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2,374 words

An Essay on the History of Bellevue Hospital -

Some Interesting Facts

By PHILLIP W. WEISS

Describing the characteristics of an ideal hospital, Sir Thomas More wrote:

> **They take more care of their sick than of any others; these are lodged and provided for in public hospitals.[1]**

Sir Thomas's words epitomize the story of Bellevue Hospital. Since colonial times, Bellevue Hospital has provided quality medical care for vast numbers of patients, regardless of their ability to pay. It is a record of service that has made Bellevue Hospital the most famous health care facility in the world.

Bellevue Hospital can trace its beginnings to a six-bed infirmary that was part of "The Publick Work House and Home of Correction of the City of New York," an almshouse that was opened by the City of New York in 1736.[2] In 1826, the facility, by then known as the Bellevue Institution – a complex of buildings

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which included Bellevue Hospital - housed 1,366 inmates in the almshouse and 336 prisoners.[3]

Between 1819 and 1970, Bellevue Hospital[4] was under the control of six different governing bodies: the Board of Commissioners of the Almshouse (1816-1849), the Board of Governors of the Almshouse Department (1849-1860), the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction (1860-1896), the Department of Public Charities (1896-1902), the Trustees of Bellevue and Allied Hospitals (1902-1929), and the Department of Hospitals (1929-1970). In 1970, Bellevue Hospital became part of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.[5]

Bellevue Hospital has always provided care for an ethnically diverse patient population. In the early eighteenth century, the infirmary treated patients from Holland, France, Ireland, as well as Native Americans.[6] During the yellow fever epidemic of 1803, only a small portion of the patients admitted to Bellevue were natives and residents of New York; most were immigrants from Ireland and Germany.[7] In 1904, almost 53 percent of the patients admitted to Bellevue Hospital were foreign born. Their countries of origin included Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, France, Sweden, and Wales.[8]

The ethnic diversity reflected the demographic make up of New York City's population. In 1870, over 44 percent of the population of New York City were foreign born. Of the foreign born, their countries of origin included Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bohemia, Canada, China, Cuba, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and Wales.[9] In 1890, Jacob Riis, noting the ethnic diversity of the city's population, wrote:

> A map of the city, colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra, and more colors than any rainbow.[10]

Ethnic diversity remained a major feature of New York City's population. In 1935, the population of 10,863,527 in the New York City Metropolitan Area was 30 percent foreign-born, 28 percent Jewish and 27 percent Roman Catholic.[11] In 1960, 20 percent of the white population of New York City was foreign born, and 29 percent of the native born white population had parents who were foreign born.[12]

Substantial numbers of patients treated at Bellevue Hospital were unable to pay for their care. Indeed, Bellevue was known as the "poor man's hospital."[13] In some years, almost no patients paid. For instance, in 1924, the total operating expenses for Bellevue Hospital, General Administration and Allied Hospitals was $3,082,956.48; receipts for the care and board of patients was $68,423.07; in 1925, total expenses were $3,072,639.76; receipts, $58,922.25.[14]

Indigence was widespread. In 1930, 50.4 percent of the hospital patients in New York City did not pay for their care;[15] in 30 government hospitals in New York City (23 municipal, 4 state, and 3 federal}, income from patients was 2.4 percent of total income with tax appropriations accounting for 96.5 percent of total income.[16] In 1934, the number of inpatients unable to pay for their care was 58.6 percent citywide.[17] That year, 332,452 such patients were admitted to municipal and voluntary hospitals.[18] Voluntary hospitals were allocated money from the city to provide medical care for the poor. In 1935, the schedule of rates per diem (unless otherwise stated) were:

Infants under five years of age	$1.15
Medical and surgical patients	3.00

Tuberculosis patients	1.75
Active cancer patients	3.00
Custodial cancer patients	1.75
Orthopedic treatment of children	1.40
Chronic, incurable or infirm patients	1.15
Maternity care, mother and child, per case	35.00[19]

Although miniscule by today's standards, these payments were a major source of income for private sector hospitals. In 75 voluntary general hospitals in New York City, income from government payments increased from 4.9 percent of total income in 1930 to 10.1 percent in 1934, an increase of 136.6 percent. At the same time, for the period 1930-1934, total revenue decreased by 8.5 percent.[20] However, the rates of payment provided by the city for care of public charges were substantially lower than the cost of caring for these patients, thus reducing the financial incentive for private hospitals to care for indigent patients.[21]

At Bellevue Hospital patients were hospitalized for practically every disease and disorder known to medical science. In 1798, patients were admitted for yellow fever.[22] In 1832, Bellevue admitted patients with cholera.[23] In 1843, patients were admitted with delirium tremens, erysipelas, typhoid fever, puerperal fever, phthisis, and pneumonia.[24] Bellevue weathered outbreaks of typhus in 1818, 1825, 1827, and the 1850s,[25] and puerperal fever epidemics in 1857 and 1874.[26] In 1930, conditions treated at Bellevue Hospital on an inpatient basis included abscesses, lobar pneumonia, chronic pulmonary tuberculosis, acute general tuberculosis, cellulitis, syphilis, acute bronchitis, acute appendicitis, vertigo, alcohol poisoning, grippe, acute cocaine poisoning, illuminating gas poisoning, chronic opium poisoning, acute salpingitis, chronic salpingitis, cancer of

the digestive system, abortion, normal parturition, gunshot wounds, stab wounds, automobile injuries, trauma from falls, unclassified violence, senility, pellagra, rickets, scurvy, "gastric neurosis", "anxiety neurosis," "senile psychosis," "arterial cerebral psychosis," "general paralysis of the insane," "alcoholic psychosis," "manic depressive psychosis," "schizophrenia psychosis," "psychosis, unclassified," "mental deficiency," insomnia, hysteria, hypochondriasis, pediculosis, unknown tumors, and unknown diseases.[27] Patients were also admitted for other conditions such as blood donation, normal child infancy, no disease, and malingering.[28] In 1892, a visitor to Bellevue Hospital wrote:

> **The twelve hundred beds are always full. Every form of malady that can afflict mankind is seen in these wards, in which a constant weeding-out process goes on.[29]**

While treating this formidable array of diseases and disorders, Bellevue Hospital maintained a high standard of care. By the late nineteenth century, the antiseptic method was rigorously followed.[30] Commenting on Bellevue's commitment to medical cleanliness, an observer wrote:

> **The drug department at Bellevue annually dispenses for use in this hospital alone about 135,000 yards of surgical gauze, 600 pounds of lint, 3,500 pounds of absorbent cotton, 50 bales of oakum, and vast quantities of drugs, including nearly 1,000 pounds of ether. On the cellar about 75,000 bottles are washed annually.[31]**

At the same time, Bellevue Hospital was able to deliver medical care at low cost. In 1904, the daily per capita cost for inpatient care at Bellevue Hospital was $1.18 *per day*;[32] in 1925, it was $2.97 *per day.* In 1925, the per capita cost of outpatient care per visit was *ten cents per visit*.[33] In 1934, the average cost per inpatient day for ward service

in voluntary general hospitals was $6.34; in the municipal hospitals it was $4.38.[34]

Bellevue Hospital was always crowded. In 1853, Bellevue Hospital treated 5,564 patients, almost double the number treated in 1847.[35] In 1855, Bellevue Hospital had 200 more patients than its proper capacity.[36] In 1892, 16,541 patients were treated at Bellevue Hospital.[37] That same year, 4,539 alcoholic patients, 3,347 who were men, were admitted to Bellevue Hospital (no other general hospital in the city would accept these patients).[38] In 1903, Bellevue Hospital admitted 27,547 patients; in 1904, 28,925.[39] In 1925, there were 46,226 admissions to the medical and surgical wards and 1,926 births in the hospital. That same year, the number of outpatient visits was 308,769 *exclusive* of new cases, which totaled 76,764. [40] In 1930, there were 58,026 admissions. That same year 2,349 children were born in the hospital; the Ambulance Division responded to 13,901 calls; 59,627 treatments were provided by the Physio-Therapy Division; and over 27,813 *tons* of coal was consumed.[41] A staff of 102 interns and 67 doctors, assisted by 692 nurses and attendants, handled a total of 454,552 dispensary visits.[42] Commenting on conditions in the Tuberculosis Service, the Department of Hospitals, in its Second Annual Report, noted that

> There has been a steady increase in the number of patients treated annually…. This increase has, of course, placed an increasing burden on the personnel and facilities of the [Tuberculosis] Service, which are now taxed to their utmost capacity.[43]

The psychiatric department was also crowded. In 1930, 16,036 patients were admitted to the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Department. [44]In 1935, 21,056 patients were admitted; of that number, 5,850, or 27.8 percent were subsequently committed to state hospitals.[45] The 1930 annual report of the Department of Hospitals of the City of

New York noted the "tremendous overcrowding, particularly in the Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Department."[46]

Years later, overcrowding still persisted. In 1965, the average occupancy rate in the Psychiatric Department was 115.3 percent.[47]

Private hospitals had large caseloads, but in the municipal hospitals the caseloads were much larger. In 1934, 134 hospitals in New York City treated a total of 644,729 inpatients; inpatient days totaled 14,160,367. Of these totals, the 24 municipal hospitals, comprising 18 percent of the total number of hospitals, treated over one-third of the inpatient caseload (222,287 patients) and provided over one-third of the inpatient days of care (5,272,635 inpatient days).[48] In 1935, Bellevue Hospital alone admitted 61,920 patients and provided 896,450 inpatient days of care.[49] The United Hospital Fund reported that between 1930 and 1934,

> Service (both the number of patients and patient days) increased in general hospitals under all types of control, all of which has increased their facilities, but very much more in the general hospitals under municipal control than in the voluntary hospitals.[50]

While the municipal hospitals were operating at almost maximum capacity, the voluntary hospitals had thousands of empty beds. The United Hospital Fund reported that

> Throughout 1934, the average number of empty beds in voluntary hospitals in New York City was 6,508.[51]

In the municipal hospitals, the situation was reversed. The United Hospital Fund noted that

> In 1934, ten of the thirteen municipal general hospitals, including those representing over 95 percent of the beds in such hospitals, were occupied to 85 percent of their capacity or more; four of the

> municipal general hospitals were occupied over 100 percent in 1934. Similarly, seven of the eleven special hospitals under municipal auspices were occupied to 85 percent or more of their capacity, including two special tuberculosis hospitals used to more than 100 per cent.[52]

Not only was the inpatient caseload disproportionately higher in municipal hospitals, the patients remained hospitalized longer. In 1934, the average length of stay in voluntary hospitals was 12.2 days; in the municipal hospitals it was 17.8 days.[53] In assessing why paying patients spent fewer days in the hospital than nonpaying patients, the United Hospital Fund concluded "that economic necessity had an influence in determining the length of hospital care of these patients."[54]

At Bellevue Hospital, as well as in other hospitals in the New York City Metropolitan Area, many of the medical house staff provided their services without pay. In 1935, 3.9 percent of the attending physicians and 2 percent of the interns in municipal hospitals were paid.[55]

For the medical profession, charity care was considered a duty. In 1843, assistant physicians at Bellevue Hospital were paid nothing.[56] The United Hospital Fund reported that

> Physicians very generally have held that the practice of medicine is not to be considered as a business undertaking, but as a personal professional service to which the poor and the well-to-do are equally entitled, and for which they should be willing to pay according to their means or not at all.[57]

After his death on December 10, 1930, Dr. Charles B. Bacon, medical superintendent of Kings County Hospital, was praised for his "thirty one years of unselfish devotion to the care of the sick poor of the City of New York."[58]

By the mid-1930s, however, the attitude of physicians on the question of

payment for services was changing. In 1934, the Public Relations Committee of the Medical Society of the State of New York adopted a resolution that stated:

> Physicians are not concerned with the care of indigents for the purpose of gain, but to render needed service in the prevention and treatment of disease. Compensation sufficient to protect physicians against economic loss is rightfully expected and should be provided from public funds.[59]

As in peacetime, in time of war Bellevue Hospital answered the call to duty. During World War One, a unit from Bellevue Hospital, designated by the Army as Base Hospital Unit Number 1, organized and operated a 316-bed hospital in Vichy, France. Base Hospital Unit Number 1 could accommodate five thousand wounded.[60] In World War Two, another unit from Bellevue Hospital, designated United States General Hospital Number 1, was again sent to Europe. General Hospital Number 1 established a hospital outside of London where they treated patients from the Eighth Air Force after bombing missions over the continent and civilian casualties from the buzz bombing of London. Later, as part of the D-Day forces that invaded Europe, General Hospital Number 1 opened a nearly two-thousand bed hospital in France. In April 1945, the surgeons performed 1,142 operations.[61]

Over the years Bellevue Hospital has served the health care needs of the poorest and most disadvantaged people of our society, and has done so with success. Whether in times of peace or war, Bellevue Hospital has provided what the United Hospital Fund has called "an essential public service."[62] By remaining true to its historical responsibility, Bellevue Hospital has set an example for what health care could be, and should be: not just a mere commodity, but a public service to be provided for the benefit of the patients, their families, and society.

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Excerpts from *Karl Marx* by Isaiah Berlin

compiled by Phillip W. Weiss

His father wrote him a long paternal letter, begging him not to waste his time on barren metaphysical speculation when he had a career to think of. (69)

If Marx derived from Hegel his view of the historical structure – that is, of the formal relations between the elements of which human history consists, he obtained his knowledge of the elements themselves from Saint-Simon and his disciples, notably Thierry and Mignet. (89-90)

Saint-Simon was a thinker of bold and original views: he was the first writer to assert that the development of economic relationships is the determining factor in history – and further to analyze the historical process as a continuous conflict between economic classes, between those who, at any given period, are the possessors of the main economic resources of the community, and those who lack this advantage and come to depend upon the former for their subsistence. (90)

Human history is the history of such conflicts: due ultimately to the blindness of both masters and subjects to the coincidence of the best interests of both under a rational distribution of economic resources. (91)

Early in life he [Proudhon] held that all property was misappropriation. (114)

In effect Marx accused Proudhon of wishing to remedy the immediate wrongs of the existing system without destroying the system itself because … he was emotionally attached to it. (119)

The framework of the new theory is undeviatingly Hegelian. It recognizes that the history of humanity is a single, non-repetitive process, which obeys discoverable laws. (124)

This accumulation in its turn creates the possibility of leisure, and so of culture; but thereby also of the use of this accumulation – of these hoarded necessities of life – as a means of withholding benefits from others, and so of bullying them, of forcing them to work for the accumulators of wealth, of coercing, exploiting and thereby dividing men into classes – into controllers and controlled. (129)

But whereas Hegel had declared that what gave its specific character to any given society was its national character … for Marx it was the system of economic relations which governed the society in question. (132)

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness." (133)

Marx accepted this vision of history as a battlefield of incarnate idea, but translated it into social terms, of the struggle between classes. (137)

Production is a social activity. Any form of cooperative work or division of labor, whatever its origin, creates common purposes and common interests, not analyzable as the mere sum of the individual aims or interests of the human being involved. (138)

The monopoly of the means of production held by a particular group of men, enables it to bind its will on the others and force them to perform tasks alien to their own needs. Thereby the unity of society is destroyed, and the lives of both classes become distorted. (139)

Such ideologies – national, religious, economic and so on, are forms of collective self-deception; the victims of the ruling class – the proletarians and peasants – imbibe it as a part of their normal education, of the general outlook of the unnatural society, and so come to look upon it, and accept it, as objective, just, necessary, a part of the natural order which pseudo-sciences are then created to explain. (139-140)

Alienation – the substitution of imaginary relations between, or respect for, persons – will come to an end only when the final class – the proletariat – defeats the bourgeoisie. (142)

Capitalism, under which the labor of human beings is bought and sold, and the workers are treated merely as sources of labor power, is plainly a system which distorts the truth about what men are and can be, and seeks to subordinate history to a class interest (which is injustice), and is therefore due to be superseded by the gathering power of the indignant victims which it own victories call into existence. (142-143)

Feuerbach is praised for showing that in religion men delude themselves by inventing an imaginary world to redress the balance of misery in real life, - it is a form of escape, a golden dream, or, in a phrase made celebrated by Marx, the opium of the people …. (144)

The real convictions and principles of a man or a society are expressed in their acts, not their words. (145)

Acts – particularly the objective behavior of a group, whatever the subjective motives of its members – those alone counted. (148)

The workers must be made to understand that the modern industrial system, like the feudal system before it, like every other social system, is, so long as the ruling class requires for its continuance as a class, an iron despotism imposed by the capitalist system of production and distribution, from which no individual, whether he be master or slave, can escape. (150)

Hence this end [the abolition of class struggle] can be achieved not by creating equality between classes – a utopian conception – but by the total abolition of classes themselves. (151)

[W]hatever his personal motive for acting as he [Napoleon] did, the demands of his historical environment inevitably made him an instrument of social change; by his agency, as Hegel had indeed perceived, Europe advanced yet another step towards the realization of its destiny. (151)

The proletariat is on the lowest possible ruing of the social scale: there is no class below it; by securing its own emancipation the proletariat will therefore emancipate mankind. (152)

But whereas all other victories placed in power a class itself is doomed to ultimate disappearance, this conflict will be followed by no other, being destined to end the condition of all such struggles, by abolishing classes as such; by dissolving the state itself, hitherto the instrument of a single class, into a free, because classless, society. (153)

The proletariat must be made to understand that no real compromise with the enemy is possible; that, while it may conclude temporary alliances with him in order to defeat some common adversary, it must ultimately turn against him. (153)

He [Marx] rejected any notion of non-empirical, purely contemplative or specifically moral intuition or moral reason. (154)

The only sense in which it is possible to show that something is good or bad, right or wrong, is by demonstrating that it accords or discords with the historical process. (154)

It [communism] is a wide and comprehensive doctrine which derives its structure and basic concepts from Hegel and the Young Hegelians, and its dynamic principles from Saint-Simon, its belief in the primacy of matter from Feuerbach, and its view of the proletariat from the French communist tradition. (157)

In the sharpness and clarity with which this theory formulates its questions, in the rigor of the method by which it proposes to search for answers, in the combination of attention to detail and power of wide comprehensive generalizations, it is without parallel. (158)

Source: Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx – third edition* (Oxford University Press: London), 1963

Report on *Karl Marx*

***Karl Marx*, by Isaiah Berlin, provides a candid, comprehensive and factual account of the life and work of Karl Marx. Berlin writes about Marx with reverence, portraying him as a prophet and martyr, albeit with flaws, that struggles and dies so that the working class could be free. Commenting on Marx's theory of historical materialism, Berlin writes, "In the sharpness and clarity with which this theory formulates its questions, in the rigor of the method by which it proposes to search for answers, in the combination of attention to detail and power of wide comprehensive generalizations, it is without parallel" (158).**

Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, the German Rhineland. He was the second oldest of eight children of Heinrich and Henrietta Marx. Heinrich was a lawyer who had converted to Lutheranism. Henrietta was a housewife. Marx's paternal grandfather and great grandfather were rabbis; their surname was Levi. Marx's father dropped the Levi in favor of Marx. In 1835 Marx entered the University of Bonn; while attending that school he was arrested for "riotous behavior" and in the summer of 1836 transferred to the University of Berlin. He was studying to become a lawyer. In Berlin, Marx gained his first exposure to Hegelian philosophy, which later provided the theoretical framework for Marx's theory of historical materialism. Marx abandoned his study of the law and took up the study of philosophy. He also started writing articles for a radical journal called the *Rheinische Zeitung*; ten months later he became the chief editor.[i] Marx submitted his Ph. D. thesis to the University of Jena and in April 1841 was

awarded a Ph. D.[i] In April 1843 Marx married Jenny von Westphalen, a non-Jew and the daughter of a Prussian aristocrat. They remained married until her death in 1881; they had seven children, three of whom lived to adulthood.

In November 1843, Marx moved to Paris where he became the assistant editor for a new journal called the *Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher*.[i] In early 1844 Marx wrote an essay on the topic of Jewish emancipation in which he asserted that Jews were neither a religious or racial entity, but a purely economic one, and opposed forced baptism.[i] (Despite his Jewish roots, Marx had no contacts with the Jewish community and never discussed his origins (269)). In Paris, Marx was exposed to the theories of several notable political philosophers, economists, writers and historians including Henri Saint-Simon,[i] Jacques Thierry,[i] Francois Mignet,[i] Charles Fourier,[i] Jean-Charles Sismondi,[i]

Heinrich Heine,[i] Arnold Ruge,[i] Mikhail Bakunin,[i] Wilhelm Weitling,[i] and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.[i] In the autumn of 1844 Marx met and formed a close and lasting friendship with Friedrich Engels, who became Marx's chief supporter, collaborator and after Marx's death editor.

In early 1845, Marx was expelled from Paris. This occurred in response to pressure from the Prussian government which had objected to certain characterization of the Prussian king published in the radical journal *Vorwarts* of which Marx was a contributing writer.[i] Marx moved to Brussels, Belgium, where he established "contacts with various German communist workers' organizations which contained members of the dissolved League of the Just, an international society of proletarian revolutionaries with a vague, but violent program, influenced by Weitling" (159-160). Marx and Engels began work on forming a political organization. They traveled to London where they met exiles who had affiliated with a federation called the Communist League which had succeeded

the now defunct League of the Just.[i] Marx and Engels took over the operation of the Communist League which then grew fast. Marx became "the organizer and leader of an active and expanding revolutionary party" (162). In 1847 the London center of the Communist League commissioned Marx and Engels "to compose a document containing a definitive statement of its beliefs and aims" (163). Engels wrote the first draft which Marx then completely re-wrote (164), resulting in *the Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which was published in early 1848.[i]

Later in 1848, revolution erupted in France, toppling the regime of King Louis Philippe and establishing the Second French Republic. Marx was expelled from Belgium and traveled to Paris; by this time revolutionary activity had spread throughout Europe. Berlin writes: "Europe was ablaze at last" (170). To support the insurgent republicans, German exiles in Paris formed a German Legion (170). Marx refused to join the German Legion. Instead he left Paris and went to Cologne where he founded the *Neue Rheinsiche Zeitung*,[i] which soon was widely read throughout Germany. In 1849, after the failure of the risings in Vienna and Dresden, Marx wrote diatribes denouncing the liberals as traitors and saboteurs, and warned of "a new monarchist terror" (175). In response to reports of workers having been killed in Paris by the National Guard loyal to the government, Marx wrote "a long and fiery leading article" calling for continued struggle against the capitalist class in power.[i] The Prussian government suppressed the

Neue Rheinische Zeitung **and arrested Marx for sedition. Marx used the trial as a forum to expound his political views and was acquitted.**[i]

Afterwards, in July 1849, he was expelled from the Rhineland and returned to Paris. However, his presence in Paris "was highly unwelcome to the government" (178) and he was ordered to leave Paris. Marx decided to go to England and on August 24, 1849 arrived in London. He would live in exile in London for the rest of his life.

For the first several years, life in exile for Marx was bleak. Berlin writes, "Marx was not a bohemian and his misfortunes affected him tragically. He was proud, excessively thin-skinned, and made great demands upon the world: the petty humiliations and insults to which his condition exposed him, the frustration of his desire for the commanding position to which he thought himself entitled, the repression of his colossal natural vitality, made him turn upon himself in paroxysms of hatred and rage" (195). During this time three of his children, Guido,

Edgar, and Franziska, died (196). He was a poor, frustrated, bitter man.

Yet Marx persevered and wrote, sustained by the strength of his own political convictions (215-217). Marx spent his days at the British Museum reading room, where he remained from nine in the morning till closing at seven, followed by long hours of work at night, accompanied by ceaseless smoking which affected his health (195). His situation improved somewhat when he became a correspondent for the ***New York Daily Tribune*****.**[i] **The paper paid Marx one pound**

sterling per article. For nearly ten years Marx wrote weekly dispatches on a wide range of subjects, including English politics, internal and external, on foreign policy, on Chartism, and the character of the various English ministries (200).[i] Engels fronted for Marx when Marx was too ill or unavailable to write. Marx also contributed articles to a paper published by Scottish writer David Urquhart, which also provided further financial relief.[i]

Marx was also visited by Ferdinand Lasalle,[i] a member of the Communist League and the leading figure in the German workers' movement after the Revolution of 1848. Although Marx disagreed with Lasalle on certain theoretical points, a friendship developed between the two; news of Lasalle's death in 1864 plunged Marx to the brink of despair. Marx felt isolated. With economic conditions in Europe improving and the radical movement quiescent, Marx was slipping into obscurity.

However, the year 1864 also marked the beginning of Marx's resurgence. English and French labor leaders organized a meeting open to anyone who desired the fall of the existing order. The International Working Men's Association, also known as The First International, an organization of European radicals, convened in London; Marx attended as a delegate representing

German artisans in London. The Inaugural Address of the International opened with the declaration "… That the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working class themselves …" (224).[i] Soon Marx was playing a leading role in the management and direction of the organization, which continued to meet annually for the next eight years.

Another event of enormous historic significance was the publishing of the first volume of *Das Kapital* in 1867.[i] *Das Kapital* represented the culmination of Marx's theoretical thoughts. Berlin writes, "The appearance of this book was an epoch-making event in the history of international socialism and in Marx's own life" (236). In this work Marx examines and analyzes the relationships between production, value, commodities, labor, money and markets, and "traces the rise of the modern proletariat by correlating it with the general development of the means of production" (238).

Basically, what Marx said was that labor is a commodity with value and that workers sell their labor which, through the extraction of surplus-value from labor, generates profit for capitalists who use this profit to engage in ruthless competition. This competition produces ever-worsening cyclical economic crises, each crisis containing within it the seeds that will eventually lead to the extinction of capitalism and the emergence of a classless society. Marx predicted that the capitalist class would be "superseded" and "liquidated" (242), the expropriators

would be expropriated, "The State," that is, "the instrument whereby the authority of the ruling class is artificially enforced" (246), would disappear, and from that would emerge the ideal community "in which there will be neither master nor slave, neither rich nor poor, in which the world's goods, being produced in accordance with social demand unhampered by the caprice of individuals, will be distributed not indeed equally … but rationally, that is unequally: for, as a man's capacities and needs are unequal, his reward, if it is to be just, must, in the formula of the *Communist Manifest*, accrue 'to every one according to his need, from every one according to his capacity'" (246). Marx dedicated *Das Kapital* to Charles Darwin, who Marx admired. (Others, however, assert that this dedication is a myth.[i]) Berlin concedes that some of Marx's predictions, such as falling rates of profit and the decline in the standard of living of the proletariat, were incorrect and "too simple" and "too fantastic" (244, 246, 250), but that others were accurate, such as the concentration and centralization of control of economic resources and the effect of industrialization and science on the methods of war.

Despite its questionable prognostications and pedantic literary style, *Das Kapital* was a success; it resonated in the socialist community. Berlin explains why: "Marxism produced a sense of liberation from doubts and confusions, by offering for the first time a systematic exposition of the nature and laws of development of society in clear, material terms …" (272). In the next ten years *Das Kapital* was translated into French, English, Russian and Italian. The work found its most receptive audience in Russia, where the authorities allowed it to be

published because, they believed, due its unpopular literary style it would not find many readers among the general public (270). Marx acquired an international following. Disciples from Germany, Russia, France, and England visited him and paid him homage. With the publishing of *Das Kapital*, Marx established his place in history. From that point on, his name was inexorably linked with the working class movement.

On March 14, 1883, Marx died in his sleep. He was 64 years old. His death passed largely unnoticed among the general public. Members of the family and a few personal friends and workers' representatives from several lands attended his funeral. Berlin sums up Marx's historical significance as follows: "Others before him had preached a war between classes, but it was he who conceived and successfully put into practice a plan designed to achieve the political organization of a class fighting solely for its interests as a class – and in so doing transformed the entire character of political parties and political warfare" (283). To his followers, Marx was a prophet whose pronouncements were a harbinger of a better future, and thus someone deserving of accolades. But to his enemies, Marx was a fraud, fanatic, and a threat.

Basic Combat Training – personal comments

by Phillip W. Weiss

"After a hard day of basic training, you could eat a rattlesnake." –
Elvis Presley

In December 1970, the army ordered me to report to Fort Polk, Louisiana for basic combat training (BCT). At the time the U. S. Army required that all enlisted personnel successfully complete BCT. BCT was an eight-week long program. I flew from New York City to Houston, Texas; from Houston I flew to Lafayette, Louisiana. In Lafayette I boarded a bus that took me to Fort Polk. I arrived at Fort Polk on December 26, 1970. After arriving, actual training did not immediately begin. It was preceded by a so-called "zero week," a one-week period set aside to give new trainees like myself, at this time known as receptees, an opportunity to acclimate to the new environment. During that time, I reported to the quartermasters section, which issued me a complete set of uniforms (dress and fatigue) and various military gear. Someone else assigned me to a temporary barrack and kept me busy by assigning me certain light duties.

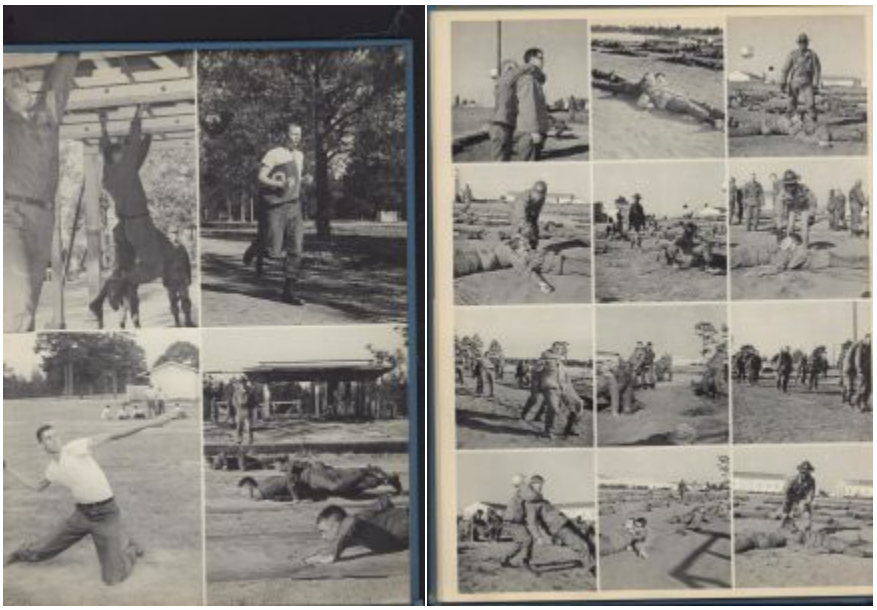
Below: Reception station, Fort Polk, Louisiana (photo: U.S. Army). The relative calmness of "zero week" belied what was to follow.

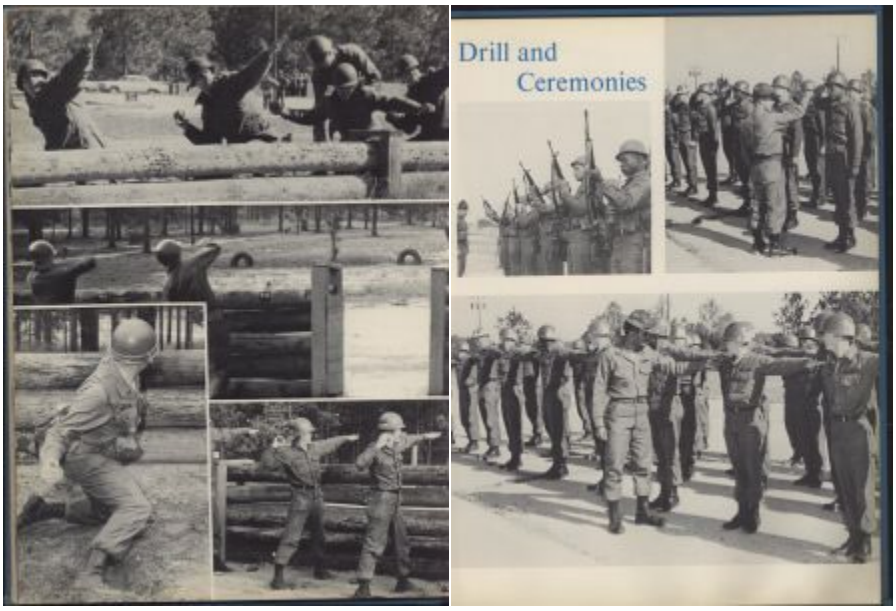


After zero-week, basic training commenced. It began with a jolt. On Monday morning, January 4, 1971, at around 4:30 A.M., while we were asleep, drill sergeants stormed into the barrack screaming at everyone to get up, get moving, and quickly fall in for morning formation. This loud, intense and intimidating onslaught of noise immediately caught my attention and set the tone for what basic combat training would be like for next eight weeks. I was no longer a receptee. I was now a trainee. Training had begun.

"Regardless of any progress made in the country's educational institutions, the Army's business is success in war – and the Army cannot safely neglect any subject that experience has shown to be important to that success." –
General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Below: Trainees at work (photos: U.S. Army). Trainees received instruction on many different facets of soldiering.



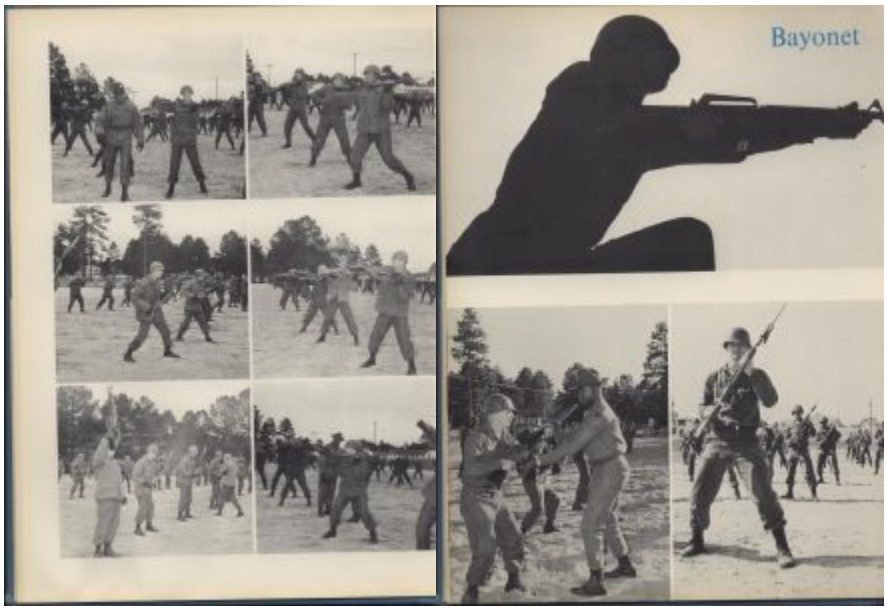


"We find that the Romans owed the conquest of the world to no other cause than continual military training, exact observance of discipline in their camps, and unwearied cultivation of the other arts of war." –
Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus

Training was rigorous, intense and comprehensive. We were immediately immersed into the military culture. To reinforce the immersion process, for the first four weeks we were confined to the post. We were taught a wide range of military skills including how to perform close order drills, how to salute, how to march in formation, how to operate a rifle, how to throw a hand grenade, how to use a bayonet, how to engage in hand-to-hand combat, how to read a map, how to make a bed the army way, how to care for equipment, and how to perform physical exercise. But most importantly, we were taught to listen to the drill sergeants, obey orders and perform as part of a team.

"Basic training is horrible. It's dirty, and it's ugly. But you learn it's not just about you. It makes you part of a team, which helps you to survive." – Rodney Frelinghuysen

Below: Bayonet training. Trainees were taught how to use the M-16 as a sword. (photos: U.S. Army)



At Fort Polk my training company consisted of five platoons. Each platoon contained approximately fifty men. Each platoon was assigned a barrack, a two-story wooden structure that probably dated back to World War Two. Each barrack had an indoor latrine which included a communal shower area, a row of urinals (without partitions), and a row of toilet bowels (also without partitions). Hygienic and bodily functions were performed in view of others. At least fifty trainees were assigned to a barrack, and probably more. Living conditions were drab. We slept in metal-framed bunk beds; two trainees to a bunk. The bunks contained no safety rails nor did the bunks have ladders to facilitate access to the upper bunk. Each of us was issued bedding. Privacy was non-existent. Personal space was limited to our bunk bed, wall locker and foot locker. We were expected to maintain our personal area, including our personal items, in immaculate condition.

"But bunk and locker drills are simply a means to an end. And that end is developing a soldier's discipline and attention to even the smallest details." – Brett & Kate McKay from How to Make a Bed You Can Bounce a Quarter Off Of

The army placed great stress on spit-and-polish. There were frequent inspections. During an inspection, it was not uncommon for the inspecting officer or designee to loudly berate one or more of us for an infraction, almost invariably of a petty nature. To me, new to the army and a civilian through and through, such nitpicking seemed pretentious, theatrical, arbitrary, and even terrifying, nothing more than an attempt to bully us into submission. In reality, however, it was part of a calculated strategy meant to quickly instill discipline and thereby help us become better soldiers.

"There is no question that many of the weaknesses developed in these maneuvers are repeated again and again for lack of discipline. Our troops are capable of the best of discipline. If they lack it, leadership is faulty. A commander who cannot develop proper discipline must be replaced." – General Lesley J. McNair

Below: Life in the barracks. Conditions were crowded and drab. Privacy was non-existent. (photos: U.S. Army)



My training company's chain of command was as follows: trainee (E1 or E-2) -> drill sergeant (E-5) -> senior drill sergeant (E-6) -> first sergeant (E-7) -> executive officer (2nd lieutenant) -> company commander (captain). My platoon included a corporal, but he was outside the chain of command. A drill sergeant supervised each platoon and was the trainee's point of contact with the chain of command. The drill sergeant in charge of my platoon was Senior Drill Sergeant Jimmy L. Carter. He was responsible for all matters pertaining to the operation of

the platoon and had authority to issue orders. He also functioned as a teacher and roll model. Hence, between the platoon and Drill Sergeant Carter there soon developed a student-teacher relationship. This relationship was far more intense than anything found in an academic setting. This was the case for two reasons. First, Drill Sergeant Carter was under pressure to convey, and for the platoon to learn, a massive amount of information in a short period of time, and second, the serious purpose of the instruction itself, which was to mold us into soldiers possessing the requisite knowledge and skills needed to perform in a military capacity. This included knowing how to kill. Hence, the stakes were much higher. The army demanded our attention. Rarely did drill sergeants repeat instructions twice.

"I don't think I could be a foot soldier. I don't know if I could take orders too good. I'm a little lazy." – Benicio Del Toro

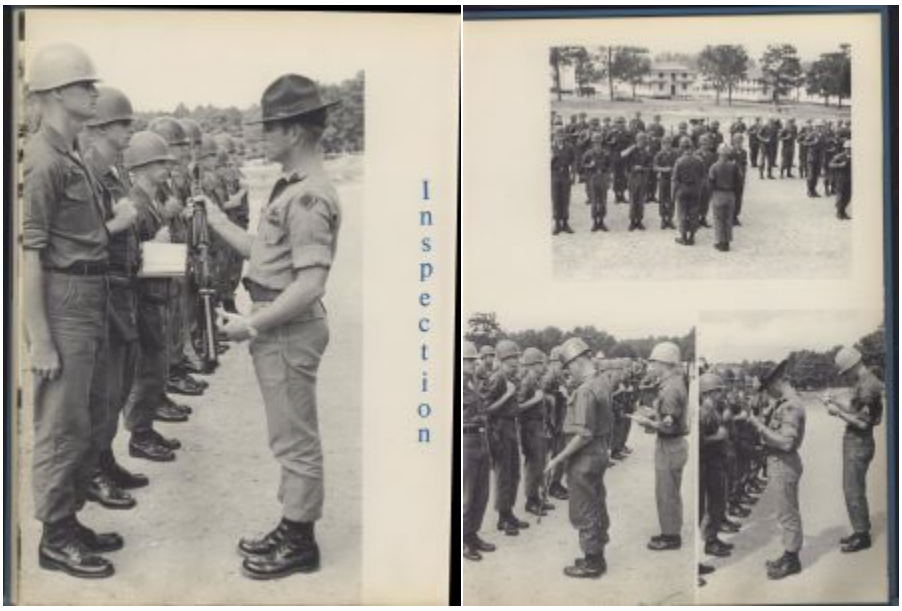
Below: Drill sergeants instructing trainees at the rifle range. Drill sergeants carefully monitored trainees to ensure that all rifles pointed in a safe direction. (photos: U.S. Army).





All trainees pulled KP ("kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol") duty. I performed KP duty twice. Under the supervision of the mess sergeant, I helped to clean the company mess hall, prepare food, wash dishes and other kitchen utensils, serve food, and pack and remove garbage. KP duty started at around 4:30 AM and ended after the conclusion of supper. In addition to KP, all trainees pulled guard duty, barracks watch duty, and latrine duty. All these duties were assigned on a rotating basis and were part of the training program.

Below: Drill sergeants inspecting the troops. Great importance was assigned to neatness and spit-and-polish. (photos: U.S. Army)



In my training company, trainees came from different ethnic and social backgrounds and from different regions of the United States. Their educational levels ranged from primary school to college graduate. Some were active army; others were serving in the reserves or national guard. Nonetheless, everyone was treated the same. All of us took participation in the program seriously. Generally, morale was good. This did not mean that we were happy and contented troopers who derived joy from being in basic training. But no one openly questioned or challenged the legitimacy of the army as an institution or the demands imposed on us as trainees. We all cooperated with the program and made a good faith effort not just to get by but also excel.

As for the personal qualities of my fellow trainees, I can state without reservation that given the circumstances all the trainees conducted themselves honorably. There were no thefts, assaults, fights or acts of sabotage within our ranks. We all managed to get along.

"Yet attention to the individual is the key to success, particularly because American manpower is not only our most precious commodity – it will, in any global war, always be in short supply." – General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Below: Trainee platoons (photos: U.S. Army) There were approximately fifty trainees per platoon, each commanded by a drill sergeant.



Each training day commenced shortly before dawn at around 5:30 AM with revelry and ended at dusk to the sound of retreat. Morning formation was followed by breakfast, then by physical training, then by more training in accordance with the program for that day. Our drill sergeants kept us busy.

Below: Physical training (photos: U.S. Army). The M-16 became an exercise prop. PT usually took place in the morning.



"Sustained rate of fire for the M16/M16A1 Rifle is 12-15 rounds per minute. This is the actual rate of fire that a weapon can continue to deliver for an indefinite length of time without serious overheating." – Operator's Manual for Rifle, 5.56- MM, M16 (1005-00-856-6885) Rifle, 5.56-MM, M16A1(1005-00-073-9421)

A critical feature of BCT was instruction on how to operate and maintain the army's basic combat infantry weapon, the M-16 rifle. Each of us was issued an M-16 rifle. We learned how to disassemble and reassemble the weapon, how to load it, how to maintain it, and how to shoot it with accuracy. To practice our marksmanship, we marched to the rifle range. The rifle range was located several miles from the barracks. Marching to and from the rifle range, in full pack and mostly at quick time or double-time pace, was physically demanding.

"The soldier is at once the agent, instrument and object of state violence." – Kenneth T. MacLeish

Below: Trainees at the rifle range. Trainees learned how to fire the M-16 rifle from different positions (all of which were awkward). (photos: U.S. Army)



"Completion of boot camp is a wonderful achievement. Basic Training Graduation is going to be one of the most memorable and monumental moments in a service member's life." – JD, www.semidelicatebalance.com

Finally, after eight weeks of training came graduation. For us graduation day arrived on February 26, 1971. We celebrated with a parade. The entire company participated. For many of my fellow trainees, graduation was a landmark event not only for them personally but also for their families, many of whom were in attendance. We were now combat-trained soldiers ready for our next assignments as members of the United State Army.

Below: (left) Graduation and (right) equipment used to transform a civilian into a soldier. (photos: U.S. Army)



Commentary on a New York Times' article

by Phillip W. Weiss

November 30, 2017

It Started as a Tax Cut. Now It Could Change American Life.

By PETER S. GOODMAN and PATRICIA COHEN, NOV. 29, 2017

According to this article, the Senate tax bill is becoming a Republican wish-list for conservative groups who are padding the bill with provisions meant to promote their respective agendas, and that the tax reforms themselves will not improve the economy.

This article is so biased that it loses its value as a source of information. Its bias is revealed in this passage: "In a recent University of Chicago survey of 38 prominent economists across the ideological spectrum, only one said the proposed tax cuts would yield substantial economic growth." These prominent economists are part of an academic elite which opposes Donald Trump. It is not likely that these economists would have anything good to say about the tax bill.

The article further asserts that "The meat of the package is a permanent lowering of the corporate tax rate, to 20 percent from 35 percent, which business leaders have long wanted. Proponents assert that this would prompt multinational companies to expand operations in the United States." In other words, the tax bill is nothing but a sham meant to benefit corporations.

What the article does not mention is that the bill will also significantly increase the standard deduction (Part III, Sec. 11021, pages 40 – 41), a measure that will provide tax relief for millions of taxpayers. The article also includes alarmist rhetoric. It warns that if the tax bill becomes law, other programs, including Social Security, will be placed at risk. According to the article, "Since the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created Social Security, unemployment benefits and other pillars of the safety net to combat the Great Depression, crises have been tempered by some measure of government support. Recent decades have brought cuts to social services, but the impact of the current bill could be especially consequential." This rhetoric belongs in the editorial section, not the news section.

Other features of the tax bill not reported:

The child credit is increased from $1,000 to $2,000 (page. 42, line 11).

An unborn child may be claimed as a beneficiary (page 54, line 12 – page 57, line 2).

Deductions for teachers' expenses is increased from $250 to $500 (page 67, lines 4 –12).

Nor does the article provide details on the proposed tax rates: (page 2, line 4 – page 4, line 1)

According to CNN Money, "In the Senate bill, the deduction for singles increases to $12,000 from $6,350 currently; and it raises it for married couples filing jointly to $24,000 from $12,700." Below are three hypothetical yet plausible examples of how this increase in the standard deduction may effect taxpayers.

Ex. 1: A married couple file a joint return. Under the current standard deduction their taxable income is $60,000. Their tax is $1,905 + 12 % of $40,050 = $6,711. Under the Senate bill standard deduction their taxable income is $48,700. Their tax is $1,905 + 12% of $29,650 = $5,463. Their tax is reduced by $1,248.

Ex. 2: An unmarried single woman files an individual return. Under the current standard deduction her taxable income is $74,000. Her tax is $11,339.50 + 24% of $4,000 = $12,299.50. Under the Senate bill standard deduction her taxable income is $68,350. Her tax is $4,453.50 + 22% of $29,650 = $10,976.50. Her tax is reduced by $1,253.

Ex. 3: An unmarried single male files an individual return. Under the current standard deduction his taxable income is $35,000. His tax is $952.50 + 12% of $25,465 = $4,009.50. Under the Senate bill standard deduction his taxable income is $29,350. His tax is $952.50 + 12% of $19,825 = $3,331.50. His tax is reduced by $678.

These four persons now have an additional $3,179 to spend. In 2016 over 152,544,000 tax returns were filed. Let's divide that number by 4. 152.544M/4 = 38,136,000. Multiply that number by $3,179 and that equals $121,234,344,000. That's a lot of additional buying power.

Of course, all this is hypothetical, but the numbers seem reasonable.

Now, will this massive tax reduction put Medicare, Social Security and Veterans benefits at risk? If, and this is a big IF, this massive influx of money produces real substantive economic growth, then the answer to that question is no. However, if economic growth remains sluggish, then other sources of funding will have to be found. It is highly doubtful that, short of a major calamity that threatens the extinction of the planet, the American public, and especially the American voter, will tolerate any reductions in public benefits that are not based on a means test.

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Objectivity, Subjectivity and Truth

by Phillip W. Weiss

Four presumptions: 1. I am human therefore I am subjective. 2. I am subjective therefore I am human. 3. I am not human therefore I am not subjective. 4. I am not subjective therefore I am not human. Based upon these four presumptions, it is possible for a person to be objective and be human? I believe the answer to that question is no. Human beings are not preprogramed machines. By nature, a machine is inflexible. Therefore, its operation is objective (or so it seems). It operates without bias. It is neither good nor bad. Intent is not a factor nor are the consequences. A machine can maim and kill and do so repeatedly. It lacks feeling and comprehension. A machine is infallible. It does not make mistakes. It is consistent. It is reliable. It does what it is supposed to do without complaint. In this respect, a machine is objectivity perfected. The machine has no personal feelings. It is objectivity in action. It cannot be human. To be human the machine would need to possess personal feelings and emotions. Then the machine would no longer be a machine. It would become human. The human cannot be objective. To be objective would transform a human into a machine. The two cannot coexist as one. The human is by nature subjective. Personal feelings are ingrained in the human psyche. The ability to feel is an integral component of the human. Remove that ability to feel and the human dies. The subjective is represented by the pronoun "I." No machine is an I. A machine is an "it." Hit a machine and it does not feel pain. Hit me, "me" being a grammatical

manifestation of "I," and I feel pain. Abuse a machine and the machine will harbor no grudge. Abuse me and I will react. How I react is entirely subjective. It is subjective because I am human. Other humans may judge my reaction according to what is considered right behavior and wrong behavior. That too is subjective. There can be no objective set of right and wrong. The objective is non-human. To assert the claim of objectivity would be disingenuous and presumptuous. Hence, pronouncements of universal rights and wrongs are ascribed to god. They come literarily from On High. On High means above the human or greater than the human. Thus, On High must be a machine. Only a machine can be infallible. But this produces a quandary. Where is this machine? The machine is animate. It must exist somewhere. If it is merely an idea, then the machine itself is rendered moot. Its universal right and wrongs automatically lose their objectivity and become subjective. They become products of human minds which have created the concept of god to give these principles of behavior the trappings of objectivity. But that is a sham. Moses was a human. Jesus was a human. Yet both claimed to possess objective knowledge of right and wrong. Moses was empowered by God. Jesus was a manifestation of God. Both performed miracles to back their claims of divinity (although technically Moses was a prophet, not a god). Humans believe this today. Religion itself is subjective. That is the case because it is a human creation. Every human creation is subjective. It is a projection of the "I." It reflects the personal feelings of its creator. The same can be said for every machine. The objectivity of the machine is a sham. No machine can be truly objective. That is because the human creates machines, and not the

other way around. The objectivity of the machine is part of the larger subjectivity of its creator. The same can be said for political concepts. Ideology is subjective. Marxism, Nazism, Fascism, Liberalism, democracy, freedom, liberty are all subjectively inspired products of human thought, which is subjective. Indeed, there is no such thing as absolute objectivity. Everything that involves humans is subjective. No two persons behave exactly alike. No two persons feel exactly alike. No two persons will comprehend exactly alike. Every idea, including those that assert no exceptions, such as the principle of the speed of light, and the principle that two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time, are human constructs based on human experimentation and human interpretation. The human component makes them subject to doubt. Nothing is self-evident. All is subject to further investigation. No human pronouncement can be presumed to be The Truth. If the Truth is objective, then no human can rationally support a claim to possess The Truth. To do so would mean forfeiting being human. The objective is a projection of the subjective. The former is a contrivance while the latter is humanity. However, there is a Truth. It is neither a contrivance nor is it phony. Every human being possesses this Truth. This Truth comes from within, not without. This Truth is personal. This Truth is real. It is the most sublime manifestation of the subjective. This Truth defines who we are. This Truth is life itself.

Cultural War

by Phillip W. Weiss

The United States is the midst of a cultural war. What is at stake is the survival ofmiddle-class values. Many forms of behavior that not too long ago were considered taboo and even criminal, are now tolerated, accepted, and even embraced as being good. These conducts include but are not limited to non-traditional relationships, sports gambling, use of illicit drugs, public intoxication, vagrancy, the reckless operation of bicycles, and the demonization of the police and law and order in general. Anyone who opposes this cultural shift risks incurring the wrath from those for whom the principle of free speech means nothing. The erosion of middle-class values has produced a climate of lawlessness which to a large degree is responsible for the sharp increase in violent street crime, including gun violence, which is getting WORSE. If you agree with CUSNY on this issue, please let us know. We greatly value your input on this important issue which directly affects EVERY person in the United States. Now, every person has a right to make their own personal lifestyle choices based upon their own personal set of values, but when personal lifestyle choices based on whatever set of values places in any way and to any degree the safety of the public at risk, then those personal lifestyle choices become a legitimate subject for public debate. For instance, if someone CHOOSES to live on the street or CHOOSES to inject dangerous drugs or CHOOSES to operate a bicycle in a reckless manner or CHOOSES to perform a bodily function in

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public or CHOOSES to smoke a tobacco or other product in a crowded subway car, those personal choices become a legitimate subject for public scrutiny and concern.

PWW12/16/2022

Crime

by Phillip W. Weiss

Of all the social problems confronting society, none instills more fear, consternation and terror than crime. Crime poses a direct threat one's personal safety. Crime forces every person to acknowledge their personal vulnerability to forces beyond their control and question the nature of society itself. Indeed, crime is a form of terrorism, but of a kind that is even more frightening than the terror associated with political causes, because while political terrorism is linked to some kind of rationale, albeit twisted, perverted and corrupt, that renders it at least explainable, violent street crime is like a pestilence that defies explanation and predictability. Crime can and does happen anytime, anywhere and without warning. Because of its unpredictability and lethal nature, crime poses a direct threat to public safety and national security. It sows fear which demoralizes the people and erodes confidence in the ability of government to protect society. This erosion of confidence weakens all of our institutions, especially those on which society depends for its defense. The criminal is an outlaw. Criminals flaunt society's rules and by doing so declare war on society. Criminals act with impunity and without restraint, thus rendering them dangerous. They are dangerous because they inflict pain and suffering on others and disrupt the operations of society. Although the percentage of persons prone to violence is low, the havoc they cause is immense. One out-of-control criminal can literally

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terrorize an entire community, thus transforming the criminal into a warlord who can impose control through brute force. Due process means nothing to a criminal. A criminal has no interest in playing by the rules. For the criminal, rules are made to be broken, all to satisfy an immediate need, no matter who gets hurt in the process.

Violent crime is a violation of the fundamental human right to live free from fear. On January 6, 1941, in his state of the union address to Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, designated Freedom from Fear as an essential human freedom.

> **The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world.**

Roosevelt spelled out the problem in no uncertain terms. No one should EVER be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor - anywhere in the world. Yet today, crime is as rampant as ever. Criminals are murdering, raping and robbing at accelerating rates, leaving in their wake VICTIMS. Whether this surging crime problem can be brought under control and resolved is the great challenge confronting all of us today. At stake is the very survival of society. Either we solve the crime problem or it will destroy us. The choice is ours. Without law and order, there is no justice. Without law and order, there is NOTHING.

Precarity

by Phillip W. Weiss

Nowhere is precarity more evident than in the world of professional sports. In professional sports every player is subject to being traded or being released outright at the slightest whim of the owners. If the player has a long-term contract, then the contract gets sold, along with the player. No player is immune from such treatment. Examples: New York Yankees traded Babe Ruth to the Boston Braves. New York Mets traded Tom Seaver, one of the greatest pitchers in the history of baseball, to the Cincinnati Reds. New York Nets sold basketball legend Julius Irving's contract to the Philadelphia 76ers. All franchise players; each one an icon, nevertheless, each one considered expendable. The Seattle Seahawks released their star cornerback Richard Sherman. The Cleveland Indians traded the immensely popular Rocky Colavito to the Detroit Tigers. New York Yankees fired the NY Yankee legend Yogi Berra. In 2013 the New York Yankees gave the tremendously popular 5-time World Series champion Derek Jeter a $5 million pay cut. In 1961 the SF 49ers traded Y. A. Tittle, their quarterback who they considered washed up, to the New York Giants where he became a superstar. Now, if these players, all icons, people who produced money for their bosses, could be treated so summarily, then no one's job is secure. The Detroit Tigers declared their 12-time batting champion Ty Cobb a free agent. The Brooklyn Dodgers traded baseball legend Jackie Robinson to the New York Giants. One year later the Dodgers left Brooklyn, soon after followed by the Giants who left Manhattan. Both played in stadiums whose history did not save them from being demolished.

Precarity applies to businesses too. B. Altman's, Gimbels, Pennsylvania Railroad, RCA. TWA, Eastern Airlines, Woolworths, Pan Am, all icons of capitalism, are just a few of the almost countless number of businesses of all sizes that have succumbed to economic forces that force them to close. No one is immune. The Secretary of State just got fired. Kings are forced to abdicate, dictators are forced to flee, and power is fleeting. Governments collapse; new ones take their place. Countries disappear then are re-constituted. The Roman Empire lasted 1,000 years, now it is history. Generals get sacked. Elected officials lose power. The Soviet Union disappeared. The Berlin Wall was torn down. Who seriously believed that one day the Soviet Union would literarily shut itself down (taking with it who knows how many jobs)? Vietnam and the US are now friends. Japan and Germany, once implacable enemies of the US, are now close allies. Jews were targeted for extermination, yet today there is a Jewish state. In 1960 Jim Crow was the law; in 2008, an African-American was elected POTUS. In 1988 Eastern Europe was communist; in 2017 a woman born in Eastern Europe became the FLOTUS.

The 1962 NY Mets lost 120 games; in 1969 they won the World Series. In 1985 the KC Royals won the World Series; they waited thirty years to win their next championship. In 1963 the New York Giants won their third straight NFL Eastern Division title; for the next eighteen years they were losers. Then they became winners again and then losers again. Winning teams stop winning; perennial losers become winners, e.g., Boston Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs. Same with countries. In the 19th century China was weak; today it is a world power. In 1900 the British Empire dominated the world; by 1960 the British Empire was history. In 1918 France dictated terms to Germany; in 1940 Germany dictated terms to France. In 1945 Germany was discredited and destitute; today it is a major power. In 1914 three empires dominated the European continent; in 1918 those empires were gone.

Digital replaced analog. The telephone replaced the telegraph. The cell phone replaced the telephone. The automobile replaced the horse. Today women have the right to vote. Slavery is abolished. Abortion is legal. Relationships change. Circumstances change.

My point: precarity is part of the human condition. In life nothing is permanent. Time is fleeting. It is relentless. Things DO change, and that includes economic relationships. Jobs are lost; new jobs are created. Why is that? Who knows? Let the sociologists try to figure it out.