

deficits. The record is not impressive. In seven of the last twelve years, forecasters deviated from the actual percentage change in the deficit by more than 95 percent. Twice, they were off by 2,000 percent. Budget forecasts swung between egregious optimism and unwarranted pessimism, but the average error in forecasting the magnitude of change, up or down, was more than 500 percent. "The uncritical acceptance of aggregate budget figures by the mass media, policy makers, and citizens alike is wholly unwarranted," the study concludes. Indeed. It is hard to believe, as the incessant media drumbeat would have it, that stock values, interest rates, and inflation expectations all hinge on the latest forecast for 1988 deficits when the government historically can't even say what is going to happen in the next few months.

And then, third, there is a paper by David Stockman—the old, supply-side David Stockman, who in a 1980 memo to President-elect Reagan wrote:

Fiscal stabilization, i.e., elimination of deficits and excessive rates of spending growth, can only be achieved by sharp improvement in the economic indicators over the next 24 months. This means that the

policy initiatives designed to spur output growth and to lower inflation expectations must carry a large share of the burden . . . For this reason, dilution of the tax cut program in order to limit short-run static revenue losses during the remainder of FY 81 and FY 82 would be counterproductive. Weak real GNP and employment growth over calendar 1981 and 1982 will generate soup line expenditures equal to or greater than any static revenue gains from trimming the tax program.

Efforts to narrow the deficits in a vast frontal assault on individual spending items, Stockman wrote, were worth a try, "but if this is the primary or exclusive focus of the initial fiscal package, the ball game will be lost." Instead, he argued, the key to reduced deficits was: 1. resisting efforts to water down the tax cuts, and 2. restoring credit and capital market order "by supporting monetary policy reform." As it turned out, neither prescription was followed. The tax cuts were delayed and weakened such that there was no real tax relief until 1983. Monetary reform was first delayed, with advisers suggesting a "gold commission" be appointed to "explore" the idea further, and finally abandoned, as supply-siders were shut out of monetary policy-making positions at Treasury and OMB.

David Stockman may have forgotten his now-famous paper, "Avoiding a GOP economic Dunkirk," but its co-author—Congressman Jack Kemp—has not. A call to his office produces an apologetic explanation from press aide Merrick Carey that "we don't have a deficit reduction plan, just a full employment plan. Would you like to see that?" A few days later, the material arrives, along with an explanatory quotation pulled from a recent Kemp speech: "Deficits are a function of economic stagnation, and a deficit reduction plan should attempt to sustain and increase the rate of economic growth and find ways to increase the number of people working. That means cutting the federal funds rate, creating urban enterprise zones, simplifying the tax code and reducing marginal rates, and paring back spending with the line-item veto." Early in March, Kemp unveiled his full-employment plan to a throng assembled at the annual CPAC here (for "Conservative Political Action Conference"). Co-sponsored by Trent Lott and Bob Kasten, it reads like a conservative's dream wish: a tax plan that goes further than Bradley-Gephardt in lowering tax rates and eliminating loopholes, line-item veto,

a price-rule reform of the Federal Reserve, enterprise zones, and more.

Kemp probably has the political emphasis about right. A recent *Newsweek* poll asked voters to list their top concerns for 1984. After two years of pounding from the press, a respectable 55 percent of the public voices concern with the "Reagan deficits." But this places the deficit barely in the top ten of their worries, still behind seven other conditions including inflation, unemployment and "the nuclear arms race." Democratic pollster Peter Hart continues to find that only 3 to 5 percent of the voters are concerned about the deficit in any tangible way, and many of them blame Congress. Robert Bartley, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, says: "You know, I sometimes think Tip O'Neill and Teddy Kennedy must wonder how they got saddled with this one. They must wake up in a cold sweat and ask themselves, 'How did we get stuck with this as our leading issue?' " Is reduction of the deficit an end in itself, or merely one of several tools for achieving economic growth? Perhaps some Washington think tank—or maybe Ronald Reagan, or Gary Hart or Walter Mondale—will want to address that question in the near future. □

T. John Jamieson

JOHN LUKACS OUTGROWS CONSERVATISM

When Dr. Lukacs appears to be right about something, it may only be a coincidence.

In 1958 a gang in Harlem called themselves "Conservatives."

—Outgrowing Democracy, p. 336.

MR. LUKACS: But you said just a moment ago that I'm exceedingly quaint.

MR. BUCKLEY: No, I'm saying that sometimes you strike me as saying things because it's quaint to say those things, or else you are attaching to them a meaning that is not readily communicated.

—"Firing Line," January 18, 1982.

The wanting appreciation of tradition among American conservatives was evident not only among some of their politicians but also among their star intellectuals. Bill

T. John Jamieson's essay, "The American Monarchist," will appear shortly in the Salisbury Review.

Buckley was an unquestioning admirer of Secret Agents, of computerism and nuclear technology; Tom Wolfe of fast-flying and fast-living pilots; the two twentieth-century heroes of Hugh Kenner were Ezra Pound and Buckminster Fuller. Jeffrey Hart, the chief editor of National Review, wrote in 1982 that American conservatism amounted to American modernism: that the progress of technology, the breaking away of modern literature and modern art from all traditional forms, and the new loosening of the family and sexual mores were matters that American conservatives should welcome, indeed, that they should espouse.

—Outgrowing Democracy, p. 339.

You may now add John Lukacs to the ranks of George Will, Peter

Viereck, and all those who challenge the right of a certain President, a certain political party, and a certain journal of opinion to call themselves "conservative." The January 1984 issue of *Harper's* carried an essay by Lukacs, "The American Conservatives," ("where they came from and where they are going"), in which he quibbles over whether the word "conservative" is ancient or English or relevant to American traditions, failing to reflect on the fact that in 1980 there was nothing in America for a conservative to conserve, just as in 1815 there had been nothing in France for the original *conservateurs* to conserve either. He laboriously searches, in this essay, for

contradictions and paradoxes in the nature of the pre-1945 American isolationism that after 1945 became anti-Communist internationalism, and comes up with many interesting accusations—and denunciations:

Their view of the world and their consequent advocacies of foreign policies were lamentable, since their view of the Soviet Union as the focus of a gigantic atheistic conspiracy and the source of every possible evil in the world was as unrealistic, unhistorical, ideological, and illusory as the pro-Soviet illusions of the former liberals and progressives had been.

In the course of carefully arranging his paradoxes, Lukacs reasons by analogy, comparing the apparent contradiction

between domestic and foreign policy in American conservatism to a similarly apparent contradiction in that of late Russian Czarism; at one point he concludes that the Stalin regime represented the triumph of "neo-Slavophilism." Now Dr. Lukacs is the most charming of men, but the sheer love of perversity evident in this statement rates a public flogging. . . . As for his animadversions on doctrines held by Professor Jeffrey Hart, they derive in part from a reading of Dr. Hart's 1981 piece, "An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Modern American Conservatism," which recommended Rousseau, Hegel, and Nietzsche as authorities for a new American rightist ideology. Such a concept is not representative but anomalous in American conservatism.

The article concludes with the judgment that, while American liberals want to exterminate humanity before birth (via abortion), American conservatives are content to wait until afterwards (via atomic fusion). The article is but a small section of Lukacs's new book, *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century*.¹ Alas, it is not a history at all, but a rather subjective analysis (if not a mere collection of superior attitudes) of what Lukacs perceives as cultural decadence. And it reveals a certain alienated cast of mind in the often crabbed and cranky prose that would be better suited to a tract on Distributism.

For those not acquainted with the aberrant historic forms of rightist politics, Distributism was the anti-capitalist position of Hilaire Belloc, who advocated restoring the medieval guild system and gave tedious harangues on the evils of advertising and "usury." Though he nods to Dorothy Day's Distributist-like "Catholic Worker" movement, Lukacs is no Distributist himself, since, among other things, he is the champion of the bourgeoisie's glorious materialism. He has traveled in conservative circles for many years as a "cultural conservative," that is, as a traditionalist who deplores the modern breakdown in morals and manners and blames it upon the modern commercial republic. A Roman Catholic, he embraces the dogma of original sin, though with slight equivocation: Despite his utter contempt for Madison Avenue, he commits one of the prevarications of "packaging" when he calls for the recovery of the sense of original sin as "a rethinking of human nature and its relation to the universe." Yet Lukacs seems reluctant to accept the marketplace as the ineluctable consequence of the ineradi-

cable human condition. He reacts to what Daniel Bell called the "cultural contradictions of capitalism," the corrosive effects of the pursuit of gain and of technological innovation upon the social fabric, with fear and disgust; and he fails to moderate this reaction while exalting his dear bourgeoisie, the class which has come into existence more or less because of capitalism. All he can say on this matter is, "One could be a bourgeois without being a capitalist, which was true of many people in the professions." This is indeed a schizophrenic procedure.

Speaking of schizophrenia, I hasten to add that the book is dedicated to George Kennan, the former ambassador to the USSR and original exponent of the Cold War's "containment doctrine" who now claims that the USSR is too preoccupied with internal problems to threaten the security of the free world, and preaches the

had been the object of latitudinarian indifference for 39 years. A study of Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, Pope's *Dunciad*, and Charles MacKay's *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* will show that the mountebanks of high and low style have always been with us, peddling universal panaceas for bodily ailments, tottering dynasties, and debile economies both public and domestic, and inciting waves of popular enthusiasm in politics or religion either by their windy oratory or by the already vastly inflated medium of print; numberless bubbles of illusion were inflated and popped in the eighteenth century, from the South Seas Bubble to the bubbles of undeserved literary reputation. In such an historical awareness lies the cure for Dr. Lukacs's alienation.

Dr. Lukacs seems bitterest about the present American Constitution which

equal length to confront the issues raised by his generalizations, and to ask him what he meant by half of them, and so in the space available here I can only attempt to conjure his *esprit du system*, however divided against itself that system may be. *Outgrowing Democracy*, as a critique of cultural decadence, describes America's fall from grace. The state of grace Lukacs characterizes loosely as "bourgeois democracy"; the state of sin, in which we now wallow, he calls "bureaucracy," which is "post-bourgeois" and "post-democratic." This culture, he charges, has not only lost touch with reality, it has dismissed reality as an irrelevant concept.

Post-bourgeois man, the book tells us, is engaged in a mystical enterprise called the "insubstantialization of matter" (though it is also called the "spiritualization of matter" without any intention to dignify the discussion with theological overtones). In the bureaucracy, people work at "jobs" without producing anything. The advertising "industry" creates desires for products that are not needed, to be paid for with money that does not exist. "Public relations" experts manipulate "images" to create roles for persons whom society would otherwise regard as of no consequence. The media generate publicity for "issues," and public opinion polls measure this publicity's effect upon minds that are not entitled to an opinion. "Insubstantialization" may also be described as "inflation," and we are told that "monetary inflation is a consequence of the inflation of society and of the inflation of words."

Though Lukacs considers Ortega y Gasset "the greatest conservative thinker of the twentieth century," he admits that the American *homo post-democraticus* does not embody Ortega's "mass man"; he is, instead, an invertebrate creature better described by the cliché "organizational man." The organizational man is a materialist, but he lives in such prosperity, a prosperity based so extensively on the projection of illusions, that he has lost touch with reality even in its most basic form, the sensible one at his fingertips. In the 1950s he mistook a house in the suburbs for a home, the building of churches for religion, paper currency for money, "public image" for character, "growth" for progress, economic expansion for triumph over moral evil. In the 1960s his world of appearances came crashing down; but after a period of humiliation, degradation, and moral compromise, he was able by the late 1970s to restore enough of those lost appearances to believe that he had recovered his balance, while it was only a kind of self-willed amnesia that made

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gospel of unilateral nuclear disarmament—all the while maintaining that he has not contradicted his original position. The flip-side of Kennanism plays a very tiresome song, a theme of negative, neurotic omphaloskepsis, "America the Wretched"—the anthem of a nation too corrupt and too confused to make itself justly an influence in world politics. Especially because Lukacs seems to subscribe to the rest of Kennanism, one might conclude that the tone of bitter disillusionment in *Outgrowing Democracy*'s description of America in the eighties signifies an intent to further the Kennan agenda—to get America out of world politics as an unworthy contender.

The thing that disgusts Lukacs the most about America is the "cult of publicity" which perpetuates a kind of verbal "inflation"—the truth-destroying magic of "public relations," the legerdemain of words and images used to alter the nature of reality in the public mind. This bitterness over popular credulity, collective amnesia, the shortening of the attention span, and the general deterioration of "consciousness" could be moderated if Dr. Lukacs would contemplate the "climate of opinion" in England in 1700. The very phrase itself, "climate of opinion," had been invented by Joseph Glanville in 1661; thus, Truth, if not already abolished,

he calls "an elective monarchy"—a phrase full of associations for students of Joseph De Maistre and of Polish history. He charges that the institution has dwindled from a "popularity contest" to a "publicity contest"—and the meteoric rise of a complete phony named Gary Hartpence certainly proves his point. This only goes to show that Dr. Lukacs's title is a misnomer. America has not outgrown democracy, it is just growing into it. It is Dr. Lukacs who has outgrown conservatism.

Throughout the 400 pages of *Outgrowing Democracy*, Lukacs's pendulum of paradox swings unvaryingly back and forth between what he would call "historical illustrations" first of one side of a proposition and then the other. But it is often unclear whether they illustrate in an evidential or only in a pictorial way. The 400 pages contain, moreover, many thousands of unsubstantiated, unelaborated, minute generalizations, some of which are intriguing and suggestive, none of which I can safely endorse, because of their unclearness and their possible relation to a world-view I have already described as contradictory; which is to say, in short, that when Dr. Lukacs appears to be right about something, it may only be a coincidence. It would take a book of

¹Doubleday, \$19.95.

him oblivious to his losses. He elected a Hollywood actor for President, who involved the nation in a "Star Wars" defense program paid for by an economic policy based on the use of mirrors. The organizational man further revealed his general lack of character by moving to a warmer climate—probably California, the zone of dementia which produced the President. He once availed himself of vicarious virtue by calling himself a liberal and now does so by calling himself a "conservative."

If Lukacs's bewilderment before the complexities of a modern economy seems childlike, then he insists that it is the child who possesses common sense in this matter. Nevertheless, if his description of the collapse of progressivist illusions during the unending hell of the sixties appears somewhat accurate, one can get it elsewhere without the bewilderment and without the bitter alienation—in Allan C. Carlson's essay last year in *This World*, "Foreign Policy, 'The American Way,' and the Passing of the Post-War Consensus," which juxtaposes in damning fashion the relevant public policy texts instead of making farfetched attempts at *le mot juste*.

The point of origin for this road of decline was a utopian moment Lukacs calls the "Bourgeois Interlude," which began with the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and trailed off some time after the Great Depression. It was a time when America was "urban and urbane and bourgeois," a time of "amplitude and richness," when great quantities of art and artisans and intellectuals were imported from Europe, a time of sumptuous apartments high above the city streets which gave "a powerful impression of the kind of urbanity which was beyond most Europeans' dreams of avarice." The facades of Fifth Avenue in 1925 "suggest the interior riches of a bourgeois society"—

I am referring not merely to their monumental exterior aspect but to the kind of life in their interiors, in these apartment houses or in the lobbies of the smart American hotels, to their decorations and furnishings, to the clothes of the people who frequented them, to much of their talk, and to the American cocktail music, the brief melodies of which were sustained by the intricate, melancholy, and sophisticated harmonic structures of Gershwin or Kern or Porter . . .

This sounds very much like a party to which I too would like to have been invited; but note the materialism of taste required to relish this scene; note also that the "sophistication" which intrigues the observer is a very vague and evanescent idea appealing to human vanity, that this idea has a market

value, and that this market value in turn sustains the party, and that the psychologists of "advertising" did not design the lobby or compose the music and did not need to invent the idea of "sophistication." The scene depicts enjoyment, which relaxes discipline, and makes Marxists, Puritans, and Distributists very indignant about the "cultural contradictions of capitalism." If we prefer to place ourselves inside it rather than inside East Berlin, Cromwell's England, or the Distributist State, then we will have to reconcile ourselves to those cultural contradictions with a more subtle moral analysis than Dr. Lukacs provides.

The moral system which supported and sustained this party, in his view, was an allegedly healthy and long-entrenched hypocrisy:

. . . we may look back with a fair amount of nostalgia to the hypocrisies of the previous century. Hypocrisy was, after all, the tribute that vice did pay to virtue. Hypocrisy, therefore, could flourish only in a world and at a time when people knew how to distinguish between virtue and vice . . .

The moral casuist is quite aware of this argument; however, when the bourgeois of the American Renaissance lost his grasp of moral and material realities through the very corruptions of pride and materialism, he did not exactly duplicate the depravity of a Borgia, and therein is the problem. If "the hypocrite wears a mask in public, while he pursues his inclinations in private," and the evils of "inflation" and "insubstantialization" led to a point where "the mask became the face"—that is, the "public personality" preempted the "private self"—then there must have been something more corrupting than corrupt in the bourgeois hypocrisy of Lukacs's utopian moment. It must be that the hypocrisy of the American bourgeois, of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (let us keep our *Babbitts* straight), was not of the knowing kind that Lukacs extols. Because it is not fully conscious, it led directly to the revision of virtue; it led to liberalism and "liberation." If Lukacs thinks so highly of the bourgeoisie, it is because he does not understand it.

Lukacs's 1970 work, *The Passing of the Modern Age*, contained a chapter with the punning title, "The Bourgeois Interior"; in it he called for a reappraisal of the term "bourgeois," whose meaning has been nearly destroyed by the ideological rhetoric of Marxian existentialists. "Bourgeois," Lukacs said, denotes a subset of the category Middle Class, and represents the achievement of what the striving Middle Class is striving for. Lukacs

also reminded us that the bourgeois practiced the minor virtues of self-discipline upon which successful entrepreneurship depends, and that the bourgeois thus became the vital economic force of the modern world. So much is true, but I believe that Lukacs has erred in his strange conclusion that the bourgeoisie represents a social ideal, and in his strange assumption that the bourgeoisie is capable of independent existence. My own study of life and letters inclines me to believe that the bourgeoisie does not represent its own ideal, that it could not exist without a class higher than itself to imitate, and that the minor virtues, though indispensable, are alone not sufficient to conserve a civilization.

But does the bourgeoisie really exist? When Lukacs praises it, he is thinking of the haute bourgeoisie, a class capable of sustaining the illusion of "sophistication"—though perhaps there is no bourgeois so petty that he cannot find a bourgeois pettier than himself. The Middle Class exists in a state of continuous mutation, eternally reinventing itself and denying its origins, standing between the classes of inherited poverty and inherited privilege; in its "bourgeois" phase, it is imitating the aristocracy, asserting itself as a proto- (or anti-) aristocracy, though curiously unable to perpetuate itself. Wherever the managerial and professional classes emerged from, they seem to lead into Bohemia and the intellectual proletariat in the next generation. Perhaps the bourgeoisie has nothing to transmit to the next generation but a tradition of denying origins.

Daniel Bell has spoken of the bourgeois "compartmentalization of life," that is, the bourgeois habit of putting politics, religion, career, social life, and domestic life into separate mental categories, logic-tight compartments. Could it be that the bourgeois is only an imitator of surfaces and never penetrates the surface of life to

the essence—that he shifts from the religious mode to the social by simply adopting the gestures and appearances appropriate to each without it ever occurring to him that there is or ought to be a connection between these spheres? In contrast, consider the aristocrat as Shirley Robin Letwin's *The Gentleman in Trollope* presents him, a "unified self" who possesses integrity because he is psychically integrated; through the unconscious assimilation of traditional ways of thinking, the gentleman is courageous, fair, and honorable without setting out specifically to be those things.

I realize that to mention the word "aristocracy" is an insult to the nation's founding myth, but I appeal for support to all those conservatives who claim to have read Edmund Burke—who seems to have said something about "the spirit of a gentleman." At the same time I note a conspiracy of neoconservatives to blame the New Left on the influence of Henry Adams. As for Dr. Lukacs, a genially snobbish European bourgeois liberal, he seems to take the pride of a leveler in leveling down to himself by showing that aristocracies have had to make many compromises in a changing world. But because the aristocracy defines itself by remembering its history, while the bourgeoisie avoids coming to grips with itself through historical amnesia, the aristocracy has made its compromises *consciously*, while the bourgeoisie has either unconsciously and semi-passively adapted to change, or, realizing that it has a vested interest in change, has tried to anticipate it. In the end, the tenuous hold on reality for which Lukacs indicts "post-bourgeois" American society would then only be intrinsic to its Middle Class nature.

Actually the *European* bourgeoisie is the one that Lukacs finds charming; but remember that it had an aristocracy close at hand to imitate.



The vast width of the Atlantic Ocean did not prevent this aristocracy from serving as a pattern also for the American patrician class of the "Bourgeois Interlude" that Lukacs also finds charming: Consider that what Tom Wolfe calls our "colonial complex" was then at its height. America could not provide sufficient scope for the ambitions of its patricians; yet because the desire to assimilate succeeded the desire to imitate, Consuelo Vanderbilt was married off to the Duke of Marlborough, and Anna Gould was unhappily though briefly yoked to Count Boni de Castellane. In 1899, William Waldorf Astor, who had served in the State Senate of New York, renounced his American citizenship, saying, "America is good enough for any man who has to make a livelihood, though why travelled people of independent means should remain there more than a week is not readily to be comprehended." In 1917 he became the first Viscount Astor.

Nevertheless Lukacs does believe

that it is the hereditary right of certain Easterners with three names and a Roman numeral thereafter to conduct our foreign policy. He resents the rise of ambitious wogs in this field, complaining in particular of the dependence of Republican Presidents upon "the global advice of the globular Kissinger"—an insult as entertaining and instructive as d'Annunzio's to Wilson: the old man whose mouth is full of false promises and false teeth.

Outgrowing Democracy abounds with much of the same rhetorical triviality, adding up to a profound lack of seriousness in the author. He revels in his disdain of the "Hollywood actor" President: But does he attribute to Reagan a corrupt or simply frivolous character because the man was once an actor, or is the politician's cinematic past only a symbol of something? Moreover, Lukacs uses large words for small matters, characterizing the shortening of the modern American's attention span as a decrease in "private integrity," and calling the "cult of publicity" a source of "intellectual corruption." I would

reserve the phrase "intellectual corruption" for the activity of the Soviet Union's Western apologists, and no doubt the wishful thinking of Kennanism is somewhat touched by this corruption.

One must complain as well of the pretense of historical fact ("A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century") and also of the pretense of common sense uncomplicated by philosophy. Lukacs shamelessly uses the antiquated charge of "ideologizing" against the conservatives, insisting that politics can proceed without principles, claiming that Johnson and Burke maintained "the commonsense argument against abstract reasoning." But that is not the whole truth. Contrary to a great deal of bad scholarship, it is quite possible, in retrospect, to articulate for those two thinkers the metaphysical principles to which they faithfully adhered, principles that describe a realm of concrete spiritual reality though it can be described only in abstract terms. Lukacs presumes, as a historian, that his possession of hard historical fact renders philosophy irrelevant.

As the theorist of "historical consciousness," Lukacs employs a peculiar historiographic technique which involves contrasting what people thought was happening in a given time and place with what we now know was actually happening. Yet there may be a peculiar temptation to the historian's vanity implicit in this technique—the temptation to confuse the superiority of historical hindsight with moral superiority.

"That vanity is much more complicated than greed is something that Dr. Johnson knew and expressed very well, while Adam Smith did not," Lukacs tells us. Yes, Johnson did insist that vanity is a pervasive force in human behavior; and in trying to account for the historian's lapses we might in milder fashion apply the Great Moralists' words for some great offenders against decency: "Truth will not afford sufficient food for their vanity, so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull." □

Richard Grenier

JESSE JACKSON: THE GREAT MAN'S PRACTICE

Don't let him look you in the eye.

I was first really thrilled by Jesse Jackson when he kissed Yassir Arafat. Not that I am a member of Transvestite Pride or Transsexual Power or any of the other groups that you might logically expect to find rejoicing at men embracing other men at great occasions of state, but there was something about the symbolism of it all, race meets race, faith meets faith, the centuries-old hatred between Christendom and Islam over at last, lips across the sea. From a seat in the can, to the brotherhood of man. From the segregated lunch, to a knockout punch. And what was so wonderful

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was that Jesse could go on for hours and hours like this, in a manner appropriate to what *Newsweek* has called "the most gifted orator in American politics." From the KKK, to the Golden Way. From a horn of tin, to the remission of sin. From Peter the Hermit, to a frog named Kermit. Jesse never fails to leave you riveted.

Of course, at the time of his first meeting with Arafat, Rev. Jackson made remarks indicating he thought the Jordan River was the boundary between Israel and Lebanon, which makes you wonder just what Jackson was achieving out there kissing Arafat, other than perhaps creating the atmosphere for the Arab League's contribution of \$100,000 to the PUSH Foundation in Chicago (making up 80 percent of its resources), and another \$100,000 to PUSH Excel (with the

origin of another \$350,000 of Excel's funding still unaccounted for), both of which are admittedly dwarfed by the \$4.5 million PUSH has received from the federal government (\$2 million of which is unaccounted for). But even if the Rev. Jackson thinks the Jordan River is somewhere in Bulgaria, and has received a Caliph's ransom from the Arab League, what is truly remarkable about him—for I can no longer conceal from the reader a highly interesting fact which I have discovered after only the most painstaking research—is that Rev. Jackson is black.

Now, as it happens, I think black people are every bit as good as people of any other color. But from what I read in the prestige press there's still lots and lots of anti-black racism out there in America, and so what thrills

me to the bone, if not quite to the marrow of the bone, is when Jackson cries out, *You should put hope in your brains instead of dope in your veins!* Because whereas if I were to apply the conventional principles of English prosody I would have to call this illiterate doggerel, which is what it is, the fact that it has been recited again and again by Jesse Jackson allows me to declare it magnificent oratory, thereby proving to the whole world that I am not a racist.

Not that Jesse Jackson cannot work up audiences, especially black audiences, into a kind of collective hysteria, chanting and swaying, and crying out. The question is whether this is what is normally called oratory ("Give me liberty or give me death." "Thou shalt not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." "We will pay any