Chapter 3: The History and Politics of Intervention

> *During certain periods there appear agents of liaison. Take the example of philanthropy in the early nineteenth century: people appear who make it their business to involve themselves in other people's lives, health, nutrition, housing: then, out of this confused set of functions there emerge certain personages, institutions, forms of knowledge … The interesting thing is to ascertain, not what overall project presides over all these developments, but how, in terms of strategy, the different pieces were set in place.*
>
> MICHEL FOUCAULT[1]

Intervention is about crossing borders and, thus, it is about physical space: territorialities, demarcations, spheres of influence. But intervention is also about universality: mobile capital flows, fundamental principles of human rights, democracy. How, then, can local struggles be placed within a transnational social movement? Is it accurate to speak of a movement as transnational if it consists of strategically supporting local movements in different locations around the world? Perhaps most pressingly, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri put it, "is there still a *place* from which we can launch our critique and construct an alternative?"[2] And how can we determine what a transnational movement would be, when David Slater argues that social movements "have frequently been seen as phenomena that occur within society, existing in juxtaposition to those key political structures that give them their essential meaning, namely, states and the states system"?[3] Will all cross-border organizing have to be framed as a function of Empire — even when it is attempting to act counter to that Empire? Can identities be constructed across borders, or are local identities still the best vehicles for social movements — and what does that mean for transnational intervention?

[1] Foucault (1980), 62.

[2] Hardt and Negri (2000), 208. Emphasis is the authors'.

[3] Slater (1997), 262.

Hardt and Negri argue for a new understanding of the international political order, that of Empire: "a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule."[4] This logic is to be understood as encompassing all space and all time, the suspension of history in an eternal necessity.[5] While their construction of the political is writ large, at times obscuring collective power such as working-class or indigenous movements, it does provide an important framework on which to construct effective intervention. Foreign and domestic policy, for instance, now exist together in a "state of exception" in which temporary techniques of state control such as a declaration of war or a "war-time economy" have "gradually been replaced by an unprecedented generalization of the paradigm of security as the normal technique of government."[6] This fundamental shift in the nature of political boundaries and biopolitical control toward "security" has serious implications for transnational empowerment. Most importantly, interventionists will need to move beyond previous conceptions of "third-party" and "local" and see themselves as fully integrated into the global political imaginary. "The West is now everywhere," writes Ashis Nandy, "within the West and outside; in structures and in minds."[7] What was formerly known as "the West" has now encompassed all known political space. Once interventionists make this philosophical shift, they will be able to support movements for social justice in creating alternative forms of power, autonomy and life, because they will no longer be bound by notions of the advanced world offering salvation to the savage world — but instead will be able to focus on the creation of freedom in all realms.

[4] Hardt and Negri (2000), *xii*.

[5] Hardt and Negri (2000), 11.

[6] Agamben (2005), 14.

[7] Nandy (1998), *vii*.

Solidarity and geography: 'all that is solid melts into air'

> *Any meaningful challenge [to capital] must contest a specific manifestation of the general structures of domination; only then can it transcend its context by serving as an inspiration, a model, a resource, or a link in a chain of similar struggles, which proliferate in response to broader structures of domination.*
>
> MARGARET KOHN[8]

The assumptions of "globalization"[9] are this: that there is a world economy that engages all workers, that this global system prioritizes and assigns duties best fulfilled by local and regional systems, and that as a result of this a finite pool of employment exists, for which workers compete across borders and, in true free-market fashion, "win" by attracting employers with productivity, investment or the generous nonregulation of the states which govern them. Workers, in fact, often do not appear in representations of globalization at all. Yet, the method by which capitalism concentrates capital in some spaces and de-emphasizes it in others — Marx's "agglomeration of production" — directly affects the construction of workers' spaces. Capitalism is premised on uneven development, using space "to ameliorate crises of overproduction and falling rates of profit and to divide the working class."[10] This is the principle paradox between state interests and globalization: how to prevent or dissuade the mobility of capital, fueling a "race to the bottom" to find the cheapest means of production worldwide.

What this means for workers is a "hierarchy of places" which generates, predictably, a "hierarchy of labor," in which the working class of more economically desirable locations are afforded more investment, security and wages than in less desirable locations. Thus, "the object of exploitation and domination tend not to be specific productive activities but the universal

[8] Kohn (2003), 163.

[9] I place the word in quotes for two reasons: first, because capitalism in general and the American economy in particular have been "globalized" for quite some time, despite the shifts noted by Hardt and Negri; second, and more importantly, because the term is a politically loaded word, it should only be understood in the context in which it is used.

[10] Johns (1998), 253–254.

capacity to produce, that is, abstract social activity and its comprehensive power."[11] Local resistance loses its leverage. The Critical Art Ensemble offers a useful description of the effect of this on movements for social justice:

> Hostility from the oppressed is rechanneled into the bureaucracy, which misdirects antagonism away from the nomadic power field. The retreat into the invisibility of nonlocation prevents those caught in the panoptic spatial lock-down from defining a site of resistance (a theater of operations) and they are instead caught in a historical tape loop of resisting the monuments of dead capital.[12]

Perhaps, if social movement organizations are most successful when they reflect the political environment in which they operate, as William A. Gamson suggests, transnational organizing will have to be purposely decentralized in order to confront Empire.[13] Resistance will no longer be focused on "monuments of dead capital" but instead on the very network itself.

When discussing transnational peacebuilding in an era of deterritorialization, it is also crucial to recognize how capital is itself a reterritorializing force. As Margaret Kohn shows, "globalization is itself a kind of space." It encompasses sites of privilege and international interchange such as airports and conference centers, and sites of subordination such as the *maquiladoras*.[14] This demonstrates the necessity for transnational labor organizing under the broader effort of peacebuilding, but this is not without its difficulties.

As a result of the process of capital mobility, the twentieth century saw local unions and labor organizations increasingly interested in foreign policy. Their efforts to prevent cheap imports — presented as a kind of "solidarity" with workers in other parts of the world who were being paid less and treated poorly — often dovetailed, both intentionally and not, with

[11] Hardt and Negri (2000), 209.

[12] Critical Art Ensemble (1994), 16.

[13] See Gamson (1990).

[14] Kohn (2003), 162.

imperialist designs. US trade unions were not only *not* opposed to placing foreign states in economic subservience, they were part and parcel of it. Under the aegis of fighting communism, labor unions supported governments and companies that pledged fealty to capitalism even when they were blatantly undemocratic, anti-union and repressive of the working class.[15]

Transnational labor organizing

The history of political intervention, then, is from an economic perspective one of continued repression and disempowerment. While the more straightforwardly violent events of war capture the political nature of twentieth-century intervention, other aspects are often obscured because a group of "progressive" organizations known as labor unions were driving that domination. Today, many labor unions in Western states argue, at least rhetorically, that a purer form of solidarity must exist between the working class of various locations.[16] And, indeed, many nonviolent intervention organizations work closely with local labor organizations, for whom ongoing war and disruption is often as much an economic issue as a human rights one.[17] As long as workers in one part of the world are willing to work under harsher conditions than in the "developed" world, labor organizers will "always run the risk of capital flight, plant closings, and layoffs."[18]

The basis and need for social justice organizing often centers on preventing or at least mediating the structures which produce this cross-border antagonism. Yet states which might benefit from neoliberal policies of low-wage production are often hostile to any mobilization of

[15] Spalding (1976), 45.

[16] Shailor (1998), 149.

[17] Peace Brigades International, for instance, helped protect the nascent Guatemalan labor movement in the mid-1980s by accompanying activists and maintaining a 13-month vigil outside a factory. See Mahony and Eguren (1997), 55–56.

[18] Johns (1998), 253–254.

the working class, and thus it is often these activists who most need protection and support through nonviolent intervention. The mobility of capital creates a globalized structure of control, as Hardt and Negri write:

> From the economic point of view, the wage regime is replaced, as a function of regulation, by a flexible and global monetary system; normative command is replaced by the procedures of control and the police; and the exercise of domination is formed through communicative networks. This is how exploitation and domination constitute a general non-place on the imperial terrain.[19]

But conceptualizing transnational peacebuilding as *only* a process of global solidarity overlooks the very leverage that peacebuilding often uses: that of local power, local collectives and local interests. “Resistance necessarily occurs in the form of local guerilla struggles that can sometimes attain global significance,” Kohn writes.[20]

Thus, movements like “zapatismo,” while they can be legitimately analyzed in a global context and seen as a form of transnational solidarity and organizing, originated in a specific place — in this case, the EZLN in the jungles of Chiapas, Mexico. Ignoring the local struggles in favor of a global strategy not only does violence to the non-Western activists, insofar as the term “global” is often understood in a particularly Western political conception, but also misreads the development of transnational solidarity, seeing the process of cross-border peacebuilding exactly backwards to its actual progress. It is not that Hardt and Negri are mistaken in their belief that “Empire cannot be resisted by a project aimed at a limited, local autonomy.”[21] But it is to say that, for the purposes of transnational intervention, local circumstances are important enough that globalized principles must not be blind to their particulars. The primary way to avoid such

[19] Hardt and Negri (2000), 211.

[20] Kohn (2003), 163.

[21] Hardt and Negri (2000), 206.

omissions is to support and internationalize existing local struggles rather than creating new, Western-directed ones.

Transnational labor organizers — of whom many union leaders in the Global North increasingly consider themselves — must, insofar as they engage in intervention, practice "transformatory" organizing if they are going to foreground local struggles for justice. This type of solidarity, defined by Rebecca A. Johns, promotes the equal distribution of capital investment, rather than focusing on bettering working conditions, wages or the ability to unionize alone.[22] Moreover, I would argue, it acts to support local efforts rather than creating externally-run movements, something in which US labor organizers have often been engaged.[23] As Sharp points out, "international action by third parties has … sometimes been regarded as a *substitute* for effective struggle by the grievance group itself."[24] Nonviolent action, and thus nonviolent intervention, he argues, must grow out of local efforts. Those who are affected by the policies of the powerholders must bear the "main brunt of the struggle" rather than third parties. "Overconfidence in the potential of aid from others," Sharp writes, "may distract resistance efforts from their own most important tasks."[25] The nature of transnational organizing, then, should be one of empowerment rather than control — yet the historical record of intervention suggests that it is often based on domination.

[22] Johns (1998), 257. Strikingly, many labor efforts still focus on unionization — benefiting *workers* — rather than focusing on capital investment — benefiting the *working class*, whether engaged in domestic work, subsistence living or unable to work. Shailor (1998, p. 149) describes as "fundamental ... the need to organize new workers into unions," lessening the responsibility to aid the unemployed that labor organizations in the United States played a primary role in creating.

[23] In particular, in Latin America labor organizers went around local unions because they were seen as being too closely aligned with communism; organizers often set up their own separate and competing labor groups within Latin American states.

[24] Sharp (1973c), 663. Emphasis is the author's.

[25] Sharp (1973c), 663.

The color of advocacy: geography and race

Third-party nonviolent intervention is based on a history of advocacy, of external organizing to mobilize support for change in another part of the world through international pressure and/or local movements. In many cases, these projects have been undertaken by white, upper-class Westerners with, at times, a particular interest in reinforcing their own power and influence in the international institutions to which they appeal. Even when the mechanisms are borne out through indigenous structures, systems of race and privilege often underlie the opportunities for political sway from the vantage point of the West. If nonviolent intervention is to achieve transnational empowerment, it must be able to leave behind these structures — or, at the very least, openly and explicitly identify them, working to counter the tendencies of racism and classism within advocacy movements. The history of attempts by privileged actors to "uplift" those they deemed less fortunate suggests that without this unequivocal focus, social action across boundaries of nationality and race will founder on the very structural inequalities activists are seeking to dismantle.

Racism and progressive organizing

Just as US labor unions were directly complicit in promoting imperialism, so too were they integral to constructing a racist "working man" identity. Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois, David R. Roediger writes, "the problem is not just that the white working class is at critical junctures manipulated into racism, but that it comes to think of itself and its interests as white."[26] Moreover, because "what usually passed for labor history was really union history," black workers are only mentioned in terms of being "a problem for white labor unions."[27] To be a

[26] Roediger (1999), 12.

[27] Hill (1996), 189,

member of the working class was *de facto* seen as being white, and this only increased in the twentieth century as black workers were shipped in as strikebreakers in northern cities like Chicago and Detroit. Yet much of the groundwork for groups like the CIO — and later, the US civil rights movement — was laid by radical black laborers in the South of the 1930s.[28]

The history of social change in the United States is largely written about white men and privileged movements for reform — for example, women's suffrage and the white-led abolition movement. Even when the focus is broader, such as in the civil rights movement, the camera is usually trained on one particular leader such as Martin Luther King, Jr., creating and reinforcing a belief in a "charismatic leader" for social change to occur.[29] Acceptable leaders are sanitized for history, and those who cannot be sanitized — Malcolm X, for example, or Bayard Rustin — are relegated to bit parts as antagonists to the noble cause and unimportant to the long arc of movement development. Not only does this do violence to the work of these other leaders, it willfully ignores the day-to-day work performed, in many cases, by women and others who could not be or were not allowed to be on "the front lines" giving speeches and leading marches.

There is an alternative history, however — a counter-history of grassroots organizing and democratic collaboration rather than top-heavy guidance, the building of leaders rather than leaders in buildings. In the United States, this is grounded in communities of African Americans where individuals worked to reduce and ultimately overcome systemic oppression levied against them. From the anti-lynching campaigns at the turn of the century to union organizing in the

[28] Honey (1993), 117.

[29] Max Weber's theory of the charismatic leader was primarily an explanation for the systems of and legitimation for different types of government (he also outlined the "traditional" type and the "legal-rational" type), but it has been divorced from its context and applied to social movements, many of which did not directly operate in the same liberal political sphere about which Weber wrote.

South long before the CIO arrived in the 1950s, as Chris Crass writes, "these legacies of resistance are at the heart of liberation struggles in this country."[30]

Ella Baker was a field organizer in the 1930s for the NAACP who focused on the empowerment of individuals, developing leadership within communities rather than exercising leadership over them. "People have to be made to understand," she said, "they cannot look for salvation anywhere but themselves."[31] Arguing for a model of participatory democracy, she eventually broke with the NAACP over whether the organization needed to focus on leaders or leadership. In addition, writes Carol Mueller, Baker de-emphasized hierarchical representation and the belief that professionalism was necessary for leadership, and made explicit calls for direct action "as an answer to fear, alienation, and intellectual detachment."[32]

As I wrote in Chapter 2, direct action is often more of a primary focus in movements that do not have affective ties to privileged communities, in which members must achieve some measure of immediate success in the short-term. In addition, this kind of approach is specifically geared toward "developing a sense of power in the people involved."[33] In Argentina, for instance, some unemployed workers have organized themselves into *piqueteros*, small community assemblies that perform direct action in order to focus attention on the 58 percent of Argentines living below the poverty line.[34] Rather than mimicking old forms of hierarchical democracy such as the unions or political parties, *piqueteros* decided the community itself "should be the place where decisions are made." Their form of *autogestion*, or self-organization, is known as *horizontalidad* for

[30] Crass (2004), 428.

[31] Quoted in Crass (2004), 430.

[32] Crass (2004), 431.

[33] Crass (2004), 432.

[34] Marina Sitrin, "The Power of the *Piqueteros*," Notes from Nowhere (2003), 472–481.

the horizontal nature of its structure.[35] In situations in which very little civil society exists, direct action may be the only form of "political" participation individuals can take, and for third-party interventionists such a development is key to preventing didactic and manipulative forms of organizing.[36] Oppression is "attacked and changed on *many* levels by *many* groups, that is, that the people themselves take control of the institutions which shape their lives."[37]

In the 1950s, Baker went on to found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Bayard Rustin and Stanley Levinson, designed to focus on "community action" against segregation rather than legal proceedings. Building on the existing religious networks of black churches in the South, the SCLC "developed the infrastructure of the civil rights movement and … functioned as the decentralized arm of the black church."[38] In 1960, she and Howard Zinn helped advise in the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. SNCC bore out Baker's ideals, focusing on community-building, group-centered leadership and direct action. The organization's Freedom Rides "pushed the proposition that merely bettering the living conditions of the oppressed was insufficient; that [it] has to be done in conjunction with giving those people a voice in the decisions that shape their lives."[39] The Freedom Rides connected intellectual analysis with everyday experiences, a revolutionary pedagogy reflected in the work of Paulo Freire, one of the foundations of transnational empowerment.

[35] Sitrin, Notes from Nowhere (2003), 475–476. Also see Rowley and Soohen (2003).

[36] See Andoni (2003), 186: "This is why defying curfews is important, why taking down road-blocks and checkpoints is important, because this is where ordinary Palestinians can find the space to resist."

[37] Lakey (1987), 150. Emphasis is the author's.

[38] Morris (1984), 77.

[39] Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, quoted in Crass (2004), 436.

Racism and nonviolent intervention

The approach of educational or training-based nonviolent intervention organizations presents the most direct problem in terms of an essentialist view of the world: because a particular movement in the "third world" does not have the knowledge to wage an effective nonviolence campaign, we will intervene and impart to them such knowledge. Most nonviolent intervention organizations, after all, operate within non-Western contexts — few are working to develop social movements in France, Japan or Australia. The reason, some theorists argue, is that political resistance is more readily understood and more widely available in democracies, even when they are partially dysfunctional.[40] Yet, many of the states the West does not consider to be democracies, the states in which nonviolent intervention groups often operate, have a long history of colonialism or imperialism from Western powers: Colombia, Yugoslavia or Sierra Leone, for example. The simultaneous lack of democracy and need for greater political resistance in these states is not a coincidence, but rather something created by Western powers. Conceiving of the states as somehow set apart from the rest of the world, with separate histories untouched by nonviolence theory, ignores the long involvement of and resistance to imperialism and domination. And regardless of how they may try to portray their nonviolence theories as rising out of the collective struggles of people around the globe, the fact remains that educators are virtually always Western, with the full force of the political and economic weight of Empire.

"The prevailing regime of representation is Euro-Americanist," Slater writes, "whereby the driving assumption is that knowledge, and in particular theoretical knowledge, is a Western property."[41] Racism oppresses by dividing and separating people into discrete categories which

[40] See Tilly (1978), 151–159; McAdam (1982), 51–54.
[41] Slater (1997), 274.

can then be ranked.[42] Treating non-Western activists as primitive and untrained, then, often reinforces the very nature of imperialism transnational peacebuilding seeks to eliminate.

"While the international accompaniment technique itself may not have racism at its core," Coy writes, "it does nevertheless engage the preferential dynamics of racism, and it flirts with colonialism."[43] Accompaniment, more than other forms of intervention, has often relied on the premise that soldiers will not fire upon Westerners because of the reaction such an action would provoke on the part of the international community. Implicitly, then, these organizations are relying on being visibly foreign — and, most often, visibly white, as many interventions are disproportionately so. Not only does this endanger the effectiveness of nonwhite, non-Western participants in these groups, it "contradicts this notion that the organization ought to model the society they are trying to build."[44] Without any training in the processes of oppression for its largely white teams, intervention risks the reinforcement of such structural oppression, Coy argues:

> As long as the organization continues to field largely *un*informed white volunteers from the north and west in the east and south, it risks *structuring the context of political action* in such a way that the primary dynamics and symbols it activates are those associated with racism and classism.[45]

There are several ways in which intervention organizations are attempting to move beyond this dynamic which will be explored in Chapter 4. Training for Change, for instance, is training Africans in third-party intervention, and incorporates into all its trainings the use of rank of many different types — finding out how to maximize the rank that each individual has,

[42] See, for instance, Said (1994), 12.

[43] Coy (1997), 244.

[44] Coy (1997), 247.

[45] Coy (1997), 269. Emphasis is the author's.

without closing off third-party intervention to white, Western males. As the history of advocacy indicates, only such an unambiguous focus can prevent the pervasive influences of racism and privilege from structuring intervention in ways that mimic systems of oppression rather than emancipation.

The priest and the airplane: Wilsonianism and humanitarian intervention

Much of this study concerns itself with questions about the movement of ideas from Western-based interventionist organizations *out* to other parts of the world. But an important element in the development of nonviolent intervention is the role of transnational forces that bring particular beliefs and value systems *in* from the rest of the world to Western organizations. The very existence of "nongovernmental organizations" in general was borne out of a relationship between local activists and the indigenous peoples they meant to support. This primarily evolved in two related spheres: in the nineteenth century, through missionary projects, and in the twentieth century, the rise of "transnational identities."

Intervention does not always mean solidarity — sometimes it can mean paternalism. And there is good reason for this tendency on the part of transnational advocacy organizations: most of them are rooted in the missionary tradition. As Walter Russell Mead puts it so clearly:

> The very concept of global civil society comes to us out of the missionary movement; apart from a handful of isolated intellectuals, no one before the missionaries ever thought that the world's cultures and societies had or could have enough in common to make common global society feasible or desirable.[46]

Nor should we accept that such universal morality has been drained from modern, "secular" activist organizations. Apart from the fact that many of the nonviolent intervention groups are now or grew out of particular religious traditions — they are the *Christian* Peacemaker Teams,

[46] Mead (2002), 146.

after all — missionaries were not simply a veil for US imperialism, paving the way for commercial and military occupation. That did occur, to be sure, on some occasions, but it was more a product of the missionaries' ethics than their racism.

If the increasingly transnational nature of capital created the circumstances for a burgeoning cross-border solidarity, missionary work undoubtedly helped to form the underlying structures to make that possible. The infrastructure of religion often helped provide for the mobilization of transnational organization.[47] US nationals, though privileged and often prejudiced, nonetheless began to work as equals with "people from other cultural backgrounds." Not only were missions the first truly multinational corporations, they were the first organizations that "systematically moved to place locals in positions of leadership."[48] This relationship between Western capital, religious proselytizing and international advocacy cannot be understated.

In many cases, missionaries acted against mainstream US foreign policy in their drive, at nearly any cost, "to transform the world and to bring about a social, economic, medical, and religious revolution."[49] Certainly, most modern-day transnational organizations have a set of values that excludes religious conversion outright, but this does not mean they have no value system at all. Historically, missionaries were the "chief bridge" between the United States and much of the rest of the world's population.[50] And, needless to say, Amnesty International and Médecins sans Frontières are working today in the same places US Protestants were operating in the nineteenth century. While intervention groups will clearly employ universalist arguments like appeals to "human rights," they must take care not to become like the worst of the missionaries,

[47] Smith, Pagnucco and Romeril (1994), 130. This could be seen occurring in the American civil rights movement as well; see McAdam (1982) and Morris (1984).

[48] Mead (2002), 153.

[49] Mead (2002), 146.

[50] Mead (2002), 151.

aloof and apart from the communities they purport to serve, existing only to ensure their own continued existence. In identifying such a disconnection on the part of critical anthropologists, Abdellah Hammoudi is clear about the danger:

> The production of universalizing partial truths could become a highly sought-after position for a new, universal intelligentsia that does not speak to any particular marginalized or dominated group because it pretends to profess on behalf of all of them.[51]

Modern advocacy groups may also exhibit many of the same aspects of colonialism in a different guise, simply by choosing the conflicts in which to get involved. In the new dynamic of Empire, Slavoj Žižek argues, all wars are framed either as "ethnic-religious conflicts" or as wars to which the Empire is a party — in which terrorists are neither "lawful combatants" or criminals. In this latter case,

> we cannot even imagine a neutral humanitarian organization like the Red Cross mediating between the warring parties … one side in the conflict (the US-dominated global force) already assumes the role of the Red Cross — it perceives itself not as one of the warring sides, but as a mediating agent of peace and global order crushing particular rebellions and, simultaneously, providing humanitarian aid to the "local population."[52]

There is some question, then, whether the assistance of Western-based organizations — like the education offered by missionaries — can really be seen as neutral. Mead captures this dissonance between being against US foreign policy and yet bound up by its weight by describing the missionaries' "intermediary role," both protecting their local congregations from "depredations of unscrupulous Westerners" and acting as a conduit into local cultures of Western values.[53]

[51] Hammoudi (1997), *xiii*.

[52] Žižek (2002), 94.

[53] Mead (2002), 144.

There are also similarities in the structures set up to handle missionaries and human rights activists. Religious pioneers were often granted "extraterritorial status" — the same as merchants and diplomats — and were thus exempt from local laws.[54] While some nonviolent intervention organizations enter states clandestinely, especially if the state in question is a party to oppression and violence, the dynamics of intervention short of direct participation often requires that the organization be known to rulers in order to be effective. Purely humanitarian groups like the International Committee of the Red Cross have long operated outside domestic laws in exchange for their relief services.

Just as transnational activists often seek to educate and train local leaders in the traditions of nonviolent social movements, missionaries made a concerted effort to introduce Western ideas and concepts. They opened Western-style universities, made printing presses more widely available and encouraged women to acquire intellectual knowledge. Though the missionaries' end goal may have been a wider spread of Christendom, there is little question they saw "democracy" as an important step on that road. Often human rights activists are acting in extension of that original education begun in the nineteenth century.[55]

The sympathetic television

The history of the dialectic between Western humanitarians and the oppressed of non-European states drew more "average citizens" on both sides into the political sphere. Missionaries "brought Americans into direct contact with the external world regardless of geography and class," Mead writes. "Many American citizens who were not part of the foreign

[54] Mead (2002), 147.

[55] As Mead (2002, p. 149) writes, "then as now, Wilsonians do not grow excessively sentimental about 'cultural differences' when those are used to legitimate nondemocratic forms of government."

policy or economic elite of the day cared very deeply about events overseas."[56] As the twentieth century wore on, the news media, photography and, in particular, the television increasingly became the framework in which humanitarian action was considered. It was not news reports but pictures that solidified US support behind involvement in World War Two, first in documentation of Pearl Harbor, and later — ordered by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower himself — pictures of German concentration camps.[57] When images of starving children in Africa are televised to those in the United States, an attempt is made to elicit action, and a specific type of political action. "When confronted with suffering all moral demands converge on the single imperative of action," Luc Boltanski writes. The only action one can take is through speech, a commitment "adopting the stance, even when alone in front of the television, of someone who speaks … about what they have seen."[58] Intervention is rooted in the hopes of going beyond that declaration, yet is significantly dependent on it. Whether it is churches imploring their congregations to write letters of support for congressional bills favorable to their missionaries, or Human Rights Watch publishing documentation of abuses in dictatorial régimes around the world, a significant level of cross-border advocacy's power comes in transmitting some of that action back home. Protective accompaniment, for instance, threatens international scrutiny of the state in question if activists being protected are harmed; observing and monitoring acts to disseminate information about the unsavory practices of those in power to a wider global audience.

[56] Mead (2002), 152.

[57] Barbie Zelizer (2002). "Photography, Journalism and Trauma," in *Journalism After September 11*, Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, eds. Advance uncorrected proof. Routledge, London, pp. 48–68.

[58] Boltanski (1993), *xv*.

This level of availability of information is, in fact, a very recent development. As Boltanski shows, up until the early 1990s humanitarian intervention was premised on political neutrality and confidentiality, pioneered by the Red Cross. Médecins sans Frontières was the first organization to abrogate the principle on privacy — by widely and deliberately reporting human rights violations — and later the principle of "neutrality" as well.[59] Nonviolent intervention organizations are clearly operating under this new, wider mandate. Just as the first social movements developed in the West in response to the growth of national political power, so too transnational social movements have developed as transnational politics became more prevalent.[60] Nonetheless, because states remain the primary focus, successful transnational organizing is dependent on managing transnational, national and local political arenas.[61]

Advocacy and identity

When, in the 1920s, Western missionaries in Kenya ignited a campaign to eliminate female circumcision, they struggled to gain support from local communities, despite overwhelming British colonial influence. Yet just ten years before, missionaries in Imperial China had successfully turned public opinion against the practice of footbinding despite a much less receptive atmosphere to Christian proselytizing. The difference was due to nationalism. In Kenya, a growing anticolonialism drew on tradition as a source of strength for the movement; whereas in China, the nationalism was based on tradition being a source of weakness and looking forward toward modernity.[62]

[59] Boltanski (1993), 178.

[60] See McAdam (1982) and Smith, Pagnucco and Romeril (1994), 124–125.

[61] Smith, Pagnucco and Romeril (1994), 127.

[62] Keck and Sikkink (1998), Chapter 2.

This demonstrates the important role of identity in constructing the situations in which nonviolent intervention organizations involve themselves. Nationalism is based on the idea of a nation as "an imagined political community," limited to some subset of humanity in contrast to other nations, sovereign in its legitimate rule and based on a "deep, horizontal comradeship" between people who may never meet or even know of each other.[63] More recently, the idea of "nation building" articulated by global political élites "is one central example of the productive project of biopower and war," Hardt and Negri write. "The nation has become something purely contingent, fortuitous, or, as philosophers would say, accidental … [yet] nations are absolutely necessary as elements of global order and security."[64] To resist Empire, then, is to resist nation building.

Unlike movements in postindustrial societies, movements occurring in the Global South will not be able to take for granted the "existence of states and nationally integrated societies."[65] Integrating society through national liberation, however, should not be interventionists' focus. While this may offer a short-term boost to the movement's morale, in the long run nationalism is counter to the vision of an egalitarian society free of violent conflict, as it is based on the exceptionalism of one's own situation in contrast to that of others. Nor can "responsible nationalism," with a critical eye on the racist ideologies of other nation-states, guarantee security from sectarianism. As Fredy Perlman writes:

> The idea that an understanding of the genocide, that a memory of the holocausts, can only lead people to want to dismantle the system, is erroneous. The continuing appeal of nationalism suggests

[63] See Anderson (1991), 5–7.

[64] Hardt and Negri (2004), 23.

[65] Boudreau (1996), 179.

> that the opposite is truer, namely that an understanding of genocide has led people to perpetrate holocausts.[66]

An alternative to this history of exceptionalism might be what Arjun Appadurai terms "ethnoscapes," identities that have become nonlocalized, historically self-conscious and culturally heterogeneous.[67] "The way in which neighborhoods are produced and reproduced requires the continuous construction, both practical and discursive, of an ethnoscape," he writes, "against which local practices and projects are imagined to take place."[68]

This new source of identity is something that can be cultivated through third-party intervention. It is not without its risks, particularly insofar as interventionists are often Western activists operating in the Global South, where they perform upon a foundation of rank and privilege. Nonetheless, a considered approach to reproducing narratives of identity offers a powerful way for divided societies to become joined together. It is a project that must arise out of local movements, but it is one that interventionists can help to shelter and nurture.

[66] Perlman (1984), 54.

[67] Appadurai (1996), 48.

[68] Appadurai (1996), 184.