
The one saving grace of Kundera's book is that it is not pretentious and that he at least makes a sincere effort to examine issues and paradoxes that others may find interesting. The same cannot be said for W. M. Spackman's *A Presence with Secrets*. Spackman's novel reads like a Barbara Cartland dime-store romance, yet it is dotted with foreign phrases, literary allusions to exceedingly obscure works and authors, and echoes of other writers Spackman must have read and admired—notably Henry James. The novel gives us the romantic life of Hugh Tatnall, a character notably devoid of interest. We watch Hugh go through romances from youth to adulthood, from freewheeling independence to settled maturity. Since Spackman shows us nothing of value or interest along the way, one can legitimately ask about Hugh's life, "so what?" The book is excessively sentimental and needlessly obscure; its style is laborious and unnecessarily complex—as if Henry James had somehow been commissioned to write a love story for Harlequin romances. It is sad to see such works published when there must be greater talents than Spackman at work in American letters.

For critics and readers alike who admire style and excellent portraiture, Hannah's *Ray* is a work of genius. His characters, so broken by existence and so lost in their own confusion, strike chords of responsiveness in the modern existentialist drifter, for these characters are but bits and pieces of the giant riddle of existence itself. The depth of Hannah's portrayals, the complexity and insights he can achieve in 113 pages, vs. 228 pages for Kundera and 161 pages for Spackman, bespeak an author who will likely be recognized as one of the most significant of his generation. It is the power of Hannah's writing in *Ray* which captivates and, at the same time, appalls. It is the power of communication, this precision of style and excellence of form, which separate *Ray* from the mediocrity represented

by *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and *A Presence with Secrets*. Kundera and Spackman could do well in looking to Hannah, for he has outclassed them in capturing the spirit of life in the anxiety-ridden modern era. But hardly anyone can look to him for the answers and illuminations that we expect from writers who, by dint of their moral impulse and responsibility, have

Why Terrorism?

Claire Sterling: *The Terror Network*; Holt, Rinehart & Winston; New York.

by Ernst Halperin

This book has created a sensation in Washington because it challenges a basic assumption of our foreign policy—i.e. that at least in Europe, if not elsewhere, the Soviet Union and the United States have a common interest in stability in order to maintain the status quo.

Claire Sterling does not give a systematic history of the various groups that make up the international terrorist movement. For that one has to go to accounts of terrorism in individual countries, such as Yonah Alexander's *Terrorism in Italy* and Jillian Becker's study of the Bader-Meinhof gang, *Hitler's Children*. As her title indicates, Miss Sterling is mainly concerned with the links between these groups. She demonstrates, first, that these links go so far beyond occasional contacts as to constitute a veritable international network, and second, that this network is sponsored by the Soviets. Moscow provides both arms and training to the terrorist groups. Extensive training facilities are maintained in the Soviet Union itself as well as in its European satellites and client states, Cuba and South

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become the grand explicators and interpreters of their epoch, generation, country or culture. Subhumanity, however insightfully depicted, will always remain a lower level of both civilization and the contemporary human condition. It would be interesting to see Hannah's abilities measured against an attempt to deal with human beings and humanness. □

Yemen. In spite of substantial ideological differences, the Soviet relationship with the second major sponsor of international terrorism, Colonel Qaddafi of Libya, is one of friendly cooperation, not rivalry.

Minor errors are well nigh inevitable in a book of this scope, and one might quarrel with some of Sterling's assessments. However, the factual evidence which she presents is incontrovertible. It is not new, though, and it was all already known to Western intelligence services and had been published in books and newspapers before. It points to an inescapable conclusion: Soviet sponsorship of international terrorism is on such a scale that it can only be explained as resulting from an explicit, high-level policy decision of the Soviet leadership. That is the point at which many balk: they accept the evidence but reject the conclusion and its truthfulness. Among them we find not only the dwindling crowd of those who still have illusions about the nature of the Soviet regime, but also hard-nosed analysts who have spent a lifetime in Soviet studies, and experienced policymakers, statesmen with impeccably anticommunist credentials.

Miss Sterling is puzzled by this "official flight from reality," by the stubborn refusal of Western governments, including our own, to put the pieces together and draw the unavoidable inferences from inexorably accumulating evidence. She asks herself, "Why?" and

responds, "I do not know why."

We have an answer.

Hard-nosed analysts and experienced policy-makers refuse to draw the unavoidable conclusion from incontrovertible evidence because this conclusion seems incompatible with their assessment of current Soviet leaders as rational human beings. Miss Sterling's conclusion does not appear to make sense even from the Soviets' own point of view. Are the Soviets backing international terrorism in order to bring about world revolution? Are they seeking to establish a communist system encompassing the entire world and controlled by them? One can only impute this intention to them if one assumes that they have learnt absolutely nothing from their own experience, from the history of communism since World War II. Yugoslavia in 1948, Hungary in 1956, the Sino-Soviet split, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Afghanistan in 1980—these events all show that only the physical presence of the Soviet Army can ensure Soviet control, and in Poland even that does not seem to be enough.

It would be impossible for the Soviets to keep the entire world under military control. A communist world would be an Orwellian world of three or more communist superstates facing each other in constant war. Stalin was not happy to see communism come to power in China, because he knew he could not control it, and there is no reason to believe that the present rulers of the Soviet Union are less realistic than Stalin. Of course we do not deny that Soviet policy is expansionist, that the Soviets will move, directly or by proxy, into countries where there is a power vacuum—provided they have a reasonable chance of maintaining control. But a deliberate policy of expansion is a far cry from a policy of world revolution through the action of terrorist groups.

Even assuming that the Soviet leaders might have the impossible dream of world revolution—would they then regard the contemporary terrorist move-



ment as an appropriate instrument? Moscow has always insisted on rigid ideological orthodoxy and, above all, on unconditional loyalty to the Soviet flag in the ranks of the world communist movement. But terrorists are ideologically heterogeneous. Some are openly critical of the Soviet system, some are Trotskyists, and still others—the IRA Provos, many of the Palestinians and other Moslems—are indoctrinated inadequately if at all. An even more important argument against the use of these groups as an instrument of world revolution is that, however great their nuisance value, few of them have any chance of seizing power. Most of them have no mass base whatsoever, others have only a narrow geographical or ethnic base, and the result of their terrorist activity is more likely to be the emergence of a rightist dictatorship than a communist regime.

The notion that the Soviets are sponsoring international terrorism as an instrument of world revolution is unrealistic. It presupposes that the Soviet leaders are incapable of learning from experience, or that the conflicts between communist states are elaborate ruses by which a monolithic world communist leadership seeks to mislead the West. In brief, the notion smacks of paranoia. That is why it is rejected by our hard-nosed Soviet analysts and experienced policy-makers—and rightly so.

All the same, there *is* abundant evidence that the Soviets are sponsoring international terrorism. They must have some reason for this other than the promotion of world revolution. What can this other reason be?

The case of Spain provides a clue. The Spanish government recently accused the Soviets of fomenting the terrorism of the Basque ETA and other leftist-extremist groups in order to provoke a military coup, because under a dictatorial regime Spain would not be accepted into NATO and the European community. This is no wild, baseless accusation. As Miss Sterling relates in her book, Spanish intelligence has observed contacts between ETA terrorists and KGB agents since 1978, and in 1979 the Soviet foreign minister offered his Spanish colleague a Soviet promise "to help Spain fight ETA" in exchange for a Spanish pledge not to join NATO. This was, of course, a tacit admission that Moscow had at least some measure of control over the Basque terrorists.

One may ask why Moscow should consider it important to prevent Spain from joining NATO, since the American bases—the crucial element in military cooperation with the West—are already there and will remain there with or without a formal alliance. And what possible objection could Moscow have to economic cooperation between Spain and Western Europe, or to the presence of Spanish representatives in the European Parliament? The answer is that *any* further consolidation of Western Europe is threatening to Moscow, because *Moscow has failed to stabilize and consolidate its own realm*, the European empire it acquired in the wake of World War II. The events in Poland have now made this startlingly clear. The Soviet leaders know that pro-Soviet communist leadership would not survive the withdrawal of the Soviet Army anywhere in their European empire. East European populations are disaffected, held in check only by the proximity of the Soviet Army and memories

of 1956 and 1968.

East Germany, outwardly the most loyal and docile of all the satellites, is particularly unreliable. Here is a country whose inhabitants refer to the currency of neighboring West Germany as *Wirkliches Geld*—Real Money. "What is that in real money?" they ask when the price of some scarce and costly item is quoted in East German marks. It is often claimed that no one in Europe, not even the Germans themselves, really

while, new successes were scored on the political front. In Spain there was a peaceful transition from rightist dictatorship to parliamentary democracy. In Portugal, democratization followed a violent revolution and the failure of a communist attempt to seize power.

The Soviets could not hide these developments from the subjects of their East European empire. It proved impossible to block the flow of news from the West by radio and, in the border dis-

destabilizers. Gone are the days when Moscow could order them to conduct a campaign of disruptive strikes and riots, as they did in Italy and France in 1947-48. These parties have had to choose between revolutionary politics and playing the electoral game. In order to retain their working-class electorate, they had to opt for the latter; this constitutes a little-noticed triumph of Western, capitalist democracy which has managed to tame and integrate into the system even the Communist Parties, once denounced by the French socialist Léon Blum as "foreign nationalist parties."—traitors to their countries.

Unable to use the West European Communist Parties as instruments of destabilization, Moscow logically turned to the terrorist groups. Soviet support of Third World terrorism had already begun in the early 1960's as part of a policy to woo the Arabs. As is made clear in Miss Sterling's book, the deci-

"Sterling's book adds up to little more than a brash popularization of the views of the rightwing think tanks that spawned current New Right ideology."

—*Village Voice*

desires the reunification of Germany. Those who assert this forget, or deliberately overlook, one not-unimportant population group—the inhabitants of East Germany—who are kept from joining their fellow Germans in the West by high walls, barbed wire, electrified fences and minefields. That is what the Soviet leaders see in their own empire. Looking westward, on the other side of the Elbe River, they see stable, prosperous democracies.

When the Marshall Plan was announced in 1947, Soviet propaganda claimed that it would result in the domination of Europe by American corporations, bringing unemployment and pauperization. Instead, "Marshallization," as Soviet propaganda termed it, proved to be a boon beyond all expectations to those on whom it was "inflicted." Western Europe developed into an economic superpower. For two decades the rate of growth in Western Europe surpassed that of the most prosperous decades of the 19th century. Living standards rose to approximate, and in some cases to surpass, those in the United States. This took place in peace and democracy, under the rule of law, with freedom of speech and full respect for human rights. The emergence of OPEC in 1973 slowed down, but did not stop, the growth of the Western European economy. Mean-

tricts, by television. Gift parcels sent by relatives had to be allowed in order to alleviate the chronic shortage of consumer goods. Finally, the need of the communist regimes for Western currencies even forced them to open their countries to tourism.

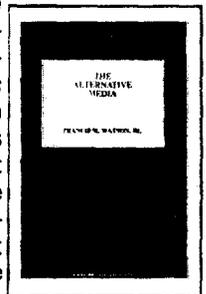
The inhabitants of Eastern Europe have thus been able to observe that, for three decades, the gap between their living standard and that of West European countries has not narrowed but widened. This means that Western Europe, prosperous and democratic, is an attraction, a magnet to the East Europeans, hence a destabilizer of the Soviet empire, for a stable Western Europe constitutes a tangible threat to the Soviet Union.

So our analysts and policy-makers are not so hard-nosed and realistic after all. Their assumption that the Soviets and the Western powers have a mutual interest in stability is an illusion. For the Soviets, stability in East and West are contradictory, not complementary. Because our Soviet analysts and our policy-makers fail to see this, they also fail to recognize that destabilization through terrorism constitutes an integral component of Soviet foreign policy.

The traditional instruments of Soviet foreign policy in the West, the Communist Parties, can no longer be used as

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sion to bring terrorism to Europe was made in 1968. The date is significant. It was a year in which it was easy to find recruits for terrorist gangs on the university campuses, among naive and disoriented middle- and upper-class youth. It was also the year in which the Soviet empire faced one of its recurrent crises: the threatened defection of Czechoslovakia, where even the party leadership had been demoralized by the spectacle of democracy-in-affluence in neighboring West Germany and Austria.

The sole criterion for Soviet sponsorship of terrorists is technical competence. Ideology is irrelevant, because the purpose of Soviet-backed terrorism is not to Sovietize the target countries but simply to destabilize them. The aim

is to plunge these countries into political confusion—leading to chaos, capital flight, economic decline and possibly military dictatorship—so that their prosperity and democracy will no longer tempt the subjects of the Soviet empire. For that, terrorists of any ideological complexion will do.

In order to persuade the Soviet Union to abandon its sponsorship of international terrorism, the Western democracies would have to agree on—and implement—a systematic, coordinated policy of political and economic sanctions. The first step toward such a policy is *to recognize the problem*. Claire Sterling's book, and the commotion it has caused, will surely help our policymakers to do that. □

ned. Like them, she is at the same time very powerful and very feminine. Like these political wives of a previous generation, she considers herself first and foremost a wife and mother. Like them, she cares for a large family and looks to her husband as the head of the household. Just as Mrs. Roosevelt influenced the women of a nation and Mrs. Kennedy groomed her young statesmen for the Presidency, Phyllis Schlafly has left her own indelible mark on our time.

Is there, then, a connection, or compatibility, between femininity and power which the vehement ERA proponents have not suspected? Throughout history there have been women who changed the course of nations—from Cleopatra to Joan of Arc to Margaret Thatcher. Women have left their imprint on societies around the world, in every walk of life, from the criminal (Bonnie Parker) to the spiritual (Mother Teresa) and virtually everything in between. Is it possible, then that there have never been any walls around women? Perhaps what faces the ambitious woman is not so much a wall as a prickly hedge—difficult, but certainly not impossible, to penetrate.

So what are the unique qualities that these unusual women—including Phyllis Schlafly—share? Education is a factor, whether it is of the "homespun philosopher" variety or the "school of hard knocks" or formal instruction at an exclusive college. Ingeniousness helps, too: the successful person is adept at circumventing life's roadblocks.

A major key would seem to be self-discipline—a quality Phyllis Schlafly seems to have been born with, or absorbed along with mother's milk and pabulum. Unless her former classmates and teachers, her friends and relations, have wonderfully kind memories, there is scarcely a single instance of Phyllis Stewart losing her temper, sassing a teacher or slapping her sister. Intensely competitive, she seems to have preferred to display her superiority in the academic arena.

One rare and outstanding quality

Tales of Virtue and Excellence

Carol Felsenthal: *The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority: The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly*; Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Becki Klute

Who is Phyllis Schlafly, this impeccable lady who touts the virtues of traditional womanhood even as she performs quite untraditional feats? This is the question Ms. Felsenthal attempts to answer. The facts have long been known—Sacred Heart Academy, Washington University, husband Fred, six kids—but they don't really tell us much. Ms. Felsenthal has done a creditable job in her efforts to find the "real" Phyllis Schlafly. But Ms. Felsenthal was unable to "climb behind her eyes" and discover the elemental person beneath the personality, the human being who lives inside the well-known woman. For Phyllis Schlafly is a very private person. She has been burned more than once by the media, so her reluctance to reveal

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her inner self is, perhaps, understandable. She resents public speculation on whether she has a housekeeper; she is hurt when ERA supporters concoct tales of child neglect in her house. She has learned that such things are inevitable, but one gets the feeling that she'd be much happier if reporters would concentrate less on her life and more on her ideas. That separation is impossible, though, for Phyllis Schlafly's ideas are ultimately the product of Phyllis Stewart Schlafly's life.

Although her daughter was born not with a silver spoon but to a family with only the memory of it, Odile Stewart set about to instill in Phyllis all the best, the most solid, attributes of the elite. And she had a willing pupil. A fortunate combination of genes gave Phyllis both the desire and the ability to fulfill her mother's every dream—much of which became her own. She teamed her prodigious intellectual talents with a phenomenal sense of self-discipline to succeed at literally everything she tried.

Phyllis Schlafly reminds me a little—in accomplishment, not ideology—of Eleanor Roosevelt, or even of Rose Ken-