

institutions they revere, and give their coevals sound reasons for sharing their enthusiasms. Those who remain silent, or rely on a *deus ex machina* like the free market or socialist morality are cowards, "men without chests," as C. S. Lewis called them. This is a critical insight, perhaps an obvious one, that free men should never forget, whether they be liberal or conservative. Arguments like these make Walzer important reading, even for those who disagree with him.

Tony Snow

Culture and Ethnicity

THE ETHNIC MYTH. By *Stephen Steinberg*. (Atheneum, New York, 1981)

This tendentious book epitomizes much that is wrong with the literature on race and ethnicity — and "social science" in general. It is a textbook example of faulty reasoning — indeed, how to *avoid* reasoning at all, by the use of rhetorical devices in place of either logic or evidence. *The Ethnic Myth* contains many facts, but the way the author uses them illustrates the crucial distinction between information and evidence.

Stephen Steinberg argues — "persuasively," the book jacket claims — "against the popular notion that the success or failure of any immigrant group is primarily a result of its cultural values. . . ." In the course of doing so, words like "exploitation" and "crisis" are applied freely to all sorts of things like ketchup. Somehow Mr. Steinberg seems to have determined how much people's work was *really* worth — a feat that has eluded economists for centuries — and so can with casual ease describe what they were paid as "exploitation."

The economic success of many ethnic groups who were discriminated against presents a formidable barrier to the book's thesis that success depends upon class, discrimination, and something called "opportunity structures." In the United States a "fortuitous wedding of historical circumstances" produced Jewish success, according to *The Ethnic Myth*. How Jews have been similarly lucky in many other countries for more than a thousand years is left unexplained. The parallel success of the "overseas Chinese" in southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and the United States is another set of remarkable coincidences left unexplained.

If the cultural values of groups are admitted as major factors, then in Mr. Steinberg's words, "the focus of blame is shifted away from the societal sources of inequality and placed on the ethnic groups themselves." Not only is Mr. Steinberg opposed to such "invidious comparisons"; his book rings with moral condemnation of America's "ignominious" past, its "festering problems related to the rapid expansion of capitalism" and opposing theories that are "nothing more than an intellectual smoke screen for our society's unwillingness or inability to

wipe out unemployment and poverty." Yet Mr. Steinberg condemns *other* writers for having "an essentially moral interpretation of history"!

The prosperity of black West Indians in the United States is perhaps the toughest example to deal with for those who explain intergroup differences by racism and discrimination. Mr. Steinberg is unfazed by the substantial income difference between native blacks and West Indian blacks: "Sowell reports that once region and education are held constant, there is little difference in the incomes of the two groups." But what Sowell actually reported in the article cited was that the two groups had *identical* numbers of years of schooling in New York City — and still the West Indians had 28 percent higher incomes there (as well as 44 percent higher nationally). Moreover, on the very same page it was reported that second-generation West Indians have higher incomes than Anglo-Saxons! It is hard to square that with racism or discrimination as the all-purpose explanation of income difference.

Other factors are handled with the same blithe attitude toward accuracy. In refuting the cultural explanation for the difference between the representation of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrant women as maids, Mr. Steinberg triumphantly points out that 20 percent of the women in nineteenth century Milan worked as maids, so that the scarcity of Italian American women in this occupation cannot be cultural. But the literature on Italian Americans abounds with references to the fact that (1) most originated in *southern* Italy, and that (2) the north-south cultural differences (and antagonisms) in Italy are large and historic. Milan is in the far north.

Facts are dispensed with entirely in large parts of the book, where selected quotations are used to establish empirical propositions, such as nineteenth century America's "desperate need" for "cheap unskilled labor." Why it is better to have people who produce, say, half the output at half the pay is by no means obvious. Indeed, prosperous nations with many wealthy capitalists tend to have *smaller* proportions of their labor force consisting of "cheap unskilled labor" who are supposedly the source of exploitative profits.

The notion of a "desperate need" for unskilled immigrants just before massive immigration began is part of a larger pattern of coincidence and predestination running through the book. Various groups arrived on the "threshold" of this or that historical development — thereby explaining their rise in American society. Jews, for example, arrived in the United States just when the garment industry was starting to grow. This incredible reversal of causation ignores the very possibility that it was the Jews who created much of the American garment industry and caused it to grow. Using Mr. Steinberg's approach, one could say that Hank Aaron often came to bat just when a home run was about to be hit. Lucky Hank!

True to contemporary fashion, Mr. Steinberg sees crime as "a symptom of class inequality," distinguishes "violence that affirms and violence that negates," dismisses quality standards as "a disguise for privileges" and asserts that "there is no such thing as 'reverse racism.'"

Throughout *The Ethnic Myth*, he rhetorically collectivizes vast num-

bers of independent decision-makers as “society” or “capitalism” — losing in the process all understanding of social phenomena that are due precisely to their competition. For example, he mentions the white employer cartels established in the post-Civil War South to hold down the wages of newly freed blacks. What he completely fails to mention — or perhaps to understand — is that these cartels quickly broke up under the stress of competition in the labor market. Southern newspapers and periodicals of that era were full of mutual recriminations among white employers and landlords for not sticking by their agreements to hold down the pay of blacks — which rose at a higher percentage rate than the pay of whites in the generation after the Civil War. A rhetorical collectivization of decision-makers does not mean that they in fact act in concert.

Despite its intellectual shoddiness, this book contains enough research and insights to suggest that the author was capable of better things, if he were not so determined to support a particular ideological position, at all costs. The greater tragedy is that people like this increasingly fill our colleges and universities, both as students and professors.

Thomas Sowell

Age of the Jackal

THE TERROR NETWORK: THE SECRET WAR OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. *By Claire Sterling.* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Reader's Digest Press, 1981)

The Terror Network is not the first book to document the deep and long-standing involvement of the Soviet Union, its satellites and surrogates and their clandestine services, in international terrorism, but it is probably the most extensive and the most carefully documented. In the past decade Brian Crozier, Ray Cline, Robert Moss, John Barron, Miles Copeland, and Stefan Possony as well as other prominent and respected scholars, journalists, and investigators have discussed the Soviet role in terrorism — in the so-called “national liberation movements” of the Third World as well as in the urban terrorist groups of Europe and North and South America. Recently, this reviewer published a monograph that summarized the documentation of Soviet complicity and sought to analyze its strategic goals and ideological foundations.

The argument for Soviet involvement is therefore not new, but until recently it was largely confined to journals of conservative or explicitly anti-Communist persuasion. In early 1981, however, the allegations of Secretary of State Haig and subsequent hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism — in which Claire Sterling as well as William Colby and Michael Ledeen confirmed the