Sonja Sivesind still seems excited as she describes the conference that took place at Berkeley last September. It was called “Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex,” and she and other organizers had expected it to be pretty much another Movement event, or what passes for a Movement event now that the Movement is dead. If they were lucky, five hundred or so people would attend, most of them the usual suspects. But when 3,500 activists descended on the campus for a weekend to discuss building a grass-roots “prison activist” movement, it not only taxed the facilities to their limits, it boosted Sivesind’s energy and made her think that maybe, just maybe, the Movement was back in business and that the anti-prison crusade was the wave of the future.

“It was an incredible conference! It was definitely packed. It took you ten minutes to get through the crowd,” she recalls. Participants jammed into the main hallway, which was lined with information tables, and eagerly gathered up as many pamphlets and fact-sheets as they could. The dozens of seminars in adjoining rooms were also SRO. During the conference’s plenary sessions, even the overflow rooms were filled, and the main auditorium was filled to a dangerous and unlawful capacity with activists, academics, feminists and radical ex-prisoners, and, of course, Angela Davis, the matriarch of this mini-movement.

Davis was acquitted in 1972, but fighting against the American prison system has been one of her enduring causes. She was in top form at the conference. For a moment, in fact, it seemed as if it was 1968 instead of 1998, as if a time warp had taken participants back to a day when radicals were taken seriously and had the means to back up their words. And unlike most radical events, this one was based on an undeniable reality. With the American prison population rapidly approaching two million, the nation’s prison system has become a general concern, one of those subjects discussed at many anti-war and human rights meetings: that Harry Truman was a racist, that the Vietnam war was about tungsten and rubber, that Stalin was . . . well, misunderstood. Professors, many of whom have not faced a serious challenge to their ideas since the heyday of the Movement, as a result of their dissertation defense, imbue captive audiences—youthsters whose families, sometimes with government assistance, are paying good money—with propaganda that ranges from silly to venomous, all out of sight of pesky parents, taxpayers, and ordinary citizens. On those occasions when conservatives or other contrarians are invited to speak (and actually make it to the podium without the invitation being rescinded), the code of academic silence on contentious issues concerning America’s past and present is golden.

This academic code of silence has long protected views that defy even rudimentary common sense and have remained largely unchanged by events of the past decade: that Harry Truman was a racist, that the Vietnam war was about tungsten and rubber, that Stalin was . . . well, misunderstood. Professors, many of whom have not faced a serious challenge to their ideas since their dissertation defense, imbue captive audiences—youthsters whose families, sometimes with government assistance, are paying good money—with propaganda that ranges from silly to venomous, all out of sight of pesky parents, taxpayers, and ordinary citizens. On those occasions when conservatives or other contrarians are invited to speak (and actually make it to the podium without the invitation being rescinded), the code of academic silence on contentious issues concerning America’s past and present is golden.

College campuses, for all the noise of the occasional party, rally or protest, are actually very quiet places these days, especially in the classroom. And for good reason: the silence of the classroom—a consequence of the self-referential insularity of the modern university—is what sustains the gravity-defying views on politics and history held by the academic left, for whom silence on contentious issues concerning America’s past and present is golden.

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As an example of this robust and noisy new academic dialogue, consider H-DIPLO, which arrived Continues on page 8

Continued on page 11
BEST WITNESS

Thank you for your wonderful article about Elia Kazan and what that gifted and courageous man has endured all these years from the Communist filth in Hollywood. I would like to send him a personal salute for his strength of character in refusing to kneel under the vile intimidation of the Communists. I salute him in particular for his clear-eyed, clear-head-ed analysis of Communism (socialism) and his support for the basic laws for American freedoms. The best part is that he thumbed his nose at the Communists and continued to produce a body of work unequaled by anything the Hollywood Communists could come up with. Bully for him. Please give him my sincere regards and admiration.

Elizabeth Santos Urbana, IL

Yes, the left is waging a war against America, and the front line on March 21, 1999, was at the Academy Awards site at the Los Angeles Music Center. All the old Communists, anti-anti-Communists, brainless liberals, and assorted leftists were there to attack Elia Kazan, a man neither forgiven nor forgotten after fifty years for outing his entire league in the Communist Party of the ’30s. The demonstrators, flushed with classic leftist indignation, very nearly started a riot early in the day. There were also a few counter-demonstrators supporting Kazan, mostly organized by the Ayn Rand Institute. But where was everybody else? After a fine piece about Kazan in Heterodoxy, (“Best Witness,” February 1999) I didn’t see anybody from Heterodoxy at the demonstration. The leftists outnumbered the pro-Kazan demonstrators by 10 to 1 and got almost all the media attention. For anti-Communism, this was no way to run a war.

Kelley L. Ross
Via Internet

REFFIGHTING THE WAR

I now regret having put aside my December/January issue of Heterodoxy. Last night I read Susan Young’s piece on the anti-war movement and the State Department’s White Papers on Viet Nam. His facts as reported are correct, but the important U.S. policy decisions were neglected or obscured by his tedious and tendentious chronology. The important, signal events of the Viet Nam mis-adventure are: (1) 1945-6. The French government re-asserted its hegemony on Indo-China; Ho Chi Minh and the resistance (to Japan) fighters agreed to autonomous status for Viet Nam within the French commonwealth but rejected the French demand for control of the banking system (with some justice. The Vietnamese were aware that French control of the monetary system was the vehicle for colonial-style exploitation of the old Indo-China). The Vietnamese returned to military action. (2) 1954. The French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu. The Geneva Accords divided Viet Nam, temporarily, at the 18th parallel. Elections were to be held for a single, unifying government within two years. The U.S. installed Ngo Dinh Diem in Saigon as president of the southern portion of the country and, apparently, determined that the unification elections would not be held as scheduled. Economic and Military Assistance Programs were initiated. (3) 1959. Ambassador Eldredge Duff explained to the assembled American advisors and technicians: “Gentlemen, [there were no women in the group] we are here for one reason and one reason only, to hang on to a piece of real estate.” (That is an exact quote.) (4) 1961. President Kennedy sent two missions to Viet Nam. The Staley Commission recommended a large de-militarized and development program for South Viet Nam, ranked third in dollar value after Israel and Egypt. The Haig Commission recommended that the existing Military Advisory Mission be enlarged and become a Military Assistance and Advisory Group. (5) 1963. President Kennedy accepted and implemented the reports. (5) 1963. President Diem was assassinated during a military coup. The coup was apparently supported by the United States Mission. (6) 1964-67. Viet Cong resistance escalated; American military advisors were committed in combat. (7) 1975. The last American helicopter with the last official Americans fled from the rooftop of the American Embassy in Saigon, writing finis to the only war in which the United States was defeated. The United States in Viet Nam to implement the containment policy promulgated by John Foster Dulles and adopted by the Eisenhower Administration. In the name of containment, the United States organized NATO, CENTO, SEATO; in the name of containment of Communism the United States supported unavory dictatorships around the world: Trujillo in the Dominican Republic; Salazar in Portugal; Syngman Rhee in South Korea. The enemy in Viet Nam was not the Vietnamese; the enemy was Communism. The anti-war movement was based on incomplete but essentially correct information. Their protests were aimed at the failure to effectively “hang on to a piece of real estate” when the owners of that real estate are prepared to die to protect it. The misadventure in Viet Nam cost 58,000 American and tens of thousands of Vietnamese dead. For the United States, perhaps the largest cost was the loss of innocence of an entire generation. Our youth, our best and brightest, lost faith in the American political process and, perhaps more importantly, their notion of the American ideal.

Frank C. Child
Santa Cruz, CA

FIRST FEM PREZ

The piece by Noemie Emery was great. However, I’d like to add one observation. The basis (including Hillary’s) toleration of Bill Clinton (even as rapist) is grounded in the fact that he proves one of the central tenets of feminism—that women are intellectually superior to men. This is the foundation of the ideology of matriarchy. Bill Clinton is prima facie evidence for their case and they don’t want to destroy the evidence. Further, as far as the feminists are concerned, it doesn’t matter if there’s a few dozen female victims of Bill; they’re expendable for the greater cause. They are simply the price that must be paid to PROVE and MAINTAIN their fundamental gender-based doctrine. Bill has provided a wonderful “springboard” to feminists’ increased political power.

Dan Smedra
Colorado

HETERODOXY PRO AND CON

I’m just writing to say how wonderful Heterodoxy is. I got turned onto it by one of my clients, who’s rather apolitical, but he just happened to have a few copies around and he gave them to me, and I subscribed. Keep up the good work. I just e-mailed the article about Bill Clinton (“First Fem Pres Impeached,” February 1999) to one of my liberal friends in Boston. I am so tempted to send her more.

Christine Garcia
Via Internet

I experienced your magazine for the first time sitting in my ophthalmologist’s office yesterday. I was thrilled to find a new news-magazine! I quickly got to reading and there it was again, all the same acidic, put-down, negative attitudes I hear on talk radio. It is difficult for me to agree when your articles are full of hate. I found some nice to read and very informing, but most—sorry, your magazine is not for me. You must know that all “liberals” are not sex fiends, Communists, and going to hell and all conservatives are not cold fish, fascists and going to heaven.

Nellye Meintzma
Via Internet

What? No editorial space for us lefties?

“Heterodoxy” my ass!

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AS reported in the December issue of the New York Times, Vice President Al Gore was not even aware of the university's policies and procedures, which he believed were in place. However, Columbia still hasn't paid Accuracy in Academia one cent—and not only that, AIA's Executive Director, Dan Flynn, told the New York Post that he hasn't even heard from the university since the whole fracas. While Columbia is busy pushing Accuracy in Academia, it has also been busy covering its tracks on the home front. In a letter sent to concerned alumni, head University Fackhead Dr. J. C. Trench discussed the situation as "routine," although he hastened to assure alumni that "Columbia consistently allows the expression of all points of view, including unpopular ones."

GORED TO DEATH: As Vice President Al Gore slowly and surely prepares to meet his electoral demise, he's proposing a number of bold initiatives to improve the quality of life for Americans. "The person who deserves to be our next president is the one who understands how tired working parents are," Gore said. "We're seeing the daily commute get longer and longer. And for people who don't think that it's a problem that parents are caught in traffic jams that are lengthening every day, I'll tell you, they haven't been in traffic jams and they don't know what it does to the desire to balance work and family."

LUNA BEACH By Carl Moore

THE CRISIS IN KOSOVO COLD WINDS BLEW UP, EXPANDED, SPREAD. WE MUST STIFFEN OUR SPARRING, GIMMLING, MAKE THOSE STEEL OUR RESCUE.

May God bless America. Er. America. Oh man, who is he doing now?

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I
called the U.S. Department of Education last week. They aren’t good for much, but they do maintain a National Center for Education Statistics.

But last week, the Center gave me a statistic that was really surprising—by 2007, only 43% of all college students will be male.

Some of the reasons for this are quite obvious. First of all, women have the more bright and motivated males to bypass or drop out of college in order to go directly into the booming technology business; the shift from a manufacturing economy where male strength was an advantage to an information society which places a premium on women’s greater verbal and writing skills; and the greater need of women for education than men (at least when the economy is good, poorly educated men can find good jobs in construction or manufacturing, but uneducated women end up in low wage service and clerical slots.)

All of these reasons are probably right as far as they go. But there’s another, less justified, reason for the relative decline in male college attendance rates that the media haven’t caught on to yet—it’s what National Association of Scholars board member Glenn Ricketts calls “the feminization of education.” In other words, schools have become a hostile environment for boys, a place where male values are trounced and female values honored. Boys are condemned by their own existence, says Ricketts. “Manhood is depreciated. Male qualities are depre- ciated.” Amidst all the feminist-generated hand-wringing about the need to revive the nation’s Ophelias, it is boys who are truly at risk. According to a 1998 analysis by University of Alaska psychologist Judith Kinfeld (“The Myth That Schools Shortchange Girls”), boys get disciplined more often, held back more frequently and assigned to special education classes three times as often as girls. Polls of students themselves have shown that boys and girls agree (by wide margins), that schools are biased against boys: 69% of boys and 91% of girls thought that teachers considered girls smarter; 81% of boys and 89% of girls thought teachers complimented girls more often; 90% of boys and 92% of girls thought that teachers punished boys more often and 73% of boys and 80% of girls thought that teachers liked girls better than boys. One result of all this: across the board, boys take fewer advanced placement tests, get lower grades, fewer honors, and dislike school more.

Teachers’ preference for girls is nothing new, of course. Because nearly three-quarters of public school teachers are female, their classrooms reflect female notions of what education should consist. Almost every textbook and every teaching technique is geared to female rhythms and female perspectives. On college campuses today, in contrast, say Alan Kors and Harvey Silverglate in The Shadow University, “men hear their sex abused, find themselves blamed for all the evils of the world and enter classrooms whose very goal is to make them feel discomfort, while their tormentors live with special protections from ‘a hostile envi-

Radical feminism has triumphed so completely at most universities that women studies’ professors routinely inform their students that males suffer from “testosterone poisoning.” Although new instructors can’t be hired unless they demonstrate a “commitment to (racial and gender) diversity,” real political diversity (a toler-

in theory, universities are one place where all ideas were welcome. But when most young men get to college, they find it not so much a market-place of ideas as an intellectual garrison state where they have to walk on eggs refrain from speaking out and otherwise keep their views under a basket for fear some over-politicized female student or professor will claim she was harassed by an “outrageous and insensitive” (i.e. politically incorrect) sentiment. One might won-
der, why it is, when over 60% of college professors and a majority of administrators are still male, that these men don’t stand up for their gender? Although Christina Hoff Sommers (Who Stole Feminism?) was never called a “fainthearted” ever to stand up to radical feminists, the problem goes beyond mere fear. The kind of men who can’t stand up for themselves face a dilemma. Women are more likely than men to bring a sex discrimination suit and to instruct teachers in “gender sensitive teaching techniques.” No longer would girls be the victims of unrequited love, the victims of sexual harassment in the educational establishment, continual abuse or anything else which served to discourage girls from pursuing professional and managerial careers.

With the backing of AAUW (at the time

press. In the meantime, increasing numbers of schools require freshmen to take courses in oppression studies (i.e. how white males oppress minorities, women and everyone else). Many schools (including some of the most elite institutions in the country) feature speech codes which ban any speech which might offend anyone on sexual, racial, and political grounds. At some schools, administrators have fired out of hand any one merely accused of sexual harassment, reason-

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It Isn’t Girls Who Are At Risk

Reviving Hamlet

by Paul Gotti

PAGE 4 MARCH 1999

From the New York Times
naively regarded as a non-ideological, mainstream organization), the bill sailed through Congress without opposition. Not a single congressman (and only one senator) voted so much as a single question about the bill, let alone a hostile one.

Overlooked was the fact that in every important particular the report was, in the words of Brookings Institution senior fellow Diane Ravitch, “just completely wrong. What was so bizarre is that it came out right at the time that girls had just overtaken boys in almost every area . . . It was like calling a wedding a funeral.” It was “phony.” It was “harmful” and despite its demonstrable falsehoods, “it dominated the news for years.”

The basis for the AAUW contention that schools shortchange girls was a study by educational researchers David and Myra Sadker. After many hours of classroom observation and study, the Sadkers had, they claimed, discovered that boys “call out” answers to teachers’ questions eight times more often than girls do. When boys called out answers, the Sadkers reported, the teachers listened respectfully. But when girls called out, they were told to “raise your hand if you want to speak.”

Although such conclusions seem suspicious on their face (why would classroom teachers, most of whom are female and fully aware of feminist issues, exhibit such overwhelming bias against girls?), they were uncritically accepted everywhere. Later, when some academics began to wonder if the studies could really be true, they couldn’t find them. The Sadker report had been the very foundation for the AAUW study, which in turn had been the basis for a major revolution in academic life—yet all that apparently remained of it was the executive summary. The data on which the conclusions were based had vanished. Sommers checked every data base she could find, and contacted research librarians at Harvard and the Library of Congress. No one had the study.

“It is (normally) hard for a study to disappear,” says Kleinfeld. “Ordinarily, many copies are made and circulated. I telephoned David Sadker to ask him directly about the serious charge that his famous study had disappeared. He could not send me a copy of the report.”

Eventually Sommers did find one of the Sadkers’ reports on microfilm in Harvard’s education library. But far from establishing the Sadkers’ claim that teachers were biased against girls, Sommers found that, if anything, it showed that schools were biased against boys.

According to the Sadkers’ own research, “when teachers are faced with disruptive behavior from both boys and girls, they are over three times as likely to reprimand the boys than the girls. Also, boys are more likely to get reprimanded in a harsh and public manner and to receive [heavier] penalties.”

Despite the fact that Sadkers’ own evidence contradicted the notion that girls were shortchanged, the AAUW seized on the Sadker study to lobby for new legislation. “Where 9-year old girls were once confident that they could conquer the world, girls at age 11 suddenly began doubting their worth,” Congresswoman Pat Schroeder told Congress. “They no longer like themselves and they begin to question their own abilities.”

In short order, the notion that girls lack self-esteem soon became one of those facts that everyone knows. In fact, says Kleinfeld, when she first started her research on The Myth That Schools Shortchange Girls she innocently assumed, like everyone else, that girls really did suffer a “severe drop in self-esteem at adolescence.” What she discovered upon actually reading the literature, she says, is that there were “no large consistent gender differences in self-esteem” between the sexes. (The few percentage point differences that do exist are more likely a result of girls’ earlier maturity, which causes them to respond more realistically to questionnaires than boys.)

More importantly, if girls had any self-esteem problems compared to boys, the effects of such problems would certainly show up in girls’ academic performance. Instead, what the research overwhelmingly shows, in the words of New York Times writer Tamar Lewin, is that “girls rule in school.” Not only do girls have advantages over boys in terms of their future plans, their teachers’ expectations, their everyday experiences at school and interactions in the classroom, they also consistently get higher grades than males. Furthermore, they get them in every subject from art to social science to math and computer science. Girls aren’t shortchanged by school, Kleinfeld says. If anything, “schools encourage and favor girls.”

What can be done?

In the face of growing feminist hegemony and shrinking male involvement, some conservatives take the position that males should stand together, fight back and recapture the educational system from feminist ideologues and the fellow-traveling, politically correct male professors who support them. But there is another point of view that says this may be one war that’s neither winnable in the universities and perhaps not even necessary to fight.

When institutions lose sight of their real goal, technology has a way of passing them by entirely. For instance, when the Post Office took the position that it was more important to provide jobs to inner city residents than deliver the mail, American businesses (at least for their important communications) largely abandoned the Post Office in favor of faxes, e-mail and express delivery services. When public schools tossed out academic and disciplinary standards to accommodate the supposed self-esteem needs of minorities, the middle class abandoned the public schools. Unless universities suddenly and unexpectedly change their focus, many young males will soon discover that the supposedly critical importance of a university education to their careers has been greatly exaggerated. They’d rather get their educations somewhere—through corporate training, proprietary schools, night classes, graduate schools, professional programs, the few remaining premier scientific institutions like Cal Tech and MIT, or the rapidly expanding educational opportunities available on the Internet.

In the process, university “fuzzy studies” departments like English, psychology, sociology, political science and history will become intellectual backwaters devoid of free speech and intellectual honesty, inhabited only by feminist faculty ideologues and their neutered male supporters. But they won’t be a place where you’ll find any self-respecting men (or, for that matter, self-respecting women either). Paul Ciotti wrote Kafka in Utah in the November 1998 issue of Heterodoxy.
The Communist Manifesto is probably the only Marxist text that has inspired the actions of millions of people throughout the world. It was written in 1848 and has been translated into over 300 languages. The book was written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

The Communist Manifesto is a political and philosophical treatise that outlines the key principles of communism. It is divided into two parts: the first part is an introduction to the theory of communism, while the second part is a critique of the capitalist system.

The first part of the Communist Manifesto begins with a brief history of the development of human society. It argues that history is driven by class struggle, and that the ultimate goal of communism is to establish a classless society in which everyone is equal.

The second part of the Communist Manifesto is a critique of the capitalist system. It argues that capitalism is an economic system that is based on the exploitation of workers by capitalists. The book calls for the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a communist society.

The Communist Manifesto is considered one of the key texts of modern political thought and has had a significant impact on the development of communism as a political ideology.
achievement, or simply lack the supportive envi-
ronment that a middle class home provides. Exces-
sive drop-out rates among affirmative action stu-
dents are the statistical indicators that these
handicaps are real. No rigging of standards can
make up for deficiencies like this.

In the face of such realities, what can lev-
eling-the-playing-field mean? Making up for the
mistakes of the biological parents? Forcing them
to get married? Compelling them to be respon-
sible to their children? Requiring them to teach
their offspring to study hard and not be self-abu-
sive? Should the state become a Big Brother for
those who fall behind, taking over their lives and
curtailing their freedoms?

The level playing field that would pro-
duce an equality of results is, in fact, a socialist
tutopia and thus a totalitarian state. To achieve it
would require a government both omniscient and
wise, a state that would massively intrude into
individual lives. Such a state would mandate com-
prehensive transfers of opportunity and wealth,
and would have to conduct a relentless crusade
against defenders of liberty and the rule of law.
The call to level the playing field, pushed to its
logical conclusion, is a call for the systematic sub-
version of American individualism and democra-
Cy. It is the kitch Marxism of our time.

In the aftermath of the Communist col-
lapse, the totalitarian danger is so remote that the
normal tendency would be to discount it. But to
do so would be to ignore the immediate threat inher-
ent in the assault. It is very possible to
destroy the foundations of social trust without
establishing a social alternative, and it is the
nihilistic ambitions of the radical assault that now
present the most serious social threat. Underlying
the idea of racial preferences, for example, is a
corrosive premise that the white majority is fun-
damentally racist and cannot be fair. For those
who embrace the idea, the institutions, traditions
and rules that white majorities have established
merit no respect. The premise of affirmative
action preferences is an assault on the very system
of economic and legal neutrality that underpins
our pluralistic democracy. Denigrating the rule
of law as merely a mask for injustice and oppres-
sion, the left destroys faith in the very system that
makes democracy possible.

In supporting racial preferences, the left
appeals directly to the state to abandon its "color-
blindness" and compel the white majority to open
doors that would otherwise remain closed. It
claims that minorities are "excluded" and "locked
out" because state, economic, and cultural differ-
cences between minority representation in certain jobs, or among
teachers, are the statistical indicators of
minority representation in certain jobs, or at cer-

tain educational institutions, and their representa-
tion in the population at large. But discrimination
between minorities is already outlawed, and there
are no identifiable racists to blame for the alleged
"exclusion" of some minorities, or some elements of
minority communities from jobs or university
admissions. The left's insinuation is that those
minority elements who have fallen behind are
locked out by invisible powers. "Institutional
racism" is responsible.

But "institutional racism" is a radical
myth. It is merely the discredited Marxist idea
that an alien power, the state, is compelling the
members of democratic societies into rulers and ruled, the
dominant race and the races that are oppressed.
Not necessarily so, for example, that the admissions
officers of America's elite colleges are
racists. In fact, admissions officers are usually des-
pired to locate as many eligible minority appli-
cants as they can, while offering large financial
rewards to those they find. The University of
California—one of the few institutions that has
been compelled to publish its racial prefer-
ences—is still spending $160 million, annually, on
outreach programs designed to increase its minor-
ity enrollments. Since this is the case, it is hard not
to conclude that the claim of minority exclu-
sions is the result of individual failures to meet
universal standards.

Is America a country ruled by racial pow-
ers, as leftist claim? Are African Americans
oppressed? If so, what would explain the desire of
so many black Haitians to come to American shores? Why were so many Haitians reac-
ly a few years ago before their immigration
was blocked, to risk life and limb to
make the illegal passage across shark-infested waters? Was it their
tendency to be oppressed? Were they
longing to be dominated by a master race? In fact, it is obvious why the
Haitians wanted to come. It is not because those who do have more
rights, more opportunity, more cultural privilege and more social
power in America than they had in their native Haiti, which has been
independent and run by black gov-
ernments for more than two hun-
dred years. Indeed, as a result of
America's pluralistic democracy,
Haitian-Americans are freer and more privileged in America than
they would be in any black-run
country in the world. The simple
truth that the rhetoric of bad faith is
designed to obscure is that blacks
are not oppressed in America, nor
is anyone else. Yet kitch Marxism
prompts powerful voices in our cul-
ture to talk as though they were.

The very presumption of the civil rights
left that racial preferences are necessary because
America is ruled by a racial majority is both logi-
cally contradictory and empirically false. In its
hour of victory in the 1960s, the civil rights move-
tment was supported by a vast majority of the American people, including federal law enforce-
ment and the American military, and by ninety-
percent pluralities in both congressional parties.
Since those victories, public opinion surveys have
shown a dramatic increase in the goodwill of whites generally towards the African-American
minority, and an equally precipitous decline in
attitudes that could reasonably be called bigoted.
Large increases in the number of black officials
elected by white constituencies.
The political history of the United
States . . . is in large measure a history of
almost unthinkable brutality toward slaves, genocidal hatred of Native
Americans, racist devaluation of non-
whites and nonwhite cultures, sexist
devaluation of women, and a less than
admireable attitude of submissiveness to
the authority of unworthy leaders in all
spheres of government and public life.
(Robin West, Progressive Constitution-
alis.
)

Of course the political history of the
United States is exactly the reverse. It is in large
measure the history of a nation that led the world in
eliminating slavery, in accommodating peoples it
had previously defeated, in creating nonwhites to
a position of dignity and respect, in promoting
opportunities and rights to women, and in fostering
a healthy skepticism towards unworthy leaders and
towards the dangers inherent in government itself
seduced into promoting Groups that
are the very affirmative action policies that are
allegedly necessary to force them to be fair.

Ironically, the move to subvert the state's
neutralitarianism—and with it the principle of "color-
blindness" that lies at the heart of the rule of
law—in the long run works against minorities and
particularly African Americans who have been
seduced into promoting Groups that
are the very affirmative action policies that are
allegedly necessary to force them to be fair.

The political history of the United
States...
Anti-Prison Movement. Continued from page 1

At the Berkeley conference, they talked about making their arguments in a way that would play up America's record as an incarcerating society—to make incarceration rates in America more easily comparable to those in the rest of the world. "The great increase in incarceration rates in America is more money to build prisons than to build schools; as much spent to keep the average prisoner as to educate a student at Harvard," said Velazquez, who leads the activist resource center. "But for all the popular fronting, the radicals' clear goal is not merely to reform the prison system, but to abolish it."

For most Americans, a "political prisoner" is a foreign concept. It conjures up an image of a French political prisoner such as Dreyfus, a victim of anti-Semitism. But Velazquez and her co-workers think of the word "prisoner" as meaning more than just a person locked in a jail cell. "A political prisoner is a person who is imprisoned for acts of conscience, a person who is fighting for their freedom, even if it means going to prison for a short period of time, as part of a larger campaign."

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is perhaps the best-known political prisoner. He is currently serving a life sentence in a Philadelphia prison for murder and attempted murder. Velazquez is a member of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners/Prisoners of War and a self-described independentist, committed to securing independence for Puerto Rico. "by any means necessary." While she is a political prisoner, she is not a victim of a political crime. The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a political crime because he is fighting for his freedom. "This is an irredeemably racist society. And by fighting against this system, he is creating an alternative society."

But for all the popular fronting, the radical's clear goal is not merely to reform the prison system, but to abolish it. The prison activists' goal, by Velazquez's view, is to encourage people to think radically, to think about alternatives, to think about abolishing prisons in terms of the roles that they play in society. "This is a system that is designed to hold black people—black men, black women—behind bars, sometimes for the rest of their lives."

While it is unlikely that America would ever embrace the kind of policies that Velazquez advocates, there are signs that the issue of prison reform is gathering increased attention. The UN has called for an end to the use of prison as a means of punishment. And the New York Times has run articles about the problems with the prison system. "The prison system is a true justice system only for those who are rich and powerful. It is a system that is designed to hold black people—black men, black women—behind bars, sometimes for the rest of their lives." The New York Times has run articles about the problems with the prison system. "The prison system is a true justice system only for those who are rich and powerful. It is a system that is designed to hold black people—black men, black women—behind bars, sometimes for the rest of their lives."

People like Velazquez and Guerra are the foot soldiers of the anti-prison movement. Angela Davis and a handful of others with a wider reputation are the field marshals with access to the media and to a wide Movement audience. Davis declared to be interviewed for this article, but her leadership on this issue has been clear from the onset. She was not only a key organizer of the Critical Resistance conference at Berkeley, she has also spoken around the country decrying the prison system for some time. "The prison system is a true justice system only for those who are rich and powerful. It is a system that is designed to hold black people—black men, black women—behind bars, sometimes for the rest of their lives."
Government at Claremont McKenna College and the former Acting Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics in Washington, D.C., a non-partisan government agency that is affiliated with the Department of Justice, finds that the arguments to be without merit. On a national level, he points out, all government spending (federal, state, and local) on jails and prisons accounts for 1.1% of all expenditures. “Even at the state level, we’re talking about 5 to 8 percent of the budget being spent on corrections, he argues. “So the notion that prisons are bankrupting us is just ludicrous.”

The activists’ comparisons between correctional spending and unemployment also suspect. The increase in California’s corrections budget seems noteworthy until one notes that the state will spend $25.7 billion on K-12 education this year, while spending $4.6 billion on prisons. Spending $4.6 billion on prisons in Fiscal Year 1999 seems like a lot of money until a simple budget check shows that California is spending $33.4 billion on education ($7.7 billion for colleges) and $16.4 billion on entitlement programs.

Unlike Rosenblatt and the prison liberalizationists, Besette thinks the diminution of crime rate and the increase in the prison population are linked: “I would say that there’s no question that in multi-years there is a strong correlation between the prison population and the decrease in the crime rate.” He notes the crime rate has been dropping for the last 20 years, except during the “crack epidemic” of the late 1980s.

“Although correlations do not prove causality, they are very strong evidence. Reasonable people could conclude that the correlation (is similar) to the correlation between cigarette smoking and health problems,” he says. In fact, Besette notes, a RAND Corporation report studying the three strikes law in California showed that “three strikes were fully implemented, serious and violent crime would be reduced 28%.” The study also found that “no matter how you increase punishment, you decrease crime.”

One feature of the anti-prison movement which the mainstream press ignores and the movement’s general social critique, is the fact that the anti-prison activists’ humanitarian concerns stop with their pity for prisoners. They absolutely ignore the victims of violent crime, he says. “The victims of violent crime, the people who are hurt or killed by violent criminals, are hurt by people who are incarcerated. At a time when we are talking about crime and the need to get tough on crime, they want to get tougher on the people who are hurting those who are hurt.”

Among stable, two-parent families, crime rates are low, regardless of race in single parent or broken homes, crime rates are notably higher, regardless of race. When one considers—as Fagan does—that there is a 25 percent illegitimacy rate and 69 percent among blacks, and research shows that the average rapist is the true victim of his crime. In some cases, violent crime is portrayed as an insurance act by prison abolitionists, even if it is not explicitly politically motivated. Penny Ryder, the Director of the Criminal Justice Program for the Michigan-area branch of the American Friends Service Committee, a pro-abolition group, isn’t sure that even violent criminals should be jailed. “Only the very, very dangerous should be put in (prison),” she claims.

Does that include murderers?

When it’s a situational murder, they don’t need prison, they need treatment,” Ryder claims. “Once people have murdered, they usually are very remorseful for what they did. Half of the time they weren’t even in control of what they did.”

Situational murder?

To give their critique the illusion of intellectual bulk, Davis and other prison activists use the term “prison-industrial complex” to describe a new alliance between private and public sectors, or oppressors, as they would say. The idea is to conjure up a structure similar to the imagined military-industrial complex thirty years ago. Just as the alliance between the military and industry supposedly propelled the economy during the Cold War, the increasing use of private imprisonment and the farming out of prison labor to private industry has resulted in an alliance between corporations and the prison system that has become a growth industry.

“Prison-industrial complex” is a clever term—it rolls together the seductive ideas of anti-capitalist and anti-military thought. It paints a picture of an out-of-control machine run by sadistic warders and greedy corporate executives. It allows the activists’ arguments to come from the Thirties, to wave the bloody shirt. “Think about the incursion of the corporate structure into the prison industry,” Angela Davis says. “The enrichment of lawyers, the enrichment of people in that language that shows she is not quite yet an existentialist.”

“Prison-industrial complex” implies a profit-making power that provides goods and services to prison, and many of the corporations are directly involved in the prison system. Other activists have the same ideas, and they too gain authenticity by having seen the prison system from the inside out. Safiya Bukhari, the National Coordinator of the Jericho ‘98 organization, an umbrella group working to free “political prisoners,” spent eight years in prison on charges of armed robbery and possession of a machine gun. During her time there, Bukhari processed inventories and performed computer-related tasks for New York State agencies—work she now says could easily be done by unincarcerated labor for far more money.

The only way (corporations) can get away with (paying less than minimal wages) is in the prison system,” she claims. “The corporations have become a cheap source of labor and they’ve taken advantage of it in every possible way, due to trade agreements such as GATT and NAFTA. The question to ask, she says, is “who’s making a profit?”

In reality, however, the prison corporations that are the arms of the state’s Corrections Department sell a limited variety of products that are heavily regulated by statutes preventing the misuse of prison labor to undercut wages or competition. Furthermore, they do not pay the majority—or even a great many—of the prisoners that are currently incarcerated.

New York offers one of the best examples of how prison labor works. Corcraft is New York State’s prison manufacturing division. Only employing 2,200 inmates statewide—less than 1% of this year’s incoming felon class—Corcraft’s workers “typically” work seven hours a day, five days a week. Their pay ranges from $0.16 to $0.45 per hour, with the possibility of production bonuses. In 1997, Corcraft made a profit of $1.5 billion for colleges) and $16.4 billion on entitlement programs.

In reality, however, the prison corporations that are the arms of the state’s Corrections Department sell a limited variety of products that are heavily regulated by statutes preventing the misuse of prison labor to undercut wages or competition. Furthermore, they do not pay the majority—or even a great many—of the prisoners that are currently incarcerated.

Other states have similar restrictions. California’s Prison Industry Authority forbids the sale of goods to private individuals or entities with in the United States. Illinois only allows private purchase of prison goods if a non-profit organization is the buyer. And even in cases where prison industry is allowed to work for the private sector in a partnership, revenues for the prisons are small. Arizona offers one of the best examples. In 1997, Arizona Correctional Industries, brought in just over $14 million in the 1998 fiscal year—and 97% of that work was done for other state agencies and local governments. Furthermore, they do not pay the majority—or even a great many—of the prisoners that are currently incarcerated.

There are some states which are more than willing to accommodate private corporations interested in doing business with the state. California, for example, insists that prisoners must pay their inmate workers prevailing or minimum wage, whichever is higher, in order to qualify for the state’s program. And in this effort that activists have nonetheless hoped their message to appeal to Middle America. Eli Rosenblatt of the Prison Activist
Resource Center argues that America needs more prisons only “if the goal is to lock everyone up, and if we have no intention [as] a society of enabling people to return to their communities as productive and healthy people.”

Safiya Bukhari asks an often-heard question from prison abolitionists: “If crime is at an all time low, why is prison construction at an all time high?”

In fact, even if no more prisoners were brought into the system today, prisons across the nation would still be horribly overcrowded. Illinois’ Stateville Correctional Center, for example, operates at an average 156% capacity. And throughout California, prisons hold, on average, double the prisoners they were designed to hold.

“Overcrowding is often the cause of all the problems,” including violence and unsanitary conditions, according to Kara Gotsch, spokesperson for the ACLU’s National Prison Project. Khaled Taqi-Eddin, an analyst with the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, admits “it’s very scary when you crowd [people] into prison like that. It’s going to do one of two things—it’s going to necessitate the release of prisoners early or force the hand of (the state) to build more prisons.”

Joseph Bessette has seen that situation first hand. While working in Illinois, he dealt with the results of the executive branch’s decision in the early 1970s not to build any more prisons. The result was a prison system that was very liberal in its policy for granting time off for good behavior and early release, and it was out of control. “They opened the back door earlier and earlier. Time served was spiking downward,” he recalls. The worst kind of murderers were only receiving 12 to 13 years in prison; rapists were doing three to four years.

In that troubled state, he says, “hundreds of thousands of people became victims of crime from much of the stress they are going through now. ‘The safety of the inmates? Since when has the prison industry been concerned with the safety of the inmates?’ Bukhari asks.

It is clear from even a few minutes conversation with them that reform is not, when all is said and done, what these activists are looking for. “We are not looking to have 2 million people locked up in clean, well-ventilated, spacious cages with decent food,” Eli Rosenblatt says. “We are seeking an end to imprisonment as it now exists.”

Goals like this—goals that recall the maximalist rhetoric of the Sixties, an era from which the anti-prison movement gains its inspiration—make the ultimate fate of the movement problematic. Yet there is no doubt that in the short term it has already had an impact in framing the debate. Prisons are suddenly a front burner issue, and the criminal justice system is on the defensive. What they were unable to do in the radical Sixties, Angela Davis and her allies seem better able to do in the conservative Nineties—convince the mainstream social thinkers and journalists that all prisoners are political prisoners, and that the prisoners’ bill of rights must include a get out of jail free card.

—Benjamin Kepple
H-NET and Beyond. Continued from page 1

H-NET: AN ACADEMIC FORUM THAT’S ACTUALLY A FORUM

By H-NET STAFF

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on the Internet in 1993. H-DIPOLO is a computer listserv—in essence, a big email list in which multiple people in different places can post freely without any moderation. H-DIPOLO is a resolutely non-partisan forum dedicated to scholarly discussion of any topic related to international diplomatic history. There are scores of other such lists, many of which are under the aegis of H-NET, a group of lists clustered around the social sciences and humanities. I became involved in Michigan State University. (If you have a particular intellectual interest, odds are there is a list out there devoted to it; try http://h-net.msu.edu/.)

The way it works is this: anyone, anyone—H-DIPOLO, happiness, makes no judgment about what’s posted, whether it is an affiliation, post anything from an opinion to a review, or even just a simple question. The marketplace of ideas and the methods of scholarship which once characterized the university then begin to operate, as other members of the list respond, challenge, correct and otherwise deliberate on the issue at hand.

Sometimes the marketplace vanishes, and some of the more arcane postings are met with silence. (If only graduate students could dare to treat the mind-numbing journal articles assigned to them in the same way.) In some cases, matters of fact or requests for data are cleared up relatively quickly. In other battles is joined and debate can go on quite literally for months on end in a string of hundreds of messages from all over the world. H-DIPOLO has been a member of H-DIPOLO for two years, and in that time I have found myself in conversation, both friendly and pointed, with a host of colleagues, students, and working scholars across the intellectual spectrum.

Messages are not edited or reviewed for political content. The only gatekeepers are the editorial board, a group of scholars of various backgrounds who oversee the list with a very light hand, and who in turn designate a moderator to handle day-to-day tasks. This is not to say that anything sent to the list is automatically posted; the current moderator, Diane Labrosse (a doctoral candidate at York University in Canada) estimates that she turns down perhaps a third of the messages sent. As a given day for reasons ranging from ad hominem sniping to factual errors to redundancy (Messages asking for citations from easily obtainable sources, for example, are frowned upon. The list is for substantive discussion; basic research.) Roughly half of the messages returned are not actually rejected but rather are sent with a request for revisions, usually to tone down some of the testier exchanges. The point, as Labrosse puts it, is to reinforce the idea that H-DIPOLO is “a scholarly list rather than a chat group.”

What makes H-DIPOLO so fascinating, and important, is not necessarily the medium of the Internet; if H-DIPOLO were just another cautious academic journal reproduced in electronic form, it would hardly be worth comment. Rather, the fascination of H-DIPOLO to many of us in and around the academy is that its format has directly breached the sanctity of the academic code of silence, and has challenged the complacency of scholars who until now have remained in splendid political and intellectual isolation. The open exchange of quick and dirty messages (submissions are usually posted within a day) serve to strip the participants of the traditional perquisites of academic protection, such as the glacial pace and casual demeanor of the peer-review system or the highly structured environment of the graduate seminar or undergraduate lecture hall.

Finding oneself for the first time in recent years in the public eye, the university, the reactions of academics have ranged from enthusiasm to bewilderment to outrage. (In theory, experimentations are often followed by critical responses of the political board to reject this unsubtle call to squall expressions of “righting anxieties,” it turned out I needn’t have worried, since the editors, to their credit, had no intention of vetting messages and thus satisfying this craving for academic silence. What was disheartening, however, was the dust-up over postmodernism itself (nor this happily critical of postmodernist approaches, and profound weeks of postings that had been open to triviality and the wrong kinds of polemics, loosely voiced opinions of no conceivable interest to but a few. Perhaps the Board and Editors should reconsider the purpose and parameters of the whole exercise?)

For the record, I did nothing serious in the bag, let silence reign. I have every confidence in their judgment (and admiration for their heroic efforts)

But ordinary people are not usually present in the classroom, and they cannot speak up when a professor tries to cook an inconvenient reality in a glaze of postmodernist jargon. Certainly, they are not permitted spectacles like the one reported by a young man who told H-DIPOLO that his instructor declared that “empiricism is dead,” a pronouncement that was followed by an announcement that the student was, in his own words, “more or less gang tackled by the professor and several of the other graduate students” for daring to suggest that reality might actually have meaning.

Whether this graduate student still has a future in academia or has gone on to better things is unclear. Perhaps the Board and Editors should reconsider the purpose and parameters of the whole exercise? For the record, I did nothing serious in the bag, let silence reign. I have every confidence in their judgment (and admiration for their heroic efforts)

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interruption, that their ears are not deceiving them and that their own professors really are spouting nonsense.

The Cold War: The Last Front Fights On

But H-DIPLO is about matters of substance as well as style, as ongoing electronic debates over the Cold War attest. The idea that America won this conflict is commonplace—except perhaps among political science departments—because it accords with commonsense: Capitalism thrives and Communism is dead, even in the few remaining “Communist” states. The American political system was more dynamic, more resilient, and more powerful than its Communist challenger, and in the end, a coalition of democracies triumphed over an evil empire held together by force. This is widely accepted among people who have not had the benefit of higher education but who knows an evil empire when they see one.

Indeed, could anyone actually believe that, say, Stalin had no designs on Europe or Asia, or that the Soviets were seeking only to defend themselves from an American bent on the rapacious capitalist looting of the USSR’s neighbors? Does anyone still believe that “we all lost the Cold War,” and that America came out of it as badly as the defunct Soviet Union? The answer, remarkably, is “yes,” and any reader of Bruce Cumings has been in the context of a larger discussion of the Korean War.) One historian at NYU condescendingly suggested that my conclusions chapter reflected anything but a tortured interpretation of this

...papers from Moscow might not mean what they meant, or that the words on the page tell us, Khrushchev exploded (in private) that “we started the war,” and that “everyone knows this.”

Khrushchev's rantings aside, this final word on the Korean War has been slow to get to the universities. When I suggested that the question of “who started the Korean War” had in one fell, archival swoop been reopened, settled, and then closed, the anxiety of people who had spent a lifetime pondering about the Cold War was palpable. (Cumings was not a participant in the discussion—rather, his work had come up in the context of a larger discussion of the Korean War.) One historian at NYU condescendingly suggested that my faith that such questions could be cleared up was “touching” but that “radically differing interpretations of the same evidence” would be subject to “the sort of positivist resolutions” I defended. In plain English, what this meant was that the words on the pages from Moscow might not mean what they say—or that NYU was conceding that these Soviets—and that a tortured interpretation of this evidence might yet salvage the effort to derail a final judgment on Korea as a simple case of Communism vs. Capitalism.

More scathing were some of the responses that came in when I and others suggested that Bruce Cumings had engaged in a political choice at the end of his opus not to assign blame for the war because he knew he would have to assign it to the Communists. Having read the book, this was to me, apparent, several of its authors agreed: as one professor at Berkeley put it on H-DIPLO, if the evidence had pointed to Harry Truman and Syngman Rhee starting the war, would anyone think Cumings would have argued the question shouldn’t have been asked?

But rather than deal directly with the polemic that Cumings had written in admirably bold and plain terms, at least two academics demanded that I tender an apology to Professor Cumings for even suggesting that his concluding chapter reflected anything but detached scholarship. My arguments were, in the words of a Rutgers historian, “an unacceptable accusation.” But for once, these excursions into relativism and revisionism appear side by side with dismissals and challenges that would not occur in most classrooms. A striking example of such a debate took place over the question of the Korean War. In 1990, Yale historian Bruce Cumings wrote a seminar study of the origins of the war in which he argued that the question of “who started the Korean War” was one that should not even be asked, suggesting that there was more than enough moral blame to go around and that the issue of who was really responsible for the events of June 1950 was one that everyone, especially Koreas, should let go.

For years, this interpretation suited many academics and no doubt the Cumings book was taught with the kind of grace and thoughtfulness “we all lost the Cold War.” The Cold War was palpable. (Cumings was not a participant in the discussion—rather, his work had come up in the context of a larger discussion of the Korean War.) One historian at NYU condescendingly suggested that my arguments were, in the words of a Rutgers historian, “an unacceptable accusation.” But for once, these excursions into relativism and revisionism appear side by side with dismissals and challenges that would not occur in most classrooms. A striking example of such a debate took place over the question of the Korean War. In 1990, Yale historian Bruce Cumings wrote a seminar study of the origins of the war in which he argued that the question of “who started the Korean War” was one that should not even be asked, suggesting that there was more than enough moral blame to go around and that the issue of who was really responsible for the events of June 1950 was one that everyone, especially Koreas, should let go.

I had no illusions about whether Bruce Cumings’ plea to drop the question of blame for the Korean War would still hold sway in too many classrooms for some time to come. But the cat’s out of the bag, and thanks to H-DIPLO (and the Cold War International History Project, a goldmine of historical documentation available at http://cwhipst.si.edu/default.htm), there are that many more students, working scholars, and interested amateurs who might find themselves agreeing with, of all people, Nikita Khrushchev—even if Khrushchev has become too politically incorrect a name to cite in the seminar room or lecture hall. Cuba Libre!

I’m a former staff member of both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and so I tend to be more inclined than most academics to find a certain amount of joy in politics as a contact sport. (Although to be fair, I should say the Senate is a sport one can’t ever really leave, direct, and hard-hitting debate about Cuba . . . with a former Cuban government official. For once, there was no embarrassed host, no apologetic leftist moderator, or any radical graduate students to shut down those who challenged the official Cuban view. Likewise, there were no barricades set up by anti-Castro émigrés to disrupt the proceedings or to silence the Cuban participant or his allies. No subject was off-limits, no intricate formalities (other than common courtesy) were observed, and no question was considered final. The Cuban, a Sr. Alzugaray formerly of the Cuban Foreign Service, acquired more than well enough, especially considering that he was treated with less deference than he would have received as a visitor to any American university.

I hadn’t known that Sr. Alzugaray was on the list—reading without posting, in the world of the Internet, is colloquially referred to as “lurking”—but he made his presence known, and his anger, clear in the midst of a discussion of the proposed International Criminal Court proceedings against Fidel Castro. Castro had been in Rome as an opponent of the treaty, I argued that any court that could conceivably have a Cuban or Chinese or Iranian “jurist” on it was not a court worthy of the name and did not have the moral standing to render judgment against U.S. policymakers. Nevertheless, with a former Cuban government official. For once, there was no embarrassed host, no apologetic leftist moderator, or any radical graduate students to shut down those who challenged the official Cuban view. Likewise, there were no barricades set up by anti-Castro émigrés to disrupt the proceedings or to silence the Cuban participant or his allies. No subject was off-limits, no intricate formalities (other than common courtesy) were observed, and no question was considered final. The Cuban, a Sr. Alzugaray formerly of the Cuban Foreign Service, acquired more than well enough, especially considering that he was treated with less deference than he would have received as a visitor to any American university.

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Internet played a crucial role in making sure that the official Cuban line (which in some universities is the official American line as well) about the socialist paradise to the south underwent a sustained and vigorous challenge, in a real debate conducted without time limits or meddlesome, well-meaning liberals trying to help facilitate some chimerical meeting of the minds. And anyone who wanted to watch—any student, any interested citizen, any fellow scholars—could sit in the electronic bleachers and draw their own conclusions without having to brave demonstrators, megaphones, or the chilly stares of their colleagues.

An Electronic Crack in the Wall

Some of the participants of the past few years on H-DIPLO seem to have dropped away, perhaps because of scholarly commitments elsewhere, or perhaps because of a lack of interest in the list’s current orientation toward Cold War history. (The constant flow of new archival materials and declassified documents has naturally pulled the list in this direction in the past year or so.) But some, I suspect, have simply left because they cannot endure the lack of deference and the breach of the peaceful silence which envelop them in the academy. Such people thrive on silence, and the Internet has become a rather noisy place.

But no matter: others have taken their place, and new faces from across the spectrum, from radical left to hard right, have taken up residence in the many discussions underway. Although the roster of participants changes occasionally, one thing is certain: H-DIPLO and similar sites on the Internet have brought down walls erected in the university over the past thirty years once and for all. Any student or young scholar who has access to a computer may now peek through the electronic cracks in the university wall, and see if the vision of the world he has been given in the classroom is even remotely congruent with what he sees beyond the campus boundaries.

In the end, the net effect of the expansion of the Internet as a vehicle for scholarly debate means that no professor can ever be sure that what he says from the lectern will go unchallenged. This kind of electronic glasnost in the academy, however small, is the beginning of the end of an intellectual Berlin Wall that has protected a great deal of academic foolishness for far too long. The peace and quiet of the rigid seminar room and the oppressive faculty lounge is being disrupted, surely and steadily, by a daily stream of electronic messages that might yet return some common sense and open debate to academic life.

Tom Nichols teaches at the Naval War College. The views expressed are those of the author and not of the Naval War College or any agency of the U.S. Government.
The following was sent to the entire faculty at Smith College, where Betty Friedan is an alumna, and Daniel Horowitz, the author of a new biography of Friedan, is a professor. The professor told his classes that the ad below was “McCarthyism.”

An Invitation to Professor Daniel Horowitz (No Relation) or Any Member of the Smith Faculty or Administration
To Debate Any One of the Following Subjects:

1. The Fibs of Smith Alumna Betty Friedan
2. Smith’s Political Hiring Practices That Result in a Liberal Arts Faculty Overwhelmingly on the Political Left
3. What Has Happened to Students Academic Freedom?

(As in the Right Not To Be Ideologically Indoctrinated in the Classroom)

—David Horowitz

Feminist Fibber
(Reprinted and revised from Salon Magazine)

W hat do political progressives feel the need so often to lie about who they are? The question is prompted by a recent biography of feminist leader Betty Friedan, which establishes beyond reasonable doubt that the woman who virtually created modern feminism is what may reasonably be called a political impostor. In her path-breaking book, The Feminine Mystique, Friedan presented herself as a typical suburban housewife not even conscious of the woman question before she began work on her manuscript. But now Smith professor Daniel Horowitz (no relation) has shown that nothing could be further from the truth. Under her maiden name, Betty Goldstein, the record shows that Friedan was a political activist and professional propagandist for the Communist left for nearly thirty years before the 1963 publication of The Feminine Mystique launched the modern feminist movement.

There are probably a lot of interesting ramifications of this revelation. As Horowitz’s biography makes clear, Friedan, from her college days and until her mid-thirties, was a Stalinist Marxist (or a fellow traveler thereof), the political intimate of leaders of America’s Cold War fifth column, and for a time even the lover of a young Communist physicist working on atomic bomb projects. In her crusade against what she called the “McCarthyism of our time,” Friedan was a political activist par excellence, someone who spent her life in ideological slavery, someone who might reasonably describe herself as a fellow-traveler of one of the last Stalinists and professional propagandists for the Communist left. Yes, she is an alumna, and Daniel Horowitz the author of a new biography of Friedan is a professor. The professor told his classes that the ad below was “McCarthyism.”

An Invitation to Professor Daniel Horowitz (No Relation)

This Ad Was Paid for by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and Electrical Workers union.

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One indication that Goldstein-Friedan has not liberated herself entirely from the Stalinist mentality that shaped her adult views is the fact that she still feels the need to lie about her identity and views. Although her new literary career in the 1960’s and 70’s was characterized by her ideological loyalties one might reasonably describe her as a fellow-traveler of one of the last Stalinists and professional propagandists for the Communist left. Friedan refused to cooperate with him once she realized he was going to tell the truth. After Horowitz published an initial article about Friedan’s youthful work as a labor journalist, Friedan publicly maligned him. Speaking to an American University audience, she remarked: “some historian recently wrote some attack on me in which he claimed that I was only pretentious to be a suburban housewife, that I was supposed to be an agent.”

This was both false and unkind, because Horowitz beaks over backwards throughout his book to sanitize the true dimensions of Friedan’s past. Thus he describes Steve Nelson as the legendary radical, veteran of the Spanish Civil War, and Bay Area party official. In fact, Nelson was an obscure radical but an important party apparatchik (later notorious for his espionage activities in the Berkeley Radiation Lab), who would be a legend only to other Communists and who was in Spain as a Party emissary to enforce the Stalinist line. Horowitz also beaks over backwards at length to defend Friedan’s lying, excusing it as a response to “McCarthyism.” Her attack on him was framed in terms of the ridiculous accusation that he was going to use innuendos to describe her past, based on the fact he was asking questions to establish the reality of what she believed. His response to this right bating is all-too-understanding. The word innuendos, he explains, was often used by people scared by McCarthyism.

The Communists led at the time was understandable. They had something to hide. But why is Betty Friedan lying to this day, long after she has anything to fear from McCarthy committees and other government investigators of internal subversion?

Surely no one seriously believes that people who reveal their Communist pasts in the Clinton era have anything to fear from the American government. The folk singer Pete Seeger, whose entire existence, is nonetheless a celebrated entertainer and was honored recently at the Kennedy Center with freedom Medal by the President himself. Angela Davis was once the Communist Party’s candidate for Vice-President and served the police states of the Soviet empire until their very last gasps. Her punishment for this career is to have been appointed Professor in the state-university of California, one of only seven faculty members state-wide to be so honored. She is a living campus legend, officially invited to speak on ceremonial occasions at exorbitant fees by college administrations all across the country, and memorialized with rooms and lounges named in her honor, despite the absence of any notable scholarly contributions and a corpus of work that is little more than ideological propaganda.

The idea that America relentlessly punishes those who betray her is laughable, as is the idea that leftists have anything to fear from their government if they tell the truth about what they did fifty years ago.

So why the continuing lies? The reason is obvious. The truth is embarrassing to them. Imagine what it would be like for Betty Friedan (the name actually is Friedman) to admit that as a Jew she opposed America’s entry into the war against Hitler because Stalin told her that it was just an inter-imperialist fracas. Imagine what it would be like for America’s premier feminist to acknowledge that well into her thirties (and who knows for how long after?) she thought Stalin was the Father of the Peoples and that the United States was an evil empire. Or that her interest in women’s liberation was just the subtext of her real desire to create a Soviet America. Now, that would require some explaining.

Which is why it probably seemed easier to lie. The problem with this solution is that lying can’t be continued. It begets other lies, and eventually becomes a whole way of life, as President Clinton could tell you. One of the lies that the particular denial of the Communist past begets is an exaggerated view of McCarthyism. Fear of McCarthyism becomes an excuse that explains everything. The idea advanced by people like Friedan, that McCarthyism was some region of terror, as though thousands lost their freedom and hundreds their lives, while the country itself remained paralyzed with fear for a decade is just false. Being an accused Communist on an American college campus in the 1950s, in fact, was only marginally more damaging to one’s career opportunities than being a member of the Christian Right would be on today’s politically correct campus, dominated as it is by the tenure-minded left.

We can go back to the very root of McCarthyism—root cause is more commonly than not is the lie that Communists lied at the time, which is just false. Being an accused Communist on an American college campus in the 1950s, in fact, was only marginally more damaging to one’s career opportunities than being a member of the Christian Right would be on today’s politically correct campus, dominated as it is by the tenure-minded left.

But enough, but reign of terror, no. (And where is the outrage from the civil libertarian crowd for this latter-day witch-hunt?)

If we are going to restore civility and honesty to public discourse about these issues, and integrity to intellectual scholarship, it is necessary to insist on candor from people about their political commitments and what they know. And it important to call things by their right names. Without such a resolve, we will continue to be inundated with books from the academy with ludicrous claims like this. In response to McCarthyism and to the impact of mass media, suburbs, and prosperity, a wave of conformity swept across much of the country. Containment referred not only to American policy toward the USSR but also to what happened to aspirations at home. The results for women were especially unfortunate. Even though increasing numbers of them entered the work force, the Cold War linked anti-communism and the dampening of women’s ambitions.

This is the commentary of Professor Horowitz, Friedan’s biographer, and the kind of ideological hot air that passes for analysis in the contemporary academy. It can do so only because of the absence of dissenting voices who know better.

by David Horowitz

To Accept This Offer or to Contact David Horowitz call 1-800-752-6562 or send an e-mail to ivf@cspc.org.

This Ad Was Paid for by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and FrontPage Magazine (www.frontpagemag.com)
A co-author of California’s Proposition 209, I have participated in countless debates on the topic of racial and ethnic preferences. One such event was broadcast on national television. Chris Matthews moderated from Washington, D.C. Joe Hicks, formerly of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and now head of the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, participated from Los Angeles, while I sat in a small studio in San Francisco looking into a camera with no screen to monitor the video portion of the program.

At one point in the discussion I observed that the recipients of racial preferences are not the real beneficiaries at all. The real beneficiaries are the practitioners of identity politics—the lawyers and government and corporate enforcers who make their living by keeping racial division alive in this country. Minorities as a group are actually the victims of such policies and such people, for in order to justify a regime in which one individual is preferred over another solely because of skin color, blacks must plead perpetual group inferiority at the expense of their own individual abilities. In this way, I said, blacks are kept on the plantation of their new masters.

Chris Matthews responded with a fervent cry, then with the outraged exclamation, “I can’t believe you said that!” After the show a technician came to unhook my microphone. With a broad grin he said, “You should have seen his face when you said that about the plantation.”

Chris Matthews’ anguished reaction is quite understandable, for it is a painful thing indeed to hear that a policy you support in the name of compassion and for the charitable uplift of the perpetually downtrodden is really nothing more than a mild, up-dated variation on that long-standing American theme of subjugating blacks: that you, as a white liberal, are actually asserting the same underlying principle of black inferiority as did antebellum planters and their segregationist successors, albeit in different degrees of intensity and with far different motives.

You can also understand why Chris Matthews was literally shocked to hear somebody actually say such a thing, and on national television at that, for the honest discussion of race in America, and the politicians who have expressed around it, had become so hedged with taboos that criticism that was banned not only from public discourse but even from the academic conversation. But as a result of Proposition 209 and other such initiatives, the cat is now out of the bag, and racial policies, like any other policies, are finally up to the public debate where they should have been all along.

This new openness is due in large part to the brave voice of Shelby Steele, whose first book, Content of Our Character, published back in 1990, reverberated around race since race since the 1960s, and the effect it has had on American institutions in general.

One of his major points is made with a revealing anecdote. During a discussion of race at San Jose State University, where he used to teach, Steele argued that black students, like Asians, should focus on self-reliance and individual excellence. A professor of black studies rose to speak. “Anger had stolen her self possession, her ability to censor her self,” Steele writes, “and so out of a kind of general alarm she said, ‘If black students do well, they’ll end up like the Asians. They’ll lose their preferences .’”

In other words the professor, who had only the best for her students at heart, saw the failure of black students as lying not in their own hands, but rather as contingent on the intervention of outside forces. This illustrates what Steele calls a pervasive “psychology of contingency.” This psychology in turn relies on an assertion of group victimization that it must rely on intimidation, mendacity, distortion, the suppression of truth and tortured rationalizations for its survival. In this regard Steele has harsh words for black scholars such as Cornel West and William Junius Wilson and for white liberal enablers such as Jeffrey Rosen and such apologetic apologists as Howard Wolpe, who viewing the system as perpetually guilty and blacks perpetually oppressed, are finally in the domain of public discourse, are finally in the domain of public discourse.

Steele adds the word “victorization” to the existing vocabulary of victimization, where the complexity of the real world with its contradictions and multiple causes, is drastically reduced to a simplistic dichotomy of permanent white oppression and permanent black helplessness.

Whites are guilty and blacks are helpless victims, thus justifying a regime of racial and ethnic preferences where color trumps merit and where the social sciences and the university as well as by corrupting the service of state intervention, and by transforming the social sciences and the university as well as by transforming the political and cultural system that has developed around race since the 60s, and the effect it has had on American institutions in general.

In his latest book, A Dream Deferred, Steele builds on the arguments presented in his first book, then describes in clear, direct language the political and cultural system that has developed around race since the 1960s, and the effect it has had on American institutions in general.

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Board of Ed Says Teacher Must Have Surgery or Lose Job

by Judith Schumann Weizner

Camilla Jemail, an eighth-grade science teacher at Smoky Ridge Intermediate School in Smoky Ridge, California, has been ordered to undergo facial reconstruction if she wishes to return to her job in September. Jemail, who has taught in the Smoky Ridge school system for the past eighteen years, has already made several adjustments in her appearance at the request of her school board, but this would be the most drastic one. She is preparing an appeal before the State Board of Education, and promises to sue if the appeal is unsuccessful.

Jemail’s appearance first became an issue seven years ago when one of her female students complained that Ms. Jemail’s hair style mocked the residents of the trailer park in which the student lived. The student insisted that since it was common knowledge that Ms. Jemail lived in a condo in nearby Llama Vista, she felt that her teacher’s “big hair” style was an expression of condescension toward her and all the other students who lived in trailer parks. When taken aback by the allegation, Ms. Jemail was not averse to changing her hairstyle and availed herself of a tax-deductible make-over, which included a close-to-the-head hair style and a sweeping change of wardrobe, which herefore had consisted of slacks and turtlenecks. She purchased several suits with coordinated blouses and accessories and found, to her great pleasure, that several male teachers were now interested in dating her.

She had been enjoying her new look and its perquisites for a few months when her principal, Virginia Tarleton, informed her that a seventh-grader from her working-class background had complained that Ms. Jemail’s new smart, professional look was making her insecure about her self-worth because her family could only afford to shop at K-Mart.

Told her to save her new wardrobe for the week-ends, Ms. Jemail went back to slacks and turtlenecks, although she did continue to accessorize them smartly. For some months it seemed that her appearance had ceased to be an issue, but one day, following the school’s annual Parent-Teacher Tobacco, Alcohol, Drug and Dangerous Substance Information Day and Picnic, a student noticed Ms. Jemail’s strong facial resemblance to Joe Camel.

The student’s parents complained to the school board, which informed Jemail that the district’s consultant on federal compliance had advised them that under the U.S. Code of Ethical Advertising Targeting Minor Americans (USCEATMA) guidelines, her physical appearance amounted to an advertisement for a harmful substance within two hundred feet of a school. They ordered her to take immediate steps to minimize the resemblance, including, but not limited to, not wearing sunglasses in class. Jemail objected, citing a congenital vision problem that caused her to get headaches if she did not wear them.

They ordered her to take immediate steps to minimize the resemblance, including, but not limited to, not wearing sunglasses in class. Jemail objected, citing a congenital vision problem that caused her to get headaches if she did not wear them. Jemail acquiesced, at a cost of $634 for which she could face an uphill battle depending on the disposition of a 1997 case to be argued before the Supreme Court this month. In that case, a Massachusetts lifestyles education teacher was ordered to undergo a sex change operation that his school board claimed would make him more sensitive to the needs of two transgendered high school juniors.

To support her ultimatum, Ms. Tarleton presented a spreadsheet created by the fourth grade computer workshop detailing the projected number of deaths from lung disease that would not occur if Ms. Jemail altered her appearance, and expressed her fear that if Ms. Jemail refused to cooperate, the district could be found in violation of USCEATMA. Citing the USCEATMA accountability inspector’s warning that if the situation were not remedied the Smoky Ridge district could lose federal funding for its Attitude Development Workshops, Ms. Tarleton explained that the town council might then be forced to raise property taxes to fund the Workshops to keep the district compliant with a HEW directive 2002 requiring all schools to implement a Concept Harmonization Curriculum by the year 2002. (The U.S. Code of Ethical Advertising Targeting Minor Americans was developed to guide the advertising industry in the production of ads that are simultaneously informative and educational, while promoting only safe products. Among the changes in advertising soon to become apparent is a prohibition on the use of animal images in ads aimed at children under the age of 27. To minimize the impact of advertising on children, ads for toys must be text-only, and must include the results of testing by the Surgeon General’s Office. Last year, when the American Advertising Conference (AAC) reached a settlement with the Justice Department regarding the new standards for print, billboard and electronic media advertising, it also agreed to finance the establishment of a fund, not unlike the Superfund, to pay any health care costs associated with injuries caused by products advertised in ads produced under the new guidelines.)

Jemail protested that she could not undertake surgery, with its attendant risks, for the mere purpose of altering her appearance, and added that her looks had nothing to do with whether or not the students smoked. Quoting a government study showing that people under the age of 43 are seven times more likely to begin smoking due to the influence of advertising than those over that age, the board upheld Ms. Tarleton’s order and told Jemail that if she refuses to have the surgery before the beginning of the new school year, she will face dismissal for insubordination.

Ms. Jemail vows to appeal to the State Board of Education, and is simultaneously preparing to file suit in Federal Court, claiming the right to the peaceful enjoyment of her features, but legal experts believe that she could face an uphill battle depending on the disposition of a 1997 case to be argued before the Supreme Court this month. In that case, a Massachusetts lifestyles education teacher was ordered to undergo a sex change operation that his school board claimed would make him more sensitive to the needs of two transgendered high school juniors.

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