

Hazony argues that their anti-Zionist ideology infected the second generation of the Israeli elite, and that this generation has now retreated from the vision and dreams of its forefathers.

To his credit, Hazony doesn't flinch from criticizing the Zionist giants he so admires. He accuses Ben Gurion and his heirs in the Labor Zionist movement of pursuing concrete achievement at the expense of ideas and vision, thereby leaving themselves vulnerable to Buber's intellectual counterattack. He contends that the Jewish settlement movement, which first arose after the triumphant Six Day War in 1967 and grew markedly in size and fervor after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, fell victim to the same syndrome: It built fortress communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip while never adequately articulating a compelling moral basis for doing so.

But Hazony overestimates the impact of a small group of isolated academics and underestimates the benefits of Israel's transformation. Though true believers scorn it as betrayal, the shift away from ideological fervor is nearly inevitable in post-revolutionary societies, few of which can sustain the fire and vision of the revolution's founders. Aspects of Israel's transformation are regrettable: the loss of egalitarianism and sense of community, and the eroding of the nation's distinctive culture and work ethic. But there are gains as well, for Israelis and Palestinians, from living in a mature, prosperous, and bourgeois society striving to make peace with its neighbors and with itself.

—Glenn Frankel

**THE PARADOX OF  
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY:  
Elites, Special Interests, and the  
Betrayal of Public Trust.**

By John B. Judis. Pantheon. 306 pp.  
\$26

**BOBOS IN PARADISE:  
The New Upper Class and How  
They Got There.**

By David Brooks. Simon & Schuster.  
284 pp. \$25

Their books are vastly different, and Judis writes for liberal journals while Brooks writes for conservative ones, but both authors make the same complaint: American political life today lacks a public-spirited elite akin to John McCloy, Averell Harriman, and the other pow-

erful figures who served the national interest in World War II and its aftermath.

The absence of a disinterested elite lies at the center of Judis's case. A senior editor at the *New Republic*, Judis criticizes the populist and Marxist view that American democracy is a sham, its strings pulled not by voters or parties or interest groups but by a power elite or ruling class. In fact, he argues, if you look at the periods since 1900 when democracy has expanded, you find active voters, active parties, active interests, and an active (albeit disinterested) elite. In this sense, an elite is crucial to democracy—the paradox of the book's title. Today, though, the disinterested elite has given way to interested elites, represented by organizations such as the Business Roundtable and the Democratic Leadership Council.

For Brooks, a senior editor at the *Weekly Standard*, the absence of a disinterested elite is a corollary. His main point is this: College-educated members of the baby boom generation have fused what used to be contending sets of values, the bohemian and the bourgeois, chiefly by blending the liberationist cultural values of the 1960s with the liberationist economic values of the 1980s. This fusion has created a new and influential stratum, the bourgeois bohemians, or "Bobos": the stockbroker who sounds like a hippie, the hippie who sounds like a stockbroker. Since this fusion gives them such satisfying private and professional lives, Bobos tend to lack the zeal to venture into national public life. "The fear is that America will decline not because it overstretches," writes Brooks, "but because it enervates as its leading citizens decide that the pleasures of an oversized kitchen are more satisfying than the conflicts and challenges of patriotic service."

Daniel Bell famously observed that the corporation wants its employees "to work hard, pursue a career, accept delayed gratification," even as the company's products and advertisements "promote pleasure, instant joy, relaxing, and letting go." One can't do both, Bell maintained—but Bobos pull it off, according to Brooks. They work hard and play hard at the same time by working at play (climbing mountains, hiking the wilds) and playing at work (dressing casually in offices that evoke tree-houses). Brooks doesn't take himself seriously—he describes his method as comic sociology—but his book is just as incisive as Judis's.

A respectful question for both authors: On the

broad cluster of issues that we group under the rubric of multiculturalism, there is an elite consensus whose content meets a prima facie test of disinterestedness. Every elite white heterosexual male who endorses wider opportunity for those who are not elite, not white, not heterosexual, or not male holds a disinterested view. Is it possible that what's new is not the absence of a disinterested elite, but the presence of a disinterested elite whose agenda differs from its predecessors' and can be pursued by means other than government service?

—Ralph Whitehead, Jr.

### *THE KINDER, GENTLER MILITARY.*

By Stephanie Gutmann. Scribner.  
300 pp. \$25

The latest sex-related scandal to afflict the Pentagon—the U.S. Army's first-ever female three-star general alleges that a fellow general groped her—provides further testimony, if any were needed, that gender remains a problem for the American military. For more than a quarter-century, the armed services have been engaged in an extraordinary effort to integrate women fully into their ranks, prompted by the military's demand for “manpower” in a post-conscription era, and urged on by powerful forces promoting

ness, and combat effectiveness, incorporating women into the force has exacted a heavy toll. She concludes that, short of a full-fledged assault on human nature, the project is likely to mean the end of the American military as a serious fighting force.

Although by no means the only book on women in the military, this may well be the first to consider the subject honestly. Unlike other writers, whether on the left or the right, for whom the issue serves as a proxy for scoring points related to a larger political agenda, Gutmann considers the subject on its own terms. Her approach is that of a journalist. While stronger on anecdote than on theory and analysis, the result is nonetheless compelling.

She empathizes with the women (and men) in the ranks who signed up to soldier and find themselves wrestling with the realities of gender-integrated ships and ready rooms. She is appropriately skeptical toward the activists innocent of military experience who airily dismiss ancient truths about military culture and unit cohesion. She is withering in her contempt for the senior military professionals who, succumbing to political correctness, foster a climate in which double standards become the norm and inconvenient data about female availability for duty and washout rates are ignored or selectively interpreted. The result, Gutmann writes, is an atmosphere within the services of “official avoidance, doublespeak, and euphemism”—and a loss of confidence in the integrity of senior leaders.

Yet one is left wondering whether gender is at the heart of the problems ailing today's military, or whether it is merely one manifestation of a much larger and more complex phenomenon. Gutmann notes in passing that the ongoing transformation of the military “parallels a general cultural drift in the United States.” That cultural tendency—pointing toward a society that is shallow, self-absorbed, obsessed with material consumption—is hardly conducive to the nurturing of military virtues in men or women. If the American military has entered a period of decline, as now seems the case, the explanation goes beyond matters of gender. Responsibility for that decline rests squarely with a people who take



*Male and female trainees at morning exercises at San Antonio's Lackland Air Force Base in 1998*

full equality for women in American society. A project without precedent in all of military history, it rests on the premise that, in war as in other fields of human endeavor, men and women are interchangeable, or at least they ought to be.

Gutmann, a freelance writer, questions that premise and totes up the price paid in attempting to demonstrate its validity. In morale, readi-