

BOOK REVIEWS

It is tempting to call Betty Friedan, whose 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, launched the contemporary women's movement, the Kermansky of her revolution. She is, after all, decently appalled by what the Bolsheviks of latter-day feminism have done to her idea of equality between the sexes. There is a difference, though. Unlike Lenin's predecessor, she is likely to see her version of the revolutionary doctrine prevail.

Three cheers for that. Or, at least, three cheers for moderation and sanity as opposed to utopian frenzy.

The good news is that the American housewife who told all the other American housewives that a professional career can be more gratifying than a perfectly polished kitchen floor is having second thoughts about the way some of her disciples have construed this blameless notion. To be specific, she doesn't think a self-respecting woman has to hate men or be a lesbian or mold her career style on male patterns or pass up motherhood for the rat race. She discerns frustration in women who have taken such routes to fulfillment.

Friedan has even developed reservations about the way the movement she created has dealt with the cherished "constitutional right" to abortion. She feels that being "for abortion" somehow obscures "the life-enhancing value for women and families of the choice to have children." She is vaguely repelled by the "abortion chic" she read about in the *Village Voice*; it seems there are women who, to flaunt their fertility, deliberately become pregnant and then have abortions.

Betty Friedan's discovery, revealed in her new book, *The Second Stage*, is that women still want love—in most cases, heterosexual love. Moreover, they want babies and they value the family as an emotional center for their lives. Maybe it shouldn't take extraordinary powers to see this, or heroism to talk about it. However, the new Friedan thesis has roused excitement everywhere and cries of betrayal among many of the old ERA stalwarts and veterans of the fight to "desexigrate" newspaper help-wanted ads.

Still, this is not the full extent of

Anne Crutcher is a journalist based in Washington, D.C.

THE SECOND STAGE Betty Friedan / Summit Books / \$14.95

Anne Crutcher

the revisionism. Noting survey data that show women in favor of ad hoc child-care arrangements—in the family if possible—the woman who once believed in a government solution for every problem, public or private, no longer thinks massive, federally funded day-care programs are the answer to the working mother's need for someone to look after the kids.

What's more, this Friedan will actually sit still for a bit of the volunteerism the National Organization for Women denounced as exploitation ten years ago. She reproaches her old colleagues for allowing the Enemy to take over the whole area of traditional feminine concern, leaving the women's movement often as disappointed in its successes as in its failures.

Boldly stating these heresies, Friedan goes on to posit a second stage for the cause. Women must transcend the "feminist mystique" that succeeded the old worship of clean

sheets and homemade cookies. Away with the superwoman who knows how to get hers but hasn't come to terms with her own desire for something more in tune with the universals of humanity than mere feminist battle trophies.

So far, so good. Betty Friedan has always been a more wholesome person than the Simone de Beauvoirs, Marilyn Frenches, and Adrienne Riches who are forever shaking their fists at the sky because they can't stand the ambivalences and tensions the human condition imposes on both sexes. One senses that she knows a bit about love between men and women and between parents and children.

Unhappily, it's not enough to save her from folly and mischief when she tries to think about society. She is a pushover for tendentious psychologizing and for the theory that whatever goes wrong in the world can be

traced to the obscene lusts of capitalist corporations. She is also a dirty fighter, more inclined to dismiss opposing arguments as lies and propaganda than to refute them.

Thus, when confronting some of the differences between men and women that have proved problematical for West Point in its coed phase, her strategy is to trash masculinity. With many a twinkling sneer at "the warrior mentality," "boy-soldier oppressors," and "the undeniable self-hate, weakness and sense of powerlessness machismo hides in men," she calls for a military ambience where "men are allowed to take off their own masks and be sensitive, and yearning and vulnerable."

Lest the thought of being defended by an army of sensitive, yearning, and vulnerable soldiers should dismay anybody, she reminds her readers that the Vietnamese were no taller than most women and they beat us, didn't they? Besides, the next war, if machismo should force us into one, will be all technology anyway, won't it? The real problem, as Friedan sees it, is devising appropriate assignment policies and child-care arrangements for the two-career military family. Analysts of American defense capabilities should note that this social analyst was invited to West Point to help the military establishment modernize its thinking.

Getting at the larger issues, Betty Friedan elaborates an earlier theme. Readers of *The Feminine Mystique* will remember that the reason post-World War II women got trapped in those little suburban houses with all the washing machines and cars and lawn mowers was that profit-crazed advertisers made them think that's what they wanted.

Well, it's still going on. Instead of designing group dwellings that will minimize housework for the job-holding mother and offer social solace to the lonely divorcee, architects pander to the corporations that continue to push individual homes so they can sell more equipment.

Of course, Friedan herself has tried group living with "an extended family of choice" and found it "almost as much work as an individual household." The difficulty, she says, "was not so much physical labor, although there were continual battles as we worked out by trial and error the sharing of the chores and



IS RELIGION A SACRED COW?

Traditionally in America a political conservative is one who holds a deep, abiding respect for the Constitution and treasures the freedoms it was designed to protect. But the "New Conservatives"—the so-called Religious Right—are fueled by issues that have little or nothing to do with conservative politics.

For 205 years this nation

has endured. By maintaining the separation of church and state, the United States has avoided the intolerance that has so divided the rest of the world. But the growing threat of the politically active Religious Right threatens to divide our country. Political preachers are trying to dictate morality to all Americans in the name of "conservatism."



FREE INQUIRY, a new magazine, is committed to basic conservative values, such as freedom, a secular society, and the separation of church and state. Unlike other magazines, it is ready and willing to take on the sacred cow of religion, including the Religious Right, and others that graze on the pasture of politics, ethics, and the social sciences.



"A Secular Humanist Declaration," drafted by **Paul Kurtz** (endorsed by 58 leading intellectuals). A vital statement focusing on the commitment of secular humanists to free inquiry and on the need for critical intelligence in today's world. It opposes doctrinaire fundamentalism, absolute morality, and political repression.



"Communism and the American Intellectuals: From the '30s to the '80s," by **Sidney Hook**. What was the appeal of the Communist movement to American intellectuals? Hook discusses the sources and grounds of its influence.



"Prophets of the Procrustean Collective," by **Antony Flew**. Why have many intellectuals become so enamored of egalitarianism that they have often abandoned the idea of freedom? One of the world's eminent philosophers offers a piercing critique of the call for unqualified equality.

Two views on sex education, by **Thomas Szasz** and **Peter Scales**. "The Return of the Sacred," by **Daniel Bell**, with commentaries by **Joseph Fletcher** and others. "The Classics of Secular Humanism," with commentaries by **Brand Blanshard**, **Isaac Asimov**, **Richard Kostelanetz**, **Albert Ellis**, **Robert Rimmer**. "The New Book-Burners," by **William Ryan**. "Secular Humanism Debated," with commentaries by **John Roche**, **Sidney Hook**, **Phyllis Schlafly**, **Gina Allen**, **Roscoe Drummond**, **Lee Nisbet**, **Patrick Buchanan**, and **Paul Kurtz**.

Free Inquiry

Published quarterly
Box 5, Central Park Station, Buffalo, NY 14215

Name (please print) 5-8212

Address Apt.

City State Zip

One year \$14.00 ☐ (Send me my first issue free.)

Two years \$25.00 ☐ (Send me my first two issues free.)

Please enclose payment

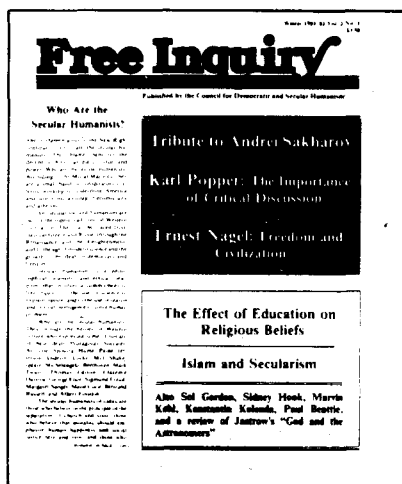
SPECIAL OFFER:

The current issue free

with your paid subscription

(first two issues free with a two-year subscription)

This issue features articles by **Sir Karl Popper** (author of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*) and Professor **Ernest Nagel** in "A Tribute to Andrei Sakharov," "The Effect of Education on Religious Beliefs," by **Burnham Beckwith**, and "Secularism and Modernization in Islam," by **Nazih Ayubi**.



expenses, but the emotional problems and nuances which were difficult to deal with."

That doesn't excuse the corporations, though. The point is that "The way capitalism has exploited the alienated human needs for love and dignity and has, above all, exploited the resulting sexual obsession for profit or power, have [sic] diverted people from paths toward true autonomy."

It's getting worse, too. "In the Reagan campaign, the far Right clearly played to and diverted our rage, using the power of Government

to subordinate the interests of people to profit and subjecting our lives even further to authoritarian or corporate control, while pretending to do the opposite." She recalls that, while Ronald Reagan doesn't look much like Hitler, "various political scientists have suggested that if fascism comes in America it will be a 'friendly fascism.'"

Like Margaret Fuller, spunkily deciding to accept the universe, Betty Friedan has chosen to admit a few basic truths about human nature. We can applaud her for that, but hardly for the rest of what she has to say. □

LECTURES ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Vladimir Nabokov, edited by Fredson Bowers
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / \$19.95

Charles Nicol

Vladimir Nabokov, the last great modern author, born the same year as Hemingway but much later in his impact, shared with a brilliant generation those emblematic features of exile and translingual authority; yet he was still exemplary: tri-lingual

Charles Nicol, Professor of English at Indiana State University, is co-editor of Nabokov's Fifth Arc, forthcoming from the University of Texas Press.

Bullish on Braces?

That's right—big comeback to braces/suspenders! For dress/business; also today's casual living. Wear with slacks/sports jacket. Be bold/show them off! A Bernardo exclusive: initials or name engraved on brass hardware. Own wardrobe/gifts! Write for gratis presentation of Bernardo's extensive collection of smashing British braces/exciting American suspenders. **BERNARDO**
2400 Westheimer, # 108W (7), Houston, TX 77068



and thrice in exile. Chronology is, however, more chance than causality, and literary history hardly begins to classify the individual genius. Better to note that Nabokov's wit was his own; that with Flaubert and Chekhov he shared a scientific attitude and a cold eye; that with Proust he shared a passionate artistry of memory; and that with, say, Melville, Borges, and T.S. Eliot he shared a love of literary reference. He belonged with his readers to a culture of literature. Russian literature was essential to the structure of the early *Despair* and then to *The Gift*, Nabokov's magnificent farewell to his native language; world literature underpinned the late, enormous *Invitation to a Beheading*. He defined his

predecessors by his allusions, the resonance of his language by the books off which it bounced. It was a dialogue not with history but with his fellow masters. The lectures on literature are that dialogue in a different form.

The elective affinities of writers are often fascinating—Herman Melville, Henry James, and D.H. Lawrence all wrote well about Nathaniel Hawthorne without having much else in common. Nabokov's first major publication was a translation into Russian of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. As a young émigré in Berlin, he wrote book reviews, the first Russian crossword puzzles, chess problems, and professional articles on butterflies. He helped support himself with English and tennis lessons—all in all, a fitting background for a future American academic, if not necessarily for a major novelist. And indeed, Nabokov's American years produced not only *Lolita*, three other novels, and *Speak, Memory*, but also a wonderfully perverse book on Gogol and a brilliantly eccentric edition of *Eugene Onegin*.

Those many years of teaching, first at Wellesley, then at Cornell, left a quantity of further material on Russian and European fiction; throughout his twenty years in a Swiss hotel, Nabokov promised to publish his classroom lectures. Many students had testified to their fascination, and Nabokov's own memory seems to have improved on his legendary classroom performance: He claimed in those arch late interviews to have delivered the lectures from neatly typed manuscripts. Yet those manuscripts actually were often mere notes which even when typed had been endlessly modified in pen and pencil; most existed only in handwritten form, sometimes in a number

of versions, sometimes in mere fragments—and sometimes lectures had been either delivered extemporaneously or later lost altogether. The interviews created a mythical earlier Nabokov, an ideally austere teacher who perhaps confounded his later avatar when he opened that Pandora's box of old classroom lectures. At his death in 1977 the project was not only unfinished but unbegun. It became a job for experts.

Enter Fredson Bowers, the notorious dean of American scholarly editing, himself in his seventies. In his heyday Bowers had set up a sort of bible of textual editing, laying down the commandments that no later scholar dared violate. His edition of Stephen Crane was outrageous in the length and ostentation of its textual notes. Students from thirty years ago at the University of Virginia remember his affected manner, his cigarette in its long holder, his disciples (parading the same cigarette holder) who thought editing a great science instead of a minor art. Praise the Lord, his version of Nabokov's lectures is merely a "reading edition"—which means that textual notes are minimal, the statement of "Editorial Method" is brief, and Bowers has become all unbuttoned. Yet there is still something of the martinet and a whiff of the overbearingly incompetent here. I have seen only praise for Bowers's editing of these two volumes, the first on Austen, Dickens, Flaubert, Joyce, Kafka, Proust, and Stevenson,* the present one on Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Gorky, Tolstoy, and Turgenev; but it seemed to me in reading the earlier volume that Bowers lost the thread of Nabokov's argument on Joyce and sewed the pieces together cross-patch, and the evidence in this volume is even more disquieting.

Lectures on Russian Literature contains, in the first place, one piece of very polished writing: a large portion of Nabokov's book on Gogol. While that book may have grown out of Nabokov's lecture notes, it seems inexcusable to excerpt the sections on *Dead Souls* and "The Overcoat" just because Nabokov discussed those works in class. The Gogol material should have been either left out altogether, since a published version was already available, or included in its totality—along with, perhaps, Nabokov's published introduction to *A Hero of Our Times* to replace his missing lecture on Lermontov. Now,

There is opportunity in America!



Sarkes Tarzian Inc. Bloomington, Indiana

**Lectures on Literature*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, \$19.95.