

new generations in modern Western societies to abandon them has damaged them severely. The author not only asks for a reversal of this attitude, but argues that we need traditions even to hold onto the advances of science, including social science. Because rational arguments based on "scientific" ends are used on every side of every argument, he perceives rationalization, along with hedonism, individualism, and ideals of emancipation, as the enemies of tradition; these may be necessary and desirable goals, but they ought not be opposed to tradition or manipulated to attain political or emotional ends.

For Shils such illegitimate or partisan use of reason and science does not bode well for the transmission of traditions or for the "creative tradition-seeking capacities" of individuals. He is not alone in his despair, and many of the reasons for his pessimism are well founded. Yet he consistently overrates the influence of radicals and of the "lumpen-intelligentsia," using heavy artillery to shoot down balloons. No one believes anymore—least of all the Left—that the elimination of tradition can in itself create a new social order. Had Shils read some of the literature of the Left he would have been aware of its splits, its problems, and its marginality. In any event, exaggerating the danger on the Left will not save tradition. But a truly Weberian method at the service of "neutralizing" Professor Shils's prejudices along with those of the Left could provide a more objective analysis that might, in fact, reinstate a more pervasive appreciation of the past. It might even preserve the best of it.

SOCIAL POWER AND POLITICAL FREEDOM

by Gene Sharp

(Porter Sargent; 456 pp.; \$15.95/\$8.95)

Charles Bloomstein

Of the leading political figures of our time, Gandhi is clearly among those most neglected. Since his assassination in 1948, interest in his theories has waned, and today there are few who see him as a master political strategist.

Gene Sharp has spent some thirty years studying Gandhi and developing the variety of political techniques the Mahatma sponsored. He takes here a

pragmatic, instrumentalist approach to the problems of violence, power, and social control and asserts that we will not rid ourselves of war, dictatorship, genocide, and economic injustice so long as we accept violence as the ultimate social sanction. It is the violence itself that abets those evils.

All theoreticians of democracy and its values agree that the capacity to govern rests fundamentally on the acceptance by the governed of the legitimacy and authority of those governing. Terror, oppression, and punishment all serve to reinforce that acceptance but cannot be effective in its absence. This is true for all forms of government, from popular democracies to tyrannies, including totalitarian states—and Iran has provided us with a very dramatic illustration of that fact.

Sharp goes further and argues that those who control the apparatus of violence, in the form of a police and prison system and a centralized military, inevitably constitute a privileged political class, controlling economic and social areas as well and making impossible a democratic socialist or humanitarian society. Noting that sanctions are essential for the stability and domestic tranquillity of any society, Sharp insists that a wide range of alternative and nonviolent measures are available, measures that would be effective and lead to a more equitable social order.

If vigilance is the price of liberty, turning over the defense of that value to a centralized military cannot nurture that vigilance. Sharp argues for what he calls a civilian-based defense of national security. The people as a whole must be imbued with the value of freedom and be willing to defend it against foreign invasion and domestic usurpation by would-be dictators. Both threats can be defeated, Sharp is convinced, by nonviolent noncooperation and resistance, expressed in strikes, general strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience.

Such nonviolent resistance has occurred from time to time in the past, and Sharp has documented almost two hundred variations of resistance techniques. No technique has succeeded in full, although some have been partially effective, especially where the goals were limited. But, Sharp claims, these past instances all took place under the most adverse circumstances possible; they were spontaneous, lacking any prior preparation or training. What is needed, therefore, is planning and

training of the population at large, with allocation of resources and funds, and continued exploration of strategies and tactics. Such a civilian-based defense would succeed, not by conversion of the opponent, but by coercion. It is risky, to be sure, but not as risky as war and violence in terms of its ultimate economic, social, and human costs. And in the process of obtaining its immediate objectives, it can help in bettering the human condition. War and violence clearly do not.

There is more to Sharp's argument. Many of its particulars will be agreed to by those concerned with human freedom and dignity; but the whole is difficult to accept, conditioned as we are by our experience and convictions. There are questions we must ask, even if we assume that the techniques will work. How do we arrive at this vigilant public, when what we see in our country is increasing apathy? How do we decentralize power, one of Sharp's goals, when in every society, developed or developing, centralization is the order of the day? How, when all our history shows that people are willing to kill and die for the defense of what they hold dear, do we get people willing to risk all while eschewing killing? And who will bell the cat? Which country will be first? Can we ask Israel, for example, to lead the way?

There are many more questions and objections, and Sharp is aware of them. He knows that his work is literally in its beginning stages and is thus asking that others join him, that exploration and study be carried on more widely, that funds and other resources be made available, and that our colleges, universities, and think tanks accept this as a major responsibility. *Social Power and Political Freedom* is intended for use as a text in political science courses. If it is widely adopted, it may help awaken the interest that Sharp requests.

How easy it would be to consign Sharp's thesis to the realm of hopeless utopianism were it not for recent events in Poland. There, under domestic totalitarianism and foreign domination, a limited protest by workers has now spread to include many other elements in the society, each with its own demands, yet all supporting the others. The Soviet Union has refrained from invasion, up to now. Why the restraint? Certainly not ethics or morality, which failed to deter them in Afghanistan. Could it be the Soviet Union somehow

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understands that conquest of Poland will not solve its problems if it then must face a united and resistant nation? What better documentation could Sharp ask for? **WV**

WHITE SUPREMACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN AMERICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

by **George Frederickson**

(Oxford University Press, 356 pp.; \$19.95)

Kalman Goldstein

Read *White Supremacy* with a fresh mind and a substantial portion of time. You will have to concentrate but will regret having to put the book down. Frederickson's language is rigorous, his conceptualizations sophisticated, his theses and hypotheses drawn from a fresh reconsideration of the best scholarly literature in English and Afrikaans. The result is a masterful and provocative essay in comparative history that offers new insights into familiar

material and introduces most American readers to largely unfamiliar territory.

Frederickson prefers the term "white supremacy" to "racism" or "prejudice" for its greater broadness and utility as a conceptual tool; it encompasses policy, context, and cultural rationales for exclusion from the civil community. One may be prejudiced without being a racist; a society may be both prejudiced and racist without constructing caste and political distinctions. This nicety may seem forced in the manifesto-like introduction, but the evidence and treatment bear the author out. Frederickson is facile in social science methodology and in language but is explicitly a historian. Therefore his is a saga of shifting emphases and attitudes over time and space. Both here and in South Africa different regions experienced different racial confrontations and made different arrangements; and in both countries at varying times there have been multiple factors producing tensions and divisions within the white "race" concerning the status and treatment of non-Caucasians. "White supremacy" is an especially useful concept in understanding the parameters of

white American attitudes toward blacks during the Abolitionist-Civil War period. Here Frederickson provides a typological dichotomy—"dominative" versus "aversive" racism—which, in a nutshell, clarifies paternalistic slaveholding and antislavery Negrophobia and helps explain the rapid national white reconciliation after Reconstruction. Further, "white supremacy" can describe the unexpectedly variable South African attitudes toward "whitening" rather than "passing." Novices to that nation's history will learn that until recently South African whites did not hold to a rigorous ancestry principle but pragmatically juggled the salience of color, caste, and cultural externals. Only we Americans, it seems, have been long wedded to a rigid racial rating system that made "passing" necessary. The novice will also be introduced to the shifting assessments by Afrikaners of ethno-cultural strains that make up the Cape Colored.

White Supremacy is organized into six chapters, each of which treats parallel aspects of national thought and development, more or less contemporaneous, through the key variables of