"Lesser Evil" as Argument and Tactic, from Marx to the Present[*]

Victor Wallis

ABSTRACT: When should revolutionary movements support, and when should they not support, a "lesser evil" among hostile forces (or among alternative strategies)? I explore varying responses to this question since the time of Marx. I also consider the use of a "lesser evil" argument by defenders of capital in their effort to justify the status quo in the face of growing popular discontent.

Introduction

The concept of "lesser evil" is applicable, in principle, to any choice between alternatives, whether made by individuals or by organizations. It may refer to specific actions or to overall systems, and it has been invoked from every political direction. Within Marxist tradition, the concept has most commonly referred to decisions on whether to give momentary tactical support to one or another bourgeois political formation. But the essential argument for a "lesser evil" approach – with or without mention of those exact words – may emerge at widely varying levels of generality. It may be used with reference to basic institutional frameworks, pitting the democratic republic against some form of authoritarian rule. It may be used to argue for strategic retreat or compromise in the face of threats to a movement's (or a regime's) survival. Within a democratic republic, it may be used in advocating a united front with particular bourgeois parties against repression or in favor of progressive social policies. Or, in the specific context of electoral campaigns, it may be used to characterize the tactic of supporting one non-working-class candidate or party over another – a tactic which may or may not involve arguing that the favored candidate is to some degree "less bad."

---

[*] This article was originally published (in German translation, as "kleineres Übel") in the *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, vol. VII/1 (Hamburg: Argument, 2008). A revised and expanded version was published, with the kind permission of HKWM editor Wolfgang Fritz Haug, in Marcello Musto, ed., *Marx for Today*, which appeared first as a special issue of *Socialism and Democracy*, no. 54 (vol. 24, no. 3; November 2010) and then (2012) as a Routledge book. The latter version is reproduced here, with a March 2016 Epilogue added.

For primary-source citations, I have kept the HKWM format, using, in order of appearance, the following abbreviations: K=*Das Kapital* (Marx); NRhZ= *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (newspaper edited by

Common to all these choices is the underlying commitment to strive for the presumed "good," which in the long run is the society of "associated producers" (K III: ch. 48, sec. 3) and in the short run is the growth of an independent working-class movement or the consolidation of a revolutionary regime. Responses in every instance range from a *maximalist* position, which holds that the positive task of advancing the revolution eclipses in importance any possible concern with whether one expression of bourgeois power may be worse than another, to a *minimalist* one, which becomes so absorbed with responding to immediate threats that it loses sight of the movement's original goal. Maximalists sometimes use the derogatory expression "lesser evilism" in an attempt to discredit the idea of giving even limited and transitory support to any bourgeois formation. In fact, however, determinations of lesser evil (or least damage) are inherent in any decision requiring *defensive* calculations, as opposed to the unobstructed pursuit of one's positive goal. To avoid such calculations is impossible; the challenge, for a revolutionary party, is to keep them within appropriate bounds.

Outside of Marxist tradition and beyond the level of purely pragmatic calculations, however, the concept of lesser evil has in the past decade taken on a rather novel role as a purported ethical justification for capitalism in an epoch of intensified crisis – ecological as well as economic – and of untrammeled US global military intervention.

Marx/Engels and electoral calculations

The political debate over the lesser evil is as old as working-class politics. It originated with the project of constituting the working class as an independent political force. Marx and Engels were engaged in this project from its beginnings. From at least as early as 1847, much of their writing was directly linked to their organizational efforts at launching a communist movement against the backdrop of the Prussian monarchy (Nimtz 2000: 67ff, 93ff). The narrow range of electoral options quickly confronted them with a "lesser evil" scenario. Already in June 1848, the big bourgeoisie's alliance with feudal Reaction was clear to Marx and Engels (NRhZ, 14/6/1848; MEW 5: 65). Discussing the

---

Marx); MEW=*Marx Engels Werke*; CW=*Collected Works* (Lenin). Dates of primary-source citations are given, where applicable, in day/month/year format. All italics within quotations are as in the original texts.

22/1/1849 elections to the Prussian Constituent Assembly, however, Marx distinguished between the movement's electoral tactics and its longer-range organizing: "Where it is a struggle against the *existing government*, we ally ourselves even with our enemies.… Now, *after* the election, we again affirm our old relentless standpoint not only against the government but also against the official opposition" (NRhZ, 18/2/1849; MEW 6: 298). Underlying this approach was Marx's conviction that a democratic state, compared to any absolutist regime, had the advantage for the proletariat of not artificially blurring social antagonisms and, hence, of providing the setting "in which they come to a free fight and thereby to a solution" (NRhZ, 29/6/1848; MEW 5: 136). In this sense, the democratic state, about whose social grounding and ultimate allegiance Marx had no illusions, was indeed for him a "lesser evil."

From the moment that the institutional framework was no longer in question, however, Marx's emphasis would shift dramatically. Speaking in March 1850 on behalf of the Central Authority of the Communist League, Marx and Engels insisted "that everywhere workers' candidates are put up alongside the bourgeois-democratic candidates," and that the workers "must not allow themselves to be bribed by such arguments of the democrats as, for example, that by so doing they are splitting the democratic party and giving the reactionaries the possibility of victory" (MEW 7: 251). It should be noted, however, that in the setting to which they referred, the only danger they anticipated was "the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body" (251). Within this framework of bourgeois parliamentarism but yet fully conscious of its conditional character, they would continue to stress the centrality of independent working-class organization (Draper 1978, Nimtz 2000). As for any eventuality in which the state might set limits to working-class advances, they would have no hesitation in strategizing – and acting – outside the parliamentary framework. Following the May 1849 shutdown of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels "went to fight with the insurrectionary forces" (Draper 1978: 240); in 1895, contemplating the real possibility of the working class attaining power through the institutions of the democratic republic, Engels nonetheless sought to remind his readers, despite censorship by the editors of *Die Neue Zeit*, that the decisive struggles might still require armed confrontations (MEW 22: 522). In this sense, although parliamentarism had initially emerged in Germany as a

lesser evil compared to absolutism, street-fighting now came to be seen as a lesser evil – or at least, under certain conditions, as a practical necessity – in order to avoid the greater danger of parliamentary co-optation.

Lenin and bourgeois constitutionalism

Within the pre-revolutionary Russian setting, Lenin viewed bourgeois constitutionalism not as a viable option (let alone as a potentially preferable regime) but rather simply as a contrasting framework, whose implications for working-class organizing were vastly different from those of his own political surroundings. In *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), much of his discussion of organizational imperatives thus takes the form of drawing conclusions dictated by Russia's remoteness from that framework, i.e., by Russia's lack of "political liberty." The degree of tsarist repression was subject to change, however, dependent on the balance of class forces. When opportunities for legal agitation multiplied in 1907, Lenin insisted that the party should make use of them, so as not to become detached from its working-class base. In voting at that time for participation in the Duma (the weak parliamentary body allowed by the czar after 1905), Lenin aroused criticism from party comrades who saw this as an act of betrayal (Le Blanc 1993: 150).

Such criticism, of course, reflected a failure to distinguish between tactical or conjunctural decisions and long-term goal. Tactical decisions routinely involve compromise. To the extent that a succession of such decisions may alter the long-term outcome, the problem may be less one of betrayal than one of insufficiently acknowledging other forces that are at work. The assessment of those other forces must therefore be a key factor in judging the appropriateness of any tactical – or "lesser evil" – decision. A number of Lenin's decisions merit consideration with this in mind.

Lenin's essay "On Compromises," written less than eight weeks before the October 1917 Revolution, was prompted by a juncture similar to that of 1907. The advantage he sought was freedom of action for the Bolsheviks; the concession he proposed was that the Bolsheviks would support the continuation in power of a Menshevik/SR coalition (3/9/1917; CW 25: 307).[1] This concession was, under the

[1] For background on the various parties, see, e.g., Rabinowitch 2004.

circumstances, a "lesser evil" compared to the risk of having the Bolsheviks' agitation suppressed before they had built up sufficient support to be able to take power.

Once in a position of state power, the Bolsheviks faced a new set of threats, suggesting the need for compromises of various kinds. Lenin's proposal to sign an unfavorable peace agreement with Germany risked a split in the Bolshevik party, but in his deliberation with Trotsky on this decision, he asserted, in effect, "better a split in the party than the danger of a military defeat of the revolution" (Trotsky 1971a: 103; cf. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder*; CW 31: 36). On the production front, Lenin clearly presented his calls for "iron discipline" and for reliance on bourgeois experts as being "a compromise" and "a step backward" ("The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," 4/1918; CW 27: 248f), but considered this approach less risky than the alternative, which he saw as dominated by "the element of petty bourgeois anarchy" and leading to "indiscipline, laxity and chaos" (CW 27: 265). He applied similar reasoning in formulating the New Economic Policy (NEP), which he put forward as a necessary measure to avoid the buildup of opposition in a country where the proletariat was vastly outnumbered by "the predominating peasantry" (Report to 10th Congress; 16/3/1921; CW 32: 265).

In all these cases, the choice made was, in immediate terms, a success, in the sense that the Bolsheviks' power-position was preserved. Such compromises may also have secondary effects, however, which become apparent over a longer period. These need to be kept in mind even if no definitive conclusion can be drawn as to the outcome of an alternative course of action. Such possible secondary effects highlight the importance of the particular conjuncture at which the original decision was taken. Among the specific decisions here mentioned, the military capitulation appears in retrospect as the least controversial, given the overwhelming popular opposition in Russia to continuation of the war. The other two decisions, even if driven by compelling considerations, may have had more complex ramifications. The NEP may have strengthened and emboldened sectors hostile to socialization and may have helped legitimize the eventual emergence of a privileged stratum. The imposition of harsh factory-discipline certainly had the effect of blocking any possible evolution of incipient

movements toward worker control, which, had they had an opportunity to flourish, might have counteracted the development of bureaucratic rigidities in the planning process.

"Lesser evil" choices may thus have costs that cannot initially be foreseen. A proper assessment of these costs, on the other hand, must take into account not only the directly affected society but also the impact of that society's presence on the world scene. In the Soviet case, the taking on of state power under less-than-optimal conditions surely helps explain – in combination with hostile foreign intervention – the emergence of a regime which would cast socialism in a negative light; but at the same time the mere existence of this regime, whatever its flaws, may have facilitated revolutionary advances elsewhere (Wallis 1990: 56ff).

Can compromise ward off the "greater evil"?

Lenin's fullest discussion of compromise is in *"Left-Wing" Communism…* (1920), where he draws examples both from the Bolshevik experience and from the politics of parliamentary regimes. In distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of compromise, he explicitly uses the notion of "lesser evil" to describe the former: "One must distinguish between a man who has given up his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to lessen the evil they can do … and a man who gives his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to share in the loot" (CW 31: 38). His example here for the "lesser evil" compromise is the Brest-Litovsk treaty; his counter-example of "treachery" is the 1914-20 role of parties of the Second International, in the support they gave to their governments' war policies, as "*accomplices* in *banditry*" (CW 31: 37).

Parliamentary struggles during the ensuing decades offered many instances in which the lesser-evil option would be debated, but usually without any prospect for the Left parties of coming to power. The most acute case of this type was the one posed by the rise of Nazism. Without going into detail about the intense debates that this elicited, we may note here that apart from the KPD's maximalist stance of belittling the fascist threat (e.g., Ernst Thälmann's plenary speech of February 1932; Beetham 1983: 162) and the SPD's minimalist position of, in Rudolf Hilferding's words, "an absolute interest in the preservation of democracy" (speech to SPD conference of 1927; Beetham 1983:

253),[2] there was the view that the Left parties, without in any way minimizing their critique of the bourgeois state, should at least join forces to confront the Nazis. As Trotsky described the choice between alternative bourgeois political forces (1931): "There are seven notes in the musical scale. The question as to which of these notes is 'better'… is a nonsensical question. But the musician must know when to strike and what notes to strike" (Trotsky 1971b: 136). The KPD/SPD split remained unresolved, however, and in the 1932 presidential election the only "electable" alternative to Hitler was Field Marshal von Hindenburg. This represented an extreme narrowing of the options, to the extent that the victorious "lesser evil" (Hindenburg) simply cleared the path for his adversary by then appointing him as Chancellor, thereby confirming the view that the choice, as offered, was no choice at all.

Lesser Evil as a system-induced imperative: The US model

Considering electoral frameworks generally, the "lesser evil" logic is endemic to systems which lack proportional representation. It is only partly attenuated by runoff elections. It appears in undiluted form in situations of party "duopoly" with just a single round of voting. In the US case, it permeates all electoral calculations, including the nominating process, where, however, it also serves to transmit the power of the big-money contributors, who (with rare and purely individual exceptions) refuse to support progressive candidates but use the argument of "electability" to rationalize their choices.

The "electability" argument – illustrated in the Democrats' choice of John Kerry for president in 2004 and in their narrowing of the nomination contest to Obama vs. Hillary Clinton in 2008 – is integral to lesser-evilism. It is used exclusively against the Left. It presupposes the normality of an economically conservative platform and asserts that the best chance of defeating its Republican or right-wing version is not by offering a candidacy that would reject the conservative position but rather by offering one that shares, with only minor reservations, its central tenets. The assumption is that those tenets are what define the "mainstream" of the electorate (the electorate itself being relatively more prosperous than the approximately 50% of the adult population that does not vote),

[2] KPD: Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany); SPD: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Socialdemocratic Party of Germany).

and that only by appealing to this mainstream is it possible to win. Within the US context, it is clear that the logic of lesser-evilism pulls the mainstream consensus steadily to the right. Thus, the more extreme the positions taken by Republican candidates and right-wing media personalities, the more the Democratic leadership will play to the voters' fears rather than mobilizing them for positive alternative programs.

A similar dynamic is repeated in the legislative process, as shown in the 2009-10 debate over healthcare. The Democratic leadership persistently silenced the advocates of an authentically universal healthcare system, permitting a steady weakening of the reform bill, allegedly in the hope of attracting Republican support which they did not need (in view of their substantial majorities in both chambers of Congress) and which they could on no account expect to obtain. Gradually, over the course of more than a year of narrowly circumscribed debate, those Democrats who initially insisted on at least a limited "public option" (a fully public system of health insurance having been ruled "off the table") were pressured and worn down to the point where they abandoned that demand and accepted a measure that, while adding a layer of subsidies and regulations, reaffirmed an augmented regime of private health insurance as a "lesser evil" compared to the previous arrangement in which the numbers of the totally uninsured had reached approximately 50 million.

It is important, by way of qualification, to note that the "lesser evil" approach is not always without political justification. As the long history of revolutionary organizing suggests, a timely retreat is preferable to an assured rout. In the US partisan framework, however, lesser-evilism reflects a virtual complicity between the two parties involved, comparable to the "good cop/bad cop" approach to interrogations. Thus, the electoral dynamic unfolds in a setting in which basic ideological assumptions are shared by the two parties and in which, despite any differences between their respective rhetorical stances (and their corresponding popular constituencies), major financial backers typically contribute not just to one of those parties but to both of them (Parenti 2002:194-214).

The resulting symbiosis has created a situation in which the Democrats as a party not only fail to challenge the Republicans ideologically, but also fail to assert their procedural rights in the face of corruption of the electoral process (Miller 2007). They

thereby diminish even further the potential impact of any support they might attract. The end-result is that a vote for the "lesser evil" serves primarily as a legitimating mechanism, with little effect on policy. The social sectors that are thereby confirmed in power then become increasingly immune to any legal restraints, inasmuch as the instruments for holding them accountable have become inoperative.

Examples of lesser-evilism are by no means confined to the United States, even if that is where its effect in weakening the Left is most apparent. Another notable instance was the 2002 presidential election in France, when, in the first round of voting, the right-wing candidate Le Pen placed unexpectedly ahead of the center-left challenger Jospin. In the runoff contest between Le Pen and President Chirac, most of the Left supported Chirac, despite the latter's clearly conservative policy-positions. The opposite outcome at the runoff stage – reflecting the inherently limited appeal of the mainly negative approach implied by "lesser evil" – was seen in the 2005 election in Iran, where the less theocratic candidate Rafsanjani was defeated by Ahmadinejad. Thus, whether the "lesser evil" candidate wins or loses, the forces of the Left remain marginalized. A final example of this effect is the chronic situation in the US colonial territory of Puerto Rico, whose existing status, with its partial cultural autonomy, appears to most local citizens – including the many who resonate with calls for independence – as a lesser evil compared with complete absorption into the United States.

Lesser evil or greater good?

From the time of the Bolshevik Revolution until the collapse of the Soviet bloc, there were grounds for arguing that the socialist orbit was expanding. Its negative traits could be rationalized as transitional phenomena whose severity could be expected to diminish over time, and a socialist presence in the international arena could be seen as a bulwark against the most adverse manifestations of capitalism. It was in this spirit that Lukács could say, in 1968, "I have always thought that the worst form of socialism was better to live in than the best form of capitalism" (Lukács 1971: 58).

With the post-1989 "New World Order," however, lesser-evil discourse took on a new dimension. In the interests of capital, the dismantling of "existing socialism" had to be rendered permanent. As the polarizing tendencies of capitalism showed no signs of

abating, its defenders shifted from extolling the system's virtues to proclaiming simply that, whatever might be capitalism's virtues or defects, "there is no alternative." More precisely, no disclosure about capitalism could possibly match, from this vantage-point, the unmitigated evil of "Communism." The widely diffused *Livre noir du Communisme* (1997) sought above all to put Communism on the same moral level as Nazism, while at the same time insinuating, by its tendentious reckoning of casualties (Perrault 1997: 22f), that Communism was even worse. The *Livre noir* in turn prompted a series of international conferences in 2000-01 culminating in an anthology entitled *The Lesser Evil: Moral Approaches to Genocide Practices* (Dubiel & Motzkin 2004: 2). The discussions here are more careful to acknowledge the complexities of comparing Nazism with Communism, and they do not presume to judge either one as "worse" or "less bad" than the other. However, by reviving the unifying concept of totalitarianism, by implicitly linking "Communism" with socialism while divorcing Nazism from capitalism, and by disregarding the historical and continuing record of mass atrocities and military interventions fueled by capitalism (Curtin 1969, Chomsky & Herman 1979, Stannard 1992, Blum 2003), the collection as a whole points to no other "lesser evil" than the institutions of liberal (bourgeois) democracy.

The justification of capitalism based on calling liberal democracy "the lesser evil" is raised to the level of doctrine by Ignatieff (2004). The "greater evil" now becomes terrorism rather than totalitarianism, but the argument is the same. If then a liberal democracy, defining its agenda as counter-terrorist, engages in practices of torture, these are by definition for Ignatieff (provided that certain procedural requirements have been observed) "lesser evils" (see Friel & Falk 2004: 151ff). Now, as before, the capitalist character of liberal-capitalist governments – and, hence, of their global priorities – goes simply unmentioned. "Terrorism" is so labeled only when directed against these governments (or their allies), never when carried out on their behalf (see Ray & Schaap 2003). The political rationalizations of liberal-capitalist governments are accepted at face value, and the possibility – dramatized in the post-1998 Venezuelan challenge to US hegemony – that what these governments might most fear is not the suppression of democracy but rather its more thorough-going implementation (Wallis 2006: 18) is not even considered.

Ironically, the current ideological flaunting of the “lesser evil” argument serves the interests of a political force (the US ruling class) which, in terms of its power, its sweep, its economic agenda, and its weapons of enforcement, can more plausibly be thought of as the world's greater evil – understanding the latter not in any cosmic or theological sense but strictly in terms of: 1) numbers of people harmed on a global scale, economically as well as militarily; 2) incidence of direct imposition via military occupation; 3) extreme character of the control techniques that are applied; and 4) systemic and non-negotiable character of the underlying priorities, namely those of capital. Thus, the United States is the country in which the power of capital is least restrained and in which, consequently, there is the highest level of obstruction to policies reflecting environmental and social-service or working-class priorities. Not coincidentally, it is also, as we have seen, the country in which the “lesser evil” calculus most fully defines the limits of policy debates, and in which, as a result, the opportunities for positive electoral alternatives are most fully closed off.

Marx and Engels noted early in their trajectory that the ruling ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class. What this most recent twist of the lesser-evil argument reflects is the fact that a long-enshrined core "ruling idea" of capital – the conflation of capitalism with democracy – has lost all credibility. In other words, since “normal” capitalist politics has lost its democratic trappings, it can devise no other legitimizing rationale than the claim to be “less bad” than an alternative that it defines as one inherently committed to the imposition of terror. The hegemony of capital has thus suffered a decisive blow, and its ideologues have had to make a leap of intellectual desperation in order to argue that the system they uphold stands for any interests other than those of its owners.

Epilogue, March 2016

The claim that liberal democracy embodies a lesser evil compared to “terrorism” underpins most US foreign-policy pronouncements. And yet it ignores the acts of terror for which the purported liberal democracy is itself responsible. On the one hand, the US government, loudly touting its democratic values, is engaged in a *de facto* “war without end,” inflicting massive civilian casualties in several countries (see Pilger 2016); on the

other, recent attacks by Islamic State operatives on European "soft" targets have strengthened the hand of those politicians – in both the US and Europe – who call for a redoubling of "security" measures of all kinds, from racial/ethnic/religious profiling and militarization of police forces to draconian anti-immigrant measures – all of which make the "lesser evil" assertion appear increasingly hollow. As the US and other governments wage "war on terror" in the name of liberal democracy, they are not only hurting people in the Islamic world; they are also subjecting majorities of their own citizenry to unpopular agendas of economic austerity. In the US case, the democratic paradigm has been further compromised by 1) legislation and prosecutions that conflate dissent with terrorism, 2) free rein to corporate money in electoral campaigns, and 3) new laws in various states tightening restrictions on the right to vote.

In relation to US elections, as the shrillness of right-wing campaign rhetoric reaches unprecedented levels, top Democrats in effect welcome that turn insofar as it provides an ever more reprehensible target for them to attack, thereby reinforcing the traditional image of their politicians as constituting (for working-class and progressive voters) the lesser evil (see Wallis 2015). The dynamic here is one of fear, which constitutes the logical basis for lesser-evil voting.[3] But this dynamic is not written in stone. As the impact of the virtual Republican/Democrat partnership becomes increasingly evident – in the form of continuities in foreign and financial policies, and with Congress obstructing progressive social measures – popular acquiescence reaches a limit, at which point the usual criteria for "electability" may suddenly cease to apply.

At the time of writing, this is being shown in the wide support generated among Democrats and independent voters by the presidential campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders. Although Sanders is conducting this campaign as a Democrat (with, therefore, a lesser-evil dimension to his overall program), his anti-oligarchic message is nonetheless one which challenges *both* of the dominant parties, and which therefore can only succeed – as he himself says – in the context of a "political revolution." In such a context, the need for lesser-evil calculations would not disappear, but their hitherto invariable rightward-leaning logic would be overridden.

[3] It should be added that the supposed lesser evil is not always "lesser." The parties in question may pursue identical policies, but a Democrat president, being *perceived* as the lesser evil, will elicit less protest than would a Republican president for doing exactly the same thing. Examples are given in Ford 2012.

References

Beetham, David. 1983. *Marxists in the Face of Fascism*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Blum, William. 2003. *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Monroe ME: Common Courage Press.

Brenner, Leni. 1988. *The Lesser Evil [The Democratic Party]*. Secaucus NJ: Lyle Stuart.

Chomsky, Noam, and Edward Herman. 1979. *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*. Boston: South End Press.

Cockburn, Alexander, and Jeffrey St. Clair (eds.). 2004. *Dime's Worth of Difference: Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils*: Oakland: AK Press.

Courtois, Stéphane, et al. 1997. *Le livre noir du Communisme: Crimes, terreur, repression.* Paris: R. Laffont.

Curtin, Philip D. 1969. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Draper, Hal. 1978. *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution,* vol. II: *The Politics of Social Classes*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Dubiel, Helmut, and Gabriel Motzkin (eds.), *The Lesser Evil: Moral Approaches to Genocide Practices.* London: Routledge.

Ford, Glen. 2012. "Why Barack Obama is the More Effective Evil," *Black Agenda Report*, March 21, http://blackagendareport.com/content/why-barack-obama-more-effective-evil

Friel, Howard, and Richard Falk. 2004. *The Record of the Paper: How the* New York Times *Misreports US Foreign Policy*. London: Verso.

Ignatieff, Michael. 2004. *The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Le Blanc, Paul. 1993. *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party.* Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press.

Lukács, Georg. 1971. Interview. *New Left Review*, no. 68 (July/August).

Miller, Mark Crispin. 2007. *Fooled Again: The* Real *Case for Electoral Reform*. New York: Basic Books.

Nimtz, August H., Jr. 2000. *Marx and Engels: Their Contribution to the Democratic Breakthrough*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Parenti, Michael. 2002. *Democracy for the Few*, 7th ed. Boston: St. Martiné Press.

Pilger, John. 2016. "A World War has Begun: Break the Silence," *Counterpunch*, March 23, http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/23/a-world-war-has-begun-break-the-silence/

Perrault, Gilles. 1997. "Communisme, les falsifications d'un 'livre noir'," *Le Monde diplomatique* (December).

Rabinowitch, Alexander. 2004. *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Ray, Ellen, and William H. Schaap (eds.). 2003. *Covert Action: The Roots of Terrorism*. Melbourne: Ocean Press.

Stannard, David E. 1992. *American Holocaust: Columbus, Christianity, and the Conquest of the Americas*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Trotsky, Leon. 1971a. *Lenin: Notes for a Biographer*, trans. Tamara Deutscher. New York: Capricorn Books.

Trotsky, Leon. 1971b. "For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism" (8 Dec. 1931), in L. Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, New York: Pathfinder Press.

Wallis, Victor. 1990. "Marxism in the Age of Gorbachev," *Socialism and Democracy*, no. 11 (vol. 6, no. 2; September).

Wallis, Victor. 2006. "Socialism and Democracy during the First 20 Years of *Socialism and Democracy*," *Socialism and Democracy*, no. 40 (vol. 20, no. 1; March).

Wallis, Victor. 2015. "The Trump Phenomenon." *MRzine* [*Monthly Review*], November 25, http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2015/wallis251115.html