

there is such a thing as benevolent Trotskyism; or that by a process of self-mystification one can create out of nothing a Third Force, a Third Camp and thereby avoid having to make nasty political choices.

The enemy is neither the White House nor democratic capitalism. The enemy is the head of the Soviet secret police who, in changing jobs, has taken over half a world and brought George Orwell's frightening

prophecies into a reality earlier than had been expected.

In short, it is time for Irving Howe to dissent from *Dissent* and to seek his fulfillment, not in re-writing history or dreaming up

new strategies for old politico-cultural frauds, but to free himself from a faith which, in his "intellectual autobiography," has driven him to forget his chosen vocation as scholar. □



EMINENTOES

## CHECK-OUT TIME

This takes us back, conservative-feud-wise. Hang around the right wing for a while, and you soon meet veterans who grunt, "I was for Barry when Irving Kristol/Jerry Falwell was still a socialist/preacher, and I'll be damned if I'm going to have my agenda set by any *Public Interest/Moral Majority*." More rarely, you find those who did not like Ike. There are those who remember the hectic days when everyone seemed to be Birching (perhaps they Birched themselves), those who still wonder who promoted Peress. Thomas Dewey, three times governor of New York, twice Republican presidential nominee, and execrated no more, is from another era. He has accepted, as Eliot said of Milton and Charles I, the constitution of silence. He came before the cusp.

Richard Norton Smith, author of *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times*,\* is unaware of his subject's datedness. He calls his book a biography of the "maker of the modern Republican Party," which is quite wrong. If today's GOP has any makers, they are Clif White, William Rusher, and the late John Ashbrook, founders of the Draft Goldwater movement. Still, Dewey's life is interesting, even for what it does not teach us, and Smith lays it exhaustively (and exhaustingly) before us.

He was born in 1902, in Owosso, Michigan, in the heart of the lands where to be on time is to be fifteen minutes late. Perhaps he was not entirely happy there; he left for New York City to study law at age 21, and never looked back. But the punctiliousness and workaholicism of his home, particularly his mother, had been scrubbed into him as with a

bristle brush, never to be washed out. For his third birthday, Mrs. Dewey gave him a bicycle, with the warning that if he fell off it would be taken away for a year. He did, and it was.

From the men in his family, he received a conviction (the evangelical terminology seems appropriate) of the truth and justice of the GOP. The Deweys had been partisans from day one. Thomas's grandfather attended the first Republican rally in 1854, and the *Owosso Times*, the newspaper he founded and passed on to the family, lectured Michiganders in passionate tones on the wickedness of Democrats and drink. "Tammany Hall," declared Dewey's editor-father, "represents all that is evil in government."

Dewey père was not so far off. Social scientists, for whom acculturation (never mind how or to what) is the *summum bonum*, are apt to look on Tammany and similar institutions with a mild eye these days; and the old machines did indeed take boatloads of immigrants whom nobody particularly cared about and Americanize them. In the process, however, they reduced politics to job seeking; and with each job went a letter of marque for fiscal piracy. When Dewey arrived in New York, millions were pouring down Tammany's maw each year. During the twenties, the city's budget increased sixteen times faster than the population.

The political criminals worked in cahoots with desperadoes of a more mundane sort. Tammany's connections with the mob were fraternal and intimate. In return for payoffs and assorted political favors (Dutch Schultz and his gang served as Democratic poll watchers), complaisant district attorneys gave the lampreys a free ride, and they bled the city ashen. Everything that was

bought, sold, or serviced in New York—from artichokes to laundry—was traded by a racket. The underworld's exactions were estimated to have raised the cost of living twenty percent.

Fiorello LaGuardia beat Tammany at the polls. Dewey, as U.S. Attorney, special prosecutor, and District Attorney, worsted the mob in court. He brought to his task all the energies he had once focused on not falling off bicycles. Nothing was too tedious or trivial, and nothing was sacred. Dewey and his lawyers sifted mounds of receipts and shelves of ledgers; they tapped phones and cold-shouldered the press. The crooks didn't stand a chance. Hollywood made movies about him. Schultz wanted to murder him. FDR simply wanted to destroy him.

Dewey rode his fame to Albany in 1942 (after a near miss four years earlier), and brought to the governor's office the same aggressive orderliness he had shown at the prosecutor's table. In twelve years, he managed to cut taxes, balance the budget, and inaugurate a series of new projects—a thruway, a state university. This was one major

difference between Dewey's era and ours. The talismanic words "waste, fraud, and abuse" actually meant something then. Government had been so slipshod that it was possible, with strict efficiency and common honesty, to lessen the taxpayer's burden while increasing services. When Dewey spoke of humane Republicanism or pragmatic liberalism, he thus meant something quite different from Nelson Rockefeller or Jacob Javits, who used such talk to steal bases for the omniscient state. Dewey represented, when it was still possible, a real middle of the road—moderately paternalistic and genuinely frugal. He provided, it is true, no bulwark in principle against the free-for-all liberalism of his successors. But he didn't practice it, either. "I like you," he once told Rockefeller, "but I don't think I can afford you."

The other great difference between then and now concerns America's role in the world, and America's conception of its role. Dewey was an establishment internationalist—not the best of all possible worldviews, maybe, but what else was there in the GOP? On Dewey's left, Wendell Willkie, the down-home Wall Street lawyer, a fatuous narcissist who barnstormed his way to the Republican nomination in 1940, and was still a contender in 1944. This John Anderson of the producing class took a world tour in 1943, and wrote a book, *One World*, that would have done honor to Eleanor Roosevelt:

Men and women all over the world are on the march, physically, intellectually and spiritually. After centuries of ignorant and dull compliance, hundreds of millions of people in Eastern Europe and Asia have opened the books. They are beginning to know that man's welfare throughout the world is interdependent. They are resolved, as we must be, that there is no more place for imperialism.



\*Simon and Schuster, \$22.50.

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Five years later, the Iron Curtain fell. Willkie's claptrap sold a million copies.

On Dewey's right stood the so-called isolationists. So-called, because before the war, they were Anglophobes more than anything else (Colonel McCormick's *Chicago Tribune* accused Dewey of making "the pilgrimage to Downing Street by way of Wall Street"). After the war, the same people developed a lively interest in Communist subversion, without, for the most part, a corresponding understanding of global strategy. When they did look abroad, it was exclusively to the Far East. Robert Taft, the leader of the Old Right, opposed NATO and postwar aid to Great Britain, and wanted a twenty percent ceiling on the proportion of American troops that could be stationed abroad.

And Dewey? He hedged no more than any other pol before Pearl

Harbor about America's entry into the war. He urged a stronger Navy, for which Roosevelt mocked him. He supported, in the dawn of the Cold War, the Marshall Plan and aid to Chiang Kai-shek, and had average—that is, sub-Willkieite, though still inflated—hopes for the UN. He opposed in public debate the resolution, "Shall the Communist party be outlawed in the United States?" (Harold Stassen took the affirmative, seconded by Joseph McCarthy.) All in all, a fair collection of positions; not everything one might have wished, but better than we actually got.

The Dewey-Stassen debate took place during the Oregon primary in 1948; it ended Stassen's presidential hopes, which were then serious (a third difference between that era and this), and guaranteed Dewey's nomination. Six months later, a glee-

ful Truman was waving the front page headlined "Dewey Defeats Truman." One anecdote of that famous upset has escaped Smith's care, so I pass it along. On election eve, Frances Dewey told her husband how much she looked forward to sleeping with the President. The morning after, she asked if Harry would come to New York, or should she go to Washington?

If Dewey had shown a little of his wife's spunk—or his own: in private, he called Earl Warren, his running mate, a "big dumb Swede"—he would have won going away. But exaggerated notions of dignity paralyzed him, and he fell back on bromides. Owosso couldn't keep him, but it kept him from the White House.

He played his last important political role in 1952, helping Eisenhower beat his old rival Taft, and pushing a young and coming senator, Richard Nixon, for the second slot.

When sweet smiling Ike was ready to pitch Nixon overboard because of a trumped-up scandal, Dewey urged him to go on television. Nixon gave the Checkers speech, and saved his political life. When at last the protégé reached the office the older man had missed, he offered his patron a variety of high posts—ambassador? Secretary of State? Chief Justice? In vain. For half a year, Thomas Edmund Dewey had been rated a sure thing for the highest post of all. Why should he stoop? In March 1971, rebellious Cabinet members planned to approach Dewey to sell him (and through him, Nixon) on the idea of replacing Haldeman with Melvin Laird.

But before they could meet with him, he was found in a hotel room, dead of a heart attack: fully dressed, bags packed, hat resting neatly on his suitcases: the last time he would fail to affect us. □



## OLD FOOLS

by Fred Barnes

There are some ideas that the mainstream press just can't digest. So it usually ignores them. One is that busing of schoolchildren for purposes of racial integration is unpopular, even among blacks, and counterproductive, promoting more separation of white and black students in public schools; not less. Another is that the demise of authoritarian, anti-Communist regimes in the Third World usually produces repression instead of liberation, as in China, Vietnam, Iran, and Nicaragua. Still another is that Communists might be hyperactive and sometimes effective in the United States in promoting their interests and discrediting their enemies.

President Reagan is among the latest to encounter this phenomenon. On several occasions—and most extensively in his nationally televised press conference last November 12—he has charged that Soviet agents have been active in stirring up the nuclear freeze movement. "There is plenty of evidence," he told report-

ers. "It's been published by some of your fraternity. There is no question but that the Soviet Union saw an advantage in a peace movement around the idea of a nuclear freeze. . . . In the organization of some of the big demonstrations, the one in New York, and so forth, there is no question about foreign agents that were sent to help instigate and help create and keep such a movement going."

The response from the freeze partisans was predictable. "Returning to the tactics of McCarthyism," said Morton Halperin, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Center for National Security Studies. Unfortunately, the reaction of the press was no less predictable. The White House was half-heartedly pushed to provide documentation for Reagan's accusation, which it did by pointing to articles from *The American Spectator*, *Commentary*, and *Reader's Digest*, along with some State Department Reports. Then, the matter was dropped, except for a few columns that ridiculed Reagan for citing a *Reader's Digest* piece.

The problem here is twofold. The

first is that the President alone seems to have been put on trial, forced to buttress his charge with irrefutable evidence or fall guilty of McCarthyism. The mere voicing of the word "McCarthyism" appears to have shut off debate and put the accuser in the dock. And Reagan was the loser in this, since his evidence was not conclusive in the minds of reporters.

This first problem leads to the second, namely that the charge of Communist involvement goes largely unexamined. Perhaps there is little to it. Indeed, the superficial evidence is far more compelling about a Communist role in the peace movement in Europe than in America. But that does not excuse the failure of the mainstream press—the big newspapers, the newsmagazines, the TV networks—to look into the charge. Have KGB agents been active in the United States in the freeze movement or is that a canard? Have Communist-front groups infiltrated the movement? Do they have any influence? Or is the nuclear freeze campaign the grass roots movement most reporters seem to think it is?

Reagan doesn't necessarily stand

to gain by a press probe into these questions. In fact, he might turn out to be embarrassed, politically at least, by his accusation, should a rigorous inquiry into the freeze movement prove the charge of Communist influence to be false, misleading, or overstated. The incentive of humiliating the President, of proving him wrong, often serves to spur reporters. But not this time. The charge was simply not taken seriously enough to warrant an investigation.

Certainly the recent experience of the *New York Times* will not encourage any reporter interested in examining a matter of alleged Communist involvement or influence. Last November 7, the *Times* ran in its Sunday Arts and Leisure section an extraordinarily long (6,500 words) and well-researched article on Jerzy Kosinski, the Polish émigré novelist. The gist was that Kosinski was the victim of a 17-year smear campaign engineered by Poland's Communist government; a campaign in which the writer has been pilloried as a CIA agent, a plagiarist, a near-congenital

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