

HETERO DOXY

ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



PC MADNESS IN HOLLYWOOD

Nothing more clearly illustrates the complete surrender of the current Hollywood establishment to political correctness than the December 15, 1999, announcement by the Directors Guild of America that, by a unanimous vote of their national board, they were dropping their prestigious D. W. Griffith Award. Established in 1953 as a means of posthumously honoring the great pioneer director who revolutionized film art, the award was the guild's highest recognition of a director's body of work and had been given to such illustrious names as Cecil B. DeMille, John Ford, King Vidor, Frank Capra, William Wyler, Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean, John Huston, Orson Welles, Ingmar Bergman, Akira Kurosawa, Woody Allen, Stanley Kubrick, and Francis Ford Coppola. But now, citing Griffith's fostering of "intolerable racial stereotypes," DGA's current president, Jack Shea, said that on the eve of a new millennium the guild (representing all the professional movie and TV directors in the United States of America) needed a better symbol for the new age. Shea's words prompted an immediate outcry from film



historians like Kevin Brownlow, who said he was "dismayed" by the DGA's decision, while the National Society of Film Critics, the leading association of U.S. film critics, deplored the move as "a depressing example of 'political correctness' as an erasure and rewriting of American film history, causing a grave disservice to the reputation of a pioneering American filmmaker."

In so publicly rejecting the founding father of cinema as an art form, the DGA has not only rejected an American legend, but cast aspersions on its own traditions as well. Not only has Griffith long been recognized throughout the world for the centrality of his contributions to filmmaking by most film historians and filmmakers irrespective of their politics, but the DGA itself paid homage to his historic role when they bestowed upon him their first lifetime membership in 1938. While Griffith's great Civil War-Reconstruction film, *The Birth of a Nation*, has caused controversy since its first showing in 1915, major American filmmakers, like Charlie Chaplin and Orson Welles, apparently never saw any conflict between their support of liberal causes and their unswerving admiration for Griffith.

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Guilty**

**Leonard Peltier:
Guilty**

**Hurricane
Carter: Guilty**

LINO GRAGLIA'S ONGOING ALAMO AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS LONE STAR

by Marc Levin

In 1997, University of Texas law professor Lino Graglia touched off a national firestorm by saying, in response to a reporter's question as to whether the achievement gap between whites and minorities was genetic or cultural, that some minorities come from cultures in which "failure is not looked upon with disgrace." It was the opposite of *Bell Curve* thinking, but that didn't matter. This sound-bite made Graglia the left's most hated professor virtually overnight. After sit-ins disrupted the law school, Jesse Jackson arrived on campus to rally thousands of students in favor of firing Graglia. Before the uproar was over, the law school building containing Graglia's office had to be secured by police following numerous death threats. He is still on the enemies list, but emotion has cooled somewhat. In

fact, after the recent publication of *Domestic Tranquility*, his wife Carolyn's attack on feminism, he may no longer even be the most hated member of his family.

Although Lino Graglia's critics on the left, from student activists to tenured radicals, continually insist that he is a racist and a bigot, his own life tells a different story. He grew up in Brooklyn, the son of Italian immigrants. After his father died when he was 13, Graglia worked his way through high school and college. "In high school, I was the pin boy at bowling alley leagues," he recalls. "I set up pins at two alleys at a time, making three or four times the minimum wage in violation of all those good child labor laws protecting me from these horrors."

Graglia attended Brooklyn Tech, a magnet school designed to produce engineers. He didn't go into the profession, but he was able to find work at huge defense plants as a machine operator. Graglia recalls,

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THE DUTY TO DIE

Well, now I'm depressed. For several years I have cheered on *Heterodoxy* as a periodical which occupied a unique and important niche in political reporting. As an example, I got quite a lift from Benjamin Kepple's article ("The Camel's Nose," November/December 1999) on the progress made by conservative campus newspapers. But then I had to go and read Wesley J. Smith's article, "Death on Demand,"(November/December 1999) explaining how he and like-minded people in Congress are trying to make sure that I will be out of luck if I suffer intractable pain in my last days. (When one gets to be my age, there is a tendency to dwell on such matters.) For the most part, I have found in the past that I can get through an issue of *Heterodoxy* without the need to wade into or bypass one more article on school prayer, abortion, evolution, or similar controversial matters. Have the editors really thought about where they are taking *Heterodoxy*? Are they ready to antagonize an important segment of their readership that is with them on the old issues like freedom of speech and unmasking the corruption and criminal activities of the far left? I don't think that we have yet won all the old battles that you have helped fight and might expect most reasonable people to support. Let's not march off to more dubious ones.

Harold Farr
North Conway, NH

I am simply flabbergasted that you printed a piece of trash like "Death on Demand." (November/December 1999) The goal of Mr. Smith's "International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force" runs utterly counter to the notions of personal freedom, which you espouse, and in favor of the kind of State paternalism that you detest. Mr. Smith's talk about a "death agenda" is a bunch of hooley. Mother Nature is the one with the death agenda and we are all on it. His suggestion that all pain can be controlled by medication is simply not true. Any oncology nurse can tell you about the many patients who die in agony despite the administration of all available medications. Mr. Smith's organization is a stalking horse for powerful institutions like the Catholic Church that believe in the nobility of suffering and wish to impose that view on everyone else. It is outrageous to suggest that I should have less right than a dog to have my suffering come to an end when my death is nearby and inevitable. I should have a more dignified choice than putting a gun to my head and splattering my brains all over the wall, which, incidentally, is entirely legal. Finally, it should be noted that if the Orwellian "Pain Relief Promotion Act" becomes law it would have exactly the opposite effect than its name suggests. It would further terrorize physicians who are already intimidated by DEA pressure to avoid prescribing desperately needed painkilling drugs.

Herb Berkowitz
Anchorage, AK

LEHIGH AND DRY

From a student who attended the institution from 1995-1998, I can say that the Ken Kersch ("Lehigh and Dry," October 1999) hit the nail on the head. The new rules have indeed caused the students to lock their doors and drink heavily and quietly. Also, the reports on the grain alcohol and illegal drug usage are right on. Now, I haven't seen this new crackdown, but the wheels were spinning while I attended this "fine" institution. The hypocrisy of these people and their Big Brother tactics are appalling in this time of supposed "enlightenment." It's hard to believe, but thirty years after the coun-

terculture protested for open-mindedness, many of the people that were once protesters are the very people who are trying to play God and keep us from the perils of abuse. Wait a second, God doesn't even do that.
Alan Umholtz
Via Internet

"Hear! Hear!" to Ken Kersch and his wonderful expose of the totalitarian mindset behind the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation and its efforts to sculpt college students to their idea of how "responsible citizens" should act. These same efforts are currently underway here at the University of Delaware thanks to a \$100,000 grant from RWJ, although the administration here appears to be less strident in their approach. The new rules aren't quite as Draconian, but the mindset and intentions are exactly the same and appear to be having the same consequences. We had a student last year who made a vow to drink 1,000 beers in one semester (he was an honors student, by the way) as a means of protest and actually got

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WRITE TO US

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people to contribute to his cause by donating beer, etc. I thought that this was incredibly funny and right to the point, but the most frightening part was that all of my coworkers in the library couldn't see the humor. They thought it was "just terrible" that a student would do such a thing in the face of this "serious problem." I have to wonder if any of these folks were ever young or did they just sprout right into fuddy-duddyness from birth? We are occasionally given a "prograss report" from the administration that is usually heavy on unspecific rhetoric and light on any actual results. Never have any facts or figures been presented that could show any sign of "improvement" on campus, just the usual bromides of "how things are getting better," yada yada yada. The school even tried to get the local bars to stop happy hours but that went over like a ton of bricks; the bar owners aren't stupid and it just caused the tensions between the university and the local merchants, strained already, to worsen. Delaware has always known as a party school, which I'm sure is one reason we got the grant in the first place, so I would doubt that there has been a significant increase in drug and/or hard alcohol use; there was plenty already. But my guess is that that would change if the university tried to impose the same heavy-handed restrictions that Lehigh has. I have always believed that everyone should have to work at least two years in the private sector so that they can understand how a capitalist system works. After 11 years at this university I have come to the conclusion that everyone should also

be forced to work on a college campus for two years so that they can be exposed to the nonsense that passes for "progressive thinking" these days. Unfortunately, most people have no idea how many totalitarian ideas are passed along to our children through these institutions of "higher learning."
Tom Melvin
Via Internet

THE DECLINE IN EDUCATION

As an affirmative action officer, I received a negative recommendation about the review by Joseph Horn of Sandra Stotsky's book ("Losing Our Language," October 1999) from someone who assumed I would disagree with her conclusions or his support of them because they seem to argue for less attention to subtle factors in pedagogical problems that sometimes coincide with attention to cultural difference. The recommender was in a way correct: I have always contended that equal opportunity is partially responsible for the decline of the educational system. However, I believe this is so not because equality in itself is evil, but because the educational system used to benefit from discrimination against women, talented women who had no choice but to become teachers. In the early '70s, women started bailing from the teacher credential path that was their only choice in academia. The result, because teaching is a thankless, largely unappreciated, and extremely difficult job, is that only the very few who are brilliant and dedicated to education and the very many who are unable to succeed at other academic programs in college are teaching our children. I cannot tell you how many times my son brought an unintelligible note home from an administrator. Once my son was the only voice in his 7th grade science class (in a public school) arguing for evolution. The answer is not to dumb down the curriculum, although that obviously will please teachers who don't understand the material. It is to make teaching more attractive, either by a raise in pay or status, and to arrange for the kind of institutional and personal support that would allow an adult with choices to choose teaching and remain in the classroom for longer than the three years that I believe is the national average—in-service education, meaningful administrative and peer assistance with discipline and academic problems, respite, shared teaching loads. Instead, current teachers are faced with stagnant or reduced budgets because of the insane dependence on property taxes to fund our schools. Their resources are declining even as the need for them grows. I applaud your choice of reviewers and books, and hope that you will continue to support those who gather statistical evidence for the decline in education so that we can, as a society, take steps to correct it.

Melanie Griffin
Via Internet

A MISOGYNISTIC ADMINISTRATION

Bravo, Ms. Emery ("The Party of Porn," October 1999) for the exposé on the despicable trashing of the courageous women (and men) that dared stand up to this administration. I never would have believed that the mainstream media would ever be so complicit with such scum, but again and again they turn their heads as these people say and do the nastiest and cruelest things imaginable to their critics. What gall it takes for them to then point the fingers at conservatives and accuse us of mean-spiritedness. They invented the phrase.
Rhonda Roddy
Via Internet

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HETERO DOXY (ISSN: 1069-7268) is published by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. The Center is a California 501(c)(3) institution.
Editorial: (310)843.3699. Fax: (310)843-3692. Subscription: 12 issues, \$25. Send checks to the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, P.O. Box 67398, Los Angeles, California 90067. Visa and MasterCard accepted.

Inquiries: (800)752-6562 or visit our Web site at WWW.CSPC.ORG

Heterodoxy is distributed to newsstands and bookstores by Bernhard B. DeBoer, 113 East Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110.

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

MOTHER AFRICA: Al Sharpton has made himself into America’s premier racial demagogue, forcing Hillary and other aspiring members of the Race Industry to kiss his ring. He’s also a one-note Johnny, whose record is always stuck in a familiar groove. So when he holds a rally, it often has the feel of history repeating itself, though whether as tragedy or farce or both is always open to question. Never more so than last month, when Sharpton presented Winnie Mandela at his latest protest concerning the Amadou Diallo police-shooting case, this time over a judge’s decision to move the trial of the four accused police officers to Albany in hopes of finding an unbiased jury. In a move that confirms his reputation for having the moral authority of a brothel bouncer, Sharpton, after decrying police “brutality,” introduced Mandela as “the queen from Africa.” True, Mandela, who referred to the black residents of Harlem as “my children,” knows all about brutality, but her experience with this subject—as overseer of a group of thug bodyguards, one of whom kidnapped a boy she helped abduct—went unmentioned at this rally. Perhaps Mother Africa can instruct her New York allies in the art of the necklace—a form of violence she has endorsed—as a way of punishing police enemies.

THE GANG THAT COULDN’T DIG STRAIGHT: In an attempt to destroy what it considered to be genetically altered plant life, the eco-terrorist group known as the Washington Tree Improvement Association invaded a greenhouse at a Washington State University facility near Seattle and killed more than 180 plants. But instead of killing what they thought were genetically altered poplar and cottonwood trees, they ended up destroying un-modified raspberry plants and a few bags of topsoil. The damage has left scientists perplexed, with one telling the *Seattle Times*, “Obviously if someone cannot tell the difference between a raspberry plant and a poplar tree, they’re not doing very well environmentally.”

THE FIGHT CLUB: Jesse Jackson recently declared at an Illinois church that the expulsion of six black students in the city of Decatur was the biggest civil rights issue in America today, according to the *Associated Press*. The six were tossed out after they were involved in a particularly vicious gang melee at a football game that was so raucous that fans had to rush to get out of the way of the brawling hoodlums. But hours after Jackson had made his case yet again that the students were punished too harshly for their sins, one of them got in trouble with the law. At 1:45 in the morning on January 16—a bit late for a teenager—18-year-old Roosevelt Fuller was pulled over for driving without his headlights on. In a not very bright display ofchutzpah, he ran off—leaving his car and his passengers, the latter of whom ratted him out to the police officer. He was arrested later at his home. Then there was another arrest a few days later when he reportedly beat his 16-year-old girlfriend and hit two of her pregnant girlfriends when they came to her aid.

GOOD NOT TO GO: In World War II films, there is often a scene where the drill sergeant must break up a pair of feuding recruits who are so keyed up to fight the enemy that they go at each other instead. But it’s apparently not that way in today’s military. According to the *Washington Times*, modern drill instructors “appear just as busy keeping the sexes apart as

they do molding young people into obedient soldiers.” The *Times* studies reams of what are known as “Article 15 documents” detailing relatively minor disciplinary infractions and their punishments. Among the offenses of today’s soldiers in mixed-sex training: “wrongfully allow(ing) a soldier of the opposite sex to massage your feet” and “wrongfully sharing your care package with two females and smiling at them instead of sharing your package with your battle buddy,” along with additional reports of recruits having public sex. One expert says “the reports show that basic training has become

feel when playing a game of tag. Do they like to be chased? Do they like to do the chasing? How does it feel to be tagged out?” Then, “tell them that they are going to be playing different kinds of tag—ones where nobody is ever out.”

DULLNESS 1A: If you’re wondering what passes for legitimate academic activity these days, consider this “posting” on a history Website, by a female graduate student looking to break in: “For a chapter I’m writing on the ideological status of domestic kitchens in the U.S., I’m trying to develop a fairly comprehensive bibliography on discussions of domesticity (academic or otherwise) in the U.S. from 1945 onward. Specifically, I’m trying to chronicle a range and chronology of approaches to domestic space—from viewing it as “women’s space” to viewing the domestic sphere as a, or even the, patriarchal construction. Even more specifically, I’m interested in the ways in which white feminists and feminists of color have agreed and disagreed about the theoretical and political status of the domestic. To give you some ideas that might spark your imagination on this issue, examples of what I’m most interested in finding include material on Kitchen Table Press and similarly conceptualized projects; 1970s and ’80s interventions into Betty Friedan-style feminism that challenged critiques of women’s relegation to domestic roles by observing, for example, that women of color have traditionally worked not only outside their own homes but often in other people’s domestic spaces.” Gag us with a soup ladle.

BIDING THEIR TIME: According to a recent report in the *Washington Times*, the Chinese government is actively preparing for a future war with the United States. The newspaper says a newly-released Pentagon book of translated articles authored

by Chinese military strategists shows that they plan “to use a combination of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and ancient Chinese tactics against the United States,” which they view as a state whose dominance is similar to that of Nazi Germany. The Chinese theorists also postulate ways to render useless American aircraft-carrier battle groups, disrupt American communication and Internet networks, and carry out acts of subterfuge against the United States. Fortunately, the Chinese currently plan to wait until about 2030 to face the American colossus head-on, but the public airing of such anti-American sentiment on the part of the Chinese leads to another: why are we pursuing a “strategic partnership” with a country whose top leaders have expressed their willingness to destroy us?

BORN-AGAIN, AGAIN: Jane Fonda is, as they say, male identified. In her past incarnations she was a pining daughter to Henry Fonda, a sex kitten for French director Roger Vadim, Hanoi Jane for radical Tom Hayden, and Mistress of the Chop for Ted Turner. Now she has found a new man: Jesus Christ. If this latest self invention is the last one, it is no laughing matter. God’s grace has a way of obliterating the folly of men and women. Even if it is a passing fancy for La Fonda, it is hard not to be sympathetic, particularly if, as reported, her religious conversion was opposed by Turner, whose anti-religious bigotry is well known and should have long ago caused Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig to sentence him to some of the sensitivity training he has ordered up for John Rucker.



more of a summer camp than preparation for war.”

GOD AND MAN IN WASHINGTON: Joshua Davey, 19, was a recipient of a Washington Promise Scholarship, aimed at helping bright students of modest financial means with paying their way through college. But when the state found out that Davey was going to study theology at a small, religion-affiliated school, they promptly canceled his \$1,125 check. Now Davey is filing a lawsuit against the state, claiming that he wasn’t told about the clause when he applied for the scholarship last May. Nor could he have—it was not inserted until October of 1999. He’s arguing that the state’s refusal to grant him the money is a violation of his First and Fourteenth Amendment rights—a sound argument, given that that the Constitution only prevents the establishment of religion, not its study.

PACIFICATION PROGRAM: In the wake of the school shootings at Littleton and elsewhere, the National Education Association reports brisk sales of a pamphlet designed to nip student aggression in the bud. Titled “Quit It! A Teacher’s Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K-3” and funded by the Department of Education, the guide recommends that students talk to hand-puppets to resolve conflicts, and that teachers lead their 5-to-9-year-old charges in creative-visualization sessions and other “calming activities.” But the guide is concerned most with pacifying the playground land where bullies roam free, playing the cruelest of playground games: tag. “Before going outside to play, talk about how students



Church Lady Joan Brown Campbell Says Good-Bye To Cuba With Love

by Marc Tooley

After nearly a decade of leading America's most famous (or infamous) ecumenical coalition, Joan Brown Campbell has finally called it quits at the National Council of Churches. But she is not leaving without a splash. Although her controversial term as secretary general ended at the end of last year, Campbell has since immersed herself in a new round of publicity, going out of the organization as she ran it for several years—by coddling a dictatorship.

Campbell's valedictory came with the Elián Gonzalez case. Evidently aware of Campbell's strong ties with Fidel Castro, her successor appointed her to spearhead the NCC campaign to return the six-year-old boy to communist Cuba. In a flurry of activity, Campbell has traveled to Cuba to meet Elián's father (and with Cuban officials, of course), offered herself to a host of media interviews, convened press conferences, returned to Cuba to personally fetch Elián's grandmothers in a chartered jet, organized another round of publicity events, met with Attorney General Janet Reno, met with sympathetic members of Congress who support Elián's return, and condemned the bad, old right-wing congressmen who wanted to keep little Elián away from his father.

Campbell has also done her part in the propaganda campaign by criticizing Elián's mother for risking his life in a dangerous escape from Cuba by sea and assuring everybody who is willing to listen that all of Elián's relatives in Cuba are desperate to have him back with them. That Elián's mother and many others are dead because Castro will not let his people travel freely seems not to have occurred to Campbell. And that Elián's family in Cuba might be reluctant to speak frankly either to the media or a left-wing church leader from the United States also seems not to be a possibility to her.

It's been the richest gush of publicity for the National Council of Churches since the hoax about the torching of black churches in 1996. And it's an appropriate epilogue for Campbell's reign, during which the NCC pursued high profile, largely left-wing causes, while sliding into irrelevance among its own church constituency accelerated. For the last nine years Campbell has been defending Castro and the world's dwindling number of other communist despots, creating dangerous myths about racial violence, lobbying for socialized medicine, fighting for gun control, touting gay and abortion rights, supporting campaign finance "reform," opposing the U.S. war and subsequent sanctions against Iraq's Saddam Hussein, condemning organized school prayer, defending President Clinton in the wake of sexual scandal, and ignoring the plight of persecuted Christians around the world.

Meanwhile, the NCC at the end of Campbell's tenure has been crippled by huge deficits and staff reductions. For the typical local church, the Council has simply become an embarrassment. Even stalwart liberals within the NCC's own member denominations are now openly calling for the organization's closure.

Created in 1950, the National Council

of Churches was supposed to represent the future of American Christian unity. When recently attempting to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, the NCC found itself floundering amid budget shortfalls and internecine strife. Campbell had no apologies. Arguing that the NCC's heart is "too empathetic" not to be in debt, she defiantly declared: "You are right that I value courage and imagination more than caution and efficiency Our deficit is not in dollars but in our failure to see in one another the moral force that ends poverty as we know it and



JOAN BROWN CAMPBELL

that challenges racism."

Thanks in part to Campbell's lack of leadership, the NCC's celebration was overshadowed by its special pleas to its leading member denominations for millions of extra dollars. The NCC also had to further milk its relief and social service arm, Church World Service, for more "overhead" funds. And the Council's Burned Churches Fund—its last great fundraising bonanza—likewise seems to have been sucked dry. (Although the NCC raised more than \$9.1 million in cash for the fund, it was revealed without comment that only \$6.4 million was spent on actual church reconstruction, with the rest going to overhead and programs aimed at the "root causes" of racism.)

At a special 50th anniversary celebration for the NCC at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Cleveland, Jesse Jackson praised Campbell's tenure at the NCC and remembered that he and Campbell had jointly traveled to Serbia last year to free captured U.S. airmen. "We are winners," he enthused as he hoisted Joan Campbell's hand high in the air, convention-style. Most of the NCC celebrants responded with only polite applause, and Campbell acknowledged the somber mood without acknowledging her own part in creating it. "We're like an aging city with a crumbling infrastructure," she admitted in her farewell remarks to the NCC. "The infrastructure is sadly in need of repair, and it is not cheap to repair it." When mainline churches catch a cold, the NCC gets pneumonia, she explained, foisting the blame on others.

Campbell's tenure began with some reason for optimism. She was a liberal 1960s-era activist, but she did not seem to be a doctrinaire left-winger who would continue the NCC's historic dalliances with totalitarians abroad and Blame America First extremists at home. She even admitted the Council's mistakes in getting too cozy with the old Soviet bloc. "We did not understand the depth of the suffering of Christians under communism," she confessed in 1993. "And we failed to really cry out against the communist oppression. I do give credit to people who called for that and did not get a response, at least from us."

At that time Campbell said she wanted to re-orient the NCC towards "family issues," like fighting pornography, which would unify rather than divide the organization's constituents. "The press really has tagged us as left, liberal," she accurately observed. "When I came my determination was to speak to a broader group of people."

It never happened. Promoting Big Government at home and socialism abroad won out over fighting the small battles that would have perhaps made family life healthier in America. Campbell has justified her crusade to return Elián to Cuba by saying it is about "family values." But under her guidance, the National Council of Churches' record on social issues is closer to the National Organization of Women than to any recognizable pro-family group.

The now 68-year-old Campbell discovered the joys of liberal activism in mid-life. She was a housewife, the full-time mother of three children, and a Junior Leaguer married to a successful lawyer in a Cleveland suburb when the social revolution of the 1960s broke upon

her. She volunteered for social justice causes through her local church. After Martin Luther King, Jr. came to town in 1967 to help organize for Carl Stokes's campaign to become America's first black mayor of a major city, she joined a voter registration drive organized by the NCC. She also invited King to speak at her all-white Disciples of Christ congregation.

The invitation sparked controversy, and King spoke from the church's outside steps rather than the sanctuary. Campbell found herself energized by the excitement and the sense of being a member of a vanguard for social justice. Her home became the meeting place not only for King but also for radical lawyer William Kunstler and for parenting author turned anti-war activist Benjamin Spock. She went on to volunteer with the anti-war Clergy and Laity Concerned and helped to organize both the Poor People's Partnership and the Welfare Rights Organization. Campbell recalls that her first "work for pay" job was for the Head Start program in the early 1970s. Shortly afterwards she went to work for the Interchurch Council of Greater Cleveland.

Campbell's marriage failed in the early 1970s. (She later would explain that her husband could not understand or support her political causes, which, given her growing resumé of leftist commitments, makes sense.) But her ecclesiastical career moved forward. Part of a movement that saw the church as a place to use for secular crusades, she attended seminary classes and took a theological home study course that allowed her to become an ordained

minister in both the Disciples of Christ and the American Baptist denominations. In 1979, she joined the staff of the National Council of Churches as a liaison for local ecumenism. She became head of the U.S. Committee of the World Council of Churches in 1985. And in 1990, she took the helm of the NCC, the first clergywoman to do so.

The Council was in crisis. Still reeling from revelations in the early 1980s about its ties to Marxist revolutionary groups around the world, the NCC was by then thoroughly stigmatized as more political and left-wing than Christian or ecumenical. The socially conservative Greek Orthodox Church, which had helped to give the NCC a fig leaf of respectability, was threatening to pullout. Campbell's predecessor had abruptly resigned.

Campbell, by then an affable grandmother, exuded reassurance and moderation. Although she had firmly established her liberal bona fides through her Cleveland and WCC activism, her arrest outside the South African embassy was but one example of her own personal liberation theology. But the Cold War was ending, and it seemed a time for the NCC to reestablish its original 1950s image as a mainstream liberal organization devoted to social justice rather than political radicalism.

Even if Campbell had wanted to change the National Council's philosophy it would have been hard to buck the entrenched Left bureaucracy at the "God Box" on Riverside Drive in New York City, where the NCC and other liberal mainline Protestant groups are headquartered. But it is not clear that she had any problems with this status quo. She took office in the midst of the Persian Gulf War, which the NCC vociferously denounced. "No war is ever just," Campbell insisted, as she participated in protest demonstrations that demonized the United States while downplaying Saddam Hussein's aggression.

Campbell and the NCC advocated sanctions as a substitute for war. But in later years as American sanctions continued against Iraq, and as Saddam continued his commitment to weapons of mass destruction, she denounced the United States for criminal sanctions that were starving the children of Iraq. And despite her indication that the NCC would focus on "family issues," Campbell identified with the left on abortion and homosexuality, even though the NCC as a body did not adopt positions on these issues, largely because it couldn't risk alienating the Eastern Orthodox churches. On the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall "rebellion" by homosexuals in New York City, Campbell joined other religious activists in surrounding the "God Box" in New York in a show of protest against church opposition to homosexual practice.

But Campbell's relationship with the Clinton administration was perhaps the most important hallmark of her tenure. National Council of Churches' delegations became frequent visitors to the White House, after years of disinterest by Republican administrations. Campbell was treated to flights on Air Force One and to state dinners for foreign heads of state. Most dramatic, in the wake of the Republican congressional takeover in 1994, Campbell led a solidarity delegation to the Oval Office to urge Clinton to be "strong for the task" of resisting the new Republican Congress. Later that year, Campbell would ask churches to wear purple ribbons during Holy Week prior to Easter to symbolize opposition to the Contract with America.

Campbell rarely bothered to disguise her partisan affiliation or her inclination to render more unto Caesar than unto God. She criti-

cized President Bush during the 1992 presidential campaign for accepting support from religious conservatives. And more recently, she has expressed alarm over George W. Bush for having named Jesus Christ his most influential philosopher. No doubt frustrated by the NCC's ostensible non-partisanship, Campbell helped to found the Interfaith Alliance in 1994 to be more aggressive in counteracting religious conservatives. The alliance accepted start-up funds from the Democrat Party Senatorial Committee.

But religious conservatives continued to gain supporters as the NCC's influence

would facilitate a cut-off of U.S. aid to oppressive governments. Campbell has used her figurehead status in the church community to minimize concerns about persecuted Christians around the world. A special focus on religious liberty (to the exclusion of economic rights) and on Christians in particular made her uncomfortable. "If you look at the Nazi regime, you can see in it the philosophy of Christian superiority," she once remarked.

Just as the NCC averted its glance when the old Soviet Bloc persecuted religious believers, so now does the NCC remain largely silent about the restrictive religious policies of communist regimes in China, North Korea, and Cuba. Campbell earned the role Castro allowed her to play in the Elián Gonzalez affair by her long praise of Cuba for having made a "priority of caring for the poor." Last year, with Castro listening appreciatively, Campbell apologized for U.S. policies towards Cuba before an applauding crowd of 100,000 in the infamous Plaza of the Revolution in Havana, Cuba.

"We ask you to forgive the suffering that has come to you by the actions of the United States," the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell implored. "It is on behalf of Jesus the liberator that we work against this embargo."

A banner across the stage read "Love, Peace, Unity." The event was intended to crown a month of government-sanctioned celebrations by Protestants in Cuba, where about 50 denominations are represented. But some crowd members confessed to the *Associated Press* that they had no specific religious belief but were pressured to attend by their communist neighborhood watch group.

Cuban Christians still endure obstacles to free worship. According to Open Doors International, an advocate for persecuted Christians, the Cuban govern-

ment routinely denies permits for new church construction. Repairs to existing churches are heavily restricted. Church property is still vulnerable to government seizure. Public evangelism is illegal. Church leaders are still monitored, interrogated, and threatened with arrest. House churches and parochial schools are forbidden. Bible distribution is limited. Yet after a 1995 meeting with Castro, Campbell enthused, "The churches now are able to carry out all the work of the church, that is the training of pastors, Sunday school teaching, evangelism, and service to the society."

When she returned to the United States from a pilgrimage to Havana last year, Joan Campbell claimed that ending U.S. trade sanctions was especially urgent now that Cuba has shown "it does allow people to express their faith freely." With such comments, who can blame Castro for commenting in a meeting with Campbell several years ago: "We see in you and your actions the expression of the best values and intentions of the American people. We love you very specially, and always welcome you to our country."

These words are no doubt in Campbell's mind as she shuttles back and forth in her crusade to return little Elián to Cuba, her chartered plane paid for by NCC dollars it supposedly does not have. But more than a few mainline church members are praying for something else altogether during this exercise in propaganda. They are hoping that Joan Campbell's departure from the National Council of Churches marks the end of the betrayal of Christian ecumenicism by party hacks and political ideologues.

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REV. JESSE JACKSON AND JOAN BROWN CAMPBELL

waned. Asked to contrast the NCC with the Christian Coalition, Campbell replied with frustration, "We're a religious organization, and it is not. They are blatantly political [and] partisan." More damningly, she claimed the religious right was seeking to "manipulate religious leaders and people of faith and good will," a charge that she evidently feels does not apply to her own brand of religious left activism.

In determining Campbell's legacy, it is likely that the role of the religious left, which she engineered, in the alleged burnings of black churches will loom large. It was a pseudo-event. There was no evidence in 1996, nor has there been any since, to show that black churches were specially targeted for arson attacks. (White churches were far more at risk.) And of the small number of black church burnings, only a fraction were the work of racists. The most prolific arsonist, it turns out, was a practicing Satanist.

But fighting the Devil did not interest the NCC. Claims of an upsurge in racist violence were more likely to grab headlines and raise dollars. The hysteria the Council ginned up netted more than \$9 million in contributions. The windfall helped to postpone an inevitable financial crisis for the declining organization.

Working in lockstep with the White House on many campaigns, Campbell obligingly defended President Clinton during the exposure of his sexual escapades. But it was the glamour of involvement in foreign policy that captivated her most. The National Council of Churches generated a "foreign policy" under Campbell, and it was shamefully unable to criticize communist and radical Islamic regimes. The NCC first opposed and then fought to water down congressional legislation that

Leonard Peltier Is No Political Prisoner

Bury His Heart

by Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley

“I still cannot understand that with the millions of people around the world demanding my freedom the government can still ignore it.” That was Leonard Peltier, usually mispronounced Pelt Ear, in a recorded message to a sparsely attended November rally in Lafayette Park in Washington, where supporters had decreed Freedom for Leonard Peltier Month.

Before the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, Peltier was the Reds’ favorite red man, the international star of Soviet propaganda and the subject of 12 million signatures demanding that the President of the United States release the victim of white capitalist American racist oppression. That campaign ended with the demise of the Soviet Union, whose Russian successors are too busy invading small nations to care. But Peltier, *sans* propaganda machine, survived the demise of the USSR. Though rivaled by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Peltier is still a celebrity prisoner, backed by an all-star, international cast now massing on what they think is the moral high ground, like Indians in a ’40s western, for a charge at the White House during the last year of Bill Clinton’s presidency. This year is also the 25th anniversary of the events that sent Peltier to jail, events that his international supporters fail to mention, if they know about them at all.

“I support the petition for executive clemency for Leonard Peltier,” says none other than the Dalai Lama. “I am deeply concerned and appeal to authorities in the U.S. to pardon him on humane grounds.”

Danielle Mitterand, wife of France’s former Socialist President Francois Mitterand, takes it personally. “I reassure Leonard of my complete support and my hope about this new action undertaken to obtain executive clemency,” she says.

Omnipresent cause-groupie South African cleric Desmond Tutu says Peltier’s incarceration is a “miscarriage of justice.” Amnesty International calls him America’s only political prisoner, and his supporters include the National Council of Churches, 55 members of the Congress, 50 members of the Canadian parliament, 67 members of the Italian parliament, 48 members of the parliament of the Netherlands, 312 French municipalities and communities, United States senators Daniel Inouye and Paul Wellstone, and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, along with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rigoberta Menchu, and Nelson Mandela.

There are Peltier support groups in Canada, England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia, and Japan, and more than 100 Peltier support groups in the United States. The prisoner also enjoys Hollywood clout from Danny Glover, Susan Sarandon, Robert Redford, and Marxist rockers Rage Against the Machine.

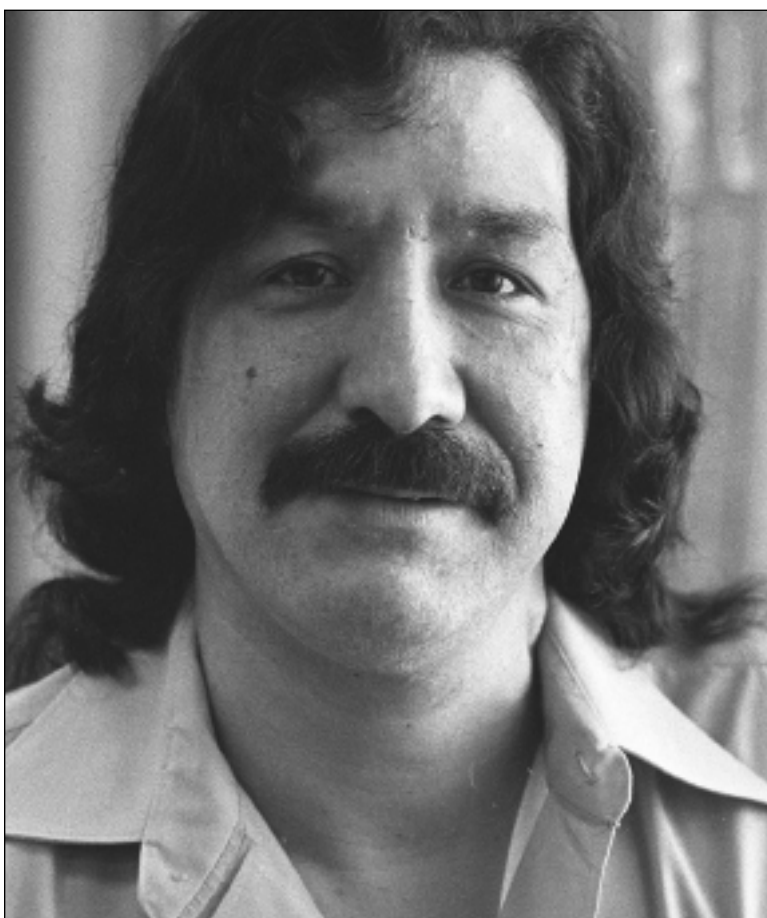
For many with no knowledge of the case or the *zeitgeist* that produced it, the sheer bulk of support must be impressive. With so many luminaries on his side, the thinking goes, the man must be innocent.

This international cast mounted a long campaign to pressure Canada, which gave Peltier over to U.S. custody, into rescinding its extradition. However, in October, Anne McLellan, Canada’s justice minister, refused to ask the United States to release the prisoner. He had been hoping that the land of his ancestors would spring him from Leavenworth, the tough federal joint in Kansas where Al Capone, George “Bugs” Moran, Frank “The Enforcer” Nitty, and George “Machine Gun” Kelly all did time.

Though Peltier shares some important traits with this gang, personal charisma is not one of them. Now 55, he stands five-foot-three and pulls his graying black hair into a long pony tail, giving him the air

of an unemployed film director. Prison garb covers the rose tattooed on his right shoulder, and “Leonard” on his left. Said the prisoner, in an exclusive November 10 interview with the *Windsor Star*: “I truly believed she [Anne McLellan] would be just and fair, but all she did was put another nail in my coffin.”

The choice of words is of interest. Peltier is now a permanent resident of Leavenworth because he put nails in the coffins of Ron Williams, 27, and Jack Coler, 28. The two FBI agents had been involved



LEONARD PELTIER

in a shoot-out with some 30 heavily armed men on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota on June 26, 1975. A quarter century later, the evidence is stronger than ever that, as the two FBI agents lay wounded and helpless, Leonard Peltier leveled an AR-15 rifle and blew their heads apart at point blank range. It was a task for which he was well suited.

Peltier was born in 1944 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, a kind of ecumenical Native American of Chippewa and Dakota antecedents, with a Canadian grandmother. One of his first Christmas presents was a cap gun and Leonard inclined to matters military. He enlisted in the Marines and sought service in Vietnam. But instead of seeing action he wound up with a medical discharge because of a shallow bite.

“I wasn’t in the Marines to bite people,” he explained with a laugh to Peter Matthiessen, author of the fan-magazine book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, the phrase Peltier uses to sign his letters. “I was there to shoot people!” The foment of his times denied Peltier his chance in Southeast Asia, but gave him a crack elsewhere. While he was spray-painting fenders in a Seattle body shop in 1965, the movement that would make him a revolutionary hero was taking shape. With the New Left on the rise and all sorts of “liberation movements” mimicking black radicalism, it was inevitable that those now called Native Americans, with their long record of mistreatment at the hands of the United States government, would grow their own revolutionary vanguard.

In July 1968, Eddie Benton Banai, George Mitchell, Clyde Bellecourt, and Dennis Banks founded Concerned Indian Americans. Since the initials CIA would send the wrong message, they changed it to American Indian Movement, or AIM. The group’s emblem was an American flag flown upside down, an international symbol for distress. For the internation-

al Left, they were the most politically correct constituency imaginable, a group whose displacement and romantic suffering was a prism through which the capitalist United States could be denounced.

Mad Bear Anderson, a Tuscarora, had visited the Cuban Communists as early as 1958. In the mid-1960s the Stalinist regime in Hanoi welcomed Sid Mills and Hank Adams of the Washington fishing rights controversy and Russell Means, radical Sioux and future film star. The extent to which AIM networked with the Weathermen, the Venceremos Brigade, and agents from the Eastern Bloc remains unclear. Louis Moves Camp testified at the Banks-Means trial that agents from behind the Iron Curtain had been present at the June 1974 International Indian Treaty Council. For its part, the FBI classified AIM an “extremist organization.”

AIM spearheaded the occupation of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay from November 1969 until June 1971, a grand piece of political theatre with plenty of support from Bay Area leftists. During that occupation AIM recruited Russell Means, who grew up in Oakland and trained as an accountant, with stints as a rodeo rider and Indian dancer. Means liked to appear in full uniform of braids, beaded belt, and turquoise jewelry.

Violence was always possible at Alcatraz, but aside from occasionally vicious in-fighting among the representatives of the various tribes, the occupation was fairly routine once the “encampment” was established. But the young “warriors” of AIM—ready to act in the spirit of Crazy Horse—were ready for an opportunity “to die for the people.”

AIM ran a camp in Box Canyon, location of the Spahn Ranch, where Charles Manson and his family hid out after the Sharon Tate murders. AIM took over the site from a Paul “Semu” Huaute, a shaman of the Chumas tribe. In October of 1973, Black Cloud and Rising Sun, two young Indians, tortured and killed cab driver George Aird, who was found stabbed 17 times and stuffed into a drainpipe.

In 1973, Indians took hostages at Wounded Knee and looted a trading post, with reported prompting from the Weathermen, the Venceremos brigade, and other leftist militia. The violence prompted none other than prairie peacenik George McGovern to respond that “we can’t have one law for a handful of publicity-seeking militants and another law for ordinary citizens.” The ensuing legal tangles called forth William Kuntzler from New York.

Leonard Peltier was caught up in this ferment. In a 1972 confrontation outside a Milwaukee restaurant, he pulled a gun on a cop and pulled the trigger twice but the weapon failed. Peltier tried again, but on the third try, the officer’s partner put his hand between hammer and firing pin. Peltier wound up spending five months in jail before AIM could raise bail. When released in 1973, he went underground and headed to Seattle. On October 21, 1973, a car registered to Peltier was identified during a shootout with Bureau of Indian Affairs police at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Two officers were injured but Peltier was never questioned. He had failed to appear for a pre-trial hearing in Milwaukee and was now a fugitive.

Peltier attended the June 1974 International Indian Treaty Council, where the Communist Bloc agents were present, and lent his services to the Kottanai Indians in Idaho, who had declared war on the U.S. government. That year Peltier was arrested on Mercer Island under the name Leonard Little Shell, and charged with possession of illegal weapons. He returned to Wisconsin and took part in the takeover of an abbey. By 1975, the fugitive alerts described Peltier, accurately, as “armed and dangerous.”

In June of 1975, Peltier was living on Pine Ridge and acting as an enforcer for AIM on the

reservation. On June 24, FBI agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler came onto Pine Ridge looking for Jimmy Eagle, wanted on assault charges. Williams was driving a Green Rambler Ambassador 401, and Coler a two-tone gold-and-white 1972 Chevrolet Biscayne. Around midday, agents Gerald Waring and Vince Breci heard Williams on the radio. He had seen a red-and-white vehicle and “there appears to be some Indians in the vehicle, and they appear to have rifles.”

The red-and-white vehicle stopped on a ridge and the occupants got out, joined on the high ground by other armed militants, Leonard Peltier among them. The two FBI men stood stranded in an open field, armed with only revolvers, useless at long range, and one rifle.

“They are on the ridge above us and firing on us,” Williams said over the radio, which registered the sound of gunfire. One of some thirty firing was Peltier, from behind a row of junked cars parked above.

“We are being fired upon,” Williams said. “We are in a little valley in Oglala, South Dakota, pinned down in a crossfire between two houses If someone would get to the top of the ridge and give us cover, we might be able to get out of here.” But if help didn’t come, Williams said, they were “dead men.” His last message, very faint, said simply, “I am hit.”

When Coler attempted to retrieve his unloaded rifle from the trunk, he took a heavy round, one of nine that passed through the trunk lid, that practically severed his arm. Bleeding heavily, he managed to crawl into his car, soon pierced by volleys of fire from above. At least 125 rounds hit the agent’s car. Together, the agents managed to get off a total of five rounds.

Williams was also hit, but under heavy fire ran over to the wounded Coler, stripped off his shirt and fixed a tourniquet. Coler passed out from loss of blood, and Williams was rapidly weakening but still fully conscious. He was trying to surrender, but this posed a dilemma for the approaching Indian gunmen, as author Peter Matthiessen astutely noted: “Flight would have been hopeless. Anyone could be identified by the victims.”

The unconscious Coler, father of two small children, would have died within minutes anyhow, but one of the Indians shot him in the head, first with a grazing round then full on, shattering his skull. Williams saw what was coming and pleaded for his life, lifting a hand to his face. His executioner pressed the muzzle of the AR-15 .223 caliber rifle muzzle to the hand and squeezed the trigger. A .223 round blasted the agent’s severed fingers into his face before exploding Williams’s brain and skull. Then the gunmen shot both men after they were dead and scattered the agents’ personal effects, propping up Coler’s FBI credentials on the hood. Then they turned both dead men face down, a move they apparently believed their Sioux ancestors had made to prevent the victims from going to heaven. Then the gunmen fled, taking the dead men’s weapons with them.

By 1:30, FBI reinforcements arrived and ordered the Indians to come out. The Indians fired a warning shot and the FBI returned fire. Indian Joe Killsright fell dead in the exchange.

“They opened up on us, and they had some real sharpshooters out there, too—it was just lucky they was a good distance off,” Peltier told Peter Matthiessen during the early 1980s. “So I hollered to the rest to keep on going, and I fired off a few rounds in that direction, just to keep their heads down.” He credited his escape to divine intervention. “Something had been there,” he said. “The Great Spirit helped us.”

On the property of Indian Al Running, agents found rifles, sawed off shotguns, pistols, and explosives including a .44 Ruger rifle that had been with Peltier and his group. They also found an AR-15 with an obliterated serial number and .223 clips in a jacket marked “Chicano Power.” In an orange-and-white International Scout they found the .357 revolver issued to Ronald Williams.

In a 1964 Mercury station wagon used by the fugitives, FBI agents found Agent Coler’s .308 rifle and the AR-15 that turned out to be the murder weapon. On November 25, 1975, a grand jury indicted James Eagle, Darell Dean Butler, Robert Robideau, and Leonard Peltier on two counts of first-degree murder.

On the run, Peltier also shot it out with an Oregon policeman who stopped the motor home he was driving. The vehicle contained seven boxes of dynamite, nine hand grenades, and 14 firearms, one of them the murdered FBI agent Jack Coler’s service revolver.

Peltier made it across the border to Canada, but the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested him on February 6, 1976. The fugitive explained to the Canadian gendarmes that he had mistakenly believed that the FBI agents sought to arrest him for the attempted shooting of the Milwaukee cop in 1972. That was why he opted to shoot first and ask questions later.

After numerous appeals Peltier was extradited. At his 1977 trial in Fargo, North Dakota, three witnesses said that moments before the execution of Ron Williams and Jack Coler, they had seen Peltier walk toward the two men with the AR-15. In 10 hours, the jury convicted Peltier on two counts of murder. Before being sentenced to two life terms on June 1, 1977, Peltier made a statement likely scripted by his supporters: “Native Americans will resist any further encroachments by military forces of the capitalistic Americans, which is evidenced by large numbers of Pine Ridge residents who took up arms on June 26, 1975, to defend themselves. I stand before you as a proud man. I feel no guilt! . . . I have nothing to feel guilty about! I have no regrets of being a Native American activist—thousands of people in the United States, Canada, and around the world have and will continue to support me to expose the injustices which have occurred in this courtroom. I do feel guilty for your people that they must live under such an ugly system. Under your system you are taught greed, racism, and corruption—and most serious of all, the destruction of Mother Earth No, I’m not the guilty one here: I’m not the one who should be called a criminal—white racist America is the criminal for the destruction of our lands and my people.”

This incantation was big magic. Here was a member of the premier victim group in American history hurling jeremiads at white, racist, capitalist Amerika, which was also guilty of raping Mother Earth. AIM propaganda proclaimed that “AIM warriors at Oglala were defending Native People against genocide.”

In 1979, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear Peltier’s case, which didn’t stop it from growing as a left-wing cause any more than the evidence did. As Peltier settled into prison, the Soviet Union cited his name in response whenever the United States brought up the question of the dissidents languishing in the gulag.

Peter Matthiessen’s *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* portrayed reservation conflicts as politically correct Native Americans versus sellout Indian goons. Peltier, who speaks at length in the book in swaggering bar-stool rhetoric, emerges as the victim of an international capitalist conspiracy to deprive Indians of uranium deposits on their land. Robert Redford used the book as the basis for his documentary *Incident at Oglala*.

In a 1991 reissue, Matthiessen introduced a shadowy “Mr. X., who claimed to be the real killer, a claim denied by Peltier’s original co-defendants. After 469 small-print pages that ransack all possible evidence of Peltier’s innocence, including the *deus ex machina* of Mr. X, the author renders this stunning verdict: “Although convinced that Leonard Peltier had been tried unjustly, I still lacked any strong sense of his innocence. The brutal nature of the agents’ executions and the fact that Peltier and his men had eventually been caught with the dead men’s weapons made me resist the Movement propaganda”

It was as though Victor Navasky had penned an op-ed in the *New York Times* worrying that Alger Hiss may have indeed been a Stalinist spy.

But by this time, the machinery of political martyrdom had reached a state of perpetual motion that paid no heed to second thoughts. On August 17, 1985, 50 congressmen, led by Rep. Don Edwards, had signed an amicus brief in support of a new trial. But on September 11, 1986, the Eighth Circuit affirmed Peltier’s conviction. That ruling only confirmed that view of his cult that the true facts were not driving the Peltier campaign. In October 1987, actor Peter Coyote organized a benefit concert “Cowboys for

Indians and Justice for Leonard Peltier,” with Willie Nelson, Jackson Browne, Kris Kristofferson, Joni Mitchell, and Robin Williams.

The following year, William Kuntsler discussed political asylum in the USSR for Peltier with Soviet officials, including Mikhail Gorbachev. In addition to their 12 million signatures to the White House demanding clemency, the Soviets sent medical personnel to visit Peltier in prison.

On December 30, 1991, a judge in Fargo denied Peltier a new trial, a refusal that touched off a shift in tactics. Canadian member of parliament Jim Fulton called for annulment of Peltier’s extradition, and Sen. Daniel Inouye led the push to return the convicted murderer to Canada. Peltier and his supporters urged followers to write Anne McLellan, Canada’s justice minister. She reviewed the case, weighing the 1995 review by former Canadian Attorney General Warren Allmand, which recommended a new trial. McLellan concluded that “no evidence has come to light to change the conclusions reached in the previous court decisions” and on October 16 refused to ask her counterpart, Janet Reno, to release Peltier, whose supporters blasted the decision.

“McLellan is the laughing stock of the international law community and has sullied Canada’s good name in the fight for human rights,” said Jennifer Harberry, the leftish Washington D.C. lawyer and member of the Peltier team.

In his Leavenworth interview with the *Windsor Star*, Peltier showed that he had upgraded his vocabulary with the times.

“This is a case of native people, of ethnic cleansing happening to them,” he said, explaining that at the time of the murder of the FBI agents on June 26, 1975, he was lying on a cot in a “spiritual camp” on the reserve. His account covered the war paint of AIM versions with softer, gentler colors.

“It was chaos,” Peltier told the *Star*. “Bullets were flying everywhere and I heard children crying in fright. I went to check on an elderly couple in the camp and then to protect the children. I couldn’t tell where the bullets were coming from, but eventually realized they were coming from two cars parked about 150 yards away. I fired a few warning shots into the air and I knew some of the other men were firing as well. After a while the firing stopped and the word went round that the two men from the cars were dead.”

How the two men came to be dead Peltier didn’t say, but he now casts himself as their potential rescuer.

“I can’t say I’m sorry I killed those guys because it’s not true,” he said. “I did not kill them, I did not see the agents die. But I’m sorry they died and would have tried to stop it if I knew what was going to happen. I want to be free, but if to be free means having to admit to a lie, I can’t do that. So maybe I will have to die in prison.”

That was what those who sentenced him to two life terms had in mind, though the sentence hardly fits the crime. But as the Clinton administration winds down, Peltier’s supporters in the international sweat lodges of the Left will be stepping up the drumbeat for the President to grant their hero clemency. Based on his record of pardoning Puerto Rican terrorists, it is possible that the President will come through for them, despite strong opposition from the FBI. Whatever the President does, the case presents a parable of the Left for all time, especially its attachment to crime.

Murder has always been the vocabulary of the Left in power, from Stalin to Mao, to Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge. The vocabulary of the intellectuals defending this power, from Walter Duranty to Noam Chomsky, has been to deny or defend those murders. For those who missed that Big Show of the ’60s, the story of our time, the campaign to free Leonard Peltier tells you all you need to know.

Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley is author of The Hollywood Party: How Communism Seduced the American Film Industry in the 1930s and 1940s.



PC Madness, continued from page 1

The artist whom the DGA tried to airbrush out of history on the basis of one-half of one film was a complex, at times contradictory figure whose work is remarkable for its productivity (some 450 films), its creative innovation, and its social vision. Born on January 22, 1875, into a Kentucky family left impoverished by the Civil War, Griffith struggled throughout his early years, earning his way as a traveling actor. His artistic salvation came not from the traditional world of literature and theatre to which he aspired but in the new medium of the motion picture when he began his extraordinary directorial career with the Biograph Company in 1908. During his five years there, he transformed the cinema from entertainment into art. His greatness lay not simply in his development of the basic grammar of narrative film but in his use of the new medium to express a distinctive vision. To convey this vision, he drew from his players, like Mary Pickford, Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, and Lillian and Dorothy Gish, a new, more restrained acting style wholly different from that of the stage and able to communicate powerful emotions directly to an audience studying their faces close up. His characteristic social themes, far from racist, championed the rights of the American Indians, whom he saw as the victims of white oppression, in films like *The Redman's View* (1909) and *Ramona* (1910). He deplored the depredations of wealth and power in films such as *A Corner in Wheat* (1909) and became the first filmmaker to show the Ku Klux Klan in an unfavorable light in *The Rose of Kentucky* (1911). He focused his camera on scenes of urban poverty in *What Shall We Do With Our Old?* (1910) and *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912) and projected in many of his films a new, more assertive heroine in keeping with the aspirations of the suffragette era.

When Griffith began making features for his own independent company in 1913, he projected this social vision in classics such as the 1916 epic *Intolerance*, intercutting four parallel stories from different ages as a way of opposing war, capital punishment, Prohibition, and the rapacious capitalism of his day. In *Broken Blossoms* (1919), he denounced the false racist assumptions many whites held about the Chinese. In *Way Down East* (1920), he attacked the repression of women, and in *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), he supported the original goals of the French Revolution while decrying its later slide towards dictatorship and anarchy. He endorsed women's suffrage and became the first filmmaker in Hollywood history to employ union labor at a time when Los Angeles was largely an open-shop town.

Yet the Directors Guild ignored this remarkable accomplishment, unequalled by any other figure in film history, because of *Birth of a Nation*. The film was an unprecedented box office triumph in 1915, winning acclaim for its spectacular Civil War scenes balanced with the more intimate human scenes of its protagonists. Yet the film's portrayal of the Reconstruction period as a reign of terror in which white Southerners were saved by the Ku Klux Klan from black mobs incited by the Northern occupiers—a view that Ulrich Phillips and other historians of the day had made into a leading interpretation of these events—touched off a storm of criticism around the country. Joining in the NAACP's campaign against the film were both liberal and conservative supporters of black interests and the Union cause. Despite the many attempts to ban it, the film remained the cinema's biggest hit in the United States until the release of King Vidor's World War I epic, *The Big Parade*, a decade later.

Apart from ongoing NAACP opposition, the controversy tended to subside somewhat over the years as the film garnered recognition as the American cinema's first acknowledged masterwork, despite its politics. But controversy reappeared in the late 1930s and early 1940s when the cause was taken up by American Communists. Linking revivals of *The Birth of a Nation* with the immense publicity surrounding the new Civil War epic *Gone With the Wind*, the organized left, in an attempt to win greater influence in the black community, attacked both films as

racist propaganda. They began circulating rumors about Griffith, which are still repeated today, that all black roles in the film were played by whites in blackface. Ironically, in view of this criticism by the American left, Griffith recalled in later years that he had been called a Communist himself “when *Intolerance* was branded radical and dangerous.” Yet the American Stalinists of the 1940s rarely if ever took note of the fact that Griffith at the peak of his career had contacts with anti-war leftists like Max Eastman and was favorably reviewed by such socialist publications as *The New York Call* at a time when many of his films were being shown throughout revolutionary Russia. Later on, although some of Griffith's strongest admirers were independent-minded leftists, like writer James Agee, social critic Paul Goodman, and even documentary filmmaker



Emile de Antonio (*Point of Order*), the orthodox left, reincarnated as a “New” Left, continued the attack. The culmination of their protests occurred in 1980, when a lily-white Berkeley-based group of radicals calling itself the International Coalition Against Racism stormed a San Francisco revival house showing *The Birth of a Nation*, vandalizing the theatre, destroying projection equipment and burning the print of the film. Largely as a result of this incident, theatrical screenings of *Birth*, once a staple of revival houses, have become very rare.

A common and fallacious charge against Griffith's film is that it provoked bloody confrontations between blacks and whites. (Performances of Thomas Dixon's more overtly racist play, *The Clansman*, on which *Birth* was based, did inflame racial tensions and, in some instances, led to violence.) Similarly, it is commonly accepted that *Birth* bears the primary responsibility for the reappearance of the Ku Klux Klan, a simplistic explanation offered up in lieu of a more sophisticated analysis of the facts. In fact, the Klan, comprised for the most part of nativist, white Protestants, emerged as a mass movement in the early 1920s as a result of the climate created first by the sedition laws and anti-German propaganda during World War I, then followed by the post-war Red Scare and the reaction to demands by minorities and labor for greater equality. Had Griffith never made *Birth*, there is little doubt that the Klan or a similar group would have emerged in response to the war and post-war environment. Indeed, few of the critics of the film have ever acknowledged Griffith's stated purpose in making *The Birth of a Nation*—to reveal to the spectator “the ravages of war to the end that war may be held in abhorrence.” Also lost was the fact that, in developing his theme, the director took pains to soften the glaring racism of Dixon's original narrative. In his 1988 book, *The “I” of the Camera*, William Rothman finds in the film the “darker” vision of an artist who recognizes all of humankind as vulnerable to the

monstrous forces within.

Griffith's film certainly provided a dramatic portrayal of the sense of grievances felt by the South in the devastating aftermath of the downfall of the “peculiar institution” of slavery and the way of life it had sustained. When he began work on the film, he told his cast: “Only the winning side in a war ever gets to tell its story.” Griffith had already projected the imagery of defeat in his Biograph works dealing with the Indians. His innovative use of a panoramic landscape shot in *Ramona* to show the Indian hero watching helplessly from a mountaintop as his village is destroyed by white settlers in the valley below anticipates the famous shots in *The Birth* of a Southern family weeping on a hilltop while Sherman's army devastates the valley. This vision, a recurring feature of Griffith's work, reached its most spectacular heights in the Babylonian story of *Intolerance*. The most devastating consequences of defeat are surely the eradication of a people's entire history and civilization—Babylon's fate when it was conquered by the Persians in 539 B.C. This sense of being vanquished would recur in more intimate films like *Broken Blossoms*, with its noble Chinese Buddhist hero suffering from the bigotry of “the barbarous Anglo-Saxons, sons of turmoil and strife,” and *Isn't Life Wonderful?* in which starving workers in a defeated Germany cry out in despair, “Yes, beasts we are; beasts they have made us—years of war and hell.”

It was his commitment to the survival of cultures and of the individual that made Griffith, with his roots in the Jeffersonian tradition and his admiration for Whitman's poetry, an eternal foe of regimentation, particularly by those he called the intolerant “think-as-I-think” men who sought to impose their views on society for the ostensible purpose of creating a better world. Invariably, in his films, Griffith saw such efforts as leading to harm, whether it was the carpetbaggers swarming into the South in *Birth*; the puritanical capitalist in the modern story of *Intolerance*; or Robespierre in *Orphans of the Storm* attempting to channel the French Revolution's democratic aspirations into his own totalitarian Republic of Virtue.

As Cari Beauchamp, author of a widely acclaimed biography of screenwriter Frances Marion, says, since Griffith is the father of modern cinema, content of his works, whether seen positively or negatively, should not be an issue. In her opinion, the award that has borne his name is about directorial accomplishment and commemoration of the artist who made it all possible. As she succinctly puts it, “End of story.”

The DGA is tight-lipped about who first came up with the decision to dump D. W. and to what degree (if any) they were responding to outside pressure. But the decision was made behind closed doors and never included public discussion. Given the fact that Kweisi Mfume, the current head of the NACCP, applauded the DGA's decision the very day it was announced, declaring they never should have named the award after Griffith in the first place, his organization may have had some input. It would, however, be yet another indication of this organization's decline, for as far back as 1915, the NAACP magazine *The Crisis* drew an editorial distinction between Griffith as an “artistic producer” and the subject matter of *The Birth of a Nation*, to which the organization objected.

But if the NAACP is different from what it once was, so is the film industry. Marc Wanamaker, a Hollywood-based film historian, whose uncle was the late, prominent actor Sam Wanamaker, believes that in an out-of-control PC environment, the Directors Guild dropped the award because it wanted to demonstrate “sensitivity” to its new black members. The DGA may have been swayed by the continual attacks on Griffith and *Birth* by the new, younger militant black filmmakers, like Spike Lee and John Singleton. Indeed, Singleton carried the war against the film to its most ludicrous extreme when, in 1994, he likened *The Birth of a Nation* to the Holocaust! In

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Why “The Hurricane” Is Hot Air

by Paul Mulshine

After I had written a couple of newspaper columns pointing out that the movie *The Hurricane* is a hoax, I found myself on a Los Angeles talk-radio station debating the matter with Rudy Langlais, executive producer of the movie.

I told about reading an excerpt from a 1964 *Saturday Evening Post* article on Rubin “Hurricane” Carter. The article appeared at the apex of Carter’s boxing career, just before he was to fight for the middleweight championship. Carter told the writer that in his youth he used to “shoot at people.”

He elaborated: “Sometimes just to shoot at ‘em, sometimes to hit ‘em, sometimes to kill ‘em. My family was saying I’m still a bum. If I got the name, I play the game.”

Langlais interrupted me: “Surely you don’t believe that.” But he didn’t press the point. For a good reason. Either Carter was telling the truth, and he is a psychopath. Or he was telling a falsehood, and he is a liar.

Actually, he’s both, if his criminal record and his public statements are any indication. And as for the people who made the movie about him, they’re not much better. The movie is allegedly “based on a true story,” but there is only one scene in it that is an accurate depiction of a true moment in history. It is the scene in which the up-and-coming young boxer knocks out the great Emile Griffith in 2:13 of the first round of a 1963 fight.

That really happened, exactly as shown on-screen, which makes it unique in a movie full of distortions and outright lies.

The stunning upset in the Griffith fight was the highlight of a life that would soon go downhill fast. But for a few months after that fight, Carter truly looked like a fighter who—in the immortal words of Bob Dylan—“could have been the champion of the world.” Actually, the only way that really could have happened was if a truck ran over all of the middleweights who actually knew how to box.

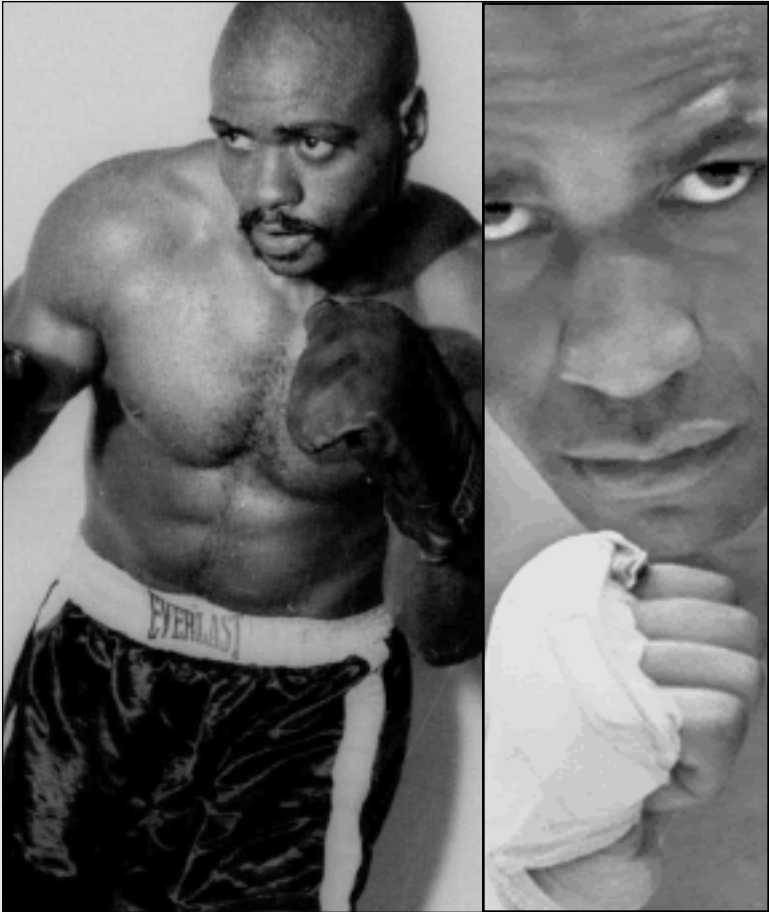
Carter was in the ring what he was in real life, brutal and thuggish. With his shaved head, goatee and evil stare, he hoped to win the fight psychologically before the physical action even began. This worked with some of the young fighters he met on the way up, but when he got a title shot it was against Joey Giardello, a tough Italian from South Philly who had never ducked a fight in his life. It didn’t work. Giardello easily solved Carter’s lunging style and then gave him a boxing lesson.

You couldn’t tell that from the movie, however. In the movie, Carter pounds Giardello all over the ring during the final rounds. The judges huddle. A half-hour later, they announce their decision. Carter is robbed. The crowd boos.

In real life, those final rounds were not so good for Carter. A Dec. 14, 1964, newspaper clipping said of Carter

that “under Giardello’s early pounding to the body and later head shots he withered over the last five rounds.” Carter lost decisively on the cards of all three judges. A poll of 18 ringside sportswriters had Giardello winning 14-4. Giardello, now 69, recently saw the movie and is threatening to sue over his portrayal. He has set up a Website (<http://www.joeygiardello.com>) that tells the truth about the bout, complete with a video.

It’s unfortunate the rest of Carter’s life wasn’t also captured on



RUBIN CARTER (LEFT) & DENZEL WASHINGTON AS CARTER (RIGHT)

video so that it could be compared against the lies on screen. The pattern of that fight scene is the pattern of the movie. Carter doesn’t lose fights; they are fixed. Carter doesn’t commit crimes; he is framed. Carter doesn’t bully people, drink, beat women or do any of the other things that he did in real life. He is an angel.

In an early scene, for example, the young Carter is shown running through Paterson, New Jersey, with some pals and playfully tugging at some shirts on sale outside a store. In real life, Carter was arrested at the age of 12 for stealing shirts from a store. His own father turned him in, exasperated by the thieving and bullying Carter had engaged in since his first contact with the law at age 9.

Then the movie shows the innocent young lad defending himself and his friends against a child molester. He throws a bottle at the molester’s head. The molester picks him up and is ready to throw him over a waterfall. Our hero pulls a knife and cuts the molester. But a racist cop pins the crime on Carter and he is sent away to reform school. He breaks out years later and joins the Army, serving honorably as a paratrooper. When his hitch is up, Carter returns to Paterson, where the racist cop tracks him down and sends him back to the reformatory. He doesn’t emerge again until age 24, when he begins his boxing career.

In real life, the only true part of

that story concerns the bottle. Carter did indeed break one over a man’s head, but he also stole the man’s wristwatch and \$55, court records show. This was his fourth juvenile arrest and the one that landed him in the slammer at age 14. He was paroled the next year and then committed another crime to violate his parole. He was jailed again and escaped. He did indeed join the Army, but his service was far from honorable. Court records show he was court-martialed four times in the 21 months before he was kicked out on May 29, 1956, with the designation: “Unfitness.”

After another stint in the reformatory, he got out and began a career of adult crime that he later described in the *Post* article. “We’d get into lots of fights, my partner and me, to see who would hit the man first. We’d get a whim and do it. I couldn’t begin to tell you how many hits, muggings and stickups. No use trying to count them.”

In the movie, Denzel Washington portrays Carter as a proud man who walks with his head held high. In real life, he descended into purse-snatching, a crime of small-minded cowardice. After a spree that included one purse-snatching and two brutal muggings on July 2, 1957, Carter was sent to adult prison. His behavior in prison was so bad that he served his maximum sentence. He was released on Sept. 16, 1961, and had his first pro fight that same week.

When Carter’s ring career was in its ascendancy, he stayed out of trouble with the law. But after the Giardello fight, he won just seven of his last 16 fights and returned to criminality. According to a prison psychiatrist who examined Carter in 1958, he was “an emotionally unstable and aggressive individual” with “a strong paranoid orientation.” It was only Carter’s boxing that kept him sane, the psychiatrist observed. He stated that when “Rubin’s ring aspirations do not exist, he will become more aggressive and it is predicted that a repetition of present involvement will occur.”

An excellent prediction, as it turned out. Carter’s career was on the ropes on the night in 1966 when two black males walked into the Lafayette Bar in Paterson and shot every white person in the joint. The prosecutor amassed a huge pile of evidence showing Carter and pal John Artis were those two men. The movie ignores this evidence and instead shows Carter socializing in a bar in another part of town when the killings occurred. And that alibi matches the testimony given by defense witnesses in Carter’s first trial, in 1967.

But in Carter’s second trial, in 1976, three key alibi witnesses admitted they lied that first time about Carter being at the bar. And a former Carter sparring partner named “Wild Bill” Hardney, who did not testify at the first trial, described at the second trial how Carter had asked him to lie and say he was at the bar with him on the night of the killing.

Carter got that second trial because a key witness against him, a

petty crook named Alfred Bello, had supposedly recanted his identification of Carter as being at the scene seven years after the trial. At the trial, Bello had testified that he was burglarizing a building near the bar when he heard the shots. He said he saw Carter—who was easily identifiable because of his shaved head and goatee—fleeing the bar with another man, both holding guns.

The alleged recantation sparked a publicity campaign that included an awful Bob Dylan song (though one particularly bad couplet, “To the black folks he was just a crazy nigger/Nobody doubted that he pulled the trigger” was ironically true. Carter had little support among the black people of Paterson whom he had terrorized for so many years.)

If Carter had been acquitted in his second trial in 1976, the Hurricane movie would have been made back then. But he wasn’t acquitted. First alibis were recanted. Then Bello took the stand and testified that his recantation had come only because Carter’s supporters had offered him bribes. And, of course, there was the unpleasant matter of that mountain of other evidence connecting Carter to the crime, including the shotgun shell and bullet found when police stopped him right after the murders in a car that exactly matched the description of the killers’ car.

It is perhaps for this reason that the movie totally skips over both trials, other than to falsely state that all-white juries were impeached for both. Instead, the movie focuses on the efforts of the members of a Canadian commune to find new evidence to free Carter after his second trial. This part of the movie is so obviously false that even Carter’s supporters are writing articles pointing out the lies, so it is not worth mentioning here except for perhaps the biggest lie of all. The character of the racist cop Vince Della Pesca—you remember him, the one who has been terrorizing Carter ever since that fictional molestation incident in the late 1940s—surfaces in the 1980s to threaten the Canadian supporters’ lives. In one unintentionally comic scene, Della Pesca emerges from the shadows to tell the Canadians to back off. In another, the front wheel falls off the Canadians’ Volvo—obvious sabotage by Della Pesca.

In real life, the Della Pesca character—whose real name was Vince DeSimone—died in 1979. There is no record that he ever did a single one of the evil acts attributed to him in the movie. Not only that, he wasn’t a racist or a thug, according to those who knew him. About the only thing the movie got right is that the actor who plays him is made up to have an unattractive face. DeSimone had a handsome face before World War II, but then a German bullet went through it. Nineteen plastic surgeries couldn’t fix it. That’s Hollywood for you. The disgraceful military career of Carter is made to look honorable and the war wound of a true hero is made to look dishonorable.

But the movie’s biggest distortion concerns the events on the evening of the killings and their impact on the decision that finally set Carter free. Earlier that evening, a black bar owner in Paterson had been shot to death by a white man. Seven hours later, two black males entered the Lafayette Bar and Grill and shot everyone in the place without attempting

a holdup.

At the 1976 trial, the prosecution argued that revenge was the motive. After the first shooting, Carter had spoken with the black victim’s relatives and had inquired about a shotgun. And Carter himself had testified to a grand jury that there was talk in the black community of “shaking,” a slang term for revenge.

But onscreen, the prosecution argues the motive was simply that the bar did not serve blacks. The movie then debunks its own lie by having a black



CARTER & WASHINGTON AT THE GOLDEN GLOBES

actress state that she and other blacks drank at the bar regularly.

This is crucial to the technicality that finally sprung Carter. After almost two decades of judge-shopping, Carter’s defense team finally had the good fortune to come up before federal Judge Lee Sarokin, the most criminal-friendly judge in the nation. Sarokin ordered a new trial on the grounds that the prosecution should not have been permitted to argue that racial revenge was the motive.

“For the state to contend that an accused has the motive to commit murder solely because of his membership in a racial group is an argument which should never be permitted to sway a jury or provide the basis of a conviction,” Sarokin wrote.

By that standard, of course, the prosecution in the Texas dragging death of James Byrd Jr. would have had to find some other motive than the racism that so clearly led to the actions of the three killers.

Even Sarokin did not state Carter was innocent or that he was framed, as the movie people keep saying. In fact, the prosecutor could have tried Carter a third time but chose not to. Witnesses had died and Carter was nearing his parole date anyway. His partner in crime Artis was already out on parole. The prosecutor had succeeded in his main goal—keeping Carter off the streets until he was too old to brutalize others.

Judge Sarokin was clearly a starstruck publicity hound who was looking for a way to set Carter free regardless of the facts. Now retired, he has joined Carter’s traveling circus and appears on TV with him. In fact, it seems like you can’t turn on the TV these days without

seeing the new, lovable Hurricane Carter.

This infuriates Carolyn Kelley. Kelley is a black community activist from Newark, N.J., who in 1974 joined the effort to free Carter at the urging of Muhammad Ali. She was and is a devout Muslim with a very optimistic view of human nature. Too optimistic.

After Carter was released on bail on March 20, 1976, for his second trial, Kelley was part of the entourage that traveled with Carter and Ali to Landover, Md., for Ali’s fight against Jimmy Young.

There was a minor mix-up over hotel rooms and Kelley had to go to Carter’s room to discuss it. For some reason—Kelley thinks it is because Carter had just had an unpleasant encounter with Wild Bill Hardney, who would soon testify about the false alibi—Carter burst into maniacal laughter when Kelley entered his room. He began gargling some cologne, apparently for the alcohol content. “Then it clicked: I had to get out of there,” she told me when I interviewed her recently. “But there he was between me and the door. I didn’t see it coming but he hit me in the face. I felt everything getting dark. I remember praying to Allah, ‘Please help me,’ and apparently Allah rolled me over and he kicked me in the back instead of the guts. Allah saved my life.”

As usual, Carter didn’t admit to the beating. He didn’t do it. He was framed. Kelley had an affair with him and was a woman scorned, Carter said. Also, she had threatened to make up the story of a beating unless he gave her \$100,000, Carter said.

Both alibis are unlikely. The journalist who broke the story, Chuck Stone of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, says that even after the beating Kelley went out of her way to keep the story out of the papers. Stone, now a journalism professor at the University of North Carolina, broke the story himself for the most valid of journalistic reasons—it was a scoop, front-page news that forever debunked Carter’s image as an innocent man.

Well, maybe not forever. Memories are short in Tinseltown. Hollywood has managed to re-create Carter once again as some sort of a gentle philosopher. Kelley saw him on the recent telecast of the Golden Globe awards lecturing the gullible showbiz audience on love.

“I sat there and my heart was beating out of my chest. I was in pain. How dare you talk about love? You can’t love anyone, even yourself.”

Her explanation of Carter’s comeback is simple: “He’s Satan, and Satan can fool a lot of people.”

The movie, of course, totally ignores the beating of Kelley. But in real life, she remains the most visible and undeniable evidence of the true nature of the man.

“If he could do that to me, a woman who was no threat to him, then he has erased in my mind any doubt that he could kill three or four innocent people,” Kelley now says.

Paul Mulshine wrote “Happy Kwanzaa” in the November/December 1999 issue of *Heterodoxy*.

PC Madness, continued from page 8

similar vein is a highly acclaimed, widely seen PBS documentary on early black filmmakers entitled *Midnight Ramble*, first broadcast in 1994. While its subject is nominally the pioneer black film director, Oscar Micheaux, the program spends so much time demonizing Griffith and *Birth* that the viewer is left with the impression the main reason blacks ever went into filmmaking at all was to respond to D. W.'s epic. In an attempt to discredit Griffith, the documentary presents as fact an alleged confrontation between Griffith and a black maid named Cora who was supposedly so upset by *Birth* that she angrily left his employ. The problem with the story is that not only did the incident never take place, the maid never existed. The incident and the character were both concoctions of Homer Croy, a white novelist and screenwriter, in his largely fictionalized 1959 "biography" of the director called *Star Maker: The Story of D. W. Griffith*. In actuality, Griffith's personal relations with blacks he knew over the years were quite warm. For example, the black actress Mme. Sul-Te-Wan who began her work in the cinema with *Birth* was one of Griffith's most loyal friends and one of the few people from the early days he was still seeing when he resided at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel toward the end of his life. She often said that if both her father and D. W. were drowning, she'd step over her father to save Griffith.

Also influencing the DGA decision (if only subliminally) were those simplistic "greatest of the century" lists that began to appear during the countdown to the millennium. Amidst great fanfare, the American Film Institute in 1998 announced their selection of the 100 greatest American films of the cinema's first century. Among them was *The Birth of a Nation* but not *Intolerance*, even though in 1977, the AFI's choice of 50 greatest American films had included both Griffith epics. By focusing only on *Birth* to the exclusion of Griffith's other works, the AFI's 1998 choice reignited the controversy and reignited the NAACP as well. Another link in the chain was *TIME*'s 1998 list of the 100 most influential figures of the 20th century. By any standards, the one motion picture director who should have been selected was the acknowledged creator of film grammar, D. W. Griffith. But aside from Chaplin (who was chosen primarily as a star), the only film director on *TIME*'s list was Steven Spielberg. Although Spielberg may be the most powerful man in Hollywood today (and some might say Washington as well), he can hardly be said to have influenced the whole course of 20th century cinema. That distinction belongs to Griffith alone. While Spielberg may have picked up an award from the NAACP and has White House connections, Griffith's political and social influence was much more profound. His work, after all, greatly impressed such leaders as Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, and even V. I. Lenin.

Given all these developments, it may be that the DGA's move against Griffith was sadly inevitable. It's not clear how many of the DGA's board members might have been motivated by genuine ideological fervor in casting the unanimous vote. Nor is it certain that any of them have a strong knowledge or appreciation of early film history. Current board members include such well-known veteran directors as Arthur Penn, John Frankenheimer, and Paul Mazursky, all of whom entered the world of filmmaking through their work in TV during the 1950s and early 1960s and were too young to have seen Griffith's major films when they were first released. (When Ezra Goodman, the last journalist to interview Griffith, met Frankenheimer in the late 1950s, he was struck by how little the newcomer from TV seemed to know about film history.) The DGA's current president, 71-year-old Jack Shea, is a failed feature film director who has earned his bread and butter by directing episodes of numerous TV series, among them, *Designing Women*, produced by the First Family's good friends, the Thomasons.

In any case, the DGA's move against Griffith is indicative of the extent to which political correctness now guides the thinking of some of the most influential

members of the Hollywood community today. Since content has been raised as the only issue in the DGA's dishonoring Griffith, Guild members have simply dug another hole for themselves in which they will struggle to find another great, departed director whose name on the award might make them feel more comfortable. With the Guild's board having established political purity in matters of race as an apparent absolute, the vast majority of Hollywood's great filmmakers from its golden age would be as unacceptable to them as Griffith, no matter how many humanistic ideals underlie much of their work. John Ford, Cecil B. DeMille, King Vidor, Frank Capra, Michael Curtiz, Howard Hawks, Lewis Milestone, William Wyler, George Stevens, John Huston—all of these and many more could also be accused of helping foster "intolerable racial stereotypes" somewhere in their films, whether



D. W. GRIFFITH

this involves the use of black comedy stereotypes, depicting Indians as merciless savages in innumerable westerns, or making anti-Japanese propaganda movies during World War II. Furthermore, the DGA's decision, in light of Hollywood's current output, is highly hypocritical. After all, as film historian Christopher Jacobs points out in an article on the controversy for *The High Plains Reader*, "the Hollywood establishment that has now rejected Griffith continues to perpetuate and encourage stereotypes—ethnic, racial, religious, and otherwise." The hypocrisy was all too evident when in a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed piece, screenwriter Ted Elliott defended the DGA's action, citing the "racism" in *Birth* as the appropriate reason for renouncing Griffith. Yet Elliott himself has been targeted for his lack of political correctness in the Disney cartoon version of *Aladdin*, which he co-authored, widely criticized by many Arab groups for what they regard as its insulting racial stereotypes of Arabs!

But even beyond the issue of racial stereotyping, there are other issues of content where the film community today comes up short. As Kevin Brownlow remarks, so much of Hollywood filmmaking today is saturated with mindless, graphic, and gratuitous violence, images whose constancy and realism have the potential for inciting people to act out what they have seen on the screen. How, then, can Hollywood's current filmmakers feel that they have a moral entitlement to disavow D. W. Griffith?

Perhaps the most unsettling thing about the DGA board's unanimous decision in repudiating Griffith is that these individuals are in theory, at least, artists themselves and, one would hope, sophisticated enough to appreciate the complexities of history and of the human heart in all its mysteries and apparent contradictions. The fact that they dropped Griffith without any exploration or discussion of his art or the rich content of his work indicates a simplistic mindset on their part, something which does not bode well for the content of current American filmmaking. Those critics who are bent on obliterated

ing Griffith from Hollywood's history would argue that what they see as the negative attitudes in *The Birth of a Nation* outweigh the artistry of his total output. Using such reasoning as this, one could contend that any artist who runs afoul of a radically changed political and cultural environment should be relegated to the dustbin of history. Yet in sharp contrast to Griffith's fate in PC-ridden America, his great Soviet counterpart, Sergei Eisenstein, continues to be officially honored in today's Russia. In film history, Griffith's name is traditionally linked with Eisenstein's as a master of montage, and Eisenstein always acknowledged his indebtedness to the American filmmaker whom he called "the grand old man of us all." As the Soviet Union began to fall apart a decade ago, it was conceivable that Eisenstein, like Griffith, might be identified with a politically incorrect version of history in his own country now that the revolution he supported and the system which had commissioned his films were discredited. Both in Russia and outside, more and more critics were dismissing Eisenstein (along with the Soviet cinema, which he had come to symbolize) as an outdated reminder of a totalitarian past that deserved to be forgotten. Like *The Birth of a Nation*, which had been blamed for America's racial ills, some writers were now claiming that Eisenstein's silent films had helped pave the way for the far greater horrors of collectivization and the purges by providing cinematic justification for these policies. As his centenary loomed, it was a matter of considerable import from the standpoint of film history how Eisenstein would be remembered (if at all) in the new post-Communist Russia. The answer came on the 100th anniversary of his birth, January 23, 1998, when the Bank of Russia issued two minted commemorative coins bearing Eisenstein's name and portrait. On the back of both is the old double-headed eagle that has supplanted the hammer and sickle of the Communist regime. But what has not been supplanted in the new Russia is an abiding respect for the cinematic genius whose works stirred audiences around the world.

Eisenstein, of course, became the ultimate martyr to an orthodox, politically correct view of history when his cinematic depiction of Ivan the Terrible's tyranny caused a rift with Stalin that hounded him to an early grave. Despite periods of repression like World War I, the America of Griffith's day, by contrast, allowed for a diversity of historical interpretation, paradoxically preventing the country from fragmentation. Thus, Griffith's presentation of the suffering and sacrifice of the old South in *The Birth of a Nation* coexisted with the graphic depictions of the horrors of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most often filmed story in the silent era. The same audiences that thrilled to the stirring portrayals of the Western movement in *The Covered Wagon* and *The Iron Horse* were moved by the dramatization of the plight of Western expansion's foremost victims, the American Indian, in films like *The Vanishing American*. W. S. Van Dyke's *White Shadows in the South Seas* also attacked racism.

For those whose imaginations have been formed within the tunnel vision of political correctness, however, the past does not exist. Only now in this alleged enlightened age of "diversity" and "multi-culturalism" are the American people finally being instructed in the evils of racism. As evidenced by the DGA's dishonoring of Griffith, such PC triumphalism has inevitably struck a chord with the current Hollywood establishment heedless of its own tradition and forever claiming, in the true spirit of commercialism, that the new is better than the old. The Guild's action in removing the most significant commemoration of the director in the film capital is all too indicative of the narrow view of history they want to impose on the rest of us. In their hands, "today is the first day of the rest of your life" is a totalitarian slogan.

—By William Drew



William Drew has written several books on film history, including D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance: Its Genesis and Its Vision*.

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"The beginning wage was \$1.25 an hour at a time when the minimum wage was 50 cents. We were required to work 68 hours a week. We got a 15 percent bonus for taking the night shift so I took the night shift. I made a couple of thousand in the summer which was riches then. This is what put me through college and law school."

The tough road Graglia has traveled affected his political views: "Being self-supporting since age 13 perhaps makes one less sympathetic to plights or less guilt-ridden about the advantages one has had. I am certainly not complaining. I have gratitude. One difference between liberals and conservatives is that liberals are upset that the world is not better while conservatives are gratified that it is not worse. I recently debated several critical legal theorists at Harvard who said the system had to be destroyed because it is so evil due to the huge inequalities. I said, what system can we substitute? They said, we can worry about that later. I said, as someone who came from no wealth or social status with a weird name, and am now addressing Harvard Law, you can never convince me that there are not worse systems."

Graglia is sensible of the irony in his current situation: that finds himself on the far right of academia for defending the very meritocratic system that allowed him and others from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed. It was through grades and standardized exams—aspects of The System now under assault—that got Graglia into New York's City College, which was then highly selective, and Columbia Law School. Graglia counts himself lucky to have entered the academy and law profession in the early 1950s, when who you were was beginning to replace who you knew as a qualification for a job. However, this transition was not quite complete, as Graglia found out when he, along with all other Jews and Italians, were the only Columbia students on the law review not to receive offers from Wall Street firms. Graglia had to look to the public sector and took a position in the U.S. Justice Department.

After an avalanche of criticism and threats in the wake of his 1997 remarks about the consequences of a culture of poverty, Graglia received grudging support from liberal black intellectuals William Raspberry and Bob Herbert who both conceded in their syndicated columns that his observations were essentially correct and urged the black community to put greater emphasis on academic achievement. Hugh Price, head of the National Urban League, acknowledged, "We haven't surrounded our young people with enough opportunities to excel academically and to be recognized for excelling. We haven't had the rituals in our own community that reward young people for doing well."

In fact, there has been no refutation of the studies cited by Graglia, which find that Asian American students spend the most time doing homework and the least time watching television while black students, on average, do just the opposite. In part of Graglia's 1997 remarks that were never mentioned in media reports, he pointed out how Asian students have surpassed whites in academic achievement despite obstacles such as learning a new language. Of course, the willingness of the son of Italian immigrants to acknowledge the superior academic performance of Asians in comparison with whites has not stopped campus leftists from labeling Graglia a "white supremacist."

However, there is mounting evidence that cultural differences are responsible for disparities in academic achievement. Studies have long linked Jewish students' academic success with the strong emphasis placed on education in most Jewish homes. More recently, research by John Ogbu and Signithia Fordham, most notably their landmark study "Black Students, School Success: Coping with the Burden of 'Acting White,'" has concluded,

"What appears to have emerged in some segments of the black community is a kind of cultural orientation which defines academic learning in school as 'acting white' and academic success as the prerogative of white Americans. This orientation involves both social pressures against striving for academic success and a fear of striving for academic success."

In addition to staking out a position on the issue of race, culture, and academic achievement, Graglia has also been involved in the debate over affirmative action. In 1971, he wrote what was possibly the first law review article opposing racial preferences in the *Pennsylvania Law Review*. "It took some guts for the *PLR* to publish my article," he recalls. "They would only do it if they could simultaneously publish a refu-



LINO GRAGLIA AND CLINT BOLICK

tation—this has been a familiar experience for me. So they got Derek Bell [a leftist Harvard professor] to write an article alongside mine. Most of his piece castigates the *PLR* for publishing my article."

Graglia's writings on racial preferences in higher education antagonizes the left because they pay no lip service to the facades of "outreach" and "diversity." Graglia explains, "How do you justify preferring some people on the basis of race and thereby disadvantaging others? In the education context, we're talking about very large preferences: at the University of Texas Law School, the automatic "reject" grade for whites and Asians was higher than the automatic "accept" grade for blacks and Mexican Americans. The main justification given is that it's a remedy for blacks who were mistreated and oppressed in this country's past. But giving racial preferences to some groups and not to others is in no way a recompense for that."

If in fact the legal and political debate is coming around to Graglia's position on racial preferences, it will not be the first time that he was ahead of the curve. Court-ordered racial busing began in 1971 with the *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg* decision, which eventually affected thousands of school districts across the nation. Following this decision, the opposition to busing, according to the media, consisted primarily of uneducated Southern segregationists. That perception changed in 1976 when Graglia's influential book *Disaster by Decree* came out. Following the book, Graglia was invited to speak at anti-busing rallies throughout the country and published articles on the subject in the *National Review* and other magazines.

Graglia explains, "It struck me from the beginning that the idea of classifying people on the basis for race for different treatment was a prescription for racial separation and hostility.

Busing did not increase integration but rather separation, because whites left cities and public school systems. I had argued that on practical grounds and it turned out to be true. I also argued that blacks would not get an educational benefit."

While Graglia's public profile is inextricably linked with issues of race, his legal expertise goes far beyond these areas. He has written and taught extensively on a broad range of issues in constitutional law as well as antitrust law. As with racial preferences and busing, Graglia's view of constitutional law stands in sharp contrast to that of most of his colleagues. Graglia believes the Supreme Court plays far too great a role in American life and wishes to leave all topics not explicitly covered in the Constitution in the hands of the American people through their elected representatives. Graglia is especially critical of the kind of judicial activism embodied in *Roe v. Wade* where the Court "created a new right out of whole cloth." Graglia laments that, with a sharply divided Supreme Court, one unelected, unaccountable lawyer can effectively decide enormously complicated and controversial social issues for the entire nation. Graglia's majoritarian impulse runs so deep that, in a recent speech before the Young Conservatives of Texas, he raised the question of whether constitutionalism itself amounts to "rule of the living by the dead."

Needless to say, what the Democrats did to Robert Bork would pale in comparison to what would happen to Graglia if he were nominated to be on the Supreme Court. The closest Graglia has gotten to the institution he views so skeptically is through his wife, who clerked for future Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger. Graglia met his wife Kay (short for Carolyn) while they worked on the *Columbia Law Review*. In fact, it was Kay who was highly sought after upon their graduation. She ended up taking an offer to work in the Eisenhower Attorney General's office with the condition that they also offer her husband a position.

Kay worked for Burger, who was then assistant attorney general in charge of the civil division. When he was appointed by Eisenhower to the Court of Appeals in 1956, he asked Kay to come to be his first law clerk. Graglia recalls, "After her clerkship concluded, we had planned to go back to New York, but Burger recommended to Kay that she go talk to Covington and Burling, which was the most prestigious law firm in Washington. They hired almost exclusively Supreme Court clerks. Kay really liked Washington and got an offer. She says I got this husband and they said send him around. They made me an offer too."

Several years later, the Graglias' first child arrived and they returned to New York. Lino worked at a firm there while Kay chose to stay at home. Kay Graglia's decision to cut short her legal career despite being at the very pinnacle of the field became the subject of her 1998 book *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief Against Feminism*. The book has been described by the *Dallas Morning News* as "a 451-page testament to why she is unlikely to replace Patricia Ireland as National Organization for Women president."

Appearing on CSPAN's *Booknotes*, Kay discussed the origin of her book: "Actually, I started thinking about the book way back in 1965. I decided to write that book when our youngest daughter was only a few months old. And I was home one night—I remember the night that I thought, 'Someday, I'm going to write a book.' I was home waiting for her to wake up. She was an infant. It was nighttime. Lino—by then, he was working on Wall Street and we were living in the New Jersey suburbs. And I was waiting for my daughter—my youngest daughter, the baby, to wake up to be nursed. And Lino wouldn't get home until late on the 11:00 train. And I was reading the *Feminine Mystique*, which had been recommended by a friend. And when I read the things that Betty Friedan said about the

housewife, about me, a mother waiting for her baby to wake up to be nursed, I couldn't believe what I was reading. She said that we were parasites, we were dependent children, we had no real function, we were less than fully human. Here was Betty Freidan saying that I was 'a waste of a human self' and that I should leave my three darlings and have them raised by a nanny. And I thought to myself, someday, I'm going to answer this book. And from then on, everything I read I evaluated in terms of its relevance to defending the homemaker and domesticity."

While Kay Graglia would not attempt to prevent women from entering the workforce, she says motherhood "opened a whole new world to

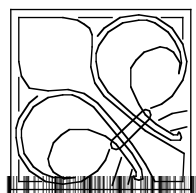
me; that there's a lot more than being a market producer. The workplace may be a fun place when you're single or when you don't have children, but once you have children and the feminine, the female part of you takes over, you can become a very different person. And that's what I have called 'awakened femininity.'"

Kay dedicated *Domestic Tranquility* to her husband. "It was because of this tremendously satisfying marital relationship," she says, "that I ever was able to feel secure enough not to need the security of a job. It takes a lot of courage to give up a job when that's been your whole identity. And it's because he made me feel so good about myself just as a woman that I didn't need

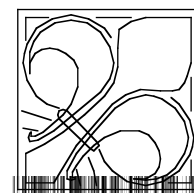
to have that job. And, of course, he's the foundation of it because he's the one who supported me all these years."

Whether one is looking for an eloquent refutation of racial preferences or an incisive condemnation of modern feminism, it can be found under one roof in Austin, Texas. As for those on the left, even they must admit that the Graglias were made for each other.

Marc Levin is a law student at the University of Texas, editor emeritus of the Austin Review, and executive director of the Campaign for a Colorblind America.



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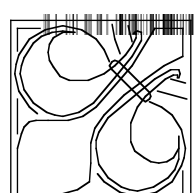
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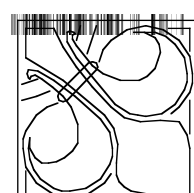


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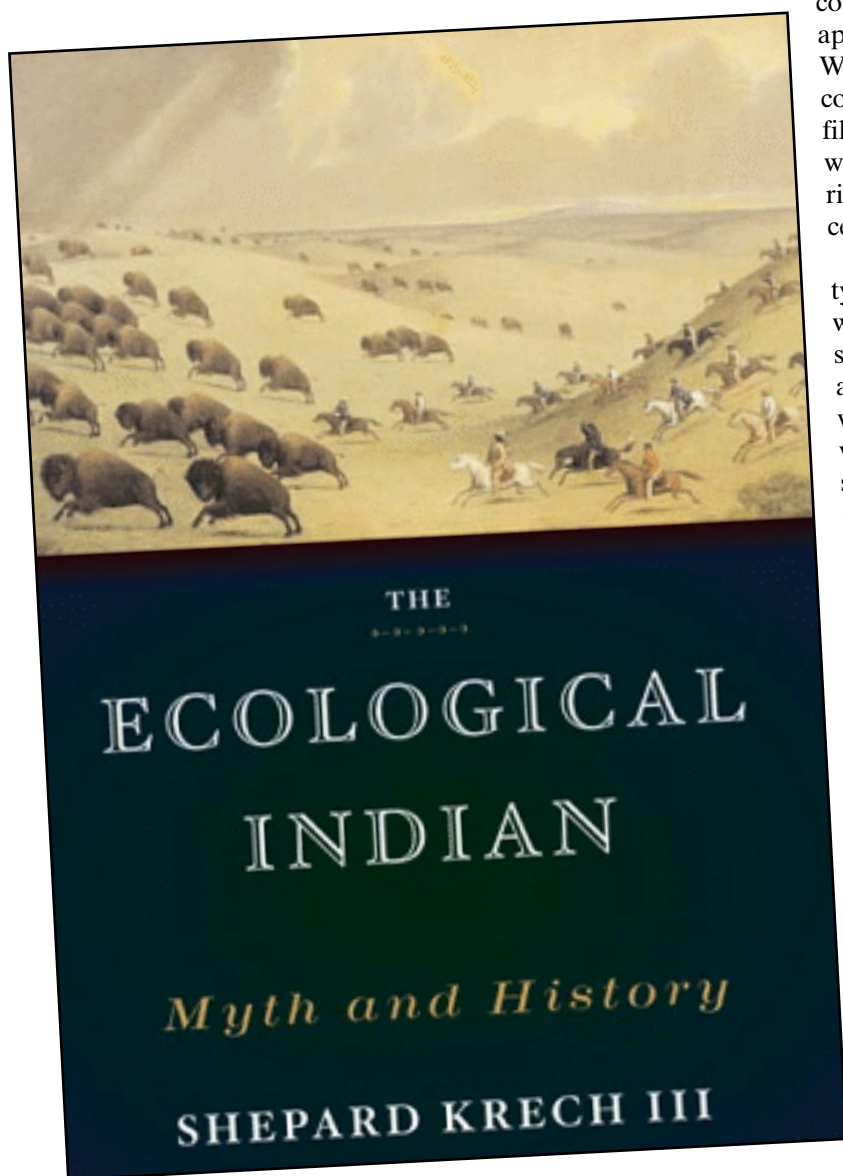
R E V I E W

The First Litterers

The Ecological Indian: Myth and History

by Shepard Krech III
W. W. Norton & Company, 1999, 318 pp.,
\$27.00

REVIEWED BY GLYNN CUSTRED



Almost from the very start, stereotypes of the American Indian have been exploited by Europeans (and later by their American descendants) both to criticize and to glorify their own societies. The earliest version goes back to the sixteenth century, which depicted the idealized Indian in America as living “in the manner of the Golden Age.” Such Enlightenment figures as Montaigne, Chateaubriand, Lahotan, and, most influentially, Rousseau elaborated this stereotype into the image of the Noble Savage who was described as an innocent, honorable, and wise child of Nature living in a kind of Eden still uncorrupted by the evils of civilization. Rousseau and his contemporaries, however, were far less interested in the primitive virtues of the distant “savage” than they were in using his purported nobility to criticize their own society. In this way, the New World, as one historian puts it, was used as “a stick to beat the old.”

In the United States, contact between Indians and settlers was one of often violent conflict. Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt, in his history *The Winning of the West* reminds us that westward expansion was primarily a feat of conquest; the conquest of a “howling wilderness,” as the conquerors saw it, and of its inhabitants, the Wild Indian, who had to be tamed or removed if Progress were to prevail. The more distant the frontier, however, the more this stereotype mellowed. An increasingly urban population in the late nineteenth century began to view the wilder-

ness and the Indian through a haze of romantic nostalgia, and as the Conquest drew to a close the image of the Noble Savage was altered to meet the requirements of a triumphant nation.

According to this version the Indian was indeed cruel and cunning, yet he still possessed nobility as seen in his unquestioned courage and in his martial virtues. In this way the Noble Savage became the Worthy Adversary against which the heroic progress of a great nation could be measured and properly appreciated. The Indian as Worthy Adversary, depicted in countless novels and Hollywood films, thus became a part of the way the nation imagined and glorified itself for more than half a century.

In the 1960s, the stereotype changed again. The Indian was shorn of his martial virtues, since martial virtues were out, and in its place his victimization was stressed, since victimization was in. Also the sensitive, gentle side of the Indian as a pristine child of Nature was reasserted. The most elaborate expression of this image is found in a book entitled *The Conquest of Paradise*, written in 1990 by a veteran of the Sixties Left, Kirkpatrick Sale. Sale extolled the moral and the ecological perfection of pre-contact Native America and railed against the European intrusion that destroyed that pristine paradise and violated Mother Earth. The villains in this unmitigated disaster, said Sale, were Columbus and all those who followed him, bringing with them an inherently corrupt and corrupting civilization that lived on, to Sale’s grave disapproval, in

his own country and in his own time. In this way Sale appropriated with little change the image used by Rousseau and his contemporaries, thus taking up an eighteenth century European stick to beat late twentieth century American society.

Both the Noble and the Ignoble Savage have been closely tied to Nature whether Nature was perceived as a hostile wilderness or an idyllic paradise. The sharpest visual image of the latter was created for a PR campaign designed to advance the environmental movement, a modern day nature cult, which had become an integral part of the adversary culture. Iron Eyes Cody is an Indian actor and veteran of many western films depicting the Indian as Worthy Adversary. In 1971 he was hired to become the poster boy for the environmental campaign. His familiar and truly noble face was shown nationwide with a tear trickling down his cheek. Above this image were the words, “pollution: it’s a crying shame.” The “crying Indian” thus became the logo of the movement, and the Ecological Indian (the latest manifestation of the Noble Savage) became its mascot.

But what about the real people behind this five-hundred-year-old stereotype? What was their real relationship with the environment? Were they passive children of Nature running carefree and happy through some pristine Eden? Were they imbued with some special wisdom that made them sensitive stewards of a balanced Nature and protectors of Mother Earth? Or were they people, like people elsewhere, who had a complex and not always harmonious relationship with their environment?

This is the question posed by anthropologist Shepard Krech III in his book *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. Krech begins with a brief summary of the myth of the Noble Indian and its exploitation in Europe and America. He then goes to the archeological and historical records and to current events in order to examine, as he puts it, “the fit between one of the most durable images of the American Indian and

American Indian behavior.” He begins his investigation with the Late Pleistocene, a time some 11,000 years ago, when a number of species mysteriously disappeared in the Americas, among them the horse, camel, mammoth, mastodon, and giant sloth. One theory lays the blame on ancient hunters known as Paleoindians. According to this theory, Paleoindians were “superpredators” who slaughtered enormous numbers of megafauna, wasting half of what they killed, thus leading to the extinction of entire species.

Krech argues that the theory is flawed since climatic fluctuations have not been taken into account. He argues, though, that to leave out human agency in the process would be just as wrong. In support of this claim he points to Polynesia and especially Madagascar where pre-modern human populations played a role in the extinction of various species. Logic and historical analogy thus support the view that Paleoindians did indeed play a role in the disappearance of those species, a view not at all in line with the politically correct stereotype of the Ecological Indian.

Archeology also tells us that early Indians were far from the careful and frugal hunters of the current stereotype. One method used to kill buffalo in both ancient and historical times was the drive. Large numbers of animals were driven into enclosures where they were slaughtered, especially the preferred cows and calves. In other places, whole herds of buffalo were driven over cliffs. One archeological site which illustrates this method is found in southern Alberta and is appropriately known as the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Ancient bones and soil at the foot of the cliff measure thirty feet deep where buffalo crashed by the hundreds to their deaths. Afterwards only some of the kill was used, mostly those on top of the great heaps of dead animals. Also, in every case of over abundance the game was only “lightly butchered.” That is, only preferred parts were taken leaving the rest “to rot in the field” as one nineteenth-century observer noted. Krech observes that “with tens (or even hundreds) of thousands of buffaloes in sight each year there was no compelling reason to curb waste.” Nor does it seem that buffalo hunters ever made any effort to do so.

When fire was used in such drives, or as a weapon against enemy tribes, it often killed hundreds of animals and left the survivors badly burned to die a slow and agonizing death. The description by a nineteenth-century traveler of miles of scorched earth and pitifully injured and dying beasts would doubtless have brought another trickle down the cheek of Iron Eyes Cody if indeed he had been there to see it for himself.

Evidence recently presented by historians also indicates that Plains Indians were already massively reducing buffalo herds before the *coup de grace* was given at the end of the nineteenth century by white hunters slaughtering buffalo by the thousands for the market. This process was the result of lavish consumption on the part of the Indians and, after 1840, hunting for the market. It was also compounded by increasing competition for grazing lands from increasing herds of Indian ponies.

Indian activity, however, not only affected wild life, it probably also accounts for the disappearance of one Indian culture, namely the highly developed Hohokam culture that flourished in the American Southwest between 400 B.C. and 1,000 A.D. The “Vanished Ones,” as modern Pima and Papago Indians describe them, built cities and an elaborate network of canals that allowed them to irrigate large stretches of the desert. Krech shows how the environmental effects of that kind of farming may well explain the disappearance of the Hohokam culture long before the arrival of the first Spanish explorers.

Krech believes that some activities of pre-contact Indians were indeed wasteful or otherwise detrimental to the environment. However, the relatively small populations at the time prevented those activities from impacting nature in a major way. What brought the near extinction of not only the buffalo but other species in historical times was the eager and active participation of the Indian in the booming trade in furs and skins.

Critics fault European and, later, American traders for corrupting Indians with commerce. Yet the Indians were engaged in trade long before the arrival of the Europeans. And when Europeans offered such valuable commodities as knives, axes, iron kettles, and guns along with luxury and prestige items like jewelry and dry goods, Indians did not hesitate to enter the trade, exchanging for them mundane items for commodities of high value. In fact, one seventeenth century Montagnais Indian of Canada told a Jesuit missionary that “the English have no sense. They give us twenty knives like this for one beaver skin.” Krech also tells us in passing that it was not the Indian who tried unsuccessfully to implement conservation practices, but rather colonial and, later, state legislatures. He also shows how certain Indian hunting practices in Canada probably originated from conservation policies advocated by the Hudson Bay Company.

Those are some of the negative aspects of the Indians’ active relationship with their environment. Krech also shows us a degree of sophistication of even hunters and gatherers in manipulating the environment for their own purposes. For example, fire was routinely used to clear forests and create meadows rich with berries or as forage for deer or to increase the yield of grass seeds. In fact, Krech believes that the natural environment

of North America had long been molded and shaped by practices such as these as well as by agriculture. He argues that the rapid decimation of the native population due to European diseases allowed the natural environment to recover to a point where the environment appeared as a wilderness to those who finally came *en masse* to develop it. In this respect, says Krech, the pioneers inherited not a “virgin” but rather a “widowed” country.

Krech ends his study with a brief description of the present situation. Tribes today, he shows, make decisions that sometime please and at other times infuriate environmentalists. “In Indian Country as in the larger society,” he says, “conservation is often sacrificed for economic security.” Indeed that might be said of earlier times before the coming of the European and his American descendant when Indian Country stretched all across the continent.

The conclusions Krech draws from his carefully reasoned and well-documented study are that “images of noble or ignoble indigenusness, including the Ecological Indian, are ultimately dehumanizing” for they “deny both variation within human groups and commonalities between them.” To say, as the stereotype suggests, that Native Americans left no trace on the land “demeans the Indians.” In this respect historian

Richard White observes that “it makes them look like an animal species, and thus deprives them of culture.” But Indians are humans who, like all other humans elsewhere, have shown a great and rich range of cultural variation over a long period; a richness to which no facile stereotype in service to another people can ever do justice.

Many anthropologists have all too often fallen into stereotypic thinking of their own. One example is the excessive and unreflective use of cultural relativism. Another is the acceptance of stereotypes useful in advancing political agendas but interfering with accurate descriptions of people in human terms. Robert Edgerton deals with the excesses of relativism in his book *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony* (1992). Now Shepard Krech has addressed a distorting political stereotype in *The Ecological Indian*. It is hoped that more scholars in that and related professions will follow their lead so that all of us can better understand the true range of human variation and its long and complex history.

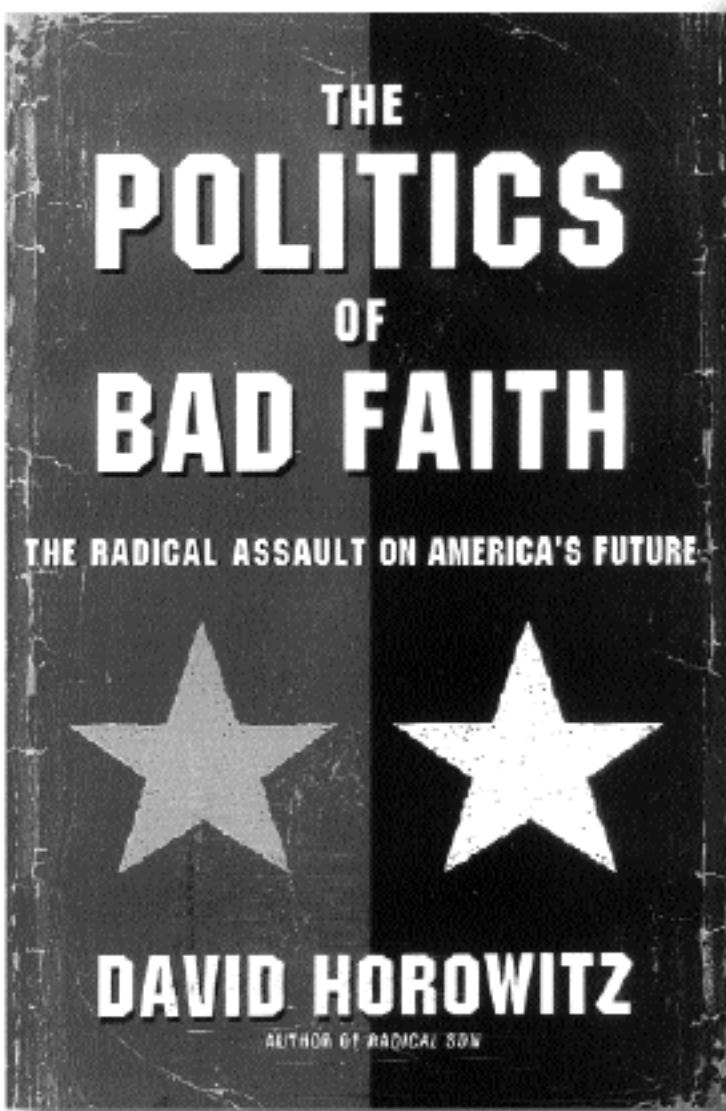
Glynn Custred teaches anthropology at the California State University at Hayward.



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STRANGER THAN FACT

Three-Year-Old Seeks Reinstatement to Preschool

by Judith Schumann Weizner

Yvonne and Jeff Krieger, parents of three-year-old Herbie Krieger, have filed suit against the Marion Wright Edelman Federal Child Care Center and Preschool in the upstate community of Gap, New York, to have their son’s expulsion from the school on weapons charges overturned.

Expulsion is automatic for violators of the school’s strict no-weapons policy, but depending on which definition of “weapon” the court accepts, the tot’s penalty could be reduced to suspension.

The outcome of any weapons inquiry at any level of the federal school system is significant because weapons allegations become a permanent part of each student’s Academic Narrative.

The current complaint is not Herbie’s first problem with school authorities. Last year, shortly after the beginning of the fall term, he was suspended for cultural insensitivity. According to school director Betty Sweete, young Krieger punched a child who had stepped on his foot, and, instead of apologizing, insisted that the other boy had hurt him, thus violating the school’s zero tolerance policy on unresolved conflict.

The Kriegers insist that Herbie only struck the other boy when he refused to get off their son’s instep after repeatedly being asked to remove himself. The boys’ teacher, Jennifer Nighce, reported that she had heard Herbie ask the other boy only once before hitting him, but several children said they had heard Herbie, whom they call Kevin, say “getoffgetoffgetoff” seconds before the fight erupted.

At Herbie’s hearing before the school’s Sensitivity Panel, Ms. Nighce explained that the other child had actually been expressing his liking for “Kevin,” as he comes from a cultural background in which close physical proximity is the norm. Her Cultural Values Inculcation Report on the incident did indicate that she had attempted to enlighten “Kevin” as to the other child’s cultural framework. The report also noted that “Kevin” had not seemed to grasp the concept and repeatedly insisted that his foot hurt, even after being given a time out to think over what Ms. Nighce had said.

When Herbie was asked to tell the Panel whether he had learned anything from the incident, he said he had learned that he should never do at home what he learned in school. Pressed to elaborate, he said his parents had told him that stepping on his little brother’s foot was not an acceptable way to show his love. The Panel determined that the Krieger family exhibited signs of obtuseness and placed “Kevin” in the Gray Group for intensive observation of the appropriateness of his responses. It also made his continued enrollment in the school contingent upon the Kriegers’s attendance at its six-week seminar “Teaching the Three-Year-Old to Apply School Lessons to Everyday Situations.”

One month after his parents had completed the seminar, “Kevin” was allowed to return to the Yellow Group, and shortly after that, when Ms. Nighce observed that he did not punch a student who had put a worm in his soup, he was promoted to the Green Group and allowed to play with the EarthSavers Diorama.

But within two weeks, “Kevin” found himself

in trouble again, after Ms. Nighce observed him offering a piece of hard candy to the same child who had been responsible for his difficulties with the Sensitivity Panel. (Ever since a Chicago twelve-year-old suffocated his baby sister by forcing her to eat a CherryRock jaw-breaker, hard candy has been forbidden in federal child-care facilities.) Intensive questioning by the school psychologist failed to turn up any evidence that “Kevin” had been attempting to avenge himself on the other



HERBIE KRIEGER

child, and he was simply charged with bringing contraband to school, suspended for a month, and placed on the school’s list of Potentially Violent Offenders for observation.

According to all accounts, when he returned to school he was a model student. The third quarter report praised his ability to get along with his playmates so highly that he was reportedly being considered for the school’s Rodney King Fellowship Award. No one seems to have foreseen what followed.

The incident occurred on May 23 when two armed gunmen robbed a bank in the shopping center across the street from the preschool. “Kevin” and another student had been playing “Barney Loves Me” when the commotion outside drew the students to the windows. As they watched the robbers running from the bank shooting at the police, “Kevin” pointed his finger at them and yelled “bang, bang, bang” until one of them fell. The Disturbing Incident Report states that he subsequently slipped his hand into his pocket as if holstering a pistol.

The Kriegers’ lawyers are expected to argue that Herbie did not violate the weapons policy because all the students bring their fingers to school every day and are not penalized for doing so. They are likely to recommend that he be charged with the lesser offense of inappropriate pointing, generally regarded as a violation of the sensitivity code, a serious offense, but not grounds for automatic expulsion. Jury selection is slated to begin next week.

The Marion Wright Edelman Federal Child Care Center and Preschool at Gap (formerly Fools’ Gap) is one of the first of the Federal Family Harmony Administration (FFHA) preschools established several years ago under the Federal Family Income

Preservation Act of 2001 (FFIPA). The purpose of the FFIPA is to enable families to reap the benefits of having both parents in the workplace without imposing the costs of daycare on them. Instead of charging tuition, FFHA preschools are funded by the federal 12.8 percent tax on toy weapons, but in recent months sales of such toys have flagged, resulting in lower tax revenues. The FFHA has reportedly commissioned a study to support a request to Congress to levy a tax on all items that have the potential to be used violently.

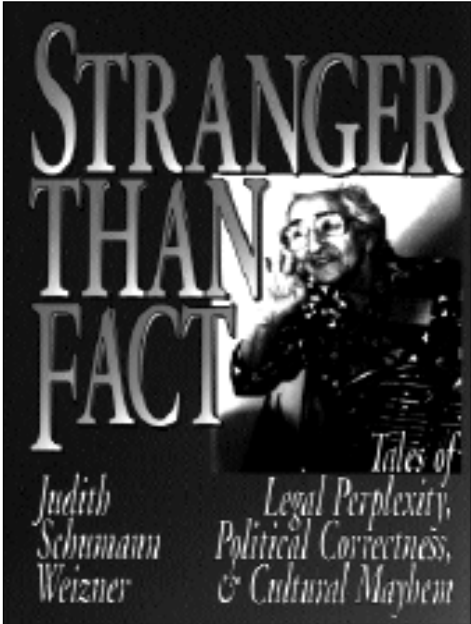
FFHA preschools are expected to have a great impact on the way Americans will relate to each other in the future. Since the stated goal of the Federal Family Harmony Administration is to eliminate violence in our society by the year 2010, the preschools have implemented several innovative policies endorsed by the International Psychology Institute (IPI), including its novel approach to naming.

Research conducted by the IPI shows that parents tend to name their babies either after relatives or according to the way the name sounds in connection with their surname, but often with scant regard for the actual meaning of the name. A fourteen-year IPI study of five children showed a 53.6 percent greater inclination to violence among children whose names carried violent connotations (for example, “Oscar,” which means “leaping warrior,” or “Judith,” the name of a notorious assassin). When children having names with such connotations enroll in FFHA preschools they are given new names to be used at all times on school property or while taking part in school-sponsored activities. In this way, Herbie Krieger, whose name means “bright warrior” was re-named “Kevin Renfred,” meaning “kind peacemaker.” (In the first year of the FFHA preschools’ existence, the parents of William Godfrey sued to have their son be allowed to retain his name, but the Supreme Court found that because the school was federally funded, it had the obligation to remove all references to the deity. A year later, a black child named Blanche was given the name Melanie because school officials felt that her name sent conflicting signals and would ultimately confuse her as to her true identity. This case, *Blackwood v. Sprewell Early Childhood Developmental Center* is still making its way through the courts, its progress slowed by bomb threats and repeated demonstrations by members of the Coalition for a Black Peace in front of the court building where it is being heard.)

If the Kriegers are unsuccessful in contesting their son’s expulsion, Herbie will be banned from all federal preschools and will be required to complete five years of counseling and remedial study before being allowed to enter kindergarten.

According to a report in yesterday’s *Gap Gazette*, the Kriegers have not yet decided whether to let their son return to the Marion Wright Edelman Preschool at Gap if they prevail or to claim their one-time privilege of educational relocation and register him in the J. Reno Federal Preschool in near-by Gully.

Next month the Kriegers must answer charges stemming from their son’s transportation of contraband jaw breakers.



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