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Advocacy and Anthropology

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Source: *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Sep., 1990), pp. 742-743

Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the American Anthropological Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/680349>

Accessed: 09/11/2009 07:17

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Commentaries

Advocacy and Anthropology

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"As we said in the 1960s, just *do it!*": with these gung-ho, throwback words, Professor John Bennett ends his begrudging review of *Advocacy and Anthropology: First Encounters* (AA 91:462, 1989). It is a miserable business, complaining of being mistreated by reviewers; but as the convenor of the Advocacy and Anthropology conference and the editor of the book, I owe these remarks to the 40 participants and 17 authors.

When Professor Bennett says: "If anthropologists are concerned about advocacy, all they need do is to conduct research on these issues" what can he mean—that we do not have to discuss approaches, strategies, ambiguities, and contradictions, and to analyze the failures and whatever successes come our way? Contrary to his "just *do it*" line, Bennett himself, of course, has taken part in such discussions over "the past 40 years." Then does he mean that we who sat around the Advocacy and Anthropology conference table had had no experience with advocacy? If that, he's grievously wrong.

Nor do I know where Professor Bennett got the impression that we had a monolithic view of advocacy and an unproblematic view of anthropology. Very much to the contrary, there was sustained debate through the three days over "the tension . . . between an advocacy role and the putative canons of the discipline" (Joan Ryan, p. 208). See Basil Sansom (pp. 4–12) and Sandra Wallman (pp. 13–15) on the absence of canons, simply "rules of thumb" at the best. See Georg Henriksen (pp. 119–129) on the *disservice* the anthropologist as advocate may possibly render "his" people. See Emmanuel Marx versus Jacque Sarsby (pp. 34–38) on what research relationship is possible with bureaucracy. See Joan Ryan versus Peter Harries-Jones versus Penny Van Esterik (pp. 83–87) on "institutionalizing advocacy" and possible problems of credibility that our hallowed canon of participant-observation can present us with in adversarial situations. See Lisa Gilad (pp. 201–202) on the *inappropriate-*

ness of much anthropological graduate training, and Joanne Prindiville (pp. 215–217) on *who* among us can afford (in terms of career costs) to do advocacy: "Would you," she asks, "encourage people to go out and do advocacy work, even before they establish a professional presence and have a stable job within the anthropological community?" There was more.

Perhaps, though, Professor Bennett's remarks are not about what is in the book as much as what he supposes (a) advocacy has come to be about (in American anthropology—and remember, he sees the book under review as "mainly a British-Canadian production"), and (b) what advocacy should be about. Bennett offers, as an example of (a): "'Advocacy' is conceived almost exclusively as a kind of defense of the indigenous groups one studies"; and of (b): "the horrors and crises of the modern world system: religious mayhem, AIDS, rampant sex, drugs, guns, urban decay, children of poverty, delinquency, refugees, the homeless, multi-nationals."

Returning to the book that was under review, while there was considerable concern over the possibilities of cultural extinction of native peoples (addressed particularly cogently by David Maybury-Lewis [pp. 130–148], as Bennett properly notes), other "horrors of the modern world" were addressed in advocacy contexts. See especially David Anderson on wardship of the mentally retarded (pp. 46–51) and Penny Van Esterik on confrontation with Infant Formula (pp. 59–77). The conference was held in 1983, at which time neither AIDS nor refugees had gained much of a research profile, but perhaps it is in order to note that in both these fields there is now someone working who took part in the conference. Likewise with the effects on local communities of Chernobyl fallout. So I think we kept and are keeping faith, in some measure, at any rate, with Bennett's prescription, though I do not believe any one of us is working yet on "rampant sex" as a diagnostic feature of the modern world.

When it comes to his dismissal of the 22 chapters as being "without any new conclusions," one really wonders what reading Professor Bennett gave them. Nothing new from David Anderson (pp. 51–58) on the relation between social work and anthropology in ad-

vocacy terms? Or in the Joseph M. Kaufert et al. team essay (pp. 98–115) on the use of native medical interpreters? Nothing new in Peter Harries-Jones's epistemological argument (pp. 224–248) on the need to separate advocacy anthropology from applied anthropology? Nothing for the younger fieldworker to learn from Lisa Gilad's postdoctoral encounter (pp. 203–207) with patronage and corruption during contract research, or for even the most seasoned fieldworker among us from the grilling of W. E. H. Stanner (pp. 174–198) by the Solicitor General of Australia?

We were aware of work from the 1960s: one of the chapters is self-reflexively entitled "Reinventing the Advocacy Wheel?" (Ignatius LaRusic); but our concerns were with our experiences in the 1980s and with the future. I have considerable respect for Professor Bennett's anthropological writings; it is all the more saddening, therefore, that he couldn't see what was worthwhile in the deliberations of practitioners of different generations and diverse intellectual and professional backgrounds. I hope my remarks do not sound too self-serving; rather, that they draw attention, beyond the matter of this particular book, to the wide gamut of issues advocacy raises for anthropology (or anthropologies) and individual anthropologists. Professor Bennett wonders why anthropologists "have to worry about doing it" (i.e., advocacy). Much of our conference was, indeed, devoted to this worrying about *how to do it*, even about *what it is*.

References Cited

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Land Availability and the Oraibi Split: A Rejoinder to Levy

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Jerrold Levy's review of my *Deliberate Acts: Changing Hopi Culture through the Oraibi Split* (AA 91:495–496, 1989) includes two criticisms I would like to respond to. Reflecting on my argument that there was no shortage of available agricultural land at Oraibi at the time of the split in 1906, Levy says:

there is no evaluation of Bradfield's estimates of the carrying capacity of the land. . . . The abundant land and water of the summer colony of Moenkopi are given as evidence that there was no shortage of land. But there is no mention of the fact that the colony was used almost entirely for the production of cotton during this period or that, as soon as permanent settlers were sent to forestall a takeover by the Hostiles, they immediately complained of the shortage of land. [p. 496]

As I emphasized (e.g., 1988:249), Bradfield's analysis of Third Mesa agricultural land is inadequate because he considers only the Oraibi Valley. He neglects lands *already used* (according to documentary and Hopi sources) in the 1890s for maize-beans-squash agriculture—at Moenkopi, around the Dinnebito Wash and at No-Trail Mesa (as well as a number of other sites I did not mention in this context)—all of which were rendered more accessible still by the acquisition of wagons in the 1890s (which Bradfield likewise ignores). Bradfield's assessment of the carrying capacity of the land, then, is irrelevant since it is based on a critical false premise regarding available area.

Levy is correct that cotton was the main crop planted at Moenkopi at *some* periods prior to the Oraibi split. But his "during this period" is unclear. At some periods prior to the 1870s, cotton was the sole crop, owing to fear of Paiute and later Navajo raids on food crops. But a major purpose behind Hopi leader Tuuvi's invitation to Mormons to settle at Moenkopi (which began in 1873 [1988:36]) was to act as a protection against such raids, thus enabling Hopis to plant food crops there (similarly, Hopis also farmed in the late 1870s on the Little Colorado River near Sunset under Mormon "protection"). Hopi agricultural fields increased with year-round settlement at Moenkopi, very probably beginning in the 1880s, as recognized in government records of Hopi agricultural plots in 1888, and assignments of agricultural allotments in 1893 and subsequent years. In 1900, the U.S. National Census recorded 85 Hopi residents at Moenkopi (1988:249). References to Hopis planting food crops at Moenkopi occur in Mormon and other records in the late 19th century, as Shui-chi Nagata (1970:144) also reports:

The documents for the earlier periods also indicate the early presence of the corn-beans-squash complex. John D. Lee noted the Hopi planting corn and melons in their summer settlement of Moenkopi during the 1870's. . . . Stephen mentions "corn, beans,