

MARCUS RASKIN

Marcus Raskin has been an intellectual pillar of the movements for progressive social change for nearly a half-century. In 1962, Raskin resigned a post at the National Security Council after watching the Cuban missile blockade bring the world to the brink of nuclear incineration and the disastrous U.S. military build-up in Vietnam. He founded the Institute for Policy Studies with fellow Kennedy administration official Richard Barnet in 1963 and built the organization into the premier progressive think tank in the nation's capital. The author of more than 20 books, Raskin has spent much of his career calling for the dismantling of the "national security state" (a term he coined) and the reconstruction of institutions to support real democracy.

CURRENT WORK

Raskin is an active Distinguished Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies, in addition to teaching at George Washington University's School of Public Policy. A professor and adjunct professor in Stephen Joel Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration, Raskin teaches national security, philosophy and practice of public policy and social movements as they affect the shaping and implementation of public policy. He also taught as a Fulbright lecturer in Germany in 1980. At GW Raskin has team-taught in the political science and sociology departments.

Raskin is completing, Judgment and Choice in Public Policy, which continues his work on reconstruction begun in Being & Doing. He is also working on two novels, a memoir, and a new recording of piano compositions to be released in 2008-2009. Mapleshade Records released his first piano recording, Elegy for the Cold War, in 2004.

He has published three works of nonfiction in the past few years, Liberalism: The Genius of American Ideals; In Democracy's Shadow: The Secret World of National Security, with American University professor Carl LeVan; and The Four Freedoms under Siege: The Clear and Present Danger from Our National Security State, with the journalist Robert Spero. He advises the Congressional Progressive Caucus and conceptualized the network of local elected officials that evolved into IPS's Cities for Peace project, which has coordinated hundreds of city council resolutions against the Iraq War.

EARLY YEARS

Born in Milwaukee in 1934, Raskin was a piano prodigy who left home to study at New York's Juilliard School at the age of 16 as a special student. Although he has remained an accomplished pianist throughout his life, he abandoned a career in music to study politics and law at the University of Chicago. (AB) 1954, J.D. (1957)

In 1958, he moved to Washington, where he became legislative counsel to a number of congressmen before entering the White House as a member of the National Security Council's Special Staff, working under National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy.

In 1962, he was a member of the U.S. delegation to an 18-nation disarmament conference in Geneva. However, tensions ran high with Bundy, who supported the escalation of U.S.

military engagement in Indo-China at that time, and Raskin decided to pursue the creation of an independent institution outside government to critique official policy.

He co-authored the Vietnam Reader with Bernard Fall, which was used in dozens of teach-ins across the country. In 1968, he shared the honor of being indicted—along with William Sloane Coffin, Dr. Benjamin Spock and two others known as the “Boston 5”—for conspiracy to aid resistance to the draft. Not long after his acquittal, he co-authored Washington Plans an Aggressive War with Barnet and Ralph Stavins, based on the Pentagon Papers and hundreds of interviews.

THE LAST THREE DECADES

With the publication of his book Being & Doing to rave reviews in 1971, Raskin became the country’s leading thinker on the theory of “social reconstruction.” According to Library Journal, Raskin “foresees a peaceful process of non-Marxist reconstruction that will replace authoritarianism and the status quo with politics of the people and a redefined social ethic.”

The San Francisco Chronicle called it "a watershed book, an important indictment of our society by a political thinker who in some quarters is held to be the most brilliant in the field." In 1977, 56 members of Congress, led by Congressional Black Caucus Dean John Conyers, requested that IPS undertake an analysis of the federal budget. Raskin directed the project, which led to the publication of the 1978 book The Federal Budget and Social Reconstruction.

In the 1980s, Raskin became a leader in the anti-nuclear movement as the Chair of the Sane Freeze campaign. He also worked with labor leaders to organize the Progressive Alliance, a coalition of 16 labor unions and 100 public interest groups that laid out a progressive alternative political agenda. In 1994, Raskin convened a meeting of prominent thinkers to plot out a series of books and activities that would chart an alternative course for the new millennium. He published his own thoughts on the end of the 20th century in 1998, in the book Visions and Revisions.

Library Journal commented that “At a time when the political Left in general, and the Democratic party specifically, stands in a state of almost total disarray, individuals of that political persuasion must look long and hard for a confident and articulate spokesperson. Raskin comes about as close to fulfilling this role as one is likely to find. In this collection of essays, Raskin ... offers a broadly based critique of both our own political culture and the world's. Calling for a thoroughgoing reconstruction (in place of the current deconstruction offered by the Right), Raskin attempts to formulate the philosophical basis for a revitalized liberalism.”

PATHS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Raskin is also the editor of a series of books laying out Paths of Reconstruction for the 21st Century. The goal of this project is to generate ideas and proposals across disciplinary lines that catalyze citizen action and help other scholars and activists pursue

their own inquiries. Thus far, the project has published three books - on economic justice (by Robin Hahnel), the business of America (by Saul Landau), and American ideology (by Andrew Levine).

Over the next four years, three more volumes are planned: 1.) Organizing Transnational Social Movements for Economic and Social; 2.) Rethinking the American Constitution: Rights, Problems, and Power; and 3.) Conditions of Decency: Social Caring, Health and Education.

In all his work, Raskin aims, in his words, “to re-factualize,” or present facts in a new way that can change consciousness. Over more than four decades, he has undoubtedly changed the consciousness of hundreds of young scholars he has mentored, not to mention scores of policy- and opinion-makers. Honoring military resistance to war, with Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto and former IPS intern David Cortright, author of *Soldiers in Revolt*.

COMMENTS FROM OTHERS

"Marc Raskin is America's most important intellectual." - Joseph D. Duffy, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities "Raskin is a fascinating figure, the epitome—like Sartre or Marx—of the intellectual engagé." - Doug Ireland, 1980 "Marcus Raskin's analysis of our current condition and prospects for the future is thoughtful and humane, and eminently practical, touching on virtually every aspect of existence in a tour de force of remarkable skill and originality." - Noam Chomsky (on *The Common Good*), 1986 "Raskin brings a unique and creative imagination to the examination and illumination of today's issues." - George McGovern, 1986 "If there were a few more citizens like him—tough, skeptical, and alert—American democracy might cease to be a spectator sport and become a viable enterprise." – Barbara Ehrenreich, 1991 "Raskin is an original thinker, who has been living what he writes through his work with IPS." – J. William Fulbright, 1991 "Marc Raskin remains an original voice for sanity and true democracy in running the nation's security affairs."

- Seymour Hersh, 1991 "Raskin's greatest contributions to three decades of debate over foreign and defense policy were his 1960s epiphanies of the national security state. He urges us to dismantle this state, which has disfigured American public life with its enshrinement of executive privilege, secretive bureaucracies, and neglect of the domestic order. The prescriptions for what to build in its place stem from Raskin's irrepressible idealism, optimism—and moralism." - Robert L. Beisner, *Washington Post*, 1991

"Marcus Raskin is unquestionably our foremost theoretician and practitioner of liberalism."- Richard Falk, Princeton University, 2004

"Marcus Raskin's book *Liberalism* is a rare combination of deep insight, apt anecdote, and genuine concern for others."- Rep. John Conyers, 2007

BOOKS BY MARCUS RASKIN

- The Limits of Defense, with Arthur Waskow (1962)
- The Vietnam Reader, with Bernard B. Fall (1965)
- A Citizen's White Paper on American Policy in Vietnam and Southeast Asia (1965)
- After 20 Years: Alternatives to the Cold War in Europe, with Richard J. Barnet (1965)
- Being and Doing: An Inquiry Into the Colonization, Decolonization and Reconstruction of American Society and Its State (1971)
- Washington Plans An Aggressive War, with Ralph L. Stavins and Richard J. Barnet (1971)
- An American Manifesto, with Richard Barnet (1971)
- Notes on the Old System: To Transform American Politics (1974)
- The American Political Deadlock: Colloquium on Latin America and the United States: Present and Future of their Economic and Political Relations, Oaxtepec (1975)
- Next Steps for a New Administration (1976)
- The Federal Budget and Social Reconstruction: The People and the State (1978)
- The Politics of National Security (1979)
- The Common Good: Its Politics, Policies, and Philosophy (1986)
- New Ways of Knowing, with Herbert J. Bernstein (1987)
- Winning America: Ideas and Leadership for the 1990s, with Chester Hartman (1988)
- Abolishing the War System: The Disarmament and International Law Project of the Institute for Policy Studies and the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (1992)

- Presidential Disrespect: From Thomas Paine to Rush Limbaugh - How and Why We Insult, Scorn and Ridicule Our Chief Executives, with Sushila Nayak (1997) (2008)
- Essays of a Citizen: From National Security State to Democracy (1991)
- Visions and Revisions: Reflections on Culture and Democracy at the End of the Century (1998)
- Liberalism: The Genius of American Ideals (2003)
- In Democracy's Shadow: The Secret World of National Security, with Carl LeVan (2005)
- The Four Freedoms Under Siege: The Clear and Present Danger from Our National Security State, with Robert Spero (2006) paperback (2008)

Raskins' books have been translated and published in Germany, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia. He has appeared on national and international television for extended interviews regarding matters of foreign and domestic policies including major US networks as well as Canadian Broadcasting, Australian Pacifica, NPR British television, Telesur and local radio stations. Print media includes op-ed and commentary in Japanese, German, English, Italian, and Russian newspapers; US Newspapers op-eds include: Washington Post, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Newsday, Los Angeles Times, and the Baltimore Sun. His articles and reviews have appeared in the Historical Review, Chicago Review, Harvard Education Review, and Scientific American.