

risson's successor, Tyler, lost his temper and told him, "Go you now, then, Mr. Clay, retire to your end of the avenue, where stands the Capitol, and there perform your duty as you shall think proper. So help me God, I shall do mine at this end of it as I shall think proper."

These snubs and exclusions deepened the shadows as Clay grew older. He had much else to endure. His family life was a series of hammer blows. Of his eleven children, two daughters died in infancy, a third aged 12, a fourth at 14, a fifth at 20; his remaining daughter Anne—his favorite child—was killed by a post-natal infection, leaving the Clays with seven small children to bring up. His eldest son spent most of his life in an insane asylum, his second became an alcoholic, his third—the most promising—was bayoneted to death in the Mexican War, and the youngest joined the eldest in confinement. Clay suffered these Job-like sorrows with agonized fortitude: one cannot but think that his intense political involvement, maintained until old age, was in some way an escape from his stricken home.

Opinionated, partisan, and impetuous throughout his life, Clay was nonetheless pragmatic when it came to getting things done, presiding over both House and Senate, when the national interest demanded, in an ecumenical spirit: his three principal achievements were all irenic. In 1819-20, he was the architect of the two-part deal known to history as the Missouri Compromise, which settled, or at any rate dampened, the slavery issue for a generation. In 1833—despite his strong personal views—he devised the compromise tariff that almost certainly prevented the development of American political parties on sectional lines. And finally, brushing aside all his disappointments and setbacks, and employing all the matchless resources of his persuasive oratory, he pushed through the Compromise of 1850, which again defused the conflict between North and South. Senator Foote, who took part in this historic debate, perhaps the most remarkable ever staged in the Capitol, later argued that, if Clay had sat in the 1860-61 Congress, there would have been no Civil War. I doubt it. But it is clear that, with a gigantic piece of democratic machinery like the U.S. federal system operating according to a written but often ambiguous Constitution, the kind of lubricating skills Clay possessed in such plenitude are well-nigh indispensable. They have never been more requisite now, and that gives the story of his career, so well told by Professor Remini, relevance and importance. □

OUT OF THE BARRIO: TOWARD A NEW POLITICS OF HISPANIC ASSIMILATION

Linda Chavez

Basic Books/208 pages/\$23

reviewed by WILLIAM MCGURN

One Saturday morning a few years ago, Newt Gingrich and GOPAC launched a live TV link-up with community leaders across the country, in hopes of bringing the Reagan Revolution to the local level. I attended the link-up session sponsored by the Organization of Chinese Americans at the Holiday Inn in Silver Spring, Maryland. Immediately after the TV segment, a public liaison officer from Mayor Barry's office rose and proceeded to thump for the same old Great Society solutions that had just been repudiated on screen. (The Republican party didn't even bother to send a representative to the meeting, but that's another story.)

To my astonishment, a number of Chinese Americans in the audience—educated, obviously affluent, more or less conservative—agreed. Lamenting their lack of power and influence, they compared themselves unfavorably to American blacks. "Who listens to us?" asked one well-dressed man in a dark business suit. "Nobody. We have to be more like them [blacks]."

The attitude puzzled me. Surely Asians would find the social and economic price paid by blacks for their political clout too steep. Yet the question demonstrates that despite its many ethnic minorities America has only one language of civil rights, and it is a language of failure. In *Out of the Barrio*, Linda Chavez, executive director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights under Ronald Reagan, illustrates the devastating effects the black model is having on Hispanics trying to become part of mainstream society. "Previous immigrants had been eager to become 'American,' to learn the language, to fit in," writes Chavez. "But the entitlements of the civil rights era encouraged Hispanics to maintain their language and culture, their separate identity, in return for the rewards of being members of an officially recognized minority group."

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Out of the Barrio, then, is really two books in one. The first is about the American dream (the operative word in the book's subtitle is *assimilation*). The second relates the Hispanic experience to U.S. immigration policy, implying that the rejection of an American identity by Hispanic groups such as the Mexican American Legal and Defense Education Fund and the National Council of La Raza only increases public enthusiasm for more guard dogs and barbed wire along our southern border. "To succeed at the affirmative action game," says Chavez, "Hispanics had to establish their failure in other areas."

Chavez ranges far and wide in this short book, but it's held together by the assumption that assimilation is the *sine qua non* of any multi-ethnic democracy. In the past, she notes, this proposition was accepted by immigrants and native-born alike, to the enrichment of both. Even the fact of past discrimination merely confirms Chavez's larger point: that Hispanics have not had it any tougher than other immigrants. And the discrimination felt by Hispanics was never comparable to that experienced by American blacks. While the U.S. did not get its first elected black governor until Doug Wilder, there have been six Hispanic governors since the turn of the century. Moreover, at the time the Voting Rights Act was passed, two Mexican-Americans from Texas (where hostility toward them was highest) held seats in Congress, a situation unthinkable for blacks in the Deep South.

Her position established, Chavez directs her first shot at bilingual education. Originally a temporary program to bring youngsters up to speed while they learned English, bilingual education has become a government-subsidized mandate for Hispanic separatism, and has provoked an understandable backlash. Other minorities have felt its sting, particularly during hard times, but the emphasis on Spanish arouses

special resentment because it bespeaks a desire for separatism and an unwillingness to abide by the old rules. As Chavez points out, "Nothing so stirs animosity toward Hispanics as the belief that they do not wish to learn English." (Except perhaps the idea that taxpayer dollars should go to reinforcing this disinclination.)

Even those of us who, like Chavez, view immigration as critical to America's continued prosperity wonder about the wisdom of letting in people who become eligible for all manner of costly entitlements while being absolved of any responsibility. Not all of those who are part of the anti-immigration backlash, she notes, are cranks:

Many are simply frustrated at what they see as an erosion in the consensus that the United States has a common language and culture worth preserving. They see Hispanic youngsters taught in their native language, ballots printed in Spanish, and licensing exams for everything from becoming a barber to driving a car administered in Spanish. They see election districts gerrymandered to give Hispanics extra political clout, illegal aliens used to apportion legislative seats, and even demands by some Hispanic leaders that noncitizens be allowed to vote in U.S. elections. They see Hispanics given preference in hiring, promotions, and admissions to universities. At some point non-Hispanics were bound to try to do something about it. The outrage has been manifest in laws to make English the official language and in attempts to restrict Hispanic immigration. Neither of these efforts, however, has addressed head-on the issue of Hispanic entitlements. Moreover, both have polarized the Hispanic community, driving many moderate Hispanics into a more radical, separatist camp.

In fact, closer examination would show it is not maintaining Spanish per se that arouses hostility (last time I checked there were no movements against Greek-language religious services, Yeshivas, or even Chinatowns). It's the elevation of a foreign tongue to parity with English through government chicanery and at the expense of the hapless taxpayer.

Like so much other mischief, bilingual education began in the 1970s with an innocuous-sounding directive from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare ordering school districts with more than a 5 percent minority population to take "affirmative steps" to help children who didn't speak English. One Supreme Court decision (involving, oddly enough, a

Chinese named Kenny Lau) and several administrative interpretations later, the deed was done. Schools either had to "initiate bilingual programs, whose effectiveness did not have to be demonstrated, or accept the burden of proving the superior effectiveness of alternative programs." Note the underhanded procedure: bilingual education was never explicitly ordered; it was eased in the back door by regulations that made alternatives too difficult, expensive, or vulnerable to lawsuit, just the sort of legerdemain that lends credence to conservative suspicions about the recently signed civil rights bill.

Likewise significant is that the champions of bilingual education have never had to demonstrate the efficacy of their own agenda, because such a requirement would soon put them out of business. A number of studies over the past fifteen years have shown federally funded bilingual education to be a complete flop both in boosting proficiency in English (hard to do when students are speaking Spanish all day) and in improving performance in other subjects. Nor have advocates had to demonstrate support from the people they ostensibly represent. Good thing, too, for there's no evidence bilingual education is popular with Hispanics; an Education Department survey found that a whopping majority (78 percent of Mexican-Americans, 82 percent of Cuban-Americans) opposed teaching in Spanish if it meant less time for English.

Of course, the gulf between the Hispanic community and its leadership makes perfect sense when you recognize their opposing interests. Parents want their children to get ahead, to do better than they did, which in America means a better education, increased career options, a mortgage—Main Street, USA. Hispanic leaders, most of them funded by the large foundations (Ford in particular), are largely unaccountable to the Hispanic community. They are more properly considered "ethnic power brokers" whose main base lies *outside* the community.

Consequently, instead of celebrating the patriotism and success of Hispanics who have already made it in the U.S., Hispanic leaders might as well be writing Pat Buchanan's speeches. They manipulate the growing percentage of Hispanic immigrants to downplay the material progress of the community as a whole, then use this disparity to barter for ever more privileges, set-asides, and quotas. The upshot, says Chavez, is that if the average Joe knows anything about Hispanics, it's that they have been left behind by the rest of American society:

The Hispanic poor, who constitute only about one-fourth of the Hispanic population, are visible to all. These are the Hispanics most likely to be studied, analyzed, and reported on and certainly the ones most likely to be read about. A recent computer search of stories about Hispanics in major newspapers and magazines over a 12-month period turned up more than eighteen hundred stories in which the word *Hispanic* or *Latino* occurred within a hundred words of the word poverty. In most people's minds, the expression poor Hispanic is almost redundant.

Confirming the stereotype, the president of La Raza thunders that U.S. racism has left Hispanics "the poorest of the poor, the most segregated minority in schools, the lowest-paid group in America and the least educated minority in this nation."

The basis for all this hokum usually is some kind of apples-and-oranges comparison of median income that shows Hispanics still earning a fraction of what whites earn. Mexican-Americans, for instance, earn about 57 percent of the white average, a proportion that has held firm for roughly three decades now. From this we are supposed to infer that Mexican-Americans have not improved their lot over time. What they don't tell you is that they are not talking about the same people. In 1960, more than 85 percent of Mexican-Americans had been born in the U.S. Today, only half of Hispanic adults are U.S.-born. Given that immigrants by and large start out at the bottom of the ladder, the larger the immigrant base of any community the greater the drag on the average. Economic breakdowns rarely factor in time spent in the U.S. (the government, Chavez notes, does not distinguish between the incomes of native-born and immigrants); when these factors are taken into account, virtually all discrepancies disappear. "The most invisible Hispanics today are those who have been absorbed into the mainstream," the author writes. "The success of middle-class Hispanics is an untold—and misunderstood—story, perhaps least appreciated by Hispanic advocates whose interest is in promoting the view that Latinos can't make it in this society."

The engine behind these distortions, of course, is affirmative action. Back when the civil and voting rights acts were first passed in the 1960s, the enemy was discrimination and the goal opportunity. But with affirmative action all that was thrown out the window: far from equal opportunity, the standards were shifted for certain people. In turn, whole new classes of

beneficiaries were created. Chavez pointedly informs us, for example, that the term *Hispanic* did not exist before affirmative action and does not exist outside America: how else would you lump an Argentine doctor, a Mexican housewife, and a Cakchiquel Indian into the same culture? And the leadership ignores the more compelling lessons to be learned from the distinctly different paths taken by, say, Cubans and Puerto Ricans, lessons that primarily confirm the primacy of marriage and family and warn against looking to government for solutions.

This is not to deny that there have been beneficiaries of affirmative action, only to

say that they have largely been confined to an elite funded by outside sources and politicians enjoying seats safe from challenge. Political scientist Peter Skerry, author of a forthcoming book on Hispanic politics, notes that the use of illegal aliens to inflate population figures used for redistricting is creating "rotten boroughs" where politicians are elected by very few voters. The upshot, as Chavez notes, is a class of leaders "more intent on vying with blacks for permanent victim status" than on helping Hispanics become the latest chapter of the American dream. The David Dukes are already reaping the harvest. □

MOSTLY MORGENTHAUS: A FAMILY HISTORY

Henry Morgenthau III

Ticknor & Fields/501 pages/\$27.50

reviewed by EDWARD NORDEN

Getting rich and founding a dynasty in America is no problem. The hard part is keeping the dynasty going. It's especially hard to preserve a great Jewish family, because in the U.S. the Jews chronically melt away.

Three generations, a century at most, after a Jew arrives on these shores, most of his descendants have been assimilated. Of the Sephardi Jews who upset Peter Stuyvesant by settling in New Amsterdam, there's hardly a living trace. The German Jews who came over between 1840 and 1870—"Our Crowd"—have kept their family names but not the ancestral faith. Today the vanishing is being done by the great-grandchildren of the huddled eastern European masses immortalized by Emma Lazarus, herself of Sephardi extraction. The fast track to assimilation, to disappearance, has always been intermarriage, and current figures tell us that American Jews are choosing to marry out more frequently than in and raising their kids mainly as Christians or as nothing. Exceptions like the author of this book furnish the nicest proof of the rule.

Henry Morgenthau the Third's great-grandfather Lazarus stepped off the boat with his wife and dozen offspring in 1866.

Edward Norden, a regular contributor, is writing a book on the future of the Jews.

This was late for someone who aimed to join Our Crowd, that interlocking in-group of families like the Seligmans and Lehmans, Loebes and Wertheims, Goldmans and Sachs, whose founders had crossed the ocean and made their first piles before the guns went off at Fort Sumter. A climber, a bit of a scoundrel with an indifferent business sense and a violent streak, Lazarus failed in his bid to conjure a New World fortune and win the seal of approval for his clan. However, one of his German-born sons, Henry Senior, burnished the Morgenthau name with a chain of real estate killings—he sold Times Square to Adolph Ochs—so that by the time his native-born children married, one could be paired with a Lehman, another with a Wertheim. The Morgenthaus therefore belong securely in the red-hot heart of the all-but-extinct American-Jewish-German nobility.

A scion of this family, the author is 74 years old and has made some exceptional choices. Not only is he married to a Jewish woman, but one who comes from Poland, a match as rare in the good old days of Our Crowd as a solar eclipse. His marriage to Ruth Schachter, he says truly and with pride, was "a drastic departure." Furthermore, he has seen to it that their children got the basic education in Judaism that he didn't. These choices followed on and

sharpened what he calls his "experience of Jewish rebirth," itself a reaction to the Holocaust, the rise of Israel, and the "malaise" his parents imbued him with at an early age in the face of all things Jewish. The book he has written is therefore pretty special. It isn't first-class history and doesn't unpack all the rooms and closets in the mansion with a convincing or brilliant thesis. Too much of it is in the where-I-was-when-I-heard-about-Pearl Harbor mode. But it does fairly honestly tell the Morgenthau family's story, a tale of glory and melancholy not without parallels in the general experience of American Jews.

The author may be aware that social and economic success in the New World has been the undoing of his fellow Jews. But he never comes to grips with this paradox, either in the large or within the compass of his story. "A social-archaeological dig," he calls it. And indeed, besides tapping his memories and those of his relatives, he has traveled to Bavaria to rummage in the Mannheim archives and rub moss off gravestones, interviewed people who worked for his father at the Treasury Department, had Eleanor Roosevelt's letters to his mother deciphered, read the FBI dossiers on Harry Dexter White, and sifted through his grandfather's papers in the Library of Congress and his father's 900-volume diary at the FDR Library. He acknowledges the help of his cousin, the late Barbara Tuchman, and one suspects that this gifted historian, along with his editors, saved the author from drowning in his material.

If he lacks a thesis, he does have an approach, and not a bad one—he is forgiving, even fond, yet not blind. He mentions things no authorized work could include, thanks to which his subjects, every so often, jump off the page. Lazarus was "manic": his brood hired Pinkerton's to shadow him and briefly had him committed. As for Henry Sr., though he gained the fortune that eluded Lazarus, was embraced by Our Crowd, and became ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, only his own son's fame eased the disappointment and bitterness of his old age. It is important to note—Henry III doesn't—that this fortune was a middling one. It wasn't in the Rockefeller or Kennedy or Guggenheim league; it was, and is, just enough to enable its creator and his seed to do something more useful than work for a living. That something, that "religion," was to be "service to democracy," writes the author. As soon as Henry Sr. got the money, he went into behind-the-scenes do-gooder politics. An early check-writer for presidential candidate Wilson, he de-