

banks of the Thames! May I book you the journey?

Italians respect intellectuals, provided they can afford the wine. Their respect, which is truly continental, is the sort of thing that is endlessly described in Nabokov's émigré stories of Paris and Berlin: it is essentially the homage paid by an innkeeper to a guest whose eccentric ways are both valuable subjects of local gossip and welcome opportunities for enrichment in the community. The English, to say nothing of the Americans, have all but lost this notion of hospitality where intellectuals are concerned. Tell them you are writing about love, and they will think you a child molester. Say it's money, and they will decide you are dangerously poor, but if it's poverty that fascinates you, they will despise you as a shady moneybags with republican leanings. What can a writer legitimately say he is interested in, then? Small wonder there are so many biographies in the bookstores.

To escape the social consequences, one must have rank, accreditation, position. If I could announce, in an anglophone drawing-room, that I am a university professor, in all likelihood my Dangerfieldesque gripe would be no more, no matter how queer my actual or professed inclinations. Well, here in Italy nobody needs to announce that kind of thing. If you can pay for dinner, you are a professor.

Which brings me back to my feelings of displacement. Gastronomy and respect for intellectuals aside, I am obviously missing London with its 22 casinos. Rome has none. The other day, walking through a little piazza in the center of the city, I found myself in a small room packed with at least 500 people elbowing their way to happiness. "*Que casino, ma guarda que casino!*" one could hear exasperated cries here and there. With the stress on the middle syllable, unfortunately, meaning what bedlam. Bedlam, confusion, *casino* because the most unforgettable thimbleful of coffee in civilization is to be had in this room for about 60 cents, and it's a sure bet, too.

Was I happy at the famous Caffè Sant' Eustachio? No. The smoke of Tuscan cigars, the misleading semantics, the pushing crowd had awaked my appetite for the hazards of Mayfair, and I almost burst into sentimental tears from Dostoyevskian frustration. "*Portatemi sulle rive brumose del Tamigi,*" I wanted to thunder, whereupon all the imaginary

innkeepers of Europe past and present would duly bow and, scurrying like mice through the stage set representing a crooked street, would run to book me an overpriced flight to Heathrow. "*Stanotte voglio giocare d'azzardo!*" I would bellow after them. Nothing but respect for the

hero in my Italian melodrama.

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The Antipodean

for A. D. Hope

by Alan Sullivan

Worthy to stand with Johnson, Swift or Pope,
You offer young successors more than Hope;
But soon the work which you refused to quit
When niggling numbats deconstructed it
Must pass in trust to your unworthy heirs
Mounting their death-watch on Parnassian stairs.

Often you felt your countrymen disdained
What vestiges of culture they retained,
Preferring bards who plotted Marxist coups
Or ran with wallabies and kangaroos.
Once their descendants tire of shearing sheep,
They'll find their past securely in your keep.

We foreigners who glimpsed your Isle Of Aves
Or heard your bamboo flute across the waves
Explored the wandering islands of your mind
Where art and nascent science intertwined
As grave Casserius dissected nerves
And Herschel plotted planetary curves.

No existential vagaries for you—
You always kept Voltaire and Locke in view,
Skeptical though you never lost your faith
That somewhere in the background, like a wraith,
Hovered an esoteric Absolute—
The true numen for which we substitute
Divinities too like the human race.

Finding in grief an unimagined grace,
You blessed the tongues of all humanity,
Blessed Babel's curse—the gift which set us free
By breaking words and making them ignite
As a prism makes a rainbow of the light.
If one tongue threatens now to trump the rest,
Who would begrudge a prophet his bequest?

MILITARY

Enemies Foreign and Domestic

by William J. Corliss

A cynic once observed that in times of peace nations make war on themselves. Nowhere is this phenomenon more manifest than in the United States military, where the onslaught of political correctness has resulted in the lowest morale in memory. As American Armed Forces recently geared up for another engagement with Iraq, a troubling consensus arose among officers in the Persian Gulf: neither the hearts and minds of the servicemen nor the material force structure were in readiness for success with a minimum of casualties.

Why was this not more widely reported? The answer lies in the modus operandi of political correctness, which demands unhesitating conformity of behavior and opinion while imposing irrational taboos on the discussion of certain subjects.

Outside of religious orders, there is no institution that demands so much in the way of obedience and conformity as the military. Precisely because the imperatives of political correctness are so frequently contrary to human nature, the effects on a comparatively closed society like the military are devastating. And even though the national defense of the republic is jeopardized thereby, many officers remain silent, as Elaine Donnelly of the Center for Military Readiness has explained, out of a well-justified fear of a career-ending mistake.

When Lt. General Victor "Brute" Krulak, USMC (Ret.) appointed me to the post of Deputy-in-Chief of *Strategic Review*, the venerable quarterly of the United States Strategic Institute (USSI), he did so because he recognized a need

for a full hearing on controversial topics, particularly those falling under the heading of cultural politics. Privately exasperated officers, from all branches and all ranks right up to general, immediately rallied to our banner, telling us that the reason uppermost in everyone's mind for the current readiness crisis is the deliberate feminization of the military.

As I argued in an editorial published in our fall 1997 issue, if political correctness is to be combated in the military, Congress and the military should dispatch immediately the feminist demand that women be integrated into combat units. Contrary to popular misperceptions and the bureaucratic redefinition of combat criteria, the exclusion of women from combat remains the clear intent of the law, codified in the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948. That is why we are sometimes told that maneuver warfare and over-the-horizon weapons have rendered all members of the military "combatants." At other times we are told that certain posts which previously appeared to be involved in mortal combat do not qualify as "direct" combat postings. By one gloss or another, I argued, the Pentagon Pharisees will have their way, and "intent" be damned.

Because of this editorial, I was summarily dismissed from my post. I was told that the Institute's official position on integrating women into combat units had already been written some time ago by General Krulak. When I found this previous editorial, a weak demurrer to gender integration, I noted the by-line was not of General Krulak but of the then-deceased chairman of the USSI, Arthur G.B. Metcalf. There was no telling what might have happened inside the Beltway should someone have suspected that the opinion of General Victor Krulak was also that of his son—General Charles Krulak, the current Commandant of the Marine Corps.

That incident merely hints at what is taking place inside the military and the dark night of self-censorship concealing it. It is no coincidence that when ABC's *Nightline* (February 10, 1998) chose to explore the new rules of "men, women

and sex in the workplace," the lead segment by Dave Marash zeroed in on the military. Speaking from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), which *Nightline* incorrectly identified by the less charged name of the "Military Management Institute," Marash briefly let slip the truth: "But when talk moves from what should be to what is, in today's American armed services, the word you hear again and again from these military managers is 'scared.'" A male officer is then shown worrying aloud, "I feel scared sometimes because I'm afraid that I might do something that I'm going to regret, and then next thing I know I'll have a report against me for sexual harassment." Apart from that glimpse of reality, ABC delivered cover-up coverage designed to inflame the public against seemingly irrational males.

Here, in contrast, is how feminist activist Linda Bird Francke describes the mission of the same institute in her book *Ground Zero*:

The DEOMI subjected male students to sexual harassment in a role reversal exercise known as Meat Market. "Bend over. Touch your ankles. Hmmm, good pair of buns," female students murmured about a male student in one classroom. In another, a female student ordered a male to lie down on his back and hold his legs open in the ongoing tradition of the "leg-spreader." "We want the males to feel truly uncomfortable," says one of the trainers watching the exercise approvingly from the central, one-way glass control booth. . . . At DEOMI the simple answer to gender discrimination was the elimination of the combat exclusionary laws. The complex answer lay in the purging of biases and stereotypes ingrained in the white male Christian heterosexual culture.

The complete portrait sketched by Francke resembles nothing so much as a remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*.