

dictatorship, said Lieberthal, "the reality is that Chinese society is extraordinarily dynamic and there's just a huge amount going on in terms of social change." And, according to Anthony Saich of the Ford Foundation, though the dominant view is that the human-rights situation has never been worse, in fact it has never been better.

Beijing, of course, is much exercised over its image, and has castigated foreign reporters for their unhappy picture of China, calling on them instead to emulate Edgar Snow—the old "friend of China" of sixty years ago. But, asks Jonathan Mirsky of *The Times* (London), which Edgar Snow do they mean? The Snow whose *Red Star over China* (1938) helped to undermine the despotic yet legitimate government of the Chiang Kai-

shek and the Nationalists? Or the Snow who, out of deference to his Maoist hosts in the early 1960s, chose to look the other way and ignore the evidence of what was the greatest famine in human history?

"There are few more important issues facing the West than managing China's emergence as a great power," wrote the *Economist* in May 1996. It took Warren Christopher eighteen months after his appointment to make his first trip to Beijing; it took Madeleine Albright a matter of days. Perhaps that's a sign that, after years of drift under both Bush and Clinton, Washington is at last trying to forge a real China policy. □

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for life. And the faith was passed on, sending Daniel off to the Jesuits and Philip to the Josephites, after a full taste of war. It is only then, when discussing Phil's vocation, that the biographers mention that Dado left copies of the *Catholic Worker* around the house and helped set up a Catholic Interracial Council in Syracuse.

Amid the conformist self-congratulations of fifties' Catholicism, restless and relentlessly honest men like the Berrigans created discomfort, not least for themselves. It began as fairly modest efforts to awaken the lay apostolate and challenge the church's own racism, then to respond to Pope John XXIII and the council, then to confront their country's bloody war in Vietnam. By then they were hardly alone; a surprising Catholic peace movement captured national attention, and the church at all levels began to face the problems that had long troubled them. But it was never enough, less because they were radicals, which they were, than that the nation's capacity for violence, and self-deception, was far greater than anyone suspected.

Polner and O'Grady make it clear that it was never easy for Dan or Phil. Dan loved the Jesuits, he seemed to thrive in an academic environment like Cornell University, he was a very good poet, and he enjoyed the company of some powerful people. But he worried about unmerited suffering and his more relentless brother pulled at him. And Phil, the authors show, had his own vulnerable points: He needed Dan as he later needed his wife, Elizabeth. Both loved being part of the church, and were hurt that some Catholics seemed more angry at them than at the warmakers. Even leaders of the old Catholic peace movement had reservations about the tactics of the Berrigan-led "ultraresistance."

The heart of the book spans the years of intense protest, from Dan's exile to Latin America for upsetting Cardinal Francis Spellman to the Harrisburg conspiracy trial for an alleged plot to kidnap Henry Kissinger. The nearly twenty-five years since the trial take a smaller proportion of the book, though we learn of the Plowshares antinuclear actions, like

## PHIL & DAN AT WAR

### Disarmed and Dangerous

The Radical Lives and Times of Daniel and Philip Berrigan  
Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady

Basic Books, \$30, 421 pp.

### David O'Brien

**O**n February 12, 1997, at 4:30 in the morning, Philip Berrigan, Tom Lewis-Borbely, and three others entered the grounds of Bath Iron Works in Maine and hammered and spilled blood, their own, on the missile launch tubes of a billion-dollar Aegis destroyer. A few hours later, West Bath District Court Judge Joseph Field set a probable cause hearing but refused to jail the protesters. According to press reports, Judge Field said of Philip Berrigan: "He is a moral giant, the conscience of a generation."

Berrigan and Lewis-Borbely go back

a long way. They were first arrested together for the pioneer draft board raid, "the Baltimore Four," in 1967. Since then, they have spent a lot of time in jail, seven-and-a-half years for Berrigan. When not in jail they live with their families in poor neighborhoods, Berrigan in Baltimore and Lewis-Borbely in Worcester, Massachusetts. Berrigan's brother, Jesuit Daniel, now seventy-five, appears regularly at protest vigils in New York, and ministers to cancer and AIDS patients. His missile-hammering days may be behind him. But these Berrigan brothers and their friends are, among many other things, stubborn.

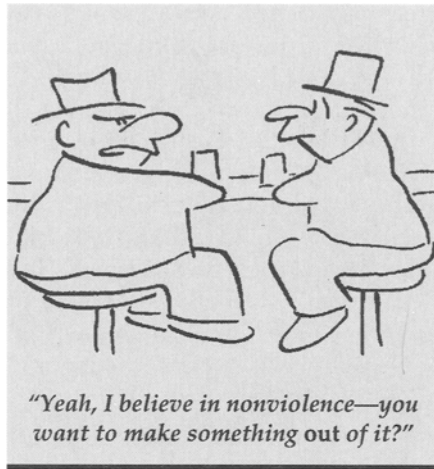
Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady have done a public service by reconstructing the "radical lives and times" of the two best known of the six Berrigan brothers. Family life for the Berrigans in upstate New York in the Depression-era was hard. Their dad, "Dado," never brought home much money, he brooded over his failures, bullied his wife and sons, and long after he was gone he took hard shots in the sons' memories. His anger overwhelmed the love of their mother, Freda, and made leaving home easier. Still, the bonds of family remained tightly drawn,

that at Bath, of controversies over the Middle East, Vietnamese human-rights abuses, abortion, of Daniel's growing commitment to pastoral care for the dying, and the commitment of Phil and his wife Liz to raise a family while spending considerable time in jail. This last section is understandably the least satisfying: We would like to know more about these men as they have lived their beliefs after the spotlight went off.

There is no hagiography here. Both men seem eligible for much forgiveness because they had such a tough dad. The authors make plain that, while brother Jerry became an ally and at times a co-conspirator, the other Berrigan brothers had little sympathy for their radical actions. But the ties of blood, and simple fraternal affection, are extremely strong. The authors describe faults, impatience, occasional hyperbole, touches of self-righteousness, but they also make clear that Dan and Phil have acknowledged them. But the book is "life and times" history, better at describing events colleagues, background, and strategy than at probing the depths of motivation or even searching the great body of Berrigan writing for clues to their inner life.

The authors know that the Berrigans differ from other famous radicals because they are Catholic, very Catholic. Phil still murmurs the Jesus prayer while painting houses and prays from the Scriptures of the day's liturgy. And they are undoubtedly a certain type of Catholic, with that deep assurance that can deal with defeat. They are also very American: They said more readily in the sixties that they wanted to save the country from continuing dishonor. Later they seemed to despair of the civil faith, and so their Catholic faith seemed deeper, perhaps more sectarian, because it no longer had that American trust in the people and hope for their future as its intimate companion.

In the end, the authors think Dan and Phil did what they set out to do, to challenge the "moral rot" of national policy: "Despite their imperfections...the Berrigans honored the country and the world in this, the bloodiest century in human history." They helped move their



church on questions of war and peace, they inspired other good people to do good work, they loved their friends and family, they stayed the course.

A Maine judge thinks Phil is the conscience of a generation, and one Jesuit told Polner and O'Grady he thinks Daniel "the greatest Jesuit since Ignatius." On the most important issue of their time, nuclear weapons, they faced the truth while far too many spent their talents seeking ways to justify the unjustifiable. The gifted moderates now seem convinced that they helped "our" side "win" the cold war, while the Berrigans still prefer, in Dan's words, "to be as marginal as possible to madness." It is possible that only on those margins, with people like these, that alternatives to madness can be imagined, a necessary step to the much desired renewal of our country and our church. □

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## A NATION OF PATRIOTS

### France under the Germans

#### Collaboration and Compromise

Philippe Burrin, translated by Janet Lloyd

The New Press, \$27.50, 530 pp.

### Steven Englund

Consider the French. They march through history saddled with this huge reputation for collective self-esteem—for nationalism. "France, a Nation of Patriots" was not only the title of a famous study by the great (Catholic) historian, Carlton J.H. Hayes; it is also a universally accepted description of the French state of mind. Then along come books like Philippe Burrin's to make hash of things. Or to make us think about what "nationalism" really is.

*La France à l'heure allemande*—the book's more dramatic French title—first

appeared four years ago and established itself as the best general, one-volume synthesis on a topic as delicate as it is complex: France and the French, 1940-44. With an eye for cogent detail and an ear for sound generalization, Burrin embraces all aspects of his topic. From high state policy to low business machinations, he offers a comprehensive look at state and society in the four years that France stood "for herself alone," as Charles Maurras put it. Only the Resistance escapes the author's dragnet. That lacuna—no small one, admittedly—plus the fact that the author has been mediocly served by his translator, are the only things to regret in an otherwise splendid study.

The true excellence of this book is not confined to its panoramic vision. If Burrin is unhesitating in his tough judgments, he escapes the procurator's voice of indictment—as Robert Paxton did not, in his classic *Vichy France*—thanks to his taste for distinctions and a writerly feel for detail that is human, humane, and humorous.

First, the distinctions. Aptly, for a Swiss scholar, the author displays a singular talent for nuance. Nowhere else