

anywhere in this amenable little book.

A final remark of Dr. Dubos illuminates his anecdotal style, which so effectively engrosses the reader and develops the themes. "But I'll give you the finest example of all. In my opinion, Christianity took root not so much because of its truth but because Christ spoke in parables. In fact, he says just that in the book of Matthew: 'Therefore speak I to them in parables.' For only parables can express the full complexity of things. If you define your subject too precisely, you'll stifle its living richness, but if you tell a story, then your listeners will sense everything that the story may contain. I truly believe that this is the way to make things grow. In addition, I confess it's much more entertaining." **WV**

**FRIENDLY FASCISM:
THE NEW FACE OF CORPORATE
POWER IN AMERICA**

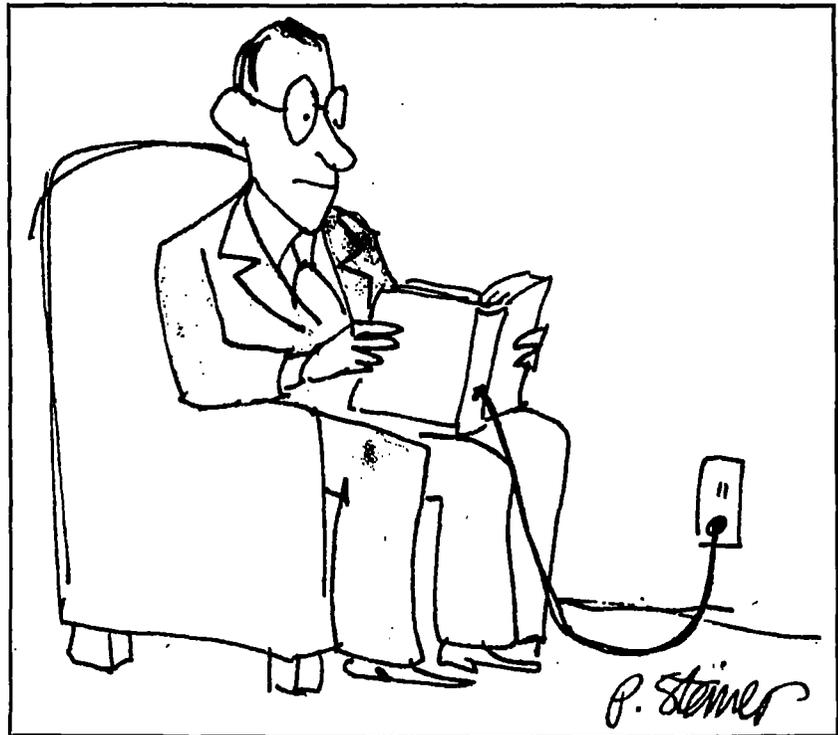
by **Bertram Gross**
(Evans, 410 pp., \$15.00)

**THUNDER ON THE RIGHT:
THE NEW RIGHT AND THE
POLITICS OF RESENTMENT**

by **Alan Crawford**
(Pantheon, xv + 381 pp., \$13.95)

Newton Koltz

Friendly Fascism, a long series of new variations on the theme that power tends to concentrate in the hands of those who already have too much of it, is a book you want to like and take seriously. It promises quite a lot: to blow the lid on the government-corporate collusion that threatens to turn this country into a *pleasant* police state—a scary, all too likely possibility. Unfortunately, the book delivers none of the punch one wants from it. Unless you are that rare individual who believes the oil companies' explanations of their mega-profits, it's unlikely you'll find any new revelations here. The problem with the book, I think, stems from the old academic delusion that *careful presentation, balance, and "fairness"* are equivalent to hard reasoning and insight. When you want probing questions and tough answers, it smothers you in balance and overwhelms you with waves of tedious facts, until in the end you are too numb to be frightened...which is not to say



that *Friendly Fascism* is a waste of either trees or time. Indeed, when our new Tom Paine sets out to write our new *Common Sense*, he'll surely find Dr. Gross's book essential background reading.

Thunder on the Right is a series of variations on a rather different kind of takeover theme: the story of how the well-organized, well-financed, well-promoted political network that has come to be called the New Right took control of America's right-wing establishment. It's often a sad book because Crawford, who thinks of himself as a conservative in the tradition of Edmund Burke, John Adams, and to an extent the Buckleys, is dismayed that the Right is no longer the dignified, exclusive club it used to be. Somebody let in the folks in leisure suits, white patent leather slip-ons, and bouffant hairdos. Crawford can't seem to accept the fate of an élitist intellectual in a democracy. Given the choice between an élitist who knows full well what the people *really* need and a tub-thumping, antiabortion, anti-ERA, pro-school-prayer rabble-rouser, the polyester people will go for the rabble-rouser every time.

Once you have become calloused to Crawford's sometimes whiny tone, however, the book becomes quite fun to read. It's an insider's book that's often both hard-hitting and feisty. I can report with pleasure that Crawford has

learned well from his mentors, the Buckleys, how to skewer his enemies without savaging them. (The most villainous of his enemies appears to be Richard A. Viguerie, the Mephistophiles of direct mail fund raising for New Right causes. There's not a good word for Viguerie in the book, I'm delighted to say.) More important, I think Crawford is correct about the danger the New Right represents for the Republic. For him the threat from these people—the single-issue groups, the fundamentalist churches, the Political Action committees, the "Moral Majorities," and all the rest—is not to the "political process," as so many liberals seem to be saying. "Why," they write, "do *these* people want to get involved now? Why are *they* participating in the process when after all they never did before?" (Liberal élitists can be just as whiny as their conservative counterparts.) The danger from the New Right is much more fundamental than that. They put their own will (often identified with some kind of higher law) ahead of the Law. Or, to put this in more concrete terms, the ayatollahs of the New Right—in the name of law and order—would like to make a revolutionary change in the American system of government. They want, simply, to make over the system in their own image, a catastrophe that would make living under a "friendly fascist" regime seem downright enjoyable. **WV**