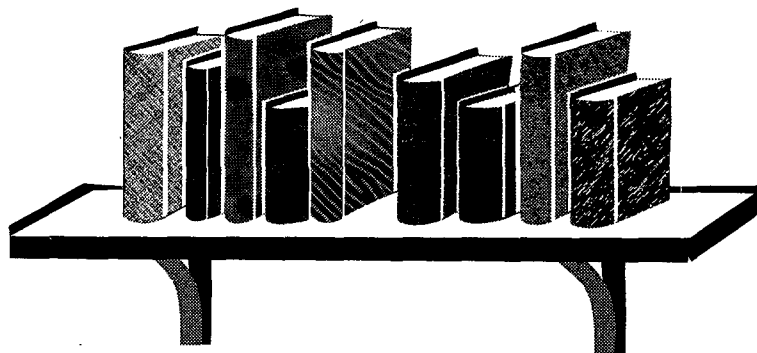


Bookshelf



Guy Debord: Revolutionary

By Len Bracken

Feral House

267 pages, \$14.95

REVIEWED BY ANNE OLSON

Len Bracken's critical biography explores the ideas of Left Bank intellectual Guy Debord, who once wrote that there are "everywhere revolutionaries, but nowhere the revolution." This is the first biography of Debord, who was the most combative member of the anti-surrealist Lettrist International movement, a leader of the May 1968 Paris revolt and the creator of the masterpiece book and film, *Society of the Spectacle*.

Debord also founded the Situationist International, a political and art movement of the '60s, which spurned the banality of everyday life imposed by convention, consumerism and alienation. Instead, they created imaginative yet realistic "situations" intended to subvert the "nihilistic comforts" of modern capitalist society.

The book is more of an overview of situationist theory than a typical biography, but the theory explains Debord's life best because he practiced what he preached. Bracken, who edits *Extraphile*, "a journal of sub-proletarian revolution, utopian fantasy, pornography and conspiracy theory," has written a biography that will satisfy those well-versed in situationist literature as well as those who have never heard of the half-Marxist, sometimes Leninist, usually drunk and often brilliant Debord. ■

The Racial Contract

By Charles Mills

Cornell University Press

192 pages, \$19.95

REVIEWED BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

In this ambitious book, Charles Mills, an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois in Chicago, attempts to debunk the ideas that are the foundation of contemporary political philosophy. An extended essay in the vein of critical race studies, *The Racial Contract* reveals the white supremacist biases at the core of Western political theory.

It is commonplace in political philosophy to depict society as a "social contract" implicitly accepted by people fleeing the "nasty, brutish and short" state of nature. Mills, however, vigorously argues that underlying that mythical arrangement is an even more fundamental "racial contract." He declares that "white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today." Using the classic theories of Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant, Mills argues that racial hierarchies were being constructed even as these Enlightenment philosophers were laying the groundwork for liberal democracies. His racial contract thesis is so convincing that one wonders why it hasn't been explored until now in the precincts of mainstream political philosophy. But that's his point. The racial contract's effectiveness lies in its very invisibility. ■

Generations: A Century of Women Speak About Their Lives

By Myriam Miedzian and Alisa Malinovich

Atlantic Monthly Press

592 pages, \$27.50

REVIEWED BY PAT ARNOW

In *Generations: A Century of Women Speak About Their Lives*, the authors ask: What was life like for a woman born in 1900, and how was it different from the experience of a woman born in 1930 or 1970? The authors, a mother/daughter team, gathered oral histories to chronicle the changes in the lives of American women. In chapters organized by topic ("Growing Up," "Family," "Work") and then by generation, dozens of women from different racial, religious, ethnic and class backgrounds tell their stories.

Most of the women in this volume are not born storytellers. Generalities abound, such as in the following example of a woman remembering her early married life: "I wasn't that crazy about work. I really wanted to be home with the kids, and I became a real mother and wife. It was wonderful. I enjoyed it, but married life was difficult." A few of the stories do throw sparks, however, enlivening the whole work. Customs and culture are also explained well, ultimately providing a valuable document of women's lives in the 20th century. ■

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

RESEARCH DIRECTOR—DC-area nonprofit institute seeks individual with strong analytical, writing and teaching skills plus familiarity with monetary issues, financial markets, grassroots constituencies and policy community. Salary DOE. Letter and résumé to Financial Markets Center, P.O. Box 334, Philomont, VA 20131. EOE.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE where it makes a difference. Organize low-income workers in the Deep South to fight for justice. Louisiana positions available in Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans. Start at \$12,000 + bonuses. Good benefits, fully-paid health insurance. Call (504) 923-3102, write: 5177 Greenwell Springs Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, or e-mail "seiu100br@igc.org."

DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN TRAINING SCHOOL—Seeking progressive, committed activists who want a career in politics. Intensive four month training program with direct participation in hot Democratic primary. Top national strategists will conduct weekly trainings. Qualified graduates will be offered full time, paid positions on campaigns in the fall general election cycle. Housing, food and out-of-pocket expenses provided. To apply for the 1998 Chicago Campaign School, call (847) 424-1998.

COMMUNITY JOBS: The Employment Newspaper for the Non-Profit Sector. Join over 50,000 job-seekers in reading a unique monthly publication containing more than 200 new job listings (in Environment, Arts, International, Health, Youth, Civil Rights, Housing, Human Services, etc.). Featuring informative articles, book reviews, resource lists, profiles of nonprofit organizations and the people who found them. Contact: Community Jobs,

1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 838, Wash., DC 20036.

TEAMSTER REFORM MOVEMENT seeking energetic organizers or union activists for national and regional staff positions. Organizing and educational work in promotion of participatory union democracy. Commitment to a progressive labor movement required. Writing skills a plus. Spanish fluency a plus. Women and people of color encouraged to apply. Send résumé and references to: TDU, P.O. Box 10128, Detroit, MI 48210. (313) 842-2600.

IN THESE TIMES seeks volunteer editorial interns with a strong interest in progressive politics and independent publishing to work two days a week at our Chicago offices. The internship consists primarily of fact-checking, but it may also include some research, reporting, proofreading, writing and administrative tasks. Send cover letter, résumé and clips (optional) to: Craig Aaron, assistant editor, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

IN THESE TIMES seeks part-time advertising interns with an interest in progressive politics and independent publishing. Internship consists of assisting

Advertising Director in contacting advertisers, promotional planning, media kit design, new business campaign and special 21st anniversary issue. Contact: Patricia Gray, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. (773) 772-0100, ext. 236; fax (773) 772-4180.

POSITION DESIRED

UNION/PROGRESSIVE ADVOCACY POSITION. Ace researcher/policy analyst/writer seeks relevant staff position with union or progressive advocacy group. Experience with Teamsters, SEIU, Democratic Party. Call Glenn at (301) 949-9484.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

SPANISH, CULTURE, TOURS, at Escuela Azteca. Summer in beautiful Cuernavaca. \$220 two weeks. Intensive grammar all levels. Weekend tours. Minicourses with Ross Gandy, Ph.D. (Mexico):

JEWISH CURRENTS

February, 1998 issue

Editorial on the crisis of the Netanyahu government; "New York City Elections, 1997," David Hacker; "A Day Trip to Nablus, Autumn, 1996," Anika and Kenny Movchine; "Jewish Identity, Politics of Diversity," Ralph Seliger.

Single issue: \$3 (USA).
Subscription: \$30 yearly (USA).

JEWISH CURRENTS

Dept. T, Suite 601,
22 E. 17 St., New York, NY 10003

CHIAPAS

CHALLENGING HISTORY

INDIGENOUS VIEWPOINTS ON
THE POLITICAL
SITUATION IN SOUTHERN MEXICO

SPECIAL EDITION OF *AKWE:KON JOURNAL*.
SINGLE ISSUE: \$14.00 PPD. ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION: \$18.00 (U.S.) CHECK/VISA/MC TO:
300-IT CALDWELL HALL,
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NY 14853

Reform or Revolution?). Live with Mexican family. For brochure: call (52-73)-15-24-69. Address: ESCUELA AZTECA, Apdo. Postal 76-005; 04201 Mexico, D.F.

SPANISH IN GUANAJUATO—Two weeks, \$255. Instituto Falcon, Jorge Barroso, Mora 158, Guanajuato, Gto 36000, Mexico. Ph./Fax: (473) 2-36-94. E-mail: infalcon@redes.int.com.mx.

Visit our website at:
www.infonet.com.mx/falcon

A PEOPLE VACATION in beautiful Guatemala. Personalized Spanish classes at indigenous-owned school. Volunteer opportunities. Fantastic excursions. R&B with local family plus 5 hrs/day of classes is \$130/wk. Contact CBA,

Continued on page 36

LARGE PROGRESSIVE ILLINOIS LABOR UNION

is filling three positions:

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
Responsibilities include media relations, news releases, brochures, position papers, direct mail and speeches. Must have extensive public relations experience; strong writing skills; and desktop publishing ability. Requires knowledge of and commitment to the labor movement. Based in Chicago.

ATTORNEY

Illinois-licensed attorney to represent Union in arbitrations, labor board, and other court and administrative hearings. Based in Springfield, travel throughout Illinois. Applicants should have solid credentials in labor and employment law and commitment to labor movement. Proficiency in MS Word and Lexis, or willingness to learn, also required.

ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Responsible for implementing all aspects of broad legislative program: policy analysis and development; lobbying elected officials; building grass roots support. Requires knowledge of governmental bodies and experience with legislative process; research ability; knowledge of and commitment to labor movement; strong written and oral communication skills. Based in Springfield.

Equal Opportunity Employer.

Competitive salary and excellent benefits. Send résumé and writing samples for above positions to: Minnie Perez, 29 N. Wacker Dr., #800, Chicago, IL 60606.