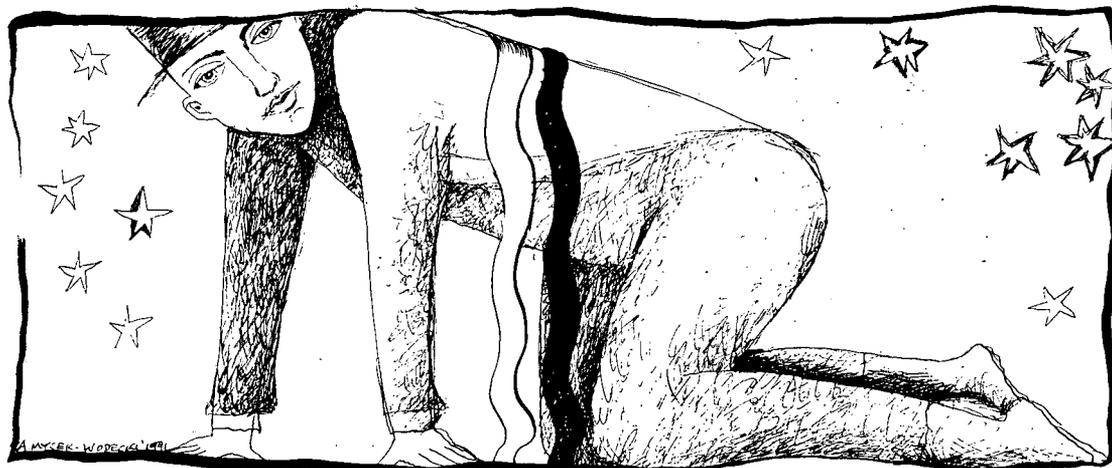


# The Goading of America

by Florence King



Anna Myreck-Wodecki

Fisher Ames is the Founding Father who draws a blank. Few people today have heard of him, yet he wrote the final version of the First Amendment, and his speech on Jay's Treaty, delivered when he was the leader of the Federalists in the First Congress, was called the finest example of American oratory by Daniel Webster and Abraham Lincoln, both of whom memorized large portions of it to train themselves in the art.

Why then the blackout on Fisher Ames?

He was born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1758, entered Harvard at 12, and graduated at 16. He was mustered, with the rest of the class of 1774, to fight in the Revolution, but his militia unit saw no action. After Independence he taught himself law and went into practice, farming the family lands on the side, until politics called.

The Ames home seems to have been a cocoon of idyllic happiness. His wife evinced none of the nascent feminism of Abigail Adams. She gave him six sons and a daughter, who received large chunks of paternal quality time thanks to the pleasure Ames took in inventing and playing educational games. He also got along well with his in-laws; his letters to brother-in-law Thomas Dwight are as warm as they are voluminous.

Fisher Ames was called a "sweet" man by his contemporaries. His first biographer, writing shortly after his death, spoke of "the charms of his conversation and manners [that] won affection" and "the delicacy, the ardor, and constancy with which he cherished his friends," and said: "He had a perfect command of his temper; his anger never proceeded to passion, nor his sense of injury to revenge."

No one sounds less like a misanthrope, yet Fisher Ames had a bleak opinion of human nature. "Our mistake is in supposing men better than they are. They are bad, and will act their character out," he wrote. He also insured his absence from history textbooks with his condemnation of

government of the people, by the people, and for the people, proclaiming: "Our disease is democracy. Democracy is a troubled spirit, fated never to rest, and whose dreams, if it sleeps, present only visions of hell."

Ames's fellow Federalist and philosophical soulmate, Alexander Hamilton, held the same views and just as frequently aired them. It being impossible, however, to ignore Hamilton in the textbooks, it has been the custom to soft-pedal his opinions of mankind and democracy—for example, the typical high-school or college text will say, "Hamilton distrusted the people," when in actual fact he said: "The people! The people, sir, are a great beast!"

Both Ames and Hamilton, and in a later era Henry Adams, were sociable men with a wide circle of friends who nonetheless qualify for conditional membership in the ranks of misanthropy. As Federalists, Ames and Hamilton believed in a government controlled by "the wise, the rich, and the good," the same philosophy held by Henry Adams, who was nominally a Democrat. The views of all three men amounted to what we now call elitism. Since the elitist hates the masses, and since the masses make up the vast majority of the human race, the elitist conservative is, numerically speaking, a practicing misanthrope.

In Ames's case, his basic outlook was exacerbated by a political event that goaded him into a bitter hatred of mankind. It is no exaggeration to say that he was frightened into misanthropy by the French Revolution.

As word of the excesses of the Terror filtered in—summary executions, blood-drinking, cannibalism, massacres of nuns, the sexual dismemberment of the Princess de Lamballe, accusations of incest against Marie Antoinette—all done in the name of "the People," Ames coined the word "mobocracy" and likened France to "a Cerberus gaping with ten thousand throats, all parched and thirsting for fresh blood . . . tyranny more vindictive, unfeeling, and rapacious than that of Tiberius, Nero, or Caligula, or any single despot that ever existed."

Even after the Terror ended, his sensitive mind and fastidious nature compelled him to dwell on it: "Behold France, that open hell, still ringing with agonies and

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*This article is excerpted from Florence King's forthcoming book, *With Charity Toward None: A Misanthropy Primer*, to be published by St. Martin's Press early next year.*

blasphemies, still smoking with sufferings and crimes.”

Ames was not alone in his fears. Burke in England reacted the same way. The French Revolution probably created more misanthropes than any other event in history. In other bloodbaths the evildoers have been exotic foreign marauders or nations within nations—Huns, Bolsheviks, Nazis, Khmer Rouge—but in the France of the Terror they were *the People*, humanity’s uppercase whole.

The French Revolution frightened Jefferson and his democratic republicans too, but for a very different reason. The conservative Federalists, fearing the people, wanted a strong central government with a powerful executive branch. But the liberal Jeffersonians, fearing kings, wanted separation of powers, with checks and balances to control the executive, whom they saw as a potential Louis XVI ever ready to abridge the people’s rights. To Ames, this amounted to a deliberate weakening of executive authority inflicted on the Constitution by those who imagined all government to be a Bourbon king.

Ames deplored “persons clad in English broadcloth and Irish linen who import their conveniences from England and their politics from France.” He meant Thomas Jefferson, whom he loathed, considering him a dupe of the French Enlightenment’s naive, optimistic faith in the essential goodness of human nature. Whenever anyone quoted Jefferson’s “all men are created equal,” Ames shot back: “but differ greatly in the sequel.”

The “Jeffs,” as Ames called the democratic republicans, moved him to savage eloquence: “The crimes they can excuse, and even persuade themselves to call virtues, they do not blush to commit. They foresee little and dread little of what they foresee. They learn to throw their eyes beyond the gulf of revolution, confusion, and civil war, which yawns at their feet, to behold an Eden of primitive innocence, equality, and liberty. . . . The rights of man are to be established by being solemnly proclaimed, and printed, so that every citizen shall have a copy. Avarice, ambition, revenge, and rage will be disenchanted from all hearts and die there; man will be regenerated . . . and the glorious work of that perfectibility of the species, foretold by Condorcet, will begin.”

To the republican claim that anarchy could be avoided by giving the people so much freedom that they would have nothing to rebel against, Ames countered, “a stomach spoiled by sweets will loathe its medicines.” Human nature being what it is, he said, people will always find something to rebel against; if nothing else, envy will make them crave “the power to make others wretched.”

He predicted the rise of what he called “factions” and we call pressure groups: “A combination of a very small minority can effectually defeat the authority of the national will. . . . Suppose at first their numbers to be exceedingly few, their efforts will for that reason be so much the greater. They will call themselves the People; they will in their name arraign every act of government as wicked and weak; they will oblige the rulers to stand forever on the defensive. . . . With a venal press at command, concealing their number and their infamy, is it to be doubted that the ignorant will soon or late unite with the vicious?”

But, the democratic republicans argued, the majority

rules! No, said Ames, they don’t. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and most people are unwilling to pay it: “The virtuous, who do not wish to control the society, but quietly to enjoy its protection; the enterprising merchant, the thriving tradesman, the careful farmer, will be engrossed by the toils of their business, and will have little time or inclination for the unprofitable and disquieting pursuit of politics.”

The only eternally vigilant citizens in a democracy, Ames warned, will be members of factions whose ceaseless demands will cause “a state of agitation that is justly terrible to all who love their ease. . . . It tries and wears out the strengths of the government and the temper of the people. It is a game which the factious will never be weary of playing, for conquering parties never content themselves with half the fruits of victory.”

Ames opposed the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, believing that the Magna Charta guaranteed everything that needed to be guaranteed. A member of Congress when the Bill of Rights was introduced, he wrote scathingly in a letter to Thomas Dwight:

Mr. Madison has introduced his long expected amendments. They are the fruit of much labor and research. He has hunted up all the grievances and complaints of newspapers, all the articles of conventions, and the small talk of their debates. It contains a bill of rights, the right of enjoying property, of changing the government at pleasure, freedom of the press, of conscience, of juries, exemption from general warrants, gradual increase of representatives. . . . This is the substance. There is too much of it. Oh! I had forgot, the right of the people to bear arms. *Risum teneatis amici?* [Can we restrain our laughter?] Upon the whole, it may do some good towards quieting men, who attend to sounds only, and may get the mover some popularity, which he wishes.

Ames wrote the final version of the First Amendment not because he approved of it, but simply to bring literary order to the unwieldy bundle of rights that Madison amassed.

As time went on and his health failed, Ames’s bitterness increased. When Jefferson was elected President he said: “We are in the hands of the philosophers of Lilliput.” As for the Louisiana Purchase, it was “a Gallo-Hispano-Indian Omnium Gatherum” destined to produce even more factions and lead us down that fatal Roman road from a republic ruled by laws to an empire ruled by power.

He continued to pound away at democracy. “What other form of civil rule so irresistibly tends to free vice from restraint and to subject virtue to persecution?” “There is universally a presumption in democracy that promises everything, and at the same time an imbecility that can accomplish nothing, not even preserve itself.” “We are sliding down into the mire of a democracy, which pollutes the morals of the citizens before it swallows up their liberties.”

Five years before his death he wrote Thomas Dwight: “Our country is too big for union, too sordid for patriotism, too democratic for liberty.” He was glad to be out of politics: “Nor will I any longer be at the trouble to govern this

country. I am no Atlas, and my shoulders ache.”

In the end, he seemed to adopt a broader misanthropy extending beyond American politics to the entire race of mankind: “Indeed I consider the whole civilized world as metal thrown back into the furnace, to be melted over again.”

Most people know that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died at a ripe age on the same day: July 4, 1826. Given the superstitious weight of the number *three*, a study of the life of Fisher Ames concludes with a chill down the spine, for Ames died of tuberculosis at age fifty on July 4, 1808.

The Grim Reaper’s unhealthy interest in America’s birthday takes on ominous significance when we examine our present national mood in the light of Fisher Ames’s warnings about factionalism.

Our underlying fear that there is no national glue holding us together has always been embarrassingly obvious. Whenever calamity strikes—Pearl Harbor, Dallas, the Iranian hostages, the Challenger explosion—we give ourselves away with a verbal pat on the back that we recite with conspicuous relief: “It brought us together.”

Collecting *Götterdämmerungs* in the cause of union will no longer work. There is now so much *pluribus* in the *unum* that everybody is somebody’s “them.”

Affirmative action is our “French Revolution,” goading us into misanthropy as surely as the excesses of the Terror goaded Fisher Ames. It has sent a twist through the national belly, as anyone who knows anything about this country might have predicted, for when you hit Americans in the college education, you hit them where they live.

As a childless spinster I have no personal stake in college admissions but I have felt that twist in the belly. I call it “the copy-editor feeling.”

Affirmative action has been in operation long enough now for its effects to show up in our daily lives. Business and professional people in every field are regularly stunned by the lack of basic competence in entry-level employees. I see it in publishing; our dumbed-down educational system no longer produces enough people capable of doing literature’s housekeeping chores. Our democratic classrooms are full of students who ought to be turning mops and shovels instead of pages, but they “graduate” and realize the dream of equality by becoming, among other things, copy editors.

College is the most sacred of our sacred cows, the first rung on the ladder of success, the cornerstone of the American Dream of advancement through merit alone. The fury that bright students and their parents feel when a college place goes to someone less qualified is the fury I feel at the thought of my writing falling into the hands of a semiliterate copy editor who did not deserve to be hired, but had to be hired because a publishing house or a magazine or a newspaper needed somebody of this race or that ethnicity, or because they needed a she instead of a he, or because the job applicant was a dyslexic and “needed” to be a copy editor to bolster his “self-esteem”—and lest you think that can’t happen, check out the Americans With Disabilities Act.

I know that I can sit here at the computer for twelve or fifteen hours, going over and over what I’ve written,

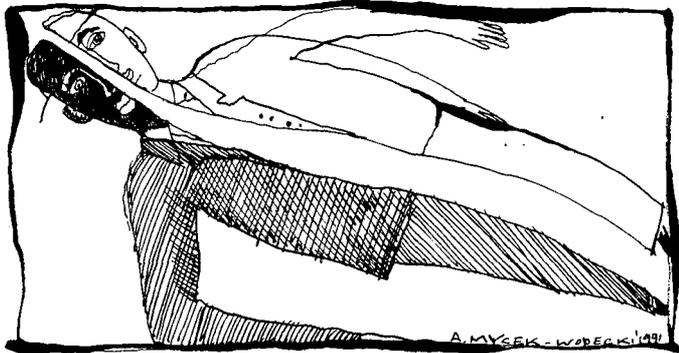
reworking sentences until I am sure I have said what I wanted to say in the simplest, clearest way possible; I can work until dawn, shaking from coffee, parched from cigarettes, dizzy from exhaustion, and fall into bed to dream of green words on a black screen. . . . *but it won’t matter because somebody is going to screw me up.*

*What’s the use?* is becoming our national war cry. Copious tears have been shed over despairing rage in the ghetto, but there’s more than one kind of despairing rage, and more than one kind of victim. The talented, ambitious student who cracks the books to get into college, only to be passed over for someone less deserving, thinks *what’s the use?* and then feels the twist in the belly. His parents, who have worked themselves ragged to give him a college education, think *what’s the use?* and then feel the twist in the belly. The professor who demands excellence from his students, only to find himself charged with elitism, thinks *what’s the use?* and then feels the twist in the belly.

The present mood of America, especially on college campuses, recalls Robinson Jeffers’s phrase, “something in the air that hates humanity.” Assessing the Civil Rights Act of 1990, Thomas Sowell lays it on the line:

I see no reason why it can’t happen here. Nothing is easier than to start a spiral of racial confrontations, and nothing is harder than to stop it . . . we will have quotas set in concrete, no matter how much people deny it. And the hatred that is going to grow out of that is going to be something like we’ve never seen. . . . There’s a consolation in being as old as I am. I don’t think that I’m going to live to see the terrible trends that are setting in, particularly in race relations, come to their conclusion. I certainly would not want to be here for that.

Affirmative action was designed originally for “women and other minorities,” but the phrase is becoming increasingly meaningless, especially in the area of college admissions. Female conscientiousness and eagerness to please have always made women good students and natural test takers. Jews have gloried in scholarship throughout the ages, and Asians of both sexes score so high on SATs and IQ tests that they regard affirmative action as an impediment. As Stuart Rothenberg reports: “[T]hey don’t see themselves as an embattled minority.”



Affirmative action has degenerated into favoritism for blacks for the sake of keeping the racial peace, but the favor is pure chimera. Affirmative action is to blacks what chivalry

is to women. When women are defined as helpless, when they are treated as if they are helpless, when they go along with the charade and pretend to be helpless, they eventually become helpless. One would expect feminists, of all people, to grasp this simple analogy, but like most free American citizens nowadays, they go along to get along, and they will go anywhere.

It is now illegal in California to give blacks IQ tests. Atlanta will follow suit if some educators there have their way. Noting that whites constitute only 6 percent of the city's public school enrollment but 45 percent of its gifted and talented program, Thelma Mumford-Glover, the program director, has devised a plan to get more blacks into it:

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**The Alice-in-Wonderland insistence of IQ-test innovators that down is up, bad is good, low is high; and the hysterical contention of Egyptomaniacs that white is literally black, raise the question of whether blacks as a group are becoming misanthropic.**

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"We recommend the elimination of IQ and achievement tests from the criteria."

Nancy Amuleru-Marshall, director of research for the Atlanta public schools, seconded the motion with a statement of such sublime ignorance of the connection between premise and conclusion that it has to be read twice: "Any tests that emphasize logical, analytical methods of problem-solving will be biased against minorities." The crimes these so-called educators can excuse and even persuade themselves to call virtues they do not blush to commit, so Atlanta is developing IQ tests based on "athletic ability, 'street smarts,' and interpersonal skills."

Meanwhile, the philosophers of Lilliput are busy in the self-esteem division of affirmative action. Claiming that the study of Western civilization is "cultural genocide" and "intellect victimization" aimed at blacks, Afrocentrists are demanding that curricula at all levels be rewritten to include the contributions of black Africa—which assay out to just about everything ever invented, written, and built thanks to the scholarly technique they have devised: the mugging of ancient Egypt.

Around 1915 there was a popular vaudeville number called "The Irish Were Egyptians Once." Now a growing band of black scholars is insisting that blacks were. This is more than educational pluralism or equal time. It is a deliberate attempt to denigrate and destroy European culture, for by placing themselves in ancient Egypt, blacks can claim that they antedated and influenced ancient Greece, and thus take credit for all the seminal discoveries in mathematics, architecture, sculpture, astronomy, and philosophy that make up Western civilization.

This is precisely what they are doing. The leading

Egyptomaniacs—Martin Bernal of Cornell, Asa G. Hilliard III of Georgia State, Theophile J. Obenga of Gabon—contend that Greek philosophers "sat at the feet" of black Egyptian priests, who taught them all they knew. Hilliard also claims that Rameses, King Tut, Moses, Cleopatra, Jesus, Buddha, and Aesop were black; and that study at "the great African universities" was "fairly common" among the ancestors of American slaves. He concludes: "Since Africa is widely believed to be the birthplace of the human race, it follows that Africa was the birthplace of mathematics and science." *It follows?* If geometry and structural engineering had been based on that kind of logic, the pyramids would have collapsed on the Jewish slaves that the black Egyptians owned.

The most outlandish claim comes from an Oregon teacher, Carolyn Leonard, who has solved the riddle of the Sphinx: "Napoleon shot off its nose to alter the facial features so people wouldn't know it was African." This happened to a lot of old statues, according to Leonard. "They were not eroded by time, but deliberately altered to rid them of the vestiges of African features."

Afrocentrism is catching on. Stanford University has already yielded once on the content of its Western Civilization course and, having so readily shown weakness, will no doubt be pressured to yield some more. Sphinxologist Leonard is ensconced in the Portland school system with the glorious title of Coordinator of the Multicultural-Multiethnic Education Office. The New York State Department of Education has created a new "curriculum of inclusion." And in Washington, D.C., a former 60's activist, Alben Walker, is conducting a "pilot program" in one elementary school. According to the *Washington Times*, her curriculum employs yoga. ("In through the noses, out through the mouths. . . all the spiritual sciences have their roots in Africa. . . Invoke your ancestors, breath in, breath out.")

John Leo of *U.S. News & World Report* calls Afrocentrism "a sort of Tawana Brawley theory of history, in which facts do not matter, only resentments and group solidarity." However, Leo adds that when he called seven prominent Egyptologists at random to ask their opinion on the Black Egypt theory, all seven said it was not true—"then asked that their names not be used." One told him it was "politically too hot" to get into.

Egyptologists tend to be dependent on grants from foundations, which are dependent on government tax laws. Most people erudite enough to dispute Afrocentrism are sucking on some public or semipublic tit, which explains why only four scholars so far have come forward to do battle. Two of them are unassailable emeriti of history almost as eternal as the pyramids themselves: Henry Steele Commager and Arthur J. Schlesinger, Jr. The other two are William H. McNeill and Diane Ravitch, who was called "Miss Daisy" by the offended Egyptomaniacs.

The four have formed the Committee of Scholars in Defense of History, but who will be brave enough to lend them public support? Certainly not the enterprising merchant, the thriving tradesman, the careful farmer, or the rest of our virtuous citizenry who do not wish to control society, but quietly to enjoy its protection and send their children to its schools. They, who have little time or inclination for the unprofitable and disquieting task of being called racists, will

simply grumble in private until they wake up one morning and find that Afro Ed has become a required course in every school in America, and nobody will know how it happened.

Hatred of truth is misanthropy in the fullest sense because it denotes a hatred of the human spirit at its most noble. The Alice-in-Wonderland insistence of IQ-test innovators that down is up, bad is good, low is high; and the hysterical contention of Egyptomaniacs that white is literally black, raise the question of whether blacks as a group are becoming misanthropic.

**T**hey no longer regard whites as the only devils in their private hell. In recent years they have begun directing bitter enmity at other races and ethnic groups; increasingly, they seem to be saying that anyone who is not black is white.

Miami is a flashpoint for black-Hispanic tensions. Black accusations of brutality against Hispanic police pulsate with the same frenzied quality of similar cases against white police in the 60's. They also are showing the same tendency to turn into *causes célèbres*, such as last year's well-publicized trial of an Hispanic officer who shot a black motorcyclist who tried to run over him. The Miami police force itself has divided along racial lines: black officers have charged that Hispanic officers are slow to respond to back-up calls from them.

In "Hispanics vs. Blacks in Houston," about the ongoing struggle for municipal power, *Newsweek* reporter Ginny Carroll writes: "The reigning assumption seems to be that the nation's two largest minorities will have to duke it out, while white control remains intact . . . the animus between [Hispanics] and Houston blacks is likely to worsen."

In my own area, blacks have built up a head of steam over newly arrived Central Americans. Arlandria, a long-time black section of Alexandria, is now home to an enclave of Salvadorans and it is ready to boil over. "They can't stand each other," said a social worker.

A study by the University of Chicago's Population Research Center suggests one reason why blacks resent Hispanics. The study found that Hispanics who were perceived as white had little difficulty moving into white suburbs, while Hispanics who appeared to be black were subject to the same discrimination patterns as American-born blacks. Said study director Douglas S. Massey: "Hispanics are primarily white. They are apparently more accepted as neighbors than blacks." Idealists will say that Hispanics, having a foot in both camps, will "educate" their new white neighbors, but anyone who knows how human nature really works can see where this split is headed. As a Herman Wouk character put it: "The great unwashed worship the washed."

Black hostility toward Asians has mounted steadily in the face of Asian business success, which many inner-city blacks attribute to a government plot, and the superior academic performance of Asian students in tests that are supposedly biased in favor of whites. To make matters worse, a personality conflict freighted with irony has also emerged. Explaining what it is about Asians that blacks don't like, the embattled Korean grocer whose Brooklyn store has been the target of a year-long black boycott told the *Washington Post*: "Because we don't laugh so much and don't smile so much, it doesn't seem like we're very kind people." Blacks are now

demanding smiling good cheer of Asians just as white Southerners once demanded it of them.

In *Do the Right Thing*, a desperate Korean about to be attacked by blacks cries, "Me no white. Me no white. Me black." But it does no good. To the attackers he is white because he is not black. The Virginia State Employment Commission seems to think along the same lines. According to *Richmond Times-Dispatch* editor Robert Holland, who unearthed a copy of it, the Commission has a conversion table to help them rig aptitude-test scores on the basis of race (a practice politely known as "score adjustments"). Blacks and Hispanics are listed separately by name, but the category known as "Other" consists of whites — and Asians.

Black anti-Semitism has taken the same bizarre turn. Said Toni Morrison in *Time*: "What I find is a lot of black people who believe that Jews in this country, by and large, have become white. They behave like white people rather than Jewish people."

Rachel Flick confronted the same attitude at a 1988 black-Jewish conference in Atlanta convened to repair the damage between the two groups. "What emerged in Atlanta, moreover, was that interest in repairing the alliance is one-sided," said Flick. "For Jews of the Reform tradition, as most of the civil-rights activists are, an alliance with the downtrodden is an essential part of feeling Jewish. But for blacks, Jews are white — a point tactfully and truthfully offered by Benjamin Hooks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People."

As a final fillip, blacks have thrown down the gauntlet to feminists. To repair the damage done to poor black males by their female-dominated, fatherless environments, the growing movement by black educators to segregate boys into separate classes, or even separate schools staffed exclusively by black male teachers, can only undermine the whole concept of sexual equality and re-invent Freudianism, complete with new-old buzzwords like "emasculat.?"

Hispanics, Asians, Jews, women — blacks are flailing their way into misanthropy minority by minority, interest group by interest group, faction by faction. If it continues, our Omnum Gatherum might well achieve a unity nobody bargained for.

A few years ago, while having coffee in my favorite diner, I eavesdropped on a conversation between two good ole boys who were discussing the race for the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination. This is what I overheard:

"Hey, T.J., you know what?"

"Whuzzat, Dwayne?"

"If the Jews hate Jesse Jackson, they cain't be too bad."

Political scientists would call this a realignment but in fact it is a movement of the earth. If Dwayne and T.J. can become good ole goys, anything can happen. If blacks continue on their misanthropic way they will eventually goad the rest of the population into a monolithic white race with some only-in-America touches. Having given "Protestant Ethic" a new meaning, Asians will increasingly think of themselves, and be thought of, as white. The concept of "ethnics" will vanish altogether as all whites adopt the Eurocentrism of which we presently stand accused — and Wasps will finally stop describing as "foreign looking" anyone who does not turn pink and blister after an hour in the sun. 

# The Isolationist Enigma

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

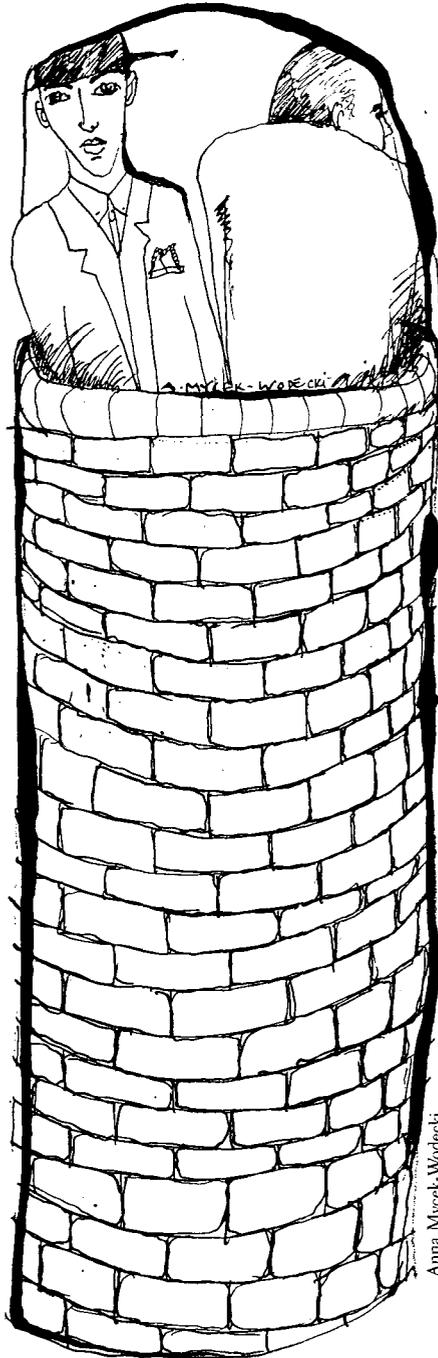
*"We assert that no nation can long endure half republic and half empire."*  
—Democratic National Platform, 1900

**The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867-1950**  
by Godfrey Hodgson  
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;  
402 pp., \$24.95

According to Godfrey Hodgson, Henry L. Stimson—secretary of war for William Howard Taft, secretary of state for Herbert Hoover, and, again, secretary of war, this time under Franklin D. Roosevelt—“was identified with the dangerous idea that it is America’s destiny to lead the world, and the drives that had led him to that conviction come from deep in the American past. But, when all else is said and done, he was one of the great guardians of the Republic, one of those to whom Plato said the fullest honor should be given because he preserved us from our enemies.” If only he had preserved us from ourselves as well.

Godfrey Hodgson, who is currently foreign editor of *The Independent* in London, was Washington correspondent for the *London Observer* from 1967 to 1971; also he has taught at Harvard, Yale, and other American universities and is described by his American publisher as a frequent lecturer in the United States. Thus credentialed, he has included in his biography of this distinguished American statesman and warrior glib glosses on the topic of isolationism in the United States in the 20th century and a silly summary of American immigration reform in the 1920’s; an equation of American isolationists between the two World Wars with H.L. Mencken’s

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*booboisie* (Mencken!—who loathed the Brits and in 1914 hoped that the Germans would be in Paris before Christmas); and a declaration that “Stimson, in 1939 and 1940, was the American Churchill. He was articulating the New Deal Democrats’ instincts more clearly than their own leaders. Beyond Left and Right, above Republican and Democrat, he was setting forth the lasting principles of the American tradition.” Elsewhere, he remarks in passing: “In the last analysis [isolationism] was not about world politics, but about American politics.” That is, of course, a profoundly true statement. Why didn’t Mr. Hodgson pay due attention to it in his book?

Henry Stimson was indeed a grand old man of a type (morally, not intellectually) that today is as dead as the dodo. And it is indisputable, as Hodgson amply shows, that by keeping Roosevelt’s mind opposed to Churchill’s passion for military feints and parryings and directed instead toward an all-out assault on what Hodgson calls “the citadel of Nazism,” he made a major contribution to the Allied war effort. Yet to praise Stimson so unstintingly as the preserver of the “Republic” is much less a rash act than it is an uninformed one. For this “Republican” was a man who held ideas of republican government that were incongruent, in many important ways, with the republicans who had designed the American Republic and set it in motion. “His conception of the role of the executive in constitutional law,” Hodgson writes, “was robust, to say the least: it could verge on the scarcely disguised expression of the ancient and profoundly un-American code of statecraft that is summed up in the phrase