

heard something of the sort from Senator Javits, and a recent poll reveals that a majority of Americans favor compelling all young people to spend *two years* in something like Vista, say; it sits no more comfortably coming from our friend Buckley than from the other side. It is, in short, a version of the statist altruism game: *you owe it to your country*. I cannot buy it and hope others will resist it actively. I revere Bill Buckley as mentor and love him as a friend; this idea I abhor.

The body of the book, however, is tremendously wise, modest but bold, daringly simple, yet close to revolutionary; if they ignore this one they will have shown themselves impervious to a conservative approach to anything. The reforms are these:

1) Congress shall appropriate funds for social welfare only for the benefit of those states whose per capita income is below the national average. With a minimum of statistical charts, in language even an economic simpleton can comprehend, Buckley shows how ridiculous our current governmental policy on welfare is. Not only does the money slosh down to Washington, get diluted, and then drip back up to the states whence it came; it also comes from the poorer states and goes to the richer. "Blessed are they who do not see yet believe," he writes; it will take time to instruct people in economic truths, but it's time well spent. Chapter One is economic instruction in the brilliant manner of Hazlitt; it is, as *The Leader* in Washington would say, perfectly clear. It is, moreover, stunning in its simplicity, and we should push for it.

2) Congress should eliminate the "progressive" feature of the income tax, eliminate all deductions except those that relate directly to the cost of acquiring money, eliminate all exemptions and the corporate tax, reimburse taxpayers below the poverty line any federal taxes regressive in impact, and levy a uniform tax of 15 percent on all income. And a bit more, but that's the crux of it. Who pays the highest proportion of income in taxes under the current system? Surprise! The poorest taxpayers, and

the richest. As with the first reform, the statistics he provides are revealing, and compelling. The ultralibertarian is not going to cotton to the idea of preserving the income tax at all, and his opposite number among the traditionalists may not enjoy the hard facts of today's inequitable taxation system. But facts they are, and the income tax will be with us, like death and transfiguration, always. So best to make it work better. The Buckley proposal would greatly help.



3) An amendment to the Constitution, courtesy of WFB: "No child shall be denied admission to a public school . . . on account of race, creed, color, or national origin. . . . Nor shall any relief authorized by any legislature for children attending nonpublic schools be denied by virtue of any provision in the Constitution of the United States or of any State." That's how amendments sound, ladies and gentlemen. In English: no forced busing (which has been shown not to work to achieve the good things busing's sponsors hope for), and help to private and parochial schools as to public ones. Once more, Mr. Buckley's libertarian friends will yelp: why any government involvement in schooling *at all*?! Once more: right now that's the way it is, and everybody hates busing but the social engineers, and non-public schools are dropping like stock

prices. Buckley's book is not utopian; it is practical. This is an entirely sensible, completely workable proposal, and, I'd wager, it would be very popular. He's batted 1,000, discounting the two mini-proposals at the start. And then:

4) "The Fifth Amendment (as currently interpreted) should be repealed. Procedures should adapt to the criterion: Did he do it? Procedures should adapt to the goal of speedier justice." Ergh. As *stated*. Because he does *not* propose to do away with the Fifth Amendment, only with the provision against self-incrimination (and some will say to that, *only*!) and such interpretations as the court has inflicted upon this nation, resulting in criminals guilty as sin walking the streets to strike again because of details of procedure. This is a less simple case than the preceding three, less simple, that is, to endorse without qualification, and it requires and brings out the most ingenious argumentation at his disposal to buttress it. I must at this point stand agnostic about the wisdom of the disputed parts of the Fifth Amendment; too many years, maybe, under the wing of the Constitutional scholar Leonard Levy, and a sobering brush with the law once, have made me suspicious of doing away with *any* procedural guarantees. Yet proposal four herein is inspired by a desire for more justice not less, and within our fold it should (though it won't) provoke the most debate.

One places this newest addition to the growing five-foot shelf of Buckleyana in a spot of honor. It is an exquisitely fashioned handful of essays, delightful, as a Puritan said of some Indians, to behold, provocative, and learned, the mature ideas of *un homme sérieux*. Which reminds me, a minor cavil: must the punchlines always be in Latin? I mean, "*Castigo te non quod odio habeam, sed quod amem*," and all that, rather reduces the audience, not so? Japanese would do as well, and of Bill Buckley's little failing in this splendidly successful book I must sadly declare (and *you* look this one up, Bill, as I must look up "*Castigo* . . ."): *shikata ga nai*.

David Brudnoy

Book Review

The Children of Darkness

IN A SENSE, we are all victims of the Dewey decimal system: over here is a book on sociology or economics; over on that shelf is psychology or poetry or self-help. *The Children of Darkness* does not readily fit any of these pigeonholes because it uniquely examines public institutions in the light of private character, and explores personal dreams in the context of public ideologies. A chapter, for example, explores the craze to be "individualistic"—i.e., not one of the masses—and enlarges the theme into the phenomenon of widespread alienation, and ultimately into social radicalism. Elsewhere, Richard Wheeler explores the youth culture not in terms of the usual

by Richard S. Wheeler
Arlington House \$7.95

contexts, but rather as a weakening of character and a decaying of values.

All of these divers threads are woven into a grander theme: the apocalyptic struggle between secular, agnostic (and usually leftist) people, and the religious (and usually more conservative) people. For it is along this "fault in the bedrock" of the Republic, as Wheeler puts it, that the ultimate values confront each other. All else—partisan politics, liberal and conservative ideologies, the struggles of interest groups—he subsumes to the titanic clash between those

who worship God and adhere to the Christian ethic and the New Men who do not. The battle rages on multiple fronts: abortion, pornography, egalitarianism, pacifism, socialism—all, along with innumerable other issues, take root in the deeper theological schism.

The youth culture of the sixties was the vanguard of a secularist trend dating back to the Renaissance, Wheeler believes, and he regards it as the first clear-cut emergence of purely secular men unrestrained by conscience, guilt, or the desire to improve themselves and be productive. Youths acted out in reality what their secular-humanist parents and mentors only dreamed of doing in the distant future.

Charles Reich, for instance, wrote enviously of a greening generation that enjoyed free sexuality, the abandonment of manners and morals, escape from work, and an ultimate individuality that spat in the face of the traditional and the sacred. Upon this rubble of Western civilization and the Christian ethic, the children of darkness have intended to build their freedoms and lives.

The bulk of the book deals with the ludicrous failure of this secular vision. It is in effect a hymn of Christian belief, a defiant song of faith cast out into the twilight of the life of the Church, a song celebrating the teachings of Jesus as the moral basis for liberty and compassion in the world. It was this amazing religion, Wheeler observes, that internalized law and charity in the breasts of believers, and established a mechanism of guilt and forgiveness, all of which enabled the growth of mild and benevolent governments and free economies. Christianity assumed the burdens of charity and order: it built hospitals, orphanages, and schools. It regulated family and neighborhood life, thus lessening the burdens and scope of government.

But the children of darkness, he notes, have been remarkably barren: they have built no hospitals or charities, succored no poor, attained no surpluses for charity (on the contrary, they are parasites), added nothing to the sum of learning, and contributed nothing permanent to spiritual life. They have sought individuality in differentness, these strange children of the dark: "They call it alienation or nonconformity or individualism and all it actually is is a flight into the darkness and all it accomplishes is a terrifying loneliness outside the perimeter of community and communion. They have denied themselves the bread and wine, and in their arrogance they condemn themselves to a half-life of pawing through trash heaps. They are vain."

Wheeler summons the ghost of Winston Churchill to demonstrate that individuality does not necessarily rest upon alienation. Churchill, he notes, is commonly regarded as the most individualistic person of the century, yet in no major way was he alienated from his society. On the contrary, throughout his long life he celebrated the genius of his island race, his monarchs, his nation's manners and common law. He was too busy scaling Everests to worry about the distance between his views and those of the run of Englishmen.

Nowhere is Wheeler's discernment of the youth culture more telling than in his discussion of liberty. It is not a lust for freedom, he argues, but rather the dread of it, that impells the children of darkness into the retreat of drugs, communes, and an alienated life. Capitalism terrifies the kids because it offers them endless opportunity and the chance to evolve themselves into something great. But they opt instead not to work. They prefer the stodgy certitudes of socialism, where life is assured, to the uncertainties of capitalism, where sheer freedom opens up the terrifying prospects of success and failure, advance and retreat, and the evolution of character that reaches toward *dominion* over one's life. So the children of darkness *flee* individuality, even while celebrating a fake version of it

by growing beards, wearing dreary clothing, or rejecting the social ethos.

Wheeler does not simply justify religion for its social or personal utility—his passion for a mild and free community, informed by religious authority, runs deeper than that. Christianity is the acting out of God's will, the sole source of valid authority. He grasps the nettle of authoritarianism boldly, noting that reverence for higher things is essential to a good commonweal. The failure of secular men to revere anything beyond themselves is the root nihilism of the Left—and can lead only to the strife of all against all.

But for all of Wheeler's grapplings with things sacred and profane, the book is an adventure in English. He has been a newsman: the language is casual and brisk, with an occasional goodhumored *mot* such as his sly observation that nothing very radical has ever emerged from Norman Mailer's belly. This is the sort of book that sets off fireworks in the heads of its readers, and starts trains of thought that end up in unexplored places.

He ranges widely—sometimes without much organization—into the whole relationship of the counterculture to the established order: to liberals, to the economy, to religion. As always, he moves to and fro from the outer world of social structures

to the inner world of the soul, discussing the Dirty Speech Movement at Berkeley, the flower children, the pharmaceuticals, the radical libertarians, and the puritans; the demolition of form in art and music; the hypocrisies of the squares who talk free enterprise while begging government favors; the problems caused by permissiveness on the one hand and parental over-protectiveness on the other; the role of guilt in social and personal order; and the relationships of strong character to yeoman liberties.

One senses, all in all, that he himself was once a child of darkness who then fought clear of so many of its tribulations that he writes about them with an uncanny intimacy. If he was never actually part of the counterculture, it seems clear enough that he has shared its temptations and learned to beware its follies. We sense in the author a conscious struggle back from the brink of secular and modernist thought, and into the higher life of the spirit. He writes: "Now and then a man or woman emerges from the subculture a scarred, humble, and altogether beautiful person who has seen and rejected hell and has something urgent to say about it." Did Mr. Wheeler have someone in mind? The question tantalizes.

John Caravan

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Analyzing the Clods' Narcotic

A FEW WEEKS AGO the American Broadcasting Company presented a special program entitled *Judgment: The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg*. Now, most of you probably recall the Rosenbergs as the husband and wife who were convicted of, and eventually executed for, espionage in behalf of the Russians in connection with the United States atomic bomb project at Los Alamos. If such was your memory of the event, however, ABC's little prime-time drama did its very best to disabuse you of such a naïve and simplistic view. From the very beginning, the show served notice that it would strive to be "controversial," "thought provoking," "intelligent" drama. Or so producer Stanley Kramer informed the home audience by way of introduction. Kramer followed this with a little discourse on the "hysteria" gripping the country in 1951 while the trial took place, as behind him a mushroom cloud slowly blossomed and then faded from the screen. Dissolve now to the trial itself, which, according to the network and Kramer, involved a sensitive and bewildered couple being railroaded to the electric chair by a nefarious, paranoid government (prominently featuring future McCarthy aide Roy Cohn as an assistant prosecutor) and a collection of confessed-spies-turned-perjurers, out to get the Rosenbergs to save their own skins. Why then, you may ask, did the jury convict? Very simple—the Rosenbergs took the Fifth Amendment when asked if they were members of the Communist Party, and, of course, the hysteria-gripped men and women of the jury considered that the equivalent of a plea of guilty. After the stern cold warrior of a judge sentences the pair to death, the scene switches to Sing Sing, where Julius and Ethel exchange sentimental love letters (read aloud for the benefit of the audience), while an angry world cries *Sauvons Les Rosenberg* to a barbaric and unyielding America. Finally, the victims march together to their execution, while Kramer, in a voice slickly concerned, ties everything together by saying that although the Rosenbergs have died, "history will yet have its say." Stirring stuff indeed for a Monday evening.

If some of you are regretting your failure to witness this particular version of history having its say, you need fret no longer. There are any number of opportunities yet in store for you. In the near future, for example, ABC plans to present the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti as part of its *Judgment* series, and if their treatment of the Rosenberg case is any indication, you can be sure the network historians will have a great deal to say about the victimized Italian

anarchists of the twenties. And there are, supposedly, more such "specials" on tap.

But anyone interested in television's view of our past and present need not search his daily newspaper for occasional announcements of special programs. On the contrary, there are now several regularly scheduled programs which boldly beam their message across the nation, tackling controversial subjects and ideas previously deemed taboo by stuffy little minds. These shows, you see, are part of television's new wave of hard-hitting, mature adult programming—which means, of course, that they are situation comedies. The networks seem inordinately proud of them, and talk of a "new maturity" which permits such programs to replace the pap which formerly saturated the airwaves. My own feelings on this trend are that the pap, however nauseous, was inestimably healthier for the nation. An examination of two of the most popular of these shows should demonstrate what I mean.

The best example along these lines is entitled *M*A*S*H*, a half-hour sitcom on CBS each Saturday night. Originally a motion picture, *M*A*S*H* (an acronym for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) features a group of fun-loving doctors and nurses doing good deeds near the front lines of the Korean War. The heroes are a pair of doctors, Captains Pierce and McIntyre, who are cleverly and drunkenly cynical about life in general, and about the army and the Korean War in particular. Each week the audience is treated to their repertoire of snappy one-liners on these topics, and is left to reflect, through its chuckles, on what a silly country we were for letting the neanderthals who run our armed forces interfere in the personal business of some formerly happy Koreans.

Let us think the pro-army view is unrepresented, allow me to present Majors Frank Burns and Margaret Houlihan. In contrast to Pierce and McIntyre, they are very much in favor of both the army and the war. They are also the program's resident boobs and patsies. Major Burns is given to telling native Koreans that they should be "grateful for our coming over here to save the American way of life in Korea from Communism," or similar nonsense, all intended to expose our idiotic motivation for intervening in the conflict. Of course, the Koreans Burns talks to are all very clever, perceptive, inscrutable types, who respond to him with insightful witticisms like "We thank you from the bottom of our bomb craters," yuk, yuk. Major Houlihan, on the other hand, is a "Regular Army Clown," anally fixated about things like rank and regulations and

medals and such, even though there's a war going on and people are out there dying for no good reason. Burns and Houlihan are also revealed each week as Bible-spouting hypocrites, cuddling up in their tents even though Burns has a wife back home—all of which shows how much you can trust those idiots who strut patriotism and morality.

There are other lovable, funny characters in this series, but I think one can see already the major themes of this mature new adult comedy. The Korean War, you see, was really just an early Vietnam, over which our dumb, bumbling country got all worked up with foolish idealism and equally foolish fears about communism, and then proceeded in its obnoxious way to interfere with the peaceful lives of a group of Asians who were really wiser than all of us. All this was tragic, of course, but at least with the aid of some clever young men who saw through it all and realized how truly meaningless the whole patriotic trip was, our folly can be exposed through laughter.

As *M*A*S*H* presents our past, so *All in the Family*, the first of the new hard-hitting, adult TV shows, gives us comic perspective on our present. By now, almost everyone is familiar with Archie Bunker, the program's main character, who each weekend thrills the nation with his portrayal of typical blue-collar American conservatism. According to Bud Yorkin and Norman Lear, innovators of the new approach to TV comedy and producers of the show, this political viewpoint involves about equal portions of bigotry and ignorance, and very little else. Archie, when he is not stating his affection for "Richard E. Nixon" (*sic*), is fond of referring to black women as "mammies" and their sons as either "boys" or "spades." He has also been known to call the mentally retarded either "goofballs" or "halfwits" while in their presence. But Archie is really a victim himself, or so the show's "deeper" moments would have us believe. Trapped in an economic system geared against the little man, he has cheated and lied about working-class friends who might threaten his job security, and in one memorable episode made a transparent attempt to falsify his income tax return in order to help make ends meet.

The show has a live-in son-in-law who serves to highlight the absurdity of Archie's viewpoint. For example, when Archie raises a working man's cry against high prices and inflation, the son-in-law immediately points out that Nixon is responsible, and that things would have been much different had McGovern taken top prize. The live audience usually registers its approval of such *bon mots* with prolonged, knowing laughter. Watergate, you may be sure, comes in for a full measure of critical treatment. In short, *All in the Family*, one of the highest ranking shows in the Nielsen ratings, presents each week a humorous half-hour of *ad hominum* argument against the working conservative. An appreciative audience laps it up.

One might fairly ask, of course, what all this has to do with public policy. After all, most of us have seen things on television with which we disagree, but what exactly is one supposed to do about it? There is, I must admit, no satisfactory answer. The