

# HETERO DOXY

ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



## GET WHITEY

One of film's most vivid contributions to the current National Dialogue on Race begins with, of all things, a car chase. To be sure, the chase scene that opens *Law of Desire* isn't like any you've seen before. A police officer has finally cornered a white utility van when out leaps the driver, a young woman with frizzy blond hair, a black miniskirt, high-heeled boots, flowery rings on all ten fingers, and way too much lipstick. As "American Woman" by the Guess Who blares in the background, she pummels the officer into bloody submission. The crowning moment comes when she kneels over him and hawks up a loogie, letting it dangle in a goopy string over his face only to slurp it up time and again like a yo-yo as he screams at the torture. As a voice-over needlessly tells the viewer later on, "this weren't no ordinary waitress." Officer Bob, meet White Trash Girl, "inbred biological disaster turned superhero."

*Amistad* it's not, but just because *Law of Desire* won't match Spielberg at the box office doesn't mean the ideas behind it won't have their day in the sun. Conceived and dramatized by Jennifer Reeder, a performance artist and faculty member at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, one of America's most prestigious fine arts universities, White Trash Girl is perhaps the perfect mascot for the academic Left's newest contribution to the cultural mosaic—critical studies in whiteness, or more simply, whiteness studies. Its



name sounds like something out of David Duke's dream curriculum, but its core assumption—that acknowledging and eradicating white skin privilege is the key to racial harmony—makes whiteness studies a perfect fit for the multicultural university. Indeed, it can be seen as an attempt to fill the only remaining square in the color-coded chessboard of the modern academy, where ethnic studies departments are devoted to blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans, but, until now, not whites. Promulgated at academic conferences and in journals, texts, and in a small but growing number of college classrooms, whiteness studies is poised to become the Next Big Thing on campus.

Whiteness studies borrows from critical race theory the notion that racial differences are in large part the product of institutional racism—residues from the segregationist past so ubiquitous and so ingrained in the fabric of society as to be invisible. Job networking, housing patterns, and educational achievement, for example, are largely determined by this unseen hand. Whites benefit from skin privilege whether or not they are aware of it, and whether or not they ever personally discriminate against anyone. In the words of the organizers of the first major academic conference on whiteness, held on Berkeley's campus last April, whites are "the passive inheritors of a system of privilege and wealth," a system which whiteness studies aims to bring to the world's attention.

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Multi-culturalism*

*Cold War  
Revisionism  
Revisited*

*Bill Lann Lee*

## IN DEEP WINTER A MEMORY OF RED SUMMERS COMMIE CAMP

Ronald Radosh

This past September, I received a notice in the mail informing me that the summer camp I had attended for many years, Camp Woodland for Children in Phoenicia, New York, was having a special reunion. The event was to be held in conjunction with the acquisition by the State University of New York at New Paltz of the camp's archives and records. I was not surprised that the university would find the archives attractive. Woodland was not just another camp. It was, in fact, one of the well known venerable left-wing institutions; a camp where the children of members of the Old Left could be counted on to learn and to internalize the socialist values of their parents.

Yet I had mixed feelings about attending the reunion. It would be nice to find old friends and bunkmates and, after so many decades, see what they had made of their lives. I knew that my best friend at the camp, with whom I have been in touch over the years, was planning to attend.

Like others who went to Woodland, the camp experience had a great impact on how I would view life. I first went as a camper in the senior camp where in the late 1940s I and my fellow bunkmates lived in tents and, as ten and eleven year olds, were introduced to the cultural world of the old Popular Front Left. I stayed long enough to take part in the first "work camp" for the teen years. Campers built structures, cleaned up the camp, and served in the kitchen, as well as taking part in trips and events suitable to older campers. When I went off to college, I returned to Woodland after a hiatus of a few years to serve as a counselor. In all, I estimate, I went to the camp for seven or eight summers.

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# 15 Tips on How to Be a Good Leftist\*



## Tip 1 Don't Blame Yourself: Society Did It

It is very important to begin with an acute sense of alienation from your society and a simultaneous blindness to the real sources of this alienation. First, maintain a superior attitude toward ordinary human desires and affairs. These are governed by a “false consciousness” which will be removed when things are set right. At the same time, never look back at your own life or attempt to evaluate your impaired capacity for connecting with other people. Do not question why it is that almost every leftist you know did not, in their adolescent years, grow up “hanging out” with his or her peers in the normal sense . . . .

. . . Reject psychologizing that makes the individual the scapegoat for Society’s crimes. Instead, be totally preoccupied with the “alienation” of others. Feel sorry for the “alienated classes,” and fight for their redemption. Wallow in images of their suffering and project your own feelings of estrangement onto them. Never for a moment consider the possibility that they do not share your angst . . . .

## Tip 2 Hate Capitalism: Politicize Your Angst

Now that you have depersonalized your alienation, you can start politicizing what you feel. Nurture a good robust hatred of capitalism. Do not concern yourself with the fact that capitalism is not even a system, but a way of life that allows more people more freedom of action and material well-being than any similar group of people has enjoyed since the beginning of time . . . .

. . . Never consider how an alternative society might work, nor how they have actually worked. This is not your obligation. Moreover, it will not make you happy . . . .

## Tip 3 Be a Socialist, But Don't Call Yourself One

You don’t want to be pinned down as being a socialist (it could be embarrassing). Instead, say things like: “I am not necessarily a socialist, but I am socially minded.” Ignore the meaninglessness of this statement. Just believe that you can make the world “a better place” and ignore the possibility that tragedy, injustice, evil, and hierarchy might be universal realities whose cures do not reside in government institutions; and that thinking that they do can make things worse . . . .

. . . Talk a lot about the importance of creating “equality.” But never get too technical or specific, as for example, one might in explaining how a society with perfect “equality” would work. Don’t consider, for instance, how a hockey league would function in a society of equals . . . .

## Tip 5 Hate America

This is very important. If you are American, hate yourself and the country you come from. Purge yourself of your “Americanism” and take pride in doing so. Meanwhile, enjoy all the things that American society has to offer. Denounce your country and imagine that you are living in the most oppressive society on earth. Meanwhile, never leave America for long. Don’t consider what your life would be like in North Korea, where people are starving, or in Iraq, where an individual can hardly breathe. This will confuse the issue . . . .

. . . Criticize the United States from every angle humanly possible.

Ignore the contradictions and absurdities this causes. Denounce America when it cuts off immigration. Denounce America for being the most oppressive society in the world. When you insist that America should take in immigrants, do not reconsider why you are wishing such a horrible fate upon these people. Do not wonder why people want to live in America. Do not wonder why they don’t want to live in North Korea. Do not demand that Cuba take in Haitian refugees. Blame the American economic embargo on Cuba for Cuba’s economic failure, but when the United States invests in other countries, protest that this is economic imperialism, that it infringes on other nations’ sovereignty, and that it is unconscionable. Don’t attempt to explain why Hong Kong, an economy created entirely by foreign investment, has the highest living standard in Asia . . . .

## Tip 7 Reject Free Will

You must believe that everything people do in a democratic-capitalist society is done out of submission to an imposed social structure . . . .

. . . Reading Noam Chomsky will help with this greatly. Throw Chomsky’s name around constantly, especially with other leftists. Ask things like: “Hey, have you read Chomsky’s latest?” Do this in a manner that suggests that anyone who hasn’t is suffering from serious character flaws. You should say things like: “Chomsky’s great, Chomsky’s great.” Say this over and over again, preferably with other leftists who are also saying this over and over . . . .

## Tip 10 Take the Moral High Ground

This is one of the key characteristics of being a good leftist. Distinguish yourself as one of the few remaining sensitive people on the planet, one of the few who wants goodness in the world. Say things like: “There are people living in cardboard boxes!” Say this with great indignation, as if others support this reality. Say it as if there is a simple cure for poverty. Do not consider that the myriad experiments to alleviate poverty through government intervention have failed and created more serious problems . . . .

. . . Start calling yourself a “post-modernist.” Don’t worry too much about what this word actually means. Just call yourself this. Explain to people how oppressive the English language is, and denounce people when they use words like “evil” to describe anything. Tell them this is very simplistic. Ask things like: “What exactly does ‘evil’ mean?” Ask this in a tone implying that you have thoroughly researched this topic, and that it is unconscionable that people use the word in any way. Remember, however, that if the topic of American foreign policy comes up, you can feel completely free to use the word “evil” to describe it . . . .

. . . As a “post-modernist,” you should use sweeping empty statements to try to impress all

those around you. Try things like: “democracy is a sham” and “technology oppresses.” Carry a book by Michel Foucault around with you to elevate your self-importance . . . .

## Tip 12 Repress Your Emotions

Repress all of your feelings. Watch the old *Star Trek* series and emulate Spock. Pride yourself on this behavior and believe that emotions are only for the lower classes. Never discuss your own personal problems truthfully or say anything about your life in general. Just articulate a lot of slogans. When asked how you are, politicize the answer. Never say things like: “I’m o.k., a little hurt by my relationship with my parents, but working things out.” Always say things like: “Fine, we’re going to kick those damn capitalist bastards out of office . . . .”

## Tip 13 Play Leftist Softball

Organize softball games. These should, of course, be as uncompetitive as possible. When holding the bat, if you are male, hold it in a non-aggressive and clumsy manner. Try not to act too “macho.” Intentionally miss the ball just to show that you don’t want to “compete” like the greedy capitalists. If you do hit the ball, don’t hit it far or too hard. Run to first base with your hands and wrists dangling in the air, laughing like a sissy. This way you are not engaged in machismo and, therefore, not reinforcing patriarchy. If you get to first base, steal second. Feel guilty about this, then blame capitalism . . . .

## Tip 14 Go to Demonstrations

This should ideally follow the softball game. Go to a university campus and get really angry. Get together somewhere outside an administration office. Scream things like: “We have rights!” Shout this over and over again with hatred, as if someone inside the office is responsible for your misery. Make sure to create an atmosphere of hysteria and try to emulate the behavior of the Hitler brownshirts. Stab your fist in the air and chant with venom: “Racist, sexist, classist, homophobic!” Do not consider why you are yelling this or at whom. Convince yourself that being racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic are all mutually inclusive. Do not wonder things like: “Can a person be sexist and classist but not homophobic and racist?” . . .

## Tip 15 Have a Death Wish

Hate your life. Block out anything that might bring you joy. You should watch out for music, since it is especially capable of relaxing you, and of even making you cheerful. You can, perhaps, listen to music that exhibits a lot of angst. Maybe this is okay, but check with the “line” your group of leftist friends have on this. Overall, you should definitely get mad if a female artist sings a sad love song about not being able to live without a certain man. Don’t enjoy her voice, the lyrics, or the rhythm. Only envision exploitation. Condemn the female singer for seeing herself through the eyes of the Other . . . .

. . . Blur the boundaries between civilized behavior and barbarism. Despise normal feelings. More importantly, despise the kind of normal human existence that you personally would do anything to be a part of, but can’t. Refuse to deal with the world through intelligence, shrewdness, or understanding. Just be impatient and indignant. Never grow up . . . .

\* Excerpts from the latest title in the *Second Thoughts Books Broadides* series. For information on how to order this and all the other titles, please see ad on page 11.

<b>Editors</b> Peter Collier David Horowitz	<b>Literary Editor</b> John Ellis	<b>Staff Writers</b> K.L. Billingsley Cristopher Rapp	<b>Art Director</b> JP Duberg	<b>Illustrator</b> Carl Moore	<b>Circulation Manager</b> Bruce Donaldson
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EDITORIAL STATEMENTS etc

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

**MEDICAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STORY:** When Gail Granscay heard about 7-year-old John Callaghan she wanted to do something. John is a first-grader in Walnut Creek, California, who is afflicted with adrenoleukodystrophy, a disease that was the subject of the movie *Lorenzo's Oil*. Adrenoleukodystrophy, passed from mother to child, attacks the brain, resulting in a gradual loss of movement and vision, and is usually fatal within two or three years unless its progress is halted. John's only hope was a bone marrow transplant, although only one person in twenty thousand will be the right match. After she found out about the boy, Gail Granscay decided to try to become a donor. She thought that because her own maternal grandmother was also named Callaghan there might be at least a microscopic chance that she would be more likely to provide a genetic match than most people. Partially disabled and living on a fixed income, Granscay called the local branch of the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank and made an appointment for the bone marrow donor test. She asked if it was possible that the \$39 test fee could be waived because of her financial circumstances. She was asked her race. When she said she was white, she was told that the fee could be waived only in the case of non-whites. This was policy, a way of increasing multicultural participation in bone marrow testing, and it was the policy of the American Red Cross as well. Asking for the rationale, Granscay was told that a far higher percentage of whites than non-whites donate bone marrow. Accepting the stigma of conscientiousness, she scraped up the money to pay the fee, took the test, and got her relatives in Florida also to see if any of them could provide a match for John Callaghan.

**A WHITE HOUSE DIVIDED:** According to no less an authority than *Time*, the Clinton White House has been struck by divisions in the racial dialogue the President is trying to get going. Several of the white males lurking around this maneuver have bowed out, feeling that it has been taken over by women and minorities on the White House staff. As one unidentified female staffer said, "The white boys don't like not being in charge. They took their marbles and went home." But it scarcely matters, since the outcome is assured in advance. The commission on race won't even write its own final report. That responsibility has been handed to black lawyer and Harvard professor Christopher Edley. His views can be inferred from his reaction to *America in Black and White* by Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom. Edley called this massive and impressively researched work "a crime against humanity."

**SHE'S GOING TO DRUDGELAND:** Susan Estrich, sometime campaign manager for Michael Dukakis, has turned out to be one of Matt Drudge's most surprising and energetic defenders after being leaned on by the White House to line up behind Clinton's Leftist-in-Chief, Sidney Blumenthal, who is suing Drudge for reporting a rumor that he was a wife beater. She recently had this to say in the e-magazine *Slate*: "I love gossip. It's true. I'm just being honest. I call my friends in Washington once a week, and I get a fill of who's saying what about whom, and, so long as it's accurate, it hardly matters if it's true. I make of it what I do, just like the people at the water cooler themselves. This is what Drudge does. He tells us what

you'd hear if you had a friend you could call. He's a different kind of editor from the ones at the *New York Times*, and, knowing that, I still read him every morning. I don't believe everything I see, but in my experience in Drudgeland he's no less accurate than most of the newspapers."

**MINORITY SCIENCE:** Thomas Kidd, a white graduate student at Clemson, is now also a plaintiff. Kidd filed a suit after applying for a National Science Foundation fellowship and getting back an Internet message saying that he didn't qualify

\$150,000 to the group gets to spend one night in a Nevada brothel with the entire 20-member Pretty Woman Committee, the council's fund-raising arm, which is made up of prostitutes. And yes, contributions are tax deductible.

**AIDS MADNESS:** The debate in the gay community over AIDS prevention continues. As reported in last month's cover story, the battle began when moderates like Gabriel Rotello and Andrew Sullivan suggested that gay men should limit the number of their sex partners to lower their risk of infection; since then they have been the subject of public attacks, most notably by Sex Panic, an organization of "queer theorist" radicals who insist that promiscuity is crucial to gay liberation. The latest contribution comes from Tony Valenzuela, the San Diego-based "sex activist" and gay porn star who recently organized the Sex Panic Summit, attended by activists and academics from across the country. In a profile in the current issue of *The Advocate*, the HIV-positive Valenzuela explains his predilection for unprotected sex with multiple partners. "Sex with a condom is artificial sex," he says, adding that he slept with about 150 men last year and failed to use condoms about a third of the time. As to whether this might be a bit dangerous, particularly in light of health officials' warnings of a second wave of the AIDS epidemic, Valenzuela explains that while gay men should try to stay uninfected, "health isn't only biological. Health is psychological, emotional, and erotic. We're so one-dimensional when it comes to health, saying that it has to be biological survival."

**ECONOMICS 101:** On January 10, National Public Radio White House correspondent Mara Liasson was discussing the potential federal budget surplus and the different ways the Clinton Administration has proposed to spend it, such as increased day care. On the other hand, Liasson said, Republicans were plotting to "spend any surplus on tax cuts." Thus, in the minds of NPR's deep-thinkers, in the rare event that a hard-working citizen keeps more of what she earns, that constitutes government spending, and wasteful spending at that. Any media mogul up for buying a used network and stocking it with actual journalists?

**THE FACE OF ROE:** *Roe v. Wade* turns 25 this month and to celebrate, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) is hosting an anniversary luncheon in Washington D.C., with the First Lady as honorary chair and Vice President Gore as featured speaker. As a supplement to these festivities, NARAL's website features an item entitled "The Human Face of Roe," which consists of short profiles of women who have had abortions. One "face," however, is conspicuously absent: Roe's. For years, Norma McCorvey, the woman dubbed "Jane Roe" for the 1973 trial, had been a mascot of the abortion movement. But in 1995, McCorvey underwent a religious conversion and publicly announced that she intended to spend the rest of her life working against abortion. NARAL doesn't talk about her much anymore. "Abortion has been founded on deception from the very beginning," said McCorvey at a rally last year. "My little lie grew and grew and became more horrible with each telling . . . For this I will forever be ashamed."



because these fellowships were only for members of minority groups interested in science and engineering. Kidd will probably make out better than if he had gotten the fellowship. In 1996, the NSF settled a previous lawsuit out of court and agreed to drop race-based qualifications from a summer group devoted to science.

**DARWIN, THE MUSICAL:** Theater buffs whose tastes have evolved beyond *Cats* may want to catch a one-man show entitled *Darwin: The Musical*. Performed by Richard Milner, an anthropologist and senior editor at *Natural History* magazine, the show has played in New York, San Francisco, England, Scotland, and Germany, and recently found a niche in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles. The play consists of song-and-dance numbers performed by Mr. Milner, including the ballad "When I Was a Tadpole and You Were a Fish."

**PRETTY WOMEN:** The National Sexual Rights Council, a D.C.-based lobbying organization which aims to legalize prostitution and improve working conditions for "sex workers," recently announced a new way to thank its supporters. According to a report in a recent issue of *The American Benefactor*, anyone who donates at least





# Mussolini and Neo-Fascist Tribalism Up From Multiculturalism

By David Horowitz

Like most of the destructive movements of the 20th century—socialism, fascism, nihilism—multiculturalism is an invention of well-fed intellectuals. It did not well up from the immigrant communities and ethnic ghettos of America as an expression of their cultural aspirations or communal needs. In fact its primary sponsor and most effective agency has been the Ford Foundation, a ten billion dollar tax-dodge created to protect the fortune of America's leading industrial bigot. Henry Ford published the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a public service in the '20s and influenced Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitic crusade, winning himself an Iron Cross in the process. After his death, his foundation passed into the control of the intellectual Left and its fellow-travelers, the bureaucratic mandarins and the parlor socialists of the monied elite.

Multiculturalism, as we know it, would also not have been possible without the catastrophe that has befallen our colleges and universities in the post-'60s era. I am referring here to the politicization of the academy and the debasement of the curriculum, the transformation of the liberal arts divisions of the academy into a crude indoctrination platform and recruiting center for the America-hating, crypto-Marxist left. This intellectual plague has been described bluntly by Harold Bloom as "Stalinism without Stalin. All of the traits of the Stalinists in the 1930s, 'are being repeated . . . in the universities in the 1990s.'" I am going to make an emendation to Bloom's description a little later. The mentality is Stalinist, but it is the particular Stalinism of Antonio Gramsci that informs the multicultural fervor in the academy. As I will further demonstrate, the post-modern left owes more, intellectually, to Mussolini than to Marx.

But we need to pause, first, over the fact that multiculturalism would not have been possible without the Ford Foundation and its tax-avoiding largesse. When you think about it, the American system of higher education in its own environment is remarkably diverse. There are more than three thousand institutions of higher learning in this country, occupying a diverse cultural geography. There are public and private colleges, technical institutes and schools of the arts, land-grant schools and schools with denominational affiliations, and many others besides. It is almost inconceivable that all these institutions would adopt a single party line, and would do so within the space of a decade or two, as they have on the multi-cultural front—and on so many other fronts dear to the Left. How was this possible?

Well, it is possible if you have a pile of money larger than the discretionary spending of the federal government in these areas, and you are viewed as a benign force by the academic community itself. The power of the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford Foundations, and their clones, to shape America's institutions of higher learning is by no means new. At the very beginning of the era of the modern university, for example, Andrew Carnegie decided that it would be a good idea to give college teachers pensions. A college president was pretty hard-pressed to refuse such a gift, if he

wanted to retain the best faculty available. Accordingly, the Carnegie Foundation attached some conditions to its grants, and it is these conditions that served to define the entire educational era that followed.

The Carnegie Foundation began by announcing that only colleges, as defined by itself, would be eligible for the grants. The Foundation then defined a college as requiring so many hours of secondary school education (which are still known as Carnegie Units), as possessing an endowment of at least \$500,000, as having at least

specialists in the particular geographical areas and national units it had targeted for attention. For efficiency reasons it wanted these specialists to have an interdisciplinary approach to the targets in question, a demand that the university as then constituted could not fulfill.

The solution was to re-shape the university, and so the OSS turned to Rockefeller and later, when it became the CIA, to Ford. Grants were offered for the creation of "area studies" programs and area specialists. The Russian Institute at Columbia and the Asian Studies Center at Berkeley were prototypes of the new academic curriculum. Naturally there was powerful resistance from the conservative forces in the university, the departments, and the scholarly disciplines, which regarded this as an abusive intrusion into academic concerns and a debasement of their intellectual pursuits. But just as naturally the money provided by Rockefeller and then, during the Cold War, by Ford, overrode these objections and the new interdisciplinary area studies programs flourished in schools all over the country.

Like the spy chiefs of the Central Intelligence Agency, Marxists also favor the interdisciplinary approach. Marxism was never about "economics" but always about "political economy," a theoretical agenda embracing all aspects of society and culture in the service of mid-wiving a new human cosmos. That is because Marxism, and all species of post-modern radicalism, are totalitarian in their ontology, their epistemology, and their political agendas. Nothing escapes them. Like all gnostics, political radicals are confident that they possess the theoretical key that will unlock the mysteries of humanity and society. Of course, they don't believe in any immutabilities like human nature which, in the preposterous view now proposed in the university, is "socially constructed." Their agenda, like that of Lenin and Hitler, is

to re-construct the world and to create the new men and new women who will inhabit it (and think just as they do). Such an enterprise requires an adolescent credulity, an amnesia towards the past, and an interdisciplinary approach.

That is why the radicals of the '60s, when their revolution in the streets came up empty, turned to a vulnerable, open, and essentially defenseless institution for a last act of desecration and conquest. That is why they began colonizing the university with spurious intellectual projects that looked a lot like the CIA area-studies programs. Soon there appeared black studies (now African American, of course), women's studies, queer studies, cultural studies, and even American studies, the closest clone of the CIA prototypes, targeted not on foreign adversaries, however, but on the indispensable, one might even say constitutive, enemy of the left-wing imagination—the U.S.A. itself.

What made the routine violations of academic norms, and the subversion of institutional traditions possible was millions upon millions of dollars of bribes in the form of grants, subsidies, and other awards to administrators, academics, and institutions by the Ford Foundation and its satellite donors. It is no exaggeration to say that without the financial intervention of the Ford Foundation there would be no African American studies, women's studies, or queer studies as we know them.

What is multiculturalism? Well, in the first place, as my partner Peter Collier has pointed out,



eight departments, and with each department headed by a Ph.D. That was how the Ph.D. became the key to the academic kingdom. Never, of course, has there been a more conformity-creating credential. The Ph.D. means that university intellectuals are required to beg the approval of their betters for the decade that shapes their professional life. This credentialing system has been more effective than a Central Committee in creating ideological conformity in the ivory tower. The Carnegie Foundation also announced that it would not fund pension programs for denominational institutions. That was how Brown, Drake, Wesleyan and many other colleges gave up their denominational affiliations, and how the secularization of American higher learning began. As a congressional commission asked at the time: If a college will give up its religious affiliation for money, what will it not give up?

Since that time, the power of these elite foundations has only grown. A crucial flexing of their financial muscle, with ramifications for the present ideological directions of the university, came in the 1940s in response to the Second World War. At that time, America's spy agency, the OSS, developed a need for "area specialists" for its intelligence operations. It had no use for historians, political scientists, or economists as such. The department system that the Carnegie Foundation had created was not functional in creating intellectual specialists for military intelligence, which had more specific agendas than the "disinterested pursuit of knowledge" could service. It wanted

it is two lies in one word, since it is neither multi-nor cultural. It is, instead, fundamentally political and, like Stalinism, allows only one party and one party line. Its bottom-line agenda is the deconstruction of the idea of American nationality, in the service of the mindless, destructive, never-ending radical assault on the capital of the democratic world. *Because* it is the capital of the democratic world. Multiculturalism is the team banner of the hate-America Left.

From its inception as a nation of immigrants 200-odd years ago, America has been the inclusive mulit-national, multi-ethnic society, unparalleled in all human history in its success in integrating diverse communities on the basis of an ideal of equality. This success has been predicated on an American culture (not a multiculture) that makes that integration possible and sustains that American idea.

Multiculturalism is a head-on challenge above all to the notion that there is an American culture, and, that this culture is superior to all other cultures in precisely the ambition to be inclusive and equal, and that, consequently, this culture is the very crucible of America’s future and its multi-ethnic success.

Multiculturalism is the place the Left went to lick its wounds when the ’60s was over, and to carry on its malevolent agendas. The question radicals faced at the time was: How to continue the war against the evil empire—America—now that socialism was indisputably bankrupt. You do it the Gramscian way—Antonio Gramsci being one of the many many disreputable Communists (and not a few disreputable Nazis) who have been enshrined as intellectual icons by the academic Left. Gramsci’s addition to Marxist theory was to suggest that by seizing control of the culture you could extend that control to the rest of the social order as well. Never mind that the notion that the ruling ideas may not be the ideas of the ruling class destroys the entire edifice of Marxist theory. Logic was never a strong point of the Left. The real beauty of Gramsci’s strategy is that it lets you forget about economics (which you never understood anyway) and about the colossal failure, the pure evil of actual socialist achievements, while continuing your adolescent hatred for America and its immense good works.

If you need an academic rubric under which to carry out this nihilistic attack, try “critical”—as in critical legal studies, critical race theory, or critical theory as such. Marx and his friends in the Hegelian Left were, of course, the original “critical theorists,” but the ones you want to especially model yourselves after are the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School—deracinated Marxists who fled to the America they hated when the Hitler radicals came to power. Much earlier than you, Adorno

and co. had lost faith in the proletariat and the liberated future as well. But they also did not want to give up their totalist assault on the bourgeois culture that gave them freedom to spew their abuse, and that had saved their lives as well.

Along with this spiteful hatred, another socialist frisson of the multicultural movement is the post-modern view that everyone (except white people), and every culture (except Western culture) is equal, and deserves equal respect. The culture arrogantly called Western Civilization is exclusionary and has to go. Your canon has the imperialists, the guilty, and the white, while ours has the innocent, the oppressed, and the persons of color. You have Homer and Shakespeare, and we have Rigoberta Menchu. Alongside the less appetizing aspects of the academic nightmare the Left has created, its capacity for self-parody is almost endearing.

In locating the roots of multiculturalism, we have to take into account a second catastrophe, in addition to the one that has befallen the academy. This is the catastrophe of the Left itself. Over the last several decades, even as the star of the Left has ascended in the academic firmament, it has become obvious to most ordinary mortals that the intellectual tradition of the Left—the tradition that currently embraces Marx and Foucault, Heidegger and Derrida, Angela Davis and Andrea Dworkin—of Frederic Jameson and Michael Lerner, is utterly, terminally, irredeemably bankrupt. Socialist economics, critical theory, and progressive loyalties have produced the worst atrocities, the most horrific suffering, the most crushing oppression, and the greatest misery in all human history. But not for a moment, in the nearly 10 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, has the Left begun to face its failure, or confront its deeds, or figure out what happened to its impossible dreams. It has simply moved on to another trench in its permanent war against the West—the English and Comp Lit departments of American universities. And in the course of this move, it has degenerated from a Stalinist universalism to a neo-fascist tribalism, which is what multiculturalism is really about.

There is a historical precedent for this post-modern devolution. At the time of the First World War, it had also become apparent to socialists like Lenin and Mussolini that something was awry in their totalist perspectives. A funny thing had happened on the way to the war. The proletarian international was supposed to heed Marx’s reminder that the workers of the world had no country and to unite in opposition to the inter-imperialist conflict. Instead, the socialist parties of Germany and France decided they had more to lose than their chains and voted to support their national bourgeoisies and the war budgets that

made the conflict possible. The socialist idea had collapsed.

In response to this debacle of Marxist theory, the Left of course did not decide to do the honorable thing and pack up its bags and go home. It wanted to continue its own war against the capitalist democracies of the West. Two paths lay before it. Lenin decided that conspiratorial vanguards were necessary to make sure that next time the working classes behaved as they were supposed to—in conformity with socialist theory. Lenin created the Communist International to crack the whip of theory over the huddled proletarian masses. But the human components of this institution also stubbornly obeyed the dictates of reality rather than theory and, instead of acting as an international vanguard, quickly became an organization of frontier guards for the Soviet Union.

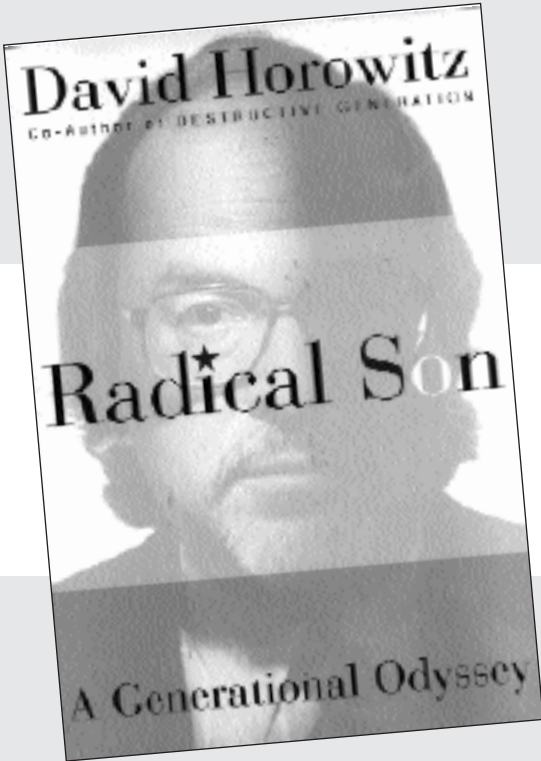
Mussolini chose the other course. He decided that the true revolutionary agency was not an international class without property, but the nation itself. Fascism, in fact, was a socialism of the People, spelled with a capital P, or, if you happened to live in Germany, with a V for Volk. This is the real intellectual heritage of today’s post-modern, politically correct, and multicultural Left.

I quote the political scientist Stephen Holmes of the University of Chicago: “Every anti-liberal argument influential today, was vigorously advanced in the writings of European fascists [including the critique of] its atomistic individualism, its myth of the pre-social individual, its scanting of the organic, its indifference to community,..its belief in the primacy of rights, its flight from the political, its decision to give abstract procedures and rules priority over substantive values and commitments, and its hypocritical reliance on the sham of judicial neutrality.”

Gene Vieth has put it more directly: “Cultural determinism, the reduction of all social relationships to issues of sheer power; the idea that one’s identity is centered in one’s ethnicity or race; the rejection of the concept of the individual . . . all of these ideas are direct echoes of the fascist theorists of the 1930s.”

Or, to put it even more directly, “identity politics”—the politics of radical feminism, queer revolution, and Afro-centrism—which is the basis of academic multiculturalism, is a form of intellectual fascism and, insofar as it has any politics, of political fascism as well.

*This article is adapted from a speech delivered at the Seventh National Conference of the National Association of Scholars in New Orleans, December 12-14, 1997.*



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# *The Apology that Never Came* Revisionists and the Cold War

By Jamie Glasov

The final verdict on the Cold War is in. With the revelations that have gradually surfaced from the former Soviet bloc, we can now finally confirm one reality: that it was the Soviet regime that initiated, as well as aggressively prolonged, the East-West conflict that dominated the international arena for four decades. The so-called “revisionist” historians, who lectured us for years about how the United States was responsible for the Cold War, have now been proven irrevocably wrong. Once exceedingly vocal, they are now conspicuously silent. Sometimes silence is golden. Sometimes it is something else.

Revisionists greatly enjoyed articulating one basic theme: that American economic “aggression,” manifested by Washington’s supposed effort to penetrate Eastern Europe with its capitalist system, triggered the Cold War. This thesis always suffered from two basic flaws. The first was that it ignored, or exonerated, Soviet behavior. The second was that it suffered from a dubious gulf between its theory and reality. A serious problem existed in the fact that the evidence was simply not there to support the revisionist theory. There was a fundamental flaw in its main underlying assumption: that American imperialism was exclusively a product of capitalism’s need to expand. But how, the revisionists were asked, was it that so many non-capitalist powers developed imperial policies? The revisionists never answered that question. It is safe to presume they never will.

The evidence that has surfaced from behind the former Iron Curtain has now completely legitimized what most observers always deemed to be common sense: America was justified in defending the Western world from the Soviet regime. If Moscow’s behavior throughout the Cold War was not enough to convince the skeptical of Soviet intentions, the documents from the Soviet archives, as well as the revelations of former Soviet officials, now confirm that the Soviet regime did not, to put it charitably, bestow utopian egalitarianism, or entertain magnanimous intentions toward the West. It would do well to mention a few of the myriad details that have surfaced from the Soviet archives. They crystallize the major flaw of Cold War revisionism.

One recently declassified document by the Directorate of History in Ottawa is a stolen memorandum, dated 1956, from the chief of the Soviet General Staff. Titled “Appreciation of the Situation,” it reflects the theme of hundreds of similar released Soviet documents. The memorandum begins with the overall “object” of Soviet foreign policy: “To prepare a plan covering the next phase of securing Russian domination of the world, at the same time safeguarding Russia from interference by any other nation in the attainment of the ultimate object.” The British Commonwealth and the United States, the memo notes, “are the only countries with Armed Forces

and industrial potential capable of obstructing the attainment of our object” and particularly frustrating is that “The United States and Canada have a Joint Defense Plan for the defense of North America.”

The document goes into detail about what countries “are completely under our control” and which countries “are considered capable of offering only limited or unorganized resistance to a moderately strong force.” The study boasts that a myriad of highly trained agents are “stationed in all democratic countries and have built up effective fifth column organizations . . . .” These organizations have “revolutionized trade unions,” penetrated the armed forces, “dislocated and aggravated the economic systems by means

Pact exercise entailed a plan to move troops through Schleswig-Holstein, the German province bordering Denmark, after it had been destroyed by 76 nuclear bombs.

It is interesting to note that, during the Cold War, any individual who suggested these were real Soviet intentions was ridiculed by those on the left of the political spectrum. Western conservatives who argued that the Soviets were intent on world domination were caricatured as paranoid and reactionary by their political opponents. People can be ridiculed—facts can’t. Several historians are conspicuously silent today in regard to the facts regarding the Cold War. Two of the most prominent revisionists, Walter LaFeber and Gabriel Kolko, devoted their entire

professional lives to blaming the United States in the Cold War. It is now clear they based their intellectual careers on a lie. Silence has been their escapism. But because we do not know what these historians have to say now, does not mean we do not know what they said then. It would be worthwhile remembering.

LaFeber and Kolko both shared the distinction of being defenders of the Stalinist regime. There was some ambiguity in their approach: half the time they exonerated Stalin, half the time they pretended he did not exist. Their work was based on the assumption that there was only one side in the Cold War. In crucial places in their narratives, Stalin was lost somewhere in the footnotes. When the authors did mention the Soviet dic-

tator, they did so without referring to Stalinism. Though this was, to say the least, a dubious way of treating Soviet history, one must concede that it gave hope to those aspiring to write histories of the Nazi regime without mentioning the Holocaust.

Kolko and LaFeber employed double standards that were impeccable in their consistency and dishonesty. Every American action was demonized, while Soviet behavior, however brutal and inhumane, was mentioned in passing and put into “context.” Thus, while America’s supposed efforts to penetrate Eastern Europe with capitalism was portrayed as scandalous, Stalin’s ruthless occupation of that area was mentioned briefly and explained as the result of Soviet desires for “economic partnership” and “security.” Kolko and LaFeber spared their readers the story of entire peoples caught in a totalitarian nightmare. The realities of the suppression of political dissent were left out of their narratives. Perhaps the authors felt these painful stories about tortured human lives would confuse the issues. Perhaps they felt they were serving a higher human purpose with their heartlessness. Perhaps not.

For revisionists, communists were allowed to pursue their interests; capitalists were not. The double standard was clear here, but more intriguing was the discrepancy between these revisionist arguments and the ingredients of the private lives of the people who made them. While Kolko and LaFeber found it unconscionable that the United States pursued its interests, it was worthwhile asking: did these individuals ever pursue their own interests? What human being does not pursue his or her inter-



of strikes, demonstrations, sabotage, etc.,” instigated “civil war in some of the less stable countries and are capable of seriously disorganizing and disrupting any war effort made by U.S. or Commonwealth countries.”

The memo considers that “it is possible that the willingness of U.S. and the British Commonwealth to fight Russian expansion has deteriorated to the extent that we could overrun portions of Western Europe or the Middle East without bringing on global conflict.” The U.S., it is suggested, might “accept a decisive defeat of Great Britain by aerial atomic warfare if presented with the accomplished fact . . . .” This would be more likely, the study suggests “if subversive activities in the U.S. were intensified.” The study boasts of the capability of having 300 atomic bombs “readily available,” stresses the importance of denying the U.S. “the use of operations bases in Europe, Middle East, and North Africa,” and concludes that “any move toward expansion by us could cause a world war, we are prepared for this and will accept the risk.” The study stresses, however, that it is “essential that this campaign be conducted with the utmost speed.”

One declassified Soviet document after the other articulates these same basic themes. Numerous documents, for example, now reveal that the Warsaw Pact accentuated an offensive strategy and had planned to launch a surprise nuclear offensive against Western Europe, despite the Pact’s official declaration that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. East Germany had thousands of medals ready to be awarded to soldiers who crossed the Rhine and a collection of new traffic signs to put up in several West European countries. One Warsaw

ests? What nation in the world does not do so?

This point is worth examining. The key question is, are revisionists critical of every nation in the world that pursues its own interests? Absolutely not. And they especially excuse the Soviets for pursuing theirs. Only America, in revisionist eyes, is not allowed to pursue its own interests. The assumption here, of course, is something revisionists would much rather disregard, but cannot escape from: they hold the United States up to higher moral accountability than they do any other nation. This implies American civilizational superiority over other nations, a belief, in turn, that implies a racism on the part of the revisionists. It also shows that revisionists based their anti-Americanism on the incredible premise that America was better than other nations and needed to be judged according to a higher ideal. In other words, they maintained arguments which were contradicted by the assumptions on which they were based. But thinking through one's own anti-Americanism is too risk-laden for those who have based their entire lives on anti-Americanism.

Such foundations to intellectual arguments have serious consequences; they were revealed in Kolko's and LaFeber's works. Both authors argued that Washington's great felony was its failure to accommodate Stalin and give him the secret of the atomic bomb. In their perspective, it was America's reluctance to share its atomic secrets with Stalin which made the Soviet dictator paranoid and difficult to deal with. A study of the fate of the millions of people who died in Stalin's concentration camps would have revealed some different reasons why the Soviet dictator was difficult to deal with. But Kolko and LaFeber chose not to scrutinize too closely the realities of the Stalinist regime, an excursion which might have increased their lack of faith in their own beliefs. They chose not to know anything about Stalin, yet they simultaneously, and incredibly, wrote their history on the assumption that they were Stalin's closest confidants, knowing his every motive. They consistently explained that Stalin meant no harm. How did they know? While the Soviet leader's actions spoke volumes, his motives were unknown at the time of revisionist writing, which explains why these authors conveniently avoided studying or documenting Stalin's behavior. But they appointed themselves as the ones who knew what Stalin's secret thoughts were. Today, the recently declassified sources from behind the Iron Curtain disclose Stalin's motives. They discredit everything the revisionists said.

Recently disclosed Soviet sources now confirm that Stalin's paranoia would not have been alleviated, and the arms race and the Cold War not avoided, even if the U.S. had shared information about the atomic bomb with Stalin. Soviet documents, as well as interviews with Russian scientists who constructed Soviet nuclear weaponry, indicate that American post-war policies and monopoly of nuclear weapons had a small effect on Stalin's conduct in the post-war period. Thus, the conservative argument has finally been proven: it is nonsensical to condemn the United States for not giving atomic secrets to a leader who was crushing the freedom of Eastern Europe and presiding over an internal order that was pernicious and inhumane. And it is absurd to believe as revisionists do (or did), that the Soviet Union, even if armed with nuclear weapons, never posed any great threat to American interests and that if Washington had only changed its terrible ways the Cold War would have been immediately resolved.

The more former Soviet sources tell us, the more painful it is to read revisionist history. Kolko's work is a case in point. Kolko paints U.S. pronouncements of hopes for peace as insincere, yet he portrays Stalin's recurrent "peace crusades" as genuine desires for friendly coexistence. For Kolko, Stalin's threats regarding the West's inevitable destruction, and his boasts of communism's ability to survive a nuclear war, are not important. What is important, according to Kolko, is Stalin's "conservative" policy in Western Europe, in which the Soviet dictator, in

Kolko's world, instructed the communist parties to practice restraint. The dubious thing about this argument is not only that the evidence discredits it, but that Kolko's own narrative contradicts it. Kolko condemns American leaders for paranoia regarding a communist threat in Western Europe, arguing that Moscow exercised little controlling influence over communist parties in that area. The question then remains, how could Stalin counsel restraint on those over whom he had no controlling influence?

Kolko's contradictions are as illuminating as his apologies for Soviet crimes. In a choice that defies characterization, Kolko picks Poland as an example of Soviet good behavior. In doing so, he chooses a nation whose history represents, perhaps most clearly, the suffering of Eastern Europe under Soviet rule. The Soviets violated the Yalta agreement and reneged on democratic elections for Poland in 1945, by which time that Eastern European nation had already come to symbolize tragedy. Stalin had exterminated masses of the Polish population. The Polish people suffered indescribable terror after the Soviet invasion of Eastern Poland in September 1939. An estimated 1.5 million Poles were deported to Soviet labor and prison camps, where many were either executed or died from starvation or forced labor. The liquidation of the Polish peoples originated in the September 1939 German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty, which contained secret provisions for the handing over of eastern Poland and the Baltic states to the Soviets and the mutual extermination of any Polish opposition to either the Nazis or the Red Army.

The Soviet purges of Poles included the Katyn forest massacre in the Spring of 1940, in which the Soviet secret police (NKVD) executed approximately 14,500 Polish officers. Many of the executed Polish officers were buried in mass graves at Katyn. Upon inquiry by Polish investigators concerning their fate, the Soviets suggested that they had escaped to Manchuria. That version encountered several difficulties after German troops discovered the mass graves in 1943, whereupon Stalin blamed the massacre on Berlin. Despite incontrovertible evidence of Soviet guilt, Moscow steadfastly maintained its innocence for 50 years.

Gabriel Kolko liked the Soviet version on the Katyn forest, so much that he played verbal gymnastics with it throughout his works. First he argued that the "criminological evidence" proved the "culpability of both sides" at Katyn. This was fascinating; it raised an interesting question: how can a people be "culpable" in their own extermination? Was Kolko implying that the Polish officers were masochists? Or were they suffering from suicidal tendencies?

Kolko doesn't explain. He does, however, at one point concede that the Soviets were responsible for Katyn. He explains, however, that their action was "understandable," seeing that Moscow had a "political incentive" to carry it out. The assumption here is that having a political incentive to do something is, in and of itself, justification to do it. The question must then be asked: was the Holocaust "understandable" because the Nazis felt they had a political incentive to wipe out Jews? What, ultimately, excuses a regime that engages in mass murder? For Kolko, this is an issue which should not be judged on a moral basis. Then we might ask, does Kolko apply this same standard of amoral judgment upon American foreign policy?

Kolko does not explain these issues. He does, however, insist that the Katyn incident "must be downgraded" and be seen as the "exception rather than the rule" in Stalin's behavior. Kolko explains his comment by arguing that the Soviets did not engage in mass murder; he praises Stalin for not indulging in "liquidation" in the 1940-1945 period, stressing that "mass murder" did not occur in Poland. Having said this, he contradicts himself and concludes that the Germans were most likely responsible for Katyn.

The evidence proves Kolko wrong on all counts. First, it remains highly questionable what

kind of meaning exists in a compliment that congratulates a dictator for not committing mass genocide during a certain period. Should we now look for momentary lapses in mass murders' genocidal programs and praise them on these pauses? Notwithstanding the dubiousness of this proposition, it is important to point out that, in relation to Stalin, it is not only ludicrous, but false.

Kolko says that Stalin did not engage in genocide during the 1940-1945 period. History tells us the Polish peoples were liquidated during this period and that they were killed in mass numbers along with six national minorities in the Crimea and the Caucuses, all of whom were deported wholesale to Soviet labor camps in 1943-44. Approximately three million Russians were also exterminated in the penal camps of Kolyma from the early 1930s to the late 1950s.

In terms of Kolko blaming the Germans for Katyn, the facts speak for themselves. In April 1990, Premier Mikhail Gorbachev publicly admitted the NKVD's responsibility for the Katyn executions. Newly released documents from Russian archives reveal that an even greater number were executed. A March 1940 Soviet memorandum, for instance, showed Beria requesting Stalin's approval for shooting 25,700 Polish captives. The world awaits Kolko's commentary.

Kolko's position on the Korean war was as telling as his position on Poland. Kolko blamed the Korean war on South Korea, even though North Korea invaded it. Kolko writes that the "North Korean army moved across the 38th parallel about 4:00 a.m. on June 25," but explains that the invasion should not be seen as "a causal fact" of the Korean war. It remains questionable how much wisdom exists in an interpretation that maintains it is relatively insignificant when one country invades another.

If North Korea's invasion of the South was not enough evidence to persuade revisionists that North Korea started the Korean war, the revelations from the Russian archives might make them reconsider their position. Released Soviet documents now directly contradict the official communist position on the Korean War's outbreak, revealing that North Korea had planned and initiated the invasion with the objective of unifying the country through military force, and that this had the full support of Joseph Stalin. The documents also show that Stalin sought to establish his position as leader of the international communist movement by his support of the invasion. He believed the United States would not interfere in Korea and was shocked by American intervention. Though it was basic common sense that Kim Il Sung could not have planned and initiated his military campaign without Stalin's approval and aid, many American revisionists argued precisely that. But now we know.

More than anything else, it remains puzzling what exactly it was that the revisionists found so unconscionable about the Americans loathing and fearing the Soviet regime. The question must be asked: What did the revisionists expect Washington to do when it confronted a regime that was brutalizing its own people and engaging in genocide? How was it supposed to react to the already existing confirmed information about the show trials, the purges, and forced collectivization policies?

Although the revisionists are not interested, Stalin's forced collectivization campaign liquidated about 15 million people. Directed primarily at Russian farmers in the early 1930s, the official massacre by deportation and terror-famine dealt Ukraine the hardest blow: approximately five million Ukrainians (20 percent of the Ukrainian population) were executed or died from forced labor and officially induced starvation in 1932-33. Recently declassified documents in the Russian archives confirm that Stalin played a direct role in this genocide, and that earlier estimates significantly understated the number of victims. Revisionist claims of Stalin's relative innocence and the "exaggerated" estimates of the repressions have been discredited.



What attitude was the United States supposed to have about these realities? What reaction should it have had when it found out its ally was spying on the West throughout World War II? What was it to do when the Soviets brutally took control of Eastern Europe and imprisoned, tortured, and liquidated all of their opponents? How was it supposed to behave while the Stalinist regime demonstrated intransigence everywhere from Berlin to Iran and Korea, supported guerrillas in Greece, and demanded possession of the two eastern provinces of Turkey? What was it to do when the Soviets continued to operate in complete secrecy and blocked Western inspection of their territory (designed to calculate the damage inflicted by the Germans)?

After the War, the West confronted a regime that kept a tyrannical grip on its own people, as Stalin proceeded to stifle all religious and political freedom. Poets and intellectuals received special attention from the NKVD, suffering incarceration or worse, and no Soviet citizen was exempt from possible execution, not even Communist Party members. Perhaps no other reality epitomized the nature of the Soviet regime better than the fate of Soviet civilians and POWs, two million of whom were involuntarily sent back to the Soviet Union; they were either immediately executed or deported to the Gulag Archipelego, to serve sentences from six years to life.

It is worth recounting the circumstances surrounding this tragedy, since the fate of the POWs crystallizes the nature of the Soviet regime. It also illuminated the mentality of the people who chose to ignore it. Washington and London both complied in returning Soviet POWs, civilians, refugees, and émigrés from pre-revolutionary Tsarist Russia to NKVD hands. In the end, British soldiers clubbed the refugees and POWs, women and children included, into the transports provided for their forced repatriation back to the Soviet Union. Thousands committed suicide and acts of self-mutilation in an attempt to avoid deportation. Harold MacMillan recounted his own personal agony of handing Russian citizens over to the Soviet military:

Among the surrendering Germans there were about 40,000 Cossacks and White Russians with their wives and chil-

dren. These were naturally claimed by the Russian commander, and we had no alternative but to surrender them . . . it was a great grief to me that there was no other course open.

Britain’s foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, flattered himself for fulfilling his promise to Molotov, in October 1944 (called the “Tolstoy” conference), to return all Soviet citizens in British hands to Stalin immediately after the war. Eden prided himself on what he saw as his special affinity for, and understanding of, Joseph Stalin. An admirer of the Soviet dictator, he referred to himself as the “Red Eden.” He stressed that Stalin had “never broken his word” and argued that while the West had to acquiesce to Soviet objectives, it especially had to “concentrate on arriving at an understanding with Stalin who alone had moderate ideas.”

It is difficult not to see a parallel between the mentality of the Edens of the world and the revisionists: the tendency to sacrifice flesh and blood for the sake of abstract ideals. The revisionists, like Eden, were not too interested in what the Soviet regime actually did; they were more preoccupied with what it was supposedly trying to do.

Instead of apologizing, some revisionists are now desperately revising their arguments. Recognizing their error in blaming the wrong party on the onset of the Cold War, they have now refocused their arguments to the ending of the Cold War. One of the more popular arguments of the contemporary revisionist thesis is that the United States needlessly pursued a “tough” policy toward the Soviet Union in the 1980s, since the Soviet bloc was self-destructing on its own anyway. This argument is based on several debatable assumptions, the most interesting of which directly contradicts the underpinning of the entire revisionist thesis. In recognizing the failure of communism, the new revisionist interpretation accepts the reality that Gorbachev’s thaw brought the despotic component of the Soviet regime to an end, a process which obliterated the Soviet Union, since the authoritarian feature was the key factor that kept the system intact. Yet the very existence of this component is ignored by revisionists, who cannot accept this

Soviet reality without conceding the legitimacy of American concerns. Admitting the justification of Washington’s disposition would be impossible for revisionists, since doing so would cancel out the entire revisionist argument itself. Furthermore, apart from its other flaws, which must remain the focus of another study, this new revisionist argument is based on hindsight, an ingredient which is, arguably, not the strongest of intellectual foundations for historical scholarship.

It is possible to ignore the past. It is also possible to avoid the process of soul-searching. But insulating oneself from reality does not change reality, nor does it nurture the integrity of those who practice such insulation. Today, the revisionists confront a truth that is, in their circumstances, horrifying in its ramifications: it necessitates the abandonment of an obsessive anti-Americanism, a disposition upon which the revisionists have built their entire professional careers. Without anti-Americanism, revisionists would not only lose their status and cultural affiliations, but also their entire sense of purpose. It is easier, therefore, for them to hold on to their political beliefs, which never did, and never will, fit in with those undesirable things called facts.

The perpetrators who initiated and prolonged the Cold War, who engineered a brutal totalitarian regime that left millions of victims in its path, have finally admitted their guilt. It is the defenders of the perpetrators who are still to speak. They have been left out in the cold, lost in the shadows, scurrying from the light. They are silent, but silence can speak a thousand words. In this particular and pathetic case, the silence distinguishes the revisionists in one illuminating and tragic light: today, the only people in Russia who agree with the revisionist interpretation of the Cold War are the neo-Stalinists. This is Western revisionism’s greatest legacy, its touching post-mortem. Perhaps a plaque should be made for the occasion—and placed at Katyn.

Jamie Glasov is author of *15 Tips on How to Be a Good Leftist* published by Second Thoughts Books.



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**SMEARING THE RIGHT**



*The Real Bill Lann Lee*

# Assistant Attorney General for Civil Wrongs

By Patrick J. Manshardt

Bill Clinton no doubt knew that Bill Lann Lee would run into some difficulty in his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The role of Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights has become a hot seat. After all, Bradford Reynolds and William Lucas, both appointed by Republican presidents, saw their nominations fail on Senate panels controlled by Democrats because they were deemed politically incorrect on certain arcane issues of race. And Clinton's own first choice of Lani Guinier in his first term was turned down by Republicans for the opposite reason—because the ideas in a number of her law review articles showed her to be a racial radical. Clearly someone chosen for this post in the currently inflamed racial atmosphere is a marked person, and as one commentator has remarked, winning a president's nomination “is less like being summoned to the head of the class than being told to go stand in an intersection.”

Clinton, however, could probably have been forgiven by thinking he would get this nomination through without much fuss. By all appearances, his nominee, Bill Lann Lee, had an impressive record as a civil rights attorney. He is, moreover, a member of the “model minority,” and has a compelling personal story as the son of a poor Chinese immigrant who operated a hand laundry in New York City and served his country in World War II. Lee worked his way into Yale, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and attended Columbia Law School. He served as Western Regional Director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and had also been roundly applauded as a “moderate” by Democrats who suggested that Lee had a reputation as a conciliator when it came to solving disputes. Unlike Guinier, who was a radical theorist, Lee was considered to be a pragmatist, well in the mainstream of the civil rights establishment.

But while the Clintonites expected little opposition to Lee, they were prepared to play the race card when it came. And thus, when the nomination began to falter under the probing of Senator Orin Hatch, Democrats got Jesse Jackson to declare that opposition to Lee's nomination was a “hate crime.” Teddy Kennedy chimed in that the Judiciary Committee's eventual refusal to send the nomination to the full Senate was “unjust” and “unconscionable.” Democrats, in an attempt to save the nomination, lined up a number of Asian-American groups to demonstrate their anger to this perceived injustice. Denying Lee, the first Asian-American to be nominated to this post, they said would send a message to Asians that there is no place for them in the corridors of political power.

This highly caustic rhetoric was enough to make even the *Washington Post* blanch. In an editorial the *Post* wrote: “The suggestion put forward by some Democrats, that the opposition to Mr. Lee was racist and amounted to some form of Asian bashing, was reckless, unfounded, and disgusting, as was the same charge when they hauled it out a year ago in a pitiful attempt to divert attention from the actual activities of John Huang. They should be ashamed.”

A close examination of Lee's career indicates that his nomination ran into trouble not because of his race, but because of his own positions on affirmative action and his apparent willingness to not only fail to apply anti-discrimination laws in an even-handed manner, but to actively evade and circumvent the effect of Constitutional guarantees of equal protection to all members of society.

At his confirmation hearing, Lee's attempt to appear moderate collided with responses to ques-

tions showing that he believes there is nothing wrong with race- and gender-based preferences. This is despite the fact that the United States Supreme Court has severely limited the instances where such drastic remedies can be utilized, despite Lee's repeated promise to “follow the law.”

Lee's promise to “follow the law,” particularly where the law now restricts the use of race- and gender-based preferences to those contexts where they are legally permissible, and to respect California's Proposition 209 rings hollow given his past record on these issues. Far from showing a moderate stances on matters of race, Lee's record actually shows him to be a determined activist who will employ any device, legitimate or not, in support of such preferences. My own experience with Lee in a little noted but significant case involving quotas suggests him to be a person willing to sacrifice democratic principles, ethics, honesty, constitutional rights, and respect for this nation's legal institutions in pursuit of his extreme ideological goals.

In 1994 when the NAACP and the ACLU filed *Tipton-Whittingham v. City of Los Angeles*, a class-action gender discrimination and sexual harassment lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department and the City of Los Angeles, Bill Lee was one of the lawyers who represented the plaintiffs. The purpose of the lawsuit was to seek monetary damages and injunctive relief with respect to female officers and others who alleged gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and retaliation in the LAPD. A few years earlier, the NAACP and the ACLU were successful in obtaining a consent decree requiring the city to hire and promote more minorities within the department. The plaintiffs' attorneys intended to seek similar relief for female police officers and applicants to the LAPD, in effect extending the requirements of the previous consent decree.

Everything might have gone well for them if the California Civil Rights Initiative had not qualified for the ballot. But it did qualify and posed an immediate threat to the case Lee was pursuing. In late October 1996, Lee and his co-counsel, in a collusive settlement with attorneys from the city of Los Angeles, attempted to settle the portion of the lawsuit seeking injunctive relief. I represented a LAPD lieutenant who intervened in the case to challenge a settlement to the lawsuit.

The obvious reason for Lee's sudden move was the expected passage of Proposition 209, a statewide ballot initiative that prohibited race- and gender-conscious preferences in public employment, education, and contracting. Proposition 209, by its own terms however, exempts federal consent decrees entered into before the effective date of the initiative. On election day, Tuesday, November 5, 1997, Lee and his co-counsel presented the Los Angeles City Council with a consent decree for approval. The terms of the consent decree were to lock the LAPD into race- and gender-based hiring and promotional requirements for the next 18 years. One of the consent decree's more obnoxious requirements was that the LAPD would be required to make efforts to hire and promote women in the same percentages in which they are represented in the civilian work force. This is despite the fact that women apply to the LAPD in numbers far less than their representation in the civilian work force.

Any ambiguity as to the exact intentions of Lee and his confederates was dispelled by comments made to the *Los Angeles Times* by city councilman Mike Hernandez who stated: “We were able to get done what needed to get done in terms of making sure those provisions that were affected by Proposition 209 got passed.” Furthermore, Lee's co-counsel Carol Sobel (formerly of the ACLU) stated in the same article: “There were important issues about recruitment and hiring that were dealt with today . . . . It's easier to make the commitment before election day and not put it at risk.”

The city council approved the consent

decree and Lee and his co-counsel presented on the same day to magistrate Judge Rosalyn Chapman for signature and approval. Before the magistrate judge could sign the consent decree however, district court Judge William Keller, to whom the case was originally assigned, reasserted jurisdiction over the case after he learned of the parties' back door maneuvers through press reports.

At a status conference held on November 19, 1997, Judge Keller indicated his anger and surprise at the parties' effort not only to do an end run around Proposition 209 on election day, but around him as well. On nine different occasions, Lee and his co-counsel requested that the court stay the proceedings “to facilitate the parties' ongoing settlement discussions.” At no time did he and his co-counsel ever inform Judge Keller that they would attempt to have a magistrate judge sign the consent decree. In fact, the evidence indicates that Lee and his co-counsel actively misled the court about their intentions. The parties never placed a signature line on their stipulation to proceed before a magistrate judge, and therefore it was never seen by Judge Keller.

Lee attempted to settle the injunctive portion of the lawsuit without any notice or fairness hearing that is required in class-action settlements. The purpose of such a hearing is to ensure that the terms of the settlement agreement are fair to all class members and to notify them that their rights will be affected. Such notice is also useful to non-class members who interests may also be prejudiced by the decree.

At best, Bill Lann Lee's conduct in this matter was underhanded. At worst, it was unethical and a fraud on the court. (California ethics law requires lawyers to be candid and honest with the court.) Lee and his co-counsel were so desperate to keep this opportunity to create another pocket of affirmative action from slipping out of their grasp that they took affirmative steps to hide their intention to do an end run around the voters of California. The likely reason for this is that they assumed Judge Keller would be reluctant to sign a wide-ranging consent decree hastily rammed through the city council and presented for signature on election day. Lee's conduct also showed a disregard for the clients he purports to represent. Without a fairness hearing, members of the putative class have no way to demonstrate that their interests may be adversely affected by those who presume to represent them.

To some extent, of course, Bill Lann Lee's actions in Los Angeles have become a moot point now that the Clinton administration has gone around the Senate's back (as Lee attempted to go around Judge Keller's) and given him an executive appointment as “Acting” Assistant Attorney General. But what the events in Los Angeles show is that Republicans were perfectly reasonable to question Lee's position on preferences and that their worries that he a racial radical in a racial moderate's clothing were perfectly just. Lee's past conduct indicates that he is the type of attorney who harbors no reservations about stepping on the electoral process, circumventing court rules, compromising the interests of his putative clients and the constitutional rights of others, and attempting to deceive a district court judge and the general public in the pursuit of an extreme ideological agenda.

Given what we know about Lee, we are justified in fearing that a man who commands a large staff of attorneys and vast government resources will use these resources to pursue his own view of affirmative action, a view that is at odds with the sentiment of voters and the thinking of the Supreme Court alike.

Patrick J. Manshardt is general counsel for the Individual Rights Foundation in Los Angeles.





Get Whitey, Continued from page 1

One obstacle is the fact that white-skinned people do not typically think of themselves as members of a “white race” with distinct and insular interests. Indeed, those who do most conspicuously are neo-Nazis and other pariahs. Reeder explains that “white people don’t want to identify as being white because for too long discussions of whiteness have always been in racist terms, or about white power or white supremacy. Identifying as white comes along with the stigma of racism.”

In whiteness studies circles, the hesitancy on the part of mainstream whites to embrace their skin color is seen as evidence not only of their feelings of racial guilt but also of their silent complicity in institutionalized oppression. “Whites are said to consider themselves a neutral universal category, hence nonracial and superior to ‘racialized’ others,” writes Annalee Newitz, a Ph.D. candidate at Berkeley who spoke at the spring conference. “Their self-image as whites is thus both underdeveloped and yet extremely presumptuous.”

“One of the luxuries that white folks have regarding race is that we don’t think of ourselves as belonging to a racial group,” says Matt Wray, a Ph.D. candidate in Berkeley’s ethnic studies department and an organizer of the conference. “We tend to think of ourselves as individuals.” This “tendency,” of course, has its roots in the classical liberal and Judeo-Christian traditions which made the abolition of slavery and segregation possible, but for these new racialists, like the old, individualism is a no-no. “One move in critical studies in whiteness is precisely to encourage white folks to see themselves as belonging to a racial group which has social advantages, and to stop thinking in individualistic terms,” Wray explains, “because that skews one’s perspective on the reality of race and class.”

It is her intertwining of race and class that makes White Trash Girl particularly important. According to Newitz, poor whites are unique in white society in that their race is noticed—thus the term “white trash,” as opposed to simply “trash”—and therefore they can play a key role in convincing white people that “white” describes more than just melanin content. “Because white trash is, for whites, the most visible and clearly marked form of whiteness,” write Newitz and Wray in the introduction to the recent anthology *White Trash*, “it can perhaps help to make all whites self-conscious of themselves as a racial and classed group among other such groups, bringing us one step closer to a world without racial division, or, at the very least, a world where racial difference does not mean racial, symbolic, and economic domination.”

Reeder adds that by combining her white skin (and the benefits which it presumably implies) with qualities that separate her from middle class white America—violence, rudeness, lewd sexuality, and above all, trashiness—White Trash Girl “makes the idea of white privilege problematic.” On another level, even the character’s name invokes the academic Left’s holy trinity of race, class, and gender.

But whiteness studies isn’t all abstraction, and its analyses often takes some interesting turns. For example, in *White Trash*, a young academic from Syracuse University contributes a piece on Elvis, crowning him “The King of White Trash

Culture.” In an essay entitled “Crackers and Wackers: The White Trashing of Porn,” UC-Santa Barbara’s Constance Penley describes *Hustler* as “an ingenious deployment of white trash sensibilities.” Later, she finds wisdom in matters of race (as well as class and gender) in the antics of MTV slackers *Beavis and Butthead*: “kids use these cartoon lumpen to teach themselves a very important social fact: that the only people who get to be that stupid and live are white guys, and they just barely do.”

At times this fascination with bad taste

WHITE TRASH GIRL, JENNIFER REEDER



borders on the bizarre. Racial significance is attributed to just about everything—from Madonna to chain-saw art, to the sci-fi classic *Planet of the Apes*. That film, it is argued in *White Trash*, can be understood as “a white-authored fantasy about the abolition of white power” in which “whites have been have become the primitive slaves while civilized ‘others’ rule the Earth.” Gun shows have also come under the race-colored microscope; Wray says gun collecting reflects whites’ longing for a return to frontier days. “Among whites there is a nostalgia for a time

when white really meant something, to have a secure sense of what your whiteness entitled you to.” The uninitiated reader may have difficulty squaring this with Wray’s earlier assertion that whites are utterly oblivious to their whiteness, but it gives some example of the lengths to which the movement is prepared to go to herd white-skinned people into the corral of race consciousness.

Because poor whites are poor (and thus, the thinking goes, partial victims) they represent an opening for those trying to get whites a seat at the multicultural table. Wray and Newitz believe this may help society to re-envision what it means to be white, and make it safe for whites to own up to their race. White trash, they write, can correct the “vulgar multiculturalist assumption” that “whiteness must always equal terror and racism,” and “lay the groundwork for a form of white identity that is comfortable in multiculturalism, and with which multiculturalism is comfortable as well.”

They are joined in this hope by Jeff Hitchcock, director of the New Jersey-based Center for the Study of White American Culture, which since 1995 has been one of the whiteness studies’ major outposts, providing diversity consulting and sensitivity training to area corporations and promoting the importance of understanding and reforming whiteness. Hitchcock argues that the idea of colorblindness “often means that we overlook racism,” and “forces us to choose between an unacknowledged self-hatred for our culture, or to gravitate to the falsely aggrandized self-image perpetuated by white racists.” Instead, Hitchcock writes in an essay on the Center’s Website, white people must find a way to “be whites, intentionally, consciously, and with some pride, and also be nonracist,” and to learn to live in a multiracial society “without having to dominate it either consciously or unconsciously.”

The answer, explained Hitchcock in an interview for *Heterodoxy*, is for whites to anoint racial leaders, essentially palefaced Jesse Jacksons who would be designated to speak on behalf of the race. “You need people to stand up and represent white people,” he said. “We need white leaders in an explicit way to talk about who we are and what our aspirations are.”

Not everyone in the world of whiteness studies thinks this is a good idea. “A lot of those people remind me of doctors who secretly love the disease they’re supposed to be fighting,” says Noel Ignatiev, a historian at Harvard’s W.E.B. DuBois Institute. Ignatiev is the leader of the New Abolitionist Society, whose stated goal is “the abolition of whiteness.” New Abolitionists agree that hidden, pervasive racism is at the root of the world’s inequities, but take issue with the notion that white culture can be redeemed. “In our view there is no

such thing as white culture.” explains Ignatiev. “Whiteness in this country is based on nothing but illicit privilege and the attempt to defend that privilege.”

If young scholars like Newitz and Wray are the Tom Haydens of whiteness studies, Noel Ignatiev is the movement’s Huey Newton, sharpening its radical edge. Ignatiev is guided by the conviction that “treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity,” and that examining and destroying white privilege is just the first step to bigger and better things. In an essay in *Race Traitor*, the quar-



terly journal he edits, Ignatiev writes approvingly of the L.A. riots, longing for the day when the “Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992 will become general and sustained.” This will bring about the collapse of U.S. society, which like “any capitalist society” consists of “two classes, the masters and the slaves.” Ignatiev says that the separatist militias that have attracted so much attention in recent years “aren’t any worse than any other cross section of white Americans.” In fact, aside from their white supremacist tendencies, such groups have “potential” because of their anger and willingness to use arms.

Even the less militant proponents of the discipline indict American society as fundamentally racist. Asked for an example of white privilege, Kelly Stoddart, an organizer of the Berkeley conference, tells of an experience she had as a literacy teacher in Richmond, a small city near Oakland. One of her students lived in a neighborhood where she could not get the newspaper delivered; Stoddart believes this was because the neighborhood was largely Latino. “I attributed it to discrimination,” she explains, adding that it “just blows my mind.”

Calls to the newspapers serving the Richmond area suggest a different reality. Zonna Thomas, a circulation manager for the local daily, the *West County Times*, says that the paper delivers to the entire city with the exception of one three-

block area where door-front service had to be ended because carriers were repeatedly mugged. Jim Dove, vice president of circulation for the company that delivers the *Oakland Tribune*, adds that the region is one of the most racially diverse in the country, making discrimination economically suicidal. “If we weren’t going to deliver to minorities, we wouldn’t have anyone to deliver to.”

Not surprisingly, even some leftist academics are less than enthusiastic about this new field. Sean Wilentz, a professor of history at Princeton and an avowed “progressive,” told the *New York Times Magazine*, “In their view whiteness is implicitly the racial category that is evil, and blackness is just a response to it. It’s black nationalism by another means.” The *Times* also noted that some black studies professors are unhappy with the new field and worry that interest in whiteness will draw attention away from minorities.

Regardless, whiteness studies looks like an idea whose time has come, at least in the American academy. The discipline has found its way into courses in places like UC-Berkeley, Northwestern, and the Universities of Connecticut, Florida, and Minnesota. Last year the Harvard Educational Review included the topic in its symposium on ethnicity and education. The Center for the Study of White American Culture has provided teaching materials to professors looking to add whiteness to their ethnic palette,

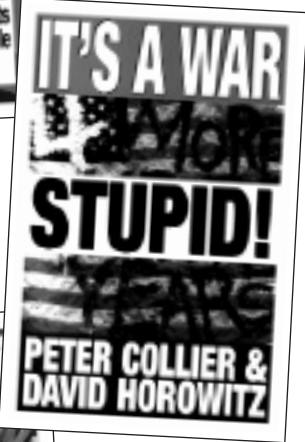
most notably at Emory and UC-Santa Barbara. Three hundred scholars attended the conference in Berkeley last April; in November, Hitchcock’s Center hosted an equal number at its Second Annual National Conference on Whiteness. This February, the Claremont Colleges will be hosting a similar conference dubbed “Outing Whiteness.”

“We’re hoping that we can provide a dynamic force for change,” explains Mary Washington, a professor of sociology at Lehigh University and a member of the Center’s board of directors, “certainly within the academy, and if it has implications for the broader society that’s even better.”

In the meantime, White Trash Girl continues to maximize the contradictions of white society on-screen. To date her films have been featured at festivals and in 10 foreign countries, and throughout the United States, and she has her own line of trading cards. A series of “graphic novels” based on the character is in the works, and a new film is scheduled to debut early this year. And it seems likely that this toxic avenger will continue to embody the perverse prescriptions of whiteness studies. As alter-ego Reeder explains, “I’m not advocating all-out public chaos, but I am advocating ripping the scab off the wound again and again until it can really fester. That’s when it begins to heal.”



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### Commie Camp, Continued from page 1

Established by the educator and folklorist Norman Studer in the mid-1940s, the camp was a major presence for children of the Old Left until its demise in the early 1960s. At that time, strangely, a fight broke out among its shareholders over whether or not to sell the valuable land the non-profit camp was located on, for big bucks. The temptation must have been too great to resist. The old main social hall and dining room was burnt down in what was apparently an act of arson, and eventually, the camp was sold to developers who immediately converted it into prime suburban condos.

Camp Woodland was unique because although it was clearly a very left-wing institution, it was successful in a way that the score of other Communist camps in the New York area was not. At one extreme were the overt Communist Party institutions, which included Camp Unity (later Wingdale on the Lake) for adults, and two children's camps, Camp Kinderland (affiliated with the Yiddish Communist fraternal group, the International Worker's Order), and the very hard-line Camp Wo-Chi-Ca. Perhaps the name was meant to confuse innocents, who might think that it was some kind of Indian name. But Wo-Chi-Ca stood for Worker's Children's Camp, to indicate its proletarian orientation, or to make it clear to *Daily Worker* subscribers that this is where their children should go. The camp named its social hall "The Paul Robeson Playhouse" and regularly engaged in open Party activities. During the great 1950s comic book scare—remembered most with the savage attack leveled against comics by the left-wing psychiatrist Dr. Frederick Wertham—the camp's yearbook reported proudly that its campers were asked to all turn in their comics, which were then burnt in a huge evening public bonfire. In that manner, the Wo-Chi-Ca campers were purged of whatever racism and pro-Americanism might have been instilled in them by the dangerous cartoon strips. No "Captain America" for Wo-Chi-Ca campers!

Eventually, the camp was forced to close when local super patriots raided the camp with rifles, putting fear into parents, who quickly pulled their children out. In the heated atmosphere of '50s America, the negative publicity the camp received in the press was too much for them to buck, and the institution closed its door.

My camp, Camp Woodland, received its share of bad publicity, but it did not meet the same end as Wo-Chi-Ca. Indeed, during the House Committee on Un-American Activities' foray into the New York area, the directors and some staff members of Woodland were subpoenaed. But the local upstate New York Republican newspapers, which ran editorials praising its programs and its presence in the region, defended the camp. At one point, the camp was even featured in a *Voice of America* radio broadcast beamed to the Soviet bloc countries, as an example of how in the United States there could be found a children's camp that practiced interracial democracy. It was the ultimate irony. The United States government, as part of its anti-Communist propaganda arsenal, used a camp whose founders and leaders were almost all Communists or fellow-travelers.

Camp Woodland's secret was that unlike its counterparts, its presence in the Communist orbit was downgraded, and the camp functioned as a central part of the culture of the Popular Front. Instead of sectarian Communism—no "Paul Robeson Playhouse" for Woodland's campers—the camp basked in

the aura of CP chief David Browder's assertion that "Communism is 20th Century Americanism." And on the local level, under Norman Studer's leadership, the camp replicated the kind of innovative folklore archival collecting that another famed leftist intellectual, Alan Lomax, was carrying out at the Library of Congress. While Lomax traversed the Deep South with his ancient recording machine, finding among others, Leadbelly and, later, McKinley Morganfield, a.k.a. Muddy Waters, Studer used the technique to gather and interview the aging singers and storytellers of the old Catskill region of New York State.

His efforts came at a propitious moment. New York State had decided to modernize its water system by building a massive new reservoir at Ashokan, New York. The creation of this showplace, which would feed New York City in addition to upstate areas, meant



### CAMP DIRECTOR NORMAN STUDER

the displacement of scores of old-timers, as well as the closing down and buying out of their old family farms. Sensing the drama inherent in this local example of progress, Studer and his campers set out to interview the old-timers. As a senior camper in the late 1940s, I remember vividly riding in his old station wagon throughout the Catskills, driving up to scores of old farmhouses and sitting on the front porch, as the residents poured out their life stories. We gathered old implements, long useless butter churners and ancient wash-basins, and eventually built and displayed them in a local museum of the Catskill Mountains. And Studer was able to find local singers; true folk bards who, in the tradition of mountain folk, told their stories in haunting ballads. Among them was a man who came to be known as the "bard of the Catskills," one George Edwards. A tall striking man, already in his mid-80s, Edwards lived long enough to sing and transcribe all of his songs, now considered classics of the region by folklorists. His songs, and many others, were later published in a book edited by the left-wing composer Norman Cazden, entitled *A Catskill Songster*, and available on a now out-of-print long-playing record, "Catskill Mountain Folksongs" on the fabled Stinson label.

These songs were anything but political or left-wing. As Cazden wrote in his notes for the album, the songs were "regional variants of music traditional in other part of the United

States and also in Canada, England, Ireland and Scotland," the product of "highly mobile lumbermen, from an era when self-entertainment and song-swapping were a natural accompaniment of everyday life." They were, in other words, traditional folk songs in the true sense of the word; songs gathered from old-timers like Edwards, a scoop maker and lumberman; from Mary Avery, the widow of a stonecutter and road worker; and from one Marvin Yale, who Cazden described as a "hermit-like rural handyman with a droll manner."

Undoubtedly, Edwards was the camp's greatest find. In an article about him written six years after his death in 1949, Studer explained why he was important, and in what way his life was connected with the heyday of Popular Front culture. Edwards, Studer wrote in a 1955 issue of *Sing Out! Magazine*, "belonged to the days of the lumber camps,

tanneries and quarries, when raftsmen rode the Delaware and canals plied the old D and H canal. His father, a scoopmaker by trade who lived a carefree life [was] always on hand with a ditty or a good joke." He went on to recount how the whole Edwards clan could sing and tell stories throughout the night. And the songs were sung at barn dances, husking bees, and apple peels. It was, indeed, far different than our modern era. And then Studer got to the point. The singing and community activities, the square dances and quadrilles, were "testimony to the creative power of ordinary men and women!" But then, alas, the modern era dawned. "The age of curses—the radio, the phonograph and the movie—canned entertainment." Their music might have died, but for one thing. "The WPA throughout the country began to collect folklore." And so it was that the New Deal, with the influence on it of the political and cultural Left, was tied to the tradition of people like Edwards, even if he and his friends did not know it. And Studer, relating how Woodland then brought him to its quarters, cited what he thought was the camp's importance. "It seeks to bring city and country people together in a neighborly way; getting people together of all races, creeds, backgrounds in fellowship with one

another." But Studer ended his article by gently presenting the subliminal political message—Edwards "will always be a symbol of the tough and enduring spirit of the common folk, their essential dignity and their singing strength." It was people like Edwards, in other words—or those who continued his tradition in different times—who would be able to usher in the socialist future.

These individuals, people from a different time and place than our own, became heroes in the PopFront drama of the Camp's director and his staff. They were, of course, common folk. But working their land and highly individualistic, and no doubt registered Republicans to boot, it is highly doubtful that any of them had politics anything near American Communism, even in its Browderite variety. But by rescuing their stories and heralding their lives, the Camp managed to endear itself to the local Catskill residents, who then looked askance at the charges leveled against the Camp by antagonistic Congressmen from Washington. To the old-timers of the Catskills, the Camp had listened to their woes and honored and revered them, and they were not about to turn their back on the Camp. In their eyes, no doubt, the charges of Communism hurled at Woodland appeared to be nothing but irrelevant publicity grabs—attempts of grandstanding Congressmen on the make to gather publicity for their reelection campaigns.



To bring the folklore to the public, at the end of each camp year Woodland presented the Folk Festival of the Catskills, at which campers and counselors, along with numerous authentic old-timers from the Catskills, presented songs and stories which were performed publicly at the Phoenicia ski slope, in long afternoon and evening performances. The camp also produced a different cantata each summer, and in this effort, the face of Popular Front culture was most visible. Most people know of the two most popular of such efforts, Earl Robinson's and John LaTouche's "Ballad for Americans," made most famous by Robeson, which he even sung at the 1940 Republican Party convention. And Robinson and Millard Lampell's "Lonesome Train," about the death of Lincoln, was another such favorite of the Old Left. Woodland campers at times, of course, performed these, but they had their own composers and their own cantatas. The most popular was Herbert Haufrecht's "We've Come from the City," which in a simple manner preached the message of farmer-labor unity, a mythical favorite of Party propaganda. It was, I recall, a rather trite and pedestrian piece of work. Its main chorus extolled:

*We've Come from the City,  
We've Come from the Town,  
We've Come from the City,  
To Shake Your Apples Down;  
You Have Called Us City Slickers,  
We Have Called You Hicks*

You get the idea—our goals are the same, and with a proper attitude, unity can and will be achieved. The camp also nobly worked to acquaint us with those who were up till then neglected fighters for civil rights and freedom. Thus Bob DeCormier, the brilliant and charismatic composer and singer (later leader of the Belafonte Singers during Harry Belafonte's heyday, and head of the New York Choral Society), composed a cantata about the life of Sojourner Truth. By presenting these works at each year's Catskill Folk Festival, the Camp did its part to bring the broader Popular Front message to the local inhabitants.

Then at the day's end, the events were capped off with a long night of square and folk dancing, with the calls provided by numerous Catskill musicians—often accompanied by the various counselors and campers, a group which at different times included John Cohen, later and still one of the New Lost City Ramblers; Julius Lester, remembered fondly by his friends as having started out his career as a folksinger; Eric Weissberg, later of The Tarriers and banjo player extraordinary who had the hit record "Dueling Banjos," which he first played for the soundtrack of the film *Deliverance*. And, of course, no summer could be complete without the arrival of Pete Seeger, who at times stayed for days on end, performing, filming the camp and participating in its various events. I can still recall vividly the sleepout on top of a local mountain, at which Seeger woke us early in the morning, singing loudly the old holler "Wake up Jacob," as he grilled eggs and bacon on a frying pan.

It was events like these that have caused loyal Woodland alumni to cherish and treasure the years spent at the camp. As anyone knows who has undergone the summer camp experience, the bonds of closeness and solidarity with one's fellow bunkmates are intense, given the shared experience in which two short months seem to signify the very secrets of life's meaning. And given that we were campers, all the regular fights, early passionate camp love affairs, trips and sporting

events were part of the camp life. Alas, very little swimming. The camp's pool was so small that barely twenty people could fit in it. The attempt to bulldoze some land and fill it in was an abysmal failure, leading the campers to term the quickly stagnant pond "Ushy Gushy." Woodland produced few swimmers.

Aside from the folk music, what is it about the camp that even permits one to put it on the record as one of the group of Communist summer camps? By and large, Studer avoided any hard propagandizing. But it did take place. And it was seamlessly integrated into the regular activities of the camp. Traditional Jewish summer camps in New York—attended by the Long Island, New York City and Westchester Jewish kids—had what were called "color wars," a summer camp version of the Olympic Games. In color wars, the camp was divided into teams with different col-



PETE SEEGER SINGING CAMP SONGS

ors, and playoffs were between the two winning teams. Woodland had something else instead—"the summer youth festival," obviously named and fashioned after the Soviet bloc World Youth Festivals, which were the Cominform's post-war attempt to attract young people to the Communist cause by organizing yearly trips to whatever Soviet bloc nation hosted the festival. There, young people would begin and end the festivities by joining together with all the world's youth in attendance, where they would link hands and sing "The World Youth Song," penned for the event by the Soviet composer Dimitri Shostakovitch. And of course, we sang it at times at Woodland. I can recall the lyrical, bright tune, promising better tomorrows when all would live in peace and harmony under socialism.

*Everywhere the youth are singing  
Freedom's Song,  
Freedom's Song, Freedom's Song,  
We are the Youth,  
And the World Acclaims our Song of  
Truth.*

How poor Shostakovitch must have blanched to be forced to write these words, knowing fully that the "truth" the ballad espoused masked the worst horrors imaginable.

At Woodland, the teams were divided into different countries. Of course, everyone vied to have the honor or either being the

USSR or The People's Republic of China. The poor losers who were given the name U.S.A. could only sulk at their luck. Two of our fellow campers were American-born Chinese—the children of an American mother and a Chinese father. Their father, it turned out, was a major Chinese Communist, who had managed to infiltrate the highest ranks of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, all the time hiding his true beliefs and secretly serving Mao. My friends assured me that if the campaign to give recognition to People's China, as we called it then, succeeded, their father would be appointed UN Ambassador and they would then be allowed to live with him and their mother as a real family. And they, and we, proudly sung the Chinese Communist song we learned at the annual summer Youth Festival—"Chee Lai!" or the "Song of the Volunteers," with its wonderful ode to Mao's troops, "We Will Follow

You Forever, Till China Will be Free." Of course, the song—whose title is translated roughly as "Arise" in *The People's SongBook*—promises that the fighting of the Chinese people was for "true democracy."

The weeks of the summer youth festival was, in fact, the time at camp in which whatever overt Communist indoctrination occurred took place. In conjunction with the daytime sporting events, each night the camp presented lectures and discussions from outside visitors from different countries, who purportedly were there to acquaint us with the life and culture of their native lands. In reality, what was presented was something quite different. One summer two young men from Greece came. Their presentation, however, was not about their land and their lives. Rather, it was a clarion call to battle on behalf of the Greek Communists, and a recounting in heroic terms of the Party cadre in Greece during the ill-fated Greek civil war. In their telling of the story, the Greek partisans, as they called them, fought the good fight against American-backed fascists, and nobly sought to build a Greece aligned with the forces of freedom emanating from the Soviet Union.

I do not recall the two visitors informing us of how Stalin closed off the borders to prevent Yugoslav arms going to their comrades, in order to honor his pledge to Churchill that Greece would remain firmly in the Western camp. But the presence of people like these two men afforded other opportunities. Indeed, these two became the first people to try to recruit me to membership in the Labor Youth League—the official youth arm of the Communist Party. The recruiting drive took place at the camp, on camp grounds, during rest period. At the time I was in the first group in the newly created work camp, the group that had bunks instead of tents, and that was made up of 13- and 14-year-olds. Our counselor, himself a New York Communist Party member, gave us the good news that if we agreed to come hear their message, we could skip the otherwise mandatory rest period. A few of us, all trusted young politicians, left the bunk feeling, I recall, very special indeed. Here we were presented with the message that although we did not have to fight with arms in Greece, as they did, we could join in the same international struggle here in the imperialist heartland. And if we joined the ranks of the Party, with its eternal Marxist-Leninist principles, we too could be part of the vanguard ranks of those who were fighting for freedom.

Lying on the grass on a mountain slope in upstate New York, we dreamt dreams of guerrilla warfare at home, of waging a fight that would be worthy of that undertaken by our new friends, the two Greek comrades. They



left taking our names and addresses. Sure enough, a few months after camp, the two appeared at my parents' apartment, asking to see me. They had come ready to have me join their ranks. At the time, a young junior high student, I was not quite ready. But they had sowed the seeds, and a year or two later I joined the youth arm of the Party entirely on my own.

I also was a camper the year the armistice in Korea took place, ending the fighting in what was becoming a highly unpopular dragged-out war. One has to remember that to most Americans—who, it turns out, had it right the first time—the Korean war was a response of the United States to armed aggression by Stalin's puppet in Korea, the great leader, Kim Il Sung. But to the legions of the fellow-travelers in America, it was a case of U.S.-backed South Korean aggression against North Korea. All of us had read I.F. Stone's conspiracy theory in the leftist New York *Daily Compass*, the successor paper to the wartime *P.M.*, and later, his highly regarded revisionist fantasy, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. And so, when we called for peace, we were waging a fight against imperialist aggression. Since our country ostensibly wanted war, to demand peace was a victory for the forces of socialism.

On Sunday morning, when the camp gathered at our amphitheater for our regular Sunday ecumenical gathering—the substitute for religious services at regular camps—we had a special service to honor the new peace. Norman Studer, the camp's director, spoke of the hope it gave those of us who were on the right side in our own country (i.e., the Left side) and we all sang those favorite peace songs—"Study War No More," "Strangest Dream," and of course, "Put My Name Down," a song that called upon people to sign the Soviet propaganda document, the so-called Stockholm Peace Petition. Some of us wondered what our true Party comrades at Wo-Chi-Ca were doing. After all, we had wanted North Korea to win and unify the country for socialism—and I recall debating whether in fact the peace treaty had been an actual defeat for the forces of revolution. At Wo-Chi-Ca and Kinderland, we thought, they would have had a better and more honest perspective, and would not have left the official statements to a bland celebration of the attainment of peace.

About 15 or so years ago, a memorial meeting was held for Norman Studer at the auditorium of the left-wing New York union, Local 1199, the old Hospital Worker's Union. Founded by the late Leon Davis, who built the union up from a small body representing drug-gists to a militant group that organized the nursing staff of New York hospitals, the union had a long relationship with Camp Woodland. Throughout the years, Davis sponsored scholarships for the camp to send children of his members away for the summer, thereby creating a base of support for the camp as well as a body of campers that could always be counted on to fill the spots. The union's executive director, Moe Foner, spoke about the program at the event. And Pete Seeger appeared, leading several of the camp's singers and guitar and banjo players in a retrospective of the camp's songs. Former counselors and campers got up to speak, to tell stories of what the camp meant to them, and what it represented. It was a litany of the expected refrain: the camp taught real democracy; it promoted fellowship of all people, men and women, black and white, Asian and Hispanic. The camp promoted international peace, welcomed the chil-

dren of the ostracized and the blacklisted, including the children of Morton and Helen Sobell, and the two sons of the Rosenbergs, Michael and Robert Meeropol. (In a strange twist of fate—given my own eventual involvement with the Rosenberg case—when the sons first went to the camp, my parents gave their adopted parents, the Meeropols, my old footlocker to use for their clothes when they went off for the summer.) And there were the children of some of the Smith Act victims, as well as those whose parents sought to disappear as the Party instructed its key cadre to go underground, in order to avoid being picked up in the period when it taught that fascism was on the horizon. I remember one of my campmates telling me of the various complicated arrangements he had to undertake to even see his father—including waiting at selected subway stops in New York, where his father would

years. The Popular Front may have disappeared politically with the demise of Earl Browder, but the culture it created lived on. Indeed, it even was co-opted and put to modern patriotic use by Ronald Reagan. During the 1976 Centennial celebrations, viewers of the Presidential gala at the Statue of Liberty were treated to Frank Sinatra singing the old PopFront standard he recorded during the FDR years, Earl Robinson's "The House I Live In." A song that Robinson wrote to celebrate the unity in diversity of the common man—the very theme of the Popular Front—had become a song that symbolized the new pride in America that scores of working-class former Democrats—the new Reagan Democrats—now found in the conservative Republican President. At a time when Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" is played at the annual Miss America Pageant, the songs and anthems of the Camp Woodland days have moved way past their origin. But to the aging alumni of Camp Woodland, it is still 1948—Henry Wallace is trying to wage the fight for peace by running for President on his pro-Communist third-party ticket—and Camp Woodland is a serene resting place for the children of those who thought they were engaging in the last ditch struggle to prevent World War III, and who, in so doing, would make the future safe for socialism.

A few years back my old college roommate and friend, the writer and director Marshall Brickman, appeared on a network television show and was queried about a line he wrote for *Annie Hall*, the film he co-authored with Woody Allen. As I recall the movie, one of the female characters had said that like so many others, she attended "socialist summer camp in New York." What, the interviewer asked Brickman, was a socialist summer camp? He responded in his usual sharp comic manner that it was a camp at which the kids competed by giving the most points to those whose fathers actually had served time under the Smith Act (the law used to convict American Communist leaders for conspiring to "teach and advocate the overthrow of the U.S. Government by force and violence").

That description, in a nutshell, served well as a coda for Woodland. And because of this, I decided not to attend the event at New Paltz. Having moved on in my view of the world and long since left the world of the Old Left, I knew that attending would have made me party to a nostalgia trip of memories by those who were still mourning that world's demise. Those who were in prison for violation of the Smith Act, despite their suffering, were hardly great American heroes. The memorial meeting at 1199 for Norman Studer had taken place soon after my first article on the Rosenberg case was published in 1979, and even though at that time I still thought of myself as a man of the Left, the icy reception I was given by some former campmates was more than unnerving. Now, so many years later, I decided I did not need to attend the gala reunion to remember what Camp Woodland achieved. I have my own memories and my own take on the camp. Knowing in advance that it is undoubtedly not in sync with those of the still-loyal children of the Old Left, I let the occasion pass on into the past where it belongs.

Ronald Radosh is co-author, with Joyce Milton, of *The Rosenberg File*, recently reissued in a new edition.



### CAMP WOODLAND DANCERS

come off a subway car and visit him for a few minutes.

As I look through the roster of names on the camp's reunion alumni list, it reads like a Who's Who of the Old and New Left. The camp may not have been overtly political, in the sense that it sought to implement the politics and views of the official Communist movement. But its directors and staff saw the camp as part of what they believed was the "broad progressive community," of which Communists were a central part. The emphasis on folk music alone as an integral part of the camp's program dovetailed with the Party's discovery of folk music as a key part of the Popular Front. As they contrasted the authenticity of the music with the supposed crass nature of commercial culture, adoption of folk music was seen as a way of reaching the real masses, who supposedly would translate their rejection of America's official culture into that of adopting the political program of the Marxist party. For those who were not so political, it was simply an unspoken understanding that the Soviet bloc countries were on the right side of history, and that somehow or other, Camp Woodland was in its own way part of that same worldwide struggle for the better socialist future.

As we grew and made our way in the world, the alumni of Camp Woodland, by and large, never left the milieu in which we spent our formative late childhood and early teen



*The Postmodern Bible*  
The Bible and Culture Collective  
Yale University Press, 1995

REVIEWED BY THOMAS F. BERTONNEAU

The collectively authored *Postmodern Bible* prompts the partly familiar question, how many cutting-edge theoreticians does it take to screw in a light-bulb—or rather—to screw up Scripture? The answer, in this case, is ten—less, if I am not mistaken, than that required for synagogue worship but quite sufficient for Jesus’ prescription that “wherever two or more are gathered in my name . . .”

Immediately, however, this densely written tome from Yale University Press must disappoint because it is not what one hopes it will be, if only for the sake of amusement; it is not, I mean, a rewritten, PC version of the Bible, with God desexed or unsexed (or oversexed), the strident voice of feminism infused throughout, and the agony of sensitivity settled imperiously over the whole. (Exodus 20 sanitized, for example, into an anti-hegemonic and pleasantly unthreatening “Ten Suggestions.”) That might have piqued one’s interest or raised one’s hackles. Alas, what “The Bible and Culture Collective” have produced, linking themselves in a socialist shock-brigade of de-individuated authorship, is a mere pleonasm on dozens of grad-school-oriented anthologies offering summaries of Saussure, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Johnson, Kristeva, Irigaray, and all of the other usual, post-structuralist suspects—and at second or third hand. How well I remember Terence Hawkes’s *Post-Structuralist Criticism* and Jonathan Culler’s *Structuralist Poetics*. And how I wish I might have kept them from cluttering up my mind. But here they are again, cluttering up 398 pages of passively voiced tedium.

Yet *The Postmodern Bible* does echo its scriptural namesake in one respect, at least, for the beast with twenty hands that wrote it in effect repeatedly quotes Pilate as he washed his mere two: “What is truth?”

For postmodernism, of course, there is no truth, and for postmodern theologians there can be no revelation of anything meaningfully designatable as truth. The ten authors of *TPB* share with Derrida, Foucault, and all the other dark luminaries of contemporary epistemological nihilism, “a suspicion of the claim to mastery that characterizes traditional readings of texts.” And yet their own language is nothing if not ferociously apocalyptic, hegemonic (as they might say), and authoritarian: “By sweeping away secure notions of meaning,” they write, “by radically calling into question the apparently stable foundations of meaning on which traditional interpretation is situated, by raising doubts about the capacity to achieve ultimate clarity about the meaning of a text, postmodern readings lay bare the contingent and constructed character of meaning itself.” Sweeping away, radically calling into question, laying bare, and the implied destruction of certainty that they entail—this is the perfected “language of dominance” that *TPB* disingenuously attributes to the traditional readings of the Testaments Old and New. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that “the politics of reading is . . . an obvious focus of our book,” and that the politics in question is decidedly left-wing. The paradox of today’s radical politics—never grasped by those who espouse it—is that it requires the deconstructive immolation of knowledge to further its aims and stokes the flames of that immolation expeditiously while at the same time insisting on the absolute status, the knowledge-character, of its own fiats and commandments. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

The seven chapters of *TPB* lay out the major strands of literary-critical postmodernism for application to academic Bible scholarship: (1) Reader-Response Criticism, (2) Structuralist and Narratological Criticism, (3) Poststructuralist Criticism, (4) Rhetorical Criticism, (5) Psychoanalytic Criticism, (6) Feminist and Womanist Criticism, and (7) Ideological Criticism. Each chapter rehearses, as I have already suggested, the standard MLA bibliography of the designated genre in endless pedantic detail. A glance at the list of “works cited,” given at the back of the book, shows that the majority of these are secondary sources dating from the fifteen years 1975-90, approximately, the fat time of the decon-

struction enthusiasm. Thus: Beavis (1987), Buttgieg (1987), and the omnipresent Norris (1982, 1983, 1985, etc.). One unintentionally wistful title, by Brooke-Rose, hints at the probable fate of *TPB* itself (and everything like it) as far as rational people are concerned: “Whatever Happened to Narratology?”

It must be said, however, that *TPB* is written primarily for the post-rational. As for reader-response criticism, the meaning of the text listeth as the reader bloweth, or in the language of today’s disengaged undergraduates, “Whatever . . .” The Bible and Culture Collective require many more words. They say (blowing hard) that “the reader and the text [being] interdependent, the text as a privileged object is displaced in favor of the reader’s experience,” whereupon the meaning of the text becomes “an experience which occurs during the reading process.” Weighting the readerly side of the reader-Bible interdependency frees the subject from “submission to the transcendent and transforming Word.” Whatever . . . In structuralist criticism, the critic reveals, à la mode de Derrida, the “binary opposition” that structures the traditional reading, which revelation, in turn, lays bare “how culture is constituted by the valuation of one term in the opposition over the other.” Narratologists show how the Gospels, for example, spin stories from such oppositions and valuations. Such work aids “in decentering the historical-critical paradigm” that has dominated Bible scholarship up until the present.

The collective authorship of *TPB* defines post-structuralist criticism (a.k.a. deconstruction) as the identification “of points of failure in a system . . . at which it is able to feign coherence only by excluding and forgetting that which it cannot assimilate.” Since the Bible has traditionally offered itself as the transparent Word of God, Derrida’s critique of “logocentrism,” the Western delusion that language deals in correspondential statements about a stable external reality, is useful in deflating Scriptural hybris. It should be noted, however, that “indeterminacy of meaning” is an extraordinarily dubious concept to apply, say, to that little line in Exodus 20 which admonishes the Hebrews (and through them the universal humanity), “thou shalt not murder.” When the meaning listeth as the reader bloweth, all manner of mischief becomes possible. Nay, likely. Quoth the servant Smerdyakov to Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoyevsky’s immortal classic, if God does not exist, then “everything is permitted.”

Little distinguishes what *TPB* calls rhetorical criticism from anything that has come before in the sequence of chapters (“decentering should not be an alien concept to rhetorical critics”); and what the collective authors meanwhile dub psychoanalytic criticism derives, not from Freud (where it is, in fact, rich in possible applications to an understanding of the Bible), but from Lacan, whose star rises these days as those of Derrida and Foucault set. “The Lacanian real is not to be confused with ‘reality,’” the authorship earnestly reminds us. (Let none of the ten of them worry.) Lacanian, Derridean, Foucauldian—for all its pretense of difference, postmodern discourse remains blandly homogeneous, so much so that a random redistribution of paragraphs would probably make no impact on the readability of either *TPB* itself or any of the already incestuous “sources” from which it copiously quotes.

In the chapter on feminist and womanist criticism, one finds this choice morsel: “That one can identify several viable womanist and feminist readings of the same text is not symptomatic of a problem requiring a solution (i.e., women can’t make up their minds), but rather enacts what this entire volume seeks to explore and enable: a foundational shift in biblical criticism away from a hermeneutical project whose goal is to find the correct key to unlock the unitary truth of the text and toward projects focused on multiplicities of meanings, interpretations examining layers of ideology and shifting meanings—in short, toward cultural critique.” (Draw breath here.) Perhaps it really is useful to know what “womanist criticism” is and how it differs from Brand X feminist criticism. “A womanist reading” of the Bible, *TPB* informs us, “emerges out of African American women’s encounters with the text and is shaped by a consciousness deriving from the particular struggles many African American women have faced, including struggles with (and sometimes against) forms of feminism that have elided or suppressed the differences that exist among women of various classes, races, ethnicities, and circumstances.” (Draw breath here again.) In Hosea 2, for example, the husband’s obligation to reform the wife whom he redeems from whore-

dom is traditionally read as an analogy of God’s desire to salvage the people whom he rescues from the promiscuity of polytheism and cult. A feminist reading would point out that this text presupposes women as subordinate to and morally in need of men. A womanist reading, as I understand it, would insist on the master-slave dialectic of the husband-wife parable, to show that it is not simply women who are subordinate to men, but whole classes of others who stand below the hegemonic few of Biblical patriarchy. Again, traditional interpretations of the Bible need to be overthrown because they justify and permit the disposition of the many by the few. “A thread running through . . . this volume is the assertion that reading and interpretive strategies are socially, politically, and institutionally situated and that they draw their energy and force from the subject positions of readers and interpreters.” (Draw breath here once more.)

They huff and they puff, these neo-Nietzschean hunters of the Bible’s hidden agendas, but I fear that it is a strong house—the Bible—and will not soon blow down. (That postmodernists might pass out from overblowing is another matter, but they already seem to be wandering about in a stupor.) Exodus 20—to refer again to it—is not, after all, a set of ten random formulations, which might as well be ten others, as unlike the given ten as possible. The Commandments are, rather, plausibly anthropological; they are predicated on an accessible, if not always consciously thematic, human nature which is liable to destructive impulses and requires, therefore, some clear guidelines for peaceful community. The problem of covetousness, remarked in the tenth of the ten, addresses the human tendency to grasp at objects and possessions simply because they currently belong to someone else. My three-year-old, for example, instantly becomes obsessively interested in whatever it is of his that he has been ignoring until I pick it up to put it away. Thievery is covetousness. So is putting the move on your neighbor’s wife. The danger implied by covetousness is in retaliation. If my neighbor finds me in his bed coveting his wife, he is likely to forget the seventh commandment and shotgun us both into sheol. My hot-blooded Creole relatives will no doubt seek revenge on their own and, before anyone knows it, the community is riven by a full-scale vendetta.

God admonishes the Hebrews not to worship idols (a) because the idols are false (i.e., not gods and not deserving of worship) and (b) because the manner of propitiating them entails human sacrifice, a practice forbidden since Abraham went up the mountain with Isaac and in violation of the seventh commandment. Such matters require interpretation only to the extent that we must pause, collect ourselves, and link them to what we can see about us daily in demonstration of human nature. Anyone who knows what the Nazis said of the Jews, and what they then did to them, knows what the ban against false witness is about. It takes a post-modernist not to see it.

One wonders, in concluding, how a collective postmodern authorship might respond to criticism. By deferral, no doubt, and I imagine a Dickensian scene in which Smith, called to account for this piece of absurdity or that of long-windedness, draws on his meerschaum and says “Oh, but Jones wrote that,” and Jones, sipping his port, says, “Tut, tut, Smith, I see Mortimer’s hand in it as clear as day,” whereupon Mortimer, in her turn, accuses Jones of hegemonism, theocentrism, sexism, insensitivity, and a lack of understanding of the historical marginalization of the womanist cause. Smith punches Jones in the nose in Mortimer’s defense. A general melee ensues and they all end up in hospital, as in the final scene of Stanley Kramer’s *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, silently preparing to charge each other with hate crimes.

If not in the real world, however, then in the academic world, postmodernism is not the farce that the rest of us so plainly see, but a triumph, with great throngs of graduate students still climbing up on the enormous wagon as it trundles by on the way to tenure. Who in his right mind would gainsay the proposition that will become . . . er . . . the Bible of first-year graduate students in theology and religious studies departments (Such it is intended to be.)? It will. It must. *Credo quia absurdum est!* But I believe I hear a cock crowing. Truly it’s a mad, mad, mad, mad world.

Thomas F. Bertonneau is author of *Defining Standards at Michigan’s Public Universities*.





# Supreme Court to Decide Whether Vote Goes to the Dogs

By Judith Schumann Weizner

The Supreme Court has announced that it will hear arguments to determine whether the State of New York must continue to allow George Chienne, an Akita, to register to vote.

The case has been working its way through the courts since 1997, when George was refused entry into the voting booth for a school board election in his Chemung County hometown of Hundesberg, despite the fact that his owner, Debbie Chienne, produced a valid voter registration card obtained for him by mail during a state wide voter registration drive.

Ms. Chienne insists that she never had any desire to make George a cause célèbre and underscores this claim by explaining that after the polling supervisor forbade George to enter the voting booth, she handled the situation quietly, obtaining absentee ballots for him in the next three elections, instead of filing suit.

Subsequently, however, George was forced to relinquish the franchise when his Christmas Eve rescue of three kittens from certain death under the wheels of a speeding train—while their distraught mother looked on, frozen with fear—made the front page of the *Hundesberg Citizen*. An alert Board of Elections clerk, reading the story to his children, made the connection between the George Chienne in the story and the George Chienne whose signature on an absentee ballot had struck him as unusual.

Upon revocation of George’s voter registration, Ms. Chienne reluctantly decided to press George’s cause in court, and hired Steve Badger, legal counsel for Humans for the Sensitive Treatment of Animals (HuSTA), to restore George’s civil rights. The suit, *Chienne v. Chemung County Board of Elections*, charged that George, who is the recorded voice on the “Fearsome Fido” Electronic Household Guardian, and a minor celebrity in Hundesberg for his TV voice-overs, was being taxed without representation.

As soon as the judge learned that the Chienne referred to in *Chienne v. Chemung County Board of Elections* was George, and not Debbie, he dismissed the case. Badger promptly appealed, basing his petition on *Badger v. Town of*

*Shadyside, N.Y.* (In this landmark case, the U.S. Supreme Court held the Town of Shadyside liable for Badger’s fee in an earlier case in which the town had failed in its attempt to order a Rottweiler euthanized. The Court ruled that since the town had brought charges against the Rottweiler itself and not against its owner, it must pay Badger’s fee, as the Rottweiler, which was not employed, could not do so.)



GEORGE CHIENNE

The Court of Appeals ordered a new trial. This trial, lasting seventeen weeks, ended when the jury found that although George did earn money on which taxes were paid, the money was actually Ms. Chienne’s, as George had no independent bank account and did not write checks. Based on this finding, Judge Kenneth Jerbelle ruled that since Ms. Chienne was the taxpayer and was registered to vote, the Chienne household already had all the representation it was entitled to. He ordered George’s name stricken from the rolls.

Badger returned to the Court of Appeals, arguing that the criteria set forth in the lower court’s ruling amounted to discrimination on the basis of his client’s ability to balance a checkbook and write with a pen. He argued that this could also be construed to apply to many mentally challenged people who, nonetheless, had won the right

to vote in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1998. (In a suit by the Commonwealth CommonSense Party, Massachusetts’ long-standing requirement that voters know the names of the candidates was challenged as being a cover for a minimum-IQ requirement. The stipulation was dropped when the court ruled that it was “grounded in a pseudo-scientific construct [IQ] that exists solely to limit the self-determination of groups regarded by some as marginal.”)

The Court of Appeals reversed Judge Jerbelle’s decision and directed the Board of Elections to permit George to register on condition that he demonstrate the ability to express his voting preferences independently of Ms. Chienne. Ms. Chienne readily agreed, noting that, given his strong opinions about people, George would have no trouble expressing his preferences once he had met the candidates, although she feels that his right to vote in presidential elections might be restricted if she were not able to drive him to meet the candidates.

Mr. Badger says he is looking forward to arguing George’s case before the Supreme Court. A graduate of National Law School, he has been chairman of the school’s Animal Rights Department since 1994 and has been in the forefront of the animal rights movement for the past 12 years.

Speaking on Sable News Network’s “Tomorrow’s News Today,”™ Badger told reporter Jeffrey Lyncks, “It is unfortunate that the Court’s decision concerning such an important matter will be based on the narrow question of taxation without representation, because, at best, a positive ruling will benefit only a small number of animals—those that have jobs. I would be happier if this case were going to settle the matter of the vote for all animals.”

He pointed out that although this appears to be uncharted territory in law, in fact it is not. “As late as the 15th century, there were trials in France in which animals were charged with crimes. They had state-paid attorneys and were convicted or acquitted like humans. It was a very advanced concept that somehow never caught on in Anglo-Saxon law. Anyway, the Constitution makes no distinctions according to species. This ought to be a no-brainer.”



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