

# HETERO DOXY

ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



## 150 YEARS OF EVIL

It has been hardly a decade since the statues of Lenin were toppled throughout the Soviet empire and the head of Karl Marx was severed once and for all from any connection to a body politic. Yet the lips of the severed head continue to move.

In the West leading intellectuals—many who would not allow themselves to be called Marxists—profess to hear a message they insist is relevant to our times. Thus the rush to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, the only text that most of the millions of soldiers in Marxist vanguards around the world ever read.

The *Manifesto* was an incitement to totalitarian ambitions whose results were far bloodier than those inspired by *Mein Kampf*. In it Marx announced the doom of free market societies, declared the liberal bourgeoisie to be a “ruling class” and the democratic state its puppet, summoned proletarians and their intellectual vanguard to begin civil wars in their own countries, and thereby launched the most destructive movement in human history.

Yet this birthday celebration in the commanding heights of our political culture is marked not by judgments of its historical malevolence or even by cautionary admonitions to potential disciples, but by fulsome praise for its brilliant analyses and even more preposterously for its analytic profundity and prescience. Both the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, not to mention usual



suspects like *The Nation*, have embarrassed themselves by asserting the indispensability of this tract for understanding the failings of the very system which brought Marxism to its knees—capitalism.

We might expect this of a former Communist and present-day Marxist like Eric Hobsbawm, who contributed the egregious introduction to an anniversary edition of the *Manifesto* published by the *New Left Review*'s Verso Press. But it is passing strange to be presented with so historically unconscious a statement from the *New York Times*. Given the current state of the intellectual culture, it is no doubt appropriate that the *Times* would pick a professor of English literature for the task (English departments being virtually the last redoubts of the Marxist faith this side of Havana). But it is ironic that the professor, Steven Marcus,

should be a protégé of Lionel Trilling, one of the most perceptive liberal critics of Marxism. For Marcus has written nothing less than a birthday ode to the irascible and demonic genius from Trier, under the title “Marx's Masterpiece at 150.”

According to Marcus and the *Times*: “The *Manifesto* was and is a work of immense autonomous historical importance. It marks the accession of social and intellectual consciousness to a new stage of inclusiveness. It has become part of an integral modern sensibility . . . and it remains so, after the demise of Soviet Communism and its satellite regimes, the descent into moribundity of Marxist movements in the world and the end of the cold war.”

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RIP**

**Is Homer Dead  
or Sleeping?**

**Paycheck  
Protection**

**Bilingual  
Showdown**

### GANGSTA RAPPER TAKES TINSLETOWN BY STORM RACIAL CUBISM

by Shane Smith

**N**ewsweek recently gave a respectful notice to *The Player's Club*, a new film about a black female student putting herself through college by working as a stripper that opened in late April with an \$8 million box office, the highest per-screen average of any movie that week. Even more, the magazine's critic enthused about the writer and director of the movie, a young black man, born O'Shea Jackson, who is better known as Ice Cube. A rapper with a new album in the works, the Cube has already made a small name as an actor scowling his way through roles in films like John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood* and *Higher Learning*, as well as the thriller *Anaconda*, where he disses the monster.

*Newsweek* sees the 28-year-old Ice Cube as someone who is “becoming a force in Hollywood,” an artist who moves easily between film and the rap music where he made his reputation for what the magazine calls “brutal social commentaries.” But such a statement is tantamount to praising a white country-western singer whose lyrics obsess on torturing and killing blacks for having a “bittersweet take on race relations.” It is, of course, inconceivable to imagine such praise for a white racist artist. But the other side of the coin which bears the image of Ice Cube rings nicely at music stores and at box offices in theaters across the country. Writer and performer of rap songs that glorify drug dealing, murder, misogyny, and violent racism, Ice Cube is seen only as an angry young black man whose talent is a diamond in the rough.

Critics who see the Cube as a noble savage ought to spend a little more time with his lyrics. Starting with his first CD release in 1988, made with fellow rap-

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## COMMUNIQUÉS

## RAGIN' AGAINST THE RAGE

*Heterodoxy* was duped. The fact that Norah Vincent's anti-male rant was directed against gay men does not make it any more palatable ("The Rage of a Privileged Class," March 1998). It's still the ideology of resentment and victimization against (gay) men keeping (lesbian) women down. One example: Vincent is livid that the national glossy magazine *Out* fired Sarah Pettit and replaced her with a (ugh) male. She writes, "*Out* was offing a female honcho who just couldn't seem to cater enough to its 70 percent male readership . . . The reason: gay men are raving misogynists and lesbians . . . are the untouchables of the elite gay male world. It's no surprise, then, that a woman was ousted from the top job at *Out*." Puleaze! This is the same ideology of gender victimization and resentment that *Heterodoxy* usually rips. Did you know that upon her firing, Pettit told the *New York Times* she was contemplating a sex discrimination lawsuit against *Out*'s owners, for the transgression of deciding to change the editorial direction of their magazine and no longer requiring her services? (Whenever a feminist is fired and replaced by a male, it's always sex discrimination.) Is it ridiculous to think that a magazine with a 70 percent male readership should focus more on men than women (apparently, Pettit and Vincent think so). Was the male president who fired Pettit guilty of sexism when he originally promoted her to the position? Pettit's last cover story was a fawning celebratory interview with—get this—Angela Davis, the Communist Party USA activist. Under new editor James Collard the magazine has been less political and more the culture and lifestyle magazine that its readers seem to want. (Eight letters in the current issue take aim at the Angela Davis cover story, for all the right reasons.) Vincent, I should add, does point out many destructive lunacies on the part of some gay male activists, such as the Sex Panic gang. But her underlying venom toward (gay) men for our supposed income privilege and our oppressive misogyny, her claim that most gay men view lesbians as the lowest form of life is right out of the (lesbian) feminist handbook—and the ideological basis upon which lesbian feminists have won leadership quotas in all major lesbigay political, social, and cultural groups, which, by the way, they now dominate—often to the total exclusion of gay men.

Stephen H. Miller  
Arlington, VA

It is an understatement of major proportion to say that I was dismayed and disheartened to read "The Rage of a Privileged Class" by Norah Vincent. It is almost an impossible task to list and respond to the inaccuracies, half-truths, outright lies and negative innuendoes in that antigay propaganda bilge. First of all, the underpinning of the article was the Human Rights Campaign (formerly the Human Rights Campaign Fund). This organization is nothing more than a large apologist and supporter of the Democrat Party that throws nice black-tie dinners for its donors. I discovered an interesting parallel on page three of the same issue of *Heterodoxy*, where, under the heading of

"Paycheck Protection," you (or your writers) made the following observation: "On average, 40 percent of union households vote Republican, but 98 percent of union money goes to Democrats." Substitute the words "Human Rights Campaign" for "union" and you have the precise situation in the gay community. For many years, HRC has collected funds from (primarily) gay men in exchange for putting on events featuring prominent celebrities. Contributors are called "members" but they have absolutely no voice as to the expenditure of HRC funds to political candidates or otherwise. HRC claims to be "bipartisan," but it overwhelmingly contributes to Democrat candidates—in the 98 percent plus range—even when the Republican candidate is considered "gay friendly," based on his or her voting record. I might point out that HRC endorsed Clinton for reelection—months before either the Democrat or Republican conventions

happened motivated by a desire to find a publisher. Saturday nights at a Sunset Boulevard night club are far more drug-enhanced and at least as sexually charged as a circuit party—and that's where the heterosexuals party.

James R. Baird, Jr.  
Los Angeles, CA

For several years now I've found *Heterodoxy* a refreshing critique of the usual knee-jerk liberal pieties and hand-wringing, always well supported by careful attention to the facts. So I was surprised when Norah Vincent, in her breathless piece on gay sexual politics, alleged that *Out*'s former editor was "ousted" (her word, not mine) just because she's a woman. That's an unpleasant charge these days, and I'd think any fair-minded journalist would have contacted the other side before leveling it. But I never got a call, a fax, a letter, even an e-mail—nor, as far as I can tell, did any of my fellow managers at *Out*. Next time Ms. Vincent decides to throw around dangerous charges, she might check things a little more closely. P.S. Take my word for it. No one at *Out*'s HRC was wealthy, and the Armani tux was bought at a sample sale.

Steve Pippin  
Vice President  
Out Publishing, Inc.

## PSEUDOSCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

David Horowitz's "Karl Marx and the L. A. Times" is excellent, and focuses usefully on the incredible persistence of Marxian follies in our society. Let me point out that while we are burying Marxian myths there is one more to lay to rest that Horowitz does not address, and that is that Marxian Socialism is "scientific." That particular folly owes more to the high-school drop-out Friedrich Engels than to Marx. But Engels' sole-authored 1880 pamphlet "Socialism—Utopian and Scientific" actually had a larger sale and distribution than the *Communist Manifesto*. It proved to be an enormously effective means of selling ideas that we call "Marxian," but which owed at least as much to Engels, including the term "Marxist" itself. Morris Hillquit, for example, the leader of American Socialism, acknowledged that it was Engels' pamphlet that won him to socialism. This pamphlet was the foundation for the widespread but absurdly erroneous notion that Marx and Engels were Sons of the Enlightenment who applied the principles of natural science to social science. But anyone who has read the contentious, sarcastic gibes at Sir Isaac Newton that litter the works, both of Marx and of Engels, would laugh at this idea. The very word *Aufklärung*, German for "Enlightenment," is not to be found in the 49 volumes of the collected works of both men. Those are some of the points made in the only full-length critique of the scientific content of socialism that I know about my own manuscript "Road to Gulag: A Century of Pseudoscientific Socialism."

Lawrence Cranberg  
Austin, TX

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Send your comments to  
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were held, or the Republican nominee even chosen. As a side note, your author Ms. Vincent states: "Here's a little known secret of queer life: Lesbians . . . are the untouchables of the elite gay male world. It's no surprise that a woman was ousted from the top job at *Out*." It seems a bit queer, to coin a phrase, that Ms. Vincent didn't bother to mention that the executive director of HRC is a lesbian, Elizabeth Birch. It is also significant to point out that many of the leaders of other gay organizations of major prominence are also lesbians, including Lori Jean who heads the largest gay and lesbian social services group in the country, the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center. The imaginative hatchet job Ms. Vincent did on the so-called "gay circuit parties" merely emulates her pattern of disparagement of homosexuals in general and gay men in particular. It's preposterous to refer to these party-going men as a "privileged elite." I've been to a couple of these events and am acquainted with dozens and dozens of gay men who have attended one or more of these parties. Straight Mardi Gras in New Orleans (which I've also attended) is eons more Bacchanalian than these "circuit" parties. Of course, there are some financially well-off gays who choose to spend their income on attending more than one of these events each year, but by far the main participants are men with average or less than average income who want to enjoy the excitement of being part of a dance that attracts 10,000 other men of similar tastes. The orgies so vividly described by your Ms. Vincent are figments of her biased, super-feminist, male-hating personal agenda—or per-

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# REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

**BRAVESKIRTS:** Although diversity is the *sum-mum bonum* of the multicultural university and cross-dressing a subject studied affirmatively in chic postmodern courses on sexuality, when Jerry Griffin, 49, a Scottish-American admissions counselor at the University of California at Davis showed up for work wearing a skirt, he was told to take it off. The occasion was National Tartan Day, a new Scottish-American holiday recently approved by the U.S. Senate, and Griffin was wearing the blue, black, and green kilt of Clan Donald, the largest and most powerful of the Scots highland clans. The day marked the signing on April 6, 1320, of the Declaration of Arbroath, which asserted Scottish sovereignty in the face of English attempts to conquer Scotland, a story told in the movie *Braveheart*. However, April 6 was also the beginning of UC-Davis Welcome Week and Griffin's supervisor told him that he did not want newly admitted students and their parents to see a man in a skirt. But Griffin was not mollified. "Why was my expression of ethnicity questioned?" he asked. "What was inappropriate about it? The dress code here only forbids offensive T-shirts or cutoffs. . . . Where do you draw the line?" Mr. Griffin asks. "A guy with dreadlocks or if my Japanese co-worker wears a kimono?" Griffin says the deeper issue is that European diversities are not recognized as diversities on today's campus. After he notified local media and then posted a notice about the incident on the Internet, Griffin got hundreds of e-mails in response from as far away as New Zealand and Rabat, Morocco, from a largely, but not exclusively, Scottish crowd. The university chancellor's office got about 45 e-mails, provoking Chancellor Larry N. Vanderhoef to write one man who complained, "Having a great-grandmother from Scotland myself . . . I ask that you not draw general conclusions about UC-Davis based upon this incident." Meanwhile, the local branch of Clan MacLean has offered to station naked blue-painted soldiers—a Pictish custom highlighted in battle scenes from *Braveheart*—in front of the campus admissions building as a lesson to the university.

**RE-IMAGINING BLASPHEMY:** The Re-Imagining Movement, which broke on the American church scene with a notorious 1993 conference lauding pagan goddesses and offering a substitute milk and honey "eucharist" while worshipping Sophia, is back at it again. Funded by mainstream denominations (which give a new twist to the old Leninist maxim that capitalists would sell the rope used to hang them), 1,000 Re-Imagineers met again in late April in St. Paul, Minnesota. Opening ceremonies took place in a darkened room with lampstands of flame, beating drums, and dancing women. Mary Farrell Bednarowski, one of the keynote speakers, announced one of the themes of the meeting: "To ask about someone's story is theology." Later she told the crowd, "I don't think anyone here thinks she is God or Goddess, not with a capital 'G' anyway." Rita Nakashima Brock, another speaker, congratulated Re-Imagineers on opposing rape, violence, Western imperialism, multi-national corporations, structural adjustment and welfare "deform." The attempt to shock through extravagant sacrilege was present throughout the proceedings, especially in statements like one by Carter Heyward: "Listening week after week to

the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer is likely to be more damaging to women and girls than a sexy come-on by a sleazy priest." The final ceremony of the weekend was the ritual biting of the apple to symbolize a woman's solidarity with Eve in her rebellion against male authority and phallogocentric knowledge. Yawn.

**A FOX IN THE CHICKENHOUSE:** Critics of the plantation mentality behind affirmative action have often suggested that the push for race preferences might well conceal unconscious racial preju-

Association meeting in San Diego featured 12,000 educationists gathered for such themes as: "Who Is Master and What Are the Tools"; "A Critical Conversation on Race, Class, Gender, Postcolonialism and Other Standpoints in Educational Research"; "Hope Reinscribed: The Struggle for a Revolutionary Multiculturalism"; "Fast Capitalism, Fast Feminism and Some Fast Food for Thought"; "Making Things Perfectly Queer; Dance, Power and Difference"; "Marx and the Red Shoes—Toward a Critical Pedagogy of the Body; A Feminist Pedagogy for Children's Dance"; "Transgression and the Situated Body—Sex, Gender and the Gay Male Teacher." Two sessions were dedicated to the memory of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian Marxist loon who believed that to teach children things they didn't know was to oppress them. Star of the show was Peter McLaren (see "Crits and Bloods," *Heterodoxy*, May-June 1996), a Canadian Marxist who led a session on "Epistemologies of Whiteness." James Pennell of Auburn University advanced the "total integration" of sports, equal numbers of males and females on the field and court at all times. As Orwell said, some ideas are so stupid only intellectuals can believe them.

**SIC TRANSIT GLORIA:** Gloria Steinem recently keynoted Stanford University's annual celebration of Herstory day, a celebration of the role of women in history. The talk (which was not really a talk because Steinem announced that a formal speech had hierarchical structure and hierarchy is based on patriarchy) ruminated on future feminist revolutions. Noting that the truth is what will set you free, but first it will piss you off, Steinem noted, among other things, that Mozart had a genius sister and that maybe some of his compositions are hers, and suggested that an ancient American tribe known as the Moundbuilders may have built a settlement the size of London in America before the European settlers arrived. Then the founder of *Ms.* Turning her attention to religion, said that religious structures were built to resemble the female body, the outer and inner structures

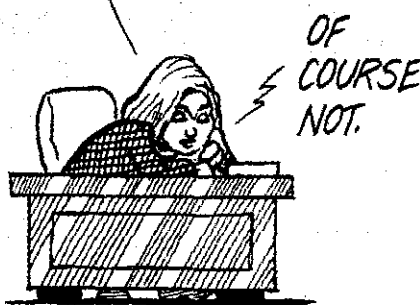
of a church representing the labia majora and minora of the female anatomy, the central aisle the vagina, the two halves of the church the ovaries, and the altar the womb. There, men—often dressed in skirts—sprinkle imitation birth fluid and proclaim you will be born again. To Steinem, monotheism is but imperialism in religion.

**DOWN THERE:** "Let's celebrate our cervix!" Thus begins an essay in *Rites*, a monthly publication by the Womyn's Center at Chico State University. Noting that she'd given "sex talks" to over 700 students, the writer complains that "many women did not even know that an orgasm stemmed from their clitoris. In fact, the majority of the women did not even know what to call their genitals, or they would call everything the 'vagina' or the parts 'down there,' and many had never been taught by their mothers, fathers or schools what the clitoris was or even the name. It took all my power to keep me from screaming, 'Why not? Men look at their penises everyday! They touch them, play with them, look at them, name them, inspect them, take pride in them, and are encouraged to do so their whole lives.' I believe strongly that we, as women, need to cherish our vulva, ovaries, uterus, cervix, and of course, my favorite, our clitoris." Your tax dollars at work.

## LUNA BEACH By Carl Moore



SO IN YOUR OPINION THE PRESIDENT IS NOT AN OAFISH SEXUAL HARASSER.



IT'LL REALLY HELP IF I CAN SAY GLORIA STEINEM IS IN HIS CORNER.



ABSOLUTELY, HILLARY.



dices. Such a view got a boost when Houston's Director of Affirmative Action was forced to resign in late April after calling city councilman Joe Roach, who is a dwarf, a "midget." As part of her farewell, Lenoria Walker said in her resignation letter: "For me to continue would actually harm the mayor's efforts toward diversity, fairness, and inclusion." Walker's comment came during a panel discussion at the annual meeting of the country's black mayors. After saying it, she broke into nervous laughter. At first Ms. Walker was asked only to accept a three-day suspension without pay and to write a letter of apology to Roach. But an analysis of a tape of other of her comments revealed that Ms. Walker, who is black and who played a major role in the campaign to vote down a ballot measure last fall that would have abolished affirmative action in Houston, made other questionable comments. "I didn't use everybody in my office," Ms. Walker said at the conference when discussing the defense of affirmative action. "I mean I have whites, Hispanics, whatever. I used the ones that I knew was genuine and the ones that I knew wanted to save affirmative action."

**WHERE HAVE ALL THE LEFTISTS GONE?:** Gone to the education industry, every one. The mid-April American Education Research





# ELECTION IN CALIFORNIA: THE

## Prop 226: Put Up Your David Dukes

by Cris Rapp

**"S**tand strong! Stand tall! Stand on your convictions!" California Assemblyman Carl Washington, a first-term Democrat from Los Angeles, was speaking on the north steps of the state capitol building in Sacramento, displaying the timbre and cadence learned in his days as a preacher. His booming voice, decibels louder than any other speaker at the rally, caused passersby to stop and listen, but his primary audience consisted of 150-or so middle-aged, mostly female activists from the California Nurses Association (CNA), waving picket signs in the 86 degree mid-April heat. The noontime rally was being held by the nurses to protest Proposition 226, an initiative slated for the state's June 2 ballot, which would require unions like CNA to get annual permission before taking money from workers' pay for political contributions.

It came as no surprise that Rep. Washington was there, along with Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa, Ralph Nader's left-hand man in California, Harvey Rosenfield, and other Democratic legislators and "progressive" activists. Unions are the Democratic Party's most reliable source of funds (seven of the top ten contributors to federal campaigns in the 1995-96 election cycle were unions, and they gave 96 percent of their money to Democrats) and 226, latest in a series of state initiatives with tremendous implications for national politics, threatens to pinch the steady cash-flow. ("My party, the Democratic Party, is going to have its heart cut out if this initiative passes," Sen. Hilda Solis remarked from the podium.) But in stating his opposition to the initiative, which would allow workers a say in what political causes their money supports, Washington's rhetoric took a rather Orwellian turn.

Urging the defeat of Prop. 226, he shouted, "Working people deserve rights! You deserve the opportunity to express those rights, and you deserve protection!" And then, pumping his fist, "I am with you, I am your protector!"

Welcome to the topsy-turvy world of California politics, where giving workers greater control over their money will get you accused of endangering their rights, and being the "protector" of employees means ensuring that the union boss has ready access to their paychecks. Such reasoning is nothing new to California residents who two years ago saw Proposition 209, a measure prohibiting racial preferences, called "racist" by its opponents.

Union activists claim that sinister national figures like Gingrich-aided Grover Norquist and Indiana businessman Pat Rooney have forced the Paycheck Protection initiative on California voters. But what is becoming one this year's most important national issues actually got its start four years ago in an Orange County school board race.

Almost immediately after his election in 1992 to the board of the Saddleback Valley Unified School District, Frank Ury became a fixture on the teachers union's Most Wanted list. An engineer by trade, he led a drive to make algebra a requirement for graduation from the district's high schools, a reform which the union torpedoed. What most angered the education establishment, however, was Ury's public support of Proposition 174, a 1993 ballot initiative which would have established school choice in the state, and which the pow-

mission before using that money for contributions to candidates or ballot measures.

The logic behind the measure seems almost axiomatic, but "paycheck protection" might not have caught on in California if not for an eye-opening experience in Washington state in 1993. When voters there passed a similar initiative, the number of teachers supporting the Washington Education Association's political activity plunged from 48,000 to 8,000, a drop of more than 83 percent. WEA officials responded by raising teachers' mandatory dues to make up for the loss and continued their political spending apace. When this ruse was uncovered by objecting teachers, the state attorney general filed suit against the union, alleging "hundreds of thousands of dollars" in illegal political spending; to avoid going to court, the WEA agreed in February to pay the largest campaign violations fine ever levied in the state.

California was only one of several states where events in Washington had a trickle-down effect. (As it stands now, laws similar to Prop. 226 are being considered in 24 state legislatures, and initiative drives are underway in four others.) Paycheck protection laws are already on the books in Washington, Idaho, Michigan, and Wyoming, and no fewer than five such bills have been introduced in Congress. (One such measure was defeated in March, after 52 Republicans crossed the aisle to vote against it.) But at present all eyes are on California, where a victory for paycheck protection could give the issue legitimacy nationwide.

So far, Prop. 226 is running strong. In a Field Poll of California voters conducted in March, 60 percent of respondents favored the measure, and, tellingly, among union homes support was even higher, at 61 percent. An April poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*

reported similar findings, with 66 percent of likely voters planning to vote for the initiative, and, despite the repeated urgings of union leaders, 58 percent of union members supporting 226. But instead of bowing to the wisdom of their members, the sachems of big labor treated these poll findings as evidence of large scale false consciousness and, in the last month before the election, brought out their big guns, paid for with the big money they had taken from union members' dues.

The campaign against 226 was similar to the one waged against Proposition 209 two years earlier. In 1996, with Proposition 209 registering upwards of 60 percent support, defenders of racial and gender preferences realized that vague utterances about "diversity" would not be enough to convince voters to reject the initiative, whose language was drawn straight from the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. So the anti-209 forces attempted to smear its supporters as racists. The most audacious moment in this campaign came when student activists at Cal State Northridge—acting in concert with anti-209 guru and longtime Kennedy soldier Bob Shrum—invited David Duke to represent the pro-209 side at a campus debate. The former-Klansman's presence, they hoped, would cre-



CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION RALLY AGAINST PROP. 226

erful California Teachers Association (CTA) spent more than \$9 million to defeat. In retribution for these repeated acts of apostasy, the local union even circulated a petition demanding that Ury be removed from office.

Cooler heads prevailed in that instance, but when Ury came up for reelection in November 1996, the CTA and its local affiliate saw a chance to get even. Together they contributed nearly \$70,000 to the campaign against him, an unheard-of amount in a relatively small district like Saddleback. Ury tried to fight back, raising \$30,000, seven times what he had spent in winning the seat in 1992, but he was defeated. "They wanted to tell me how to think, and I didn't sit up and roll over for them," says Ury, "so they made sure I was knocked out."

The ordeal demoralized Ury, but he learned something from the experience. Like most other candidates for local office, he had financed his campaign using donations sent in voluntarily by people who agreed with his ideals. The CTA, on the other hand, had paid for its campaign against him the same way it does all of its attacks—with money automatically deducted from members' paychecks. With an eye toward correcting this imbalance, Ury and some friends wrote the initiative that has become 226, stipulating that unions and employers who take deductions from employees' paychecks must get annual written per-

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# SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

## Prop 227: The Guru of Bilingualism

by Paul Ciotti

Inside the educational establishment, University of Southern California professor Steven Krashen is an academic superstar, writing books and papers, consulting with school districts and jetting off to educational conferences where he's practically become the patron saint of schools of education. His keynote speeches are so well received that teachers have been known to form spontaneous lines at the podium—"Ohhh, Dr. Krashen, just let me hug you!" He's bright, articulate and uncommonly fast on his feet. He is also, in the view of some, deeply and spectacularly mistaken.

As the chief academic defender of bilingual education, Krashen has, over the years, provided intellectual justification for programs that his critics see as having trapped immigrant students in Spanish classes for five, six, or seven years on end, thus preventing them from ever learning enough academic English to compete with native English speakers. The results, contend critics, are appalling test scores and soaring dropout rates that trap kids in minimum-wage jobs with no future. But it's not just Krashen's passionate advocacy of bilingual education that critics object to. There had been a previous go-around with Krashen's views back in 1987 when, as a member of California's 1987 Language-Arts Framework (educational policy) committee, Krashen helped introduce the "whole language" strategy for teaching children to read. It was, said one educational lobbyist, "the single most damaging education reform effort in the history of the state."

"I read one of his books," echoes Marion Joseph, a longtime liberal activist and member of the California Board of Education, "and he is just flat wrong. [His] approach and philosophy are not working. It's so outrageous. The damage done to these children is overwhelming."

For someone at the very heart of a major policy debate, Krashen keeps a decidedly low profile when not on stage at some rally or debate. He doesn't give out his Malibu address or phone number. If you want to talk to him, you have to send him a fax, and if he's interested, he'll call you back. He's also more than a little thin-skinned about personal attacks. He's been known to drive to radio stations where the host is trashing bilingual education and demand to go on the air too. Last year, when Jill Stewart, a pulls-no-punches reporter for *New Times Los Angeles*, called him a "windbag" and "a foolish Ivory Tower type" who pushes "destructive theories upon minority children," Krashen practically flew to the *New Times* office to issue futile threats of a lawsuit.

"They told me I was a public figure now," says Krashen ruefully. "I said, I wasn't one till last week. I am now, thanks to you!"

Despite his energetic and relentless advocacy of bilingual education, in person Krashen comes across surprisingly casual and low-key. When I recently met with him at a Starbucks in Santa Monica, he showed up wearing a forest-green, Maine-guide, duck-billed ball cap pushed back far on his head, wrinkled chinos and a wall-paper-pattern windbreaker. He looked more like Wally Cox playing a small-town gas station atten-

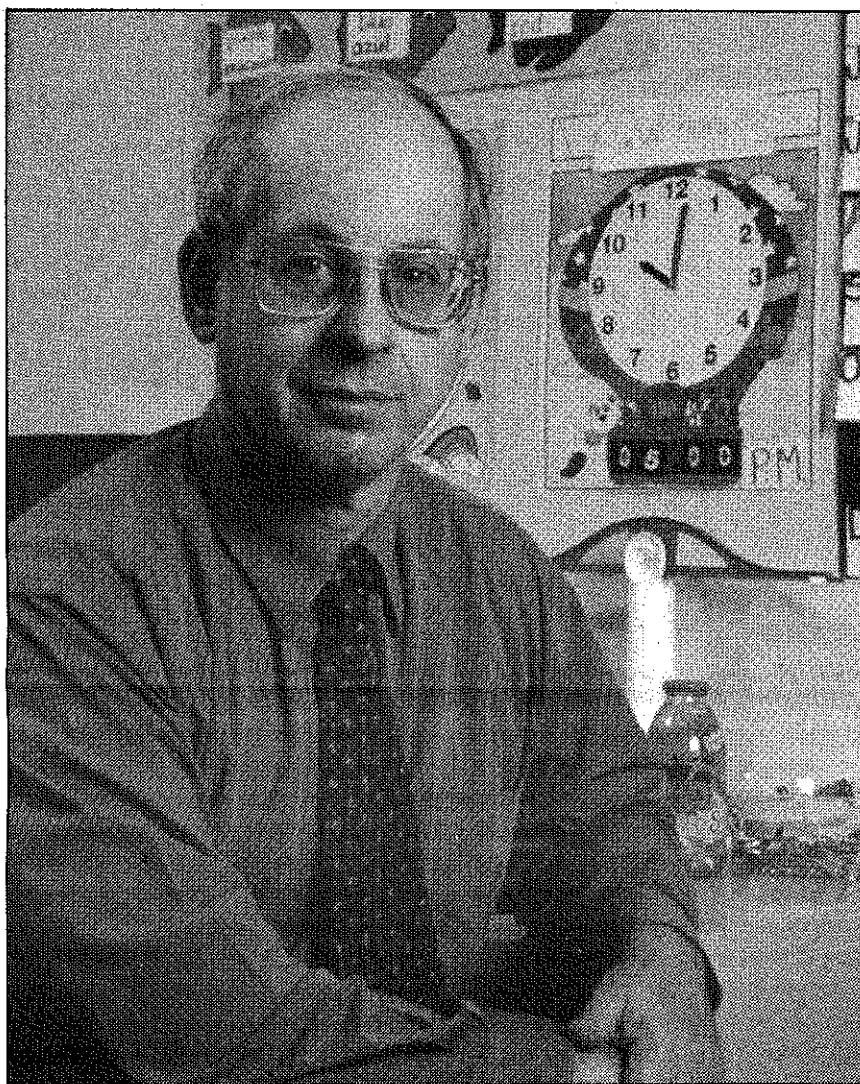
dant than any high priest of language acquisition, whose many books and monographs are pored over by teachers and education school professors like academic holy writ.

He also has a more interesting history than your typical academic. When he's not haunting research libraries at 2 A.M. for education studies with which to bewilder and confound his opponents, he takes boxing lessons, practices Tae Kwan Do (he has a black belt), and reminiscences about the day in 1978 when he won the Venice Beach Open Incline Press Championship with a lift of

But then, he says, he was "intellectually seduced" by the legendary linguist and longtime leftist Noam Chomsky. He subsequently began to study language acquisition, writing a book in 1981 (*Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*) that has since become a standard in the field. His biggest contribution is a unified field theory of language acquisition. "He's like Freud," says one Los Angeles schoolteacher who disagrees with Krashen's theories but respects their breadth. "He's given us a language to talk about things we couldn't talk about before."

Perhaps because of Krashen's influence, whenever linguists get together there are always some people who want to take off on him (in the trade it is called "Krashen bashin"). And it's not always just about his theories themselves. Krashen, says Barry McLaughlin, a bilingual researcher at the University of California at Santa Cruz, has an "unfortunate" tendency to make "sweeping statements based on weak empirical data," "to switch assumptions to suit his purposes" and "to brush aside conflicting evidence in footnotes" where it's less likely to be seen.

In his own defense, Krashen says there are explanations for criticism directed his way, and not all of them necessarily have anything to do with whether or not his theories are correct. "Unlike Chomsky," he says, "my field has a heavy practical impact. If Chomsky is right or wrong businesses don't rise or fall. In my case, if I'm right, nearly all the [English as a Second Language] and foreign language textbooks are obsolete. Many of the language arts textbooks are obsolete. Teachers will get hired and fired. Bilingual education rises and falls. So a lot of the critics have other motivations."



BILINGUAL ACTIVIST STEVEN KRASHEN

285 pounds. He once even beat a former national champion (though, to be fair about it, says Krashen, "he was drunk that day.")

In the field of education, "Krashen's name is all over [teachers'] staff development materials," says Los Angeles schoolteacher Doug Lasken. Los Angeles Board of Education member David Tokofsky later told me that his mother, who is an elementary school teacher, recently "went to a teacher inservice (professional development training session) and when she came back, she started asking me, 'What's going on. All I hear is Krashen, Krashen, Krashen. Who is this guy?'"

In Tokofsky's view he's also someone who is too clever by half. Tokofsky met Krashen last year when he testified before the Los Angeles Board of Education to argue for better school libraries and more books. "We had just gotten the Stanford 9 test results," says Tokofsky. "They were abysmal, horrible."

When it was Krashen's turn to speak, says Tokofsky, he said, "I would just stop spending money on tests and put it all into libraries." I said, "Excuse me, what did you just say? Eliminate all tests?" But he was a half step ahead of me. He had all these snappy responses—"Weighing the baby more often doesn't make it grow any faster."

Originally Krashen hadn't planned to devote his life to the study of language acquisition. His doctoral dissertation was in the area of neurolinguistics, and he later held a post-doctoral fellowship at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute.

Krashen has a major motivation himself these days—defending bilingual education. Even before software entrepreneur Ron Unz's anti-bilingual education initiative Proposition 227 qualified for the ballot, Krashen was out in front attacking it, dashing off letters-to-the-editor, speaking at campus rallies and debates, and otherwise assailing the premise that Unz had any qualifications whatsoever to write an education initiative.

Unz's English-for-the-Children initiative, Krashen repeatedly tells audiences, is an educational disaster in the making in that it is based on no scientific studies and will limit non-native speakers to one year of transitional help and despite what Krashen claims are numerous studies showing that children need many more years to attain English proficiency.

"Ron Unz is a complete amateur, a software entrepreneur!" says Krashen. "And here he is trying to dictate state policy on bilingual education. The hospital administrators are telling the surgeons how to operate!"

But to critics of bilingual education that's a lot better than letting the operations be done by bilingual ideologues. The main problem with bilingual education is that it's not bilingual at all, says Gloria Matta Tuchman, Unz initiative co-sponsor and candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. "It's monolingual Spanish." And it continues that way for many years, especially in reading. By the time children get into all-English classes, they are so far behind their English-speaking classmates in English fluency they never do catch up.



This is one reason why, critics believe, that the Hispanic drop-out rate is twice that of whites. It's also the reason that recent polls by the *Los Angeles Times* show nearly three times as many people plan to vote for the Unz initiative as plan to vote against it, and that the measure still has strong support in the Hispanic community.

To Krashen, the dropout rate is a phony issue. Hispanic teenagers drop out of school to get jobs, he says, not because bilingual education has left them unequipped to succeed in high school. Besides, he maintains, when you adjust for the students' economic status (low-income people drop out more), the dropout rates for whites and Hispanics are "virtually identical." As for those polls that show overwhelming support for the Unz initiative, you can't rely on them either, says Krashen. Depending on how you ask the question, you can get any result you want.

Finally there is the problem of what Krashen sees as the media's conservative bias when it comes to bilingual education—only 45 percent of the stories written by the normally liberal media support bilingual education, in contrast to 87 percent of academic papers which he says do support it. This is the explanation, he says, for the support the Unz initiative has received from prominent Hispanics like Jaime Escalante, the former East Los Angeles teacher whose success teaching advanced-placement calculus to Hispanic students at Garfield High was depicted in the film *Stand and Deliver*. "If all I knew about bilingual education was what I read in the papers," says Krashen, "I'd be against it too."

If he is somewhat on the defensive when it comes to bilingualism these days, Krashen is even more embattled on the pedagogical issue of whole language. When asked about his role on California's 1987 Framework Committee, Krashen cheerfully pleads "guilty" to the charge of introducing whole language into the state. But his goal, he quickly says, certainly wasn't to make kids illiterate. It was rather to introduce them to something that could make learning to read as easy and natural as learning to talk.

Instead of squelching a child's natural enthusiasm with "drill and kill" exercises, says Krashen, with whole language, rather, you offer the child a "rich print environment" of interesting and accessible books. You don't need phonics. You don't need tests. You don't even need formal instruction. If you just surround the children with books, the kids will read them, and when they do they will acquire proper grammar, vocabulary, and spelling through the act of reading itself. Or, as Krashen puts it—"we learn to read by reading."

With the support of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, whole language swept through California public education and university teacher-training departments like academic wildfire. Within a few years 87 percent of all teachers reported that whole language was their teaching method of choice. Leftist activist and educators were euphoric, calling the technique "the child-centered, experiential, reflective, authentic, holistic, social, collaborative [and] democratic" route to literacy.

Parents on the other hand were less enthusiastic to discover their children were being encouraged to "invent" their own spelling; that grammar and vocabulary instruction were out the door; and that anyone who objected was ridiculed as a "phonics Nazi."

Liberal euphoria over whole language ended in 1995 when the results of the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that California students had come in last in the nation, tied with Louisiana for last place.

"The research is really clear," says former state Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig. "[Under whole language] kids gave up by the third grade. The percentage of kids coming out of the third grade going into the fourth grade that can really read that 4th grade material is ten percent in Los Angeles and one-third in suburban areas. Everyone knows no matter what people are telling them that there is a huge hunk of kids who can't read. [At some schools] you can't teach

spelling. It makes no sense. They have somehow confused teaching (basic reading) skills with being anti-Hispanic. Krashen has a lot to answer for. He has blood on his hands on this one."

The drop in test scores caused a fury among state legislators who were being blamed by parents for blindly buying into whole language without proof that it really worked. In an unprecedented frenzy of bipartisan cooperation, the legislature unanimously passed in 1996 a series of "back-to-basics" bills (known as the "ABC bills") emphasizing phonics and generally repudiating the whole language approach. They also created a State Board of Education with authority over curriculum to counter the stranglehold that whole language ideologues had on the state Department of Education.

When you ask Krashen how he responds to the charge that whole language wrecked the education of hundreds of thousands of school children across the state, he answers that, contrary to the whole premise on which the back-to-phonics movement was based, test scores did not go down during the golden age of whole language. The 1995 Framework Committee—which reversed the recommendations of the 1987 committee on which Krashen had served—"didn't even look to see if there was a decline," says Krashen. In fact, he says, when you consider how few library books most students had access to (fewer than the number available to some prison inmates) and the increasing percentage of children living in poverty, "it is amazing that the scores are still the same. Our teachers must be doing a wonderful job."

To Bill Honig, the assertion that test scores didn't decline in the early nineties is absurd. "Test scores were going up every year in the eighties," says Honig. "We adopted the [whole language] framework in 1987." The state suspended testing for four years to save money. When testing finally resumed in 1994, California kids were the worst readers in the country. "What Steve Krashen has been saying has hurt large numbers of kids."

With polls showing Unz's English-for-the-Children initiative ahead by nearly a 3-to-1 ratio, with the June election just weeks away, Krashen is everywhere these days, speaking at rallies, writing letters to the *Los Angeles Times* and *Atlantic Monthly* to complain about their anti-bilingual stories and articles and firing off e-mail messages to bilingual supporters, many of whom seem to regard the Unz initiative as a dark and malignant plague settling slowly over the land.

Surprisingly, no one on either side is really discussing the real issue. If the current battle over Prop. 227 (the English for the Children initiative) were simply a debate over which method best teaches children English, few people would care, and Ron Unz never could have collected the necessary 700,000 signatures to put it on the ballot. The hidden battle that provides much of the emotional energy for the debate is one over assimilation versus multiculturalism. Supporters of bilingual education are invariably multiculturalists who in some inchoate way see bilingual education as an opportunity to make it up to Hispanics for having seized the American southwest from Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe. As believers in the self-esteem theory of education, they also resist anything that might (temporarily) lower a child's self-esteem, such as for instance, the trauma of having to learn a new language. They also see bilingual education as a way to support Hispanic activists who believe that if immigrant children are taught in Spanish it will forever be their primary language, the one they dream in, fight in and make love in. This in turn will make sure that they will forever remain loyal to the country of their birth.

Critics of bilingual education, on the other hand, are people troubled by what they regard as an appalling lack of assimilation. They see Hispanic activists running through the streets of Los Angeles shouting anti-American slogans and carrying Mexican flags; they see upwards of 80,000 Hispanic soccer fans laughing, jeering, and blowing plastic trumpets during the playing of the national anthem at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena

and otherwise rooting for the Mexican team over the American one; and they conclude that, unlike previous generations of immigrants, many current immigrants neither have much respect for this country nor any great desire to assimilate.

To his credit, Krashen doesn't play the race card (he keeps the discussion strictly on the best way to teach English). Instead, as a way of defusing the suspicion of many Americans that bilingual education is really a part of some anti-American cultural agenda, he continually reiterates in his talks and debates that "the goal is English. English is the goal;" he wouldn't support bilingual education if the goal weren't English literacy; "and the fastest way to get it is to give children literacy in the first language."

Given the public's current (negative) feelings about bilingual education, it's not an easy sell. "Isn't it true," I asked Krashen at one point, confused by his assertion that time on task doesn't matter, "that more time you spend on [learning English] the faster and better you get it?"

"It turns out that's not true," Krashen said quickly. "Absolutely not true." As for the issue of assimilation, even "right-wing Republicans should support bilingual education," he said, "it's the fastest route to English."

Although this might seem to fly in the face of common sense, Krashen told me, sometimes reality operates that way. For instance, he told of recently losing 15 pounds on the high-fat, low-carbohydrate Atkins diet.

"Who would think," he asked, "that the best way to lose weight is to eat fat? Well, the best way to learn to read is counter-intuitive too."

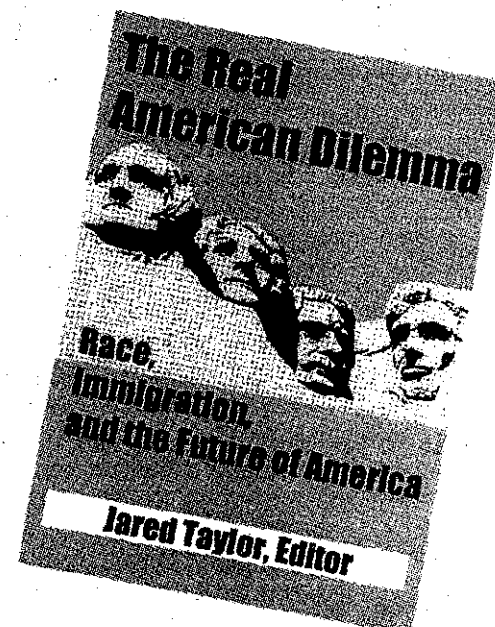
"How are the kids going to learn English if they don't hear English?" demands Gloria Matta Tuchman, an elementary school teacher with 33 years experience successfully teaching English to non-English speaking first graders. "If you hear Spanish, you learn Spanish. And they are not even doing a good job of doing that!"

Besides, she asks, where on earth does Krashen get off telling people like herself, who have spent decades in the classroom transitioning kids from Spanish to English in just one year, the best way to teach English?

"The man has never taught elementary school, much less first grade," says Tuchman. "I don't think he has a clue."

Paul Ciotti is a freelance writer who lives in Southern California.

## Why is Race the Problem that Will not Go Away?



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## Prop 226, Continued from page 4

ate a tidy, syllogism in voter's minds: David Duke supports Prop. 209; David Duke is a racist; therefore anyone who supports 209 is a racist. In case someone didn't get the hint, the No on 209 campaign began airing television ads which featured clips of Duke at the debate, then shifted to a figure in Klan robes, with a cross burning in the background. Defenders of race preferences even forged a letter, which they distributed to the press, from Duke to 209-spokesman Ward Connerly, thanking him for his "support." (In fact, Connerly had repeatedly denounced Duke in public.) These smears were offensive, at times absurd, and not ultimately successful, but they did manage to whittle down the support for the measure. (It passed with just over 54 percent of the vote.)

Two years later the campaign against 226 has adopted a similar strategy. The first TV spot produced by Californians to Protect Employee Rights (CPER), the union-sponsored group heading the campaign against 226, hit the airwaves in late April. The ad says nothing about unions, dues money, paycheck deductions, political contributions, or any other aspect of the ballot language. In fact, the viewer is left with no clue as to what the initiative really says. Instead, he is given a middle-aged man looking at the "fine print" of the voters guide with a magnifying glass. An off-screen announcer intones that 226 isn't what it seems. "When you take a closer look at Prop. 226, you'll see that a foreign lobbyist, multinational corporations, and an out-of-state insurance tycoon are behind it." The magnifying glass pauses over small, unlabelled black-and-whites photos. The men in the photos are J. Patrick Rooney and Grover Norquist.

These two, along with Gov. Pete Wilson are sharing the David Duke role in the anti-226 script. To be sure, each has indeed been an important supporter of the initiative, but the CPER's attempt to cast them as figures of KKK-like malice is a bit of a stretch even in the morally challenged world of TV attacks and disinformation ads. Rooney, the "insurance tycoon" in the ad, is the 69-year-old chairman emeritus of the Indianapolis-based Golden Rule Financial Corp., but he's hardly the greedy fat cat described in the union propaganda. During the 1970s, he spent eight years and \$2 million of his own money pressing a racial-discrimination lawsuit against the Republican-dominated Illinois state government, alleging that the state's insurance agent exam discriminated against blacks. Eventually the case was settled in Rooney's favor out of court. Later, Rooney set up a charitable foundation that provides half-tuition scholarships for poor children in Indianapolis, allowing them (they're predominantly black) to go to private schools. Today the program serves 1,300 children each year, and has served as the blueprint for similar charities in 32 cities.

It is undeniable that Rooney, who splits his time between California and Indiana, is extremely active politically. During the 1996 election year, for example, his family, his business Golden Rule, and its executives contributed \$440,000 to various campaigns. But his commitments are consistent with a social conscious that is anything but reactionary. For the past 17 years, for example, Rooney has attended Holy Angels, a black Catholic church in Indianapolis' inner city with the explicit purpose of engag-

ing in integrated worship in a venue where black people call the tune.

Described in CPER's literature as an "ultra-conservative," Rooney is currently the principle financial backer for "safe haven" schools being set up by black churches in low income urban areas. In this context, Rooney's \$49,000 contribution to the 226 campaign—given when the signature drive hit a lull last summer—does not seem so menacing.

But Rooney is only part of the evil Mutt and Jeff act being staged by anti-226 forces. At the CNA rally in Sacramento, when Nader-disciple Harvey Rosenfield cracked a joke about a "guy named Grover," the audience ooh'ed in recognition. It's a fair bet that few in attendance had ever heard of Grover Norquist before a few months earlier, but union organizers have

into her crystal ball and chanting, "Bring back the days when Californians worked for a dollar a day and loved it."

Speaking at the nurses' rally, Jim Hart of the Service Employees Union took things a little farther off the deep end, delivering, to a sing-song rap at the end of his speech, stressing the last word of each line like a spoken-word poet.

*He wants to put in a political right-wing FIX.*

*He wants to take you out of the political MIX.*

*And he wants to do it with*

*Proposition Two-Two-SIX.*

*And I say no more Wilson TRICKS.*

*We will stop Two-Two-SIX!*

A characteristic bit of anti-Wilson hyperbole came from Judith Barish, communications director for the California Labor Federation, who said to me, "When you hear that Pete Wilson is worried about workers' rights, it's like hearing that serial killers are opening up a daycare center."

Even apart from the perfervid effort "to duke" (an infinitive which may enter the political lexicon alongside "to bork") Rooney, Norquist, and Wilson, the 226 opponents' rhetoric skirts constantly on the edge of hysteria. Jesse Jackson set the tone in a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed in which he wrote that "California's rabid right is now opening a new front in its class war," and suggested that the Paycheck Protection proposition threatened the environment, civil rights, the 40-hour work week, and—yes—child labor laws.

Bill Leonard of the Green Party turned the initiative on its head, telling the crowd at the CNA rally that 226 "takes away personal choice."

In an interview with *Heterodoxy*, Emil Lawton, the political action coordinator for the Los Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club, did Leonard one better, calling the initiative a "threat to democracy."

And, in what seemed to be an effort to prove Jackson's maxim that race is a part of everything in America, *LA Weekly* editor Harold Myerson opined recently in the *New Republic* that 226 was really a veiled attack on Latinos.

With principle and public sentiment against them and time running out, the unions are turning to their one completely renewable resource—their members open pocketbooks—and creating in the process a case study indicating why paycheck protection is necessary. At its annual meeting in March, the executive council of the AFL-CIO decided to deduct an extra \$12.5 million from dues paid by its members across the country solely to fight Proposition 226.


The California Teachers' Association, defying its own internal polls which show 70 percent of its members support 226, has set aside \$4 million of its own to fight the initiative, including \$500,000 for an internal campaign to combat teachers' false consciousness about their right to control how their dues are spent. The irony of the union using money from teachers' paychecks to convince them to vote against a measure they overwhelmingly support isn't lost on Elizabeth Lee, a Sacramento elementary school teacher who has been active in the campaign for 226.

"I support my union, but I'm surprised they would be so blatantly anti-member," she says. "Why are they so afraid of giving us a choice?"

# DEFEAT

## Proposition 226

NEWS REPORT FOR THE BIG LIE FALLS 5%



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- \* Mother Jones Article
- \* Text of Proposition 226
- \* Who's behind the Initiative
- \* Who's against Prop 226
- \* How it affects you
- \* Frequently Asked Questions
- \* Myths & Facts about Prop 226
- \* Ballot Argument
- \* Voter Registration

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Proposition 226, which is on the June 1998 ballot, is sponsored by a group of out-of-state interests, including a millionaire insurance tycoon and a Washington DC-based lobbyist with close ties to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

Proposition 226 would:

1. not decrease the amount of foreign donations to political campaigns. Federal law already prohibits foreign donations to political candidates.
2. set up two sets of rules governing how different types of organizations engage in political campaigns, which is just unfair. In fact, Proposition 226 would curb unions and employee organizations from engaging in politics to protect pensions, health and safety laws, and health care benefits.
3. will cost state and local governments and schools millions to implement because of its bureaucratic regulations on employees' political activities.

Meanwhile big business - which already outspends unions and employee organizations by 11 to 1 - would be able to freely contribute to politics to influence governmental policy and political decisions.



WWW.DEFEATPROP226.ORG

tried to make the name of the founder of the DC-based Americans for Tax Reform a synonym for unbridled evil. ATR footed the bill for a massive mailing to collect the signatures needed to qualify the initiative for the ballot; at \$441,000, its donation remains the pro-226 campaign's largest by far. In addition, the organization has pledged \$10 million to support the paycheck protection legislation in other states.

Norquist is prone to the occasional impolitic remark, and his quip that he'd like to "crush labor unions as a political entity" is in wide circulation these days. Worse still, in the union's logic, he is a "primary confidant" of Newt Gingrich.

The third of the anti-226 campaign's triangle of evil is Gov. Pete Wilson, who along with former Vice President Dan Quayle serves as honorary chairman of the campaign. (Why Quayle has been ignored is something of a mystery.) As was the case during the drive for Prop. 209 two years ago, when "Wilson, you liar, we'll set your ass on fire" was a common cry at rallies, union officials are beginning to lose their grip at the mere mention of the governor's name. A political cartoon circulated by the State Employees union, entitled "The Pete Wilson Séance," depicts him seated at a table, holding hands with several men and women in business suits, with a fortune teller gazing

# Eldridge Cleaver RIP

by Peter Collier

When I heard over the radio that Eldridge Cleaver had died, I wondered to myself, as many no doubt had who knew about his born again Christianity, if this was the last stop on his curious pilgrimage. I also thought back to that afternoon in 1967 when he walked into the offices of *Ramparts* magazine which had in effect sponsored his release from prison, took a look around as if casing the joint, and deadpanned, "Is this where they're making the revolution?"

I had recently come to work at *Ramparts* myself. For weeks I had been hearing about this authentic voice, soon to be our authentic voice, from the black underworld; this poet of rape who had the audacity to claim that this crime for which he had done hard time was actually a legitimate insurrectionary act. His prison essays were one of the first literary manifestations of black power, one of the first unveilings of that quintessentially '60s notion that all prisoners are political prisoners. In the isolation of his prison cell, Eldridge had psyched out the zeitgeist more adroitly than most of us on the outside. He saw we were entering an era when someone like himself could not only blame America for his crime, but also plausibly claim that he had been washed clean of his guilt by the blood of the Vietnamese. But while the voice was the voice of Eldridge, I'd heard that the hand that wrote *Soul on Ice* had been held by more than one white editor.

As Eldridge looked around the *Ramparts* office on that days thirty odd years ago (and very odd some of those years have been), I noticed his eyes—a striking green, and so hooded that they seemed embedded in epicanthic in epicanthic folds. He let his glance linger languorously on surfaces that would have seemed ordinary to anyone except a man who'd been looking at objects of monochromatic sameness for countless days behind bars. Then he turned and walked down the hall. The gait was not the cantilevered swagger of the black hipster. It was slower and more deliberate, a walk developed over years of doing the prison exercise-yard passeggiata.

Eldridge was something of an anomaly at *Ramparts*. The rest of us were earnest white revolutionaries mixing journalism and a deepening activism to wage war by other means against the government. Eldridge talked the same talk but he walked that different walk. The look on his face as he listened to our bull sessions—an ironic, impassive face that didn't show emotion easily—carried the charge that this was kid's stuff. Yet he was our noble savage, a radical celebrity who increased our clout. He was by nature a conversational counter puncher, but he could do the black revolutionary schtick with the best of them and had an ability that most other black revolutionaries didn't to get under the white skin. Not long after he arrived at *Ramparts*, a suspicious-looking box addressed to him arrived in the mail. Thinking that it might be a bomb, we got Don Duncan, a former green beret who was on our staff and who theoretically had some knowledge of demolitions, to open it. After much huffing and puffing, the lid came off. Inside the box was nothing more dangerous than a coil of dogshit nesting

in a bed of excelsior. The rest of us were in a tizzy of revolutionary outrage; Eldridge just laughed at the racist dog" who'd sent it.

Cleaver liked the dope and hedonism and sex—especially sex—that was the Musak of the Movement. Despite or given the perversity of the time, because of his background, he was catnip to lefty women. (I remember coming into the office one Saturday afternoon and thinking it was deserted until I heard a noise, and Eldridge emerged from an area where we kept a cot, along with a knockout blonde deb who volunteered for

radicals cringe. "Whatchu talking about, man?" he said. "More people got killed trampling each other to get a look at that brother's body at his funeral than were killed in any damned purges!"

He never seemed really at ease at *Ramparts* and his literary output was negligible. It always seemed to me that wasn't until he met Huey Newton a couple of months after getting out of prison that Cleaver really found his niche. When he became a Panther, it was the equivalent of a free-agent superstar signing with a superteam. At the time I always wondered why Eldridge, to me a much more impressive figure, became a follower of Newton. But I understood later on when it was revealed that far from being a shrill voiced theoretician giving brain dwarfing hour-long Castroite rants, Huey was actually a black Scarface running drugs and women in Oakland and beating and even murdering whoever got in the way. Eldridge had seen people like Newton in heavy lock-up where they ruled over other prisoners by their violence, mesmerism, and homemade existentialism, and by a nihilistic willingness to die for their power. He had seen prison gangs take over the joint and realized that Huey, acting with the help of the white left, had put together such an organization on the outside. Eldridge knew he had only gotten away with rape; Huey had gotten away with murder.

Eldridge was an ornament for the Panthers, although he remained a sort of free lance enragé, running for President on the Peace and Freedom ticket, making speeches in which he called for "pussy power," accused Reagan of being a "faggot" and Bobby Kennedy of being "scurvy," and offered to kill Joseph Alioto, along with Alioto's children and grandchildren while he was at it. He was willing to put up rather than shut up. His most famous moment came in 1969 when he was in a shootout with cops in Oakland. As rifle and shotgun rounds penetrated the house where he was holed up, he survived by getting into a bathtub and later came out, stripped naked, with his hands up. A young thug named Bobby Hutton—forever after known as L'il Bobby Hutton in Panther martyrology—was killed and his bloody shirt was waved for years to come.

The shootout became Eldridge's summary moment, just as shooting and killing an Oakland cop named John Frey had been for Huey two years earlier. It was the foundation of his own personal myth inside the Panther party and a significant stop in the development of the idea—still taken seriously in some quarters today—that the Oakland police, in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, were waging a genocidal war

against the Panther organization. It wasn't until twenty years later that Cleaver told writer Kate Coleman that the cause for the shootout had not been motiveless malignancy on the part of the police. In fact, just prior to the shootout he and a carload of Panthers had ambushed a black and white, wounding a pair of policemen as part of their war against the "army of occupation" in the ghetto, and the gun battle in Oakland that claimed Hutton's life had been a sequel to this event. Cleaver's admission to Coleman never made much of an impact among his former comrades. As they say, the accusation is always on page one and the retraction buried in the Metro section.

After the shootout Eldridge jumped bail and disappeared into a '60s haze—traveling to

March 23, 76.

Eldridge Cleaver  
Alameda County Jail  
1225 Fallon Street  
Oakland, California  
94612

Dear Mr. Guirard:

I have enjoyed very much your letter to me of January 21, 76, and the accompanying copy of your letter to Salgharitsyn, dated December 11, 1975. I did not immediately answer your letter because I didn't know what to say.

There was something very logical and accurate about your essay, yet I was bothered by how you placed all emphasis upon what you call "the taproot of the evil in Marxism." My initial reaction was that you had gone too far, you had exaggerated the point. I grew tired of your repetition of the word soul. That was back in January. Since then, I have come round to agreeing with you. I now feel that the neglect of the spiritual, non-material aspect of human nature is fundamental, not only to by Marxists and Communists, but by our contemporary world in general. But certainly you are correct when you point out that Marx begins by categorically denying all possibility of the existence of the soul—HUMAN SPIRIT, LIFE, etc.—by the dichotomy of material vs ideal, identifying idealism as wrong from the jump.

In the past, I have always confined my criticism of Marxism and Communism to the economic and political aspects. I have tended to shy away from philosophic criticism, mostly, I think, now understood, because I still accepted unquestioningly philosophical materialism. It just never comes up when you discuss politics. Which I now recognize to be a great mistake on my part. In the past, I was never interested in religion, regarding it as a reactionary force—the opium of the masses. But now I have shook off that blindness and rediscovered the soul, and I am very happy about it. My argument, criticism, or spail, has been strengthened a million-fold. A whole universe of ideas has fallen into place for me. I am really free, born again, after approximately 22 years of being cut off—I find what off into materialism at the age of 18!—from the whole spiritual aspect of human nature—the soul.

I want to thank you for the stimulating jolt which your essay gave to my thinking.

Yours truly  
Eldridge

CLEAVER LETTER TO GUIRARD

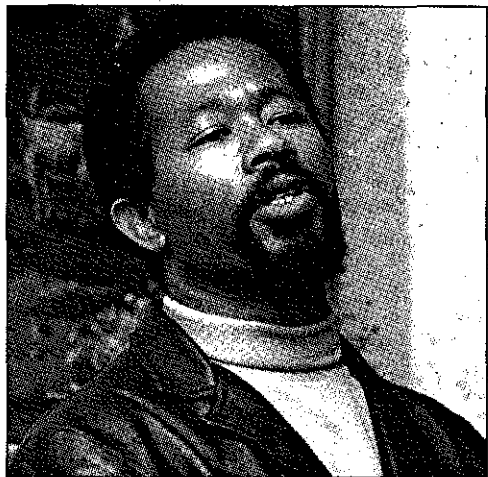
us and who was now rearranging herself like a hen after the rooster is through.) He also cut something of a swathe through San Francisco's radical chic circles. I heard that he was invited to a party honoring James Baldwin. He had, of course, attacked Baldwin parricidally in his writings, just as Baldwin had once similarly attacked Richard Wright. But when he saw Baldwin at this party, so it was said, Eldridge bear-hugged him and gave him a solid French kiss.

He was a master at upping the ante—that sky's-the-limit rhetoric that became the lingua franca of the Movement. I remember in one casual conversation saying something derogatory about Stalin's crimes, whereupon Eldridge fixed me with one of those gelid stares that made white



Cuba, then to Algeria (where he had to put up with another exile, Timothy Leary, whose bizarre loquaciousness caused Cleaver to warn him that there was a "Panther graveyard" thereabouts for people who talked too much), and then to Paris where he is alleged to have shared a mistress with Giscard d'Estaing. Somewhere along the way he fell out with Huey, accusing him of selling out the "armed struggle" and ridiculing his fatuous posturing as the Servant of the People. It was more than a war of words. Their quarrel was played out in the back alleys of Oakland, Los Angeles and New York, as Eldridge, putting together a rebel army of black revolutionaries from abroad, launched a civil war against the Newton branch of the Panthers. Cleaver soon resigned from his command, but his troops would leave behind the nucleus of the terrorist Black Liberation Army.

When he finally returned to America in 1975, Eldridge was a changed and also a diminished man. It wasn't just his involvement in gimmicks like the codpiece pants to be marketed as "Cleavers." There was a change in his attitudes too, or at least in his rhetoric. One of the things he said when he returned—and those who had served



ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, 1968

ing the country. When he came out, he embarked on a journey that would produce many incarnations—Moonie, Christian, Republican. I listened for news of him as he became a recycler, a prophet, a political candidate, a buffoon. The conventional

radical wisdom was that he suffered from a bisected life. The first part—into prison and then into the revolution—was seen as an exemplary journey of our time. But nobody on the left made the same assumption about the leftover life Eldridge lived

with him in his war against the U.S. would never forgive him for it—was that it was "better to be in jail in America than a free man in most other countries."

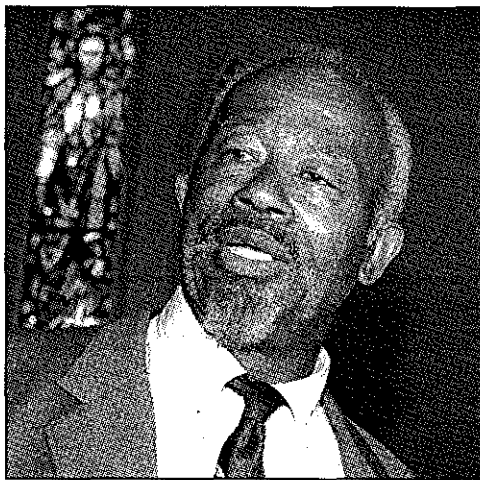
Eldridge did go to jail for a couple of years for the shootout and flee-

after coming home. What happened after 1975 was bogus: there are no second acts in American lives.

It was confusing. He was always a con man, always seizing the main chance. Did he believe any of the protestations he made, either as a revolutionary or as a pilgrim? It is hard to tell. Yet I always thought that what happened in his afterlife in America—a time when his soul was in thaw—was at least as interesting as what happened when he first burst on the scene back in 1967 and that it was a shame nobody told his story.

There's a tiny slice of that story in the following letter. Early in 1976 Washington attorney James Guirard, hearing that Cleaver was in jail, sent him a copy of a long philosophical essay he had written to Solzhenitsyn some time earlier about the failure of dialectical materialism. He hadn't gotten an answer from the exiled Russian writer and didn't expect one from the

black revolutionary. But three months later, Cleaver replied with the following note which shows why he became an embarrassment to his old comrades and an enigma to the rest of us.



ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, 1997

#### 150 Years of Evil, Continued from page 1

To be sure, on America's benighted college campuses, unfortunately and deplorably, this description of Marxism's currency is accurate. Marxism, or some kitsch version of it, has indeed become "part of an integral modern sensibility." But what about the real world, outside the ivory tower?

Of even more consequence is the *Times's* endorsement of this degeneration of intellectual life—what should properly be regarded as a social disaster. Instead of digesting the lessons of the Communist holocaust, closing the Marxist tent, throwing the *Manifesto* in the intellectual garbage bin where it belongs, dusting off the volumes by Von Mises and Hayek, which actually predicted the Communist fall and—for the first time in one's life—thinking about how to make bourgeois democracy work, the *Times* apparently would like its progressive readers to believe that none of this sordid revolutionary history has any relevance to the important and present task of continuing the civil war the *Manifesto* first incited:

A decade after those world-historical occurrences, the *Manifesto* continues to yield itself to our reading in the new light that its enduring insights into social existence generate. It emerges ever more distinctly as an unsurpassed dramatic representation, diagnosis and prophetic array of visionary judgments on the modern world . . . A century and a half afterward, it remains a classic expression of the society it anatomized and whose doom it prematurely announced.

Prematurely! Are we to understand by this that the *Times* thinks the bloody apocalypse Marx gleefully hoped for is yet to come? The answer is obviously yes if the *Manifesto* has "enduring insights" into capitalist economy. And what exactly is it that the *Manifesto* is alleged to have diagnosed? This, after all, is the decisive issue. Is the *Manifesto* correct in what it says about "social existence"?

In fact the *Manifesto* is so self-evidently wrong in its fundamental analyses and judgments that its author could not begin to explain how the article praising his bankrupt and discredited war cry could appear in the *Times* at all. How is it that the leading institution of the "ruling class" press, in the principal bourgeois nation on the planet, could feature such Marxist tripe? Nor is this ques-

tion incidental to the core problem of a text whose principal thesis claiming to analyze complex societies on the basis of a single structure—economic class—is announced in its very first line: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle."

This hypothesis is really the essence and sum of the *Manifesto* which is not a call to thought, but—and this should never be forgotten—a call to arms. The striking (and reprehensible) thesis of the *Manifesto* is that democratic societies are not really different in kind from the aristocratic and slave societies that required revolutions to overthrow. Despite surface appearances, despite the fact that in contrast to all previous societies, democracy makes the people "sovereign"—democratic capitalism is "unmasked" by Marx as an "oppressive" and tyrannical society like all the rest, and therefore requires extra-legal and violent means to liberate its victims from its yoke. That is why those who have been inspired by the *Manifesto* have declared war on the liberal societies of the West and have spilled so much blood and spread so much misery in our time.

The meaning of the first sentence of the *Manifesto*, then, is this: All (non-socialist) societies are divided into classes that are "oppressed" and those who oppress them. Capitalism is no different, even though its revolutions may have instituted democratic political structures designed to enfranchise the "oppressed." For the very idea of democracy in a society where private property exists, according to the *Manifesto*, is an illusion: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." In other words, democratic elections are a sham. Civil war is the political answer to humanity's problems: "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains." The solution to all fundamental social problems—to war, to poverty, to economic inequality—lies in a conflict that will rip society apart and create a new revolutionary world from its ruins. This is the enduring and poisonous message of the *Manifesto*, and why its believers have left such a trail of human slaughter in their path as they set about to create a progressive future.

Almost every important analytic thesis of the *Manifesto*—including its opening statement—is patently false. History is not the history of class struggle, as defined by Marx, i.e., the struggle of economic oppressor and oppressed. Not even the historical event which provided the basis for

Marx's theoretical model, the French Revolution, is explicable in these terms. Historians like Simon Schama and Francis Furet have established, beyond any reasonable doubt, that capitalism was already thriving under the monarchy, and it was the nobility, not the bourgeoisie, that upended the *ancien régime*. When we look at the twentieth century, whose course has largely been determined by forces of nationalism and racism, which Marx utterly discounted, the hopeless inadequacy of his theories becomes impossible except for those blinded by faith—to ignore.

According to Marx, the bourgeois epoch possesses a distinctive feature: "It has simplified the class antagonisms: Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes, directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." But, of course, it hasn't. Which is one reason why Marxism has failed, as a program, in all the industrialized countries.

In fact, much of the Marxist critique of capitalism reflects nothing so much as a romantic longing for a feudal past in which social status was pre-ordained and irrevocable, and stamped every individual with a destiny and a grace:

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.

Of course, it has not exactly done this either. More likely it has turned physician, lawyer, scientist, and poet into entrepreneurs themselves. In the open societies created by capitalist revolutionaries, they can set up as independent contractors; they can incorporate themselves; and they can move up the social and economic scale to heights undreamed of when their status may have been "reverential" but where it was also fixed by the immutable relations of an authentic "class society," which bourgeois society is not. The complexity and fluidity of class structure in developed capitalist societies has made a mockery of the core principles of Marxist belief.

Marx was a first-rate intellect and a brilliant writer, and his descriptions of the progressive economic expansion of market societies under the leadership of the "bourgeoisie" are memorable and provide most of the basis for claims that the *Manifesto* is an accurate and "prescient" work. Marx famously extolled the capitalist class for constantly "revolutionizing the forces

of production," concluding: "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together."

This sentence encapsulates both the seductive power of Marx's writing and the sinister import of his theory. The description would seem to be an endorsement of capitalism, indicating the immense value to all members of society in the encouragement it has provided to an entrepreneurial class to create more social wealth than the world has ever known. It would hardly seem to provide an argument for the permanent war that Marx goes on to advocate against the bourgeoisie in the name of human progress. But even in the sentence quoted, one sees how the theory is designed to cancel the praise. Marx identifies the creative entrepreneurs as "rulers" in a sense designed to parallel that of absolutist monarchs and slave-owners, and thus to detach them from the reality of their achievement and from the fact that they earn the power they accumulate, and thus to incite social resentment and hatred against them. The theory further postulates that the productive forces these entrepreneurs have created have "outgrown" them, and make it necessary to destroy their "rule."

In Marx's colorful prose: "Modern bourgeois society . . . is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells." Marx is referring here to the business cycle and its economic crises.

In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence.

According to Marx the bourgeoisie is at war with the very forces of production that it has called into being ("The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.") And there is more. The forces of production called into being by the bourgeoisie have also created a class, the proletariat, which is its victim and its antagonist. The proletariat has no property itself, and therefore is in a position to abolish private property which is the "condition" of bourgeois production and bourgeois oppression, to remove the bourgeois "rulers" from their corporate thrones and to create a cooperative society in which the economy can be organized according to a "social plan." This development emanating from the logic of History that Marx has discovered, has all the inevitability of a natural force:

The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces

and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Under the spell of prose like this, whole generations of "progressives" have been blinded to the obvious bounties of democratic capitalist societies and encouraged to make war on them, and with a nihilistic fury inspired by illusions of "social justice" producing human tragedy beyond measure. The heirs of Marx are still at it. In the wake of the Communist catastrophe, they are willing to acknowledge only that Marx's economic categories are too narrow and that the proletariat has failed to make the revolution. But the core Marxist model, the model which proposes that democratic societies are oppressive and tyrannical, that they deserve not fundamental allegiance and constructive attention but venomous scorn and nihilistic rejection, that democratic processes and institutions are a sham, that the just solution to social problems lies along the path of civil confrontation and political warfare—this model is alive and well among radical feminists, racial separatists, queer nationalists, and the rag-tag intellectual army of post-modernists, critical theorists, and kitsch Marxists that inhabit our universities and evidently our editorial rooms as well.

Contrary to the *Times*, and other institutions of the "bourgeois" media that have followed its lead, what needs to be emphasized on this 150th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto* is that Marx was totally, tragically, destructively wrong. He was wrong about the oppressive nature of the bourgeoisie and the outmoded nature of capitalist production, wrong about the increasing misery of the working class, and wrong about its liberating powers, wrong about the increasing concentration of wealth and the increasing polarization of class under capitalism, wrong about the labor theory of value and the falling rate of profit, and wrong about the possibility of creating an advanced and democratic industrial society by abolishing private property and the market in order to adopt a "social plan."

If Marx's economics were already outdated and false when he wrote the *Manifesto*, even worse was his political ignorance. He was, in particular, disastrously deaf to all the resonances of the Anglo-American constitutional tradition and the accumulated democratic wisdom ascending from the Magna Carta to the American Constitution. Here in its implacable arrogance is how the "visionary" prophet who wrote the *Manifesto* actually saw the political future:

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize

itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

One billion people have been impounded in totalitarian states and gulags, and one hundred million people have been murdered in our lifetime by Marxists acting on these false premises. That they should be endorsed today by anyone at all is a moral disgrace. This is what we should remember on the 150th anniversary of Marx's destructive work. Political power is not "merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another." In democratic market societies, where social mobility is fluid, the people are sovereign and the rule of law prevails, classes do not "oppress" one another, and those who inflame the passions of revolution are inciting their followers to criminal acts. Period.

Private property may be the basis of class divisions, as Marxists claim, but private property has been proven by all history to be the indispensable bulwark of human liberty, the only basis for producing general economic prosperity and social wealth that human beings have yet discovered. There are no democratic societies, or industrial societies or post-industrial societies that are not based on private property and economic markets. Those who make war on private property, make war on human liberty and human well-being.

As noted above, the writer of the *Times* review is a professor of English literature. At any other moment in our intellectual history his choice for an assignment of this importance might be dismissed as mere happenstance. But Marcus's views reflect the appalling state of literary studies in American colleges, which under the aegis of tenured radicals have become a pretext for teaching Marxist kitsch under rubrics like "post-modernism," "post-structuralism," and "critical" and "cultural" studies. These pseudo-Marxists share Marx's hatred of all bourgeois societies like our own. As the professor, himself, put it in the *Times*: "Whether it is regarded as capitalist democracy as civil society, as the welfare state in transition or as the modern social contract, bourgeois society remains alive and well which means of course, as it always has, that it is in a hell of a state."

The sub-text is that American society is a society to be rejected and despised as a social hell, that its institutions are institutions to be subverted and destroyed. This is the curriculum in all too many college classrooms today. This is the real meaning of the *Communist Manifesto* on its 150th anniversary, and of the celebrations of the *Manifesto* by an intellectual class whose own record in this bloodiest of centuries, is a sordid and sorry one of apology and support for the totalitarian enemies of America both abroad and within.

—David Horowitz

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## Ice Cube, Continued from page 1

pers in a group called N.W.A. (Niggas with Attitudes), his confrontational tone, particularly against law enforcement, is set. On the famous track, "Fuck tha Police," N.W.A. rappers put the police on trial, and, not surprisingly, wind up with a conviction:

N.W.A. court is in . . . Beat up police . . . scene of the slaughter . . . Ice Cube will swarm on any motherfucker in a blue uniform . . . gonna be a blood bath of cops dying in LA . . . I'm a sniper with a hell of a scope . . . Taking out a cop or two . . . A sucker in a blue uniform waiting to get shot by me or another nigga . . . the jury has found you guilty of being a redneck, white-bred, chickenshit motherfucker . . .

The 1989 N.W.A. release of "Straight outta Compton" is nearly identical to the 1988 release, except that now the "Fuck tha Police" track is removed. Later Ice Cube CDs call for the killing of law enforcement officers, and lyrics often single out white male officers.

Violence directed more broadly at whites began in 1990 after Ice Cube broke away from N.W.A., starting with his first solo work called "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted." In the title track Ice Cube claims to be a criminal and says:

. . . Ice Cube has got the 4-1-1 . . . Cops ain't shit to me . . . FBI is on my dick. Stay off! . . . I'm wanted by America . . . It's time to take a trip to the suburb. Let them see a nigga invasion. Point-blank on a Caucasian. Cock the hammer and then cracker won't smile. Take me to your house, pal. Got to the house. My pockets got fat, see. Cracked his head. Got the money and the jewelry . . . 'AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted' reports that Ice Cube is the leader of the Lench Mob. Also in the group they have J-Dee\*, T-Bone\* . . . It's like a black thing.

Educated blacks who do not help take violence to the whites should be killed, one phrase says on another song. In more recent years Ice Cube's lyrics occasionally suggest that blacks who act too much like whites should be killed.

His violent racism got attention from the media in the fall of 1991 when "Death Certificate" was released. In it, whites and law enforcement have been joined as targets by Asians and a white Jew who managed N.W.A. However, the threats against Asians and Jews are relatively minor in comparison to repeated acts of verbal violence against whites. "Horny Lil' Devil" is representative of the Cube's take on whiteness:

. . . you are the prince of darkness, arch-enemy, father of evil, hell-born, demonic, savage, fierce, vicious, wild, tameless, barbaric, ungovernable, uncontrollable . . . the Beast . . . Looking at my girlfriend's black skin . . . she don't like white men . . . get your punk devil-ass hurt . . . where I'm from, devils get they ass kicked . . . I wanna kill a devil for talking shit . . . horny little devil, you better listen, before your ass come up missing . . . Trying to fuck me out of my land and my manhood . . . right now you got the upper hand . . . when I'm on top, I won't be fucking you, I'd rather put a buck in you. Because I hate the devil with a passion. And when I see the whites of his eyes, I start blasting. Dig a hole and throw his ass in it. I won't be happy until I'm down to my last ten . . . we'll blow your head off, and turn that white sheet to a red cloth . . . beat the Jap up . . . put his dick on the wood block. Swing. Swing. Swing. And Chop. Chop. Chop . . . I'm gonna get my gun, and put an end to the devil. So get a fucking shovel . . .

By 1991 Ice Cube had become a follower of Nation of Islam, a commitment that was soon reflected strongly in his music. (In return, Louis Farrakhan, in a speech at the Los Angeles Coliseum last summer, said that music had more influence than preachers among young blacks, and praised rap and Ice Cube in particular from the podium.) The pamphlet inserted into the "Death Certificate" CD, in fact, shows a photograph of the rapper reading a copy of Nation of Islam's weekly newspaper, *The Final Call*, whose title refers to the final warning God gives in order to get blacks to pledge to Nation of Islam doctrines just before the onset of the bloody Armageddon. In the background of the photograph, posed menacingly behind Ice Cube, stand members of Nation of Islam's security force, the so-called Fruit of Islam.

The only one of his CDs not distributed by the Priority/EMI Group team came out in 1992 when he wrote and produced lyrics for his friends

take out white boys, that's scary. Boom. Yah. I'm the nigga that said it, and I'm sorry that I can't regret it. But it's a proven fact that Jack is anti-black. So here's your fucking pay back . . . I'm coming. Bullets humming. Devils running. Niggas gunning. Many done it. Looks stunning . . . Armageddon is a confrontation, that the information is coming from the Nation. So what you gonna do with your crew or your boys? Will you just sell out or bring the noise? Keep your boys 'cause we got big toys with the one-mile scope.

Released late in the year after the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, "The Predator" CD seethes with a tone of wild empowerment and describes the Riots as righteous acts. The "Wicked" track warns the country: "April 29 was power to the people, and you just might see a sequel." Death threats are issued to the white police officers who participated in the beating of Rodney King, to the jurors who acquitted the officers, and to whites in general. The title track issues forth:

. . . riots ain't nothing but diets for the system. Fighting with the beast, 'no justice, no peace' . . . Niggas are sick of your white man tricks, with no treating us right. Now it's on, on sight. . . Farrakhan for president of white America . . . Put my chrome\* to your dome, watch it bust like a cantaloupe . . . So who's Ice Cube? I'm a rapper, actor, macker. Got a little problem with the redneck cracker. . .

Printed on the CD pamphlet is the following caveat: "Ice Cube wishes to acknowledge white America's continued commitment to the silence and oppression of black men . . . White America needs to thank black people for still talkin' to them 'cause you know what happens when we stop . . ."

The major music companies continued spreading the rapper's sentiments around with 1993 and 1994 CDs. The track "Enemy" on the "Lethal Injection" CD begins with an introduction by the hydrophobic Khalid Muhammad, anti-Semite-in-chief of Nation of Islam:

Every January 16, it's the Dreamer . . . What did he dream? That little black boys and little white girls would one day hold hands together, shit . . . They little black hands are yours. They can't hold your black brothers' hands. But you gonna go hold some crackers' hands before you hold each other's hands. You gonna walk with your enemy before you learn to walk with one another? How sick can you be? . . .

At this point, Ice Cube continues:

. . . bust\* a Glock. Devils get shot . . . Buck the devil . . . After 1995 not one dev\* will be alive . . . Ku Klux Klan, scared of me nutty beats, 'cause them nutty beats equal them bloody sheets . . . me know Elijah . . . I know that Farrakhan is your baby, Jesus. Devil, don't you know I'm a soldier, in God's name . . . You don't care if me die from the cracker . . . You don't care because you're nothing but a cracker. Now it's Judgment Day. Allah will never play. 'Freedom Got an AK,' them guerrillas\* say . . . When God give the word me herd like the buffalo, through your neighborhood. Watch me blast, drive up your past, getting that ass. You should've took heed of my word and became a friend of me. Now you're just the enemy . . . Now I change my style up . . . Bodies pile up . . . I'm killing more crackers than Bosnia-Herzegovina, each and every day, out a six-straight Chevrolet, with the heavy A to the motherfucking K . . . don't bust 'till you see the whites of his eyes, the whites of his skin, the whites of his lies . . . Putting in work for Master Farad Muhammad . . .



ICE CUBE IN HIGHER LEARNING

to rap in a new group called Da Lench Mob. Handled by Time Warner under the Elektra label, the raps from "Guerillas in tha Mist" often refer to Nation of Islam's doctrines, as is shown by "Buck tha Devil":

. . . Buck the devil. Boom. Here comes a tune. Bullets fly by your head. Zoom. Zoom. Zoom. A to the K to the 4 to the 7, little devils don't go to heaven. Last night I shot eleven at the record shop. Most of them dropped when my nine\* went, pop. Damn. See the fucking cop with the flat-top standing over nigga's face down on the black top. That shit has gotta stop, so I kicked a hip-hop. Popped that devil in his ass and make him flip flop . . . Trying to fuck a black. In fact, I got the 4-1-1 so you can buy a gun. Lench Mob's got the devil on the run . . . Shorty joined the Nation . . . As-Salamu 'alai-kum . . . Whitey can't fake them, and if they try FOI will break them . . . Ice Cube got the motherfucking bomb . . . Da Lench Mob. Down with Farrakhan. Gotta let 'em know the devil is a conniver. The devil hates my skin because I'm an original\* . . . be sure to put the devil on your shit list. Ya'll can't miss this, a brand new LP, from the L-e-n-c-h M-o-b . . . relying on my voodoo . . . fuck you too and your Red, White, and Blue. Motherfucker, you through. So act like you knew. Shoot you with my .22. I got plenty of crew. I



1995, Elijah is alive, Louis Farrakhan, NOI\*, Bloods and CRIPS and little old me, and we all getting ready for the enemy ...

Writing most of the tracks on Da Lench Mob's second CD, "Planet of da Apes," Ice Cube packs in phrases that glorify the killing of whites. "Goin' Bananas" is a good example:

... We're having thoughts of overthrowing the government ... the brothers and sisters threw their fists in the air ... It's open season on crackers, you know. The morgue will be full of Caucasian John Doe's ... smoking\* skinheads until they're all dead ... Ring the alarms. You motherfuckers been warned. And I won't fail, I make the Riot shit look like a fairy tale ... I remember the time when you were white, you were right, and when you were black ... you stayed back ... The KKK is my motherfucking prey. I'm hunting them down with wicked AK ... gang a cracker for his bank ... down with the FOI ... Oh my god, Allah, have mercy. I'm killing them devils because they're not worthy to walk the earth with the original black man. They must be forgetting. It's time for Armageddon, and I won't rest until they're all dead ...

The last track on the CD gives Nation of Islam's "Final Call":

Pinky dead again ... The devil got his. Fuck that. I want mines. The system was designed for pinky to live fine ... It's time to regulate, and set the shit straight ... it's time to warrior ... Fuck them laws, 'cause the Mob is coming raw. Nigga, is you down 'cause it's the Final Call. The media is only good for bluffing, and the government is only good for straight fucking. Grab your gat. Know the three will start busting. I'm trying to take them down, that these devils ain't nothing ... The war of wars with no fucking scores. And after this there won't be no more. April 29 was a chance to realize ... the g.'s are out to kill ... Nigga, is you down 'cause it's the Final Call ... For 400 years we've been played like a trump, with no respect, held by the fucking neck. But you thought we was gonna let it ride. Now here's the payback, the shit from way back. Changing the course, with no fucking remorse ... we got crackers to kill. Sending them back in on a ship to Europe ... They deserve it ... A nation-wide riot across America ... Fuck them laws, 'cause my mind is coming raw. Nigga, is you down, 'cause it's the Final Call ... This is the Final Call, on black man and black woman, rich and poor. Rise up ... come together for this black mastery.

The 1994 solo work, "Bootlegs & B-Sides," does not let up on the need to kill whites. In addition, Ice Cube proclaims the belief in black supremacy that is commonly held by Nation of Islam followers: "... not only mentally but physically the black man rules."

1994 was not only the year of two more violently racist CDs, but was also the year that Ice Cube hit Hollywood, taking a role as the defender of black grievances in director John Singleton's *Higher Learning*. Two years after meeting Singleton at a rally for Louis Farrakhan, Ice Cube got his first movie role in 1991 in the director's *Boyz n the Hood*, in which the rapper plays a former inmate who kills to avenge the murder of his brother. A year later he played a murdering drug dealer in *Trespass*. More recently he has played the good guy: the neighborhood protector (*Friday*; 1995), the victim of a sheriff's department full of racist, misogynist, anti-Semitic white male officers (*The Glass Shield*; 1995), the victim of South African police and the victor over armed skinheads (*Dangerous Ground*; 1997), and the monster-killing hero in *Anaconda*.

There are, of course, some ironies in his film persona, particularly when he is shown working with the whites his rap music despises. *Higher Learning*, for instance, is a film in which actors who pretend to be white supremacists are vilified, while Ice Cube, who actually espouses black supremacy, plays a character who escapes censure. Although Ice Cube's character initiates violence, he does so in response to specific racist acts perpetrated by whites. Away from the movie set, Ice Cube raps the slogan "no justice-no peace." Director Singleton promotes the "no peace" part of the chant as not only a warning of civil disobedience but also as a threat of riots.

The only other common target besides whites in Ice Cube's music are rival rappers or black drug dealers. In some songs Ice Cube threatens drug dealers or gang members because he views them as a detriment to predominantly black communities, but in other songs the same types are either blandly described or outright glorified and praised. Demeaning references to women are common. In "You Can't Fade Me" Ice Cube raps that he is thinking about shooting a woman in the head who tried to trap him falsely into paying child support. In "Cave Bitch" white women are degraded and he suggests that blacks should kidnap white women and hold them for ransom.

Demeaning synonyms for female are used to characterize men, as are derogatory synonyms for homosexual. Homosexuals, although rarely pointed at by the rapper, are threatened in "Enemy" and in a few lines of "You & Your Heroes," a song that claims black entertainers and athletes are superior to white ones; however,

in both songs being white overrides being homosexual as the justification for hatred.

Even though in some CDs Ice Cube bluntly asks blacks to avoid always blaming someone else for problems they face, in other lines he undermines the self-help messages by passing onto whites some of the ultimate responsibility. Ice Cube emphasizes in his lyrics that killing law enforcement officers is justified because officers disrespect, brutalize, and kill blacks. Excerpted from an interview and put onto the "Fuck 'Em" track of "The Predator" CD, Ice Cube says: "The things they done to us in the past are still affecting us now, mentally." His songs suggest that whites spread AIDS, crack cocaine, and guns through predominantly black neighborhoods, and then, after luring blacks into crime, imprison them with sentences harsher than those handed down to white criminals.

The largest video television channel in the world, MTV, spotlighted Ice Cube in videos throughout the 1990s, and even put him on the show to talk as a "role model" to millions of young people. Parents might be disturbed by a 1994 track of his rap propaganda called "Trapped":

... you motherfucking crackers know me. Your kids buy my shit ... I got game on top of game. The kid is mesmerized by the Lench Mob fame ... I smoke him, choke him ... I see the white kids running ... I'm the nigga, called the brothers. Stop the black-on-black. It's time for the kidnap ... Being a black man ... in his white land ... Motivate. Motivate. Motivate. The kids are talking. Now they want to do them drive-by's. That's right ... It's too late. Your little child is trapped. White boys ... love them hot. You come to the ghetto, you come to get mopped ... we might tell you to kill your fucking family ...

One might wonder about the fate of popular culture in America when a figure like Ice Cube is not only not censured, but given an ever-widening platform to spread his hateful ideas. Yet this is what has happened as he has moved out of the ghetto of rap and into films first as a star and now as a director courtesy of New Line Cinema, a Time Warner subsidiary, which recently gave him over \$5 million to make *The Player's Club*. He is doing so well in the industry that one can imagine a time in the not-too-distant future when the Cube stands up on stage smoldering at the audience at an Academy Awards ceremony. "... and I'd like to thank my main man, Louis Farrakhan and my brothers who are ready to cap the white devils ..."

Shane Smith is a freelance writer who lives in Los Angeles.

## A GLOSSARY OF HATE WORDS

**AK:** semi-automatic carbine

**Armageddon:** Nation of Islam professes that Allah will annihilate all whites except those that obediently succumb to the teachings of the Nation of Islam. Afterward, blacks will take control of the earth.

**As-Salamu 'alai-kum:** peace be on to you, a common salutation amongst Muslims

**A to the K to the 4 to the 7:** AK47

**black-on-black:** a crime in which both the victim and the offender are blacks

**blast:** discharge bullets from a gun

**bomb:** propaganda

**bust:** shoot a firearm

**busting caps:** discharging cartridges in firearms

**chrome:** handgun having a metallic luster, due to chrome plating, nickel plating, or made of solid stainless steel

**dev':** devil, a white

**dome:** a person's head

**Dreamer:** Martin Luther King

**Elijah:** Elijah Muhammad, founder of Nation of Islam

**FOI:** Fruit of Islam, security force for the Nation of Islam

**g.:** gangsta, black gang member

**game:** ability to make double meanings with words or phrases

**gat:** handgun

**Glock:** brand of pistol

**guerrillas:** rappers from Da Lench Mob; or black gang members in general

**J-Dee:** rapper of the group Da Lench Mob

**John Doe:** male body without identity

**kidnap:** corruption of white youth

**Master Farad Muhammad:** Nation of Islam professes that Master Farad Muhammad was a prophet who taught the Nation of Islam doctrine originally to Elijah Muhammad during the 1930's in Detroit, Michigan

**Nation:** Nation of Islam

**nine:** 9 mm pistol

**1995, 400 years after 1555:** Nation of Islam professes that 1555 was the beginning of whites enslaving blacks in North America and that after 400 years Armageddon would end the slavery.

**NOI:** Nation of Islam

**pinky:** whites

**putting in work:** committing crimes

**Shorty:** Da Lench Mob rapper

**smoking:** shooting people

**T-Bone:** Da Lench Mob rapper

**toys with the one-mile scope:** high-powered rifles

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# FrontPage

(updated daily)

## Leader of the Free World



This is a photograph of a float from a recent parade in Germany  
Submitted by William Bockman



Brock Exposed



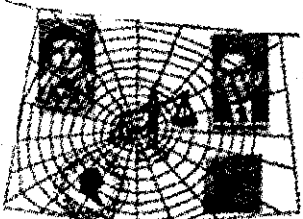
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By Cristopher Rapp



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Karl Marx and the Los Angeles Times

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### Commie Camp

In Deep Winter, a Memory of Red Summers

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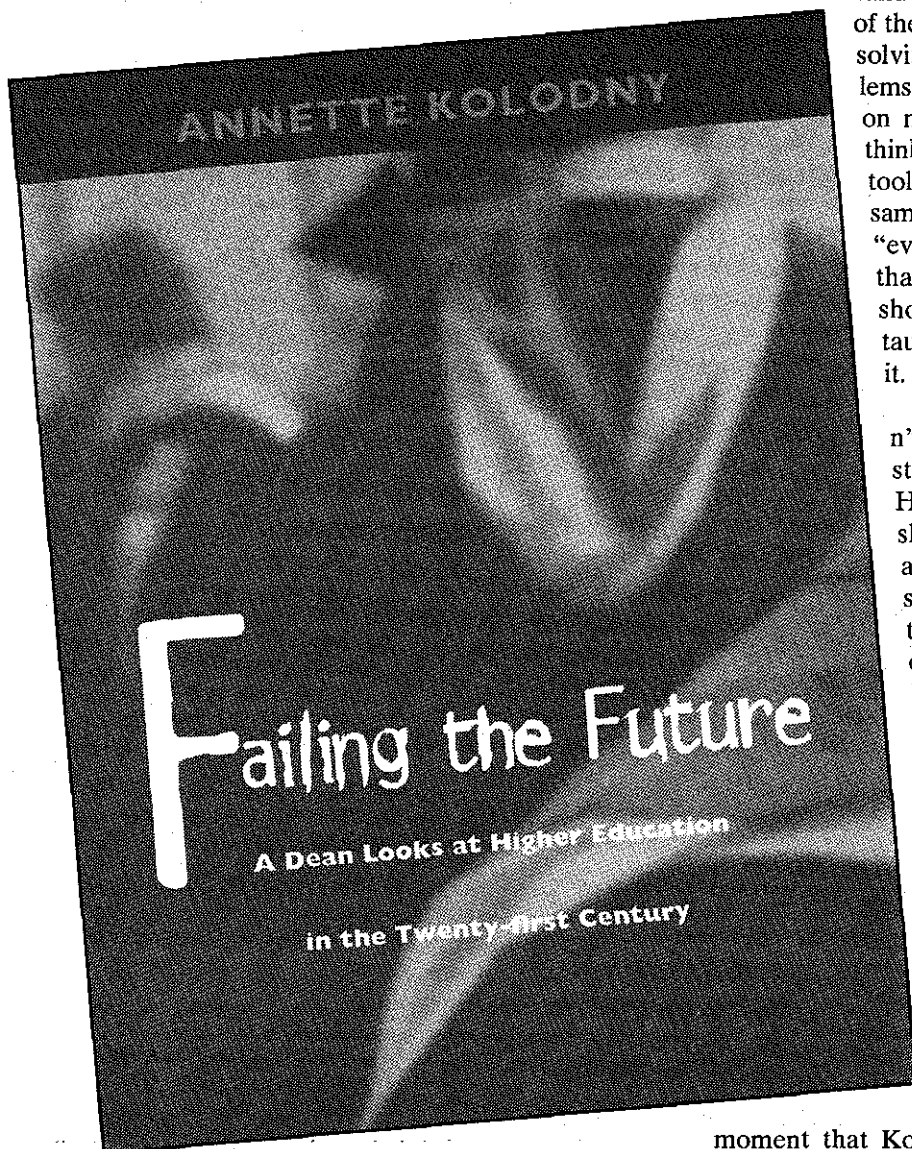
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## REVIEW

**In the Land of the Blind*****Failing the Future: A Dean Looks at Higher Education***by Annette Kolodny  
(Duke University Press, 1998. 298 pp. \$24.95)

REVIEW BY SANFORD PINSKER



Annette Kolodny served as dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona between 1988 and 1993. Her term was not, as they say, a walk in the park—neither for her (she brought an astonishing lack of experience to the task, never having even served as a department chair, much less as a university administrator) nor for those who rightly resisted her efforts to carry out an agenda top-heavy with feminist activism and minority “inclusion.”

For decades, the financially plagued University of Arizona had given the humanities the short end of the budgetary stick, preferring to put their money into programs that state legislators smiled upon: science departments, agri-study, and certain professional schools. The humanities were, by contrast, a small-ticket item, and the powers that be were happy enough to have things remain as they were. Why Kolodny ever got the nod as dean is, then, something of a mystery. Not only was she a hard-bitten feminist in scholarship and activism (her 1975 study, “The Lay of the Land,” is often cited as a “pioneering” work in feminist literary criticism), but she had also once been denied tenure at the University of New Hampshire, apparently because she was tough to get along with.

*Failing the Future* is at once a detailed account of Kolodny’s assorted crises as a dean and also a series of recommendations on how to turn public research universities into kinder, gentler places. Granted, management styles differ, but there is simply no way to separate the chapters in which Kolodny makes it clear what infuriated her as a dean and the chapters in which she recycles the antique rhetoric of participatory democracy into administrative *Newspeak*. Here, for example, is a sentence that fairly leaps off the book’s second page. The humanities are “vital and rigorous disciplines,” Kolodny intones, and then goes on to explain why this is so: they are the “key to understanding the vast diversity of human culture over

time and a tool for solving current social problems.” I have no quarrel with adjectives such as vital and rigorous, but I find myself wondering just how easily they can be attached to most disciplines currently plying their wares as part of the humanities; and by the time I get to the real business at hand—namely, Kolodny’s sense of the humanities as a “tool for solving current social problems”—I know enough to slip on my hard hat. People who think of the humanities as a tool are very likely to be the same ones who tell you that “everything is political” or that demographics alone should determine what is taught and who should teach it.

But Kolodny doesn’t try to hide where she stands on such matters. Here, for example, is what she observes about the additional three million students who are expected to enroll in the nation’s colleges and universities between 1997 and 2013: “At the moment, more than one-third of students in primary and secondary schools are minorities, and in Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Texas, Mississippi, and the District of Columbia more than half of the students are members of a racial minority.” Let us assume for the

moment that Kolodny’s figures are accurate, and then go on to speculate about the consequences for liberal learning that such bean-counting implies. Does it mean, for example, that the classics no longer speak to the new constituencies crowding into higher education for the first time? Or that the pursuit of truth must be sidelined in favor of the truths of multiculturalism built on the premise that one idea is not better than another, but only different? Does it imply that those who treat students as individuals rather than as the sum of their identity parts (race, class, and gender) will have no place in the balkanized academic world that Kolodny envisions? Absolutely. For while Dean Kolodny bemoans how number-crunchers in the provost’s office continually ask her to come up with plans for a “leaner, meaner” administration—more sections taught by fewer faculty, Annette, the activist, is not at all shy about using her numbers to browbeat any who raise objections to Women’s Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and dozens of other special interest studies programs waiting their turn in the wings. For her, those who are not an enthusiastic part of the diversity juggernaut are simply in the way.

Kolodny also “unpacks” her justifications for protecting (or is it “privileging”?) the new turns that scholarship is taking inside the humanities. Speaking at a 1991 meeting of the Modern Language Association, she gave academic freedom a whole new—and I think, dangerous—twist. After summoning up as many lurid cases as she could (feminist scholars who had their cars torched, or posters announcing their talks ripped down), Kolodny gets to what she sees as the nub of the matter—“the preservation of the principle of academic freedom undiminished by bias, prejudice, or discomfort with difference.” What could be more reasonable, or more attractive to someone who has always championed open classrooms, free-wheeling, no-holds barred discussions, and the liberties that John Stuart Mill associated with the marketplace of ideas? But these, alas, are not what Kolodny has in mind. Rather, she sees academic freedom as meaning receptivity to radical feminists and other new constituencies in the university and sees the absence of such support as

“anti feminist intellectual harassment.”

Kolodny’s own words on this matter show how scary it is when a tenured radical takes the next step and becomes a university dean: “. . . while most teachers of literature nowadays would be quick to defend J.D. Salinger’s controversial 1951 work [*The Catcher in the Rye*] under the flag of academic freedom, far fewer professors (especially if they are untenured) would risk defending Rita Mae Brown’s 1973 novel, *Rubyfruit Jungle*, with its exuberant and unapologetic lesbian narrator. This is because the teaching, research, and scholarly practices that, to date, have been traditionally protected by the concept of academic freedom—that is, the practices that make the concept recognizable and constitute its meaning—have largely been practices forged without the participation of women (especially feminists), African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, (open) lesbians and gays, or the disabled. . . . Having enjoyed no role in defining the concept of academic freedom, these groups—and their interests—are understood to be protected by it only insofar as their products and activities conform to the accepted products and activities of the past.”

I have quoted her at length because I wish to avoid charges of intellectual harassment, either by paraphrasing or otherwise misrepresenting her argument. Even so, I suspect I am not entirely off the hook because what Kolodny’s brand of intellectual harassment really comes to is disagreement—and here I have little choice but to plead guilty. Never mind that Kolodny mixes apples with oranges (one can be against banning books and still remain convinced that *The Catcher in the Rye* is a much richer literary work than is *Rubyfruit Jungle*) or that her view of academic freedom is, at best, spongy, what makes the mind whirl is Kolodny’s apparent conviction that advances in knowledge happen only when new constituencies elbow their way into formerly white male bastions and change the rules. Give people enough beatings or, in Kolodny’s case, threaten them with enough lawsuits, and 2+2 turns out to be any number that the State (or politically correct commissars) wants. What Orwell recognized as the thumbprint of totalitarianism, Kolodny sees as the reality being social-constructed.

Where the politics of ideas is concerned, Kolodny is much longer on politics than on ideas. The real challenges of higher education, if I may be permitted to fall into a bit of deanspeak, have precious little to do with the holy trinity of race, class, and gender that Kolodny repeats as if it were a sacred mantra. Rather, they have to do with why American students perform so badly in math and science when compared with their counterparts from other industrialized countries, and why their grasp of culture is, charitably put, so tenuous.

There are delicious moments in *Failing the Future* when Kolodny’s self-righteousness gives way to unintended contradictions. As a middle manager, for instance, she came up with plan after plan to reconfigure job descriptions and develop better teamwork—all to no avail. The provost, reflecting the counsel of his crisis management team, continued to demand that budget cuts be made. But what frustrated her most was “the duplicity of it all.” A few pages later, however, Kolodny offers up this comment: “If logic and hard data failed me and I thought it would help, I teased, I cajoled, I flirted, I pouted.” Apparently duplicity is okay in the service of higher gods.

Ex-Dean Kolodny’s recommendation for how to fix higher education is to agree with her. My own sense—and I speak as a professor in the trenches rather than as a dean—is that higher education badly needs a much clearer sense than we currently possess of what the goals of liberal learning are and how we can best go about achieving them. Kolodny’s manifesto should be part of the discussion, with this important caveat: those who raise objections to her ever-multiplying interdisciplinary studies programs deserve something better than the demonization that *Failing the Future* offers so generously and so unconvincingly.

Sanford Pinsker teaches at Franklin and Marshall College.



## REVIEW

## Defending the West

*Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom*

by Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath  
(The Free Press, 290 pp., \$25.00)

REVIEW BY BRUCE S. THORNTON

Once the essence of Western education, the study of ancient Greek and Latin languages and civilization has fallen on hard times. The utilitarian bias of education for most of this century meant that Homer and his brethren were considered increasingly useless for helping us fight both our political and economic rivals, let alone the more mundane task of preparing students for gainful employment. More recently, the rise of multiculturalism and its version of history as a therapeutic melodrama has cast the Greeks as the original Western villains, the first Dead White Males who tied the oppressed "other" on the railroad tracks of history.

Attacked as Homer is from both the educative right and the therapeutic left, his pulse is barely audible in higher education these days, let alone in the larger culture. But Heath and Hanson's trenchant, funny, and impassioned analysis of Classics' decline, and their unabashed, stirring celebration of the values the Greeks created—values we Westerners today enjoy, and the rest of the world is desperate to adopt—perhaps can begin to bring Homer back to life.

You can tell that the language and culture of Ancient Greece is in sad shape when its caretakers can offer only Disney's fatuous *Hercules* and an awful made-for-television *Odyssey* as evidence for the Greeks' vitality. That's sort of like arguing that the *Amos 'n' Andy Show* was evidence of improving race relations. The real truth, as documented by Hanson and Heath, can perhaps be best appreciated with one stark statistic: "There are now five or six Classics professors in the country for every senior Classics major, over thirty articles and books each year for every graduating student."

This dearth of students at the same time that the profession has flourished suggests one reason for the decline—careerist professors were (and are) too busy running the academic *cursus honorum* to concern themselves with secondary and undergraduate education, argue before the wider public for the importance and value of Classics, and write books that could make the case for Classics' relevance to modern American society. Most of what has been written represents academe at its worst—jargon-ridden and over-technical ugly prose that transforms the Greeks into the worst sort of pretentious bores. No wonder that most professional writing in Classics these days is read only by editors and reviewers and the stray graduate student looking to swell a dissertation footnote or two.

Hanson and Heath document the awful irrelevance of much current classical scholarship with generous quotation from some of the worst offenders whose "language and tone are not merely embarrassingly elitist; they are also absolutely fatal to creating any new interest in the Greeks themselves." Traditionalist pedants—"the self-proclaimed Old Guard of Classics [who] fiddled while Rome and Greece burned in their classrooms"—come in for some deserved licks, but it is the "postmodernists" and their political Tweedledees, the "race-and-gender" hacks, who get the worst scourging—as well they should. After all, traditionalists would be the first to admit that they are elitists whose esoteric researches should not be sullied by any contact with hoi polloi. But the PC crowd mask their own pursuit of privilege in a spurious concern for liberating the "oppressed other," and in so doing traduce the Hellenic legacy that is the ultimate source for the ideals, like freedom and human rights, they take for granted in their own lives as well as profess.

This rank hypocrisy is repeatedly exposed by Hanson and Heath, and linked to the academic careerism that, pace some conservatives who see the specter of sixties radicals in every tenured postmodernist, explains more than anything the decline in humanistic studies in higher education: "In the eighties,

Classics (and, indeed, all of the academy) was reinvented as a place of reduced teaching loads, extended leaves, think-tank hopping, conferences, endowed chairs, grants, and petty power politics—often decorated with a patina of trendy leftist ideology or neoconservative scorn as the volatile financial situation and the funding source prompted." Worse than the hypocrisy, however, is the completely un-Hellenic behavior exhibited by the therapeutic poststructuralist: "How odd that so many of this last generation of academics adopted instead the ethics of the corporate state and created a careerism fatal to undergraduate teaching and broad scholarship. In the process we lost both the student and the general reader, Homer's only links to the world outside Classics." Why should anyone care about funding Classics when its own watchdogs had, as in Plato's metaphor, turned into wolves devouring their own flock, subsidized by release time and the NEH?

Hanson and Heath, though, don't just provide an autopsy of Homer; they also write an encomium to the Greeks and what they bequeathed to Western civilization and, indeed, to the world. In one of the best defenses of the West in a long time, their second chapter, called "Thinking Like a Greek," clearly and forcefully makes the case for the uniqueness of the Greeks and their priceless legacy via the West to humanity. They list seven innovative ideals unheard of anywhere else in the ancient Mediterranean: the acquisition of knowledge remains independent of religious and political authority; military power is controlled by civilian authority; government is constitutional and consensual rather than the private boondoggle of the great man or clan; religion is separated from and subordinated to political authority; the middling class, those neither rich nor destitute, forms the bulwark of society; private property is protected from government; and, most important, free dissent and open criticism are fundamental assumptions of political life.

In addition to these innovations that initiated the long development of the political ideals we all enjoy today—not to mention the knowledge of the natural world that has created our material affluence—the Greeks possessed a view of human existence as "tragic and ephemeral," in contrast to our misplaced therapeutic imperative that makes subjective feeling and personal fulfillment the highest good. With our wild expectations of what existence owes us, we are constantly chafing against the limits of our own material nature and of a society we suspect is unfairly hindering our ascent into the nirvana of personal fulfillment, unalloyed happiness, and exalted self-esteem. No wonder we are so ready to hand over our autonomy to whatever state functionary promises to make our infantile wishes fact.

The Greeks knew better. Recognizing the absolute limits placed on human aspiration, especially the intractable disorder inherent in nature and in our own passions, the Greeks understood that reason and culture have to provide the structure of limitations, everything from customs and laws to inhibitions and shame, that provides stability in a world of destructive forces both within humanity and without. They argued frequently over whether this structure could indeed succeed in creating order—one thinks of Euripides' Phaedra answering Socrates' "virtue is knowledge" with her despairing cry, "I know the good, but can't bring it to completion"—but they never entertained our peculiar delusion that humans are basically good, nature benevolent, culture repressive, and eternal happiness an entitlement. The Greeks' ability to face the truth of humanity's tragic condition "steadily and whole," as Matthew Arnold put it, in turn explains their insistence that "truth is a far more precious commodity than self-esteem," that word should match deed, and that "natural impulse unchecked by the constricting bridles of law, tradition, and civic order leads not (as is supposed) to liberation and self-fulfillment, but more likely to be a holocaust."


The most important bit of Greek wisdom, however, and their most valuable legacy to us, is the tradition of critical consciousness they initiated. The willingness to question everything, to subject all ideas to critical scrutiny, to "examine" life as Socrates did, explains the peculiar dynamism of the West as well as the marvelous literature of Ancient Greece, unmatched by any society contemporary with them; and perhaps unsurpassed by any society subsequent. Everything that characterizes the modern West, from material prosperity to the ideal of universal human rights, freedom, and democracy, is "merely a logical

cultural consequence of the Greeks' legacy of open inquiry, self-criticism, anti-aristocratic thought, free expression and commerce, and their faith in disinterested reason and science, immune from the edicts of general, priest, and king." And every place in the world where this legacy has not been adopted presents us with the spectacle of oppression of the weak, starvation and squalor amidst abundant natural resources, misery and suffering from easily preventable diseases, and the tyranny of superstition, clan loyalties, and irrational customs. As Hanson and Heath put it, "When one truly rejects the West, corpses mount." As long as the world wants freedom and material abundance, as they surely do, as long as the "other" is risking his life to become "Western," we will need the Greeks and their legacy.

Hanson and Heath's acknowledgment of the West's unique value, however, does not come at the expense of recognizing its equally unique lethality: "The entire freight of Western civilization—constitutional government, individual freedom, capitalism, Christianity—has spread through the blood and iron of Western infantry." The same dynamic critical consciousness that created democracy and science resulted as well in a war-making efficiency unmatched by any other society. This remarkable efficiency at killing has resulted in misery and suffering for those peoples unfortunate enough to be in the West's way. But killing our fellows for gain or sport is a constant in human history; only the Greeks had as well "the institutionalized questioning of aims and procedures" that could question such killing. Cortés and his Spaniards were more efficient at violence than were the Aztecs, but their willingness to kill arose from the same human evil. What the Aztecs didn't have was a Bartolomé de las Casas or an Antonio de Montesinos or a Pedro de Cieza de León who defended their culture's victims on the basis of a humanity that transcended race or clan.

What Hanson and Heath call "the Beast"—the racism, sexism, slavery, and exploitation that the multiculturalists tell us are the unique cargo of Western civilization—is of course lurking in every human culture and society past and present. What is unique to the Greeks and their heirs is the recognition that the Beast is a Beast, and only the West has created the ideals and values that perhaps could "awe the Beast," as Emerson put it, even if we will never kill it. That is what makes the classical legacy so important, and its demise such a catastrophe—"The death of Homer means an erasure of an entire way of looking at the world, a way diametrically opposite to the new gods that now drive America: therapeutics, moral relativism, blind allegiance to progress, and the glorification of material culture." Without that tradition of humane critical consciousness, where will our public culture find a counterforce to the merely material motives, the petty desire for pelf and gratified appetite, that increasingly drive our society?

That the larger society should look askance at the study of Ancient Greece and Rome is not surprising. As Hanson and Heath show, Classics has always had to answer the charge of elitist irrelevance. But always in the past new champions would spring up to defend Homer. These days we face the shameful spectacle of the caretakers themselves, like Ephialtes at Thermopylae, betraying Homer to the utilitarian enemy. The greater irony is that at this moment in history when the ideals of freedom and democracy and human rights, all invented by the Greeks, represent the best hope humanity has for liberating itself from the tyranny of the thug and the natural world alike, fat-cat professors in America are lining up to plunge a spear in Homer's dying body. And for what? "Short-term gain, a few paltry offices and titles, some small sense of self-importance, the pathetic smugness of belonging to the latest esoteric sect, a bit of money—all the usual companions of sloth, greed, and arrogance."

*Who Killed Homer?* belongs on the shelf with John Ellis's *Literatures Lost*. Together these books document the university's shameful destruction of the West's legacy; both argue eloquently as well for the unique value of the Western tradition, and both demonstrate in their clear prose and broad learning the passion for ideas and literature increasingly rare in the vocational factories that these days pass for universities. One can only hope that the body around which Hanson and Heath battle has a few  breaths left.

Bruce S. Thornton is the author of *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality*.

# Housewife Arrested Under New Code of Civil Conduct

By Judith Schumann Weizner

**R**ita Cortese, a thirty-six-year-old mother of two pre-schoolers, goes on trial tomorrow, the first person charged under the recently enacted Federal Code of Civil Conduct (FCCC). Mrs. Cortese maintains her innocence and says she is looking forward to being completely vindicated.

Mrs. Cortese was arrested on June 13 at Goodkind's Groceries in Mylde Manors, a quiet neighborhood in Queens, New York, after she was observed speaking loudly to Gladys Pushin, an elderly woman, at the checkout counter. Witnesses told police that while Mrs. Cortese was unloading her shopping cart, Mrs. Pushin arrived carrying two cans of cat food and elbowed her way to the front of the line. They said Mrs. Cortese shrugged and let her go, but then, when Mrs. Pushin's husband began passing more items to his wife from behind Mrs. Cortese, she spoke up. She told Mr. Pushin that while she didn't like the way his wife had cut in front of her, she had not wanted to object, as her own elderly mother did such things, and she had felt some sympathy for his wife. She explained that his arrival with a cartful of groceries had changed the entire situation and said she was sorry, but she could not allow them to shove her aside this way because she had to finish quickly and pick up her children, whom she had left in the care of a neighbor.

Witnesses disagree as to what happened next. Several of them said that Mr. Pushin chastised Mrs. Cortese for leaving her children and that Mrs. Cortese replied, "Excuse me, but that is none of your business." Others say they did not hear her say "excuse me." By all accounts, she did not raise her voice until Mrs. Pushin said, "When I was a young mother we stayed at home with our children and they didn't all become drug addicts." Then, witnesses agree, Mrs. Cortese said, "You're a meddlesome, obnoxious old woman. Pay for your damned cat food and get out of my way." At that point, the cashier summoned the store's etiquette custodian who called the police.

When the tape from the etiquette custodian's voice analyzer showed that Mrs. Cortese had exceeded the civility limit by .4 decibels, she was arrested and charged with two

counts of creating a hostile environment in a public accommodation, two counts of elder abuse and one count of compromising the value of a minority-owned property. (Goodkind's is owned by a consortium of



RITA CORTESE

minority businessmen who acquired it as part of last year's Inner City Supermarket settlement.)

While creating a hostile atmosphere in a public accommodation carries a mandatory sentence of six years in jail followed by two years of weekly sensitivity classes, the charge of elder abuse is much more serious, carrying a sixteen-year sentence on each charge. Mrs. Cortese has so far refused an offer to have the charge of compromising the value of a minority-owned property dropped in exchange for a public apology and the funding of a scholarship for minority children. If she is convicted of this offense, she will face an additional twelve years in prison.

The Federal Code of Civil Conduct was passed when Congress, heartened by the .023 percent drop in traffic fatalities following passage of the Federal Road Rage Act, responded to President Clinton's announcement of a new initiative to rid the United States of criminal behavior stemming from a bad attitude.

(The Road Rage Act survived an almost immediate First Amendment challenge when Louis Angerman petitioned the Supreme Court to overturn his aggressive driving conviction, arguing that aggressive driving is a natur-

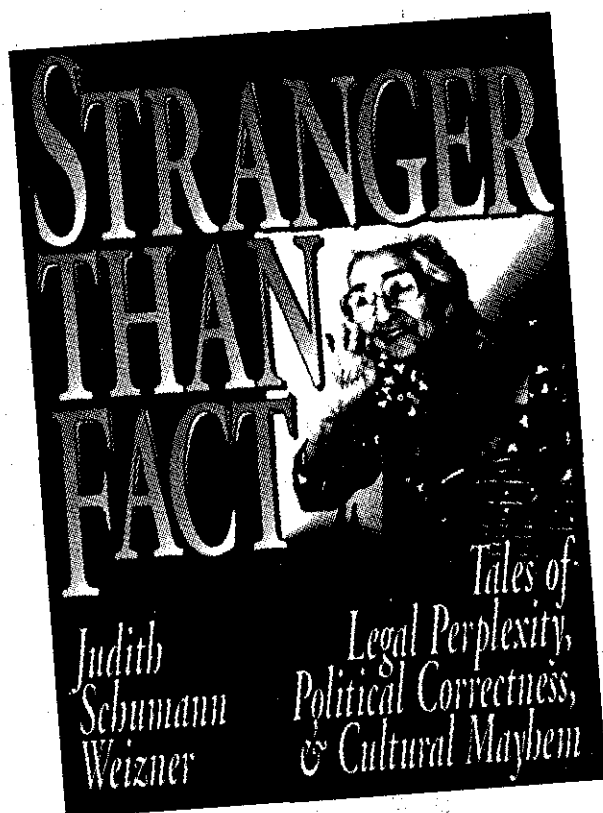
al form of free expression for a person with an aggressive temperament and that it is therefore protected by the First Amendment. In the majority opinion of *Angerman v. California*, Justice Arthur Buffone wrote, "Mr. Angerman's argument that the First Amendment allows him to give free rein to the aggressive side of his nature is no more persuasive than would be an argument from a racist that his use of the word 'nigger' should be allowed because it is natural for him to think in those terms. Aggressive driving can be construed as a form of hate crime. Hate crimes can be prosecuted without violence to the First Amendment because, while it is the element of expression that turns an ordinary crime into a hate crime, that expression is merely the outward, audible symbol of an underlying attitude toward the victim without which the crime would never have been committed." Last year, in *Karvil v. The Conservative Cartoonist*, this court established unequivocally that the principle that free expression may be curtailed under certain circumstances without

violence to the First Amendment. Mr. Angerman's conviction for aggressive driving must stand because aggressive driving is by definition the concrete expression of a particular, unacceptable, dangerous attitude without which there would be fewer accidents.")

While the Federal Code of Civil Conduct has not yet gained universal acceptance, the President feels that once people see the anticipated reduction in the number of unpremeditated felonies they will support it.

The FCCC went into effect at midnight on June 12, the fifth anniversary of the New York BMT Subway Massacre, in which twenty-five subway passengers were deliberately contaminated with leprosy by a homeless man who lost his temper when he was asked to step in and not block the doorway. The homeless man, whose name was withheld under provisions of the Americans with Contagious Diseases Act (ACDA), was sentenced to six months of rehabilitative civility therapy.

If Mrs. Cortese is acquitted, she may still have to stand trial for attempted diminution of Mrs. Pushin's self-esteem under Section 8 of the Vintage Americans Conservation Act (VACA) for having called a matriarch "an old woman."



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