

Another respect in which Hitler's fantasies about the mass conformed to a common intellectual pattern was in his division of the mass into the bourgeoisie, which, like all intellectuals, he despised, and the workers . . . In the early days of the movement he made sure members came to meetings without collars or ties, believing that this "free and easy style" would win workers' confidence. . . . English leftist intellectuals of the Auden group in the 1930s likewise set about proletarianizing themselves. Auden wore a cloth cap, dropped his aitches and ate peas with a knife . . .

Call it the "like Hitler a lover of dogs . . ." method of guilt-by-association. Note that Carey finds no fault with Auden for the totalitarianism he *did* actively support: the Stalinism of the Great Terror. But Carey is less interested in the intellectual roots of totalitarianism than in making use of a witty interpretation of Hitler's legacy for a kind of cheap moral stunt. (As such, his book resembles other recent efforts of the British intelligentsia, like David Irving's cheeky claim that Hitler can't be definitively proved to have known about the Final Solution; or Andrew Motion's idle imputation of Nazi sympathies to Philip Larkin on the basis of a childhood trip to Kreuznach and an adult affection for Margaret Thatcher.)

Carey uses the final pages of the book to set up his cheapest shot. He first notes that Hitler admired Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, and classical Greece, deplored modern art, worshipped the artist as hero, etc. Then he begins the next paragraph:

It is hard to see what could be accounted trivial, half-baked or disgusting about these propositions from the standpoint of early twentieth-century intellectuals, or, for that matter, from the standpoint of a late twentieth-century intellectual such as George Steiner.

Or, he might have added, from the standpoint of Anne Frank or Raoul Wallenberg.

"It is true," Carey adds as an aside, "that Hitler goes on to suggest that the feat of producing the great achievements of Western art effectively establishes the supremacy of the Aryan race . . ." Oh yes, but except for that, and the bit about the ovens, he and Steiner see eye-to-eye! □

SICK SOCIETIES: CHALLENGING THE MYTH OF PRIMITIVE HARMONY

Robert Edgerton

The Free Press / 269 pages / \$24.95

THE DECOMPOSITION OF SOCIOLOGY

Irving Louis Horowitz

Oxford University Press / 243 pages / \$25

reviewed by FRED SIEGEL

Recently a friend, a businesswoman with a passing interest in social policy, asked me, "Whatever happened to anthropology?" Thinking that she was referring to the increasingly self-conscious and therapeutic character of cultural anthropology, I told her the joke about the New Age anthropologist doing field work. After an almost four-hour conversation with the chief of a remote tribe, the interviewer stopped to say, "Okay, enough about me—let's talk about you." But it turned out that she simply meant that with all the discussion of how American popular culture in general and ghetto culture in particular had turned rancid, those specialists on culture, the anthropologists, had nothing to say.

Robert Edgerton's *Sick Societies* addresses American culture only for a few pages, to discuss the pathologies of the West Virginia hollows. But his account of the Rousseauist assumptions enshrined in American anthropology provided part of the answer to my friend's question. Chief among these assumptions, as Edgerton explains, is that "because smaller and simpler societies . . . develop their cultures in response to the demands of their immediate and stable environments, their ways of life must have produced far greater harmony and happiness." It is the belief "that emotional and moral commitment, per-

sonal intimacy, social cohesion . . . were lost in the transition to urban life" that Edgerton challenges.

Most of *Sick Societies* is given over to summarizing cases of dysfunctional, primitive practices and societies maladapted to their environment. Take Tasmania, which, because of its geography, was totally isolated and free from external pressure or competition. Unable to make fire the Tasmanians gave up on fishing, and lived

generation after generation, abandoning previously useful practices without creating new ones. Given their relatively abundant food supply the various tribes might have been able to live relatively amicably. But instead in pursuit of women they lived in a Hobbesian world of raid and counter. Four thousand years of isolated primitivism led not to harmonious adaptation but . . . to a "slow strangulation of the mind."

American anthropology has its origins in Franz Boas's crusade against white supremacy and the racism of the eugenics movement, which argued that Darwinism explained the moral and mental attributes as well as the physical characteristics of different groups. But that attack on xenophobic intolerance, the benefits of which we are still reaping today, turned on itself. Boas, crusader for tolerance that he was, argued nonetheless that the sympathetic study of

Fred Siegel is professor of history at the Cooper Union and a columnist for the New York Post.

different cultures should not lead to the absence of overarching moral standards. There was for Boas, as for Montesquieu before him and Isaiah Berlin after him, an irreducible tension between the claims of a universal morality and a respect for local traditions. But as a part of what has been called the "de-Enlightenment" of anthropology, that tension was resolved in favor of a romantic localism.

Xenophilia replaced xenophobia, so that many anthropologists came to respect every culture but their own. Barbarous customs like female genital infibulation have been passionately defended by anthropologists on the grounds that they must be functional or else societies living close to nature wouldn't have adapted them in the first place. Anthropologists who are capable of sniffing out the slightest smell of repressive power in their own societies are able to defend cannibalism, ceremonial rape, and head-hunting as successful adaptations.

The non-anthropologist who reads Edgerton will be struck by the similarities between the argument evoked to place primitive societies beyond criticism and those that have been used to defend the dysfunctional and deadly expressions of ghetto culture like "gangsta" rap, as a reasonable response to the brutality of white society. The combination of cultural relativism ("Who are we to judge?") and functionalism ("They must know what they're doing") has had the effect of shutting off debate. What Edgerton wants "is a moratorium on the uncritical assumption that the traditional beliefs and practices of folk societies are adaptive while those of modern societies are not and a commitment to examining the relative adaptiveness of the beliefs and practices of all societies."

It's an approach with which Irving Louis Horowitz would very likely concur. Horowitz, a distinguished professor and the editor of *Transaction* publishers and *Society* magazine, is passionately and persuasively critical of the way sociology "has become so enmeshed in the politics of advocacy . . . that it is simply unaware of, much less able to respond to, new conditions."

An instructive case for Horowitz is one of the most embarrassing episodes in the annals of social science: In 1983 Derek Freeman published *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, which showed that not only had

Margaret Mead gotten her facts wrong about the sexual paradise she had found in Samoa, but that Samoans suffered from their share of social and personal pathologies, including a "cult of female virginity" carried further than its Western counterpart. What's more, one of Mead's central informants then came forward to explain that she and her friends had only been pulling Mead's leg.

The 1983 general meeting of the American Anthropological Association responded to Freeman's criticisms not by reconsidering Mead's evidence but by roundly condemning Freeman's book as blasphemy. Important though the question of sexual liberation was, it was part of a larger apostasy in which Freeman had undermined the primitive ideal anthropologists had so long used to bash their countrymen.

Here again, although Horowitz doesn't discuss Rousseau, the radical tendencies within sociology can be described as Rousseauian. Just as the French anthropologist Levi-Strauss turned to reading Rousseau to explain what he was seeing in the Brazilian jungle, Mead's account of sexual life in Samoa seems in retrospect not to have required a physical journey. Here is Mead on Samoa:

Sex has produced a scheme of personal relations in which there are no neurotic pictures, no frigidity . . . and in personal relations, caring is slight. Love and hate, jealousy and revenge . . . are all a matter of weeks.

Here is Rousseau on man in the state of nature:

Males and females united fortuitously according to encounters, opportunities and desires. . . . His appetite satisfied, the man has no longer any need of the woman, nor the woman of one particular man.

Mead, only 24 when she had been in Samoa, and herself troubled by questions of her own sexual identity, appeared to have been had, but so it turns out was most of her profession. (Freeman's findings had the same effect on anthropology that the collapse of the USSR had on sociology—next to none.)

Sociology in general, Horowitz argues, has largely become a "repository of discontent, a gathering of individuals who have special agendas" and find the ideal of

objectivity to be merely the burdensome baggage of a bourgeois past. The upshot he notes, is not just the highly publicized closing of the sociology departments at Washington University and the University of Rochester but "the departure [from sociology departments of] urbanologists, social planners, demographers, criminologists, penologists," all of whom have spun off their own independent fiefdoms. What's been lost, he argues, is the once-fruitful interaction between empirical researchers, now separated into their specialties, and sociological theory which, cut off from its empirical connections, has become an "escape from reality."

Horowitz takes up the contemporary correlates of a cultural relativism unhinged from its Enlightenment origins in describing what happened to criminology. While anthropologists following Levi-Strauss were denying any meaningful distinction between "savagery" and "civilization," criminologists, says Horowitz, sought to reduce the "distinction between normal and criminal behavior . . . to the whimsical nature of law in society." Criminals were viewed as little different from other citizens engaged in expressions of grievances or searching for wealth through self-help. "Relativism," Horowitz concludes, often ends "in sheer intellectual nihilism."

The "society made me do it" school of sociology has done little to improve on Rousseau's answer when asked if it was true that he had sent all his children to orphanages. "Yes" he answered and went on: "Nature wishes us to have children because the earth produces enough to feed everyone; it is the style of life of the rich; it is your style of life which robs my children of bread."

"Rousseau," wrote Judith Shklar, was both "the voice of protest against every social rule and the voice of therapeutic moral authority." It is from Rousseau and his heirs that the radical left derives what might be described as its anarcho-Stalinist tendencies—that is, its ability to define even the most minimal demand for order in bourgeois societies as repressive while embracing Castro-like carriers of the general will.

In a letter to Mirabeau, Rousseau wrote, "I do not see an endurable middle way between the most austere democracy (of the general will) and the most complete Hobbesianism." But it is precisely

that excluded middle that Horowitz is looking for. His solution to the "decomposition of sociology" is, in the tradition of John Dewey and Sidney Hook, to re-engage the discipline whereby the individual researcher's passions are contained by continually testing propositions against the best available evidence.

"Liberalism," wrote Dewey "as a method of intelligence. . . . signifies the adoption of the scientific habit of mind in application to social affairs." This was to be the *via media* between research demands imposed by the scientific method and the unavoidable moral concerns the researcher brought to his task. This was a tension—like the anthropologists' con-

flict between universalism and particularism—that radicals resolved in favor of moral relativism.

What now for anthropology and sociology? The future depends on whether the campus Bourbons will be willing to acknowledge that, as New York polymath Jim Chapin puts it, "the Rousseauian kingdom has failed in both its countercultural and totalitarian forms." Neither discipline is likely to revive until the diehards are willing to acknowledge—even if only tentatively, in the form of Isaiah Berlin's "'yes, but . . .' to the Enlightenment"—that the idea of progress may still have something to offer. □

THE DEVIL WE KNEW: AMERICANS AND THE COLD WAR

H.W. Brands

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reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

H. W. Brands is part of a new generation of revisionist historians of the Cold War. In the 1960s, the older generation—C. Wright Mills, William Appleman Williams, Gar Alperovitz, Marcus Raskin, et al.—thundered against American imperialism and gloried in the coming age of Third World revolution. They were notable for a shrill anti-Americanism, an enthusiasm for Marxian "experiments" of the Cuban variety, and a relentless search for grand, sweeping theories to explain all of postwar American policy.

While Brands, a professor at Texas A&M, agrees with a great deal of earlier revisionist dogma, he enjoys one distinct advantage: he has seen the future, and it has failed. Where Mills and others championed anti-imperialist struggle, at least in the Third World, Brands, having witnessed

the consequences of Communist governance in Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, is spared the obligation of defending the socialist faith. He does not insist that Communism might have succeeded if only the United States had not forced it to repressive extremes. And he wastes little time on shopworn notions that the Cold War was triggered by President Truman's "atomic diplomacy," or that prospects for détente were repeatedly scuttled by a rogue CIA.

Ultimately, however, the similarities between the old revisionism and the new are more striking than the differences. Like earlier revisionists, Brands condemns Cold War liberals and neoconservatives, and not Joseph McCarthy, as principally responsible for leading America towards a ruinous anti-Sovietism. His enemies' list features Senator Henry Jackson, Truman's foreign policy team, and—especially—those who gave the Cold War intellectual respectability, from Reinhold Niebuhr to Norman Podhoretz. Brands admires Senator Robert Taft, for his anti-interventionism; along

with Eisenhower, for his warnings against the military-industrial complex. He approves of Henry Wallace's understanding attitude towards the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe, and of the Jimmy Carter who spoke of America having overcome its "inordinate fear of Communism."

Brands writes of anti-Communism with a mocking superciliousness, poking fun at the benighted hard-liners who actually believed in such concepts as the Free World and democratic capitalism. As Brands reminds us, again and again, many silly things were said during the Cold War by American politicians, military men, and members of the political fringes. Brands is a scholar in a free society, and therefore has access to just about every policy document and public utterance issued during the past four decades. But were there Soviet generals who talked about bombing America back to the Stone Age? Did the Soviets seriously consider an invasion of Europe? We may never know; and Brands doesn't care enough to speculate. This book is about America's Cold War experience, and the author is not restricted by an equal time rule. On the other hand, he should be expected to deal honestly with the Communist system and its policies, insofar as they influenced America's own, and on this score, Brands fails miserably.

B brands consistently misinterprets or slants Communist history to serve the idea that American hawkishness reinforced Kremlin hard-line attitudes. He incorrectly asserts that American foreign broadcasts were a significant factor in the Hungarian Revolution. He ignores convincing evidence that Fidel Castro was pro-Communist well before he took power, and was thus *not* pushed into Moscow's arms by hostility from Washington. He also misreads perestroika; Gorbachev's initiatives proved not that Communism could be reformed, but precisely the opposite.

More fundamentally, Brands is so relaxed towards the nature of Communism that he views anything but easygoing coexistence as folly. He thus derides Reinhold Niebuhr as an ideological accomplice of McCarthyism for having described Communism as more dangerous than Hitlerism. Niebuhr believed that, where the Nazis relied on raw power, Communists used lies and deceptions to pose as "the liberators of every class or nation which they intend to enslave." He also felt that Communists were "consistently totalitarian in every

Arch Puddington worked until recently for Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty. He writes frequently on the history of the Cold War.