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Between Means and Ends: Reconstructing Coercion in Dewey's Democratic Theory

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John Dewey's democratic theory is celebrated as a classic statement of the theory of deliberative democracy. This article challenges deliberative appropriations of Dewey's political thought by situating his democratic theory within the contentious history of American labor politics. In his writings on direct action, strikes, and class struggle, Dewey advocated coercive and nondeliberative modes of political action as democratic means for democratic ends. Examining Dewey's writings on democracy, action, and the use of force reveals how a means-oriented pragmatism circumvents the problematic dichotomy of ideal ends and non-ideal means framing contemporary debates about idealism and realism in democratic theory. Pragmatism's account of the interdependence of means and ends in political action, as a process of creative and collaborative experimentation, combines a robust defense of coercive tactics with a consequentialist critique of violence.

Democratic ends demand democratic means—this formula runs throughout John Dewey's corpus. Dewey's robust vision of democracy as a political regime and a way of life, as important to the pursuit of scientific inquiry and the cultivation of moral character as to the legitimation of state power, posed a radical challenge to the minimalist visions of electoral democracy that defined the theory and practice of American liberalism in the twentieth century (Farr 1999). "The struggle for democracy," Dewey asserts, "has to be maintained on as many fronts as culture has aspects: political, economic, international, educational, scientific and artistic, religious" (1988b, 186). Dewey's insistence that the means of this struggle must be as democratic as the ends they seek is normally interpreted as a canonical statement of the theory of deliberative democracy (Honneth 1998; Bohman 1999; 2004; Dryzek 2000; Festenstein 2001; MacGilvray 2005). This is the Dewey familiar to political theorists from *The Public and Its Problems*. There, Dewey argues that "*the* problem of the public" is finding adequate means to democratic ends; namely, "the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion" (1984a, 365; emphasis in original). Historian Robert Westbrook characterizes Deweyan democracy as "anticipating" contemporary theories of deliberative democracy (2005, 187). Amy Gutman and Dennis Thompson similarly find common cause with their own theory of deliberative democracy in Dewey's "unequivocal declarations of the need for political discussion in a polity recognizably democratic in the modern sense" (2004, 9). Others have read Deweyan pragmatism as a corrective supplement to deliberative theories of democracy: Dewey's democratic theory has been invoked to bridge deliberative exchange and participatory democracy (Hildreth 2012); reasoned persuasion and aesthetic expression (Konoski 2005); moral justification and epistemic validation (Festenstein 2004); and deliberative legitimation with institutional design (Knight and Johnson 2011).

By pragmatism's own lights, these reconstructions ought to be judged by their practical consequences for democratic theory. However, conscripting pragmatism for contemporary theoretical purposes risks obscuring elements of Dewey's political thought that cut against the normative and conceptual premises of deliberative democracy.[1] Dewey advocated discussion and deliberation as "indispensable" aspects of democratic action, to be sure; but he also called them "weak reeds to depend upon" for democratizing rigid institutions and confronting entrenched forms of domination (1987c, 50). "Persuasion that assumes that large numbers are not affected by their interests and can be influenced solely by reasons is so innocent as to be naïve" (1935, 292). The limits of deliberative persuasion led Dewey to conceptualize a crucial role for nondeliberative means of political action, such as disruption, noncooperation, and coercion. This article situates Dewey's democratic theory within the context of the contentious history of American labor struggles in which it was forged to argue for a more robust means-oriented conception of democratic theory—one that is at odds with the ends-oriented politics of deliberative democracy that pragmatism has become associated with in contemporary political theory.

Ends-oriented political theories isolate ends from means in order to prioritize the former over the latter. Ends, understood as normative ideals, provide these theories with a transcendent moral point of view for criticizing and reforming nonideal political practices. A means orientation to politics, by contrast, circumvents the distinction between ideal values and nonideal

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[1] The politics of pragmatism's retrospective conscription for the purposes of later ideological disputes are discussed in Jewett (2011) and Livingston (2016, 24–52).

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practices by emphasizing the *interdependence* of means and ends. Means, for Dewey, condition ends. "The kind of means used determines the kind of consequences actually reached—the ends in the only sense in which 'ends' do not signify abstraction" (1987d, 259). Ends, in turn, are not moral ideals independent of practical means; they are means to further action. "Means and ends are two names for the same reality. The terms denote not a division in reality but a distinction in judgment" (1983, 28). The same reality is the experience of action; the distinction in judgment is the perspective one takes on it. Judged prospectively, ends are anticipations of consequences orienting action's rush into the future. Seen retrospectively, ends are "pivots *in* action" as an ongoing process of experience (1983, 155; emphasis in original). Pragmatism's focus on means and ends as two aspects of a single continuum of action places consequences—not transcendent ideals—at the center of its political theory.[2]

At the heart of pragmatism's account of the interdependence of means and ends is its stress on action and uncertainty. As Dewey writes in *Human Nature and Conduct*, "All action is an invasion of the future, of the unknown. Conflict and uncertainty are ultimate traits" (1983, 10–11). Political action under conditions of uncertainty is a process of experimentation. It is a creative adventure into the unknown that transforms self, world, and values. Political theories that prioritize ideal ends over actions displace this uncertainty by proscribing modes of action on the basis of moral ends. Pragmatism's means-oriented politics, by contrast, resituates values as ends within the experience of action to recast political ethics in experimental terms. By foregrounding a process conception of action, pragmatism provides a consequentialist critique of nondemocratic means without committing itself to deliberative theory's categorical exclusion of coercion. Coercive action, more than violation of ideals of deliberative conduct, can be a vital democratic means to democratic ends.[3]

Pragmatism's means-oriented conception of political action finds its clearest expression in Dewey's writings on industrial democracy. From his earliest writings on ethics from the 1880s, when he was still an unreconstructed Hegelian, to his later writings in the 1950s, Dewey conceptualized political economy as a pressing site of participatory democratic reconstruction. His "radical" liberalism (1987c, 45; 1987e, 287) attacked both the "pseudo liberalism" (1987f, 291) of free-market capitalism and the antiliberalism of state socialism, with its conception of "plann*ed* society" rather than "a *continuously* plann*ing* society" (1988a, 321), as twin threats to democracy (Westbrook 1991, 429–95; Ryan 1997, 284–327). These criticisms of American capitalism brought Dewey into sustained engagement with the labor movement across his long career, most dramatically in his role as a president of the League for Industrial Democracy. For these reasons, it is no surprise that the labor movement's most powerful weapon, the strike, provides a revealing example of how coercive means can serve democratic ends.

The history of the strike in the United States, particularly in the decades preceding federal recognition of the right to strike, is a record of contentious and often bloody struggles between labor, capital, and the state for control over the means and meaning of social reproduction. As Michael Walzer (1970, 36) once remarked, the recognition of the right to strike in the United States "has come to be so widely accepted that its illegal and semilegal history and all the philosophical issues raised by that history have been forgotten." First amongst these issues is the distinction between democratic and nondemocratic means. Deweyan democracy, I argue, understands the distinction in *consequential*, rather than *categorical*, terms. Its means-oriented approach poses the question: When can the use of force enrich experience rather than impoverish it, deepen the public's perceptions of its problems rather than obscure them, and promote creative acts of democratic reconstruction rather than perpetuate experiences of crisis and impasse? Reading Dewey's philosophy of action alongside episodes from his encounter with the coercive tactics of the American labor movement provides a new perspective on the democratic theory of *The Public and Its Problems*. As we will see, coercive means can serve democratic ends when they are used to *provoke* rather than *resolve* democratic inquiry in the face of habits, ideologies, and institutions obstructing the public's inquiry into its problems.

Decentering deliberative interpretations of Dewey's political thought also challenges agonistic criticisms of pragmatism as blind to power and coercion (Mouffe 1996; Geuss 2001, 124–28; Wolin 2004, 495–523).[4] Hannah Arendt, for example, thought pragmatism admirable for its critique of the tradition of Western philosophy but ultimately judged Dewey's account of democracy as collective inquiry as "out of touch with reality" (2005, 195). Such criticisms overlook the ways in which Dewey's means-oriented conception of democracy cuts across the dichotomy of realism and

[2] I borrow this distinction between means- and ends-oriented politics from Karuna Mantena's recent study of M.K. Gandhi's political thought (2012a). Dewey shares a similar conception of the interdependence of means and ends with Gandhi, although without following the argument to Gandhi's radical pacifist conclusions (see Bondurant 1998; Dalton 2000; Mantena 2012b). Means-oriented politics, as I use the term here, is meant to stresses the *continuity* of means and ends rather than prioritization of means *over* ends. Rather than use the awkward expression "means-*and*-ends-oriented politics," I follow Mantena's use of the shorthand "means-oriented politics." The centrality of Dewey's conception of the means-ends continuum to his political theory is discussed in Eldridge (1998).

[3] On deliberative democracy's moral prohibition of coercion as violating the ideal of equal respect, and the challenges it produces for conceptualizing social movements and protest politics, see Young (2001), Medearis (2005; 2015, 15–44), and Stears (2007). Medearis makes a claim for the value of a pragmatist theory of action similar to the argument proposed here. While we both find a compelling challenge to contemporary theories of deliberative democracy in Dewey's theory of action, he mobilizes pragmatist resources to articulate a theory of democratic alienation, while my concern is rooted in the ethical and political insights of Dewey's means-oriented account of coercion.

[4] For classic statements of these criticisms, see Mumford (1926), Niebuhr (2013), and Mills (1969).

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idealism. Marc Stears (2010) demonstrates the insufficiency of these familiar interpretive coordinates by resituating Dewey's democratic theory within the terms of an American radical democratic tradition. Stears frames the terms of the American radical democratic tradition as an experiment in combining the idealism of contemporary theories of deliberative democracy with a realist insistence on the intractability of coercion, conflict, and hierarchy in politics. Rereading Dewey's remarks on deliberation and coercion in this intellectual context sheds light on the ways "Dewey's rejection of violence was more subtle than some of his fellow-travelling critics suggested" (Stears 2010, 97). This radical tradition emphasizes the importance of cultivating practical wisdom for negotiating the tensions between ideal deliberative ends and nonideal coercive means, although Stears argues that Dewey's insistence that democratic ends demand democratic means amounted to little more than "a set of vague generalities" (2010, 100). Supplementing Stears's study of *The Public and Its Problems* and *Liberalism and Social Action*, with a focus on Dewey's philosophical writings on experience and action in *Human Nature and Conduct*, *Ethics*, and *Logic*, reveals a more robust conception of means-oriented politics than Stears's account of the radical democratic tradition suggests. Pragmatism's means-oriented politics provides a more compelling (because more fully articulated) account of the moral intuition at the heart of the American tradition of radical democracy; namely, its "buoyant, crusading, and militant" faith that radical democratic futures can only arise from creative democratic experiments in the present (Dewey 1987b, 299).

The organization of this essay proceeds contrapuntally rather than chronologically. I compare different historical moments and different genres of writing (philosophical treatises, political editorials, private correspondence) in a nonlinear fashion in order to demonstrate how Dewey's means orientation to politics follows from pragmatism's broader reimagining of action, experience, and inquiry. I begin by examining the short but provocative essays on force Dewey penned during the First World War. These essays reframe debates about the ethics of direct action in terms of multiple experiences of force as energy, coercion, and violence. The consequential account of force proposed in these essays remains incomplete, however, without a fuller understanding of Dewey's theory of action and inquiry. To flesh out the broader philosophy of action underlying Dewey's notion of force, I turn next to his encounter with communist arguments for revolutionary means in the 1930s. By comparing Dewey's political and philosophical writings, I show how Dewey, in response to critics like Leon Trotsky, outlines a critique of violent means without falling back into a categorical repudiation of coercion. The following section draws out the implications of this argument for reconsidering Dewey's supposedly deliberative conception of action in *The Public and Its Problems*. Reading *The Public and Its Problems* as an exercise in means-oriented democratic theory foregrounds the value of coercion in democratic inquiry for articulating the public's problems. Coercion, of the kind that Dewey celebrated when the American Rail Union shut down Chicago in the spring and summer of 1894, finds a role to play in political action as a democratic means of making problems public. In conclusion, I examine some consequences of pragmatism's means-oriented approach to politics for thinking about coercive political action beyond the terms of ends-oriented democratic theories.

THEORIZING FORCE: ENERGY, COERCION, AND VIOLENCE

Dewey's writings from the First World War provide rich resources for beginning a critical reconstruction of pragmatism's means-oriented politics. These writings are centrally concerned with the dangers of how a politics oriented around moral ends displaces urgent questions of political means. Consider Dewey's critical comments on pacifist objections to the war. Dewey charged American pacifists with suffering from

> a somewhat mushy belief in the existence of disembodied moral forces which require only an atmosphere of feelings to operate so as to bring about what is right, the denial of the efficacy of force, no matter how controlled, to modify disposition; in short, the inveterate habit of separating ends from means and then identifying morals with ends thus emasculated (1980a, 262).

The categorical prohibition on the use of force condemns pacifism to political insignificance. "Any political or legal theory which will have nothing to do with power on the ground that all power is force and all force brutal and nonmoral is obviously condemned to a purely sentimental, dreamy morals" (1980b, 246). A means-oriented political theory, by contrast, begins by acknowledging the fact of force. "No ends," Dewey explains, "are accomplished without the use of force" (1980b, 249).

In his 1916 essays "Force, Violence, and Law" and "Force and Coercion," Dewey extends this critique of moralism to defend labor's use of direct action as a method of "bringing about any social change which is of serious import" (1980b, 244). The connection Dewey draws between debates on the morality of war and labor tactics is a testament to the contention surrounding coercion within the American left in the early decades of the twentieth century. Pacifists sympathetic to the labor movement were divided over the question of whether or not the strike constituted a strategy consistent with Christian principles of nonresistance. John Haynes Holmes, a leading voice of Protestant pacifism in the United States between the wars, denounced strike action as violence. The strike is premised on "the principle of coercion" rendering it "a weapon of violence used in the spirit and to the ends of war" (Holmes 1920, 45–46). As sociologist Clarence Marsh Case observed at the time (1923, 285–304), such criticisms reveal the ways orthodox pacifism remained strictly negative without any positive program for confronting injustice.

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Dewey's pursuit of a positive alternative to pacifist moralism begins by distinguishing three ways force is experienced: as energy, coercion, and violence. Energy is the generic name for forces in transaction. "Power or energy is either a neutral or a eulogistic term. It denotes effective means of operation; ability or capacity to execute, to realize ends" (1980b, 246). The hammer that drives the nail into the board, the foreman that directs the worker, the joke that makes another laugh are all examples of energy. Energy is not a unified substance. It is a placeholder for the plurality of material, social, and emotional interactions that define the contours of particular practical situations. "It means nothing but the sum of conditions available for bringing the desirable end into existence" (ibid.). Any political theory that has no place for conceptualizing the energies that makes action and interaction possible has no language for discussing politics at all.

Violence differs from energy in quantity rather than quality. Violence is the excess of force in relation to ends. "Energy becomes violence when it defeats or frustrates purpose instead of executing or realizing it. When the dynamite charge blows up human beings instead of rocks, when its outcome is waste instead of production, destruction instead of construction, we call it not energy or power but violence" (ibid.) Violence is "force running wild" (1980c, 212). Coercion, finally, straddles the boundary between force as energy and as violence. It is a use of force meant to organize conflicting energies within a situation. Dewey's central example of this third category is the rule of law. Law is the reflective use of force. It ought to be regular, orderly, and economic, using the least amount of force necessary to coordinate conflicting ends. The force of law transforms from coercion into violence when it exceeds a minimal economy. Dewey concludes from this schematic distinction that the types of force characterizing interaction—energy, coercion, and violence—differ in degree rather than kind. What distinguishes the justified use of coercion from the brute force of violence is its efficiency as a means for realizing ends. The "*only question* which can be raised about the justification of force is that of comparative efficiency and economy in its use" (1980b, 251; emphasis added.)

Before considering the adequacy of this account, it is worth noting some implications that follow from Dewey's distinction between coercion and violence. First, there is no a priori difference between violent and nonviolent forces. Where coercion ends and violence begins is a topic of inquiry that must be attentively investigated by the affected public. How to draw this distinction is always a political question. Second, there is no institutional distinction separating coercion from violence. While Dewey attributes coercion to the rule of law and violence to what appear to be extralegal uses of force, distinguishing coercion and violence in terms of their "comparative efficiency" prohibits the state from claiming any monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The political and economic institutions that wield the greatest amounts of force are the actors most likely to use them inefficiently. Dewey writes, "The serious charge against the State is not that it uses force—nothing was ever accomplished without using force—but that it does not use it wisely or effectively" (1980b, 248). Similarly, these essays characterize laissez-faire capitalism as radically inefficient. Rather than encourage cooperative methods of economic production that promote free and equal human development, the labor market wastefully pits workers against one another as competitors in the service of their own exploitation (1980b, 249; 1987c, 26). On Dewey's view, political and economic institutions that obstruct the free and equal realization of human potential are the preeminent sources of violence in American society.

It is against the background of this experiential account of force and its entailed conception of institutional violence that Dewey considers the coercive force of the strike. Workers are justified in the use of coercive means to seize control of the site of production where the alternative is the perpetuation of patterns of institutional violence that inefficiently structure interaction in a manner that obstructs human growth. Dewey puts this point in a characteristically dense sentence: "A recourse to direct force is a supplementation of existent deficient resources in effective energy under some circumstances" (1980b, 247). This claim may be read as license for viewing politics as a sort of war of all against all, but it is just here that the distinction between coercion and violence does important work. An efficient and moderate use of coercive force is permissible on pragmatic grounds to correct for inefficient and wasteful uses of force judged to be violent. Again, Dewey's central example of the use of coercion against institutional violence is strike action. He explains:

> If the social ends at stake can be more effectively subserved by the existing legal and economic machinery, resort to physical action of a more direct kind has no standing. If, however, they represent an ineffective organization for the end in question, then recourse to extralegal means may be indicated; provided it really serves the ends in question—a very large qualification be it noted (ibid.).

Where existing institutions are judged to be inefficient means for realizing their ends, there arises a legitimate claim to use coercive force to disrupt, correct, or abolish them. Inherited institutional orders that were once agents of progress can become obstacles to further development as they fail to adjust to changing historical conditions. Dewey insists that, *ceteris paribus*, extralegal action is very costly and disruptive, whereas the rule of law's role as an "impartial umpire" is both a valuable and efficient means of expending energy, putting the presumption of legitimacy on the side of legally constituted institutions when they come into conflict with dissidents. Even here, however, the public's perception of existing institutions as "a standing menace" can become grounds for the "resort to crude methods" as "a necessary stimulus to the better working of the refined methods" of legal adjudication (1980b, 248).

Posing efficiency as "the only question" at stake in legitimating coercion is clearly unsatisfying (Hildreth 2009, 787). A critique of moral idealism that celebrates efficiency as the sole criterion for judging when ends

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justify means risks collapsing into a brutal form of amoral realism. As Arendt warns in a different context, "murderous consequences" often wait at the end of a line of thought that justifies means in terms of efficiency (1998, 229). Violence, as she defines it, follows from the encroachment of such means-ends rationality into the sphere of politics. A narrowly mechanical criterion of efficiency, moreover, precludes the need for political inquiry concerning the consequences distinguishing energy, coercion, and violence in any particular case. It was in response to these essays by Dewey on means and ends that Randolph Bourne penned his famous indictment of pragmatism as morally hollow and politically naive. "In the application of philosophy to politics," Bourne charged, "our pragmatists are sliding over this crucial question of ends" (1992, 340).

The singular appeal to efficiency illustrates one of the persistent interpretive challenges facing any study of Dewey's political thought. The mechanical metaphors in these essays invite a narrowly instrumental understanding of pragmatism. While Dewey remained committed to the view that moral and political questions ought to be articulated in the terms of scientific inquiry, criticisms by Bourne and others pushed him to foreground the interpretive method of the social sciences—as the study of meaningful and intelligent human interaction—as a more appropriate model for political inquiry than the natural sciences (Dewey 1985a, 64–69; Caspary 2000, 45–109; 2003). To recover the insights about coercion and violence that remain veiled by Dewey's infelicitous choice of language, we need to interpret these essays in light of his broader theory of action as experimental inquiry.

COMMUNISM, CONSEQUENCES, AND ACTION

Dewey returned to the question of coercion and violence in the aftermath of the Great Depression as labor politics returned to the forefront of his thinking. The Russian experience of revolutionary civil war loomed large over the United States in the 1930s as American radicals debated the question of what path the transition to socialism might take. The Third Period Communist Party USA's "rule or ruin" strategies of disrupting labor organizations it considered counterrevolutionary, along with the beginning of the Moscow trials in 1936, brought the question of the relationship of means and ends to the center of American socialism during these years (Ottanelli 1991; Buhle 2013; Phelps 1997). Examining Dewey's responses to the communist claim that violent means are necessary for democratic ends in a capitalist society fills out two important elements of his means-oriented democratic theory. The first is rearticulating the insights from his earlier essays on coercion and violence in light of his wider writings on experience and action. The second is its consequential, rather than categorical, critique of violence.

One artifact of these disputes concerning revolutionary means is Leon Trotsky's "Their Morals and Ours," published in *The New International* in 1938. Trotsky, then in exile, was an icon for the anti-Stalinist left in the United States. "Their Morals and Ours" offers a response to liberal critics, like Dewey, who charged that the brutality of Stalin's rule was a natural consequence of Marxism's conflation of "the dictatorship *of* the proletariat" with Party rule "*over* the proletariat" (Dewey 1986a, 91; emphasis in original). Despite their political disagreements, Trotsky and Dewey shared philosophical intuitions about means and ends. Like his pragmatist counterpart, Trotsky attacked the moral absolutism of pacifism, "the Kantian-priestly and vegetarian-Quaker prattle about the 'sacredness of human life'," for severing the dialectical interdependence of means and ends (Trotsky 2007, 63).

Trotsky responds to the charge of amoralism by attacking liberalism's ends-oriented political morality as bourgeois ideology. Liberal morality is the artifact of a dying capitalist era. Transition to a postcapitalist society requires a revolutionary morality that propels the progressive realization of human emancipation. If Marxism is amoral, it is only in the sense that it does not allow the archaic morality of an earlier historical era to stand in the way of the class struggle's work of historical negation. The morality of revolutionary means can only be judged from the dialectical perspective of the class struggle. Moral judgments concerning the use of force are a matter of the "living experience of the movement *under the clarification of theory*" rather than the dictates of moral abstractions (Trotsky 1973, 49; emphasis added). For Trotsky, the morality of tactics boils down to the consequentialist question of what "really leads to the liberation of humanity. Since this end can be achieved only through revolution, the liberation morality of the proletariat of necessity is endowed with a revolutionary character" (Trotsky 1973, 48).

Dewey encountered Trotsky's theory of revolutionary violence in his role as chairman of the International Commission of Inquiry into charges against Trotsky. The Commission of Inquiry met in Coyoacán, Mexico, in 1937 to weigh the charges brought against Trotsky and his family by the Soviet Union. Dewey read Trotsky widely in preparation for the inquiry but, due to the focused nature of the event, did not find an opportunity to engage in any sustained philosophical exchange with the revolutionary. The opportunity arose the following year when *The New International* invited Dewey to contribute a rejoinder to "Their Morals and Ours." Dewey's response is philosophically revealing for the great importance it places on the seemingly minor differences in their respective accounts of the interdependence of means and ends. Dewey shares Trotsky's view that morality is a historical phenomenon rooted in the experience of ethical life. Additionally, Dewey, like Trotsky, understands means and ends as interdependent. The means used affect the end they bring about, no less than the end pursued shapes the choice of means available to achieve it. Also like Trotsky, Dewey holds that means cannot be justified or prohibited in isolation from some particular ends. "I hold that the end in the sense of consequences provides the only basis for moral ideas and actions, and therefore provides the only justification that can be found for means

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employed" (1988c, 350). But it is on this very point that Dewey marks the crucial divergence between Trotsky's dialectical materialism and his democratic pragmatism. Trotsky disjoins means from ends despite himself when he stipulates that the class war—seen "under the clarification of theory"—follows *inevitably* from the end of human emancipation. A pragmatic understanding of the relationship of means and ends does not prohibit class struggle, but it does "rule out the deductive method of arriving at it as a means, to say nothing of its being the *only* means" (1988c, 350; emphasis in original). Trotsky's dialectics displace the essential *contingency* of action and the need for continuous inquiry into consequences.[5]

A capacious philosophical account of contingency, action and inquiry lies in the background of both Dewey's rejoinder to Trotsky, as well as his earlier discussion of energy, coercion, and violence. Action is marked by uncertainty. Means sometimes misfire in pursuit of their intended aims and unintended consequences proliferate. "Doing is always subject to peril, to the danger of frustration" (1984b, 27). Dewey folds the contingency of action into his account of the interdependence of means and ends by distinguishing between two sorts of ends, *ends in view* and *ends actually achieved*. It is ends actually achieved that justify or condemn political means. But these ends can only be judged retrospectively. In the moment of action, agents need to project anticipated ends as hypotheses. These action-orienting hypotheses are ends in view. A politics that judges means in terms of ends requires attention to the ways the contingent nature of action introduces the risk of slippage between these two sorts of ends, ends in view and ends actually achieved.

What makes action unpredictable is its constitutively relational nature. All action is conjoint action. "Singular things act, but they act together," Dewey explains. "Nothing has been discovered which acts in entire isolation. The action of everything is along with the action of other things. The 'along with' is of such a kind that the behavior of each is modified by its connection with others" (1984a, 250). The other things we act along with are the contingent stuff of our natural and social environments. Things, persons, techniques, ideas, and values are the material and symbolic affordances of action. We are organisms who draw on the forces of our environment as the means of acting in the world. Transactions with these affordances are what Dewey refers to generically as energy in his essays on force. Environments are shifting and unstable. Things break. People disagree. Ideas grow tired and stale. The environments that facilitate conjoint action thus also come to obstruct or transform it in unforeseen ways. Just as our actions transform our environment, our environment transforms our actions. A "slight surprise of action," to borrow Bruno Latour's expression (1999, 281–292), inhabits all transaction between agents and the environments they find themselves immersed within.

[5] See also Dewey (1986a, 93; 1988b, 122–3). On Dewey's post-Darwinian conception of contingency, see Rorty (1982, 72–89), Diggins (1994, 205–79), and Rogers (2009, 25–58).

Inquiry is the practice of creatively responding to problematic situations that arise when the means of action escape their anticipated ends. The practice of inquiry lies at the heart of Dewey's conception of action (Caspary 2000; Rogers 2009). Most interaction is habitual and unreflective. When we go for a walk, build a house, or cook a dinner, we are not consciously pursuing means towards ends. We are relying on habitual knowledge to guide transaction within familiar environments. Dewey characterizes these unreflective experiences of transaction as *unproblematic* situations. Situations become *problematic* when previous habits falter in the face of some unanticipated conflict, frustration, lack, or surprise. Something suddenly demands our attention, "something the matter, something out of gear, or in some way menaced, insecure, problematical and strained" (1977, 138). Inquiry begins as a way of focusing attention, conceptualizing the problem, gathering evidence, drawing inferences from past experience, and projecting creative lines of action into the future. Dewey characterizes the end of inquiry in aesthetic terms as an experience of fulfillment or "consummation" (1987a, 22). The result of inquiry is not restoration of a past equilibrium but the qualitative reconstruction of the relationship of agent and environment that enriches their transaction and renders both more responsive to future disruptions. Inquiry, in short, is not simply an intellectual operation. It is the practice of actively reconstructing a worldly situation of conjoint activity.

For this reason, inquiry involves the active pursuit of ends in view. An end in view "is formed and projected as that which, if acted upon, will supply the existing need or lack and resolve the existing conflict" (1988d, 221). Three important features of Dewey's account of the continuity of means and ends follow from this point. The first is that ends cannot be appraised discretely from means. The anticipated consequences an actor projects as possible or impossible turn on the transactional energies furnished by the means of action before her. Means create possible ends. It follows that all projections of ends in view are means to further action. They are situated judgments of problems in experience aiming towards their creative resolution. Ends in view are "*means* in present action" (1983, 156; emphasis in original). This is the second feature. Because both the appraisal of the problem and the judgment of the means appropriate to resolve it are fallible, the actions that result from an end in view may not, and often do not, accord with the projected aims. Part of inquiry is attending to the possibility that ends actually achieved will fail to correspond with the original ends in view. This is its third feature. Where means misfire, new problematic situations arise that demand further inquiry and experimental repair. Action is the transformative process of ongoing consummation and beginning anew.

The irony of Trotsky's critique of liberalism, on this view, is that its hardheaded realism reproduces the very same separation of means and ends Trotsky criticizes. Like ends-oriented liberalisms, Trotsky's dialectical materialism abstracts means and ends from

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the uncertain experience of action in which moral and political questions emerge. The regrettable "American habit of discussing political questions in a moral vocabulary" that Dewey found exemplified by pacifism removes moral questions from the problematic situations in which they can be intelligently considered (1980a, 261). The same inquiry-obstructing abstraction is at work in Trotsky's stipulation that political strategy can only be deduced from a theoretical grasp of history's iron laws. The result is that "in avoiding one kind of absolutism Mr. Trotsky has plunged into another kind of absolutism" (Dewey 1988c, 354). Trotsky's dialectic of means and ends negates liberalism's ends-oriented absolutism only to reconstitute it at a higher level of abstraction. From pragmatism's means-oriented perspective, a sudden stroke of revolutionary violence offers no shortcut through the democratic work of fallible and experimental social inquiry in the midst of a contingent environment that perpetually escapes human mastery (1987e, 288).

What does this exchange with Trotsky reveal about Dewey's curious claim, discussed in the previous section, that the "criterion of value lies in the relative efficiency and economy of the expenditure of force as a means to an end" (1980b, 249)? At first glance, the language of mechanical efficiency appears no less context blind than Trotsky's prescription of political means on the basis of idealized ends. When Dewey's functional distinction between violence and other modes of force is reexamined within the terms of his theory of inquiry, the distinction looks quite different, however. Force becomes efficient in inquiry when it serves to creatively reconstruct the conflict or obscurity that marks a problematic situation. It is a means that transforms the situation in a manner that enriches experience and extends actors' power to address like situations in the future. Or as Dewey puts this point more cryptically in "Force and Coercion," "Efficiency requires methods which will enlist greater individual interest and attention, greater emotional and intellectual liberty" (1980b, 251). Behind the mechanical language of efficiency is a conception of the uncertain and relational nature of action as the basis for a socially-situated and context-sensitive economy of democratic judgment (Rogers 2009, 59–103).

Reinterpreted from the perspective of conjoint action, the distinction between violence and coercion becomes more clearly a question of consequences. Violence, as "force running wild," is a use of force that exacerbates a problematic situation. Human flourishing depends on the most expansive participation in inquiry into common problems. Such practices depend on practical wisdom no less than on ethical bonds of trust and mutual care. Exercises in force that sever these bonds are violence. By deepening conflicts and animosity, violence impoverishes experiences by undermining the capacity for collaborative action. Violence's impoverishment of experience is an ever-intensifying one, moreover. It is force that stalls inquiry, amplifies problems, and so perpetuates further outbursts of violence. This is what it means to say that violent means perpetuate violent ends. "Force breeds counter-force; the Newtonian law of action and reaction still holds in physics, and violence is physical" (1987c, 60). The nonviolent use of force, by contrast, facilitates the consummation of a problematic situation. It is force guided by the collaborative intelligence of actors entangled together in common problems. "Everything that is done is done by some form of power—this is a truism," Dewey writes. "But violence and war are powers, as well as a multitude of other things. Persuasion and conference are also powers, although it is easy to overestimate the degree of their power in the existing economic and international system" (1986b, 109). What role might coercion, as an experiment with power that blurs the boundaries of violence and persuasion, have to play in the democratic resolution of problematic political situations?

COERCION AND MAKING PROBLEMS PUBLIC

In *Demanding Democracy*, Stears argues that the political and economic crises of the 1930s pushed Dewey to rethink the deliberative democratic idealism characterizing his earlier writings. "During this phase, Dewey clearly separated the long-term goal of a communicative democracy—to which he remained absolutely committed—from a short-term political strategy suitable for Depression-era America that emphasized a series of distinctively nondeliberative approaches to the ongoing struggle" (Stears 2010, 95). As the encounter with Trotsky examined in the previous section illustrates, Dewey came to see the need for "other forms of political action: those resting somewhere in the middle ground between violent insurrection and communicative rationality" (2010, 97). Dewey's vision of nondeliberative means for deliberative ends is not unique to a distinct "phase" of his career, however. It is a direct consequence of the means-oriented approach to politics grounded in his philosophy of action as experimental inquiry. To demonstrate the centrality of coercion in Dewey's understanding of political action, this section examines how what is often taken to be a classical statement of deliberative democracy, Dewey's 1927 *The Public and Its Problems*, can serve as lens for articulating the means-oriented intuitions about coercion and political action expressed decades earlier in his response to the Pullman strike.

Chicago's railway workers paralyzed the city in the summer of 1894 when the American Railway Union declared a sympathy boycott with striking workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company. Railway workers in Chicago refused to switch trains carrying Pullman cars, bringing transcontinental trade passing through the nation's busiest rail hub to a grinding halt. George Pullman, the company's owner, denounced the strike as a coercive assault on "the principle that a man should have the right to manage his own property" (in Brecher 1972, 94). Despite charges of coercion, the work stoppage itself was overwhelmingly nonviolent. President Cleveland responded to labor's bold act

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of self-assertion by dispatching the military. In July, an army of fourteen thousand armed men, made up of federal troops, state militia, and private marshals hired by the railway companies, descended on Chicago to retake control of the rail system. Strikers turned to tactics of direct action to hold the yards as police and military escalated the conflict, ranging from toppling freight cars to blockading tracks to burning rail company equipment and buildings. The strike was ultimately broken by the overwhelming power of the state and the rail industry, leaving seven hundred train cars destroyed, thirteen strikers killed, and the union's president, Eugene Debs, behind bars on federal charges (Brecher 1972, 78–96; Westbrook 1991, 86–91).

The strike captivated Dewey, who had taken up a position at the University of Chicago that summer. Letters written from the early months of the strike express his sense of exhilaration.[6] He exclaims to Alice Dewey on July 2nd, "Simply as an aesthetic matter, I don't believe the world has seen but few times such a spectacle of magnificent, widespread union of men about a common interest as this strike evinces" (Dewey n.d.). Dewey's enthusiasm for the strike was not widely shared. Jane Addams, for example, described it as a "great social disaster" (Addams 2002, 163). Addams saw the strike as a tragic testament to the immaturity of the labor movement and its failure to seek consensus with management. "It is impossible to justify such a course of rage and riot in a civilized community to whom the methods of conciliation and control were open" (ibid.). Dewey disagreed with Addams's appraisal of the possibilities for conciliation. Moreover, he did not share her conviction that consensus was always preferable to conflict. In response to her arguments that "antagonism was not only useless and harmful, but entirely unnecessary," Dewey confesses in an October 10th letter, "She converted me internally, but not really, I fear. At least I can't see what all this conflict & warring of history means if it's perfectly meaningless; my pride of intellect, I suppose it is, revolts at thinking its [*sic*] all *merely* negative, and has no functional value" (n.d.; emphasis in original).

This conviction that "conflict & warring" must serve some historical purpose finds dramatic expression in a July 14th letter penned after the state broke the strike:

> As you will have found out by the papers, the strike is lost, & "Labor" is rather depressed. But if I am a prophet, it really won. The business made a tremendous impression; and while there has been a good deal of violent talk—particularly it seems to me by the "upper classes," yet the exhibition of what the unions might accomplish, if organized and working together, has not only sobered them, but given the public mind an object lesson that it won't soon forget. I think the few freight cars burned up is a pretty cheap price to pay—it was the stimulus to direct attention, & it might easily have taken more to get the social organism thinking (ibid.).

Dewey defends the strike as an efficient means of provoking "the social organism" into confronting the tensions between labor and capital that lay just under the surface of social life. As is often the case with action, however, the ends in view did not align with the ends actually achieved. Public opinion considered Debs criminally responsible and the strike itself a nuisance.[7] Dewey, too, came to consider the strike "a most inconsiderate, unreflective thing" without "a chance in a thousand for success." And yet, despite its failure to spark genuine public inquiry, the "indirect effect of the strike however will be tremendous," he writes on July 28th (ibid.). Dewey's reference to the strike's "indirect effect" is unclear but we may reasonably infer that he means to underscore the transformative effects of the action that so captivated his aesthetic imagination. Political action is a process of experimentation. Its consequences are not known in advance and they often exceed any particular ends in view. New means create the possibilities for new ends. What Dewey seemed to find so exhilarating about the spectacle of workers collaborating to shut down the national rail system was how their very response constructed new interests, forged solidarities, and brought new political selves into being. As he would put this point in a more sober tone in *Human Nature and Conduct*, means are never mere instrumentalities for achieving some desired ends. They are "an adventure in the discovery of a self which is possible but yet unrealized, an experiment in creating a self which shall be more inclusive than the one which exists" (1983, 97).

In what sense can this episode of bloody conflict be understood as an experiment in democratic means enacting democratic ends? Dewey's remarks on the Pullman strike, like his concession to Trotsky that class war in principle could be an appropriate means of democratic social change, admit a crucial role for the use of force in democratic politics (see also 1935, 291; 1987c, 61; 1987f, 294). However, Dewey elsewhere distinguishes democratic means and coercive measures as antithetical technologies of social change. He writes in "Democracy is Radical" that democratic means "are those voluntary activities of individuals in opposition to coercion; they are assent and consent in opposition to violence; they are the force of intelligent organization versus that of organization imposed from outside and above" (1987b, 298; see also 1987c, 58–9; 1988b, 153–5). These remarks appear caught in the curious contradiction of claiming that democratic inquiry cannot categorically reject the use of coercive means while characterizing the method of democracy in terms of its constitutive opposition to coercion.

One way to interpret this contradiction—particularly as it finds itself expressed in Dewey's writings from the 1930s—is as an expression of American

[6] Westbrook (2005: 86) observes that Dewey could not express these sentiments in a more public venue due to the University of Chicago's persecution of faculty members who spoke out in favor of the strike.

[7] Dewey makes allusion to this popular response to the Pullman strike in his 1932 *Ethics* when he writes, "The public sides sometimes with one party, sometimes with the other. It is likely to sympathize with the workmen as against a great corporation, unless the strike causes serious inconvenience not only to the employer but the public itself, as, for example, when a railroad is forced to cease from running trains" (1985b, 400).

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anticommunism (Feffer 2005). Here the distinction between democratic and nondemocratic is a purely stipulative one reflecting a creedal liberalism anxious to delegitimize revolutionary Marxism. While some pragmatists such as Sidney Hook embraced this form of liberal dogmatism, it is neither representative of pragmatism's means-oriented conception of politics nor the path pursued by Dewey's radical liberalism.[8] Another interpretation is suggested by Stears's language of negotiating the tension between long-term deliberative goals and short-term nondeliberative strategies; namely, that coercion is a tragic but necessary means for reconstructing social conditions where no more intelligent method is yet available. Dewey's writings provide some evidence for this interpretation. For example, in the 1932 *Ethics,* he describes militant strike action as permissible only prior to federal recognition of collective bargaining (1985b, 401; see also 1987c, 55–57). Coercion is a temporary feature of a democratizing society rather a permanent feature of a democratic society. While such passages point to a tension between Dewey's competing impulses to minimize conflict and to celebrate it as a democratic good, his emphasis on the interdependence of means and ends, as well as the permanence of action's transition into the unknown, presses against interpretations that place emphasis on a neat distinction between short-term necessities and long-term ideals.[9]

The previous discussion of Dewey's broader theory of action and inquiry points towards a means-oriented interpretation that dissolves the contradiction. Deweyan democracy opposes coercive means used to impose *outcomes on inquiry* rather than coercion used to spark a *process of inquiry*. Coercion can become a democratic means when it serves as a tool of provoking public inquiry. These are means that intensify the problematic character of a social situation that remains repressed or distorted by existing institutions, narratives, ideologies, and practices. Inquiry involves articulating problems. "The indeterminate situation becomes problematic in the very process of being subjected to inquiry," Dewey explains in *Logic* (1986c, 111). Bringing problems to light *as problems* involves practices of disrupting the status quo that suppresses them. "The method of democracy—insofar as it is that of organized intelligence—is to *bring these conflicts out into the open* where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests than are represented by either of them separately" (Dewey 1987c, 56; emphasis added). Disruptive democratic means can work to summon a public around a problematic situation demanding participatory reconstruction. Coercive tactics can become democratic technologies for making problems public.

This broader understanding of the connection between coercion and action offers a way of interpreting Dewey's remarks on the Pullman strike in terms of the theory of democratic inquiry proposed in *The Public and Its Problems*. The public is an association called into being by the contingencies of conjoint action. Unintended consequences that escape the control of existing institutions and disrupt established habits call forth the need for a public to address them. "The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for" (1984a, 245). Practices of caring for common problems are what constitute the public as a public. Individuals entangled by consequences come to discover the interconnections binding them, and so too the collective interests they share in resolving them. Subtitled "An Essay in Political Inquiry," *The Public and Its Problems* folds the theory of inquiry into the practice of participatory democracy.

Dewey's theory of the public mirrors the pattern of inquiry discussed in the previous section. Impasse strikes when an unexpected event interrupts habit's orderly flow. A process of inquiry is sparked to conceptualize the event and formulate a response. Creative ends in view become means for reconstructing and enriching the problematic situation. Political problems, however, are less transparent than the disruptive pang of hunger or the sudden surprises that Dewey considers in these previous cases. The public affected by problems is not always identical with the public formed to care for their consequences. This is because public problems are objects of disagreement (Marres 2005, 215; Myers 2013, 104). Persons and groups constituting the public entangled by common problems often disagree about the nature, scope, and even the very existence of these problems. The contested nature of public problems introduces a political question into Dewey's account of inquiry concerning how problems come to be perceived *as* problems. A problem of the public is how the public discovers itself; that is, how the *public affected* by the problem can become the *public mobilized* to address it. Labor and social movements need to reconstitute the matter of fact entwining the public together into a reflective matter of concern.[10] The facticity of problems persists, however, even where publics refuse to recognize them because problematic situations are objective moments of conflicting social forces.

Consider Dewey's characterization of the experience of problematic situations left uncared for: "At present, many consequences are felt rather than perceived; they are suffered, but they cannot be said to be known, for they are not, by those who experience them, referred to their origins" (1984a, 317). Individualism, apathy, consumerism, conformity, nationalism,

[8] Hook's turn from revolutionary pragmatism to dogmatic anticommunism, and Dewey's criticisms of the latter, are discussed in Phelps (1997, 210–33). Eldridge (2002), discussing Dewey's role as lead author of New York Teacher Union Local 5's grievance committee report, offers powerful evidence against the charge that ideological anticommunism was a primary factor shaping Dewey's characterization of coercion as undemocratic.

[9] See Westbrook (2005, 95) on the tension between Dewey's more conservative and more radical impulses concerning conflict.

[10] I follow Myers (2013, 85–138) in using the Latourian distinction between "matters of fact" and "matters of concern" to characterize this aspect of Dewey's account of public inquiry.

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religious fundamentalism, and war are some of the many confused expressions of the experienced contradictions of liberal capitalism Dewey calls on his readers to actively perceive and address rather than passively suffer (1984a 315–324; 1984c, 66–76; 1988b, 99–115). How can the public find itself in the midst of this confusion—pinned between competitive individuals who refuse to acknowledge their mutual entanglement under the illusion of an atomistic liberalism, an economy based on private ownership, and a political tradition of alienating power to elite representatives? Ideological naturalization of the status quo obstructs the road to inquiry. Similarly, political institutions become unresponsive to social change and unanticipated surprises. Problematic situations where political and economic institutions block inquiry, where authoritative ideologies suppress common problems, and where material conflicts are left unaddressed, are ones ready to explode. "The belief in political fixity, of the sanctity of some form of state consecrated by the efforts of our fathers and hallowed by tradition, is one of the stumbling blocks in the way of orderly and directed change; it is an invitation to revolt and revolution" (1984a, 257; see also 1983, 125). A revolutionary situation looms on the horizon of problems left unresolved. The alternative, however, is not simply a demand for better deliberation. Mobilized publics *force* problems into common view. Democratic inquiry sometimes demands disrupting the habits of thoughts, social norms, and ruling institutions that perpetuate a problematic status quo. As Dewey puts this point in a suggestive passage, "To form itself, the public has to break existing political forms" (1984a, 255).

What does it mean to "break" political forms? Reaching back to Dewey's essays on force, this passage can be taken to suggest that norms, practices, and institutions that obstruct democratic inquiry constitute modes of institutional violence. They actively impoverish collective experience, inhibit free and equal development, and stand in the way of participatory reconstruction. The Pullman strike perpetuated a national crisis by forcing a latent problem out into the public, even if this inquiry was cut short by state repression. That Dewey saw the strike's coercive confrontation with a structurally violent status quo as unleashing participatory possibilities for social reconstruction points towards the potentially democracy-promoting effects of public disruptions. The strike becomes a democratic means not by destroying the capitalist order, but by problematizing class domination and inequality as problems for the public. Additionally, the experience of the strike transformed the workers' identities and their collective capacities for action. Even as they failed to sway public opinion, Dewey saw the creation of new interests, solidarities, capacities, and ends in view as prefiguring the public's capacity for broader and deeper democratic action.[11] The "improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion" is only one of the public's problems (1984a, 365). Its "most urgent problem," Dewey writes, is discovering itself as bound by common consequences (1984a, 370). For this reason, democratic inquiry demands experiments in making problems public.

RESITUATING DEMOCRATIC THEORY BETWEEN ENDS AND MEANS

Dewey stated the basic problem of a means-oriented politics a century ago when he posed the question, "What is force, and what are we going to do with it?" (1980c, 211**)**. This article has examined Dewey's answer to this question across his writings on action, inquiry, and militant labor politics in order to reconstruct the meaning of his maxim that democratic ends demand democratic means. Dewey's engagements with the question of how to democratically reconstruct the means and meaning of economic production reveal a more contentious and coercive conception of political action than conventional portrayals of pragmatist political thought would suggest. Seeing beyond these familiar conscriptions of pragmatism also discloses a means-oriented alternative to the ends-oriented orthodoxies of idealism and realism in contemporary democratic theory.

Compare pragmatism's stress on the interdependence of means and ends with the prioritization of ends over means proposed by the ideal/non-ideal theory distinction. Ideal theory prioritizes normative visions of how political conduct ought to proceed as the grounds for criticizing concrete political practices that take place under nonideal conditions of unequal power, exclusion, and disrespect. Deliberative democracy, as a critical model of the conditions of democratic legitimation, is one such example of ideal theory. As Gutmann and Thompson explain, deliberative democracy "is not intended to be a description of current political reality. It is an aspirational ideal" (2004, 37). Dewey thought dichotomizing theory and practice in order to fix a source of authority beyond the vagaries of experience to be the great vice of modern moral philosophy. In pursuit of normative authority untouched by the uncertainty of action, these theories turn away from the messy world of experience that provides the only reliable resource for constructing intelligent responses to reality. It is no surprise, then, that Dewey, like ideal theory's contemporary critics, took the prioritization of ends over means to displace urgent political questions of how the public can respond to its pressing problems and as unwittingly supplying "the apparatus for intellectual justification of the established order" (1982, 188).

The prioritization of ends over means is evident in even the most context-sensitive statements of deliberative democracy. Jane Mansbridge and a group of leading theorists of deliberative democracy argue that the deliberative ideal occasional authorizes coercive actions such as strikes and civil disobedience in order to redress inequalities of power and forms of exclusion obstructing deliberative listening and reciprocity. Acts of coercion that equalize power can

[11] Medearis (2015, 141–49) draws similar implications from Dewey's means-ends continuum for conceptualizing civil disobedience.

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sometimes contribute to "creating conditions for good deliberation" (Mansbridge et al. 2010, 82). Moreover, coercion is occasionally required to defend oneself from opponents who refuse to abide by deliberative norms. This is a laudable expansion of deliberative democracy beyond the categorical prohibition on coercion that marked many of the theory's earlier statements. However, this consequentialist argument for the legitimacy of coercion as a "remedial force introduced to correct or publicize a failure or weakness" in deliberation remains beholden to the notion that the use of force is a tragic concession morality must make to reality rather than an irreducible register of political action in which means and ends are interdependent (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 18). As John Medearis argues, democratic theory might find value in coercive actions such as strikes beyond their role as instrumental means for approximating deliberative ends. "They may represent an insistence on autonomy in expanding one's labor. They may help participants enlarge their capacities to act politically, to cooperate actively with like-minded people, or to express themselves, deliberatively or not" (2015, 44). Appeals to the end of reciprocal listening and mutual respect alone, moreover, provide actors with little orientation for negotiating the concrete and often unpredictable consequences such means hold for ends. Better, from a pragmatist perspective, is a consequentialism that confronts these questions from the perspective of political action as an open and uncertain process of public experimentation.

Rejecting the priority of ends over means is not license for amoral realism, however. Stears comes close to this conclusion in his account of the American radical democratic tradition. On his account, the project of seeking strategic means reflecting democratic ends inevitably comes crashing up against the paradox of politics. The practical struggle for ideal democratic ends demands nondemocratic means in the nonideal present. Radical democrats like Dewey asked citizens to "cast aside many of the traditional behavioral constraints that restricted their political conduct" and embrace "forms of conduct that might be rightly described as adversarial, manipulative, and even coercive" (Stears 2010, 5, 12). The urgent need for "an egalitarian corrective" to the inequality of mid-century America licensed "dramatic political means," including deceit and violence (2010, 94, 96). Stears rightly argues that "there can be no sweeping rules in democratic theory" for where to draw the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate political strategies without attention to the contexts in which democratic struggles unfold (2010, 214). In framing the challenge of radical democracy as an unresolvable paradox of ideal theory under nonideal conditions, however, Stears's realism reiterates deliberative democracy's disjunction of ends from means. His conclusion that democratic theory needs "to separate the two forms of democratic theorizing"—moral idealism and strategic realism—in order to occupy the tension between them offers little guidance as to exactly what it means to negotiate the paradox or craft the kinds of political judgments that these radical democrats did about the limits of appropriate means in their struggle for deeper democracy (2010, 54).

Emphasizing the interdependence of means and ends, by contrast, shows the paradox to be only an apparent one by circumventing the distinction between ideal theory and nonideal practice. In its place, a means-oriented politics proposes a dynamic conception of political experimentation where values and strategies interpenetrate in an open process of conjoint action. One contribution of this way of understanding Dewey's democratic theory is the perspective it offers for judging the shifting boundaries between democratic and nondemocratic means. "Certainly nothing can justify or condemn except ends, results," Dewey argues. "But we have to include consequences impartially. Even admitting that lying will save a man's soul, whatever that may mean, it would still be true that lying will have other consequences, namely, the usual consequences that follow from tampering with good faith and that lead lying to be condemned" (1983, 157). The "usual consequences" that follow from nondemocratic means, like acts of violence that aim to resolve public problems rather than open them up to experimental reconstruction, are deepening disagreement and mistrust that impoverish the public and intensifies its problems. Democratic means, by contrast, are those practices that build solidarities rather than destroy them, that bind actors in common problems rather than polarize perceptions, and enrich the public's ability to deal with ever-new problems to come rather than deepening animosity and mistrust. Where violence ends and nonviolence coercion begins is not a question answered by more rigorous definitions; it is a political question that must be continually reexamined. "The emphasis of liberalism upon liberty of inquiry, communication, and organization does not commit it to unqualified pacifism," Dewey writes, "but to the unremitting use of every method of intelligence that conditions permit—and to search for all that are possible" (1987f, 294). How to creatively unite intelligence and force is a problem for the public, and for political theory, no less urgent than improving the conditions of discussion and debate.

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