

libertarian advocating nationalist measures: The two go hand in hand.

Faced with the erosion of our national sovereignty through unlimited immigration, economic globalism, and political internationalism, some conservatives have taken their stand on the nation-state not only as a last redoubt to be defended (which it is) but as a supernatural entity tied together by “the mystic chords of memory” and presided over by “the better angels of our nature.” This sort of nationalism, whether proclaimed by Mazzini or Lincoln, is as blasphemous as the prayer of the Unitarian socialist that American children are forced to recite in school. To pledge allegiance to a flag is idolatry; to proclaim the Union indivisible not only insults the men who founded this federal republic but justifies the continued centralization of power that is the bane of all modern states.

Real Americans are bound by traditions and habits that connect us both to the great struggles in our national history and to the local places where our kin are buried and our children are christened. If we are not Georgians or Kansans, we cannot be Americans except by the polite fiction that allows us to pretend (as we ought to pretend) that naturalized immigrants are as American as native sons. This generic U.S. identity is as bloodless and bogus as the New Soviet Man. Armed with this fictional identity, nationalists would have to form a party, take over the government, reconstruct the nation by imposing a propaganda curriculum on the schools and by destroying the last few tatters of provincial diversity—and it would be morning again in America, again.

Even if such a nationalist scenario were a paradise and not a nightmare, it is absurd to pretend that it might ever be played out. To the extent that we Americans still possess an authentic identity, we are finding it in our churches, in our families, and, occasionally, in our ethnic traditions. I am dismayed by the prospect of large parts of the United States turning Mexican, but I am terrified by the reality that we are creating: a nationalist-socialist state that will eliminate both the Mexican and the Anglo-American identities.

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## In the San Juans

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The satisfaction, first, was to confound the skeptics. We had stopped to talk with two—a hirsute man from Texas, middle-aged, beside a pickup truck, and then a younger chap, his son, I guess, involved in struggles with a motorcycle and a ramp. The parleying took place just off the highway at the entrance to a forest road we hoped

to take, ascending steeply from the Rio Grande. By we, I mean five friends, three vehicles—my Jeep, a monster diesel Ram with an RV, and a Ford truck, well-traveled, towing a fifth wheel. The Texans had been up off-road. “So what’s it like up there?” “It’s mighty slippery . . . a mud-bowl, don’t you know. We managed to make out

on the two-wheeler, but I reckon that on four, and pulling rigs like those, I wouldn’t try. Well, we’ll be moseying on.” The motorcycle loaded on the back at last, the two set off, and we consulted. Power we had, big tires, and strong will; but it had rained—fat, wholesome drops—on the San Juans the day before. We drove up anyhow—

eight miles and more (I clocked it), gaining height in spiral moves and grinding over rocks and gravel. And the ruts were not too bad. Though mire ruled out a likely spot among some aspen, farther up where spruce were thick, we found a loggers’ track, abandoned, which unraveled in a clearing for a level camp. We had our water

with us. By evening, we had gathered wood, laid out a ring of massive stones, and built a fire that lasted seven hours. Surrounded as we were by picket trees, enclosed in folds of mountains, we surmised the highest range off to the south, and felt its shadows, as the sky, with Venus barely visible, turned pale and powdery blue—

a lovely woman, but no longer young, preferring softer lighting on her face, and brilliants in her hair. So finally, the joy was in ourselves. Beneath the fledgling stars, we listened to the birds in evensong and watched the smoke trail off as from an offering, the old wood crackling in the flames, the old hearts incandescent, pure.

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## The Western Front

by Paul Gottfried

### Plus ça Change . . .

In the December 27, 2002, issue of the English edition of *Forward*, self-described Orthodox Jew David Klinghoffer attacks Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn for his recent book *Two Hundred Years Together*. In this historical work, Solzhenitsyn deals with Jews and Russians living side by side from 1775, when Russia came to occupy the heavily Jewish regions of Eastern Poland and Lithuania, until after the fall of communism in 1995. Although the book does not attack collectively all Eastern European Jews and praises the filial pietism and customary life associated with the Orthodox, Klinghoffer accuses Solzhenitsyn of “cast[ing] Jewish socialists in the role of demonic villains, seeking to overturn Russian society in the years before and after the 1917 Revolution.” He notes that Russian historian Richard Pipes (himself Jewish), writing in the *New Republic*, agrees that Jews played a pivotal role in the Russian Revolution and that Pipes does not impute to Solzhenitsyn any sinister purpose. Klinghoffer, however, remains unconvinced. He accuses the Russian author of “invidious age-old distinctions,” and, though he does not treat him as harshly as he does Jesus (Who abetted Christian antisemitism “by constantly fussing with the rabbinic sages”), he considers Solzhenitsyn a troublemaker. Solzhenitsyn’s “tendency to split us into good and bad Jews is very ancient and typically comes to no good.”

Setting aside his questionable charges against Jesus, Klinghoffer does provoke serious questions. Either Jews were disproportionately represented among communist revolutionaries, including those who oversaw mass murder, or they were not. If they were, then there is surely nothing wrong with Solzhenitsyn or Pipes saying so, any more than there is with someone acknowledging the preponderance of German nationals in the Waffen SS. I can only imagine Klinghoffer’s reaction if a German publicist stated that those who called attention to the crimes committed by other Germans were dividing the German people.

Solzhenitsyn’s assertions may understate the reality—a conclusion to which I am led by reading Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein’s work *Jüdischer Bolschewis-*

*mus: Mythos und Realität*. The author, a meticulous multilingual scholar, investigates a wide range of primary and secondary literature (including works by Jewish communists celebrating their involvement with the Soviets and with Stalin). Bieberstein shows that Jewish membership in Russian and Polish communist organizations was at least eight times as great as Jewish representation in the general populations. Jewish communists dominated the Soviet-controlled international revolutionary Comintern and its publications, and Jews were active in the secret-police apparatus in Russia and elsewhere in the Soviet Empire. Much of the virulent antisemitism that spread through interwar Europe and created a breeding ground for Nazism was based on “fear of Jewish Bolshevism.” Such well-known Jewish Bolsheviks as Hungarian communist Bela Kun and Comintern leader Karl Radek gave substance to this fear by steadily proclaiming their hatred for Christianity.

While Bieberstein demonstrates that anti-Christian revulsion affected Jewish radicalism, he leaves no doubt that Jews in Eastern Europe viewed their social situation as “hopeless.” He quotes a 1904 study, *Die Juden der Gegenwart* by German Jewish sociologist Arthur Ruppin, who argues that “wealthy Jews fund revolutionary socialism not because of the economic oppression of the proletariat but because of their own frustrations.” Bieberstein remarks that the “particularly strong radicalism” observed among Eastern European Jews, especially the Russian Jewish immigrants who helped set up the French, English, and American Communist Parties, resulted from their exclusion from czarist Russian society. German and Austrian Jews, who enjoyed greater civil rights, were correspondingly less radical, even in their socialism. Those Jews who felt most discriminated against struck back by embracing often destructive revolutionary politics, which, in turn, nurtured even more poisonous antisemitism. Needless to say, communist leaders, starting with Stalin, were quite happy to sacrifice their Jewish revolutionary shock troops once they were no longer deemed necessary for their purposes.



That the communists in power turned on Jewish revolutionaries—some of whom, such as Trotsky, had incited Bolshevik crimes—does not exonerate the victimizers-turned-victims, however. Nor can we attribute the misdeeds of all communist fanatics to social suffering. Stalin’s Jewish general secretary in the Ukraine, Lazare Kaganovich, who was responsible for the murder of millions of Ukrainian peasants, did not grow up in squalor. Like the parents of Trotsky and those of Rosa Luxemburg, the elder Kaganoviches were affluent landowners. The same was true of Lev Kamenev (Rosenfeld) and of the notorious sybarite Gregor Zinoviev, who, together with Stalin, ruled the Soviet party at the time of Lenin’s death. Hungarian communists Bela Kun, Georg Lukacs, and Tibor Szamuely could not even claim to have suffered social indignity. All of them came of age in a liberal monarchy that had ennobled the fathers or grandfathers of two of them. On a 1926 trip to Soviet Russia, anti-Christian Jewish Marxist Walter Benjamin rejoiced that the communists were wiping out Christian civilization. Benjamin grew up in wealth.

Some of the Jewish bourgeoisie, however, supported the anticommunists. This happened even in Russia, though the sporadic anti-Jewish outbursts of the anti-Bolsheviks made Jewish anticommunist opposition weaker than it might have been. Vera, the esteemed wife of Vladimir Nabokov, came from an assimilated Russian-Jewish family that sided with the anti-Bolshevik Whites in the Russian Civil War. In Eastern Europe, the Jewish bourgeoisie provided the most politically active Jews on both sides. In both the first century and the 20th, as Klinghoffer reminds us, Jews opposed other Jews. And, in the tumultuous events described by Solzhenitsyn, the very bad side won. ☐