

If Koch Were Black

By Gloria Steinem

It was said earlier this summer that race is a bigger factor in the mayoral contest than New Yorkers care to admit. After the Bensonhurst killing, the wisdom of that point is unmistakable. The problem is, we haven't figured out what to do about it.

I have a suggestion that comes from a time-honored habit in social justice movements. To uncover bias

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in ourselves, the media, whatever, just reverse the race or sex or ethnicity of the people involved. Then ask if the response would have been the same.

For instance, would we know as much about the Central Park jogger if she had been a young black woman from the projects? Was "woman hatred" or "sexism" talked about as much in that event as "race hatred" and "racism"?

Were the actions of the young white murderers in Bensonhurst reported in the same "wolf pack" way as those of the young blacks in the Central Park attack? Did our friends and neighbors talk the same way about the Bensonhurst mob as they did about the Central Park gang?

My answer to those questions is no, and that gives me a better idea of the bias in what I'm reading or seeing on television, and generally what the problem is.

The same technique can reveal truths about ourselves. From this habit of reversal, for instance, I have learned that I feel a special pride when a woman does well, but that I also hold women to a higher standard of helping others; that I worry more when there are a lot of Jewish names in an insider-trading scandal; that I'm relieved when a violent crime turns out to be the act of someone white and not black; that I respect men who marry equals but also women who are secure enough to marry men not seen as their equals — and so on.

Since the only thing we can affect between now and primary day is our own vote and, perhaps, that of friends and neighbors, I suggest the same method for our assessment of the candidates.

Why not reverse their race and then vote accordingly?

For instance, what if Ronald Lauder were black — say, the son of a Harlem hair-straightening queen. Might not his lavishing of many millions of dollars on a hopeless and ill-informed campaign be even more of an embarrassment to his own group and the source of even more jokes to others? Certainly, he would be more criticized for not using his inherited and unearned money to help the poor. (Which raises a question: Shouldn't we be just as critical of his misuse of that money anyway?)

If Rudolph Giuliani were black, there might be more disappointment at his egocentricity in leaving a law enforcement job for which he was well suited — and where he was doing some good against drugs and corruption — to run for a mayoral office for which he has no relevant experience. (So, shouldn't we be just as disappointed and unsupportive?)

If Richard Ravitch were black, we might be more clear about his lack of public leadership skills, advise him to get out of the race — which he entered against his own announced decision to run only if David Dinkins did not — and suggest that he use his insider expertise in a city management post instead. (So, why aren't we being more honest about his leadership and viability problems, and urging him to sign up for a Dinkins administration?)

If Edward Koch were black, he might be seen, at best, as a noncommittal, nonrhyming, more parochial Jesse Jackson. At worst, he would be the Steppin Fetchit of real estate development, the Butterfly McQueen of city services and the Al Sharpton of race relations in government. (So, shouldn't we face up to his divisiveness, his preference for big office buildings over human services and the danger of his say-anything, do-anything, loose-cannon-on-deck style?)

If David Dinkins were white, he would be a patriotic ex-Marine, a mathematician, a self-made man who is devoted to his family (all of which he is); the candidate with by far the best knowledge of this city and the longest experience in its management (which he is); the source of the most practical and innovative solutions for our housing and public school crises (which he also is); the only candidate who always honors the issues and talents of the female half of this city (which he is); the most trusted, unifying and healing force among the widest range of racial, ethnic, religious and economic groups (which he is); and generally a man of such dignity, high caliber, proved leadership and good heart that our only question would be: Why is he willing to take on this thankless job?

I strongly urge that we check our own racial bias with this technique of reversal. And if we still don't vote for David Dinkins, the problem is not his. It is ours.

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U.S. Intervention Would Help Peruvian Maoists

By Grant W. Fine

LIMA, Peru
A narcotic haze seems to have spread through Washington, dulling the political senses of those who are responsible for formulating drug control policy.

Few believe that the U.S. will ever be able to quash the resilient international drug market by military action against drug production and trafficking in foreign nations.

That lesson should have been learned from the Reagan Administration. It focused on reducing supplies, but the wholesale price of a kilogram of cocaine dropped from \$60,000 in 1980 to less than \$10,000 in 1988 as increasing quantities of cocaine penetrated the U.S.'s permeable borders.

Nevertheless, President Bush and his drug czar, William Bennett, would continue to expand the efforts to reduce the supply by widening the role of U.S. and foreign military forces in countries that produce or trans-ship drugs.

Mr. Bush's new drug strategy calls for \$261 million in economic and military aid to help combat cocaine production and trafficking in the Andes nations of Peru, Colombia and Bolivia. Mr. Bush also plans to send U.S.

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If Bush pressed for a bigger military role...

military advisers to train foreign anti-drug forces and, reportedly, to expand the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in fighting drug trafficking.

Initially, Mr. Bush's strategy might put a small dent in the worldwide supply of cocaine. In the long term, however, cocaine would continue to stream into the U.S. as production and trafficking sites shifted to more remote areas of the Andes and the Amazon jungle.

More important, though, is what the plan could do to the sensitive process of re-establishing democracy in the Andes. Simply put, throwing more resources into a futile war on drug production could destabilize democracy in the region and even assist leftist insurgents.

Peru, where democracy already is teetering, provides a prime example of the problems of military intervention against drugs. The freely elected Government of Alan García Pérez is

struggling to contain an internal war that has cost the lives of an estimated 15,000 Peruvians since 1980.

Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, a violent Maoist guerrilla movement, has seized control of several outlying provinces, including most of the Upper Huallaga Valley — the source of about 60 percent of the cocaine consumed worldwide.

In an apparent marriage of convenience, the guerrillas have forged a loose alliance with Colombian cocaine traffickers. Shining Path protects traffickers from law enforcement and levies a tax that finances its arms acquisitions and operations.

In addition, Shining Path serves as an intermediary between traffickers and growers, guaranteeing the latter fair prices for coca leaf in exchange for a percentage of their earnings.

An aggressive policy of reducing drug supplies would assist Shining Path, creating more hardship for coca growers and spurring the group's further growth. Indeed, Shining Path's rapid consolidation of control in the Upper Huallaga Valley is largely explained by the U.S.-supported policy of eradicating crops, destroying laboratories and airstrips and interdicting drug shipments.

Such operations have reinforced the perception among coca growers that the state is depriving them of their livelihood. In regulating the Upper Huallaga Valley's coca economy and protecting the peasants, Shining Path has, in effect, replaced the state.

Perhaps most serious, however,

... Shining Path rebels would win coca farmers' support.

such a strategy would result in an escalation, rather than a resolution, of the military conflict in the Upper Huallaga Valley. The Bush drug plan would entail increased participation of the Peruvian armed forces in the drug war. The U.S. would provide training, equipment and funding to the military for drug control purposes.

Since it is impossible to separate drug control from counterinsurgency operations in the Upper Huallaga Valley, some of the aid to the Peruvian military would presumably be used to support the war against Shining Path there. The U.S. thus would be supporting the military's counterinsurgency operations while at the same time pursuing a drug-control strategy that inadvertently fueled support for the guerrillas.

Escalation of the war in the valley would lead to a deterioration of the already dismal human rights situation in the area and would threaten to

upset the precarious balance between civil Government and military control, as crucial municipal, regional and presidential elections approach.

International human rights organizations have repeatedly condemned both the Peruvian military and Shining Path as systematic and gross violators of human rights.

Therefore, cooperation of U.S. advisers with the Peruvian armed forces in combating the guerrillas would constitute a symbolic acceptance of military atrocities committed in the course of counterinsurgency operations. In short, drug control efforts might too easily slip into an unplanned and unwanted involvement in yet another guerrilla war.

It is time to reassert the primacy of sensible policy over appearances in Washington. Waging a "tough" war against drugs in the Andes is bound to prove costly and self-defeating. President Bush should have opted instead for a stronger emphasis on education, treatment and rehabilitation at home.

At the same time, Mr. Bush should encourage the strengthening of democratic institutions and respect for human rights abroad. Such a policy should promote economic development in drug producing nations in order to reduce dependence on drug production and weaken the appeal of violent revolutionary change. Much can be done by providing greater access to U.S. markets and renegotiating debt repayment on terms more favorable to debtor nations. □

Israeli Hired Guns — a Public Secret

By Andrew Cockburn

WASHINGTON
The now notorious film clip of Israeli military trainers schooling their Colombian students in the proper techniques of assassination from a moving vehicle was all too familiar when it appeared on the screen. Col. Yair Klein and his associates in the Spearhead Corporation had demonstrated the same maneuver for our cameras in an abandoned quarry in Israel earlier this year.

Armed to the teeth with assorted Uzis and automatics, the colonel and his three associates — all of them ranking reserve officers in the Israel Defense Forces antiterror apparatus — climbed into a white sedan and roared at high speed toward a cardboard bull's-eye target. At the last moment, they popped out of the windows like burly jacks in the box and filled the target full of holes. Spinning around, they pumped dozens more rounds into the simulated victim.

As an example of how to blow away a passerby from a moving car this was most impressive, but its efficacy in defending against terrorism appeared open to question. However, the men from Spearhead were anxious to explain that they always worked "with the complete approval and authorization of our Ministry of Defense."

Nor was this mere rhetoric. As evidence they produced the Defense Sales Directory, published annually by the Israeli Ministry of Defense, a full page of which is devoted to detailing the services on offer from Spearhead. The key official for such matters is Zvi Reuter, head of Sibata, the ministry's export arm, and the only person whom the Spearhead personnel seemed to fear.

Our session with these formidable military men passed in an atmosphere of mutual good cheer. Apart from displaying an incisive grasp of the politics of Central America, Colonel Klein talked about the restaurant he was building on the banks of the Jordan River to feed the Christian fundamentalist baptismal market.

Lieut. Col. Amatzia Shuali, a colleague of Colonel Klein's in Spearhead, and late of the Shin Beth internal security service, recalled that

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Peter Kuper

during his two visits to Colombia he had been much impressed by the pristine beauty of the countryside. The only chill on the conversation came when we asked him who he had been working with there.

The next time I saw the car maneuver demonstrated was when the TV news ran the videotape. One of the students in the tape, according to NBC News, was later apprehended for the assassination of 11 Colombian judicial investigators.

This might seem a strange activity for a team that repeatedly stressed not only its adherence to Israeli Defense Ministry guidelines but also its conviction that it was working in conjunction with U.S. interests: "Our political views are very much parallel with American political views, fighting terrorism," one of them said.

This appears to be no more than the truth, at least according to some defini-

Colombia isn't the only place they've turned up.

nitions of American interests. Colonel Shuali worked in Honduras to impart his craft to the contras. In Guatemala, he claims to have trained every officer over the rank of captain on a contract arranged by Pesakh Ben Or, the local representative of the state-owned Israel Military Industries. Other excursions have taken Spear-

head to Bolivia, and, judging by the species of tropical birds twittering in a cage outside Colonel Klein's office, to South Africa.

Such work is in the grand tradition of the covert side of the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Time and again, when domestic political circumstances inhibit U.S. assistance to particular regimes, Israel has stepped into the breach.

As Spearhead's marketing director explained to us: "The Americans have the problem of public opinion, international image. We don't have this problem."

The Israeli Government is already severely embarrassed by Colonel Klein's and Lieutenant Colonel Shuali's starring role in the drug cartel's home movie. And the embarrassment could spread if anyone felt the need to ask questions.

Just as Colonel Klein could, if he wanted, lay bare his relations with

Mr. Reuter at the Ministry of Defense, so could Israel jog President Bush's memory about who has done what for whom in the fight against leftist insurgency everywhere from El Salvador to Colombia and points beyond.

While Lieutenant Colonel Shuali was doing his bit for the contra cause in Honduras, Mike Harari, a former official of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, was assisting the Panamanian strongman, Gen. Manuel Noriega in dispensing ill-gotten financial subventions to the contras. And he did so with the approval of Oliver North and others in the White House.

Such awkward facts have to date stayed mostly out of sight and out of the public mind. Yet, there must be a lot of people wishing that Colonel Klein and his band had stayed away from the cameras. □

In Education, Small Is Sensible

By Deborah Meier

I love New York. I love Chicago. I love Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony." It's not an antipathy to bigness that makes me a fervent champion of small schools. Rather it's the conviction that unless we start thinking small, none of the recent consensus that has developed around needed school reforms is remotely feasible.

Small schools are not the answer, but without them none of the proposed answers stand a chance.

What teachers need is a direct voice in the decisions they implement. "Teacher empowerment" is on everyone's list of needed reforms.

But what does this mean in a school with 100 faculty members who rarely see each other work, don't share the same students and differ widely in their pedagogical assumptions?

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We all agree that a good school can't work without greater trust and support from families. But trust comes from parents, teachers and students knowing each other over a period of time. Parental apathy develops as a rational response to large, anonymous schools.

We agree that students fail to use "higher-order thinking skills" — intellectual reasoning, engagement and curiosity. But we still place these neophyte intellects in schools where they rarely witness strong-minded, articulate adults defending ideas, exchanging views or making reasoned decisions. Hugeness works against lively intellectual intercourse.

No one denies that school reform won't get far until we do something about drugs, violence and vandalism. But the solutions appropriate to a large anonymous school — metal detectors, quasimilitary pass systems — increase the depersonalization that contributes to antisocial behavior.

We claim that young people need settings that help them develop strong values and moral vision. But

Big, anonymous schools are self-defeating.

large schools operate, of necessity, on the basis of bureaucratic values. In a bureaucracy, the worst "crimes" are those that create disorder.

Young people cannot learn democratic values in a setting that does not value individual achievement, that cannot notice triumphs and defeats, has no time to celebrate or mourn, or respond with indignation or recognition as the situation requires.

Small schools offer opportunities to solve every one of these critical issues. School-site empowerment can

be tackled efficiently and naturally. Staff can meet to discuss issues and differences without complex governance structures; understanding the budget does not require an advanced degree in accounting. Looking in on colleagues and, sharing ideas, becomes possible.

In small schools, parents hear about the same teachers, students and families year after year in a variety of formal and informal ways. Trust builds and issues that arise get settled handily. Accountability to parents, as well as to the community, is a less knotty problem.

In a small school, strangers and strange behaviors stick out and can be addressed with dispatch. Troublemaking strangers can be identified and peer pressure has an inhibiting effect on violence or other antisocial behavior. It's hardly surprising that private high schools in New York City have always had student bodies of under 500. That's the right size.

Are small schools economically feasible? Huge school buildings may have been pennywise, but they are

pound foolish. But just as the Empire State Building houses many companies, large school buildings can house many small schools.

That's happening right now. In New York City's District 4 in East Harlem, there are now 51 small schools in the same 19 buildings that contained 19 schools in 1974. Each cluster of small schools can choose how to share equipment and space, based on the trade-offs they want to make. District 4 schools have become nationally known as schools that are good to teach at and good to attend.

Yes, small schools, like small towns, can be small-minded. But they offer the flexibility and structural simplicity needed to tackle the complexity of learning.

Just as language immersion is the best way to learn a foreign language, immersion in a small, caring school community is the best way to learn what is a foreign language to too many of our young: the language of participation, that difficult public language necessary to becoming a member of a democratic society. □