

# RADICAL AMERICA

VOL. 20 NO.1

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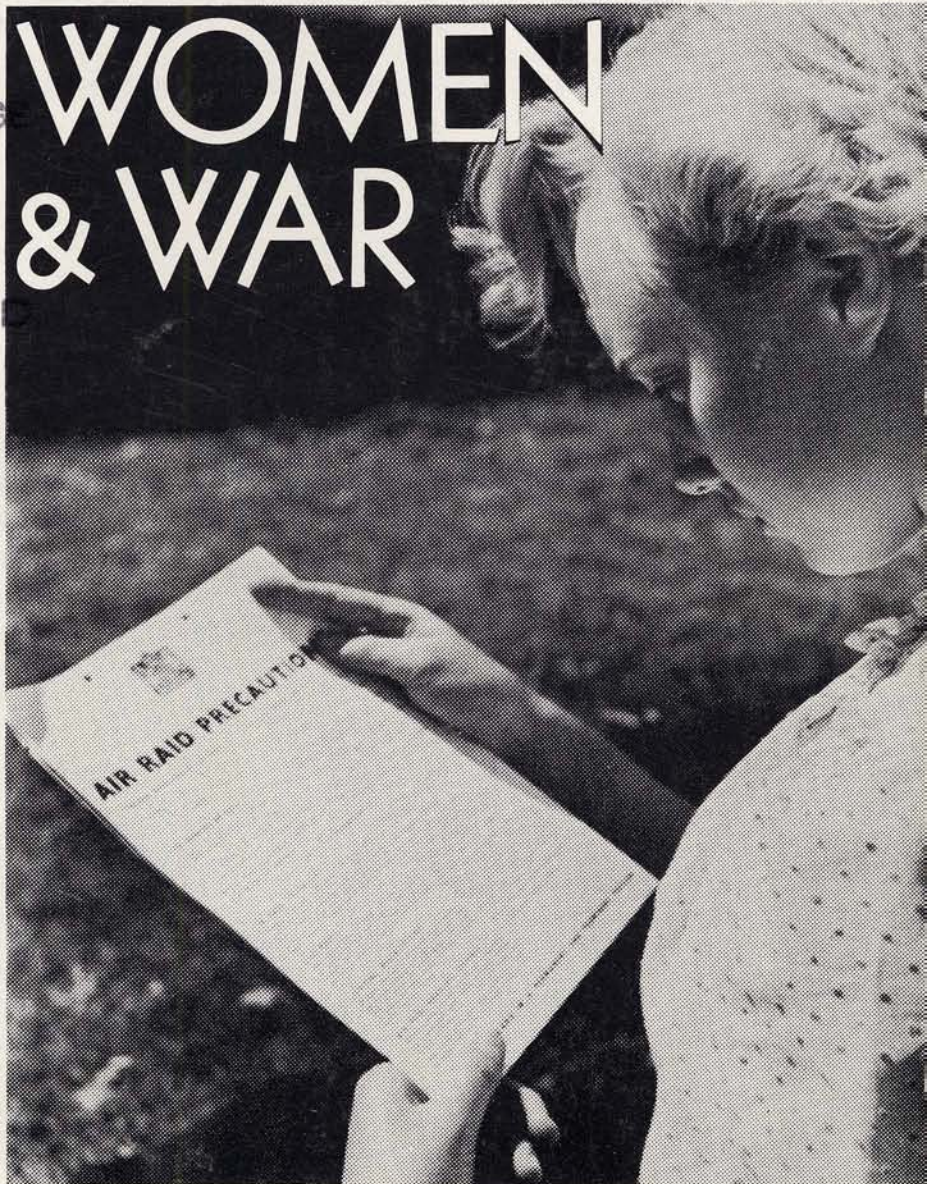
LYNNE HANLEY

Women  
Demilitarizing  
Literature

ELISABETTA  
ADDIS &  
NICOLETTA  
TILIACOS

Eurofeminism  
& "Security"

## WOMEN & WAR



Also: MORE ON GERMANY, LEFT & RIGHT; PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS; JEAN GENET

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# INTRODUCTION

The successful deployment of new American missiles in Europe, against widespread and bitter opposition, provides the background to several articles in this issue. Portrayed as a major foreign policy success for the Reagan administration, the legacy of deployment holds consequences for politics in Europe and the U.S. which have yet to unfold. The articles from Germany (by Hans Betz and Jamie Goldfein) and from Italy (by Elisabetta Addis and Nicoletta Tiliacos) represent strikingly different responses from the European political context that is developing after Cruise.

Betz discusses the new missiles as a symbol of Germany's inability to resist US military domination. He explores the central role nationalism is coming to play in public discussion on both the Right and Left, propelled by a popular view of Germany as an "occupied country." Addis and Tiliacos, on the other hand, describe a generation of feminists returning to left politics, compelled by the issues of war and peace, which are made stark by the missile deployment. We found their discussion of the feminist contribution to anti-nuclear politics, including the debates among Italian feminists, fresh and provocative. It both challenges and extends US feminist thinking about these issues.

Along with Addis and Tiliacos, Lynne Hanley's article in the current issue begins a

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feminist critique of the division between "the world of men and the world of women," and its implications for a culture engaged in preparations for war. Looking at the relationship of literature to war, she proposes that the human type who "produces, disseminates and uses the hardware [of war]... stands forth sharply as a man." Turning to Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, Hanley suggests that it is the release of men from daily concerns, the world of women and children, that gives them the leisure and the license to perpetuate the culture and the technology of war. The male assumption that women remain protected and largely untouched by war fuels the separation and undercuts the legitimacy of women's protest.

By focusing primarily on the role of men in silencing women, Hanley illuminates but sidesteps a central debate: "Why are women especially interested in peace?" or "What is the distinct contribution of feminism to the peace movement?" Italian feminist debates speak to the questions; Addis and Tiliacos assert that women's authority to address the issues of war and peace derives directly from the feminist confrontation with the ideologies of masculinity and femininity. Feminism provides an analysis which deepens the meaning of security, conflict, fear and rationality as those terms are manipulated by the men who debate nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

The idea of security in the nuclear age is unpacked through a feminist comparison to security in the nuclear family. As feminist critiques of the family recognize, the exchange of self-determination for "protection" is a false alternative. It masks the violence within families and states, revealing the patterns of domination which depend for their continuance on the presence of an outside threat.

For both Hanley and Addis/Tiliacos, disrupting the image of the unknown enemy, the alien beyond the walls, is a central feminist concern. For Hanley, the solution lies, partially, in a transformation of consciousness, a cultural blurring of gender boundaries, which reduces the distance between women and men. She imagines for example what a "demilitarized university" might look like, how much more sympathetic to concerns which have traditionally been assigned only to women. Addis and

Tiliacos, on the other hand, describe TMG's efforts at "detente from below," behind and beyond the walls and borders that keep women contained and divided from one another.

Walls and borders, the politics of bloc confrontation, haunt the entire European political landscape, nowhere more starkly than in Germany, as Hans Betz reminds us in his article on the politics of national identity in West Germany. He examines how political and cultural debates about the meaning of nationalism not only fuel the Right in Germany, but especially important, divide and confuse the Left. As he sees it, the German Left's disenchantment with internationalism, combined with powerlessness in the face of US missiles has led the Left into a revived consideration of what it means to be "German" and how to connect to German history, especially the legacy of fascism. This is



Women's protest at Downing Street, London, following the US bombing of Libya, April 1986.

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thorny ground, given the historical reality of Nazism among still-living Germans and the presence of a Right that is happy to reclaim German identity from an "American-imposed" (and by implication, unjustified) guilt.

While not as extreme, US leftists too must struggle with "national" questions. How much do we, as some populists argue, attempt to ground our goals and values in a (progressive) reading of American history? Does the reclaiming of that history as our political and cultural heritage remain a racist and sexist undertaking? Those of us with white Southern roots find this a particularly provocative problem. How can we identify a progressive tradition among white southerners which does not gloss over the deep legacy of racism which permeates the political history and culture of the region? Such questions find resonance in the dilemmas that Betz presents facing German leftists today.

Similarly, the critique of technology and growth which increasingly characterizes both the Right and Left in Germany can be troubling. An important contribution of the Greens, for example, has been their insistence on a "third way" which rejects the industrial imperatives of both capitalist and Soviet-style "progress." Yet, as Betz argues, these same concerns can play into a return to romantic "volk" arguments which were a critical part of the mythology that fueled Nazism. Can a German Left challenge centralization and destructive growth while recognizing the ways that modern, city life has allowed escape—especially for women, gays and other "outsiders"—from the shackles of authoritarian, paternalistic, "tradition"?

The Right in the US has not abandoned technology or the imperatives of capitalist growth—witness the continued support for nuclear power and weaponry. But it does ask us to return to traditional family and community roots and to abandon the decadence and dependence of fast-paced urban life. In the US too, many socialists and feminists have expressed yearnings for more "natural" structures and ways of living. So we, also, may need to consider where apparent agreement with conservative arguments signals the need to reconsider our own positions. Finally, Betz describes the disturbing development of "eco-racism" on the

German Right. Framing their arguments in terms of the differences between cultures, without an underlying assumption of their common rights, these writers encourage and sustain the hostility to "foreigners" (immigrant workers and those seeking political asylum) which Jamie Goldfein so vividly describes in her "Letter From Berlin." As part of a recent crackdown by the West German government, guards enter the subways of Berlin looking for potential "terrorists"—those who don't look German. We know all too well the legacy of separating Jews from Germans.

In his article on the recent election in the Philippines, Frank Brodhead recasts his notion of the 'demonstration election' in light of recent events.<sup>1</sup> This election technique has been used by the US since the 1960s in Third World countries such as Vietnam, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, to "demonstrate" to the US population the necessity of expanded military involvement in the interest of democracy. The media's complicity in the view that democracy *means* "free elections" is one of Brodhead's central themes. He elucidates the essential role the media has played in framing the demonstration election as a gripping political drama for the US audience, and decodes the steps that go into making the event a crowd pleaser.

The elections in the Philippines were prompted, initially, very much as a demonstration—to bolster our military involvement there. Yet, many of the issues that elsewhere have been "off camera" came intensely into view. The incumbent's use of violence, fraud and coercion, the severe limits on the opposition, the total control of the local press, the money and guns used to induce voter participation—these previously hidden dimensions of US-sponsored elections were suddenly on the agenda.

Yet, Brodhead argues against the media's own view that it was a catalyst for a major change in US foreign policy toward the Philippines, that it forced the Reagan administration to back off and finally drop Marcos. He suggests that it was only when significant sectors of the US elite withdrew from Marcos that the press opened its files on the regime's brutality, if not its memory of two decades of unwavering US support.

It has been widely noted that the Reagan administration is adept at using the media, particularly T.V., to define agendas, set political terms, build enthused audiences and dismiss political opposition. Staged events view the people as extras. Yet, despite the best laid plans, the stage can become a sharply contested territory. We wonder, if in sponsoring an election in Marcos' Philippines, the US administration overreached itself and now faces enormous risks in uncharted territory. The election became a stage upon which the Filipino people displayed their political energy and will, took actions which we doubt the political elites in either country anticipated, let alone directed. If Reagan and the media were able to adapt in the case of the Philippines, we wonder how they will respond to opposition demands for elections in Chile, South Korea, or Pakistan.

What are the possibilities for a wedge between the vision of US policy articulated by the administration and that reported by the media? The current situation in South Africa suggests that a gap can exist, as staged events by both the US and South African governments continually fall prey to both the strengthening black rebellion and the willingness of the press to bring those images into US homes. Yet the media's disagreement with the Reagan administration over South Africa remains discrete. It does not lead to a more general skepticism about US policy elsewhere.

Finally, what are the implications of Brodhead's article for the anti-intervention and anti-militarist movements in this country? It is not uncommon to hear discussions these days of the importance of "using the media," even to hear that progressive organizations or those fighting referenda campaigns have hired "media consultants" (at great expense) to help them learn how. A frequent explanation for the demise of the Freeze points not to its concentration on legislative strategies or the narrow constituency it targeted, but to its "failure to use the media more effectively." Brodhead's reiteration of the traditional left view of the media as the "Free World propaganda system," artful and deliberate in the techniques of political deception, should raise questions about such media strategies. Aside from the resources diverted from organizing work—the real task

of building a movement, Brodhead reminds us that the US media is not independent. In the cases he analyses, the media's commitment to democracy as a method, not a content, ties it to the existing policy frameworks, and enables its adaptation when these seem to be challenged from below. Along with the feminist discussions in this issue, Brodhead's article encourages us to continue decoding the ideological mainstays of the "Free World" and its security.

Also in this issue we include a tribute to Jean Genet by Michael Bronski. Jean Genet, French playwright, novelist, and poet was a gay man of letters for whom, as Bronski relates, the "sexual imagination" was central. Not surprisingly, given the character of Genet's work, the article provoked discussion and debate among board members. Its appearance in the same issue with Addis and Tiliacos raised the question of differences between how men and women respond to Genet's embrace of violence and its link to erotic life. Addis and Tiliacos maintain that the fear of violence blocks the essential conflict between women and men. We wondered if the homoerotic context, particularly relationships between men, provides a different view of violence linked to eroticism, one which is distant from the fear which Addis and Tiliacos believe is a condition of women's lives. In fact, Bronski suggests a distinction in Genet between the violence of eroticism and brutality, which is violence by authorities or the state. The question of violence/non-violence remains an important one for activists, and we encourage our readers to respond with their thoughts and experiences about this issue.

#### FOOTNOTE

1. Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections* (Boston: South End Press).

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#### MOVING???

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**FACCIAMOCI SENTIRE  
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PER UNA SOCIETA' SENZA RUOLI,  
SENZA PRIVILEGI,  
SENZA DISCRIMINAZIONI**



# CONFLICT, FEAR, AND SECURITY IN THE NUCLEAR AGE:

## The Challenge of the Feminist Peace Movement in Italy

ELISABETTA ADDIS AND NICOLETTA TILIA COS

On March 10, 1983, three women from the Greenham Common Peace Camp were sentenced by an English court never to speak of peace and war in public: a rather creative use of English common law against women guilty of a non-violent demonstration against Cruise missiles.

One year later, a group of women peace activists from Rome and Perugia organized a national demonstration of women to protest the final deployment of Cruise missiles in Sicily scheduled for March 15th. The demonstration was held on March 10th, and was a success. The group which previously had no name became known as the "Tenth of March Group." When they later found out about the Greenham Common sentence, they decided to keep the name for its symbolic value.

In what follows, we recount the experience and the ideas of the "Tenth of March Group" (TMG). Working at the crossroads of the feminist and peace movements, and asserting that women have an important and distinctive word to say on issues of peace and weapons in the nuclear age, TMG gave birth to a stream of original thought and political actions within the European Left.

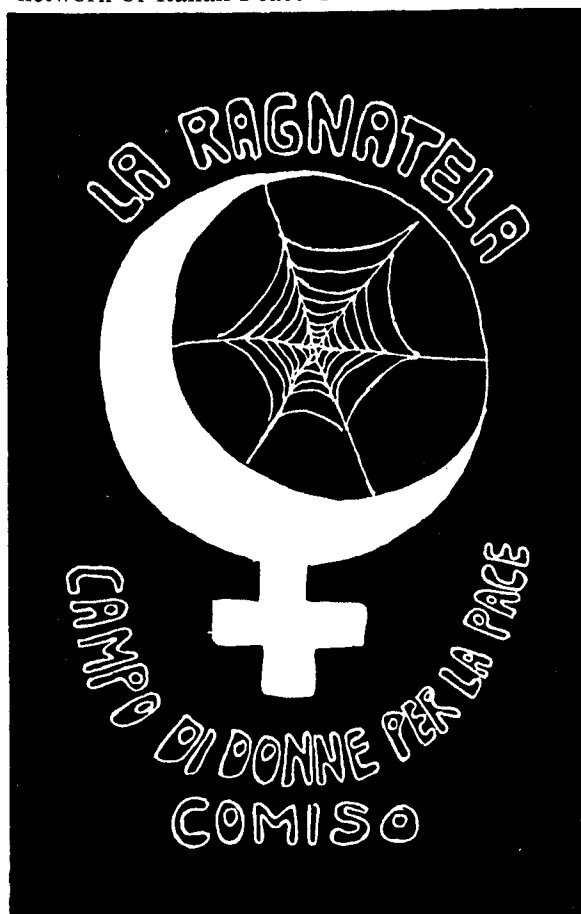
TMG met for the first time in February 1984 after seven well known women in the arts and the professions signed a 'manifesto' calling for a demonstration of women for peace "to break the silence of women on peace and war". The 'manifesto' evoked considerable enthusiasm and also considerable criticism.

Some women, including the women of the *Collettivo Pompeo Magno*, one of the first feminist groups in Rome, feared that the pacifist left could use the women's movement for ends that were not women's own, thus undermining the autonomy and the specificity of feminist culture. Other women, especially members of the Virginia Woolf Cultural Center, another important group in the history of Italian feminism, claimed that since women had always suffered war passively, never prepared or made it, there is no basis from which women could transform this passive denial into active opposition.

Nonetheless, a large group of women, which was to become TMG, met to organize the demonstration that brought fifty thousand women into the streets of Rome on March 10, 1984. After the demonstration, when the organizers met to evaluate the results, they decided that such a success was an indicator of the need for a pacifist feminism, or a feminist pacifism, or at any rate, that there was a special connection between women's issues and the issues of peace and war.

Two other groups of women peace activists existed before the 10th of March Group (TMG) formed: the *Ragnatela* (Spiderweb) and the *Gruppa Feminista Donne Contro le Armi* (Feminists Against Weapons). Spiderweb was born in 1981 at the peace camp around the Comiso Base [site of American Cruise missile deployment in Sicily] when some women started an autonomous camp near the original one. The central idea behind the *Ragnatela* action was the need to bear witness to the possibility of an alternative way of life; the daily practice of nonviolence brings people closer to each other and to nature. This vision required living for long stretches of time at the Camp, both to experience this way of life and to continuously remind people of the scandal of the missiles. For their general orientation regarding conventional politics and for actions

other than those situated directly at Comiso, Spiderweb defers to the decisions and strategy of the mixed peace movement and the wider network of Italian Peace Committees.



In contrast, The Feminist Group Against Weapons began its discussion on peace and war from the standpoint of radical feminism, denouncing the patriarchal structure of the family and the male-dominated structure of society as the source of militarism and authoritarianism. Therefore they refuse to cooperate with the mixed peace movement, even refusing the label "pacifist." The unique character of weapons of the nuclear age, a central theme of Spiderweb and TMG, does not receive particular attention from this group.

At its beginning, TMG included members of both these groups, women who were already active in various organizations of the Left (trade unions, press, parties, and especially the peace movement), and women who had moved from militancy on the Left to the separatist feminist



and to articulate their own rights and positions. Feminism rejects violence, which silences conflict. Conflict can and must be solved in other ways, by seeking a non-destructive form rather than the annihilation of the opponent.

"Violence appears as a true denial of conflict in the life of people and of countries. This is even more true in the nuclear age. What is the relationship between the conflict we need in order to 'live, not survive' and the limits to the possibilities of our life and political action imposed by the conflict between the superpowers? . . . Conflict in the nuclear age has this paradoxical character. The nuclear weapon is a weapon that cannot win without destroying the other. Yet, you cannot destroy the other without at same time destroying yourself," (Santa Severa Preliminary Papers, forthcoming.)

### The Invasion That Is Already Here

A second theme was the invasion that is already there, the invasion of war into daily life and into our social imagery and the positive value that fear can assume. Nuclear weapons do not affect our life only if and when they are used. They affect the way we think and act to-

day on the meaning of life and death. The fear of nuclear war is at the same time the fear of surviving a nuclear holocaust. The primal instinct of survival gets turned upside down when we face an event where death would be more desirable than any aftermath. We come to fear the triangle of death, survival, and the state of suspension that the world arms race creates. There is no escaping this prelude to nuclear terror: it is called security.

Women are used to daily fear, to accepting themselves as people who feel fear [...] it is something they know how to deal with, while for men, fear and admitting fear is transgressive. It is because they can acknowledge fear that women can imagine the utopian details of a world without fear. ("Pauro e Utopia," Santa Severa Papers, forthcoming)

### Men's Reason and Women's Bodies

A third theme combined an analysis of rationality with an analysis of the different ways in which women perceive their bodies, nature and life. How did it happen that the 'rational'



*Among the signs: violence! is the division of roles between men and women, violence! is being afraid, violence! is prostitution, violence! is conjugal duty, violence! is part time work, from Feminism in Italy.*

approach to the problem of security led to the crazy result that the entire planet could be destroyed in the name of this very same rationality? Does the fact that women bear life in their wombs affect the way in which they think of its destruction? Does women's relationship to motherhood, the experience of developing and nurturing an 'other' inside and outside their bodies, influence their perception of difference, the dynamics of the 'other'?

With these questions in mind, TMG discussed and tried to answer the arguments of Alessandra Bocchetti\*, who in her "Discourse on women, peace and war," had argued in favor of women's intrinsic indifference to and estrangement from the issue of peace and war. Bocchetti's approach to the issue of women and war in her essay extends the tradition established by Virginia Woolf in her essay, "Three Guineas."

A woman has at least three strong reasons that make her more a body than a man: the fact of biological motherhood, the cultural attitude called maternal, and the feeling of her body as prey. This unavoidable consciousness of bodies is for women a kind of material thought: women think through the experience of their bodies. If abstract thought is that thought that forgets/denies the body, then women are incapable of abstract thought, of Pure Thought.[...] More than anything else, women could not have thought this war [nuclear war]. Women are extraneous to the logic, to the system, to the science which prepared war, and to the mental imagery that allowed it. Therefore it is our otherness which is the foundation of our collective identity as women. Why then should we ask for peace? And from whom? (Alessandra Bocchetti, *Discorso sulle donne e la guerra, Centrale Culturale Virginia Woolf, 1984*)

Do these arguments necessarily follow from the 'otherness' of women? How can we respect what is peculiar to women's thought, starting from it, and still act upon nuclear war?

In the peace movement, the practice of non-violent action has also provoked men to think about their bodies and what it means to use them as instruments of political action. Still, this "feminization" of the movement cannot blur the fundamental difference between men's choice to use their bodies to resist, and the uni-

## ABORTO l'alternativa dell'autogestione



"Abortion, The Alternative of Self-Management," from *Feminism in Italy*.

que awareness women have of their bodies.

This discussion of men and women, difference and power moved the Santa Severa Conference to rethink another key subject within both feminism and the peace movement: self-determination. The perspective of nuclear war changes the traditional meaning of individual death and life, denies the value of the individual person, his/her own will, his/her own choice. Through feminism women achieved a sense of self as a woman, in a collective process of individual reevaluation. They feel, therefore, that nuclear weapons pose an extreme threat to the 'personhood' that they have struggled so hard to achieve. If we consider the possibility of the extreme violence of nuclear war, not simply as women but as feminist women, we come to reject a position of indifferent passivity and are led to consider the feminist version of non-violent action as a feasible alternative.

Non-violence is much more than a lack of violence: it is a set of ideas, of principles, of techniques of action to be considered within a project of social change. Non-violence is an attempt to find new solutions for conflict, avoiding violence and aggression. But non-violence is also an active decision to look for conflict, to antagonize power[...] We find one of the most interesting aspects of non-violence in the central role of the individual, [...]the

\*Alessandra Bocchetti is a well-known feminist author and one of the main organizers of the Virginia Woolf University of Women.

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idea that each of us is responsible, in his/her own way, for the whole world in which we live, and can contribute to changing it.[...] (Santa Severa Preliminary Papers, forthcoming.)

Following on the heels of the women's march and the Santa Severa Conference, the women of the now established TMG participated in the third Convention for Nuclear Disarmament in Perugia in July 1984.\* With women who came from all over Europe, TMG opened the debate on self-determination and non-violence.

At Perugia, so called "pacifist diplomacy" was defeated. The organizing committee had invited both the "official" governmental Peace Committees of the East and the independent peace groups operating within the dissident movement. Only Hungary sent both. All the other Eastern countries denied visas of exit (or, more cruelly, of reentry) to the independent dissident peace groups and sent only the bureaucrats of the official committees. This development induced heated debate on the decision to have invited the officials at all. It was perceived as a failure of the West European peace movement in its goal of bridging the hostility between governmental and dissident peace activists in Eastern Europe.

This failure at the Perugia convention moved the 10th March women to begin thinking of a practice of "detente from below." "Detente from below" would subvert the ineffective, official detente and overcome the limits of pacifist diplomacy. It would prioritize the feminist practice of "beginning from ourselves," taking off the masks of the "enemy" that the superpowers impose on us. Concretely, this meant to go and meet, person

\*This was the third international conference of European peace movements sponsored by European Nuclear Disarmament (END). [Editor's Note: It is interesting that, although this conference was covered, and debated, in the U.S. left press, no mention was made of any feminist content. Cf. Diana Johnstone, "Is the European Peace Movement a Dead END?" In *These Times*, August 22, 1984; and the debate between Johnstone and E.P. Thompson, "Diana Johnstone Has END Wrong," ITT, November 7, 1984.]

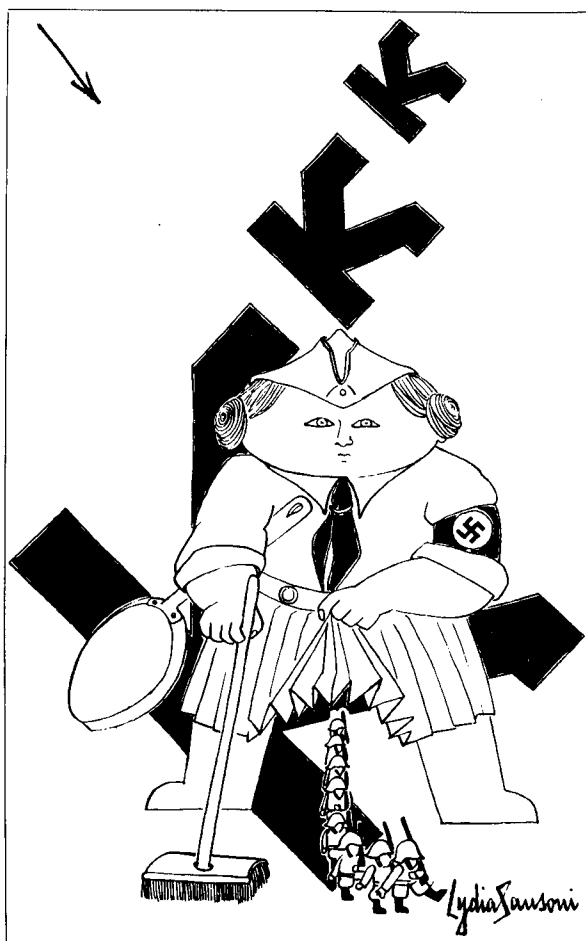
to person, the 'alien,' the 'different,' the 'far away,' to create a dialogue with women beyond the wall that divides the East from the West.

### Need for Security?

The militarization of society is accompanied by political choices that create a climate of fear and antagonism, pitting one against the other, breaking the internal links of solidarity, even among women. Parallel to this internal weakening of solidarity, we imagine a common enemy, terrible and fearful.[...] The message is both of fear and reassurance: the enemy is there and it is dangerous, but our weapons will frighten him and stop him[...] Facing the prospect of a nuclear holocaust, we have to turn upside down this traditional idea of the arms race, according to which having more weapons makes us feel more secure. Today, our new weapons are the source of our insecurity. Facing the imminence of planetary destruction, it does not matter whether weapons are "ours" or "yours," because they make all of us targets.

This quotation is from a paper on the "Need For Security" (*Bisogno di sicurezza*) which the TMG presented at a conference organized by the Peace Committees the same day the ministers of defense and foreign affairs of the Western European Union were meeting in Rome to discuss European security (i.e., increasing conventional weapons). From the point of view of women, we asked, what is this hypothetical European identity that our ministers claim to secure? "Identity" is also a key word of feminism and the TMG group used it to analyze the grotesque analogy between the models of security and identity that a male-dominated family structure offers to women and the identity and security that governments and NATO and the Warsaw Pact offer to European citizens.

Those who are considered weak, minor, handicapped, need to be protected even if this means denying them free-expression. Aggression and violence are recognized as problems only when they happen outside the family. In this context, the guarantee of security lies in agreeing to stay at home.[...] Extrapolating this



Women as breeders of Fascist soldiers, Kinder, Kuche, Kirche, Lydia Sansoni drawing.

analysis, weaker, minor nations are denied self-determination in order to protect them from the outside enemy. The violence existing inside each bloc, between states, between the State and its citizens is never recognized, or worse, it is justified as an unfortunate but unavoidable by-product of security. Feminism unmasked the "security" of the traditional feminine role, where the outside is always frightening for the weak woman, so that her only hope is to have a strong father or husband: feminism revealed that the traditional family itself is the site of violence. At the same time, it unmasked the illusory security that comes from simple "equality," under which women are asked to perform as males in a man's world, accepting all the rules and hierarchies of value. When our ministers speak of European security, they either ask us to stay inside NATO and delegate our defense to the USA, or they call for an autonomous, "eman-

culated" Europe to send more conventional forces to Lebanon and reassume a prominent place in a world always dominated by the same values. This alternative is also false and illusory.

The counterparts in the East with whom TMG began to network were the women of the Charter 77 group in Prague, and the *Frauen fur Frieden* in East Berlin. Charter 77 had presented a document at the Peace Convention in Perugia which was read by supportive emigres. They asserted that the military buildup was one of the main obstacles to their struggle for civil rights and national self-determination. *Frauen fur Frieden* is a group of women which has been fighting against the militarization of East German society, especially military service for women and military education of children at school.

The meeting between the 10 March group and *Frauen fur Frieden* produced the idea of launching an "Open Letter by women in the East and in the West to all citizens of Europe" in coalition with other women's groups, to be signed in the five countries in which NATO and the Warsaw pact had deployed the Cruise, Pershings and SS-20s, (i.e., Italy, East and West Germany, England, Czechoslovakia). The letter was made public in the five capitals on March 8, 1985. Written in East Berlin by TMG and *Frauen fur Frieden*, the sympathy of ideas and purposes between the two groups was astonishing. As a TMG woman put it, "It was as if we had worked and developed together for months."

The meeting and the agreement with the women of Charter 77 was considerably more difficult. Charter 77 is a mixed group of civil rights activists, fighting to obtain freedom of speech, press, and assembly. The women had never organized autonomously. In signing an all-woman letter, they feared being confused with the government-inspired groups of "women for peace" who appear in official parades and support Soviet militarism under the guise of peace efforts. They also were unwilling to risk weakening an already thin front of opposition which necessarily gave top priority to the struggle for civil rights. They asked to stress the parts of the document which dealt

most exclusively with the issue of civil rights. The final text ran as follows:

### Neither Victim Nor Executioner

*For detente from below, for the denuclearization of Europe: An Open Letter by women from East and West to all the citizens of Europe.*

We are women in five European countries where the deployment of new American and Soviet weapons has begun. We are women of different cultures, from Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern Europe, some of us religious, others not, many of us feminists or pacifists or members of other civil rights or environmental movements.

Despite our differences, we are united by the will for self-determination, the will to struggle against the culture of militarism, against uniforms, against the education of our children as soldiers, against the senseless waste of resources to build weapons. We demand the right to self-determination for all individuals and peoples. We want to contribute in a specific way to changing the existing social structure. That is why we also challenge conventional gender roles and ask men to do the same.

Freedom to determine one's own fate also means freedom from exploitation and violence: freedom of thought and action at our workplaces, freedom in our relationship to nature and in the relationship between men and women, between generations, between States, between East and West, North and South.

Together we want to break this circle of violence and the sources of our fear: fear of nuclear weapons, fear for the end of humanity and of the earth, fear of violence over our bodies and souls. We want to be able to debate and act to overcome these divisions together, not illegally, but through each of us using the right to free expression, especially in those places where this right is daily denied. There can be no real peace without respect for human rights.

The deployment of new nuclear weapons in our countries has further limited our freedom and escalated our fears. Our obligation to break the circle of violence has increased because we all share responsibility for a possible catastrophe. We are conscious of being

both perpetrators and victims of this system of violence, even if it is not we who established it. We reject both roles.

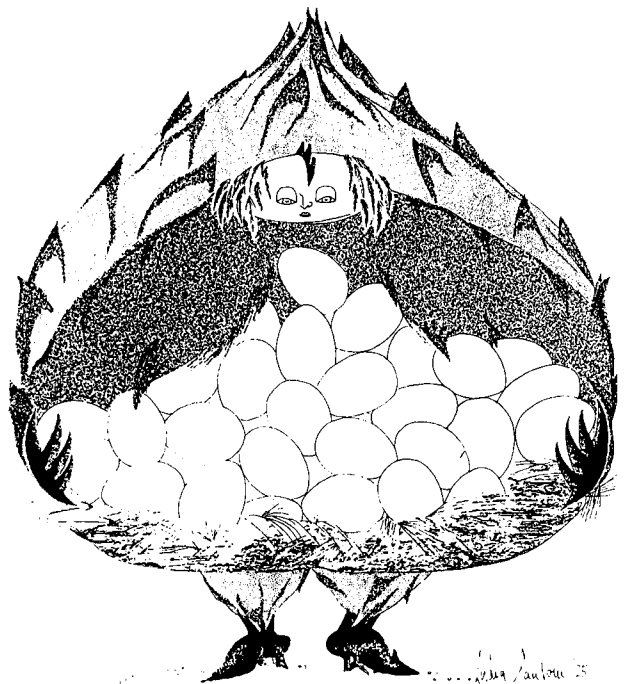
We are not reassured by the fact that representatives of both superpowers are negotiating in Geneva, again over our heads. Once again we are expected to pin our hopes on these representatives to see reason and voluntarily renounce the production and use of weapons. Talks on how to make talks force us to believe that it is not possible to solve the problem "from above."

Instead, we choose the way of self-determined initiatives "from below." This road does not pass by the militarization of society, nor by missile ramps nor by the destruction of nature and of interpersonal relationships.

We want neither a peace which oppresses us nor a war which will annihilate us.

Forty years after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, forty years after bloc confrontation began, at last we want to begin getting to know and understand each other better, and meet one another beyond the wall which not only divides our countries but our hearts and minds as well.

*We've begun detente from below: join us!*



*Woman as a brood hen, Lydia Sansoni drawing, from Feminism in Italy.*

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This letter was signed individually by women of all the groups we mentioned. We then began the campaign to collect more signatures. At the 4th END Convention held in Amsterdam in July 1985 it was agreed to launch a campaign around the letter in the Fall of 1985. In Italy the document was signed by all the women deputies elected in the lists of the Communist Party, by the women's coordination committees of the three main unions, CGIL, CISL and UIL, by women in other parties and groups on the Left, by independent personalities in the professions and in the arts. A very large contribution towards its dispersal was made by the women of *ARCI-Donna* cultural circle and by the *ARCI* environmental league.

In addition to the strategy of "detente from below," TMG is contributing distinctive methods of organizing and new political ideas to the Italian Left and peace movement. The method is an attempt to avoid abstraction, linking the "micro" level of women's lives and the "macro" level of international politics. It is an attempt to get involved in political institutions — parties, groups and governments — while keeping the characteristic internal workings of a small feminist group, and to propose action to other small groups of women. When more women became interested in the issue, TMG decided not to expand much over the current size (twenty to forty women per meeting) but to start other small groups in a network.

There is only one other group of women in Italy which has attempted to act in the "outside" world of politics and legislation rather than on personal politics: the feminist group that promoted the women's proposal for a new law on sexual violence.

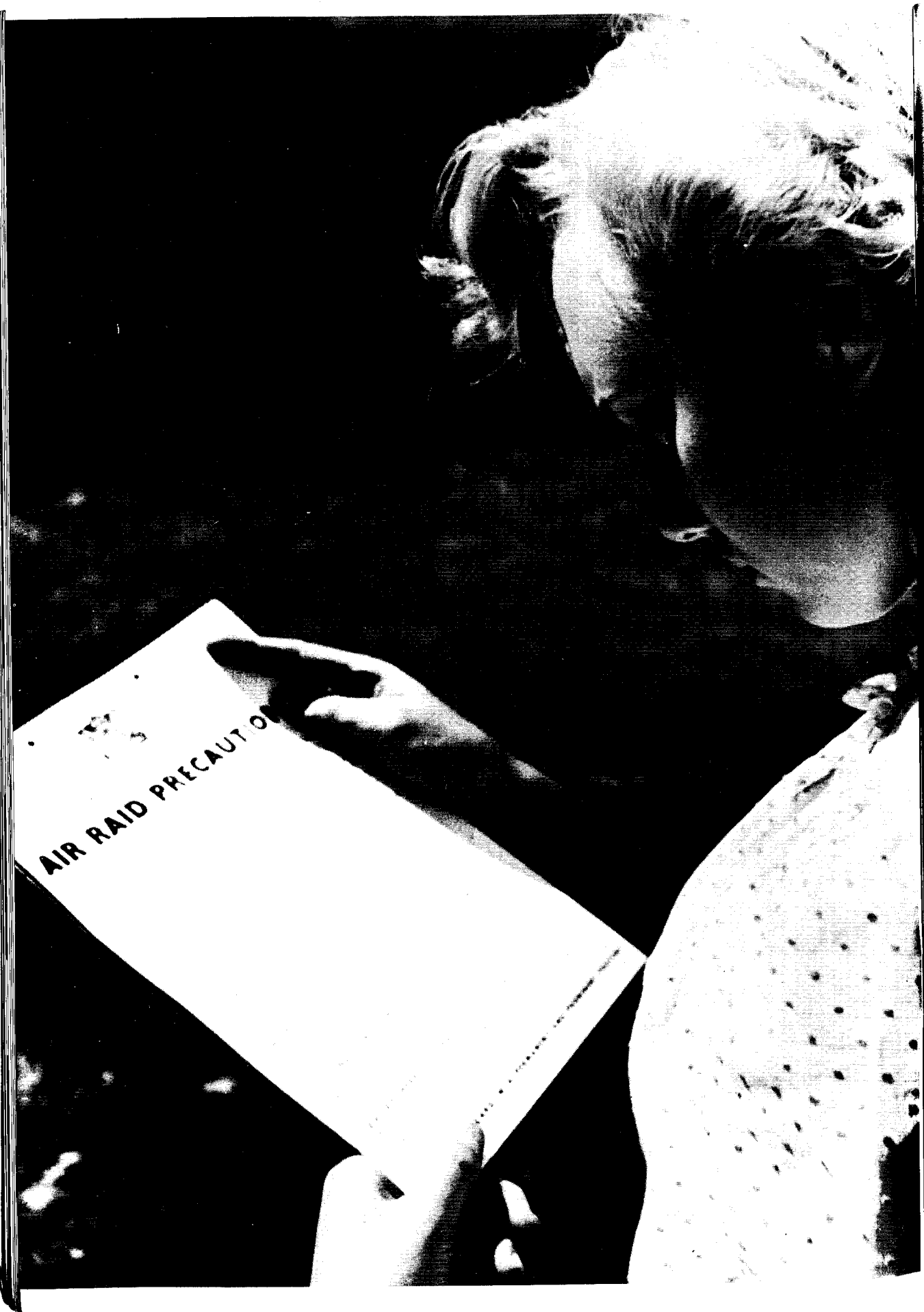
The link between sexual violence, male violence and military violence is not the only connection between peace activism and feminism. TMG discovered much more; the practice of feminist politics becomes a source of pacifism. Women are not pacifists because they are women; they are pacifists because they are feminists. Feminism claims for women the right to a voice, which is allowed on daily matters, but denied at the intermediate level of decisions on public affairs. Feminism claims a voice at the highest possible level, that of the international politics of nuclear weapons.

TMG's critique of the male model of interpreting and governing reality led them in a coherent way to a critique of the preparation for total war. In their writings they fully justify the initial intuition they started with in 1984, that for women peace is not a political issue like any other. To a culture built on wars and bent on total destruction, feminists speak a word with the sense and authority that no other word on peace can have: the only reassuring word.

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**AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS**

# HER STORY OF WAR:

## De-Militarizing Literature and Literary Studies

LYNNE HANLEY

*I have a six year old daughter and we live in the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts. The best equipped playground in this valley, so devoted to the education of the young that it is known in Washington as "The Happy Valley," happens to be at Westover Air Force Base. The playground was built by bomber pilots for their children, and it is a small city of slides and jungle gyms and rings and bars and mazes and tank tire tunnels. When we go there, the same pilots who so lovingly constructed it circle lazily overhead, ready to follow orders which would turn it and their children to dust.*

In 1938, when Virginia Woolf published *Three Guineas* — one of the most elegant arguments ever written on how to prevent war — her nephew Quentin Bell greeted it as “the product of a very odd mind and . . . of a very odd state of mind.”<sup>1</sup> “What really seemed wrong with the book,” Bell said, was the attempt to involve a discussion of women’s rights with the far more agonizing and immediate question of what we were to do in order to meet the ever-growing menace of Fascism and war” (VWB, 205). Other members of Woolf’s largely pacifist Bloomsbury circle were less delicate in their criticism. E.M. Forster pronounced the book “cantankerous” and Maynard Keynes was infuriated. It was a silly book, he said, and not at all well-written. Even Woolf’s most trusted critic, her husband Leonard, didn’t like the book as much as she thought he should.

Why this sense of impropriety, oddness, outrage even, when a woman involves herself and her sex in a discussion of war? We are at risk, after all. Though we are not yet being drafted or sent into combat in Nicaragua or Libya, men's weapons have too wide and indiscriminate an embrace for us to rely on them for our protection. As Virginia Woolf observed in 1938, when men's weapons had a far narrower reach, "any kitchenmaid . . . can read and understand the meaning of 'Air Raid Precautions' when written in large letters upon a blank wall . . . [and] any kitchenmaid would attempt to construe a passage in Pindar if told that her life depended on it."<sup>2</sup>

Women are robbed of the authority to express themselves on the subject of war because they are assumed not to be in war. *Men Without Women*, Hemingway called his collection of World War II stories, and though we all agree that Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* belongs in the genre of the war novel, I have rarely seen Doris Lessing's *Children of Violence* series so labelled. In a disturbing article which appeared in *Esquire* magazine a year ago entitled "Why Men Love War," William Broyles, Jr. presents his idea of the archetypal war story, one he found in Michael Herr's *Dispatches*:

Patrol went up the mountain. One man came back. He died before he could tell us what happened.<sup>3</sup>

As Broyles points out, the purpose of this story is "not to enlighten but to exclude." Its message is, "I suffered, I was there. You were not. Only these facts matter" (WMLW, 61).

This assumption of women's absence from the field of battle permits war to be one of the few topics upon which literary criticism remains unself-consciously sexist. In his classic study of the literature of World War I, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell mentions Vera Brittain and Virginia Woolf in passing, but regards no literary work by a woman as worthy of serious investigation. Even in modern memory, women weren't there.

Fussell's oversight is perhaps forgivable, given the relative simplicities of the war he was

remembering. In World War I, the "front" was clearly delineated and English and American women could choose to stay behind it, though a remarkable number didn't. Gertrude Stein, Edith Wharton, Vera Brittain, and Winifred Holtby all were there, as were the many less noted women who served in signal, motorcycle, and nursing corps. Even World War II had its limits, and though huge civilian populations in Europe and Japan died, the myth of a protected zone for women and children survived. In modern guerrilla warfare, however, the front is difficult to find, the rear is not necessarily any safer, and being a woman or a civilian is no guarantee of exemption.

Modern nuclear warfare, of course, vaporizes the myth of a protected zone, of women's exclusion from war, yet military science remains as pronouncedly masculine as the combat zone. War and its kindred sciences divide the sexes in Western culture more radically than any other human activities, with the exception of childbearing and possibly sports. The breathtaking maleness of the terrains of both the military and of nuclear science and technology is what first impresses most women writers bold enough to assert an opinion on these matters. That there is a connection between this radical separation of men from women and children, and the release of mental and physical impulses of pure destruction is a suspicion most women writers on war find impossible to dismiss.

So, Woolf's "attempt to involve a discussion of women's rights with the far more agonizing and immediate question of what we [are] to do in order to meet the ever-growing menace of Fascism and [now, nuclear] war" is not, for most women writers, odd but inevitable. Once we move beyond the bartering of hardware to an analysis of the human type which produces, disseminates and uses the hardware, that type stands forth sharply as a man who has reduced his intellectual, social and physical commitments to women and children to a minimum, or who, at least, is prepared to do so upon command.

In the military, as Cynthia Enloe convincingly demonstrates in *Does Khaki Become You?*, a willingness to forsake wife and family is painstakingly inculcated in the soldier under the

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rubric of "combat readiness." All concerns of wives and children are ultimately deferred to the necessity of making the soldier ready to desert them. Perhaps this institutionalized infidelity is what makes it so difficult for many women writers to connect the men they love with the men who make war. Few women writers like to see their lovers as killers,<sup>4</sup> and even fewer like to see their lovers weighing their

connection so lightly. Even when she supported World War I, Vera Brittain was infuriated that her lover Roland could so automatically place "heroism in the abstract" ahead of their relation in the concrete. And Rebecca West's soldier in *Return of the Soldier* can commit himself to a woman only after he has lost all memory of the war.

The military's conviction that excessive con-



Virginia Woolf

nection to women and children is hostile to its aims is echoed in the male academic's conviction that excessive connection to the practical and the personal interferes with his aspirations and obligations. Defending the academic man, and more specifically her Cambridge don husband, F.R. Leavis, Queeni Leavis scoffed at Virginia Woolf's notion in *Three Guineas* of the academic man "hurrying home at four-hour intervals to spend upwards of half an hour giving the baby its bottle." But Woolf insists that the license granted the academic man to forsake the baby and the bottle has led to the vast elaboration not only of the marginalia of literary texts but also of the machinery of war. In a footnote to *Three Guineas*, Woolf meditates on a quotation from "The Report of the Archbishop's Commission on the Ministry of Women":

"At present a married priest is able to fulfil the requirements of the ordination service, 'to forsake and set aside all worldly cares and studies,' largely because his wife can understate the care of the household and the family. . . ." (*The Ministry of Women*, p. 32)

The Commissioners are here stating and approving a principle which is frequently stated and approved by the dictators. Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini have both often in very similar words expressed the opinion that "There are two worlds in the life of the nation, the world of men and the world of women"; and proceeded to much the same definition of the duties. The effect which this division has had upon the woman; the petty and personal nature of her interests; her absorption in the practical; her apparent incapacity for the poetical and adventurous—all this has been made the staple of so many novels, the target for so much satire, has confirmed so many theorists in the theory that by the law of nature the woman is less spiritual than the man, that nothing more need be said to prove that she has carried out, willingly or unwillingly, her share of the contract. But very little attention has yet been paid to the intellectual and spiritual effect of this division of duties upon those who are enabled by it "to forsake all worldly cares and studies." Yet there can be no doubt that we owe to this segregation the immense elaboration of modern instruments and methods of war; the astonishing complexities

of theology; the vast deposits of notes at the bottom of Greek, Latin and even English texts; the innumerable carvings, chasings and unnecessary ornamentation of our common furniture and crockery; the myriad distinctions of *Debrett* and *Burke*; and all those meaningless but highly ingenious turnings and twistings into which the intellect ties itself when rid of "the cares of the household and the family." The emphasis which both priests and dictators place upon the necessity for two worlds is enough to prove that it is essential to their domination (TG, 180-81).

Woolf's conviction that the mental liberation from worldly cares and responsibilities enjoyed by the academic man is as dangerous to the welfare of the human race as is the literal abandonment wife and family imposed on the soldier by the military, finds expression in many contemporary women writers, most notably Adrienne Rich, Susan Griffin and Christa Wolf.

Women's literature on the wars of this century records an increasing recognition of the war-monger in the male intimate: father, husband, lover, brother, mentor, colleague, friend. World War I led Vera Brittain to distrust the glamour of war, but her reservations about war's enthusiasts are undercut by her nostalgia for the intensities of wartime, and by her loyalty to the memory of her dead lover, brother and friends:

It is, I think, this glamour, this magic, this incomparable keying up of the spirit in a time of mortal conflict, which constitute the pacifist's real problem—a problem still incompletely imagined, and still quite unsolved. The causes of war are always falsely represented; its honour is dishonest and its glory meretricious, but the challenge to spiritual endurance, the intense sharpening of all the senses, the vitalizing consciousness of common peril for a common end, remain to allure those boys and girls who have just reached the age when love and friendship and adventure call more persistently than at any other time. The glamour may be the mere delirium of fever, which as soon as war is over dies out and shows itself for the will-o'-the-wisp that it is, but while it lasts no emotion known to man seems as yet to have quite the compelling power of this enlarged vitality.<sup>6</sup>

There is none of Vera Brittain's wistfulness in Sylvia Plath's response to World War II. No Veil of romance obscures the connection between her father and Fascist in "Daddy," and no nostalgia mutes Plath's terror:

You do not do, you do not do  
Any more black shoe  
In which I have lived like a foot  
For thirty years, poor and white,  
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

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*Tube Shelter perspective, Henry Moore, 1941.*

I have always been scared of you,  
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledegoo.  
And your neat moustache  
And your Aryan eye, bright blue,  
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You—

Not God but a swastika  
So black no sky could squeak through.  
Every woman adores a Fascist,  
The boot in the face, the brute  
Brute heart of a brute like you.<sup>7</sup>

As father is to daughter, so Nazi is to Jew, so man is to woman. In "Daddy," the combat zone invades the protected zone of intimate relations between men and women, forcing those relations to conform to the law of the battlefield.

Towards the end of *The Golden Notebook*, Anna Wulf admits a similar convergence of the fields of war with the fields of love, but brings it even closer to home when she recognizes that war has invaded her and shaped her emotions, so that the logic of her relation with her lover Saul is the logic of war:

I knew, but of course the word written cannot convey the quality of this knowing, that whatever already is has its logic and its force, and that the great armouries of the world have their inner force, and that my terror, the real nerve-terror of the nightmare was part of the force. I felt this, like a vision, in a new kind of knowing. And I knew that the cruelty and the spite and the I, I, I, I of Saul and Anna were part of the logic of war; and I knew how strong these emotions were, in a way that would never leave me, would become part of how I saw the world.<sup>8</sup>

Anna's effort to admit her own cruelty, spite and egoism, her own participation in the logic which leads to war, is an effort to undermine what she regards as the root cause of war, the imaginative construction of an enemy who bears no resemblance to oneself and who must be overpowered, if not annihilated. Adrienne Rich, in "Trying to Talk with a Man," makes a similar effort at a nuclear testing site when she chastizes her husband for "Talking of the danger/ as if it were not ourselves/ as if we were testing anything else."<sup>9</sup>

The experience of war, in retrospect and in



Greenham Common, John Reardon photo.

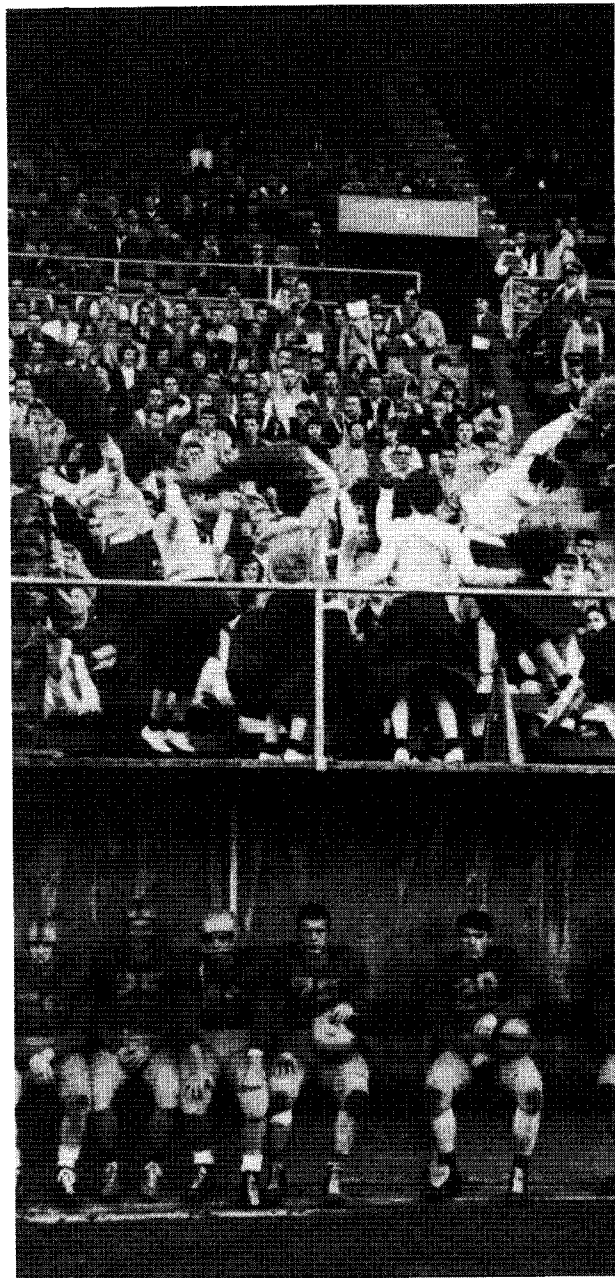
prospect, led Virginia Woolf to hate and fear the English culture and the educated English gentlemen she had loved.<sup>10</sup> Her solution, echoed today by the Greenham women, was to withdraw from the influence of all patriarchal institutions and of all male intimates, arguing that women could best help men prevent war by being as little like them as possible. By camping next to Cruise missiles, however, the Greenham women force us to recognize that there is no place to withdraw to, no spot on earth now lies beyond the arms of educated white men, not even New Zealand. The Lysistrata solution—to refuse to participate in the men's world—while tempting, seems finally to exacerbate the radical separation of the sexes upon which the

military and its right hand sciences thrive. The prevention of war would seem to require, on the contrary, the reconstruction of the prevalent form of the relation between the sexes in western culture, so as to erode the boundaries between male and female, white and black, the abstract and the concrete, the professional and the personal. In a footnote to *Three Guineas*, Woolf notes a promising sign of such reconstruction in the erosion of the identification of manhood with fighting:

The nature of manhood and the nature of womanhood are frequently defined by both Italian and German dictators. Both repeatedly insist that it is the nature of man and indeed the essence of manhood to fight. Hitler, for example, draws a distinction between "a nation of pacifists and a nation of men." Both repeatedly insist that it is the nature of womanhood to heal the wounds of the fighter. Nevertheless a very strong movement is on foot towards emancipating man from the old "Natural and eternal law" that man is essentially a fighter; witness the growth of pacifism among the male sex today . . . It is possible that the Fascist States by revealing to the younger generation at least the need for emancipation from the old conception of virility are doing for the male sex what the Crimean and the European wars did for their sisters. Professor Huxley, however, warns us that "any considerable alteration of the hereditary constitution is an affair of millennia, not of decades." On the other hand, as science also assures us that our life on earth is "an affair of millennia, not of decades," some alteration in the hereditary constitution may be worth attempting (TG, 186-87).

How quickly science changes its tune! Though science no longer assures us that our life on earth is "an affair of millennia," the history of this century (wars, wars, wars, as Sylvia Plath sums it up) insists that we can't rely on short term solutions alone. And it is in long term solutions, in "some alteration of the hereditary constitution," as Huxley puts it, in the reconstruction of consciousness as Lessing might put it, that literature plays a crucial role. The last of the romantics and the most rigorous since Shelley, Lessing believes in the power of the imagination to transform human consciousness. By providing what she calls blueprints for

alternative constructions of reality, the imagination undermines the determinism of history, biology and tradition. Lessing's *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five*, the second volume of her *Canopus in Argos* series, is one such blueprint, specifically for altering the prevalent construction of manhood and womanhood in western culture, a construction which breeds combat between nations and lovers alike. We enter this narrative



High school football game, 1955, Burt Glinn photo.

confined to the sexually polarized Zones Three and Four. The boundaries between these two zones are closed, and though passage is physically possible from one to the other with protective gear, it occurs to no one in either realm to do so.

Represented always by a woman (Al\*Ith and then her sister Murti), Zone Three boasts a culture formed to serve and reflect the sexuality of women. As is not uncommon in her realm, Al\*Ith is mother to fifty children, some of whom she has borne herself (without pain), more of whom she has adopted but regards as no less, and no more, her own. Every Zone Three child has several parents, gene-father and mind-fathers, gene-mother and mind-mothers, each of whom voluntarily accepts responsibility for the child's rearing and welfare. Monogamy is unthinkable in Zone Three, and Al\*Ith's relations with both men and women are as friendly as they are sensual. The boundaries between friend and lover will not, of course, remain clear in a society in which sexuality is identically expressed in the mother's caress and sexual intercourse.

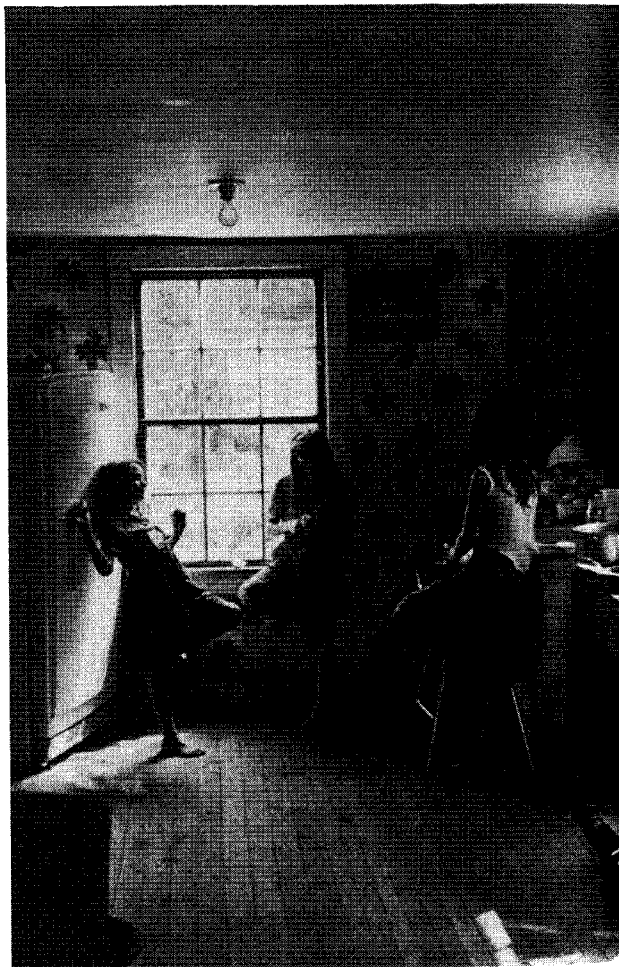
Self-possession is the overriding characteristic of the inhabitants of Zone Three, because coercion is not an option. Al\*Ith has no authority, she merely represents her realm and symbolizes its cooperation. Zone Three has no armies, no police, no legal system—no institution which reflects an experience or an expectation of combat. The energies of the inhabitants of Zone Three are released in the making of things, particularly clothes, furniture and songs. The relation of humans to beasts is equally cooperative in Zone Three, and communication has even been achieved with the trees, some of whom are willing and able to act as transmitters of messages between Zone Three citizens.

Lightness, grace, friendliness, composure, contentment, cooperation, plenty and emotional ease characterize the atmosphere of Zone Three. In an interview with Minda Bikman in *The New York Times Book Review*, Lessing says she thinks women, left to themselves, are really like this:

You know, whenever women make imaginary female kingdoms in literature, they are always

very permissive, to use the jargon word, and easy and generous and self-indulgent, like the relationships between women when there are no men around. They make each other presents, and they have little feasts, and nobody punishes anyone else. This is the female way of going along when there are no men about or when men are not in the ascendant.<sup>11</sup>

Sharply juxtaposed (so sharply that it nearly kills Al\*Ith to cross the border) is Ben Ata's Zone Four. Intensely hierarchal and patriarchal, Zone Four commits all its resources to the army. Though there is no enemy and no war, Zone Four's ideology of combat shapes its cultural and social life. Its architectural monuments are fortresses, its sexuality takes the form of rape, its male children are bred to fight and its female children are bred to breed fighters.



from *Photographing Children*.

Heaviness, coercion, conflict, scarcity, emotional excess, awkwardness—these comprise the atmosphere of Zone Four which Lessing clearly means us to associate with our culture as it is, under the domination of white men.

If the novel stopped here, with the juxtaposition of the two zones, we'd have a relatively familiar feminist critique of patriarchal society, and a relatively familiar feminist fantasy of a matriarchal alternative. We'd have, for example, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*. But Al\*Ith and her zone are jarred into disarray and dismay by the command that Al\*Ith marry Ben Ata, that Zone Three have intercourse with Zone Four. Al\*Ith greets this command with disgust and repulsion, her perception of Zone Four is like Plath's of Daddy. Ben Ata likes the idea no better, his perception of Zone Three is like Hitler's of pacifists. But the command comes from The Necessity, the name by which inhabitants of both zones know the will of the Canopians, a superior race in a distant galaxy whose aim is to protect all species whenever possible, and who achieve this aim by cross-breeding the more bellicose species with the more nurturant.

As a result of the troubled and painstakingly achieved marriage of Ben Ata and Al\*Ith, travel becomes possible not only between Zones Three and Four, but also into the previously unimagined or forgotten Zones Two and Five. Al\*Ith receives the knowledge she needs to enter Zone Two from a song originating in Zone Five, and Arusi (the son of Al\*Ith and Ben Ata) unites both zones in one body. Zones

Three and Four reflect the marriage of their leaders. Ben Ata dismantles his army and sends most of his soldiers home, where they expend their energies in making homes and furniture and rearing their children. He himself is sufficiently reformed to be required to marry Vahshi, the female leader of Zone Five who is now more bellicose than he is. The citizens of Zone Three lose their complacency and recognize that their health and welfare depend not on their ignoring, but on their transforming the war-monger at their border. Thus, a novel which begins as a feminist utopia and dystopia, ends with the erosion of the boundary between male and female, with the tempering of both male aggression and female self-enclosure, and with a transformation of duality into multiplicity. The marriage achieved is not the literal marriage of male to female, but the opening of the mind of each to the mind of the other so that each becomes both. Though the metaphor has its origins in an energetically heterosexual and patriarchal culture, Lessing reverses its implications by recommending a marriage in which the battle of the sexes is resolved not between the sexes but in the consciousness of each.

A crucial recognition of women writers of this century who have been able to bear contemplating war and nuclear war, and one clearly embedded in Lessing's conception of Zone Four, is the degree to which the ideology of combat pervades all our institutions, shaping to its assumptions our most private, as well as our most public, experiences. If women, as Woolf suggests in *A Room of One's Own*, were so shocked in August 1914 "to see the faces of our rulers in the light of the shell-fire"<sup>12</sup> that romance was killed, the light of the shell-fire since has steadily killed our faith in the liberal education of our rulers as well. When Woolf asks a decade later, in 1938, "Where is it leading us, the procession of educated men?", she answers, emphatically and repeatedly, to photographs like these:

Here then on the table before us are photographs. The Spanish Government sends them with patient pertinacity about twice a week. They are not pleasant photographs to look upon. They are photographs of dead bodies for the most part. This morning's collection contains the photograph of what might be a



"Boy Commandos," LIFE, 1943.

man's body, or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig. But those certainly are dead children, and that undoubtedly is the section of a house (TG, 10-11).

Woolf goes on to argue in *Three Guineas* that the patriarchal structure of the home and of the professions encourages a similar bellicosity, making men "possessive, jealous of any infringement of their rights, and highly combative if anyone dares dispute them" (TG, 66). In "Toward a Woman-Centered University" written forty years later, Adrienne Rich insists that combativeness remains the dominant note of higher education in America. Quoting at length from Leonard Kriegel's critique of his graduate education at Columbia, Rich points out that,

Certain terms in the above quotation have a familiar ring: defending, attacking, combat, status, banking, dueled, power, making it. They suggest the connections—actual and metaphoric—between the style of the university and the style of a society invested in military and economic aggression. In each of these accounts what stands out is not the passion for "learning for its own sake" or the sense of an intellectual community, but the dominance of the masculine ideal, the race of men against one another, the conversion of an end to a means.<sup>13</sup>

Last February, *The New York Times Magazine* ran an article entitled "The Tyranny of the Yale Critics," which featured stunning portraits of Jacques Derrida in a designer overcoat leaning pensively at twilight against a stone pillar, Harold Bloom sinking ponderously into his leather lounge chair amid a sea of papers and books, Geoffry Hartman in a prophet's white beard posing in front of a stained glass window, and J. Hillis Miller nattily dressed looking up from his book at the Naples Pizza Parlor in New Haven. These well-upholstered men at the top of their profession have, of course, their quarrels with each other but none has any quarrel with his position. They practice a form of literary criticism known as deconstruction. In an effort to rescue his critical method from the belligerent implications of its name, J. Hillis Miller argues that deconstruction is not "demolition" of the text.

Rather,

such criticism is an activity turning something unified back to detached fragments or parts. It suggests the image of a child taking apart his father's watch, reducing it back to useless parts, beyond any reconstruction. A deconstructionist is not a parasite but a parricide. He is a bad son demolishing beyond hope of repair the machine of Western metaphysics.<sup>14</sup>

The mollifying image of the child taking apart his father's watch obscures neither the male-centeredness nor the aggressiveness of this parricidal approach to literary texts. However much we may wish to see the machine of Western metaphysics dismantled, we will not do so through the militarist language or the elitist practices of the Yale critics.

"The university is above all a hierarchy," Rich writes in "Toward a Woman-Centered University."

At the top is a small cluster of highly paid and prestigious persons, chiefly men, whose careers entail the services of a very large base of ill-paid or unpaid persons, chiefly women: wives, research assistants, secretaries, teaching assistants, cleaning women, waitresses in the faculty club, lower-echelon administrators, and women students who are used in various ways to gratify the ego (OLSS, p. 136).

Though we don't see in the *Times* portraits of the Yale critics the bevy of ill-paid women behind them, if we have followed recent accounts of the efforts of clerical workers at Yale to augment their pitifully small salaries, we will know they are there. If we are to take seriously Woolf's advice that women can best prevent war by being as little like men as possible, it follows that our institutions of higher learning must not just accommodate women but reflect whatever it is in the lives and habits of women which tempers their bellicosity and their presumptuousness. This means not just adding a bathroom here and a woman faculty member there, but modelling both the content and structure of education after the lives of women. In recent years, for example, the university has grudgingly accepted some responsibility for child care, but only to release women from time to time from their children so that they can be more easily accommodated in male-devised struc-

tures which cannot function in the presence of children. No institution of higher learning requires, or even encourages, *all* its faculty to participate in the care of children, and few regard discourse addressed to children as a serious intellectual undertaking. Women have spent a great deal of time with children, learning how to communicate across a great divide in knowledge and understanding, how to live with irrationality, how to curb the impulse to use brute force—lessons surely useful to the prevention of war. Women's lives have centered in making and caring for things at home and in the community, in living and working with family and neighbors, in reading and writing and painting and playing musical instruments not as a means to prestige or riches or position, but for their own sake—activities

surely useful to the prevention of war. A university sincerely interested in preventing war would insist on the connection between these activities and higher thought rather than imposing a dichotomy upon them. As Grace Paley puts it in an article in *Resist*, "I just don't believe in armed struggle as a way to change the world, or the neighborhood."

In these days of what Cynthia Enloe calls "militarized peacetime," of the battle of the deconstructionists and the reconstructionists, the battle of the sexes, race war, Cold War, terrorism, and blatant US provocation in Afghanistan, Central America and the Middle East, in these days of super bowls and presidential campaigns waged almost exclusively in the language of the prize fight, we might do well to consider why we have failed so utterly to



*Jimmy Winkle and friends build a backyard foxhole, LIFE, 1943.*



Air raid practice in a North London factor, 1939.

emasculate not only the military and the military sciences, but also what we like to call liberal education. "To fight has always been the man's habit, not the woman's," Woolf points out in *The Three Guineas*, and as long as our higher education consists predominantly of texts by white men disseminated by white men, to fight will be the habit of our culture.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf A Biography* (New York, 1972), 204. Any further quotations from Bell's biography of Woolf will be noted in the text as VWB.

2. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (New York, 1938), 87-88. Any further quotations from Woolf's *Three Guineas* will be noted in the text as TG.

3. William Broyles, Jr., "Why Men Love War," *Esquire* (November 1984), 61. Any further quotations from Broyles' article will be noted in the text as WMLW.

4. In an article entitled "To El Salvador," published in *The Massachusetts Review* in 1983, I traced some elaborate evasions of this recognition by such writers as Colette, Rebecca West, Vera Brittain and Joan Didion.

5. Queenie Leavis, "Caterpillars of the World Unite" in *The Importance of Scrutiny*, ed. Eric Bentley (New York, 1948), 389.

6. Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (New York, 1980), 291-92.

7. Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (New York, 1965), 49-50.

8. Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook* (New York, 1973), 589.

9. Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck* (New York, 1973), 4.

10. In an article entitled "Virginia Woolf and the Romance of Oxbridge," published in *The Massachusetts Review* in 1985, I traced Woolf's increasing disillusionment in the years between the wars with English culture and education.

11. *New York Times Book Review* (March 30, 1980), 24.

12. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York, 1929), 15.

13. Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (New York, 1979), 129-30. All further quotations from Rich's article will be noted in the text as OLSS.

14. *The New York Times Magazine*, February 9, 1986, 25.

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## **The Reasons . . . ?**

### **The Reasons . . . ?**

He beat her, he told her because she was looking at another man. And that he loved her so much, it made him fearful and crazy to think he might lose her. He told her that he was sorry and that it wouldn't happen again. but, it did. Since the real reason he beat her was because . . . he could.

He beat her, he said because she was a poor housekeeper. And this reflected badly on him. And if she would just change her slovenly ways, he wouldn't have to beat her. But, the real reason he beat her was because . . . he could.

He beat her, he said because the children cried. And after working all day he felt she should be able to keep them quiet. And if she kept better control of them, beatings wouldn't be necessary. But, the real reason he beat her was because . . . he could.

He beat her, he told her because he was upset, things were going bad at work. And that she should understand that he was under great pressure. And further, if he didn't love her and want so much for her, he wouldn't beat her at all. But, the real reason he beat her was because . . . he could.

He beat her, he told her because she wasn't pretty anymore. And that she had let herself go. And the excuses went on-and-on. "The dog died, the dish ran away with the spoon, the Red Sox lost the pennant." But, the real reason he beat her was because . . . he could.

The reason she took his beatings was because, at first, she loved him and believed he loved her. Then she believed that he beat her because he loved her. Then she believed that he beat her because she deserved to be beaten. She also let him beat her because she was used to living in fear. And finally, she let him beat her because she couldn't, wouldn't, why live if she believed, he would beat her, just because he could . . . ?

**Sharon Howell**



# ON THE GERMAN QUESTION:

## Left, Right, and the Politics of National Identity

HANS-GEORG BETZ

After thirty years of predictable and often boring normalcy, the mood in Germany has started to shift. Questions are being raised which only several years ago would have been considered taboo. The catastrophes of the militarized industrial society, the specter of the "end of progress" reopens the past in the search for alternatives. In what follows I will discuss what I see as the most important phenomenon in Germany today: the question of identity and closely connected with it the revival of the "national question." I will argue that the rise of the ecology movement and the Green Party are closely linked to a general search for identity in contemporary Germany. And I will suggest that the renewed interest in the national question above all on the Left has led to a dangerous blurring of Left and Right.

Our starting point is on the Left. Ever since the days of the student movement in the late sixties the West German Left has been internationalist in its outlook. Young leftists often identified themselves with the struggles of Third World countries against imperialism and neocolonialism more than with domestic politics. Although the Left did undertake a painful confrontation with the history of Nazism, it seems that many leftists, horrified by what they

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\*This article emerges out of internal political debates in Germany. Moishe Postone, in conversation, modified my opinions regarding the weakness of the Green's critique of German society; the need for a differentiated view of Romanticism; and most importantly, the need to understand left politics in the context of the changing world situation, particularly regarding the relative strengths of Germany and the US.

learned and shocked by the extent of their parents' involvement in National Socialism, turned away from German society. Maoist parties and study groups were all ways to escape the horror of the past and to feel accepted again as partners in an international progressive struggle.<sup>1</sup>

In the late seventies the Left plunged into a severe identity crisis. Disappointed and frustrated over what was perceived as the failure of many revolutionary movements and regimes (e.g., Kampuchea, Vietnam, and China), some called for "a return of the Left to our own country."<sup>2</sup>

The frustration over internationalism coincided with a broader disillusionment with Marxism. There was disappointment with the working class which had failed its mission, disdain for the countries of actually existing socialism which did not even approximately conform to the promise of socialism, and a recognition that victory was not around the corner, not even in sight. Above all there was the realization that Marxism was an inadequate tool for the interpretation and analysis of a social system which had unleashed such an immense potential of control and destruction.<sup>3</sup>

### The German Identity Crisis

The disarray of the Left, its "identity crisis," coincided with a more general social questioning of the meaning of German identity. In the mid-seventies, amidst the visible deterioration of the economy following the first oil crisis in 1973, and an even bleaker outlook for the future, Germans began to lose their faith in the blessings of science and technology. Asked whether they believed that *Technik* (i.e. science and technology) was a blessing or a curse, the number of respondents who said they were optimistic declined rapidly in the seventies. While in 1966 72 per cent of the population regarded *Technik* a blessing, in 1970 the number had decreased to 50 per cent, and in 1981, to 30 per cent. In response to the question "Do you believe in progress?" 60 per cent of those asked, answered with yes in 1972; in 1978 only 34 per cent; in 1982 it was down to 27 per cent. Conversely, the fear of science and technology rose dramatically. In 1981, 56 per



*Huts built as part of the protest against the extension of Startbahn West.*

cent associated progress with fear.<sup>4</sup>

This growing scepticism towards *Technik* and progress was manifested politically in citizen initiative groups, i.e., loosely organized grassroots groups which tried to prevent the construction of new technological projects like nuclear power plants, and the expansion of airport runways, and highways for military purposes. These initiatives documented an increased willingness by German citizens to challenge state decisions. Closely connected to this increased challenge to the state we find a growing number of politicians and social scientists writing that Germany was facing a "legitimation crisis." This crisis was evidenced by more and more Germans questioning the ability of traditional political institutions, such as political parties, to master the problems they faced. Thus, in 1984, surveys found that only



*Police destruction of the huts.*

40 percent of the German population trusted the political parties.<sup>5</sup>

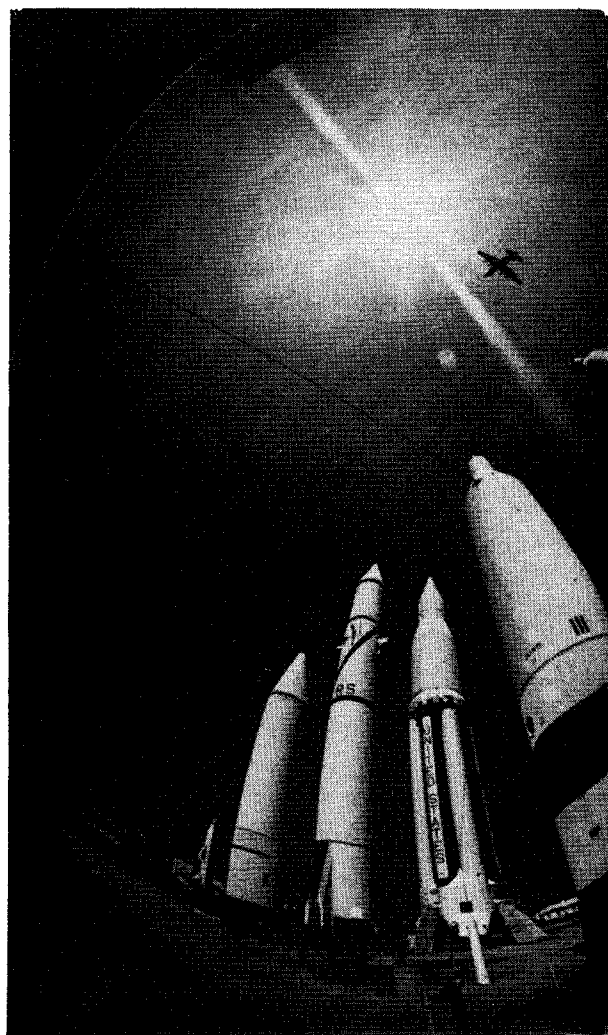
The crisis of German society was not confined to politics alone. It also found its way into literature. The most important example was Michael Ende's book *Momo*, a modern fairy tale, which attracted both children and adults. *Momo* is the story of a little child who sets out to save the world threatened by "gray men," ghostlike creatures who live on time which they buy from humans. But these gray men stand for more than the typical fairy tale villains. They represent the ethics of life in modern industrial societies, the anonymity and pressure for time. In an interview with *Le Monde* Michael Ende emphasized that he does not "attack individuals, but a system — call it, if you want, capitalism — which (. . .) is leading us straight into the abyss." *Momo* and Ende's second book, *The Neverending Story* both became bestsellers in Germany. By 1985 more than 2.5 million copies of the two books had been sold; further evidence of the growing alienation in Germany.<sup>6</sup>

The scepticism towards *Technik*, political institutions, and the industrial system itself was the result of a growing recognition among Germans that the post-war "economic miracle" had finally reached its limits. This had particular meaning in a society which so closely associated national identity with economic prosperity and growth. Having been totally defeated in the war, divided into two countries, the Germans substituted economic performance for lost national identity. No wonder that in the booming 50's and 60's the slogan was "*Wir sind wieder wer*" (We are somebody again). *Being* was the result of having achieved something, and many Germans proudly displayed what they had achieved in their holiday domiciles in Italy, Spain, or Yugoslavia.

The economic crisis of the 1970s exposed a post-war German identity built on sand. As a result many Germans began searching for a different meaning to life and thus a new identity. Nothing expresses the search for identity better than the fact that Erich Fromm's books *To Have or To Be?* and *The Art of Loving* became national bestsellers in Germany at the end of the 70's.<sup>7</sup> Between October 1979

and September 1982, *To Have or To Be?*, which was subtitled "the spiritual foundations of a new society," went through twelve editions, selling more than half a million copies.<sup>8</sup>

One must not forget that when the economic crisis hit Germany, Germany was the second largest capitalist country in direct competition with the United States.<sup>9</sup> As long as the world market was expanding, this competition did not create friction between the two countries. But once all major capitalist countries experienced a severe economic crisis, Germany constituted a direct challenge to American interests. As a consequence the United States tried to reassert control over an ally which had become too powerful. This policy was evident in the attempts by American administrations to station neutron bombs in Germany, to prevent the Germans from selling pipelines to the Soviets, and finally to deploy new medium range missiles on German soil.



## The Left Comes Home

At a time when many Germans felt that their country's power was fading, the American move to reassert control over Germany provoked a reaction. The reaction was a renewed discussion about national sovereignty, the German Question, and national identity. The argument I will go on to make is that the German "search for identity" has taken social and political form in the rise of the ecology movement and the Green Party. Moreover, the growth of the ecology movement broke the isolation of the Left, and opened a way for its "return to Germany."

Leftists entered a Green Party whose base included those rooted in a conservative, often romantic view of modern capitalism. The marginal "green" groups, out of which the Green Party formed, had rejected an emphasis on economic growth and advocated the decentralization of large industries into small, labor-intensive units. Their goal was to preserve life, conserve nature — without a critique of the society which produced the destruction. Ecology was their overriding concern. The task was to find a "third way" between capitalism and communism which they regarded as two sides of the same "materialist" coin. Thus the entrance of the Left, against the bitter resistance of many conservatives,<sup>10</sup> fundamentally altered the Green agenda.<sup>11</sup>



*Rural Myths, Ten-8*

For the Left, ecology was only one of many concerns. The main issues were an overpowering state and the extension of full democratic rights to all members of society. Important "alternative" concepts like decentralization of power, grassroots democracy (*Basisdemokratie*) and the threat from the "nuclear state" (*Atomstaat*) were used to warn of the extent of state power and to show how individuals could gain power over their own lives.<sup>12</sup>

As I have indicated, the Left at this point was repudiating its own history and traditions. The Maoism that had dominated left politics in the 70's was abandoned for a view which challenged the fetish of economic growth and pointed to the disastrous consequences from ecological damage and military build-up. In question, however, is the extent to which the Left has identified and exposed the strains of romantic anti-capitalism and nationalism that live beneath the surface in the dominant culture and are asserted by tendencies within the ecology movement.

In what follows I will first discuss the right-wing ecology politics and then those on the Left. My concern, on the one hand, is to identify the opportunistic entry of the Right into the issues which have been developed by the Left. On the other hand, I will point to the dangers raised by the Left entering a territory which has historically been dominated by the Right: the preoccupation with rebuilding a *German* culture, a *German* identity, a *German* nation.

## Right-Wing Ecology

For the recovery of ecological consciousness necessary for man to survive, we first of all need an inner revolution of human thinking. Neither the unlimited accumulation of material goods nor boundless consumption give meaning to life or happiness. [Only the experience of nature, the cultivation of cultural values, and the social security in family and *Volk* can do that.] Economic growth can only be accepted if it does not result in

- the destruction of the natural environment,
- the boundless exploitation of natural resources,
- a threat to human health.<sup>13</sup>



*Friends of Nature, 1916, from Bertolt Brecht's Berlin.*

This quote draws on the concerns that have ignited protests across Germany, but frames ecological issues in the tradition of conservative romanticism. It is taken from a pamphlet by the National Democratic Party (NDP) which represents the extreme Right\* in the Federal Republic. While the NDP puts "Green" issues in the forefront, their concern is not so much the protection of the natural environment but to reestablish nature as the core concept of an alternative ideology.<sup>14</sup> This ideology invokes the "laws of nature" to justify a hierarchically structured, "organic" order which governs the relationship between the individual, nature, and society. The manifold disturbances of this organic order are the reason for the problems that confront us today. The goal becomes to eliminate the sources of disturbance and to restore that order. Those sources of disorder include both capitalism and communism, "a pair of materialist twins." In response, they call for a "new community order," which should include both co-ownership by the workers of the means of production as well as profit-sharing, and they repeat early ecological demands like "the promotion of alternative energy sources in order to make the construction of nuclear power plants unnecessary."<sup>15</sup>

## Ecological Racism

The Right also invokes ecological concepts in order to promote a new form of racism. In July 1983, Eibl-Eibensfeld, the head of the research department for human ethology<sup>16</sup> at the Max Planck Institut of Behavioralism, wrote in the liberal *Suedutsche Zeitung*:

The present confronts us with many problems which frighten us. We experience fears based on economic worries, fears resulting from uncontrolled population growth and the damage to the environment resulting from it; and, finally, social fears, the result of the crowdedness and anonymity of mass society and a policy of immigration the consequences of which the politicians have failed to recognize in time.<sup>17</sup>

The connection between pollution, overpopulation, and an allegedly misguided "policy of immigration," indicates the direction in which Eibl-Eibensfeld seeks to exploit ecological concerns and the widespread critique of modern industrial society. His analysis can only be understood in the context of a growing xenophobia directed against foreign workers and political refugees seeking asylum in the Federal Republic. Foreign workers are dangerous, Eibl-Eibensfeld argues, because their "survival strategy" is incompatible with advanced industrial societies.

While it is the strategy of advanced industrial societies to reduce population growth in order to allow for prosperity for all, underdeveloped societies have adopted a different strategy: they have as many offspring as possible. Once people who have adopted the latter strategy are imported into advanced industrial countries, they disturb or even destroy the delicate balance there.

These arguments fit neatly into a theory which has been termed "ecological racism."<sup>18</sup> According to this theory every *Volk* needs its own specific environment with which it is familiar in order to thrive. As is the case with the natural environment, every interference from the outside disturbs the "natural ecology of a *Volk*." The result is disastrous. "Only

\*For the purposes of this discussion the right is defined as those individuals and groups which try to influence or shape public opinion for racist, nationalist goals. Although some of them are organized in political parties of the extreme right — mainly the now almost defunct NPD and a new party, The Republicans (Die Republikaner) — their

ideas lie clearly outside of what is acceptable in mainstream politics today (including the DCU/CSU). Therefore they try to advance their ideas through journals (the most important are *Nation Europa*, *Criticon*, and the "national revolutionary" publications *Neue Zeit* and *wir selbst*), books and occasional ads in the large German newspapers.

when a *Volk* maintains its characteristics can we preserve the ethnic variety to which humanity owes its adaptability . . .”<sup>19</sup>

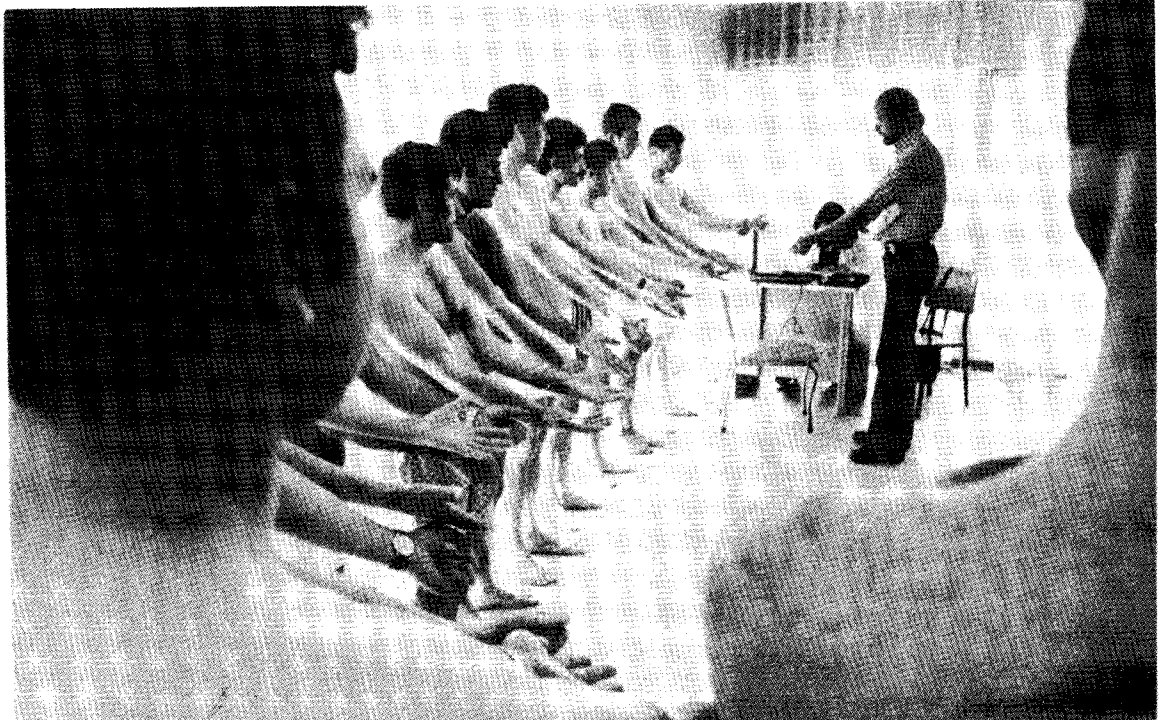
The Right has been quick in adopting these arguments in their “*Kampf*” (Struggle) against what they call the “foreignization” of Germany. In 1982, fifteen German professors formed the so-called “Heidelberger Circle” whose sole purpose was to warn the German people of the extent of this threat. Their famous “Heidelberger Manifesto” begins with the following words: “With great worry we observe the subversion (*Unterwanderung*) of the German people by the influx of many millions of foreigners and their families, the foreignization of our language, our culture, and our nationhood (*Volkstum*). . . . Already many Germans have become foreigners in their living districts and work places, and thus in their own *Heimat* (home).”<sup>20</sup> Additionally, they worry that the foreign population will out-multiply the Germans.

The Right contends this reasoning is not racist. Rightists argue that they attack every kind of cultural destruction. When in 1980 a “Citizen Initiative Auslaenderstopp” (Stop Foreigners) was formed, it was quick to point

out that it regarded foreign workers as its “allies.” After all, Auslaenderstopp argued that the attempt to “melt” foreign workers into the German people destroyed their cultures as well.<sup>21</sup>

The “Heidelberger Manifesto” and the “Citizen Initiative Auslaenderstopp” fuel irrational fears and stereotypes which have particular meaning at a time when German society is already experiencing a severe identity crisis. In the confrontation with the alien nature of the foreigner, Germans are to discover that they possess a culture and that they are a *Volk*, what is more, an endangered *Volk*.

Invoking “German” culture against its “intruders” is also evidenced in the renewal of anti-semitism. It is interesting to note the recurrence of anti-semitic attacks on the Frankfurt School by contemporary German intellectuals.<sup>22</sup> And this is not only from the far Right. In an essay with the title “The Cynical Enlightenment,” Gerd Bergfleth, professor at Tuebingen and an expert on the French philosopher Georges Batailles, attempts to analyze the relationship between Jews and Germans “without bias,” without the “prosemitism” of which he accuses the Left. Bergfleth writes: “The



Turkish workers being examined by German doctors, from *A Seventh Man*.



*Sports club jogging through the Brandenburg Gate, 1925, from Bertolt Brecht's Berlin.*

most important factor for the turn to the Left [of post-WWII Germany] was the returning German-Jewish intelligentsia which got a last chance to transform Germany according to their cosmopolitan standards — a process which succeeded so completely that for two decades were unable to talk about an autonomous German spirit.” Bergfleth finds it striking that rootless Judaism (*heimatlose Judentum*) “usually lacks a special sense for that which is peculiarly German (*deutsche Eigenart*), for example, the Romantic yearning, the unity with nature or the memory of a pagan-Germanic past which cannot be eradicated.”<sup>23</sup>

Bergfleth’s essay represents an extreme attempt to confront the German identity crisis. Yet its themes mirror a growing mood in Germany today. It includes frustration over the fact that Germans are not allowed to forget the past, that they are still being regarded as criminals, as the “*menschheitliche Unmensch*” (the universal un-human). It includes attacks on the Left for having infested the Germans with their internationalism. “Thanks to the ‘leftist re-education,’” Bergfleth writes, “Germans have become foreigners in their own country.” He maintains that “Germans have been

allowed to be Europeans, Americans, Jews, or whatever else, but not [themselves].” Finally, the same mood supports an attack on the Enlightenment and on rationality which at least have to share responsibility for all the evils of modernity. “Where the rational destruction of nature has an advantage over the irrational one is only in the cynicism with which it [rationality] falsely transforms a disaster into a blessing.”<sup>24</sup>

This essay is disturbing because Bergfleth cannot be dismissed as a rightist. Moreover, it was published in 1984 by Matthes & Seitz, a very respectable publishing house in Munich. The mood which the essay reflects is disturbing because it allows things to be said with a claim for respectability which only five years ago would have been condemned by German society as racist. It is also disturbing because once again old stereotypes are revived in order to give Germans a sense of who they are. And it is disturbing because these stereotypes are couched in the terms of a “new wave philosophy” of irrationality and a new German *Mythos* which, as its critics have pointed out, attract the alternative scene as well as the right.<sup>25</sup>

## Green Anti-Industrialism: Left or Right?

The values of the Right are certainly alien to the Greens. Yet the disillusionment with Marxism and the general scepticism toward technology and economic growth leave many on the left without a framework with which to analyze German society. The "return to Germany" on the part of the Left has, for some, led to a sweeping critique of industrialism per se, and the suggestion that pre-industrial forms of existence can restore a "natural harmony" between humans and nature.

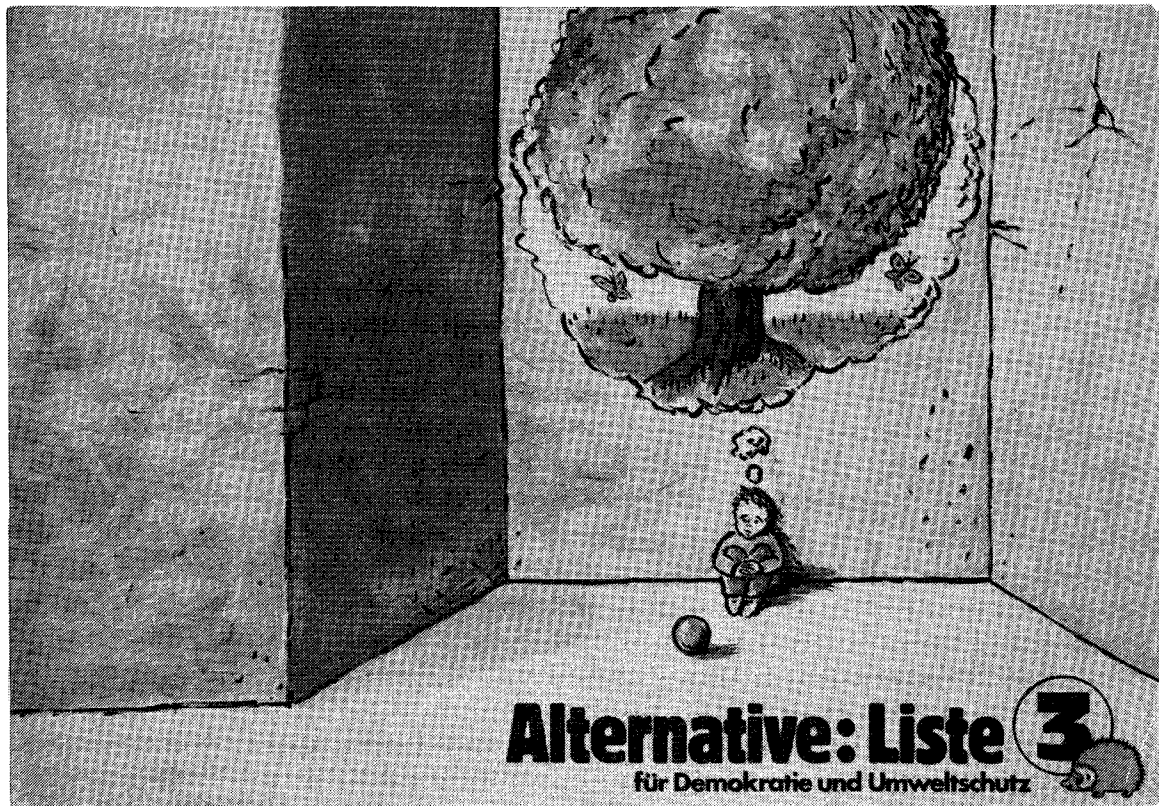
In February 1984, several prominent Greens founded an "eco-libertarian tendency inside and outside of the Green Party." In their platform, the eco-libertarians state that, unlike Socialists, they regard private ownership of the means of production as a "secondary problem." Marxism is criticized for accepting the concentration of production in big industries and the centralization of power inherent in the industrial system. For the eco-libertarians, the most important problem today is industrialism itself, "the most destructive heritage of a history in which humankind became the ruler of the world and assumed the right to build it according to its wishes and ideas."<sup>26</sup>

The Greens often make bold assertions equating West and East, because both are dominated by an ideology of economic growth and production. For Rudolph Bahro, one of the main ideologues of the "fundamentalist" wing of the Green Party (before he left the party), virtually everything which he considers bad is a consequence of the industrial system. These consequences range from nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants to cancer, criminal behavior, psychological defects, even the hostile behavior of the Soviet Union. Thus, Bahro writes:

The first precondition for the arms race is, of course, modern industry as such. Exterminism is rooted in the very foundation of this system and its innermost driving forces. Exterminism does not just find expression in nuclear weapons and power stations; it is the quintessence of the whole complex of tools and machines operative on humanity and the planet. . . .<sup>27</sup>

In the face of nuclear extermination, for Bahro the "question of survival" (*Ueberlebensfrage*) is all-important. Other problems, like the class question, he regards as secondary.

While I agree that the critique of industrial



society as we have known it, West and East, must become part of a left agenda, we must continue to ask what keeps the critique left, once the alienation and destructiveness of industrial society cannot be simply traced to capitalist social relations. To blame everything on an abstract "industrial system" neglects the fact that the direction industrial societies have taken is, above all, the result of underlying unequal and oppressive social relations. Job-related illnesses, nuclear accidents, and the arms race are closely connected to the need to assume and retain bureaucratic power in the East and to make profits in the West. A critique of industrial society and a search for alternatives must start here. Otherwise, we fall back on the romantic assumption that beneath the cover of industrialism there already exists a natural harmony. Such a view is an open invitation to the Right which has always presupposed such a harmony. The growth of a right-wing intelligentsia that articulates the dangers of superpower domination, the atomization of urban existence, the threat of nuclear energy and industrial growth to both the environment and the quality of life, poses a serious challenge to the Left. It becomes crucial then to underline the different futures projected by Right and Left. If there is any arena in which we might expect the distinction between Right and Left to be clarified, it would be around the issue of nationalism.

### The National Question and the Right

National identity, in the case of post-war Germany, always and above all means a search for a solution to the "German Question," i.e., the fact that the Germans live in a divided country with different social and political systems, integrated into two hostile military alliances. For the Left, the division of Germany was a direct result of the crimes of Nazism and German imperialism for which the German people have to accept responsibility. The Right, on the other hand, has always denied such responsibility and blames American "re-education" for trying to make the German people feel guilty. The psychological purpose of re-education was to change the "the spiritual substance" of the German people, in order "to

subjugate" them and "let them accept all guilt."<sup>28</sup> Tellingly, this line of argument implies that the feeling of guilt had to be introduced into German society because there was nothing the German people had to feel guilty about. No wonder that for the Right the first step towards a revival of national identity lies in "the de-criminalization" of German history. "We want a normal nation. This includes the de-criminalization of our history as a precondition for a true national consciousness. This way alone will lead to the re-establishment of Germany."<sup>29</sup>

Rightist authors accuse the Americans of systematically destroying German morality by introducing political pluralism; by creating the illusion that there are no absolute values; by replacing the study of history with political science to destroy all sense of historical traditions in the young generation, making them into "barbarians without a history." They further accuse the Americans of not accepting the West Germans as equal partners. "We are the defeated of 1945, eternally guilt-ridden, who according to the declared sin of the war must never get back a national identity, but must instead remain an instrument in the hands of the victors."<sup>30</sup> This overt anti-Americanism on the Right often feeds on the old clichés about *Kultur* and civilization. While the Germans are said to possess *Kultur*, the West, and above all the United States is accused of only being capable of producing a shallow civilization. Pierre Krebs, the head of the right-wing "Thule Seminar," writes:

America is a nation completely conquered by money and business. America is the home of the *homo dollaricus uniformis*. In 200 years this country has neither succeeded in creating one single school of art nor in providing one of its cities with a special character. (. . .) This country of imperialism without an empire [because it lacks a superior spiritual principle] — this country wants in spite of everything to be the model for the rest of the world.<sup>32</sup>

As in the past, these remarks serve a purpose. In denying America any right to impose its model on the rest of the world because it lacks a superior spiritual principle, the author not only demands that Germany liberate itself from American tutelage, he also assumes that Ger-



many must become the model because it possesses that superior spiritual principle, its *Kultur*. "Between the liberal-consumeristic way of the American West and the dictatorial-materialistic way of the East, Germany must work on the development of an organic form of society based on solidarism and voluntarism, which shall determine the coming era."<sup>33</sup>

#### "New Nationalists" and the Left

August Haussleiter, a father figure for the Greens, is an important representative of the "new nationalism" whose source is on the Right, but whose ideas, I believe, have provided the intellectual ground for some left thinking about Germany today.

The new nationalists discarded the old nationalists' dreams of a reunified German Reich, with the borders of 1933, as reactionary and above all outdated. Instead they propagate a "national revolution" which would lead to self-

determination for the German people. They advocate a "Third Way" between capitalism and communism, between idealism and materialism, between East and West, between the imperialist superpowers. They have also developed plans for a reunified Germany which they say must be neutral, unaligned and demilitarized.<sup>34</sup>

The ideas of the new nationalists lay dormant for a long time. Its proponents<sup>35</sup> led a politically marginal life. The rise of the ecology movement and with it the rediscovery of Germany by the Left, however, brought them and their ideas back on the political scene.

Why did the Left rediscover Germany? One reason, which I have already discussed, was the disillusionment of the left with internationalism. Another was the rediscovery of *Heimat* (home) in the course of the ecology movement. *Heimat* provided many points of identification. As far as the ecology movement was concerned it could be used to give a concrete meaning to "nature" by associating it with a particular landscape. Associated with dialect and folklore, it served regionalist movements. In terms of political resistance it could be used as a "counter-civilization motif, the idea of home being evidently understood as anti-state, anti-centralization, and counter-industrial."<sup>36</sup> The third reason was the reaction on parts of the Left to the changing political relationship between the United States and Germany in the 1970s — especially the decision of the Carter administration to deploy neutron bombs in Germany.<sup>37</sup> This decision put the question of German sovereignty on the political agenda, an issue which became more important after the failure of the Peace Movement to prevent the deployment of new American medium range missiles on German ground.

Thus the discussion about national identity already preceded the so-called dual track decision of 1979. (The two tracks being first negotiations between East and West, and if that failed then the escalation of the arms race with the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles.) The debate over this decision only intensified the discussion. Thomas Schmid, publisher of the journal *Freibeuter* and a member of the eco-libertarian wing of the Greens, was probably one of the first to articulate what the search for identity meant:

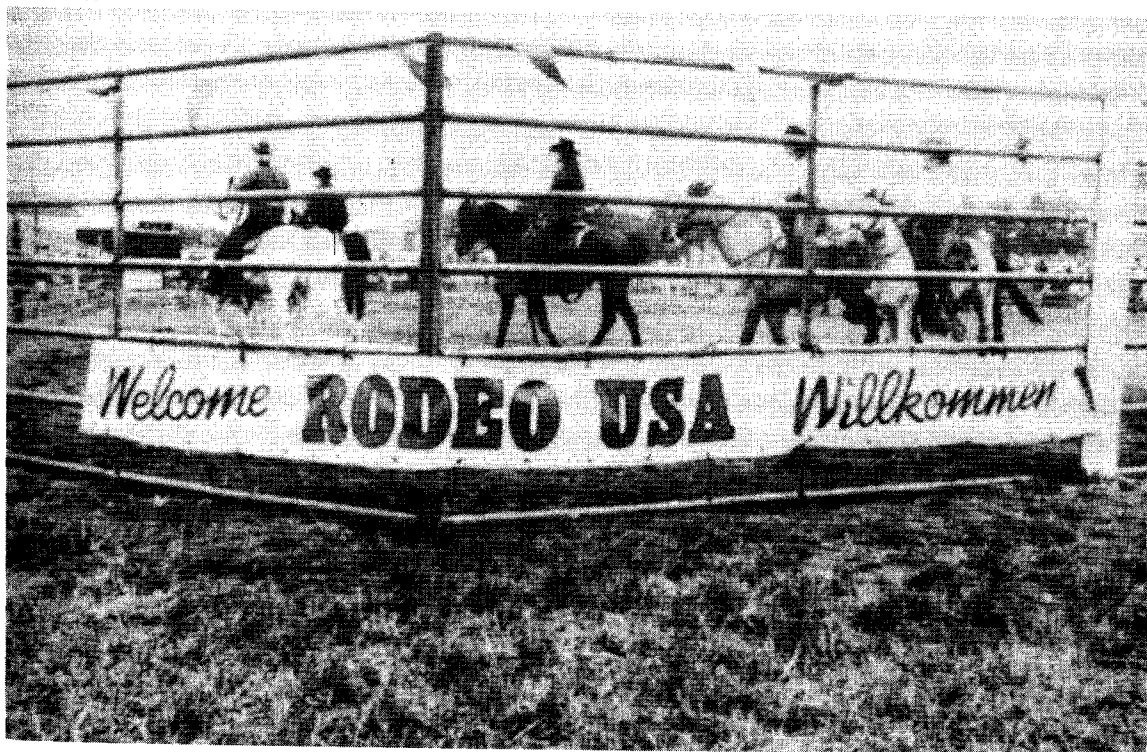
"I am sure that I will not forget the German horrors — but I also do not want to forget my being German. Wherever the German horror is, there the German fascination is also very close.(...) (I) think we will only be able to deal with the German horror if we do not negate our being German any longer. Not only do I belong to this country, I also love it. What I want here is a Left which is not only cosmopolitan but also German. A Left which does not want to compensate for the lack of political culture in Germany by jumping on the train of other countries, but by developing a *specifically German culture.*" [italics mine]

Thomas Schmid uses especially harsh words for those on the Left who negate their German identity and continue to be caught in a ritual of self-accusation: "That is a dead end, that is in the tradition of the imperialistic de-Nazification by the god-damned Yankees who decreed democracy in our country."<sup>38</sup>

This exclamation of frustration reveals the ambiguity with which the Left approached the question of identity. On the one hand the confrontation with the horrors of the German past, on the other the bitterness towards those who told the Germans what they had done. The danger in this line of argument was that it could play into the hands of the Right. No wonder that the most important journal of the extreme Right, *Nation Europa*, reprinted and very favorably commented on Thomas Schmid's remarks.<sup>39</sup>

### Anti-Americanism and the "German Question"

If at the beginning the search for identity meant once again a confrontation with the German past, the focus shifted dramatically once the Left started to oppose the dual track decision. The first reaction of the Left to that decision was to demonstrate against the deployment of the missiles in Germany and to alert the public to the dangers which the missiles represented. Despite growing support for the Peace Movement on the part of the German population, resulting in some of the largest demonstrations in post-war Germany, the effort ultimately failed. The expectation that the new generation of American missiles would actually be stationed on German soil together with the strong impression that the Americans were thinking about the possibility of a "limited nuclear war" created widespread fears of an immediate threat to Germany. It also created the feeling, especially in parts of the Peace Movement, that the effort had failed because of Germany's political situation. The interpretation was that the Americans once again were imposing their will on the Germans; the Germans, on the other hand, were unable to prevent the implementation of a decision detrimental to their vital interests because almost forty years after the war the Germans were still living in an *occupied country*. The considerations which followed this analysis concentrated on ways for Germany to escape from a situation which threatened



nuclear annihilation. In thinking about these issues the Left studied the logic of the military blocs in Europe and the symbol of the bloc confrontation, namely the division of Germany.

The discussion about the question of German sovereignty is a predictable reaction to the fact that the world political and economic situation is changing. At a time when both superpowers are trying to reestablish control over European nations more than reluctant to follow their lead, the desire to break out of the blocs is understandable. The discussion about the future of Germany, including possibilities for reunification, followed almost inevitably. But once this is accepted, the discussion must shift to the question of the goals for a future Europe, an alternative Germany. For Germany in particular, where nationalism has led to such disastrous results in the past, this means that a demand for national sovereignty cannot be separated from issues like democracy, the threat of Germany's economic power to the rest of Europe, the fears and anxieties of other Europeans, and the goal of an open society that transcends the traditional insider/outsider status of those who live in Germany. This is where important segments of the Left have failed.

The intensity with which the German Question is debated in parts of the left is a direct result of the failure to stop the deployment of the missiles and the resignation felt by many young people following this defeat. The centrality of the German Question must be seen in two ways. On the one hand, Germans ask how they can prevent something like the deployment of the missiles in the future. On the other, there is the attempt by some leftists to use the national question "to revive the momentum of the Peace Movement" and "to enlarge the potential for social protest" since the Peace Movement has lost strength.

The Left is divided over what position the Green Party should take on the national question. One faction argues that Germans must accept the division of Germany and recognize the post-war borders as final. Their argument goes as follows. Germany plays a crucial role in the East/West bloc system. The experience of WWII has meant that both Eastern and Western Europe maintain an image of Germany



*Vice-Admiral Jeschounek*

as an enemy, an aggressor who may at any time attempt to regain its old, 1933, borders, its "lost" territory. The failure of West Germany to recognize East Germany as a sovereign state is seen as proof of their revengeful design to regain authority over that territory which includes parts of Czechoslovakia and Poland. Thus if West Germany accepted the fait accompli of two Germanys, the fear and distrust upon which the Warsaw and Nato Pacts are maintained would dissipate and the "logic of the military blocs" would be broken. The reduction of fear could then enable all European nations to focus on substantive social and political changes.<sup>40</sup>

### **Left Nationalism**

The ideas of the second faction, who I will call the "left nationalists," are important because they seem the most determined to win the heart of the left. But more importantly I think their views are dangerous. The question of national

sovereignty is their overriding concern while their views on the nature of a future Germany are more than hazy. Their main argument is that the reunification of Germany is the precondition for peace in Europe.

Peter Brandt and Herbert Ammon, two of the most prolific left writers on the national question, wrote in 1982: "The 'national task' of Germans in both East and West Germany is (...) not the *imprisonment* in the alliances prescribed to them, but a thorough overcoming of the status quo." [italics mine] How could the Germans fulfill their national task? For Brandt and Ammon the answer lies in the secession of both Germanys from their respective alliances, their demilitarization, and a process of peaceful unification of the two countries. The two authors maintain that the peaceful unification of Germany would not only benefit the Germans but also the rest of Europe since it would make "peace, democracy, and national autonomy into a combined issue."<sup>41</sup> In their view the unification of Germany could become the first step towards a reunification of Europe and the formation of an all-European community. A pamphlet of the "Berlin Working Group of the Alternative List," to which Brandt also belongs, argues the same position.

Over the last several years the number of groups, initiatives and study groups all dealing with the national question has grown. Among the most important of these groups is the so-called *Linke Deutschland-Diskussion* (Left Discussion about Germany, LDD) of Rolf Stolz, a former member of the presidium of the Green Party. According to Stolz, the LDD unites members of the SPD, the Greens, the Alternative List Berlin, and others who are not organized in parties.

The LDD maintains that the installment of new American missiles in Germany presents an immediate danger to the Soviet Union "from German soil." A peace treaty and the withdrawal of all *occupation* forces from Germany is therefore necessary in order "to ban the danger of war." The LDD demands a "progressive policy of unification which will create peace, a consistent decoupling from the hegemonic power of the USA and the capitalist system, and the deliberate decision for a particular German way." Thus, a "German eman-

ipation movement...serves the vital interests of all the peoples of Europe." They focus on German sovereignty as a question of national reunification and pose the German problem as one of being occupied by the U.S. Implying the notion of Germany as victim, the new nationalists gloss over the fact that Germany has become a very strong actor in the international capitalist system. This failure of analysis regarding Germany's power in the world makes the new nationalists difficult to distinguish from the right.

The image of Germany as an occupied country is also the intellectual basis for the "National Revolutionaries," the most interesting group among the new nationalists. Their arguments combine right and left thinking.<sup>42</sup>

The ideology of the National Revolutionaries rests on two pillars, the first of which they call "*Befreiungsnationalism*" (liberation nationalism). They claim that the assertion of national identity is the key to national autonomy and self determination. In their publications the National Revolutionaries support all kinds of national liberation movements and "national revolutionary" struggles, ranging from the Irish, Basques, Eastern Europeans and Ukrainians to the Afghans and Sandinistas. The enemies of the peoples are the superpowers which they see as accomplices in dividing the world into spheres of influence. The liberation of Germany from its oppressors is "the moral task and our concrete (German) contribution to the liberation of the world." The goal of National Revolutionary politics is "the national unity of the German people in an independent and democratic, free and socialist Republic of Germany." By socialism the National Revolutionaries mean a socialism "of the specific national way, against communism and capitalism, bureaucracy and corporations." The National Revolutionaries propose this third way for Germany because the Germans constitute "neither a people of the West or the East, but a people of the middle of Europe which wants to go its own way. The anti-capitalist yearning of our people is alive, but it is not a pro-communist yearning; we hope for a different way because otherwise we will be pulverized between the systems and military blocs."<sup>43</sup>

The second main point of the National

Revolutionaries is what they call "ethno-pluralism." It is here that the National Revolutionaries sound almost identical to the racist ideas of Eibl-Eibensfeld or the authors of the "Heidelberger Manifesto."

"Race is an essential characteristic for the categorization of humanity," writes Hennig Eichberg, long the chief ideologue of the National Revolutionaries, in a programmatic article in 1970. He divides humanity into three races, the Europides, the Mongolides, and the Negrides. Such a theory of races, he claims, does not yet constitute racism. Racism only begins when one rates the different races. But, he continues, "there is no valid measure to divide the races into better and worse ones in a moral or any other sense. Even the validity of a categorization into culturally superior and inferior races is doubtful. Until we have valid empirical data, one will have to limit oneself to the statement that the different races have developed differently and have achieved different forms of cultures." These remarks are outrageous by themselves. The very categorization of races has, historically, been racist. Not

simply in the judgments made, but in the very idea of what constitutes a race. Eichberg then goes on to contradict his claim of neutrality. One page later he asserts that the white race has turned out to be superior when it comes to civilization and technology. The territories of the Negrides, on the other hand, "show, despite more than a century of partly intensive contact with the white civilization, hardly a dim reflection of this specific progressivity." But this, of course, should not lead anybody to pass judgment on other races. It only means that one has to recognize that every race has its own specific characteristics. This recognition should lead one to realize the importance of "delimitation and separate development, and cooperation in mutual respect."

Eichberg goes on to write, "Nationalism, that means turning away from the chauvinism of the nineteenth century and the imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth century back to the culture and traditions of our race,...[the] historical center [of which] is Europe, *our* Europe." Eichberg is really concerned that *our* Europe might be invaded by those "other



One in three Berlin workers has no vote. Vote for foreign immigrants.

“races” and that as a result Europe might lose its special culture and traditions. “The fronts,” Eichberg warns, “already run through Paris and London.” No wonder that for Eichberg the apartheid system of South Africa, “which attained peace through a smart and liberal racial policy,” represents a model society, where his ideas of separate development are fully realized. It is not surprising that he contrasts the South African apartheid system to the United States, a country “rocked by ‘integration’ and permanent race wars.”<sup>44</sup>

If one reexamines the National Revolutionary theory of liberation nationalism in the light of this theory of ethnopluralism, their rejection of liberal capitalism and communism and with it their anti-imperialist attacks on the superpowers take on a different meaning. The National Revolutionaries fit well into a series of attempts by certain groups on the right like the “Thule Seminar” to revive a “European spirit.” In their publications these rightists argue that European identity has been destroyed by the American West and the Soviet East. They attack American liberalism and Soviet Marxism for their egalitarian character which they claim destroys national identity: “The egalitarian world system is the instrument for genocide (*Voelkermord*).”<sup>45</sup> Thus the right is not so much concerned about the military power of the superpowers. The superpowers represent, above all, ideologies with universal pretensions and therefore a *cultural* threat to national peculiarities. From this it follows that national liberation means that a people frees itself from the cultural hegemony of the competing ideological models of the superpowers. Or, as Hennig Eichberg has recently said: “To create the German nation, that means *decentralization*, that means to turn away from the headquarters of Vodka-Cola...”<sup>46</sup> Gerd Bergfleth’s critique of the Enlightenment reflects a similar mood. Again it is the equalizing tendencies of the Enlightenment which Bergfleth attacks: “Whole industries of Enlightenment (*Aufklaerungsindustrien*) are constantly at work in order to hammer into the individual the equal step of progress — the total democratization which ties the individual to social imperatives and thus extinguishes the individual peculiarity.”<sup>47</sup>

## US-Außenminister Alexander Haig:



„Es gibt wichtigeres als Frieden“

US Secretary of State Alexander Haig, “There are more important things than peace.”

The attempts of the National Revolutionaries to infiltrate the Green Party date back as far as 1978. For the National Revolutionaries the Green Party provided an ideal target to escape political marginality especially since early Green ideology and National Revolutionary theory seemed to share views: “the sense of a third way between Left and Right, beyond capitalism and communism, [based] on the knowledge of a ecological-biological threat to man and his environment, rooted in the materialist spirit of the ruling ideologies.”<sup>48</sup> But it was not only a worldview which the National Revolutionaries shared with the still conservative Greens. They also shared a common desire to keep the Left out of the party.<sup>49</sup> Once the Left had succeeded in joining the Green Party, it began to try to push the National Revolutionaries out. In October 1980 the Alternative List of West Berlin decided that they could not work together with *Solidaristen* and other National Revolutionaries. They argued that the National Revolutionaries were even more dangerous than the neo-Nazis because they hid

their true intentions behind a curtain of grass roots democratic and ecological programs. The Greens accused the National Revolutionaries of regarding Austria as part of a future reunified Germany and of maintaining that the division of Germany was "the result of the imperialist politics of the occupation forces." These statements, the Greens wrote, belittled both Hitlerian imperialism and German nationalism.<sup>50</sup>

If the Greens were to a large degree successful in excluding National Revolutionaries from the party, the National Revolutionaries have once again found their way into segments of the Left. Their influence can be seen most clearly in the program of the *Linke Deutschland Diskussion* (LDD). As we have seen, the LDD demands a "German emancipation movement" to liberate Germany from American hegemony and capitalism and advocates a "particular German way." The choice of words suggests a National Revolutionary influence. This suspicion is confirmed by the fact that the LDD lists among its supporters Armin Krebs and Wolfgang Venohr, both of whom have National Revolutionary politics.

Not only do the signatures of National Revolutionaries appear on peace initiatives of the Left, they also write for left journals while leftists write for National Revolutionary publications. Thus Hennig Eichberg has written in such left publications as *Befreiung, das da — avanti*, and *Aesthetik & Kommunikation*;<sup>51</sup> Herbert Ammon recently wrote an article in the National Revolutionary journal *wir selbst*, ironically enough just after an article written by Lothar Penz, the former head of the *Solidaristen*; and Peter Brandt and Herbert Ammon published an article in Wolfgang Venohr's *German Unity Will Surely Come (Die deutsche Einheit kommt bestimmt)* which included articles by rightists such as Hellmut Diwald and Harald Rueddenklau.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion:

To make one point quite clear: I welcome the fact that the Left has been fighting against the increase of American military power in Europe. Because of the Peace Movement and the Greens, public awareness of the dangers of the arms race has increased dramatically. Without

such pressure, the Social Democrats would never have reconsidered their position on the deployment of the missiles nor begun a search for alternatives to the military status quo in Europe.

It is certainly necessary and legitimate to think about ways out of the bloc system and also to think about the German question. Yet, if the renewed attempts of the U.S. to reassert control over Germany are a result of the fact that Germany's position in the world capitalist order has considerably improved, then the Left's focus on German sovereignty may inadvertently play into the hands of German capitalism and of those on the Right who want to strengthen Germany vis-à-vis the super-powers and Europe.



from "The White Hell of Pitz Palu," 1929. From Bertolt Brecht's Berlin.

The failure to come to terms with Germany's role in the world capitalist system also has the effect of justifying reunification in cultural terms. Dan Diner, a member of the alternative scene in Frankfurt, has warned of the form which the confrontation with the U.S. has taken on the Left. He believes that alongside the political opposition to American hegemony and the extension of American military power, there lies a "deep resentment, a cultural anti-Americanism."<sup>53</sup> To contrast a "Vodka-Cola culture" versus a particular German culture "in the humanist tradition of the German people" feeds on the old clichés of Western civilization versus German culture and comes very close to the way the Right opposes the alien nature of the foreigner against everything "German." The danger for the Left, in this blurring of lines between Right and Left, has already been recognized as an opportunity for the Right. In the words of Manfred Mueller, "The nationalist Right should attentively watch the development of the left nationalism, and it should learn from it.... The Right might then have a good chance to harvest what the left nationalists sow today on stony ground."<sup>54</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Schneider, Michael, "Fathers and Sons Retrospectively: The Damaged Relationship Between Two Generations," *New German Critique*, no. 31 (1984); also Fetscher, Iring, "Die Suche nach der nationalen Identität," in Juergen Habermas (ed.), *Stichworte zur "geistigen Situation der Zeit," 1. Band: Nation und Republik*, Frankfurt, 1980.
2. Schmid, Thomas, "Terra Incognita, Erkundigungen ueber die Deutschen und ein Plaedoyer fuer die Rueckkehr der Linken in ihr Land," in *Die Linke neu denken*, Berlin, 1984; Ebert, Wolfgang, "Wir Wendekinder," *Die Zeit*, no. 45 (1985), p. 65; also Knoedler-Bunte, Eberhard, (ed.) *Was ist heute noch links?* Berlin, 1981.
3. Conversation with Moïshe Postone. Also see Botho Strauss's famous rejection of dialectical thinking, "Ohne Dialektik denken wir auf Anhub duemmer; aber es muss sein; ohne sie!"
4. *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie*, vol. III, Munich, New York, Paris, 1983, pp. 105, 514; von Klipstein, Michael and Burkhard Struempel, *Der Ueberdruss and Ueberfluss*, Munich, 1984, pp. 183-187.
5. Veen, Hans-Joachim, "Die Waehler und Repraesentanten der Gruenen: Zwischen aktuellem Protest und einer anderen Republik," in *Eichholz Brief*, no. 1 (1985), p. 16; also see Abromeit, Heidrun, "Parteienverdrossenheit und Alternativbewegung. Thesen zur Weiterentwicklung des Parteiensystems der Bundesrepublik," *PVS*, no. 2 (1982).

6. Shlaes, Amitz, "Germany's Pied Piper of Romantic Fantasy," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 28, 1985.
7. Erich Fromm was associated with the Frankfurt School in the 1930's. He later became a popular analyst of the alienation of modern society.
8. Erich Fromm, *Haben oder Sein*, Munich, 1979.
9. This point and its elaboration below were made by Moïshe Postone in conversation.
10. For a history of the Green Party see Hallersleben, Anna, "Wie alles anfang..." in Thomas Kluge (ed.), *Gruene Politik*, Frankfurt, 1984; Hallersleben, Anna, *Von der Gruenen Liste zur Gruenen Partei?* Zurich, 1984; Stoess, Richard, *Vom Nationalismus zum Umweltschutz*, Opladen, 1980.
11. For the AUD see "Das Leben schuetzen!" *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, June 19, 1976; for the GAZ see "Das Gruene Manifest," *Neue Politik*, no. 8 (1978) pp. 28-30.
12. See for example Hirsch, Joachim, "The West German Peace Movement," *Telos*, no. 51 (1982), pp. 135-141; Rucht, Dieter, "Neue soziale Bewegungen — Anwaelt oder Irrlaefer ders Projekts der Moderne?" *Frankfurter Hefte*, no. 11/12 (1985), pp. 144-149; Hirsch, Joachim and Roland Roth, "'Modell Deutschland' und neue soziale Bewegungen," *Prokla*, no. 40 (1980), pp. 14-39.
13. Cited by Dudek, Peter, "Konservatismus, Rechtsextratismus und die 'Philosophie der Gruenen,'" in *Gruene Politik*, pp. 94-95.
14. This point was clarified for me by Moïshe Postone. Postone identifies two traditions within Romanticism. One seeks to put nature at the center of its ideology, to make nature determinant of society; the other invokes nature in order to critique society, for example to point to the human consequences of the domination of nature.
15. Vorsatz, K.H. "Der Weg nach vorn," *Profil* (Nationaldemokratische Schriftenreihe), no date.
16. Ethology in Germany is mainly associated with the work of the Nobel Prize Winner, Konrad Lorenz and Irenaeus Eibl-Eibenfeld.
17. *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, July 3-4, 1983, p. 111.
18. Dudek, Peter, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.
19. Eibl-Eibenfeld, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, July 3-4, 1983, p. 111.
20. "Heidelberger Manifest vom 12. Juni 1981."
21. Cited in Barkholdt, Bernhard, "Die Buergerinitiative Auslaenderstop," *Naiton Europa*, no. 2 (1981), p. 33.
22. In addition to the essay by Bergfleth discussed below, see also, *Umweltzerstoerung und Ideologie* (Tuebingen, 1983), pp. 51-2. This book was written by the physicist Rudolf Kuenast for the "Thule Seminar," an organization of right-wing intellectuals who have close ties to the French Nouvelle Droite.
23. Bergfleth, Gerd, "Die Zynische Aufklaerung," in Bergfleth, Gerd et al., *Zur Kritik der Palavernden Aufklaerung*, Munich, 1984, pp. 180-181.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 1985-186.
25. Hornauer, Uwe, "Abgesang der Postmoderne," *Evangelische Kommentare*, no. 9 (1985) pp. 492-494.
26. *Kommune*, no. 4 (1984), p. 51.
27. Rudolf Bahro, "A New Approach for the Peace Movement in Germany," *Exterminism and Cold War*, New Left Review (ed.), London, 1982, p. 88.

28. Jaeckel, Georg, "Umerziehung des deutschen Volkes," *Nation Europa*, no. 9 (1984), p. 22.

29. "Erklärung des Deutschlandrats vom Dezember 1983," *Nation Europa*, no. 1 (1984), p. 81. (Members of this "German Council" were among others Hellmut Diwald (see fn. 44), Bernhard Willms (see fn. 61), and Franz Schoenhuber, the Bavarian leader of a new nationalist party on the Right, "Die Republikaner.")

30. Von Wolmar, Wolfram, "Die deutsche Identitätskrise," *Nation Europa*, no. 2 (1984), p. 8.

31. See fn. 22.

32. Krebs, Pierre, "Aufruf zur europaischen Selbstbesinnung," *Nation Europa*, no. 11 (1981), pp. 6-7.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

34. Stoess, Richard, "Vaeter und Enkel: Alter und neuer Nationalismus in der bundesrepublik," *Aesthetik & Kommunikation*, no. 32 (1978), p. 50.

35. Besides Haussletter, the leader of the first party to call itself *Die Gruenen*, *Aktionsgemeinschaft Unabhaenger Deutscher*, I would emphasize Wolf Schenke, the publisher of the monthly *Neue Politik*.

36. See Diner, Dan, "The 'National Question' in the Peace Movement — Origins and Tendencies," *New German Critique*, no. 28 (1983), pp. 100-102. For a discussion of *Heimat* and ecology movement on the right, see Werner Georg Haverbeck, "Heimat und Volkstum als Grundlagen der Zukunft," *Nation Europa*, no. 10/11 (1984), pp. 35-50.

37. Moishe Postone alerted me to this point.

38. Quotations from Fetscher, Iring, *op. cit.*, p. 120-122.

39. *Nation Europa*, no. 5 (1981), p. 36.

40. The most important representative of this position is Dirk Schneider, a former member of the *Bundestag* from the Alternative List Berlin. For his view see Dirk Schneider, "Seid Umschlungen Millionen — Wie das Stichwort 'Widervereinigung' Linke und Rechte zusammenfuehrt," *Stachelige Argumente*, no. 28, September 1984, pp. 11-15. See also von Bedow, Wilfried and Rudolf Brocke, "Dreimal Deutschlandpolitik. Deutschlandpolitische Ansätze der Partei der Gruenen," p. 7; to be published in *Deutschlandarchiv*, no. 1 (1986).

41. Ammon, Herbert and Peter Brandt, "The German Question," *Telos* no. 51 (1982), pp. 32-45.

42. For different views of the National Revolutionaries, see Richard Stoess, "Vaeter und Enkel," p. 52; and Schultz, H.C. and Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, "Was will die 'Neue Rechte'?" in Jan Peters (ed.) *Nationaler 'Sozialismus' von Rechts*, Berlin, 1980, pp. 48-55.

43. "Unser Programm fuer Deutschland," Sache des Volkes, Nationalrevolutionaere Aufbauorganisation; "Fuer die Sache des Volkes voran — Deutsche was tun?" Nationalrevolutionaere Aufbauorganisation; both can be found in Jan Peters (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 252 ff.

44. Singer, Hartwig, "totale Nation? Europaischer Nationalismus und die Oeffnung nach vorn," *Junge Kritik*, no. 1, Coburg, 1970, pp. 9-42. Hartwig Singer is the pseudonym under which Hennig Eichberg wrote at that time.

45. Krebs, Pierre, *Die europaische Widergeburt*, Tuebingen, 1982, p. 12

46. Eichberg, Hennig, "Balkanisierung fuer Jedermann?"

— Nation, Identitaet und Entfremdung in der Industriegesellschaft," *Befreiung*, no 19/20 (1981), p. 68.

47. Bergfleth, Gerd, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186.

48. The quotation is from Lothar Penz who in 1979 was the head of the *Solidaristen*, a branch of the National Revolutionaries.

49. Letter from November 1, 1979, copy in Jan Peters (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 245-247.

50. "Rechte Gruene? Zwischenbericht der Kommission 'Rechtsextremistische Unterwanderung der GRUENEN und nahestehender Vereinigungen' der Gruenen Baden-Wuerttemberg," October 1982, p. D33.

51. See, e.g., Hennig, Eichberg, "Wir sind eben doch Deutsche," *Aesthetik & Kommunikation*, no. 36 (1979), p. 126.

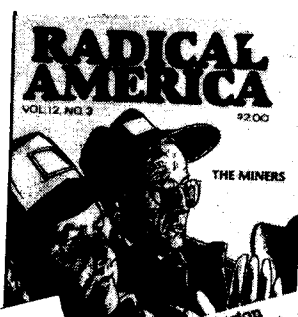
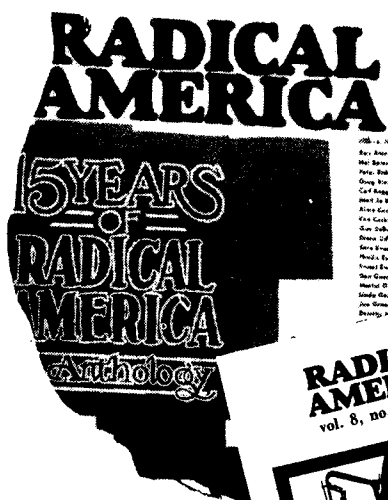
52. Ammon, Herbert, "Eine notwendige Ergaenzun zum Buelow-Papier," *wir selkbst*, no. 4 (1985), pp. 23-26; Penz, Lotha, "Strategische Bedingungen alternativer Verteidigung," *ibid.*, pp. 26-30. Brant, Peter and Herbert Ammon, "Patriotismus von Links," in Wolfgang Venohr (ed.) *Die Deutsche Einheit kommt bestimmt, Bergisch-Gladbach, 1980, pp. 119-159. In a letter to me Herbert Ammon has admitted that it might have been a "tactical mistake" to publish their article in Venohr's book. Letter from November 27, 1985.*

53. Dan Diner, *op. cit.*, p. 104. Another example was the controversy between Rudolf Bahro and Andre Gorz about German nationalism. Bahro wrote: "If your great nation [i.e. France] is the heart of European culture, then surely this heart must now be trembling, given that, without drastic changes, it is no longer relevant to the rest of humanity." "Rapallo — why not? Reply to Gorz," *Telos*, no 51 (1982), p. 123.

54. Mueller, Manfred, "gibt es eine nationale Linke?" *Nation Europa*, no. 5 (1981), p. 38.

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# LETTER FROM BERLIN

JAMIE GOLDFEIN

I was sitting on the subway, on the line that goes through East Berlin, on its way to the North part of West Berlin, at the end of April this year. We pass through deserted subway stations; deserted, that is, except for East German police stationed there to prevent escape from or entrance into East Berlin. I am always eager to travel on one of the lines that go through East Berlin, though my daily life seldom requires me to do so; this is one of the few times that I really feel that I am in the divided city of Berlin.

Whenever I pass through these dark stations and see East German police hidden and on the lookout, I envision what life was like when they were full of people. I remember that Berlin was the capital of Germany—a growing and cosmopolitan city. And I contemplate why Germany was divided, and about how “efficient” German trains are known to be and what that meant to the millions who perished.

I am relieved when the subway passes through these heavily guarded stations and returns to the “normal” brightly lit and active West Berlin stations. Back in West Berlin, I am brought out of my reflection on what it means to be in a divided city, and I return to my daily thoughts. But again, I am reminded of what “normalcy” means in such a city. Living in West Berlin, I’ve come to accept as “normal” the deserted subway stations, the wall, the



*Police observance, from Potsdamer Strasse.*

patrolled and mined borders, the buildings and people in East Berlin I can see from West Berlin, but from whom I am isolated, the partings of old friends or relatives I watch on the bridge to East Berlin.

People get off and on the subway at the West Berlin station one stop before the border station between East and West Berlin—Friedrichstrasse. I expected the feelings and thoughts evoked by the guns, hidden guards and surveillance to disintegrate into my thoughts of the friends I was meeting. Instead, several small groups of West Berlin policemen walked up and down the subway; they approached each car and surveyed the passengers. They entered the car I was in, looked us all over, glanced over me to inspect the next passenger, and then walked to the next car. I saw a few people on the platform being stopped and interrogated.

I had known that the police were carrying out *Ausländerkontrollen* (control of foreigners). I had read about it in the newspapers, and had protested against it as part of the mass demonstrations against the US attack on Libya. But the feelings of fear, of powerlessness, of rage, and of sadness were unexpected.

The West Berlin authorities, under the orders of the US, had instituted identity checks of “suspicious,” “non-Western” looking people in response to terrorism in general, and the attack on the disco—La Belle—in particular.<sup>1</sup> These identity checks constituted an extension of the racism prevalent in West Germany, giving the police the power to question and detain individuals as potential terrorists based on their appearance. What this means is that anyone who does not look “German” (or North-West European) is subject to police investigation about their identity, their visa status, their political views, whatever the individual policeman wants to ask.

A scene from “David,” a West German film by Peter Lilienthal about a young Jewish man and his family in Nazi Germany, flashed into my head. In the film, the Jewish father, in an attempt to warn his family of the arrival of the Gestapo, risked riding the subway even though he wore a yellow star and Jews were forbidden to use public transportation. He held his briefcase over the star and was not caught for this “violation,” though, later, he was killed in a concentration camp.

Feeling the police looking everyone up and down, searching for dark-skinned, “non-Aryan” looking targets, I became intensely aware of being Jewish, and of the complicated questions of identity in West Germany.

I came to West Berlin for the first time in June 1984 to research visual images of women and Jews, and how they were linked in Nazi propaganda. Prior to that first trip, I was terrified, and felt vulnerable being a Jewish woman coming to confront the reasons for my fears (i.e. the Holocaust). At the same time, I felt an urgency to face those fears and that history. Though many people had an immovable distrust of “the Germans” and thought I was a bit crazy to undertake such a project, I felt that I owed it to myself, to my family, to Jews, and to “history” to probe into this past. My respect for the German Left in their mobilization against US missiles and the organization of the Greens assuaged my fears to a degree; because of my experience on the Left, I could understand some of what it means to be an individual in a culture you try to break from. I

was willing to consider trusting “the Germans.”

During my first stay in West Berlin, I encountered a variety of reactions to my being Jewish—but mostly silence. People knew I was Jewish because of my last name, but most people chose to ignore this, or to react in a way that evaded the issue. “Are you of German descent?” I was often asked instead of the more central question “Are you Jewish?” I was grateful to the people who took a risk and probed into what it means to be Jewish. But mostly, there was silence, or buried anti-semitism: “Your name sounds so funny to me.” “Why?” I ask. “I don’t know...”; or, “You look so regular, I never would have thought you were Jewish...”

I struggled to understand race, ethnicity, and national identity as an American and a Jew. I became intensely aware of my Jewishness in a way I had never been before. I felt like an “outsider,” and realized that in Germany, the definition of “insider” is very limited. Jews are “outsiders,” as are the many “foreigners” who



*Auschwitz: Lie of the . . . [century]. “It’s called graffiti. First I found it disgusting—but somehow, one gets used to it.” From Passport.*

populate West Germany—Turks, Arabs, Africans, Sri Lankans, Italians, Poles, etc. What was particularly jarring from a U.S. perspective is the narrowness and homogeneity of “German identity, and the impossibility for “outsiders” to be seen as “German.” Unlike the US (not to downplay the racism and anti-semitism there), Germany has no history of a diverse ethnic/racial population who are at the same time considered “German.” When Jews were a substantial minority in Germany (before Nazism), many had assimilated, to a degree, as “Germans.” Nazism shocked “assimilated” Jews into the awareness that they were not in fact “Germans.”

Further, there was always a distinction between assimilated, “barely Jewish” German Jews, and Eastern European Jews living in Germany. The word commonly used for immigrant—*Gastarbeiter* (guest worker)—illuminates the situation of immigrants in this respect. If one does not conform to “German” norms (i.e. skin color, hair texture, attire, fluency in German without an accent, etc.), one is always a “guest worker.” The fact is, though, that many immigrants are not “guest workers,” but have resided in Germany for many years (even permanently), and have built their families and lives there. Indeed, many “guest workers” are the second and third generation living in Germany. Rather than being recognized as ‘German,’ immigrants and their descendants are treated more as “permanent guests.” There is no such thing as a Turkish German or a Sri Lankan German.

In my everyday life in West Berlin, I faced antisemitism and racism daily. I shared with other “outsiders” the horror of seeing swastikas and graffiti which said, *‘Juden Raus!’ ‘Turken Raus!’ ‘Auslaender Raus!’* [Jews out! Turks out! Foreigners out!] As a Jew, I identified with other “outsiders,” but was relatively privileged because I was a US citizen and light skinned. Although there is deep-rooted antisemitism in Germany, there is such a small population of Jews that antisemitism does not generally have direct, actual people as targets. I began to explore the meaning of antisemitism in a country without many Jews, and the significant position other “non-Germans” occupy in German society.

Non-European immigrants are the main targets of the most visible and strongest sentiment and actions directed against “non-Germans.” Staggering unemployment among “non-Germans” is not only a result of denied work permission, but also the refusal of employers to hire them. Those jobs that are available to “non-Germans” are the lowest-paying. Commonly, job and housing ads in the papers specify *‘nur Deutsche’* (Germans only).

As I traveled within Berlin, I shared the fear of and rage at neo-Nazi groups and skin-heads<sup>3</sup> who march through the subways, hang out on corners, and harass “non-Germans.” Neo-Nazis and skin-heads represent the “illegitimate” part of German hostility to “outsiders.” The West German constitution provides for the prohibition of neo-Nazi groups, the spreading of Nazi ideology, and the use of Nazi symbols. Swastikas, pictures commemorating Hitler, and *Mein Kampf* are all unconstitutional, although they are prevalent in disguised and undisguised forms. Some examples of neo-Nazi activities include the following: 250 people from the neo-Nazi “Free German Workers Party” and other sympathetic autonomous groups held a rally earlier in 1986 near the Hammelner graveyard to protest the removal of the graves of executed Nazi war criminals. In 1985, in Aschaffenberg, over 40 gravestones were pulled from the ground and defaced with antisemitic slogans and symbols.<sup>4</sup> Each year, Hitler’s birthday is celebrated. May 1, which was first made a holiday by the Nazis, is a day for meeting and celebration by former SS men.<sup>5</sup> Skin-heads hold an annual ‘festival’ where the main entertainment is terrorizing Turks.<sup>6</sup> I discovered that antisemitism and racism are “normal,” and that the neo-Nazis and skin-heads expressed in the extreme the normal racism and antisemitism of the general population.

It was during my second stay in West Berlin (October 1985 to the present) that I encountered an intensification and shift in hostility towards “outsiders.” The subway ride, illustrating active persecution of “non-Germans” by police, underlined the more active role the state has assumed against “non-Germans.” Antisemitism and racism have both sharpened and become more acceptable on



Women refugees, from Passport, Langrock photo.

an official level. Actions like *Auslaenderkontrollen*, the breaking of taboos on what can and cannot be said, and the absence of official response to blatant racism and antisemitism demonstrate the change.

Racist laws and policies already in place provide the foundation upon which a strengthened racism can stand. Institutional racism includes the following government policies and practices: financial "incentives" to foreign workers to return to their native lands, the incentives often equalling less than their accumulated social security; refusal of work permissions for immigrants and family members of immigrants who are allowed to work; children who were born and/or have grown up in Germany being sent back to their "native" land at the age of 16; applicants for political asylum being given food stamps, instead of the money that other welfare recipients get; deportation to hostile countries; deplorable living conditions in public housing facilities for immigrants and political asylum applicants; long waits for the processing of visa and asylum cases.

I was enraged that while neo-Nazis and skin-heads roamed the streets, terrorizing "outsiders," Jewish synagogues had to be guarded by police; instead of the violent racists and antisemites being controlled, the Jews were fenced in and "protected" by German police. Even more angering was the refusal of the police (and the justice system) to follow up on alleged illegal and violent activities by skin-heads and neo-Nazis. In April 1986, the police raided eight apartments where weapons were built and stored. Although, according to the Justice Press Representative, the three arrested men belonged to the fringes of the 'radical right scene,' the investigation is not probing this, but rather, their involvement with organized crime.<sup>7</sup>

By looking the other way, and thereby granting the Nazis a kind of immunity, there has been a trend of renewed "legitimate" antisemitism in the state itself. For the most part, the state's antisemitism does not take the form of legislation or official actions, although the Reagan-Kohl visit to Bitburg and the *Auslaen-*

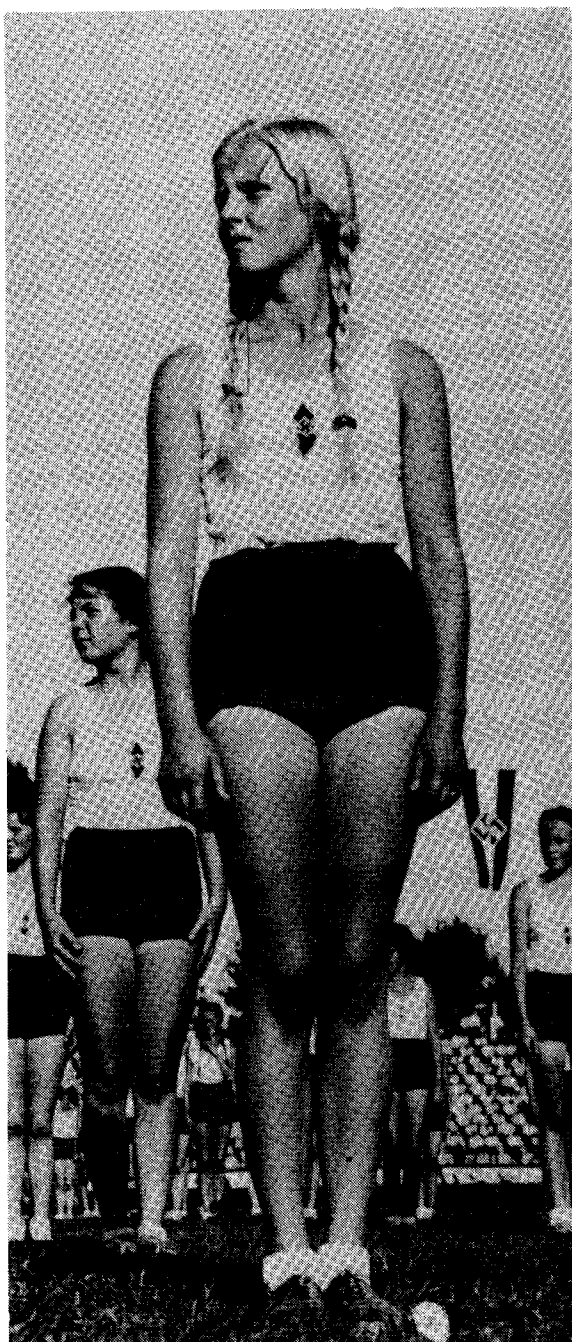
*derkontrollen* are important exceptions to this. Rather, it exists in non-official statements by government officials, and a corresponding lack of official reaction to the antisemitism of their colleagues.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl has been prominent in the trend to "reconcile" with the past by making antisemitism (silent, spoken or symbolic) more acceptable. Kohl followed up Bitburg last fall by supporting Kurt Waldheim's candidacy for the Austrian presidency. This spring, Kohl showed his contempt for any appropriate "reconciliation" with Nazi history when he did not respond to the comment made to him by a CDU member of parliament, Herman Fellner. Discussing the *Weidergntmachung* (reparation) for forced labor during the Nazi years, Fellner remarked that: "...Jews are quick to raise their hands to speak whenever a German money box jingles."

Conservative Mayor Wildrich Freiherr von Mirbach Graf von Spee (CDU) "joked" in a similar vein earlier this year: "In order to manage the balancing of budgets in 1986, one would have to slay some rich Jews." After a long hesitation (approximately one month), von Spee resigned his office—and received a lavish party upon his leaving. At the end of April, von Spee was fined 90,000 DM (approximately \$40,000) by the state to be paid to a children's career clinic.

Von Spee's antisemitism was explicit. Nonetheless, the fact of antisemitism in the government is sharply denied by many politicians. Liberal FPD parliament member, Hildegard Hamm-Bruecher, initiated a "topical hour" on antisemitism ("topical hours" are extra-time hours which occur periodically to discuss current issues). She wanted to address antisemitism by politicians and consider appropriate political measures. Hamm-Bruecher wrote to twenty-five conservative (CDU/CSU), five Green and five liberal (FDP) representatives, all of whom she considered "democratic" and asked them to attend her proposed topical hour.

Despite negative responses from the CDU/CSU representatives, the discussion took place on February 27, 1986. An FDP representative opened the session with the statement that "There is, to be sure, no very alarming an-



tisemitism in the Federal Republic," but, he acknowledged, there are "very alarming tendencies." These consist in "...the use again and the spreading of the same generalizing prejudices and scapegoat cliches with which we were poisoned in our youth..." Dr. Joachim Mueller of the Greens also acknowledged that "Auschwitz did not make antisemitism im-

possible in Germany.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Hans Klein’s (CSU) comment that he could not detect any antisemitic tendencies in the Federal Republic was characteristic of the conservative sentiment that the entire theme was inappropriate for a “topical hour.”

Not only had Hamm-Bruecher’s attempt to address antisemitism within the political system been met with silence and trivialized, it also unleashed fierce antisemitism. Following her proposal, she received about 150 letters containing antisemitic exclamations and threats from both anonymous and identified individuals. This response gave the lie to the conservatives’ belief that there is no problem and their refusal to admit that this belief reinforces the trend toward toleration and legitimization of antisemitism as something “normal.”

The new normalcy of racism and antisemitism is based on unchallenged notions of race, ethnicity and national identity. I have been simultaneously addressing the questions of Jews and immigrants in Germany because I believe these to be closely connected. Though Jews and immigrants have distinct histories, they are “outsiders” living in a Germany with deep-rooted ideas of what it is to be an “insider.”

“Germanness” is asserted as an historically-rooted identity, fixed and homogeneous. German identity leaves no room to change or adapt in response to the presence of “non-Germans.” *Who* the “outsiders” are is different, but the fact that “outsiders” stand so much apart from “German” culture has remained constant. Many ideas about “outsiders” have remained intact. For example, Jews are still stereotyped as rich (we have to slay some rich Jews; Jews always respond to German money boxes), and “outsiders” are still seen as politically suspect (as the *Auslaenderkontrollen* show).

I continue to question the ways antisemitism lives on in a country with few Jews. At the same time, my attention is drawn to other minorities. I am frightened by the Nazi past, by renewed and legitimated antisemitism, and by powerful contemporary racism. My relative safety does not comfort me very much with German identity so deeply entrenched and respected, and without an adequate challenge to this.

There have been attempts; however, to ques-

tion what it means to be “German,” to break with the Nazi past and to confront racism and antisemitism in current German society. To protest the *Auslaenderkontrollen*, hundreds of people participated in mass subway rides. Arrests were made, and people were charged not with illegal protest, or impeding the investigation of “suspicious” people, but rather, with disrupting the orderly functioning of the subway. This rationale struck me as particularly ironic, since the police, in carrying out the checks, were interfering with the orderly and proper use of public transportation by “outsiders.”

While these and other protests against German racism and antisemitism are meaningful, more widespread is the German desire to forget and “reconcile” with the past, and therefore ignore today’s antisemitism and racism. Most people do not want to think about these problems. A recent interview in *Der Stern* (a popular illustrated weekly magazine) showed that the majority of those interviewed do not like to discuss the persecution of Jews (63%) and want to finally close the issue of Nazism (66%).<sup>11</sup>

These two responses—ignoring and legitimating antisemitism and racism on the one hand, and actively challenging it on the other—demonstrate the polarization about these issues in German society. Living in West Berlin, I have an acute awareness of those two tendencies—there is heavy police control here as well as strong protest. I am left with troubling questions. What is an open society? And how can West Germany *become* an open society? West Berlin is a city of refuge, but what do the people coming here expect? And what do they find?

West Berlin is a focal point in an increasingly tense international context. When the tension builds, the state and police control tighten. People who look ‘different’ are actively sought out and interrogated. Those who protest lose their right to protest—as, for example, the removal, by police, of banners hung in protest of the *Auslaenderkontrollen*.<sup>12</sup> And everyone loses their right to information in the “free” Germany: the results of the controls were not made publicly available, and it was impossible to find out how many people were detained, and/or deported. Militarism invades daily life, and one is expected to accept this as “normal.”

Berlin is a city of contrasts and of extremes, which is perhaps why the situation seems so alarming here. Berlin is a city filled with borders, walls, police, soldiers... I feel the history as I pass by bombed-out buildings. And I feel the failure to learn from that history as I sit on a subway while police scrutinize me to determine if I am a dangerous "outsider."

### FOOTNOTES

1. It is interesting to note that at the same time these controls were instituted in West Berlin, similar actions were being taken in France. French police minister Robert Pen-draud announced that, of late, approximately 4000 people and 3000 cars are controlled each night; during the day, I.D. checks have been so frequent that it is impossible to numerically register them. *Die Taz*, April 22, p. 3.

2. Italians comprised the majority of the first wave of immigration to Germany after WWII, and they are still not fully accepted in German society. However, the situation of non-Europeans is much worse. Turks are currently the main immigrants, but there has been an increase in immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East and Sri Lanka. Eastern Europeans have a somewhat better status because they come from communist countries and West Germany wants to offer some kind of "better" alternative.

3. Skin-heads, who are violently antisemitic and anti-foreigner, are to be distinguished from "punks," who have generally been progressive and antifascist, in the vanguard of the housing, anti-imperialist and other struggles. Ironically, skin-heads, who dress and look quite unusual, are notorious for harassing anyone who is different, including "non-Germans," leftists, communists and hippies.

4. Gerd Krug, "Wie Antisemitisch sind die Deutschen?" *Der Stern* C8041, #16 (April 10, 1986), p. 30.

5. One shouldn't forget the "socialist" platform of the Nazis—the National Socialist Workers Party. The Nazis built a mass movement and tried to appeal to workers and quell potential opposition in part through coopting workers' traditions and holidays.

6. *Die Taz*, "Skinhead-Terror in Flensburg," April 21, 1986, p. 4.

7. *Die Taz*, "Haftbefehl erlassen," April 25, 1986, pp. 20.

8. *Der Stern*, op. cit., p. 30.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.* p. 33. It is revealing to look at the breakdown by age of these responses: *Would you like to discuss the persecution of Jews with friends and acquaintances?* "Yes"—26%: 32% of 16-29 year olds; 32% 30-44 year olds; 21% of 45-59 year olds; 18% of those over 60. "No"—63%: 58% of 16-29 year olds; 58% of 30-44 year olds, 68% of 45-59 year olds; 70% of those over 60. *Do you think that the Nazi past should not be discussed so much, but rather close the book?* "Yes"—66%; 59% of 16-29 year olds; 69% of 45-59 year olds; 74% of those over 60; "No"—24%: 28% of 16-29 year olds; 27% of 30-44 year

olds; 24% of 45-59 year olds; 17% of those over 60.

12. *Die Tageszeitung*, April 24, 1986, p. 20. On the weekend of April 19 and 20, the police removed numerous banners denouncing the US attack on Libya and the *Auslaenderkontrollen* and painted over graffiti which was years old. Neither American nor German authorities have claimed responsibility for ordering this. It appears that the police actions, however, have encouraged the banner painters: many new banners have appeared through the city. On April 23, a twenty meter banner was raised on the *Gedachtniskirche* ('Memory' Church), the symbol of West Berlin. The removal of this banner by police and the fire department drew the attention of hundreds of tourists, shoppers, workers and others in the area. In 1982, the police instituted a similar crackdown on banners, but were forced to register defeat in the end.

Jamie Goldfein has lived in West Berlin for nearly two years where she did various research projects. She has just returned to the US.

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**SPECIAL ISSUE ON WEST GERMANY TODAY.** Featuring articles on Bitburg; Fassbinder; Anti-Semitism and the Left; Crisis of the Greens. Also, a report on the Guatemalan election, interviews with Nicaraguan coffee workers.



# THE US MEDIA AND THE "ELECTION COUP" IN THE PHILIPPINES

FRANK BRODHEAD

The "election coup" in the Philippines was a stunning victory for the Filipino people. Though the struggle to rid the nation of the hated Marcos dictatorship was long, the final collapse came in one brief surge of joyous self-liberation. In the course of this struggle, the opposition to Marcos showed itself to be brave and resourceful. Millions of people in the United States, following the events through newspapers and television, were quickly won over to the Aquino campaign and its dramatic struggle for electoral democracy. In recent years perhaps only the support given to Poland's Solidarity movement can match the emotional resonance which the Filipino uprising found in the United States.

This seems only natural. Who could fail to respond to such a contrast between the brave and nonviolent struggle of masses of ordinary people, and the corrupt dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos? Yet this contrast presents a puzzle, and provides our starting point. It was, after all, the United States that installed Marcos and supported him for two decades. And almost until the very end of Marcos's rule, the U.S. mass media covered for his brutal dictatorship. U.S. economic and military interests in the Philippines, moreover, are substantial; and it would be startling if the U.S. mass media developed a "foreign policy" toward the Philippines seriously at odds with the National Interest—i.e., the interests of

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*The author would like to thank Meredith Deane, Allen Hunter, and Christine Wing for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay.*

*Cover of Columbia Journalism Review, May/June 1986.*

multinational corporations and the Pentagon. Yet in the months preceding the election, a stream of articles in the U.S. media portrayed Marcos as the bad guy, and Aquino as the hope of the Filipino people—and U.S. interests.

What happened to the U.S. media during the Filipino insurgency? Did it perceive the National Interest in a way significantly different from the Reagan administration, and by framing the news of the Filipino struggle in a certain way reshape the U.S. foreign policy consensus toward the Philippines? This question can be related to an ongoing debate about the role of the U.S. media in foreign policy formation. Some, particularly those on the Right, claim that the mass media are essentially part of a “new class,” with distinct class interests that are not the same as the National Interest. The Right, for example, points to the role of the U.S. media during the Vietnam War, and particularly its coverage of the 1968 Tet Offensive, as having created a no-win consensus at home which was ultimately responsible for the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. Conversely, on the Left, it is argued that the Western media functions as a Free World propaganda system, unswervingly supporting the needs of the U.S. government by suppressing unwelcome information and giving great play to system-supporting “news.” The bias inherent in the coverage of international events by major U.S. news organizations, according to this view, provides the West with a privately owned propaganda system that serves the needs of its national security establishments far more effectively than the Eastern bloc is served by its state-owned media.

Thus the U.S. media coverage of the Filipino revolution provides a useful test case in attempting to determine the role of the media in relation to state policy. This case is made more interesting because the media’s coverage had at its center the Filipino election. In *Demonstration Elections*, a study of U.S.-sponsored elections in the Third World, Edward S. Herman and I argued that the mass media played a key role in shaping the popular understanding of these elections in the United States, and that shaping this consensus was in fact the primary purpose of such elections.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion was based on a study of the 1966 election in the

Dominican Republic, the 1967 election in South Vietnam, and the 1982 election in El Salvador. While the Filipino election was not simply a demonstration election, staged solely for U.S. consumption, in late 1985 the election was suddenly scheduled for early 1986, largely to satisfy pressures from the United States, where Marcos’ “Human rights” record was under attack, and his ability to govern effectively was openly doubted by members of Congress and even some in the Reagan administration. In this sense the election in the Philippines had many similarities to those in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador. In these circumstances we might expect the U.S. mass media to enthusiastically support Marcos, and to distort or suppress news about the electoral opposition, as it did in Vietnam in 1967 and in El Salvador in 1982. Instead, the U.S. media did exactly the opposite. What was it about the Filipino election-coup—or, What happened to the U.S. mass media?—that explains this great difference in media coverage?

#### **“Free Elections” and Free World Propaganda**

The amount of critical coverage of the recent election in the Philippines by the U.S. media was extraordinary. Not extraordinary in the sense of excessive, for the media’s demonstration that the Marcos government was determined to stop at nothing to rig the election was clearly warranted. The media’s coverage was exceptional because the kinds of questions raised have traditionally been off the agenda when the U.S. media reports on a U.S.-sponsored or U.S.-supported election.

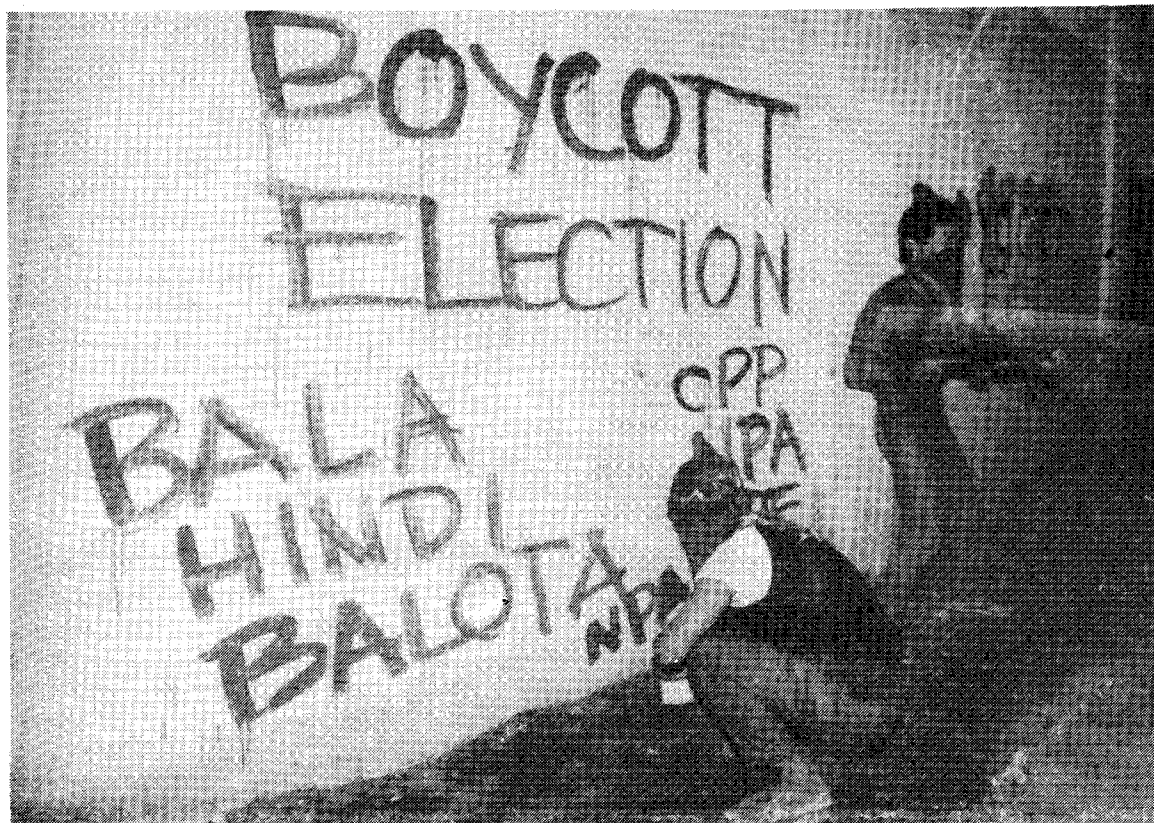
When the United States staged elections in Latin America and elsewhere in the first half of this century, its goal was primarily to install a particular leader or client, or to force the local elite to settle its conflicts nonviolently through the electoral process, thus not disrupting business. While a concern about domestic opposition to U.S. intervention was occasionally part of the motivation for staging an election, prior to the Vietnam war this was never the primary purpose of the election. During the 1960s, however, as the Vietnam war undermined automatic popular support for the U.S. imperial enterprise, staged elections were transformed.

Now their purpose became less to choose or ratify particular leaders and clients, and more to *legitimize* the U.S. military presence or military invasion by showing that the war effort was enthusiastically supported by our clients. Because the purpose of these elections was to demonstrate to a U.S. audience that military action in a Third World country was in the interests of freedom and democracy, these elections might be called *demonstration elections*.

Consider how the U.S. media has covered such elections. It becomes apparent that their cooperation is critical to the success of a demonstration election. The chief form of media cooperation is to put certain questions on the agenda and determinedly suppress others. Thus, in the cases of the elections in the Dominican Republic in 1966, in South Vietnam in 1967, and in El Salvador in 1982, the U.S. media reported virtually nothing about the state of fundamental political freedoms in the countries holding the election. A quantitative study of the media's coverage of issues such as

freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association, for example, shows that these long-term or background issues affecting each of these three elections were completely off the agenda of the U.S. media. The right and ability of opposition parties to campaign freely, to obtain access to the media, or even to run were non-issues in the U.S. mass media in its pre-election reporting.

Instead of assessing whether or not the fundamental prerequisites for a free election existed, in its reporting on these three U.S.-sponsored elections the Free World media focused on the personalities of the candidates. They followed the norm established by media coverage in U.S. presidential elections, where a focus on personalities follows logically from the absence of much programmatic difference between the candidates. Instead of dwelling on the elements of electoral fraud being perpetrated by the U.S.-supported regimes, the media found their dramatic format for the elections in the question: Would the election be



*New People's Army advises "Bullets not Ballots," Guardian photo.*

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held at all, or would it be disrupted by the guerrillas or the Left? But the bulk of U.S. media reporting was focused on the election-day events themselves, not the fundamental conditions of electoral freedom. Thus media coverage featured the drama of peasants braving threats of guerrilla disruption to cast their votes, the long lines of voters and thus the large voter turnout, the legal and procedural framework of the election, and the actual mechanics of voting.

In each election, election observers from the United States served as a dramatic foil for the media, for they were able to state that they had seen no fraud or coercion. (For California Senator and official U.S. election observer George Murphy, for example, the 1967 election in South Vietnam was "just like an election back in Beverly Hills"!) Of course, the U.S. observer teams were completely unfamiliar with the country and did not speak the language. They could see only a tiny portion of the polling places, generally in the major cities. Dependent as they were on the government for transportation, interpretation, and protection, they were reasonably seen by ordinary citizens as part of the sponsoring powers behind the election. Not surprisingly, peasants seldom attempted to explain their grievances with their U.S.-supported government through a government-supplied interpreter. The observers also invariably arrived just days before the election, and were thus in no position to "observe" any of the pre-election events such as voter registration or campaigning. None of this has ever been challenged by the U.S. media.

In the critical post-election period, certain issues continued to be on the agenda, while others were definitely unacknowledged. On the agenda were the positive reports of the U.S. observer teams, and the congratulations and statements of support sent to the newly elected government by the United States and its allies. Also on the agenda, though in muted form, were assessments by experts about the amount of economic and military aid that would be necessary to stabilize the fledgling democracy. Off the agenda, however, was any critical assessment of official statements about the outcome and meaning of the election. For example, take the question of the actual turnout

and the actual vote tallies. In each case, the election-day visual images served up in the U.S. media were those of a large voter turnout. Long lines of voters waiting to cast their votes were shown on television. Election observers unfailingly reported that the ballot boxes had not been tampered with. Despite a blemish or two, each of these three U.S.-supported elections received high marks in the U.S. media.

But the truth was unfailingly the opposite of that reported in the U.S. media. *Demonstration Elections* contains extensive documentation, much of it available to reporters at the time, that the vote count was greatly inflated, and the opposition votes were undercounted, in each U.S.-supported election. By greatly reducing the number of available polling places during the 1982 election, for example, the Salvadoran government created the long lines of voters which framed the election-day events for U.S. television. Yet despite legal and extralegal pressures to vote, unreported at that time by the media, it now appears that the voter turnout in El Salvador was vastly exaggerated. In the triumphant aftermath of the election, for example, the U.S. media failed to pursue two studies by El Salvador's Central American University which showed convincingly that it was physically impossible for more than two-thirds of the alleged 1.5 million voters to actually vote.<sup>2</sup>

One of the stated purposes of U.S.-staged elections has been to return client states to "civilian rule." The U.S. media consistently failed to note that it was invariably military, not civilian, power which was strengthened by these elections. In the case of Vietnam, the victory of the Thieu-Ky ticket meant that the military beat the civilians (even though the civilian candidates gained a majority of the total vote). In the cases of the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, the electoral victors, Joaquin Balaguer and Jose Napoleon Duarte, were simply figureheads, fronts for military rule. The U.S. media regularly avoids asking any questions about why a free election strengthens the hand of military, not civilian, forces in the U.S. client state.

Finally, the U.S. media never ask questions about the *policy outcome* of a U.S.-staged election. In the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and



El Salvador, the U.S. media portrayed the campaign and the process of voting as a determined mass struggle for peace. Not only, however, did the military emerge strengthened in each election, but the function (in fact, the *intended function*) of the election was to increase greatly the level of military violence, and to provide new, apparently more solid legitimacy to a growing U.S. military commitment to the "freely elected" regimes. In a sense, the role of a staged "free election" is to clear the ground for an escalation of the U.S.-supported military assault on the electorate.

The bias inherent in the media's focus on election-day events rather than on the more fundamental conditions of political freedom is clearly evident when it is contrasted to the media's reporting on an election inimical to U.S. interests. The 1984 election in Nicaragua provides such a contrast. In the case of the Nicaraguan election, the media had no interest whatsoever in the size of the voter turnout or the bravery of the voters in going to the polls, despite the threat of rebel disruption. Nor were the mechanics of the election of great interest. The thorough preparations for the election, and the massive citizen involvement that the smooth functioning of the election-day events represented, went unnoticed in the U.S. media. Nor were the U.S. media very interested in the nearly unanimous support given to the election by international observers. Instead, the U.S. media focused almost exclusively on those questions that are off the agenda for a U.S.-

sponsored election: the fundamental issues of freedom of the press and speech, the right of opposition parties to contest the election, and the bias built into the election by the ordinary advantages of incumbency.

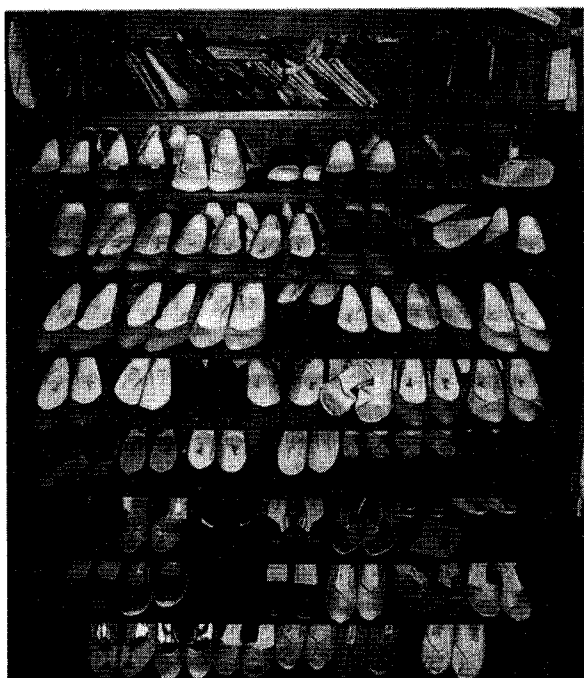
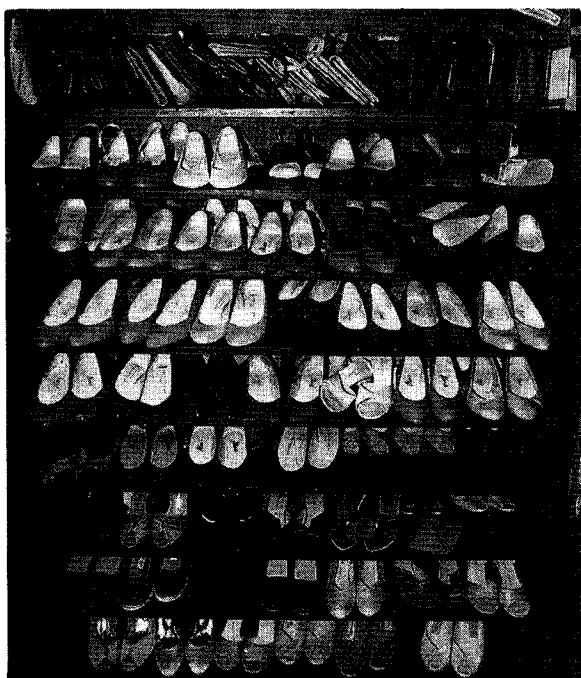
It is not possible to maintain that this bias in the media reflects the greater legitimacy of the U.S.-sponsored elections. On the basis of every conceivable index of free elections, the Nicaraguan election of 1984 was vastly more democratic than those in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador. Whether it be in terms of the fundamental freedoms enumerated above, or in the level of violence directed against those who might contest the election, or even in the election-day mechanics themselves, an abundance of evidence shows the Nicaraguan election was more democratic than the U.S.-sponsored elections.<sup>3</sup> Yet precisely the opposite conclusion was reached in each case by the U.S. mass media. Moreover, the media interpretation was completely acceptable to the U.S. public, Congress and "informed opinion" responded to each staged election drama with solemn promises to support these fledgling democracies with greater inputs of military and economic aid, helicopters, and military advisers. Thus, today the United States wages war against the peasants of El Salvador in order to

defend the "democratically elected" regime there, and it wages war against the government of Nicaragua in order to force it to hold "truly free" elections, Nicaragua's earlier election effort being acknowledged all around as a farce.

### The Election in the Philippines

Does the recent election in the Philippines represent a significant deviation from this pattern? While the election was clearly not a wholly-owned subsidiary of the United States, as were those in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, or El Salvador, it is no exaggeration

media would have focused on the personalities of the candidates and the drama of holding an election in a society under attack from leftist guerrillas, and that it would have concentrated the bulk of its coverage on the mechanics of the election and the election-day events themselves. But the U.S. media did not follow this pattern. Instead, both the print media and television almost uniformly supported Marcos' opposition, both editorially and in the way they chose to present the election events. In fact, within certain broad limits U.S. media coverage took a nearly unprecedented look at the fundamental



Imelda's shoes, TIME

to call it a U.S.-sponsored election. The election was first announced when President Ferdinand Marcos was interviewed on U.S. television on November 3, 1985; and Marcos' announcement followed a stream of U.S. threats and entreaties to hold elections, including visits from CIA Director William Casey and Senator Paul Laxalt, known to be a close confidant of President Reagan. Finally, the recent election must be seen as a follow-on to the May 1984 election, which was staged by Marcos at the behest of the United States to achieve a complex package of goals.<sup>4</sup>

According to the model sketched out above, one might have predicted that the U.S. mass

conditions of democracy in a U.S.-supported regime staging an election, analyzing many of the long-term factors affecting genuinely free elections.

The Philippines' election-coup, U.S. government interventions,<sup>4</sup> and the media's coverage can be broken down into four stages. During the first stage, from the announcement of the election on November 3, 1985, until the middle of January 1986, there was little that was unusual in the news treatment of the election itself. While both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* threw editorial support behind Marcos' opposition, the campaign itself was overshadowed by speculation concerning

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the results of the official investigation into the murder of Benigno Aquino. When the investigating commission cleared the accused of all wrongdoing on December 2, television network news gave modest coverage to the ensuing demonstrations of Filipinos angered over this miscarriage of justice. Yet during this opening stage of the election campaign, the media's criticism of Marcos was tempered by the near certainty that he would win. Thus the election was framed from the point of view of the dilemma it presented the United States: Marcos was clearly unable to restore confidence in the economy or stem the growth of the leftist New Peoples Army, yet there seemed little likelihood that he could be defeated.

Only in mid-January did media coverage of the Filipino election campaign begin in earnest. During this, the second stage of the election-coup, a series of revelations suddenly cast doubt on the certainty of a Marcos victory. His real estate holdings in New York were revealed by the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. His bogus record of wartime "heroism" was exposed by U.S. historian Alfred McCoy, and featured prominently in the elite media. And his health was visibly failing, contributing to his pathetic performance before crowds. These all were set against the enormous size and enthusiasm of the crowds that greeted Aquino wherever she went.

When the White House announced its neutrality in the race, the door was wide open for critical coverage of the election. Heavy coverage now focused in an unprecedented way on the details of electoral fraud about to be perpetrated: people were quoted on camera about being given bribes by Marcos campaign workers to attend rallies; techniques of ballot-box stuffing were described by seasoned veterans of the art; and there continued to be extensive footage on television of campaign violence and intimidation.

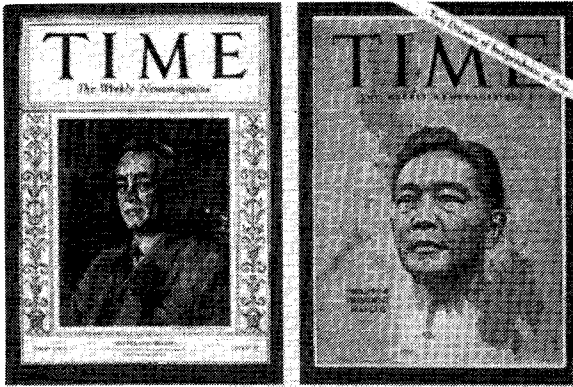
The third stage of the election-coup began as the polls closed on February 6. This is typically the point at which the U.S. media move on to other things. But pre-election coverage of the likelihood of fraud at the counting stage had raised expectations of a post-election story, which were immediately fulfilled by the dramatic efforts of the private

electoral watchdog organization NAMFREL to protect the ballots and the ballot boxes and to ensure that an honest count was made. The official U.S. observer delegation, headed by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, transcended the usual ceremonial role played by observer delegations and became an interpreter of NAMFREL's concerns to U.S. audiences, publicly sharing NAMFREL's fears that the election was being stolen.

Despite the fact that the U.S. media were now uniformly framing the news from the Philippines in terms of Marcos' apparent defeat, on February 10 President Reagan stated that the election showed that the Philippines had taken a step toward democracy and now had a two-party system; and ABC reported that the Reagan administration was preparing itself for the reality that Marcos would declare himself the winner and stay on.

While the precise calculations that caused the Reagan administration to reverse itself and back away from an endorsement of Marcos' continuation in power are still uncertain, two factors must have entered heavily into its considerations. The first was the daily protests outside the Filipino parliament building, demanding that an honest count be made and that Aquino be acknowledged as elected. These protests were given official sanction by the Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops on February 14. Two days later Aquino, who had declared herself the winner in the election, called for a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience until Marcos stepped down. It was thus clear that Marcos could not put a stop to the actions of "People's Power" by simply declaring that the election was over and that he had won. The second factor which certainly must have influenced the White House was the growing revolt in Congress, which moved rapidly to cut off aid to the Philippines unless Marcos stepped down. Reagan had clearly lost the support of both the media and Congress for even a power-sharing arrangement in the Philippines; and the strength of the popular movement behind Aquino guaranteed that Reagan would have difficulty with *any* foreign policy initiatives unless Marcos was removed.

The fourth stage of the election-revolution,



*The legacy of US sponsored Philippine "independence," from Quezon 1935 to Marcos 1966. Covers from TIME*

the revolt of the military which began on February 22, moved swiftly toward that goal. Each television network now devoted one-fourth to one-third of its newscasts to the military revolt, its implications for the United States, and particularly to footage of masses of people rallying to the support of the rebels. On Sunday, February 23, Reagan promised to halt all aid to Marcos if he used force against the rebels and their supporters, and on Monday he called on Marcos to resign. The following day, February 25, Marcos and his entourage boarded U.S. transport planes and fled to the safety of Hawaii.

Let us focus on how these events were portrayed by the U.S. media, and compare them to the media's treatment of other U.S. sponsored elections.

—It was clear from the U.S. media that Marcos enjoyed not only the normal powers of incumbency in the election, but political influence reflecting two decades of dictatorship. The electoral advantages he gained from his control of the political machinery, his vast patronage machine, and his hand-picked Supreme Court and Electoral Commission were fully explained by the U.S. media. While the power of incumbency was very much on the agenda for the Nicaraguan election of 1984, it was off the media's agenda in the elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador.

—The campaign of repression and intimidation, not only against the New People's Army and the mass organizations of the Left, but also against the centrist political forces of the Aquino campaign, was dramatically brought

home to the U.S. audience. Many physical attacks on Aquino campaign workers and election headquarters were detailed in the U.S. media. The wave of assassinations against Aquino campaign workers following the election received front-page coverage in the United States during the critical post-election deliberations of the essentially pro-Marcos circle of advisers closest to Reagan. During the elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador, the U.S. media treated opposition charges about similar levels of repression as *allegations*, and characterized protests from the defeated opposition as the bellyaching of sore losers. Conversely, during the Nicaraguan election of 1984 the protests of the opposition that the election was unfair became the central theme of U.S. media coverage, even though the actual incidents of campaign violence alleged by the opposition resulted in no deaths or serious injuries. U.S. media coverage on these issues in the Filipino election was obviously influenced by many factors not present in other U.S.-staged elections, including the historic links between the two nations, the large Filipino community in the United States, the fact that the leaders of the opposition were well-mannered and spoke English, and the particular appeal of Mrs. Aquino as the widow of an assassinated political leader with close ties to the United States. Nevertheless, the departure of the U.S. media from its traditional treatment of an electoral opposition in a U.S.-supported election is not explained by these factors alone.

—The inequalities between the two parties in terms of the ability to campaign freely were also explained in great detail in the U.S. media. U.S. audiences learned what the Marcos monopoly of television and radio time meant, and were told about the great differences in the ability of the two parties to use paid advertising. Similarly, the U.S. media gave extensive coverage to the Marcos campaign's use of bribery and intimidation to turn out the voters, and regaled the U.S. public with stories of Marcos-controlled areas that had returned 99% of its votes for Marcos in earlier elections. U.S. television broadcast several interviews with Filipino voters who described being bribed for their votes, and with Marcos campaign workers who freely admitted giving such bribes. Many

people attended Marcos campaign rallies told U.S. television audiences that they had been paid to cheer Marcos. Extensive details also appeared in the U.S. media about the Marcos campaign's "flying squads" of voters who would be bused from polling place to polling place on the day of the election, and about the large number of dead people who inexplicably remained on the voting rolls in Marcos-controlled areas. In a sense, the U.S. mass media served up an intensive seminar on how Third World elections can be manipulated, and on the importance of the presence or absence of fundamental conditions of democracy such as a free speech or a free press.

—Election-day events were dramatized in the U.S. media. This is what we would expect in a U.S.-staged election. Yet if the primary visual image of the Salvadoran election, for example, was the long lines of voters waiting to vote (representing a large turnout and thus demonstrating the legitimacy of the election), the primary visual image of the Filipino election was that of courageous election volunteers who were prepared to guard the ballot boxes with their very lives. Perhaps more than anything else, it was the media's focus on the efforts of the watchdog organization NAMFREL to safeguard the integrity of the election—and their inability to do so—that persuaded the mass of U.S. citizens that Marcos' supposed election victory was fraudulent. In fact, NAMFREL became closely joined with the evolving U.S. position on the elections, as was illustrated by the appearance of the official U.S. observer delegation at NAMFREL headquarters, and Senator Richard Lugar's speech from there in which he pleaded with President Marcos to allow an immediate and honest vote count. Indeed, there is irony in that it was the far *greater* freedom of the Filipino election—in contrast to the Salvadoran election—that allowed an organization like NAMFREL even to exist and to do its work, despite repression and harassment. An organization like NAMFREL would not have lasted a week in El Salvador, where similar popular organizations were wiped in the 1970s.

It would appear, then, that the U.S. media's treatment of the Filipino election was closer to its handling of Nicaragua's 1984 election than it



Corazon Aquino, TIME

was to the staged elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, or El Salvador. By the yardstick of what was on the agenda and what was off the agenda, the media would seem to have cast the Philippine election as a "negative demonstration election," a treatment hitherto reserved for Soviet-bloc elections or Nicaragua, but not for one of our up-to-now staunchest allies.

#### **The Mass Media and U.S. Interests in the Philippines**

As its record during the elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador shows, the U.S. mass media has no interest in democracy or "free elections" in the abstract, but only when they coincide with larger U.S. policy interests. Thus the media's support for democracy in the Philippines in 1986 was not a fundamental departure. Rather, it was rooted in, or at any rate in harmony with, changing U.S. policy toward the Philippines. A process of significant policy reassessment had begun in 1983, well before the recent Filipino election.

While a number of influential U.S. policy makers had long warned that the Marcos regime was living on borrowed time, U.S. support for Marcos did not begin to erode until the assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983. The sudden media attention which the murder focused on the Philippines highlighted the urban middle class's loss of confidence in Marcos, the regime's inability to quell the ensu-

ing unrest, and the obvious governmental cover-up in the inquiry into Aquino's death. Each of these factors served to publicize the weaknesses of the Marcos regime, stimulating the Pentagon, State Department, CIA, and the relevant House and Senate committees to begin a new round of fact-finding inquiries.<sup>5</sup>

The results of these surveys were alarming. For their part, the Pentagon and the CIA dramatically upgraded their assessment of the military capabilities of the armed leftist opposition, the New People's Army. It was also apparent that the Philippines had entered a serious economic crisis, which the free-market ideologues of the Reagan administration not implausibly linked to the "crony capitalism" of the Marcos regime. But what most clearly

reached the United States through the mass media was the growing strength of populism and nationalism among the Filipino middle classes. All of these were viewed as seriously jeopardizing the two important U.S. military bases in the Philippines. The importance of these bases cannot be underestimated. (See box

What linked the problems confronting the U.S. in the Philippines together was the overwhelming dominance of Marcos. Throughout much of 1984 and 1985, therefore, all the threads of U.S. policy toward the Philippines were engaged in trying to mitigate this dominance, without actually risking all by promoting a coup against him.<sup>6</sup> In the military sector the chosen vehicle for U.S. policy became the armed forces "Reform Movement," which en-

#### THE BASES OF INTERVENTION: U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

According to a State Department spokesperson testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in April 1986, "The combined capabilities of the U.S. bases in the Philippines place them among the most important military establishments we maintain anywhere in the world."<sup>1</sup> Clark airfield is the headquarters for the 13th Air Force. Subic Bay is the largest naval supply base in the Western Pacific, and is believed to be the storage place for U.S. nuclear weapons in the region. Together the two bases occupy an area twice the size of Manhattan, and they are serviced by a permanent occupation force of 15,000 U.S. military personnel and many thousand Filipino civilians. Linked to these bases are a string of U.S. antisatellite tracking stations, communications facilities, and antisubmarine warfare stations.<sup>2</sup> When, during the course of Marcos's collapse, various people proposed that the bases could be replaced by facilities elsewhere, the cost of such a relocation ran into many billions of dollars.

The strategic mission which these facilities support was described by the State Department spokesperson quoted above as follows: [To]

- Guarantee the external security of the Philippines and represent our most significant contribution to the U.S.-Philippines mutual defense pact;
- Support our wide-ranging commitments all along the Asian littoral, including our

security commitments in Korea, Japan, and Thailand, and important national interests in the Persian Gulf—the geostrategic location of the Philippines is unsurpassed with regard to meeting these vital national security commitments; and

—Offset the expanding Soviet military presence at Cam Ranh Bay and, as a consequence, preserve the stability of Southeast Asia by securing the vital South China sealanes against the ever-increasing Soviet threat.

What is not made crystal clear by the State Department spokesperson is that the bases are a vital link in any first-strike nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, and they are the hub of any U.S. efforts to project counterinsurgency force in either the Pacific or the Persian Gulf. According to U.S. strategic conceptions, therefore, the defense of its access to its Philippines military installations was vastly more important than any sentimental commitment to the person of Marcos.

1. "U.S. Security Interests in the Philippines," A statement by Gaston J. Sigur, Jr., Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, before the Subcommittees on Sea Power and Force Projection and on Military Construction of the Senate Armed Services Committee, April 10, 1986.

2. Eric Guyot, "The Pentagon's Plans for the Philippines," *Resist Newsletter*, January 1985; and Michael Bedford, "The Philippines: The Bases of U.S. Intervention," *Defense & Disarmament News*, October-November, 1985.

listed perhaps the majority of Filipino military officers in a campaign essentially designed to promote the career open to talent. This was interpreted by many as analogous to the "El Salvador model," where a reformed officer caste had allowed a more vigorous prosecution of the war against the guerrillas. This reform movement was successfully thwarted by Marcos, however; and it is in this light that the uproar over the rehabilitation of Marcos' Chief-of-Staff Gen. Fabian Ver must be seen, and not in any abstract commitment to getting to the root of the Benigno Aquino murder.

A similar interpretation—that Marcos was the problem—was made by the U.S. leadership of the root causes of the crisis of the Filipino economy. As Paul D. Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on October 30, 1985:

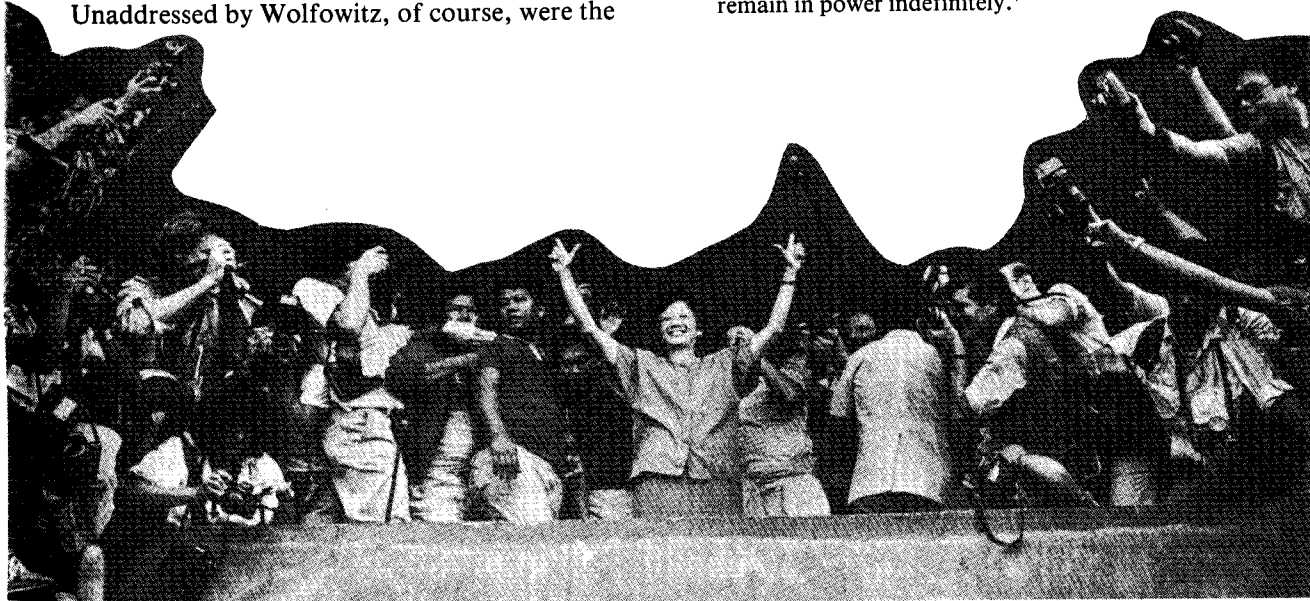
It is our judgement that intrusive and erratic government interference in the economy, together with control of important segments of the economy by personal monopolies... have contributed significantly to the overwhelming economic problems now faced by the Philippines... We strongly believe that a reorientation toward a free market system and a restoration of confidence can, in combination, unleash considerable productive economic energy and investment.

Unaddressed by Wolfowitz, of course, were the

dire effects of these policies on the poor. Also unstated was the fact that those standing in line to benefit by a more open economy were U.S. sugar and construction interests. But it was undeniably true that "crony capitalism" was driving substantial sectors of the urban bourgeoisie into alliance with the mass organizations of the Left.

U.S. strategy to deal with these twin threats to its interests in the Philippines was recrafted in the summer of 1984 by an Inter-Agency Task Force which had been formed in the wake of the Aquino assassination. Fortunately its recommendations, completed in November 1984 and embodied in a National Security Study Directive, (NSDD) were leaked to the press, affording us a candid appraisal of official U.S. policy toward the issue of keeping Marcos or dumping him. After reviewing the growing military and economic threat to the stability of the Philippines, the NSSD turned to the dilemma posed by Marcos. "While President Marcos at this stage is part of the problem," it noted,

He is also necessarily part of the solution. We need to be able to work with him and to try to influence him through a well-orchestrated policy of incentives and disincentives to set the stage for peaceful and eventual transition to a successor government whenever that takes place. Marcos, for his part, will try to use us to remain in power indefinitely.'



*Cory Aquino greets her crowd and the media.* Columbia Journalism Review.

But despite the great leverage supposedly embodied in massive U.S. aid to dictators, Marcos, as we noted above, thwarted all attempts at subversive reform. He cleverly headed off more serious U.S. intervention by agreeing to hold elections in 1984, which resulted in the seating of a small elite opposition in the National Assembly, with virtually no power at all.

By mid-1985, with the military "Reform Movement" all but exhausted in the Philippines, and with the growing perception among the U.S. policymaking elite that the New People's Army would soon be a serious threat to any pro-U.S. regime, the elite was seriously divided on how to proceed. On the "left," critics like Representative Stephen Solarz, head of the Asia-Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, proposed that U.S. aid to the Philippines be used as a lever to force reforms or drive Marcos out. But the Pentagon and the State Department held that the Communist Threat must take priority—an assessment that Marcos, of course, shared. As Wolfowitz stated in October 1985 in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,

Those who propose to cut our relatively modest military assistance to the Philippines for the sake of reducing the incidence of military abuse or promoting political reform do a disservice to both goals. . . . The process of rebuilding the Philippine Armed Forces is long overdue and will take a long time to complete. Those who will gain from delay are not Marcos' democratic opposition but only the NPA. Indeed, if the democratic opposition does gain power some day, they too will need effective protection against the communists and will wish that the process of rebuilding the Philippine military had been started earlier.

As had been the case in Vietnam, when faced with a leftist insurgency the Pentagon and the State Department were loathe to tinker with military aid, and would allow promised reforms to go implemented if they believed it would detract from the war effort against the guerrillas.

The solution to this stalemate was elections. As noted above, the 1984 election had resulted in only token gains for the democratic opposition in the Philippines, and Marcos believed he had little to fear from any election conducted



*Zoltan Grossman photo*



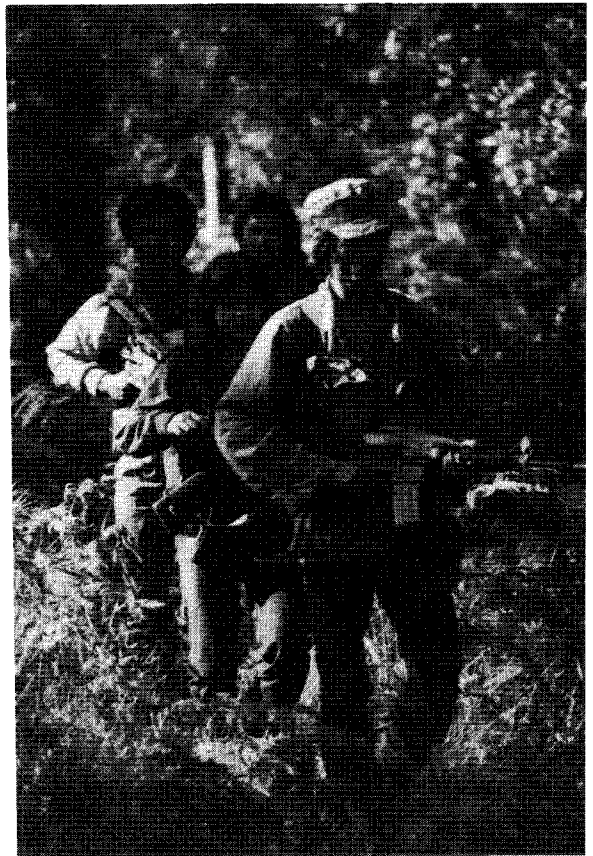
*Zoltan Grossman photo*

under his still-powerful repressive apparatus. Elections, of course, were among the demands of liberal congressional critics of Marcos. And elections were also welcomed by administration pragmatists, who saw them as a means to forward their projects of military and economic reform. As Michael Armacost, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, noted in a speech in early December: "A credible government that has public confidence is an essential precondition to the solution of the country's problems." Elections would provide a way of resolving anger over the Aquino assassination, and the acquittal of Ver, stated Armacost; they would make it more likely that structural economic reforms could be carried out; and receiving greatest stress, elections would facilitate the military's Reform Movement. "The communist insurgency in the Philippines may be around for some years," Armacost said, "but honest elections perceived as such can restore the authority and prestige of the government and stymie the guerrillas."<sup>8</sup>

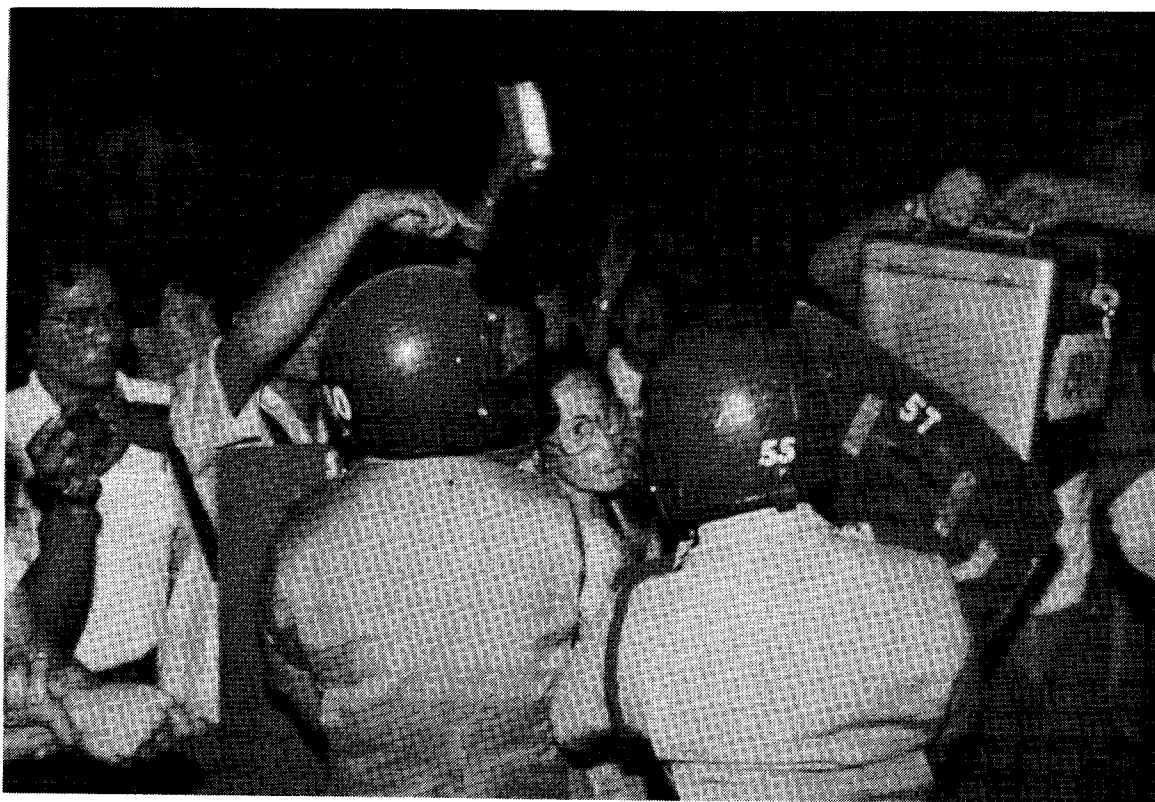
In sum, the U.S. policymaking elite entered the Filipino election period united on an understanding that serious changes were necessary in the Philippines if U.S. interests were to be preserved, but divided on a number of critical issues, including the appropriate mix of carrots and sticks that could induce Marcos to implement the reforms perceived to be necessary. The points of unity among the policy makers—retention of the U.S. bases, reform of the Filipino military, opening up of the economy, and defeat of the leftist insurgents—were to define the boundaries of the media's agenda in covering the election. However the divisions within the elite, and the tactical improvisation required to cope with the massive insurgency from below which developed during the course of the election, left the U.S. mass media relatively free from official guidance during the last, critical stages of the revolution. But whether Marcos won the election or lost it—and this latter outcome seemed extremely remote until well into the campaign—the utility of the election from the point of view of the United States depended entirely on its being perceived as relatively free and fair. Conversely, an election campaign that was perceived in the Philippines and the United States as a fraud would be a disaster for U.S. policy interests, further alienating congressional support from the military build-up the Pentagon deemed necessary, and driving the Filipino middle-class opposition into a tighter embrace with the nationalist and populist Left.

Yet this was precisely what happened. By election day the United States' worst-case scenario had unfolded, in which a classic "dual power" stalemate threatened to settle the future of the Philippines by a mass popular uprising which would have divided the armed forces. To what extent the United States directly intervened to cut this Gordian Knot by instigating the military revolt still remains unclear. While we do not yet know what instructions Philip Habib was given before he left Washington to confer with Marcos and opposition figures in the immediate post-election period, or what demands he conveyed to Marcos, or what assurances he gave to Defense Minister Enrile or General Ramos, we can be fairly confident that the ensuing military revolt was a U.S.-supported

coup from the outset. In early March, for example, Secretary of Defense Weinberger verified reports that U.S. personnel at Clark Air Base had provided fuel, equipment, and ammunition to the rebel helicopters that crippled Marcos' planes at Villamor Air Base and fired rockets at Malacanang Palace. And the *Christian Science Monitor* reported on March 4 that pro-Aquino military officers in the Philippines admitted receiving aid from the U.S. monitoring teams at San Miguel Communications Center, which serves the U.S. bases at Clark and at Subic Bay. These reports presumably represent only the tip of a very large iceberg of U.S. planning, assistance, and guarantees given to the military leaders of the coup. And clearly such a policy option—to organize a military coup if the alternative was a popular armed insurrection—must have been developed well in advance of the election.



*New People's Army, Zoltan Grossman photo.*



*TIME covers the efforts of NAMFREL workers to protect the ballot boxes.*

Let us return, finally, to the U.S. media. It is clear that the media's anti-Marcos orientation during the election period was not out of step with U.S. policy toward the Philippines. In emphasizing the obvious issues of electoral corruption and the likelihood that the opposition would be counted out, the media was completely in line with the chief points of unity guiding the U.S. policy makers. But, as we have seen, this unity papered over a large area of tactical uncertainty, not least of which was the critical question of which candidate would better serve U.S. interests. This particular question was largely settled by the massive outpouring of popular support for Aquino, particularly in the immediate post-election period. But in the absence of a clear direction from the top, the U.S. media was in the relatively unusual position of having a free hand to explore "the news" about the Filipino election. Thus a U.S. audience was treated to a concentrated teach-in on the relevance for free elections of a controlled press, an atmosphere of intimidation and violence, and the many techniques of elec-

toral fraud. The anti-Marcos sentiments which such relatively unbiased reporting engendered in the U.S. population, finally, became itself a factor in forcing the policymaking elite to draw a line against the continuation of the Marcos regime.

It would be misleading, however, to end on this note, that the truth had prevailed. For it had not. While the agenda which the U.S. media allowed itself was a relatively broad one, it completely failed to address the root causes of the Filipino political crisis, or any solutions to that crisis beyond those posed by Aquino or the United States. Off the agenda was the issue of land reform, an issue which Aquino did not address and probably could not address without splitting the elite opposition. Thus the issue of rural poverty was framed only in terms of the Marcos' corruption and the inequitable distribution of wealth. Nor was the issue of the U.S. bases seriously addressed. What was their purpose, and why should the Filipinos cooperate in this purpose? From the point of view of the U.S. media it was self-evident that the United

States had a right to maintain these giant bases there; and, indeed, Aquino's acceptability as a candidate—both for the U.S. government and the media—was contingent on her willingness to distance herself from the demands made by many of her supporters that the United States leave the Philippines.

Perhaps most importantly, the U.S. media failed to make clear that the political distance between Marcos and Aquino was in fact a very small one, and that they occupied approximately the same space on the conservative end of the political spectrum. Off the media's agenda was not only the human face of the New People's Army, but also the vast array of popular forces well to the left of Aquino which had been fighting for the rights of workers, peasants, women, students, and others. The participants in these movements numbered in the millions, and in the last decade they have joined in a thick network of progressive (and *de facto* anti-imperialist) coalitions. While a sizeable proportion of these mass organizations ended up supporting Aquino in the election and then in the showdown with Marcos, these popular movements were never absorbed into the traditional political apparatus of the elite

opposition, and the new government cannot solve their grievances. Yet these movements could only be portrayed by the U.S. media as anonymous, pro-Aquino masses, as atomized poor people opposed to the person of Marcos. Despite the broad "permission" which the U.S. media had to report "the news" of the Filipino election, and despite the powerful images of struggle which it reported back to us, the organizing capacities and self-activity of ordinary Filipinos was off the media's agenda.

### Conclusion

It is obvious that the election-coup was a great victory for the Filipinos. Yet it should be no less obvious that the outcome was also a victory for U.S. economic and military interests in the Pacific. While the United States had backed President Marcos to the hilt for two decades, and although President Reagan himself had spoken out on behalf of Marcos even as his regime was crumbling, the United States emerged from this crisis with every single one of its goals achieved. Its military bases are secure, at least for now. The Filipino Left has been checked, and possibly divided. The drift of the middle classes in the Philippines into a *de facto*





TIME covers the overthrow of Marcos.

alliance with the revolutionary Left appears to have been stemmed. The "reform" wing of the military now has the upper hand, and appears willing to beef up the war against the New People's Army, presumably along the lines of the U.S. effort in El Salvador. And a conservative, pro-U.S. regime with enormous popular legitimacy, both at home and in the United States, now stands ready to receive more U.S. military and economic aid, and to negotiate favorable terms with the International Monetary Fund.

Whether the popular energies unleashed by the Aquino campaign and the ouster of Marcos can be contained within these channels, of course, is another question. But from the perspective of the possibilities apparently on the horizon in the fall of 1985, the United States has landed on its feet and emerged from a potentially debilitating crisis with virtually no scars and a lot of breathing room. In fact, Reagan has managed to portray himself as a foe of tyrants and a liberator, bringing down both Marcos and

Baby Doc in Haiti, credentials which he employed with great skill in gaining renewed congressional support for the *contras* fighting against the government of Nicaragua.

The U.S. media has also emerged from the Filipino election-revolution with its credibility enhanced, and there must be few who doubt that its coverage of events in the Philippines has served the cause of democracy. While it would be nice to think that a new path has been permanently laid down in the media's coverage of elections staged by U.S.-supported dictatorships, this seems unlikely. The pattern of election coverage established by the media's performance in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador in 1982 and again in 1984 has clearly prevailed. Whether tested in the (negative) case of Nicaragua, or in the elections staged by Grenada, Turkey, Guatemala, Honduras, Pakistan, Panama, or the many other examples of "resurgency democracy" so beloved by the State Department and its propagandists, the U.S. media has unfailingly put

itself at the service of U.S. economic and military interests. The case of the Philippines did not deviate from this pattern, although the exceptional circumstances in which the election was conducted and by which U.S. interests were advanced enriches our understanding of a propaganda system in action.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections*, Boston: South End Press, 1984. Information about the elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador, and about the role of the media in these elections, is taken from this book.

2. The only reporter to show any interest in this story was Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times*. Bonner was soon demoted to the business section and before too long quit the paper.

3. "Report on the Nicaraguan Elections of 1984," Latin American Studies Association, 1985.

4. See Walden Bello and Edward S. Herman, "U.S.-Sponsored Elections in El Salvador and the Philippines," *World Policy Journal*, Summer-1984, pp. 851-69. The primary goal of the 1984 election was to stabilize Filipino politics by splitting the middle class and elite opposition from the Left, and reconciling and reunifying the elite. It was also hoped that an election would allow U.S. military aid to flow to the Philippines unimpeded by qualms about human rights there. The achievement of these goals would allow the Philippines, whether under Marcos or his successor, to pursue the military struggle against the "communists," and to restore the faith of the international business and banking community in the Filipino economy. Thus the 1984 election, like its successor, was far more complex than a simple "demonstration" election.

5. This account of the shift in elite opinion in the United States draws primarily on Walden Bello, "Edging Toward the Quagmire: The United States and the Philippine Crisis," *World Policy Journal*, Winter-1985-6, pp. 29-58; and Leslie Gelb, "Marcos Reported to Lose Support in Administration," *New York Times*, January 26, 1986.

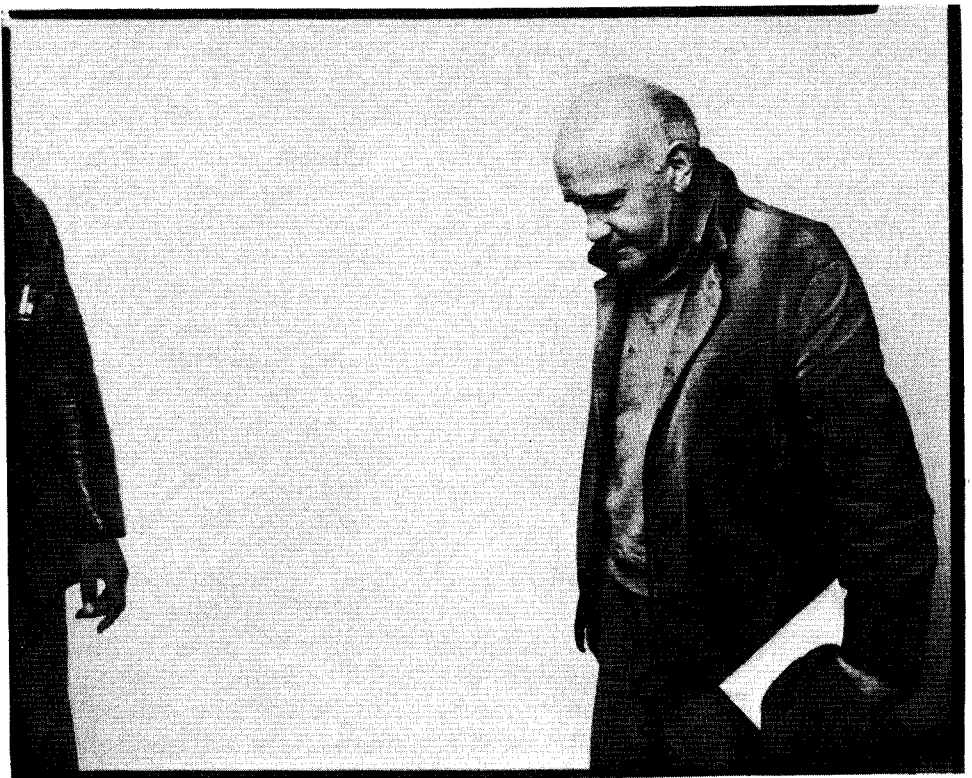
6. A comparison of U.S. strategy toward Marcos with the dilemma confronting U.S. Vietnam strategists in 1963 would be very interesting. The decision to dump Diem during the Buddhist crisis of that year was embarked on very reluctantly. It was not the justice of the demands of the Buddhists, of course, which prompted the U.S. move, nor the public outrage generated by the media publicity given to Diem's savage repression of this nonviolent, neutralist mass movement. Like Marcos, Diem was overthrown by the U.S. because his failure to control his people jeopardized U.S. military plans for Vietnam. For an excellent account of U.S. considerations in this period leading up to the overthrow of Diem, see George Kahin, *Intervention: How the U.S. Became Involved in Vietnam*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986, pp. 93-181.

7. The National Study Directive is discussed at length in Bello, "Edging Toward The Quagmire," *loc. cit.* The assessment of Marcos is quoted on page 36. It was Bello, incidentally, who transmitted this important document to the press.

8. "The U.S. and the Philippines: Dangers and Opportunities," an address to the Portland (Oregon) World Affairs Council, December 5, 1985.

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Frank Brodhead is an associate editor of *Radical America*. *Aside from Demonstration Elections, he and Edward S. Herman have also co-authored The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection (New York: Sheridan Square, 1986), a case study of "western disinformation."*



# THE SPECTRE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE:

## A Memoir of Jean Genet

MICHAEL BRONSKI

Sitting at my desk, surrounded by all of Genet's novels and plays, critical studies and magazine interviews, I find I am at a loss for what to say about the man's writings. He is accepted as a world-famous novelist and playwright, lauded by both academics and political progressives for his work and his thought. But I realize that what is, and always has been, important to me is that Genet — through his life as well as his writing — has proven that the inescapable connection between the personal and the political is manifested by sexuality. No matter what his station in life, and he was both a lifetime prisoner and a feted member of French intellectual society, it was his understanding of the sexual imagination and the power of the sexual act that allowed him to act, write and live the way he did.

The bare bones of Genet's biography are well known, and as important as his work, to his avid readers. Born in 1910, he was a bastard who never knew his parents and was brought up under the auspices of the *Assistance Publique*. In his tenth year he was arrested for theft and placed in a youth reformatory. His career as a criminal was always being interrupted by his career as a prisoner and he spent a good part of the next thirty years behind bars. After his tenth arrest for theft he was sentenced to prison for life and was freed by the efforts of such French notables as Gide, Sartre and Cocteau. While in prison he began writing poetry and

eventually wrote his masterwork *Our Lady of the Flowers* there only to have it destroyed by a guard. He rewrote it and managed to have it published, in a limited edition, in 1943. After being canonized by Sartre in the 1952 *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr* he was accepted as the bad boy genius of French letters. Over the next thirty years he wrote the rest of his novels and received even greater praise as a playwright. During that time he had been vocal in his support of such political groups as the PLO and the Black Panthers. At one point he lived with the Panthers for two months, in the U.S., and it was through his encouragement that Huey Newton wrote a public letter supporting the Gay Liberation Movement. A great deal of his writing in the 1950s and 1960s was spurred on by his political involvement with and support of the Algerian resistance to French colonialism. Throughout his life Genet became increasingly identified, in both his writings and his politics, with the outsider, the underdog, and the disenfranchised.

I first read Genet — *Our Lady of the Flowers* — as a 15 year old homosexual living in the New Jersey suburbs. It was the early sixties and there was little to read that mentioned gay people, besides some downbeat novels and

homophobic sociology. The world of Genet with its queens, prostitutes, pimps, rough trade sailors and dangerously exciting street life was a revelation. It was not just that many of the characters were homosexuals — although that was important — but that they glorified in being outsiders. Their very position as criminals and as rebels became their self-definition and their identity. In Genet's inverted vision the outcasts and the despised became saints and royalty. It was a vision that provided me with both comfort and strength.

Here was a man, a writer, a self-proclaimed homosexual who had a critique of sex, politics and society with which I could identify. The movement from being an unhappy high school student to becoming involved with progressive politics, the second wave of feminism, and the counterculture, were all prompted by my determination to remain firmly on the outside of-mainstream America, attempting to change it while being in secure control of my own life. There were few solid models to follow on this course and although he was not always in the forefront of my mind Genet was always present, if only as a spectre of what was possible.

The fact was that I did not know what was



*Jean Genet, William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, at the Democratic Convention, Chicago, 1968, Jill Krentz photo.*

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possible: my politics were a series of reactions to situations, each an attempt at further self-definition. But most of the time these situations seemed to be at odds, or at least vying for attention with, my ever-emerging identity as not only a homosexual, but as a sexual person. It was with gay liberation that my attachment to Genet began to make more complete sense. For the first time here was a politic — and a writer — which spoke to all of me. The possible was now.

I had always viewed Genet as the ultimate anti-bourgeois, the *bête noir* of the establishment. If there is a cohesive politic in Genet it is the centrality of the sexual imagination — the role that sex and sexual fantasy play in all of our lives. The drag queens and the street hustlers of *Our Lady of the Flowers* gain all their strength from their ability to act out and transform themselves sexually. The ruling class and the power brokers of *The Balcony* know that the most potent tool for social control is the sexual imagination. The working class women in *The Maids* (whom the playwright insists should be played by young men) understand that their salvation lies in the eroticized role playing which allows them to kill their mistress. Time after time Genet insists that personal and social freedom are attainable only after we have the courage and the power to act out on our sexual convictions.

I began to understand, from Genet, that in our erotophobic culture that *any* sex is an anti-social act of rebellion. The more taboo the act, the more political, and potent, it is. From our earliest days, we are taught to separate sex from the rest of our lives: it is private, hidden, something to be ashamed of, something to be discreet about. The sexual imagination, like the sexual act, is also to be kept silent, restrained. It is a small part of life which should be kept in its place or it might run free and impede our *real*, “functional” and “productive” lives. All too often it is divorced from how we view our politics, and how we perceive our political agendas. To repress, or ignore, the power and force of sexual feelings is to avoid the wellspring of energy which fuels our emotional and intellectual commitments to our lives, and politics. The moment our sexuality is relegated to a position of unimportance, or is perceived

as being separate from everything else, our politics are going to suffer.

Sex, for Genet, is not just something which must coexist with politics, it is the starting point, the instigator of political action. The embracing of all sexuality as political energy predicates what Genet would call violence. “Violence” is a loaded word but Genet has a very specific usage in mind — influenced by his gender, class background, and immediate political context. For him it is any strenuous life-affirming activity which must fight to assert itself. “Violence and life are virtually synonymous” he has written in an essay defending the actions of the Baader Meinhof group and the Red Army Faction. “The grain of wheat whose germination breaks the frozen ground, the beak of the hatching chicken which cracks the shell . . . the birth of a child — all are implicated in violence.” Genet sees all of life as a series of violent acts; it is the way that life and history move on. But he is very careful to separate “violence” from “brutality” which he defines as “that gesture which would destroy all free will.” Brutality is the power of the state against the individual; violence is the correct personal response against any brutality.

I first read Genet’s thoughts on violence and brutality at a time when I felt that the gay movement was rejecting its original tenets of sex radicalism for those of assimilation. As sexuality was becoming more and more of a charged issue — especially as it came under sustained attacks from the Right — it was becoming easier for gay liberationists, and many on the Left, to either downplay or totally ignore it. I was experiencing this not only in my political sphere but in my personal life as well: sexual repression was, for the first time in many years, becoming palpable in my everyday life. It was in fact a perfect, if not prime, example of Genet’s definition of “brutality”: a self-imposed gesture of censoring sexual liberty and free will.

Soon after this lesbians and gay men began discussions and dialogue about such issues as pornography, s/m, and intergenerational sex. The gay community, and the feminist community, began dealing openly and honestly with what I considered vital and life-sustaining questions — questions about sex and politics. And

although almost no one involved ever quoted, or even mentioned Genet, once again his example gave me both the insight and the ability to see through the present into what might become the future.

The gift that Genet has given me, and the world, in his life and his writings is the idea that all pleasure is erotic and that all eroticism is a form of rebellion. Through him I have understood my own relationship to the rest of the world and to my own sexuality and I have learned to deal with each of those in a way that makes both my life and my politics whole. It is a lesson I believe gay liberation has learned from and which all other political movements might profit by. Genet understands that the state, and all other forms of social control, are repressive and brutal and urges a rebellion against them. In its simplest terms this rebellion begins by acting upon and enjoying our sexual imagination and freedom. To do so is an act of violence — and of life — against all forms of repression and intolerance.

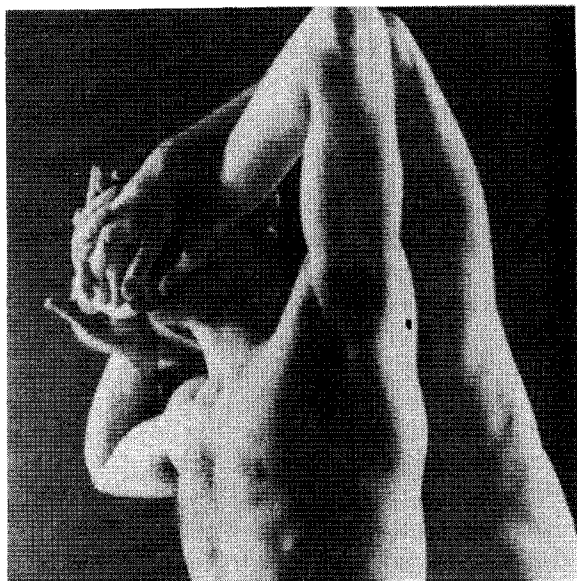
Michael Bronski is a gay activist and writer whose film, theater and literary criticism, as well as innovative articles on sexuality, have appeared in periodicals ranging from *Fag Rag* to the *Boston Globe*, *Gay Community News*, *Stallion*, and the *Boston Phoenix*. He is the author of *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility* (*South End Press*, 1984).

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Jean-Manuel Vuillaume, *Das Manner Foto Buch*, 1985.

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# LETTER

Dear Editors:

I liked Cynthia Enloe's article, "Bananas, Bases and Patriarchy," in *Radical America*, Volume 19, No. 4.

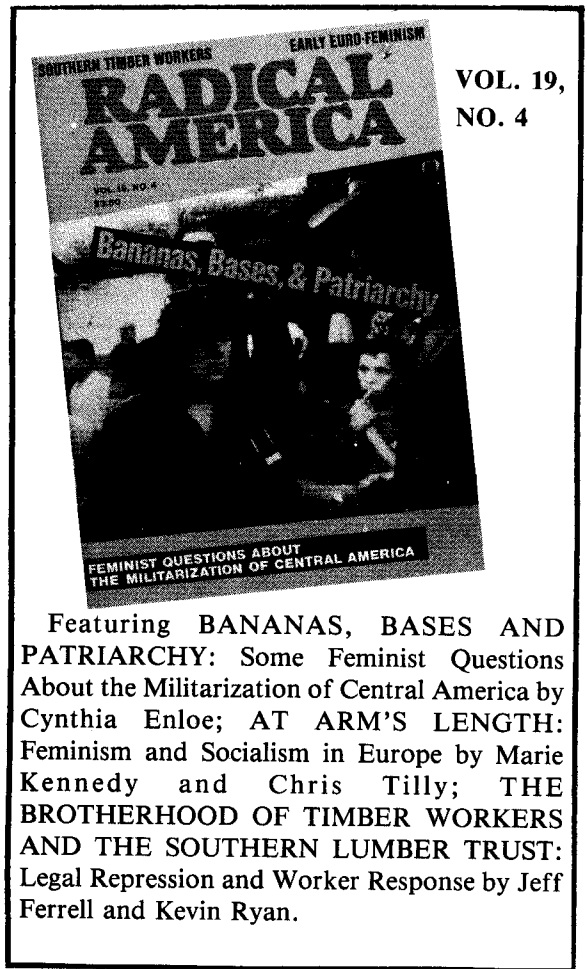
It was interesting and informative to me that Enloe, with such an apparently simple investigative tool as the question, "Where are the women?", could bring out so much new information about the realities of women (as distinct from men) under the impact of imperialist relations. This highlights the small amount of work that has been done on the gendered aspect of imperialist relations. Moreover, the article (for example, sections on "nation of chamber maids" and "the militarization of gender") leaves little space to argue for the lack of political relevance of such an investigation for the anti-imperialist movement.

I was struck that, while examining the realities and daily lives of women under the impact of imperialism, Enloe presented a much more real and complex picture, both of the countries she considers and of the interaction between these countries and the first world. This suggests that just as gender analysis of societies has already made our perception of these societies more realistic and has enriched our radical critique of them, a gender analysis of the relations between societies would bear similar fruits.

Enloe's article is also a search for possible directions for the elaboration of a feminist theory of imperialism. The question you raise in your editorial, "What if perpetuating male privilege is seen as a strategic question, not a periodic tactic of contemporary imperialism?" points to one such suggested direction. A dual theory of imperialism? Is there conscious and organized strategizing for expanding and/or enforcing the patriarchal system (or a particular form of patriarchal system) parallel to that of profitmaking? What are the institutions in charge of drawing up policies and ensuring that they materialize? Is there consensus on the form of the patriarchal system to be promoted and on the best way to do so?... Or is it that the imperialist powers benefit from the patriarchal systems in the third world just as they benefit from the raw material and the cheap labor in those countries? As something already available that can be exploited towards their goal with a minimum expenditure of energy? Could there be certain antagonisms between patriarchal system in the first world and those in the third world?...

It was exciting to me to finish reading this article and be left with a number of interesting questions. I hope to read more about this subject in your magazine.

Hassan Vakili  
Cambridge, MA



VOL. 19,  
NO. 4

Featuring BANANAS, BASES AND PATRIARCHY: Some Feminist Questions About the Militarization of Central America by Cynthia Enloe; AT ARM'S LENGTH: Feminism and Socialism in Europe by Marie Kennedy and Chris Tilly; THE BROTHERHOOD OF TIMBER WORKERS AND THE SOUTHERN LUMBER TRUST: Legal Repression and Worker Response by Jeff Ferrell and Kevin Ryan.

## ERRATA

In Vol. 19, No. 6 there are two layout errors for Rita Arditti, "Reproductive Engineering and the Social Control of Women." Pp. 18-19 should be reversed with pp. 16-17. Secondly, we inadvertently left out the following bibliographical references. They should be inserted following page 26.

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