

Latin American candidates visit campus

Within a week's time in March, the three finalists in the search for a Latin American historian paid visits to Boston University, meeting department faculty and representatives of the administration and of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture (in which the appointee will hold a half-time research position) and delivering talks on their research.

The first candidate was Eric Zolov, who received his PhD in Latin American history from the University of Chicago in 1995. He is currently an assistant professor at Franklin & Marshall College; previously he held various visiting appointments at Georgetown University, the University of Puget Sound, the University of California at Davis, and the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City. Zolov is the author of *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (University of California Press, 1999) and co-editor of *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*. He spoke on "Miracle of Miracles?: Reexamining Mexico's Revolutionary Project from a Global Perspective, c. 1955-1975."

Second to visit was Jeffrey W. Rubin (PhD in political science from Harvard University in 1991), currently a visiting associate professor of Latin American Studies at Mt. Holyoke College. He held a previous appointment (1988-1996) at Amherst College and part-time

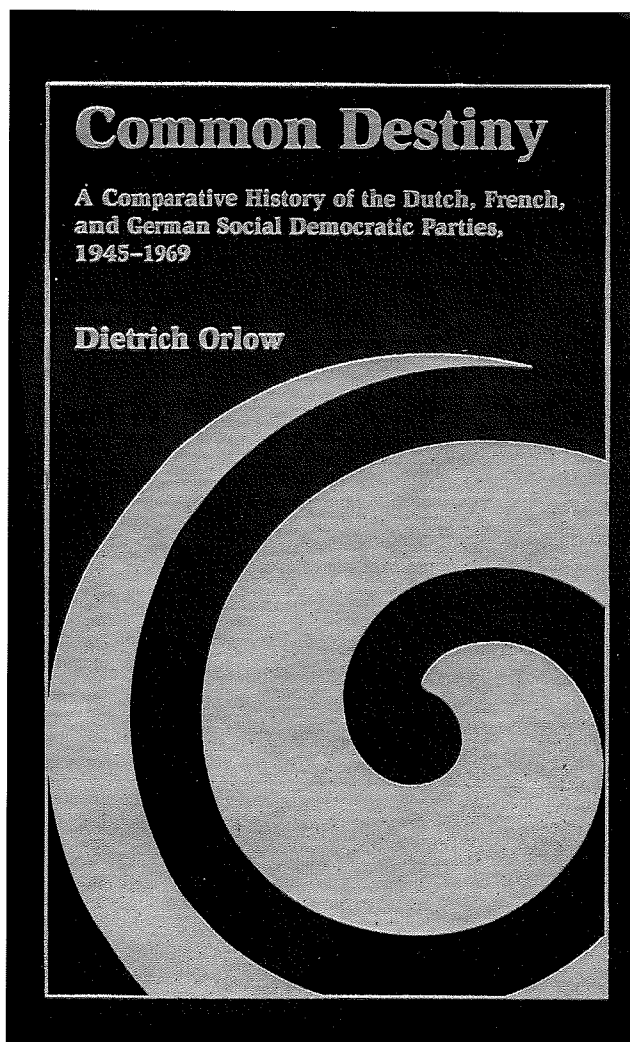
Dietrich Orlow's new book deals with comparative history of European Social Democratic parties

In March Berghahn Books published Professor Dietrich Orlow's newest work, *Common Destiny: A Comparative History of the Dutch, French, and German Social Democratic Parties, 1945-1969*. We are pleased to reprint parts of the introduction:

A few years ago the editors of *Die Zukunft*, a periodical published by the Austrian Social Democratic Party, invited Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, the former director of the London School of Economics and former warden of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, and the then Austrian chancellor Kurt Vranitzky to

discuss the future of European Social Democracy. As a sort of sweeping introduction to his analysis of the problems the Continent's Socialists would face in the future, Dahrendorf began with the good news: The twentieth century was the age of Social Democracy. The West European Social Democratic parties had succeeded in translating their ideas and programs into policies and legislation to a greater extent than their political rivals.

Until recently that conclusion was shared, in a rather self-congratulatory manner, by many contemporary social-



ists, who also offered a ready explanation for their political achievements. Typical was a comment which the present-day leader of the Dutch *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA), Wim Kok, made at a retrospective conference in the mid-1980s: "The success of West European Social Democracy...was primarily the success of choosing democracy, discussion, and compromise; it is based upon...concrete reform projects."

The optimism in the socialist ranks increasingly turned to pessimism in the 1990s. Until the triumph of the New Labour party in Great Britain and the Socialists in France lifted the self-confidence of Europe's left-wing parties, Europe's social democrats seemed to have reached political dead ends. Conservatives and neo-liberals on both sides of the Atlantic held them responsible for the failure of the welfare state and the chronic structural problems of the Continental European economies. Reaganism and Thatcherism were the new watchwords. Even the Social Democrats themselves seemed to have lost faith in their cause. Assessments like "deep-seated pessimism" and "ill adapted to their century" contrasted sharply with the earlier promulgations of decades of triumph.

Neither deterministic triumphalism nor blanket condemnation is warranted, of course, and the present work is an attempt to present a more reasoned analysis of the history of three West European social democratic parties, the Dutch PvdA, the French *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO), and the German *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD), for a pivotal period of their lives, the quarter century after the Second World War.

Wim Kok's contention that the social democrats readily chose the road to pragmatic reformism (a conclusion many scholars share) does little justice to what was in fact a difficult process of adjustment for West European social democracy in the post-1945 era. As this comparative analysis will show, the Social Democratic parties began their political life after the Second World War with visions of revolutionary euphoria, although twenty-five years later all

three had become reformist, pragmatic, broadly based catch-all parties. But their paths to reformism did not proceed smoothly along parallel lines. Each addressed the challenges of postwar politics in its own way, meeting a broad spectrum of needs with quite different responses.

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The three parties which are covered in this study were not chosen at random, although the choices may need a little explanation. First of all, they share a common ideological heritage: all three began their organizational life with programs based upon the classic tenets of Marxist dialectical materialism. Equally important, their postwar organizational and ideological problems were remarkably similar: all three needed to respond to the domestic and foreign policy challenges that accompanied Western Europe's transformation into a tertiary industrial society and the intensifying Cold War. The three parties were also unique because of the particularly intense contacts they had with each other. Both on the bilateral and multinational level the three parties felt a constant need to interact with each other, to explain their positions to the other two "sister parties," and to attempt—by no means always successfully—to arrive at common positions, particularly on "European" issues.

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The aim of this book is not to present a narrative history of the three parties, but to focus on providing a comparative analysis of their organizational life, leaders, and policies. To this end, the analysis begins with a thumbnail overview of the three parties' histories from their founding to the end of the Second World War. This is followed by a sketch of the major changes which Dutch, French, and German society underwent after the Second World War. The process was complicated, but the most salient development was the accelerating bourgeoisification of Western Europe (what Helmut Schelsky in a famous book described as the "levellied middle class society." For parties

that had based their political outlook on the permanent existence of antagonistic classes, this disappearance of their core constituency and its absorption into the bourgeoisified society undoubtedly confronted them with what was perhaps the greatest challenge in their history. It was very much a situation of "we have met the enemy, and he is us."

The realization that the new postwar Europe had little resemblance to the old lay well in the future when the war came to an end. For the moment all three parties saw the dawn of the era of socialism. It was a brief moment of euphoria, followed quickly by disillusionment, and, more slowly, by the acknowledgment that the parties would have to adapt to new forms of politics.

The three parties spent much of the first decade after the war attempting to reinvent themselves organizationally and ideologically. At the same time, their domestic and foreign policies had to take into account revitalized capitalism at home and the reality of the Cold War abroad. As we shall see, their efforts to meet these challenges had widely varying results.

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While the political fortunes of the three parties after 1945 were quite different, there was an undeniable constant as well. In 1969 the Dutch, French, and German social democratic parties bore little resemblance to their predecessors twenty-five years earlier. The last quarter century had brought profound organizational, ideological, and personnel changes. Analyzing these from a comparative perspective is the central aim of this book. ♦

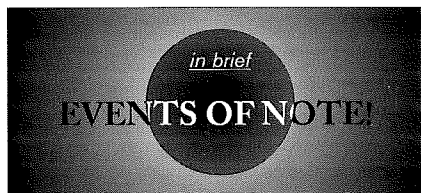
GRADUATE STUDENT MILESTONE

On March 3 Amy Kittelson passed her qualifying oral examination. Examiners in the field of American history were Professors Lori Kenschaft, Jill Lepore, and James Kloppenberg (of Harvard University); the examiner in the minor field of nineteenth-century European cultural and intellectual history was Professor James Johnson.

positions at the City University of New York Graduate Center, Rutgers University, and Yale University. Rubín is the author of *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism, and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico* (Duke University Press, 1997). His presentation was entitled "Democracy and Grassroots Innovation in Brazil and Mexico."

The third visitor was Patrick M. Barr-Melej, who earned a PhD in history from the University of California at Berkeley in 1998. He is the author of *Between Revolution and Reaction: Reformers and the Rise of the Middle Class in Chile* (forthcoming from the University of North Carolina Press in 2001). He has been a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley. His talk was on "Illiteracy, Illiberality, and Other Ills of the 'Raza': Socioeconomic Change and Reformist Cultural Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Chile."

Early in April both the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture and the department will make a recommendation for an appointment in Latin American history. ♦



Graduate student **Sarah Phillips** won the Edwards Award for the best article submitted to *Agricultural History* by a graduate student. Her essay, "Antebellum Agricultural Reform, Republican Ideology, and Sectional Tension," will appear in the October 2000 issue. She will travel to the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians to receive the award. She has also received a dissertation fellowship from the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs.

On February 15 noted Somali author **Naruddin Farah** visited Dr. **Konrad Tuchscherer's** class on modern African history to lecture on war and urbanization in Somalia. Afterwards the Afri-

can Studies Center held a lunch in Farah's honor.

On April 13 Professor **Joseph Boskin** will present a paper entitled "Burllesque's Urban 'Class' Act" to the Boston Immigration and Urban History Seminar at the Massachusetts Historical Society. On April 15 he will chair a session on "Folksongs as Windows on Social Disorder" at the spring conference of the New England Historical Association.

Professor Emeritus **Saul Englebourg** will present a paper entitled "Henry C. Wallich: A Third Generation Banker" in a session on "Banks, Bankers, and Regulation" at the annual meeting of the Economic and Business Historical Society in late April in San Diego.

Professor **Merle Goldman** published a review essay in the February 2000 issue of *The American Historical Review* entitled "Restarting Chinese History." She also testified in March before the U.S. Government Commission on International Religious Freedom on the persecution of unofficial religious groups in China and before the Senate Finance Committee on the issue of human rights and granting China Permanent Normal Trading Rights.

Department secretary **Al Sargis** had an article titled "Ideological Tendencies and Reform Policy in China's 'Primary Stage of Socialism'" published in the current issue of the journal *Nature, Society and Thought*. The issue also contains other papers presented at the "Projecting Marxism into Y2K" Conference at the University of Nevada-Reno in October 1999.

Professor **David Mayers** presented a paper, "Kennedy's Diplomats and the Cold War," at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association in Los Angeles March 14-17; he was also a discussant for a panel on "Diplomatic Negotiations." Additionally, he was a participant/discussant in a workshop sponsored by the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. The workshop was composed of Chinese and U.S. scholars and organized around the problem of Sino-American relations plus prospects for improvement.

In mid-February Professor **Clifford Backman** presented a paper entitled "Navies and the Maritime Tradition in the Crown of Aragon" at a conference on "Power and Domination: Europe and the Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" held at Arrabida, Portugal. Papers from the conference will be published in 2001. Backman is also scheduled to deliver the annual Michael Freedman Lecture at Roger Williams University (Bristol, R.I.) on May 10; the topic will be "Arnau de Vilanova and the End of the World: A Reprise."

In March Professor **Regina Blaszczyk** attended the annual meeting of the Business History Conference in Palo Alto, California, where she chaired a session on "Turning Families into Modern Consumers in the Post-war Era," with papers on the the U.S., France, and Japan.

Professor **Barbara Diefendorf** presented a paper on aristocratic patronage in seventeenth-century Parisian convents at the Renaissance and Reformation Workshop at Harvard in February and at a French Cultural Studies Seminar at Stanford in March.

Professor **Marilyn Halter** organized and chaired a conference held March 10-11 in Honolulu on "The Limits of American Citizenship: Local Culture, Hawaiian Identity, and Mainland Influences in Hawai'i," sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture. She also delivered a paper at the gathering, "Beyond the Continental USA: Local Culture and National Identity in Hawai'i and Puerto Rico." On the conference's first night there was a literary performance with song and dance created by the editors of *Oiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal* that revives the literary heritage of Hawai'i; performers read poetry and excerpts from plays, essays, and memoirs to musical accompaniment. The performance was taped by the local cable TV station to be broadcast over the next three months. The working conference on Saturday included presentation of six scholarly papers (under review for publication by the journal *American Studies*) and a "Living Ethnicity" panel

See *EVENTS OF NOTE*, page 7



The Computing Services Group in its office in CAS 107: (from left) Brian Anderson (specialist in software and training, operating systems, modems, and antivirus software), Erik Kraft (specialist in documentation, Apple computers, and scanners), Scott Cole (who is responsible for the overall management of the office and also coordinates the student employees and the CAS 330 lab), Larry Andrus (assistant manager, specializing in database and file conversion software and in backup services), and Joe DeVito (specializing in Dell computers, Microsoft Office, and Eudora). There are also 15 students employed in the office.

Computer Services Group provides assistance to computer users in the College

By the fall of 1998 it had become clear to the administration of the College of Arts and Sciences that the proliferation of personal computers in faculty and administrative offices within CAS would require that there be more support than was then available. The Personal Computer Support Center on Cummington Street had existed for a number of years, providing assistance (mostly by telephone) with networking and software issues; and some departments, primarily in the sciences, had their own computer consultants. But most units, including History, were on their own for other issues, such as problems with installing new computers or upgrading memory or making printers work.

It was in 1998 that Dean Dennis Berkey took steps to establish the Computing Services Group (CSG), bringing Scott Cole from the Office of Information Technology to be its manager (he holds a BS and an MS in computer science and has more than eight years of computer experience). The group uses a two-tier support model to enable a fairly small staff to assist hundreds of faculty and staff in the College: In each department one or more "computer specialists" are charged with funneling information from the department to the CSG (in the History Department, Jim Dutton is that person—there are some 26 of them in the College). If the "specialist" can solve a problem, so much the better, but if he or she cannot do so, the request for help is sent to the CSG via its Web site and so reaches the professional staff. (The CSG asks that the help requests be sent by way of the departmental specialist, not from individuals—often the problem can be solved without the submission of a request.) Within a few days of a submitted request—often sooner—someone from the CSG will call or pay a visit to try to solve the problem, and in almost all cases, the staff does find a solution, whether the issue stems from hardware or software, from a Macintosh or a PC, from the campus network or an individual computer. Of course the CSG cannot support every brand of computer and every piece of software, and so Scott Cole has set up "standards" for the purchase of hardware and software, for example, Apple iMacs or Dell PCs, Microsoft Word and Excel for word processing and spreadsheets, Eudora for e-mail. By establishing these standards, the group is able to increase the depth of its knowledge of the supported

item. Fortunately for those who choose to go outside the standards, the CSG will not refuse to try to help with other issues. During 1999 the CSG responded to more than 2600 computer problems submitted via its Web site (an average of 12½ tickets per day).

In addition to responding to problems already in progress, the CSG offers preventive care: Last year each departmental specialist was invited to submit a list of all hardware and software in use by faculty and staff, and the CSG staff evaluated each item for Y2K preparedness (the History Department used this support in its planning); the CSG also provided a list of Y2K help sites on the Web and sponsored a meeting with those in charge of BU's Y2K team. Recently the group offered to install or upgrade virus-protection software on every computer in the College (again, this offer was accepted by the department). Last summer CSG staff members conducted two weeklong workshops on computer issues—covering everything from the basics of how a computer works to more specialized topics. And there are ongoing brown-bag lunches for departmental specialists on topics of concern.

Some of the CSG services are little known: Each faculty and staff member, for example, can request an account on a server kept at 725 Commonwealth Avenue. The allocated space on the server,

which can be set up to appear as an icon on a user's desktop, can be utilized for a quick backup of crucial files, or various staff members can share information stored on the server. There is also a backup service: A user moves files to a particular folder on his computer and leaves the machine on overnight; the files are automatically backed up onto tape for safekeeping and can be retrieved if necessary. One of the most exciting new additions to the CSG services is the CAS 330 Computer Lab which is open to CAS students and staff for ordinary use and can also be reserved for lectures or presentations. The lab contains 14 Apple iMacs and 14 Dell Windows computers and has facilities for laser printing (both black and white and color) and color scanning.

There is also the computer equipment warehouse, in which the CSG stores Mac and PC hardware and software that is no longer in use and that may be redeployed elsewhere. Sometimes otherwise useless computers will hold memory or a floppy drive or a hard drive that is still useful. For example, recently a History Department computer quit recognizing its floppy drive. The CSG staff was able to bring over a drive from a computer in the warehouse to determine whether the problem lay in the drive or the motherboard.

There is no doubt that the Computing Services Group has made a notable improvement in the computing experience for faculty and staff in the College. ♦

NEWS

of the History Department at Boston University

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Editor: James T. Dutton, Department Administrator

Items of interest for publication and changes of address should be sent to the editor.

News of the search for a department chairman

As reported in the previous issue of the newsletter, Gordon Martell of the University of Northern British Columbia visited campus on March 14-15 to meet department members, representatives of the university administration, and graduate students. In his presentation on the use of power and diplomacy, he used the analogy of a child's attempts to negotiate a later bedtime to demonstrate that all of us—not just the nations of the world—engage in diplomacy in our lives.

A third candidate, Peter Coclanis, currently at the University of North Carolina, will visit in April; information will be available in the department office.

Update on fall courses

Since the printing of the class schedule for fall 2000, the following changes have been made:

CAS HI 309 ("Millenarian Expectations in Western History: Year 1 to 2000") will be taught by Professor Richard Landes on Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-11 a.m. The course covers the role of millenarian expectations (that is, belief in an imminent, radical transformation of the world) in the development of the modern West. Topics to be considered include apocalyptic expectations and millenarian groups, secularization of millenarian hopes, and the role of disappointed expectations in the emergence of modern industrial society.

CAS HI 386 ("Modern Latin America") has been canceled. In its place Professor Claudio Véliz will teach CAS HI 281 ("Introduction to Latin American History") Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-5 p.m. The TelReg call number for HI 281 is 840151.

CAS HI 409 ("Medieval Science and Technology") has been canceled.

CAS HI 480 ("The History of Racial Thought") is a new course in the approval process. To be taught by Professor Ronald Richardson, the course will study racial thinking and feeling in Europe and the United States since the fifteenth century. It deals with racial thinking in the context of Western encounters with non-European people and Jews and considers its relation to social, economic, cultural, and political trends. Those interested in the course must contact Prof. Richardson for permission to enroll.

Conference on Dual Citizenship and Identity

Professor Marilyn Halter has organized a conference sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture on "Dual Citizenship and Identity in the Global Context" to be held at Boston University on Saturday, May 6, in the Conference Auditorium at the George Sherman Union. The conference is open to the public, and those interested are encouraged to attend all or any part of the event (no pre-registration is required). Following are the principal events in the day's agenda:

■ 9 a.m. Keynote Address: Lawrence Fuchs, Mayer and Walter Jaffe Professor of American Civilization and Politics, Brandeis University.

■ 10 a.m. Session I: Overview—On the Meaning of Citizenship in the Modern Nation State
Papers: Jim Hollifield, Southern Methodist University; David Jacobson, Arizona State University. Comment: Nazli Kibria, Boston University.

■ 1 p.m. Session II: The Social and Cultural Aspects of Plural Citizenship
Papers: Katharyne Mitchell, University of Washington; David Hernández, University of Puerto Rico. Comment: Barry Levine, Florida International University.

■ 2:45 p.m. Session III: Comparative Legal Issues
Papers: Rey Koslowski, Rutgers University; Dietrich Thranhardt, Institut für Politikwissenschaft. Comment: Martin Heisler, University of Maryland.

■ 4:30 p.m., Plenary on Policy
Moderators: Marilyn Halter, Boston University; Thomas Berger, Johns Hopkins University.

Two department members win fellowships

In March Professor Thomas Glick learned from the Dibner Institute for the History of Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that he had been named a Dibner Institute Senior Fellow for the 2000-01 academic year. The fellowship includes a standard stipend of \$31,000 as well as an office at the institute and other amenities. Prof. Glick, who will be on sabbatical for the full year, will use the time to work on a project entitled "The Biology of Fritz Müller in the Context of the Reception of Darwinism in Nineteenth-Century Brazil."

Müller (1822-1897) was arguably one of the three or four most influential Darwinians of the nineteenth century. His famous book, *Für Darwin*, was not only an early defense of Darwin's theory—it was published in 1864—it was also the earliest exemplar of a sustained Darwinian research program. As such, its influence among biologists was enormous.

Müller's research was carried out wholly in Brazil, where he immigrated in 1852. His research was published mainly in German and, seemingly isolated from mainstream science during the latter part of his career in particular, he kept himself in the scientific mainstream by carrying out an extensive correspondence, with Darwin most significantly.

After Müller's death, his papers were removed to Germany by his nephew and biographer, Alfred, who used them to compose a biography and to publish a selection of letters. Subsequently, the entire collection was destroyed in a flood. The destruction of his papers, combined with the unfamiliarity of mainstream historians of science with Brazil, meant that Müller, important though he was, has been ignored as a subject of biographical inquiry ever since. The only way to proceed is by a laborious and patient search for data.

Glick's research will deal with

Müller in the context of the reception of Darwinism in Brazil, looking at his biology, particularly as revealed in his published writing and in his correspondence, especially that with Darwin.

The reciprocal relationship between Darwin and Müller is a large part of the story. Darwin pressed Müller into service as a member of his own communication network, one of whose tasks was to perform experiments or make specific observations on Darwin's behalf. Darwin interested Müller in barnacles, for example, with the result that Müller performed some interesting research on them. So Müller's research program developed reciprocally with Darwin's, through both direct and indirect agency.

Professor William Keylor will also be on sabbatical during the next academic year, having won a fellowship from the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation (\$7,000) as well as a research grant from the Earhart Foundation (\$20,000). The two will enable him to complete his research in American, French, and British archives in preparation for a book tentatively titled "The Legacy of Versailles: An Inquiry into the Long-Term Consequences of the Peace Settlement of 1919."

The leaders of 27 nations remained in Paris for six months in 1919 to devise a peace settlement that would not only redraw the map of Europe but also institutionalize a set of procedures for the conduct of international affairs in the postwar world. The most salient features of this radical new program included the commitment to establish a supranational system of collective security as a means of settling international disputes without recourse to war, to propagate the principles of political democracy across the globe, and to promote the free exchange of productive factors through a liberal capitalist international economic order.

These principles lay at the heart of the war aims of the American president, Woodrow Wilson, after the U.S. entered the war in 1917; when the statesmen who joined him in Paris sought to translate war aims into peace plans,

however, the original version of the Wilsonian project was substantially modified at the behest of America's European partners in the victorious coalition. But Wilsonianism did not die; it survived as an alternative to the post-war policy of disengagement from world affairs in the course of the inter-war period until it was revived by Franklin Roosevelt during the Second World War and embraced by his successor, Harry Truman. As in 1919, however, this neo-Wilsonian conception of world order again foundered, this time due to the staunch opposition of the Soviet Union. The disappearance of the Soviets as a superpower in the last decade of the century seemed to remove the last obstacle to the realization of the Wilsonian dream: a stable, peaceful international order anchored by a shared commitment to political democracy and market capitalism.

Keylor proposes to re-examine Wilson's original formulation of the principles, focusing on the aspects of the debate between the president and the allied leaders that shaped the definition of Wilsonianism as an ideology of international relations and moving on to a consideration of the features of this ideology that were incorporated into the foreign policies of subsequent presidents and the consequences apparent in our own day. ♦

The Boston University
Interdisciplinary Italian Studies Program

presents a lecture by

James H. Johnson

Associate Professor of History

Boston University

"The Mask of Venice"

Tuesday, April 11, 7:30 P.M.

CAS 313
725 Commonwealth Avenue

composed of leaders of various local ethnic populations, including the Portuguese, Puerto Rican, and Okinawan communities in Hawai'i. Prof. Halter reports, "In terms of interdisciplinarity, this was a paradigmatic American Studies event. Two of us actually teach in American Studies programs and I also represented the History Department; the rest came from departments of English, History of Consciousness, Women's Studies, Political Science, Hawaiian Studies, Social Work, Ethnic Studies, and European Languages. The timing of the event added to the relevance of the conference themes since just two weeks before we met, the Supreme Court overturned the state law allowing only Native Hawaiians to vote in Office of Hawaiian Affairs elections. While we were there, leaders of the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement were calling for acts of civil disobedience to protest the ruling and a new third political party was formed representing Native Hawaiian interests. Thus, questions of American citizenship, sovereignty, race, and ancestry (the elections were ruled unconstitutional on the basis of the 15th Amendment guaranteeing that voting rights cannot be denied on the basis of race) were very much in the air." ♦

A commentary on the history of American humor

BY CARLA LOVETT

Don't be confused, I don't have to write the commentary because I don't have a computer of my own, it's an assignment, but I'm at my girlfriend's computer because I don't have one of my own, computer that is.

Humor is first and foremost a means

to make people laugh, or cry, or emote in some form. When someone is hurting, feeling bad for themselves, they are in a very interesting state. I think Charlie Chaplin said it best when he said that, "Laughter is the tonic, the relief, the surcease for pain." I had to look up the word "surcease" before I fully understood the quote. It means to put an end to.

The paradox of comedy is its incongruity. Humor is found in the mediation of two opposing forces: order and chaos. Like any other art form, humor takes a lot of skill to find this mediation. Chaos and entropy is relevant to humor and comedy. I think of the Great American Joke as ordered chaos that transcends its structure.

Living in America is not an easy task. America is free to communicate to anyone, anywhere, at anytime. Throughout American history, humor has played a large role in the development of our union. Americans have experienced times of aggressiveness from the pursuit of the American dream to bouts of depression and war. The American Dream has mimicked comedy and the same is true of the vice versa. I would estimate that throughout history, more time has been spent in the pursuit of sexual gratification than in the pursuit of electricity, breaking the sound barrier or even splitting the atom.

The best model to employ for explaining this phenomenon is Sigmund Freud's concept of the conscious and unconscious. Making personal humor public. The problem is about boundaries as I've explained before. Many people don't like this people humor becoming public. Sexuality was not a product for public consumption. They [death, sex, and racial divisions] are issues that are not supposed to be openly discussed or put on display for public consumption. However, this regression seemed more of a silent transformation. Backing up to the basics allowed the nation to recover from its scare.

Racial jokes. I love them to death. As

This article was compiled from actual excerpts from papers written for Professor Joseph Boskin's famous course dealing with American humor, HI 380 ("American Popular Culture: Film and Humor"). The author, who is a student in the PhD program, was a grader for the course.

sit-coms such as "All in the Family" began to overplay racist jokes, voices of equality began to distort the humor position. Hispanic jokes pigeonhole them as being lazy, stupid, often illiterate, poor, etc. Despite all this, the Hispanic population is often looked down upon. Nowadays, there is no need for African Americans to go round-about with their humor. Black jokes slowly integrated themselves into black entertainers. The acting became a truth and a fiction that all or most could enjoy.

With a similarity in execution, a difference between comedic styles from country to another is distinguishable. These individuals of minorities worked their cultures into society through film as actors. Monty Python has a pension for the ridiculous, and many British pride themselves on their tolerance of 'eccentrics' as they term them. From the lip sinking of kung-fu masters in the past, to the comical defeats of Jackie Chan, the Asian people have proved to capture our attention on the big screen.

As minorities begin this isolated integration, a new force arrived, a come theme that related to more of America than before; work. And since most of the population was working class, they needed a subject to laugh at. The film [Modern Times] portrays the American worker in a comedic way since the Tramp keeps falling into ridiculous situations by being in the wrong place at the wrong time while chasing the American dream and finally walking off into the sunset with his love. One could argue that chasing a dream means leaving reality behind. However, one day you are awakened by the crash of reality on your feet.

The Simpsons, although cartoon characters, are probably the best example still on air of working class families. *Frasier* is the opposite of *The Simpsons*. Which brings me to *Animal House*. The boys of Delta chapter are wild, dumb, and obnoxious pigs. All they had to do was sing a song and throw tomatoes. In 1986's *Eddie Murphy RAW*, he pushes the envelope on fowl language about as much as George Carlin. It burst through the tensions of society like the mashed potatoes through Bluto's mouth. As said, with Groucho always

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donning a thick grease mustache and eyebrows while constantly smoking a cigar. When *Austin Powers* was welcomed by the public, no one dared call it stupid, it was already an American treasure.

I believe that the WWF is the most diverse comic troupe that I know of. Keep in mind that most of the following information on these wrestlers was actually taken off of the official WWF website. Irony in professional wrestling reminds me of a story my grandfather used to tell me over and over. In short, for awhile we ate, slept, and breathed irony. And it was ugly. It was a big ironic mess and people finally got sick of it.

Humor helps us ease into reality. Humor in a candidate's campaign has become so essential, since quick one-liners help win time on the air. We can observe that some tragedies are soon followed by jokes humoring the incident. During the Bush administration the media went crazy with criticisms of the President when he vomied over a Japanese ambassador at an international convention. They [politicians] are supposed to be grand figures, god-like, without frailties or infirmaries.

Photocopy machines provided mass transportation for boundary less jokes and a new form of unspoken humor. And while machines are ennobling, they cause vulgarity by their malfunctions, masticating on workers, shown by the example in *Modern Times* when the group of inventors come to the factory and introduce the feeding machine designed to improve on worker output and time efficiency. Jokes off the Internet are received as an output of our society as a whole. And the speed in which we receive them serves as a translator to liberating our indirect feelings about present situations, dilemmas, or catastrophes.

Geez, if this is any indication of how well the rest of the paper is going to go, I should probably start again and hope that maybe something better will happen. ♦

The Gaspar Bacon Lecture for 2000

Robert Dallek

Professor of History

will lecture on

**"The American Presidency:
Twentieth-Century Transformations"**

Wednesday, May 3

5:00 P.M.

The Castle, 225 Bay State Road

