

HETERO DOXY

ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



COMRADE CHAPLIN

According to Hollywood legend, Charlie Chaplin was not only the screen's great comic genius, but also a premature victim of blacklist-era anti-Communism, persecuted by the Justice Department and eventually hounded out of America. Richard Attenborough's

recent bio-pic, *Chaplin*, actually includes a shot of J. Edgar Hoover standing in front of his fireplace, presumably plotting the Little Tramp's downfall. Actually, the FBI chief had relatively little to do with Chaplin's problems, and Attenborough would have served the truth far better if he had shown Joseph Stalin at the Kremlin Wall brooding over the film star's usefulness. For Charlie Chaplin's story demonstrated nothing if not the tenacity of the Communist movement when it came to exploiting its celebrity sympathizers.

A child of the south London slums, Charlie Chaplin went to work as a clog dancer in the music halls at the age of nine. While touring America with a troupe called Karno's Komies, he came to the attention of Mack Sennett, joining Sennett's Keystone studio in late 1913. His Little Tramp character was a phenomenal success, and in 1916 he signed with the Mutual Film Company for \$670,000. With the possible exception of steel magnate Charles Schwab, Chaplin was the highest paid individual in the United States and the first movie star with an international following.

Having had first-hand experience of hunger and having seen the impersonal face of charity under the English Poor Laws, Chaplin was drawn to socialist ideas. One of his first friends in Hollywood was freelance writer and Socialist Party organizer Rob Wagner, later a

director of Will Rogers' films and publisher of a small literary magazine, *Beverly Hills Script*. Wagner gave Chaplin a copy of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* to raise his consciousness about the depredations of capitalism and managed his public relations during World War I, when Chaplin's refusal to serve in uniform threatened his

career. In 1919, Wagner introduced him to the charismatic Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses* and a Soviet sympathizer, who was in L.A. to deliver a lecture entitled "Hands Off Russia!" Chaplin became close to Eastman, and fell in love with Eastman's lover, Florence Deshon. (The Sinead O'Connor of her day, Deshon had derailed a promising film career when she refused to stand for the playing of the national anthem at the premier of her silent film, *Jaffrey*.)

In early 1922, Deshon committed suicide and Eastman went abroad for a long stay in the Soviet Union. Chaplin's activism continued for a while after his departure. He held a fund-raising party at his studio for U.S. Communist boss William Z. Foster and reportedly gave \$1,000—a large sum at the time—to the Party. A few weeks later, in January 1923, two Chaplin comedies were screened in the Soviet Union, the first time any of his films had been shown there. Nikolai Ledbedev, the *Pravda* reviewer, wrote: "Chaplin is an old member of the Socialist Party of America. According to the latest information he has joined the American Communists." Ledbedev went

on to joke that as soon as the Soviet Union had established its own "laugh factory" it would become necessary to consider "a swift transfer, as a point of party discipline, of Comrade Chaplin from America to the [USSR]."

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HOOKED ON INSTITUTIONAL RACISM THE NUTTY PROFESSOR

By David Horowitz

"I am writing this essay sitting beside an anonymous white male that I long to murder." When I read this sentence, I found myself looking around the room nervously. Was there someone hiding with a weapon? Was this sentiment aimed at me? Such paranoia might be occasioned by the opening of a new novel by Brett Easton Ellis, which this sentence resembles. But what I am reading is actually not fictional at all, but an essay by bell hooks (the lower case affectation is hers), a writer of wide-ranging influence in the university culture. Previously on the faculty of Yale, hooks is currently the Distinguished Professor of English at City College in New York, where there must be many nervous white males. Her recent collection of academic essays, *Killing Rage*, is one of eight

similar diatribes that make up the oeuvre of a writer whom the *New York Review of Books* recently described as "the most prominent exponent of black feminism" in America.

The actual provocation for hooks' homicidal urge turns out to be nothing more than a lost seat in first class (now assumed to be one of the perks for Distinguished Professors) on a commercial airline flight. hooks tells how she had seated herself alongside a female friend, who is also black but identified only as "K." (Could this be a goofy literary allusion to Kafka's *Trial*?) No sooner are hooks and her friend settled, however, than a voice over the plane's speaker system calls K to the front of the cabin where her ticket is inspected, and it is determined that she does not actually have a legitimate claim to the seat. This mishap is the result apparently of a faulty upgrade, which it is too late to correct. At this time, K is also introduced to the anonymous white male of hooks' murderous intention, who is

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COMMUNIQUE

Status Quota

As a stock analyst, the daily struggle to absorb, sift through, and utilize information to my clients' profit can be intense. There just isn't much time for information that does not have deep and immediate bearing on the financial forces that dictate the future. As a result of the deluge of information that is available, but not by any means uniformly useful, I regret to say that I was actually considering letting my subscription with you lapse. Your February issue, including the article on the San Francisco Fire Department, changed my mind.

No matter who we are, we all must keep perspective. A mind focused too narrowly on the opinions of Wall Street analysts (many of whom, no doubt, have hidden axes to grind) may be at risk of losing its perspective. I am made more aware of the PC forces through your insightful work; these are forces that make corporate America less muscular, less efficient, less profitable than it could be, just as they have transformed San Francisco's Fire Department into but a shadow of its former self. Multiculturally motivated quotas, burdensome codes of conduct designed around chip-on-the-shoulder paranoia, environmental overboardism, these may be among the worst enemies of America's corporate growth; yet they are busy at work both within corporations themselves and in the culture wherein corporations are conceived and strive to flourish.

Yes, I almost fell out of touch, but now I have seen the error of my ways. Please accept the enclosed check in return for another year of *Heterodoxy*!

Monte Bishop

Black Racism

G.J. Krupke's article on the little-discussed phenomenon of black hate crimes was right on the money. Black-on-white crimes are not the only "dirty little secret" being covered up. Shortly after my February issue of *Heterodoxy* arrived in the mail I read in the local newspaper that a 28-year old Camp Pendleton Marine shot two superior officers, killing one, with the words "This is for the brotherhood and the brown side." Afterwards he reportedly vowed that "the killing would continue until people of color are released from prison." The killer was a native of Guam; his victims were white. *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 8, 1996, at B-1.

The headline on the news story blandly reported "Marine May Face Penalty of Death." Can you imagine the headline if a white Marine shot and killed a black officer for racial reasons? Congratulations for taking on this taboo subject.

Mark S. Pulliam
San Diego, CA

Olfactory Correctness

In "Olfactory Correctness," *Heterodoxy*, November, 1995 James Bovard derisively denies the scientific existence of multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) and sarcastically characterizes MCS patients as "hysterical" or "delusional." What are the facts?

The professional literature of the last twenty years shows MCS to be a multisystem disorder caused by an intolerance to environmental chemicals that can adversely affect practically every organ and system in the body, e.g., brain, immune, respiratory, gastrointestinal, etc., and, if unchecked, can lead to tissue damage and serious illnesses. Some 15 percent of the population, 38 million people, suffer some degree of MCS and as many as 5 million have disabling, sometimes life-threatening diseases.

Contrary to Mr. Bovard's contention, most MCS patients are physically well and free from psychiatric illness prior to being exposed to chemical substances. Psychological symptoms usually develop after such exposure and result both from the neurotoxic damage to the brain as well as from not being able to continue living and working in their usual environment, i.e., having their lives turned upside down.

If Mr. Bovard had reviewed all of the scientific literature, instead of quoting a few biased or outdated sources such as the position of the American Medical Association nearly 15 years ago, he would surely have reached conclusions very different from those in his "Olfactory Correctness" article. In fairness to the millions of individuals who suffer from MCS, Mr. Bovard might consider writing another article on MCS after he

read at least several recent scientific contributions, e.g., Ashford & Miller, *Chemical Exposures: Low Levels and High Stakes*; National Research Council, *Multiple Chemical Sensitivities*; and Rea, *Chemical Sensitivity*, Vol 1, 2, & 3.

Daniel Brown
Green Valley, AZ

PC Water Boy

Occasionally I read your paper just to see how the cultural Right operates at its worst, and in that respect you never fail to entertain me. However, John Ellis' recent review of John Wilson's *The Myth of Political Correctness* is so fraudulent a performance, even for *Heterodoxy*, that I thought it might be worth trying to inform your readers that Wilson's book is actually quite valuable for anyone concerned with political controversies in U. S. higher education.

According to Ellis, Wilson's book simply denies the existence of left-wing PC in American universities, and attributes the PC phenomenon to a "right-wing conspiracy." Neither claim is true. Wilson does document a widespread campaign of lying and disinformation on the Right, but that's not the same thing as saying that PC was cooked up by evil scientists in Olin Foundation laboratories. And Wilson does try to explain—and, usually, to defend—a wide variety of leftist and liberal positions on matters like sexual harassment, curricular reform, and feminist scholarship. You'd never know that from reading Ellis' review, though, because even though Wilson covers dozens of specific debates, Ellis mentions one and only one area of controversy—his own pet obsession, affirmative action at Berkeley.

It's true that Wilson occasionally tries to defend positions on the left that I (and many others) find indefensible. But what's so extraordinarily compelling about Wilson's book is his research into underreported incidents of right-wing intimidation and coercion on campus, ranging from the brutalities of gay-bashing and racist violence to the declaration by educational fascists like John Silber that some areas of contemporary research are off limits at Boston University (how that's for a commitment to free speech?). Unless your readers are like your financial backers in that they have two standards for political freedom (left-wing intimidation is the work of the Great Satan, right-wing intimidation is the work of God), I think they'd be extremely interested in reading Wilson's book for themselves.

But I know that right-wing violence and misconduct are not going to be reported faithfully by *Heterodoxy* any more than they would be by *Der Stürmer*; accordingly, I don't expect that Ellis would be so honest as to acknowledge this aspect of Wilson's book. Indeed, I'm sure that Ellis was assigned to review the book precisely because he's one of the most rabid of *Heterodoxy's* stable of attack dogs. I do find it worth comment, however, that Ellis calls Wilson's book "grossly incompetent." That's a funny phrase, coming from Ellis. In a recent issue of the NAS journal, *Academic Questions*, Ellis inadvertently betrayed the fact that he did not know of any feminist scholar who has publicly disagreed with anti pornography advocate Catharine MacKinnon. There are literally hundreds of such scholars, and anyone who doesn't know it is simply too ignorant to report reliably on contemporary feminism. But feminism is not the only area in which Ellis has shown himself to be an ignoramus of the first water. In the course of challenging the competence of Wilson's book, for instance, he refers repeatedly to Martin Jay, whom he calls a founding member of Teachers for a Democratic Culture. He's clearly thinking of Gregory Jay, who's unrelated to Martin. Greg Jay teaches in another field, at another school two thousand miles away from Martin. But if you don't know that, you can at least distinguish the two Jays on the grounds that they have different first names.

This would be trivial enough except for the fact that the ignoramus who made the mistake is also the ignoramus who accuses John Wilson of incompetence (Wilson's book, by contrast, contains not a single error of this kind). But I find this kind of glitch in almost every issue of *Heterodoxy*; almost alone among right-wing tabloids, *Heterodoxy* engages in vituperative *ad hominem* attacks even when it's not sure which *ad hominem* it's supposed to be attacking. I fully expected *Heterodoxy* to lie about the contents of Wilson's book, but I honestly didn't expect that someone so grossly inept as John Ellis would actu-

ally have the gall to challenge the book's factual accuracy. I guess that's why *Heterodoxy* is so much fun to read—and it's one reason why my colleagues and I have come to think of it as evidence of the new "compassionate" conservatism: a kind of privately-subsidized rest home, a shelter for the intellectually incompetent.

Thanks. And keep up the good work!

Professor Michael Berube
Urbana, IL

John Ellis Replies: Mr. Berubé charges that I lie about John K. Wilson's book when I say he attributes the PC phenomenon to a right wing conspiracy. Here are Wilson's own words: "The myth of political correctness is a powerful conspiracy theory created by conservatives and the media who have manipulated resentment against leftist radicals into a backlash against the fictional monster of political correctness." Who is lying?

Mr. Berubé says that I wrote, ignorantly, that no feminist has criticized MacKinnon. Wrong again: I wrote about one of the sisterhood who wanted to disown MacKinnon by denying that she had any serious influence among feminists. The issue is what I wrote in *Academic Questions* was not whether any feminists criticize MacKinnon, but the reverse: whether any listen to her.

Mr. Berubé claims to be entertained, but his letter shows otherwise: clearly, we have upset him so much that he has lost control. How else could he loudly demand honesty even as he denies the central thesis of Wilson's book? Or insist on factual accuracy while misquoting my text (he gets wrong both of the only two phrases that he places in quotation marks, including that "funny phrase coming from Ellis") and claiming I mention "one and only one area of controversy" when in fact I mention three? Or forget that you can't wax indignant about "vituperative *ad hominem* attacks" and at the same time pepper your own remarks with words like "rabid," "attack dogs," and "ignoramus"? Or make the desperate and logically impossible claim that Wilson's book contains no errors (how could that ever be known?) while ducking my factual demonstration that Wilson gets the events at Berkeley hopelessly wrong?

What has so upset Mr. Berubé? Had he been more candid about his personal stake in the book, the reader would already know. For Mr. Berubé has a glowing recommendation on the book's cover: "This is an original, discerning, and extremely important book." Now Mr. Berubé has egg on his face, because reviewers other than myself have used phrases such as "a worthless book," "preposterous thesis," or shallow and ineffective endeavor."

Mr. Berubé does Wilson no favor in claiming that the book is "extraordinarily compelling" in showing extensive right wing PC on campus. To believe that, you must also believe that the scale of conservative presence and influence on campus, if not equal to that of left and liberal influence, at least approaches it. And if you believe that, you can believe anything. (As another reviewer has already shown, Wilson has to troll small fourth-tier campuses to find his examples.)

But the deeper reason for Mr. Berubé's unhappiness is probably this: as I previously suggested, Wilson is an ambitious young man who has seen a career opportunity in carrying water for the PC establishment. This hazardous role thrusts out onto the front line a young person not yet well-equipped for the task while generals rest safely away from the fray. Mr. Berubé, too, has chosen to build his career by ingratiating himself with the PC establishment. And now he, too, has had to learn through the fate of Wilson's book and his complicity in how badly things can go for young people who make this ill-advised career choice.

On one point I indeed nodded: in my last paragraph only (not "repeatedly") I absent-mindedly wrote the first name of my University of California colleague Martin Jay, where I obviously meant Gregory Jay. I humbly beg Martin Jay's forgiveness for that unintended calumny. Mr. Berubé surely cannot believe, however, that I do not know the difference between a colleague in my own university and the man whose latest antics we chronicled just a few months ago in David Mulroy's "Great Books Triumph in Beer City" (*Heterodoxy*, September 1995).

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REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

HOW WE DIDN'T GET TO MARS: In the couple of months since we published "Lost in Space," there has been more weird science at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, America's premier venue for space exploration. The bibliography of suggested reading has even more feminist agit-prop since Lloyd Billingsley wrote the story. Recently, staging a science workshop for teachers of gifted students, lab chieftains brought in an "art therapist" who played flute while a former JPL mission planner banged on a bongo drum. Teachers were told to breathe deeply because "this isn't about thinking." Then they were given crayons and told to draw a circle and color in "planet me."

LIVING ON IN INFAMY: The spirit of the recent Enola Gay-Smithsonian episode lives in a new effort to commemorate the camps used to relocate Japanese-Americans from west coast areas during WWII. California Democrat Robert Matsui and Republican Jerry Lewis have sponsored an effort to make the Manzanar camp part of the National Park Service. A 1973 plaque at the Manzanar calls it the first of 10 American "concentration camps" which were the result of "hysteria, racism, and economic exploitation." Ken Masugi, a former EEOC official whose parents spent time in a camp, and who opposed the 1988 reparations bill, notes that the 150,000 Japanese Americans in Hawaii, like those living in the east, were not subjected to the relocation and says that "the symmetry argument" with Nazi and fascist Japanese concentration camps is "just preposterous." Victims of the Japanese agree. "I don't think 'concentration camp' is in the same light," said Katherine Hoskins, an American civilian who with 17 members of her family survived three years in a Japanese prison camp in Manila. "Starvation was a big part of it, degradation, living in a crowded situation with the barest of necessities," she said. "It was fear from day to day. The Japanese threatened arbitrary killings if anyone tried to escape and four men were taken out and beheaded for communicating with outsiders."

Nothing quite that strict happened at Manzanar, where one 19-year-old Mexican-American famously hid out to escape the draft by faking a Japanese identity. The relocation camps were a grim roomer in our history, but they were not morally equivalent to what took place in the land of the enemy. Chuck Holden, who spent more than three years in various Japanese labor camps and survived transport on a "hell ship" to Osaka, points out: "They [the relocated Japanese-Americans] were alive when the war was over. We lost many of our people who were in Japanese camps."

NO MO' BETTER SEX: Twenty years after its founding by 60s refugee Victor Baranco, and 17 years after the state of California authorized the school to grant PhDs in "sensuality" and "lifestyles," the "Colonel Sanders of communes," More University in the East Bay city of Lafayette, has finally lost its approved status. (See "University of Sex," *Heterodoxy*, March 1994.) The 16-acre ramshackle campus of purple buildings has offered such courses as "Basic Hexing," "Expansion of Sexual Potential" and "A Weekend With Vic." Equipment for one class listed: "A mirror, a towel, and all body parts." Locals have dubbed the place, which was born during the reign of Jerry "Governor Moonbeam" Brown, "the academy of carnal knowledge" and "Fuck U." A sign at the gate warned that "Only Cowards Commit Suicide Slowly." In 1986, inspectors found that More's only library was a collection of videos and that the centerpiece of their video studio was a gynecological table. More has been fighting off a new inspection since 1989, when the state called for tougher standards.

More's lawyer argued that the closing of the campus would have a "chilling effect" on education.

OH PC WHERE IS THY STING: The wasp has been the mascot of Emory and Henry College in Virginia since 1921. But now members of the school's African-American Society feel stung that the name is not inclusive enough. Worse yet, the swift, menacing insect has even been mistaken for WASP, the acronym for those awful white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, a group that has been extinct for some 600 years. Suggestions for alternative, inclusive mascots include The Swarm and, in a colorized version, The Golden Swarm. When one student took a lighter to a handbill calling for the change, black sophomore Reggie Williams compared it to a cross-burning. No word from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals on the propriety of a name change.

LUNA BEACH By Carl Moore



PERFIDIOUS ALBION: The President and Vice-President of the Albion College Republicans, Jeff Schroder and Corinne Johnson, were elected members of their student Senate who had been the constant vocal opposition of the liberal activities of the student Senate since the beginning of the school year. Johnson also served as a member of the Student Affairs Committee of the Senate. Recently, a gay organization on campus proposed a resolution that the student Senate support the recent efforts to legalize gay marriage in Hawaii. The Student Affairs committee voted this resolution down four to three. Johnson then sent out a press release, with the help of Schroder, claiming that Albion Students said "no" to gay marriages. Given that this subset of the student Senate did vote down the proposition, both Schroder and Johnson believed, as representatives of the school, they had a right to send the release. The release had at its top the title "Student Affairs" with the name "Corinne Johnson, committee member" as a contact. Once the student senate found out about the press release, however, liberal Senate members filed impeachment papers against Schroder and Johnson. The student Senate cited the two for breaching the constitution, the liberal members of the Senate interpreting the constitution as permitting only the President to speak in an official capacity for the student Senate. They also cited that the letterhead used gave the appearance of speaking on behalf of the entire senate. However,

this interpretation was highly debatable. Schroder states, "Almost every member of the Senate talks about Senate matters to the student newspaper, so to say that only the president can speak for the Senate in an official capacity is absurd. . . . If the Albion Senate Constitution prohibited us from speaking about Senate matters...it would be a direct violation of the First Amendment." As for the letterhead, a local newspaper called "The Homer Index" criticized the Senate's interpretation of the title. The Homer Index was one of several newspapers that received Ms. Johnson's press release. A recent Index editorial stated: "No reputable journalist would think for a minute that a press release with the Michigan Senate [for example] on the top and the name of a specific Senator underneath it represents the entire membership of the organization." Next, several radical organizations, including a gay rights group called "Break the Silence," demanded that the private e-mail files of the Albion College Republicans be opened. The CRs had a private e-mail bulletin board, including sensitive material and letters sent to them from other people. Albion College officials responded by making the CR file public, without making any of the other student groups' private e-mail files public. Even more forbidding, Albion CRs were not notified that the files were made public. "We found out about our files being public by the activities of some opposition organizations," says Johnson. "Students on campus were being asked to sign petitions to impeach us, the petition filers were showing students our private e-mail messages as examples of how 'bad' the CRs were, the college didn't even have the decency to notify us." After this, "Break the Silence" filed charges against Johnson and Schroder with the local and campus police, claiming that the press release constituted a "hate crime." (If Johnson is found guilty, by the police or the college, she will lose her scholarship and be unable to attend Albion.) On Monday, April 1st, the Albion College Student Senate held an impeachment hearing. Non-students were banned from talking at the meeting, an action taken in response to the numerous conservatives from outside the school that came to support the two CRs. A State Representative who attended the meeting was not even allowed to speak. Albion students were allowed during constituent time to bring out many allegations about the students in question; they also brought the infamous "petitions" to the Senate supporting impeachment. However, on several occasions when Jeff Schroder attempted to defend himself, student Senate President Chris O'Connor cited that his comments were not germane to the discussion. "Many students noted the 'pink ribbons' which were worn to support 'gay rights.'" The student Senate then proceeded to impeach both Schroder and Johnson. Schroder's crime was that he allowed Johnson to use his fax machine; Johnson's crime was that she wrote a press release revealing what a committee of the student Senate did. The impeachment was publicized in local and state-wide newspapers the day after the impeachment. This led Albion College to issue a press release stating that it does not involve itself in the internal affairs of the student Senate. However, Sarah Briggs, Director of Communications for Albion College, said that Albion supports its student senate: "Since this is a student matter, it was dealt with appropriately by the Student Senate." As for the e-mail folder, Ms. Briggs admitted the folder had been opened, but she asserted that "the folder was not officially sanctioned by Albion College." The response amazed Jeff Schroder, who noted, "The File was CREATED by Albion College: we called the technology division and asked them to give us a private folder, and they did so. How this could not be sanctioning of the folder is impossible."

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LOBBY FIGHTS BACK Standing at Armageddon

K.L. Billingsley

"He looks like an angry white man, what is he doing here?"

The comment passed between a couple of lesbians who looked ready to rumble with a photographer who had appeared at the April "March to Fight the Right" in San Francisco. The fact that the photographer was himself wearing a "Fight the Right" T-shirt and hung assorted hardware from his ears to blend in with the crowd didn't save him. The lesbians shadowed him as he took shots of the Lesbian Avengers, wielding "We Recruit" banners and jostling with the Guerrilla Girls, Witches Heal, and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence for pride of place in the march. He captured ACTUP cadres starting fights with security when one of their speakers was denied access to the podium. Eventually the photographer, aware that he was being followed, fled for his own safety.

The National Organization for Women, organizer of the pro-affirmative action Fight the Right march, predicted a turnout of 100,000 then claimed 50,000. The true figure was 13,000 and the march, billed as a mass upheaval in behalf of quotas and set-asides which a California ballot initiative seeks to nullify, proved to be more a kind of jamboree of sexual dissidence and radical political nostalgia groups. Participating groups (any collection of 20 or more people qualified) included the DC Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals, Inc., Deaf Gay and Lesbian Center, Gay Human Rights League of Queens County, Sisterlove Inc., Outrage/Queer Progressive Network, National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Project, the Communist Party, Revolutionary Sisters of Color, the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, The Green Party, Democratic Socialists of America, the National Lawyers Guild, and representatives of various unions including the National Education Association. If these were the usual suspects, one group that had a frisson of the new was the one calling itself Angry White Guys for Affirmative Action.

The Fight the Right March was the kick off event for a campaign to defend affirmative action by any means necessary. On their November ballot, for the first time in the U.S., people will be given the chance to vote on the race and gender preferences imposed by government, and which have become the status quo in the Golden State and across the nation. Voters will decide on the Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment by State and Other Public Entities, otherwise known as the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), which will end the use of race and gender preferences in state education, employment and contracting.

Because of California's stature as a bellwether state, supporters of affirmative action see the November election as an Armageddon where they will battle for the Lord. The motley crew parading at the April 14 march does not mean these forces lack clout. Indeed, prominent liberals, many in the kitchen cabinet of Bill Clinton, who has

patented the Jesse Jacksonesque slogan of "mending not ending" affirmative action, are beginning to deploy an expensive, hard-hitting campaign to make sure that this cornerstone of PC orthodoxy is not defeated. Under the emerging liberal strategy, feminists will be point women for the campaign to defeat the CCRI initiative.

NOW president Patricia Ireland and Feminist Majority boss Eleanor Smeal head the "Campaign to Save Women's Rights and Civil Rights." NOW takes this endeavor so seriously that it has moved staffers from Washington to San



NOW president Patricia Ireland

Francisco and put together a group of honorary co-chairs that includes celebrities Holly Hunter, Callie Khouri (*Thelma and Louise*), Jean Stapleton, Mary Steenbergen, Gloria Steinem, and Menendez brothers' attorney Leslie Abramson.

Like supporters of abortion who view the possible ban of gruesome "partial-birth" abortions as a threat to the entire abortion superstructure, supporters of race and gender preferences see CCRI as the slippery slope leading to nationwide abolition of affirmative action. Insensitive to the irony, they have dubbed their campaign "Freedom Summer '96." Unlike the veterans of the original Freedom Summer over 30 years ago, the opponents of CCRI seek to support, not eliminate, a system evaluating people on the basis of race.

Since the abuses of affirmative action have shown up most dramatically on college campuses, it is no surprise that this legislative reaction against those abuses should have been architected by a pair of academics, anthropologist Glynn Custred and philosopher Tom Wood. The event that triggered their decision to do something came in 1991 when then-Speaker of the California Assembly Willie Brown, working with onetime New Left leader Tom Hayden, proposed a bill mandating that not only should the entering class of the state's universities conform to the racial breakdown of

California, but that the *graduation rates* themselves must also follow racial quotas. The Democrat-dominated California legislature actually passed the bill. It was promptly vetoed by Governor Pete Wilson, but for Wood and Custred the incident confirmed what they and a growing number of other observers had been thinking—that affirmative action, which may have begun as an outreach program, had hardened into a program of racial quotas and equality of results, with a grievance elite of professional ethnics nominating an ever-expanding list of mascot groups for accredited status as victims and "protected classes."

Wood and Custred took the radical position that, after three decades of the government imposing these trends, the people should at last have a vote on a system that evaluates them solely by group membership. Using language from the 1964 Civil Rights Act, they drafted a modest proposal:

Neither the State of California nor any of its political subdivisions or agents shall use race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin as a criterion for either discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group in the operation of the State's system of public employment, public education or public contracting.

Although both state and federal civil-rights programs are left in place, CCRI's appearance sent supporters of affirmative action into a state of rabid rhetoric in which they claimed that the sinister and conspiratorial "Right Wing" is "slamming the door" of opportunity and "turning back the clock" to a state of affairs resembling medieval Spain. Former Speaker Brown charged that anyone who supported CCRI was a "racist," with the Rev. Jesse Jackson providing backup vocals. But the polls continued to show the public singing a different tune.

About 60 percent of voters, including significant numbers of minorities, favored CCRI even before backers had applied for permission to gather signatures. Indeed, it was the campaign in behalf of their concept waged by Custred and Wood that led directly to the University of California Board of Regents' decision last summer to curtail affirmative action on UC campuses. That decision, in fact, led most observers to assume that CCRI would easily qualify for the ballot and pass in a landslide. In fact, however, the national Republican party, which pragmatically has the most to gain from the initiative qualifying for the ballot, unaccountably expressed little interest. Conservative media figures and celebrities, who have backed other California ballot measures, also took a rain check. Big business, terrified of the EEOC's race and gender police, shunned the measure as if it were a political Ebola virus.

With everyone assuming that it was a done deal, CCRI floundered throughout much of 1995 with financial problems that made qualifying for the ballot problematical. (An estimated \$2 million is required to get a ballot measure certified in California.) By late last fall observers were predicting an embarrassing failure for CCRI and a perhaps fatal setback in the effort to ban affirmative action. But then things began to turn around. Pete Wilson, by now a former presidential candidate, started writing letters and drumming up sup-

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The Other Minority

One group that feels a special pressure from the California Civil Rights Initiative is the Asian-American community. In terms of victimhood, we Asians have as solid a claim to success in the spoils system as any minority, as even a cursory look at events such as the Oriental Exclusion Act proves. Yet despite all we have suffered—from our days building the transcontinental railroads, to our days at Manzanar, Asian-Americans are also the most successful ethnic group in America. Our children's Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are at the top, and surveys continually show Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino-American families ranking as among the highest in our society in terms of income. Asians behave more like role models than permanently disadvantaged minorities. So why do so many Asian-American college students rally for affirmative action? Why do they support quotas when a quota system works against their people who are denied enrollment at universities, contracts, or hiring because of their high achievement and their relatively small numbers in the national population? Why do they and their elders in official Asian political organizations seem to be mimicking the politics of the Rainbow Coalition?

Asians do face real discrimination, but it is caused far more often by bureaucratic racial engineering than by white racism. And the frustrating thing is that none of the official Asian civil rights groups focus on this discrimination. Asian student leaders and civic groups have little to say about students being turned away for university enrollment because quota requirements have been filled and room has to be made for students from other ethnic groups with dramatically lower test scores; and there is little concern for Asian families and Generation X entrepreneurs who are also turned away for minority business loans. Instead our leaders mimic the rant of other ethnicities in the civil rights "coalition." Among the non-political class in Chinatown and the Little Saigons in every big city in America, the strange coalition with the Afro-American-dominated civil rights establishment—with concerns quite opposite their own—leaves many at a loss to understand what is happening.

For the most part, current Asian leaders focus on bogus issues, such as the frequency of violent hate crimes against their people. Listening to these leaders, one would have to conclude that America is a cruel and hateful racist hell hole manipulated by a bigoted all-white, old boy network that schemes against cultural diversity and concocts ways to torment Asians. This is even more of a caricature of the Asian experience in America than the similar cartoons drawn by other minorities to justify their victimhood, and, given our success, far more incomprehensible.

In the late 1980s and 1990s I served as an elected board member of the District of Columbia chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), the oldest and most prestigious civil rights organization in Asian-America. Along with other young professional Asians I was disturbed by the open association the OCA had with left-leaning civil rights groups like the NAACP and the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund. Many OCA members felt uncomfortable with the expectation that we would automatically echo minority demands for racial quota schemes—schemes we believed had failed to reward our people despite performing well above expectation in aptitude testing and busi-

ness acumen. Yet the demands were made nonetheless, and our people were, in effect, made into water carriers for the likes of Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Lani Guinier. By the time my term on the board was over, I had realized that Asian leaders have capitulated to the desire to be seen as crusaders for human justice and that they can see no other way to achieve this but to jump aboard the victimization bandwagon.

I saw the same bizarre impulse earlier this year when I traveled to California college campuses and witnessed the phenomenon of English-speaking Asian students trivializing the very real discrimination their people face in terms of artificially capped college admissions while ranting about "racism" in a way



they thought might win approval from their black and brown comrades. For them, there is no justice in America, no fairness, and no opportunity. I understood, after listening to them, why the average Asian-American citizen has turned out these student radicals and the multicultural civil rights coalition altogether.

Average Asian-American citizens know that the most horrifying examples of violence experienced by Asians have not been from Caucasians. Violations of civil rights, property and person are predominantly black-on-Asian crimes. The events have been frequently seen on national television: acts of looting by African-American street criminals who burned down hundreds of millions of dollars of Asian-owned mom-and-pop shops during the Rodney King riots; the cold-blooded double murders of two Asian women who were shot to death in their Washington, D.C. jewelry store; and similar events that led to murdered Asian store clerks and owners in New York City.

I have talked to many Asian shop owners who expressed bitter frustration with their leaders who have, for the most part, refused to condemn Afro-American violence. They were told not to criticize such actions and to keep the "community of color" united. In this context, "community" is actually a code word for the political coalition that self-anointed Asian civil rights activists have used to gain stature by mimicking the tactics and arguments of the black civil rights establishment. But for most Asians, this is a coalition we never asked to be a part of and would be comfortable walking away from. Such sentiments are unquestionably reflected in exit polls conducted during American elections. It is no accident that in the past decade Asian-Americans have become the most Republican-voting ethnic group in America.

This voting pattern reveals most dramatically the inevitable incompatibility between most Asian-American citizens and the quota-oriented, African-American dominated civil rights establishment. The black leadership of this establishment demands social engineering based on race, which is anathema to most

Asians. Most Asian-American voters do not support using rhetorical terrorism against Caucasians to extract preferential treatment that emphasizes race and not merit, or forces employers (including Asian family shop owners) to hire by the numbers.

Tensions from these deeply-rooted cultural and political incompatibilities between the black civil rights leadership and average Asian-Americans have caused pro-quota Asian activists conscripted into the campaign against CCRI to practice a bizarre denial. They are painfully aware that Asian sentiment in the United States is conservative and oriented toward individual achievement. They are aware that Rainbow Coalition politics goes against the grain of the Asian experience in America and against the grain also of Asians' relationship in the current century with Caucasians. Yet they continue to allow themselves to be put into the radical coalition just to provide one of the primary colors in the rainbow. They can't bear to deny themselves the perverse emotional gratification that comes from dredging up past persecutions and trying to adopt them as their own to an act I can only characterize as the political and ethnic equivalent of dressing in drag.

The reality is that Asian- and Caucasian-Americans this century have assimilated to each other quite well. Inter-racial marriages between the two groups are proliferating at every socio-economic level, a development that gives the lie to the Asian Left's attempt to convict America as being driven by hatred in its reaction toward minorities and immigrants. Moreover, the stereotype of an Asian-American family owning and operating their own enterprise and living a version of the American Dream is clearly based on reality. The presence of new stores in low-income areas is one of the most hopeful events in the last three and one-half decades of urban social decay and upheaval. While the rest of society seems to be piling up debt, filing for divorce, and doing drugs, Asian-Americans are creating networks of entrepreneurial wealth, and kept their children focused on advanced academic achievement and business development. As Booker T. Washington urged blacks to do at the turn of the century, Asians have cast down their buckets where they are. And in the process, Asian-Americans have become everything most Americans thought this country had lost for good in the past 35 years—a collection of self-reliant and upwardly mobile individuals living orderly lives of achievement and success.

Asian-Americans have many things to be proud of. But to me the most significant of our accomplishments is showing how bogus such social remedies as affirmative action really are. While watching young Asian radicals joining the multicultural protest at the Berkeley campus of the University of California recently, I was struck by how out of place they looked, how incongruous in supporting a system that each one of them has had to overcome. An Asian friend who was watching the demonstration said to me, "Don't worry. As soon as this is over, they'll go back to the dorms and hit the books so they can get their As in computer science and engineering and get out into the world and earn their good livings."

Right. But for the time being, they just don't get it.

—Matthew Tsien

Matthew Tsien is an activist in Asian-American affairs in Washington, D.C.

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port. Ward Connerly, the black UC regent who championed the elimination of quotas in the University of California system took over the campaign. With Connerly at the helm, the CCRI delivered more than 1 million signatures, and the measure duly qualified on April 16.

Unlike many quota supporters, Connerly has actually suffered from racial discrimination. He was born in Leesburg, Louisiana in 1939 and lived there long enough to remember the humiliations of Jim Crow. His father abandoned the family when Connerly was two and at age four his mother died, leaving him to be raised by his aunt and uncle in the tough, largely black Del Paso Heights section of Sacramento. Despite such setbacks, Connerly frequently points out that he didn't need preferences to get into Sacramento State in 1959. Nor did he need them to land his first job with the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, nor to go into business for himself.

Connerly is also something of a walking rainbow coalition. His antecedents include a Choctaw Indian grandmother and a white grandparent of French descent. His son is married to a Vietnamese woman. He supports continued outreach for jobs and school admissions based on economic status, but not on race. Connerly's leadership on the issue is the result of an ability to cut through the complexity. It is wrong, he says, to punish people who have committed no racial misconduct in order to reward people who have suffered no racial discrimination. As he recently told a reporter: "We're giving a preference to Jose, because he's Chicano, over Chang, because he's Chinese...because of something that Robert's father, who was white, did to William's father, who was black, 100 years ago."

The anti-CCRI forces are attempting to make Connerly the issue are not by engaging his arguments. Rather than dealing with the content of his character, they have focused on the color of his wife. "He's married to a white woman," huffed L.A. Democrat Assemblywoman Diane Watson. "He wants a colorless society. He has no ethnic pride. He doesn't want to be black."

Connerly has been subjected to many such attacks—"sellout" and "Uncle Tom" are epithets he has become used to hearing directed at him—and normally does not respond in kind. But this time he fired back. "I thought that in this nation the whole range of miscegenation laws had been struck down along with the bigotry that props them up," he said. He also called Sen. Watson a "bigot" and a "lightweight." (Shelby Steele, author of *The Content of Our Character*, does not hesitate to describe Watson as a "flat-out unmitigated racist.") Connerly also fought back when attacked by Angela Davis.

Davis' slavish adherence to Stalinism proved no obstacle to a lucrative teaching post at UC Santa Cruz, even though she lacks any scholarly credentials. According to the left-wing *Bay Area Guardian*, Davis has cultivated a third career in the Bay Area's lesbian culture, where she performs weddings. Meanwhile, she gives good figurehead for the anti-CCRI campaign. "Young people of today have to learn to take leadership," she said in a recent speech. "I want to suggest particularly at this moment in the history of this country and the history of the state of California, radical activism is something that is needed perhaps more than ever before."

Aware that in the past Davis' "radical activism" had involved providing guns for a murderous black militia, Connerly said in a letter he fired off to her: "As a Marxist ideologue, I suspect that you yearn for race and gender warfare as much as you do for class warfare." Recalling her support for L.A. rioters in 1992, Connerly recalled

"the exploitation of black Americans by communist revolutionaries to suit their own agenda." When students from UC Santa Cruz traveled to Sacramento in an official University of California vehicle and trampled his lawn, Connerly saw the hand of Davis and he noted that Angela Boyce, a former African American Student Union President at UCSC, told a crowd: "We're wearing black but we should be wearing red, because we'll be having blood on our hands once the fight is over."

The attack on the CCRI initiative has involved something approaching a Mutt and Jeff act on the part of opponents. While radical students invade Connerly's front yard and Chicano militants threaten his life, liberal affirmative action partisans engage in a more decorous campaign. Earlier this year, for instance, after the UC regents upheld their July 1995 decision to do away with race and gender preferences in admissions and employ-

preserving affirmative action they are like Cleavon Little in Mel Brooks' *Blazing Saddles*, who surveys the scene and asks: "Where de white women at?"

"The prevailing political wisdom contends that if the CCRI remains a minority issue it is sure to pass. But if the women's movement emphasizes it as a gender issue it will go down in flames and perhaps extinguish the nascent national trend as well," writes Steve Stallone in the *March News for a People's World*. At the April 14 march, the Rev. Jesse Jackson told reporters that white women have been the biggest beneficiaries of affirmative action and that the campaign against CCRI was now a "majority" issue. But the credentials of the Summer '96 campaign to speak for women, or even feminists, may well be doubted.

NOW, which is spearheading the fight against CCRI, claims a membership of 250,000. (By contrast, the conservative Concerned Women for America, is said to number 600,000.) Some have quipped that NOW should be renamed the National Organization of Militant Feminists, but it may now be questioned if the group represents even that faction.

"Some call us the National Organization of Lesbian Women," says Gene Boyer, a NOW charter member who adds that the majority of NOW workers are lesbian. And by some estimates, the *New York Times* noted, lesbians represent between 30 and 40 percent of the NOW's membership.

Betty Friedan, godmother of the American feminist movement, who has criticized NOW's focus as too narrow, called the growing lesbian sector the "lavender menace." A sense of how dramatically the identity of NOW has changed over the years is conveyed by an aside in the *New York Times* which notes that by the 80s the organization's conferences featured women-only dances with lesbian entertainers.

The schizophrenia of NOW came out of the closet when the organization's President Patricia Ireland told the *Advocate*, a gay magazine, that she maintained two distinct private lives, one with James Humble, her painter husband of 25 years, and a love relationship with a Washington woman she did not identify. ("I'm a hybrid," Ireland explained. "I want it all. I want to do everything. I don't see why I can't have my cake and eat it too.") As one observer noted, it would be like Bill Clinton publicly keeping Hillary as an official wife in distant Little Rock, while maintaining a male lover in Washington.

Largely because of its growing identification with lesbianism, NOW is

having trouble getting new members. It is clear that the organization has hopped on and taken the reins of the anti-CCRI bandwagon in part to reenergize itself in a bold effort that does not resemble its current inclinations. Thus NOW runs ads recruiting students for "the internship of a lifetime." The ad goes on to say: "Working out of YWCAs you will be deployed to communities throughout California. Freedom Summer '96 Squads will organize massive voter registration." The squads will reach out to "feminist, African-American; Native American; Lesbian/Bi-Sexual/Gay, and church groups."

The *National NOW Times* put out a special March/Rally edition with a page-one piece calling for an end to bias on sexual orientation, accompanied by a photo of angry lesbians holding banners demanding LESBIAN RIGHTS, with the subhead explaining that "Lesbian Rights are Women's Rights." Posters for the march screamed "DEMAND lesbian, gay and bi-rights," confirming that NOW is increasingly obsessed with sexual preference rather than women's rights.

Besides urging sisters to march, coalition leader Eleanor Smeal has provided a worshipful endorsement of Barbara Bergmann's *In Defense of Affirmative Action* (New Republic Books), a book

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"CCRI... You Liar... We'll Set Your Ass On Fire"

ment, the ACLU announced that it was challenging the move in court and the ever creative UC system tried an end-run around the regents with "geographical diversity," using the zipcodes where "people of color" presumably live, as a substitute for race and gender.

Shortly after the regents' March meeting, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a series of articles about UC brass and state politicians pulling strings to get students into plum campuses Berkeley and UCLA. UC regent Ralph Carmona, a supporter of racial preferences, said this underscored the need for continued affirmative action because minorities had no VIPs to lobby on their behalf. But the *Times* series, though released with the fanfare of a Watergate exposé, backfired.

The chief offender, it turned out, was none other than Willie Brown, now mayor of San Francisco. While acknowledging that Brown was the undisputed champ of favoritism, the *San Francisco Chronicle* editorialized that the former speaker was "not hypocritical" because "at the same time he sought favors for the well-connected, he also continued this support of affirmative action."

But opponents of CCRI realize that all of these sideshows are unlikely to tilt the vote. In coming up with the centerpiece of their strategy in

Are Lesbians Taking Over NOW?

You might think America's lesbian ladies are doing all the talking these days. Those feminist icon Betty Friedan calls "the lavender menace" have come to dominate what was once the most mainstream of America's feminist organizations.

How did the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s become the Lesbian Celebration Movement of the 1990s? As NOW approaches its 30th anniversary, it's worth dusting off the group's founding document to see just what feminists in the heady days of the Sixties thought their movement was all about.

The NOW Bill of Rights, adopted at the group's first national conference in 1957, is surprisingly reasonable given the sky's-the-limit rhetoric of contemporary feminists. The document's first demand, of course, is passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, followed by a call to end racial discrimination and, as the final item of the list, a call for the repeal of abortion laws. Yet the majority of the demands in the NOW Bill of Rights concern economic issues with which many Americans today might well agree: paid maternity leave; tax deductions for home and child-care expenses; equal education; and equal access to job training and other poverty-related programs.

In other words, the NOW Bill of Rights concentrated on the decidedly mainstream demand that women should be economically liberated. Today, even most conservative parents want their daughters to be able to support themselves without relying on a husband and to choose marriage out of a genuine desire for a lifetime partner rather than out of economic necessity. Realizing that economics are at the core of women's equality, the bill's authors had little to say about social and lifestyle issues. The word "lesbian"—or "sexual preference," or "gay rights," or any of the other hot-buttons pushed so flagrantly at every feminist rally today—was not even mentioned.

While there are plenty of radical documents from the early days of women's lib—it was the Sixties, after all, and groups like the Redstockings expressed the temper of the time—their radicalism had more to do with the *de rigueur* Marxism of the day than with exhorting women to come together with other women in the Summer of Love. *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* contains plenty of references to "Whitey," the Imperialist Phallic Society, and the coming utopia in which family, private property, and the state have all been abolished. Yet in the 602 pages of this tome, published in 1970 and edited by Robin Morgan, there is just a single five-page essay on lesbians, placing this topic not even in the closet but in the basement of women's liberation.

Within a year after this book's publication, however, NOW's first president Betty Friedan had been ousted from the organization. A younger, more radical group of feminists was on the ascendancy and former housewives like Friedan, concerned primarily with women's economic liberation, were no longer needed. In a recent *Playboy* interview, Friedan refers to a "sort of a de-Stalinization of the women's movement—their attempt to write me out of history." Indeed, to contrast the shrill radicalism of NOW today with the tempered language of its 1967 Bill of Rights, and Friedan's own words in *The Feminine Mystique*, one gets the idea that NOW's past is something of which its current leaders are less than proud.

Yet even as NOW was radicalizing its wish list over the years to include abortion on demand for teenagers, women occupying 51 percent of all the jobs in every career category, and the creation of special legal protections for gays, until relatively recently the group has consciously avoided being seen as a lesbian organization. In "Notes of a Radical Lesbian" (the 1969 essay

from *Sisterhood Is Powerful*), author Mary Shelley wrote: "When a woman showed up at a feminist meeting and announced that she was a Lesbian, many women avoided her. Others told her to keep her mouth shut, for fear that she would endanger the cause."

This realization that lesbianism and the notion of gay rights would alienate women otherwise sympathetic to the movement was a guiding force for NOW during the 70s and 80s. While there were certainly many lesbians in NOW during those years, none of the openly gay members ran for office to avoid bringing the group negative publicity.

With the election of former stewardess and lawyer Patricia Ireland as NOW's president in 1991, that all changed. Ireland leads a double private life, traveling back and forth between Florida, where she resides with James Humble, her painter husband of nearly 30 years, and D.C., where she lives with an unidentified woman partner. After her election, Ireland told the *New York Times* that she hoped discussion of her *ménage* would help dispel the notion that most Americans still live in traditional family units. "There's still this concept of Mom, Dad, Dick, Jane, Spot, Puff. But there are really all kinds of arrangements people make in their lives." Indeed, there are. But the kind of arrangements Ireland has made are of a different order than, say, the single dad struggling to raise a kid after a divorce, or the unmarried mom struggling to get off public assistance and leaving the kids to be raised by their grandparents while she attends school.

It's one thing to tolerate bisexual and lesbian affairs—and quite another to celebrate open marital infidelity. Yet adultery has become, for many feminist leaders, a tool of women's liberation. As Dharma Heva wrote in *The Erotic Silence of the American Wife*, adultery is "a revolutionary way for women to rise above the conventional." As the *New York Times* reported, Patricia Ireland's open gayness, combined with her open infidelity, was a source of contention among the elites of NOW. The lesbians were offended because they wanted her to declare herself one of them. Heterosexual members were unhappy because they had hoped their pretty new president would dispel rumors that the organization was a gay bastion.

And Patricia Ireland isn't the only high-profile officer who no longer worries about the perception that NOW is a lesbian bastion. Vice President for Action Rosemary Dempsey (who, with her "life partner" Kid Costanza owns a lesbian and gay bar and guest house in Florida) earned national attention when she won custody of her two children after a challenge was mounted based on her being gay. By some estimates, as much as 30% of NOW's activists are now lesbian.

It is important to point out that the objections to these openly gay leaders are not to their sexual preferences per se, but to their elevation of such preferences to the top of the political agenda of the country's blue-ribbon women's organization. There have always been Marxist and socialist elements to the women's movement that sprang up in the turbulent Sixties, but in the last few years NOW seems tacitly to have adopted feminist law professor Catharine MacKinnon's basic tenet as a driving force for their agenda: "Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most taken away." Lesbian and gay rights now rank fifth on NOW's agenda—after 1) pushing for the "feminization of power," 2) fretting about glass ceilings and sticky floors, 3) supporting the ERA, and 4) increasing access to abortion.

Yet is lesbianism what most women are truly concerned with? Not according to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, whose new book, *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life*, talks about how the average woman is concerned above all with the

age-old task of balancing work and family. Not only does NOW ignore the issue most important to women, the group seems to be openly hostile to the relationships and moral structures that most women still regard as desirable. Americans may be marrying later in life than they once did, but most of them, even feminist crusaders like Catharine MacKinnon, do get around to doing it sooner or later. And most people who divorce end up marrying again.

This is something that the lesbian elites that have seized control of NOW just don't get. Christina Hoff Sommers once described a women's studies conference being held at a hotel where several bridal receptions were taking place. "Why have they put us in a setting where *that sort of thing is going on?*" one of the attendees was heard griping. Hostility to "that sort of thing" is now official policy at NOW. The group is fond of touting the record-breaking March for Women's Lives it helped organize in 1992. Yet if 750,000 Americans believe keeping abortion legal is so important that they went to Washington to demonstrate in its support, you have to wonder why those thousands of folks haven't bothered to join what is supposed to be the nation's most influential feminist organization.

Could it be because other aspects of NOW's platform are distasteful even to adamantly pro-choice women? A while back, Sixties lesbian feminist Mary Shelley condescendingly admitted that she had "found some beautiful, loving men among the revolutionaries, among the hippies, and the male homosexuals. But the average man... is my oppressor and my enemy." Fast-forward three decades and leading feminist Naomi Wolf says that women have told her they're afraid to come to feminist meetings because they're intimidated by the lesbians there who look down on them for "sleeping with the enemy." Pro-choice women who care about economic freedom for themselves and their daughters—but who also care about the husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons in their lives—are understandably put off by such hostility to their way of life.

Fortunately for the average American woman, the range of women's organizations out there has broadened at the same time that lesbians were giving NOW a bad case of tunnel vision. Since 1979 more than 600,000 women have joined Concerned Women for America. Denuded by the *New Yorker* as a league of well-coiffed society matrons, CWA's pro-family stance is nonetheless more appealing to the average working woman struggling to balance career and family than is NOW's gender radicalism. And since Ireland took the helm at NOW, groups like the Independent Women's Forum and the Women's Freedom Network have sprung up. While NOW spokeswomen may still be the ones journalists call for the "women's perspective," it's groups like the IWF that are getting a more balanced view of what women think and want published on the op-ed pages of the nation's most influential newspapers.

Yet Patricia Ireland vows to fight on until today's radical ideas are tomorrow's mainstream ones. It is true that many of the "radical" ideas about women's economic freedom in the old NOW Bill of Rights are today accepted by the American mainstream. Does this mean that one day the average feminist—indeed, the average American—will consider bisexual triamphates a good thing? Probably not. As former NOW president Molly Yard herself has said of Ireland's in-your-face adultery, "I didn't like it when Gary Hart did it and I don't like it now."

—Elizabeth Larson

Elizabeth Larson has written for *Investor's Business Daily*, *The Women's Quarterly*, and other publications.

SLOW LERNERS ON THE LEFT

Speaking in Tongues About Religion

By Julia Duin

At times it seemed like a homecoming week for the New Left, replete with concerts by Pete Seeger, poetry readings ("I am the water, I am the spring; Can you hear me sing?") and one time '60s activists stuffed into blue jeans with brightly colored yarmulkes perched on their heads. Indeed, the "Summit on Ethics and Meaning," held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington D.C. on the weekend of April 14-16 was suffused with nostalgia for a time when the Left was still relevant in American intellectual life and when it could convince itself that it held the high ground in moral discourse. Yet it was, paradoxically, also a moment of spiritual groping on the part of what's left of the Left for the way that conservatives have come to have a monopoly on contemporary discussions of values and virtues and spirituality itself. As the conference progressed, what had been billed as an inquiry into the crisis in America became instead an inquiry into the ongoing crisis of the Left.

Close to 1,600 people, not to mention another 200 volunteers and speakers, made the trek to Washington for the three-day confab initiated by Michael Lerner—of late Rabbi Michael Lerner—of *Tikkun* magazine. Workshops ranged from "Envisioning a Humane Health Care System" and "What Kind of Society Nurtures the Soul?" to "Can a Meaning-Oriented Politics be Relevant to the Legislative Battles of 1996?" and "God Does Not Belong to the Right—so why are Right-Wingers Winning in the Religious World?" One of the ideas behind the conference was to extend the franchise of the "politics of meaning," coined by Lerner several years ago and briefly adopted by Hillary Clinton in the early days of the present administration. The First Lady eventually distanced herself from Lerner and his quest for "meaning."

If access to the White House has vanished, however, Lerner's quest to make "the politics of meaning" a household term has continued. The term appears repeatedly in his magazine (a recent issue had one article on "Economics of Meaning" and another on "Bruce Springsteen, Tom Joad, and the Politics of Meaning") and there are also repeated attempts to explain what this "new theoretic orientation and a strategy to change American society" means. After giving a lengthy "theoretical orientation" to explain the term in a recent *Tikkun*, Lerner gave, presumably for the intellectually challenged, what he calls a "sound-bite version," although it is more like a sound-mouthful: "The goal of a politics of meaning is to change the bottom line in American society, so that productivity or efficiency of corporations, legislation, or social practices is no longer measured solely by the degree to which they maximize wealth and power—but rather also by the degree to which they tend to maximize our capacities to sustain loving and caring relationships and to be ethically, spiritually, and ecologically sensitive."

Under Lerner's somewhat grandiose ambition for his concept, the "politics of meaning" has now become the "meaning movement," a fuzzy concept that purportedly stands for such qualities as mutual respect, civility, commitment, love, caring, spirituality and ecological sensitivity. These qualities were marketed as being the exclusive property of the Left, which is morally superior to the hopelessly rigid and monochromatic Right.

The media were often roasted by speakers for fostering despair and God was invoked as favoring compassion. This, in fact, was the big

The gathering was not totally religious but it was obsessed with religious clichés—an experience resembling catching the Democratic Party at prayer. The guiding spirit of this convention was Lerner, who is also a psychologist and director of the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning in New York City and, as of last November, a rabbi ordained by a rabbinic court into the "Jewish renewal movement," the closest thing Jews have to a nondenominational body. Few people could have brought in such numbers and Lerner must be credited with risking the future of *Tikkun* in going into debt to finance the conference, although he prudently insisted that all of the speakers travel there at their own expense.

"It's partly the failure of liberals to understand the ethical and spiritual crisis that makes it possible for the right to answer that crisis," Lerner said. "If there's one thing we're going to reject in this summit, it's the wisdom of James Carville, who says, 'It's the economy, stupid,' as though economic issues were all that counted in peoples' lives. We say no, it's the ethical and spiritual crisis that is central to understanding what is going on in American society."

Opinions varied on whether Lerner and his magazine are taken seriously in Jewish circles but at present, it serves as the one voice of the Jewish Left. Lerner may have had more clout back in 1993, when he became known as Hillary Clinton's unofficial intellectual counselor. Lerner's obvious ambition to exert influence on the First Lady apparently proved his undoing, as the White House drew back and Lerner found himself dumped by Hillary as quickly as he had been adopted. Lerner said at the conference he has since been disillusioned with the administration but admitted that old loyalties die hard. In one of his manifestoes, he criticizes "what the media and then the Republicans have done to Bill Clinton." Both forces, he contends, have focused on "never actually documented" allegations about Mr. Clinton's past, "thus undermining Clinton's ability to lead the struggle for a more positive social-change agenda."

The summit on ethics and values, therefore, was to be Lerner's own audacious attempt to take up the crusade that malign forces had prevented the President from leading. He remains convinced he is on the track of something deep within the hearts of all men and women of good will in this society, but hitherto a ground staked out only by conservatives. The latter, he told reporters, has "what we believe is a distorted set of answers" but are "nevertheless addressing a correct set of questions."

There was an endless "dialoguing" about how conservatives have cornered the moral market in America, but many of the subjects that are key to the conservative worldview (teen pregnancy, school prayer, pornography) rated barely a mention. One question that seemed off limits at the summit was that of sin and how and why it causes the selfishness, homophobia, materialism and other ills this conference deplored. Without dealing with the question of evil, the conference threatened to become what the successful conservatives would ridicule as an attempt at social change without soul change. Without personal spiritual conversion of the type practiced by the religious conservatives those attending this conference envied, the effort would end up becoming



Rabbi Michael Lerner

surprise of the conference: the G-word was much in vogue with a crowd that heretofore had been associated with the church of secular humanism and whose ecstasies had been those of the Marxist variety. But now there was a scramble to board a train conferees seemed to feel might already have left the station. "The liberal and progressive world needs your religious sensibilities and insights," a conference brochure stated, although the Protestant types who popped up here—former Catholic priest Matthew Fox, *Sojourners* magazine editor Jim Wallis, Baptist pastor Tony Campolo and Harvard Divinity School professor Harvey Cox—tended to be those whose visions of Jesus Christ were of the Greatest Social Worker Ever Born.

Even though 30 years had gone by, the remembrance of things past in the glorious '60s haunted the summit like a lost Atlantis. Conference leaders had come together partly to admit defeat in the most major aspect of their lives' work—in trying to transform society as progressive Protestant and Jewish activists, they had forgotten spiritual realities and on their watch conservatives had successfully cornered this market.

political, which is perhaps natural, since this is an arena the Left understands far better than it does religion.

Yet the language of the conversion experience was on full display. "We are making public repentance for the ways some of us in those movements did not pay adequate attention to a certain form of self-indulgence we were glorifying in the '60s," Lerner said, admitting that the greatest lapse of attention was denying the importance of spiritual reality and religious experience. Yet it was not clear that the lesson had truly been learned. One need not believe in God to be part of the new movement, said Peter Gabel, Lerner's co-creator of the "politics of meaning" term and a *Tikkun* associate editor. Gabel admitted that he does not believe in a religion and told reporters that a "politics of meaning" could operate without such a base.

Nevertheless the Leftists at this meeting understood that somehow they must find a way to speak to ethical, spiritual, and family values issues in America. This is no easy task, as they possess no equivalent to such conservative groups with religious underpinnings that do speak to those concerns—groups such as Promise Keepers, Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, or Towards Tradition. Puzzled as to why conservatives had grabbed the upper hand in the values debate, they chalked it up to concepts they could understand: better organization, more finances, subtle appeals to racism or prejudice or cleverer use of spiritual language. In fact, one of the main conference speakers, feminist author Naomi Wolf, wrote an article for the October 1995 *New Republic* pointing out how those favoring abortion needed to spiritualize their language much like the pro-lifers had been doing for decades. Like the rest of Lerner's crowd, Ms. Wolf seemed to miss the real reason that a conservative vision could sway Americans. Her solution involved bigger and better firepower in the form of propaganda co-opting the language, if not the logic, of spirituality. Religious conservatives have "hijacked" moral discourse, she complained, because liberals would not use the "language of the spirit." She added, "We must use the language of right and wrong, good and evil."

The prime arena for that is abortion, where "My side said all abortions are morally equal." This is crazy, she told them bluntly. Her side needed to make some value judgments. After all, "A late term abortion is sadder than an early term abortion... the death of a fetus is a real death

and we need to mourn that." (Mourn, but not stop producing dead fetuses; maintain the status quo but do it soulfully.)

Wolf even allowed that conservatives had answers she lacked. Many pro-choicers vilified her after the *New Republic* piece, she said, but pro-lifers sought her out and thanked her. "When I actually heard the pro-lifers speak—after a lifetime spent in feminist land, to my astonishment, some of them were actually articulate, loving individuals who cared about social justice and raising the status of women." Then she made a somewhat startling confession to a mostly female audience at a workshop on rethinking abortion: "Pro-life feminist is not a contradiction in terms." To the conference's credit, Miss Wolf was matched with a pro-life speaker who is about the same age: Helen Alvare, the articulate policy advisor to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops who challenged listeners to come up with an agency that does more to help out the already-born than the Catholic Church's own Catholic Charities organization.

There was something touching about the conference, as those attending groped for a language that half a lifetime of commitment to Leftism had robbed from them. Some of the spiritual principles at play among some of the conservatives whose action they wished to steal were totally lost on this group—principles such as spiritual warfare, the kind of fasting and prayer that birthed Promise Keepers, tithing, compassion circles, Bible study and other practices that provide the foundation of religious conservatives' inner and outer lives. This conference instead was praying that some kind of magic mix of mainline Protestantism and Reform Judaism, along with liberal Democracy and humanism, would rise from their impotence with a Kennedy-like vision to move the country toward a new paradigm, an overused term much in over use here. More than 100 Unitarian churches were represented here, not to mention Islamic speakers and New Agers such as Marianne Williamson of the "Course on Miracles" fame who told one plenary session to "exercise the power of consciousness" to remedy the world's ills.

Part of the conference's purpose was to put flesh on the "politics of meaning" concept by producing a "Covenant with American Families," patterned after the House Republicans' "Contract With America." Included in the Covenant were provisions for one year of paid family leave for parents, a 30-hour work week to redistribute work

and employ more people, a "family support corps" in neighborhoods to care for the elderly, "councils of elders" to distill their wisdom, a National Families Day, providing community for single people, replacing high school Scholastic Achievement Tests with "empathy training," raising the minimum wage and so on. Having waged a successful battle selling "choice" as the key word on the abortion question, they're preparing to do the same on the family front and the phrase "family values" was repeated over and over, although never with the persuasive tonality it receives among conservatives.

One major difference between this meeting and similar meetings of conservatives was that the Covenant emphasized single-parent and gay and lesbian families as much or more than it did traditional families. Homosexual speakers were plentiful but the most amazing one may have been Torie Osborn, former executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force who confessed that although "it really is the gay '90s," still, "my movement is lacking a clarity of vision." Reasons why included a disconnect between grassroots gays and their leaders, legislative strategies that "don't speak the language of the heart," and a charge that homosexual leaders are "mired in political correctness that enshrines power and uplifts victimhood."

When a shocked murmur from more than a thousand listeners greeted that assertion, Ms Osborn turned to spirituality, calling coming out "a spiritual journey, a shamanic journey." Due to AIDS, "a surge of spiritual energy" is sweeping through gays, she said, although due to Bible bashing from conservatives, "it was not OK to be spiritual until recently in the gay/lesbian world."

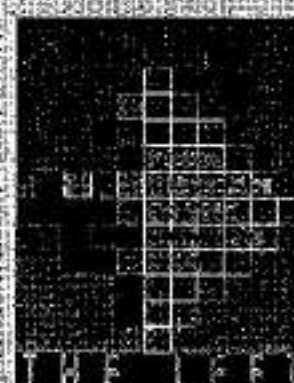
Expect to hear more from these folks, especially since follow-up conferences are planned for Seattle and Minneapolis in May; San Francisco over Memorial Day weekend; Los Angeles in early June, Ann Arbor on June 6, Portland, Ore. June 8-9 and Chicago at a later date. Whether or not Lerner and his group is equipped to take on the Right, they're set to try nevertheless. They realize that they have no other choice. "We are at a crossroads where we may be witnessing the embryonic stages of the disintegration of the American civilization," intoned Harvard University professor Cornel West at one of the plenaries. "When Dan Quayle says the family is in trouble, he's got a point."

Julia Duin is a reporter for The Washington Times.

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COMRADE CHAPLIN, continued from page 1

Despite his apparent conversion into the Communist cause, however, Chaplin had too many of the ties of bourgeois individualism to make him a promising political asset. A manic-depressive, he was a creature of moods and prone to reckless behavior. A series of ill-starred sexual adventures culminated in 1927 with a messy divorce from his second wife, Lita Grey, whom he had seduced when she was just fifteen. That same year the IRS seized his studio for back taxes and threatened him with an indictment for fraud. Chaplin had to be restrained from flinging himself out a window of his suite at New York's Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Intellectually unreliable, Chaplin was not the sort of person to become an orthodox Marxist. He was excited about the Russian Revolution, once trying to persuade a skeptical Buster Keaton of the glories of Bolshevism, but otherwise his politics were based on a wistful romanticism and a distaste for authority in any form. "The socialists want man to live by the product of his own labor," he once told a friend, "whereas I don't think he should have to work at all." Nor did he see a contradiction between his radical principles and his sharp business practices. After hearing a monologue on Bolshevism similar to the one that had perplexed Keaton, Chaplin's assistant, Eddie Sutherland, observed, "I happen to know that you have three million dollars in the bank. How does this give-away-the-money affect you?" Chaplin dismissed the question, saying, "Oh, Eddie, don't be silly. It doesn't affect artists."

Although the Comintern, the Soviets' global apparatus, decided in the mid-twenties to focus its organizing efforts on workers in the film industry, repeated attempts to exploit Chaplin's sympathies came to nothing. Nevertheless, the Communists persisted in efforts to organize him with a doggedness that at times led to farcical complications. One approach involved sending pioneering director Sergei Eisenstein (Alexander Nevsky, Potemkin) to work in Hollywood under the auspices of United Artists, the company Chaplin had founded with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith. Needless to say, the Soviets had little interest in Eisenstein's artistic development. He and his crew were expected to "study" the production of talking pictures and bring their knowledge home so that Sovkino (the Soviet motion picture bureaucracy) would be relieved of having to pay royalties to the relevant patent holders.

Because Egon Erwin Kisch, a high-level Comintern operative, had spent eight days at Chaplin's studio during a visit to Hollywood in 1929, Eisenstein's welcome seemed assured. But when the director's party showed up in Hollywood, Chaplin gave them the run-around and so did Douglas Fairbanks, although the swashbuckler at least invited Eisenstein to parties and had meetings with him in his steamroom.

Jesse Lasky of Paramount stepped into the breach and signed Eisenstein to a contract. The Soviet film crew rewarded him by ranging all through his studio, breaking off chunks of soundproofing material for analysis by engineers back home. Later, Paramount declined to produce Eisenstein's epic script, *Sutter's Gold*, which portrayed totem poles rising in the Great American Desert among its other absurdities, and Lasky was criticized by Chaplin and others for being too greedy to support the artistry of a cinematic genius.

Eisenstein's visit took a serious turn when he decided that he preferred the freedom of Santa Monica to the restraints of Moscow. Chaplin was indignant, arguing that Eisenstein had a duty to return home to serve the Revolution. At the same time that he was badgering the Soviet director, however, he was also demanding hard currency before he sent prints of his films to the Soviet

Union. A deal that would have paid him off in furniture seized from the tsar's palace was discussed, but fell through.

Chaplin was always a troublesome recruit for the Communists. Even his Depression-era classic *Modern Times*, originally titled *The Masses*, created an awkward dilemma for the Party. During a period when the Soviets glorified heavy industry and gave medals to assembly line workers who

Charlie Chaplin in *The Dictator*

Modern Times

exceeded their quotas, its message was unacceptably "Luddite" in its critique of the assembly line. No less than Boris Shumilatski, head of the Soviet film industry, set the line for reviewers friendly to the Party, explaining that the film "must be taken as a stage in the growth of a remarkable artist."

Though released with a separately recorded soundtrack, *Modern Times* was essentially a silent movie. Planning his first dialogue film, Chaplin realized he needed help in structuring a workable script, and he asked another of his long-time socialist friends, Konrad Bercovici, to become his collaborator, proposing that they would split any profits from their labors on an 85% to 15%

basis. A prolific writer of fiction, non-fiction and screenplays, Bercovici had recently been in Europe covering the rise of Nazism for *Collier's* magazine. On his return to the U.S., he had purchased an auto trailer and begun touring the country, lecturing on the dangers of fascism.

Bercovici interrupted his lecture tour to collaborate with Chaplin and spent most of 1937 working on two projects—*In Old Chicago*, which Chaplin envisioned as a "not too propagandistic" script about Louis Lingg, the Haymarket bomber, and *Cry of the Wolf*, based on one of Bercovici's own "Gypsy tales." Gradually, it began to dawn on Bercovici that Chaplin enjoyed his company but was not really serious about making either movie.

Knowing Charlie's odd ways, Bercovici was only mildly disconcerted when Chaplin abruptly severed all contact and dropped out of sight. According to the gossip columnists, Chaplin had left home after a quarrel with his lover Paulette Goddard, who had played the "gamine" in *Modern Times*. (Louella Parsons called the contretemps "Hollywood's first husband-wife strike.") In reality, Chaplin was in semi-hiding, evading subpoenas in connection with two plagiarism suits over the film.

In the spring of 1938, Bercovici and Melvyn Douglas, the liberal activist and popular leading man, ran into Chaplin at a cocktail party in Pebble Beach. Chaplin talked without enthusiasm about his efforts to write a romantic comedy that would be a suitable vehicle for Goddard, and Bercovici chided him, "Why don't you do something for yourself?" Bercovici then began to describe a satire in which Chaplin would play dual roles, as a Hitlerian dictator and the dictator's naive look-alike.

Bercovici and Douglas spent the night at Chaplin's rented house, and a week later they were invited to return to attend a party that Chaplin and his aide, Tim Durant, were giving at the Pebble Beach Lodge. This time, Bercovici came prepared with a written synopsis. Chaplin read it on Sunday morning, after the party, and was intrigued. But, he protested, he wasn't sure that such a film could be made. He would have to check with a "contact" of his who "knows the attitude of the State Department." Chaplin left the room, made a phone call, and returned shaking his head. His contact had vetoed the idea.

Bercovici was stunned. He had been a friend of Charlie's for twenty years and had never known him to worry about offending the U.S. government. But then, just 18 days later, *Variety* announced that Chaplin was about to begin work on his next film, and in October the trade press reported that the working title of that picture would be *The Dictator*. Bercovici had returned to his home in Connecticut, and his letters to Chaplin went unanswered. In 1939 during a visit to LA, he ran into Chaplin at the Brown Derby restaurant, but Chaplin bolted before he could confront him. Another time, Chaplin made a date to meet at his house, but when Bercovici showed up, no one answered the door.

Chaplin was notoriously stingy with both money and creative credits. However, on occasion he did pay for the use of other people's concepts and put co-writers on his payroll as assistant

directors. His abrupt decision to cut off Bercovici requires another explanation, and it is not hard to find. Bercovici was the wrong kind of anti-fascist—he denounced Stalin in his lectures about fascism as just another face of the evil of totalitarianism—and he was anathema to the Communist Party. One can assume that the contact Chaplin called that day in Pebble Beach was not in the State Department but in the Party, because once Bercovici was off the project, the CP view of the film changed.

Indeed, Chaplin immediately hired two young assistants who were Party members. One of these, playwright Dan James, naively kept a record

of their working sessions, during which Chaplin "spontaneously" came up with the same plot ideas previously outlined by Bercovici. (Later, under oath, Chaplin would deny that he had ever seen Bercovici's synopsis. For that matter, he insisted that they had never collaborated on the *Haymarket* and *Cry of the Wolf* scripts either.)

Bercovici had been banished, but Chaplin's problems with his Hitler satire, now called *The Great Dictator*, were far from over. A week before rehearsals were scheduled to begin the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed, and American Communists realized, literally overnight, that military resistance to Nazism only served the interests of capitalist munitions makers and British imperialists.

The Great Dictator reflected the ideological back-pedaling occasioned by this change in the party line. For example, early in the movie the feisty Hannah, played by Paulette Goddard, brains a Storm Trooper over the head with a frying pan. Later—apparently having been converted to pacifism off-camera—Hannah talks the men of the Pretzelburg ghetto out of a plan to assassinate the dictator, Adenoid Hynkel, telling them, "Our place is at home looking after our own affairs."

The final sequence of the picture was to be a speech delivered by Charlie the Barber, who has been mistaken for his look-alike, Hynkel. A draft of the speech written in the spirit of the Hitler-Stalin pact actually included the sentiment, "Yes, let us have appeasement." By the time final preparations for the sequence were being made, however, it was already late spring, 1940, and the word "appeasement" was now forbidden. After several more revisions, the speech emerged as a masterpiece of double talk and evasion. As sops to the mass audience there were exhortations to "Fight for Liberty!" and bring into being a new world, "in the name of democracy." The politically attuned, however, would have no trouble recognizing the current CP "peace" line. At one point, Chaplin looked directly into the camera lens and warned, "Soldiers! Don't give yourself to these brutes ... Who drill you—diet you—treat you like cattle and use you as cannon fodder." Though in theory the character he played was addressing German soldiers, Chaplin's words echoed the Communist charge that FDR wanted to use American boys as cannon fodder to defend the British empire.

The Great Dictator marked a turning point for Chaplin. Previously, he had been relatively cautious about taking public stands on political issues and avoided inserting overtly leftwing propaganda into his films. After 1940 he emerged as Hollywood's most visible—and in the opinion of many, its most obnoxious—fellow traveler. One reason for the change was obvious. His earliest "political advisor" Rob Wagner was in declining health. (He died in 1942.) Wagner was friendly to the Soviets. (He had designed the logo for Upton Sinclair's EPIC party, for instance, but pulled out of the Sinclair movement when CP enthusiasm waned.) But Wagner was nonetheless cautious in comparison to CP apparatchiks to whom Chaplin now drew close—individuals like Ella Winter and film score composer Hanns Eisler, whose brother Gerhard was a notorious Comintern enforcer and one of the chief Soviet agents in the U.S. Max Eastman, whose friendship with Charlie had held up despite his disillusionment with the USSR and his turn to the Right, had no doubt that Hanns Eisler was an "agent of influence," assigned to prod Chaplin into a more public role. But Eastman's warning was ignored. Chaplin found it impossible to imagine that a serious composer and likable fellow, as Eisler was, might be pursuing a covert political agenda.

As a speaker at Second Front rallies in 1942 Chaplin indulged in over-heated rhetoric. Addressing his remarks to "Dear Comrades—and

yes, I do mean comrades," he accused American troops of "languishing" (sic) while the Soviets bore the brunt of the struggle for democracy. During one speech in Chicago he said, "We are no longer shocked by the Russian purges. They liquidated the Quislings and the Lavals, and it was too bad that Norway, Hungary, and other countries didn't do the same. The stigma against Russia is being dissolved like mist in the sun."

His activities as a sponsor for Russian War



Charlie Chaplin as Monsieur Verdoux



On Trial for Violating the Mann Act

Relief and the National Council for American-Soviet Friendship tended toward the fatuous. At one banquet a Soviet ship captain presented him with a live bear cub. At another, he was photographed kissing the hand of Ludmilla Pavlichenko, a female sharpshooter who toured the U.S. billed as the "Soviet Molly Pitcher," after the famed figure of the American Revolution. Asked if he had second thoughts about sending a congratulatory message to the Paris World Peace Congress of 1949, an anti-NATO propaganda exercise, Chaplin said, "I am never suspicious of anybody who is working for world peace."

The apotheosis of Chaplin's Red Decade

was *Monsieur Verdoux*. Like all Chaplin movies, *Verdoux* had moments of originality and wit, but the production—begun a month after Stalin's February, 1946 speech denouncing the supposed aggressive intentions of the U.S.—sagged under the weight of its message: War is just another form of capitalist enterprise, and soldiers who fight for capitalism are no better morally than a serial-killer like Henri Verdoux, who marries a string of women and murders them for their money.

The American Legion, an organization with a better memory than most movie reviewers, recalled that this was the same Charlie Chaplin who had called for "More bombs for Berlin!" during the war and criticized American fighting men for not dying fast enough. The Legion asked theater owners to boycott *Monsieur Verdoux*, and Chaplin's ability to release future pictures in the U.S. was in doubt.

Chaplin, meanwhile, had been indicted on Mann Act (the 1910 law forbidding transportation of women across state lines for immoral purposes) and civil rights charges in 1944. David Platt, the *Daily Worker's* movie critic, opined that Chaplin was being framed by "appeasers" of fascism as punishment for making *The Great Dictator*. (Platt conveniently forgot that he himself had praised *The Great Dictator* as an anti-interventionist film.) In reality, Chaplin's nemeses were gossip columnist Hedda Hopper and U.S. Attorney Charles H. Carr. Hopper was outraged that Chaplin had pressured his latest "discovery," an emotionally troubled young woman named Joan Barry, into having two illegal abortions within six months. For Carr, Chaplin's politics was just a convenient peg on which to hang a high-profile investigation of police corruption in Beverly Hills.

Contrary to the Attenborough bio-pic, J. Edgar Hoover had little to do with the federal prosecution. Hoover recognized that Carr had a weak case and kept his distance. While investigating the Mann Act charge, however, FBI agents began to suspect that Chaplin might be planning to defect to the Soviet Union. It was rumored that he had been offered the post of head of the Soviet film industry as a lure. (Chaplin even joked about the offer with Barry, asking her, "Joanie, what would you think if I became a commissar?")

These suspicions were revived in 1952 when Chaplin scheduled the opening of his latest film, *Limelight*, for London, two weeks before the American Presidential election. Chaplin, who had never become a U.S. citizen, had been transferring his American assets to his wife, Oona, and confiding to friends that he was leaving the country for good. Attorney General James P. McGranery made a pre-emptive strike, revoking Chaplin's re-entry permit the day after he sailed for Europe.

There is no hard evidence that Chaplin meant to visit Moscow, much less defect, though the Soviets were certainly eager to have him. In any event McGranery's action probably did more damage to America's image abroad than any surprise announcement Chaplin might have planned for the *Limelight* premiere. Ironically, anti-Stalinists like Irving Kristol, the sort of commentators Chaplin dismissed as "fascist," were among the first to criticize McGranery and argue that Chaplin ought to be allowed to return to the U.S.

Chaplin ended his days in Switzerland socializing with jet-setters and crowned heads *manqué*, a voluntary tax exile from Great Britain whose welfare state he praised in speeches but declined to help pay for. In the end, he was more than a little disgusted with his Communist friends, complaining that they always seemed to want something from him. What a discovery! If only Chaplin had caught on to this earlier, his remarkable career might have come to a happier conclusion.

Joyce Milton is co-author of *The Rosenberg File*. Her book on Charlie Chaplin, *Tramp*, will be published this year.

THE NUTTY PROFESSOR, continued from page 1

holding the appropriately designated ticket and takes possession of K's seat saying he is sorry to see her inconvenienced. Resigning herself to the inevitable, K goes to relocate herself in coach.

hooks is outraged. Unwilling to give up her own first class accommodation to join her friend, the professor turns her attention to the white stranger: "I stare him down with rage, tell him that I do not want to hear his liberal apologies, his repeated insistence that 'it was not his fault.' I am shouting at him that it is not a question of blame, that the mistake was understandable, but that the way K was treated was completely unacceptable, that it reflected both racism and sexism." Whitey, no liberal wimp, attempts to defend himself. He lets her know "in no uncertain terms" that he feels the apology he has already made is enough and that the professor "should leave him be to sit back and enjoy his flight."

But this black Madame Defarge will have none of it: "In no uncertain terms I let him know that he had an opportunity to not be complicit with the racism and sexism that is so all-pervasive in this society (that he knew no white man would have been called on the loud speaker to come to the front of the plane while another white male took his seat...)." Say what? Defarge: "Yelling at him I said, 'It was not a question of your giving up the seat, it was an occasion for you to intervene in the harassment of a black woman...'"

Her invective exhausted, hooks takes out a pad and starts to pen the notes from which she later composes this account. "I felt a 'killing rage,'" she remembers. "I wanted to stab him softly, to shoot him with the gun I wished I had in my purse. And as I watched his pain, I would say to him tenderly 'racism hurts.'" While hooks is thinking these tender thoughts, her intended victim senses the smoldering hostility aimed in his direction. "The white man seated next to me watched suspiciously whenever I reached for my purse. As though I were the black nightmare that haunted his dreams, he seemed to be waiting for me to strike, to be the fulfillment of his racist imagination. I leaned towards him with my legal pad and made sure he saw the title written in bold print: 'Killing Rage.'"

Two pages after recounting this bizarre episode, now a text about racial oppression in the academy of radical thought, hooks makes the following observation: "Lecturing on race and racism all around this country, I am always amazed when I hear white folks speak about their fear of black people..." Like other radicals, hooks is unable to connect the aggression she projects to the reaction she provokes. Her unwitting self-revelation is actually a paradigm of the radical mind in relation to the America it loves to hate.

Since we all have a bleeding heart, however well disguised, I searched in vain through hooks' text to find a reasonable source for her killing rage, one that would reach beyond the trivia of this occasion, one that would render her outburst less embarrassing not only for her, but for her publisher, her university and her admiring legions. But my search was truly in vain. I found no litany of racial incidents—even the invocation of a past involving relatives who were slaves or victimized by the Klan or entangled in the criminal justice system—that might justify murderous thoughts, or even the verbal abuse of a stranger, whose guilt seems, in hooks' own rendering, not only abstract but debatable. Nothing. Nothing but homogenized anger and a passion torn to tatters.

Still a relatively young woman, hooks has already achieved the kind of academic fame and institutional validation that any of her peers, white or black, would envy, including a six-figure income and global itinerary (flying first class). Her lectures on "white supremacy" and related "black feminist" battle themes take her all over America and also Europe, where she is able to advance her cause not in the usual coffee-house bunkers of political vanguards, but in the cathedrals of the high culture, her expenses gratefully paid by administrators of venerable collegia convinced, apparently, that their flocks could use a stiff dose of killing rage.

All this success, all the honors and intellectual power conferred, do not cause the slightest hesitation for hooks, who, like so many other fawned-over and spoiled black intellectuals, just won't take

yes for an answer. As she explains: "My rage intensifies because I am not a victim." Like other radicals hooks is eager to eat her cake and have it too, to accumulate the privileges of the comfortable while enjoying the moral gratifications that come with posturing as a champion of the afflicted; to wear the disinterested mantle of the scholar and still be a warrior for partisan causes.

Of course it occurred to me almost instantaneously after reading that first weird sentence of her book, that if hooks were not radical and black, her confession about wanting to kill would have provoked alarm. (Just as, if O.J. Simpson were white and his victims black, it is inconceivable that he would be playing golf today.) Later-racial homicide, when con-

templated by



whites, is still a serious matter. But in the prevailing liberal ethos, black killing rage against whites must never be understood as individual pathology, but always as the redress of historical grievances. Or, as many blacks actually do seem to regard it: morally justified "payback." In the progressive view, as espoused by tenured radicals like bell hooks, it is even a necessary stage on the path to "liberation." The development of a proper killing rage is, in fact, not only politically correct but morally salutary for the oppressed, if they are not supinely to submit to their fate.

The repression of killing rage, as professor hooks informs us, is the agenda not of psychiatrists and peacemakers, as one might expect, but of white supremacists: "To perpetuate and maintain white supremacy, white folks have colonized black Americans, and a part of that colonizing process has been teaching us to repress our rage, to never make them the targets of any anger we feel about racism." White students who may resist such claims by their professor are advised to consult special texts: "When such conflicts arise," she informs her academic peers, "it is always useful to send students to read *Yours In Struggle*..." The term "struggle" actually understates the situation as hooks and her comrades construct it. What is really happening in America is an "on-going Black genocide and the patriarchy's war against women." Rage, in these circumstances, is not only "healing," it is "revolutionary." Better still, it is self-defense. Blacks who lack rage are merely allowing themselves to be victims of the genocidal campaign that white America is waging against them: "When we embrace victimization, we surrender our rage."

This particular thought introduces a companion meditation, which comprises the second essay in hooks' text, and which is about a black man who did not surrender his rage. Colin Ferguson was a sometime college student (perhaps even a reader of professor hooks' texts), the scion of a prosperous Jamaican family. Ferguson made himself a footnote in the text of every radical Clausewitz on the subject of race war by going on an armed rampage on a Long Island commuter train intending, as he explained in a note, to avenge "racism by Caucasians and Uncle Toms." The deranged Ferguson managed to kill six people, all Asian or white. (But nobody, I think, ever

referred to him as a black "genocidal racist"—a term apparently reserved for white police officers who use the "N-word" in talking the talk, although, unlike Ferguson, they don't walk the walk.) The Ferguson tragedy could easily qualify as a text for a sermon on the dangers in attempting to justify a race-directed rage. Yet no one, least of all bell hooks, has mounted the pulpit. Consequently, the enraged and deranged Ferguson is, in certain quarters, catching on as a revolutionary hero instead. Martin Simmons, an instructor in English at New York University, was quoted in a recent *Vanity Fair*: "I have colleagues who tell me they're putting his picture on the wall next to Malcolm X."

Instead of preaching against the Long Island commuter massacre, professor hooks uses it as another occasion for renewing her racial rage, which she cossets with a narcissistic fervor. As hooks interprets the semiotics of the incident, it becomes a text on how the white media has turned Ferguson's deed into a racially charged image: "Even though the gunman carried in his pocket a list containing the names of male black leaders, the white-dominated mass media turned his pathological expression of anger towards blacks and whites into a rage against white people." She can't deny that he did set out to attack the white oppressor, but Ferguson also had a "complex understanding of the nature of neo-colonial racism," which the press deliberately obscured: "He held accountable all the groups who help perpetuate and maintain institutionalized racism, including black folks [i.e., Uncle Toms]." By manipulating the facts, the white media was able to turn the tragedy into "a way to stereotype black males as irrational, angry predators," instead of an occasion "to highlight white supremacy and its potential 'maddening impact.'"

This task was left to William Kunstler, the late radical advocate of the criminal and oppressed, who offered to defend Ferguson using the "black rage theory." Kunstler argued that white society drives black people into a homicidal rage for which they are not responsible. Ferguson, according to Kunstler, was "not responsible for his own conduct...white racism is to blame." A *National Law Journal* survey taken at the time found that two-thirds of blacks interviewed, agreed with Kunstler's "black rage" theory. Professor hooks offers her own supportive anecdotal insight: "In the aftermath of the train incident, I heard many well-off black people express their identification with the killer." She herself did not take any pleasure in the racial murders, but she does appear to enjoy reporting that she "heard many wealthy and privileged black folks express pleasure. These revelations surprised me since so many of these folks spend their working and intimate lives in the company of white colleagues."

Most blacks who harbored such feelings kept them to themselves, at the time. But some did not. During a rally at Howard University, the "Harvard" of black colleges, Nation of Islam spokesman Khalid Muhammad compared the psychopath to rebel slave leader, Nat Turner. Muhammad told a cheering, laughing audience of middle-class black students: "God spoke to Colin Ferguson and said 'Catch the train, Colin, catch the train.'"

Like other Americans who do not happen to be black, I didn't get much of a yuck out of this obscenity. Yet if I can't say that it struck me as funny, I will allow that Muhammad's statement had significance. It is reactions like this and the elation that followed the acquittal of the obviously guilty O.J. Simpson in the black community, that make hooks such a telling witness about what has recently seemed like an epidemic of black racial hatred.

Studies conducted at the Million Man March called by racist demagogue Louis Farrakhan last November reveal that 40% of the participants had college educations and incomes exceeding \$50,000, and more than 70% had incomes of more than \$25,000 and were thus also solidly middle-class. Farrakhan is now the most popular black leader among educated blacks, and he and his minion Khalid Muhammad are easily the most covered and well-paid speakers before black student associations across the country. Inviting black racists to college campuses in defiance of white sensitivities has become, in fact, a rite of African-American authenticity for black student groups everywhere.

Nor can it be dismissed as mere accident that—in contrast to the historical experience of all other ethnic groups—it is educated and middle-class members of the black community who are the most hospitable to the genocidal racism and anti-Semitic rantings of Farrakhan, Muhammad and the followers of their cult. What other ethnic community in America would march one million strong behind their anti-Semites and racists? The Ku Klux Klan can't even assemble a public demonstration of its members that exceeds 100, or escape counter-demonstrations which outnumber its own 50 to 1.

Equally striking is the general tolerance for racist outrage when committed by blacks. In the wake of the Million Man March, a white man was burned alive by blacks in Chicago, a pregnant white welfare mother and her two white children were murdered by three blacks who ripped a black fetus out of her womb in Illinois, seven whites were torched by a black racist in Harlem after protests against the very presence of the white-owned store they were in, and a black city worker in Fort Lauderdale gunned down five white co-workers, without a single acknowledgment by any public figure or the nation's press that the black community might have its own racial problem.

Actually this anomaly—the epidemic of middle-class black rage and the absence of corresponding outrage on the part of public officials and the liberal press when confronted by black racism—is grounded in a perception of America's race problem that was first announced some 30 years ago in the wake of the riots that afflicted Watts, Detroit and other inner cities in the mid-60s. It is a perception that became passé in the 70s, but has now returned with a vengeance. This is the idea that it is not so much actual racism, or even legal discrimination that creates a serious problem for black America. Instead it is "institutional racism," a subtle but pervasive influence on social opportunity and behavior.

Institutional racism is an idea that originated as a phrase in a government report on the Watts riot, became part of the New Left worldview, and has recently re-emerged in the "multicultural" academy, where it has metastasized in an elaborate body of pseudo social-scientific cant in which any statistical disparity of black representation anywhere in the culture can be presented as proof of white malevolence and the necessity for preferential remedies. (One such academic "study" appeared in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, where it was alleged that "institutional racism" was the major factor in the high incidence of schizophrenia found in Jamaicans who lived in the U.S. and England.)

In a time like our own when serendipities like Mark Fuhman are rare, the idea of "institutional racism" is obviously a godsend for black demagogues fearful of going out of business. This theory keeps the dream alive. While slightly more respectable than Farrakhan's crackpot religious explanations (whites are "devils" invented by a mad scientist named Yacub), the theory of institutional racism inspires no less sweeping indictments of white depravity. The unspoken assumption of every affirmative action policy is that institutions where whites predominate must be coerced into being fair to black applicants. But does even the most fanatical advocate of quotas believe that Harvard, Yale and other institutions of the liberal elite would be contriving to keep qualified African American students from entry in the absence of affirmative action laws?

Then why are such laws necessary? Because, their proponents argue, the influence of "institutional racism" is so subtle and so deeply ingrained, that admissions officers at Harvard and Yale would exclude African Americans without realizing what they were doing. Say what?

The all-purpose concept of "institutional racism" originated with the Kerner Commission Report following the urban riots of the Sixties. It was an attempt to explain—and to justify—the paradox of a rebellion against a legal system that had just achieved equality before the law (in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965) for all Americans. This was the moment that ushered in what might be called the second civil-rights era, whose most distinguishing achievement has been the squandering of the moral legacy of the first, and the restructuring of the civil-rights agenda around victimization and ever-escalat-

ing demands for "redress of past injustice" as a radical cause. The pivotal legislation of this cause has been the system of racial preferences that is subsumed under the rubric of "affirmative action."

It is because the theory of "institutional racism" and the affirmative-action policies it has spawned are a radical rejection of the American system—of individual rights, equal opportunity and a single legal standard—that the most dramatic anomaly of the second civil-rights era has been produced: Whereas the civil-rights movement under Martin Luther King achieved its aims with the support of most American citizens and 90% majorities in both houses of Congress, the current civil rights agenda is opposed by a majority of the American public and lawmakers. This opposition reflects the inability of most Americans to accept the double standard and to understand the persistence of "black rage" in the face of enormous social, cultural and economic gains by African Americans, and their own sense that they accept African Americans as full partners in



bell hooks

America's civic compact. This sense of themselves, moreover, is corroborated by every major opinion survey on race relations which shows unprecedented levels of acceptance by white America of its black citizens.

Why, as racial prejudice declines among white Americans has black anger increased? The ubiquitous answer given by the civil-rights left is institutional racism. The failure of the rest of America to genuflect in response has spawned the peculiar angst of bell hooks and her comrades. "Why," writes hooks, "is it so difficult for many white folks to understand that racism is oppressive not because white folks have prejudicial feelings about blacks (they could have such feelings and leave us alone) but because it is a system that promotes domination and subjugation?" (emphasis added) Echoing hooks' complaint is another icon of the radical academy, Communist Party spokeswoman Angela Davis. Interviewed in the double issue of the *New Yorker* devoted to race relations, professor Davis laments the passing of the Sixties when "there was a great deal of discussion about...the importance of understanding the structural components of racism. There was an understanding that we couldn't assume that racism was just about prejudice—which, unfortunately, is what not only conservatives but liberals are arguing today." (emphasis added)

For radicals like hooks and Davis, whose greatest fear is obviously that they will be deprived of their rage which is the basis for their schtick, racism is no longer about prejudice (which, though still a presence, is clearly on the wane) but about all disparities between blacks and whites (each lumped together as one racial category despite the enormous disparity within those groups). Just as Marxists are convinced that class oppression exists when everyone is not economically equal, so race radicals know that racial oppression exists when any statistical disparity crops up between racial groups. So long, of course, as the disparity works against the "oppressed." No one, for example, argues that the over-representation of blacks in sports is the result of institutional racism and requires a government remedy. The fact that

four-fifths of the donut shops in California are owned by Cambodians also fails to elicit proposals for affirmative for non-Cambodians who are excluded.

Unhappily, the racist view of American social institutions is not just a matter of left-wing opinion but is incorporated into a body of law as well. Not since the segregationist era has the buttressing of a racist philosophy been the work of American law schools. But now, at Harvard, Stanford and other founts of academic legal scholarship, representatives of the school of "Critical Race Theorists" argue that blacks can do no wrong and whites can do no right. Setting about the work of developing the theory of institutional racism, these law professors defend the importance of a "race-conscious perspective." They elaborate upon the theory that only whites can be racist (because "only whites have power") and even go so far as to defend common black criminals, as rebels against an oppressive system (while of course deploring the effects of "black-on-black crime"). Not since Germany in the thirties have such clearly racist doctrines been promulgated from the elite institutions of a nation and the inner sancta of its laws.

Not surprisingly, the theme of institutional racism was the text of Jesse Jackson's half-literate rant at the Million Man March: "We've come here today because there is a structural malfunction in America. It was structured in the Constitution and they referred to us as three-fifths of a human being, legally. There's a structural malfunction. That's why there's a crack in the Liberty Bell. There's a structural malfunction; they ignored the Kerner Report. Now we have the burden of two Americas: one half-slave and one half-free." (In which half does Jackson, a celebrity millionaire, locate himself?)

The utility of "structural" racism for demagogues like Jackson is that, while recognizing that the vast majority of whites are no longer overtly racist, they can use it to make all whites guilty nonetheless. No one has to be a racist in actual thought or deed to participate in a racist system or reap its benefits. Since the System "benefits" whites most (because statistically they enjoy the greatest success), only whites, as a group, can properly be called its beneficiaries. Only whites can have power. And therefore be racist.

In understanding this tortured logic, bell hooks is an unfailing guide. Like Farrakhan and other radicals, she prefers the term "white supremacy" to "racist" in describing the enemy—because the latter suggests a search for individual culprits, when it is the System that is at fault. Professor hooks tells us that the revelation that led to her use of the term came when she encountered white women in the feminist movement who were not racist in the traditional sense. They actually sought the comradeship of blacks but still "wished to exercise control over our bodies and thoughts as their racist ancestors had." Whatever specifics lie behind this paranoid image of body-and-thought-control (hooks doesn't provide details), the emotional bottom line is clear: As long as hooks feels less powerful in any relationship she has with whites—and for whatever reason—she will regard herself as a victim of racism. One suspects that many successful blacks see racists under the bed from similar impulses, and for similar reasons respond favorably to racist incitements like Louis Farrakhan's claim to the million men he assembled in Washington that "the number-one problem in the world is white supremacy."

Once accepted, of course, the concept of institutional racism is so powerful that blacks who embrace it are not only insulated from the charge of their own racism, but exculpated in advance for any crime they might commit. Thus hooks, in a kind of pre-emptive jury nullification, finds herself innocent of the murder she wanted to perpetrate: "Had I killed the white man whose behavior evoked that rage, I feel that it would...have been caused by...the madness engendered by a pathological context."

When blacks commit crimes, the truly guilty party is always the racist System that made them do it. Which is why even otherwise law-abiding blacks could celebrate the release of a double-murderer like O.J. as "getting a brother off." Even when hooks does not identify with an odious African American deed, she finds a way to extenuate it. When dealing with Farrakhan's anti-Semitic poisons, for example, which she does not endorse and which even make her uncomfortable, she asks:

From whom do young black folks get the notion that Jews control Hollywood? This stereotype trickles down from mainstream white culture....Indeed, if we were to investigate why masses of black youth all over the United States know who Louis Farrakhan is, or Leonard Jeffries, we would probably find that white-dominated mass media have been the educational source...

So...if the white media did their job and censored black leaders like Farrakhan he would have no black followers...

Of course, hooks' reasoning is so incoherent and circular that she could just as well blame the "white-dominated media" for giving blacks the impression that America is institutionally racist, since the media have bought the radical theory lock, stock and barrel. To cite one illustrative case: A front page "news article" in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1993, purported to show that the traditional ladder of upward mobility for America's minorities no longer existed, thanks to institutional racism. The unspoken subtext of the article was that if this opportunity didn't exist, then—without affirmative action—none would:

Whites Earn More At All Levels,
Challenging Belief that Education
is the Key to Parity Data Shows

Whether they have dropped out of high school or invested years in a graduate degree, whether they have struggled to master English or not, California's minorities earn substantially less than Anglos—a disparity that challenges the long-held tenet that education is a key to equality...

This "study," as reported by the *Times*, was probably more powerful in persuading middle-class blacks who read it that the system was stacked against them, than all the speeches of Louis Farrakhan put together. But although the *Times*' study was conducted from actual census figures by the *Times*' own statistical analyst, it showed nothing of the kind. The ethnic categories used in the analysis were "Anglo," "black," "Latino" and "Asian." But the term "Anglo" actually included a host of minorities—Jews, Armenians, and Arabs to name a few—who themselves are victims of ongoing hate crimes and discrimination, yet—for reasons unexplained in the study—provide its yardsticks of success. The oppressed categories were also suspiciously stacked. "Latinos," for example, is a spurious grouping which includes South American Indians and descendants of Spanish conquistadors, Portuguese-speaking Brazilians, low-income Puerto Ricans and high-earning Cubans.

In addition, the *Times* analysis made no allowance for the kind of educational degrees, graduate or otherwise, that the targets of its study possessed. It is well known that blacks and Latinos tend to seek degrees in low-paying fields like education rather than in higher-paying fields like physics or engineering. Finally, the *Times* analysts made no allowance for age or on-the-job experience, critical components of earning potential. Yet the *Times* printed useless statistics and a racially inflammatory story nonetheless, and probably felt like it was doing the right thing in confirming the existence of institutional racism. When I read the story, I actually became incensed enough to call the reporters, who sheepishly admitted that they did not have the data to make the claims they had, but defended the decision to print them anyway, employing the Tawana Brawley theory of truth: even if the article was wrong, it was right.

The concept of institutional racism, devised by radical academics and promoted by an irresponsible media, has led directly to another expression of oppressed rage called "black liberation theology." Its chief text, written by James Cone, is published by the Maryknoll press—an outfit of liberation theologians who a decade or so ago thought they might find Christ totting an AK-47 among the Sandinista dictators and the Salvadorean guerrillas. Cone came to the conclusion that even if whites were not individually

racist, white racism was so oppressive to blacks that whites should be obliterated anyway:

Most whites...do believe in 'freedom in democracy,' and they fight to make the ideals of the Constitution an empirical reality for all. It seems that they believe that, if we just work hard enough at it, this country can be what it ought to be. But it never dawns on these do-gooders that what is wrong with America is not its failure to make the Constitution a reality for all, but rather its belief that persons can affirm whiteness and humanity at the same time. This country was founded for whites and everything that has happened in it has emerged from the white perspective....What we need is the destruction of whiteness, which is the source of human misery in the world.

This kind of Afro-nazism would seem hard to swallow even for bell hooks. But she manages to gobble it down without difficulty: "Cone wanted to critically awaken and educate readers so that they would not only break through denial and acknowledge the evils of white supremacy, the grave injustices of racist domination, but be so moved that they would righteously and militantly engage in anti-racist struggle." More likely they would simply take out their aggressions on the nearest white individual.

According to hooks, of course, this doesn't happen. "It is a mark of the way black Americans cope with white supremacy that there are few reported incidents of black rage against racism leading us to target white folks....[Whites] claim to fear that black people will hurt them even though there is no evidence which suggests that black people routinely hurt white people in this or any other culture."

Actually there is. Last year, according to U.S. Department of Justice statistics, there were 1.54 million violent crimes by blacks against whites. This contrasts with 187,000 violent crimes by whites against blacks, or one-fiftieth the rate, adjusted for relative population size. The crime of rape—an act of anger and aggression—stands by itself as a statistic. In 1994, there were 20,000 rapes of white women by black men, but only 100 rapes of black women by white men. Of course, the radical clerks have institutional explanations for this depredation as well.

In a book that has already become a bible for the movement, Professor Andrew Hacker—a white professor with a politically correct "race conscious" perspective—discusses the fact that while blacks constitute only 12% of the population, they commit 43% of the rapes, including rapes of white women where (he is quick to emphasize) the risk to them is greater:

Eldridge Cleaver once claimed that violating white women has political intentions....Each such act brings further demoralization of the dominant race, exposing its inability to protect its own women from the worst kind of depredation. Certainly, the conditions black men face in the United States generate far more anger and rage than is ever experienced by white men. To be a man is made doubly difficult, since our age continues to associate 'manliness' with worldly success. If black men vent their frustrations on women, it is partly because the women are more available as targets, compared with the real centers of power, which remain so inchoate and remote. (emphasis added)

For the Sixties black radical as for the Nineties white liberal, the act of rape—when committed by blacks—is no longer a vicious act against a defenseless individual, but an understandable attempt to strike out at the real culprit—the white supremacist system.

In the last analysis, all these arguments are really extensions of the Kerner Commission's attempt to use the concept of "institutional racism" to justify a civil riot. It should be no surprise that a most prominent member of the tenured black left, Harvard professor Cornel West, a radical clerk with

even more stellar credentials than his one-time co-author, bell hooks, applauds the 1992 civil outrage in Los Angeles, which destroyed 58 lives and 2,000 Korean businesses (Koreans having been targeted by the black community as a racial violator of its turf). West called this race riot a "monumental upheaval [that] was a multiracial, trans-class, and largely male display of justified social rage."

Racism, as bell hooks informs us, hurts. And the racists hurt not only the rest of us, but themselves. Indeed, the self-inflicted wound is often the real provocation for their rage. Returning to the incident on the plane flight that began her meditations, hooks reveals—without a hint of self-consciousness—just how the mishap that deprived her friend of a first class seat occurred. It began with a series of familiar urban frustrations (yes, bell, even whites have them). The professor, her antennae alert for manifestations of the white supremacist order, instantly converts each of these incidents into a racial *casus belli*:

From the moment K and I had hailed a cab on the New York City street that afternoon we were confronting racism. The cabby wanted us to leave his taxi and take another; he did not want to drive to the airport. When I said that I would willingly leave but also report him, he agreed to take us.

They faced "similar hostility" when they stood in line for their first-class upgrades at the airport:

Ready with our coupon upgrades, we were greeted by two young white airline employees who continued their personal conversation and acted as though it were a great interruption to serve us.

Impatient to be served, hooks interrupts the employees' conversation and is rebuffed by one of them, who interjects something like "Excuse me, but I wasn't talking to you." hooks' response is to escalate her reaction until she creates an actual racial incident:

When I suggested to K that I never see white males receiving such treatment in the first-class line, the white female insisted that 'race' had nothing to do with it, that she was just trying to serve us as quickly as possible.

Even the white female's effort to smooth over the situation is taken racially by hooks. She looks over her shoulder and sees that a line of "white men" has formed in back of them, and concludes that to serve these privileged males her tormentors now "were indeed eager to complete our transaction even if it meant showing no courtesy." To spite them all, and make everyone wait anyway, hooks summons a supervisor to whom she again complains about the racism of the airline employees. The supervisor listens and apologizes, while the tickets are processed by the "white female." When the transaction is complete, hooks takes a cursory glance at the tickets she has obtained for herself and her friend K. She looks up quickly, however, to catch the hostility of the employee she has humiliated, commenting, "She looked at me with a gleam of hatred in her eye that startled, it was so intense."

Somewhere along the way through these emotional minefields, K's ticket has not been properly marked for upgrade, causing her to be "ejected" from her seat. She is replaced by the white male, who probably waited patiently in the same line behind them, without that healing rage, and got his ticket done correctly.

Professor hooks is a woman intellectually and morally over her head teaching on a university faculty and trying to function as a social pundit. But she is also a perfect expression of the misery the "multicultural" university has inflicted on itself and on the nation as a whole. The concept of institutional racism currently in vogue among hooks and her friends is an expression of racial paranoia, and nothing more. It is true that even paranoids have enemies. But it is also true that by projecting their insecurity and aggression onto those around them, paranoids create real enemies where there were none.

Armageddon, continued from page 6

destined to become the coalition's bible as "Freedom Summer" unfolds.

The author, a liberal white female, demonizes white males ("An all-white-male crew of waiters does not happen by accident...Even pizza delivery and valet parking are often dominated by white men"); caricatures opponents of affirmative action ("Their diagnosis of the situation is that women and minority people are not as capable and do not strive as hard as white men"); and dismisses black foes of affirmative with a zeal that suggests racism (the arguments of Shelby Steele and Glenn Loury are "not even mildly plausible" and "the reader is beginning to wonder about the appropriateness of Loury's appointment to the economics department at Harvard"). Yet her invective ignores real-life issues of affirmative action such as those in the San Francisco Fire Department, where unqualified affirmative-action hires led to accidents and a judge maintained the consent decree even after the quotas were filled, evidence that, despite protestations to the contrary, affirmative action has become a permanent program not a temporary remedy. This case and Fred Lynch's *Invisible Victims*, the only major study of affirmative action's effects on whites, rate not a single mention from Bergmann.

But she does engage in some Freudian slips that may limit her book's usefulness as a prospective proof-text for the pro-quotas movement. Speaking of the negatives of affirmative action, for instance, she admits that "all potent medicines have side effects... to fight a war, you generally have to suffer some casualties; the war may also corrupt some of your own soldiers." This is a daunting admission not unlike the old Marxist prescription for social violence: to make an omelet you need to break some eggs.

If present affirmative-action plans are continued, she writes, "there will be gains outside of the labor market as well. All of us will benefit from revitalized central cities, lower crime rates, and fewer panhandlers, fewer homeless. It will be easier, more pleasurable, less guilt-inducing, and safer to live in a more just society."

Affirmative action, in short, will provide everything but free hot d'oeuvres in every bar. But Bergmann, an economics professor at American University, fails to cite a single place where the race and gender preferences she favors have produced such social and economic bliss.

The focus of the militant feminists' and lesbians' attack on the CCRI is section C of the initiative. Drawn directly from the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it states that "nothing in this section shall be interpreted as prohibiting bona fide qualifications based on sex which are reasonably necessary to the normal operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

Eugene Volokh, law professor at UCLA, notes that without this language, male guards

could be hired to strip-search female prisoners and schools could be forced to allow men on women's sports teams, which these days is not entirely a frivolous concern. Al Hill, with Civil Rights Office of the U.S. Department of Education, confirms that such cases have been increasing, and that Title IX rules allow boys to compete for spots on girls teams in non-contact sports. A Massachusetts state court has ruled that boys cannot be excluded from competing for places on girls teams, which has thrown the system into turmoil.

The coalition against the CCRI calls Clause C the "skeleton clause" which they illustrate with a skulls-and-crossbones logo. Eleanor Smeal says that the clause "destroys the very foundation of California women's rights law," and the campaign has retained a high-profile legal team to make the point.

Erwin Chemerinsky of USC law school and Laurie Levenson of Loyola law school logged countless hours during the Simpson trial and have become the Captain and Tenille of L.A.'s legal coverage. Chemerinsky, who also worked in the effort to deny confirmation to Clarence Thomas, says that CCRI will allow discrimination against women and girls that is not permitted under current law.

Author Shelby Steele calls this idea "disingenuous" and "Orwellian." He says, "It's so obviously a strategy. I've never seen a political issue where their hand was so obvious. They are taking the part using gender to protect women and turning it around. People will see through that." CCRI co-chair Pam Lewis, a mother of four daughters and a Democrat who voted for George McGovern, agrees: "I don't think anyone will take it seriously. I think it's preposterous that anyone would think that in the present day that anybody could look at a woman and tell her to go back in the kitchen."

CCRI does not affect federal protections nor those in the California constitution. But Chemerinsky still calls clause C "its most insidious provision," implying that the whole initiative is insidious and says it will make for "a far less rigorous standard" and expressly allow sex discrimination, one of his specialty areas.

This "analysis" has already had something of an impact on the media debate about CCRI. Not long after an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times* by Chemerinsky and Levenson trashing CCRI, the *Times'* Cathleen Decker wrote a piece on CCRI reporting, as news, that "the measure also would strip from the state Constitution the current protections women have against sexual discrimination in the workplace." In addition to being untrue, the language is straight from Chemerinsky, though not attributed. Liberal and leftist pollsters, unable to deny widespread support for CCRI, have also played fast and loose. Liberal pollster Mervin Field, for example, tried to mitigate the significance of his own data lest he give aid and comfort to CCRI

supporters. Commenting on his latest figures, which showed 58 percent of white women in favor of CCRI, 28 percent opposed and 14 percent undecided, Field felt compelled to tell the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "If you have one side saying clause C is a threat and the other side saying no, it isn't, it still sows seeds of doubt — and that's all you have to do."

And in a March 11 release on CCRI, Field reported that William Bennett had "spoken out against provisions of the CCRI." On March 26 Bennett shot back that: "I have publicly endorsed the California Civil Rights Initiative. I attended the CCRI's initial fundraising meeting in Los Angeles last spring. I continue to be an enthusiastic supporter of CCRI, and I will do everything I can to help pass this initiative. Indeed, I intend to visit California again to reiterate my support and to help raise funds."

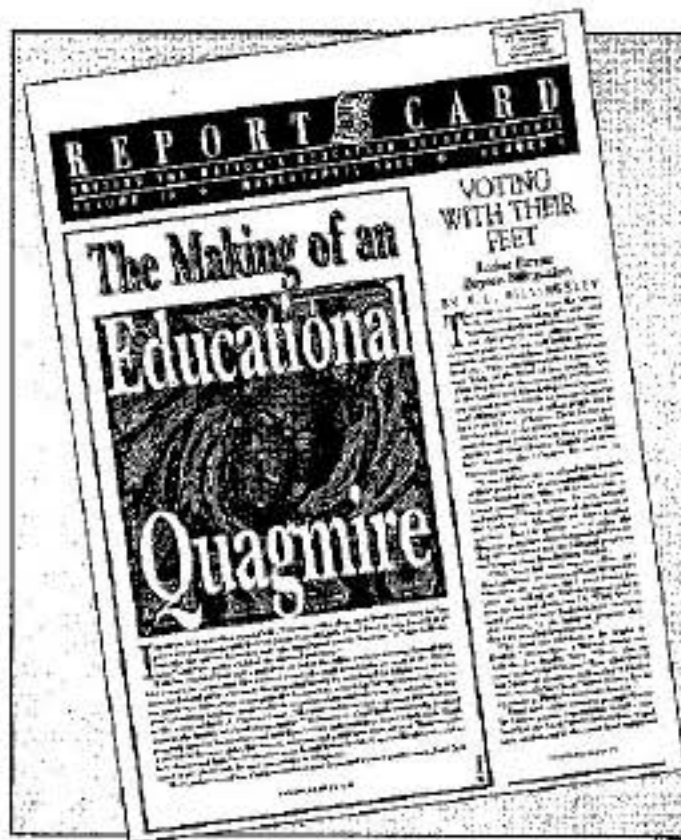
Some women feel that this carefully orchestrated anti-CCRI campaign is not to prevent gender discrimination against a minority but to preserve privilege, and in some cases monetary advantage. "There's a lot of money in terms of ancillary services and to government," says Barbara Lydick, CEO of B&A Associates in San Diego, a management consulting firm. In addition to the army of well-paid bureaucrats needed to enforce it, she notes that "affirmative action for women has spawned a rather large industry of sensitivity training." For *The Myth of Male Power* author Warren Farrell, a former member of the NOW board, the issue is more basic, the transformation of feminism from a faction claiming opposition to special protection to a militant lobby fighting to protect its advantages: "By opposing CCRI the movement has gone from being in favor of civil rights to being against civil rights."

"Among NOW feminists," Farrell says, "there is an almost identical attitude toward men as Nazis had toward Jews. The Nazis said Jews had the money, the power and that the problem of society was with Jews." Novelist Sally Quinn uses a different metaphor.

"Like Communism in the former Soviet empire, the movement in its present form has outlasted its usefulness," she writes, "Like communists who denied the existence of God and the right to worship, leaders of the feminist movement overlooked the deepest, most fundamental needs of their constituency. . . The truth is that many women have come to see the feminist movement as anti-male, anti-child, anti-family, anti-feminine. And therefore it has nothing to do with us."

Supporters of government discrimination know that the political trade winds blow east from California and that Florida, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, and Illinois are considering similar ballot measures, which have also been introduced in 17 states and the U.S. Congress.

"What happens here is a national issue," says Eleanor Smeal of the upcoming contest in California. "If we lose here, we lose nationwide."



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STRANGER THAN FACT

City Loses Negligence Case

By Judith Schumann Weizner

Judge Lois Wahnsinn of the New York State Supreme Court ruled today that the City of New York must pay fourteen million dollars to the family of Juan Apoya, an immigrant from Mexico, who perished in last year's subway conflagration, when, unable to understand instructions shouted at him by firefighters, he ran toward the tracks, fell off the platform and broke his neck. The fire, which destroyed much of the Twenty-Third Street West Side IRT station, was subsequently found to have started when a homeless man tried to grill a cheese sandwich on the third rail.

Mr. Apoya's widow and nine children sued the City Of New York, charging that the city's failure to comply with President Clinton's Greet Our New Americans Directive (GONAD) had resulted in his wrongful death. Lawyers for the city argued that a team of interpreters had been present at the scene, as required by the directive.

The President's directive mandates that every public accommodation must provide interpreters for all languages spoken within a given locality. Each of New York City's subway lines maintains such a team. In addition, smaller teams, comprised of native speakers of all languages in use within ten blocks of each of the stops, are on duty at the city's subway stations twenty-four hours a day.

Since the team at the scene of the fire had included not one, but three Spanish interpreters, the city argued that it had been in compliance with GONAD and that the Apoyas' claim was absurd on its face. However, the Apoyas' attorney explained that Mr. Apoya had grown up in a small fishing village on the west coast of Mexico in

which, although children study Spanish in school, the language spoken in most homes is Chequaotl, now spoken by fewer than four hundred people. He argued that, as Mr. Apoya had lived within three blocks of the Eighteenth Street station on the West Side IRT line, the City had been remiss in not providing a Chequaotl interpreter.



Widow Juanita Apoya

The city's attorney presented the Apoya family's Medicaid application on which Spanish was listed as the family's language of choice, as evidence of the baselessness of the Apoyas' claim.

Asked to explain this seeming contradiction, Mrs. Apoya testified that, as both she and the social worker who assisted her with the application had been unable to spell "Chequaotl," they had settled on Spanish as the Apoyas' language of record, despite the fact that Mr. Apoya had often boasted that he had forgotten everything he had learned in school, including Spanish.

The widow explained that her husband usually sent one of the children on errands that might require the use of written or spoken lan-

guage and that, although only three of the children could make themselves understood in English, all of them were fluent in Spanish, thanks to their school's bilingual instruction program.

Testifying via video hook-up through an interpreter, the Spanish teacher from Mr. Apoya's village school in Mexico stated that although young Apoya had certainly tried to learn Spanish, he had been singularly untalented in that area and, having barely passed the course, could hardly have been said to have spoken Spanish at the time he left Mexico for the land of opportunity.

The Apoyas' attorney then called Dr. Jonathan Sturm, editor of the *North American Journal of Linguo-Psychology*, to the stand to support his contention that a person not completely fluent in an acquired language often retains the habit of praying and counting in his original tongue, and that in an emergency he would be most likely to revert to the language of his youth. Dr. Sturm's testimony, delivered in American sign language through an interpreter, took the greater part of the afternoon session because Dr. Sturm was compelled to stop frequently due to an attack of bursitis.

This morning the court found the City responsible for the error on the Apoyas' Medicaid application, ruling that the clerk should have indicated her inability to spell "Chequaotl" and left the space blank pending review by a supervisor. Since the lack of a Chequaotl interpreter at the Twenty-Third Street station stemmed from this original carelessness, the city was deemed liable for Mr. Apoya's death.

Asked what she thought about the decision, Mrs. Apoya told reporters through her Chequaotl interpreter, "Everybody told my husband if he was going to America he should learn English or he'd never make any money. I said if he couldn't learn Spanish what made him think he could learn English? For once he listened to me."

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