

# It's time for us to end the cold war against Cuba

Sunday Freeman, January 3, 1993  
Kingston, N.Y.

**John J. Neumaier**



ON DEC 3, 15 tons of bicycles, Bibles, powdered milk, wheelchairs, medicines, and school supplies arrived in Cuba's Havana harbor from Mexico. What was startling about this shipment was that it originated in the United States and broke the U.S. blockade of Cuba. The story was barely mentioned by the mass media, in spite of yearly editorials about "peace on earth, good will toward men."

The "U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment," as it was called, was the brainchild of the Minneapolis-based Pastors for Peace, an affiliate of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). Supporters of the "Friendshipment" were not only Christian pastors, but also members of Jewish, Muslim, Unitarian, and non-religious communities.

IT BEGAN in early November when 43 vehicles and over 100 volunteer drivers set out from every part of the United States, headed south. En route they stopped in some 90 U.S. cities to collect donated goods and hold prayer meetings. On the eve of the start-off, Nov. 5, a prominent African-American pastor and executive director of IFCO, Rev. Lucius Walker, Jr., spoke at a support meeting at Christ Episcopal Church in Poughkeepsie. He described how the Torricelli bill, signed into law on Oct. 23 by President Bush, was going to intensify the economic deprivation of the Cuban people.

The new law expands the 30-year reach of the United States prohibition against trading with Cuba by applying it to U.S. subsidiaries in other countries, by further limiting the right of sovereign nations to trade with Cuba, and by tightening the ban against travel of U.S. citizens there.

Incidentally, or perhaps not so incidentally, Rep. Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., received generous campaign contributions from right-wing Cuban-Americans. The New York Times condemned the Torricelli bill as "dubious in theory, cruel in its potential practice and ignoble in its election year expediency."

It's interesting that just a few years ago, Torricelli fought for the right of a firm in his state to trade its product in Cuba.

THE U.S. embargo is in flagrant violation of international law, Rev. Walker said. At the same time, he recognized the risks involved in the Pastors for Peace decision to confront the government. Despite possible penalties of a \$100,000 fine and 10 years behind prison bars, they were determined to demonstrate their opposition to the government's

continuing interference in the affairs of Cubans and the abrogation of U.S. citizens' right to lend a helping hand to needy Cubans and to travel and make up their own minds on the pluses and minuses of the state of Cuba.

While Rev. Walker and his colleagues oppose the U.S. government embargo, which is based on military might rather than moral right, he made it clear that he was not defending or evaluating Fidel Castro and his political ideology. The fact is that U.S. government interference in Cuba predates Castro by more than a century.

UNWILLING on principle to concede the right of the U.S. government to forbid U.S. citizens to give Cubans medical, religious, and basic survival assistance, the Pastors for Peace had decided not to apply for an export license. When the caravan arrived at the Mexican border, the U.S. Treasury and State Department officials did not let it pass. There were some ugly scenes with U.S. customs officials. Nevertheless, on Nov. 22, the caravan was allowed to proceed, in part, it is reported, because of widespread citizen protests to the State Department.

Mexican government officials welcomed the American pastors and drivers and provided them a police escort from Laredo to Tampico. There, Mexican dock workers donated their labor and loaded a ship bound for Havana.

For three decades Americans have been told about the perfidy of the Cuban government. No doubt there has been suppression of internal dissent which the government regarded as a threat to its one-party system. Even Castro and his supporters acknowledge this is the dictum "Freedom within the revolution, but no freedom against the revolution."

Though there is real social conflict in Cuba, it is far

more complex than the selective reporting of our press lets us know. Even Cubans who oppose Castro are resentful of the way the U.S. government and prominent Cuban emigres like Jorge Mas Canosa pretend to speak for all Cuban dissidents. In fact, human rights crusaders in Cuba have repeatedly spoken out against the embargo.

THERE HAS BEEN all too little information in our media about the extent to which U.S. propaganda broadcasts and the CIA have sought to interfere in Cuba's internal affairs. The pretense of objective reporting on the internal Cuban situation becomes even more evident when one compares it with the coverage of Central America. The U.S. press reports at length about oppression, prisons, and living standards in Cuba, but it underreports the far more terrible social conditions and human rights violations in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

And what about our trade relations with China? It, like Cuba, calls itself communist. The difference is that China is a large and powerful nation. Even communist Vietnam is about to be given economic opportunities that the U.S. government continues to deny to the Cubans.

INTERNATIONAL public opinion is not supporting the U.S. in its rigid stance as the only government in the world with a trade embargo against Cuba. The European Community appealed to President Bush to veto the Torricelli bill because it contravened international law. And then there came the strong U.N. Assembly condemnation of the U.S. embargo (Nov. 24). The vote was 59 to 3, with 71 abstentions; only the United States, Romania, and Israel voted in the negative. Coincidentally, the vote took place only two days after the Pastors for Peace broke the U.S. blockade.

Even in the U.S. there is some mainstream

opposition to government policy. The Minneapolis Star and Tribune declared on Nov. 29 that "If President Bush won't seek an end to the embargo, his successor should." A former head of the U.S. Interest Section in Havana, Wayne Smith, wrote in the Miami Herald that the Torricelli bill, "really authored by the Cuban-American National Foundation (headed by Canosa), will cause serious problems between the U.S. and our principal allies and trading partners." The Cuban-American anthropologist Ruth Behar (no friend of Castro) called for an end to the embargo in a Dec. 18 New York Times op-ed piece. She urged the next president to take such action and thereby "end the cold war for all Americans, north and south."

IT MAY BE wishful thinking to hope that Clinton will reconsider his enthusiastic pre-election endorsement of the terrible Torricelli bill, which he did when he was looking for votes in Florida. But he is an intelligent politician and may yet be persuaded not to repeat Kennedy's error in sticking with his predecessor's Cuba policy and thereby ending up in a Bay of Pigs.

If Clinton won't be persuaded to replace might with right, he may well be swayed by some of the pragmatic arguments. If today's "free trade" rallying cry has any real meaning, there is no reason to block American business from mutually beneficial broad trade relations. Many U.S. entrepreneurs are eager to compete in Cuba's tourism market. There are manufacturers of agricultural and communications equipment who would welcome access to Cuba.

Cubans claim to have built one of the finest national health systems in the world, to have reduced dramatically illiteracy, racism, prostitution, and sexism, which were rampant under Castro's predecessor, the corrupt Fulgencia Batista. Let's trust Americans to find out for themselves what the truth is and let's trust Cubans to find a way of solving their own political and economic problems, without interference from Uncle Sam.

Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.

# Journeying to Massachusetts to revisit Karl Marx

**MOST AMERICANS** know very little about Marxism or Karl Marx (1818-1883). This is not surprising. For more than a hundred years, U.S. leaders have bitterly opposed the ideas that Marx disseminated. After the Bolshevik revolution, the ideas of socialism and Marxism were further anathematized.

Some Americans know that Marx was the co-author (with Friedrich Engels) of the Communist Manifesto (1848). Few have read his most famous work, *Capital*, or his earlier philosophical writings. It usually comes as a surprise to people to learn that Marx's revolutionary program included such features as the graduated income tax, abolition of child labor, and free public education, now widely adopted.

**WHEN** he became president of Columbia University, Dwight D. Eisenhower was shocked to learn how academic curricula neglected the study of Marxist sociology and philosophy. During my stays at Moscow University during the '80s, I found that Soviet academics, in spite of intellectual repression and censorship, knew more about the basic ideas of capitalism than most U.S. academics knew about the philosophical or economic ideas of socialism. The point is that the fear of being tagged a socialist, a Marxist, or a communist did not start in this country with Sen. Joseph McCarthy's political antics; it goes back to well before the Russian revolutions of 1917.

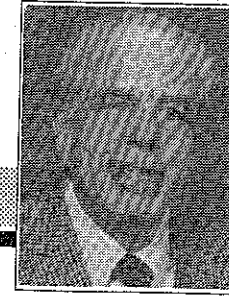
That there is now a renewed interest in Marxism may be due in part to the recent break-up of the Soviet Union and of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, which in turn has led to a diminished fear of old-fashioned red-baiting.

I want to report to you about a three-day academic conference on the theme of "Rethinking Marxism" that I recently attended at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. For starters, I have to say that although the gathering was "Mass.-based," it was by no means mass-based. Still, some 500 people (mostly academicians) were in attendance, meeting daily from 8:30 a.m. until late at night, to discuss various aspects of the theme: "Crises and possibilities of Marxism in the New World Order." There were 130 panels, with at least as many speakers.

**FOR THOSE** who are not familiar with either Marxist scholarship or Marxist movements, it is important to point out that there is sharp disagreement on what Marx's ideas actually were, and even on what is meant by Marxism. In fact, back in the 1860s Marx grew so frustrated with what some of his followers were doing in his name that he declared that

*Sunday Freeman, Kingston, N.Y.  
December 6, 1992*

**John J. Neumaier**



he was not a Marxist.

Historically, these arguments among Marxist theorists and within the socialist movement became particularly fierce in Germany, between the Social Democrats and the Communists. In the Weimar republic (1919-1933), members of the German Social Democratic Party bitterly opposed the German Communists, and the latter called the former "social fascists." They did not get together until they met inside Hitler's concentration camps — the Third Reich having banned the Social Democrats, the Communists, and all other parties, except of course the Nazis.

**DURING** the 19th century, Marxist socialists called themselves Social Democrats. In 1918, after the second Russian revolution, the Bolshevik branch of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, which followed Lenin's views, renamed their party the Communist Party (to distinguish it from the Mensheviks and other less militant Social Democrats).

After Lenin's death and Stalin's rise to power, Leon Trotsky (under Lenin, Russia's second most powerful leader) strongly opposed Stalin's policies. Stalin not only reciprocated but declared war on Trotsky and his supporters in the late 1920s, eventually exiling him from the country. (Trotsky was assassinated, in Mexico in 1940, presumably by one of Stalin's henchmen.) There are also Marxists who call themselves Maoist (after the late Chinese leader Mao Tse-Tung) or, as the case may be, anti-Maoist, as well as numerous other trends, ranging from "orthodox" to "revisionist."

**AT THE** Massachusetts conference, not surprisingly, there was disagreement in almost every panel about interpretations of Marx's thought and about the various Marxist theories that have sprung up during the last 100 years. Though most conferees seemed to support some form of democratic socialism, it was not always easy to tell what variety of Marxism

they represented, or whether some of them might more suitably be classified as ex-Marxist or post-Marxist, or even anti-Marxist. Conferees disagreed on whether the Soviet Union was really socialist.

At one panel, two U. Mass. professors (editors of the journal *Rethinking Marxism*) put forward the thesis that the Soviet economic system was a kind of state capitalism. They felt that the USSR's economy had oscillated, going from periods of limited markets and some privatization (for example, under Lenin's "New Economic Policy" which was introduced in 1921 in order to stimulate the Soviet economy) to Stalin's command economy. They argued that Western capitalism also oscillated, between periods of predominantly private capitalism and entrepreneurial initiative to periods of greater state intervention and stricter control of markets (for example, Roosevelt's New Deal).

After this theme had been considered by the five-member all-male panel, the assigned discussant, a prominent British author and feminist, pointed out that they seemed to be concerned only with economies of production. She reminded them that without reproduction there could be no production. (In short, who would reproduce the "oscillators"?)

**IN SPITE** of political, ideological, and theoretical differences, most of the speakers at the conference were well-known for having long opposed the repressive features of the Soviet state and its party bureaucracy. Nevertheless, some of the discussants felt that there had also been positive achievements, such as educational and scientific progress, the comparative absence of unemployment, and the heroic Soviet role in the defeat of Nazi Germany, without which many more Western troops would have been killed. (The USSR lost more than 20 million people during the war.)

The conferees' strongest criticism was directed

against the ruthlessness of Stalin and Stalinism, with its millions of victims. Some drew attention to the differences between Stalin's ideas and actions and those of Marx and Lenin. A few, while agreeing with the overall criticism of Stalin, voiced the view that he nevertheless contributed significantly to the building of Soviet power and the defeat of fascism (one discussant cited World War II American establishment figures in support of this view).

**ALONGSIDE** the condemnation of the Soviet state and Communist ideology, there was also strong criticism of the negative features of U.S. capitalism. Not a few speakers and participants brought up homelessness, unemployment, lack of health care coverage, widespread social injustice, extreme poverty in the midst of great wealth, the world's highest incarceration rate, and the plight of the inner cities. They felt these conditions were not just a result of the Reagan-Bush years, but of a political economy that favors large corporations and private fortunes over the middle classes of working people and small businesses, and of the growing under-classes.

Unlike intellectuals and activists of earlier generations, the conference participants were not optimistic about the likelihood that Western societies, with their formal democratic structures and capitalist-controlled markets, could easily transform themselves into genuine democracies that would empower the large majority of the people both politically and economically. By the same token, few believed that the domination and exploitation of the Third World by the West, including the United States, would soon end.

**THIS** century's experience with "actually existing socialism," especially its Stalinist form, and with capitalism, particularly its fascist form, seemed to have made many of the conference participants skeptical that "utopia" is just around the corner. But it was evident that most of them had not given up on theorizing about it; nor on struggling for a world order that will be both economically more just and politically more free than what we find today — though it may take generations to bring this about.

**Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.**

Opinion

# Visitor has unique perspective on Russia, U.S.A.

Sunday Freeman, October 4, 1992  
Kingston, N.Y.

**MARINA** Muratovna Doguzhieva, a senior instructor of philosophy in Russia, is a visitor at our home. Sally and I met her at Moscow State University in 1984 and again in 1991 and were very impressed with her charm, honesty, and wide-ranging cultural and intellectual interests.

She has quickly caught on to American ways, and we've been amused to hear her say "oh yes, 'help yourself'" (a phrase for which there is no Russian equivalent) as she reaches for one of the fruits she seldom if ever can buy in her homeland, or pops a piece of bread in that strange device called a toaster.

But I will let her speak for herself. (She is very modest about her English, but knows our language much better than I do hers.) Here are some excerpts from an interview with her.

**JN:** Tell us a little bit about your background.

**MD:** I was born in the south of Russia, in a little town named Shakhti. It's not far from Rostov-on-Don, the famous capital of the Kazak (Cossack) region. I graduated from an ordinary school and a music school, and after that I came to Moscow and to Moscow State University where I graduated from its school of philosophy. After that I had several years of post-graduate studies and defended my dissertation on "The problem of historical time in the philosophy and the methodology of history". Then I came to Kaluga, an ancient German and Russian town (of 300,000, three hours from Moscow by train), where I teach philosophy at the Kaluga branch of Moscow State Technical University.

**JN:** You mentioned to me that you and many young people in Russia are somewhat turned off from politics. Why is that so?

**MD:** It's a very simple reason. Life in Russia — I'm not accustomed to call it "Russia", I'm accustomed to call it "Soviet Union" — life in Russia is very difficult now, in connection with food, clothing, absence of money and so on. And young people, we have many pragmatic youths now — and maybe this is good in some sense — they try to survive this difficult period and try to earn money in any possible way. They see life only from a short distance and not from a wider perspective (including politics).

**JN:** Your answer already indicates that you know quite a bit about the political situation there. So if you are willing, would you say something about the way you and others feel about *perestroika*, Gorbachev and Yeltsin?

**MD:** The phenomenon of Gorbachev is a strange one. He was more understandable for western people and for a western mode of thinking than for Soviet people. It may be one reason for the very skeptical attitude toward the terms *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

## John J. Neumaier

Maybe when Gorbachev started the process of *perestroika*, he did not foresee all the consequences of his own activities. Maybe he was only the motor, the engine of the initial changes that occurred and after that they were objective (objectively determined) and did not depend on Gorbachev's will, intentions, etc.

**JN:** What about Yeltsin?

**MD:** When we had the election for the first president of Russia, I voted for Yeltsin and the main reason was that he was the "least worst," because the alternatives were awful. But in my opinion Yeltsin and Gorbachev are not so different as is usually thought. They have common roots and both of them were so-called "apparatchiks" with strong (Communist) party background and maybe in their (past) actions and methods they are similar. Maybe differences in personal character play some role; Yeltsin is a more pragmatic person than Gorbachev because Gorbachev is ideologically very closely connected with so-called socialism. But I think that he himself does not understand correctly the nature of socialism and socialist ideas because the society of our country during 70 years was not socialist, in my view.

**JN:** Along the same lines, I want to ask you, now that the U.S.S.R. and Soviet Communism have receded into the past, what changes have you observed in persons in positions of authority, at various levels of government and education or other enterprises?

**MD:** As to our bosses, former and now, the situation is curious because many of our chiefs and Communist leaders have stayed in the same positions, on the same level of authority. Part of them could change very fast because their real ideological positions and feelings were unknown even to them; they had only interests in their careers and not strong ideological positions. And now such former Communists are called democrats, and have many privileges, many more goods (commodities). They try to live with a new vocabulary, under new conditions, and they have money and influence, and in the main nothing has changed for them.

On the other hand, some former Communists do not



recognize the new reality and cling insistently to old ideological schemes, false ones, and that is a tragedy for them; that type of Communist does not live as well as in the former U.S.S.R.. Then, they had an ideology, not only ideology but ideals of life, and now it's a great tragedy for them, that is, the destruction of the U.S.S.R. and the destruction of Communist ideals and the moral ideals of our former life. But another part of our former Communists have not only got rid of former ideals but have become the enemies, the strong enemies of those ideals. It's not a noble behavior, but sometimes it's a psychological reaction from one extreme point to the other, the opposite.

**JN:** Americans have heard about a kind of religious revival in Russia. Any comments on that?

**MD:** It's partly true. But the situation now is so contradictory, particularly with the Russian Orthodox church. Part of the population wants to return to religious feelings, to religious education as a foundation for morality. But the Russian Orthodox church as an organization cannot play that moral role because it's a very corrupt organization. A part of Russian Orthodox priests was connected with the KGB, and now many priests play only a formal, a decorative role, and part of the population comes only to church because it's in fashion. But for a very small part of population it is genuine. For some it's a kind of replacement for former Communist ideals.

**JN:** What about the lives and position of women in Russia? Have you noted any differences between the situation here and in your country?

**MD:** The situation with our women is almost tragic in my opinion. Because of our great wars we have more women than men. Another problem is that the new system created in Russia is a bad system for women because women are the first candidates to be unemployed, and every day women have the problem of finding food for family, the problem with children because education is now no longer free but becoming very expensive, the problem to find clothes, and so on. In our conservative society these are more problems of women than problems of men. And now our women

don't resist this situation. They can resist only in their personal everyday lives. But it seems to me that in the future we will have a big movement for women's rights like in the U.S.A. now. The situation with American women seems to me better, but they have their own problems.

**JN:** Now that you have been just about a month in this country, what are your tentative impressions?

**MD:** I like America. It's a very interesting and unusual country for me. It's a great country, no doubt. But it has some interesting features that are sometimes difficult for me to understand. It's true, in my opinion, that America is a classical example of a consumer society. And the consumer approach connects not only with material goods like clothing, food, techniques, and so on, but with spiritual, non-material things, for example, religious beliefs. The attitude to political problems in America is also very interesting for me. Maybe it's a specific kind of social control. For example, American elections look like a show with actors and actresses, a very well-organized political show, and their consumption of political ideas and trends looks very strange.

But it seems to me that the slogan of Brezhnev times "Everything in the name of people, everything for the good of people" has been more realized in the U.S.A. It seems to me, for instance, that America likes senior citizens. It's very touching for me because the situation of senior citizens in our country is so awful now. But it also seems to me stunning that I have seen so much poverty in your country, like blocks and blocks of poor housing in New York City. One scene that I remember was very strange for me. A young white man, a beggar, who sat on the pavement with a sign that said: "Homeless, hungry, please help, God bless you". A young normal man who is capable of working and earning money for living.

**JN:** What are your hopes for the future?

**MD:** The future of my country does not look good now. We must come through a very difficult period, economically, politically and ideologically. But we have the energy of our people, great natural resources, and it seems to me after the terrible period of reconstruction and revolutionary changes we will have a more comfortable and more worthy life in our country.

**Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.**

# Tales of mass communication...live from Brazil

EVERY two years Dr. Sara Fletcher Luther and I attend the meeting of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR). (In this year of family values — valued mostly to get family members to vote Republican — it may be prudent to add that Sara is my wife, Sally.)

The IAMCR is a large and active group of scholars and is affiliated with UNESCO. We both gave papers at the five-day meeting, which took place in Guaruj, a beautiful coastal town near Sao Paulo, Brazil.

With some 156 million inhabitants, Brazil is a country larger than either Western Europe or the continental United States. The official language is Portuguese, which sounded to us like a strange mix of Spanish and French, with a touch of Arabic.

Unfortunately, corruption scandals of the current administration, headed by President Fernando Collor de Mello, have made headlines around the world. Collor is now facing the likelihood of impeachment proceedings or forced resignation. The largest opposition party is the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores). It lost the last presidential election but may well win the next.

PRIOR to the IAMCR conference we stopped over in Rio de Janeiro, arriving on a sunny day, with the temperature in the 60s. August is part of the winter season there and though there were a few surfers, hardly anyone was swimming at beautiful Ipanema beach. Our hotel fronted the Atlantic, affording a breath-taking view of the bay.

Like most tourists, we took the cable car to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain. (Unfortunately, the renowned statue of Christ on top of Corcovado Peak was enveloped in clouds.) We also visited Rio's striking cathedral, built in the shape of an Aztec pyramid. It is the work of the world-famous architect Oskar Niemeyer, who also designed Brasilia, Brazil's modern capital.

Somewhat unwillingly, the driver took us to the base of one of the vast mountainside slums. The Rio slums are called *favelas* and house nearly one-sixth of the city's population. We were told that, in most cases, a *favela* is ruled by a political boss, often a drug lord, who procures favors and protection for his constituents (in some ways reminiscent of the days of big city bosses in this country). The settlements'

## John J. Neumaier

depressed conditions stood in stark contrast to the elegance of the buildings along the beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana.

FROM several sources we learned that most of Brazil's wealth is controlled by two per cent of the population, leaving most of the people in different degrees of poverty. Still, on Rio's downtown streets the pedestrians, by appearance at least, seemed at neither of the extremes. The Brazilian professionals whom we met later at the conference were clearly middle class.

On the drive from Sao Paulo to Guaruj we again observed extreme conditions of poverty and slum housing. The ocean boulevard of the resort town itself is fringed with tall palm trees, provided by nature, and tall condominiums, built by the wealthy. Near the convention hotel where we were billeted, militia men were often in evidence, presumably to ensure the safety of the some 500 IAMCR members (from 50 countries) who attended the conference. An opening touristic film for the delegates featured the great natural beauties of Brazil, its rapid technological progress, architectural wonders, macho men and bikini-clad women — but of course no mention of the living standards of the majority of Brazilians.

DURING the convention we learned that the IAMCR is about to be upgraded to full NGO (non-governmental organization) status in the United Nations family. This is of special importance to association members, who feel that improvement in the world's various mass communications media cannot be realistically expected from national governments, preoccupied as they are with self-preservation and glorification of whatever ideologies they represent.



Mass communication researchers from the Third World feel that their countries are greatly disadvantaged by the overwhelming dominance of Western communications technology and ideology. As an example, they cite the huge Western news agencies that blanket the world, with the result that news about their own regions, say, in Africa, reaches them via the Associated Press, Reuters, or Agence France Press rather than their own media. IAMCR does not take a formal position on this question but many of its members are working for redress of the imbalance in world information flows.

IAMCR's administrative headquarters are in Amsterdam. The current president, Cees J. Hamelink, is a charming Dutchman, full of humor. In his opening remarks, he speculated on why the Brazilians seemed to have it in for the Dutch, whom they defeated overwhelmingly at the Olympics in volleyball (three games to none). He suggested that it might have been because, in the 16th century, the Dutch had profitably sold Brazil to Portugal. (Apparently it hadn't occurred to him that Brazil wasn't theirs to sell in the first place.)

THE convention's official languages were English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese though the dominant language in use at most of the meetings was English, a fact that caused resentment on the part of Latin American and other Third World delegates. One distinguished member from Venezuela forcefully argued from the floor (in Spanish, though he also speaks English) that many (mostly Americans) in ethnocentric fashion were only speaking in English, expecting that those from other linguistic backgrounds should do likewise (simultaneous

translation was not always available at the section meetings).

A related controversy resulted in a decision to increase the number of vice-presidents from two to five in order to improve the geographical and cultural representativeness of the association's executive board. Belatedly, one delegate pointed out that there were seven and not five continents.

Being aware of Third World feelings toward Europeans and people from the United States, I suggested that one way of resolving the dilemma would be to abolish Europe and North America. The proposal was applauded enthusiastically but reluctantly laid over, amidst considerable laughter.

SPEAKERS at the conference took up a wide range of topics, from such esoteric themes as "A Bibliometrical Approximation to Local Journals' Bibliographic Studies" (by a Spaniard) and "An Epistemological Issue for the Qualitative Study of the 'Eight o'clock Soap Opera'" (by a Brazilian), to such broader themes as "Mass Media in China: Towards Commercialization" (by two members of the Republic of China now studying in England) and "From Command Media to Media Market: the Role of Foreign Capital in the Transition of the Hungarian Media" (by two members from Budapest University).

Our own contributions to the mutual "enlightenment" were: "Can we talk? Women's Voices on Shortwave Radio Worldwide" (Sally's) and "Communication, Ideology, and the Soviet Intelligentsia under Perestroika" (mine).

The next IAMCR conference will be held in 1994 in Seoul, South Korea. The invitation was formally and enthusiastically presented by Dr. Chie-Woon Kim, a Korean professor, whose interesting paper in the Political Communication Section dealt with "Political Power and Mass Manipulation: A Case Study of (South) Korea."

**Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.**

# Human rights leader is ambushed in El Salvador

SALLY LUTHER (my wife) and I have just returned from a meeting of the International Advisory Board of Radio for Peace International (RFPI) in Costa Rica.

RFPI is a unique, non-commercial, non-governmental shortwave station, located on the campus of the University for Peace (created by the United Nations). It broadcasts (in English, Spanish, French-Creole, and German) on international peace, human rights, and social justice issues. A major project of RFPI is a two-hour daily broadcast called FIRE (Feminist International Radio Endeavor) which is committed to the eradication of the abuse of women and gender discrimination.

**COSTA RICA** is a haven for peace and human rights groups. One very active center is CODEHUCA (Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Central America), a coalition of the non-governmental human rights commissions of the seven Central American countries. We learned about its work in 1989 when we interviewed its director, Mirna Anaya.

A Salvadoran human rights lawyer and mother of five children, Anaya had to flee her country after the death squad assassination of her husband, Herbert, in October 1987. Both she and her husband had been prominent legal advocates on behalf of the poor in El Salvador, and for that reason were marked for death by reactionary forces in their country. Sally made a video of our 1989 interview with the courageous and charming Ms. Anaya, which was aired by Poughkeepsie Public Access TV Channel 32.

**DURING** this year's visit to RFPI, James Latham, its program director, invited Sally and me to sit in on a dramatic radio interview he conducted with Grahame Russell, a remarkable young Canadian lawyer who is working with CODEHUCA. The interview was about a recent attempt on the life of Mirna Anaya, who had returned to San Salvador in June 1992.

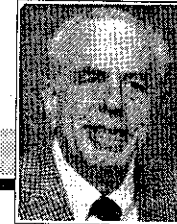
Here are major excerpts:

"On Jan. 3, of this year, at around 7 p.m., she (Ms. Anaya) was driving with her children Gloria and Ernesto and a nun from the U.S., with Peggy Fitzgibbon, who works for the Sisters of Charity. They were driving from the city of San Salvador to Suchitoto, Guazapa, which is about 25 kilometers away.

"I just spoke with her this morning (Jan. 10), here in San Jose, Costa Rica. She said that, as she was driving along the highway, a little after night fell, she was signalled by someone ahead with a flashlight to pull her pickup over. As this is the common practice of the police in El Salvador, she pulled the truck over to the

*Daily Freeman, February 7, 1993  
Kingston, New York*

**John J. Neumaier**



side of the road - with her two children in the back part.

"IT was at that point, she said, that she realized there were six to eight men, heavily armed with AK-47 guns, all masked, and all dressed in the same black clothing, with no official insignias indicating what (Salvadoran) military group they were with.

"This was taking place on a deserted stretch of the highway, between San Salvador and the town of Suchitoto. The leader of the group, who approached first, shouted at Mirna and at all of them to get out of the truck. She obviously realized at that moment that it was an ambush and she floored it; she accelerated very fast.

"The one man who had approached the window and was closest opened fire on her fleeing truck. She said that four bullets hit the car; one entered the gas tank and fortunately it did not explode; two entered elsewhere and didn't do any real damage, and the other bullet hit her son Ernesto. It entered him through the back, and came out of his front side and lodged itself in his leg.

"...She has come to Costa Rica to denounce this attack, and to attend some CODEHUCA meetings. She is going back right away to be with her family.

"**THERE** are a couple of things that are questionable; she has gone to the (Salvadoran) police, this (attack) has been denounced internationally; but the thing is that she had phoned the place they were going to that night shortly before heading out on the road. So the suspicion is that special security forces in El Salvador are still tapping the phone lines of the offices of groups and persons that are working on different human rights issues.

"...None of that can be proven, but that is what is suspected. It seems that the repression has changed. As she said this morning, the level of common violence has gone up in El Salvador, since the peace process began; the level of political violence has gone down. What is suspected, and what is very hard to prove, is

that they are using new forms of oppression. Some of it is being hidden behind the mask of common violence.

"IN recent months, there have been many (death threats against human rights workers in El Salvador). One of the main cases that Mirna has been working on with the non-governmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador (CDHES) is that about a month ago the CDHES published a series of paid announcements in the *Diario Latino* newspaper in El Salvador, in which they explicitly set out a list of human rights violations committed by top-ranking military officials during the previous 12 years of civil war.

"Included in the officials who appeared in the paid announcements were the vice-minister of defense, Col. Zepeda, and the minister of defense, Gen. Ponce. Those are the two most high ranking officials denounced by the CDHES.

"In the paid advertisements, the CDHES said, 'according to our information, we accuse Gen. Ponce of the following crimes,' and then they set it out in detail, including massacres, rapes, assassinations, illegal detentions, disappearances, etc. They accuse Gen. Ponce of being in charge of certain units of the El Salvador army that carried out these horrendous crimes.

"...As Mirna said, the reason they did it was for a moral sanction because the legal process is still not working in El Salvador and the work of the International Truth Commission is going to have limited success at best. So they are going after the army with moral sanctions.

"THE response of the armed forces was to initiate legal proceedings of defamation against the CDHES. At the same time there were death threats made against the directorship of the Commission and Mirna is one of the directorship.

"After Mirna went to the hospital with her son on that night of the third (January), she went to the

police and denounced it (the attack). Their response was that there had been many cases of ambushes and common crime along that stretch of highway by heavily armed men.

"At worst they are covering up something; at best the violence is out of control and the police and security forces can't control it.

"It is true that after the demilitarization process many ex-soldiers and some ex-guerrillas have kept their weapons and because of the social-economic situation in El Salvador they have turned to crime.

"SO it is not for sure that this was a political assassination attempt. One suspects it was, because it was an attempt against Mirna and she is a human rights activist involved in some controversial cases right now; but the level of violence has gone up in El Salvador.

"...And so the short answer (as to what the public can do) is that people interested in Central American issues should not believe that peace and democracy have been achieved.

"Leaving aside the issue of Guatemala, all we have, in countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama, is the chance now at peace and democracy, and it could easily revert back...

"IF they don't take care of the underlying social and economic issues and if they don't bring to trial the perpetrators of the crimes of the past, this will recur. I don't see fighting breaking out in the near future, but clearly it could break out again 15, 20 years down the road, if these issues are not dealt with.

"So as to what can be done, (you can) denounce Mirna's situation, but keep it in context of a region whose problems have not begun to be dealt with seriously...."

I can only add to Grahame Russell's report that those of us who are aware of the complicity of past U.S. administrations in massive human rights violations in Central America must redouble our efforts to right the wrongs that have been committed, all too often with the help of our tax dollars, and to create a climate that will not support such acts in the future.

**Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.**

# Embarking on quest for a more human world

FROM time to time we need to look beyond the daily horrors of war, terror, crime, deprivation, and suffering that characterize so much of the world today. Can we build a more human world in the future? None of us really knows, but that shouldn't prevent us from exploring the question.

Surely a more human world would be significantly different and better than our own, though it still would not be perfect. Utopia, by definition, is beyond our reach. But to cynically resign ourselves to the continuing miseries of a vast part of humanity by invoking the shibboleth that human nature can't change, is to give up without a struggle. Had such an attitude prevailed among our forebears, they never would have left their caves.

TO GET to a more human world, we will have to redirect our technological energies, from the invention of ever more sophisticated weapons of destruction and defoliation to the creation of material plenty for all of the world's people. Is it visionary to think that we can overcome material scarcity? No more than were the ingenious dreams of the past which we now see realized in the breathtaking achievements in global communication and transportation on land, sea, and in the air.

The real challenge is to confront and combat the destructive forces of our social heritage: racism, sexism, and ethnic chauvinism. We will have to overcome the stark economic inequality that enables privileged groups to exploit others, on the basis of birth, geography, nationality, race, sex, class, and physical or intellectual differences. In a more human world, just being human should be the principal classification of people. Furthermore, human beings would have to live in harmony with the rest of nature. We must learn how to protect and conserve resources and stop the spread of malignancies in our environment as well as in our bodies.

AND what about the life of the spirit, the mind, and human ideals? To answer that question, we must set aside ideas that exaggerate the separation between mind and body, spirit and matter. The two are inextricably interrelated. How can we develop our minds and grow intellectually and morally, unless we

## John J. Neumaier



feed both body and mind? Of course, if this ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body in a prosperous environment is to be realized, it needs a strong democratic foundation. Future generations will have to develop genuinely democratic institutions through their ongoing struggles toward real civilization.

In some ways it is more difficult to figure out how we get to a better and more human world than to imagine it. We carry the terrible weight of past and present catastrophes. Witness our own century, a period of almost continuous violence on a world scale, including two world wars, the holocaust, genocide on several continents, neo-colonial wars, and the unspeakable horrors of civil wars like the ones that are still raging in the former Yugoslavia and Angola.

What needs to be done should, of course, be distinguished from what you and I can do and are willing to do, in both the realm of thought as well as action. I think of Martin Luther King as an inspiring example of the unity of spiritual striving and meeting down-to-earth material needs; on the mountain top he dreamed of liberation and in the streets he marched with striking garbage workers.

THIS brings to mind the division of labor, already lauded by Plato, who, of course, preferred being a philosopher, while others were carpenters. Adam Smith elaborated the concept in *The Wealth of Nations*, considering it economically indispensable for the growth of manufacturing and commerce.

Important as occupational specialization was for human progress historically, the fact is that the increasing division between physical and mental labor

has become a major obstacle to a more human world. The low quality of much of television is an example of the perpetuation of intellectual dividing lines. So is the dichotomy between the intellectual levels of academic analysis and journalistic reporting. Not that academic education does not leave much to be desired. But the prevailing standards in the mass media at best discourage critical thinking and at worst leave people uninformed, misinformed, and basically conformist.

THE world of the 20th century still consists of societies led by elites whose primary function is to perpetuate their own power, and with it their economic wealth and political supremacy. This applies no less to capitalist elites than it does to communist elites. You can see this in former communist lands, where many of the emerging leaders are just reprocessed from the old regimes.

Appeals to nationalism, patriotism, and a new world order are used by those in power to build ideological support for their own vested interests. As a result of such manipulation, people are conditioned to believe that obstacles to a better world are usually to be found beyond the borders of their own country. For example, we know a lot about the horrors of Hitler's genocidal regime in Nazi Germany. But most Americans and many Western Europeans know far less about the responsibility of their own governments and elites for the rise of Hitler to power and for failing to stop him before he rearmed Germany.

AS another example, most of us are ill-informed about various aspects of our system of justice. Thus, it

is not well-known that the United States has the highest per capita prison population of the world. To be precise, the U.S. incarceration rate is 455 per 100,000, second is South Africa with 311 prisoners, third is Sweden with 44. (During the last year of the Soviet Union, 1991, its rate was 268 per 100,000, which placed it third that year.)

What then can we do to participate in the struggle to bring about a more human world?

First, we need to recognize that it will take thought as well as action, faith as well as hard work. Too, we must go beyond concern for our own individual welfare, though that is a good beginning, as Erich Fromm said in *Man for Himself* when he argued that one has to accept oneself before one can really accept others. But we must realize that our own security is linked to the security of others, that our country cannot for long be safe and prosperous unless all other peoples are.

IN a society like ours, only a few dare to think we can overcome the use of war as an instrument of national policy; only a few will confront the structures that stand in our way. Such people need to unite if they are to be a political force.

Let me cite as an example the national organization Veterans for Peace (the Eleanor Roosevelt chapter is headed by Hyde Park resident Eli Jaffe). It is comprised of veterans once socialized into the ways of war who now seek to transcend it and to persuade the wider population that this is possible.

It took millennia to develop human language. Surely, universal peace will not come about in a matter of decades. Will we even survive as a species? I don't know. But one condition for survival is that the struggle for a more human world must become universal.

**Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.**

# BOMBING YUGOSLAVIA: Another war in the name of peace

IMAGINE you're a citizen in the Serbian republic of Yugoslavia. Whether or not you support Slobodan Milosovic and his regime (many Yugoslavs have opposed him in the past), chances are you and your family are frightened and angered by the massive bombing of your country. President Milosovic may have persuaded you that the U.S.-led NATO powers cared little about "ethnic cleansing" when it was done by Albanians and Croats to Serbs. The Belgrade media is no doubt proudly reminding you that when Fascist Croats and Albanians were fighting on the side of Hitler's Germany, a majority of Serbs were heroically resisting the Nazi onslaught.

But we are in the United States. The mass media we listen to is underscoring the humanitarian intentions which prompted the U.S. government and its 18 NATO allies to undertake the intensive bombing attack on Yugoslavia (mostly by U.S. pilots). The announced peaceful aim and moral imperative for this "just war" is to force Milosovic to stop the ethnic cleansing of citizens of Albanian lineage living in Kosovo. We are being told that the news out of Belgrade is just lying propaganda, and that, in sharp contrast, it is truth which is emanating from round-the-clock NATO briefings, from President Clinton, the State Department, and Pentagon information specialists.

AS USUAL, it is difficult for the targeted audiences of the warring governments to separate fact from fiction. In Yugoslavia ideological control is mostly accomplished through government hegemony; in the United States it's done through the pliant conformity of most of the fourth estate, i.e. the mass media, which has rightly been called the fourth branch of government.

This explains why so few U.S. journalists and TV anchors protested the bombing of the Yugoslav TV headquarters in Belgrade and the "collateral" killing of 13 civilians, presumably journalists, who were inside.

IN SPITE of governmental propaganda on both sides there are people who insist on thinking for themselves. I want to single out here the many Yugoslav NGO's (non-governmental organizations recognized by the U.N.) whose members are speaking out for peace and against ethnic cleansing.

Seventeen Belgrade NGO's recently issued an appeal on the Internet, saying: "We, representatives of civic groups and organizations, have worked valiantly and persistently against the policies of the war-mongering and nationalist regime (of Milosovic),

Sunday Freeman, May 2, 1999  
Kingston, N.Y.

John Neumaier



in favor of the respect of human rights, particularly having put our determination against the repression exercised against the Kosovar Albanians." But they bitterly lament how their efforts to democratize their country and to cooperate with a broad-based non-violent movement of ethnic Albanians have been set back because of the sustained US-NATO bombing attacks.

IN AN article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 9) an American of Serbian origin writes that "the Milosovic regime is corrupt and brutal," but she grieves that "my adopted country is bombing my homeland." She says Kosovo contains more than 800 Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches and that the Serbs think of it as their Mecca, adding that: "The Kosovo Serbs dwindled from 50 percent of the population prior to World War II to 10 percent today, largely due to expulsion, often at the hands of the Albanians themselves."

Indeed, all but forgotten is the West's own condemnation of the terrorist tactics of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), tactics which effectively destroyed the broad-based and non-violent Kosovar movement against ethnic cleansing.

IN SPITE of Congress's overwhelming vote to back the Clinton administration's bombing initiative, along with the obligatory political rhetoric about "backing our troops", Americans are increasingly divided over the merits of this war. It's becoming clear to many, even to some politicians, that the Clinton-Albright ultimatum to Milosovic — accept U.S.-NATO military presence in Kosovo, end the ethnic cleansing, or else be bombed — was not a stellar moment in U.S. diplomacy.

Indeed, it has had the very opposite and predicted effect — bringing incredible misery and suffering to hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians. Growing numbers of Americans are repulsed by the mas-

sive bombing of Yugoslavia's infrastructure and the killing of innocent civilians. Moreover, though only two years ago more than 200,000 Yugoslavs held a protest rally in Belgrade against Milosovic, his regime now enjoys broad support as people unite behind him against the merciless bombing by the powerful NATO coalition.

There are other matters of growing concern to Americans: the mounting tension with Russia over the bombing, the threatened oil embargo, a possible ground war, the strengthening of Russian ultra-nationalists, and the diversion of Social Security tax funds to pay for the war. Only arms manufacturers and born-again cold warriors could welcome these developments.

WHAT ABOUT the legal basis of this undeclared war against a sovereign country? The U.S. Constitution explicitly delegates the power to make war to the Congress. And the air attacks on Yugoslavia clearly contravene the U.N. charter, which permits defensive military engagements only if specifically approved by the Security Council. NATO itself, originally founded to contain the Soviet Union, was set up as a purely defensive pact.

One should not exaggerate parallels between the U.S. war in Vietnam and the bombing of Yugoslavia. The Vietnam war cost the lives of 3.5 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans. Still, as I see it, we in the U.S. are again on the verge of a bitter polarization over what the administration is doing in the Balkans. Despite mainstream support, more and more opponents of the war are speaking out — some from the Right and some from the Left.

WHATEVER one's orientation, it is by no means easy to penetrate the Foggy Bottom miasma which veils U.S. foreign policy. Without belittling the unconscionable killing of thousands of Albanian Kosovars, one has to ask why it is that this particu-

lar ethnic cleansing has caused our government to start the war. There are millions of people in Sudan, Rwanda, Indonesia, and other African, Asian, and Mid-Eastern countries who have been and still are being persecuted and killed. What about the cruel persecution by one of the 19 NATO allies, Turkey, of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Kurds, not to speak here of the history of U.S. ethnic cleansing against diverse groups of people, especially Native Americans, and the continuing evidence of past and present discrimination and segregation?

Already in the 1980s, economic and "strategic restructuring" of Yugoslavia was one of Washington's policy objectives. Specifics are to be found in National Security Decision Directive (NSSDD) 133 entitled: "United States Policy toward Yugoslavia."

There is a slight difficulty, however, in that the document is labeled "SECRET SENSITIVE." A censored version of NSSDD 133 was declassified in 1990. It turned out to be similar to NSSDD 54 of 1982 pertaining to Eastern Europe, a cold war document which had set the goal to "reintegrate the countries of Eastern Europe into a market-oriented economy."

IT WAS a goal which involved the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. For details on how these agencies and the U.S. contributed significantly to the weakening and shrinking of the economy of Yugoslavia see "The Globalization of Poverty — Impact of IMF and World Bank Reform" (1997) by University of Ottawa Economics Prof. Michel Chossudovsky. The gradual ethnic dismemberment of Yugoslavia after 1990, with the assistance of Germany, the U.S., and other Western nations, is part of the story.

It is high time for the American people to speak up, assemble, demand redress of grievances, and rein in the political-military-industrial complex's arrogation of power to make war in the name of peace. We must insist that the United States government cooperate with the United Nations to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Kosovo.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International, 6.975 15 050 and 91 160.*



# Academic freedom is *the* issue at SUNY New Paltz

AMONG the phone calls I got here in rural Central Florida asking what happened to my November column, one caller wanted to know what I thought about the attacks on Dr. Roger Bowen, president of SUNY New Paltz.

The Hudson Valley newspapers hadn't come yet and I wondered if people were objecting to President Bowen's initiative in planning a link-up of SUNY New Paltz with Uzbekistan, to help that former Soviet republic redesign its higher education and also set up exchange programs with the university in Tashkent.

Or could it be his commendable promotion of an exchange program with Limerick, Ireland?

NO, my Kingston friend explained, it had nothing to do with higher education overseas, but apparently with what some considered lower education at New Paltz. He said it somehow involved sadomasochism and that Bowen was being asked to resign.

I couldn't recall immediately the meaning of sadomasochism (which should establish my innocence with any suspicious reader). When I eventually received the *Freeman* with its blow-by-blow account of charge and countercharge, I got the drift. Clearly it was a situation that politicians couldn't pass up, a golden opportunity to rally around the flag of decency, motherhood, and the American way.

Of course, I knew the meaning of plain masochism, as would anyone who has served as commander-in-chief of Fortress New Paltz (as it was called during the time the Nixon-Agnew team was whipping up war protests by making liberal use of napalm in Vietnam and rad-lib bashing on the home front). But, like many men, I could benefit from more studies of women's issues, and I was puzzled over the linking of women's sexuality with the Marquis Donatien de Sade, the male chauvinist after whom sadism is named.

However, female sadomasochism is outside my field of expertise, and, unlike a SUNY Board Trustee or a College Council member, I hadn't had the privilege of attending any of the workshops which have drawn so much fire from the righteous among us. I understand that attendance was in fact optional and that financial support came largely from private sources and registrants.

WHICH BRINGS me to the issue of apparent concern to the outraged politicians, to wit, that at public colleges free speech must be limited to subjects that pass standards of decency. They seem to

Sunday Freeman, December 7, 1997  
Kingston, N.Y.

John N. Neumaier



assume that such standards are best set by themselves, with the help of the more outspoken guardians of citizens morality whom they have appointed to oversee public higher education, and of constituents who may share their religious and sexual convictions.

I willingly concede that Gov. George Pataki and his brave allies in the Christian Coalition, Republican officialdom (and even among descendants of 17th century witch hunters) may be more educated on the intricate aspects of sadomasochism and related women's workshop issues than I am. Imagine what this censorious coalition would have done to the likes of Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich, or Margaret Sanger.

IN MY VIEW, President Bowen's principled conduct in the face of the vicious attacks on him and on the women's seminars should be an inspiration to his fellow college presidents. Newspaper reports indicated that he mentioned in his introduction to one of the conferences that he found some views expressed on campus offensive and he also was quoted as saying in an interview: "I am personally offended by S&M ..."

But instead of hiding behind his own more conventional views, which may well overlap with some held by his detractors, he steadfastly supported the academic freedom of the workshop organizers. Unlike his critics, he is well aware of and in agreement with the commitment to freedom of speech that is in the tradition of a conservative enlightenment thinker like Voltaire.

The ultimate justification given for political interference in academic policy at public universities has always been money, although all too many legislators in this land seem to exercise their power of the purse very selectively. Generous when it comes to spending tax money for war-related research, or for the construction of more and more prisons (though

not necessarily the educational rehabilitation of inmates), they seem especially sensitive when it comes to academic programs in political and social theory of which they might not approve.

IN A WORLD in which genocide, militarism, murderous land mines, poverty, hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, corruption and so many other revolting moral tragedies persist, is it not absurd to seek to concentrate public concern on women's workshops on sexuality and sadomasochism, which even according to the most sensational reports will not add to the massive human misery that is permitted untrammelled expansion in our time? Seen in this light, one might be tempted to view all the fuss about the women's study seminars as much ado about nothing (minus Shakespeare's genius). But to minimize the seriousness of the attacks on President Bowen and on feminist perspectives would be to encourage future powerplays to stifle free expression through intimidation.

The point is not that explorative studies of sexual behavior or fantasy — in or out of bed, heterosexual or otherwise — should be made part of liberal arts graduation requirements. But this does not mean that there cannot be academic inquiry into such subjects, or into the makeup of people who like to be associated or disassociated with such behavior, or with the theoretical discussion of it.

In a lighter vein, one might speculate that perhaps the people who came up with the obviously provocative workshop titles were originally candidates for employment with the Public Relations Office of SUNY New Paltz, and when President Bowen rejected their applications, they decided to demonstrate their ability to draw public attention to the college in other ways.

OF COURSE there are limits to free speech (a topic often discussed in this space). It doesn't extend

to advocacy of hate crimes, for example. And no one contends that those who disagree with the airing of controversial topics on women's sexuality don't have the right to express their disagreements. They do, but they don't have the right to prevent the expression and discussion of unpopular or objectionable points of view by others, not even at public colleges.

Moreover, why don't the conservative politicians who are leading the attack on the SUNY president concern themselves with some of the more urgent issues of our time, like the widespread racism that mars our democratic society, or the continuing brutality against women? Or, if they insist on protesting the airing of certain sexual topics, how do they feel about media sensationalism in making public the most private parts of the president of the United States?

LET ME END on a positive note. I was never more satisfied to be associated with the *Freeman* than when I read its editorial (Nov. 9) that began with the statement: "The morality posse is on patrol." It provided a ringing defense of Bowen's unyielding support of the best tradition of the American university, namely his resolve to "provide a forum for people of all different views..."

Since a university is so dependent on the universe that surrounds it, SUNY New Paltz is fortunate to have the *Freeman* on its side, supporting, true to its name, freedom of expression. And not only the *Freeman*, but the college faculty and students, the SUNY chancellor, the president and faculty of Bard College, the New Paltz Town Board, *The New York Times* (editorial, Nov. 11), Congressman Maurice Hinchey, D-Saugerties, and the countless citizens who have shown themselves ready to defend and speak out for freedom of expression.

I join with them in saying that New York is fortunate to have a scholar of Roger Bowen's stature, integrity, and courage as the academic leader of the State University College at New Paltz.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.*

# Why we must remember – in spite of Holocaust Deniers

EVERY April, Jews and non-Jews renew their remembrance of the millions of people who were brutally murdered during the Nazi Holocaust. The solemn act of commemoration helps strengthen our resolve to stem the genocide, oppression, and violence that are still being perpetrated, and no country, including ours, can claim innocence.

So it is nothing less than shocking, especially to survivors, to learn that there are individuals and organizations whose avowed purpose is to deny that millions of Jewish human beings were systematically murdered by shooting, gassing, beating, starvation, or in other cruel ways as a direct result of the anti-Semitism that was central to Adolf Hitler's fascist ideology.

Of the more than 11 million victims of the Nazis, close to five to six million were Jewish. They had constituted close to a third of the world's Jews and two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe. Their murder was planned as the Nazis' *Endlösung* – the Final Solution.

**THE SPECTRUM** of Deniers ranges widely – from those who deny the Holocaust altogether to those who deny that they are Deniers, even while asserting that no one was murdered by gassing. They also seek to minimize the number of Jews who were killed, some claiming that at most a few hundred thousand Jews died, many due to wartime hardship. Another Denier tactic is their attempt to downplay Nazi war crimes by stressing, in comparison, what was done by the Allied powers to Germans.

Whenever the vicious propaganda of the small but worldwide Denier movement succeeds in casting doubt on the Holocaust or its dimensions, it weakens the remembrance of the millions of victims whose killers denied them their very humanity. Not surprisingly the Deniers do not remind their often-uninformed audiences of how the Nazis laid the foundation for the Holocaust, fostering German anti-Semitism with hideous portrayals of Jews as sub-humans in newspapers like *Der Stuermer* ("The Stormtrooper"), and in movies like the obscene German propaganda film of 1940 "The Eternal Jew," which pictorially likened Jews to slimy vermin and rats.

**OVER THE** years, the propaganda techniques of the Deniers have varied substantially and in fact have evolved and changed in response to their critics. This is described in the penetrating study of the

Sunday Freeman, April 5, 1998  
Kingston, N.Y.

John Neumaier



Denier movement undertaken by Deborah Lipstadt in the 1993 book "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory." The author gives a detailed account of the people and groups engaged in the systematic effort to deny or minimize the Holocaust. The majority consists of rabid anti-Semites, but with the passage of time some Deniers have become more subtle. In addition to outright Fascists and Neo-Nazis, the Denial movement has attracted a small number of academics, who seek to legitimize Holocaust denial with what they call "Historical Revisionism," challenging the long-established documentation of historians and the eyewitness accounts of Holocaust survivors.

Inevitably the findings and judgments that have emerged from historical research provide different perspectives on the significance and lessons to be drawn from the mass murder and the atrocities that go under the name of Holocaust. These differences are magnified and exploited by Deniers in their announced "revisionary" mission and in their eagerness to subject the tragedy of the Holocaust to debate, in search of *prima facie* legitimacy for their hateful propaganda.

**MY OWN** perspective has undoubtedly been influenced by the murder of my mother at the Majdanek camp and of my Jewish German and Austrian relatives, including my two Viennese girl cousins. Why even draw attention to the ludicrous attempt to deny or minimize their deaths and the slaughter of so many millions of others? The answer is that the Deniers are putting their pernicious allegations before a growing number of people, especially young people on college campuses and on talk shows, people who may not be acquainted with 20th century history. The Deniers' claims are frequently accompanied by open or disguised anti-Semitism. This in turn feeds the hate propaganda that is growing exponentially on the airwaves and in cyberspace. The

World Wide Web now has 163 web sites sponsored by 81 racial hate groups, including 21 Ku Klux Klan and 12 Neo-Nazi groups (Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, Winter 1998).

Looking back, one can see that Holocaust Denial was already present during World War II, even as the Final Solution was being implemented. The German government was zealous in its attempt to keep the world from knowing about the mass murder of Jews and of what was happening at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, and other death camps. My own experience with Denial occurred first in 1945, after the Allies liberated survivors of the Nazi concentration camps.

As a U.S. soldier on duty at a Prisoner of War camp at Fort Robinson, Neb., I was present when German prisoners were shown gruesome newsreels of the gas chambers, the ovens, and the open ditches piled high with dead naked bodies. I will never forget the reaction of the German prisoners' spokesman named Huehnmoerder. When he saw a photograph of emaciated prisoners peering out of their wooden bunks, he insisted that these were not pictures of Jews, but of concentration camp inmates in India, incarcerated by British imperialists.

**THE PLACEMENT** last November of an ad in the SUNY New Paltz newspaper by the "Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust" illustrates the freedom of speech approach which Deniers have utilized to get campus newspapers to present their propaganda. The ad offered \$50,000 to anyone arranging the showing on national network TV of the Deniers' "documentary" on Auschwitz, modestly called "Video of the Century". Of course, neither academic freedom nor freedom of speech obligates a student-financed newspaper to accept every advertisement or pointof view that is put before its editorial board, as both the student editor and the college president (who does not have jurisdiction over stu-

dent publications) readily acknowledged. It was explained that an editorial slip-up had occurred, and fortunately in this case there have been letters to the editor which recognized the ad for what it was.

Typical Denier publications go under such titles as "The Hoax of the 20th Century," "The Six Million Swindle," and "Anne Frank's Diary: A Hoax." With the help of self-described "experts," the so-called revisionists continue to deny the existence of gas chambers at various death camps, though the opposite has long been proven (see for example the authoritative 1990 book "Truth Prevails: Demolishing Holocaust Denial").

**SEEKING TO** equate Nazi crimes with human rights violations by the wartime Allies, the Deniers compare the terrible and unjust internment of loyal Japanese-Americans in the U.S. to the atrocities committed in Nazi death camps. An example of the incredibly crude attempts at humor and irony of which Deniers are capable is a question in one of their propaganda pieces; it asks, what's the difference between six million Jews and 300,000 Jews? Their answer is that the difference is "5,700,000." How can one make light of the mass murder of one's fellow human beings?

Another favored Denial method is to bring up the diversionary issue of Israel in connection with the Holocaust. Of course, this ignores the fact that neither Jews in Israel nor outside of it are of one mind regarding Israeli government policies, Zionism, religion, or attitudes toward the rights of the Palestinian people. In any case, issues involving Israel do not in any way change the facts of the bloody history of the death camps and the genocide against Jews.

We must not let the Holocaust Denial movement weaken our struggle against the killing of innocent people, whatever their ethnic, racial or religious background, and for that matter whether they are Israelis or Palestinians, Iraqis or Iranians, Germans or Russians, Gypsies or Tibetans, North or Latin Americans, Asians or Africans. What matters is that they are our fellow human beings.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.*

# What can we say about 'The Merchant of Venice'?

Sunday Freeman, Sept. 1, 1996  
Kingston, N.Y.

"THE Merchant of Venice," one of William Shakespeare's most frequently performed works, was featured at the Shakespeare festival this summer in beautiful Stratford, Ontario. Able director Marti Maraden situated the stage action in fascist Italy, around 1933 (its original setting was 16th century Venice).

To cope with the powerful overtones of anti-Semitism, an excellent kit has been made available to high school groups. Festival authorities were mindful of the harassing of Jewish school children by some fellow pupils following a 1989 performance of "The Merchant," and, during a 1984 performance, of the spontaneous audience applause that broke out at Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity.

AS A Jew and an admirer of Shakespeare's art, I have more than a passing interest in the great playwright's depiction of Shylock, a depiction that is both brilliant and awful. The issue of creativity that is tinged with ethnic, racial and sexual prejudice stretches through history, and not a few talented artists and intellectuals have harbored anti-Semitic feelings; one thinks of Richard Wagner, Ezra Pound, Martin Heidegger and T.S. Elliott.

In the case of "The Merchant of Venice," the anti-Semitic elements of the comedy are hard to pass off lightly; human history has recorded too much tragedy — from the pogroms that preceded and followed Shakespeare's time, to this century's Holocaust, a horror of unspeakable proportion.

THERE IS a long heritage of anti-Semitism in Europe and the Americas. For centuries, many Christians were taught to view Jews as the killers of Christ. Incredibly, there was once the widespread superstition that on their religious holidays Jews drank Christian children's blood. Exploiting this kind of popular fear and intolerance of Jews, European rulers precipitated periodic massacres of Jews and sometimes their outright expulsion. England expelled its 16,000 Jews in 1290 and did not readmit any until 1656, four decades after Shakespeare's death. The few Jews in England during his lifetime had become Christianized.

The main plot of Shakespeare's play turns around Shylock, who is approached by the Christian merchant Antonio, seeking a loan. Antonio wants to help his beloved friend Bassanio win the hand of Portia, a virtuous heiress. Shylock consents to lend Antonio 3,000 ducats (a huge sum in Elizabethan

## John J. Neumaier

times), demanding "in a merry sport" that Antonio pledge one pound of his own flesh as security if he cannot repay in the allotted time. Antonio is surprised, since in the past he had often insulted, taunted and ridiculed the Jew, but he readily agrees, supremely confident that his various overseas trade expeditions will bring in enough to repay the debt.

LATER, Shylock is angered and deeply hurt when he learns that his daughter Jessica, "his flesh and blood," has eloped with Lorenzo, to whose Christian faith she has converted, and has taken with her Shylock's precious jewels and a ring that belonged to his beloved dead wife Leah.

When Antonio's ships are lost at sea and he is unable to pay back the loan on time, the enraged Shylock demands that he be rendered forthwith a pound of Antonio's flesh, to be taken from the region of the heart. He stubbornly rejects Bassanio's belated offer (via the good offices of Portia) to double or triple the 3,000 ducats.

In court, Portia, disguised as an eminent man of the law, cleverly turns Shylock's seeming triumph into crushing defeat when she reveals that Venetian law prohibits the shedding of blood in civil transactions and mandates the death penalty for any who offend this law. Thus, the Christian is victorious over Shylock, who is deprived forthwith of his fortune and, at Antonio's insistence, is forced to convert to Christianity.

OVERALL, Shakespeare depicts in Antonio a virtuous, entrepreneurial merchant who is loyal and generous to his friends. In Shylock, he depicts a despicable, implacable, miserly moneylender. No doubt but that the Elizabethan audience enjoyed this playing to their prejudices. But what many then and now have overlooked are the subtle qualifications that



Shakespeare provides which render Antonio far less virtuous and Shylock far more complex than appears on the surface.

Though reactions to the play have varied, depending on the period, place and staging, the characterizations of Antonio and Shylock have historically tended to reinforce popular stereotypes and anti-Semitism.

Had Shakespeare been born a Jew, how very differently he might have described the two protagonists. Antonio, light-hearted and light-of-mind, spoiled heir of a prosperous Christian family, could have been shown as simply full of nasty prejudice and envy toward a successful Jewish business competitor. Foolhardy, risking his inheritance on sea ventures that are mainly designed to impress others, Antonio would be seen drinking and playing with his idle friends, for whom he vouches, regardless of their merit or their cause.

ON THE other hand, Shakespeare could have described Shylock within the existing historical context, in which the Church condemned the "sin" of usury, and in which Jews, though prohibited from owning land, were prevailed upon by the reigning kings and princes to fill the role of money lenders, so necessary for the development of commerce and the financing of wars. Shakespeare might have explained that while the public expected Jews to charge interest because they were categorized as "unfaithful," and thus already barred from entering heaven, it hated and envied them for profiting from moneylending.

But the fact is that Shakespeare was born a Christian, though his characterizations were less ethnocentric than those of many of his fellow dramatists who dealt with a similar theme, then and after. Remember how Antonio despised his fellow merchant Shylock, even spat on his "Jewish

gaberline," holding himself superior socially, morally, and of course religiously?

AND IN spite of Shylock's negative traits, one can detect in him what Henry Morgan Hudson (in 1879) called "the remains of a great and noble nature, out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated injuries." Indeed, Shakespeare pictures Shylock as a Jew who is aggrieved precisely because the dominant culture excludes him as a fellow-human being.

Further, Shakespeare's Shylock exposes Christian culture of his time as being profoundly hypocritical, when he reminds his fellow citizens, and incidentally the English of his day, of their practice of slavery: "You have among you many a purchased slave, which like your asses and your dogs and mules you use in abject and in slavish parts. Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs! Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds be made as soft as yours ..."

IN another famous lament, Shakespeare has Shylock speak movingly to the ages: "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, sense, affections, passions — fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

But for all his bitterness, Shylock had not learned that legal justice is based not only on law, but on who makes and controls the law. Then, as now, the application of justice cannot be separated from power. The power of the law was rightly invoked against the spilling of blood, of even "one drop of Christian blood," but one can't help wondering what if Jewish blood or a pound of Jewish flesh had been at stake? The point is that Jews are no less nor more worthy than any other group of human beings, whatever their religious, racial, or national background.

Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.

# 90 years of freedom of speech from *The Progressive*

Daily Freeman (Sunday edition)  
February 7, 1999 (Kingston, N.Y.)

John Neumaier



**THOUGH FREE** speech is widely acclaimed in this country, not too many media go about championing unpopular views, especially ones that criticize the establishment. One place where free speech has been used vigorously and fearlessly for almost a century is *The Progressive*, founded in 1909 by Wisconsin Sen. Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. under the name *LaFollette's Weekly Magazine*.

In the journal's 90th anniversary issue last month, Editor Matthew Rothschild points out that LaFollette was fully aware of what progressives like himself were up against in American politics. The Republican senator had warned that "Big Business and the Special Interests" had a huge influence on "politics, government and natural resources" and that they exercised their rule "through the very men elected to represent the people". Though convinced that the battle for democracy "will be the longest and hardest ever fought," LaFollette optimistically predicted that "Here (in the U.S.) we shall win." But he obviously realized that democracy required free speech and an informed and actively involved public.

**THE** anniversary issue of *The Progressive* gives an exciting overview of the journal's proud history, including an unflinching depiction of its warts and all. For example, Rothschild, readily admits that the magazine (family-run until the late 1940s) was egregiously on the wrong side of history in its isolationist refusal to recognize the evil threat of Hitlerism.

Though rooted in a Republican background, the magazine has published the views of a wide variety of authors, among them, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, William O. Douglas, Earl Warren, Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow, Jack London, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

**IN 1917,** LaFollette accused the Democrats of being the "war party," seeking to "justify our entrance into the bloody conflict (World War I) on the ground that it is in the interest of democracy." He saw "a struggle going on today in every civilized nation between democracy and autocracy," and argued that "Every nation has its war party. It is not the party of democracy. It is the party of autocracy. It seeks to dominate absolutely. It is commercial, imperialistic, ruthless. It tolerates no opposition. It is just as arrogant, just as despotic, in London, or in

twin to the German Junker." (What would he have said about today's celebrated "Global Economy"?)

An article on LaFollette's contentious career in the House of Representatives and the Senate recounts how he must have infuriated his fellow senators during the war debates when he exclaimed that "The poor ... who are always called upon to rot in the trenches ... will have their day, and they will be heard." He was promptly censured by the Senate and the *Boston Evening Transcript* proclaimed that "henceforth he is the Man without a Country."

Actually, he was re-elected to the Senate in 1922, and in 1924 he ran for president, garnering five million votes, gaining the support of the Socialist Party, African Americans, women, organized labor, and farmers, and terrifying the establishment. His wife, Belle Case LaFollette, who had been a leading suffragist in Wisconsin, took over the magazine after LaFollette's death in 1925.

**HOWARD ZINN**, author of *A People's History of the United States*, writes about the political ferment of the period of the magazine's founding. Eugene V. Debs was the leader of the Socialist Party. Zinn characterizes "the era of Debs, the first 17 years of the 20th century" as one in which "millions of Americans declared their adherence to the principles of socialism ... until war created an opportunity to crush the movement."

When Debs opposed U.S. participation in World War I he was condemned to 10 years in prison, though Republican President Warren Harding pardoned him after he served 2 1/2 years. Zinn describes Debs' militant support of women garment makers, coal miners, black, white, skilled, and

erful corporate giants like the Rockefellers.

**THE** Socialists' successes were mostly at the local level, where they counted 1,200 office holders in 340 municipalities. Zinn reminds us "of the powerful appeal of the socialist idea to people alienated from the political system and aware of the growing stark disparities in income and wealth. As so many Americans are today."

The name "socialism" has been usurped and associated with what Zinn calls "distortions of recent experience in bad places." He predicts that the time will come when Americans will again insist on economic as well as political democracy, emphasizing that already many of them regard "bread and butter as better guarantees of 'national security' than guns and bombs."

**IN** another anniversary article, "A Lesson Joe McCarthy Taught Me", David R. Obey relates how he turned from a Republican high school student, leafletting for Republicans Joe McCarthy, Eisenhower, and Melvin Laird, to a Democrat (Obey now serves in Congress).

The lesson came from McCarthy's supporters when they red-baited one of Obey's best teachers, who "was about as much of a Communist as Jack Benny." Obey explains that his teacher "had the temerity to teach that the provisions of the United States Constitution and the political platform of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce did not necessarily coincide. He taught us about the Bill of Rights, and that it guaranteed Americans the right to be wrong and to believe in whatever they wanted."

Obey said he learned from his teacher that

of Salem's witch hunts and Joe McCarthy's character assassinations — may often be tomorrow's truth."

**THE** anniversary issue also contains reminiscences about the late Erwin Knoll, long-time editor of *The Progressive*. Knoll was on Nixon's infamous "enemy list," an achievement in which he took considerable pride. A pacifist and fiercely independent man, Knoll often repeated (probably with a wink) I.F. Stone's maxim: "Every government is run by liars. Nothing they say should be believed."

Knoll's stature as a fearless journalist devoted to the Bill of Rights and freedom of speech eventually gained him a place as the lone radical on the panel of regional editors regularly featured on the PBS' mainstream "McNeil-Lehrer News Hour."

A Jewish refugee from Austria, Knoll staunchly supported Palestinian rights in the face of some of Israel's claims. In this connection, his reminiscences go back to his childhood in nazified Vienna and the time he cried when told by a neighborhood fruit vendor: "We have no oranges for Jewish boys." Returning to the same stand many years later, Knoll purchased an orange and found it bore a label that said, "Produce of Israel."

Since Erwin was my fellow-broadcaster on Radio for Peace International, I made it a point of visiting him one day in his editorial office in Madison. I was impressed by his modesty and the charm that he exuded. Though we had our differences, I, along with his many admirers, greatly miss his voice of reason and compassion.

**IF YOU** in your reading don't insist on conformity with establishment views, or with your own for that matter, look for *The Progressive* in your public library, or at a well-stocked news vendor, or buy a subscription. It is a valuable source of alternative news and thought-provoking opinion.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.*

# BOMBING YUGOSLAVIA: Another war in the name of peace

IMAGINE you're a citizen in the Serbian republic of Yugoslavia. Whether or not you support Slobodan Milosovic and his regime (many Yugoslavs have opposed him in the past), chances are you and your family are frightened and angered by the massive bombing of your country. President Milosovic may have persuaded you that the U.S.-led NATO powers cared little about "ethnic cleansing" when it was done by Albanians and Croats to Serbs. The Belgrade media is no doubt proudly reminding you that when Fascist Croats and Albanians were fighting on the side of Hitler's Germany, a majority of Serbs were heroically resisting the Nazi onslaught.

But we are in the United States. The mass media we listen to is underscoring the humanitarian intentions which prompted the U.S. government and its 18 NATO allies to undertake the intensive bombing attack on Yugoslavia (mostly by U.S. pilots). The announced peaceful aim and moral imperative for this "just war" is to force Milosovic to stop the ethnic cleansing of citizens of Albanian lineage living in Kosovo. We are being told that the news out of Belgrade is just lying propaganda, and that, in sharp contrast, it is truth which is emanating from round-the-clock NATO briefings, from President Clinton, the State Department, and Pentagon information specialists.

AS USUAL, it is difficult for the targeted audiences of the warring governments to separate fact from fiction. In Yugoslavia ideological control is mostly accomplished through government hegemony; in the United States it's done through the pliant conformity of most of the fourth estate, i.e. the mass media, which has rightly been called the fourth branch of government.

This explains why so few U.S. journalists and TV anchors protested the bombing of the Yugoslav TV headquarters in Belgrade and the "collateral" killing of 13 civilians, presumably journalists, who were inside.

IN SPITE of governmental propaganda on both sides there are people who insist on thinking for themselves. I want to single out here the many Yugoslav NGO's (non-governmental organizations recognized by the U.N.) whose members are speaking out for peace and against ethnic cleansing.

Seventeen Belgrade NGO's recently issued an appeal on the Internet, saying: "We, representatives of civic groups and organizations, have worked valiantly and persistently against the policies of the war-mongering and nationalist regime (of Milosovic),

Sunday Freeman, May 2, 1999  
Kingston, N.Y.

John Neumaier



in favor of the respect of human rights, particularly having put our determination against the repression exercised against the Kosovar Albanians." But they bitterly lament how their efforts to democratize their country and to cooperate with a broad-based non-violent movement of ethnic Albanians have been set back because of the sustained US-NATO bombing attacks.

IN AN article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 9) an American of Serbian origin writes that "the Milosovic regime is corrupt and brutal," but she grieves that "my adopted country is bombing my homeland." She says Kosovo contains more than 800 Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches and that the Serbs think of it as their Mecca, adding that: "The Kosovo Serbs dwindled from 50 percent of the population prior to World War II to 10 percent today, largely due to expulsion, often at the hands of the Albanians themselves."

Indeed, all but forgotten is the West's own condemnation of the terrorist tactics of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), tactics which effectively destroyed the broad-based and non-violent Kosovar movement against ethnic cleansing.

IN SPITE of Congress's overwhelming vote to back the Clinton administration's bombing initiative, along with the obligatory political rhetoric about "backing our troops", Americans are increasingly divided over the merits of this war. It's becoming clear to many, even to some politicians, that the Clinton-Albright ultimatum to Milosovic — accept U.S.-NATO military presence in Kosovo, end the ethnic cleansing, or else be bombed — was not a stellar moment in U.S. diplomacy.

Indeed, it has had the very opposite and predicted effect — bringing incredible misery and suffering to hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians. Growing numbers of Americans are repulsed by the mas-

sive bombing of Yugoslavia's infrastructure and the killing of innocent civilians. Moreover, though only two years ago more than 200,000 Yugoslavs held a protest rally in Belgrade against Milosovic, his regime now enjoys broad support as people unite behind him against the merciless bombing by the powerful NATO coalition.

There are other matters of growing concern to Americans: the mounting tension with Russia over the bombing, the threatened oil embargo, a possible ground war, the strengthening of Russian ultra-nationalists, and the diversion of Social Security tax funds to pay for the war. Only arms manufacturers and born-again cold warriors could welcome these developments.

WHAT ABOUT the legal basis of this undeclared war against a sovereign country? The U.S. Constitution explicitly delegates the power to make war to the Congress. And the air attacks on Yugoslavia clearly contravene the U.N. charter, which permits defensive military engagements only if specifically approved by the Security Council. NATO itself, originally founded to contain the Soviet Union, was set up as a purely defensive pact.

One should not exaggerate parallels between the U.S. war in Vietnam and the bombing of Yugoslavia. The Vietnam war cost the lives of 3.5 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans. Still, as I see it, we in the U.S. are again on the verge of a bitter polarization over what the administration is doing in the Balkans. Despite mainstream support, more and more opponents of the war are speaking out — some from the Right and some from the Left.

WHATEVER one's orientation, it is by no means easy to penetrate the Foggy Bottom miasma which veils U.S. foreign policy. Without belittling the unconscionable killing of thousands of Albanian Kosovars, one has to ask why it is that this particu-

lar ethnic cleansing has caused our government to start the war. There are millions of people in Sudan, Rwanda, Indonesia, and other African, Asian, and Mid-Eastern countries who have been and still are being persecuted and killed. What about the cruel persecution by one of the 19 NATO allies, Turkey, of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Kurds, not to speak here of the history of U.S. ethnic cleansing against diverse groups of people, especially Native Americans, and the continuing evidence of past and present discrimination and segregation?

Already in the 1980s, economic and "strategic restructuring" of Yugoslavia was one of Washington's policy objectives. Specifics are to be found in National Security Decision Directive (NSSDD) 133 entitled: "United States Policy toward Yugoslavia."

There is a slight difficulty, however, in that the document is labeled "SECRET SENSITIVE." A censored version of NSSDD 133 was declassified in 1990. It turned out to be similar to NSSDD 54 of 1982 pertaining to Eastern Europe, a cold war document which had set the goal to "reintegrate the countries of Eastern Europe into a market-oriented economy."

IT WAS a goal which involved the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. For details on how these agencies and the U.S. contributed significantly to the weakening and shrinking of the economy of Yugoslavia see "The Globalization of Poverty — Impact of IMF and World Bank Reform" (1997) by University of Ottawa Economics Prof. Michel Chossudovsky. The gradual ethnic dismemberment of Yugoslavia after 1990, with the assistance of Germany, the U.S., and other Western nations, is part of the story.

It is high time for the American people to speak up, assemble, demand redress of grievances, and rein in the political-military-industrial complex's arrogation of power to make war in the name of peace. We must insist that the United States government cooperate with the United Nations to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Kosovo.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International, 6.975 15 050 and 91 160.*



# Academic freedom is *the* issue at SUNY New Paltz

AMONG the phone calls I got here in rural Central Florida asking what happened to my November column, one caller wanted to know what I thought about the attacks on Dr. Roger Bowen, president of SUNY New Paltz.

The Hudson Valley newspapers hadn't come yet and I wondered if people were objecting to President Bowen's initiative in planning a link-up of SUNY New Paltz with Uzbekistan, to help that former Soviet republic redesign its higher education and also set up exchange programs with the university in Tashkent.

Or could it be his commendable promotion of an exchange program with Limerick, Ireland?

NO, my Kingston friend explained, it had nothing to do with higher education overseas, but apparently with what some considered lower education at New Paltz. He said it somehow involved sadomasochism and that Bowen was being asked to resign.

I couldn't recall immediately the meaning of sadomasochism (which should establish my innocence with any suspicious reader). When I eventually received the *Freeman* with its blow-by-blow account of charge and countercharge, I got the drift. Clearly it was a situation that politicians couldn't pass up, a golden opportunity to rally around the flag of decency, motherhood, and the American way.

Of course, I knew the meaning of plain masochism, as would anyone who has served as commander-in-chief of Fortress New Paltz (as it was called during the time the Nixon-Agnew team was whipping up war protests by making liberal use of napalm in Vietnam and rad-lib bashing on the home front). But, like many men, I could benefit from more studies of women's issues, and I was puzzled over the linking of women's sexuality with the Marquis Donatien de Sade, the male chauvinist after whom sadism is named.

However, female sadomasochism is outside my field of expertise, and, unlike a SUNY Board Trustee or a College Council member, I hadn't had the privilege of attending any of the workshops which have drawn so much fire from the righteous among us. I understand that attendance was in fact optional and that financial support came largely from private sources and registrants.

WHICH BRINGS me to the issue of apparent concern to the outraged politicians, to wit, that at public colleges free speech must be limited to subjects that pass standards of decency. They seem to

Sunday Freeman, December 7, 1987  
Kingston, N.Y.

John N. Neumaier



assume that such standards are best set by themselves, with the help of the more outspoken guardians of citizens morality whom they have appointed to oversee public higher education, and of constituents who may share their religious and sexual convictions.

I willingly concede that Gov. George Pataki and his brave allies in the Christian Coalition, Republican officialdom (and even among descendants of 17th century witch hunters) may be more educated on the intricate aspects of sadomasochism and related women's workshop issues than I am. Imagine what this censorious coalition would have done to the likes of Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich, or Margaret Sanger.

IN MY VIEW, President Bowen's principled conduct in the face of the vicious attacks on him and on the women's seminars should be an inspiration to his fellow college presidents. Newspaper reports indicated that he mentioned in his introduction to one of the conferences that he found some views expressed on campus offensive and he also was quoted as saying in an interview: "I am personally offended by S&M ..."

But instead of hiding behind his own more conventional views, which may well overlap with some held by his detractors, he steadfastly supported the academic freedom of the workshop organizers. Unlike his critics, he is well aware of and in agreement with the commitment to freedom of speech that is in the tradition of a conservative enlightenment thinker like Voltaire.

The ultimate justification given for political interference in academic policy at public universities has always been money, although all too many legislators in this land seem to exercise their power of the purse very selectively. Generous when it comes to spending tax money for war-related research, or for the construction of more and more prisons (though

not necessarily the educational rehabilitation of inmates), they seem especially sensitive when it comes to academic programs in political and social theory of which they might not approve.

IN A WORLD in which genocide, militarism, murderous land mines, poverty, hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, corruption and so many other revolting moral tragedies persist, is it not absurd to seek to concentrate public concern on women's workshops on sexuality and sadomasochism, which even according to the most sensational reports will not add to the massive human misery that is permitted untrammelled expansion in our time? Seen in this light, one might be tempted to view all the fuss about the women's study seminars as much ado about nothing (minus Shakespeare's genius). But to minimize the seriousness of the attacks on President Bowen and on feminist perspectives would be to encourage future powerplays to stifle free expression through intimidation.

The point is not that explorative studies of sexual behavior or fantasy — in or out of bed, heterosexual or otherwise — should be made part of liberal arts graduation requirements. But this does not mean that there cannot be academic inquiry into such subjects, or into the makeup of people who like to be associated or disassociated with such behavior, or with the theoretical discussion of it.

In a lighter vein, one might speculate that perhaps the people who came up with the obviously provocative workshop titles were originally candidates for employment with the Public Relations Office of SUNY New Paltz, and when President Bowen rejected their applications, they decided to demonstrate their ability to draw public attention to the college in other ways.

OF COURSE there are limits to free speech (a topic often discussed in this space). It doesn't extend

to advocacy of hate crimes, for example. And no one contends that those who disagree with the airing of controversial topics on women's sexuality don't have the right to express their disagreements. They do, but they don't have the right to prevent the expression and discussion of unpopular or objectionable points of view by others, not even at public colleges.

Moreover, why don't the conservative politicians who are leading the attack on the SUNY president concern themselves with some of the more urgent issues of our time, like the widespread racism that mars our democratic society, or the continuing brutality against women? Or, if they insist on protesting the airing of certain sexual topics, how do they feel about media sensationalism in making public the most private parts of the president of the United States?

LET ME END on a positive note. I was never more satisfied to be associated with the *Freeman* than when I read its editorial (Nov. 9) that began with the statement: "The morality posse is on patrol." It provided a ringing defense of Bowen's unyielding support of the best tradition of the American university, namely his resolve to "provide a forum for people of all different views..."

Since a university is so dependent on the universe that surrounds it, SUNY New Paltz is fortunate to have the *Freeman* on its side, supporting, true to its name, freedom of expression. And not only the *Freeman*, but the college faculty and students, the SUNY chancellor, the president and faculty of Bard College, the New Paltz Town Board, *The New York Times* (editorial, Nov. 11), Congressman Maurice Hinchey, D-Saugerties, and the countless citizens who have shown themselves ready to defend and speak out for freedom of expression.

I join with them in saying that New York is fortunate to have a scholar of Roger Bowen's stature, integrity, and courage as the academic leader of the State University College at New Paltz.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.*

# Why we must remember – in spite of Holocaust Deniers

EVERY April, Jews and non-Jews renew their remembrance of the millions of people who were brutally murdered during the Nazi Holocaust. The solemn act of commemoration helps strengthen our resolve to stem the genocide, oppression, and violence that are still being perpetrated, and no country, including ours, can claim innocence.

So it is nothing less than shocking, especially to survivors, to learn that there are individuals and organizations whose avowed purpose is to deny that millions of Jewish human beings were systematically murdered by shooting, gassing, beating, starvation, or in other cruel ways as a direct result of the anti-Semitism that was central to Adolf Hitler's fascist ideology.

Of the more than 11 million victims of the Nazis, close to five to six million were Jewish. They had constituted close to a third of the world's Jews and two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe. Their murder was planned as the Nazis' *Endlösung* – the Final Solution.

**THE SPECTRUM** of Deniers ranges widely – from those who deny the Holocaust altogether to those who deny that they are Deniers, even while asserting that no one was murdered by gassing. They also seek to minimize the number of Jews who were killed, some claiming that at most a few hundred thousand Jews died, many due to wartime hardship. Another Denier tactic is their attempt to downplay Nazi war crimes by stressing, in comparison, what was done by the Allied powers to Germans.

Whenever the vicious propaganda of the small but worldwide Denier movement succeeds in casting doubt on the Holocaust or its dimensions, it weakens the remembrance of the millions of victims whose killers denied them their very humanity. Not surprisingly the Deniers do not remind their often-uninformed audiences of how the Nazis laid the foundation for the Holocaust, fostering German anti-Semitism with hideous portrayals of Jews as sub-humans in newspapers like *Der Stuermer* ("The Stormtrooper"), and in movies like the obscene German propaganda film of 1940 "The Eternal Jew," which pictorially likened Jews to slimy vermin and rats.

**OVER THE** years, the propaganda techniques of the Deniers have varied substantially and in fact have evolved and changed in response to their critics. This is described in the penetrating study of the

Sunday Freeman, April 5, 1998  
Kingston, N.Y.

John Neumaier



Denier movement undertaken by Deborah Lipstadt in the 1993 book "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory." The author gives a detailed account of the people and groups engaged in the systematic effort to deny or minimize the Holocaust. The majority consists of rabid anti-Semites, but with the passage of time some Deniers have become more subtle. In addition to outright Fascists and Neo-Nazis, the Denial movement has attracted a small number of academics, who seek to legitimize Holocaust denial with what they call "Historical Revisionism," challenging the long-established documentation of historians and the eyewitness accounts of Holocaust survivors.

Inevitably the findings and judgments that have emerged from historical research provide different perspectives on the significance and lessons to be drawn from the mass murder and the atrocities that go under the name of Holocaust. These differences are magnified and exploited by Deniers in their announced "revisionary" mission and in their eagerness to subject the tragedy of the Holocaust to debate, in search of *prima facie* legitimacy for their hateful propaganda.

**MY OWN** perspective has undoubtedly been influenced by the murder of my mother at the Majdanek camp and of my Jewish German and Austrian relatives, including my two Viennese girl cousins. Why even draw attention to the ludicrous attempt to deny or minimize their deaths and the slaughter of so many millions of others? The answer is that the Deniers are putting their pernicious allegations before a growing number of people, especially young people on college campuses and on talk shows, people who may not be acquainted with 20th century history. The Deniers' claims are frequently accompanied by open or disguised anti-Semitism. This in turn feeds the hate propaganda that is growing exponentially on the airwaves and in cyberspace. The

World Wide Web now has 163 web sites sponsored by 81 racial hate groups, including 21 Ku Klux Klan and 12 Neo-Nazi groups (Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, Winter 1998).

Looking back, one can see that Holocaust Denial was already present during World War II, even as the Final Solution was being implemented. The German government was zealous in its attempt to keep the world from knowing about the mass murder of Jews and of what was happening at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, and other death camps. My own experience with Denial occurred first in 1945, after the Allies liberated survivors of the Nazi concentration camps.

As a U.S. soldier on duty at a Prisoner of War camp at Fort Robinson, Neb., I was present when German prisoners were shown gruesome newsreels of the gas chambers, the ovens, and the open ditches piled high with dead naked bodies. I will never forget the reaction of the German prisoners' spokesman named Huehnmoerder. When he saw a photograph of emaciated prisoners peering out of their wooden bunks, he insisted that these were not pictures of Jews, but of concentration camp inmates in India, incarcerated by British imperialists.

**THE PLACEMENT** last November of an ad in the SUNY New Paltz newspaper by the "Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust" illustrates the freedom of speech approach which Deniers have utilized to get campus newspapers to present their propaganda. The ad offered \$50,000 to anyone arranging the showing on national network TV of the Deniers' "documentary" on Auschwitz, modestly called "Video of the Century". Of course, neither academic freedom nor freedom of speech obligates a student-financed newspaper to accept every advertisement or pointof view that is put before its editorial board, as both the student editor and the college president (who does not have jurisdiction over stu-

dent publications) readily acknowledged. It was explained that an editorial slip-up had occurred, and fortunately in this case there have been letters to the editor which recognized the ad for what it was.

Typical Denier publications go under such titles as "The Hoax of the 20th Century," "The Six Million Swindle," and "Anne Frank's Diary: A Hoax." With the help of self-described "experts," the so-called revisionists continue to deny the existence of gas chambers at various death camps, though the opposite has long been proven (see for example the authoritative 1990 book "Truth Prevails: Demolishing Holocaust Denial").

**SEEKING TO** equate Nazi crimes with human rights violations by the wartime Allies, the Deniers compare the terrible and unjust internment of loyal Japanese-Americans in the U.S. to the atrocities committed in Nazi death camps. An example of the incredibly crude attempts at humor and irony of which Deniers are capable is a question in one of their propaganda pieces; it asks, what's the difference between six million Jews and 300,000 Jews? Their answer is that the difference is "5,700,000." How can one make light of the mass murder of one's fellow human beings?

Another favored Denial method is to bring up the diversionary issue of Israel in connection with the Holocaust. Of course, this ignores the fact that neither Jews in Israel nor outside of it are of one mind regarding Israeli government policies, Zionism, religion, or attitudes toward the rights of the Palestinian people. In any case, issues involving Israel do not in any way change the facts of the bloody history of the death camps and the genocide against Jews.

We must not let the Holocaust Denial movement weaken our struggle against the killing of innocent people, whatever their ethnic, racial or religious background, and for that matter whether they are Israelis or Palestinians, Iraqis or Iranians, Germans or Russians, Gypsies or Tibetans, North or Latin Americans, Asians or Africans. What matters is that they are our fellow human beings.

*Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.*

# What can we say about 'The Merchant of Venice'?

Sunday Freeman, Sept. 1, 1996  
Kingston, N.Y.

"THE Merchant of Venice," one of William Shakespeare's most frequently performed works, was featured at the Shakespeare festival this summer in beautiful Stratford, Ontario. Able director Marti Maraden situated the stage action in fascist Italy, around 1933 (its original setting was 16th century Venice).

To cope with the powerful overtones of anti-Semitism, an excellent kit has been made available to high school groups. Festival authorities were mindful of the harassing of Jewish school children by some fellow pupils following a 1989 performance of "The Merchant," and, during a 1984 performance, of the spontaneous audience applause that broke out at Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity.

AS A Jew and an admirer of Shakespeare's art, I have more than a passing interest in the great playwright's depiction of Shylock, a depiction that is both brilliant and awful. The issue of creativity that is tinged with ethnic, racial and sexual prejudice stretches through history, and not a few talented artists and intellectuals have harbored anti-Semitic feelings; one thinks of Richard Wagner, Ezra Pound, Martin Heidegger and T.S. Elliott.

In the case of "The Merchant of Venice," the anti-Semitic elements of the comedy are hard to pass off lightly; human history has recorded too much tragedy — from the pogroms that preceded and followed Shakespeare's time, to this century's Holocaust, a horror of unspeakable proportion.

THERE IS a long heritage of anti-Semitism in Europe and the Americas. For centuries, many Christians were taught to view Jews as the killers of Christ. Incredibly, there was once the widespread superstition that on their religious holidays Jews drank Christian children's blood. Exploiting this kind of popular fear and intolerance of Jews, European rulers precipitated periodic massacres of Jews and sometimes their outright expulsion. England expelled its 16,000 Jews in 1290 and did not readmit any until 1656, four decades after Shakespeare's death. The few Jews in England during his lifetime had become Christianized.

The main plot of Shakespeare's play turns around Shylock, who is approached by the Christian merchant Antonio, seeking a loan. Antonio wants to help his beloved friend Bassanio win the hand of Portia, a virtuous heiress. Shylock consents to lend Antonio 3,000 ducats (a huge sum in Elizabethan

## John J. Neumaier

times), demanding "in a merry sport" that Antonio pledge one pound of his own flesh as security if he cannot repay in the allotted time. Antonio is surprised, since in the past he had often insulted, taunted and ridiculed the Jew, but he readily agrees, supremely confident that his various overseas trade expeditions will bring in enough to repay the debt.

LATER, Shylock is angered and deeply hurt when he learns that his daughter Jessica, "his flesh and blood," has eloped with Lorenzo, to whose Christian faith she has converted, and has taken with her Shylock's precious jewels and a ring that belonged to his beloved dead wife Leah.

When Antonio's ships are lost at sea and he is unable to pay back the loan on time, the enraged Shylock demands that he be rendered forthwith a pound of Antonio's flesh, to be taken from the region of the heart. He stubbornly rejects Bassanio's belated offer (via the good offices of Portia) to double or triple the 3,000 ducats.

In court, Portia, disguised as an eminent man of the law, cleverly turns Shylock's seeming triumph into crushing defeat when she reveals that Venetian law prohibits the shedding of blood in civil transactions and mandates the death penalty for any who offend this law. Thus, the Christian is victorious over Shylock, who is deprived forthwith of his fortune and, at Antonio's insistence, is forced to convert to Christianity.

OVERALL, Shakespeare depicts in Antonio a virtuous, entrepreneurial merchant who is loyal and generous to his friends. In Shylock, he depicts a despicable, implacable, miserly moneylender. No doubt but that the Elizabethan audience enjoyed this playing to their prejudices. But what many then and now have overlooked are the subtle qualifications that



Shakespeare provides which render Antonio far less virtuous and Shylock far more complex than appears on the surface.

Though reactions to the play have varied, depending on the period, place and staging, the characterizations of Antonio and Shylock have historically tended to reinforce popular stereotypes and anti-Semitism.

Had Shakespeare been born a Jew, how very differently he might have described the two protagonists. Antonio, light-hearted and light-of-mind, spoiled heir of a prosperous Christian family, could have been shown as simply full of nasty prejudice and envy toward a successful Jewish business competitor. Foolhardy, risking his inheritance on sea ventures that are mainly designed to impress others, Antonio would be seen drinking and playing with his idle friends, for whom he vouches, regardless of their merit or their cause.

ON THE other hand, Shakespeare could have described Shylock within the existing historical context, in which the Church condemned the "sin" of usury, and in which Jews, though prohibited from owning land, were prevailed upon by the reigning kings and princes to fill the role of money lenders, so necessary for the development of commerce and the financing of wars. Shakespeare might have explained that while the public expected Jews to charge interest because they were categorized as "unfaithful," and thus already barred from entering heaven, it hated and envied them for profiting from moneylending.

But the fact is that Shakespeare was born a Christian, though his characterizations were less ethnocentric than those of many of his fellow dramatists who dealt with a similar theme, then and after. Remember how Antonio despised his fellow merchant Shylock, even spat on his "Jewish

gaberline," holding himself superior socially, morally, and of course religiously?

AND IN spite of Shylock's negative traits, one can detect in him what Henry Morgan Hudson (in 1879) called "the remains of a great and noble nature, out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated injuries." Indeed, Shakespeare pictures Shylock as a Jew who is aggrieved precisely because the dominant culture excludes him as a fellow-human being.

Further, Shakespeare's Shylock exposes Christian culture of his time as being profoundly hypocritical, when he reminds his fellow citizens, and incidentally the English of his day, of their practice of slavery: "You have among you many a purchased slave, which like your asses and your dogs and mules you use in abject and in slavish parts. Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs! Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds be made as soft as yours ..."

IN another famous lament, Shakespeare has Shylock speak movingly to the ages: "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, sense, affections, passions — fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"

But for all his bitterness, Shylock had not learned that legal justice is based not only on law, but on who makes and controls the law. Then, as now, the application of justice cannot be separated from power. The power of the law was rightly invoked against the spilling of blood, of even "one drop of Christian blood," but one can't help wondering what if Jewish blood or a pound of Jewish flesh had been at stake? The point is that Jews are no less nor more worthy than any other group of human beings, whatever their religious, racial, or national background.

Poughkeepsie resident Dr. John J. Neumaier was president of SUNY New Paltz from 1968-72 and of Moorhead (Minn.) State University from 1958-68. He is philosophy professor emeritus of Empire State College, New York City. His column appears in the first Sunday Freeman of each month, and is broadcast by short-wave station Radio for Peace International.