

David Horowitz

The Queer Fellows

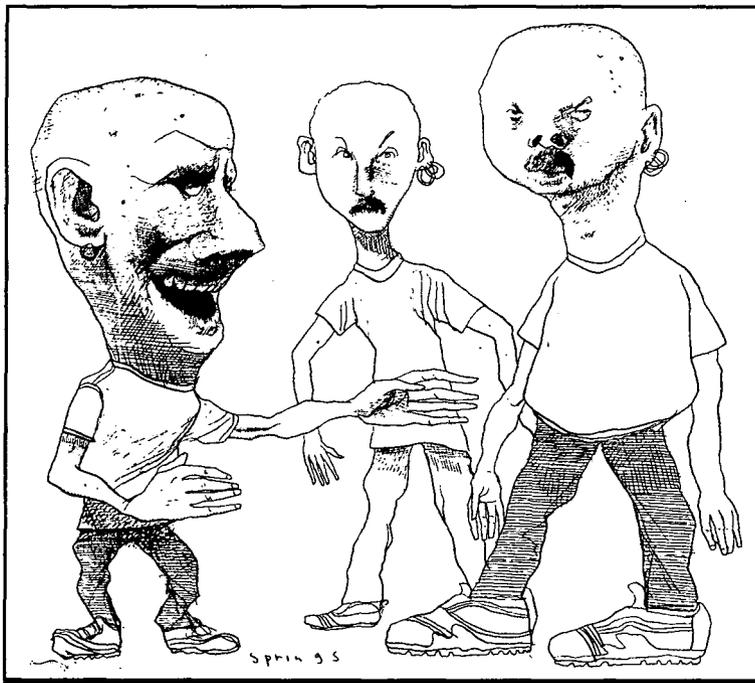
"Queer theorists" on American campuses are resurrecting the Marxist project—with sex, not class, as its target. For the new academic radicals, the enemy is not just heterosexuality but the idea of gender itself.

A specter is haunting the American academy, the last refuge of the political left. It is the specter of "queer theory." Amidst the din and clatter of utopias crashing messily to earth, the true believers are once again burnishing the agendas of social revolution. From Berkeley to Cambridge, lesbian and gay activists busily work to unveil the latest weapon in the intellectual armory of the tenured left. "Queer politics is no longer content to carve out a buffer zone for a minoritized and protected subculture," an academic manifesto proclaims. Its goal is "to challenge the pervasive and often invisible heteronormativity of modern societies." Says the *Village Voice*: "It isn't enough to become parallel to straights. We want to obliterate such dichotomies altogether."

The "dichotomies" are already being obliterated in liberated zones of the popular culture. A *San Francisco Chronicle* reviewer describing Michael Jackson's international video *Black and White*, which was seen by half a billion youngsters across the globe, waxes messianic:

The refrain in the *Black and White* video is "It doesn't matter if you're black or white." Most riveting is a computer-enhanced

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segment where a person changes ethnicity and sex in rapid succession. . . . In a world threatened by racial tensions and overpopulation, the survival instinct could summon a new human, one who has no single race and who, by being . . . androgynous, is less subject to the procreative urge.

The task (in the words of the previously cited manifesto) is "to confront . . . modern culture with its worst nightmare, a queer planet."

As novelist Saul Bellow observes, "The idea is to clobber everything that used to be accepted as given, fixed, irremediable." For the new radical theorists, the enemy is no longer a ruling class, a hegemonic race, or even a dominant gender. Instead it is the sexual order of nature itself. Oppression lies in the very idea of the "normal," the order that divides humanity into two sexes. Instead of a classless society as the redemptive future, queer theorists envisage a gender-free world.

Queer revolution is thus the ultimate subversive project: it proclaims the death not only of Society's God, but also of Nature's Law—the very idea of a reality beyond human will. For these revolutionaries, not even biology grounds possibility or can limit human hope. Theirs is the consummate Nietzschean fantasy: a world in which humanity is God. On this brave new horizon, humanity will realize its potential as a self-creating species able to defy its own sexual gravity. The future will give birth to a

new revolutionary people, no longer male and female, but queer.

The century behind us is littered with the corpses of millions who died on the cross of such new worlds. Before the collapse of the Communist empire, the quest for a “new man” and “new woman” consumed the lives of entire nations. But the effort to produce a super race created instead an unprecedented monstrosity, whose horror was nonetheless predictable. Indeed, it was predicted by contemporary critics of Lenin and Marx, who saw how the revolutionary ideal bore within itself the seeds of its own undoing.

For behind the revolutionary pursuit of an impossible ideal lurks a deep hatred for the human norm and an unquenchable desire for its annihilation. The inhumanity of the Communist ambition was what made its epoch so evil. Self-hatred is the root of the Communist ideal, a lesson too easily ignored. The totalitarian state was not an aberration of the progressive spirit, but its apotheosis. If the agenda is to erase the human past in order to remake the human soul, then totalitarian terror is the necessary means.

Why should anyone have expected anything different?

The paradox of progressive intentions and reactionary consequences is as old as the left itself. It springs from Rousseau’s fantasy that social institutions are the root of all evil, which is the fountainhead of radical theory. It is the idea that human reality is “socially constructed” and thus can be socially molded to virtuous ends by a vigilant (and armed) political elite. Although they affect an intellectual superiority to their Communist forbears, the new campus puritans seek an identical result: the redemption of humanity through political power.

For Marxists, the key to this power was the proletariat, a majority class. Oppressed by its lack of property, the proletariat could accomplish its liberation only by the abolition of property. This revolutionary act would re-constitute as a liberated class not only the proletariat, but all social classes.

No one believes any longer in the revolutionary myth of the proletarian international, but Marx’s discredited paradigm has been resurrected by his epigones in the American academy. The fulcrum of this revival has been the development of post-Marxist theories that substitute other “oppressed” groups—blacks, women, and homosexuals—for the missing revolutionary term. Behind each of these theories lies a version of the constructivist idea: the social construction of a race, class, or gender creates the premise that it is socially “oppressed.” Thus women have been historically excluded from certain roles not as a result of biological realities—for example, the hazards of childbirth before the development of modern medical techniques—but because “patriarchal society” has defined their roles in order that men can oppress them.

It should be obvious that radical theory is, in fact, a radi-

cal depreciation of the humanity and dignity of ordinary people. Only the successful are historical subjects; the rest are mere objects of others’ “oppression.” In the radical view, society reflects neither nature nor history, and individual human beings have no complicity in their historical fates. They are mere social creations.

The same constructivist fallacy creates the revolutionary potential of all those categories valorized and simultaneously depreciated by radical theory, i.e., stripped of their free will and reduced to the status of historical objects. It is their destiny to be reshaped and redefined by the radical vanguard. But because they were mere objects in the historical past, they are also objects in the radical future. This, in capsule, is the totalitarian story, and the animating theme of all radical theory.

All theoretical relativisms, beginning with Nietzsche and culminating in Derrida, have this absolute in common: there is no objective value, no natural standard, no insurmountable obstacle to human desire. This is the intellectual ground of a leftism that—to paraphrase Lenin—is an infantile disorder. As one queer writer recently summarized:

In this age of deconstruction, the notion that sexual identities are “essential”—

that is, constituted by nature—is under attack [by revolutionary theorists]. Identity—in terms of race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality—is no longer seen as stable or even coherent; but as variable, provisional, and most of all constructed.

In *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, David Halperin, a leading queer theorist, describes the contribution of the father of structuralism: “Foucault did for ‘sexuality’ what feminist critics had done for ‘gender.’ . . . He divorced ‘sexuality’ from ‘nature’ and interpreted it, instead, as a cultural production.”

If sexuality is a “cultural production” and can be shaped to fit a conscious design, what area of human endeavor or desire cannot? Like their predecessors, the Doctor Frankensteins of the newest left are intoxicated with the prospect of brave new worlds. Their agenda is to make a racist, sexist, homophobic humanity into a liberated entity in their own image. This is a secular idolatry identical to that of the Communist apocalypse.

Ironically, the point of entry for the revived radical impulse in the United States was a traditionalist movement for social reform. The civil rights movement, under the leadership of Martin Luther King, was guided by a conservative agenda. Its goal was to include black Americans in the existing social contract, especially in the segregated South, where the constitutional covenant had been restricted to whites. King’s dream was the American dream: inclusion and opportunity for all. *E pluribus unum.*

King’s victories were achieved under the banner of “inte-

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gration" into the very system that radicals despised. It was the worst nightmare of the rejuvenated left. As soon as the civil rights movement achieved its goal of ending legal discrimination, the radicals acted to push King aside. Led by racist demagogues like Stokely Carmichael, the new left rejected King's leadership (deriding him as "Uncle Martin") and embraced the violent racism of Malcolm X. The banner of integration was replaced by the call for separatism and "black power." The new political goal—"black liberation"—was defined as liberation *from* the American dream. Underpinning the new vision was a bastard version of the old paradigm, as the discredited Marxist categories were recast in racial terms.

The problem with this new paradigm was that it lacked the basic coherence of its Marxist predecessor and, except as a rationale for destructive agendas, made little political sense. Once the idea of a universal class was discarded, there was no logical cutoff for new pretenders to the revolutionary throne. Women, "Latinos," homosexuals, and Native Americans vied for possession of the victim's mantle. No reflexive embarrassment seemed to restrain them as they rushed forward to compare their own discomforts with the historic sufferings of American blacks. Even college students—among the most privileged of America's social ranks—experienced no difficulty in nursing their grievances into a revolutionary apotheosis, captured in the title of a sixties tract called *Student as Nigger*.

But the most determined and successful claimants were radical women. Led by activists whose outlook had been shaped in Marxist polemics, radical feminists quickly appropriated the moral aura of the civil rights epic. Developing what came to be called a "politics of identity" (in contrast to the old politics of class), the feminists turned to the Marxist patriarchs as an intellectual source. From the poisoned well of the Communist past, they drew not only the specific terms but the general forms of their social analyses, creating a parodistic version of what had long been a bankrupt creed.

In a typical "contribution" to the new feminist theory Catherine MacKinnon crudely substituted sexual categories for Marx's economic terms, ignoring the absurdities that this intellectual sleight-of-hand inevitably produced. "As work is to marxism, sexuality [is] to feminism," she wrote in her pretentious opus, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*. To provide a theoretical underpinning, she simply abandoned the dialectic of history that had provided Marxism with a complex if erroneous view of human praxis, favoring a vulgar Lamarckism in which environment not only determined but actually created gender: "The molding, direction, and expression of sexuality organizes society into two sexes: women and men." This is now the prevailing

"explanation" of sexual identity in elite universities across the United States.

No sooner had radical feminists grasped the revolutionary laurel, however, than the hierarchy of the oppressed asserted itself *within* the revolutionary ranks. Bisexual activists claimed a more revolutionary status than comrades who were straight; lesbians rebelled. "Heterosexual sex," complained a lesbian theorist (and former Trotskyite) "is a site for male dominance that Marx ignored." (No doubt a shrewder one of his judgments.)

To establish their primacy in the revolutionary pecking order, radicals came up with a catchy slogan: *Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice*. Catherine MacKinnon turned this into academese: "If feminism is the epistemology . . . lesbianism is the ontology."

The collision of feminist factions was replicated throughout the radical ranks. Lesbians clashed with gays. To provide an exit from the impasse of this political fragmentation, the idea of "queer" was proposed as a unifying concept. "Queer" posited a universal sex to replace the absent universal class.

Their agenda is to make a racist, sexist, homophobic humanity into a liberated entity in their own image. This is a secular idolatry identical to that of the Communist apocalypse.

To the constructivist, all identities, gay and straight, are the product of a socially imposed ideal—heteronormativity—which also structures the system of oppression. This

is the gender-patriarchy system through which heterosexual males oppress women and gays. In MacKinnon's formulation: "Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of its dominant form, heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission." It is the task of the sexual revolutionary to overthrow the norm that structures this oppression.

In its queer formulation, the radical project appears to reach its outer limit, realizing what the young Marx might have called its species essence. For the concept of queer is really the modern revolutionary idea distilled into crystalline form as the cry of the Unhappy Consciousness: *That which is normal oppresses me*.

To the rest of humanity, the institutional forms of capitalist democracies appear as liberating structures in whose environment individuals can achieve, breathe free, and realize their desires, without engaging in anarchy and chaos. It is the Hobbesian dilemma resolved. Liberty ordered by the rule of law, and market constraints. To the alienated radical, however, democracy is a diabolical form of social oppression because of the freedoms it permits; because it appears to be free, while failing to live up to radical expectations.

To the post-modern left, the institutional forms of capitalist democracies are not at all triumphs of an evolutionary process, nor reflections of the reality of who we are. To radicals, democratic government is not "a reflection on human

nature" (as the authors of the *Federalist* maintained), but an instrument of class/gender/race oppression that social liberators like themselves are obliged to destroy.

But in this malevolent confrontation with democratic societies, radicals are confronted with a serious dilemma. Because democracies, like America's, are founded in conservative views of human nature, they embrace their opponents. Democratic societies institutionalize change and accommodate the unexpected. The reform of institutions is written into law as a necessary part of the democratic process, just as tolerance for difference is its central value. Not only do democracies not suppress their opposition, but they provide a haven even for those who hate the System. The democratic founders understood the inevitability of second thoughts.

It is this very principle of tolerance that queer revolutionaries and radicals most reject. For it is this rejection that defines them as radicals. For them, tolerance itself is repressive because it denies their most cherished illusion: that they are the authentic voice of humanity, and theirs the universal political solution.

Radicals, in short, do not want integration into a democratic system or equal status in a democratic state. Nothing could be more self-defeating than to be counted one among many. For radicals, accepting the idea of a democratic norm—or any norm at all—is merely to collude in one's own oppression; to embrace a "false consciousness" in

place of a revolutionary vision. "Formally, the state is male, in that objectivity is its norm," explains the author of an essay titled "Fear of a Queer Planet." In this radical conception of human freedom, the revolutionary goal is a queer state where norms no longer exist. At the recent tenth anniversary conference of the National Council for Research on Women, its feminist president cited the term "unwed mother" as an example of "androcentric" bias because "it presupposes that the norm is to be a *wed* mother." Heteronormative, androcentric, Euro-centric: for the radical, the very idea of the normal community—the non-queer—is the mark of its oppression.

Normality can be a descriptive term, a proscriptive term, or both. A "normal procedure" in medicine or in public health is a procedure that is *usually* prescribed. It is usually prescribed *because* it has been previously tried and proven successful. It is by trial that we arrive at methods, procedures, institutions, laws, that bring our efforts into conformity or coherence with the orders of our nature.

When homosexuals object to the term "abnormal," they are objecting to its proscriptive use—for example in the claim that homosexuality is unnatural or immoral or should be illegal. As a matter of description, homosexuality appears to be both a fact of nature and abnormal. According to the best statistics available, between two and five percent

How about a little Glasnost on American college campuses?

Over 30 years ago, in Moscow, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev jabbed his finger into the chest of then-Vice President Richard Nixon and said, "Your grandchildren will live under communism." Nixon replied, "Your grandchildren will live in freedom."

Looking at college and university campuses in America today, it seems that they were both right!

In the wake of the tremendous political, economic, and social upheaval in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, the American campus is about the only place the Marxists can call home. While it may not be communist, the indoctrination and tactics of "political correctness" that some students are forced to endure is similar to the old systems cast aside by the people's revolutions against communism.

You can help in the student's revolution here in America by joining Accuracy in Academia. Through our monthly newspaper, *Campus Report*, and campus chapters, we are trying to instill fairness and open debate where some have chosen to use the lecture stand as a bully pulpit for their own political views or the rights of the few are being unfairly imposed on the rights of the many in the name of diversity and multiculturalism. Won't you join us?



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of a population will be homosexual in any given society, whether that society is tolerant or intolerant of homosexual behavior. Studies of identical twins indicate that upbringing has little bearing on homosexual development. The conservative conclusion will be that homosexuality is normal in that it is rooted in nature, but that socially it is abnormal in that the vast majority of people are not and will never be homosexually inclined.

But description in this sense does not necessarily lead to proscriptive conclusions. The claim that homosexuality is socially abnormal does not lead to any conclusion as to whether it is immoral or not. Such conclusions must be a matter of individual principles and communal preferences. Many communities and religions do view homosexuality as immoral. These attitudes may be "oppressive" to homosexuals, but no more so than are Christian attitudes towards Jews as souls condemned to eternal damnation. Jews can live with this attitude in a society that protects their rights and invokes tolerance of difference as its central virtue: *E pluribus unum*.

The ideal of American pluralism—the political norm that governs the behavior of its citizen democrats—is the necessary embrace of diverse communities: even communities in fundamental conflict. The pluralistic norm of American democracy requires that the deviant community and the abnormal citizen (black, homo-

sexual, immigrant, Jew) be equal before the law and enjoy the same inalienable rights as everyone else. To violate this norm, to break the law of America's social contract, is to invite terrible consequences, as the bloodiest and most shameful pages of America's history attest.

But it is the normal "civil rights" solution to the problem of minority status, integration into America's civic foundation, that homosexual radicals reject. In rejecting America's normative institutions, while radically inventing the social future, however, they invite just those retributions that have historically attended the systematic violation of natural order. In so doing, they have created their own social Frankenstein, even without achieving state power, in the contemporary epidemic of AIDS.

Who would not have known in 1969, the year of "Gay Liberation," for example, that promiscuous anal sex was unsanitary for individuals and a potential danger to public health? Yet, gay liberation was defined by its theorists as just that: promiscuous anal sex, a challenge to the repressive "sex-negative" culture of what queer theorists now call "heteronormativity," i.e., the heterosexual and monogamous norm. In the radical view, existing sexual norms reflected nothing about humanity's

historic experience, but were merely a social construction to preserve the privileges of a dominant group.

Like black radicals before them, gay activists rejected the idea of integration into a civil order. Gay liberation was identified with a sexual agenda that did not seek civic tolerance, respect, and integration of homosexuals into the public order of bourgeois life. It was defined instead as a defiant promiscuity, the overthrow of bourgeois morals and sexual restraints. And, consequently, of bourgeois standards of public hygiene. No natural or moral barriers were recognized to the realization of the radical project.

The effect of this radical agenda was immediate and unmistakable. In the years 1967-1969—the flowering of the sexual revolution—the incidence of amoebiasis, a parasitic sexually transmitted disease, increased fifty times in San Francisco because of promiscuous oral-anal sex among gays. Despite the consequences, a Toronto leftist paper defended the practice in an article titled "Rimming As a Revolutionary Act." During the next decade, the toler-

erant American civil order made room for the sexual revolutionaries. Public officials licensed sexual gymnasias called "bathhouses" and turned a blind eye toward homosexual activity in bookstore back rooms, bars, and "glory hole" establishments, until a \$100 million industry flourished by decade's end. At the same time, natural forces asserted themselves

The demand that homosexuality should be made illegal is not a matter of mere communal prejudice or individual preference. It is a demand that violates the social contract and its pluralist imperative, and runs counter to the very idea of America's unity as a nation.

with ever more devastating results.

As opportunistic but still treatable infections flourished in the Petri dish of the liberated culture, gay radicals merely increased their defiance. Overloaded VD clinics became trysting places in the liberated culture. In his authoritative history of the AIDS epidemic, author Randy Shilts describes the atmosphere on the eve of its outbreak:

Gay men were being washed by tide after tide of increasingly serious infections. First it was syphilis and gonorrhea. Gay men made up about 80% of the 70,000 annual patient visits to [San Francisco's] VD clinics. Easy treatment had imbued them with such a cavalier attitude toward venereal diseases that many gay men saved their waiting-line numbers, like little tokens of desirability, and the clinic was considered an easy place to pick up both a shot and a date.

Far from causing radical activists to rethink their agenda, the burgeoning epidemics prompted them to escalate their assault. When Dr. Dan William, a gay specialist, warned of the danger of continued promiscuity, he was publicly denounced as a "monogamist" in the gay press. When playwright Larry Kramer issued a similar warning, he was accused in the *New York Native* of "gay homophobia and antieroticism." At a public meeting in the year preceding

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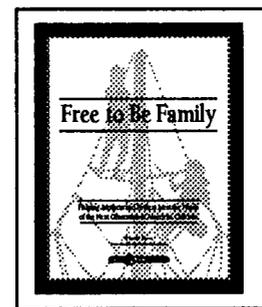


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the first AIDS cases, Edmund White, co-author of *The Joy of Gay Sex*, proposed that “gay men should wear their sexually transmitted diseases like red badges of courage in a war against a sex-negative society.” Michael Callen, a gay youth present at the meeting, had already had 3,000 sexual partners and was shortly to come down with AIDS. He writes in his book, *Surviving Aids*, that when he heard White’s triumphant defiance of nature’s law, he thought: “Every time I get the clap I’m striking a blow for the sexual revolution.”

Callen’s attitude was emblematic. The first clusters of AIDS victims were formed not by monogamous civil reformers who had come out of the closet to demand tolerance and respect, but by sexual revolutionaries who pushed their bodies’ immune envelopes to advance the new order. Callen, who later founded People With AIDS, reflected on this revolutionary path:

Unfortunately, as a function of a microbiological . . . certainty, this level of sexual activity resulted in concurrent epidemics of syphilis, gonorrhea, hepatitis, amoebiasis, venereal warts and, we discovered too late, other pathogens. Unwittingly, and with the best of revolutionary intentions, a small subset of gay men managed to create disease settings equivalent to those of poor third-world nations in one of the richest nations on earth.

The diseases were being transformed as well. As Shilts explains, the enteric diseases—amoebiasis, Gay Bowel Syndrome, giardiasis, and shigellosis—were followed by an epidemic of hepatitis B, “a disease that had transformed itself, via the popularity of anal intercourse, from a blood-borne scourge into a venereal disease.”

Where were public health officials, as these epidemics took their toll? Why didn’t they intervene, sound the alarm, close the bathhouses, undertake vigorous education campaigns among gays to warn potential victims of the danger in their path? The reason was the revolution itself: So successful was the campaign of the radical activists that it made traditional public health practices politically impossible, particularly when officials attempted to close sexual bathhouses regarded as “symbols of gay liberation.” As Don Francis, the Center for Disease Control official in charge of fighting the hepatitis B epidemic, told a reporter: “We didn’t intervene because we felt that it would be interfering with an alternative lifestyle.”

In the early eighties, the AIDS epidemic was still confined to three cities with large homosexual communities.

Aggressive public health methods might have prevented the epidemic’s outward spread. But every effort to take normal precautionary measures was thwarted in turn by the political juggernaut the gay liberation movement had managed to create. Under intense pressure from gay activists, for example, the director of public health of the City of San Francisco refused to close bathhouses, maintaining that they were valuable centers of “education” about AIDS, even though their only purpose was to facilitate promiscuous sex.

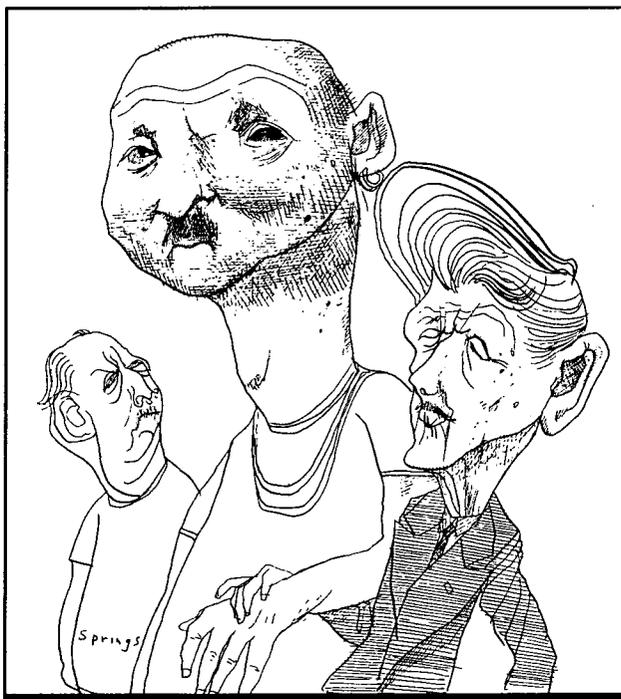
Not only were measures to prevent the geographical spread of AIDS thwarted by radical politics, but measures to prevent its spread into other communities were obstructed as well. Thus when officials tried to institute screening procedures for the nation’s blood banks and asked the gay community not to make donations while the epidemic persisted,

gay political leaders opposed the procedures as infringing the “right” of homosexuals to give blood. The San Francisco Coordinating Committee of Gay and Lesbian Services, chaired by Pat Norman, a city official, issued a policy paper asserting that donor screening was “reminiscent of miscegenation blood laws that divided black blood from white” and “similar in concept to the World War II rounding up of Japanese-Americans in the western half of the country to minimize the possibility of espionage.”

The result of these revolutionary attitudes was to spread AIDS among hemophiliacs and some heterosexuals. Similar campaigns against testing and contact tracing—standard procedures in campaigns against

other sexually transmitted diseases—insured the metastasis of AIDS into the black and Hispanic communities, which now account for more than 50 percent of the known cases.

The war against civilization and nature, which is at the heart of the radical enterprise, inevitably produces monsters like AIDS. The epidemic has now taken a toll of 200,000 Americans, with a million more infected. The implementation of real public health methods is nowhere in sight. Thus, even as the ashes of the Communist empire grow cold, the lessons of the disaster have not been learned. Once in power—as the entire history of our bloody century attests—the radical impulse embraces radical evil in the futile attempt to enforce its rule, and to realize its impossible ideal. The nihilism that rejects nature and the idea of the normal is as blindly destructive as its consequences are predictable. □



We said it. Did you read it?

GRANT'S

INTEREST RATE OBSERVER

Vol. 10, No. 6

30 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005 (212) 809-7994

MARCH 27, 1992

Flying buildings go public

John Templeton, the visionary bull, told a visitor recently (and the visitor told *Grant's*) that the news has rarely been more hopeful and the equity market has rarely seemed more picked-over. With GPA Group plc, the world-league aircraft lessor that plans to go public this spring, there is no such dichotomy. The valuation will almost certainly be too rich while the fundamental news continues to disappoint.

GPA is a credit story as much as a stock story, and it rang a bell with a reader. Suppose, our friend said, Olympia & York had tried to go public two years ago. What would people have said about it? He answered his own question. They would have said it was unique: mysterious, asset-rich, commanding, profitable. They would have called its president a genius and its business plan a blueprint for the future. Its leverage they would have overlooked or endorsed as prudent and enterprising. If someone had objected that O&Y's earnings were dependent on the appreciation of its assets, they would have replied that buildings—O&Y's buildings, at least—do appreciate, because they always used to. If someone had said, what if the credit markets refuse to lend to this brilliant company? the people would not have wasted their breath on an answer.

Now comes GPA with assets that more and more seem to resemble flying office buildings. There are objectively too many aircraft, thousands of new planes are on order (GPA has placed firm orders through the year 2000 for \$12.1 billion in new planes and has purchased options for another \$9.5 billion's worth of new planes), and airlines have begun to cancel orders. Japanese banks, formerly the leading aircraft financing source, are pulling back, and aircraft prices and lease rates are down. Airline operating losses have recently set records, and surplus aircraft spring up in the desert like cacti. A few weeks ago, McDonnell Douglas jolted the stock market by disclosing how it has contributed its part to the surplus: "Some existing MD-11 contracts contain provisions requiring repurchase of aircraft at the option of the commercial customers. In view of the current market conditions for used aircraft, the company's earnings and cash flows could be impacted by the exercise of these options by airlines."

The GPA registration statement makes for good reading, too, and the issues it raises are universal. They include corporate valuation, credit risk and the state of the world economy. Equity markets are sky high, but private-market values, in

general, are not. Real estate is not. Aircraft values, as noted, have fallen—are falling, reportedly—but the airline business is cyclical. "At February 1, 1992," the document says, describing some of the damage done by the rise in airline bankruptcies, "the Group's portfolio included 36 aircraft which were not in revenue service with lessees." Hence, the pressing question: Is the aircraft problem cyclical or secular?

The authorized answer is "cyclical," but you may doubt it, as we do. If you examine the prospectus, as we did, you can lay out the trend of GPA Group's finances and plot its ambitious aircraft-acquisition schedule. Note the rise in indebtedness, the decline in aircraft leasing margins and the rise in aircraft sales margins. Observe the rise in the number of aircraft owned ("aircraft in portfolio"), the drop in number of aircraft sold and the decline in return on assets. Still, however, in the last 12 months, profit from aircraft sales was almost twice as great as profit from aircraft leasing. In the early going, GPA bought a plane only after it had lined up a customer, and in that respect it resembled a cautious real-estate developer. Increasingly, however, it has bought planes on speculation, thereby coming to resemble O&Y....

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A Symposium.

One of history's commonplaces is that the progressive left exalts esoteric pleasures, like ferrets, Frisbee, and macrobiotic food, over basic ones—like dogs, football, and booze.

That makes us nervous. With a Clinton administration looming, The American Spectator asked some of its more bibulous contributors to suggest great bars of Reagan's reign that might serve as a redoubt of reason in Clinton's.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

The two bars I will visit most often during the Clinton years will be the same two I visited most often during the Carter-Reagan-Bush years, which are both around the corner from my Manhattan apartment: **Pete's Tavern** and **Tuesday's**. I recommend Pete's to those who are hungry rather than thirsty: they've had a good chef for a few years, and the bar is a zoo. Pete's has the added advantage of being the place where O. Henry wrote "The Gift of the Magi." Tuesday's is quieter, equally good for a burger or a beer.

Both bars will gain added pertinence after Inauguration Day, because they were once hangouts for hangers-on of Tammany Hall. Tammany's last wigwam, or headquarters, stands on Union Square Park, a block away, though it long since passed to other tenants (note the liberty cap on the pediment). Around the base of the flagpole in the park runs a bas-relief contrasting the wretched victims of tyranny with the happy beneficiaries of freedom (i.e., rule by Tammany Hall). I know of Pete's Tammany connection only through reading, but Tuesday's still has a picture of Al Smith on the wall. No pictures of the Tweed courthouse, or the horse farm Richard Croker bought with his ill-gotten gains. Tuesday's gives you *honest*

Tammany. The country should be so lucky.

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DAVID BROOKS

In Moscow everybody is a Reaganite; it's just a question of which branch. Some are Elliott Abrams-style anti-Communists, others Jack Kemp tax-cutters. When I walked into the hard currency bar **Night Flight** and saw forty young women displaying their wares in miniskirts and push-up bras, I said to myself, "Oh, this must be the libertarian wing."

Like everything else, the oldest profession is effectively legalized in Moscow. And just as Hayek would have predicted, the free market has imposed its own quality controls. The women at Night Flight are all beautiful and intelligent-looking, and all speak excellent English. The decor is American yuppie, with a dance floor in the back where cou-

ples can do their little disco dithyrambs. I sat on the balcony for a better view of the playing field. It was a good fifteen minutes before one of the young women sat down to tell me how handsome I was. She'd been to Tokyo and Rome "on business" and knew a lot about the headquarters of the American Express Corporation in New York. When it became clear that there'd be no sale from me, she made me buy her a drink anyway—tequila and Sprite. I told you these women had class.

The highballs come with long droopy straws sticking out of them. As the men browse around the room, holding their drinks in front of them, it looks as if they're using these flaccid tubes of plastic as divining rods. Four senior Japanese executives gathered four Russian women at their table, and spent the evening giggling to each other like teenagers. A large group of Italian men surrounded one woman and kept shouting at her that she was a "bella donna."

Night Flight provides a glimpse into Russia's woes. First, it illustrates the tremendous waste of human capital. These women should be selling real estate or running ad agencies. The next night I had dinner with a former Reaganite, Robert Kagan, who predicted that at some point Russians are going to rebel at the thought of their beautiful women selling themselves to Westerners. These could be the final days in Moscow when things Western have cachet. Bill Clinton had better hurry over.

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RONALD E. BURR

The most important component in keeping *The American Spectator* solvent for twenty-five years has been the staff's

