



reached the point, in rhetoric at least, though not I think in reality, of a denial of the idea of a common culture and a single society. If large numbers of people really accept this, the republic would be in serious trouble."

Signs are that the excesses of the "ethnic upsurge" will be their own undoing. Already, they have united outstanding scholars of the left, right, and center in a chorus of condemnation. The spectacle of Marxist historian Eugene Genovese embracing conservative Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* is typical of this unusual united front. Still, one must share Schlesinger's concern about those students who have been taught by "Afrocentric" scholars that AIDS is a white-engineered conspiracy directed at the black population, or, even more sweepingly, that Europeans are "ice people," responsible for the world's three D's—"domination, destruction, and death." No one born in this century needs to be told how poisonous such ideas can be.

DEMOCRACY AND DELIBERATION: New Directions for Democratic Reform. By James S. Fishkin. Yale. 172 pp. \$17.95

Soundbites, Michael Dukakis in a tank, George Bush munching on pork rinds with Iowa farmers—so ran the presidential campaign of 1988. Even the "issues" were vacuous: Willie Horton, the ACLU, and "read my lips."

Fishkin, a University of Texas political scientist, may not have the cure for the problem, but he has come up with a good idea: a "National Issues Convention," to be held in January of the coming year. Six hundred delegates, demographically representative of the U.S. population, will gather for three days of direct deliberation with the candidates for both parties' presidential nominations. The delegates will be divided into separate party meetings and at the end of the third day will be polled on the issues and their choice of candidate. The Public Broadcasting System will televise the proceedings to a national audience.

Although such a proposal hardly needs intellectual justification, Fishkin provides just that in *Democracy and Deliberation* (to be published shortly before the convention). "True democracy," argues Fishkin, depends on three conditions: political equality, protection against the tyranny of the majority, and real deliberation. Fishkin holds that deliberation is a means to the fulfillment of the first condition, political equality. But despite recent convention reforms, endless primary campaigns still prevent conventions from being effective deliberative bodies. An issue-oriented mini-convention coming before the primaries may be the solution, says Fishkin. Whether it is or not, *Democracy and Deliberation* makes worthwhile reading for anyone concerned with the ills of our political system.

Science & Technology

STRANGERS AT THE BEDSIDE: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making. By David J. Rothman. Basic. 303 pp. \$24.95

Once upon a time—it was only a few decades ago, but it now seems something out of an old