

An American Dark Age: Echoes and Memories

By Robert G. Colodny

It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Repression in America

By Bud and Ruth Schultz

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TO publish a book which reveals the dark side of American political history in the first three quarters of this century, a book which exposes the extra-constitutional activities of all branches of the American political

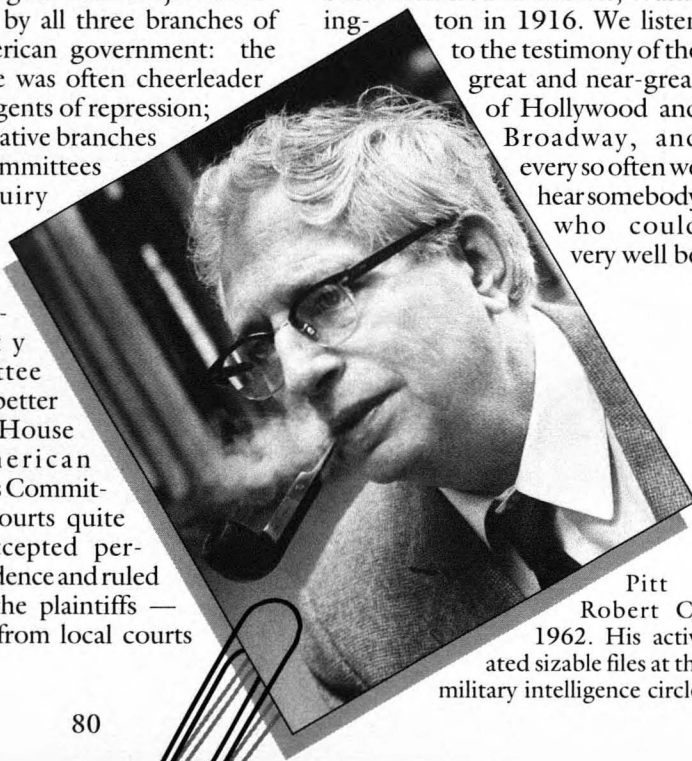
Robert G. Colodny, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Pittsburgh, is the author of numerous works on modern European history and is also an authority on the history and philosophy of science. He was asked to contribute this review because of his personal experiences: during World War II, he was among those soldiers suspected of espionage or subversion and held at a military base in Western Pennsylvania; in January 1961, a *Pittsburgh Press* article intimated that Colodny was a communist subversive, and politicians and the *Press*, in particular, fanned it into a two-year-long controversy. Colodny, then a professor at Pitt, endured federal inquiries as well as the scrutiny of a special panel set up by Pitt Chancellor Edward Litchfield; that panel found no truth in the allegations. The "Colodny Case" led to what many consider a classic plea for free speech in a democratic society, delivered by Litchfield. The reasons that police and intelligence agencies harassed Colodny for 20 years form a major part of his story, which appears here for the first time.

institutions, was an act of great civic courage. I am proud that the University of California, which by 1950 had awarded me three degrees, has put its imprimatur on this volume. I say this now, because later on I must refer to events at that institution which show it in a more dubious light.

This book is the oral history of 35 victims of political repression; its great value is that the victims speak for themselves unencumbered by sociological jargon or political explanations. The book does not attempt to justify the ideas that were repressed or the actions that were advocated. Its focus is simple and clear. American citizens attempting to exercise rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights were subject to repression by all three branches of the American government: the executive was often cheerleader for the agents of repression; the legislative branches set up committees of inquiry such as the Senate Internal Security Committee and the better known House Un-American Activities Committee; the courts quite often accepted perjured evidence and ruled against the plaintiffs — this ran from local courts

to the Supreme Court itself. The bulk of the book covers the period from the end of World War II up to the early 1970s. There are flashbacks to the early part of the century which give historical depth to what is certainly going to be considered an American tragedy by our descendants.

Probably no part of American society was completely immune to acts of political repression on the part of police agencies or congressional committees. The witnesses who are heard in the pages of this book run from the famous or near-famous to the totally anonymous and obscure. We hear the voices of Scott Nearing, busted out of the University of Pennsylvania in 1915, folksinger Pete Seeger, the baby doctor Benjamin Spock, the Wobblies massacred in Everett, Washington in 1916. We listen to the testimony of the great and near-great of Hollywood and Broadway, and every so often we hear somebody who could very well be



Pitt Professor Robert Colodny, c. 1962. His activities generated sizable files at the FBI and in military intelligence circles.

the man across the street, the anonymous neighbor. In most cases we are confronted with a body of ideas and actions that were perceived to be a challenge to the existing order in American society or to power relations or to segments of society who believed their property might be put in jeopardy. Generally speaking, the more important ideas subject to thought control were those pertaining to the rights of labor to organize, to racial minorities seeking redress of ancient grievances — above all, the civil rights advocates of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, and American Indians responding to centuries of abuse by the federal government — and to that hardy band of scholars and ordinary citizens who suggested that socialism was a viable alternative for organizing the common life of the American people.

A Catalog of Heretics and Heresies

The title of this magnificent book derives, of course, from Sinclair Lewis's 1937 book, *It Can't Happen Here*. This was a fictional account of the takeover of the American republic by elements resembling fascists. Whether or not the events chronicled herein portend the takeover of this republic by fascists is a judgment that must be made by each reader. Americans are notorious for their short historical memory, and I suspect that it is only the graybeards among us who can recall the precise steps by which Mussolini's blackshirt thugs conquered Italy in the early 1920s, or can recall the long death agony of the Weimar Republic of Germany which eventuated in the takeover by Hitler.

Most of the events recorded in the testimony of these victims took place within my own lifetime, and as a professional historian, I was generally aware of their nature. Yet in reading again some of the more brutal episodes recounted, I had a feeling that this could not

happen here. I felt quite often that I was listening to testimony from some alien land; but the brutalization of the steelworkers in Aliquippa and Woodland by the Pennsylvania Coal and Iron Police in the early years of this century is part of the history of Allegheny

There developed a fear of a monolithic communist conspiracy...

County. The witness, Pete Muselin, recounts how the Coal and Iron Police, largely made up of Anglo-Americans, terrorized the Slavic immigrants who were working in Jones and Laughlin Steel mills. These were the men, women, and children who had been thought of as "the huddled masses yearning to be free." Often they were brought here by agents of the steel companies. Why were they repressed, why were they brutalized? Largely to keep them docile, and to prevent the idea of unionism from taking root. All this was 70 years ago, and yet towards the end of this book, in the testimony of Tom Quinn, once again a union, the United Electrical Workers, in Pittsburgh, is terrorized by agents of state and church because they wish to build a grassroots, militant union. Then there were the Palmer raids, right after World War I, when thousands of immigrants were picked off the streets and deported without recourse to the courts, treated like garbage and dumped beyond our shores. This was orchestrated by a young bureaucrat in the Department of Justice whose activities run throughout all of the book, J. Edgar Hoover, and the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation. And then there were the agents of the Immigration and

Naturalization Service, who also figure in repressive activities in the South. Given the influx of refugees from Central America clawing at our southern border, has this Immigration Service developed any deeper sense of humanity and compassion than it displayed in the epoch of Hoover and Attorney General Palmer, in the 1920s?

The Palmer raids may be thought of as a paranoid response by American authorities to the Russian Revolution and to the fear that all immigrants from Eastern Europe were somehow or other infected with the virus of Bolshevism. This reminds historians that the first paranoid response to foreign affairs was the Alien and Sedition Laws of the eighteenth century, a response to an equally paranoid fear of the French Revolution. Closer to our own time, an age of revolution and counterrevolution, as American policy was confronted with revolutions in China, Cuba, and Indo-China, there developed a fear of a monolithic communist conspiracy bent on taking over the world and subverting the foundations of American society.

Broadly speaking, one can say with some certainty that most of the political repression chronicled in this volume was the Cold War abroad being brought home, particularly after the outbreak of the Korean War in the early 1950s. The long agony of American involvement in Vietnam produced the last wave, so far, of political paranoia. To understand much of the testimony in this volume, it is necessary to bear in mind that, pursuant to their ruthless quest to identify suspected subversives and to silence them, all branches of the government recruited armies of informers. This was done not only by the FBI and other federal agencies. The same practice was carried out in practically every major industrial center of the United States.

Police-controlled "red squads"

and "industrial squads" were most active in pursuit of union organizers, often referred to in police dossiers as "alien agitators." The most notorious units were in Chicago and Los Angeles. In those cities the expert advisors were

In the penetration of revolutionary groups, Hoover borrowed unconsciously again from the czars.

refugees from the Russian Revolution. In addition to the informers was the blacklist; in his foreword to the book, Alexander Navasky, editor of *The Nation*, writes,

"Not only was there a Hollywood blacklist, but there was also a blacklist in the academic community from elementary school on up to graduate school, in the trade union movement, the scientific community and throughout all branches of government. Conductors on the New York subway system were fired from their positions because of their politics. The blacklist was a pervasive system, a part of the dark side of the American legacy that goes all the way back to the Alien and Sedition Laws."

There was nothing new about informers. They have been part of human society since at least the days of the Roman republic. Tacitus complained that they corrupted the foundations of civic life and the Romans called them "*delatores*." But in the American experience, particularly after World War II, the informers were joined by a host of professional perjurers, a

stable of kept witnesses, who, almost like circuit riders, went from hearing to hearing to bear false witness. And as we shall see later on, there were also professional forgers. In all of this, as I have said, there was not much new. What Hoover added to a litany of U.S. secret police activities was the use of agent provocateurs, infiltrators put into legal organizations to encourage criminal activity so that the organization could be indicted, dragged before a grand jury, and put out of business. However efficient these activities may have been in the furtherance of the plans of Hoover and his associates in other branches of the government, the hard fact is that these activities poisoned justice at its very root and made a mockery of the democratic processes which the investigators and inquisitors publicly said they were attempting to defend. Another Hoover twist was that he attempted to find replacements for leadership that he had destroyed or hoped to destroy. This was particularly true during the time of his relentless pursuit of Martin Luther King, Jr. We know now from information gathered by the use of the Freedom of Information law that Hoover wanted to replace King with Samuel Pierce, the lamentable figure who was center stage last year in the great Housing and Urban Development scandal. In doing this, Hoover unconsciously borrowed from the practices of the *Okhrana*, the dread secret agency of the czars of Russia. The Russian police agents not only attempted to break up revolutionary groups in the Russian empire, they also attempted to organize the workers in unions which the police would control. This was the root of what became known as Zubatov socialism. And in the penetration of revolutionary groups, Hoover borrowed unconsciously again from the czars. We need only consult the career of Azeev, the terrorist who was controlled by the secret police. An-

other fact to be borne in mind is that all of the post-World War II activities take place in that new age of real terror, the age of nuclear weapons. After the Soviet Union broke the American monopoly, it was quite easy for the FBI and similar agencies to play upon a deep-seated American fear that somehow or other the security enjoyed by their fathers and grandfathers had been frittered away or lost by treason. Now the hunted subversives could be linked to a hostile and alien power armed with atomic weapons. In this condition, it was rather easy to create the public opinion without which the witch hunts would have died aborning.

Reading the testimony of most of Schultz's aggrieved witnesses, one is struck by the fact that even when recollecting their ordeal in the tranquillity of the 1980s, their words bear a sense of the terrible isolation which they felt at the time. Few, if any, grasped the total picture or understood that they were the victims not of a personal vendetta, but were engulfed in a political process that had intensified after the election of Dwight Eisenhower and the takeover of Congress by the Republicans.

One exception was Professor Burrows Dunham, chairman of the philosophy department at Temple University in Philadelphia, who was driven out of the teaching profession for 15 years because he pleaded the Fifth Amendment before the House Un-American Activities Committee. In his testimony Dunham states:

The point at which the attack on constitutional rights was leveled was not at us lefties. We were unimportant except to be used as pawns. The attack, I am quite sure, was aimed at breaking up the coalition Roosevelt had established between the liberals at the center and the socialist left. There was a group of people you could call left wing liberals, and these were

the chief victims, the spectacular victims. Alger Hiss was one, Professor Owen Lattimore was another. These guys, along with others, were connected with developing our policy towards China during and after the war. They argued for a coalition government between Chiang Kaishek and Mao Tse Tung, a coalition between the capitalist and communist forces. Those who held that view, Owen Lattimore and John Service and Edmund Club, lost their jobs in the State Department. I mention this because the victims show you where the attack was aimed. The phrases of the period, like 'fellow traveler,' and efforts to prove guilt by association were aimed at splitting the center off from the left. It was very effective. The liberals were scared of being called reds, from Truman on down. They showed you in those days a clean pair of heels. Most did. Of course there were some who were quite stalwart, who really believed in the doctrine of free speech.

Dunham's thesis of a well-thought-out Republican strategy is supported in part by the fact that in the 1950s, where Republicans had gained the majority in a number of states, inquisitorial committees were established. Among these were the Tenney Committee in California and the Canwell Committee in the state of Washington, which ravaged the University of Washington and drove out of the profession a number of its most famous scholars. Most vicious was the Rapp-Coudert Committee in New York. These widespread state committees, by their very ubiquity, maintained in the public mind the notion of a widespread threat to national security. They competed with the congressional committees for prime time coverage, and if one adds up the number of their victims, the state committees ruined more lives than did those of Congress.

I have one quarrel, however, with the Dunham thesis: the inquisitors did not begin during the Eisenhower presidency, they began with the Dies Committee in the late 1930s. And the Cold War did not begin with the election of Harry Truman. The Cold War, if we mean the unremitting hostility between the Soviet Union and the United States, should be dated at least as far back as 1924, when Lenin's Red Armies crushed the White Armies of the counterrevolution and the Soviet Union emerged in the ranks of the great powers. Some of the more bizarre episodes of the witch hunts took place far from the glare of klieg lights and television cameras — behind closed doors. These were events whose records are still locked in secret cabinets in Washington, D.C. To shed some light on this and perhaps throw some refracted light on the themes developed in the Schultz book, it may be useful if I relate a few episodes in which I was directly involved and which have not been reported hitherto.

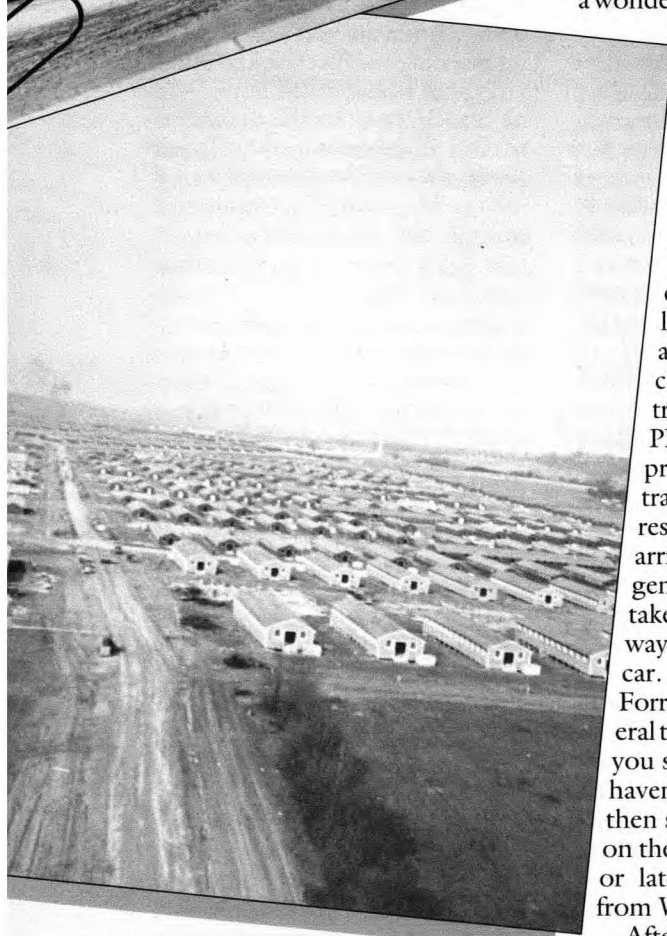
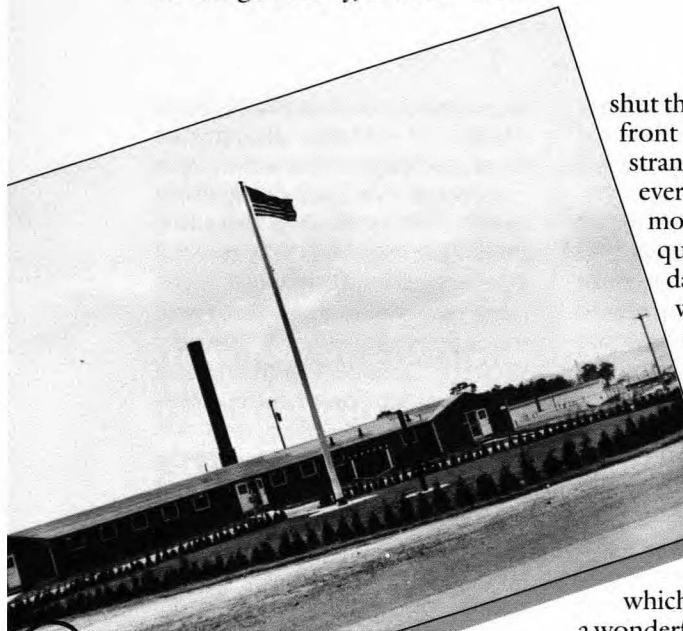
The United States Army, 1941-1943

I had volunteered for military service in late September of 1941 and was inducted in November. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Army combed through its files to find soldiers who had some scientific training. My name dropped out and I was transferred to a new unit that had been established to man the new radar installations that guarded the Pacific Coast of North America. After some initial training I was transferred to the Fourth Interceptor Command headquartered in San Francisco. Here an elaborate detection service scanned the Pacific sky and sea for approaching enemy aircraft or surface vessels. I was asked to join a very small group that was attempting to discover why certain test airplanes flown by the Air Force could not be picked up by radar. This involved rather complex

mathematical analysis of where and when the airplanes disappeared from our scopes. This activity was conducted in a small room where every document had punched through it the words "top secret." In the course of my work, I became involved in discussions with the intelligence officers from the Western Defense Command and the Army Air Force on the activities of Axis espionage, and was asked to write a small piece for the house organ, *The Sky Writer*, about how small bits of information, apparently innocuous and harmless, could be fitted into a kind of jigsaw puzzle, to develop a more complete picture of what we were doing. After this was published, a number of the officers asked me to give what would be the equivalent of mini-lectures on the technique of Axis penetration of North and South America, which I did, based on my experience in Spain and Mexico. In the latter country, I had been attached to what was called the *Oficina Interaliada de Informacion*, or Inter-Allied Information Office, which was monitoring Axis activities in Mexico and throughout the hemisphere. There was a peculiar sequel to these discussions. A certain colonel, who could only be described kindly as an imbecile, came to the conclusion that nobody

'I was taken under guard to the railway station....'

could know that much about Axis activities without having participated in those activities. The consequence of that conclusion was a communique sent to Washington, and after some weeks, I was summoned one Sunday morning to the offices of the regimental commander. Awaiting me were three civilians from the War Department. They took me to a small office,



shut the door, placed a guard in front of it, and began the strangest inquiry that I have ever experienced. After some moments of answering their questions, it suddenly dawned on me that these were questions that one would put to a suspected enemy espionage agent. Somewhat exasperated, I said, "Don't you know that I was a volunteer in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War?" to which the answer was, "What a wonderful cover story." (The International Brigades, composed of volunteers from 53 countries, were formed in 1936 to defend the Spanish Republic. Among the volunteers were about 3,000 Americans, collectively remembered as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.) Some days later, I was summoned again to the regimental commander and handed travel orders which said that PFC Robert G. Colodny will proceed by first available transportation to Camp Forrest, Tennessee, reporting on arrival to the commanding general. A few days later I was taken under guard to the railway station and put in a sealed car. When I arrived at Camp Forrest, the commanding general there asked me, "Why were you sent here?" And I said, "I haven't the slightest idea." He then said, "Well, we'll put you on the casual battalion. Sooner or later we'll hear something from Washington."

After a few days in these barracks, a number of new arrivals turned up, a strange group: CIO executives from Los Angeles, union organizers from John Lewis's District 50, reporters from the *Daily Worker* and other radical

journals, and a number of other characters with a similar background — all soldiers. After perhaps two or three weeks, when there were 30 or 40 of us gathered in the casual battalion at Camp Forrest, we were taken one morning to the railway station in Nashville and put aboard a train. We noticed that on this particular train, next to the cars that we were in, there was a group of military police. The train proceeded east and north for some days and nights during which it kept stopping to pick up other cars. These carried, in addition to a few more International Brigade veterans, a large group of longshoremen from Harry Bridges' union, and a contingent of sailors from the maritime unions. We entered the Monongahela Valley, moving through the roaring series of blast furnaces and endless rows of red-hot pig-iron ingots. This was my first introduction to Pittsburgh. At Penn Station, we were let out to wait for another train. Then, drenched in soot, we resumed our journey on a northerly course. Sometime in the evening, we passed through the town of Sharon, Pennsylvania, and then were ordered out of the train. We were lined up and began a march. Rain began to fall. We walked over roads that ran through swamps on both sides, and finally, in the distance, we began to see flashing lights. We thought they were searchlights attached to anti-aircraft batteries. We reached the crest of a hill and looked down into the valley and there, scattered over flat lands, was an enormous encampment. Through the lights we could see that this was not an ordinary encampment. It was ringed with a high metal fence topped with barbed wire. At regular intervals, we could make out watch towers. As we approached, I recalled a song that I had heard sung by the German volunteers of the Thaelman Battalion in Spain. They called it "*Die Moorsoldaten*" — "the peat

Headquarters, *top*, and barracks at "Camp Shenango" near Greenville, Pa. (Mercer County), c. 1942, where U.S. soldiers suspected of political crimes were held.

Renamed Fort Reynolds in 1943, this massive camp became the principle personnel depot for European-bound troops. It was closed after the war.

bog soldiers." It went: "Far and wide as the eye can wander, heath and bog are everywhere. Not a bird sings out to greet us. Guns and barbed wire everywhere."

When daylight came and we had been assigned to barracks within the camp, we looked around and discovered that this was indeed a very unusual place. It was called "Shenango," a rather ordinary military training base but surrounded by stockades, each stockade heavily wired off from the neighboring one. We learned later that one of the stockades was for members of the German-American Bund, the Sons of Italy, and other ultra right-wing groups. Another stockade held deserters. Still another held cashiered officers. It was these cashiered officers who served us in the chow lines. Though it was a long time ago, I still remember the faces of those men. Never had I seen such sorrow stamped on the human visage. In the beginning, though there were no passes, no mail in or out, we were not harassed in any way. We were put through the normal kind of infantry training, route marches, gas mask testing, small light weapon activity, and so on. Then one of the internees, a journalist, managed to get in touch with Drew Pearson, and he informed that famous journalist that in this encampment were held militant trade unionists, ordinary trade unionists, and the veterans of the International Brigades. In later years, I learned that Drew Pearson took the story to his good friend, Eleanor Roosevelt, who placed it on the desk of her husband. President Roosevelt, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, had adhered to an embargo against the Spanish Republic, but later recognized it had been a terrible blunder. He, as well as a number of the members of his cabinet, such as Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau and Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, had been quite fervent partisans of the Spanish

republicans. The president, we learned, was appalled at the information that Pearson gave him. The result was that after a few more weeks, an order came through that all of the trade union internees, as well as the veterans of the International Brigades, should be sent immediately to ports of embarkation and shipped out to the war zones where their services would be most useful.

The fact that such an encampment as Shenango existed should surprise no one, because a year before this place was set up, the Western Defense Command had rounded up 120,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry, the

'I learned that [journalist] Drew Pearson took the story to his good friend, Eleanor Roosevelt....'

famous Nisei, and had placed them in concentration camps scattered all across the more remote parts of the West. At the time that we were being released to go into the combat zones, the Nisei of military service age were also being enrolled in all-Nisei regiments, one of which became the most highly decorated infantry outfit of the entire U.S. Army, for its magnificent service in Italy and Germany. (For details, see the testimony of Minori Yasui in the Schultz book).

Not long after we left Shenango, a violent race riot broke out, with both sides armed with rifles and carbines. It is sometimes forgotten that Mr. Roosevelt's army was completely segregated. Black soldiers were often subjected to gratuitous humiliations, particularly with reference to recreational facilities. (For details about the Shenango incident, see

the interview with Dempsey Travis in Studs Terkel's *The Good War* [Pantheon Press, 1984]).

Our small band of International Brigade survivors were scattered throughout the services and the various combat zones. I must note that when we got there, the field commanders were delighted to have us. Members of our small band landed with the assault waves on Normandy and before that at Salerno and Anzio, later at Leyte Gulf. But let me conclude this part of this episode by noting that when the war was over, despite our medals, honorable discharges, etc., the FBI renewed its relentless harassment, a harassment that continued for almost 40 years. Harassment in this context meant: surveillance, tapping of telephones, opening of mail, visits to employers and landlords with the aim of obtaining firing and eviction. Rarely were these "suggestions" ignored.

My destination after leaving Shenango was Fort Lawton in the state of Washington. There, with several hundred other infantrymen, we trained for a few weeks and then boarded ships for the North Pacific. My many months of service in the Aleutian Islands were relatively uneventful and undramatic, but I think useful to the war effort. Among other duties, I had that of monitoring Axis radio stations, analyzing their propaganda line, suggesting appropriate responses, etc. I stamped my reports "Confidential" and a messenger took them to advance command headquarters for transmission to "G2," Washington. The commanders on Adak in the Aleutians knew all there was to know about me and were not only understanding, but quite pleased to have my services. Part of my function was to brief the colonels and generals once a week on the progress of the war on all of the fronts. In 1944, Dashiell Hammett, the detective story writer, and I were asked to write a brief history of the

war in the Aleutians, primarily, I suspect, to give those terribly isolated soldiers some sense of the role they were playing. I was offered a field commission but declined it, not out of false modesty, but because the vicious weather and the endless winters had made alcoholics out of most of the officers. Sergeants could not afford to get drunk at \$85 to \$100 per fifth, and I preferred to remain quartered with them. As '44 became '45, a great fleet of battleships, carriers, and other transport vessels began to gather in the great harbor of Adak, for it was at this time that the Army, the Navy and the Air Force were preparing to use the Aleutian Islands as a jump-

ing off point for the invasion of the northernmost Japanese island. After the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war, 50,000 of us, who had served on what we called the northern highway to victory, were repatriated. Recalling the earlier suspicion that I was an Axis agent, I am reminded of a line from the German poet-dramatist Schiller: "Against human stupidity, even the immortal gods are helpless."

University of California, Berkeley, 1949-1952

On March 25, 1949, the regents of the University of California at Berkeley, by a very narrow majority, voted to require a loyalty oath by all employees of the University. This touched off a firestorm that would last for three or four years, and would so wound that institution that a decade later it had not recovered. The regents stated that their action was intended to prevent the Tenney Committee, the California clone of the House Un-American Activities Committee, from instigating large scale investigations of the university system. The faculty, though divided on some issues, was unanimous on at least one point: the regents' action constituted a violation of the charter of the university, since that document vested in the academic senate the sole power of setting the standards for the hiring or dismissal of the academic staff. The intellectual leader of the opposition to the oath was the world renowned German scholar, Ernst Kantorowicz. He was generally considered the greatest living medievalist. Kantorowicz was

a man with impeccable conservative credentials. As a young officer returning from the Lionel von Sanders imperial German mission to the Ottoman Empire, he had joined *Frei Korps* units which fought the Spartacists in the streets of Berlin. Thereafter he went to the University of Heidelberg, where he had a distinguished career. Then he had gone to teach in Italy, and sometime in the late '20s, was expelled from that country for refusing to take an oath to the government of Benito Mussolini. In Germany, he was tolerated because his great work on Friedrich Hohenstauffen, the German emperor who had opposed the papacy in the thirteenth century, clearly praised the principle of strong leadership. This was picked up by a few of the intellectuals in the high command of the Hitler movement. However, when World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, he fled the country to avoid having to take an oath to Adolph Hitler and his regime.

I was one of 10 history graduate teaching assistants when the controversy developed. We met together and decided that either all of us would sign the oath or none would. Practically all of us had studied under Kantorowicz and had taken his two famous seminars, one on Europe in the thirteenth century and the other on the Byzantine world from Diocletian to Stalin. It was our unanimous conclusion that if we signed the oath, we would disavow and dishonor our principle mentor within the history department.

When the Korean War broke out in the summer of 1950, the position of the non-signers became extremely critical. Most of the foreign born, who included some of the stars of the university, felt they had to sign or face the wrath of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Despite the fracture in its unity, a significant minority of the faculty held firm.

Colodny in the short-wave receiving room on Adak in the Aleutian Islands, c. 1944. As a technical sergeant, Colodny's duties included monitoring Axis radio stations.



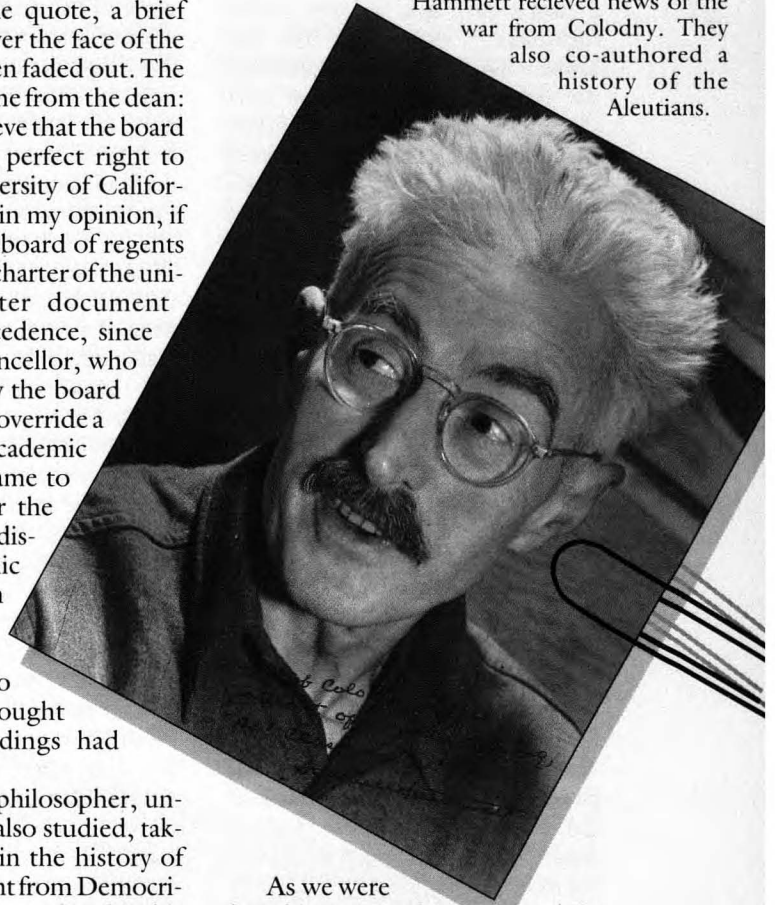
Finally, with the controversy unresolved, the administration hit upon what they thought was a compromise. They established a special committee, the Committee on Academic Tenure and Privilege, which was empowered to hear the cases of all of the non-signers; there would be secret sessions in which the non-signer would express his or her reasons for not signing the oath. The committee would then make a report to the chancellor. Our little band of 10 gathered again, and since I was the oldest, they asked me if I would go before the committee first to test the water, learn what the procedures were, and what the attitude of the committee would be. On the appointed day and hour in a room guarded by the campus police, I came in and saw the committee seated behind a huge mahogany table. Before each of the members was a yellow pad. They did not ask me to take a seat at the table, and so I remained standing. The committee was made up of an historian who was a nationally recognized expert on the career and teachings of Thomas Jefferson, a senior member of the philosophy department, and a dean of one of the science departments who was acting as chairman.

The first question came from the chairman: "Have you written or published anything which could be construed as espousing communist doctrines?" I replied that the university library had bound copies of my masters thesis, "A Study of the Foreign Genesis of the Franco Regime," and of my doctoral dissertation, "The Struggle for Madrid;" that altogether there were 1,000 manuscript pages, and that these documents had been accepted as meeting the highest standards of scholarly work. As to what might be construed from these writings, I said, "I am reminded of the statement of Mazarin (the great French prime minister of the seventeenth century). He said: 'Show me six

sentences written by the most innocent of men, and I will show you six reasons to hang him.'" When I cited the quote, a brief smile flickered over the face of the historian, and then faded out. The next question came from the dean: "Do you not believe that the board of regents has a perfect right to protect the University of California?" I said that, in my opinion, if the action of the board of regents contravened the charter of the university, the latter document should take precedence, since not even the chancellor, who was appointed by the board of regents, could override a decision of the academic senate when it came to the standards for the hiring and the dismissal of academic personnel. With that exchange, committee members rose to their feet and I thought that the proceedings had concluded.

But then the philosopher, under whom I had also studied, taking his seminars in the history of materialist thought from Democritus to John Dewey, and in the philosophy of history from Plato to Spengler, said: "Before you go, is there any question you want to put about the proceedings of this committee?" I asked, "What do you propose to do with the evidence before you?" The answer came not from the philosopher but from the dean: "We will examine everything that has gone on here; and we will write a confidential report to the chancellor and relevant authorities." I then asked, "What principles will guide you in your evaluation?" To this, at first there was no answer from any member of the committee. Finally the dean said, "The purpose of this committee is to determine whether or not your statements can be considered a valid replacement for the oath demanded of you."

Dashiell Hammett of detective story fame served with Colodny. As editor of the post newspaper, *The Adakian*, Hammett received news of the war from Colodny. They also co-authored a history of the Aleutians.



As we were breaking up, the philosopher intervened again. "Mr. Colodny, is there anything you wish to add?" In retrospect, I think that if I had remained mute, it might have been of better service to the cause. But standing there with the light in my eyes, and getting somewhat angry, I said, "I am reminded that when the captors of Joan of Arc were prepared to execute their captive, they requested the learned doctors of theology at the University of Paris to answer two questions: 1) were the procedures in accordance with canon law?; 2) had the statements of the captive revealed adherence to heretical doctrines? In both cases," I said, "the learned theologians had answered yes." There was a dead silence, and I departed.

I told my colleagues that in my

judgment it would be futile to use historical arguments. It would be much better to stand on as abstract a moral principle as one could formulate. I do not to this day know what all of them said before the committee, but I know that one, a young lieutenant commander who had been badly wounded on a destroyer off Okinawa, had told the committee that the Japanese, before they began

**'We didn't burn
books in
democratic
America....We
merely took them
off the shelves.'**

their aggression, had constituted an agency called thought police, or *kampei*. This organization had been instrumental in preparing the way for the consolidation of the power of the militarists that had led eventually to Pearl Harbor. And I know that another one of my colleagues had reminded the committee that in boot camp we had all watched the film "Why We Fight" and had seen hysterical crowds pledging fealty to Adolph Hitler, to Il Duce, to El Caudillo, and to his imperial majesty, the Emperor of Japan.

Despite drawing on our limited pools of historical learning, all of our contracts were cancelled.

In my case, this was not the end of the matter. My doctorate had been awarded in September 1950, and like all fresh Ph.D.s, I was anxious to find employment in my chosen profession. The University of California maintained a large office of teacher placement. This office compiled dossiers consisting of academic transcripts, letters of recommendation from members of the faculty, statements about honors and scholarships,

etc., and sent them to requesting institutions where applications had been filed. Months went by and none of my applications led to an offer of a position. This was rather puzzling, because at that time the universities and colleges were stumbling all over each other to recruit faculty to meet the influx of the soldiers coming out of the armed forces under the G.I. Bill. The '40s had far from exhausted this pool. Then one night at home, I received a telephone call from the dean of a small college in northern California. He told me never to ask the University of California office of teacher placement to send my file. I asked why. He said that in addition to usual documents, there were about a dozen pages of raw material from the files of the FBI. I found this rather astonishing; however I can report that when the information was taken to the office of the chancellor, the policy was discontinued. Most of us eventually found employment. Ernst Kantorowicz, dismissed from the University of California, found a permanent home at the prestigious Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. One of my colleagues became the Mellon Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, and others were scattered through good universities.

After four decades of thinking about these incidents at the University of California, I still remain convinced that since what happened at Berkeley happened throughout the country, the universities, having abandoned the high moral ground, lost something very precious. I might add as a footnote, that when my case was *sub judice* at the University of Pittsburgh — a few remarks on the public debate involving me in the early 1960s appear later in this essay — the philosopher who had queried me so many years before at Berkeley was now chancellor there. He wrote an eloquent and powerful letter in my defense,

addressed to Pitt's Chancellor Litchfield.

San Francisco, 1956

In 1956, having breached the barrier of the academic blacklist, I was teaching a course in modern European history at San Francisco State College. This institution had recently been upgraded from a teacher training institute to a liberal arts college. Consequently it had a very small and inadequate library. When, in my course I came to the Russian revolution, I found that our library had no books for the use of my students, but I knew that the San Francisco public library had a quite large collection of Russian and Soviet materials. I suggested to three students that they go as a group to the library and borrow as many books as they could, to be circulated through my class of about 35 students. The titles I selected included such classics as John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, General Kornilov's *From the Double Eagle to the Red Flag*, Vernadsky's *A History of Russia*, and Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station*. The next day my students came back empty-handed. They reported that the librarian had demanded their social security numbers, their home addresses and telephone numbers, and furthermore demanded to know who had selected this group of books. The students had refused on all counts.

When I reported this to the administration, they took it up with the head librarian at the San Francisco public library. It turned out that this was far from the policy of the library; the particular librarian the students encountered had imposed this screening on his own initiative. I mention this because, as I have noted, for McCarthyism to reach the peak that it did, it required not only acts of Congress, but the direct intervention of thousands of small-scale bureaucrats. This, after all, was the same moment that that miserable pair,

Roy Cohn and David Schein, under the protection of Senator McCarthy, were ravaging the libraries maintained by the U.S. government overseas. At the same time, in what we now call the Sun Belt, local zealots and bigots were beginning to purge high school libraries of such dangerous literature as the works of Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Howard Fast, and John Steinbeck. We didn't burn books in democratic America the way the Nazis did in Germany. We merely took them off the shelves. It might also be recalled that in these same years, 1952 to 1958, some postmen delivered the names of subscribers to *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, and other such magazines to their local police, not realizing that as far as the subscription lists of liberal and radical journals were concerned, the FBI had pilfered these years before, and were probably kept pretty up to date on who subscribed to what.

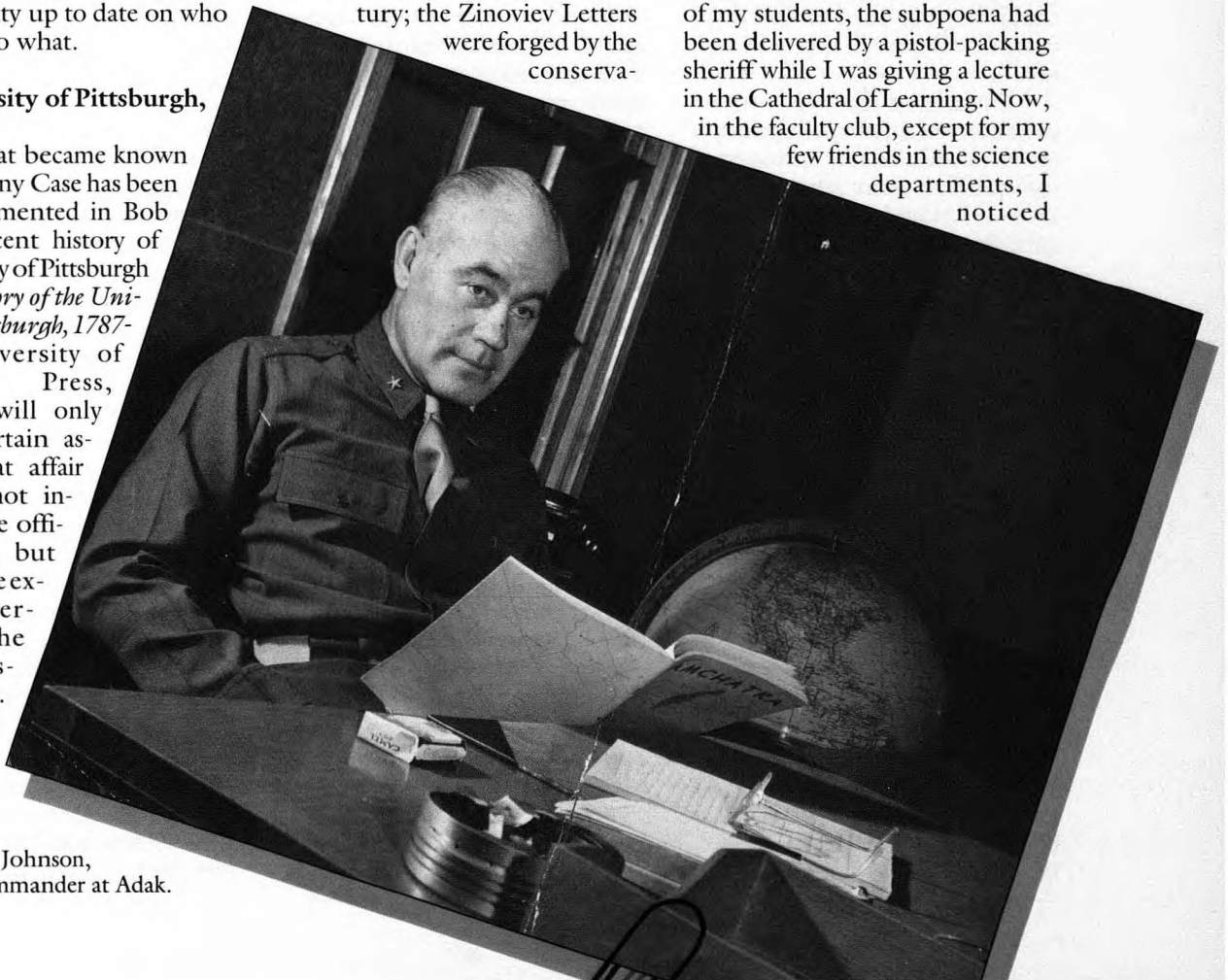
The University of Pittsburgh, 1961-1963

Since what became known as the Colodny Case has been amply documented in Bob Alberts's recent history of the University of Pittsburgh (*Pitt: The Story of the University of Pittsburgh, 1787-1987* [University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987]), I will only mention certain aspects of that affair which are not included in the official history, but which may be extremely germane to the issues discussed above. First of all, the FBI was

involved from the very beginning, and in furtherance of what they called the "Cointel" program (counter-intelligence program), their people in Pittsburgh asked permission of their director in Washington to forge letters supposedly from my students, setting forth the subversive content of my lectures. Such letters were then forged and delivered to members of the Board of Trustees and to the administration at the University of Pittsburgh. What is appalling about this is that here we enter into that nightmare Orwellian world where reality itself becomes what the secret police say it is. The forging of letters and other documents by agents of the state is nothing new. The "Casket Letters" formed part of the charges against the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots; the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were forged by agents of the Russian czar in the nineteenth century; the Zinoviev Letters were forged by the conserva-

tive party of Great Britain in the 1920s; and the Tukachevsky File was forged by Heydrich in the 1930s. What was even more despicable than forging letters supposedly about me was the effort by the FBI to get hold of my students' actual notebooks. When some of these students flatly refused, they threatened them with a subpoena. As far as I know, all of my students called their bluff.

After I came back from the hearings before the Senate Internal Security Committee, my university colleagues were most anxious to know what the procedures were, how it went, etc., and they met with me in the faculty club on the 17th floor of the Cathedral of Learning. I gave as objective an account as I could. However, when I was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee, there was a subtle change of attitude. Much to the discomfort of my students, the subpoena had been delivered by a pistol-packing sheriff while I was giving a lecture in the Cathedral of Learning. Now, in the faculty club, except for my few friends in the science departments, I noticed



General Henry Johnson,
c. 1945, commander at Adak.

that I was being, if not shunned, at least left alone. After three or four days of this, one of the senior members of a cognate discipline came to my office and said, "Look, nobody ever wins anything in a HUAC hearing. Furthermore this ***** (expletive deleted) place is full of informers. There is no point in giving them a bunch of sitting targets."

Shortly thereafter, on the morning of the day that I was to fly to Washington for the second set of hearings, a young priest came to my office. The year before he had been sent by his abbot to do graduate work under my supervision, to determine whether or not this priest could qualify for doctoral work. He studied with me the performance of the Catholic historians during the Frankfurt assembly in Germany in 1848. That day, in my office, he said, "I wish I could come to Washington and testify for you, but I can't. However, I will pray for you. Godspeed."

Considering that most of the cases described in the Schultz book ended calamitously for the accused, the question must arise why the affair at Pitt ended with my clearance. First and foremost, the city of Pittsburgh at that time had a most unique configuration of power and authority. In my judgment, the reasons for success were: 1) the unflinching stand of the chancellor and his advisors; 2) the most powerful union in Pennsylvania at the time, the United Steelworkers of America, through their representatives and lobbyists in Harrisburg, blocked first a bill of attainder aimed at me and secondly a resolution authorizing a scattergun investigation of the university; 3) powerful representatives of the ecclesiastical community, who in other jurisdictions might have sided with the accusers, in this case stood with me; 4) there were two newspapers in Pittsburgh, and the more literate one, the *Post-Gazette*, stood with the

chancellor and with the faculty not only of Pitt, but of all the other universities in the city who recognized a threat to academic freedom; 5) finally, when the affair had gone into its sixth month, three of the most prestigious corporate figures in the city, using connections established during World War II with the highest levels of the intelligence community in Washington, as well as the diplomatic community, decided to get to the bottom of the business, to separate fact from fantasy. When they had concluded their work, they informed the relevant authorities of what they had discovered, and then the most eminent among them went to the most carping of the media and said in effect, "Back off and shut up."

Retrospect and Prospect

Questions will arise in the minds of the readers of the Schultz book: "Will this sort of thing happen again?" "Was McCarthyism a one-time aberration in the stream of democratic life of the United States of America?" Unfortunately, my answer to this is yes, it will happen again. Nixon's plumbers and Reagan's Oliver North both cast a long shadow towards the future. Built into the very fabric of modern society will always be orthodoxies with their passionate defenders, and equally eager subverters of orthodoxies. This indeed is the very pulse of history, the source of not only scientific creativity, but all forms of creativity growing out of the collision and clash of conflicting ideas and opinions. To look at the near future, I would like to borrow from Christopher Marlowe's play, *The Jew of Malta*, the following exchange: "Thou has committed fornication." "Yea, but 'twas in another land, and the wench is dead." I can see a senator from an oversight committee confronting an over-zealous member of one of the police agencies or intelligence agencies and saying, "Thou hast

committed political repression," and the answer, "Yea, but, 'twas under another president, and the victims are dead." If we cannot stop this sort of thing, perhaps we can at least reduce to a minimum the number of innocent victims. I would like to conclude by making a modest proposal: we must begin to bring up our children so that they have the capacity to recognize a political charlatan or an over-zealous bigot, and to despise charlatanism and bigotry. To develop these capacities, we must instill in our children love and respect for two perhaps archaic virtues: honor and valor. ■

Educating Men and Women Together: Coeducation in a Changing World

Edited by Carol Lasser

Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press with Oberlin College, 1987. Pp ix, 173. \$18.95

I N 1836, the leaders of young Oberlin College decided to admit women students, making it the first "coeducational" college in the nation and in the world, although the word itself was not coined until 1874, as Catharine Simpson points out in her essay in the book. To celebrate this popular innovation, historian Carol Lasser and others at Oberlin in 1983 assembled a series of speakers on the general theme of coeducation in the United States. The resulting 11 essays, with Lasser's introduction, are relevant, well-written, interesting and informative. The general reader should be forewarned, however, that the volume's title is deceptively broad, for only the simplest kind of coeducation is under discussion here —namely that at small, select liberal arts colleges. The book omits the more complex forms of internal segregation,