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Solidarity Enough

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very different from Washington's to dominate the political outcome.

Luttwak's suggestion that the United States employ armored forces even in future urban warfare is also questionable. That may work against an unsophisticated and poorly armed enemy like the Somali militias, but against determined and fairly well-armed opponents it could be a recipe for disaster—as the Russians have discovered in Grozny. In this kind of fighting, unfortunately there is still no substitute for brave and well-trained infantry.

ANATOL LIEVEN

Senior Fellow, United States Institute of Peace

SOLIDARITY ENOUGH

To the Editor:

Combining exaggeration, truncated citation, and silence about pivotal aspects of my argument, Stephen Holmes is shrewd, crafty, and rarely fair in his review of my book, *Liberalism's Crooked Circle: Letters to Adam Michnik*. Consider these examples, one from each section of his essay ("Liberalism in the Ruins," September/October 1996).

"Katznelson," Holmes writes, "nevertheless insists on informing his old friend [Michnik] that 'liberalism needs socialism.'" As I report, it was Michnik's surprising affirmation, "We need socialism," written in 1982 from a communist jail cell, that helped motivate my inquiry about the prospects for what others have called a liberal socialism: a strong egalitarian impulse nestled inside liberal political premises. The first of my two letters explores whether attempts to assemble combinations of this sort—found, for all their disagree-

ments, in the work of John Dewey, Michael Walzer, and John Rawls—are doomed to incongruity. I am critical of most of these attempts, arguing that they dodge difficult questions about freedom and unfreedom, property and sovereignty, the distinction between public and private, and the limits of policy instruments to rectify inequality available to free societies.

"[Katznelson] tacitly accepts," Holmes claims, "[liberal theory's arguments about the relatively benign role of capitalist elites and the dangers of government overreaching to rectify inequality], mentioning euphemistically the 'distasteful' or 'unpleasant' consequences of excessively egalitarian policies (meaning Stalinism)." This sentence is shameful. Its ugly coda is far worse than its factual misrepresentation. My book was generated by participation in efforts to assist free intellectual inquiry inside totalitarianism. Its passions and commitments are unambiguous.

"Katznelson . . . also complains of Michnik's lack of solidarity with the Jewish nation and the State of Israel, capping his recitation with, 'So many recusals, so little affirmation; are Jews merely a metaphor for suffering?'" By selectively apportioning a footnote, Holmes manages to transmute my lament at Michnik's attempts to transcend without incorporating Jewish particularity into a censorious comment about Michnik's personal beliefs. In accepting a New York synagogue's award in 1991, Michnik stated, "I am a Pole and now I must explain why I have accepted this award given to Jews." Avowing he has always affirmed

Letters to the Editor

his Jewish ancestry “whenever Polish life was overshadowed by anti-Semitism,” Michnik noted he accepted the award “in the name of solidarity,” though not, he added, “solidarity with Jewish tradition and customs . . . the Jewish nation or the country of Israel.” I then wrote, “It is not right to judge such heartfelt statements, but when I read them I thought, so many recusals, so little affirmation . . .”

Holmes commends my book for its invention and brio. I am pleased to reciprocate.

IRA KATZNELSON

Ruggles Professor of Political Science and History, Columbia University

To the Editor:

Holmes is obviously confused about what is at stake in Ira Katznelson's remarks.

Whether Adam Michnik, Gyorgy Konrad, or anyone else born into a Jewish family decides to become observant by following Jewish custom and tradition is that person's own business. That is not the point at all. The point is whether public intellectuals in Poland, Jewish or not, should dismiss the legacy of the past.

Holmes is also on slippery ground when he writes that “in the United States, moreover, it became possible in the 1960s and in the 1970s for young Jews in New York City or Cambridge, Massachusetts, to join the mainstream of American society . . . without having to undergo any ordeal of assimilation and without toning down their Jewish gestures or habits or beliefs.” This statement displays obvious ignorance of the history of the Jewish experience in America, and borders on

cultural anti-Semitism. What are Jewish “gestures or habits or beliefs”?

SEYLA BENHABIB

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CUBA ON THE LINE

To the Editor:

So much nonsense is written and said about the United States' Cuba policy that it startled me to see David Rieff get it so right (“Cuba Refrozen,” July/August 1996).

The hard/soft policy Rieff describes put the Castro regime on the defensive and encouraged forces of peaceful change within Cuba, built the first bridges of understanding and cooperation between the United States and some of its closest allies, and was beginning to win over such diverse constituencies as the Cuban exile community and U.S. business to the cause of promoting democracy in Cuba. Such an approach was doomed to failure, I suppose, by the same entrenched interests that threaten any move toward political solutions, whether in Cuba, Northern Ireland, or the Middle East.

My one criticism of Rieff's article is that he does not recognize how dangerous the situation now is. The margin for error in the U.S.-Cuban relationship is minuscule. Any serious miscalculation by either side will push the two countries beyond the point of diplomatic solutions and toward the tragedy for which Miami and Fidel have been preparing since 1960.

RICHARD A. NUCCIO

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