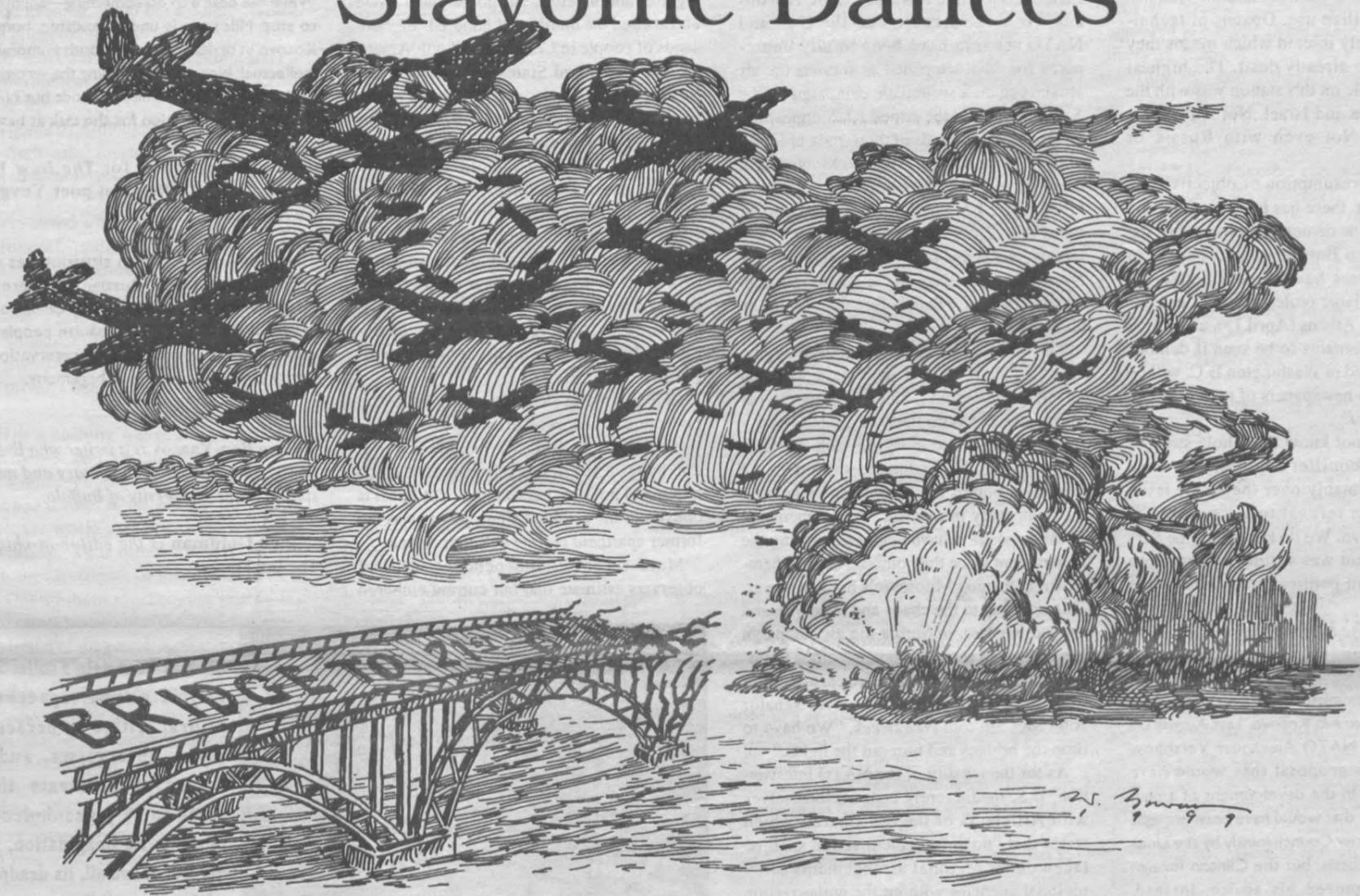


The BOOKPRESS

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Slayonic Dances



Cara Ben-Yaacov &
Jack Goldman

As the war in Yugoslavia continues to escalate it is becoming increasingly apparent that the United States and NATO are putting their own interests ahead of even the Kosovars they are claiming to help. Last Saturday, NATO missiles destroyed a bus in central Kosovo, killing more than 20 civilians. This latest NATO misstep provides a macabre counterpoint to the unexpected release by the Serbs of three captured American servicemen. U.S. officials rejected the request of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who helped to free the soldiers, to stop the bombing for even one night as a reciprocal gesture.

The manner in which U.S. diplomats continue to dance around every proposal for serious negotiations raises the question of whether NATO would rather continue to sacrifice innocent lives than settle for less than unconditional surrender by the Serbs.

In an interview with United Press International on April 30, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic offered the following in exchange for a cessation of bombing and withdrawal of NATO troops from Albania and Macedonia:

—Immediate return of all refugees to their homes in Kosovo.

—Withdrawal of 90 percent of Serbian troops "within a week."

—Permission for the United Nations to establish "a huge presence" of peacekeepers who could be armed for self defense.

—Wide autonomy for Kosovo, but not total independence.

At a news conference in Washington, Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright responded, "I think we are not anywhere near a serious proposal." Apparently, the U.S. will accept nothing less than a NATO-led army of occupation, that may have to fight its way into Kosovo.

Even if one remains skeptical of Milosevic's promises, would not "a huge" U.N. presence be adequate to maintain a peace agreement? Does it make sense to reject this offer—even as a basis for further negotiations—in order to continue the bombing campaign with its attendant civilian casualties and further displacements of refugees?

In an earlier incidence of NATO's multiplying miscalculations, *The New York Times* carried a front-page photograph of destroyed tractors. The metal carts behind them were buckled and twisted like unmade beds. In the foreground, two mutilated corpses lay in stocking feet. For several days, NATO spokesmen could not decide if the casualties were Serb soldiers who had been hit and then dressed to look like civilians, or ethnic Albanians killed by the Serbs. Finally, it was admitted that an "errant" NATO missile had indeed struck the convoy of farm vehicles. It was simply a "mistake" like NATO's "unintentional" firing pass that demolished a train full of Serbian civilians in early April.

The most recent mistake in NATO's strategic strikes happened when missiles targeting a Serbian military training site went off course. NATO claims there was

only one "errant missile," but two separate neighborhoods in southern Serbia were hit. One of the missiles caused, according to National Public Radio, "a crater thirty feet wide," and "swallowed up a three-story building, killing at least twenty civilians, six of them children." ABC radio news reported that the wreckage was so severe that the civilians in the building had been reduced to "bones and melted flesh sticking to sheets." They also reported that "seven legs have been found, but so far no bodies."

When NATO strikes kill innocent civilians, the vocabulary employed to describe these events is replete with words like "mistake," "accident," and "collateral damage." What is generally left unsaid is that such attacks are the entirely predictable consequence of a deliberate strategy which is willing to accept civilian casualties in order to avoid politically unpalatable military losses of our own.

The skillfully executed media campaign

on the war in Kosovo has made massive air strikes on civilian facilities synonymous with the word "humanitarian," rather than violations of international law. This word "humanitarian" provides us with more than just a rationale for our "accidents," it becomes a mission and, like all good media campaigns, makes us want more. As Thomas Friedman put it in his *New York Times* column, "Twelve days of surgical bombing was never going to turn Serbia around. Let's see what twelve weeks of less than surgical bombing does. Give war a chance."

Shortly after pictures of civilian dead began to be released, *The New York Times* printed an article on a bombed civilian convoy with a pull-quote that read, "Nothing like a parade of corpses to sour support for the war." These corpses, of course, were once Kosovars, the same Kosovar corpses that we were horrified to see when Serbian forces were the perpetrators. But now they

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Cornell '69. A Retrospective

A special issue re-examining the events surrounding the Willard Straight Hall Takeover on April 30, 1999

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Glenn Altschuler, and James McConkey

Slavonic Dances

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had been cynically transformed into a "parade" staged by the Serbs to manipulate us. It was the beginning of the end for Yugoslav media. Not a week later, NATO began its attacks on Serbian television stations, radio stations, and print media which were used, according to President Clinton, to "spew hatred and to basically spread disinformation."

Mirko Mandrino, a telecommunications specialist and democratic activist who lives in Pancevo, recalls the destruction of Earth Station Yugoslavia 1, saying, "This night bombs and missiles smashed totally satellite communication stations in Ivanjica. It was our pride, our ears and connection to Intelstat and Eutelstat communication systems, for purely civilian use. Dozens of technicians are heavily injured which means they will die or are already dead. The highest amount of traffic on this station was with the USA, Australia and Israel. Not with Cuba, Libya, Iraq. Not even with Russia or Belarus."

As for the presumption of objectivity in the U.S. media, there has been scant coverage of worldwide demonstrations against the bombing. Even European newspapers in NATO countries have done a better job reporting very large protest marches in London (April 11), Athens (April 13), and Rome (April 10). It remains to be seen if demonstrations planned in Washington D.C. will be noticed in such newspapers of record as *The New York Times*.

We still do not know the whole story of why the Rambouillet negotiations were aborted, presumably over the single issue of the Serbian refusal to accept NATO forces in Kosovo. We do know that the Serbian government was willing to sign on to most significant political provisions of the agreement.

Writing in *The Nation* (May 10), William D. Hartung notes,

The Clinton Administration never really gave diplomacy a chance in Kosovo. Last August US ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow was pressing a proposal that would have engaged Russia in the development of a plan for a settlement that would have been brought to the UN Security Council jointly by the United States and Russia, but the Clinton foreign policy team ignored his advice. Instead, according to Robert Hayden, a Balkans expert at the University of Pittsburgh, the Administration's proposal at Rambouillet would have given NATO forces free rein to roam unmolested throughout the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia, a concession that no sovereign nation would ever accept.

Equally disturbing has been the instantaneous rewriting of recent events, leading people to believe that our only choice was to start bombing in order to stop a massive

Serbian assault on the Kosovars.

Yet, according to an official report by a U.N. team of observers (*The New York Times*, 4/1/99), from October 1998 to February 1999, fewer than 100 civilian deaths (including Serbs killed by the KLA) could be accounted for in Kosovo. It is true that both sides had violated a previous agreement negotiated by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, but Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observers were still in place and could have provided the nucleus for a much larger monitoring force. Instead, when the decision was made to begin bombing, the OSCE had no alternative but to hastily withdraw its personnel.

Even though, at the time, U.S. officials acknowledged that "the bombings would increase violence towards ethnic Albanians," it is remarkable that the U.S. and NATO seem to have been totally unprepared for what happened as soon as the air strikes began: a systematic campaign by the Serbs to root out the armed KLA opposition and to expel hundreds of thousands of Kosovars into neighboring Albania, Montenegro, and Macedonia. The number of Albanians killed is not known, but it is assumed to be more than 2,000. By now the media have largely succeeded in obscuring the fact that NATO policies have made the situation in Kosovo far worse than before the start of the air campaign.

The bombing has also had a catastrophic effect on the internal democratic opposition to Milosevic. Zoren Dijindjc, a leader in the Serbian Democratic Party is quoted as saying, "Bombs have marginalized any dissenters here. Washington has spent more on one day's bombs than it ever spent helping the democracy movement." Many members of the opposition have begun supporting the government since the bombing began, thereby strengthening Milosevic's hold on power.

In addition to the chaos and misery in and around Kosovo, in Serbia the air campaign has destroyed scores of homes, office buildings, factories, roads and bridges, and water and electrical power facilities. As Senator John McCain told *Newsweek*, "We have to drop the bridges and turn out the lights."

As for the legality of the NATO intervention, U.S. media rarely concern themselves with Article 53 of the UN Charter which states that "no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council."

Recently, Amnesty International has raised objections to the intentional destruction of Serbian television stations, pointing out that these attacks are in violation of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention on War which prohibits the deliberate targeting of such predominantly civilian facilities, even when they may serve some military purposes.

According to Amnesty International, "International law prohibits attacks on

civilians and civilian sites. It also requires stringent safeguards when carrying out attacks against military objectives, including giving effective advance warnings of attacks which may affect civilian populations."

When the Serbs indiscriminately kill civilians in their efforts to eradicate the KLA, the U.S. press does not hesitate to register its dismay at such "atrocities." But when NATO planes at altitudes of 15,000 feet commit equally unspeakable acts, all we hear are hypocritical expressions of regret amid explanations that in war "accidents" are bound to happen.

What is happening in Kosovo is undoubtedly a humanitarian crisis, but it is far from clear that our intervention is motivated by humanitarian concerns. Throughout the eighties and nineties, our government aided and abetted the murders of hundreds of thousands of people in Central and South America, yet the United States still operates the School of the Americas in Georgia, whose graduates perpetrated massacres in villages like El Mozote in Guatemala, where almost every man, woman and child was slaughtered by government forces, many of whose officers had received their counter-insurgency training from Americans. At the time, the U.S. media never used the term "ethnic cleansing" to describe the war of extermination against the Guatemalan Mayan population. In fact, it took years before our government admitted what had happened at El Mozote.

In the past few decades, many bodies in civilian clothes have piled up around the world and many refugees, like the one million Palestinians in Gaza, live lives of destitution and political persecution. Yet Israel is one of our most valued allies, just as was the former apartheid regime in South Africa.

More recently, independent medical observers estimate that our current embargo

against Iraq is costing the lives of over 4,000 children every month due to malnutrition and disease. But we have yet to see adequate coverage of the destruction of Iraq, though numerous humanitarian and religious organization in the world are calling for an end to the sanctions.

Clearly, humanitarian concerns alone have never determined American policy. On Yugoslavia, our refusal to abide by international law as embodied in the United Nations, and our transformation of NATO from a defensive organization to a tool of military intervention bear the distinctive mark of *realpolitik*.

To quote once more from Hartung's article in *The Nation*:

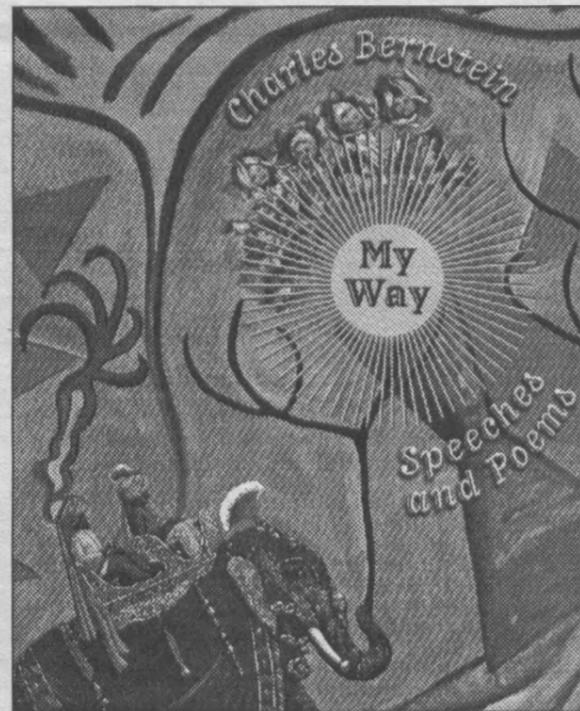
While the desire to do something—anything—to stop Milosevic is understandable, bombing Kosovo in order to save it is both immoral and ineffectual. Not only is bombing the wrong tactic for achieving humanitarian ends but NATO is the wrong institution for the task at hand.

In an op-ed piece for *The New York Times* (5/1/99), Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko said,

The shame of the Balkan situation lies with some political cynics, Russian, Western and Yugoslav, who play the Kosovo card, not on behalf of the Serbian or Albanian people but only for their own prestige, preservation of power or demonstration of hegemony.

Cara Ben-Yaacov is a writer who lives in Ithaca. She studied documentary and media studies at the University of Buffalo.

Jack Goldman is the editor-in-chief of The Bookpress.



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Bonfire Night

Jon Michaud

On a warm July evening just before dusk, Arthur McCree was driving along a narrow road in County Down when he came to a road-block. It appeared suddenly out of the weaving hedgerow, two green Land Rovers parked aslant on either side of the road, funneling traffic into a narrow channel where soldiers stood with blackened faces and weapons drawn. As he slowed the car, Arthur looked in the tall summer grass beside the road for the gleam of a sniper's visor or gun barrel, but he could see only the thick flaxen stems swaying in the evening breeze. One of the soldiers stepped forward with his hand raised and Arthur brought the car to a complete stop.

"Good evening," said the soldier. "Where are you going tonight?"

Arthur looked at him. He was young and his nose was running, a silver trail leaking across his upper lip.

"I'm going to Ardlough."

"To Ardlough," repeated the soldier, sniffing. "And what business do you have in Ardlough?"

"I'm to attend a funeral."

"A funeral," said the soldier, absently. "May I see some identification?"

Arthur reached into his pocket and drew out his wallet. "There you are," he said.

The soldier sniffed again, wiping his nose on the sleeve of his combat jacket. He inspected the driver's license under the beam of his torch.

"There's nothing worse than a summer cold, is there?" said Arthur.

The soldier ignored him. "One moment," he said and walked to the back of the nearest Land Rover where a man wearing a headset was waiting. Two other soldiers moved towards the car, fingers on the triggers of their rifles. One of them sneezed, not raising his hand to cover his mouth. The cold was making the round of the patrol, Arthur thought. He looked across at the hedged bank beside the road, searching again for the helmet of the sniper who must be there, the shiny barrel of his gun. Maybe the sniper is sick as well, he thought, listening for a snuffle or a sneeze in the grass. But there was nothing.

The first soldier returned and handed the driver's license through the window.

"On your way," he said.

Further along the road Arthur came to a town where the Eleventh Night was being celebrated. The streets were filled with people, more people than could be accounted for by the size of the town, as though every farmer, shack-dweller, tinker and itinerant son in the district had come for the night. They stood in groups near pubs with a glass of beer in each hand, talking and taking in the evening, looking skyward for some signal, their expressions guarded but expectant. They were jammed into cars, circus-style, a driver with a cargo of moving limbs and laughing heads, hands at windows, hip flasks and tins of beer held to their lips. They walked along the pavements carrying children and folding chairs and garden furniture and drums and pipes. They wore bowler hats, their umbrellas hooked to their elbows. They were dressed in grey suits with orange sashes, or in their best summer dresses or in bleach-streaked jeans and mod apparel or short black skirts worn without tights, white legs fat and puckered to the kiss of the summer night. Some wore coats safety-pinned with Union Jacks, others carried banners bearing the Red Hand or the white charger or the King of Orange or the Cross of St. George, the material loosely furled in the breezeless evening. Traffic slipped forward in a choppy stutter. Deeper into the town, Arthur passed men laden with bundles of wood, boards, sticks, cords of tinder, two-by-fours and construction materials, as though a house were being transported across town piece by piece. From the backs of cars sections of drywall and gimpy tables and shattered cribs were taken. Finally, he came upon the great pyre itself, a stack of broken furniture, lumber, and oddments piled up in an open space, the assembled debris of

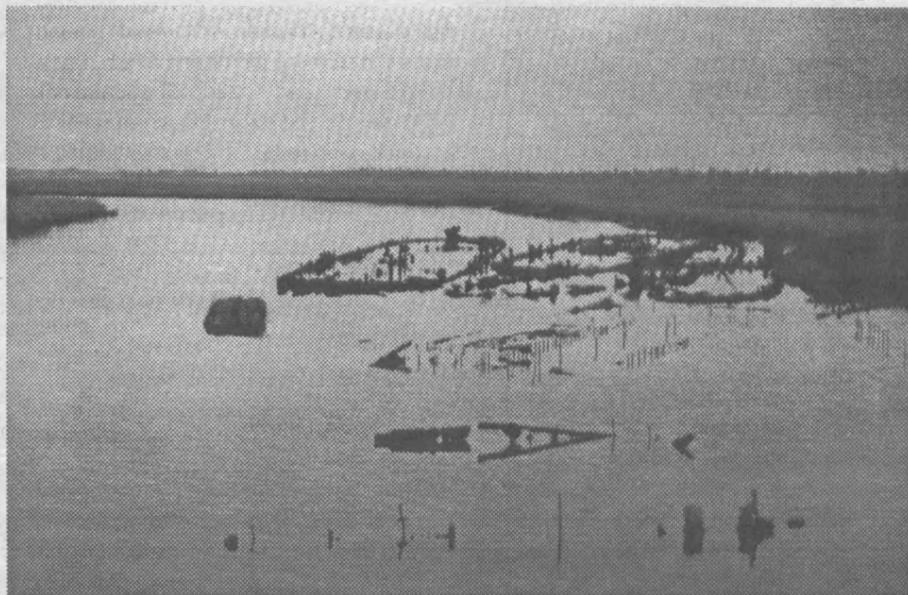
the town, ready for a match. The eager crowd was gathering around, their numbers thickening as they waited for darkness to fall.

Beyond the open square the traffic eased. Arthur stopped to let families cross in front of him but soon enough he was free of the congestion and driving along the loughshore where the ferry was docked. On the pier, a burly man sat on a crate reading a newspaper, a barrel-sized dog at his side. Arthur brought his car to a stop and the dog began to bark, lunging forward on its tether, its mouth a giant hand-puppet with teeth.

"Shut up you," said the man, clubbing the animal into silence.

"How much?" asked Arthur cracking open the window.

"Three pound."



John Lochhead

Arthur rolled down the window a little further and paid him.

"Looks like yer on yer own tonight," said the man. "Pull all the way up." He slapped the roof of the car.

Arthur drove up the clanking ramp and parked at the forward end of the deck. He could feel the boat rising and falling on the gentle waves of the lough. Ahead of him, above the raised front ramp of the ferry, a view of the plum-colored Mourmes appeared and disappeared, appeared and disappeared.

He stepped out of the car. In the distance he could hear the incantory whistle-and-thud of the marching bands practising for the morning's procession. The sound seemed to come from everywhere, to rise out of the water itself with a lapping, tidal repetition. On deck the boat captain appeared from the gloaming, walking towards the pilot-house raised high on the side of the ferry like a watchtower. The old man was thin and bearded, the sparse silver whiskers clinging to his cheeks like cobwebbing. He was biting on a thick brassy key.

"Bout ye," he said, taking the key from his mouth and smiling. There was a gap in his teeth, as though his smile was something that had to be unlocked.

"Hello," said Arthur, watching him climb spryly up to his post. A light went on in the pilot house and he could see the movement of the captain's shadow against the yellow glass. He turned away. On the horizon, the day's last light was ebbing out of the sky and the mountains were slowly merging into the heavens. He had stood here countless times with his father, traveling to and from Belfast, every year the captain getting a little thinner and a little balder. Now the captain was a specter of a man, ghostly. In fact, everything was looking unreal to Arthur, the lights of the town on the water like the lanterns at a Japanese funeral, the dockman's dog feral and growling on the pier. Suddenly he didn't know how old he was. He couldn't tell whether the sun was coming up or going down, whether he was going home or leaving again, whether the festivities were just beginning or drawing to their close. He put his hand on the warm bonnet of the Ford and tried to feel comforted by it.

In a moment, the deck began to thrum under his feet and this finally brought him back to himself. He saw the dockman on his way to raise the ramp. But before it could be lifted, there came the long peal of a car horn

followed by the arrival of a pair of headlights sliding towards the dock along the shore road.

"Shite," said the dockman.

It was a bright crimson Rover, hubcaps shining and lines of light flowing across its gleaming paint. It drove straight up the ramp past the yowling dog and stopped just behind Arthur's Ford. The driver's door opened and a tall, wiry man stepped quickly out.

"Right there," he said.

"Hello," said Arthur.

"Aye," said the dockman approaching the driver. "Three pound."

Paid, the dockman finally raised the ramp and jumped to the pier. He tossed the looped hawser back onto the deck and waved at the captain in his yellow chamber. Sitting down, he unrolled his paper and stroked his dog into

silence as the boat drifted away from the dock.

On board, the wiry man came forward and Arthur was able to get a better look at him. He wore his clothes tightly on his frame, combat boots with doublewound laces, drainpipe jeans and a thin blue jumper which stuck to his torso like a peel. His nose was broken and lined in a crooked perpendicular to his thick mustache. The eyes were dark, squelched in under the brows. On the four fingers of one hand he wore rings made from coins, an expensive set of brass knuckles. He seemed familiar: Arthur knew the type at least, a rucky lad. You would have expected him to be standing in front of a bonfire tonight, in the Belvoir Estate or along the Annadale Embankment, his voice full-tilt to the flames.

"I nearly missed yis, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Arthur. "Nearly."

"Pigs," said the man, gesturing back the way he had come.

They were moving. Arthur hadn't noticed at first, but they were gliding along the water, the lights of the jubilant town shrinking behind them. He stepped away from his car, towards the railing; he wanted some distance between himself and the stranger. He looked down at the water. The night was moonless and the surface of the lough was blank and without apparent depth, like a great well above which they were suspended.

"You want a smoke?" asked the man, approaching him.

"No thanks," said Arthur.

The man lit his cigarette and flicked the still-burning match at the water. "Does this take long?"

"You've never come this way before?"

"No," the man said warily.

"About half an hour."

They leaned for a time on the railing, saying nothing. The man held his cigarette with thumb and forefinger, cupping it against the wind. When the first cigarette had been smoked down to a stub he used it to light another, flicking the spent nub into the water with a twitch of his nostrils. He hawked and spat and his phlegm looked phosphorescent as it arced through the air hitting the water silently like a rising fish. After a time he spoke.

"I thought yis might remember me," he said calmly. "I know'd yis as soon as I saw yis—them Jaesus eyes of yours. But I reckon

you had a hundred of me in your time and I only had one Mister McCree."

Arthur recognized him now, not the name—not yet—but the young face nearly lost under the man's broken bones and whiskers. He remembered the boy this man had been. This happened all the time in Belfast, not a big enough city, not a place to lose yourself or hide from your past. Wherever he went he came across a student who had aged a decade overnight, sprouted a beard and a gut, new inches of flesh on his crown and smudges under the eyes. In some cases he was proud of any part he might have played in growing these men from the boys they had been. But more often than not, the sight of his former pupils filled him with dismay and a sense of futility. They were time's signposts, progress refused. James Tanahill—the name appeared like magic in his head—was one of the latter group.

"Tanahill," said Arthur. "I remember you."

"Y'can call me James—since we're not in the classroom now."

"James, then."

"Aye." He lit another cigarette. "Are you still teaching at old Methody?"

"Yes."

"A good number that, wouldn't you say. Summers off, holidays and all that. I reckon you can probably do it in your sleep now."

"It has its perks," said Arthur.

"Aye."

"And what are you doing with yourself, James?"

"Oh, this and that, you know. Job's hard to come by. My friends get me work from time to time."

"You seem to have done well for yourself, even so," said Arthur eyeing the Rover.

"Oh that. It's not mine. I borrowed it. I've got some business down in Armagh and I needed a car."

"I see." They were out in the middle of the lough by this time and it was very dark. The lights of Port Glen were some distance behind them and the lights of Castle Rock were still a long way off in front. Arthur looked up at the pilot house and saw the captain's shadow as remote as the distant shores.

"You know, it pains me a wee bit to admit this, but all my life ever since I left your classroom, I've been thinking about what you tried to do for me."

"Is that so?" Despite himself, Arthur was pleased.

"Aye. I've still got those two books you lent me. Sorry I never returned them to you like. I didn't even read them either. To this day, I've only ever read one book in my life—all the way through."

"What's that?"

"The Bible."

"It's a good one," Arthur allowed.

"It was all they'd give me in Crumlin Road, so I read it. What the fuck, right? It's not like I've read it since I got out but I still think of some of them Bible stories. Would you reckon that counts, thinking about the Bible instead of reading it?"

"I'm not a minister, but I'd say so. Though I imagine there's still nothing better than reading it."

"Aye. I appreciate that, I do. And maybe when I get to Armagh I'll find myself a nice wee bookshop and buy myself a Bible and read it, but for now I've still got some of them stories in my head. I think about them. They're a great way of passing the time. Do you know which story I think about the most?"

"Which one?"

"The one about the good samaritan. Do you know that one?"

"Of course."

"That's a good story."

"Yes it is," said Arthur.

James stopped sucking on his cigarette and looked at him. "Well, Mr. McCree, I need yis to help me...to be a good samaritan if y'like."

"Of course, James. What can I do?"

"Aye, well. The thing is, I need yer car."

"But you have a car."

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Off Campus

At The Bookery

This presentation is part of our ongoing series of readings and talks in the Women's Community Building, on the corner of Cayuga and Seneca Streets.

Sunday, May 23, 2:00 p.m.

Join us for a joint poetry reading by two very different poets:



Roald Hoffman

Best known as the 1981 Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry and one of the shapers of modern theories of chemical bonding, Professor Hoffman will be reading from his third collection of poetry, *Memory Effects*. He most recently read at The Bookery in 1997, from his book, *Old Wine, New Flasks*, which he co-authored with Shira Leibowitz Schmidt. Professor Hoffman also writes essays and non-fiction, including *Chemistry Imagined*, *Reflections on Science*, and *The Same and Not the Same*.

Thom Ward

Thom Ward will be reading from his new collection, *Small Boat With Oars of Different Size*. Mr. Ward is Editor/Development Director for BOA Editions, Ltd, and teaches writing workshops at Robert Wesleyan College, in elementary and secondary schools, and through the Writers and Books Literary Center in Rochester. He lives in Palmyra, NY, with his wife, 3 children, 2 cottonwood trees, a cat, a mouse, and a guinea pig.



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DOUBLE HEADER

The scores my Cousin Martin got from the radio coded directly into his bloodstream. Head dialed close, he knew hits runs errors strikes, everybody's averages until the very verge of batting moment, breath catch high and inside, and there's the pitch:

And the crowd roars. And Joltin' Joe relocates the stations of his personal geometry, lit diamond echo blazing out from the Yankee Stadium just three local bases loaded down on the subway stop from where in the Bronx Marty memorized glory: And it's a line drive into left field, how

far to home, the silence pounds its run, long gone. How some brief numbering keeps, overhead speedball streak still wheeling wow this once only circuit, the swung sum of it. That crack of solid connect O boy, goes around comes face toward us. Now's

the time's total, is a spun wobble suddenly clipped alone, or never batter's up bat was flung. From human side let go be that forever ball falling back, back soundless into arc: Where home is purely here and how about that

—Carol Rubenstein

Carol Rubenstein collected and translated songs, chants, and epics in Borneo and returned, living now in Ithaca.

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Cornell '69: A Retrospective

April 19 marked the 30th anniversary of Willard Straight Hall takeover by students in the African-American Society at Cornell. The takeover, which received national coverage in The New York Times and led to the eventual resignation of Cornell President James Perkins, was the central event in a turbulent confrontation between Cornell faculty, students, and administration. This April also marked the publication of Donald Alexander Downs' *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University*, a controversial exploration of the events surrounding the Straight Takeover.

In an effort to re-examine these events, their lasting repercussions, and the claims levied in Downs' book, The Bookpress presents a special issue of reviews and retrospectives on Cornell '69.

—The Editors

Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University.
Donald Alexander Downs.
Cornell University Press, 1999.
359 pages, \$35.00 cloth.

Reeve Parker

God protect us from the unremitting obstinacy of the learned, in love with their absurd, unreasonable and extravagant systems.

—Metastasio

Dust jacket (guns, bandolier, & blacks, red '69' hemorrhaging luridly down from an all-white "Cornell") and contents are well matched, each aping in tone and style the slanted, sensationalist coverage by the national media—the prime-time feeding frenzy of yesterday that, in the words of former trustee William Robertson that author and former undergraduate Donald Alexander Downs savors, "just murdered Cornell." Thirty years on, and what does *Cornell '69* hold for Bookpress readers? The question tempts the mind, especially if the hope is that in this extensive backward glance there might be some guidance through the thicket of Cornell's, and Ithaca's, and the nation's persisting problems of racial tension and violence. Downs' book, with its fervent claim that the "legacy" of Cornell's story in 1969 is about the "failure of liberalism to protect intellectual freedom in the face of imperative social justice claims, thereby providing a blueprint for the severing of these principles that compromises higher education to this day," does not offer much comfort.

Downs wants his readers' attention and pursues it from the start by a serviceable flair for vivid, telegraphic captionese:

Just behind and between Evans and Whitfield sauntered Homer ("Skip") Meade, Jones's staunch ally. The sarcastic and ironic expression on his face matched his attire: rifle, western poncho, field-hand hat, cigar hanging from his lips—a touch of Americana. He was Clint Eastwood, the "man without a name," the "high plains drifter."

Enter, four pages later, Cornell President James Perkins, in Downs' view the chief traducer of liberalism and of academic freedom. The nuances of tone and timing in Downs' cadenced prose do the work:

Sporting a résumé studded with all-star national and international appointments, the tall, elegant Perkins was a quintessential progressive liberal of his era.... He cut a very high profile. Noted Cornell historian Walter LaFeber recalled that even Jack Kennedy once asked, "Who is this James Perkins? He is on everybody's list. Everybody mentions Perkins." Perkins was very ambitious," LaFeber said.

But the turn to quotation, so much a staple in Downs' portrayals, brings with it, occasionally, a barely concealed treachery, none so shocking and tasteless as when, elaborating his sense that "the Cornell presidency was the jewel in Perkins' crown" and that he brought a

valued "style" and "class" to Cornell, he reaches for poetry:

He seemed to resemble Richard Cory in E. A. Robinson's famous poem: "He was a gentleman from sole to crown / Clean favored, and imperially slim. . . / And admirably schooled in every grace: / In fine, we thought that he was everything / To make us wish that we were in his place."

Readers familiar with the poem, a staple in American secondary school English classes, will supply the unforgettable final stanza Downs so knowingly omits:

So on we worked, and waited for the light / And went without the meat, and cursed the bread; / And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, / Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Unlike the unloaded weapons that exited Willard Straight so theatrically, such stealthy portraiture is a smoking gun equipped with a silencer. For an author who later so vociferously deplores the public "collaring" of the president by a militant black student at a December 1968 symposium on the University's investments in South Africa, the comparison to Richard Cory makes a strange way to begin. One might have hoped for truth and reconciliation, not character assassination.

To be fair, *Cornell '69* is by far the fullest representation of the troubles at Cornell in 1967-1969, the product of years of intensive work, both through interviews in the mid-1990s with many of those who participated in the events and through exhaustive research in the formidable hoard of materials in the blandly named "Challenge to Governance" (no hemorrhaging wound there) archive in the Rare and Manuscripts Collection of the Carl A. Kroch Library at Cornell. Especially early on, he sets the history of local student activism appropriately in the larger frame of movements toward separatist rather than integrationist politics and toward confrontational strategies across the country. To his credit, Downs' very substantial achievement—not least in his assiduous and competent organization of the many subsections of his chapters—comprises an ongoing critical history of the internal deliberations of and interactions among many disparate committees and groups, at the faculty, administration, and student levels, with special attention to the roles of leaders.

Nonetheless, for these very reasons, and for its ponderous discursiveness, you have to slog through this book. More perspicacious editing would have helped, especially in eliminating redundant patches of narrative or argument, but the book overall offers what must stand as the most extensively elaborated account to date of the events of 1968 and 1969, generously served up with judgments, opinions, anecdotes, speculation, and gossip. Many of these latter stem from Downs's own interviewees or by contributors in 1969 to the extensive Oral History archive in Kroch; but many also, to be sure, are Downs' own. A number of his oral sources remain, by request, anonymous—and one of his most frequently invoked—and admired—sources is an extensive, book-length manuscript in unidentified private hands. Doubtless, recent interviewees, by consulting personal files, have revived—rather than "recovered"—memories silted over in intervening years. Another thirty years on, in the unlikely event that another such exhaustive work is undertaken, Downs's probity and judiciousness themselves are likely to be the sole guarantors for much that *Cornell '69* claims. (Readers unfamiliar with Caleb Rossiter's moving account, in *The Chimes of Freedom Flashing*, of his "personal history of the Vietnam anti-war movement and the 1960's" will find his livelier, unbuttoned narrative of the events at Cornell a welcome relief, and its arguments more variously insightful than Downs' protracted pursuit of his brief against the failure at Cornell.)

Inevitably, of course, Downs has moved selectively among his voluminous materials.

He gives credit, to be sure, and extensive coverage, to people like Gloria Joseph, the black COSEP administrator who recognized the pressures on black students at Cornell and worked with tireless resourcefulness to effect change and who soon became an advocate for the students' claims of institutional racism. But the result, overall, amounts to a fairly pervasive *parti-pris* polemic for "principles" of liberal education and "academic freedom," tilting his presentation most frequently toward the views of a handful of those faculty members largely, though not exclusively, in the history and government departments, who stood for such "normative values"—they come in again and again for adulation: "they... possessed an *esprit de corps*, a common commitment to the principles of liberal education. The departments were nationally ranked and had some of the best and most committed teachers on campus."

These faculty were most opposed to Perkins' efforts to shift the university's energies and resources toward addressing issues of social justice in the nation at large and, as they saw it, away from educating the intellects of individual students. They were most disturbed by the administration's failure effectively to resist increasingly militant student activism. These are the faculty Downs recurrently celebrates as "master" teachers, the most prominent in his narrative being Allan Sindler, Walter Berns, Allan Bloom, and Walter LaFeber. Sindler looms largest, early by virtue of his central role in redesigning and then administering and defending the new code for campus conduct, later in his uncompromising rejection of the administration's and faculty's "surrender" to black student demands. Here, early on, is Downs at his tendentious best: succinctly drawing distinctions, attributing beliefs, and turning to others for the surrogacy of testimonial quotes, bordering on the fulsome:

During the racial crisis of December 1968, [Sindler] was one of Perkins's most incisive advisers. Like Perkins, he was a New Deal progressive liberal who believed in social justice. But he differed from Perkins and many other liberals at Cornell in several respects: he was committed to the proposition that social justice must be anchored in such liberal norms as individual freedom, responsibility, and accountability; he believed strongly in the principles of liberal education and the university as an autonomous institution with its own distinct *raison d'être*; and he was willing (some would say driven) to fight for these principles regardless of the strength of the opposition.... "Allan Sindler has devoted his heart, mind, and soul to the Sindler Commission," said his colleague Andrew Hacker... John Marcham described Sindler as a "tremendous community person" with "a huge heart."

Downs also gives prominence—though far less often and far more equivocally—to faculty on the left who displayed similarly strong attributes, despite their "radical" persuasions. Here, on Economics Professor Douglas Dowd: but he withholds the honorific term "principles," and foregoes testimonial quotes, turning instead for his quote to a *Daily Sun* report of a meeting when Dowd delivered harsh strictures against American society:

The tall, imposing Dowd . . . was the most influential radical professor on campus, and he worked on several committees that dealt with students. He was also a leading antiwar activist and radical critic at the national level. Dowd was deeply committed to radical change in America and believed that the university should be an agent in bringing about social change or should at least provide an institutional base for groups dedicated to politics and change.... In 1967, [lecturing before] a packed house in Annabel Taylor Hall's Founder's Room he singled out America for special blame. America was the ultimate hypocrite about justice and lacked the historical excuses that exonerated such countries as India. America was "the very worst society that history has ever known," he told the gathering. Though he viewed the university and America as deeply flawed, Dowd did respect the intellectual functions of the university, and colleagues told me that he did not impose his ideology on students in the classroom.

And so it goes. On Eldon Kenworthy, whom Downs rightly credits with averting violence by a timely intervention when hundreds of students and some faculty in Barton Hall seemed on the brink of seizing Day Hall or another building to force the faculty to reverse itself and accept the nullification agreement that had ended the takeover. Though supporting their purpose, he "stopped the flow toward what in all likelihood would have been a violent confrontation." But pages earlier Downs recounts "a story about Kenworthy that highlighted the new orientation toward teaching and scholarship." The story came from a historian invited to speak to Kenworthy's students on the forced internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II:

[W]hen [the Americans] decided to evacuate the Japanese . . . no one at that point even knew that there would be relocation centers or concentration camps... When I finished this whole elaborate, week-by-week analysis of the administration, of ways in which policies developed over several months, and what the forces were at each stage that moved them in the direction they moved, Eldon [sic] sat back and said, "But isn't America a racist society?" Well, that was the lesson that he wanted to come out of this. All the historical specifics were not the things that he cared about.

One wonders what glowing testimonials to the minds, hearts, and souls of Dowd and Kenworthy, and others he tags as "young," "idealistic" and "progressive"—who saw in the initiative of the students the possibilities of change—this scholar has silently passed by.

Cornell '69 abounds in what will be, for most readers, hitherto unknown revelations, some of the most telling in now-it-can-be-told mode, about the aftermath of nullification, when an uneasy peace settled and President Perkins's unforgiving antagonists in History and Government went to work. "The group's objectives were to affirm the principles of liberal education and to overthrow Perkins." Here Downs inclines to the rhetoric of guerrilla insurgency and military tactics:

Other behind-the-scenes action broke out.... Perhaps most notable were the maneuvers of LaFeber, Fred Marcham, Berns, Silbey, Bloom, Sindler, and a few others. . . . At this point, Marcham and his allies had three goals: to save the department, to oppose 'all threats to freedom and learning,' and to seek Perkins's removal.

As usual, words from the worthies wheel in, and in this cabal, most worthy was LaFeber, "who had begun speaking with trustees as early as the Monday of crisis week":

He first called Austin Kiplinger, an important member of the board, and told him he should come to Ithaca right away, but Kiplinger refused. So LaFeber called [retired trustee Arthur] Dean, who was very responsive and started contacting trustees. LaFeber was deeply impressed by Dean. "Dean was, I think, the single toughest guy I've ever met in my life," LaFeber commented in an interview twenty-five years later. "He was quite extraordinary."

Downs, too, gets off on Dean's toughness and goes again for the résumé:

His impressive résumé included numerous honorary degrees (mostly law), general counsel positions and directorships of several major companies, ambassadorships and involvements in important international conferences and negotiations (nuclear disarmament, weapons treaties, and so on), and many national and international honors. He had been leading senior partner of the prestigious New York law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, where he had succeeded John Foster Dulles as a partner. Dean was tough-minded and dedicated to Cornell.

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Cornell '69: A Retrospective

continued from page 5

No Richard Cory he. So Professors LaFeber, Sindler, and Marcham flew on a hastily arranged mission to New York, to be picked up at the airport by Board of Trustees Chairman Robert Purcell "in a limousine" and taken "to his office (he was the head of the Rockefeller Enterprises in Latin America)" to meet secretly with a "select group of trustees, including Dean." Marcham—whose role at two or three points in the book is to draft statements "about academic freedom"—read his most recent one, "asserting that a university should be 'free from pressures by the one or the few or the many, free above all from those who cannot trust the causes they advocate to open discussion and rational persuasion.'" Either Downs is deadpan or the colossal ironies here escape him. Imagine the scene: the trustees of the university treated to a crash tutorial in academic freedom. (Today this would take place by distance learning.) And real manliness plotting Perkins's downfall not in the open forum of the academy in Ithaca, but where it can trust the tough causes they advocate to sympathetic ears. "LaFeber was the most effective because the trustees wanted facts, and the master historian was able to give them all the facts they needed. . . . He knew how to home in on his prey." Downs, suitably impressed with how real power operates, adds that "after this meeting the group dined at Dean's residence, a magnificent apartment overlooking the East River."

Given this bent, it's not surprising that another tough guy with impressive credentials, the aptly named Homer Bigart of *The New York Times*, gets top billing in Downs's account of the vendetta against Perkins and on behalf of academic freedom. War talk—and the inevitable surrogate testimonials—abound.

A forty-year veteran of the *Times*... Bigart had won two Pulitzer Prizes for his reporting on World War II and Korea. He wrote front-page articles about academic freedom and the conflicts among the faculty that did more than anything else to crumble the ground under Perkins' feet. According to John Marcham, himself a master reporter, Bigart was "known as the best investigative reporter in the country."

Enter a voice from a past campaign:

Times publisher Harrison E. Salisbury's portrayal of the first time he met Bigart in London in 1943 captures the figure Bigart cut in words that observers would repeat at Cornell: "The glimpse of Homer transmitted the essential characteristics of the man who would become the war correspondent of his time. He was alone, a slim, almost frail figure hunched over his Olivette slowly punching with two or three fingers.... He took almost personal offense at what he considered Cornell's camouflaging of the truth."

"By the end of crisis week," Downs reports, "Bigart had become a fixture in the Government and History Departments, history repeating itself:"

Like Salisbury, Richard Polenberg spotted him sitting in Fred Marcham's office, hat tipped to one side, cigarette hanging out the side of his mouth as his fingers poked on the keys of his battered manual typewriter—the classic image of the probing, unbending reporter. Bigart's instincts as a prizewinning war reporter told him that the war at Cornell was not over and he should be suspicious of information provided by authorities. . . . Bigart continued his barrage... But that morning what [Cornell Press Officer] Tobin called the "blockbuster" appeared on the front page of *The New York Times*. Bigart's article blew the first big hole in the president's armor.

Black militants, whose bandolier ammunition supposedly didn't even fit their guns, should be liberally edified by how Downs homes in on these "truths." (His tales of two Homers epitomize his own ways with the arts of political camouflage: the one, black, cigar hanging from his lips, sarcastic and sauntering from Willard Straight into public space, a man without a name, a drifter, a terrifying interloper on Ezra Cornell's pastoral campus (he'd be "profiled" in New Jersey today); the other, white, cigarette hanging out the side of his mouth, holed up heroically in Sibley, probing, unbowed, Pulitzers like howitzers trained on Perkins.)

Downs covers himself by acknowledging that Bigart's views were partial to a minority of the faculty, but goes on to applaud, again through the proxies of surrogates, most notably this time John Marcham ("Bigart got the essentials of the Cornell story right"), whose *Alumni News* Downs credits with publishing coverage later that month hugely damaging to Perkins' Cornell. (It doesn't trouble Downs that the views of this Marcham, "a Bigart-figure in his own right," tally with those of his father, whose office served as Bigart's bunker.)

Does Downs think the "best investigative reporter in America" had no business ignoring the views of black students or others—both students and faculty—who saw things differently, who felt that the Cornell community had survived a crisis not by standing obdurately on principle but by sensibly negotiating a peaceful solution, without bloodshed? Does Downs so identify with legends about the heroism of war correspondents that he has no second thoughts about the intellectual respectability—much less the probity—of *The Times*' assault on Perkins? Here and there he allows a dissenting voice, like that of William Robertson (chairman of the trustees' committee that, after Perkins's resignation, investigated what had happened at Cornell), who in 1997 told Downs that Bigart was an "S.O.B." who "murdered Cornell." But the remark prompts no sustained reflectiveness on the consequences of the media's role in tarnishing Cornell and scapegoating Perkins.

Downs is fond of saying that people he agrees with "got it right." He gets it right, unfortunately, when he writes, with post-mortem insouciance that's simply appalling, that the day after Perkins stepped down, "Bigart's story about the resignation appeared

on the front page of *The New York Times*, the assassin given the pleasure of writing his victim's obituary." Tough guys don't weep.

Making my way through Downs' book these past two weeks I've also been reading, in a writing course with seventeen freshmen and one senior, one of Gabriel García Márquez's finest—and blessedly brief—comic novels, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. It's been a fascinating fortnight and, frankly, trying to keep these books straight, a confusing one. García Márquez spins the story of a grisly assassination committed as "a matter of honor," in which such pieties as a rule people's minds don't fare very well. (With this writer the weapons are knives, not guns.) Both writers rely, endemically, for their most characteristic effects, on dizzyingly complicated fabrics of "he told _____" moments, where the blanks can be, variously, "his mother," "me," "the investigating judge," "the faculty council," "General Petronio San Román," or "Trustee William Robertson." Telling in both books often becomes, paradoxically, a matter of foretelling, history bleeding into augury. As García Márquez's narrator has it, "There had never been a death more foretold."

Here's how García Márquez begins:

On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. He'd dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit. "He was always dreaming about trees," Plácida Linero, his mother, told me twenty-seven years later, recalling the details of that distressing Monday. "The week before, he'd dreamed that he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything," she said to me. She had a well-earned reputation as an accurate interpreter of other people's dreams, provided they were told to her before eating.

And here's *Cornell '69*, reporting how, ten years later, "History Professor Frederick Marcham" (whom Downs earlier says "had earned a reputation as one of Cornell's most conscientious and able academic citizens") "described in haunting words the growing dread that had come over many members of the Government and History Departments during March and April, especially after the unprovoked beatings on campus. Their fears seemed to be coming true."

For many days faculty and students organized nightly fire watches to protect the academic buildings. Members of the history and government departments thought themselves particularly vulnerable to attack because in their lectures and discussions they dealt with political, economic, and social topics that bore upon issues that concerned black and white radicals...

Almost from day to day Walter Berns, Allan Bloom, or some other member of the government department came to me and asked me to draft a petition denouncing violence and intimidation. The student who had been beaten [unconscious] was, I believe, for these persons and others, evidence of the last and worst challenge to the world as they had known it... [That world had] now become a place of fire and bodily danger. I myself said that one day we might see a corpse hanging from a tree limb. All of us had looked into the pit. Certainly the members of the government department had done so.

Downs' chronicle pulls back from the pit of such momentarily fearful imaginings, but still sees Cornell as living out the legacy of what he calls, in his conclusion, "the stunning collapse of liberal principles at Cornell" and insists is "paradigmatic for its time and ours." Near the end of his book he turns to the present issue of residential program houses at Cornell, acknowledging the arguments pro and con, but giving most coverage to a handful of lurid incidents that tilt toward the pit and to strident invoking of "principles," the pursuit of "truth," and "academic freedom." Ducking the barrage of those endlessly descending mantras, I run for cover in García Márquez.

Sindler, Berns, and Bloom abandoned Cornell to its fate, the latter two—and Bloom especially—in sepulchral tones closing the tomb. The downpour of *Cornell '69* too often sounds such apostolic gloom, dousing the alma mater. An extended passage early on in García Márquez's *Chronicle* offers an antidote, narrating the occasion of a visit, much anticipated in the provincial town, by the bishop, Plácida Linero, practicing her augury, shows no interest in kissing his ring: "He won't even get off the boat. He'll give an obligatory blessing, as always, and go back the way he came. He hates this town." The event proves her right, in this levitating writer's brilliant fable:

There were a lot of people at the dock in addition to the authorities and the schoolchildren, and everywhere one could see the crates of well-fattered roosters they were bearing as a gift for the bishop, because cockscomb soup was his favorite dish.... But the boat didn't stop. It appeared at the bend in the river, snorting like a dragon, and then the cocks began to crow in their baskets and aroused all the other roosters in town.... On the upper deck, beside the captain's cabin, was the bishop in his white cassock and with his retinue of Spaniards... the boat let off a shower of compressed steam as it passed by the docks, and it soaked those who were closest to the edge. It was a fleeting illusion: the bishop began to make the sign of the cross in the air opposite the crowd on the pier, and he kept on doing it mechanically afterwards, without malice or inspiration, until the boat was lost from view and all that remained was the uproar of the roosters.

Reeve Parker is an English Professor at Cornell University.

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Cornell '69: A Retrospective

Benjamin P. Bowser

A little-known outcome of the 1969 Willard Straight Takeover and the institutional self-examination that followed was the University's effort to recruit and train minority graduate students. Prior to 1969, less than 1% of Cornell University's graduate students were from the four historic racial minority groups that were then and are still now grossly under-represented in American professional life—African-Americans, Puerto-Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and Native Americans. One of the student demands during the Straight Takeover was that the university address this embarrassing discrepancy in its enrollment. It is not clear when and why the specific demand about graduate education became part of the protest; Black graduate enrollment was not a central issue in the Takeover and subsequent Barton Hall meetings. This demand and the university's response are not even a footnote in the recent history of the Straight Takeover and its aftermath. Nevertheless, the University acted.

The Door Opens

In the fall of 1969, a handful of new Black graduate students entered the university. The aftermath of the Takeover was still very much in the air. The Black undergraduates had had a major victory and were looking to capitalize on the university's self-examination. The new administration was still in transition; there was a sense of the fragility of the moment and the potential for additional protests and takeovers.

A count of old and new Black graduate students suggested that the small number of Blacks might have doubled in this one year. The few Black graduate students at Cornell up until 1969 were an elusive group. In fact, it would be erroneous to call them a group at all; they were an aggregation of individuals who were mysterious to the undergraduates and to each other. The Black Graduate Student Association was formed in the fall of 1969, primarily by the new students. I was elected president and very quickly received a letter from President Corson encouraging open communications. The only Association goal for which there was unanimous consensus was the need for the university to enroll more Black graduate students.

Meetings between the administration and Black graduate students, primarily from the South, led to a decision in the fall of 1970. The university would have to recruit if it was going to identify and attract a larger number of Black graduate students who could do Cornell work. Several Black students were willing to assist in recruitment and to represent the university at their undergraduate institutions. Under Donald Cook's leadership as Dean of the Graduate School, William Osby, a City and Regional Planning student, was hired as Assistant to the Dean (later Assistant Dean) to organize and coordinate this effort. An unprecedented \$500,000 per year was committed for fellowships and recruitment. What we did not realize then was that events at Cornell had propelled the university into recruitment of talented Black students into its graduate programs several years before comparable institutions began serious recruitment efforts.

The Straight Takeover and the self-examination that came afterward opened the space to experiment, to act, and to take chances admitting non-traditional students. The years from 1970 to 1975 were the University's formative years in its commitment to minority graduate education. It was during this time that Black students "learned" the university as a group rather than as individuals. The university administration and the individual academic departments had their initial experiences working with more than one Black student every other decade.

Several departments already had long track records of training Black scholars from historically Black institutions. Their experiences and counsel were critical to other departments that were "taking a risk" — often for the first time.

Why was admitting Black students a risk? If the university relied, as it had prior to 1969, on Black students finding Cornell, the numbers would have continued to be very small. A few Black students every now and then would apply and have "competitive" admissions credentials. Depending on the field, they might even enroll. But more often, these mainstream Black graduates would end up going to Harvard or some other prestigious graduate school in a metropolitan area.

For Cornell to enroll any number of Black graduate students would not only require identifying them and interesting them in the university, it would require flexibility in admissions. Students would have to be considered who might not have the same Graduate Record Examination scores as those usually admitted and funded. Some students might have to be admitted from colleges, universities, and departments the graduate faculties were unfamiliar with. Some students might have to be admitted who would need some additional course work before they were "mainstreamed."

I should point out that Black students were not the first to require flexibility in admissions. For many years prior to 1969, the Cornell Graduate School had had a provisional admissions category, precisely to admit highly desirable non-traditional students. Once admitted and enrolled, non-traditional students generally required more careful counseling in their departments than did traditional students, and some required more time to complete their course of studies. Many of the Black students admitted prior to 1969 were admitted provisionally. But once in their department and given a chance to demonstrate their talent and capability, they gained regular admissions and, despite some notable failures, most successfully proved themselves and completed degrees.

If the Straight Takeover and the period of self-examination that followed opened the door for Black students to the university's graduate programs, the success of the first cohort of Black graduate students was the best argument for continuing recruitment and flexibility in admissions. The unprecedented willingness of graduate programs to take provisional admits did not come totally out of altruism, however; the \$500,000 set aside for fellowship support was a big factor. Departments have to compete for fellowship funds and assistantships to support their traditional graduate students and programs; they were willing to take risks with non-traditional Black graduate students who brought their funding with them. Among other things, this meant that departments did not have to trade-off admitting traditional students for "graduate affirmative action."

The Minority Graduate Fellowship was also invaluable in recruitment. Cornell's representatives could offer potential students full funding if they were admitted, which was not only a great financial incentive, but compelling evidence of the University's commitment to minority graduate education. Black graduate enrollment at Cornell University increased from 60 in 1970-71 to 166 by 1974-5. During this period there were an average of 303 Black applicants per year, 30.7% gained admission and 17.3% of minority applicants accepted admissions and enrolled.

Changes and Pressures

In 1975, William Lambert became Dean of the Graduate School. Memory of the Straight Takeover and institutional self-examination had faded. In addition, a number of changes had taken place outside of Cornell that impacted our initiative. Nationally, the notion of racial under-representation had

expanded. Puerto Ricans, American Indians, and Mexican-Americans were also recognized as being grossly under-represented in the sciences and academic professions. What had started for Cornell as recruitment of Black students was now recruitment of minority students.

Budgets started to tighten as costs went up nationally after the OPEC oil boycott. I became Dean Lambert's new Assistant Dean and my job was to continue the university's effort but to expand it to include the three additional groups. I was also asked to do other mainstream tasks for the Graduate School in order to avoid becoming a "minority dean." The new reality was an expanded mission, an expanded set of responsibilities, and limited money. Also, by 1975, a number of other prestigious universities had come to realize that the best-qualified minority students were not going to just come to them because of their names. So they began recruiting as well. We now had considerable competition for the limited pool of students we drew from.

An expanded effort and increasing competition began to take its toll in the Lambert years. We were now recruiting as far east as Puerto Rico, continued to work extensively in the South, and began developing contacts in California and the Southwest. But despite this expanded recruitment effort, total minority student enrollment was slowly dropping—155 in 1975, 132 in 1976, and 122 in 1977. I attribute this directly to increasing competition. The numbers of applicants and our admission rates remained stable, while the percentage of students accepting our offers of admission dropped steadily from over 50% in 1974 to below 30% by 1977.

Another problem that we were up against was the growing national interest in professional degree programs. Rising costs after the OPEC oil boycott, the decreasing value of the dollar, limits on faculty appointments, and word of a glut of PhDs all translated into increasing interest in law, business, and medicine. This trend was particularly pronounced among minority students with the grades and backgrounds wanted for Cornell graduate programs. Even Cornell's generous fellowships no longer gave us an edge.

The Door Begins to Close

Allison Cassett became the next Dean of the Graduate School. By 1978, institutional self-examination was not only over, it was forgotten. The Straight incident was almost a decade old and Cornell was moving back to business as usual. The new Dean held a rigid disbelief that anyone without the standard GRE and an undergraduate degree from one of the usual well-known institutions could do Cornell work. The achievements of a generation of Black and other minority students to the contrary, including her Assistant Dean, were simply dismissed. She would say, "It is unfair to the institution, unfair to the student" to admit people who did not have the same academic credentials as everyone else. Departments that had done a good job of selecting, training, and graduating minority graduate students were scrutinized rather than encouraged; the fact that they admitted all of these (non-elite) students was taken as evidence that their programs were of questionable quality. The new Dean gave me my first experience with the kind of low-brow conservatism that has dominated American political life since the Reagan 1980s—an ideological view that is absolutely immune to evidence that does not fit its worldview.

The new Dean did have some good points. Minority students could no longer go their entire academic career at Cornell on the Minority Fellowship. They had to be mainstreamed by the second or third year at the latest as an indication of their department's commitment to them and of the competitiveness of their work. Minority students who were admissible on regular fellowships

and assistantships were to be admitted as such. They could not be admitted to departments on Minority Fellowships just because they were minorities. The Law and Business Schools were given increasing proportions of the Minority Graduate Fellowship pie. Mainstreaming as soon as possible was the name of the game. Applicants who were admissible but non-traditional and who might pose a risk for their departments were admitted more grudgingly each year.

What covered the erosion of Cornell's support for bringing non-traditional minority students into the university was a Federal fellowship grant called GPOP, lately renamed The Patricia Harris Graduate Fellowship. This fellowship was ironically designed based upon the early Cornell fellowship effort. GPOP enabled universities that did not and could not make the same \$500,000 per year commitment that Cornell made to attract and enroll minority graduate students. Cornell was one of the first recipients of this grant, not long after Dean Cassett came aboard. A central criterion for continued funding was a demonstration that GPOP funding was not replacing prior institutional commitment and funding. GPOP also provided institutional funds to recruit new students. I used this money to hire an assistant who focused on recruitment. We managed to get application numbers and admissions up in 1979 and 1980, but our overall enrollment of minorities in the university's 82 graduate programs (outside of Law and Business) did not go over 120.

By 1981, Cornell's financial commitment to minority graduate education had eroded to the point that our GPOP grant was not renewed. The grant reviewers were very clear on why Cornell would not receive substantial new grant money—the prior financial commitment had obviously eroded.

The door that was opened by the aftermath of the Willard Straight Takeover, closed by the early 1980s. I resigned from the Graduate School in 1981 with the Dean's encouragement. Those who followed me in the Dean's Office continued the struggle.

Almost twenty years have passed and this is now a forgotten event at Cornell. But I keep getting delightful reminders of what Cornell did. I have made more visits to Washington than I want to remember to National Research Council panel meetings and have served as an expert reviewer for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. On many occasions, in airports or in Washington hallways, I have come across former students. Many were considered by admissions committees in the 1970s as high-risk. Some needed an extra semester or year to finish their degrees. They are now full professors, deans of colleges, laboratory directors, recipients of multiple competitive research grants—men and women who train their own graduate students, and have distinguished publications in their fields. They are Cornell's minority graduate students from the 1970s. They are living, breathing, and distinguished witnesses to the fact that an institutional effort to address the gross under-representation of minorities in the professions can not only work, but it can pay off handsomely for institutions that persist.

I fear that Cornell may be back to the time when the now-senior and distinguished Black psychologist, and former New York State Regent, Kenneth Clark, was sent a letter from Cornell in response to his application in the 1930s. He was turned down for admission because of concern that he might be uncomfortable as a graduate student at Cornell. He went to Columbia instead. Good students come from a wide range of backgrounds and in time succeed. The question is, which institution will serve them and then enjoy credit for their successes?

Benjamin P. Bowser teaches sociology at California State Hayward. He was honored as faculty member of the year in 1997. He is the author of several books on racism and diversity.

Cornell '69: A

Reuben A. Munday

For more than thirty years now, when ever I mentioned that I was a member of Cornell University's Class of 1969, people want to know whether I participated in the "armed occupation" of Willard Straight Hall. When I tell them that I did, they want to sit down to talk about the details of what happened and the objectives that the African-American students sought to accomplish.

Recently, I have declined to participate on panels on this topic because, frankly, I'm tired of talking about it. I want to talk about Jim McConkey's creative writing class and nights that I spent at Dan and Dorothy McCall's small blue house discussing the great American writers of the 20th century. I want to talk about eminent professors at the Arts School who were more than willing to meet with me at the Temple of Zeus in Goldwyn Smith Hall to have coffee and discuss with me my youthful ideas. There is a wonderful feeling of euphoria that I remember that comes over you when you just sit quietly on the Arts Quad on a spring day.

I could tell you about the two years that I spent as a staff writer for Cornell's office of Public Information in Day Hall. Or, I could tell you about the priceless knowledge that I gained from graduate courses taught by John Heinrich Clarke and Dr. Ben Jochanon at the Africana Studies and Research Center. But, no, I know you want to know about the "Straight takeover."

I'm writing this article because I recently recognized that my declination of invitations to speak on the topic of the Straight takeover brought back surprising emotion. Maybe this topic was not really finished personal business, as I claimed. I decided that it might be useful to accept the invitation to write this article, as an opportunity to face once again the agonizing circumstances that led to my presence in Willard Straight Hall in April of 1969. I realized, as I began to gather my thoughts, that my distaste for the topic was not a result of an uncharitable unwillingness to share my knowledge of an event that has been attributed meaningful historical significance by some, but rather by my desire to move on with my life. My desire not to be stuck. I am a strong proponent of facing the past squarely, and learning from it. To be stuck in the past, on the other hand, seems self-defeating to me. It is with both of these ideas in mind that I offer my personal account of why I was in Willard Straight Hall in April of 1969.

In September of 1965, my father and I boarded the Silver Comet in Chehaw, Alabama, just outside of Tuskegee Institute, to begin our long train ride to Binghamton, New York, where we would catch a bus for Ithaca. Long train rides were old hat for me. I had been traveling by train between Tuskegee Institute and Kingston, Pennsylvania to a college preparatory school called Wyoming Seminary since I was 14 years old. At the time, the southern portion of the United States was in open war over the issue of race. Middle-class African-American parents like mine who could afford it, packed their children up like war refugees for the trek north to eastern prep schools that were beginning to open their doors to us.

I grew up near the campus of Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University, a historically black college where my father taught animal genetics and my mother taught English. The Institute was a cultural center for African-Americans because there were few places like Tuskegee that offered a supportive middle-class environment to educated blacks. Aside from the Institute, there was a large Veteran's Administration Hospital that was largely staffed by African-American physicians. There was one Alabama legislator who was heard to say that there should be a law

against putting two "negra" institutions in the same town.

The national African-American community was always somewhat ambivalent about the Tuskegee experiment and its founder Booker T. Washington because, while the Institute provided the only available vocational and academic training to students who were the direct descendants of a people who had been enslaved for centuries, it was only permitted to exist if its leader—at least publicly—advocated accommodation of legal segregation. At an early age we were taught to fear whites' fear of what was referred to as "race-mixing." Of course, we could look at each other's complexions and know that there was a grand discrepancy between the principle of social separation and its practice.

My elementary school years were spent at the Institute's laboratory school, Chamblis Children's House. From our idyllic island of peace in the heart of Dixie, the rumblings of the Civil Rights Movement were beginning to get too loud to be drowned out by a false civility designed to pacify southern whites, whose anger was aroused by any sign that we might desire to fully exercise the constitutional rights that white immigrants enjoyed immediately upon arrival in this country.

Rosa Parks, an unassuming and respected seamstress, had refused to relinquish her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, 38 miles from Tuskegee. She had dutifully sat in the back of the bus, as was required at the time, but that was not enough. Southern genteel notions of the treatment of ladies did not apply to black ladies. She was to get up simply because the "gentleman" was white. Rosa Parks said she was too tired to play the game that day. Her refusal to move set in motion the famous Montgomery bus boycott.

A young Baptist minister had also recently arrived to preach at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. His name was Martin Luther King, Jr., and my mother took me to hear him speak at the Tuskegee Institute Chapel. Even at my age then, I knew that something important was happening. "Keep moving," he told us. "If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but keep moving."

In our classrooms at Children's House we watched armed National Guardsmen restrain grown men and women who were determined that black students would not attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. We watched the small tv time and time again in horror as neatly dressed grade-school children walked in confused bewilderment, protected from raging crowds by lines of armed soldiers.

We watched our governor, George C. Wallace, stand in the door of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa to prevent black students from attending the University. (Governor Wallace probably didn't know or care that Native American Chief Tuscaloosa was half-black.) Wallace didn't see himself as just a low-down racist; according to him, he was defending high-sounding federalist principles like state's rights and the sacred customs of the South. In my experience, except when we went north, African-Americans at the time could not attend integrated schools without the involvement of guns, police, and ugly habits.

My father was a quiet, determined man who walked away from his home near Berea, Kentucky to attend Hampton Institute in Virginia against his father's wishes. His father needed him and his nine brothers and sisters to help on the farm. My father left anyway, and pursued his education until he completed his Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts in 1947, the year of my birth. Thanks to his "disobedience," my life, the lives of his family members, and the lives of many of his students at Tuskegee Institute were profoundly changed.

At the time of our train ride to Ithaca, our relationship had become strained by what he considered my political extremism. In 1965 I took a summer job as a tutor with the Tuskegee Institute Summer Education Project (TISEP). In the course of my work, I became involved with a group of students who were actively working in a number of counties in Alabama, registering rural blacks to vote. It was very dangerous business at that time, and my mother and father legitimately feared for my life.

Tuskegee is at the center of what was called the "black belt" in Alabama, an area where the black population significantly outnumbered the white population. It was the idea of the students in the area to use the power of the vote to improve the lives of the black majority. This idea, firmly based in the American ideal of participatory democracy, was referred to as "black power." A new political party called the Black Panther Party began operating in Lowndes County to exercise this power.

The time that I spent in the "country" during that summer and at other times during my college years exposed me directly to a side of southern life that shocked me and changed me. People were living as virtual impoverished slaves on rural plantations owned by white farmers. They had been deprived of any meaningful education and they were terrified by the idea that we were asking them to risk their lives by seeking to exercise their basic constitutional rights. If we were accompanied by white northern students, many of these rural black people kept their eyes to the ground, as they had been trained to do in the presence of whites.

Many of our fellow white "freedom fighters," who were generally well-intentioned and morally principled, were offended when we asked them to work only in the offices because the people we were trying to help had been conditioned to be afraid of the sight of white people, or, to put it more accurately, they were conditioned to be afraid if they dared to do anything to better their position in life.

Many of the men and women of my father's generation disapproved of our brash, youthful irreverence for customs of civility and acquiescence in the name of survival. They weren't the first parents to think that their children lacked the common sense to take a practical view of their situation, but their fears were heightened by the local media's characterization of us as Communists, outside agitators, criminals, and irresponsible, un-American Negroes. They feared that we were alienating our friends who were not members of our race.

We didn't want to be responsible Negroes on the issue of compromising our human rights. It had been more than a decade since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act had been passed in 1964. We didn't think that honest whites, who wouldn't suffer any infringement on their constitutional rights for a minute, would be alienated by our agitation on behalf of our people—but if they were, so be it.

We didn't know anything about communism and we didn't think we were un-American. We were as American as apple pie. If there were any criminals, it was the people who were violating the Constitution by denying African-Americans basic human rights.

It was a quiet, pleasant ride to Ithaca. My father and I had a tacit agreement not to discuss civil rights issues because those issues always ended in anger. My parents wanted me to get a good education and they wanted to keep me out of the turmoil that was embroiling the South. Cornell University was not just one of the great universities of the world, it was a good place to escape the problems of blacks in the South. There were 38 African-Americans out of

a class of 1900 students in the Cornell Class of 1969. My understanding is that it was the largest group of African-American students to ever enter the University as freshmen. I doubt that the entire population of African-American students on campus prior to 1965 equalled 38.

Our admission, we learned, was the work of a group called the Committee on Special Education Projects ("COSEP"), and the person responsible for assisting us with our adjustment was a wonderful woman named Gloria Joseph. I was to live in room 4111 University Halls #4, and my roommate was a young man from River Ridge, New Jersey.

My father shook my hand and wished me well, and he thanked Ms. Joseph for being there to help me with my adjustment. The emotion that I felt was not nearly as overwhelming as when he shook my hand and left me four years earlier at Wyoming Seminary. He was not going to repeat the same mistake that his father had honestly made; he was going to support my desire to get a good education.

Cornell was an exciting place to be in those days. The quiet atmosphere of Ithaca was a wonderful environment for the focused study of the numerous and varied courses offered by the university. The students were bright, generally friendly, and well-informed about the issues of the day. Although the African-American students were a distinct minority, I felt considerably less isolated than I had in Kingston, Pennsylvania. In my own mind I had formed the belief that social isolation was the price that an African-American was required to pay for a high-quality education.

I saw myself as something of a trailblazer, although I later learned through independent reading that the true African-American trailblazers had been present in small numbers on elite American college campuses years before. Little special note was taken of them generally, and many of them spent their professional lives quietly building the backbone of the African-American middle-class at places like Howard, Hampton, Fisk, Morehouse, Spellman and Tuskegee.

As a way of offering support to each other, the African-American students at Cornell formed what was then called the African-American Society. We met regularly to discuss events and circumstances on campus that impacted us as a group, interpretations of our reading of African-American history and literature, and the civil rights movement that was unfolding. As more black students entered Cornell, the organization's membership grew, and its name was changed to the Black Liberation Front.

To understand the "radicalization" of black students at Cornell and to understand how the "occupation of the Straight" could take the turn that it did, it is necessary to recall the backdrop of events that were occurring in the country at that time.

The war in Vietnam was raging and students, black and white, were burning their draft cards, marching in protest in major cities like New York, and committing other acts of civil disobedience. Students across the country were occupying college campus buildings to express their disapproval of the war and their unwillingness to fight in it. White students at Cornell, led by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), occupied a building on the Engineering Quad for several days.

Each night on the news, the number of American soldiers who had been killed that day was reported. Family members clashed over the conflict between the ideal of patriotism and questions about the legitimacy of our intervention in the affairs of Southeast Asia. The 1968 National Democratic Convention in Chicago became a virtual street riot.

The pace of the women's movement had also quickened. The availability of the birth control pill gave women more control

Retrospective

over their bodies and they were agitating for more access to "men's jobs" and pay commensurate with the pay of men for equivalent work. A sexual revolution was underway and it was made some people feel liberated and others uptight.

For the first time, white college students were openly using drugs other than alcohol and prescription pills. They grew their hair long and wore loud clothes, if they wore any clothes at all. These folks were referred to as "hippies," and I was never really sure what their "bag" was, although they liked to talk about "love" and "peace." After the war in Vietnam ended, they seemed to disappear.

In the black community our counterparts at historically black colleges like Morehouse in Atlanta and North Carolina A&T in Greensboro were "sitting-in" at "white" lunch counters and getting their heads bashed for their trouble. They weren't beaten because they were less educated than the people who were beating them or because they lacked merit as individuals; they were attacked because they were violating customs that were deeply rooted in racism.

In January of 1966, a friend of mine, Sammy Young, was shot in the head at the Greyhound Bus Station in Tuskegee for insisting on using a "white restroom." Sammy, who had a very light complexion, was the son of a prominent family in Tuskegee and was a graduate of Cornwall Academy in Massachusetts. The white man who shot Sammy was expeditiously acquitted.

The murder of Sammy changed me further. I fully realized for the first time that the struggle for the civil rights of African-Americans was not something that I had engaged in to help other people, people we used to call "country people." The racism of the South made no allowances for class, education, individualism, shades of complexion, or economic status. The signs said "white" or "colored," and they meant what they said.

It seemed to me that, if the courts and the law enforcement officers of the South would not protect us, we would have to do the best we could to protect ourselves. I really think that my father agreed with me, but he didn't agree with my having the indiscretion to talk openly about it.

African-American soldiers, who were disproportionately represented in the armed forces in Vietnam, were coming home dead or, in many cases, with drug habits and emotional problems. Those who were able to adjust when they returned were ignored for their sacrifice, as were most of the other veterans of that war, and many could not find jobs.

Inner cities were exploding in anger in Watts, Harlem, Newark, and Detroit, to name a few. Muhammad Ali—who has been re-packaged as an American hero—was stripped of his heavyweight championship

for refusing to go to war. "Hell no, I won't go," he said. "It ain't the Vietnamese that have been calling me nigger."

Then in 1968, the ultimate happened. Martin Luther King was shot down at the age of 39 in Memphis, Tennessee. Even those who were doubtful of the efficacy of King's nonviolent tactics were disillusioned by his murder. I think that we all secretly hoped that he would be proved right. Given the very basic advances that he sought for us, like equal access to public accommodations, I felt anger and what I considered to be righteous indignation.

In the context of this history I really didn't think that our takeover of Willard Straight Hall in April of 1969 during parents' weekend was a big deal. To me it was a garden variety demonstration with typically vague goals that were related to seeking resources to support the study of our own history while we were at Cornell studying everyone else's history.

The demonstration was reasonably routine for the period, until a group of fraternity guys broke in and demanded that we leave. "This is our parents' weekend," they told us.

The real problems did not arise until they began to push people, including women, around. At that point, they were physically evicted. They threatened to return "equipped" to remove us from the building, and we took their threats seriously. It was at this point that the decision was made to stay where we were and to prepare to defend ourselves.

I think that we were all intelligent enough to know, even at that age, that we could not defend ourselves if real racial hostilities had exploded in upstate New York. But at that time, given my experience in life, the idea of being pushed around was not acceptable. I did not want anyone counting on the fact that I would "go limp," as we had been taught to do in the South, and take a beating at anyone's whim. My recollection of this resolve to stand up for myself is much clearer than my recollection of the particular demands that we, as a group, were making on the University. I have to leave the articulation of our specific goals to someone who has a better memory than I.

I am grateful that the decision was made not to kill us, and that I was permitted to go on with my life. I am also grateful that I was not expelled and was permitted to ultimately complete my education at Cornell a year later.

The most painful memory for me of the time was seeing the disappointment in my father's eyes when I returned to Tuskegee without my degree. Nothing any racist or patronizing liberal could say could have hurt me as much as the look in his eyes. I knew him and I knew what he went through to get where he was. He had been proud of me, despite our disagreements, and he had sacrificed material luxuries to see to it that I got a better opportunity than he had. I saw

in his eyes the disappointment of the aspirations of generations of people, the earliest of whom aspired only to have physical chains removed from their bodies.

I thought back to the way my father had held his head high when the President of Wyoming Seminary announced at my graduation that I had been selected to receive the Ruggles Award as the outstanding graduating senior. My mother also told me later that he carried around the tie pins that were given to me after my election to two Cornell honorary societies, Aleph Semach and Quill and Dagger. Just months before the Straight incident, he was showing his colleagues the dean's list certificate that I received for academic excellence at Cornell.

I wanted to tell him that I had stood up for him and the other great people of Tuskegee. I wanted to tell him that people like him had a right to fight for their dignity. But I knew what he would say. He would say that you don't imitate and stoop to the level of those of whom you complain. Although the mighty usually prevail, that does not necessarily make them better than other people.

He would say that a man should finish what he starts and shouldn't allow himself to get distracted. He would say that the best thing that I could do for myself and others was to get myself a good education. In the end, I knew that I had defied the will of my father in the same way that he had defied the will of his. Each man has to live in his own time.

To the African-American students at Cornell who are interested in the events surrounding the occupation of Willard Straight Hall, I am glad that you are interested in the history of African-Americans at the University, but I hope that you will not choose to be stuck in that history. You are living in a very different time that calls for very different ways of thinking. It would be a waste for you to try to relive the experiences of those of us who went before you. Fortunately for you, you have a reasonably large black alumni group that is anxious to share its experiences with you and can identify with the challenges that Cornell presents to African-American students. Unfortunately for us, we did not have the support of such a group.

Please don't waste your valuable time trying to defend your "equality" or your right to be at Cornell. You are desperately needed by your community and I am giving you permission to take four years to prepare yourselves. I even hope that you will manage to have some fun. Many of those who are so quick to sit in judgment of you would do well to engage in more introspection and self-evaluation.

Diversity is reality, not an idea dreamed up by African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and women to harass other "innocent people." The opposite of diversity is delusion. If the great universities of

this country are really interested in the pursuit of truth, they will continue to seek to include intellectually capable representatives of all segments of our society. If not, it will be the universities' loss, and the excluded segments will have to make the best of the limited resources that are available to them. Our determination to move forward is part of our "merit."

Remember that Frederick Douglass improved his reading skills by tricking young white boys in Baltimore into correcting his pronunciation of words. Remember that Booker T. Washington, an ex-slave, literally walked to Hampton Institute to get his education. Remember that the students at Tuskegee Institute, not only built the buildings on their campus, they also made the bricks. Our inclusion in significant numbers among the student bodies on Ivy League campuses is very recent history.

I realize now what I did not have the experience to realize in my 20s. The opportunity to get a Cornell education is the opportunity to develop something much more powerful and productive than a gun; it is the opportunity to have a university-trained mind. Take advantage of that opportunity.

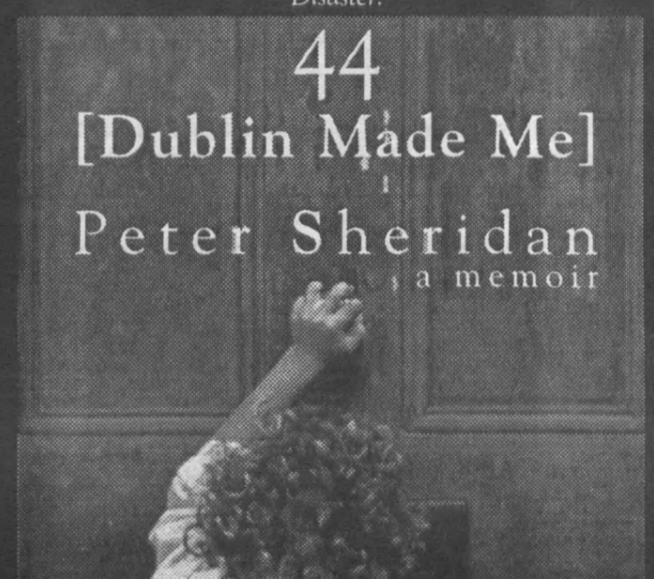
To those who think that we were responsible for "closing the American mind" and/or destroying "academic freedom," I think that you are wrong. A part of the problem in the first place was that the American mind had been closed to people like us for a very long time. At Tuskegee there was a period when students were not permitted to walk across campus with books because the sight of blacks with books upset southern whites. Black college presidents who were seeking to raise funds to support their schools' academic programs were routinely asked to sing Negro spirituals as part of their appeal. Professors with nice cars wore chauffeur caps when they drove their cars on campus to create the impression that the cars did not belong to them. I guess you have to be a part of a community that has "academic freedom" to bemoan its loss.

Hopefully, the incident at Willard Straight Hall will just be a historical footnote in the great future of Cornell University that we should work together to create. For those who are still angry about the incident, angry that we "got away with it," I can only repeat the advice that I am given when I try to offer some of the details of what I have experienced and learned about African-American history: "Things aren't like that any more. Let's move on." Thank God, I have been able to do so.

Reuben Munday is President and CEO of Lewis & Munday, A Professional Corporation in Detroit, Michigan, one of the largest African-American owned law firms in the country.

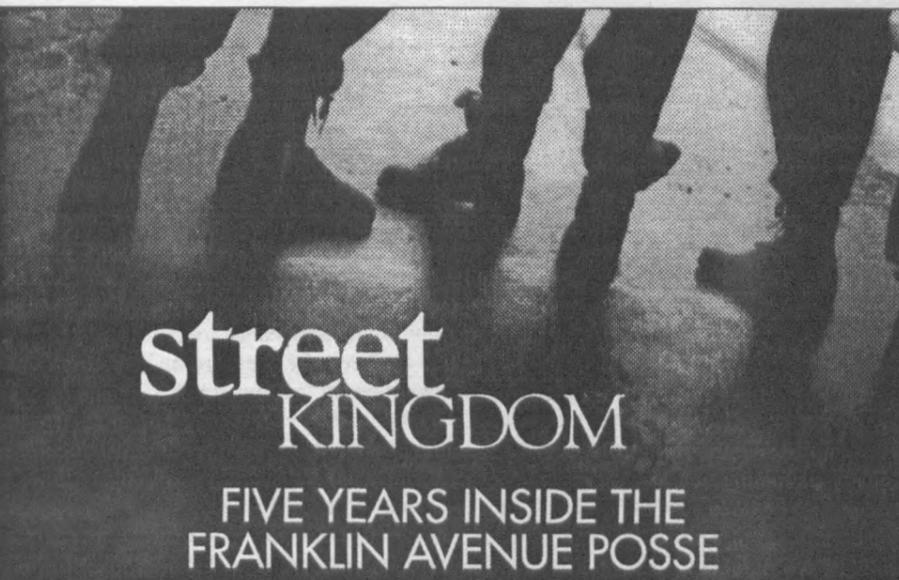
I tried not to look down. To look straight ahead, like Da told me. I was shaking with fear. I remembered the Greek boy. He didn't do what he was told and flew too near the sun.
Disaster.

44
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Cornell '69: A Retrospective

Glenn Altschuler

Just about every Cornell graduate knows that on April 20, 1969, about eighty members of the Afro-American Society marched out of Willard Straight Hall, brandishing guns and raising clenched fists in the Black Power salute. At the rear of the procession, looking exhausted and forlorn, walked Vice-President Steven Muller and Vice-Provost Keith Kennedy, who had represented the university in the negotiations that ended the occupation. When he saw on the front page of *The New York Times* "The Picture" of the exit from The Straight, accompanied by an article about the "capitulation" of Cornell to militant students, President James Perkins realized "we had one hell of a public relations problem on our hands."

To others, including Donald Alexander Downs, Cornell '69 revealed a "problem" more profound and permanent: a great university, paralyzed by racial confrontation, and intimidated by the threat of physical violence, had abandoned academic freedom and ceased applying its rules to all members of the campus community. The takeover of The Straight epitomized the "crisis of the American University."

Based on extensive archival research and interviews with many of the participants, *Cornell '69* examines this crisis through a narrative of the most troubled academic year in the history of the institution. Despite clumsy organization and prose, a nearly useless index, and, apparently, a failure by Cornell University Press to engage the services of a copy editor, Downs manages to tell a compelling, if depressing, story. The book's strength lies in the accumulation of details that help those of us who weren't there understand the "time of troubles." Downs also sees in the university's return, albeit temporarily, to a Hobbesian state of nature, and the response of administrators and faculty to the takeover, and the events that preceded and followed it, a failure of liberalism. When Cornell ceased "to protect individual freedom in the face of imperative social justice claims," when it allowed power to prevail over persuasion, it lost its soul and "dissolved under the force of pressures arising from within."

It is difficult to imagine an armed occupation of a campus building at any time before the 1960s, when demands for racial justice and an end to the war in Vietnam reached hundreds of colleges and universities. Less than a decade removed from panty raids and parietal hours, institutions of higher learning were ill-equipped to handle challenges to their authority and legitimacy. Their task was complicated by the sympathy of many in the academic community with the goals, if not always the tactics, of the protesters. Accommodation, moreover, did not immunize a campus from turmoil, a lesson that many faculty and administrators were slow to learn. Indeed, Downs argues, it may have emboldened student radicals and their allies to up the ante.

Administrators and faculty at Cornell struggled with these very issues. When James Perkins became president in 1963 he moved immediately to make equal educational opportunity a reality for blacks. He acted out of a sincere conviction that the "integrated school and the integrated campus represent our best hopes for future understanding between black and white." To more effectively recruit and retain black undergraduates, Perkins established the Committee on Special Education Projects (COSEP). Enrollment increased from a pitifully small eight African-American students in 1963 to 250 in 1968-1969. Although the SAT scores of these students were considerably lower than those of others offered admission, retention rates remained high.

By the second half of the decade, however, some black students were contemptuous of Perkins' "tokenism." In 1966 they formed the Afro-American Society (AAS), barring

whites from membership, except by special permission. Incidents of racism, including a confrontation in the dorms over the playing of soul music, and Phi Delta Theta's decision to charge blacks (and not whites) admission to a social event, contributed to demands that the Elmhirst Room in The Straight be used exclusively by blacks at mealtime, a black therapist be hired by the university, and residence halls be set aside for blacks. Perkins agreed to hire a black psychiatrist and Wari House, a dormitory for black women, joined Elmwood House, which had already been set up for black men. In the spring of 1968, racial tensions exploded.

In a course on Economic Development, Father Michael McPhelin, a visiting professor, claimed that the urban poor lacked the ambition to rise through their own efforts, preferring instead to play "sick and perverted games" and teach their children "cunning for survival, as in the jungle." Black students in the class charged that Phelin was a racist, who should be fired. When they got no satisfaction from chair Tom Davis, several dozen students took over the department office after a scuffle that sent two security officers to the infirmary. The occupation ended when Provost Dale Corson promised to appoint an additional instructor, approved by the AAS. A few hours later, Martin Luther King was assassinated. In the ensuing days, blacks took over a radio station and several fires broke out. At a memorial service for King at Bailey Hall, black students entered en masse and sat in a separate section, roped off by the administration. In his "eulogy" AAS member Larry Dickson predicted that non-violence had died with King, warned his "brothers and sisters" that their lives were in danger in Ithaca, asked them to prepare to "shoot back and you shoot to kill," and challenged whites: "If you honkies think you had enough to fuck with us, just try it!"

A commission subsequently investigated the McPhelin affair. No action was taken against McPhelin or the students. Indeed, Provost Corson thanked members of the Afro-American Society for making the community aware of the problem of institutional racism. By failing to endorse academic freedom, Downs believes, "the administration ended up siding with the students." In any event, in the wake of the incident, demands for a black studies program grew.

AAS members told Perkins that Cornell must establish a degree-granting black studies program or college, run for and by blacks, (the AAS rejected the student-faculty Advisory Committee appointed by Perkins to establish the program), with an annual budget of \$250,000 and a director chosen by AAS. When the president promised to make 320 Wait Avenue available to the Program, AAS students refused to wait, evicting the faculty and staff who resided there, and commandeering thirty lounge cushions from the residence hall in Donlon.

Although Perkins refused to meet the deadline set by the AAS to implement their demands, his response seemed to demonstrate that much could be achieved by "threatening the honky." He cited legal obstacles to an autonomous college, rejecting advice that he point out that a separatist college was incompatible with the mission and values of the university. Suggesting at first a willingness to discuss "greater autonomy," the president later indicated that he was "finally not opposed" to a black college, though "It would involve a rearranging of my whole personality."

To keep the pressure on, seven blacks went on a "toy gun spree," in December, 1968, threatening bystanders, disrupting traffic, and knocking over candy machines. A larger number of students dumped thousands of library books, which "had no relevance to them" on the floor and upset card catalogues. President Perkins himself was a target. At a meeting in his office, one student ostentatiously carried a knife while another put his arm, menacingly, around the president's shoulder. At a symposium

on South Africa, in February, 1969, as Perkins explained Cornell's investment policies, one black student grabbed him by the collar while another warned off security officers with a two-by-four. Perkins was shaken, the campus was tense, and Edward Whitfield, president of the AAS, insisted that his organization, not the judicial boards of the university, discipline its members.

Beset as well by anti-war protests, including an SDS-sponsored disruption of Chase Manhattan recruiters at Malott Hall, Cornell administrators decided that attempts to discipline students for destroying property, injuring security officers, or interfering with free speech might increase anti-establishment sentiment on campus. Thus they watched with dismay as the judicial bodies on campus voted to hear charges against AAS members for the toy gun and Donlon lounge cushion incidents. The committee insisted that the absence of blacks on the board (AAS member Tom Jones had resigned from the student-faculty committee and no other black had run for office) was not relevant because each adjudicator was charged to apply his/her judgments on the merits of the case at hand. After a protracted tragedy of errors, including mis-scheduled appointments, misunderstandings about the rules of the process, and efforts to convince the AAS to accept a slap on the wrist for the defendants, the Student-Faculty Board on Student Conduct voted to reprimand the students in the toy gun spree and take no action in the Donlon case (because the cushions had been returned to Donlon an hour after they had been seized). The board's deliberations and decision came against a backdrop of violence: in mid-March in three separate incidents, white students were assaulted by blacks; one of them was severely beaten.

Although AAS members claimed that The Straight was taken over in response to the judicial board's decision, the occupation had been planned for weeks. Downs makes a strong, if circumstantial case, that black students themselves set off fire alarms and burned a cross on the doorstep of Wari House to build sympathy on campus for their action. After a fight with Straight employees and the eviction of adults spending Parents' Weekend in the student union, about fifty students partied, studied, telephoned their friends, seized food, and damaged about \$30,000 of property, while SDS members formed a protective ring around the building. Because Security officers were told not to impede or arrest "unless absolutely necessary" and blacks were allowed to enter the building at will, the university, Downs points out, was "helpless to defend itself and others." Although it is difficult to see how administrators could have, "in a thoughtful manner," made known their suspicions about who burned the cross, they almost certainly should have, as he suggests, sought an injunction against the students in a local court, to make clear that their actions would have consequences.

An attempt to liberate The Straight by twenty-five brothers of Delta Upsilon clearly changed the character of the occupation. Convinced that another attack might be imminent (some believed, with SDS-member David Burak, that authorities in New York State were stockpiling "super weapons" to commit genocide against blacks), the AAS smuggled guns into The Straight. When this new reality became public knowledge, anxiety turned to fear and panic, amidst rumors of violence: a rifleman was "spotted" in Uris Tower; a fire at Chi Psi "must be arson"; sirens signaled an assault on The Straight.

Perkins dispatched Kennedy and Muller to The Straight to promise that if the students left peacefully, the administration would ask the faculty to nullify the reprimands. In return, the president insisted only that the AAS join efforts to create a new judicial system. Once inside, the vice provost and vice president agreed to amnesty for the occupiers, legal action against Delta Upsilon (and

delivery to the AAS of the names of the fraternity brothers who entered The Straight), and no action for damages incurred during the takeover. Provost Dale Corson, according to Downs, was appalled, but he agreed, as did President Perkins, who was not much in evidence during the negotiations. The Provost acquiesced as well in an AAS demand that they leave the building with their guns because Muller and Kennedy indicated (perhaps mistakenly, Kennedy now believes) that they would not depart unarmed. When the occupation ended, Perkins banned guns and disruptive demonstrations from campus, but his edict was ignored.

The final act of this drama was the saddest of all. After deciding not to repudiate an agreement entered into under duress, President Perkins wasted several opportunities to build support among students and faculty for the judicial system and the preservation of law and order on campus. At a convocation at Barton Hall, he delivered a vapid speech about the future of the university. Downs speculates that he might have feared that militants would seize the microphone or harm him if he addressed the relevant issues. SDS filled the vacuum with mass rallies at Barton Hall, transforming the anti-establishment sentiments of many students into a fervent advocacy of faculty nullification. When the faculty voted that the presence of arms on campus made it "impossible" to dismiss the penalties (the body left the door open for a different decision on all the "issues behind the Afro-American complaints" under more "secure and non-pressured circumstances"), 2,500 students, with only ten nays, vowed to support the AAS demands and voted no confidence in their professors. A day later, only the timely intervention of Professor Eldon Kenworthy of Government and Burak kept 6,000 students from taking over another building.

Some faculty maintained that the passion and near-unanimity of the students, as well as the lobbying of the administration (in what many still think Perkins' most Machiavellian moment), convinced them to change their votes. But clearly fear of bloodshed gripped many. In an interview on WHCU, and again at Barton Hall, Tom Jones promised, "Before this is over, James Perkins, [Government Professors] Allan Sindler, and Clinton Rossiter are going to die in the gutter like dogs. . . [and] Cornell has three hours to live." In mortal fear for their personal safety, scores of faculty and their families filled Ithaca's hotels and motels; others left town. Eleven hundred faculty, by a margin of three to one, hastened to nullify the reprimands imposed by the judicial board. In a pathetic coda, the body then resolved to join the students in an "occupation" of Barton Hall. At Barton, President Perkins announced nullification, acknowledged that martial law remained in effect, then confessed that "there is nothing I have said or will say which will not be modified by changing circumstances."

With its newfound power, the "Barton Hall community" established as its legacy a Constituent Assembly with some governing powers, a role for students in the hiring and tenure of faculty, and a residence hall, Ujamaa, based on identity politics. The decision to establish a relatively autonomous Center for Afro-American Studies, albeit without power to grant degrees, is important to remember, predated the takeover of The Straight. With these far-from-revolutionary accomplishments, the revolution stalled and a counter-revolution began. Amidst resignations of prominent and popular faculty, including Sindler, History Professor Walter LaFeber's threat to leave, a devastating article in the *Alumni News*, entitled "Blood-Free Campus, But What Really Happened?", and an eloquent speech by Professor of Government George Kahin at a teach-in on academic freedom, students began to have second thoughts. As reporter Homer

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Cornell '69: A Retrospective

James McConkey

Though the severe racial disturbances that are the subject of *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* continued into the next year, Downs' book focuses on the period of my own involvement in the central judicial questions. The crisis over judicial processes was foreshadowed, as Downs in his careful analysis points out, by earlier events; but the particular event that led to the black takeover of Willard Straight Hall and then to the downfall of the judicial system was what he refers to as a "toy gun spree." Seven black students stopped traffic and disrupted activities in a couple of buildings; in a third, Goldwin Smith Hall, "they overturned two candy machines, discharged a fire extinguisher, and ran down the hallways banging on doors of offices and classrooms." It so happened that I was leading a seminar of maybe five undergraduates in my basement office across from the Temple of Zeus when they knocked upon and then opened the door: "Oh, there's a class going on," one of them said, and quietly closed the door. We then heard the crash as they toppled a candy machine at the end of the corridor.

Later, upon my appointment to the Faculty Committee on Student Affairs, I was a participant in the long and exhausting hours spent by the committee in trying to come to terms with the refusal of those blacks to acquiesce in any judgment upon their actions made in accordance with a code that to them was designed by whites in a university they accused of "institutional racial bias." Downs remarks, quite correctly, that the judicial code was based on the assumption that individuals are responsible for their actions, while the more militant members of the Afro-American Society were engaged in the politics of group identity and recognition.

Anybody's memory of disturbing events thirty years in the past may be colored by later memories or by an attempt at self-justification. With as much objectivity as I'm capable of giving my earlier self, I can say that the response of the black students at my door, which to me acknowledged their respect for teaching, had something to do with my unsuccessful attempt to get the FCSA to dismiss the charges against them. I considered their actions to have taken on a symbolic import—simply because they were black—far beyond the trivial damage they were accused of. I was comparing the "spree" to the disturbances of past Dragon Days, when architecture students marched through Goldwin Smith, even entering classes to spew green-dyed liquids on professors unwary enough to leave their doors unlocked—a disruptive event, surely, but one that aroused no furor. Unlike such disruptions, this one had a calculated political motive; I was naive in assuming that dropping the charges would resolve anything. My committee's refusal to drop them brought the takeover of Willard Straight Hall and the alarming introduction of weapons. But after the faculty itself nullified even more than the original charges, the black leadership was not content, refusing even to participate in a revision of the code they had objected to. They wanted an educational autonomy that disregarded not only state law but the Supreme Court ruling that made the doctrine of "separate but equal" a violation of Constitutional intent.

The compromise ultimately decided upon—an early form of the present program in Africana Studies—resulted in an absence of black students in most of the classes I taught in the following decades. In the pre-1969 years, this was not the case; some of the later black leaders were students of mine as well as of the faculty mentioned by Downs who supported academic freedom above all else. Today, I find it surprising—given all that was waiting to occur—to recall that once I accused Tom Jones, who became perhaps the most incendiary black leader, of using both his undeniable charm and the color of his skin to avoid dedicating himself enough to the work of my class. If my memory is correct, he accepted my accusation, but with a justification that would cheer the heart of conservatives today who decry

affirmative action: the university itself had influenced him to be that way, for the color of his skin and not any financial need (his parents being well-off) had provided him with financial benefits and other dispensations.

Another black mentioned in the book was one with whom I felt a particular spiritual and intellectual affinity. Not only were his insights into the literature the class was reading unusually insightful—actually, I learned from them—but both of us were persuaded by Camus' distinction between resentment and rebellion. (To Camus, resentment is an impotent envy for what one does not have or is not, while rebellion comes from an implicit assumption of equality with others: the rebel demands recognition of what he is, what he shares with them.) Still another black student would smile, wave her hands, and shout at me halfway across the whole Arts Quad, "Hello, Professor McConkey"—always a warning, for whenever it happened the AAS was planning some strategy to make even more difficult the decisions facing the committee of which she knew I was a member.

"The Cornell story," Downs tell us early on, "is about the failure of liberalism to protect intellectual freedom in the face of imperative social justice claims, thereby providing a blueprint for the severing of these principles that compromises higher education to this day." His greatest criticism is directed against President James Perkins for a liberal political bias at the expense of academic freedom—a bias that caused him to lose control; but Downs also condemns the faculty, particularly those who let their own desire for political justice in America take such precedence over academic freedom that they not only sympathized with Perkins but failed to support any corrective action themselves. (I think none of us, including those supporters of academic freedom who despised him, came as we should have to Perkins' defense, on those occasions when he—who represented by virtue of his office the university itself—was humiliated or threatened.)

Near the end of his book, in discussing the "Barton Hall Community," Downs seems to be implying what those compromises in higher education today consist of: in his view, that assemblage of students and a scattering of faculty members "signified the beginning of the 'political correctness' that took off in the 1980s, when the activists of the 1960s—the heirs of Perkins—began to hold positions of power in universities." (To me, that "Community" was remarkably hopeful, receptive to all possible ideas perhaps because activists did not interfere.) His judgment here—simplistic for many reasons—is similar to that of many political conservatives, whose own righteousness is another, if related, subject; but the righteousness that then afflicted groups on the right as well as the left (and many individuals, though not to my knowledge Perkins himself) suggests the real difficulty in times of crisis of distinguishing between intellectual freedom and ideology.

Downs' thesis, augmented as it is by those on the faculty he chose to interview, makes his judgment of Perkins too harsh for a tragic figure enmeshed within his own good intentions. Downs is unfair in contrasting Perkins to Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago, who believed, in Downs' paraphrase, "that the university can serve society only if it does not surrender its distinctive meaning and form to external forces." Hutchins, that proponent of Great Books and humanistic education, had the good fortune throughout his long career as university president and chancellor to exist in an America still confident in its own virtue and its role as inheritor of the Greek gift of democracy—though, ironically, Athenian democracy was limited to male citizens, its repose for philosophical inquiry dependent upon slavery. Hutchins never had to withstand the outer assaults and inner pressures, the growing sense of moral outrage, occasioned by the Vietnam War, that brought about a widespread disobedience (justified by the Nuremberg trials) to legislation and procedures considered unjust. The growing discontent toppled not only the president of Cornell but the President of the

United States, undoing in the process Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty—much of it aimed, like Perkins' more circumscribed efforts, at helping blacks overcome the discrimination they had been historically accorded.

Minor player though I was in the Cornell events of 1969, I was exhausted almost to the point of spiritual paralysis, and was glad to take a sabbatical leave. In Italy the following year, I wrote a novel I didn't really want to write, a fictionalized account of the events I'd just lived through. Once I got started, I found myself writing more easily than I ever had, but without any sense of my conclusion. Every day, as I finished, I had a clear idea of no more than what I would write the following day. Only when I was at the end, and had killed off my protagonist, did I realize that I had just destroyed what I had come to disdain in myself—a posture of compromise based on the wish to be liked. Unconsciously I had felt the need to destroy that self, in order to construct a social identity I could better live with, one that could resist the blandishments of any peer group.

In experiencing that year at Cornell, but even more so in writing about it, I was aware of scheming on the part of a few blacks—the kind of behavior we refer to as machiavellian. But that they (or white activists, for that matter) would actually attempt to demoralize and divide a university by acts consciously intended not only to intimidate but to encourage white guilt while inciting racial hatred (the most obvious of the examples being their own burning of a cross before the residence of black women)—this struck me as so contemptible, so morally indefensible, that at the time I could not even imagine it, whatever the growing evidence. I find it likely that Perkins couldn't imagine it, at least soon enough, either—though, on the basis of Downs' book, it seems that some of the staunchest defenders of intellectual freedom could. Had Perkins been able to imagine it for the devious revolutionary strategy it was (or turned out to be: activists can increasingly get caught up in their own early rhetoric), he could have taken a firmer position capable of giving direction to ensuing policies. So even in our innocence, we humans can be judged guilty.

This may be as sound a conclusion as I can make, but I am not satisfied with it.

Democracy, like the freedom of intellectual expression that stems from it, is a concept as precious as it is fragile. Freedom of intellectual expression is a "good," but why is it so? Because it is the freedom to search for truth. In science, truth can be objective, made verifiable by factual evidence; but humanistic truth, whatever the factual buttressing, remains as subjective as the values through which we daily interpret the reality in which we live, and can limit or broaden the pursuit of even the purest of academic ideals. For reasons whose seed, if it is to be located at all, goes back at least a century and a half ago (some carry it much farther back) subjective truth has become a series of relative and seemingly disparate and frequently conflicting truths which in unstable times give ideologues an easy entrance.

It is clear (at least to me) that none of these fragmented truths—busily though each may be taught today, each important in itself—has any real meaning unless all are brought together under a truth large enough to encompass them all, and in so doing reflect our common human origin and fate. Without such spiritual insight, and the social reforms that can stem from it, we may be destined—particularly if the present boom turns to bust—to further separation and resentment in America, to a self-hatred expressed by hatred for others capable once again of eroding academic freedom, even if genetic cloning could resurrect enough copies of Robert Hutchins to preside over every one of our universities; with it, we can rebel against injustice while remaining part of the single human race each of us undeniably represents.

Cornell '69 is a gripping, a necessary, cautionary tale; my reservations are no dismissal of its message.

James McConkey is a writer and the fiction editor of *The Bookpress*.

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Death and Transfiguration

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Howard Norman.
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Destiny Kinal

"Never tell one story. That way the first one won't fall over."

It was January 1997 and Howard Norman, author of *The Bird Artist* and now *The Museum Guard*, was lecturing for Bennington College's MFA program on Inuit first contact stories, telling of the Inuit trick of putting out two stories "to vie for distinction."

Having had the pleasure of hearing Norman's lectures, I also asked for an interview. He had done a reading from *The Museum Guard* earlier in the week; the snippet struck me as unmistakably different from his earlier books. Norman's second novel, *The Bird Artist*, as big a success in Europe as in Canada and the States, had been translated into twelve languages. And, while it was the better part of a year before *The Museum Guard* was released and I could read it through, Norman's preoccupations while he was completing the novel had come through as subtext in our interview.

Norman's first career, before writing fiction, was as a folklorist, at a fortuitous time in his late teens and twenties when his hands-on training and practice coincided with "the widest application of ethnographic and linguistic travel in the history of Canadian folklore." Norman, who speaks both Cree and Inuit, nonetheless felt himself to be an outsider, both metaphorically and literally.

You could learn languages well enough to have adult conversations, but you don't magically become somebody who had that belief system. I could describe everything I saw, but I couldn't understand spiritual dimensions of it.

He threw away his first novel, he told me, "because it was too folkloric."

What I was experiencing in these places, especially in remote maritime communities, was an uncanny sense of people living in extremely passionate ways, and that their passions would run up against a brick wall of reality, i.e., of the limitations of their lives, geographical, historical, gender, race.

Although it would be many years before he would begin to write fiction, his career as a fiction writer was fueled in 1978 in a cemetery in Heart's Desire, Newfoundland, the setting for *The Bird Artist*.

I had been sent to research graveyards...a particular cemetery in a place called Heart's Desire, way up on the north coast. Six children in a family had all died within six weeks of each other... And the idea was not to figure that out, but to use the cemetery as a kind of entrée into the community. ...People were willing to talk to me... but it was the first time I'd experienced characters that I was researching coming alive. And in a way they really forced themselves upon me. I couldn't sleep... And so I became kind of emotionally dissheveled. ...In retrospect, I think this was when I first saw—long before I started to write—that fiction would let you empathize and step inside your character's perceptions. That's when I decided what I was going to write, if I ever wrote fiction.

The Museum Guard establishes a fine-pitched hum of tension between the narrator DeFoe Russet—a man who, in his own words, "know[s] how to spend almost the exact same amount of money per month," a man who irons clothing for therapy—and his persistently dissheveled Uncle Edward, the museum guard senior to DeFoe at the Glace. On his first day of work, Norman introduces Imogen, who works in the Jewish cemetery

as caretaker, and we feel the inevitability of these three becoming involved.

*Well, I looked into it a little further [the situation surrounding the parents of the six dead children]. The sexual dynamics formed a number of triangles—the mother, the lighthouse keeper, the narrator. The character who became Margaret Handle [in *The Bird Artist*] was a half sister to the lighthouse keeper.... And the extraordinary complications of that were something I couldn't grapple with. I also thought it might not be effective even if I tried, even if it was true. But that was my choice: the truth wasn't as interesting to me, because there already seemed to be a psychological inevitability imposed on the situation [that] I wanted to open up.*

With no more than six characters in action at a given time, Norman fiddles with the small world's Rule of Three, expanding the possibilities geometrically. Coincidence comes close to taking on a voice itself.

As *The Museum Guard* is drawing to a close, curator Edgar Connaught sends home a missive from Amsterdam to Halifax bearing the author's message: "I have always despised theories of history that elevate coincidence to a principle. I do not believe for one moment that anything that I have reported to you from my weeks in Amsterdam is even remotely coincidental. I believe it has all been willed."

But a sense of predestination, justness, or design most often comes in retrospect. Looking back appears to be Norman's preferred address to his stories: both *The Bird Artist* and *The Museum Guard* begin with a narrator reflecting on what has occurred. Under this scrutiny, Norman recognizes, life arranges itself, submitting to our need to find pattern.

In retrospect, sometimes I really think that what the north represented to me was something I couldn't determine at that time. My world up to then was so claustrophobic... that it almost took this extraordinary vast openness to counteract this.... Looking back on it of course, it's different, you can use things. I can see what I was doing.

Norman assigns the role of reflection to his narrator, DeFoe Russet, whose level-headed assessments estrange him irremediably from Imogen, who has thrust herself into an existential state of present-tense beingness.

While she is still in DeFoe's orbit, Imogen explains her mysterious drive to transform herself into a Jewess from Amsterdam as a desire to do something "ennobling." She has become obsessed with the phrase, "the drama of the soul's estrangement and reconciliation," a fragment she picked up from an obscure Jewish philosopher. Making DeFoe open the Glace to her at night—against his better judgement, against his very nature—she says, "Here's what I think. I think she [the Jewess in the painting, the artist's dead wife] is living a true life and I am not.... More exactly, I'm saying, even this woman in a painting is living a truer life."

From this point forward, we are led to believe that the story will be Imogen's, and perhaps this red herring sources my small sense of vacancy with *The Museum Guard*. In fact, when we find that the story rests with the several voyeurs who have watched as bystanders, it is difficult to overcome a sense of betrayal that Imogen, who has seized center stage for her drama, is not given her moment to speak. Not a gesture, symbol or token tells us how Imogen assesses the pass to which she has willfully brought her life. Were we justified in thinking that Imogen had sufficient stature to be considered Norman's protagonist?

The central condition of Aristotle's definition of a protagonist—that s/he be noble—added together with Imogen's drive toward an ennobling act—is snatched away from us and we must ask why.

The central event of *The Museum Guard*—Imogen's disappearance, through the frame-of-reference of a painting, into the real world of Amsterdam in 1939 and the growing menace of Hitler's approach—has been explored by other writers. It's been done: the thin margin of art, the cultural and historical context, breached by a character, often a risk-taking female, who enters another time and place magically, and makes all the difference.

A bit shopworn though the device may be, the impact of Imogen's act of transference on the novel cannot be minimized. Oh, perhaps the motive of the Glace's curator Edgar Connaught to accompany Imogen to Europe is another clanky bit of equipment, a device to overlook. Imogen's development on the other side, in Amsterdam, has to be told. Norman satisfies that need through a packet of letters sent back by Connaught over a period of several months.

Perhaps *The Museum Guard* is at its weakest where it should be strongest, in the Amsterdam sections, as revealed in Edgar's letters. We can't help but share the Dutch characters' disgust—both bit players and Joop Heijman, the artist who created *Jewess on the Street in Amsterdam*—at the grotesque charade of this Canadian woman masquerading as the painting's Jewess, in a time when, as a shipboard companion notes, "Surely you are...the only Jew choosing to go into Europe, young lady." We can't help but wonder at this experiment the two lovers—Edgar the Glace's curator and Miss Delbo, the museum's art education guide—have mounted at great personal expense to force Imogen's willful illusion to its unimaginable conclusion. Norman asks his readers to suspend a great deal of disbelief in the service of his story.

Then why has he denied us the device of a message-in-a-bottle from our protagonist? For surely anything can be forgiven an author if device serves to produce an alchemical transformation in us, by identification with the fate of the characters. Does Norman build a strong enough argument to persuade us that Imogen—who seems a sensible if capricious young woman—was capable of a transfiguration of such mystery and depth? What threads does he give us—rational, intuitive or magical—to find our way back out of the labyrinth?

Norman sends Imogen on a journey toward the beast that we fear—reader and writer—into the heart of that darkness, the Nazi *anschluss*, into the impending war. With *The Museum Guard*, Norman joins the growing legion of writers—led by women and people of ethnicity, victims of colonial repression—who send their characters through the looking glass into those times of "terminal paradox" as Kundera styles them, to live life at the street level and let us see what historians might have missed.

So Norman dispatches Imogen to face our collective fears, and assigns Edgar

Connaught, her Nick Carraway, to chronicle her last moments. "My last sight of her—imagine this as a photograph, Helen—is of her working confidently and patiently, scrubbing along the center aisle of the beautiful synagogue, with its wooden floors. I chose, finally, not to interrupt. She seemed so fully resident in the moment, in the lifting of the scrub brush, pushing the pail along, humming or singing to herself."

Imogen Linny had arrived "fully resident" in her alternate reality. The evidence?: she was productive in the workaday world, doing laundry, shopping in the market, scrubbing a floor, absorbed in the ordinary, *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of the everyday. But where is the payoff? Her personal meditation on the meaning of it all. Norman robs us of that satisfaction. This isn't Imogen's story it seems.

Back in Halifax, DeFoe waits in prison, shut off from participating, punished for the crime of committing one of his life's solitary passionate acts: stealing the painting for Imogen's meditation during her last night in Halifax.

At Bennington, Howard concluded his lecture on the Inuit first contact stories with a conundrum from his cumulative years working in the north, a quote that sounded very much like something from Kafka: "The thing you know best is the thing that will betray you." His own steady sensibilities have betrayed DeFoe. The two voyeurs from the museum's staff—Miss Delbo and Edgar—have been betrayed by their romantic notion that Imogen's gesture might have meaning in the face of the Holocaust.

On the frontispiece of *The Museum Guard*, Norman puts his readers on notice with an epigraph from Virginia Woolf, "Let us shut off the wireless and listen to the past." In *The Museum Guard*, the radio brings news of Hitler's sinister intentions to Halifax in the person of a radio commentator Ovid Lamartine who—somewhat in the way of a *deus ex machina*—opens the door between the magical agency of the contemporary painting *Jewess on a Street in Amsterdam* and the claustrophobic world of the Glace. With his connections in many worlds at once, Lamartine, the folklorist's mouthpiece, functions as the storytellers of old, bringing news of distant settlements and events, the stories of our own past to a new generation: "...you see, we get, we have always gotten, the watered-down versions of Grimm's, and other fairy tales, from the dark forests of the German subconscious mind. Make no mistake about it, they are cautionary tales. "Do not go out of your houses at night, good children of Germany.... Do not wander from your villages.... the monster lurks nearby."

Destiny Kinal of Waverly, NY and points west, has been publishing interviews for over 20 years. She is working on two novels.

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Slam Dunk Capitalism

Walter LaFeber

The world changed fundamentally in the 1970s and early 1980s. In this sense, the twenty-first century began during those years, for powerful forces that will shape the early part of the new century significantly appeared for the first time. Or, to rephrase, a new era did not begin with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991, but with the information revolution, the new power of U.S. capital and transnational corporations to drive that revolution, and the reaction—sometimes violent—in the United States and abroad to that revolution. This new era has been called “the information age,” and described as “post-industrial,” “post-modern,” and even “post-imperialist” or “late capitalist.” Whatever it is termed, it marks the beginning of something different in world history.

This analysis uses the sport of basketball to begin examining these subjects. Why basketball? Because with the help of new media, the marketing of basketball has become an important fixture in global as well as American culture. Because some of the pioneering transnational corporations are exploiting American sports so profitably and with far-reaching social consequences. Because basketball has attracted both women and men as players as well as spectators since the game first appeared in 1891. And because basketball produced Michael Jordan.

This account assumes that the importance of U.S. foreign relations diminished not at all with the Cold War's end after 1989. The nation's overseas influence and power has only become more fascinating—contrary to what some of the more parochial members of the U.S. Congress, some academic departments, and a few publishing houses may believe—and it has become vastly more important for new generations of Americans to understand this.

Just how far that influence reached became clear to Max Perelman, a young American college student, when he traveled through remote regions of China in January 1997. While stranded by winter weather in western Sichuan, a long fifteen hundred miles from Beijing, he encountered a group of Tibetans bound for their capital, Lhasa. The Tibetans, Perelman recalled, had never strayed far from their native village. They had apparently not seen anything like his camera. As they retrieved from their rucksacks and shared with him bites of meat from the raw, bloody, rib cage of an unspecified animal, the group began to discuss things American. “Just how,” one of the Tibetans asked the young American, “was Michael Jordan doing?”

How these travelers knew about the Chicago Bull's star was never made clear. That they knew about him, however, was perhaps not surprising. He was the most famous athlete and one of the most recognizable people in the world. Jordan and his “Red Oxen,” as his team was known in much of Asia, had gained renown for their basketball championships. But Jordan was especially famous for another reason: he was the superhuman in television advertisements who flew through the air as he endlessly and effortlessly dunked basketballs and, simultaneously, sold Nike sneakers. These glamorous advertisements flew about the globe, thanks to new technologies such as earth satellites and cable. This communications revolution conveniently appeared for global commercial use just as Jordan was beginning a spectacular basketball career in the 1980s, and as Phil Knight was building Nike into a mighty multibillion-dollar transnational empire that ingeniously marketed its sneakers over the new media. Jordan's fame rose to the point that at the 1992 Olympic games he was embarrassed by being asked at a press conference if he were a “god.” But as *Time* magazine noted, “If Michael Jordan is God, then Phil Knight put him in heaven.”

Much of this post-1970s technology was dominated by U.S. empire-builders, notably

the flamboyant Ted Turner. He had sunk the family fortune into the emerging business of cable television and communications satellites, only to go nearly bankrupt in the early 1980s. Not long after, however, he built CNN (Cable News Network) into an international as well as American powerhouse. Indeed, the network became so international that Turner outlawed the use of the word “foreign” in its broadcasts. Nothing was foreign to CNN. In 1997, Turner stunned the world by giving one billion dollars over a ten-year period to the United Nations to help its international humanitarian programs. It stood to reason that he would give this incredible gift to the UN instead of to, say, his home city of Atlanta, Georgia. CNN, like Michael Jordan, had burst beyond mere city boundaries to become a global institution—and had grown



rich by moving far beyond U.S. borders to create a worldwide marketplace.

Jordan's role in this growing Americanization of global media was profound. He became a part of the heated argument over whether African-American athletes increasingly dominated basketball and many other sports because they were physically different from and superior to whites, or because they concentrated on these sports due to racism since other careers were closed to them. And, eventually, Jordan became a figure who often transcended race. Black social critic Stanley Crouch observed that “in 1960, if white girls in the suburbs had posters of a Negro that dark on the wall, there would have been hell to pay. That kind of racial paranoia is not true of this country now. Today you have girls who are Michael Jordan fanatics, and their parents don't care.”

The immense success of Jordan and the National Basketball Association (NBA) has also helped shape the role of women in professional sports. The combination of the talented and imaginative female athletes who appeared in the 1970s and 1980s, and the growing popularity of basketball that was created by NBA marketing techniques and new media coverage has led to the creation of professional women's leagues and lucrative endorsement contracts for a few of their stars. Women were playing basketball within weeks after the game was invented in 1891. In 1973 the U.S. government passed Title IX, a historic step that required equal facilities for men's and women's sports at institutions receiving federal funds.

Basketball has always been a commercial product. In the 1980s its ability to churn out profits reached a new level with the appearance of revolutionary technology and imaginative entrepreneurs (including David Stern, the commissioner of the NBA), who were determined to exploit that technology. Jordan became a world icon, even in far-off Sichuan, in part because the number of television sets for every hundred people around the globe doubled to 23.4 between 1981 and 1997.

While the new media could create fame and fortunes in world markets for Jordan and Nike's Phil Knight, so too could that media expose their errors, tragedies, and embarrassments globally. A “Faustian bargain” emerged in which celebrities such as Jordan sold themselves via the media, and ambitious companies such as Nike likewise sold their goods. But, in return, the media blazed Jordan's personal misfortunes across the world's television screens and told billions of viewers about Nike's subcontractors in Asia who exploited and sexually abused the workers who made their sneakers. Jordan was often asked to take stands on these and other difficult political issues. On the whole, he declined. Critics, even admirers, charged that he cared more about retaining his commercial appeal than dealing with the most impor-

tant issues of the day. Taking a stand could alienate some of the potential buyers of the goods he endorsed.

Jordan's career also helps us understand something about the nature of U.S. power in the post-Cold War era. Phil Knight liked to say that by the 1990s sports had become the world's most important entertainment. No one better exemplified the power of that entertainment than Jordan and Knight. American popular culture (the jazz of Duke Ellington, the musical theatre of George Gershwin, the dance of Fred Astaire and Martha Graham, blue jeans, McDonald's fast food, Coca-Cola), has long been part of U.S. influence and profit overseas. The power of that popular culture, however, multiplied with the technological marvels that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s.

In earlier eras, a culture was transmitted across national boundaries by migration, travel, or reading. Since leisure travel and literacy were often limited to the rich, the understanding—and exploitation—of other cultures was often enjoyed only by elites. Television and the post-1970s media, along with cheaper and more rapid transportation via jet airplanes, changed all that. Culture could move with nearly the speed of sound and reach billions of people, not just the privileged. Jordan and Nike (and McDonald's and Disney) suddenly enjoyed the power to reach vast audiences with an efficiency unimagined several generations earlier.

Jordan and Nike exploited yet another kind of power new to the post-1970s media. For centuries, the control over mass dispersal of information was held in the hands of monarchs, the Church, or, more recently, powerful newspaper and radio owners. After the 1970s, however, this power to spread information and culture became more decentralized. Masses of people could pass on information in large globs over computer systems. When only three major U.S. television networks existed, as in the 1950s, the network owners generally controlled what people could see. With 70, 150, or even 500 channels, audiences enjoyed much wider choices.

Thus Jordan and Nike could select certain channels (MTV) to target young buyers of sneakers, or use other channels (ESPN) watched by sports fans. And with the emergence of globe-girdling communication-satellite systems to carry these television advertisements, Jordan and Knight instantaneously flashed their messages, and themselves, around the world.

It was an awesome power. Transnational corporations not only played a dominant role in creating and defining American popular culture, but they used that culture's own seductiveness to influence the language, eating habits, clothes, and television watching of peoples around the earth. “Globalization,” John Cassidy wrote in *The New Yorker*, “is the buzzword of the late twentieth century,” and it is powered by vast amounts of capital—and by “English, the global language of money.” Cassidy believed that “Globalization is set to become the biggest political issue of the next century.” It already had become an interesting issue, for example, in the former British West Indies, where basketball began to displace cricket as the national sport, especially on islands where television was most watched. On Trinidad and Tobago, the black lower class took over basketball and turned it into a statement for their class and racial pride. Their model, historian Allen Guttman noted, was the NBA, as they adopted NBA team and player names, while mimicking moves of the players. Thus the sports of the British Empire gave way to the technology of the American Century.

Other peoples have not as willingly accepted U.S. influence. A respected historian (and former basketball coach), in Canada, Geoffrey Smith, likened the new era to the corrupt, rampant exploitation of the so-called Gilded Age in the United States of the 1870s-1890s. In the States, Smith argued, there has developed a “new Gilded Age—with its accompanying greed and rapacity.” Among its worst qualities is that “the ‘market’ in sport defines nearly everything.” The immense amount of money and celebrity generated by sports, he concluded, leads many, especially the young, to conclude that playing games is more important than education and politics.

Smith's and other Canadians' concern about U.S. influence is understandable. American television programs became so popular that by the mid-1990s the Canadian government finally required television and radio stations to broadcast a minimum amount of programming produced by Canadians themselves. Some 96 percent of films shown in Canada were foreign-made, the large majority from Hollywood. Four out of five magazines sold were foreign, mostly American. But the Canadians were hardly alone. Other friends and allies of the United States also warned that this power was unwelcome. “The United States has assets not yet at the disposal of any other power,” French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine declared in 1997. These assets included “political influence, the supremacy of the dollar, control of the communications networks, ‘dream factories’ [that is, Hollywood and television], new technologies.... The situation is virtually unprecedented.” Vedrine argued that France had to ensure Americans did not fall into the temptation of “unilateralism and the risk of hegemony” over other peoples.

Even in Germany, staunch U.S. Cold-War ally, a leading newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, warned in 1997: “Never before in modern history has a country dominated the earth so totally as the United States does today.... The Americans are acting, in the absence of limits put to them by anybody or anything, as if they own a blank check in their ‘McWorld.’” It was time, *Der Spiegel* suggested, to fight back before the entire world “wears a ‘Made in USA’ label.”

Growing resistance to the power of

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Slam Dunk

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American popular culture led to an intense debate over whether the United States was actually an imperialist spreading its culture so effectively that it was radically changing, if not potentially destroying, other cultures. Some of these observers believed that Americans fooled themselves if they thought other peoples would change their traditional way of living just to enjoy U.S. products. Indeed, some argued that as Americans went abroad to spread their culture and fatten their pocketbooks, they would instead have to change their own culture. They would have to become less nationalistic, less ignorant of and more open to other cultures and religions.

The new global commercial power exemplified by Michael Jordan, Nike, CNN, in other words, is making Americans fear that as they are electronically interspersed into the world community, they are threatened by the loss of their national identity—they are a people becoming too “multicultural” and sympathetic to the global power of groups like the United Nations—just as other peoples begin to eat and dress like Americans. Such fear moved into American political and economic debates during the 1990s, especially through the surprising number of votes given to Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot, who attacked such outside influences. As revolutionary technology thus integrated Americans into the rest of the world, many of them feared the strangeness and challenges that they encountered. Americans had feared the strangeness and challenges of other peoples since the seventeenth century, but never before had such dangers been so instantaneous, so immediate, as they were in the new, tightly wired world.

In this developing battle of capital versus culture, capital will ultimately win. The United States is, and has been since World War I, the world's clearinghouse for capital. By the 1990s, the volume of that capital became overwhelming; some \$1.5 trillion moved through New York City financial markets every day. This torrent of money developed the new media and powered the new transnational corporations. For good or ill, it wielded the power to bring other governments nearly to their knees during the recurring financial crises of the 1990s. It even forced the world's superpower, the U.S. government, to change social priorities and spending policies. Other nations, such as France and Japan, do not necessarily favor this kind of fundamental change and will certainly resist such power. American culture, if powered by vast sums of capital, will thus change as it becomes more global or else produce conflict that will have explosive results for U.S. politics and security.

The story of how the United States and the world reached this point begins in the 1890s, when the American economy first became the world's greatest, and when basketball was first invented. The history of basketball, especially in the era of Michael Jordan, helps us understand this era known as “the American Century.”

The Asian economic downturn of 1998 stunningly exemplified the crises and challenges to U.S.-capital-driven culture that Americans (and many others) will face in the early twenty-first century. The dramatic decline in Asian economics touched off a near-panic globally: Russia teetered on the brink of bankruptcy, Brazil faced severe crisis, and even U.S. stock markets dropped sharply. The Asians (notably the Japanese, Indonesians, and Malaysians) blamed the West, especially U.S. capitalists, for overwhelming their economies by making quick profits, then exiting—leaving behind shattered societies. U.S. government and business officials, however, emphatically placed the blame on the Asians themselves for trying to close off and overly influence markets, often through a kind of “capitalist cronyism” that favored Asian over Western investors.

It was a clash of capitalisms and cultures of the most dramatic, and important, kind. Then

it turned worse. Under tremendous U.S. pressure, 102 nations, led by Japan (the world's second largest economy), agreed to open their financial markets to foreign investors. Suddenly U.S. firms began buying up or controlling Asian firms that had long been protected from foreign influence. The most important American economic official, Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve system, announced that these other nations were finally seeing the light; they were moving toward “the type of market system which we have in this country.” A century of U.S. economic power apparently climaxed with an ultimate triumph. Others, however, were not so sure. Anti-American feelings rose in Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and elsewhere as these nations tried to protect themselves from U.S. capitalism's cultural backriders. Otherwise, as one American reporter wrote from Japan, it would only be a matter of time before an Asian family would take cash from their corner U.S. bank, “drive off to Walmart and fill the trunk of their Ford with the likes of Fritos and Snickers,” then stop at the American-owned movie theater to see the latest Disney film before returning home to check their U.S. mutual fund accounts and America Online (on their IBM computer with Microsoft software).

Asians see this as nothing less than the U.S. “desire to bury Asian values,” and they are not pleased. Nor are many Americans. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (later a wealthy business consultant with many ties to Asia) put it directly: “I am disturbed by the tendency to treat the Asian economic crisis as another opportunity to acquire control of Asian companies' assets cheaply and to reconstitute them on the American model. This is courting long-term disaster.”

At the center of this discussion arises one all-important question. Given Americans' increased dependence on world markets for jobs, given how the new technology is locking Americans into a sometimes violent global community that too easily resorts to terrorism to fight the United States, and given that Americans have no choice but to be participants in that complex, often threatening global community—what kind of participants will Americans be? They wield immense power, and unless that power is accompanied by an understanding of its effects and how it came to be, the twenty-first century will be a continuation of the confrontations and bloodshed of the twentieth century. But with new technologies the clashes will occur in a confined, interlinked global village from which no one can escape to safety.

On January 13, 1999, Jordan announced his retirement from basketball. The Chicago Tribune headlined, END OF AN ERA. “The most popular athlete in the world and undoubtedly the most popular in American sports history,” experts gushed. “Beyond that, he transcended the game, becoming an international celebrity and spokesman.”

The impact was indeed global. JORDAN RETIRES! SHOCK FELT AROUND THE WORLD, a Japanese sportspaper headlined. Basketball was a minor sport in Japan, but thanks to television ads, Air Jordan Nike sneakers had sold for as much as \$1,000 a pair and some were collected like jewels. Mexican, Polish, German, Spanish, Chinese, and British headlines, among others, echoed Japanese feelings. Standing at the end of a century in which the United States had come to command global financial power, communications systems, marketing networks, and cutting-edge technologies, Jordan exemplified this imperial control—and also some of the explosively dangerous challenges and high costs Americans now confronted in the newly wired world's new century

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Cornell '69

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Bigart excoriated the Cornell administration in the pages of *The New York Times*, a group of professors in History and Government lobbied members of the Board of Trustees to ask for Perkins' resignation. When fifteen Law School professors, including Perkins' personal friend Rudolph Schlesinger, joined the critics, the president departed.

Cornell '69 provides abundant evidence for the proposition that weak, inept, intimidated administrators and a faculty that, with notable exceptions, was disengaged until it was too late (and then subject to pressure and threat) contributed to the “crisis of the American university.” The book reminds us as well that Steven Muller's claim, “We aren't sacrificing any principle if we save lives” qualifies as a fallacy of the false dichotomy. By dint of the positions they held, Cornell's administrators were at a disadvantage in a struggle with those less inclined to weigh the impact of their actions on others. They did not have the luxury, as Allan Sindler advised, to hold to principles “and what happens... is not our concern.” Nonetheless, they could have and should have explored alternative courses of action and refused to succumb to force. These assessments are familiar ones, of course, but they remain salutary at a time when disruption and violence continue to accompany demands for academic programs and residence halls based on ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation.

But what of Downs' attempt to explain the crisis as “a twist of fate from which liberalism is still reeling?” Curiously, although he sometimes refers to tenets of liberalism, Downs never really defines the term. Indeed, in a final chapter entitled “Cornell and the Failure of Liberalism,” Downs celebrates a liberal education that teaches all Americans to respect “the rights of others and the integrity of the democratic-constitutional process.” These values, which Allan Sindler and Walter LaFaber cherished, remind us that the faculty members who opposed the capitulation to militancy stood on solid liberal ground.

At times, Downs connects the crisis to interest-group liberalism, as embodied in the value-free behavioralism of Steven Muller. Guided by a process of accommodation rather than by an authoritative vision of the public interest, interest-group liberals gravitate to the agenda of the most powerful or committed group. In Downs' own account, however, neither James Perkins nor Dale Corson were interest-group liberals. Perkins' passion for racial justice, rooted in his mother's social activism and his Quaker education, was a “genuine part of his educational philosophy.” And one colleague described Corson as “an abolitionist born one hundred years too late.” Their liberalism was not empty or value free, nor did they placate just any faction to maintain balance and order.

If they were not interest-group liberals why, then, did these men give way? To their credit, liberals were acutely aware of the legacy of slavery, exploitation, and discrimination in the United States. Prodded by black activists, imbued with a sense of special obligation to black Americans, their generation had used what Allan Sindler called “white racial guilt and empathy” to good purposes. These very qualities, however, led some liberals by the mid-'60s to defer to blacks in designing solutions and controlling institutions. The legacy of black power is decidedly mixed, but it certainly left many liberals dazed. For some, soft spots became blind spots. Determined not to be paternalistic, they became in some instances, patronizing, acquiescing in and explaining away behavior they otherwise would deem misguided or wrong. I suspect that liberals did not think that racial pride would “harden” into a separatism that manifested itself in intimidation. The goal, they believed, was the eradication of racism. When that happened, racial differences would be revealed as culturally constructed and separatism an aberration unnecessary and misguided. But

when toy guns turned into rifles, with live ammunition, when reason and accommodation failed, they lacked the will to use the means at their disposal to insist, as Peter Gomes (Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard) now does, that diversity is not an institutional or social goal in itself, but “a means to include a diversified population in shaping shared goals to enhance the quality of our common life both in college and in the wider world.”

Gomes' view, of course, is quintessentially liberal. It implies that if some liberals faltered in the 1960s, liberalism did not. It remains the best philosophy for the challenges of a multicultural nation. Liberalism mandates that procedural due process and the rule of law, backed if necessary by force, protect individual freedom and accountability while promoting social justice. Liberalism can provide the creative tension to help foster what historian David Hollinger called “a rooted cosmopolitanism,” emphasizing the dynamic character of groups, multiple affiliation and the potential to create new cultural combinations—in short, it gives us the tools to mediate between species and ethnos, between individual and group identity, to include “in the range of us” people quite different from ourselves.

If liberals were traumatized by Cornell '69 and events like it, and many were, it is time, as we approach a new millennium, to engage racial issues on campuses and throughout American society. The University, ILR Professor James Gross wrote to James Perkins thirty years ago, “will not be destroyed by fire, it will be destroyed by fear....[It] is no less prostituted because it satisfied the desires of the poor than the rich.” We must begin by rededicating ourselves to racial justice while acknowledging that many administrators and faculty continue to censor themselves for fear of being branded racists or becoming targets of attack. Members of university communities are custodians of an environment, James Gross reminds us, where the truth can be spoken to the privileged and the exploited. When they speak out, when they hold to their principles, liberals become part of the solution and not the problem.

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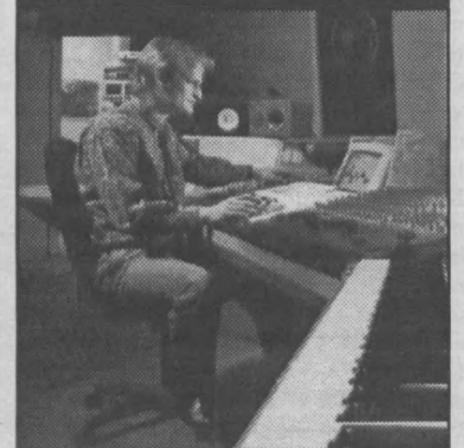
Answers to last month's Crossword:

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BIOAIR  OICAIJA  CIENTI
MNCIA  RALES  ARMA
AMRICO  ND  M  MONING
SUE  R  AIG  E  GENIS
      ABIE  SHIED
MMPAIE  SPAN  ONI
MAUIN  SIMPRK  RIA
MIMINIC  O  D  M  ION
NIA  M  R  A  I  E  HONE
AISI  E  I  E  I  E  I
      E  I  E  I  E  I
AISI  A  I  M  R  M  A  I  E
H  A  I  R  C  O  N  D  I  T  I  O  N  I  E
A  F  E  R  I  O  A  B  O  D  E  M  I  R  I  O
B  I  E  I  E  I  T  A  I  R  I  E  I  M  I  E
  
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Bonfire Night

continued from page 3

"Strictly speaking, I don't."
 "What's that then?" Arthur pointed at the Rover.

James shook his head. "No," he said.
 "But the checkpoint. Surely."
 "I stole it out the car park up at Aldregrove. Some fat bastard on his hols—won't notice it missing for a fortnight."
 "I see."

"Trouble is, the car's too good for the likes of me. I knew it, like, but there was nothing but fancy motors in that car park. I could see the soldiers back there were—they didn't think I looked like someone who should be driving a Rover. I should be driving something like that." He pointed at Arthur's Ford.
 "I'm afraid I can't help you, James."
 "Aye. The thing is, I'm not giving yis any choice there Mr. McCree." He lifted his jumper to expose the pommel of a gun in the belt of his trousers.

Arthur felt the tendons in his calves tighten up and buzz. He looked into James' eyes and saw no charity there.

"All settled then?" asked James.
 Arthur looked away.
 "That's right. We've still got a few minutes to go, don't we. We'll just stand here and chat a bit more and when the time comes, you just get in my car—the keys are in there."
 "What about my bags?"
 "We haven't time to be messin' with bags."

Arthur leaned his forearms on the railing and looked at the approaching lights of Castle Rock.

"Are you married, James? Do you have any children?"
 "I've got a wee girl in Belfast."

Arthur was uncertain whether this meant a daughter or a lover.

"I never asked yis where yis was goin' tonight."
 "Ardlough," said Arthur.

"What's there?"
 "Home. My father died."
 "I'm sorry to hear that. But at least you'll drive up in style." James smiled at him.

The lights of Castle Rock were rising in front of them now, as if the town were moving and they were still. Arthur could see the streaks of cars along a road. Off to one side, he saw a single flame appear in the darkness and then another and then the sudden immolation of a bonfire. In no time at all, there was

a neat mountain of fire with orange rings of spectators circling it like participants in a dance. He half expected the entire town to catch fire.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" said James.
 Arthur said nothing. He could see the dock now and another man waiting there, this one without a dog.

"I'll take yer keys," said James.
 Arthur removed a key from his ring and handed it to James.
 "Never you fear. I'll take good care of her. It's been great seein yis. I hope it won't be the last time."

Arthur looked up at the pilot house and saw the captain waving to the man on the dock. He heard the Ford's engine come to life and saw his own shadow cast at the dock as the headlights came on. He walked to his car and tapped on the driver's window.

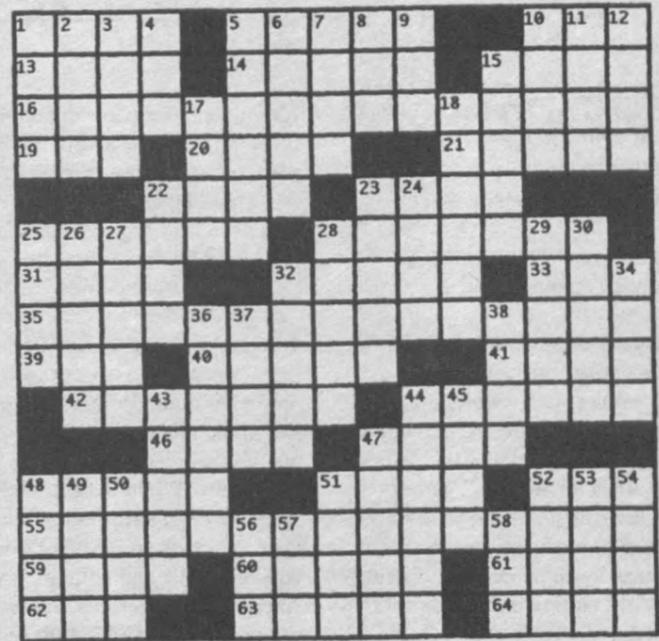
"Aye?" said James, rolling it down.
 "The petrol gauge doesn't work. There's about half a tank in there now. You should make it to Armagh without any trouble."

"Ta," said James.
 The Rover was new and comfortable. It smelled vaguely of cologne and wood shavings. The engine, when he started it, was so quiet that he thought it had stalled. He put his hands on the leather-covered steering wheel and watched the lowering of the ramp and then the tail-lights of his Ford swirling away from him in the night. The dockman was waving him off the boat.

Arthur put his foot to the accelerator and the car jumped forward as though spring-loaded. Before he knew it, he was moving through the town, gliding, weightless on the car's suspension. Like driving a cloud, he thought. Around him, there were bonfires in the gaps, flares of autumn amid the dark foliage of summer. He saw them down side-streets. Darkness, then the lively piles of orange flame, more darkness and another bonfire. The streets themselves were deserted, lightless. He moved quickly through them and soon found himself alone on the road to Ardlough, driving a stolen car to his father's funeral.

Jon Michaud is a writer living in New York. "Bonfire Night" is the first chapter of his almost-completed novel, *The Glorious Twelfth*.

Crossword by Adam Perl



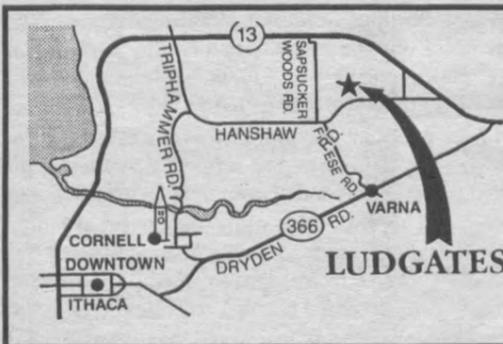
Across

1. Teen Concern
5. Persists
10. Gen. equivalent
13. Kind of prize
14. "_____ ear..."
15. Sheltered, at sea
16. Start of a quip
19. Common door sign
20. Bruce or Laura of film
21. Jimmies
22. Reason for an "R"
23. Scenery
25. Relieves
28. Kind of history
31. "Yes ___?"
32. He coined the term, "effete snobs"
33. Aurora
35. Part 2 of the quip
39. As well
40. Efforts
41. Mine opening
42. Escaping
44. Lechers
46. Frank diarist
47. Formerly
48. Mediterranean island
51. Early victim
52. _____ roll
55. End of the quip
59. Type
60. Stand
61. Verdi opus
62. Ring result
63. Adlai's running mate
64. Coward of note

8. French article
9. Gramps, for one
10. Actor Baldwin
11. "___ Set" (1957 Tracy Hepburn movie)
12. NY nine
15. "The errors of ___ man make your rule" -Blake
17. Hero
18. Air conditioning, e.g.
22. ___ on to (take possession of)
23. Pets
24. Beige
25. Sentimental
26. Alcohol measure
27. Register
28. Copying
29. Strapped
30. "___ with Love" (1967 Sidney Poitier film)
32. Sow
34. Speedy fliers for short
36. Corkscrew
37. "You have that in your countenance that I would ___ call master" K. Lear
38. Former
43. Bother
44. Nikes, for short
45. Rights org.
47. More than overweight
48. Growth
49. Take to the cleaners
50. New money
51. "There'll be ___ time in the old town..."
52. Indians' state
53. Swelling
54. Asia's ___ Sea
56. ___ out (scrape by)
57. "___ the season"
58. Author of "The Hundred Secret Senses"

Down

1. West who played Batman
2. Manage
3. Verb, for one
4. Sea eagle
5. Choir's need
6. "___ nous"
7. McCarthy aide Roy



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A Dedicated Life

Bryna J. Fireside

A Lifetime of Labor: The Autobiography of Alice H. Cook.
Alice H. Cook.
The Feminist Press, 1998.
354 pages, \$29.95 cloth.

Alice's friends almost always begin their conversation about her this way: "I first met Alice when..." What often follows is a testimonial of how meeting Alice turned into a defining event in that person's life. Alice Cook had that effect on people. Whether she was out in the field organizing women workers, rallying a group of demonstrators for peace and justice, teaching college students union organizing tactics in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell, studying the union successes of a group of formerly unemployed workers in Fukouka, Japan, or trying to rescue Jewish friends she'd met before World War II while studying in Germany, Alice always drew a loyal following. And Alice seemed to have had total recall as to when *she* met people who became important to her.

Most of us feel enriched if we have three or four great friendships in a lifetime. Alice had, literally, scores of deep and satisfying friendships, as her autobiography *A Lifetime of Labor* affirms. Indeed, the autobiography of Alice H. Cook is a testament not only to a lifetime of labor, but to the powerful life-force of friendship.

Alice Cook's accomplishments over her lifetime as a teacher, researcher, and organizer in the field of women in the labor force are prodigious, and are amply described in her far-ranging autobiography. Indeed, the books and articles she produced, the several fulfilling careers she followed would be enough for any two or three ordinary people.

Small wonder that Arlene Kaplan Daniels, one of Alice's close friends and associates, starts the forward of *The Autobiography of Alice H. Cook* with those very words: "I first met Alice..."; so too, does Florence Howe, her editor at the Feminist Press in her "notes from the publisher."

I, too, remember the first time I met Alice Cook. It was in my home in the summer of 1983—the year the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice set up camp just a hop, skip and a jump from the Seneca Army Depot. The Depot was the largest storage site for nuclear missiles. And these missiles were about to be deployed to Europe. There were protests all over the country, but the Women's Encampment was a specific attempt by women to stop the U.S. missile project. The demonstrations led by the women at the Peace Camp were often (purposely) loud, sassy, messy, and controversial. They attracted a lot of media attention—and while not all of it was positive, the "in your face" demonstrations galvanized women from all over the country to come to the Peace Camp and add to the cacophony of protests.

My friend Janet Braun-Reinitz and I decided to organize a little anti-nuclear demonstration of our own. We hatched the "Tasteful Ladies for Peace" over a couple of corned-beef sandwiches and Dr. Brown's celery tonic in Hal's Deli: we made up a list of 35 older Ithaca women and invited them to a planning meeting. Alice was one of the original "Tasteful Ladies." She attended that first meeting along with her great friend and co-conspirator, Rose Goldsen.

It was clear from the beginning that Alice was the one with the most expertise in matters of teasing the most out of a demonstration. In addition to white gloves, proper hats and summer frocks, we printed up calling cards.

Alice came up with the idea of American flags for each demonstrator. Alice hated the way the pro-nuclear demonstrators always wrapped themselves in the American flag. "The American flag belongs to us. It's ours, too" said Alice, whose mother traced her origins in America back to 1640, when her

Anglo-Scots ancestors arrived in Massachusetts, and whose Swedish-born paternal grandfather came over during the Civil War, and whose father had fought in the Spanish-American War.

The soldiers guarding the Seneca Army Depot didn't quite know what to make of this gang of aging women protesters, who now numbered around 60, decked out in their Sunday best. (Could it be that we reminded them too much of their mothers and grandmothers?) We were driven to the main gate in cars by gentlemen in three-piece suits. When we got to the main gate, there were embarrassed-looking armed soldiers facing us on the other side of the gate, which they locked with an ominous clang. Alice, who had left her flag in the car, was our spokeswoman. She immediately commanded everyone's attention. Even the counter-demonstrators were silent. Her speech lasted less than three minutes. But her anti-nuclear message was powerful. She was a real pro. I didn't know then that her undergraduate degree from Northwestern was from the school of speech, where one of her favorite professors praised her with: "You have the finest brain of any woman I know."

But the highlight of the afternoon was the exchange between Alice and a counter-demonstrator known only as "Ruth from Waterloo." Ruth was a regular pro-nuclear patriot. She showed up at practically every demonstration to taunt the protesters from the Peace Camp. Ruth was probably around the same age as Alice (who was then 79), but stockier and taller. Alice barely, if at all, reached a height of five feet, and probably never weighed 100 pounds. Ruth was dressed in army fatigues and waved her flag furiously. "I'm proud of our flag," she belted. "I've been here all summer, and our country has to be Number One."

Alice turned to Ruth, and looked her squarely in the eye, woman to woman: equals. After all, both of them loved a good demonstration. In her engagingly calm manner, Alice suggested that she and Ruth might well agree on many things, for both had a great love of country. They talked together for a few minutes, and, in a surprise gesture, Ruth of Waterloo handed her flag to Alice. "Thank you. That's a lovely idea," Alice said, and she, in turn kissed Ruth on the cheek.

This was vintage Alice. Always able to find common ground with an adversary—and no doubt, if there were just a little more time, Ruth of Waterloo might have become Alice's friend, too.

As I read *A Lifetime of Labor*, I was hoping to find the "essential Alice." What was it in her life that made it possible for this extraordinary woman to connect with such a wide range of women and men throughout her lifetime? What was it that impelled this woman who had the advantage of a college education at a time when even a high-school diploma for a woman was unusual, to combine a lifetime of social action with a lifetime of organizing women and later studying and teaching about the lives of working women in 15 different countries? Would Alice stop long enough in her determination to honor her friends and *their* work to write about the inner Alice?

Florence Howe noted that one of challenges she faced as Alice's publisher and editor, was "Alice's reticence about her personal life (which) was not uncommon among members of her generation." However, I was not disappointed. There are several threads that run through this autobiography that allow the reader to gain some insight into this one remarkable life that spanned very nearly an entire century. The thread which I think is particularly important to Alice's becoming a spokesperson and activist for the underdog, the worker, the victims of injustice is that of being the outsider. For Alice Cook was the consummate outsider who understood, even at age five, how liberating it was not to be asked to be a member of the "right" clubs.

Alice Hanson Cook was born on November 28, 1903 in Alexandria, Virginia. Almost immediately after her birth, the family made the first of many moves. By Alice's count, by the time she was married at age 23 she had lived with her parents and two younger brothers in twenty different houses in Washington, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Missouri and Arkansas. Her father worked for the railroads, and the one advantage was that they had free passes to travel by rail. But his work also necessitated the many moves.

Alice learned it was not advisable to get too attached to a particular house or location, and this helped her focus on what her mother felt was more essential: her church and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. These two constants in the Hanson family created the glue that assured them of stability—and a ready-made circle of like-minded cohorts no matter where they were. Alice's strong-willed mother, who was herself a graduate of Northwestern University, led the way. First she scouted out the churches in every new community:

... she would visit a short list of Protestant churches and decide where we were enroll. The choices were usually between Congregational and Presbyterian. Methodist was acceptable, but Episcopalians were too high-class for the modest Hansons and Baptists, somehow too low. The Catholic Church was unthinkable.... Jews were unknown to us children. But my father, who was a committed Mason, made clear that while the Order was opposed to Catholics, it welcomed Jews.

The second thread was her mother and grandmother's commitment to The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WTCU) whose goal it was to "purge the world, and particularly Western society, of alcohol"—and incidentally, to get out and campaign for the right of women to vote. The WTCU, Alice noted, was for its time, the largest women's organization in the United States. From an early age, then, Alice was introduced to conservative but unfanatical Christianity and to strong women who took to the streets to fight for women's rights, and for an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting the sale of alcohol.

Being born into a family of women who knew how to advocate for themselves did have its drawbacks. For one thing, Alice's mother dressed her daughter in bloomers instead of panties under her dresses. One day when she was playing with a little girl who lived in a big house across the street, a guest of the little girl's mother inspected Alice, noticing those bloomers. The woman looked at her friend's mother and nodded disapprovingly. "Is she p-o-o-r?" Of course at age five, Alice had already learned to read and spell, and not only knew this was a put down, but that this haughty woman somehow "put me and mine below the level of our neighbors." But smugly, Alice knew instinctively that she, herself, was the "better one."

In later years Alice would break with her parents over the alcohol issue, as well as their religious practices and beliefs. She wrote that her home was not a place where love and affection were expressed. Indeed, although she had great respect for her parents, and sought out her mother as a role model, the home was not the center of her life. This allowed her, Alice believed, never to "experience homesickness" no matter where she traveled. And it was undoubtedly the constant change of domiciles that made Alice realize her strong need to constantly develop friendships. At times she seemed to worry that her emotions did not run deep, but on the other hand, she accepted changes of place "and circumstances" as part of her life.

The activism learned at home carried over into her adult life. She never shunned working for unpopular causes, even when there was no chance of winning. During the Roosevelt years Alice had no qualms about voting the Socialist ticket. She was not throwing

away her vote, but rather making a statement.

During her college years Alice began to develop her own brand of social activism that would eventually lead her into her life's work—and introduce her to Wesley Cook, a young man studying for the ministry (a career path he gave up to work in the labor movement), and who shared Alice's political activities. Wesley quickly won her heart. Years later, he would break it when they divorced in 1950, leaving Alice to make it on her own as a single working mother.

There were many times when Alice felt the sting of rejection. Although she was just sixteen when she entered Northwestern University, she was anxious to feel included in campus life. That meant being rushed by certain sororities, and hopefully, being accepted into one. To Alice's dismay, she "was not invited to be a 'sister.' I was not up to standard in some way." Was it her dress? Her manners? Who knew? Disappointed, but not crushed, Alice's reaction was not unlike the one she experienced as a five year old. She was "reasonably sure that I could well beat them all out, or certainly equal them, in grades and academic achievements." When she was invited to join a sorority two years later because she was a recognized campus leader, she was happy to refuse.

By her junior year at Northwestern, any sense of inadequacy had left her as her grades soared and she became active in the student YWCA, the Epworth League of the Methodist church and the Liberal League. Each of these organizations led Alice to widen her circle of friends and to become more and more interested in social and political questions. Before long Alice held a leadership position in each organization. It was her leadership role in the Epworth League that very nearly ended her college career. She had become a pacifist after visiting Jane Adams' Hull House, where she met women from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. One evening she planned a meeting where a well-known conscientious objector would speak. A group of American Legionnaires in full dress uniform showed up waving the American flag. There was a reporter in the audience. When a member of the American Legion asked who was willing to take a pledge not to support our country in time of war, 38 hands were raised. Alice's was among them. The next day the episode was reported in the Chicago Tribune, and Alice was named as the group organizer. Petitions were soon circulated for the ouster from the university of "the 38," but of course, the only identifiable member was Alice. She was called on the carpet by the president of Northwestern and asked to identify the others. She refused. She worried for several days that she might be thrown out of school, but the affair blew over, although Alice was branded as a "radical."

And a radical she remained all of her adult life. It suited her just fine, as she began to seek out work that would satisfy her after she graduated from Northwestern at age 20 in the year 1924. By the time she and Wesley married in July of 1926, Alice had discovered that she was not cut out for social work, nor was she adept at secretarial chores. Her interest in the labor movement, especially as it related to women, was sparked first though her work with the YWCA, and a little later through her summer at the Bryn Mawr school, where she began to develop teaching techniques "geared to adults with little formal education."

A Lifetime of Labor is more than just the autobiography of Alice H. Cook. It is an extraordinary lesson in the history of the labor movement and its impact on women over the entire 20th century. It is the story of one woman's glorious years of working to change an unjust society, and it is the story of the great reservoir of love that Alice had for everyone whose lives she touched.

Bryna Fireside has written several books for young people. Her most recent book is *Choices: A Survival Guide for the 21st Century*.