

## NOTES ON GAVENTA: POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: QUIESCENCE AND REBELLION IN AN APPALACHIAN VALLEY

### I. The model taken from ... Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View

- 1<sup>st</sup> view: pluralists: power determined by who participates
- 2<sup>nd</sup> view: power works to limit the actions of the relatively powerless through a "mobilization of bias" preventing certain issues and actors from gaining access to the decision-making process
- 3<sup>rd</sup> view: power does not only limit action upon inequalities, but also *shapes conceptions of the powerless about the nature and extent of the inequalities themselves*
- Note that the 3<sup>rd</sup> view is simply a development of the Marxist and Frankfurt (etc) theory of ideology
- For Lukes and for his student Gaventa, all three dimensions of power work together.
- Gaventa structures his investigation of the Cumberland Gap on this model. I think he offers a basically Marxist or neo-Marxist view but tracks very carefully *how power is working* to produce apathy, a sense of "powerlessness," and consequently, the actual absence of counter-power (which *did* exist in similar populations nearby, who unionized extensively).

### II. This model as applied to the "Magic City of the South"

1. 1880s: Land Acquisition--\*=Internal colonization... by money (bc locals didn't know value of land)... or if not, by deceit and force→ownership of land/resources then becomes the basis of the distribution of wealth.. Company town... company owns land and minerals... comes to play a "parental role"
2. Company builds up massive infrastructure, physically patterning the region with railroads, various facilities
3. Development of social stratification (upon this physical base):
  - a. upper class: control capital: = absentee, London, U.S.-north ... occasional visits to extreme luxury facilities
  - b. supervisors and managers as local representatives of absentee owners
  - c. small entrepreneurs and merchants
  - d. lowest class: laborers, ditch-diggers, construction, miners... this population drawn from farms and hollows
4. Upper class takes control of the political apparatus
  - a. BOOM: 1889-1893 massive growth of production... in this period the interests of upper and lower class seems to be the same
  - b. but the boom doesn't last. Luckily for the upper class (strategically that is,) they take control of the political apparatus
  - c. 1888: act for company→right to purchase land: railroads, mines
  - d. political positions filled by company (2<sup>nd</sup> dimension of power: determination of who participates)
  - e. \*\*certain regulations come to be systematically ignored (determination of which issues *become* issues) ... there *were* regulations vs company store, health requirements, about ventilation in mines, checkweighman, wage guarantees... they simply are not enforced

- f. company integrates local elite into (mega-)elite
  - g. so now we have both economic and political hegemony
5. THE IDEOLOGICAL APPARATUS (3<sup>rd</sup> dimension of power: shaping of the consciousness of the [oppressed]) \*\*THIS CONSTITUTES ANOTHER DIMENSION OF INTERNAL COLONIZATION
- a. notion of a "common purpose" in growth... disguised less obvious inequalities
  - b. distro of idea: "benefits *attainable by all*, but *only hard work* will provide them"
  - c. a new way of life *justified as "PROGRESS"...* / "civilization"... and old culture not discussed.
  - d. PROCESS OF SHAPING (imposing choice as if it were freely selected)
    - 1. DISTORTION OF INFORMATION: industrial order introduced by *conspicuous consumption...* there's an exaggerated demonstration of benefits
    - Desires for goods instilled... but social/economic boundaries defining who gets luxuries... lower classes then replicate the upper class pattern in a lesser style
    - 2. GLORIFICATION OF NEW/DEGRADATION OF OLD
    - Old culture systematically derided: moonshine, wildness, ugly people, idle, shiftless, bad food; new culture praised: true social enjoyments, health, fine climate etc
    - 3. REPLACEMENT OF NAMES FR OLD W/NEW
    - Only mines keep Appalachian names, which produces a false sense of ownership in production
    - Everything else gets names from outside
    - 4. \*Company also controls government, church, school... ministers are encouraged to convert/civilize miners... school socializes youth away from their beginnings
    - PRODUCES CONSENSUS: felt consensus, shaped wants and values: now the population PRAISES THE COMPANY/TOWN
    - Though really it's the local elite who voice this praise loudest
    - Working class free of strikes though... only *unorganized conflict: horizontal, non-elite—non-elite violence (=expression of frustrations)*
6. COLLAPSE... consensus weakened, but not destroyed... (3<sup>rd</sup> dimension of power)... but—political control... remains... and by deceit /corruption ownership remains as well
- American Company ltd → American Company inc