

the “Hispanic” identity is more than mere political opportunism and intellectual fraud. It is an ideology of hate in quest of political domination.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Polonophobia, Cont.

by Paul Gottfried

Polonophobia,” my essay in the January issue of *Chronicles*, engendered moving and informed responses for which I am most grateful. Professors Ewa Thompson and Alex Kurczaba and Dr. Wojciech Wierzewski have all praised me generously in letters to the editor [Eds. note: See the Polemics and Exchanges section of the April issue], but, according to Managing Editor Theodore Pappas, their praise may be equaled in intensity by the hate calls he has received from readers who refuse to submit letters. One heartening development is that my essay can now be further discussed in Poland. Two widely respected Polish publications, *Respublica* and *Arcana* (the latter edited by the distinguished Polish historian Andrzej Nowak, who is a close friend of professors Thompson and Kurczaba), have both printed translations.

Allow me to clarify what I was trying to say and what I did not mean to say in my essay. I was certainly not maintaining that Poland has no history of anti-Semitism. Alas, it does, but not to the same extent as its Russian and Ukrainian

neighbors. Moreover, the interwar Polish republic did not make all possible efforts to assimilate its large and, for the most part, culturally alien Jewish minority. In the 1930’s, after the death of its gallant and magnanimous president Józef Piłsudski, the Polish government imposed educational and social disabilities on the upwardly mobile segments of its Jewish population.

This policy was plainly stupid, as assimilated Polish Jewish intellectuals have pointed out to me. For it struck precisely at those Jews, like my late father-in-law and my learned correspondent Professor Stanley Stein, who readily identified themselves with the Polish nation. The Polonized Jewish middle class had most in common with its Polish Catholic counterpart. Its members, not the Polish Orthodox Jews who were light years away from the Poles culturally, read Adam Mickiewicz and other patriotic poets and were coming to view themselves as Poles in the interwar years. Despite his Jewish antecedents, the late Leopold Tyrmand, the first editor of this magazine, was an outspoken Polonophile, and one critical reason for this was that he was steeped in Polish culture. If the Poles had played their cards right and had not been crushed by the Germans and Russians, they might have had many more Jews with the same orientation.

Even so, some of the worst or ugliest things that have befallen the Poles, from being devastated by Hitler’s and Stalin’s armies to being savaged in the American and Canadian press, were not or are not their fault. They occurred either from being in the wrong place geographically or from having incurred the disfavor of powerful malicious enemies. Indeed, the Polonophobia noted by me and my respondents has neither a functional nor rational basis. Dumping on Southern whites and their historical symbols makes good sense from the standpoint of the managerial-therapeutic state. Given the South’s history of regionalism and rebellion against the central government, supporters of the present American regime have every reason to play up the “burden” of Southern history. It also makes sense to play off blacks against whites, particularly Southern whites, inasmuch as blacks are reliable backers of an expanding and socially intrusive state. Such a strategy continues what Radical Republicans did after the Civil War.

One can even concede some strategic value in having the World Jewish

Congress and its political spokesman, Al D’Amato, go after the Swiss as Nazi sympathizers. Accusing the Swiss of pro-Nazi sentiments for holding on to the bank accounts of Jews who perished under the Nazis may be defensible strategically for those looking for money. The Swiss are loaded, and though they spent World War II armed to the teeth against a German invasion, they do speak a German dialect, and many of them look Teutonic. Though the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and its letter writers have protested this shakedown, liberal Swiss clergy and Swiss politicians capable of “growth” are now calling for a “reconsideration of Swiss history.” They want something similar to the “historical revision” that was undertaken by the Germans under Allied pressure after World War II. In the end, the Swiss federal government agreed to set up a “fund” that would go to the families of holocaust victims, though not exclusively to those with unredeemed Swiss bank accounts.

But Poland is neither Switzerland nor the American South. It is hard to see what advantage, other than venting hate, can be gained by the recent anti-Polish broadsides. Equally noteworthy, the American Jews who express or compose these invectives have usually no direct relation to Poland. Their families left generations ago, when Poland was an occupied country, and their Jewish ancestors typically came from the Pale of Settlement, which had a heavily Jewish composition and was run by a Russian administration. All of these generalizations certainly would apply to that vocal American Jewish Polonophobe Alan Dershowitz, whose family migrated from the Pale of Settlement to Brooklyn in the early 20th century. Still other American Jews are descended from those who came from Galicia, a region of southern Poland ruled by a benevolent Austrian emperor, Franz Josef, when their ancestors arrived in the United States in search of financial opportunities. In the end, Jews did not come to the United States because Poles or a Polish state oppressed them, save for a negligible number that arrived in the 1930’s. Nor was it Poles but Ukrainians and rampaging Cossacks whom Eastern European Jews associate with pogroms.

I mention these circumstances to explain my own surprise that American Jewish organizations, journalists, and moral spokespersons harbor such intense dislike for the Poles. Such a dislike would

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not much matter if those who expressed it were, say, coal miners in West Virginia or wheat farmers in South Dakota. As it is, however, they are disproportionately represented in verbal and media professions in the major cities. And while it is possible to trace their attitudes to general social or cultural causes—e.g., the dissimilarities between Eastern European peasant societies and Jewish urban-dwellers, or to the phobias that existed in Polish Jewish ghetto cultures—it is hard to understand the special dislike that American Jews, particularly liberal ones, reserve for the Poles. I have heard it expressed many times, and the shared suffering undergone by Polish Catholics and Polish Jews only seems to have intensified these hostile feelings.

Feeding this hate is, among other problems, a situation delicately mentioned by Professor Thompson and alluded to by Dr. Wierzewski: the alliance between American Jewish victimologists and the political left. Soviet Jewish collaborators have been recycled as Jewish victims if they died at the hands of anti-communist Poles. This is illustrated by the uncritical publicity showered on Yaffa Eliach, whose father's house was fired on by the Polish Home Front in somewhat embarrassing circumstances. It appears that Eliach's father had close relations with the NKVD and had welcomed the Soviet secret police into his home, when they and other parts of the Soviet occupying forces were rounding up and killing the noncommunist Polish resistance. As Professor Thompson suggests, it is Ms. Eliach and her supporters who must face the past honestly before making revisionist demands upon others.

Finally, it behooves those who were not part of the bloody and tragic history of Eastern and Central Europe to refrain from rash, uninformed judgments. The truth is that many of the inhabitants of that region, faced by brutal historical turns, became both victims and victimizers. Baltic and Ukrainian victims of Stalin collaborated with Hitler's forces, and Jewish survivors of the Nazi occupation, like my cousins in Budapest, went to work for the Soviets. Though this may not have happened in every case, such collaboration with totalitarian killers by victims of other brutal regimes was a fact of life for those in the area between Germany and Russia in the 1940's. Such behavior is not admirable, but it is understandable.

What is neither admirable nor under-

standable is the boundless stupidity of an American culture which in the course of my own life has celebrated both Nazi and Soviet collaborators: in one case, as democratic anticommunists during the 1950's; and in the other, more recently, as victims of Nazis—i.e., white, homophobic Christians. Add to this the indiscriminate journalistic assaults on the Poles, who, whatever their shortcomings, suffered grievously under two murderous despotisms and, until 1944, both despotisms simultaneously, and one gets an idea of the moral cretinism into which our Fourth Estate has plunged. Cicero was correct to note that there are those men *quos infamiae suae neque pudeat neque taedent*, who feel neither shame nor disgust when they have utterly disgraced themselves.

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LITERATURE

The Black Nationalism of George S. Schuyler

by Nicholas Stix

Decisions, decisions. Such is the life of a black man in America today. Whether to be a black nationalist, a black Muslim, an Afrocentrist, or simply a color-blind Christian—a.k.a. an "Oreo," a traitor to the black race. Such choices are not new; they were made by black Americans in earlier generations, dramatically in the case of George S. Schuyler.

Now largely forgotten, Schuyler had more influence on black readers than any other black journalist in his time or since, and only W.E.B. DuBois (who was far less prolific as a journalist) could match him for talent. Soldier, journalist, satirist, pulp-fiction writer, editor, intellectual—the "black Mencken" (as Schuyler was known) was one of America's most gifted observers. A radical individualist, Schuyler made a career of

lampooning "race men," many of whom he accused of secretly desiring to be white. And yet, at times, he wrote as a virulent race man, speaking approvingly "as a military man" of a coming racial conflagration. He spent most of his career (1924-1966) writing for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, long America's most popular national weekly Negro newspaper, written for colored people who did not mix with whites, but in 1928 he married a white woman, the former Josephine Cogdell.

Schuyler, the son of a chef, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, and raised in Syracuse, New York. Schuyler's Syracuse was a brewery and factory town, in which blacks and whites worked together, played together as children, and surprisingly often . . . married.

Schuyler took a snobbish pride in emphasizing that his family had been free for at least 150 years before he was born. However, he was no snob when it came to work and morals. He was not embarrassed by his mother's and aunt's decision to take in folks' laundry after his father died, when George was only nine years old.

As his biographer, Michael Peplow, noted in *George S. Schuyler* (1980), Schuyler was something of a black Horatio Alger, having been inculcated while in diapers "in traditional Yankee virtues like self-discipline, independence, thrift, and industry." But that was the older Schuyler. Earlier in his career, Schuyler had a distinctly cosmopolitan understanding of culture and social relations. It was only late in life that he returned to his small-town roots and a simpler approach to life.

When second lieutenant George Schuyler returned to America following Army service, primarily in Hawaii (1912-1919), he found city ghettos teeming with transplanted Southern Negroes, displaced by changes in agricultural technology. Faced with urban squalor, culture shock, and a racism without any gentility or paternalism to cushion its blows, the uprooted Negroes were not flourishing in the cracks. The urban black middle class, so far from encouraging the immigrants, treated them with contempt.

A new class of colored urban demagogues arose to minister to the new black masses, speaking in peculiar new tongues. Though they used biblical imagery, these new preachers painted images of salvation and retribution in this