

that retreating to cities will be Iraq's strategy in the event of a U.S. attack.

In order to achieve the necessary superiority over defending forces, establish a cordon around the city, and protect their lines of communication, U.S. forces could require around 250,000 soldiers on the ground (an overall 6-to-1 ratio) for operations just in and around Baghdad, a city with a population of over five million. Iraq has two other cities with populations of over one million—Mosul in the north and Basra in the south—which have additional concentrations of Republican Guard units close enough to retreat into them. Given our unfortunate experience in Mogudishu in 1993 and the Russians' debacle in Grozny in 1996, there is no reason to think that fighting in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities will be a cakewalk. All this suggests that a total U.S. force in the Gulf region of between 200,000 to 250,000—which includes not only ground combat forces but also a large number of support personnel—may be too few if we have to battle Saddam's elite forces in Iraq's major cities.

U.S. military planners have undoubtedly made similar calculations and that is why voices in the Bush administration now suggest that we may not have to fight at all because the Iraqi military may launch a coup to oust Saddam in the face of a U.S. attack. But there is little reason for confidence that this will happen.

To begin with, it is not clear which units are going to execute such a coup. The undermanned and ill-equipped regular army units may harbor critics of Saddam's regime and be unwilling to fight U.S. forces to defend it, but even if they wanted to oust Saddam, they are unlikely to prevail against the better-armed loyalists in the Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard. Nor can we count on these elite units to turn on Saddam because they enjoy a privileged place in his regime, and they will likely be the first targets in any U.S. attack.

Moreover, while Iraq has experienced many coup-attempts in the last fifty years, there has not been a successful one since Saddam's Ba'ath Party took power in 1968. Since then, there have only been four coup attempts (1973, 1992, 1993, and most recently in 1995), none of which succeeded. Even in defeat, whether during the bleakest phases of the Iran-Iraq War or during the widespread uprisings after the Gulf War, the Iraqi military has not proved willing to challenge Saddam's rule.

To be sure, if the United States invades Iraq, as is increasingly likely, we can expect U.S. forces to prevail, but

not without cost. Rather than staging the coup of Richard Perle's imagination, the Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard will likely fight, and by drawing us into cities could impose more casualties than they did during the Gulf War. Thus, "if we desire to defeat the enemy," as military theorist Karl von Clausewitz advises, "we must proportion our efforts to his powers of resistance" or, better yet, avoid this war all together. ■

*Michael C. Desch is the author of Civilian Control of the Military and editor of Soldiers in Cities.*

## Counterfeit Courage

Not all victims have equal propaganda value.

By Paul Gottfried

IN AC'S NOV. 18 ISSUE, Taki makes the observation about Daniel Goldhagen and the targets of Goldhagen's assaults that leftist, anti-Islamic author Salman Rushdie would have escaped ecclesiastical threats to his life had he "picked on Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. Catholics will accept anything and everything including the libel that Pope Pius XII was "Hitler's Pope." As one who has written extensively on this Western state religion of masochism, it seems to me that Taki's complaint is true enough. But, more importantly, he is pointing to what has become a public virtue among public intellectuals: saying or doing something that the usual gang will hold up as feisty and bold. In an interview with the *Boston Globe*, for example, Goldhagen's dissertation advisor, and the perennially fashionable Harvard political scientist,

Stanley Hoffmann, breaks forth in adulation about his former student: "Danny is not somebody who takes prisoners, which I admire in him. With him, you don't get a lot of 'on the one hand but on the other hand.' He has a prosecutor's approach to what he deems morally scandalous." Because of his moral zeal, Danny had doggedly investigated the until recently suffocating German anti-Semitism that had made the Holocaust inevitable and (wouldn't you know it!) has now completed a similar criticism of Christianity and its destructive role in the same catastrophe.

Another profile in courage, it would seem from reading Richard Lingemann's review in the *Washington Post*, is Terry Teachout, a recent biographer of H.L. Mencken. According to Lingemann, an outstanding feature of Teachout's study is that he "devotes a comparatively large

number of pages to Mencken's anti-Semitism, which triggered a scandal when passages in his diary and other embargoed writings became public in 1989." Teachout notes that while Mencken had "deeply equivocal feelings about Jews, that he was an anti-Semite cannot now be reasonably denied."

In our victim-obsessed society, in which certain objects of remorseful concern get better treatment than others, an enterprising publicist, and in this case one who writes for *Commentary*, might prosper by uncovering Mencken's alleged anti-Semitism. After all, Lingenmann does describe this figure as being in the "libertarian camp of American conservatism," and he was additionally an avowed Teutonophile, who married a non-leftist Southerner. Mencken ferociously mocked all kinds of groups, including white Southerners; and in his essays he contrasted what he called "wop opera" to Wagnerian music drama, which he took to be a higher art form. His references to Jews were relatively tame and almost entirely confined to scattered social remarks in his diary. According to Teachout, Mencken went out of his way to help both Jewish and black writers; and some of them, like the journalist Lawrence Spivak, came to Mencken's defense when cries went up about the political incorrectness in his posthumously published diary. (Are we really supposed to fume over Mencken's quip that "anti-Semitism is disliking Jews more than is absolutely necessary"?) Clearly Mencken's widely distributed insults about tasteless Italians, redneck Southerners, and boobish Methodists are now less interesting expressions of prejudice than his unkind descriptions of Jewish fellow-diners, who had the temerity to show poor table manners in Mencken's view. Not all victims of prejudice are to be treated equally, any more than PC ethnic authenticity entitles Southern whites, with a fondness for the

Stars and Bars, to the same exhibitionist rights as blacks.

As for Goldhagen's willingness to take on hard topics, only a self-deceived fool could imagine this to be the reason for his publishing success. A German friend of mine, Johannes von Bieberstein, a Prussian aristocrat who lost family in the resistance to Hitler, has just published a book examining the role of Eastern and Central European Jews in socialist revolutionary movements in the early twentieth century and, moreover, the relation of that fateful fact to interwar anti-Semitism. Although there is nothing here that would suggest that Bieberstein is any kind of anti-Semite, and if anything he exaggerates the hopeless condition of Jews in Tsarist Russia, his bold study will not bring him the loot and fame that Goldhagen has earned for his dishonest, sweeping indictment of *goyim*. Indeed, Bieberstein could only find a very aca-

demie press, with conservative connections, that would publish his non-PC investigation of Jewish radicalism and its impact. The same tepid reception awaited a Polish scholar who undertook a meticulously researched study on the Nazi murder of Poles during World War II. Always around to enlighten us, Alan Dershowitz explains in his autobiography *Chutzpah* that millions of Poles were "selectively murdered" but in no way should be viewed as victims of "genocide." As any sentient being would notice, not all victims have the same propagandistic value, nor are all researchers who take on big topics deserving of praise in the *Washington Post* or *Boston Globe*. ■

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*Paul Gottfried is the author of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: Toward a Secular Theocracy and a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.*

## Docile Fourth Estate

A cynical press prepares for war.

By George Szamuely

THE PURPOSE OF THE weapons inspections is not to disarm Iraq but to ensure that the U.S. gets its war. Given the credulity with which journalists treat the pronouncements of government officials, the outcome of the UN inspection regime cannot be in doubt. Sooner or later the UN team, desperate to find Iraq's secret hiding places, will demand that Saddam and his associates subject themselves to a full body cavity search. Since it is probable—though by no means certain—that Saddam will balk at this, the administration will

finally have its *casus belli*. An attack on Iraq is inevitable because no mainstream outlet will dare to give voice to the obvious: whether Saddam is good or bad for Iraqis it is up to the Iraqis themselves to decide. Whether Saddam does or does not have weapons of mass destruction, his possession of them is a perfectly reasonable response given the bombing, sanctions, and threats Iraq has been subjected to for more than ten years.

Criticism of administration policy rarely gets more vehement than that of