

## Gray Power

# Why Can't They Be Like Us? America's White Ethnic Groups

by Andrew M. Greeley  
E.P. Dutton & Co., \$6.95

Father Andrew Greeley is almost certain to be excommunicated for penning *Why Can't They Be Like Us?* It is not that he does not genuflect properly before all the icons of Eastern Establishment Liberal Orthodoxy — he does. Rather, despite going through the forms of ritual, Father Greeley fails to accept certain liberal doctrines as matters of faith, and he even giggles at some of the communicants in the midst of holy liberal communion.

Greeley, who is Director of the Center for the Study of Ethnic Pluralism at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, was a parish priest in Chicago's urban melting pot. At the root of Greeley's sociological observations is the question of to what extent the melting pot indeed does melt.

Professors, politicians and other professional fussbudgets have assumed that our urban crucibles have acted as the great homogenizers of society. Beyond the first or second generation, Poles, Germans, Italians and Irish simply scattered from their separate and isolated ghettos and became simply hard hats, right? Wrong, says Greeley.

And, further, Greeley suggests the heretofore unthinkable: perhaps what we should consider in the years ahead is not how best to break up these separate ethnic communities, but, rather, how to operate upon the reality of their existence. It is at this point that Greeley exhibits his grasp of reality that eludes most well-meaning liberal social planners. That is — much to the chagrin of the New Dealers, Fair Dealers and Wheeler Dealers — imperfect men cannot be programmed with the same predictable results as can an IBM 360.

A Pole on Chicago's North Side is not *ipso facto* a racist because he is fond of his community and resents and fears intrusions by outsiders. Slinging the charge of "white racism" about too freely hinders understanding of the true nature of the aspirations and fears — real or imagined — which spur America's white ethnics.

Greeley's main explicitly political conclusion is that where Mayor Lindsay ("...the intelligent and sophisticated Mr. Lindsay...") has failed Mayor Daley has succeeded. Boss Daley, despite the ogreish portrayal of the man, has managed to hold Chicago together (75 per cent of the vote most recently) partly through recognizing the ethnic communities and integrating them into the political machine at the same time that Hohn Lindsay's charisma (45 per cent) has acted as a centrifuge, contributing to Fun City's ungovernability.

Had Father Greeley stopped after excoriating the dreamy-eyed social planners mooning over the millennium his membership in the established secular religion of the land might have been salvaged.

Alas, to his credit, Greeley did not stop there. In an outrageous chapter Greeley identifies even the intellectual community as an ethnic group. To wit, "... a member of the intellectual ethnic group can be identified by the journals he reads. Subscriptions to any two of the following are sufficient to guarantee one membership at least on the margins of this ethnic group: *The New York Times*, *Commentary*, *Partisan Review*, *Saturday Review*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Atlantic* (but not *Harper's*), *Dissent*, *The New Republic* and *the Nation*. In cases of doubt a subscription to *The New York Review of Books* alone will suffice."

Or: "The strong moralism in the intellectual ethnic is reinforced by two other factors. For one, the intellectual's roots in

the Puritan Protestant and Jewish messianic past would incline him toward moralism even if there were none so bold as to disagree with him. For another, convinced as he is of his superior intelligence, the intellectual has no trouble in concluding his superior moral rectitude: he is both right and righteous."

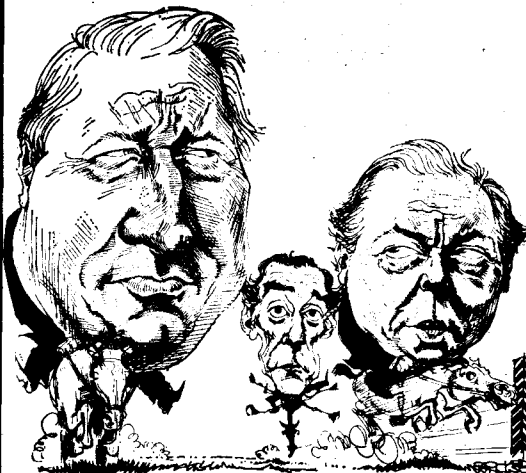
In reading these thoughts I was, by this time, quite overcome. What would Greeley serve up after these appetizers? The *piece de resistance* is selected from a menu which boils many of the youthful revolutionaries and intellectuals in a style one would not expect outside the Vice President's office: "The intellectual who shivers with delight at the fantasy of a Polish storm trooper kicking in his door at four o'clock in the morning has the same contact with reality as does the Polish homeowner on the Northwest Side of Chicago who thinks that Black Panthers are lurking in his corner drugstore. Both have created terrors for their own entertainment and delight..."

But let us move away from the intellectuals and back to the more germane urban ethnics. Greeley concludes that what is needed is understanding and interaction, not condemnation and homogenization. The differences at-

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tending various white ethnic groups will be with us for some years to come.

*Why Can't They Be Like Us?* states why they are not and urges the same temperance and understanding in the area of civil rights that Presidential advisor Daniel Patrick Moynihan called for when he advised "benign neglect," and I expect it will attract the same wrath from Liberaldom that Moynihan received. While being only a pioneer endeavor, Greeley's work is a valuable contribution to understanding the phenomenon of American acculturation. And it is delightfully written.

Jefferson Davis, a disc jockey in Pike County, Indiana, is a connoisseur of rock and roll music. His hobbies are "mingling with the crowd" and dancing.

Jefferson Davis

## CORRESPONDENCE



To the Editor:

The April 1971 issue of *The Alternative* contained an article by one Lazy Joe Fish entitled, "Fiction and Conservatives." The article only goes to prove how many a well-meaning conservative can become an ideologue, intent only on finding in literature, even literature totally unrelated to politics, justifications for his conservative beliefs.

The thesis of "Fiction and Conservatives" is "that fiction — fiction embracing poetry ... is and has been a great source of conservative strength during this cruel and wonderful century." If the article simply implied that great literature, literature which affirms such human values as freedom and individualism, lends support to fundamental conservative tenets such as individual freedom and free choice, there would be no problem. But Mr. Fish goes out of his way to name specific writers and pin them down as being without a doubt, avid supporters of ideological conservatism. He names T.S. Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, Hemingway, Faulkner, Hawthorne, Melville and Twain as authors in whose writings he, as a conservative, finds great solace and support. As Fish put it, "Twain ... is Twain." How does he find in

Mark Twain support for ideological conservatism? He says from *Huckleberry Finn*. So what? Liberals are always finding from Twain's works support for their ideology. *Ramparts* Magazine once published a huge article "proving" that Twain was a radical socialist. The leftists at *Ramparts* did the same thing your poet from Slippery Bear Shoot, Indiana has done: read great literature not for its value as literature, but for its supposed value as a source of conservative (or leftist) ideology.

And one final point is in order. Mr. Fish attempts to explain the preponderance of radical humanities majors (as contrasted to the scarcity of radical math or science majors.) He states, most probably correctly, that no one who has read great literature would want to go out and burn a University down. He condemns the "assistant-assistant professors" who "don't give a damn whether or not the students read." Forcing students in a university to take required literature courses outside their area of interest and forcing these unwilling bodies further to read books they do not want to read, is not the answer to the radicals. If a student in a lit. class does not want to read the book, the high schoolish prodding of a professor is not going to make him read the book — coercion will only cause resentment, resentment of reading. If a student refuses to read, it is unfortunate for him, and it should not be the function of the university to force him to read. If he can fake a "C," then, so what? If he is at all serious, he'll never make it anyway because of his cultivated ignorance. Anyway, I thought conservatives were the ones who opposed coercion.

Sincerely,  
Lawrence Polon  
Los Angeles, Calif

### A reply to Mr. Polon's Letter:

1. The entire sixth paragraph of my article reads as follows: "English literature during the twentieth century, then, has been, if not conservative in the sense that Robert Taft was conservative, at its center deeply anti-liberal." I thought

this paragraph had made it clear that I was not claiming the writers in question are (to use Mr. Polon's phrase) "avid supporters of ideological conservatism." But it is a writer's duty to make his ideas clear the first time and I obviously have not done so. Allow me one more try.

The point of my article was not that Herman Melville would have necessarily voted the straight Republican ticket or that T.S. Eliot and Karl Mundt would have gotten along famously. My point, stated briefly, is this: that way of looking at the world which most intelligent men describe as "conservative," has at its center certain fundamental tendencies. These tendencies are at the heart of much of the great literature of our century. Now these same tendencies are, by and large, not at the heart of the predominant ideological force of the past two hundred years, i.e. Liberalism. And, finally, these tendencies are at the heart of political conservatism.

Now comes the hard part. I am not saying that because great literature has a "conservative" basis that therefore the great authors are "ideological conservatives." Nor am I saying that the great works are somehow or other "conservative" in a strictly ideological sense. What I am saying is that great literature (exemplified but not exhausted by the examples I gave) and political conservatism are fed by the same spiritual and intellectual stream. Political liberalism is not fed by this stream, but by another — and some would say, a stronger — stream going back to the eighteenth century at least.

I did not mean to suggest (and, in all honesty, upon re-reading what I have written, I do not think I did suggest) that we read, say *Moby Dick*, to "find support" for some "ideology."

2. I thought that I had made clear that Twain is Twain and that he is his own man. I suggest Mr. Polon re-read this section of my article and I am certain if he does he will find that I did not try to pin some kind of "ideological conservative" badge on the great Twain. I did say — and continue to say — that *Huckleberry Finn* could not

(continued to page 23)

## Language is Sermonic

Richard M. Weaver  
on the Nature of Rhetoric

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This book brings together for the first time Richard M. Weaver's most significant and influential essays on the related subjects of rhetoric and language, providing a full

view of his rhetorical theory apart from his political philosophy. The introduction provides a critical interpretation of Weaver's writings on rhetoric. \$6.95.

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"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad." — Euripides

## NEW REPUBLIC

Oh, so heady are the thoughts illuminating page after page of the contemporary *New Republic*:

It is a powerful idea. What man who has ever fought a highway department or power company can feel anything but a kind of sadistic joy at the thought of hauling these people into court to demand, not whether they have followed their own pettifogging rules, but whether they have done the right thing?

The crafty *New Republic* heaves a juicy blandishment to the Redeemer of the Silent Majority:

For a good many bright, sophisticated and ordinarily skeptical Americans, getting into the People's Republic of China at this point would be about as attractive as winning a million dollars by taking part in a chain letter operation.

Archaeological findings recently published by the spear-carrying editors of the cultured *New Republic*:

That is one thing in barbaric America that even the most tolerant and sympathetic visitors from civilized countries outside cannot understand. The U.S. is the only industrialized country on earth that permits gun sales.

## THE EVERGREEN REVIEW

Presidential hopeful, Dotson Rader, tells all:

I personally came to respect the guts appeared one day in Washington and disappeared the next ... principled kids, free and clear, unaware they had already won the struggle inside themselves which many of us who came into our politics earlier were still fighting.

## THE WASHINGTON POST

A sophisticated exchange lifted from the celebrated pages of *The Washington Post*:

Q. I saw a picture of Jackie Onassis walking around in Portofino, Italy wearing a kind of tee-shirt. It was obvious she had no bra on under it. Is Mrs. Onassis one of those bra burners?

G.R., Huntington, NY

A. Jackie is definitely not a bra burner if you mean a women's lib type. The movement does not interest her a bit. She likes being a feminine woman — in the company of exciting, stimulating men. In resort areas abroad, Jackie is apt to behave as other sophisticated resorters do. It was only a few years back, after her marriage to Onassis, that Jackie's old-fashioned "teddy" type panties and unwieldy, cantilevered bras

were the talk of fitting room circles. It was the dynamic designer Halston who reportedly persuaded Jackie to "get with it" in the lingerie department. Or, as in the Portofino instance, do without it.

## STEPHEN HESS IN THE NEW YORK TIMES:

From one of America's foremost minds, the Grand Mullah of the White House Conference on Youth, comes this proud revelation coupled by a lush view of the future and an audacious prescription:

When in December, 1969, President Nixon appointed me National Chairman of the White House Conference on Children and Youth my instructions were "to listen well to the voices of American youth." I have tried hard to fulfill this Presidential mandate — although at times it was near-impossible to hear the voices in the midst of all the shouting. If the last year and a half has taught me nothing else, it has certainly taught me to both like and respect this youth (sic) generation. I, for one, have absolutely no fear for the future of this country. It will be in capable hands. In the meantime, however, I prescribe a dash of patience and a generous nip of goodwill.

Yet another specimen of the workings of a really high-grade intellect:

It is perhaps amazing — and certainly encouraging — that we were able to have such an essentially moderate gathering as the White House Conference on Youth (and I say "moderate" despite the sometimes "radical" nature of its recommendations).

## THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

A futile attempt at seriousness by the clowns and buffoons at the humorous

Gay Lib and Women's Lib have played a crucial role in each other's development. Together they expose the underbelly of society in a more extensive, penetrating way than either could alone, uncovering the depth and extent to which predetermined masculine-feminine roles have governed social dynamics, not only allowing, but often forcing one group of people to exploit another.

Wake up America! Dr. Emil Mrake (Ph. D., M.D.), Chairman of the HEW Commission on Pesticides, has carefully studied the entire issue and intoned this memorable line:

We need a study of our total food habits. We're living in an era of Food McCarthyism.

## THE NATION

The *Nation* pronounces on Angela Davis' Ph. D.:

In predominantly white middle-class Marin County, communism and black militancy are anathemas. The much publicized rise in the tax rate attributed to this trial can hardly fail to influence the county's taxpayers, from whose ranks the jury may be drawn.

Accordingly, an analysis of the fairness of the Angela Davis trial cannot proceed on a purely legal level. It must also examine the community and racial aspects of the trial, and the peculiar but no longer unique combination of race and politics influencing the atmosphere of the trial in and out of the courtroom. Both the state and the accused have an interest in obtaining the fairest trial possible. In reality, fairness can only be approximated; we come closest to it when, while operating in an imperfect system, we strive to remedy imperfections. The worst we can do is deny their existence.

## SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY

A rhetorical triumph from the old master:

The cities are mortally sick and getting sicker.

## BISHOP MOORE

Sophisticated pronouncement on democratic process from that ardent engine of Christian Endeavor and Patriotic Renaissance, Bishop Paul Moore, DD, Episcopal Bishop of New York and multimillionaire:

When the state wages illegal war against the will of the majority the claims by which the state are traditionally honored by the church come into question. Has our state ceased to be a democratic instrument of peace and justice?

Mental health note from Bishop Paul Moore, illustrious Episcopal Bishop of New York:

The health of a democracy can be judged by its debonair tolerance for dissent. A sick state, lacking in confidence, quivers at the sight of opposition. Is our government verging paranoia, the most dangerous of psychosis?

## CBS

An authentic specimen of objective reportage from the innocent rictus of Peter Kalischer, Paris:

Apparently the U.S. is not yet ready to set the date ... They know that once President Nixon sets that date the days of the Saigon government are numbered.