officials will witness substantial and even fundamental changes.

Can we be confident that the prospects of urban blacks are greatly heightened by increased black power at the local level, especially since that black power is most apparent in heavily black cities? Or is their future much more closely tied to private sector changes, population shifts, economic upheavals, and national and state urban policies and programs. The experience of American cities during the past several decades strongly argues for the supremacy of the latter set of factors. Internal urban political processes and institutions offer a distinctly inferior explanation of growth, change, and decay. There is reason to be decidedly pessimistic about the ability of urban blacks and their mayors to shape their own destinies. Even black municipal-employment gains may prove to be ephemeral. We can assume that blacks in deteriorating central cities will continue to struggle over a steadily declining level of public resources.

KENNETH R. Mladenka
Texas A&M University

Reply
A Response to Kenneth R. Mladenka

TO THE EDITOR:

It is difficult to argue with this reasonable commentary: the assertion that economic conditions beyond the control of city government will influence black public employment levels (which I take to be the central theme of the discussion) is certainly correct. It is also, I believe, entirely compatible with my present article. In a paper delivered at the 1981 meetings of the American Political Science Association (Eisinger 1981), I offered a preliminary analysis of the impact across cities of various economic factors on black municipal employment. Although measures of economic vitality are based on the health of the respective local economies, they are reflective of national forces at work.

Black proportional representation in the local civil service bureaucracy in all job categories varied inversely with measures of local fiscal and economic distress. As local unemployment rose, for example, the black presence in the civil service declined. Black penetration of the municipal bureaucracy was also lower in cities that experienced low or negative growth of manufacturing jobs and per-capita income. I argued that such economic factors would likely make their influence felt on the local public treasury, which in turn would affect the size and stability of the public work force. I concluded my analysis of the influence of economic conditions by suggesting that cities where blacks have the highest levels of bureaucratic penetration relative to their population are in fact those with growing private sector economies and stable rather than shrinking municipal work forces.

Cities governed by black mayors tend to be quite different. Many are in such poor economic condition that they have been, until the present, essentially wards of the federal government. In this era of Reagan federalism, however, their main source of fiscal support is drying up. The economic recession compounds their problems. Such cities have become our chief symbols of urban despair in a society not much interested either in the urban condition or in minority groups.

Black public employment levels in these cities are, of course, relatively high. But, contrary to Professor Mladenka’s conclusion that “blacks fare best in old, deteriorating central cities,” those levels are not as high relative to black population as in growing, economically more vital cities.

Nevertheless, I would argue that black public employment levels in poor cities would be considerably lower were it not for the existence of black political power in those places. In a regression analysis controlling for the various economic conditions, the presence of a black mayor still emerges as a significant factor associated with black employment. Thus, the cautious optimism I voiced about the effects of black political power, even in poor cities, is not, I think, entirely misplaced.

None of this is to say that a strategy of employment and job creation based largely on the local public sector will necessarily prove the most effective for creating and sustaining a significant black middle class. Indeed, after two decades of sharp growth the number of local public employees declined between 1980 and 1981, a trend we may expect to continue. Preliminary inspection of 1980 affirmative action data from the sample cities shows that blacks were already beginning to lose ground gained during the 1970s. But, of course, depression-like unemployment figures in the current private sector hardly support the notion that blacks seriously misplaced their energies by focusing on public employment.

No one these days is faring well in the current economy. Urban blacks are hurt especially. But political power, even at the local level, I believe, provides a very modest buffer for some against the tides of economic disaster generated by national and international forces and policies. In good times, political power is more than a buffer;
in bad times, it may serve mainly defensive purposes, but it is better than nothing.

PETER EISINGER

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Reference

Eisinger, P. 1981. The economic conditions of black employment in municipal bureaucracies. Paper delivered at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, New York City, September 3-5.

ON BOOK REVIEWS

TO THE EDITOR:


It simply is not true that I "return to viewing Nazis and Nazism as a monolithic bloc undifferentiated by either factions or chronological segments." Not only do I briefly mention the commonly known factions and segments to which Orlow refers, citing his own work (pp. 1-4), I develop a typology of "alienated," "normal," and "dialectical" National Socialists whose concerns were, in a sense, totally different (chaps. iv-vi). It is in this context that I argue that Nazis generally shared millenarian attitudes.

Orlow complains that my "reasons for condemning Nazis are largely matters of faith and thus not subject to the usual tests of social scientific verification." I am a classicist, and I think that a philosophy of order can be founded simultaneously in an experiential epistemology and in faith, but I grant Orlow's right to this positivistic, methodological critique. Unfortunately, Orlow extends the objection into a misconstruction of my thesis.

Orlows represents me as contending that "as millenarians the Nazis were wrong because they should have known that all millenarianisms are Christian heresies." I never state or imply any such thing. Rather, I maintain that the National Socialists had perceptions and goals that were utterly mad as measured against reality that is knowable to man through experience and affirmed to him in faith. For example, Hitler believed that, in killing Jews, he was literally annihilating demons. I think that philosophy can speak to this claim; it does not need to shrug its shoulders, lamenting that Hitler's view is a matter of opinion.

JAMES M. RHODES

Marquette University

Reply

TO THE EDITOR:

After reading Professor James M. Rhodes's comments on my review of his book, The Hitler Movement, I think that our respective positions with regard to the points of controversy he raises are primarily methodological and conceptual rather than suitable for factual analysis.

It is true, of course, that in a relatively short book such as Professor Rhodes's, it is difficult to do justice to the various factions within the Nazi Party, so that Professor Rhodes's point here is perfectly appropriate. On the other hand, Professor Rhodes feels that despite the brevity of his book it is relevant to bring in a causal connection beginning with John of Revelation in order to comprehend the Nazi phenomenon. It is precisely at this point that I am afraid we continue to disagree: I do not feel that causal connections reaching over many generations are very effective in explaining contemporary phenomena. I can well understand that Professor Rhodes disagrees on this point, but I think here we have an unbridgeable hermeneutical difference.

Similarly the categorization of historical actors into moral categories is something which I believe the historian must be careful in handling. I would certainly grant Professor Rhodes that Hitler was an evil man, though I am not sure that the cause of historical explanation is markedly advanced by using essentially theological and philosophical categories in classifying the evil that we find in the Nazi regime. That is to say, my own concept of historical explanation would be to remain as free as possible of predetermined moralistic explanatory systems. Again here I would certainly grant Professor Rhodes that his approach has a validity of its own. I am not sure, however, that it is one that many contemporary historians would feel comfortable with.

DIETRICH ORLOW

Boston University