OMNI

DISSENT USA NEWSLETTER #2, April 28, 2015.

http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/04/dissent-usa-newsletter-2.html

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

(#1 April 29, 2013).

My blog:
War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

OMNI's newsletters are much about dissent: ACLU, Bill of Rights, Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, Climate Change, Conscientious Objectors, Democracy, First Amendment, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Resistance, Social and Economic Rights, Voting, War Dissidents, etc., a large index in any country that claims to be democratic.

What’s at stake: The US is founded on the revolutionary idea of the freedom to dissent against established power. How well has the US encouraged and protected that freedom?
EMILY DICKINSON   #435

Much Madness is divinest Sense –

To a discerning Eye –

Much Sense – the starkest Madness –

‘Tis the Majority

In this, as All, prevail –

Assent – and you are sane –

Demur – you’re straightway dangerous –

And handled with a Chain –

Contents #2

Theory

Collins and Skover, On Dissent

USA
**Dissent:** “America” and “American,” as references to the USA and because they are inaccurate and project US power and empire, have caused immense harm for over 200 years throughout the world. --Dick

Ralph Young, *The History of an American Idea*

Ralph Young, Dissenting Texts

Ratner, *Hell No, Your Right to Dissent*

Hedges, Surveillance v. Dissent

*Ayers, Public Enemy*

Dissent USA Google Search April 28, 2015

**Global**

Wright, *Voices of Conscience*

**THEORY**
America values dissent. It tolerates, encourages, and protects it. But what is this thing we value? That is a question never asked. “Dissent” is treated as a known fact. For all that has been said about dissent – in books, articles, judicial opinions, and popular culture – it is remarkable that no one has devoted much, if any, ink to explaining what dissent is. No one has attempted to sketch its philosophical, linguistic, legal, or cultural meanings or usages. There is a need to develop some clarity about this phenomenon we call dissent, for not every difference of opinion, symbolic gesture, public activity in opposition to government policy, incitement to direct action, revolutionary effort, or political assassination need be tagged dissent. In essence, we have no conceptual yardstick. It is just that measure of meaning that On Dissent offers.

- No other book examines the meaning of the concept of dissent - what it is and what it is not, which are the key characteristics of dissent and which are not
- Explains the difference between the concept of dissent and the forms of dissent that are constitutionally protected
- Features the insightful and provocative commentary of twenty-three distinguished persons whom the authors interviewed
Ralph Young is Professor of History at Temple University. He is the author of *Dissent in America: The Voices That Shaped a Nation*, a compilation of primary documents of 400 years of American dissenters.

All books by Ralph Young

*Dissent: The History of an American Idea* examines the key role dissent has played in shaping the United States. It focuses on those who, from colonial days to the present, dissented against the ruling paradigm of their time: from the Puritan Anne Hutchinson and Native American chief Powhatan in the seventeenth century, to the Occupy and Tea Party movements in the twenty-first century. The emphasis is on the way Americans, celebrated figures and anonymous ordinary citizens, responded to what they saw as the injustices that prevented them from fully experiencing their vision of America.

At its founding the United States committed itself to lofty ideals. When the promise of those ideals was not fully realized by all Americans, many protested and demanded that the United States live up to its promise. Women fought for equal rights; abolitionists sought to destroy slavery; workers organized unions; Indians resisted white encroachment on their land; radicals angrily demanded an end to the dominance of the moneyed interests; civil rights protestors marched to end segregation; antiwar activists took to the streets to protest the nation’s wars; and reactionaries, conservatives, and traditionalists in each decade struggled to turn back the clock to a simpler, more secure time. Some dissenters are celebrated heroes of American history, while others are ordinary people: frequently overlooked, but whose stories show that change is often accomplished through grassroots activism.
The United States is a nation founded on the promise and power of dissent. In this stunningly comprehensive volume, Ralph Young shows us its history.

REVIEWS

• "A sweeping, panoramic narrative that is ambitious in nature, and broad and deep in scope. It provides an alternative history of the United States—indeed of 'America.' It is a history—not from the vantage point of the forgotten or the 'losers,' per se—but from dissenters: those who fought—valiantly, nobly, with great foresight and insight, and often against overwhelming, even impossible, odds and at great cost to themselves—in order to push, pull, shift, and shape the American world around them."

—Glenn Feldman, University of Alabama at Birmingham

• "A beautifully written and impressively comprehensive survey of the history of dissent in America."

—Thaddeus Russell, author of A Renegade History of the United States

• "Ralph Young takes us on a journey from the distant Puritan past to the cultural divisions of the contemporary age, showing that at every step along the way the nation's most powerful and productive force has been its rich tradition of dissent, the willingness of its citizens to cut against the grain of conformity to help build a fairer, more representative democracy. Marked by fast-paced and engaging prose, and filled with important insights and observations, Dissent may be the most important revisionist history of the nation since Howard Zinn's A People's History."

—David M. Wrobel, Merrick Chair in Western American History, University of Oklahoma

• "A wonderfully erudite and lucid introduction to another 'American dream' that inspired millions around the world. A wise and topical invitation to reappraise global image of American culture today, when we are facing renewed struggle for hearts and minds."

—Vladislav Zubok, London School of Economics and Politics

• "A broad-ranging, evenhanded view of a tradition honed into an art form in America: the use of dissent as 'a critique of governance'...Young has a knack for finding obscure but thoroughly revealing moments of history to illustrate his points; learning about Fries' Rebellion and the Quasi-War with France is worth the price of admission alone, though his narrative offers much more besides...Refreshingly
democratic—solid supplemental reading to the likes of Terkel and Alinsky, insistent on upholding the rights of political minorities even when they're wrong."

—Kirkus Reviews

- "Temple University historian Young (Dissent in America) delivers a doorstopper that few readers will ever want to misuse in such a manner; his clear and elegant style and a keen eye for good stories make it a page-turner...Young convincingly demonstrates that the history of the United States is inextricably linked to dissent and shows how 'protest is one of the consummate expressions of Americanness.'"

—STARRED Publishers Weekly

- "French historian Alexis de Tocqueville warned about 'the tyranny of the majority' in American democracy. This work deals with that important topic from colonial times to the present. Young brings experience and knowledge to this subject...This history will satisfy fans of Howard Zinn, Pete Seeger, and Allen Ginsberg."

—Library Journal


Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

Taking up Martin Luther King, Jr.'s definition of dissent-"the right to protest for right"-Temple University historian Young culls 400 years worth of texts that exercise that right with fire and flair. Anne Hutchinson, Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King Jr., Ani DiFranco and Cindy Sheehan all appear, alongside lesser-known figures like Native American Stung Serpent (writing in 1723) and Lucy Stone (who circulated her "Statement on Marriage" in 1855). Divided chronologically, the anthology collects essays, speeches, organizational statements, songs, posters, interviews, broadsides and texts in other media. Most
of those voices come from the left of the political spectrum, but Father Coughlin, The Michigan Militia and others are also here. Susan B. Anthony advises earnest dissenters to "avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences." For readers with something on their minds, 400 years of precedent may be just what they need to stimulate some questions of their own. B&W illustrations. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

From Booklist

“Dissent is central to American history,” writes historian, professor, terrorism expert, and novelist Young, and central, one might extrapolate, to the American spirit and democracy itself. Young originally constructed a comprehensive and scholarly two-volume collection of the writings, speeches, and manifestos of visionary and influential American dissenters. He now offers a concentrated version that is both more accessible and more dramatic in its chronological and inclusive coverage of a spectrum of resistance to injustice, from pre–Revolutionary War petitions to protests against the Iraq War. Name a world-altering social movement, and you will find fiery expressions of its impetus, beliefs, demands, and hopes, from the birth of the nation to religious freedom, free speech, abolition, environmental concerns, and the battles to protect the rights of Native Americans, African Americans, workers, women, and gays. Along with official documents and cries from the hearts of ordinary citizens, Young includes protest music (Woody Guthrie, Ani DiFranco, Mos Def), and profound and eloquent writings by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., Mario Salvo, and Gloria Steinem. --Donna Seaman -- See all Editorial Reviews
“It was a surreal moment,” said Bill Ayers of the experience of hearing his name first mentioned on live television during the 2008 primary election debate between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

When I met Ayers in person recently for an interview about his new book, “Public Enemy: Confessions of an American Dissident,” he seemed like anything but the
terrorist he is often cast as by right-wing media. The closest this white-haired, soft-spoken bespectacled man came to appearing radical was the pair of silver hoop earrings he sported. It was hard to imagine that once upon a time he was considered a dangerous fugitive and wanted by the federal government.

The nearly 70-year-old education theory professor was in his home surrounded by his students watching the television screen when the debate moderator, George Stephanopoulos, asked Obama about his relationship with the co-founder of the Weather Underground movement, a radical organization that sought to end the Vietnam War through acts of property destruction and civil disobedience.

Recalling how he felt when his name came up, Ayers told me, “It was a bizarre moment because I think my students all felt that they knew me quite well two minutes before this. Now they felt they didn’t know me at all. And I felt the same way. I kind of knew myself, but ...” he trailed off. “Damn! It was a strange moment!”

For Ayers that moment was indeed bizarre. And yet it was familiar because he had been in the spotlight so often before. Ayers’ life has been marked by various flashpoints, starting with his involvement in the Weather Underground in the ’60s, followed by a decade on the run from the law. Then, in 1980 in Chicago when he and his partner, Bernardine Dohrn, turned themselves in to federal authorities, they were once more thrust into public view. In 2001, when Ayers’ memoir of the Weather Underground years, “Fugitive Days,” was released, his New York book tour coincided with the Sept. 11 attacks, causing various commenters on the right to associate him with that terrorist act. And finally, his latest and perhaps most dramatic brush with notoriety came in 2008 when vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin accused Barack Obama of “palling around with terrorists” like Ayers.

Ayers told me, “The phenomenon of a national American presidential election is so beyond anything any of us has ever experienced that being a little sideshow in that story makes you a mega-story.” He mused, “I think the Weather Underground was never more dangerous, never more well known, never more threatening than during the 2008 campaign.”

Being a “mega-story” has come with a heavy price—Ayers told me matter-of-factly, “The threats came and came ... and they still come.” He even joked about how Sarah Palin would get her crowds riled up during the election campaign, chanting “kill him, kill him.” Ayers said, “I was never sure who they wanted to kill—me or the candidate. But probably both!” Right before our interview in Los Angeles, he was even confronted at O’Hare Airport in Chicago when a man apparently came up to him and quietly said right to his face, “Go back to Russia, you bastard.”

What provokes such vitriol? One of the right wing’s prevailing critiques of Ayers is that he is an “unrepentant terrorist.” Twelve years ago, Ayers detailed his years in the Weather Underground in his memoir. He explained to me that he certainly has
regrets: “This idea that there are no regrets is silly. [Journalist] Thomas Frank reviewed that book and said it reads like it’s one long regret. Nobody can live as long as I have without having regrets. Nobody did the right thing because we couldn’t end the Vietnam War and we didn’t end the war—it went on for seven more years.”

But then Ayers clarified that he remains proud of his motives, saying, “What I don’t have is regret for opposing that illegal, immoral, destructive, genocidal war with every fiber of my being. I can’t regret it. I crossed lines of legality, crossed lines maybe of common sense, but I can’t regret destroying property to try to stop the murder of 6,000 people a week. I just can’t regret it.”

The fact that his detractors fixate on his radical activism while ignoring the destructive legacy of the Vietnam War angers Ayers. He contextualized it: “I don’t think what we did was brilliant—I’m not advocating anything. But I will say that what we did was a mosquito bite compared to what the government was doing.”

Despite being labeled a “communist terrorist bomber” by the right wing, Ayers says he does not consider himself a radical. He told me, “I think on the 10 issues that I care most about, I’m in the majority in this country. A lot of radicals and revolutionaries feel that they’re a barricaded minority. I’ve never felt that way and I know part of that could be my own genetic makeup and my own delusional thinking. But I’ve always felt that I was in the majority!”

The decades of activism and experience that Ayers brings to the pages of his new book, “Public Enemy,” are a reality check on the nostalgia many of us have of the 1960s, even those of us who didn’t live through that decade. Ayers is wary of romanticizing the ’60s, saying, “I don’t believe there was any such thing as the ’60s. I think it’s a myth and a symbol and I think it’s not a particularly helpful myth in some ways because I think for young activists today they’re always reminded that nothing measures up to the ’60s. We had the ‘best demonstrations,’ the ‘best actions,’ the ‘best music,’ the ‘best sex,’ and I’m always reassuring young people that it’s all still good. ... We were as confused and delusional and wandering around as anybody ever is in life.”

Ayers has moved on from that time in his life even if the right wing hasn’t. While he is known primarily for his early radical anti-war activism, it is the years after 1980 in Chicago that he spent as a parent, educator and community activist that form the majority of his life’s work. And it is that part of his life he writes about in his new book.
Truthdig Op-Ed, NationofChange: The legal system has been grotesquely deformed in most cities to, in essence, shut public space to protesters, eradicating our right to free speech and peaceful assembly. The goal of the corporate state is to criminalize democratic, popular dissent before there is another popular eruption. The vast state surveillance system, detailed in Edward Snowden’s revelations to the British newspaper The Guardian, at the same time ensures that no action or protest can occur without the advanced knowledge of our internal security apparatus.
From United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in his 
when it comes to dissent about the public workings of government.

3. Amazon.com: Dissent in America, Concise Edition ...
   www.amazon.com/Dissent-America.../0205625894
   Amazon.com, Inc.
   Dissent in America, Concise Edition, +, Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict (Columbia Studies in Terrorism ... 

4. UCI Libraries - War Within: Dissent During Crisis in America
   www.lib.uci.edu/about/.../warwithin/
   University of California, Irvine
   The War Within: Dissent During Crisis in America. Freedom of speech, embodied in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, is a cornerstone of our ... 

5. Suppression of dissent - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suppression_of_dissent
   Wikipedia
   Suppression of dissent occurs when an individual or group which is more .... "ACLU Releases Report on Suppression of Dissent in a Post 9/11 America". 

6. Abrams v. United States - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrams_v._United_States
   Wikipedia
   Jump to Holmes's dissent - [edit]. In his dissent, Holmes wrote that although the defendant's pamphlet called for a cessation of weapons production, ... 

7. United States v. Virginia - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_v._Virginia
   Wikipedia
   Jump to Scalia dissent - [edit]. Justice Scalia's lone dissent argued that the standard applied by the majority was closer to a strict scrutiny standard than the ... 

8. History News Network | Dissent Is American
   historynewsnetwork.org/article/31632
   Jan 1, 2007 - He is the author of the recently published, Dissent in America(A.B.Longman). As a historian I cannot help but look at the events of the past five ...

1. **Voices of Conscience**
   www.voicesofconscience.com/

   **Voices of Conscience** By Col. (ret.) Ann Wright and Susan Dixon. Government insiders who spoke out against the Iraq War and why we never heard about it.

   **Authors' Bios**
   Authors' Bios · Reviews, Videos, Articles, and Interviews ...

   **Reviews, Videos, Articles, and ...**
   Reviews, Videos, Articles, and Interviews · Archives · News and ...

   **Press Materials**
   Press Materials. Press Release Announcing the January 2008 ...

   **Current Events**
   Tuesday, Sep 24, 2013. 6 p.m. - Reception at OMNI Peace ...

   **Foreword by Daniel Ellsberg**
   Foreword by Daniel Ellsberg. This is a book that should be leaked ...

   **Prologue by Ann Wright**
   Prologue, by Ann Wright. In December 2001, I volunteered ...

   **doc format**
   Dissent: Voices of Conscience. Colonel (Ret.) Ann Wright and ...

   **Table of Contents**
   Table of Contents. Foreword by Daniel Ellsberg
   Prologue by ...

   **Archives**

   **Resources**
   Archives · News and Updates · Resources · Koa Books ...

   More results from voicesofconscience.com »

2. **www.Voicesofconscience.com - Voices of Conscience**
   urlm.co/www.voicesofconscience.com

   In the United States, Voicesofconscience.com is ranked 1780649, with an estimated < 300 monthly visitors a month. Click to view other data about this site.

3. [PDF]
   Ann Wright to speak on **Voices of Conscience**
   www2.hawaii.edu/~mccpeace/AnnWright08.pdf

   Colonel (Ret.) Ann Wright. Will read from her new book, Dissent: Voices of Conscience, and will discuss her work with war resisters in the US and those seek-.
4. **Dissent: Voices of Conscience: Ann Wright, Susan Dixon ...**
   [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) › Books › History › Middle East › Iraq

The publication date of Dissent: *Voices of Conscience* is January 15, 2008. It was delayed due, in part, by the lengthy process of clearance by the Department of ... 

5. **Dissent- Voices of Conscience: Government Insiders Speak Out ...**
   [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ei6SmAEwEU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ei6SmAEwEU)

Dec 16, 2007 - Uploaded by John Perry


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**Contents: Dissent Newsletter #1  April 29, 2013**

*Emily Dickinson*

**Theory**

USA

Global

**THEORY**

Sunnstein, *Why Societies Need Dissent*

**USA**

Majid, Why Resistance, Questioning, Dissent Important: USA and Islam
Boyle, Legally Defending Resisters, Protesters

Hutto Book, Resisters Within Military

Film by D’Ambrosio, “Let Fury”

Amy Goodman

Occupy Wall Street Film

GLOBAL

Lowensetein, et al., eds., Voices of Protest

Monbiot, UK: EDF Suing Protesters

END DISSENT NEWSLETTER #2

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Dick Bennett

Newsletters