



At the Oklahoma City National Memorial, dedicated on April 19, 2000, each bronze-dipped chair bears the name of a bombing victim.

ror than a portrait of a community's five-year campaign to restore peace to its collective heart by discovering an enduring lesson.

Linenthal lays out the so-called progressive narrative (grit brings out the generous and good), the redemptive narrative (a victim's father speaks out against capital punishment), and the toxic narrative ("we still find pieces of glass in our library books"). The book's most indelible story concerns Baylee Almon, the one-year-old whose lifeless body in the arms of fireman Chris Fields became an iconic photographic image. Linenthal brilliantly captures the fetishization of Baylee and the rude exploitation of the baby's mother, with entrepreneurs hawking T-shirts, statues, keychains, even a phone card that promised to "*memorialize* the tragedy . . . in a way that no other depiction ever could."

Linenthal points a critical finger when he accounts for divisions among Oklahomans in deriving meaning from events or in arguing over who qualifies as a "survivor." He handles the design competition for the Oklahoma City memorial with similar skill. But he is often hesitant to criticize the voices he records. To read this book is to sit through an interminable parade of banality: citizens recommending that road signs near the site read "Drive

Carefully / Angels Crossing," television commentators proclaiming the nation "one family." Subtle analysis could have replaced much of the democracy in these pages.

As poignant as his words often are, Linenthal starts and stops with a portrait of the survivor mentality. He chooses not to speculate about the modern meaning of terror, or to address such issues as vengeance. Are there lessons to emerge from the crisis and its resolution? Yet perhaps the unsatisfying aftertaste on finishing this book isn't the fault of the author. As Rev. Robert Wise remarked after seeing the remains of dismembered children from the Murrah Building, "We are not made to understand."

—ANDREW BURSTEIN

THE NEW THOUGHT POLICE:
Inside the Left's Assault on Free Speech
and Free Minds. By Tammy Bruce.
 Prima Forum. 300 pp. \$23.95

There is much to quibble about in this polemic, but to judge it by the standards of an academic treatise, or even those of a comprehensive popular book, would be to miss an absolute jewel with a vitally important message. Bruce points out the futility and the dangers of trying to advance civil rights by restricting civil liberties. Along the way, she provides an insider's—indeed, an apostate's—account of the hostility that much of the contemporary Left feels toward independent thinking.

A columnist and a former president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Bruce sets the tone with the story of the *Dr. Laura* battle. While preaching toleration of gays and lesbians, TV talk-show host Laura Schlessinger expressed the view that homosexuality results from a "biological error." Led by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), a coalition of feminist, gay, and purportedly antibigotry organizations launched a mammoth protest. It aimed not to discredit Schlessinger's ideas, which were widely and wildly misrepresented, but to silence her. "If she can't be controlled," GLAAD executive director Joan Garry is quoted as saying, "she must be stopped." Major advertisers abandoned *Dr. Laura*, TV stations moved it from mid-morning to postmidnight slots, and the production com-

pany finally canceled it.

Bruce characterizes herself as “an openly gay, pro-choice, gun-owning, pro-death penalty, liberal, voted-for-Reagan feminist,” an ideological blend that didn’t endear her to feminist leaders. When Bruce led the Los Angeles NOW chapter, the organization’s national leadership pressured her not to criticize O. J. Simpson as a wife beater. Alienating black organizations and leaders could endanger the coalition built around race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity. Liberation, Bruce realized, was secondary; the principal goal was defending this alliance of victims.

Though Bruce’s descriptions of the depredations of the contemporary antiliberty Left are compelling and, from my own experience, on target, her explanations sometimes sound a bit facile. She notes the double standard embodied in university speech codes, for instance, but says little about its philosophical origins. Her concluding chapter equates devotion to capitalism with devotion to liberty, an argument that overlooks the long tradition of leftists devoted to free speech—not to mention the occasional capitalist who would gladly tolerate a police state so long as the trains run on time.

Bruce is at her best when telling stories, some of which are more extraordinary than she realizes. During the Simpson trial, she wrote to Judge Lance Ito and complained that he was treating prosecutor Marcia Clark with less courtesy than he was lavishing on the male attorneys. At Ito’s invitation, Bruce and a fellow NOW leader went to the judge’s chambers for a private, off-the-record meeting. Afterward, Ito seemed to treat the female prosecutor with greater respect. “Although that event did not have an impact on the trial’s eventual outcome,” Bruce writes, “it’s an example of a kind of activism that can and must be engaged in.”

It’s also the kind of activism that, had Simpson been convicted, might well have triggered a reversal. Judges aren’t supposed to meet with partisans in the middle of a trial, even partisans seeking nothing more than courtroom courtesy. But the lack of legal sophistication that allows Bruce to tell the Ito story so innocently also accounts for much of the unvarnished power and directness that make her book a valuable contribution to the literature of liberty.

—HARVEY A. SILVERGLATE

HISTORY

TAKING HAITI:

Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940.

By Mary A. Renda. Univ. of North Carolina Press. 414 pp. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper

No one who has been to Haiti is likely to forget the experience, and almost everyone who has been there retains an interest in the country and its culture. It is one of those countries that, though small and unimportant from an economic or political point of view, has a history that reaches beyond its boundaries, a history of unequaled tragic grandeur. Haiti’s heroic but unsuccessful search for security and freedom seems profoundly to epitomize the individual human condition.

President Woodrow Wilson sent American troops to stabilize Haiti in 1915, and they remained until 1934. At first sight, an account of the occupation through the lens of current

academic obsessions with race, gender, and class might seem a depressing prospect, an opportunity for the mechanical repetition of ideological clichés, but Renda transcends the genre by the excellence of her writing, the quality and interest of her evidence, and her temperate voice.

Renda sets out to deal with the American attitude toward Haiti rather than with the Haitian attitude toward America. She first asks what the Americans thought they were doing in Haiti, from presidents down to the marines who carried out the occupation. Were they restoring order to a chronically chaotic country, bringing Christian civilization to benighted pagans, securing a strategic base at Môle St. Nicholas (one of the few deep-water harbors in the Caribbean), seeking new markets and economic domination, or some combination of all these? Although no definitive answer can be