ONE

The Production of History

On February 18–19, 1985, a group of historians and anthropologists gathered at Johns Hopkins to explore recent directions in anthropology and history. At a lunch break during this workshop, I found myself sitting over Szechuan food with Rhys Isaac, Alf Lüdtke, Hans Medick, and Gerald Sider discussing such issues as those Kundera raised concerning memory and forgetting. As we moved from our soup to main course, Hans, speaking for Alf and Rhys, opened a practical discussion. They were proposing, Hans noted, that the planning for the next Roundtable in Anthropology and History should shift to the United States from Germany and France, where the four previous roundtables had been organized,[1] and that Jerry Sider and I should assume responsibility for planning the next (fifth) roundtable.

The discussion shifted quickly to more difficult ground. Over the pre-

1. The first roundtable was organized in 1978 on "work processes." It was held at the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte in Göttingen, Germany, with international participation which included Robert Berdahl, Eric Hobsbawm, and Edward P. Thompson. This first roundtable was sponsored jointly by the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and the Max-Planck-Institut and led to the publication of *Klassen und Kultur. Sozialanthropologische Perspektiven in der Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt, 1982), edited by Robert Berdahl et al.

The second roundtable, convened in Paris in 1980 under the sponsorship of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, dealt with the "material and emotional aspects of family," and sought to challenge the drift of work in kinship studies and family history in anthropology and history, respectively. A call-for-papers was published by Hans Medick and David Sabean in *Peasant Studies* 8 (1979). Fifteen papers prepared by scholars from the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, presenting case studies from different parts of the world, were published by Cambridge University Press in 1984 in *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*, edited by Hans Medick and David Sabean.

The third and fourth roundtables were concerned with the issue of "Domination/Herrschaft" in historical and anthropological studies. The third roundtable, convened at Bad Homburg in 1982 under the sponsorship of the Werner-Reimers-Stiftung, with assistance from the Max-Planck-Institut and the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, was conceived as a "pre-conference" or planning workshop for the fourth roundtable. The fourth roundtable, also convened at Bad Homburg, October 1983, through the generous hosting of the Reimers-Stiftung, brought together historians and anthropologists from the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Sweden, and Denmark. Eighteen papers on "Domination/Herrschaft as Social Practice" were tabled at the meeting. A number of these, in revised form, plus additional contributions, have been published in Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis: Historische und sozial-anthropologische Studien* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

Papers from the fifth and sixth roundtables, on "the production of history," are now being edited for publication by Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith.

From: David William Cohen The Combing of History (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

ceding months at the Max-Planck-Institut in Göttingen, Rhys, Alf, and Hans had exchanged ideas about the topics that future roundtables might pursue. There in Baltimore, they proposed that the roundtable group next look at "histories and historiographies." They expressed interest in my own work in rethinking the approach to history, knowledge, and memory in Africa; the paper I had just presented to the Hopkins workshop, "The Undefining of Oral Tradition,"[2] sought to free the discussion of oral materials from the excessively formalist epistemologies that marked and deformed the study of the precolonial past of Africa. They also saw an opportunity to examine new work and debates in central Europe concerning the memory and commemoration of the Fascist period and the Holocaust.

I did not find this an easy or attractive proposal. I raised questions concerning the shift in direction of the roundtables from earlier attentions to work, class, and domination. I did not feel inclined to enter anew the literatures on historiography: the theory of history, the philosophy of history, the varieties of history, historical imagination, the history of historical writing; these were and are thematic fields that I think of when I hear the word "historiography." To me at the time, and still today, the realm of historiography so construed is reserved for an arena of *scholarly* practice on the reconstruction of the past. As a field of *scholarly* activity, "historiography" privileges the written document and the learned and scholarly literatures on the past developing over the centuries. It omits, I asserted over lunch, the practices of history outside the academy.

We went back and forth, and I filled a placemat with notes and questions. Rhys spoke to an interest in "the practices of history, or historians, in handling data" and the "metaphorical structures" that find their way into historical prose. Alf spoke to the possible value of examining "different tempos of historicity" in different cultural and temporal settings and was interested in "the fate of expert knowledge." Jerry raised the issue of how "languages of power invade the discourses of professional historians."

Then Hans briefly drew out a contribution that Professor Herbert Gutman had made at the Second Roundtable in Anthropology and History, Family and Kinship: Material Interest and Emotion. Herb, Hans recalled, told the roundtable group of a woman who had in her youth experienced a dreadful and deforming injury in the workplace but had

2. Published in substantially the same form as "The Undefining of Oral Tradition," *Ethnohistory* 36, 1 (1989): 9–18; and, in longer form, as the introduction to David William Cohen, *Towards a Reconstructed Past: Historical Texts from Busoga, Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1986), 1–20.

said not a word to her own daughter about her experience. The daughter had for years combed her mother's hair, carefully covering a scar on her head, but never learning the history that lay beneath the scar. For Hans, Herb was situating this story to remark on the complexity of the subject of memory and class consciousness: how does class consciousness evolve if the traumatic experiences of class are suppressed even within the households of those who directly experience them? Hans spoke of the practices of repression that mark and constrain history, including the "collective forgetting" of the Holocaust in central Europe.

I myself recalled Herb Gutman telling this story of the daughter combing her mother's hair across the scar that inscribed the history of work upon her scalp, but over lunch that February I asserted that I had heard the story differently, in the context of Gutman's presentation a few years earlier to the Atlantic Seminar at Hopkins, as a piece of his work in draft on the African-American family in the American past. A brief debate ensued with Alf Lüdtke expressing certainty that the context was a white working-class family in the North.

The lunch closed with a promise from Jerry and me that we would juggle with the proposal to develop a program for the Fifth Roundtable on "the experience, practice, production of history,"[3] and Hans promised to send me the protocols of the Second Roundtable which would, among other things, provide an opportunity to review the record of Gutman's intervention.

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Between February and September 1985, I cleared away other work and puzzled over the subject of "history and historiographies." I talked to friends and colleagues, searched out essays, reviews, papers, and books and articles that sounded relevant and that I had never taken up. Among many individuals who offered suggestions, I remember well Nancy Struever directing me into some of the recent work of Hayden White and, playfully, into the novels of David Lodge.

In September 1985, I circulated a brief essay, "Discussion: The Production of History," to members of the roundtable and to colleagues and friends. This was intended as the beginning of a theoretical piece, a position paper, to serve as a call for papers for the next roundtable. It opened with some general remarks:

3. Citing notes I jotted down on the placemat.

> Work by historians and anthropologists has demonstrated the power of the processing of the past in societies and in historical settings all over the world. One might argue that in the cumulus of this work, historians and anthropologists have transcended the academic patter of what each discipline has done for, or taken from, the other. Historically minded anthropologists and anthropologically minded historians have, in one sense, shifted ground enormously. They have moved, or at least suggest now the potential of moving, from being audience to one another to being audience to the lively, critical telling, writing and using of history in settings and times outside the control of the crafts and guilds of historical disciplines. Historians and anthropologists together and separately are now comprehending what those outside the guild have long understood—or at least acted upon—that the control of voices on the past has been critical and remains critical in all sorts of settings. This processing of the past in societies and historical settings all over the world, and the struggles for control of voices and texts in innumerable settings which often animate the processing of the past, this we term the *production of history.*
>
> A question central for historians, anthropologists, and others becomes "what is the fate of expert knowledge of the past as members of the crafts or guilds of the historical disciplines recognize, or are forced to recognize, the immense power created as people popularly process the past outside the work of the guild?"

After referring more directly to the production of popular texts on the past outside Europe in the twentieth century,[4] and then drawing out a loose and rather general agenda, the piece closed with some further reflection:

> The recognition of this [popular] work frees the student of other societies and other pasts from narrow understandings about the nature of history, historical evidence, historical writing, and what should constitute history. One is presented with a far more spacious and challenging view of history—of the telling of the past—in which it is recognized that there are *multiple locations of historical knowledge.*
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> One is challenged to stretch comprehension to encompass clearly broad, yet sometimes largely unmapped, reservoirs of historical knowledge. Recognizing the spacious and uncharted reservoirs of historical knowledge in present and past societies, we can begin to think more clearly about the forms and directions of *historical knowledge* (which one of us has termed an "endlessly, constantly being woven tapestry of innumerably variegated patterns").[5] One can seek to recognize the play of central metaphors and paradigms, the process of literacy and the shapes of literary genres within the styles and levels of rhetoric, the locations and meanings of silences, the powers of hidden structures, and the forces and patterns of suppression.
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> In a still tentative way, we refer to these processes as the *production of history.* We mean this to encompass conventions and paradigms in the formation of historical knowledge and historical texts, the patterns and forces underlying interpretation, the contentions and struggles which evoke and produce texts, or particular glosses of tests along with sometimes powerfully nuanced vocabularies, as well as the structuring of frames of record-keeping.[6]

4. "Within our agenda there is the recognition that in land after land beyond Europe there has been produced in this century a terrific tide of popular historical literature, produced locally, often in non-Western languages, by individuals and collectivities believing their past, and their histories which tell those pasts, have authority, significance, and meaning."

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On the day that the preliminary position paper was circulated to several of the prospective participants in the fifth roundtable, I received in the mail a copy of a portion of the protocol of the Second Roundtable on Family and Kinship: Material Interest and Emotion.[7] It contained a report of Gutman's now much remarked Paris intervention. According to Herb, following here the skeletal presentation in the text of the protocol, a young woman, a young girl perhaps, had literally been scalped in an industrial accident in a textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, shortly after she was employed at the mill. Soon after her accident—early in 1912—the mill where the girl was injured was shut down by a citywide strike of 20,000 workers. During the strike, which concerned both wages

5. Personal communication from Rhys Isaac.

6. In early October 1985, Gerald Sider circulated a parallel discussion piece, centering on "two stories," one concerning the contradictions involved in Native American efforts, through history, to gain federal recognition and registration. In his piece Jerry asked, "How do a people come to understand their own history, and how do such understandings participate in shaping social action? . . . What sorts of relations exist between variant forms of 'guild' histories and different kinds of ethnohistories—e.g., distant/intimate; antagonistic/collusive; borrowing/denying; etc.? . . . the concept 'the production of history' has a double meaning: how understandings of history are created and shaped, and how history itself is made."

7. Convened in Paris in June 1980; many of the papers appeared in a volume edited by Hans Medick and David Sabean, *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

and working conditions for the largely immigrant labor force, the girl went before a congressional committee in Washington and gave evidence on the working conditions in the mills, and how she had herself been hired by the mill while below the minimum age.

Continuing, Herb recounted how, some sixty or so years later, a New York reporter went to Lawrence collecting information about electoral politics. While there he learned about the strike of 1912 and about the testimony of the young girl before Congress. He discovered that the girl had married and had a family and that her children were still living in the Lawrence area. He found a daughter and arranged for an interview. What the reporter learned, according to Herb's account, was that the woman, the daughter of the young worker who had courageously gone before Congress, knew nothing of the strike or of her mother's testimony before Congress. To the reporter, the daughter recalled that for years and years she had combed her mother's hair and saw the scar or bald spot on her head; indeed, she combed the hair to cover the scar. It had become, from the daughter's perspective, an everyday ritual, an important moment with her mother in which they could talk about many intimate things. But the mother never once told her daughter of the cause of the injury, of the strike, of her testimony before Congress.[8] It was only through a series of coincidences that sixty-five years later the daughter was to learn—from a reporter from New York City—of her mother's early labor movement activities and of her mother's accident at the mill.

For those who recalled the 1980 roundtable in Paris, Gutman's account was a story powerfully told, deftly placed upon the table to raise in a striking way the question of the fate of worker consciousness. According to the protocol, Herb's discussion began with the observation that there is a mystification about the role of the family in industrial society, that in fact we need to understand what passed between generations as history, even within single families. The story of two women, mother and daughter, was a story of the repressive mechanisms which destroy historical memory. The suppression of history is, in a sense, commented Herb, the suppression of experience, the suppression of dissent and resistance. How does class consciousness evolve, asked Herb rhetorically, if the experience of class action is suppressed even within the household of the participants? And how does such suppression, and the consequent distortion of class consciousness, occur? Should we recognize that history and memory are as much about repression and suppression as they are about creation and recollection?

8. Of course, as I was looking over these notes once again in 1991 and 1992, the question arose as to whether Anita Hill was offering up her recent testimony before Congress in the same room as this young girl—whose name was Camella Teoli. Where the structure of Anita Hill's testimony built upon a *silence broken*, the testimony of Camella Teoli was, as we shall see below, substantially effaced by a *silence constructed*.

While those present recognized that Herb's story, offered extemporaneously, came to the table second or third hand, the story—as participants later related—hung over the group as if the roundtable participants had themselves witnessed an intensely powerful experience.[9] Herb's narrative was taken down into the minutes of the second roundtable; as a text, as intervention, it surfaced again at the third roundtable; and again at the fourth, Herrschaft: Domination as Social Practice;[10] and then again at the planning meeting in Baltimore in February 1985. The story, the experience of hearing it told, in 1980, formed a central piece in the thinking of all those involved in the planning of the fifth and sixth roundtables.

The power of Gutman's intervention only increased when word of his death on July 21, 1985, circulated among a far-flung planning group, and, for some in late 1985, Herb seemed in 1980 to have constructed out of this story an interpretative and critical space for considering the extraordinary moment, five years later and just two months before his death, when a furious debate broke out around the plans for President Ronald Reagan to visit the German military cemetery at Bitburg.[11]

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Late in August 1985, just a few weeks after Herb Gutman's death, and several years after his presentation of the story at the second roundtable,

9. I participated in the fourth, fifth, and sixth meetings. At these sessions, and in several planning meetings I observed the way in which stories well told could frame a significant segment of the discussions, supplanting abstract and theoretical discussion with exemplary and well-grounded narratives. Greg Dening, Karen Hausen, Utz Jeggle, Pete Linebaugh, Vanessa Maher, Sidney Mintz, Renato Rosaldo, Peter Schneider, Regina Schulte, Gerald Sider, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot were among the participants at roundtable meetings at which I was present who told such stories, and entered them quite brilliantly into the discussions. Was this cohort—over a series of meetings across much of the 1980s—collectively, yet without an organized program, constituting narrative as theoretical intervention?

10. Papers from the fourth roundtable have appeared in Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

11. On Sunday, May 8, 1985. In attempting to explain away the embarrassment of having asserted that the German soldiers, including SS members, buried at Bitburg and those killed by the Nazi machine and buried at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp were together "victims," the president noted that "the German people have very few alive that remember even the war, and certainly none that were adults and participating in any way." For a

a small memorial service was organized in Göttingen. Pete Linebaugh commented at the service that "Herb must have gotten the story from the *Village Voice*." Later, Pete sent a photocopy of the story, by Paul Cowan, "A City Comes Alive: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1980," *Village Voice*, July 9–15, 1980, to Hans Medick, one of the organizers of the fifth and sixth roundtables, and so Cowan's 1980 article circulated among the other organizers.

What Pete Linebaugh did not recognize was that the Cowan piece was published four weeks after Herb Gutman presented his account of the Lawrence story at the Paris roundtable. In situating his 1980 Paris intervention around the account of a New York reporter, Herb was recalling the earlier Cowan article published in the *Village Voice*, April 2, 1979, entitled "Whose America Is This?" He had perhaps also seen the galleys, or published book, *Lawrence, 1912: The Bread and Roses Strike*,[12] which had an introduction by Paul Cowan. Clearly, Herb knew far more about Cowan's research on the story than his skeletal, yet moving, account to the roundtable suggested. Indeed, in 1980, he published a brief discussion of Cowan's reportage in an introduction to *Working Lives: The "Southern Exposure" History of Labor in the South*.[13] And Herb may have heard about Cowan's research in Lawrence as early as 1976 or 1977, perhaps through chats with Moe Foner of District 1199's Bread and Roses Project or from David Schneiderman of the *Village Voice*. Steve Brier of the American Labor History Project at the City University of New York recalls that he and Herb had used the Cowan research in a summer labor education seminar in the late 1970s.[14]

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Cowan's 1980 article is a thick presentation of the story Herb told to the roundtable. And it is also an eloquent presentation of his own discovery of Lawrence and of the "climate of economic and psychological repression in Lawrence which made it an act of courage simply to remember." In the 1980 piece, Cowan traces his own (from a reading of the article, at least three) visits to Lawrence:

(i) The first, in 1976, in which he was researching an "article about the legacy of the events of 1912." This is when he found and met Josephine Catalano, whose mother, Camella Teoli, had "lost her scalp in the mill" and had testified before the U.S. Congress, and this was when Josephine, or Josie, discovered her mother's role in the strike 64 years earlier and also discovered the source of the scar on her mother's head.

(ii) In 1979, when he returned to do some more research in conjunction with an introduction that he had been asked to write for the *Lawrence, 1912* book. During this visit Cowan was witness to what he describes in his 1980 article as a sudden awakening of consciousness about the 1912 strike throughout the city of Lawrence.

(iii) In the spring of 1980, when he was in Lawrence for Bread and Roses Day, a celebration of the city's "labor and ethnic past that it [the city] had buried for more than fifty years." On this day, Camella Teoli's testimony before Congress was reenacted by a twelve-year-old girl from Lawrence and a path in the Lawrence commons was named Camella Teoli Walkway.

In his 1980 article, Paul Cowan provides some precious insight into the nature of suppression of the knowledge of the past following the "settlement" of the 1912 strike and then through to the mid-1970s, including both larger and smaller dimensions of the process of suppression in Lawrence. "Nationally, the [mill] owners began to lobby for restrictive immigrant legislation, and, locally, they sought to make participation in the strike seem like a stigma rather than a badge of honor." In October 1912, Father James O'Reilly organized a mass demonstration against "radical and atheistic protest." Fifty thousand people, including those who had earlier struck the mill, demonstrated "For God, For Country." By the end of the year, reports Cowan,

> most of the strike organizers and most of the journalists had left town. Local people, abandoned by the outsiders, were forced to choose between the IWW [the International Workers of the World] and God, between being regarded as patriots or as un-Americans. And suddenly, the insurgents, not the conditions in the mills, were the main issue in Lawrence.

Camella's daughter Josie told Cowan that as a child "she had heard a few hints about her mother's role" in the strike but that every time Josie's grandmother brought up the subject of the strike or

> would mention a trip to the "big house" in Washington . . . Camella would silence her mother with a curt nod of the head. So Josephine knew nothing at all about the sensational impact her moth-

reading of the debate that developed over the months after the Bitburg debacle, see chap. 3.

12. William Cahn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1980).

13. Edited by Mark S. Miller (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

14. Personal communication, December 1985.

> er's words had made on America's consciousness [through the news of her testimony before Congress].

And yet, "Almost every morning Josephine had combed Camella's hair into a bun, to disguise the spot . . . a six inch bald spot on the back of her head."

There was also the story of Camella's father, who had been arrested after the accident for forging the papers that got her into the mill when she was still under age. And "though he was released immediately he didn't like to discuss the incident." There was also the story of Camella's son, Frankie Palumbo. Frankie recalled for Cowan that he too had worked in the mills, along with his mother, and he remembered that the mill supervisors had "always treated her badly." Frankie remembers his mother as

> an obedient, uncomplaining woman . . . her bosses often reprimanded her. Instead of promoting her to a job where she'd receive an hourly wage, they kept her on piecework until she retired. They'd give her "bad work" for days at a time . . . weak bolts of fabric that sometimes fell apart after they'd run through the machine. Every fifteen minutes or so, she'd have to stand up and retie the fabric. At the end of the day, when workers weighed in with their pieces, her bundle was often lighter than the others: as a result, she earned less. Everyone knew that "bad work" was a form of punishment.

But until Paul Cowan visited him in 1976, Frankie Palumbo too did not know why his mother was punished with "bad work." "My mother didn't talk about her past because she thought it might get all of us in trouble," Cowan quoted Frankie.

> We were afraid to speak our minds in the mills. Our parents worked there, our aunts worked in there, our cousins worked there. They'd fire all the relatives if anyone spoke out. Sometimes they even threatened to fire all the Italians and replace us with Poles or with Syrians. So we didn't want them to think we were agitators.

Frankie himself had experienced such punishment. Cowan noted that

> some days the bun that Josephine had combed in the morning would fall apart, exposing Camella's scar. Frankie, who oiled machines, would have to leave his workplace to fix his mother's hair. The supervisors regarded that act of filial loyalty as a form of insubordination. As punishment, they'd send him to another part of the mill to work.

A feature of the suppressive process—larger than irony—was that Frankie could not know that in risking his situation in the mill to cover his mother's scar he was suppressing one small piece of the articulation of the history of the strike in the mill workplace.

Cowan himself commented that

> The act of going to Washington must have been the most exciting in Camella Teoli's life. But the mother her children knew, Camella Teoli Palumbo, was just a mill hand with an odd bald spot, a sweet silent lady who bought and cooked the traditional eels on Christmas Eve, who rarely missed a Sunday Mass. She concealed her past to protect her young from reprisals—to help them achieve the kind of upward mobility in America that the 1912 strike, a victorious mass action, had helped make possible.

Cowan produced other illustrations of the processes of constricting and suppressing the memory of the past in Lawrence. Josie, in 1976, spoke of the meaning for her of discovering her mother's history, but did not want her name used in the story.[15] And only in 1979 or 1980 did a few of Cowan's informants in Lawrence allow him to use their real names. Most wanted to preserve their anonymity as they presented their stories of their experience of the strike six and a half decades earlier. One man told how his father had gone underground to avoid being deported and the "son still feared [in 1976] that if he was publicly associated with the strike his business would be boycotted." Another man was afraid that he would be fired from his city hall job, even in 1976. "You have to understand," he told Cowan, "I'm a very popular kid around town. I don't want to go around giving away the city's secrets." Another thought Cowan might be an FBI agent.

There were both general and intimate forces of suppression which removed the strike of 1912 from public discussion and from the discourse between generations within families in Lawrence. One recognizes immediately the central place of conflict in the production of historical knowledge, and the hegemony of those who controlled the Lawrence mills. One can also see that the suppression is not made actual by edict alone. The people of Lawrence—the mill workers, those who struck, even one who bravely spoke before Congress about the exploita-

15. In Cowan's 1979 *Village Voice* story, Josie was referred to as Mathilda.

tion of the mill system—organized, and carried the burden of, the suppression of their past.

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In a study completed in 1981, the anthropologist Eva Hauser has taken up a similar problem of suppression of memory in an immigrant community in a different New England mill town.[16]

> During the field investigation . . . it became apparent that these militant ex-peasants from Galicia did, in fact, participate in the labor movement of the 1930s, but that the traces of their past involved with the labor struggle have been carefully concealed . . . instead of [asking] *why*, I asked my data *how* the militant past was concealed. I ask *how* this group concealed certain militant working-class features of its past in order to try to understand *why* this was so.[17]

What Hauser's research revealed was that in this setting "the ethnic story consciously conceals class conflict and any evidence of past class struggles."[18] And, "Ethnicity seems to function as part of the repertory of avoidance strategies though earlier it had nurtured class solidarity."[19] She notes that "In my analysis of the oral histories and direct communication with members of the group about their past the traces of the pattern of concealment emerge, sometimes in the content, sometimes in the distortion, and sometimes in the anxious laughter or rapid speech of the informant."[20] One is given a sense that, as in Lawrence, the mute character of "public memory" involves an active process of production and suppression of history of participation in the labor struggles and strikes.[21]

The social historian Ardis Cameron, who has worked on the events

16. "Ethnicity and Class Consciousness in a Polish American Community" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1981).

17. Ibid., 3.

18. Ibid., 340.

19. Ibid., 333.

20. Ibid., 341.

21. In a personal communication Richard Rathbone has pointed out, among his numerous helpful responses to a draft of "The Production of History" position paper, the case of the "arriviste" ethnicity of the "new Welsh" who have returned to Wales, and to Welsh tradition, from, for example, London. He notes that "Command of the language and bristling indignation [concerning Welsh tradition and Welsh rights] are the passports to careers in the Welsh media, the civil service, and so forth. The honed memories, the stories of stories, are part of a qualification as pertinent as muscle in a labourer or math in a programmer." Rathbone sees an active and creative production of history, and

in Lawrence of 1912 and especially their prelude, as opposed to the suppression of memory of the Lawrence strike, has brought attention to the "varied and at times radicalized forms of women's consciousness formed below the surface of official scrutiny, in the convoluted yet ordinary web of female daily life" in Lawrence. Cameron takes this formation as the prime basis of the militancy and class consciousness which in 1912 shook the manufacturing system in Lawrence.[22]

The immense significance of the terrains of intimate association of Camella and daughter Josie are underlined. Intimate and social domains become one. The reader of Cowan's articles might imagine—even if one has not been told—that each time that Josie combed her mother's hair, Camella confronted her own historical memory privately, actively, consciously, while closing off her daughter from inquiry into the events of her working and insurgent childhood. In a comment on a draft of the roundtable position paper, Ruth Behar remarked, in respect to the story of Camella Teoli and her daughter, "You can't draw a line between the personal and social domains in this case; it is as if the two domains become translations of each other."[23]

One may also see that this experience of suppression was not self-willed; it was enforced, and continuously enforced, by the supervisors' punishment of Camella and the disciplining of her son Frankie. Yet this hegemony was clearly not entire. Cowan has noted that Josie remembered that, "as a child, she had heard a few hints about her mother's role [in the strike] . . . Once in a while, her grandmother would mention a trip to the 'big house' in Washington—the White House—and describe some sort of meeting with the President." Frankie recognized that his mother's work was an unexplained punishment. Another resident of Lawrence, Ignatius Piscitello, while in high school, discovered in the Lawrence public library Camella Teoli's testimony in a two-volume memoir of the 1912 congressional hearing. The memoir had been published by the congressional printer after the hearing. Cowan himself discovered that Piscitello, raging over his own mother's long, painful

manipulation of history, in this case ethnic, in the strategies of the upwardly mobile, extending the attention of the Cowan story upon the working class of Lawrence. It is perhaps production, and simultaneously it is also "production as suppression," of earlier or alternate expressions concerning the past.

22. "Bread and Roses Revisited: Women's Culture and Working-Class Activism in the Lawrence Strike of 1912," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work and Protest: A Century of Women's Labor History* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 42–61. Kathy Peiss kindly brought Ardis Cameron's research to my attention.

23. Personal communication, 1986.

dying (from 1974 through 1976) after what he remembered as her awful life at the mills, "became obsessed with a desire to vindicate her difficult, obscure life. Since then, he'd been fighting his own lonely battle to revive the memory of the 1912 strike." And others had kept the memory alive within their own hearts and minds.[24] During his 1979 visit, Cowan participated with Piscitello in a radio call-in program. Cowan recounts that

> old-timers called in, and reminisced about Big Bill Haywood's speeches on the [Lawrence] Commons, about the soup kitchens, which were organized by nationality groups, about the Harvard students, who had gotten academic credit for serving as militia men, or about the experience of working in the mills.

One of the more powerful aspects of Cowan's discussion of the lifting of the veil of public silence from the memory of the strike concerns the young mayor of Lawrence, Lawrence Lefebre, who was eating lunch "casually listening" to the radio call-in show which, Cowan noted, so animated the people of the city to tell their own stories of the strike, the repression, and their work in the mills. According to Cowan, Mayor Lefebre himself

> tried to phone the show, but all the lines were jammed. When he finally got through, he said he'd never been exposed to the positive version of Lawrence's history that he was hearing on the radio that day. The stories the callers told were thrilling . . . He urged all Lawrence citizens to share their reminiscences of the Bread and Rose[s] strike with Piscitello, [Ralph] Fasanella [whose series of paintings of the strike had just gone on display at the town library] and me [Cowan].

The evidence presented suggests that Mayor Lefebre experienced a catharsis during that lunch hour. One interpretation of that day in October 1979, and of the subsequent months culminating in the Bread and Roses celebration the following spring, is that the energy of history production in Lawrence was moved from the unveiling of memory by many individuals in and around the city to the unveiling of a walkway by the city corporation. One might observe that as the mayor listened to the stories

24. Paul Cowan's articles do not mention some fairly well organized oral history projects in Lawrence. Some preliminary inquiries into this research have suggested that these projects were organized to capture information about events and experiences in the past of Lawrence but have not addressed themselves to the experience of suppression of memory and of public expression of history. Some of Cowan's sources have interview testimonies preserved in the Lawrence oral history archives.

told on the radio and as he dialed the radio station again and again he was moving himself to the front of a popular "uprising" of history production. Cowan reports,

> The night before "Bread and Roses Day" [spring 1980], Mayor Lefebre attended a dinner dance for a local alderman. The audience of 1000 was mostly composed of policemen and firemen. When the Mayor got up to speak, he held a copy of *Lawrence 1912: The Bread and Roses Strike* above his head, pointed to the Fasanella picture of militia men marching towards a picket line of striking workers on the cover, and predicted that soon, "Lawrence will take its place next to Lexington and Concord in the forefront of American history."

Might one be excused for recalling Father O'Reilly's mass demonstration in Lawrence on Columbus Day 1912, in which a different intervention forced order and control upon a disordered and creative insurgency?

Mayor Lefebre's linkage—Lawrence, Lexington, and Concord—of the reawakening of the past in Lawrence in 1979 and 1980 with the broader production of history in the nation is a telling transformation. On the one hand, Mayor Lefebre had taken it upon himself to transform the enthusiasm of individuals telling their own stories in public, reclaiming and proclaiming their past, into a formal and corporate celebration and memorial. In placing Lawrence beside Lexington and Concord, he was further transforming the experience of the past, of the suppression and repression, and of the reawakening, into a larger story in which the process of producing history at one level is closed and at a broader level is opened. In holding above his head the 1979 book, and in directing the eye toward the 1979 paintings by Fasanella, Mayor Lefebre was essentially calling for—indeed producing—a closure of public and private production of the individual, personal stories of the strike which had begun to be told openly only after the printing of the book and only after the paintings had been shown in Lawrence.

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There is another plane to the story of the reawakening of the story of history telling in Lawrence—the story of the story—and this is in studying the role of Paul Cowan from 1976 to 1980 in the transformation of historical processes in Lawrence. According to his own presentation, Cowan was able to grasp and to articulate the meaning of suppression of the memory of the past in Lawrence from his first visit in 1976. An indication of the power of the outsider in the Lawrence story, and in the

story of the story, is that it was Cowan who linked Ignatius Piscitello's reading of the testimony of Camella Teoli before Congress, which Piscitello found in a Lawrence public library, to Josie's curiosity, or absence of knowing, about the causes of the scar on her mother's head.

Cowan's role in the Lawrence story was larger than this, for Cowan was clearly part of a wider collection of individuals interested in the struggle for control of historical memory in Lawrence. Indeed, Cowan lets the reader know that at least a handful of individuals and their organizations, mostly based outside the city and mostly in New York, were heavily engaged in the organization of the reawakening of historical memory in Lawrence. By 1979, the Pilgrim Press of New York was bringing out the *Lawrence, 1912* volume (a new edition of a work originally titled *Mill Town*) and Moe Foner of the District 1199 Bread and Roses project was assisting with the distribution of the book.

Following his visit to Lawrence in 1979 (the time of the call-in program), Cowan returned to New York and

> described the enthusiasm I'd encountered to the editors of Pilgrim Press, to officials of the United Church of Christ, Pilgrim Press's parent organization, and to Moe Foner of District 1199's Bread and Roses program . . . They wanted to co-sponsor the event [Mayor Lefebre's planned celebration] . . . So, in mid-November, the New Yorkers and the Lawrence political leaders met to plan a "Bread and Roses Day" on the [Lawrence] Commons. They agreed that the walkway would be named after Camella Teoli . . . Moe Foner had commissioned a song for the occasion—"The Ballad of Camella Teoli," composed by Nicholas Scarem.

And a film strip for the Lawrence schools was commissioned by Moe Foner's project.

When Cowan describes those dignitaries or celebrities present for the 1980 Bread and Roses Day commemoration—

> Congressman James Shannon; Peter Yarrow and Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary; Marge Tabankin, the head of VISTA; representatives of the White House and the Department of Labor; Ralph Fasanella . . . ; Moe Foner . . . ; and Howard Spragg of the United Church of Christ . . . along with dozens of newspapers and television reporters . . .

—it is almost as if Cowan wants the reader to draw a parallel with those who came to Lawrence to witness, and join forces with, the strikers of 1912. Cowan, remarking on the 1912 enthusiasm, notes the arrival in Lawrence of

> an all-star cast of activists came to town, including Big Bill Haywood, the cool-headed Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the poet and organizer Arturo Giovanitti, IWW organizer Joseph Ettor, and a young socialist named Margaret Sanger whose advocacy of birth control methods would soon . . .

Later the journalists Lincoln Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker came "to investigate working conditions in the mills, living conditions in the tenements." And Mrs. William Howard Taft, Cowan records, "journeyed to Lawrence herself."

The publication, the paintings, the mayor's intervention, the ceremony, the planning committees in New York and Lawrence, did not, however, close off the energy of history production in Lawrence in 1980. Beyond the reportage of the local newspaper and the regional cable television station,

> scores of people . . . have begun to boast about a father or mother who worked in the mills. Sometimes they bring old books, family pictures, strike posters, workman's tools over to the library, for the whole town to see . . . and children from every school in the city will tape-record interviews with their grandparents and other elderly people in town, and discuss the stories they've heard with their classmates.

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Considerable freedom has been taken here[25] with Paul Cowan's excellent story, taking it apart and putting it together again in several different ways. It is as compelling a story, or story of a story, today as it must have been for Herb Gutman when he first came across it and for those present when Herb told the story at the Paris roundtable.

In the fall of 1985, as I considered how to construct a position paper out of the first discussion draft, the effect on my roundtable colleagues of Gutman's intervention in Paris claimed a central position: the story of Camella Teoli's accident in the Lawrence mill, the Bread and Roses strike of 1912, the girl's testimony before Congress, the daughter combing her mother's hair to cover the scar, the silence between mother and daughter, the New York reporter reconnecting the woman to her mother's experience in the mill. These were the essential pieces of Herb's question concerning memory, the fate of experience, and class consciousness. But as I sifted through the various texts and reports—the roundtable protocol, the various remembrances of Herb's intervention, the reports of the

25. And, similarly, in the original position paper completed in 1986.

August 1985 memorial service in Göttingen, the articles by Paul Cowan in the *Village Voice*, the testimonies of Lawrence residents recorded by Cowan, and other materials—additional questions and data came to be adjoined to Herb Gutman's original query.

One cluster of questions surrounded the author Paul Cowan himself from 1976 to 1980. Paul, who died four years ago, was the *Village Voice* reporter who went to Lawrence to look at the state of working-class America. In a personal communication, Paul told me that one of his main interests in exploring Lawrence was a lingering concern with the George Wallace phenomenon in working-class American communities.[26] As I traipsed around the Lawrence stories, I came to see Cowan as in one sense the *Grenzgenger* (border-crosser), the stranger, the outsider who ignited public and private catharses of history and memory in Lawrence, and in another sense the organic intellectual able to grasp and articulate the meaning of suppression of the memory of the past in Lawrence from his first visit in 1976. He clearly was *making* the account in numerous senses of the word, and his connections to labor organizations and progressive publishers in New York determined that the events which transpired in Lawrence following his visits there would be enjoined to, reconstituted by, individuals and organizations outside Lawrence.

Another array of questions and observations surrounded the processes of memory in Lawrence. The ignorance of Camella Teoli's daughter—and others in Lawrence—in 1976 was not a consequence of a forgetting, a loss of knowledge, but rather of powerful and continuous acts of control in both public and intimate spaces. Such control was organized not only by the firm but by the descendants of the 1912 strikers who even in 1976 still feared that word of their parents' participation in the strike would result in their deportation to Italy. And, in an important sense, it was unknowingly organized by Camella's son Frankie as he left his work station in the mill to fix his mother's hair after the bun that covered the scar fell apart.

And there are observations and questions concerning the removal of the veil of public silence from the memory of the strike. During 1979, there was a dramatic opening toward the telling of long silenced histories and memories that surrounded a radio call-in show in Lawrence

26. On March 14, 1986, in a discussion at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, of a draft of the roundtable position paper, Cowan related that he was drawn into the Camella Teoli story for several additional reasons. (1) He was seeking a way of discussing the "cultural chaos" he saw within the *Village Voice* office in New York City in the early 1970s. Cowan was intrigued by the paradox that the radical intellectuals were abandoning the culture of families, marriage, children while family life and marriage

in which Cowan was participating. From that day through elaborate commemorative exercises the next spring the energy of history production in Lawrence was moved from the unveiling of memory by many individuals in and around the city toward the corporate unveiling of a public walkway honoring Camella Teoli, giving the history of the strike, finally, an official status within the city of Lawrence.

And one may seek to understand better Herb Gutman's engagement with Paul Cowan's writings on Lawrence. From Ira Berlin's recent compilation and editing of Gutman's unpublished essays, we learn that Herb in 1982 wrote out his own rendering of the Camella Teoli story in a paper entitled "Historical Consciousness in Contemporary America,"[27] given as an address to the Organization of American Historians the same year. While the text of Herb's address was not known to participants in the Paris roundtable or to those organizing the Fifth Roundtable, it is clear that by 1982 Herb had read closely all of Paul Cowan's articles in the *Village Voice*, for he quotes from them liberally in constructing his account of the experience of memory in Lawrence. But between the 1980 intervention and the 1982 essay, Herb appears to have somewhat reframed the arguments surrounding his retelling the story. While in 1980, his intervention concerned "simply" class consciousness, by 1982 he was intrigued by the way in which the contemporaneous evocation of African-American experience through the celebration of *Roots*—both the book and the television series—contrasted with the absence of attention to the reawakening of memory concerning the Lawrence strike of 1912. He wrote, "The devices [Alex] Haley used to humanize slaves—his achievement ideology, which pitted the individual against society—ironically reinforced the same American possessive individualism which allowed no place for Camella Teoli and her daughter."[28] In his 1982 essay, Gutman sought to elaborate an argument on, for America, the distinctions and tensions among individual and collective memory and consciousness.

As an aside, one might note that, whatever the inherent power or fate

were, evidently, essential elements of working-class lives. (2) He was intrigued by the continuing primacy of the "melting pot" thesis of American immigrant history, even as so much experience reflected the social and political vitality of ethnic continuities from the strands of European homelands. And, (3) Camella was captivating because his own family's past had never been disclosed to him. Only later did I discover, through my son Ben Cohen, Cowan's book *An Orphan in History: One Man's Triumphant Search for His Roots* (New York: Doubleday, 1982). In this book Cowan discussed his Lawrence research in brief, pages 207–11.

27. Herbert G. Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, ed. Ira Berlin (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 395–412.

28. Ibid., 404.

of the story of Camella Teoli, it seems to be readily told and retold. In his long introduction to the Gutman essays, Berlin tells it still again,[29] though in a still more economical form than either here or in Gutman's written rendition.

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When Herb Gutman introduced the essential elements of the Lawrence story to the Paris roundtable, he was seeking to exemplify the—for him—core question of worker consciousness, but as one unlocks the history of the "story," or the "story" of the "story," one recognizes a far more complex frame of reference extending from the editorial office of the *Village Voice* to the site of Camella Teoli's accident. Gutman's intervention and the response to it—attempting to read some coherent meaning from the story—seemed to tap into what was then a prevalent, and still persisting, fascination with cultural interpretation exemplified by Clifford Geertz, most notably his reading of a Balinese cockfight.[30]

In a discussion of the shifting attentions of anthropologists from a concern with structure to an interest in the way in which events unfold—such as the daughter's unknowing participation in her mother's suppression of her own history or Herb Gutman telling a story in Paris—Sally Falk Moore has argued forcefully against the kind of reification of essential cultural system that she saw in the Geertzian approach, and with a skepticism about the value of such readings of "events":

> An event is not necessarily best understood as the exemplification of an extant symbolic or social order. Events may equally be evidence of the ongoing dismantling of structures or of attempts to create new ones. Events may show a multiplicity of social contestations and the voicing of competing cultural claims. Events may reveal substantial areas of normative indeterminacy.[31]

Without saying as much, the concept of "event" comes apart[32] as Moore develops her critique of assumptions of coherent meanings and norma-

29. Ibid., 65–66.

30. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 101 (1972): 1–37. Also published in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 412–53.

31. Sally Falk Moore, "Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography," *American Ethnologist* 14, 1 (1987): 729.

32. Moore does not surrender the "event" as the appropriate focus of the processual approaches she calls for, nor does she intend to let the concept of "event" come apart as one notes the multiplicities and complexities of source and effect; indeed, she sees particular "kinds of events" as "a preferred form of raw data," which she refers to as "diagnostic events." To this reader, this specific part of her formulation seems stiff, brittle, and theoretically unproductive.

tive determinancy. "It is difficult to find in any society universal subscriptions to the overarching ideological totalism that the Geertzian search suggests. To say the obvious, the making of history is taking place in many connected locales at once."[33]

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We may also pause, perhaps, to think more broadly about the manner, and the manners, of interpretation. The structure of the presentation here, in speaking of Gutman, Cowan, Lefebre, Camella, Josie, Lawrence, and the mill, we are clearly not looking at a story but rather at a skeletal account of stories of stories. The *laminate* quality of this reading of history production has several effects. The terrains of Camella, Josie, and Frankie are joined to the terrains of Mayor Lefebre, Paul Cowan, and the New York labor committees, and to the terrains of Herb Gutman and those of us working on the subject of the production of history, and those who pick up these accounts and thereby constitute a specific audience in addition to the audiences we imagine. Many historians work, knowingly and unknowingly, on the representation and presentation of a story of a story of a story. Sometimes they/we lose sight and sound of those we study telling their own stories, sometimes those voices are made to sound clearly in our minds and in our words as we of the guild proceed with our professional production of history.[34] One challenge is to distill the processes through which these stories develop. Another is to recognize the edges of our stories and of the stories being told to us from the past, to work toward comprehending the forces emergent at these edges.[35]

In his life history of a cane worker, Sidney Mintz locates such a site, the figure of his subject Taso. Mintz allows Taso his own voice; for example, Taso speaks,

33. *American Ethnologist* 14:730.

34. Renato Rosaldo has remarked that "Doing oral history involves telling stories about stories people tell about themselves. Method in this discipline should therefore attend to 'our' stories, 'their' stories, and the connections between them. The process of reconstructing the past, in other words, requires a double vision that focuses at once on historians' modes of composition and their subjects' ways of conceiving the past" ("Doing Oral History," *Social Analysis* 4 [September 1980]: 89–99).

35. For an important example of this approach, see Carolyn Hamilton, "A Positional Gambit: Shaka Zulu and the Conflict in South Africa," *Radical History Review* 41 (Spring 1989): 5–31.

> I . . . suffered an infection in my hand, which was the result of the prick of a fish spine . . . And that day . . . they came by selling fish and we bought some for the house. And as Elisabeth [Taso's wife] was ironing, I set about cleaning the fish. It happened that as I passed the knife to scale them a spine pricked my finger. I thought it would be a trivial thing, and I only undertook to squeeze a few drops of blood out of the finger and left it that way. And later on I went again to serve in the store, and I attribute what happened to putting my hand in a barrel of salt pork (*tocino*). It formerly came in barrels, with water and everything. And I believe I got the infection from that. When night came, well, the hand hurt, and during the night it bothered me a lot.[36]

Taso is allowed to compose, and to convey, his meaningful environment and experience, to explicate pain, to relate his moments, to depict the matter of his own relationships to work, kin, his body, and friends; in a sense, Taso has seized the opportunity to define the meaning of experience that Clifford Geertz appropriated in establishing his authority over the reading of the Balinese cockfight. It is also clear that Taso produced his own history inside of Sid Mintz's intentionalities. At the same time, Sidney Mintz's "life history" is permitted to give space to Taso to relocate in our consciousness the *tocino*, to produce history, in ways not permitted Camella Teoli.

Taso and Camella suggest how much more skill must be acquired to handle the meanings of forgetting and remembering. Camella's knowledge of self was suppressed, not forgotten, and the processes were active, conflictual. There was, clearly, remembering in the "forgetting." If there is an operative expression, it is not "history lost." For Taso, remembering the past was a medium of crystallization of elements to which he himself appropriated significance, combing essential pieces from masses of detailed memories. To tell the story of his injury, he had to clear to the side, to "forget," much of the experience—a "forgetting" in the "remembering."[37]

The story of the story of the story of Camella and Lawrence's strike is continuous transformation of past, as history, into present experience, not only in 1976 or 1979 or 1980 but also within the routine of the daughter's combing her mother's hair or Frankie troubling himself to cover his mother's scar. History, in this sense, is not only the proof or the product—Mayor Lefebre's commemorative activities—but also the stuff of the process of production. And while History may be "the artefact of cultural systems,"[38] it may also be, as in Lawrence, the tissue and the force of the cultural and social processes of work, consociation, and family. In approaching the "production of history." one is also approaching "history as production."

36. Sidney W. Mintz, *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960; New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 166.

37. I am grateful to Ruth Behar for her assistance in the comparison of the Camella and Taso stories.

38. In a presentation, "A Poetic of History," tabled at, and circulated well before, the Fifth Roundtable in Anthropology and History in July 1986, Greg Dening wrote: "It is unimaginable that someone—'primitive' or 'civilized'—has no past: it is unimaginable that someone does not know some part of that past. 'Memory' is our everyday word for knowledge of the past, but memory suggests some personal or institutional immediacy in the connection between the past and those who experienced it. We need a word that includes memory but embraces all the other ways of knowing a past that has not been experienced. We do not have such a word, but in this poetics of history let me declare that word to be history. History is public knowledge of the past. That I should describe history with the adjective 'public' will alert an audience familiar with Clifford Geertz's writings to the fact that I consider history in this sense to be *the artefact of cultural systems* [emphasis added], to be expressed in communicative exchanges, to have forms specific to social occasions. History is a human universal."