

torical and cultural questions in a way that advances the agenda of minority groups, his own especially; he would resign and boycott the organization if the idea were accepted. With only a few dissenters the committee immediately turned down the proposal.

This trivial incident provokes a number of reflections. Whatever happened to the pursuit of truth? to academic freedom? to scholarly courtesy and tolerance? Another reflection: anyone (of any color) who cannot tell the difference between General Lee

and Hitler is not fit to teach young people (of any color). Another: what distinction, if any, can be drawn between the angry scholar's position and blackmail, or cultural terrorism?

Unfortunately, this is only a trivial example of a kind of thing that happens every day everywhere in America. We will soon be in the position that our colleagues in Eastern Europe are busily emancipating themselves from. In Communist countries there is an official line that everyone adheres to. It is well understood that nobody really

believes the Marxist-Leninist line except a few dull-witted and self-interested party hacks, but everyone must pay obeisance to it. All real discussion is carried on in code (at least until recently), so as not to arouse the ire of the ruling powers. A political or economic analysis of current conditions is presented in the guise of a study of ancient history, for instance, or by the use of double-meaning terminology. We are not very far from that situation now.

—Clyde Wilson

## Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

It is hardly an accident that the decomposition of the American nation and its culture is paralleled by the decomposition of the American middle class. In the 19th century, nationality and the middle classes were born together as Siamese twins, and their enemies understood their linkage and tried their best to strangle them in their common cradle. They failed, and the twins grew up as inseparable companions. It therefore makes sense that they remain united in death as they were in life.

In American as in European history, the middle class was the creator and carrier of nationalism, so much so that a cliché common among historians and sociologists holds that in the United States the middle class includes everyone. Of course it doesn't, and didn't; but the epoch that historian John Lukacs calls the "Bourgeois Interlude" —from 1895 to 1955—remains even today the normative period of American history, the era that bred the culture and character that most people, Europeans as well as Americans themselves, still think of as typically American, against which we still measure our achievements and failures.

But as Professor Lukacs notes, "middle class" and "bourgeois" are not the same thing. The former refers to a merely economic category that happens to enjoy a material income between that of the poor and that of the wealthy. A middle class is as logically necessary to social existence as the obverse of a coin is to its reverse. But the "existence of

the bourgeoisie," writes Professor Lukacs, "has been a particular phenomenon, a historical reality." The principal characteristics of the bourgeoisie were not economic but cultural and psychic—"the sense of personal authenticity and liberty, the desire for privacy, the cult of the family, permanence of residence, the durability of possessions, the sense of security, and the urbanity of the standards of civilized life." These standards derived from or were associated with the bourgeois attribute of "interiority," a preoccupation with the self manifested in literature and the arts through the novel, the portrait, the keeping of diaries, and the publication of letters, and appearing socially and politically in the creeds of individualism and the self-determination of nations.

The dates Professor Lukacs gives for the Bourgeois Interlude identify the era's cultural personality, but the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in culture followed its economic and political triumph in the American Civil War by about thirty years, just as its demise in the mid-1950's followed by about twenty-five years its political and economic overthrow in the Depression and New Deal. In the pre-bourgeois period of American history, during what might be called the "First Republic," neither nationalism nor the bourgeois psyche prevailed, and a decentralized constitutional and social order prevented the consolidation of power by either the bourgeois capitalism of the Northeast or the aristocratic capitalism of Southern plantation masters.

The "Second Republic," the politi-

cal expression of the Bourgeois Interlude, emerged from the Civil War and made the United States a singular noun and a real nation-state, just like Napoleon III's France or Bismarck's Germany. Bourgeois economic, political, and cultural dominance meant that the new elite no longer had to be content with patching up its own psychic interior. Now it could redecorate the souls of Southerners, Indians, Latin Americans, Filipinos, European dynasts, and anyone else whose spiritual architecture failed to meet bourgeois standards. The technology, industry, urbanization, and mass educational and communications institutions that the new bourgeois elite set up enabled it to start straightening out regional and social bumps in the road of progress within the United States and to make preparations for turning the rest of the world into a bourgeois parking lot.

In the process, the bourgeois elite generated its own destruction. Its corporations, banks, universities and pubescent bureaucracies gave birth to a new class of technocrats who had little use for bourgeois beliefs and institutions. In the economy, the "separation of ownership and control" removed bourgeois property-holders from the direction of their own firms and empowered professional managers in their places. In the state, democratization served to disperse sovereignty among the newly enfranchised and politically active masses, with the result that the "people" received the name of power, but the experts who managed the state held its substance. Culturally, the new intelligentsia that crept out of bourgeois universities and

into tenured chairs and the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines despised the bourgeois class that had created and subsidized it, and the new savants knit their brows to devise ways to humiliate, subvert, and overthrow the bourgeois order. All that was really necessary to accomplish that goal was for the new elites in the economy, state, and culture to meet, marry, and set up housekeeping, which they did with the blessing of progressivist ideology and an ample dowry from their new federal godfather.

By the end of World War II, the bourgeois class had been effectively decapitated as the dominant minority in the United States, or had been subsumed into the new managerial elite that now prevailed. No fratricidal conflict marked the transition from the "Second Republic" to the managerial imperium because the bourgeois elite, contemplating its interior navel, never fully grasped what was happening and was unable to muster the will or the temperament to resist it. Having insisted on wrecking the "First Republic" and reconstructing it to its tastes, the bourgeois elite lacked the capacity to preserve its own power or the national culture its power had created. In the end, its members lost only their dominance and not their fortunes or their heads, and there is no good reason for most Americans today to lament its passing.

But there is good reason to mourn what will befall those millions of Americans who were never part of the bourgeois elite but who formed their lives around bourgeois culture. As the managerial successors to the bourgeoisie push the United States into a new transnational order and ally with the underclass, the American middle class is being crushed between them and stripped of its cultural identity and heritage.

The end of the bourgeois order in the middle of the century transformed the American middle class from a bourgeois *Mittelstand* to a post-bourgeois proletariat. As political scientist Andrew Hacker describes this "new middle class," it is considerably larger than the old and hence is "unwilling and unable to adhere to rules tailored for a quite different group of individuals in quite different settings." It differs from the old middle class also in its high degree of transiency and mobility, its

"national" rather than its local character, and its lack of property. While the new middle class glories in its affluence and ability to consume whatever managerial capitalism sets before it, it conspicuously lacks the material independence of the old middle class and the authority, security, and liberty that independence yields. The members of the new middle class, writes Mr. Hacker, "are employees, and their livelihoods are always contingent on the approval and good will of the individuals and organizations who employ them. . . . Whatever status and prosperity today's middle-class American may have is due to the decision of someone to hire him and utilize his services."

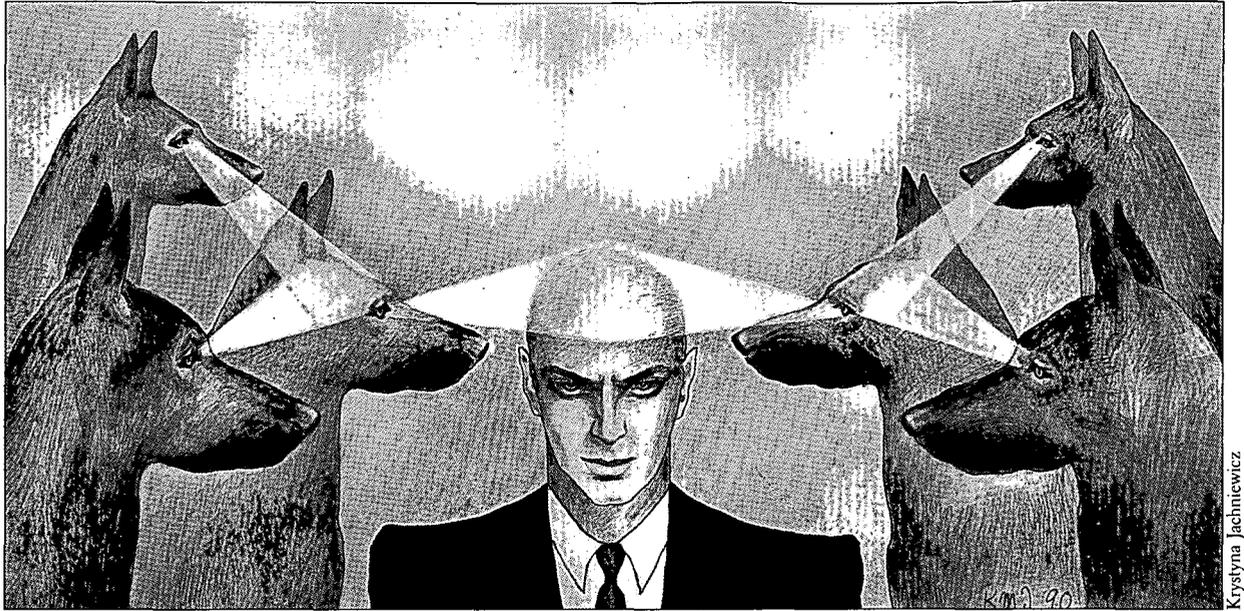
Masticated by the Depression and World War II, and digested by the mass organizations that swallowed the more compact bourgeois institutions, the American middle class has suffered a profound dispossession, regardless of the number of credit cards it carries. Alienated from the nation's past by its size and rootlessness, it retains only a fragmented memory of and identity with the historic national experience. Lacking the autonomy of the bourgeois middle class, it is unable to formulate a new identity that would offer resistance to the emerging transnational elite and its allies in the underclass. "In fact," writes Mr. Hacker, "the new middle class has many attributes in common with the traditional conception of a proletariat."

In the emerging global managerial regime, the middle class may soon be reduced to the other attributes of a proletariat as well. "By any measure," *The Wall Street Journal* reported in 1987, "the share of households with middle-class incomes has steadily declined"; the "once-tightly knit group has broken apart" and its "broad consensus on how to live and what constitutes success . . . has given way to an increasingly fragmented array of life styles and values." The need for wives and mothers to work to sustain middle-class incomes and living standards weakens family bonds. Middle-class home ownership is already obsolescent in many urban areas, and the violence of the underclass, domestic or imported, is abetted by the elite and drives the middle class from the cities their forebears built.

In Detroit, where nearly 10 percent of the population has left since 1980, only two building permits for single family homes were issued in all of 1987, and the Catholic archdiocese announced the closing of 43 churches in the city in 1988. During the Hundred Years War in Europe, wolves roamed the streets of medieval Paris; today ring-necked pheasants strut through the abandoned lots and buildings of Detroit, keeping company with the human wolves who have inherited the city that put America in the driver's seat. In Los Angeles, reports *The New York Times*, "the exodus of white middle-class residents began at least a decade ago . . . but recent alarm over smog, gang violence, traffic and housing costs appears to have accelerated the trend." More than 282,000 Californians moved out of the state entirely in 1988-89. "My 9-year-old daughter comes home from school and says a classmate is dealing drugs," 29-year-old Carol Woolverton told *The San Francisco Examiner* last July. "And there've been so many kidnappings." She is reported to have moved to Oregon with her husband, three children, and two pets. Where will they run next?

Without the cultural cohesion that the bourgeois elite imposed, the new middle class cannot expect to retain for long its traditional identity and values, let alone its political and economic power. But the new proletariat is no longer part of a bourgeois social and political order; it is only an artifact or remnant of it, and it cannot look to the bourgeois elite for leadership or salvation. That elite is extinct, and the national republic it governed during the Bourgeois Interlude is defunct along with it. If the post-bourgeois middle class seriously wishes to avoid its own extinction, it will have to evolve a new group consciousness and a new identity independent of both the moribund bourgeois elite and the technobureaucracy of the global managerial order. It will have to expurgate the self-indulgent "interiority" that ultimately proved lethal to the bourgeoisie, and it must aspire to form the core of a new political and cultural order in which it can assert its own hegemony.





## Science, Wisdom, and Moral Judgment

by Thomas Fleming

*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Juvenal's admonition to husbands has often been applied to government, but rarely with the full force of the original: "Go ahead and lock her up," the Roman satirist warned, "but who will watch the watchmen themselves? She's put on her guard and starts with them." Once a large number of frail mortals has empowered a smaller set to watch over their interests, what—or rather, since institutions always consist of power-seeking individuals, *who*—is going to prevent them from looking after their own, rather than the people's, interest? What is worse, if we are to follow up the metaphor, we are actually facilitating the corruption.

To prevent such corruption in high places, governments are turning to ethics specialists. But what are the qualifications for these positions? Chicago's "ethics chief," Gary M. O'Neill, had been a campaign fund-raiser and personal injury attorney in Louisiana before answering a newspaper ad placed by the Chicago Board of Ethics. Mayor Daley had offended the Board by recommending a candidate with "ties to city hall," and the Board—determined to have its own way—hired O'Neill as executive director on December 12, 1989.

On January 12, 1990, exactly one month later, the new ethics chief resigned, after it was revealed that he had been himself accused of campaign chicanery by the Louisiana Board of Ethics for Elected Officials. The ex-ambulance chaser's apology to the *Chicago Sun-Times* was that it was unfortunate when ambitious bureaucrats have "sad things

happen in their lives."

Note the impersonal construction so popular with children and with those who are morally "forever young": as it says on the bumper sticker, s--t happens. Even if the ethics board had not asked about any skeletons in his closet, O'Neill knew it was his obligation to tell them about the problem in Louisiana. He cannot even allege that the whole affair had slipped his mind. He told NPR's *Morning Edition* that he considered candor as an option, but only because he thought his experience with an ethics investigation could be considered an asset.

So now the question is not simply who will watch the watchdogs, but who will watch the watchdogs hired to watch the watchdogs? It is an infinite regression toward a point that represents the extinction of our liberties.

As I write this on the twelfth of January, I believe I can predict at least one of the reactions to this petty scandal. Members of the ethics profession will seize the occasion and mount a campaign to insure that only a trained professional be hired to fill an ethics position. Because, there are now academic courses in medical ethics and legal ethics, and the same business schools that cheered on Ivan Boesky have instituted ethics requirements.

Ethics is a big business, too, for such Watergate alumni as Charles Colson and Jeb Stuart Magruder. Mr. Colson has made himself into something of a celebrity-theologian, but what his credentials are, he has never made plain. Like Chuck Colson, Mr. Magruder has got religion and makes