

Editor's page

Alan Johnson

Czeslaw Milosz's poem *Sarajevo* begins with the lines 'Now, when a revolution is really needed, those who were once fervent are cool / While a country, raped and murdered calls for help from the Europe it trusted / While statesmen choose villainy and no voice is raised to call it by its name.' It was against this background that the desperate Bosnian Muslims, besieged by a murderous Serb imperialism, reluctantly accepted the aid of Mujahedin who arrived with arms and military experience. Apologists for Milosevic have long exploited this fact. **Marko Attila Hoare** reviews Evan Kohlmann's study of the episode and finds 'as eloquent a refutation as one could hope to read of the idea that Izetbegovic's Bosnian Muslims were in any way ideological fellow travellers of Al-Qaida, or its partners in terrorist activity'. Nonetheless, warns Hoare, there are salutary lessons to learn. If democrats do not support Muslim peoples facing oppression, be they in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Palestine, Kurdistan or Kashmir, 'we drive into the arms of our enemies those who would rather be our allies.'

While the 'seductions of Islamism' were largely resisted by the desperate Bosnian Muslims they have proved more attractive to many European leftists and intellectuals. Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson's important book on the love affair between the social theorist Michel Foucault and the Iranian revolution is reviewed by **Michael J. Thompson**. The marriage between postmodernism and religious fundamentalism is examined and found to have produced an offspring 'wholly against the goals and imperatives of the tradition of progressive politics.'

The social philosopher *Gideon Calder* writes from the standpoint of those who 'opposed the war but support the construction of a democratic, flourishing post-war Iraq'. Here he explores tensions within the work of Michael Walzer, editor of *Dissent*, and author of the classic *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977). Walzer's latest book, *Arguing about War* is a collection of his work on wars, just and unjust, of the last quarter century, and includes his reflections on the recent Iraq war, which he did not support. Calder argues that Walzer, whose seminal work on just war appeared at a time when realism was ascendant and moral discourse eschewed, now finds himself in a radically altered climate in which he has failed 'to insure himself against (mis)appropriation by those for whom his arguments function as a most convenient self-

apologia'. Calder also explores the 'strange distortions of perspective' that he finds produced, paradoxically, by Walzer's methodological preference to work from the 'ground up.'

The Iraq War is also the subject of an important collection of essays, *A Matter of Principle: Humanitarian Arguments for War in Iraq*, reviewed here by **Harry Hatchett** from the blog Harry's Place. The review explores the character and prospects of the small, yet lively 'pro-liberation left' whose arguments are collected in Thomas Cushman's book, and within which Harry's Place has itself played a leading role.

It is the aftermath of war that concerns **Claire Garbett** in her thoughtful review of *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, a study of post-conflict justice, reconciliation, accountability and community-relations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Garbett highlights the book's conclusion that if justice really is to produce reconciliation then popular participation 'from below' and local ownership of the justice process are indispensable conditions.

The role of international bodies in the delivery of political goods, in this case democracy and human rights, is also the concern of **Michael Allen** who questions the characterisation of democracy promotion outlined in Nicolas Guilhot's book *The Democracy Makers*. He disputes Guilhot's contention that the 'democratization industry' continues the clandestine politics of the cultural Cold War and has turned human rights and democracy, once 'weapons for the critique of power' into 'part of the arsenal of power itself.'

The inaugural issue of *Democratiya* concludes with an extended interview with **Jean Bethke Elshtain**. The author of *Just War Against Terror* ranges over the familial and religious background of her thought and confronts some of the most contested questions of contemporary politics: just war theory, humanitarian interventionism, the nature of the threat from Islamist terrorism, the Iraq war, and American power and responsibility in a violent world. She also discusses wider cultural and philosophical questions such as the role of religion in stimulating democratic dispositions, the importance of judging to politics, the question of evil, and the vocation of the public intellectual.

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