NATIONAL REVIEW

12 CLASSIC ESSAYS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BY JACK FOWLER

ONE OF THE GREAT frustrations of being NATIONAL REVIEW's publisher is knowing that you sit on over six decades of profound evergreen content. Much of it lost to history? No, not at all. But, if a tree falls in a forest . . . How about, lights hiding under the bushel baskets? So what to do about that — how to look through the vault, pick from among the many treasures stored there, and reintroduce exceptional conservative thought and thinkers to new generations?

Surely, this is precisely why God invented the e-book.

Here we are with a little collection, subjective as all heck, that is a gathering 12 terrific pieces from the annals of NATIONAL REVIEW (the magazine, that ink and paper and dead-tree thing). For this dozen, the bushel basket is lifted, the light now shines brighter.

Great writers, eclectic topics, brilliant writing: Those are the makings of a delightful electronic compendium. Prediction: You will like this book. A lot.

My thanks to Brooke Rogers, Luba Myts, Ericka Andersen, Greg Williams, and Erik Netcher for making this happen.

– JACK FOWLER
Publisher, NATIONAL REVIEW

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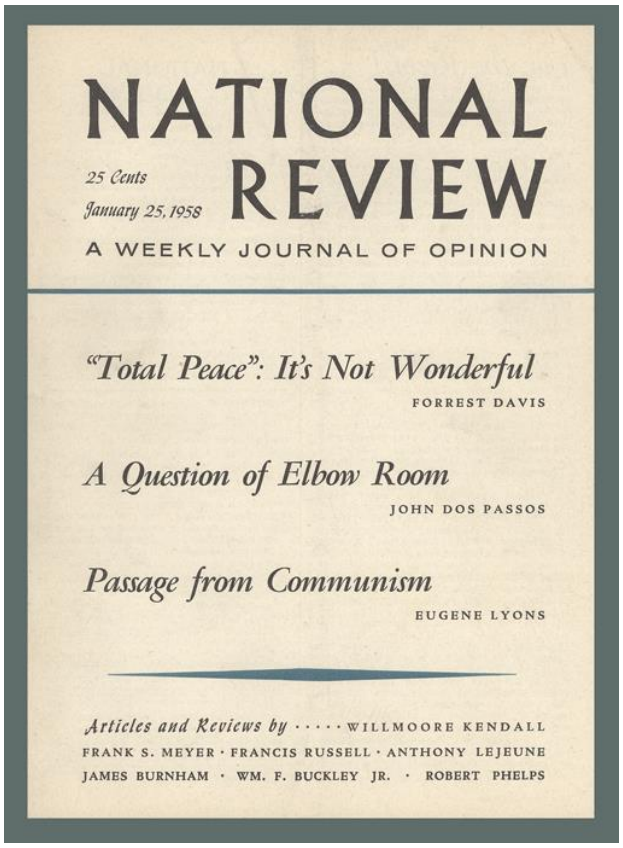


A Question of Elbow Room

BY JOHN DOS PASSOS

January 25, 1958

With the growing complexity of our economy and the consequent rise of bureaucracy goes a decline of freedom. Can the trend to serfdom be reversed?

INDIVIDUALITY is freedom lived. When we use the word individuality we refer to a whole gamut of meanings. Starting from the meanings which pertain to the deepest recesses of private consciousness, these different meanings can be counted off one by one like the skins in the cross section of an onion, until we reach the everyday outer hide of meaning which crops up in common talk.

When we speak commonly, without exaggerated precision, of an individual don't we mean a person who has grown up in an environment sufficiently free from outside pressures and restraints to develop his own private evaluations of men and events? He has been able to make himself enough elbow room in society to exhibit unashamed the little eccentricities and oddities that differentiate one man from another man. From within his separate hide he can look out at the world with that certain aloofness which we call dignity.

No two men are alike any more than two snowflakes are alike. However a man develops, under conditions of freedom or conditions of servitude, he will still differ from other men. The man in jail will be different from his cellmates but his differences will tend to develop in frustration and hatred. Freedom to develop individuality is inseparable from the attainment of what all the traditions of the race have taught us to consider to be the true human stature.

Fifty years ago all this would have been the rankest platitude, but we live in an epoch where the official directors of opinion through the schools, pulpits and presses have leaned so far over backwards in their efforts to conform to what they *fancy* are the exigencies of society based on industrial

mass production, that the defense of individuality has become a life and death matter.

It is a defense that a man takes on at his peril. The very word has become suspect. Even to mention individualism or individuality in circles dedicated to the fashionable ideas of the moment is to expose oneself to ridicule. "Listening to papers on individualism — how boring!" exclaimed a lady to whom I tried to explain over the phone what I was doing in Princeton.

The Founders on "Happiness"

When all the discussions of the position of man in the framework of government that had obsessed so many of the best minds of the century came to a focus in 1776, the chief preoccupation of the state-builders in America was to establish institutions in their new country which would allow each citizen enough elbow room to grow into individuality. They differed greatly on how best to bring about that state of affairs but there was no disagreement on fundamental aims. Protection of the individual's happiness — the assurance of the elbow room he needed to reach his full stature — was the reason for the state's existence.

Thomas Jefferson and Gouverneur Morris held very differing views on the problems of government. Jefferson was an agrarian democrat who believed that every man was capable of taking some part in the government of the community; Morris was a city-bred aristocrat who believed that only men to whom wealth and position had given the advantage of a special education were capable of dealing with public affairs; but when Morris wrote George Washington his definition of statesmanship — "I mean politics in the great Sense, or that sublime Science which embraces for its Object the Happiness of Mankind" — he meant the same thing by the word happiness as Jefferson did when he wrote it into the Declaration of Independence. To both men it meant elbow room. Elbow room is positive freedom.

Consult any sociologist today as to the meaning of happiness in the social context and he'll be pretty sure to tell you it means adjustment. Adjustment, if it is freedom at all, is freedom of a very negative sort. It certainly is the opposite of elbow room.

The outstanding fact you learn from reading the letters of the men of 1776 was that none of them had any illusions about how men behaved in the political scheme. A radical idealist like Jefferson allowed for the self-interest (real or imagined) of the average voter, or for the vanity and ambition and greed of the officeholder, as much as a cynical conservative like Gouverneur Morris.

Both parties understood the common man as well as any of the more desperate demagogues we have with us today. They allowed for his self-seeking, for his shortsightedness, his timidity, his abominable apathy, his only intermittent

public spirit. The difference was that the statesmen of the early republic used that "sublime Science" in the service of their great statebuilding aims. Using men as they found them, they managed to set up the system of balanced self-government which made possible the exuberant growth of the United States.

In Jefferson's day the average citizen had a fair understanding of most of the workings of the society he lived in. The years that stretch between us and the day of his death have seen the shape of industry transformed in rapid succession by steam power, electric power, the internal combustion engine, and now, by jet propulsion and the incredibly proliferating possibilities of power derived from nuclear fission and fusion. Any social system of necessity molds itself into shapes laid down by the daily occupations of the individual men who form its component parts. The mass-production methods of assembly-line industry have caused a society made up of individuals grouped in families to give way to a society made up of individuals grouped in factories and office buildings, for whom family life has been relegated to the leisure hours.

Modern Political Apathy

Life in our drastically changing industrial world has become so cut up into specialized departments and vocabularies, and has become so hard to understand and to see as a whole, that most people won't even try. Even people of first-rate intelligence, at work in various segregated segments of our economy, tend to get so walled up in the particular work they are doing that they never look outside of it. Even if they remember that every man has a duty to give some of his time and some of his energy to the general good, they don't know how to go about it.

Enormously complicated political institutions have grown up in response to the exigencies of the industrial framework. Instead of the farming communities which Jefferson expected to be the foundation of self-government we have a population concentrated in cities and suburbs. Instead of living under the least possible government, most of the American people are living under an accumulation of often conflicting sovereignties.

A man working for General Motors in Detroit, for an example, is subject to the management of his corporation, and to the often arbitrary government of the United Auto Workers. He is subject to the traffic police on the road on his way to and from work, to the taxes and regulations of the town where he lives, to the taxes and regulations of the state of Michigan and to the ever-expanding authority of the federal government. Each of these sovereignties has the power to make itself extremely disagreeable if he crosses its bureaucratic will. To hold his end up against this panoply of disciplinary powers, the man has only the precarious right to hold up his hand in the meeting of his union local, and the right to put his cross on the ballot in an occasional election, opposite the name of some

politician he has perhaps only heard of in the confusion of electoral ballyhoo.

Is it surprising that the common man is hard to coax out of the shell of political apathy he has grown to protect himself from the knowledge of his own helplessness? The first step towards restoring to this man a sense of citizenship would be to explain his situation to him in terms which have reference to the observable facts of his daily life. A fresh political vocabulary is needed before we can try to reset the individual cogs so that they mesh into the wheels of government.

None of this means that Thomas Jefferson's or John Adams' aspirations, to build a state which would afford the greatest possible amount of elbow room to the greatest number of its citizens, are obsolete. Their "sublime Science" was based on an understanding of factors in human behavior which have not changed since the beginnings of recorded history. Newton's basic principle of gravitation has not been superseded. It has been amended and amplified by Einstein's formulae. Newton's still remains one of the explanations through which mathematicians cope with the observable facts of physics. In a somewhat similar way, if men could be found to apply to political problems the sort of first-rate rigorous thinking which we have seen applied to physics in our lifetime, and if the study of the science of state-building should thus come into its own again, the great formulations of the generation of 1776 would still be found valid.

Buried Treasure

If there were to grow up in this country a generation of young men and women who felt that the most important thing in life was to restore elbow room to the people of the United States, they would find in the records of the founders of the Republic a storehouse of the skills and mental attitudes they would need in their work. They would find that every word which was spoken or written on the art of politics between 1775 and 1801 would take on a new urgency.

By a reapplication of the vocabulary of freedom they might find some formula through which to apply the basic tenets of individualism as directly to our daily lives as Jefferson and his friends applied them to the everyday world they knew. Lord knows for the last twenty years we have done enough talking about democracy in this country. Maybe the reason *why* the talk doesn't turn into useful action is because the terms don't apply to our lives as we live them.

Jefferson's ideas are particularly cogent to us now because among the leaders of the American Revolution he led the radical wing which was in favor of more popular rule rather than less. He was the chief leader of the tendency which led us to universal adult suffrage. In a letter he wrote a few days before his death, refusing on account of the state of his health an invitation to spend the

very Fourth of July which was destined to be his last with a group of admirers in Washington City, he spoke happily of the blessings of self-government and of "the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion," and rephrased the basic conviction of his life with characteristic vehemence: "The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God."

It is one of the magnificent ironies of history that the zealots for total bureaucratic rule, whose dogma provides them with boots and spurs to ride the mass of mankind, justify themselves by the same political phraseology which the men of Jefferson's day hoped would make forever impossible the regimentation of the many by the few. Unfortunately, the practice of the demagogic dictatorships abroad is not so far from our own as we would like to think. The redeeming feature of our bureaucratic government is that the machinery still subsists within it by which the popular will can effect its transformation in any conceivable direction. All we need is the wit and the will.

The Rise of Conformity

It is always well to remember that the commonest practice of mankind is that a few shall impose authority and the majority shall submit. Watch any bunch of children playing during a school recess. It is the habit of individual liberty which is the exception. The liberties we enjoy today, freedom to express our ideas if we have any, freedom to jump in a car and drive any place we want to on the highway, freedom to choose the trade or profession we want to make our living by, are the survivors of the many liberties won by the struggles and pains of generations of English-speaking people who somehow had resistance to authority in their blood. Their passion for individuality instead of conformity was unique in the world. What the generation of 1776 did was to organize those traditions into a new system.

When the British troops marched out of Yorktown to surrender to Washington's army one of their bands played a tune called "The World Turned Upside Down." In the long run the people of the United States have managed to make the promise of that tune come true. Underdog has come mighty near to becoming topdog. The other side of that medal is that the cult of the lowest common denominator has caused brains, originality of mind, quality of thought to be dangerously disparaged. Conformity has been more prized than individuality. All the same, we can write in the credit column that there has never been a society where so many men and women have shared a fellow feeling for so many other men and women. With every change in economic organization new class lines and stratifications have appeared, but they have hardly outlasted a generation or two. The old saying about three generations from shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves has turned out

profoundly true. Compared to the rest of mankind, we have come nearest to producing a classless society. Ask any recent immigrant.

Nine times out of ten lie will tell you that what struck him first in the United States was that feeling of the world turned upside down. The question today is whether, for all its wide distribution of material goods, this classless society offers the individual enough elbow room to make his life worth living.

Right from the beginning the wise men have said that democracy would end in the destruction of liberty. Washington in his last years, and John Adams and the whole Federalist faction, thought universal suffrage would end in demagoguery and despotism. Their reasoning was the basis of the lamentations of the school of Brooks Adams and Henry Adams at the beginning of this century. Hamilton's "your people is a great beast" was echoed by Justice Holmes in his explosion to Carl Becker: "Goddamn them all, I say." Since the earliest days only a small minority have at any time really believed in the privacy of their own consciences that American democracy would work.

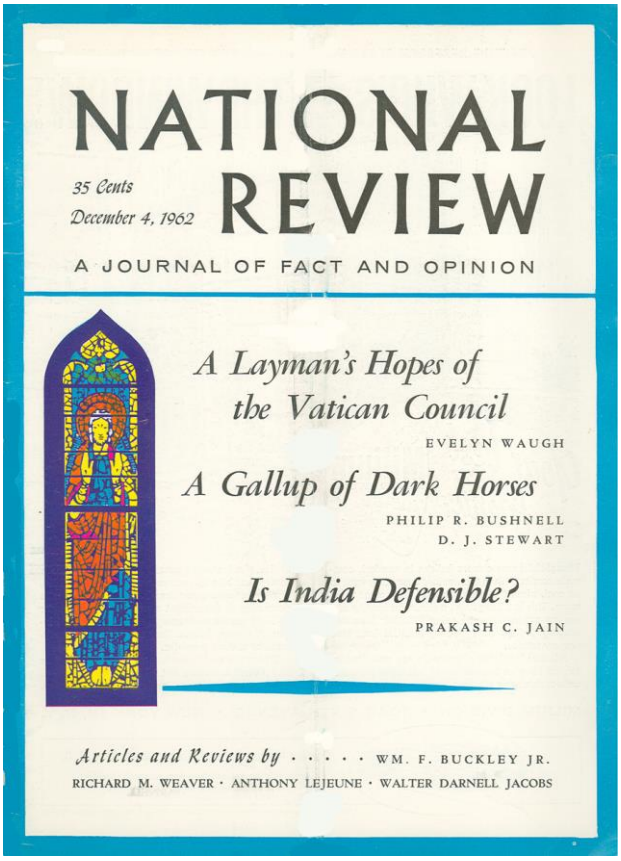
Man is an institution-building animal. The shape of his institutions is continually remolding his life.

Every new process for the production of food and goods, or for their distribution, changes the social structure. Careers are tailored to fit each new process. People's lives become intertwined with the complicated structures of vested interests. With every institutional change adaptations are demanded. Adaptation is slow and difficult and painful. The symptoms of insufficient adaptation are maladjustment, frustration and apathy. The bureaucratic social structure that has grown up around the present type of industrial production has developed so fast that we are finding it hard, perhaps harder than we realize, to operate the system of checks and balances against inordinate power which the English-speaking people built up through centuries of resistance to authority.

It was Jefferson's sarcastic young friend from Orange County, little James Madison, who set down, in the often-quoted Number 51 of the Federalist, the basic hardheaded rule on which all the men of the generation of 1776, radical and conservative alike, based their political theories: "In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this; you must first enable the government to control the governed and in the next place oblige it to control itself."

The first problem which men will face, when they try to make elbow room for themselves and for their fellows in the new type of society now coming into being, will be the problem of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy has become dominant in government, in industry and in the organizations of labor. The first interest of these bureaucracies, as of all human institutions, is in their own

survival. If these bureaucratic hierarchies, which seem unavoidable in a mass society, can be harnessed to the dynamic needs of self-government, the task of reversing the trend towards individual serfdom into a trend towards individual liberty may not be as hard as it seems at the first glance.



The Same Again Please: A Layman's Hopes of the Vatican Council

BY EVELYN WAUGH

December 4, 1962

IT IS UNLIKELY that the world's politicians are following the concluding sessions of the Vatican Council with the anxious scrutiny given to its opening stages in 1869. Then the balance of power in Europe was precariously dependent on the status of the papal states in Italy; France

and Austria directly, Prussia indirectly, and the Piedmontese kingdom particularly, were involved in their future. Even Protestant England was intent. Gladstone had his own. personal, theological preoccupations and was in unofficial correspondence with Lord Acton, but Lord Clarendon, the Foreign Minister, and most of the cabinet studied the dispatches of their agent, Odo Russell, (lately selected and edited with the title of The Roman Question) and pressed him for the fullest details. Manning was privately dispensed of his vow of secrecy in order that he might keep Russell informed. Queen Victoria ruled as many Catholics as Anglicans, a section of whom in Ireland were proving increasingly troublesome. The Council, as is well known, adjourned in dramatic circumstances which seemed to presage disaster. Subsequent history confirmed its decisions. The Pai'is Commune obliterated Gallicanism. Bismarck's Kulturkampf alienated all respectable support of the dissident Teutons. All that Odo Russell had consistently predicted came about in spite of the wishes of the European statesmen. The consultations resumed after their long recess and dignified by the title of the Second Vatican Council are not expected to have the same direct influence outside the Church. The popular newspapers have caught at phrases in the Pope's utterances to suggest that there is a prospect of the reunion of Christendom. Most Christians, relying on the direct prophecies of Our Lord, expect this to occur in some moment of historical time. Few believe that moment to be imminent. The Catholic aspiration is that the more manifest the true character of the Church can be made, the more dissenters will be drawn to make their submission. There is no possibility of the Church's modifying her defined doctrines to attract those to whom they are repugnant. The Orthodox Churches of the East, with whom the doctrinal differences are small and technical, are more hostile to Rome than are the Protestants. To them the sack and occupation of Constantinople for the first half of the thirteenth century — an event which does not bulk large in the historical conspectus of the West — is as lively and bitter a memory as is Hitler's persecution to the Jews. Miracles are possible: it is presumptuous to expect them; only a miracle can reconcile the East with Rome.

Other Churches

With the Reformed Churches, among whom the Church of England holds a unique position in that most of its members believe themselves to be a part of the Catholic Church of the West, social relations are warmer but intellectual differences are exacerbated. A century ago Catholics were still regarded as potential traitors, as ignorant, superstitious and dishonest, but there was common ground in the acceptance of the authority of Scripture and the moral law. Nowadays, I see it stated, representative Anglican clergymen withhold their assent to such rudimentary Christian tenets as the Virgin birth and resurrection of Our Lord; in the recent

prosecution of Lady Chatterley's Lover two eminent Anglican divines gave evidence for the defense, one of them, a bishop, in the most imprudent terms. Another Anglican dignitary has given his approval to the regime which is trying to extirpate Christianity in China. Others have given their opinion that a man who believes himself threatened by a painful death may commit suicide. Aberrations such as these, rather than differences in the interpretation of the Augustinian theory of Grace, are grave stumbling blocks to understanding. It is possible that the Council will announce a definition of the *communicatio in sacris* with members of other religious societies which is forbidden to Catholics. Rigour is the practice of some dioceses, laxity of others. There is no universal rule, for example, about the celebration of mixed marriages. On the other hand some French priests, in an excess of "togetherness," are said to administer Communion to non-Catholics, an imprudence, if not a sacrilege, which can only be reprobated. The personal cordiality shown by the Pope to Protestants may well be the prelude to official encouragement to cooperate in social and humanitarian activities, which would remove the bitterness from a condemnation of association in the sacraments. The question of Anglican Orders is unlikely to be raised, but it is worth noting that the conditions have changed since their validity was originally condemned. Then the matter was judged on the historical evidence of the Reformation settlement. But since then there have been goings-on with *episcopi vagantes*, Jansenist Dutch and heterodox eastern bishops, with the result that an incalculable proportion of Anglican clergymen may in fact be priests. They may themselves produce individual apostolic, genealogical trees, but the results will be of little interest to the more numerous Protestant bodies to whom the Pope's paternal benevolence is equally directed.

The "Voire of the Laitf"

A Catholic believes that whatever is enacted at the Council will ultimately affect the entire human race, but its immediate purposes are domestic — the setting in order of the household rudely disturbed in 1870. There are many questions of great importance to the constitution of the Church which do not directly affect the ordinary Catholic layman — the demarcation of dioceses, the jurisdiction of bishops, the setting to contemporary uses of the powers of the ancient religious orders, the changes necessary in seminaries to render them more attractive and more effective, the adaption of missionary countries to their new national status, and so forth. These can safely be left to the experience and statesmanship of the Fathers of the Council. But in the preliminary welcome which the project has enjoyed during the past three years there has been an insistent note that the "Voice of the Laity" shall be more clearly heard and that voice, so far as it has been audible in northern Europe and the U.S., has been largely that of the minority who demand radical reform. It seems to me possible that many of the

assembled Fathers, whatever their own predilections, have an uneasy feeling that there is a powerful body of the laity urging them to decisions which are, in fact, far from the hopes of the larger but less vocal body of the faithful. I speak for no one but myself but

I believe I am fairly typical of English Catholics. The fact that I was brought up in another society does not embarrass me. I have been a Catholic for thirty-two of what are technically known as my "years of reason"; longer, I think, than many of the "progressives"; moreover I think that a large proportion of European Catholics, despite their baptisms and first communions, are in fact "converts" in the sense that there came to them at some stage of adolescence or maturity the moment of private decision between acceptance and rejection of the Church's claims. I believe that I am typical of that middle rank of the Church, far from her leaders, much further from her saints; distinct too from the doubting, defiant, despairing souls who perform so conspicuously in contemporary fiction and drama. We take little part, except where our personal sympathies are aroused, in the public life of the Church, in her countless pious and benevolent institutions. We hold the creeds, we attempt to observe the moral law, we go to Mass on days of obligation and glance rather often at the vernacular translations of the Latin, we contribute to the support of the clergy. We seldom have any direct contact with the hierarchy. We go to some inconvenience to educate our children in our faith. We hope to die fortified by the last rites. In every age we have formed the main body of "the faithful" and we believe that

It was for us, as much as for the saints and for the notorious sinners, that the Church was founded. Is it our voice that the Conciliar Fathers are concerned to hear?

Three Questions

There are three questions of their authority which sometimes come to our attention. One is the Index of Prohibited Books. I have been told that its promulgation depends on the discretion of the diocesan bishop. I do not know if it has been promulgated in my diocese. It is not at all easy to obtain a copy. When found, it is very dull, consisting largely of pamphlets and theses on forgotten controversies. Tt does not include most of the anthropological, Marxist and psychological theses which, uncritically read, might endanger faith and morals. Nor. as is popularly believed, does it include absurdities like Alice in Wonderland. There are a few works, such as Addison's essays, which one expects to find in any reputable home and several which are compulsory reading at the universities, but in general it is not a troublesome document. Sartre's presence on the list provides a convenient excuse for not reading him. But there is an obvious anomaly in preserving a legal act which is generally disregarded. I think most laymen would be glad if the Fathers of the Council would consider whether it has any relevance in the modern world; whether it

would not be better to give a general warning of dangerous reading and to allow confessors to decide in individual cases, while retaining particular censorship only over technical books of theology which might be mistaken for orthodox teaching. A second point is the procedure of ecclesiastical courts. Most laymen spend a lifetime without being involved with them, just as they live without acquaintance with criminal proceedings. Cases of nullity of marriage are, however, becoming more common and much vexation and often grave suffering is caused by the long delays which result from the congestion of the courts and their laborious methods. The layman does not question the authority of the law or the justice of the decision; it is simply that when he finds himself in doubt, he thinks that he should know in a reasonable time his precise legal status. Thirdly, it would be satisfactory to know the limits of the personal authority held by the bishop over the laity. No vows of obedience have been made. Not in England, hut in many parts of the world it is common to see a proclamation enjoining the faithful "on pain of mortal sin" to vote in a parliamentary election or abstain from certain entertainments. Have our bishops in fact the right to bandy threats of eternal damnation in this way?

Liturgical Change

As the months pass and the Council becomes engrossed in its essential work, it is likely that the secular press will give less attention to it than it has done to its spectacular assembly. The questions for discussion are a matter of speculation to all outside the inner circle but there is a persistent rumor that changes may be made in the liturgy. I lately heard the sermon of an enthusiastic, newly ordained priest who spoke, perhaps with conscious allusion to Mr. Macmillan's unhappy phrase about Africa, of a "great wind" that was to blow through us, sweeping away the irrelevant accretions of centuries and revealing the Mass in its pristine, apostolic simplicity; and as I considered his congregation, closely packed parishioners of a small country town of whom I regard myself as a typical member, I thought how little his aspirations corresponded with ours. Certainly none of us had ambitions to usurp his pulpit. There is talk in Northern Europe and the United States of lay theologians. Certainly a number of studious men have read deeply in theology and are free with their opinions, but I know of none whose judgment I would prefer to that of the simplest parish priest, Sharp minds may explore the subtlest verbal problems, but in the long routine of the seminary and the life spent with the Offices of the Church the truth is most likely to emerge. It is worth observing that in the two periods when laymen took the most active part in theological controversy, those of Pascal and Acton, the laymen were in the wrong.

Still less did we aspire to usurp his place at the altar. "The Priesthood of the Laity" is a cant phrase of the decade and abhorrent to those of us who have met it. We claim no equality with our priests, whose personal

feelings and inferiorities (where they exist) serve only to emphasize the mystery of their unique calling. Anything in costume or manner or social habit that tends to disguise that mystery is something leading us away from the sources of devotion. The failure of the French '"worker priests" is fresh in our memories. A man who grudges a special and higher position to another is very far from being a Christian. As the service proceeded in its familiar way I wondered how many of us wanted to see any change. The church is rather dark. The priest stood rather far away. His voice was not clear and the language he spoke was not that of everyday use. This was the Mass for whose restoration the Elizabethan martyrs had gone to the scaffold. St. Augustine, St Thomas a Becket, St. Thomas More, Challoner and Newman would have been perfectly at their ease among us; were, in fact, present there with us. Perhaps few of us consciously considered this, but their presence and that of all the saints silently supported us. Their presence would not have been more palpable had we heen making the responses aloud in the modern fashion. It is not, I think, by a mere etymological confusion that tbe majority of English-speaking people believe that "venerable" means "old." There is a deep-lying connection in the human heart between worship and age. But the new fashion is for something bright and loud and practical. It has been set by a strange alliance between archeologists absorbed in their speculations on the rites of the second century, and modernists who wish to give the Church the character of our own deplorable epoch. In combination they call themselves "liturgists." The late Father Couturier, the French Dominican, was very active in enlisting the service of atheists in designing aids to devotion, but tourists are more common than worshippers in the churches he inspired. At Venice there is a famous little chapel designed in his extreme age by Matisse. It is always full of sightseers and the simple nursing sisters whom it serves are proud of their acquisition. But the Stations of the Cross, scrawled over a single wall, are so arranged that it is scarcely possible to make the traditional devotions before them. The sister in charge tries to keep the trippers from chattering but there is no one to disturb; on the occasions I have been there I have never seen anyone in prayer, as one always finds in dingy churches decorated with plaster and tinsel. The new Catholic cathedral in Liverpool is circular in plan: the congregation are to be disposed in tiers, as though in a surgical operating theatre. If they raise their eyes they will be staring at one another. Backs are often distracting; faces will be more so. The intention is to bring everyone as near as possible to the altar. I wonder if the architect has studied the way in which people take their places at a normal parochial Mass. In all the churches with which I am familiar it is the front pews which are filled last.

The Significance of Easter

During the last few years we have experienced the triumph of the "liturgists"

in the new arrangement of the services for the end of Holy Week and for Easter. For centuries these had been enriched by devotions which were dear to the laity — the anticipation of the morning office of Tenebrae, the vigil at the Altar of Repose, the Mass of the Presanctified. It was not how the Christians of the second century observed the season. It was the organic growth of the needs of the people. Not all Catholics were able to avail themselves of the services but hundreds did, going to live in or near the monastic houses and making an annual retreat which began with Tenebrae on Wednesday afternoon and ended at about midday on Saturday with the anticipated Easter Mass. During those three days' time was conveniently apportioned between the rites of the Church and the discourses of the priest taking the retreat, with little temptation to distraction. Now nothing happens before Thursday evening. All Friday morning is empty. There is an hour or so in church on Friday afternoon. All Saturday is quite blank until late at night. The Easter Mass is sung at midnight to a weary congregation who are constrained to "renew their baptismal vows" in the vernacular and later repair to bed. The significance of Easter as a feast of dawn is quite lost, as is the unique character of Christmas as the Holy Night. I have noticed in the monastery I frequent a marked falling off in the number of retreatants since the innovations or, as the Liturgists would prefer to call them, the restorations. It may well be that these services are nearer to the practice of primitive Christianity, but the Church rejoices in the development of dogma; why docs it not also admit the development of liturgy? There is a party among the hierarchy who wish to make superficial but startling changes in the Mass in order to make it more widely intelligible. The nature of the Mass is so profoundly mysterious that the most acute and holy men are continually discounting further nuances of significance. It is not a peculiarity of the Roman Church that much which happens at the altar is in varying degrees obscure to most of the worshippers. It is in fact the mark of all the historic, apostolic Churches. To some the liturgy is in a dead language such as Ge'ez or Syriac; in others in Byzantine Greek or Slavonic which differ greatly from the current speech of the people. The question of the use of the vernacular has been debated until there is nothing new left to be said. In dioceses such as some in Asia and Africa where half a dozen or more different tongues are spoken, translation is almost impossible. Even in England and the United States where much the same language is spoken by all, the difficulties are huge. There are colloquialisms which, though intelligible enough, are barbarous and absurd. The vernacular used may either be precise and prosaic, in which case it has the studied manner of a civil servant's correspondence, or poetic and euphonious, in which case it will tend towards the archaic and less intelligible. The Authorized Version of the Bible of James I was not written in the current tongue but in that of a century earlier. Mgr. Knox, a master of

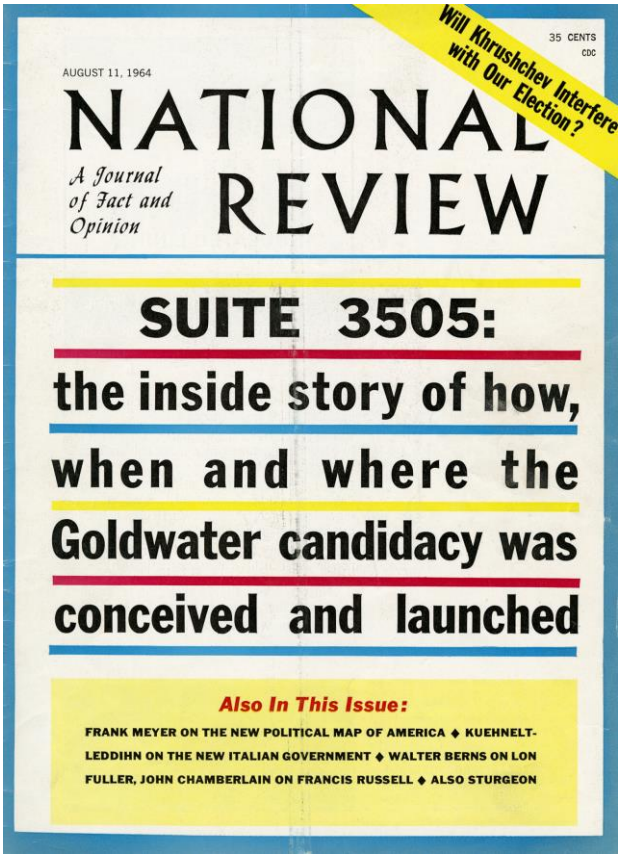
language, attempted in his translation of the Vulgate to devise a "timeless English" but his achievement has not been universally welcomed. I think it highly doubtful whether the average church-goer either needs or desires to have complete intellectual, verbal comprehension of all that is said. He has come to worship, often dumbly and effectively. In most of the historic Churches the act of consecration takes place behind curtains or doors. The idea of crowding round the priest and watching all he does is quite alien there. It cannot be pure coincidence that so many independent bodies should all have evolved in just the same way. Awe is the natural predisposition to prayer. When young theologians talk, as they do, of Holy Communion as "a social meal" they find little response in the hearts or minds of their less sophisticated brothers.

No "Togetherness"

No doubt there are certain clerical minds to whom the behaviour of the laity at Mass seems shockingly unregimented. We are assembled in obedience to the law of the Church. The priest performs his function in exact conformity to rules. But we — what are we up to? Some of us are following the missal, turning the pages adroitly to introits and extra collects, silently speaking all that the liturgists would like us to utter aloud and in unison. Some are saying the rosary. Some are wrestling with refractory children. Some are rapt in prayer. Some are thinking of all manner of irrelevant things until intermittently called to attention by the bell. There is no apparent "togetherness." Only in heaven are we recognizable as the united body we are. It is easy to see why some clergy would like us to show more consciousness of one another, more evidence of taking part in a social "group activity." Ideally they are right, but that is to presuppose a very much deeper .spiritual life in private than most of us have achieved. If, like monks and nuns, we arose from long hours of meditation and solitary prayer for an occasional excursion into social solidarity in the public recitation of the office, we should, unquestionably, be leading the full Christian life to which we are dedicated. But that is not the case. Most of us, I think, are rather perfunctory and curt in our morning and evening prayers. The time we spend in church — little enough — is what we set aside for renewing in our various ways our neglected contacts with God. It is not how it should he, but it is, I think, how it has always been for the majority of us and the Church in wisdom and charity has always taken care of the second-rate. If the Mass is changed in form so as to emphasize its social character many souls will find themselves put at a further distance from their true aim. The danger is that the Conciliar Fathers, because of their own deeper piety and because they have been led to think that there is a strong wish for change on the part of the laity, may advise changes that will prove frustrating to the less pious and the less vocal

It may seem absurd to speak of "dangers" in the Council when all Catholics believe that whatever is decided in the Vatican will

he the will of God. Tt is the sacramental character of the Church that supernatural ends are attained by human means. The inter-relation of the spiritual and material is the essence of the Incarnation. To compare small things with great, an artist's "inspiration" is not a process of passive acceptance of dictation. At work he makes false starts and is constrained to begin again, he feels impelled in one direction, happily follows it until he is conscious that he is diverging from his proper course, new discoveries come to him while he is toiling at some other problem, so that eventually by trial and error a work of art is consummated. So with the inspired decisions of the Church. They are not revealed by a sudden clear voice from Heaven. Human arguments are the means by which the truth eventually emerges. It is not really impertinent to insinuate one more human argument into the lofty deliberations.



Suite 3505

BY WILLIAM A. RUSHER

August 11, 1964

WHETHER Barry Goldwater wins or loses in November, his nomination by the Republican Party in 1964 is now history, and its consequences will predictably be enormous. For the first time since the Party assumed its modern form, it has shaken off the domination of its Eastern backers and nominated the overwhelming choice of the Midwest, the West and the South. It is not hard to see that a new road has been taken, from which there can be no turning back.

For better or worse, the future of the GOP now lies with new and vigorous elements emerging from the lusty West — a West that, to use the inescapable figure, has at last come of age as a dominating force in the American society.

It would be foolish to pretend that a development so fundamental and so inevitable was the product of any mere faction's plans or efforts. Yet this great movement had its human vectors, and their actions deserve to be chronicled accurately for the benefit of historians and all others who would like to know exactly how it happened. Various obscure and partial accounts have already appeared in the press; it is time for a complete and accurate description of the relevant events leading up to the public launching of the National Draft Goldwater Committee in April 1963. This is what this article proposes to be.

Under the Eisenhower Administration, the Republican Party had been more or less jointly controlled by a coalition of its Liberal and centrist elements, with the latter having perhaps the larger voice. This alliance was ratified anew when Nixon, upon being nominated in 1960, capitulated to Rockefeller on key platform questions in their famous "Treaty of Fifth Avenue" (which Barry Goldwater promptly denounced as "a domestic Munich").

Nixon's narrow defeat at the hands of Kennedy in November was of course a staggering blow to this Liberal-centrist entente, and in the early months of 1961 it became apparent that the time was ripe for a new initiative — perhaps even a conservative one. The old Taft bloc was gone. (One of its last congressional leaders — Congressman B. Carroll Reece — had died that very February.) The old Dewey machine, too, which had thrice run the New York governor for the Presidency and then twice elected Eisenhower, had lost much of its potency. (Dewey and Brownell, its two key figures, had retired irrevocably to private law practice.) And while Nixon had inherited the shards of the Dewey-Eisenhower organization, including one or two top-flight political operatives (notably former Attorney General Rogers), Nixon's 1960 defeat made it impossible for him to assume control of the Party again unless he could first rehabilitate his image as a winner — *e.g.,* by election as governor of California in 1962.

A Common Conviction

It was in this state of affairs that private conversations began among a group of relatively young and conservative Republican professionals during the summer of 1961. *(I have given careful consideration to the question of identifying the individuals involved in the activities described in tills article, and have concluded that — with certain obvious and inescapable exceptions — it should be left to them to identify themselves. Many [e.g., Congressman John Ashbrook of Ohio] are widely known as having participated; others are not. In any case, it has not seemed my place to break the confidence*

they all reposed in those with whom they met.) They were, for the most part, old friends; many of them had worked and politicked together during the preceding decade in the Young Republican National Federation. Some were now Republican state chairmen; others were in Congress; many held no Party office whatever. But all were influential at some level of their states' Republican politics, and they shared a common conviction that it was time for the Republican Party to turn to the Right — away from the aggressive Liberalism of Rockefeller, away from the calculated and empty platitudes of Nixon, and toward the conservative principles and personalities which had begun to make themselves felt on the national scene in the latter half of the 1950s.

They met, for their first formal discussion, in a conference room of the Avenue Motel on South Michigan Avenue in Chicago, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 8, 1961. From sixteen states they came, 22 people in all, each at his own expense; and so intent were they on the task at hand that, as one who was there recalls, "That was the day of the fourth game of the World Series between the Yankees and the Cincinnati Reds, and nobody even asked who was ahead until we adjourned at 5:30."

By 5:30 the Yankees had won, and the conferees had also accomplished quite a lot. They had constituted themselves an *ad hoc* committee to turn the Republican Party into a more conservative path. They had elected as their chairman F. Clifton White, a lanky, soft-spoken upstate New Yorker who had spent most of his adult life (he was then 43) in and around New York and national Republican politics. They had authorized White to draw up a plan of organization and action, and a budget to match; they had told him to wait upon Senator Goldwater and inform him of the group's existence and its intentions: and they had voted to reconvene in Chicago in just two months' time — on Sunday, December 10th — to assess what progress had been made.

Perhaps the best evidence of the maturity of the group was its decision not to become, then and there, at the very outset of its existence, merely a Goldwater-for-President Committee. After all 1964 was still more than two years away; much could happen in the interval — and besides, many of the men around the conference table in the Avenue Motel were in no position to commit either their states or themselves to a specific candidate, however attractive, so far in advance of the convention.

Still, as the decision to inform Senator Goldwater indicated, it was recognized by all hands that he occupied a special relationship to the objectives, and probably to the more specific destinies, of the little committee. He was indisputably the best known and best liked spokesman of conservative Republicanism. Thanks to years of tireless work as a fundraiser and campaigner for the Party, he was well and favorably known to just about every GOP leader in the nation — including almost all of those gathered in Chicago. It was just that

it was early, very early, to be talking about a specific candidate; and it was, moreover, by no means clear that Senator Goldwater would consent to run for the Presidency in 1964. There would be a time — later — to talk about that; meanwhile, it was enough that a beginning had been made.

The Senator Informed

This judgment of the group was vindicated when, pursuant to its instruction, White called on the Senator in his Washington office in late November and outlined what had happened in Chicago. Goldwater, who would instantly (and rightly) have repudiated any effort on his personal behalf at that time, was frankly delighted to learn that a knowledgeable committee of Republican pros had taken a hand in his own long, lonely struggle for a more conservative GOP. He wished it well, and White promised to keep him informed of developments.

On December 10, as scheduled, the committee reconvened at the Avenue Motel: the 22 who had been present on October 8, less five who were prevented from flying to Chicago that weekend by thick weather over the East Central states, plus ten newcomers. One of the latter, and the only governor present, was Don Nutter of Montana, who was to lose his life just a few weeks later in a plane crash at the age of forty-six. None who attended this meeting, however, was ever to forget the idealism and passion with which this ex-bomber pilot spoke of the peril in which America found itself, and of the job that needed to be done to save it.

1962: Quiet, but Crucial

The conferees went right to work. White, who had theretofore conducted his own business advisory service, was asked to establish and direct a small, full-time office in New York to coordinate the committee's work. The United States was divided into nine regions, each under a spare-time regional director whose task was to approach and organize the conservative Republicans in every state in his area. A finance committee was created to raise the necessary funds for the operation, and a budget was approved. It called for the expenditure of $60,000 in calendar 1962 — a ridiculously small sum on the scale of national politics, but 1962 was scheduled to be a year of quiet (though crucially important) gestation.

The question of a name for the committee received careful thought. Anything including the word "Goldwater" was out of the question at this early stage, for the reasons already mentioned. Nothing else sounded particularly attractive. Finally it was decided that the committee would have no name at all, at least for the time being. This solution had the advantage, among others, of providing the absolute minimum of visible target for critics, if one of these got wind of what was going on. For, while the committee did not contemplate any Florentine activities of a kind that would be unable to bear the light of day, it

had no particular use for publicity until and unless it got a candidate, and meanwhile it was always possible that the Liberals in the press would pounce upon the committee if they learned of it and denounce it as ill-timed, reactionary and just generally malodorous. (This is precisely what they did do a year later, when they at last became aware of its existence.)

Thus ended 1961. White closed down his own business, rented a tiny two-room suite on the 35th floor of the Chanin Building at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street in midtown Manhattan, and on February 1, 1962 commenced full-time operations on behalf of the nameless committee. On the frosted door was merely the number of the suite: 3505.

With White from the outset, as secretary and Girl Friday, was a woman whose name deserves to be more widely and gratefully known among American conservatives: Rita Bree, a career businesswoman who left her own secure position in the insurance field to help White in his new and crucial assignment. For fourteen months, those two people were to be the entire full-time staff of the movement that launched the draft of the first conservative Republican Presidential nominee in modern times. And they were not all easy months.

Study in Contrasts

It is amusing, in retrospect, to contrast the modest little suite in the Chanin Building with the elaborate five-story town house at 22 W. 55th Street, near Fifth Avenue, from which the Presidential ambitions of Governor Nelson Rockefeller were even then being promoted by a well-paid legion of speech-writers, researchers, advance men and big-time political operators. Already Republican state chairmen and other major political figures from many states were being flown to New York City and ushered into the gubernatorial presence for a warm handshake, a personalized version of the famous grin, and murmured assurances of fond remembrance when the inevitable came to pass. It is unlikely that Suite 3505 — had anyone on West 55th Street known of its existence — would have caused anything but mirth.

But there was work to be done, and through the winter and early spring of 1962 White took to the road to do it — crisscrossing the country, conferring with state and regional representatives, and reaching out wherever possible for fresh contacts. On April 13 the third conference of the committee convened — not in Chicago this time, but in a spacious lodge amid the still-frozen lakes and snow-mantled birch forests of north central Minnesota. Unlike its predecessors, this was a two-day affair. The atmosphere was deliberately informal: "I want them," White explained, "to get to know each other better, not only as politicians but as friends." On the screened porch of the main lodge, the regional representatives made their reports, and there was serious talk of new campaign techniques — political chitchat, in a sense,

but as absorbing to these pros as new recipes to a gathering of housewives.

It was obvious that the committee would have to mark time during most of the middle months of 1962, when the attention of every serious politician — quite definitely including those on the committee — would be focused upon campaigns for the congressional elections coming up that fall. Accordingly, it was decided not to hold another meeting until December; and meanwhile White and Bree would keep the office open, and continue as far as possible the work of further organization, against the day when attention would return to the Presidential arena.

The Low Point

In retrospect, both were later to regard those months between April and December 1962 as the very darkest they had to pass through. Attention ebbed inexorably away; and with it, money. Small as it was, the 1962 budget had not been met, and by August it was a desperate struggle to pay the rent, the phone bill and the two modest salaries — let alone the travel expenses that were essential to further organizing. ("Gosh, I wish we could help, but we're runnin' a governor out here" . . . "All our money is tied up in congressional races right now. Maybe later.") Grimly White plowed his own savings into the project; in the nick of time, one or two substantial donations were received. Somehow, by the thinnest of margins, the little office survived . . . and December came.

When it came, the eyes of practical politicians were still trained upon the election results of the preceding month — and those returns told a most interesting story. Nixon's effort to recover his momentum had failed ignominiously; he had been defeated for governor of California by 400,000 votes. On the other side of the country, Rockefeller had won re-election, to be sure — but by far less than his 1958 margin, and despite a campaign expenditure five times the size of his opponent's. Most significant of all, conservative Republicans throughout the Southern states had made striking gains — as in Alabama, where Goldwater-supporter James Martin had come within seven-tenths of a per cent of defeating veteran Democratic Senator Lister Hill. It was not hard for anyone to see in which direction these signs pointed — or toward whom.

Thus it was a confident and optimistic committee that met for its fourth plenary conference on Sunday, December 2, 1962, in the Essex Inn Motel on South Michigan in Chicago, just a couple of blocks north of the Avenue Motel where it had been founded fourteen months before. This time 55 persons attended, from almost every major state — impressive testimony to the organizing effort that had been made during 1962, as well as to the intrinsic appeal of the movement the committee was mobilizing.

Plans Crystallize

Before dividing into regional caucuses (plus a meeting of the finance committee),

the full committee heard White's report and his recommendations for future action. The 1964 convention was now just a year and a half away, and the time had plainly come when conservative action must begin to take the concrete form of support for a particular candidate. The wily politicians gathered in Chicago were not likely to forget the oldest and truest of all political aphorisms: "You can't beat somebody with nobody."

No one doubted who the candidate must be. White was instructed to call upon Senator Goldwater and tell him: 1) that the committee proposed to launch, on or about March 1, 1963, a public movement to draft him for the nomination; 2) that no consent or approval for this move, on his part, was requested or expected; and 3) that the committee only asked that, if questioned about it, the Senator refrain from a final repudiation of all possibility of his candidacy.

Word Leaks Out

White waited for the holidays to pass before calling on Goldwater; but meanwhile there occurred one of those unpredictable events which disrupt the best laid plans, with complex results for good and ill. No meeting of 55 people is ever entirely secret, and word of this one soon leaked to the press in the usual garbled fashion. TV viewers were treated by Walter Cronkite to a tour of the very room where "55 Goldwater supporters" had "met in secret" just 24 hours before, to plot the Senator's nomination in 1964. The Liberal press, which until then had, generally speaking, treated Goldwater as a sort of obscure Danish liqueur, reacted as if thieves had been discovered in the Treasure Room of the Tower. The *New York Herald Tribune* was especially outraged:

Neither the plotting to promote Sen. Goldwater for the Presidential candidacy nor the conspiracy to block Gov. Rockefeller contributes to the health or harmony of the party. . . The conservatives are guilty of bad timing, narrow motives and poor politics.

But, guilty or not, the publicity about the meeting paradoxically served one useful purpose. Rockefeller's journalistic chorus of trained seals had been prepared to hail his re-election as making him the inevitable-Republican nominee for President in 1964; and, despite the rather less than sensational margin by which he was returned to Albany, they were bugling away industriously when — like a discordant tuba blast — the word broke from coast to coast that 55 disagreeable people had just caucused quietly in Chicago to lay very different plans for 1964. Somehow, Mr. Rockefeller's nomination never seemed quite so "inevitable" again.

On the Hill: Hopes Dashed

Still, a Goldwater nomination must have seemed far in the future on January 14, 1963, when White called on the Senator in his Capitol Hill office and relayed the message from the committee. The prospects swiftly became even more remote. As luck

would have it, the timing of White's conference with Goldwater could hardly have been worse. In the first place, the premature publicity about the Chicago meeting had understandably annoyed the Senator: it was couched squarely in terms of a Goldwater candidacy, to which he had never consented by word or deed; all he had ever done was express pleasure at the news that a representative group of Republicans had decided to try to turn the Party into more conservative paths. Moreover, Goldwater at this point privately thought very little of his chances against President Kennedy, and was not disposed to throw away his Senate seat (which would be up in 1964) on a quixotic gamble that might not only end his career but damage the cause of conservative Republicanism generally. Finally, White's visit happened to coincide with the posting of some committee assignments for the new Congress (later revised), which depressed Goldwater still further and disinclined him to look with favor on the actions of unauthorized enthusiasts.

So Clif White, who had gone up Capitol Hill that morning with such high hopes, came down again "looking for a job," as he gloomily put it to a friend. Goldwater would not only not declare his availability; he was firmly determined not to permit a draft movement of any kind. One year from the opening of Suite 3505, the whole project lay seemingly in ruins.

But now occurred one of those mysterious changes in the *atmosphere* of the Goldwater drive which defy explanation unless we choose, as several marveling observers have done, to attribute them to divine intervention. The month of February 1963, which one insider declares he will always remember as "Valley Forge," produced two fundamental changes for the better.

For one thing, it was in February that serious analyses of the potential strength of a conservative Republican candidate against Kennedy, especially in the South, began to appear. (See, *e.g.*, "Crossroads for the GOP," *NR,* Feb. 12, 1963.) There is reason to believe that this so-called "Southern strategy" soon attracted Senator Goldwater's thoughtful attention, and caused him to start reconsidering his own position.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, February 17, the executive committee of the full ad *hoc* committee met in emergency session under leaden skies at the O'Hare Inn, not far from Chicago's International Airport. Exactly a month and a day had passed since Goldwater's resounding "No!" to White, and subsequent efforts to modify his stand had not met with notable success. The atmosphere was thick with gloom.

For a time the discussion circled aimlessly around the central fact of the Senator's intransigence. Finally, and rather desperately, one of those present burst out: "Let's *draft* the son of a gun!"

"What if he won't let us draft him?" somebody objected.

"Then let's draft him anyway!"

Decision to Draft

And so it was agreed. Every man present was sure, deep down in his bones, that a powerful case could be made to the GOP for a Goldwater nomination. Each guessed that, in the long run, the Senator could be persuaded to consent. Meanwhile, if the organization so painstakingly built over a space of eighteen months was not to be scrapped just when it might be needed most, there was nothing to do but launch a public drive to draft Goldwater — hoping against hope that he would not repudiate it outright.

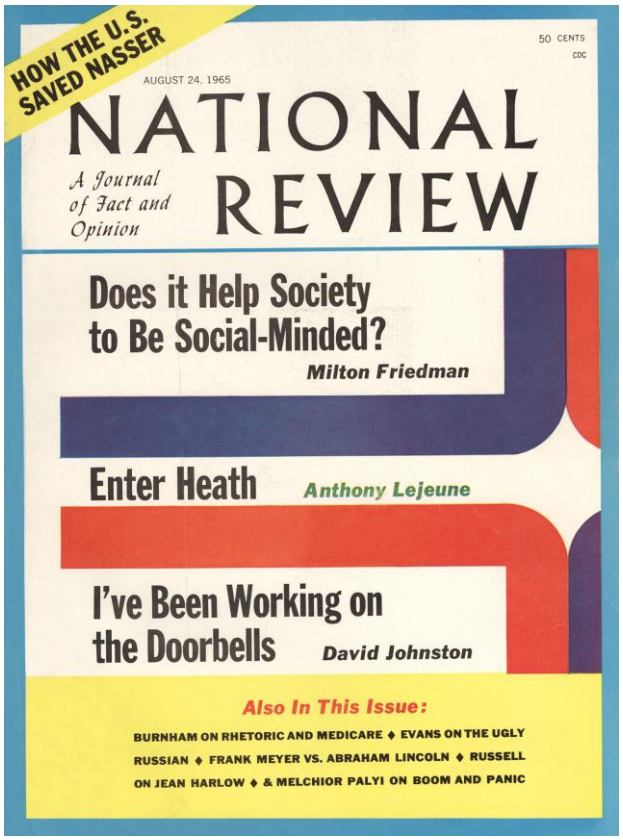
To keep this latter risk to an irreducible minimum, the executive committee briskly conscripted one of its own members — Peter O'Donnell, the vigorous young (36) Republican State Chairman of Texas — to serve as Chairman of the National Draft Goldwater Committee. (White assumed the title of National Director, and the role of top full-time official of the new organization.) The desperadoes at the O'Hare Inn shrewdly calculated that Goldwater would be reluctant to repudiate an organization headed by the Republican state chairman of one of America's largest and most conservative states; and O'Donnell further rewarded their judgment by soon proving himself as energetic as he was influential and dedicated.

'Footnote to History'

After a few more weeks' delay, to round out the top officer-ships of the new organization, the National Draft Goldwater Committee was launched at a press conference in the Mayflower Hotel in Washington on April 8, 1963. Down from Suite 3505 in Manhattan, to larger quarters on Connecticut Avenue in the nation's capital, came White and the indispensable Rita Bree and the filing cabinets containing the fruits of a year and a half of hard work through the mails, on the phone and on the road. Smoothly the existing state and regional leaders were integrated with the public organization. The press merely snorted that "another Goldwater movement" had begun — not even realizing or bothering to trace its connection with the now-forgotten "secret meeting" in Chicago the previous December. But the comment the Committee was waiting for — a grumpy one, to be sure, but bearable — came from Senator Goldwater: "I am not taking any position on this draft movement. It's their time and their money. But they are going to have to get along without any help from me."

And so they did, for nine more months, until the Senator at last declared his candidacy on January 3, 1964. But that is another story — a splendid one that diligent historians of the future can reconstruct from the abundant press clippings that record the powerful upsurge of the Draft Goldwater movement in 1963. Meanwhile, let this little footnote to history serve to

memorialize the faceless committee that in 1961 and 1962 greased the track for the first conservative express train in modern American history.



Social Responsibility: A Subversive Doctrine

BY MILTON FRIEDMAN

August 24, 1965

IT IS SAID that businessmen or labor leaders have a "social responsibility" that should take precedence over their "private" responsibility to themselves, or their stockholders, or the members of their unions. The most recent application of this doctrine is in President Johnson's message of February 10, 1965 on the balance of payments, when he proposed "voluntary" restraint by banks in making loans to foreign borrowers and by business concerns in making investments overseas.

This particular application, especially to banks, recalls the attempt of the Federal Reserve Board in 1928 and 1929 to restrain stock market speculation by appealing to banks to avoid loans for speculative purposes. The resulting dispute between the Board and the New York Federal Reserve Bank on the "qualitative" versus the "quantitative" approach to controlling speculation is an important episode in our monetary history, and it had far-reaching consequences. The balance of payments application recalls also the resort, both during and after World War II, to "moral" suasion on banks to restrict credit to "productive" uses and to refrain from loans that would contribute to inflation.

I cite these examples to illustrate that there has been experience with the doctrine under discussion and that there exists much historical evidence by which we can judge how it in fact operates.

LBJ Resorts to Exhortation

The first generalization suggested by experience is that the appeal to "social" responsibility or "voluntary" restraint has always occurred when the governmental

agency which is responsible for the area of policy in question has been unable or unwilling to discharge its own responsibility. The agency wants both to shift the blame and to give the appearance of doing something energetic; hence it denounces "irresponsible" private action and calls for "voluntary" restraint.

In our most recent example, President Johnson is understandably unwilling to take measures sufficiently strong to guarantee to offset or eliminate the payments deficit (selling our gold freely, governmental borrowing abroad, tighter money at home, raising tariffs or other restrictions on trade of which the extreme would be direct exchange controls, or changing exchange rates and abandoning a fixed price for gold either through a supposedly once-for-all devaluation or through letting exchange rates and the price of gold float). So he resorts to exhortation. If we weather the present difficulties without a major crisis, the exhortation will doubtless receive some credit. If we have a major crisis, the blame will appear clear.

A second generalization from experience is that the appeal to "social responsibility" has little effect, unless there is an iron fist in the velvet glove of appeals to voluntary restraint. The program either breaks down and is discarded, or it is replaced by a compulsory program — as voluntary price control in the United States in 1941 was replaced by legally imposed maximum price legislation in early 1942. The failure of truly voluntary programs is inevitable and has nothing to do with a lack of "patriotism" or social consciousness. Indeed, the doctrine of "social responsibility," if taken seriously, is a truly subversive doctrine in a free society. This can be seen in the kind of challenge it offers to a free society.

The most obvious problem it raises is a conflict of irresponsibilities. Consider a bank official urged now by the President to turn down a foreign loan in the name of "social responsibility." Let us assume for the moment that his rejection of the loan does in fact serve some relevant social interest. He is still faced with a real moral conflict. As a salaried official he is an agent of his stockholders. If he rejects the loan, he reduces their incomes. In effect he violates his contractual agreement with them. He may argue that he is serving their longer-term interest by acting in such a way that the government is not constrained to impose compulsory control on loans (which would be worse), but that is only an evasion of the issue. The President's request has merely altered the private interest of the stockholder and hence of the bank official. The bank official is not accepting a new "social" responsibility. He continues to be guided by his former, "private" responsibility — but within new and narrower limitations.

Suppose the bank official does accept a "social" responsibility. Shall it be preemptive no matter what the cost to his stockholders? Or only if the cost is tolerable? And who decides what is "tolerable"?

Union Leader No Public Official

The labor union official exhorted by Washington to hold down wages as a contribution to preventing inflation has a similar problem. He clearly is responsible to his union members. Let us assume for the moment that it does serve some relevant social interest if wages rise less than is in the private interest of the workers. Should the union leader sacrifice their interest? He is not a public official. He was hired, or elected, by his men to represent them, not by the citizens at large to represent the public.

There are only two ways out of this conflict. One is to appeal to the principal, not to the agent — appeal to the owners of the bank and the members of the union to instruct their agents, the banker and the union leader, to use a specified part of the potential income of the bank or of the potential wage of the workers for the social interest in question. At least each man is now being asked to spend his own money, not someone else's, for the social interest. This is in effect voluntary taxation, but in a form so obscure and roundabout that it would be very difficult to make it work.

A second way out of the conflict is for someone other than the agent or the principal to specify the precise content of the socially "responsible" action — which means in practice a government official or a governmentally created committee, which typically will be composed of representatives of the industry in question. In the wage case, the guideposts of the Council of Economic Advisers are intended to specify precisely what wage and price behavior is in the social interest — though I hasten to warn that the specification is far from unambiguous. In the balance of payments case, the President proposes that joint industry-government committees be formed and has asked Congress to exempt such committee actions from the anti-trust law (an obvious comment on the conflict between "social responsibility" and free competition). This, too, comes down to a system of voluntary taxation, but now the amount of the tax is determined by someone other than the agent or the principal.

Washington Must Dangle Carrot

Perhaps by now we can see why systems of voluntary restraint are seldom successful unless there lurks somewhere in the background, the coercive power of the state, either explicitly as when there are laws and penalties, or implicitly as when Washington brandishes the tax stick and the threat of anti-trust prosecution (steel, 1962) or when Washington offers the tax carrot (railroads, 1964). People are being asked to act against their self-interest. Even if we assume that most of them accept the "social responsibility," the case is not won. A few, less "responsible" or more sophisticated, will reap fine profits from the opportunities made available to those who wish to flout, or who know how to refute, the doctrine of "social responsibility." Their fine profits will rankle in the hearts of the "socially responsible" who are expected to continue

to sacrifice their own interest for a social purpose that is obviously not being met.

For the sake of the argument, however, let us assume that everyone, without exception, wishes to act in accordance with his "social responsibility." We still must face the problem: How can he know what behavior is "socially responsible"?

Consider the seemingly simple case of the foreign loan. Is it socially desirable to cut out all foreign loans completely? That cure would be worse than the disease. Then some foreign loans should and some should not be granted. How is our banker to know which is which? He knows tolerably well which loan will be best for the bank, but how is he to know which will be best for the balance of payments?

The President, or a Presidential committee, can fix a target. It might be a 20 percent cut in foreign loans. Twenty percent of what? If it's 20 percent of loans requested, then requests for loans will go up, and the payments problem, remains untouched. If it's 20 percent of some earlier amount of loans, then the formula is the typical backward-looking device that crops up, sooner or later, in every governmental program that is said to be progressive.

Even then we are not out of the woods. Which 20 per cent? Shall each bank decide for itself? If so, each bank cuts off the least profitable borrowers. Borrowers then compete with each other for the privilege of getting a loan, and the interest rate on foreign loans (assuming perfect voluntary compliance) goes up. The voluntary exercise of "social responsibility" has become a governmentally approved cartel to raise the price to foreign borrowers — which helps to explain why leading New York bankers were among those who developed the program and why so many banks heavily involved in foreign lending have been so favorably disposed towards it.

The only alternatives is for the government officials or the private committee to decide which loans to eliminate. But they have no criteria that individual banks do not have. Those loans that will be used to buy U.S. goods and services appear at first glance to do the least harm to our payments position. But foreign borrowers can very easily make arrangements to juggle their purchases or connive with other foreign purchasers to make it appear that said loan to X is actually being used by X to buy goods in the U.S. Other stratagems, such as U.S. firms acting as intermediaries, can be dreamt up. There is no simple way to prescribe the social interest, and the record is full of case histories to the point.

Almost without exception, appeals to "social responsibility" arise from an unwillingness to let the price system work. But no one has yet invented or discovered a substitute for the price system in coordinating the activities of millions of people without central control. Because the price system works impersonally, automatically, continuously, and quietly,

because it has no press agents, there is a tendency when all goes well to take it for granted and to forget that a function is being performed by it. Almost without exception, however, attempts to replace the price system, or to prevent it from working, have ended in chaos.

Let us move to the final stage of the argument. Let us assume that there is complete and perfect voluntary compliance with the rules of "social responsibility," and that everyone knows precisely what those rules say and mean. The deepest problem now comes to light. It is the political problem. It is entirely proper that stockholders be permitted to choose who shall manage their capital and that workers be permitted to choose who shall represent them. But if the business men are imposing sacrifices on their stockholders, and the union leaders are imposing lower wages on their members, all in the name of the "social interest," this method of selection is no longer proper. Either the principals will in time discharge their agents, selecting new ones who will give primacy to the private interest, and the doctrine of social responsibility goes by the board; or else, if the doctrine is retained, if the business men and labor leaders are to act as "public" servants rather than as the agents of stockholders or of union members, they will come to be selected through an explicitly political process. The political mechanism, not the market and voluntary contract, will circumscribe their powers and control their exercise of them. That is why, ultimately, the doctrine of "social responsibility" in the form it has come to take is subversive of a free society and a stepping stone to socialism.

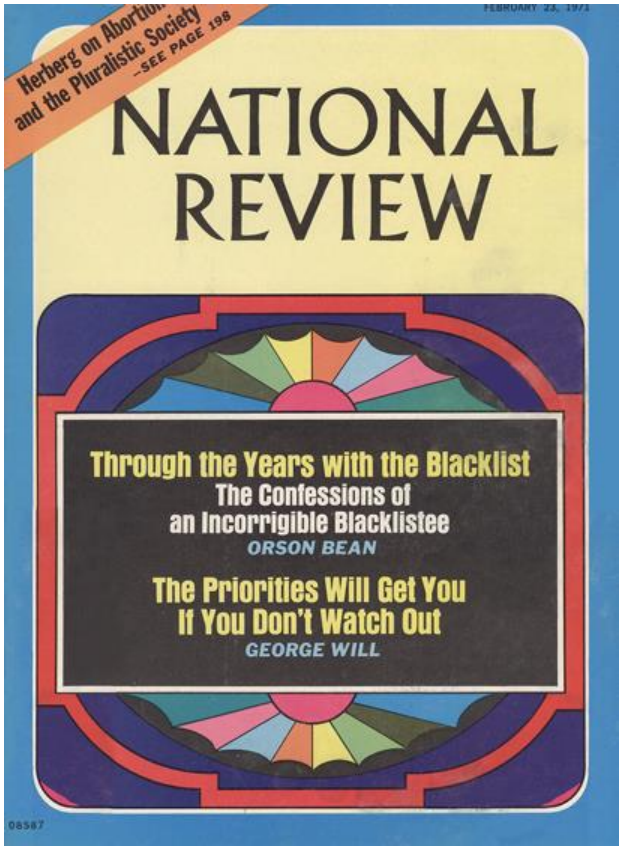
Solution Old As Adam Smith

The way out of the apparent dilemma is as old as Adam Smith's invisible hand. There is no natural harmony between social and private interest — Mandeville and Bastiat to the contrary notwithstanding. But it is possible for an economic, social, and moral framework to exist within which "every individual," as Adam Smith wrote, "generally neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. . . . He intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of his intention. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."

Let me allay a possible misgiving. "Private interests" are not to be taken to coincide with "narrow, material, selfish interests." The man who devotes his life to religious evangelism under a vow of poverty is pursuing his private interests no less than the man who accumulates money with an eye to wine, women, and song. The pursuit of "private interests" has built churches, universities, research institutions, hospitals, museums — and, yes, movie theaters, beach resorts, athletic stadiums,

and the myriads of cars with and without tailfins.

By contrast, said Adam Smith: "I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good."



Through the Years with the Blacklist

BY ORSON BEAN

February 23, 1971

One day Orson woke up, and he laughed and he laughed because, finally, he understood. He's discovered who's behind the blacklists, and how they work. And you'll know too, but if you're a l——l, you won't like

ONCE, WHEN I was a kid, a poor darky came to my house, to a fund-raising affair, one of endless fund-raising affairs which my mother and father gave for various left-wing, humanitarian causes. Prompted by my parents to do so, I trotted out my autograph book and asked him to sign it and he wrote, in a small and childish scrawl, "Willie Crawford, one of the Scottsboro boys." I'll never forget his frightened eyes as he looked about our living room at the various Communists, socialists, fellow travelers, anarchists and pseudo-revolutionaries who stood around with cocktails in their hands discussing the bourgeoisie. The Scottsboro boys were a group of Negro kids who had been accused of raping a white girl in the town of Scottsboro, Georgia. The Communist Party and its fronts had decided to make martyrs of them and had championed their cause and, miraculously, gotten them out of jail. Then, having nothing better to do with them, they had trotted them around to various fund-raising events which channeled money into the party coffers. Innocent do-gooders like my folks had entertained other innocent do-gooders and sold endless tickets for glasses of rye and ginger at 50 cents a shot "for the cause."

All it meant to me was a chance to rifle a few of the purses that were thrown with the guests' coats onto my bed. Even though I

was one of "the people" nobody ever asked me whether it was all right to use my room to check coats in, so I simply looked at the thievery as tip money.

I grew up, went into show business, prospered and became, as my folks had before me, a pitier of the poor and the downtrodden.

In 1955, I met a man named John Henry Faulk who conducted a popular radio show for CBS. I was the hot young television comic that year so we needed no introduction. As S. J. Perelman has written, "There are no strangers in the aristocracy of success." We had both rented summer cottages on Fire Island. John was from Texas and he was one of the most charming men in the world. He had three beautiful children, a lovely wife named Lynn, and a pet Mexican goat. The goat would come when he called and would follow him down the sidewalk and do everything but carry home the *New York Times*. John Faulk told wonderful stories about the poor people of Texas. He would tell these stories in dialect and act them out and there was one about a little girl who dreamed of someday owning is pair of shoes that always left me in tears.

On Friday and Saturday nights, groups of actors, writers and broadcasting people who summered on Fire Island would gather at Johnny's house, drawn by his magnetic personality, like ants to jam. Mrs. Faulk would scurry about serving drinks, their tanned and beautiful children would clamor to be allowed to stay up a little longer, the goat would frolic and the guests would bask in the healthy American wonder of it all.

All for a Girl!

In 1955, the communications industry was in the grips of a blacklist. A well-to-do grocer in Syracuse believed that America was threatened by a Communist conspiracy and that one of the Communists' aims was to take over radio and television. *Red Channels,* a book listing all the actors, announcers, directors etc. believed to have leftist/Communist tendencies, had been published, and the listees were finding it increasingly difficult to get work. The industry, traditionally scared silly by any little group of two or three complaining letters from housewives, turned to hog doo-doo when confronted by an organized campaign. In Washington, Senator Joseph McCarthy was waving lists of card-carrying Communists and the panic was on. Up in Syracuse, the grocer read *Red Channels* and found that his worst fears had been confirmed. A monthly newsletter named AWARE Bulletin began to appear. It was published to keep the anti-Communist crusade up to date, and each month it added the names of actors, announcers, directors etc. it deemed suspect.

The Fire Islanders sat around contemplating the injustice of it all. The Hollywood Ten had been driven out of the movies. Well-known actors had become unemployable because of their political leanings and some of the biggest directors and writers in the movies had been forced

out of business. Now the panic had come to radio and TV. At that time, I had hosted a summer replacement show for CBS. I had also appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* a number of times as well as on most of the other variety and dramatic programs. Based on the critical success of the summer show CBS decided to finance a pilot-kinescope of *The Orson Bean Show*. I was of course delighted with my success but the delight was tempered by a nagging sensation of do-gooder type guilt. Here I was, approaching the top of the heap while older and established performers, some of whom I had long admired, were unable to work at all.

One week that summer, the House Committee on Un-American Activities came to New York and issued subpoenas to a bunch of Broadway actors whom they suspected of having Communist affiliations. One of the subpoenaed actors, a young character man who had made several films and had been in lots of shows on Broadway, was hot after an actress for whom I was also horny. Because of his subpoena, the actor became a martyr in her eyes and I became consumed with jealousy. The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (later to be named by the Attorney General as a Communist front) called a protest meeting at Carnegie Hall at which some of the subpoenaed actors appeared. And Dummy Bean. To impress the girl. While I was waiting to go on, a left-wing friend spotted me and said, "What the hell are you doing here? The place is lousy with FBI guys taking everybody's name down. Get out." He didn't understand about moral convictions: I went on and did one of my routines from *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the girl was duly impressed and that was that.

Striking the Blow

Night after night that summer on Fire Island, John Henry Faulk held forth with messianic fervor on the evils of the blacklist. It seems that a group within the radio and television performers' union was cooperating with the AWARE crowd to rid the air waves of reds, pinks and fellow travelers. "Honey," Johnny would say to me, "don't kid yourself. These people are fascists and dangerous. They'll sit there grinnin' like an egg-suckin' dawg, all friendly-like but they'll kill you and they'll kill the country." Johnny said that we should form a slate of candidates to run for office in the TV and radio performers' union (AFTRA) to try to rid the industry of blacklisting. We would call ourselves the middle-of-the-road slate and offer the performers and announcers a genuine alternative to the old choice between the hard-core Right and the hard-core Left. (At that time, things were split so badly that at union meetings, performers would sit on either the right or the left of the meeting hall to show their sympathies.) We decided to organize a slate. We got well-known actors like Jack Paar and Tony Randall to run with us. Charles Collingwood, the commentator, got very involved and worked hard at the organizing. Finally, we had a slate of 26 people ready to present to the membership. We called a meeting at Johnny Faulk's house and

worked on our statement of policy. Then somebody said, "You know, we've really got to offer the union members a true choice. Our slate should be clean. We shouldn't have any of the old tired faces who have been involved in left-wing politics, and I hate to say it, but a couple of us have."

There was an embarrassed moment of silence and then a fairly well-known performer spoke up. "Well," he said, "I guess that's my cue to bow out. It would have been fun, and I'd like to go along for the ride, but I have belonged to quite a few committees and appeared at some benefits, and I agree with you that the slate should be completely untarnished." There were a few cries of "no, no" and "we need you!" but reason prevailed, and his name was regretfully withdrawn from consideration. One other performer said that he, too, had better withdraw, and he did, and then I opened my mouth to confess my appearance at Carnegie Hall. I didn't want to mention it because I wanted to run on this slate and be part of the crusade and not miss out on the fun. I knew no one knew about it and I could have just shut up, but I felt guilty knowing I might jeopardize the other actors' careers if the truth ever came out, so I told all. There was a pause and someone said, "Anything else?" "No," I said, "except I campaigned for Stevenson." There was general laughter and, Johnny said, "Hell, honey, you're as pure as a Baptist minister's six-year-old daughter. They can't get you for that one little thing. Stick with us, honey." And I was very relieved and we ran our slate and Jack Gould wrote about us in the *New York Times* and we won a smashing victory. Charlie Collingwood became president of the New York local of AFTRA and I became first vice president and John Henry Faulk became second vice president. The *New York Times* and everyone else agreed that the blacklist had been dealt a serious blow and we were elated.

Grim Picture

A few weeks went by and my phone rang and I recognized the voice immediately. It was Ed Sullivan. I was due to appear on his show two weeks hence and I assumed that the call was to discuss the material I would perform. "Orson," he said, "have you heard about the AWARE Bulletin?" "What do you mean?" I said. I could feel the blood draining out of my face. "They've cited you in their issue that came out today and I'm afraid the bookings are out. In fact I won't be able to use you on the show at all anymore." I felt sick with fear and anger. Sullivan continued. "Incidentally, if you tell anyone I said this, I'll have to deny it." "I understand, Mr. Sullivan," I said. "Can you tell me what they said about me?" "Yes," he said, "they quote the *Daily Worker* as saying you appeared at some Communist meeting at Carnegie Hall and attacked the House Un-American Activities Committee. Did you?" "Well," I said, "I did appear at the meeting although I didn't know it was a Communist meeting, but I didn't attack any committee. I just did one of the dumb routines I've done on your show." "Well,"

said Sullivan, "I'll help you when I can." He hung up, and I sat there thunderstruck. How could they get me for one lousy appearance? How could they infer I was a Communist or a Communist dupe or a Communist sympathizer from one lousy appearance?

I pulled myself together and started frantically making phone calls. Charlie Collingwood told me he was in trouble too. AWARE had condemned him for writing a critical letter to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. CBS officials were meeting to decide what to do about Charlie. Finally I got a look at the new issue of the AWARE Bulletin. It was devoted to an attack on the middle-of-the-road slate and it asked rhetorically just how anti-Communist we were. To answer the question it listed the three top officers, Collingwood, me and Faulk and, starting with Faulk, it said, "How about Faulk? What is his public record? According to the *Daily Worker* of April 22, 1946. . ." I read with wonder as it went on and on: Johnny at "Headline Cabaret" sponsored by Stage for Action, officially designated as a Communist front. Johnny appearing with Paul Robeson at the Communist Jefferson School. Johnny sending greetings to *People's Songs*, a Red publication. Johnny as U.S. sponsor of the American Continental Congress for Peace in Mexico City. Johnny at "Showtime for Wallace" staged by Progressive Citizens of America, a Communist front. I couldn't believe it. When the paper was finally through with Johnny, it turned to the other two officers on the slate. It said that I had done a satire on the House Un-American Activities Committee in August 1955, and it reported on the letter by Charles Collingwood in January 1955 criticizing that Committee. By themselves the allegations against Collingwood and me would not have been worth printing. Lumped in with all they had to say about Faulk, they added up to a grim picture. I was dumfounded. How could AWARE have made up all that stuff about Johnny? I was sure it couldn't be true or he wouldn't have jeopardized us all by running with us.

I ran over to John's office at CBS. "It isn't true, is it, Johnny? You didn't appear at those places, did you?" "Oh, honey," he said, "what does it matter? Don't you see those people are fascists? If they didn't have something on us, they'd have made something up."

I stood in Johnny's office staring at him with my mouth open. I could feel my ears burning. I wanted to cry or hit him in the face or shake him. Instead I just walked out of his office and went home.

Comes the Dawn

Overnight, from being the hot young comic at CBS television, I stopped working. Just stopped. I saw actors cross the street to avoid having to say hello to me. I was even snubbed by the doorman at CBS. The money stopped coming in, the glory was gone and my career as a television comic seemed like a memory.

Charlie Collingwood held on by the skin of his teeth with the support of Ed Murrow and others. Johnny Faulk was let go from his radio show and decided to sue AWARE and the grocer in Syracuse, who, it seems, was writing to his sponsors advising them that he would not continue to sell their soup in his chain of supermarkets if they persisted in sponsoring Faulk's disc-jockey show. John Faulk became the martyr of Madison Avenue. His friends raised money to support him as he went from one job to another. Time went by. Johnny became consumed by his plans for the lawsuit. He thought and spoke of nothing else. The pressure grew. His marriage foundered and his wife and kids went away. I don't know what happened to the goat.

Almost a year to the day from the appearance of the AWARE Bulletin, Ed Sullivan called me up and said that he hadn't forgotten me and that the heat seemed to be off sufficiently that he could book me again. He did so, and it broke the ice and very slowly I started to work on television again. Charlie Collingwood went to London to be a foreign correspondent and get away from it all. John Faulk proceeded with his lawsuit. He hired Louis Nizer, a brilliant lawyer. The case finally came to court in the courthouse in Lower Manhattan. While the trial was in progress, I went down to see Nizer in action. He was great. He made the blacklisters look ludicrous. He made Johnny look like Jesus. I spoke to Johnny in the courthouse hall, and he remarked on how Nizer had demolished the other side that morning. Was the other side right, I asked. "The point is they didn't prove it," said Johnny. "They were sloppy and they were bad detectives, and we're gonna kill 'em." No wife, no kids, no job, no future and his eyes gleaming like Joan of Arc's.

Sky High to Zilch

I thought back over my interrupted career and the shame I had felt that night at Johnny's house when I had contemplated, for a moment, keeping still about my appearance at the meeting.

I said goodbye to Johnny and walked back uptown. Louis Nizer won the case for Johnny, and the court awarded him a fortune but he never got much of it because the grocer from Syracuse died, and AWARE was broke. Johnny wrote a book about his experiences, but it didn't seem to sell too many copies. He moved back to Texas and the last I heard of him he was traveling around lecturing on man's inhumanity to man as practiced by grocers in Syracuse.

Time went by, and madness passed, and my career picked up where it had left off. My work in television branched out.

By 1969, I had become, among other things, one of the hot voices in the TV commercial "voice-over" field. Producers at advertising agencies would tell their casting directors to "get me an Orson Bean type." One of my best accounts was a large and prestigious bank in New York. Mine was the voice on the award-winning commercials

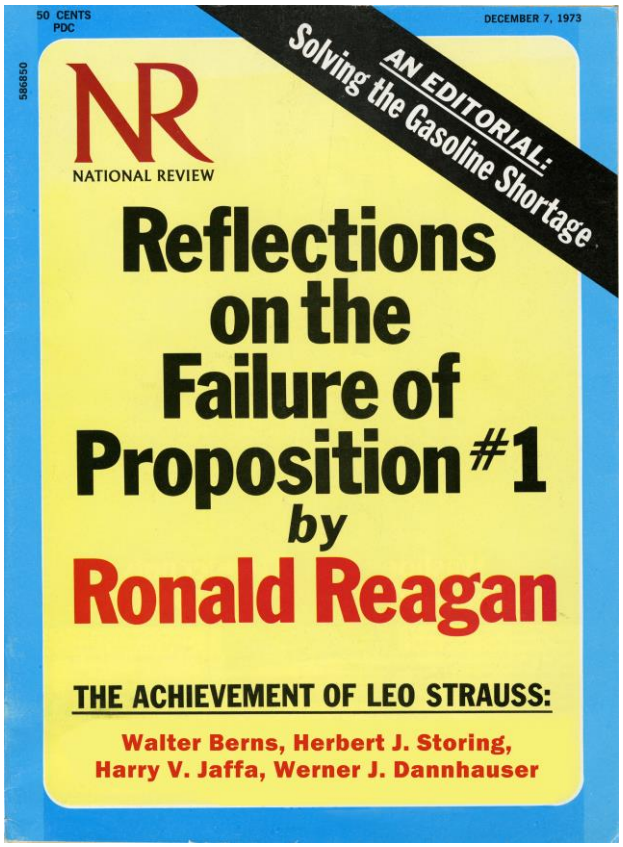
made for this bank by the most creative advertising agency in the business.

In the years since 1955, my political views had changed with the times. As dissent had turned into disorder, I had become more conservative. One day I signed a petition for an ad in the *New York Times* supporting the President's position on the Antiballistic Missile system (ABM). The ordure hit the fan up at the Agency when they saw the ad. A friend of mine, highly placed in the firm, reported to me that the "Creative Boys," the High Priests of advertising, had sworn they would never use me in the commercials they made for any other client.

We had an election for mayor of New York that year and I supported John Marchi, the Republican-Conservative candidate, one of the finest men I've ever met. My name was sent out on a fund-raising letter headed "Conservatives for Marchi." The president of one large New York bank received a copy and, circling my name on the letterhead with his pen, mailed it to the president of my bank with the notation: "Is this the kind of man you want as your spokesman?" The president of my bank good-naturedly wrote back, "I didn't get one of these. Apparently I'm not on Bill Buckley's mailing list."

The Creative Boys at the Agency were not so good-natured. I had gone too far. "The sonofabitch is a fascist," they said. A decision was made to go through the laborious and expensive process of replacing me as spokesman for the bank. A number of my commercials were re-made, taking my name off the bank's credit card where it had appeared as a sort of endorsement and changing the voice to another which sounded enough like mine to ease the transition. Overnight, my desirability as a commercial voice dropped from sky high to zilch. In the week before my voice was removed from the bank commercial, I had done nine "voice-over" jobs. In the three months following, I did none, not one. How they managed it, I don't know. After three months, I was able, here and there, to pick up four or five commercials, but my career as a "voice" was obviously through. I believe I am the first actor in history to have been blacklisted as both a Communist and a fascist. I think it's hilarious. The same Creative Boys who volunteer their services to do campaigns for peace candidates and grape pickers, suddenly drop the concept of freedom of political expression like a hot grape when the views expressed are not their own.

I was getting ready for bed the other night when it suddenly occurred to me that all the blacklisting in the communications media has always been done by the liberals. What the right-wing grocers and super-patriots did was to bring economic pressure to bear. What if the president of CBS or the heads of casting at the agencies had simply said no on principle? There would have been no blacklist. I went to sleep and woke up having a nightmare: Sir Thomas More had come back and taken the Colgate account away from J. Walter Thompson.



Reflections on the Failure of Proposition #1

BY RONALD REAGAN

December 7, 1973

THE NOVEMBER election results demonstrate once again that the people of America are firmly opposed to the philosophy of bigger and bigger government and higher and higher taxes. In Washington state, an unpopular legislative salary increase was overwhelmingly rescinded along with a proposed state income tax. New York rejected a $3.5 billion transportation bond issue by a 3 to 2 margin. Texas and Rhode Island turned down legislative salary issues, and Kentucky rejected a proposal for annual legislative sessions.

The widespread taxpayers' revolt also was evident in California where almost every local school and salary issue was soundly defeated. One county even voted to reduce the salaries of county supervisors by $2,000. These types of fiscal issues provide the only opportunity citizens have directly to influence government's fiscal policy, to protest their staggering tax burden. They made the most of the opportunity.

The only statewide issue on the ballot in California was Proposition #1, an initiative to reduce state income taxes by 7.5 per cent in 1974. It also offered an historic opportunity permanently to reduce taxes at the state level by placing a constitutional limit on the percentage of the people's income the state could take in taxes. Almost two million people voted for Proposition #1. Yet it failed by 54 per cent to 46 per cent in an election in which about 45 per cent of the state's eligible voters participated.

Why?

Why did a majority of those voting turn down a chance to vote themselves lower taxes and how, in view of the result, can I or anyone include California among those states where the people believe the total structure of government has grown too big and too costly?

The answer to this apparent contradiction can be found in the election returns and in the campaign of distortion and falsehood waged against Proposition #1 by a well-financed, well-organized opposition which desperately avoided debating the central issue: whether taxes are too high now and whether the tax burden should be reduced.

The almost two million citizens who voted Yes on Proposition #1 knew they were voting against higher taxes. Ironically, a majority of those who voted No also believed they were voting against higher taxes. The last major public opinion survey on Proposition #1 (the Field poll) revealed that a majority was leaning toward a No vote. But it also disclosed that 69 per cent of those inclined to oppose Proposition #1 did so because they thought it would increase their tax burden.

Even though the measure was specifically designed to reduce state and local taxes and hold them down permanently, many voters were confused by the TV blitz and newspaper advertising campaign staged by the opposition.

In a way, the campaign strategy of the opposition paid the sincerest form of compliment to the goal of Proposition #1: lower taxes.

After repeatedly telling the people that the measure would limit government's ability to spend, that it would force government to hold down future budgets, after appealing to the fear of every possible special interest group, opponents finally keyed their campaign to the false claim that it would increase, not reduce, taxes. They dared not campaign against what they knew would be the ultimate impact of Proposition #1: a realistic and workable limit on the growth of government to keep taxes from going up faster than the incomes of the people who pay them.

The defeat of Proposition # 1 can't be translated into a victory for advocates of higher taxes and unlimited government growth. It was a victory for political demagoguery, a triumph for the unsubstantiated charge that sounds convincing in a thirty-second television commercial but which does more to confuse than inform.

It is an axiom of politics that when people are confused about an issue, many will vote No. They'll opt for the status quo, or not vote at all. On November 6, a sufficient number of California voters were confused enough about the impact of Proposition #1 to turn back possibly the most significant effort made in this century to bring government under some reasonable degree of financial restraint. Some of them voted No; others simply stayed home.

In California, this kind of cynicism could be justified. Too often in the past, the people have been promised tax relief or more efficient government, but only on condition that a particular measure be adopted or that

government be given some new power or authority to change a previous budgetary restriction. Somehow the promises never materialize: the tax relief the people are told will be theirs is an illusion. Somehow, after the election, a great emergency is discovered, an unforeseen "need" that requires more revenue and more government, not less.

Since 1967

When I took office in 1967, we discovered that the promise of "no tax increases" could not be carried out. California was virtually insolvent, the previous administration having changed that state's system of budgetary bookkeeping in a way that allowed the spending of 15 months' revenue in twelve months' time, thus avoiding a major tax increase in election year 1966. The state government was spending $1 million a day more than it was collecting.

California, unlike the Federal Government, cannot print more money or pile up deficits. The governor is required to submit a balanced budget, and if any additional taxes are needed to balance revenues with spending, the constitution requires the governor to propose higher taxes.

So our first major lesson in government was painful: for the taxpayers and for us. We had to increase taxes by some $800 million to balance the unbalanced budget we inherited. At the time, I said we hoped this would be temporary, that when we had had time to institute reforms, to curb excessive spending, we would work to reduce the tax burden.

I believed that government could be run more economically using the same sound rules and principles that apply to the running of a business or even a household budget. The phrase "cut, squeeze, and trim" became the watchword of our administration and the result has confirmed my belief that the cost of government can be brought under control.

A task force of businessmen surveyed the state government and recommended almost two thousand steps to streamline it. Every reform, every challenge to the bureaucratic status quo brought screams of outrage, protests, and demonstrations. But contrary to the claims of the protesting groups, these economies did not curtail the state's ability to finance those programs which are properly government's responsibility. It made possible greater state support along with lower taxes.

In seven years we've managed to increase state support for public schools by 92 per cent, although enrollment this year is less than 6 per cent greater than it was in 1967. The state scholarship fund, which helps eligible young people attend college, totals more than $36 million this year, almost eight times higher than when we started.

California has pioneered the concept of treating the mentally ill with an expanded system of community mental health programs. When we started, the budget for community treatment was $18 million. This year it is more than $140 million and California's shift from the "warehousing of the mentally ill" in large state mental institutions has become a model for the nation.

No one objected to increased state support in these areas. But the economies that made them possible were vehemently opposed. When we sought to rebate budget surpluses, there were hysterical charges that fiscal chaos would result.

Before 1967, California homeowners were protesting an excessive property tax burden. But there could be no relief until economy and efficiency in government made relief possible. In 1968, we adopted a $750 homeowners' property tax exemption and this was raised to $1,750 last year (after a four year struggle), along with a revised school formula that rolled back local school tax rates and gave the schools the greatest single-year increase of state support in history. For most taxpayers, this has meant a saving of between $150 and $200 in their annual property tax bill.

We've tried to spread the benefit of more efficient government to all taxpayers. There have been tax credits for tenants (in lieu of property tax reductions); we've cut the business inventory tax in half and reduced bridge tolls eleven times.

Possibly our greatest success was in welfare reform. When I proposed this in 1971 the Democratic majority wouldn't even let me present the plan to a joint session. We were told there would be a $700 million budget deficit. There were dire predictions of fiscal chaos, charges that the state was simply shifting the burden to local government, and massive protests by welfare-rights groups that claimed the elimination of abuses and fraud in welfare would deprive tbe truly needy of help they should receive.

Welfare Reform

None of these things happened. When we started, California's welfare rolls were growing by forty thousand a month and costs were increasing three times as fast as the normal growth of state revenues (without increased taxes). At last count, there were 386,835 fewer people on welfare than when we began. We've managed to increase benefits for the truly needy by almost 30 per cent and provide cost of living adjustments for senior citizens and the disabled. Now the cost of welfare is between $1 and $2 billion less than the opponents of reform said it would be. These welfare reforms have since been adopted by a number of other states, and several of those capable and dedicated officials who helped achieve them have been recruited by the Nixon Administration to help reform welfare on a national basis.

There was no tax shift to local government. In the year after welfare

reform, 42 of California's 58 counties reduced their basic tax rates. This year, 45 reduced their tax rates, most of them for the second year in a row. Instead of a $700 million budget deficit, we had an $800 million surplus this year. As opposed to 1967, we were collecting $1,5 million a day more than we needed and we wanted to return this to the people.

More than a year ago, while we were pushing property tax reform, I organized a task force to survey the entire structure of government, to discover how, without curtailing essential services, the tax burden could be permanently reduced. This task force included some of the nation's most distinguished economists, men like Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago, Peter Drucker of Claremont College, C. Lowell Harriss of Columbia University and the Tax Foundation, Roger Freeman of the Hoover Institution, and James Buchanan of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Along with members of my own cabinet and staff, this task force worked for more than seven months. They discovered that taxes arc the one exception to Newton's law of gravity. They always go up, in good times and bad, in periods of prosperity or recession.

In 1930, the total cost of government (federal, state, and local) was about 15 per cent of the personal income of the United States. This year, in California, the total cost is 44.7 per cent and a fraction less in the rest of the country. Of this total, the state was taking about 8.75 per cent. Along with a return of the $800 million surplus, we asked the task force to devise a way permanently to reduce this percentage, to provide lasting tax relief to the people of California. The result of their work was the tax initiative we offered November 6.

Because of inflation and population growth, we know government revenues must be permitted to expand to meet essential needs. Yet we were convinced that this could be done while gradually reducing the total tax burden. In the past twenty years in California, the cost of state government has been growing 10 per cent a year but the total income of the people has been going up only 7.7 per cent. The result has been periodic tax increases and a steady upward growth in the percentage of the people's income going for taxes.

Proposition #1 Goals

Proposition #1 was designed to bring government spending into balance with the growth of revenues. The key features were:

- An immediate 7.5 per cent state income tax reduction in 1974 income,
- The total and permanent elimination of the state income tax for all families earning $8,000 a year or less, and, most important,
- Adoption of a tax limit by imposing a ceiling on the growth of state revenues, which would slowly reduce the 8.75 per cent of personal income the state takes to a level of around 7 per cent over a period of 15 years.

Unless something is done to check government's unlimited power to tax, California's state budget will grow from this year's $9.3 billion to a staggering $47 billion by 1989.

Still opponents of our proposal charged we sought to impose a fiscal straitjacket on state government that would force massive cuts for education, for mental health, for almost every item in the budget—even though the budget could have doubled in ten years and tripled in 15 under Proposition #1, and funds for education, mental health, and all other essential programs could have grown at the same rate.

At the same time, California could have planned tax reduction on an orderly basis as a part of our budgeting process. In five years, we could have cut income taxes another 25 per cent or trimmed a penny from the sales tax: in ten years the income tax reduction could have been 60 per cent, or we could have cut two cents off the sales tax.

The legislature would have retained its full authority to revise the tax structure, to raise or lower specific taxes, to do anything it does now with one important exception: Any future tax increases above the limit would have to be ratified by the people. This provision, more than any other, generated the greatest alarm in the bureaucracy which knew full well that if the people ever get veto power on excessive spending, the days of spendthrift government are over.

One legislator complained to me that returning the $800 million surplus would be "an unnecessary expenditure of public funds." Another said Proposition # 1 would restrict government's ability to redistribute the income of the people through taxes. That was one of the few completely accurate statements the opposition made during the campaign, but they didn't make it outside the legislative chambers.

Almost every group which derives status, income, and power from bigger government joined the ranks of the opposition, including the state teachers association, the state employees association, welfare groups. Opponents said our tax reduction plan would favor the rich. The truth is: State income taxes would have been permanently eliminated for every family earning less than $8,000 a year. They said it contained no guaranteed tax reduction. Yet the constitutional amendment specifically said that every year for 15 years, the percentage of the people's income that state government could take in taxes must be reduced either through a rebate or reduced taxes. They said it would increase local taxes. The truth is: Proposition #1 would have written into the constitution the same tax limits on local government contained in our 1972 property tax reform. This protection would be guaranteed, not simply by a law, but by constitutional language that only the people could change.

One of the most blatant falsehoods of the campaign was a statement that Proposition #1 would have authorized the legislature to

permit tbe levying of local income taxes by any governmental unit "from counties to mosquito abatement districts." The truth is: The legislature has that authority now and can do so by a simple majority vote. Proposition # 1 would have made it harder; it would have required a two-thirds vote for any local income tax (something we haven't presently in California).

But truth is a fragile weapon in a heated campaign. It can be ignored or twisted and distorted until the average citizen, unfamiliar with government finance, finds himself totally confused. When we proposed the California revenue control and tax reduction program in February, we offered it along with a plan to return our $800 million surplus through another 20 per cent income tax rebate in 1973 and a six months' suspension of one penny of the state sales tax.

The legislative majority, controlled by those who would later lead the fight against Proposition #1, blocked the plan. It didn't get past the first committee, even though constitutional amendments are routinely offered each year and just as routinely put on the ballot. The legislators who fought Proposition #1 could not find time last spring to hold extensive public hearings on the measure. But in the final weeks of the campaign to put the initiative on the ballot, almost every major legislative committee held special hearings to generate publicity for attacks against it.

Because the legislature refused to vote on it, we were forced to gather more than half a million signatures to place it on the ballot. This consumed a great deal of time and part of the financial support we were able to muster in support of the plan.

Yet this part of the campaign made the whole effort worthwhile. Before the initiative qualified, the Democratic majority had refused to consider returning the $800 million surplus to the taxpayers. But once the people put it on the ballot, our opponents, anxious to make it as financially unattractive as possible, offered a compromise which would return the surplus by a one-time 20 to 35 per cent income tax rebate and suspension of a penny on the sales tax for six months.

Was it politically unwise to accept this? Should we have let the surplus pile up in the treasury and thus enhance the prospects of passing Proposition #1? We considered those arguments and rejected them because our purpose has always been to reduce taxes, not to play political games. The sales tax has gone down one cent for six months, the income tax is eliminated entirely for 1973 for those families earning $8,000 a year or less, and everyone else will receive a 1973 rebate of 20 to 35 per cent.

Qualifying Proposition #1 for the ballot accomplished part of our purpose by forcing the legislature to return the surplus. But the longer-term, permanent tax reduction remains an elusive goal. Naturally, I am

disappointed. It was and is a daring idea and I do not regret the exercise.

It served a positive purpose. As a result of the battle waged in California, people all over America have been alerted to the staggering burden which taxes impose on our economy and on every family in this country.

The people did not reject the idea of reducing taxes or limiting the size and cost of government to a reasonable level. They endorsed lower taxes in elections throughout the country, including the confused vote on Proposition #1.

Perhaps we could and should have done more to draw the basic philosophical issues more clearly, to expose the distracting, irrelevant, and confusing play on human fears that was so effectively exploited by the opponents. We've learned again how powerful an array of forces there is at work in America to expand government, to maintain government's unlimited power to tax the people. These forces have seldom been defeated in the past forty years. Because they have prevailed, taxes now cost the typical family more than it spends for food, shelter, and clothing combined. A free economy cannot survive that kind of tax burden indefinitely.

More than a century ago, the French philosopher Frederic Bastiat wrote: "The state, too, is subject to the Malthusian Law. It tends to expand in proportion to its means of existence and to live beyond its means, and these are, in the last analysis, nothing but the substance of the people. Woe to the people that cannot limit the sphere of action of the state: Freedom, private enterprise, wealth, happiness, independence, personal dignity, all vanish,"

That is what will inevitably happen in America unless we act to curb the excessive spending of government. This cannot be done simply by changing the law. The national debt limit was supposed to check deficit financing. But it has been temporarily or permanently increased by changing the law two dozen times in the past twelve years alone.

Only the people, through a constitutional amendment or some other failsafe method, can limit government's excesses. That's what we tried unsuccessfully to do with Proposition #1 at the state level.

The basic issue remains unchanged. The idea of lower taxes did not fail. There will be other elections, other days. We have suffered a setback. We have lost a battle, but this struggle will go on.

The people will find a way to bring big government under control, to put a reasonable limit on how much of their income government may take in taxes. This idea will become a reality. It must prevail because if it does not, the free society we have known for two hundred years, the ideal of a government by consent of the governed, will simply cease to exist.

Scoundrel Time: & Who Is The Ugliest Of Them All?

BY WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

January 23, 1979

WHEN *Scoundrel Time* (Little, Brown, $7.95) was first published, in the spring of 1976, only the cooing of reviewers was heard. Up front, in the most prominent seats, they applauded so resolutely, so methodically, the overtone of the metronome teased the ear. Solzhenitsyn, in the first Gulag book, writes about how, during one of the terrors, Stalin's agents would fan out from Moscow to give speeches to the satellite brass, hastily convened in crowded theaters in the outlying cities to receive the details of Stalin's hectic afflatus. After the speaker was done, the subjects would break into applause, and the clapping would go on and on, because no one dared be the first to sit down, lest he be thought insufficiently servile. Indeed, rather than wait for the speaker finally to beckon the whole assembly back to its seats, on one occasion someone did it — stopped clapping, though only after a boisterous while. That man was spotted, given ten years, and shipped off to a prison camp — where, perhaps, he was given to read from the- collected anti-fascist *opera* of Lillian Hellman. . . . It seemed for a while the reviewers would be that way all around the town — the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post, Commonweal, America,* the *Chicago Tribune.* Then . . . then, in *The New York Review of Books,* Murray Kempton interrupted his own paean to Miss Hellman to make a comment or two which, however gentle, quite ruptured the trance. It was as if, in Paris during the occupation, an anonymous arranger had, by fugitive notation, insinuated the motif of the *"Marseillaise"* into a great Speer-like orchestration of *"Über Alles."* Others, after that, came rushing in. It would never be quite the same again for Miss Lillian.

Even so, one has to hand it to her. Though the book is slender, the design is grandly staged, in self-esteem as in presumption. To begin with, here is someone described in the introduction to

her own book as the greatest woman playwright in American history. Now this is probably true. But a) Isn't that on the order of celebrating the tallest building in Wichita, Kansas? and b) Doesn't an introduction to oneself in such terms, in one's own book, by one's own chosen introducer, interfere with the desired perception of oneself as a hardworking artist ignorant, indeed disdainful, of the outside world of power-plays and flackery? and c) Aren't the auspices the most alien for making sexual distinctions? I mean, Garry Wills, the Last Kid, talking about the Greatest Woman Playwright as one would talk about the downhill champion on the one-legged ski team?

And here is a writer (Wills) introducing an autobiographical book by a woman who is publicizing now her complaint against an America that, as she might put it, victimized her because .of her alleged championship of the regime of Josef Stalin. And what, then, does Wills go and do in his introduction? Quote from the author's pre-McCarthy works, to demonstrate the impartiality of her opposition to tyranny? Not at all. He goes on (and on and on — Mr. Wills consumes 34 pages with his introduction, one-fifth of the book), blithely — offhandedly — describing the era of Miss Hellman's travail as the era in U.S.-Soviet relations during which horrible old us, led by Harry Truman, promulgated a cold war against reasonable old them, the startled, innocent Communists, led by Josef Stalin. In *Commentary,* Nathan Glazer quoted from Wills's introduction: *"A newly aggressive Truman had launched the Cold War in the spring of 1947, with his plan to 'rescue' Greece and Turkey. . . . We had still a world to save, with just those plans — from NATO to the Korean War . . ."* And commented: "One reads such passages — and many others — in astonishment. Garry Wills [evidently] believes that Greece and Turkey did not need to be rescued, that one of America's 'plans' was the Korean War. It seems that he prefers the political condition of, say, Bulgaria and North Korea to that of Greece and Turkey." *That* introduction, which might have been written in the Lenin Institute, introducing *that* book, under the circumstances of Miss Hellman's apologia, was a venture either in dumb innocence (inconsistent with Hellman's persona), or in matchless cheek, on the order of Mohandas Gandhi writing his autobiography and asking General Patton to introduce it.

But the difficulties had only just begun for her. Is Ms. Hellman a nice guy? In a way, it shouldn't matter. A sentence from her book, much quoted, asks, *"Since when do you have to agree with people to defend them from injustice?"* By the same token, we shouldn't require that someone be endearing as a prerequisite to indignation at unfair treatment of her. But Ms. Hellman, author of *The Little Foxes,* is quickly spotted as being no less guileful than one of her characters. It's another case of Germaine Greer, filibustering against male chauvinism, while strip-teasing her sexual biography across the magazine rack. Ms. Hellman, affecting only a disinterested concern for justice, twanging the

heartstrings — with, however, more sleight of hand than craft. She had to sell her country house! She had to fire her cook and gardener! She had to give up a million-dollar contract! She had to take a part-time job in a department store! Her lover had to go to jail! If, unlike the earlier reviewers, you finish the book believing that you have read anything less than an episode in the life of Thomas More, you are either callous — or else her art has failed her.

She takes awful risks, entirely unnecessary. For instance, she exhibits hit-and-run contempt for Lionel and Diana Trilling — for the sin of believing in the sincerity of Whittaker Chambers. Nice people would have handled that differently. James Wechsler of the *New York Post* is denounced for being a *"friendly witness"* before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (he never appeared before HUAC: it was the McCarthy Committee, and Wechsler was hostile). Theodore White is dismissed contemptuously as a *"jolly quarter-historian"* — because he once wrote a book saying that Nixon was a complicated man (Lillian Hellman finds nothing complicated in evil incarnate). Elia Kazan, struggling to appease his conscience, in revolt now against his earlier complicity with the Communist movement, took a full page in the *New York Times* to run his palinode — characterized by Miss Hellman as *"pious shit."*

All in all, her performance is about as ingratiating as a post-Watergate speech by Richard Nixon, and so we quite understand it when Murray Kempton is driven to saying, in concluding his review, that, really, he would not want Lillian Hellman "overmuch as a comrade." Thus, the scaffolding of the book is pretty shaky. It is, after all, implicitly entitled, *"The Heroism of Lillian Hellman during the Darkest Days of the Republic,* by Lillian Hellman." It would have been a little seemlier if her book had gone out as: *"Scoundrel Time,* by Lillian Hellman, as told to Garry Wills." Or — why not just *"Scoundrel Time: How Lillian Hellman Held Her Finger in the Dike and Saved American Freedom and Self-Respect,* by Garry Wills"? He would not have needed to increase the size of his contribution by all that much. In any event — an artistic point, and with apologies to Burke — this martyr, to be loved, should be lovelier.

Then there is the problem of factual accuracy, best captured in the author's unguarded reference to Whittaker Chambers and the pumpkin papers.

Here is what Miss Hellman wrote:

"Facts are facts — and one of them is that a pumpkin, in which Chambers claimed to have hidden the damaging evidence against Hiss, deteriorates"

Now here is a sentence that might have been written by Eleanor Roosevelt. It sounds strange coming from the greatest woman playwright in American history, and

is incredible when proffered in support of the proposition that facts are facts.

Yes, it is a fact that pumpkins deteriorate.

But they do not deteriorate appreciably overnight, which is how long the Hiss films reposed in the pumpkin.

As for *"in which Chambers claimed to have hidden . . ."* nobody questions that Chambers hid the films there, not even Alger Hiss. Not even Stalin. Nor could she have intended to write, *"in which Chambers hid the allegedly damaging evidence."* Because it wasn't *allegedly* damaging, it was just plain damaging, which indeed is why all the fuss. The films went a long way to establish Chambers' credibility, and therefore the guilt of Hiss. What she presumably *meant* to write was, *"in which Chambers hid the damaging but, it now turns out, meaningless evidence."* Earlier in the book she had constructed an explanatory footnote from which the sentence in question coasted, to wit: *"In 1975 the secret pumpkin papers were found to contain nothing secret, nothing confidential. They were, in fact, non-classified, which is Washington's way of saying anybody who says please can have them."*

Facts are indeed facts. But Miss Hellman's rendition of the facts caught the attention of one of her fans, Congressman Edward Koch of Manhattan. He read her book, and wrote the author a letter of fawning praise reciting his own sustained effort to kill the House Committee on Un-American Activities. But Edward Koch has a streak of Yankee inquisitiveness, even as it is advertised about Miss Hellman that she is curious. John Hersey has written about her — his dear friend — "Miss Hellman's powers of invention are fed by her remarkable memory and her ravenous curiosity. Her father once said she lived 'within a question mark.' She defines culture as 'applied curiosity.' She is always on what she calls 'the find-out kick.'" Well, not quite always. Not on those occasions when she begins a paragraph with the phrase, "Facts are facts." (Like the *Daily World's* ritual introduction of a lie: "As is well known . . .")

Congressman Koch wrote to the Library of Congress to ask about Miss Hellman's description of the pumpkin papers, and simultaneously wrote to Miss Hellman asking for an elucidation. The lady who lives within a question mark didn't reply. But the lady at the Library of Congress did. As follows: "The footnote statement is inaccurate. On July 31, 1975, Alger Hiss was permitted to see the 'pumpkin papers,' which consist of five rolls of microfilm. One roll, as Mr. Kelly reports, was 'completely light-fogged.' Two other rolls were pages from apparently unclassified Navy technical manuals. The other two rolls, however, contained Government documents 'relating to U.S.-German relations before World War II and cables from U.S. observers in China.' Documents in these two rolls were marked highly confidential. Of the five rolls of microfilm, only these latter two had been

used as evidence against Hiss in the trial which led to his conviction for perjury in 1950."

Miss Hellman's reputation as a literary precisionist (she is said to write and rewrite her plays four, six, ten, twelve times) leads one to expect a cognate precision in those of her books and articles that bid for the moral attention of the Republic; so that one is inclined to take literally such a statement by her as, *"Certainly nobody in their {sic} right mind could have believed that the China experts, charged and fired by the State Department, did any more than recognize that Chiang Kai-shek was losing."*

But whom is she referring to? Who is it who was *"charged and fired"* by the State Department for such an offense? The controversial John Carter Vincent was three times *cleared* by the State Department's Loyalty Security Board, and when the Civil Service Loyalty Review Board found against him, Dulles *overruled* that Board, though accepting Vincent's resignation. McCarthy's target, John Paton Davies, was *cleared* by the State Department. John Stewart Service was, granted, finally dropped by the State Department, but only because the Civil Service Loyalty Review Board ruled against him, not the State Department's board, which repeatedly cleared him. And Service was otherwise engaged than merely as a diplomatic technician predicting the ascendancy of Mao. His emotions in the matter were hardly concealed. He had provided his superiors, from the field in China, such information as that "Politically, any orientation which the Chinese Communists may once have had toward the Soviet Union seems to be a thing of the past . . , they are carrying out democratic policies which they expect the United States to approve and sympathetically support." And Service's case was further complicated when he was arrested for passing along classified documents to the editor of *Amerasia,* a Communist-front publication. But of course the principal architect of our China policy, singled out by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, hadn't even been a member of the State Department, exercising his .influence on policy through the Institute for Pacific Relations. The blurb printed on Owen Lattimore's book *Solution in Asia* went further than merely to predict the downfall of the Kuomintang. "He showed," the book's editors compressed the author's story, "that 'all the Asiatic people are more interested in actual democratic practices, such as the ones they can see in action across the Russian border, than they are in the fine theories of Anglo-Saxon democracies which come coupled with ruthless imperialism. He inclines to support American newspapermen who report that the only real democracy in .China is found in Communist areas."

We have learned about democracy in the Communist world. What have we learned about Miss Hellman's credibility?

Nor is she entirely candid in describing the nature or extent of her own involvement with the Soviet Union. She vouchsafes, in a

subordinate clause that could be interpreted as contritional, only this much: *"Many* [American intellectuals] *found in the sins of Stalin Communism — and there were plenty of sins and plenty that for a long time I mistakenly denied — the excuse to join those who should have' been their hereditary enemies."* (Interesting, that one. Is she talking about American Jewish socialist anti-Communists? Who else?) Later she says, *"I thought that in the end Russia, having achieved a state socialism, would stop its infringements on personal liberty. I was wrong."* Isn't there something there on the order of, "I thought that, on buying the contract of Mickey Mantle, the Yankees would go on to win the World Series. I was wrong . . ."? But the ritualistic apology was not enough to satisfy. Soon after Mr. Kempton broke the spell, one began to notice the misgivings of others. William Phillips in *Partisan Review,* Melvin Lasky in *'Encounter,* Nathan Glazer in *Commentary,* most notably Hilton Kramer in the *New York Times* (ardently defended by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in the letters section), and even Irving Howe, in *Dissent*.

Forsooth, Lillian Hellman's involvement in the Communist movement was not comprehensively divulged in her offhanded remarks about her concern for justice and peace, and her stated disinclination for politics. Miss Hellman went to Russia for the first time in 1937, where her ravenous curiosity caused her to learn enough about the Soviet system to return to the United States confidently to defend Stalin's purges and denounce John Dewey and his commission for finding Stalin guilty of staging the show trials during the great purge. She devoted much of her professional career during that period to dramatizing the evil of brown fascism. *Watch on the Rhine,* staged in 1941, is devoted to the proposition that *"the death of fascism is more desirable than the lives and well-being of the people who hate it."* When, a quarter-century later, in 1969, she criticized, in a letter to the *New York Times,* the novelist Kuznetsov for fleeing Russia and seeking asylum in England, having first secured an exit visa by "cooperating" with the Soviet Union by giving an obviously fabricated and useless deposition against fellow dissidents, Kuznetsov replied that Miss Hellman's attack on him, "like that of a few others," was "prompted by some surviving illusions about Russia." "The Soviet Union," he explained to Miss Hellman, "is a fascist country. What is more, its fascism is much more dangerous than Hitler's. It is a country which is living in Orwellian times. . . . Tens of millions of bloody victims, a culture destroyed, fascist anti-semitism, the genocide of small nations, the transformation of the individual into a hypocritical cipher, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. In literature — nothing but murder, suicides, persecution, trials, lunatic asylums, an unbroken series of tragedies from Gumilev to Solzhenitsyn. Is that really not enough?" There is no recorded reaction from Miss Hellman.

During the war, she traveled to the Soviet Union and was received there as a celebrity. She returned the hospitality in first-rate

mint: an article in *Collier's* magazine about the heroism of the Russian people and the Russian soldiers. In that article there is a passage of triumphant irony. She has been implored by her guide to ask more questions. She records her reply: *"I said, 'The first week I was in the Soviet Union I found out that if I did not ask questions, I always got answers. . . . Tell your people to tell me what they want to. I will learn more that way.'"* (Life within a question mark.) And, indeed, she learned everything Stalin and his agents wanted her to learn, and came back to America to share her knowledge, and to despise those of her fellow Americans who insisted on asking questions.

In 1948 and 1949 she was, for a non-politician, very active. She backed Henry Wallace's bid for the Presidency on the Progressive Party ticket, and was visibly amused on being asked privately by poor old Mortimer Snerd if it were true that there were Communists in positions of power in his party. *"It was such a surprising question that I laughed and said most certainly it was true."* She then put in a call, convening the top Communists in the Progressive Party, and said to them at that meeting, Look, why don't you go paddle your own canoe in your own party? There cannot have been such dumb amazement in Christendom since Lady Astor asked Stalin when would he stop killing people.

A few months later, Lillian Hellman played a big role in the famous Waldorf Conference — the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. In her book, her running guard Mr. Wills treats most fiercely those who attended the meeting for the purpose of "disrupting" it — such red-baiters as Mary McCarthy and Dwight Macdonald, and officials of the Americans for Democratic Action who, at a press conference, raised with the wretched Russian super-pawn, Dmitri Shostakovich, head of the Soviet delegation, questions about the fate of his cultural and scientific colleagues back home, Russian writers, intellectuals, and musicians who had disappeared from sight after the most recent choler of Josef Stalin. Miss Hellman does not allude to any of this. Her quarrel with American intellectuals is over their failure to devote the whole of their time to criticizing J. Parnell Thomas. Presumably, criticism of Stalin could wait until Miss Hellman was personally satisfied that, now that he had established state socialism, he had in fact failed to introduce human freedom.

Indeed, her attitude is ferocious toward those who, looking back on their complicity with Communism, wondered more inventively than she how to make amends. By writing books? (Koestler.) Cooperating with congressional committees? (Kazan.) Doing both? (Chambers.) Miss Hellman, who wrote about how the cause of anti-fascism was bigger than anything, seemed to have lost interest in tyranny, preoccupied now with .her material well-being, and that of Dashiell Hammett, her relation with whom is jovially described by one reviewer — "She was then and had long been a friend

of Dashiell Hammett — more than a friend: a wife, *off* and on, but for the paperwork." In that spirit one could say that thus had been Lillian Hellman's relations with the Communist movement — a marriage, but for the paperwork. If one feels that paperwork, the formal exchange of vows, is essential to a sacramentally complete union, then perhaps Lillian Hellman was not married to the Communist movement any more than she was married to Dashiell Hammett. But the investigating committees, like Miss Hellman's reviewers, were interested in de facto relations.

So off she went to Washington, for her great moment before the congressional committee. There has not been such a prologue since the *Queen Mary* weighed anchor in Manhattan in order to move to Brooklyn. Her device was simple. She wrote to the committee to say she would not answer questions about anybody's activities other than her own, and unless the committee agreed not to ask such questions, she would take the Fifth Amendment. Implicit in her position was her sacred right to be the sole judge of whether her acquaintances in the Communist world were engaged in innocent activity. The committee of course declined to permit her to define the committee's mandate, so she took the Fifth, and wants us to celebrate her wit and courage every 25 years. The committee treated her with civility, did not ask Congress to hold her in contempt, and is hardly responsible for the decline in her commercial fortunes. She, not the committee, dictated the script that got her into trouble with Hollywood.

Yet the lady is obsessed with the fancy that she and her common-law husband were specific victims of the terror. "Dash" floats in and out of the book disembodiedly, but always we are reminded that he actually spent time in jail — for refusing to divulge the names of the financial patrons of the Civil Rights Congress, a Communist front (Dashiell Hammett was not a dupe, at least not in the Conventional sense: he was a Communist). Miss Hellman makes a great deal of his victimization. Murray Kempton, who would not send Caligula to prison, at this point has had enough. He writes, "We do not diminish the final admiration we feel owed to Dashiell Hammett when we wonder what he might have said to Miss Hellman on the night he came home from the meeting of the board of the Civil Rights Congress which voted to refuse its support to the cause of James Kutcher, a paraplegic veteran who had been discharged as a government clerk because he belonged to the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party. But then Hammett was a Communist and it was an article of the Party faith that Leon Trotsky, having worked for the Emperor of Japan since 1904, had then improved his social standing by taking employment with the Nazis in 1934. Thus any member of the Socialist Workers Party could be considered by extension to be no more than an agent of Hitler's ghost. Given that interpretation of history, Paul Robeson spoke from principle when a proposal to assist the Trotskyite Kutcher was raised at a public meeting of

the Civil Rights Congress. Robeson drove it from the floor with a declaration to the effect that you don't ask Jews to help a Nazi or Negroes to help the KKK." The voice of Paul Robeson lives on, speaking from the same principle: "Oct. 7, 1976, Lillian Hellman, author and dramatist, will receive the third annual Paul Robeson Award tomorrow at 12:30. The award is presented by the Paul Robeson Citation Committee of Actors' Equity for 'concern for and service to fellow humans.'"

The self-pity reaches paranoia. Edmund Wilson once wrote an entire book the thesis of which silts up as suggesting that we went to war in Vietnam for the sole purpose of increasing his income tax. Miss Hellman is vaguer on the subject of motivation, but denies her reader any explanation for bringing the matter up at all, leaving us to suppose that Somebody in Washington singled her and Dash out for Special Treatment. Thus Hammett goes to jail for contempt of Congress (for six months). *"That was a tough spring, 1952. There were not alone the arrangements for my appearance before the Committee, there were other kinds of trouble. Hammett owed the Internal Revenue a great deal of back taxes: two days after he went to jail they attached all income from books, radio, or television, from anything. He was, therefore, to have no income for the remaining ten years of his life. . . . That made me sad."* And again, *"Never in the ten years since the Internal Revenue cut off his income — two days after he went to jail — did he ever buy a suit or even a tie."* As for herself, *"Money was beginning to go and go fast. I had gone from earning a hundred and forty thousand a year (before the movie blacklist) to fifty and then twenty and then ten, almost all of which was taken from me* [note, "taken from me"] *by the Internal Revenue Department, which had come forward with its claim on the sale of a play that the previous Administration had seemingly agreed to."*

La Précisionniste rides again, a) It is, of course, the Internal Revenue *Service,* not Department; b) if she means to say that her companion Dashiell Hammett should have been excused from paying the same taxes other people pay on equivalent income (perhaps because, as a Communist, he was entitled to preferential treatment?), then let her *say* that; c) the IRS doesn't "agree" to the sale of a play, but might have agreed to accept a taxation base: in any event, the tax levied by IRS was on profit; to say nothing of the fact that d) Lillian Hellman is not Vivien Kellems' sister. The latter was the authentic American Poujadiste, and when *she* complained about taxes, she spoke from the bowels of principle. When Lillian Hellman complains about high taxes, she is complaining about the monster she suckled.

What does one go on to say about a book so disorderly, so tasteless, guileful, self-enraptured? The disposition to adore her, feel sorry for her, glow in the vicarious thrill of her courage and decency (her favorite word, "decency": she is apolitical now, she says, desiring only "decency") runs into hurdle after hurdle in the obstacle course of

this little book. Consider. It is 1952, and she is living in her townhouse in New York, and the buzzer rings. *"An overrespectable-looking black man . . . stood in the elevator, his hat politely removed. He asked me if I was Lillian Hellman. I agreed to that and asked who he was. He handed me an envelope and said he was there to serve a subpoena from the House Un-American Activities Committee. I opened the envelope and read the subpoena. I said, 'Smart to choose a black man for this job. You like it?' and slammed the door."*

Ah, the decent of this earth. The same lady who in her book tells us that she will not style her life to political fashion, now refers to her visitor, back in 1952, as "black," when of course that word was unused 19 1952. Miss Hellman was brought up in New Orleans where, paradoxical though it may seem, the same class of people who institutionalized Jim Crow never (I speak of the decent members of that class) humiliated individual members of the Negro race. It is difficult to imagine suggesting to a Negro bureaucrat who has merely performed a job assigned to him that he is collusively engaged in anti-Negro activity; impossible to understand a civilized woman slamming the door in the face of someone — a messenger — executing a clerical duty. Truly, the lady's emotions are ungoverned, and perhaps ungovernable. She seems to like to advertise this. *'I have a temper and it is triggered at odd times by odd matters and is then out of my control."* And, elsewhere, talking about her "black" nanny, she reveals that she was given *"anger — an uncomfortable, dangerous, and often useful gift."* To be used against black messengers bearing instructions from Washington, but on no account against white messengers bearing instructions from Moscow.

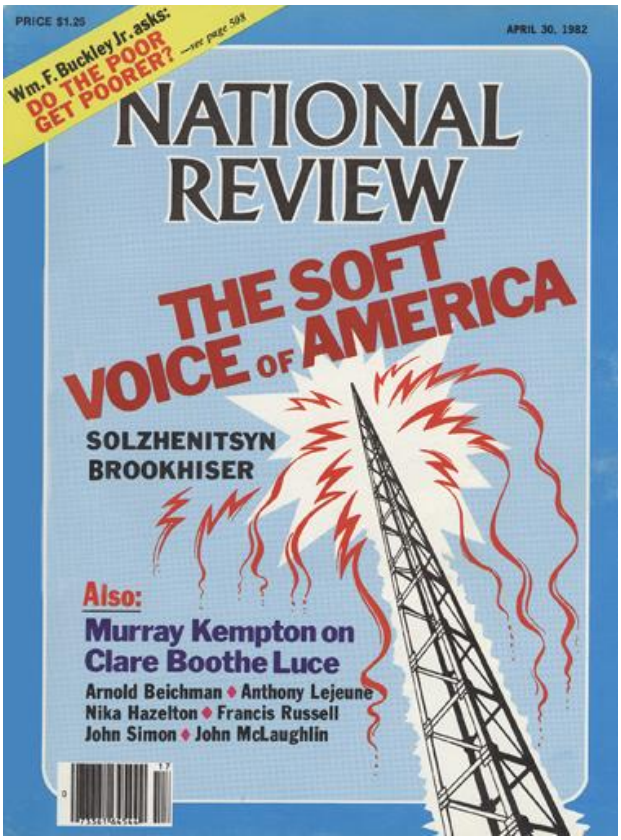
The author, though she attempts to project a moral for our time out of her own travail, does this less avidly than most of her critics, who seized greedily on this mincing tale of self-pity as the matrix of a passion play. It doesn't work. The heart of her failure beats in a single sentence. " . . . *whatever our mistakes, I do not believe we did our country any harm."*

"Dear Lillian Hellman," the socialist Irving Howe writes, "you could not be more mistaken! Those who supported Stalinism and its political enterprises, either here or abroad, helped befoul the cultural atmosphere, helped bring totalitarian methods into trade unions, helped perpetuate one of the great lies of the century, helped destroy whatever possibilities there might have been for a resurgence of serious radicalism in America. Isn't that harm enough?"

What were we supposed to defend, William Phillips of *Partisan Review,* himself an ex-Communist, asks. "Some *were* Communists, and what one was asked to defend was their right to lie about it."

The message of Lillian Hellman, says Hilton Kramer of the *New York Times*, is rendered in *"soigné* prose," causing one to

wonder if one ought to be less sensitive than Khrushchev in denouncing the work of his predecessor. But it was Providence that provided the epilogue, the ironic masterstroke'. Lillian Hellman, best-selling author of the diatribe against the Hollywood moguls who discriminated against her after she was identified as a Communist apologist. When Miss Hellman finally brought herself to criticize the Soviet Union, she singled out for special scorn Soviet censorship. *"The semi-literate bureaucrats, who suppress and alter manuscripts, who dictate who can and cannot be published, perform .a disgusting business."* And lo! the publishers of Miss Hellman's book. Little, Brown, instruct Diana Trilling to alter an essay on Miss Hellman in her manuscript. Mrs. Trilling declines, and Little, Brown breaks the contract — does its best, in effect, to suppress her book. "Miss Hellman is one of our leading successful authors," said Arthur Thornhill, president of Little, Brown. "She's not one of the big so-called money makers, but she's up there where we enjoy the revenue." The principled Miss Hellman, who condemns Hollywood for its base concern for profit, has not severed her relations with Little, Brown, never mind that they sought to suppress and alter a manuscript — in deference to *her!* But, don't you see, the vertebral column of her thought finally emerges. *She* can do no wrong. *"There is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed,"* she wrote to the chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, setting herself, by that sentence, in a class apart from her fellow mortals. Well, it took a long time for her to learn about Communism. She is elderly, but there is time yet, time to recognize that she should be ashamed of this awful book.



The Soft Voice of America

BY ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN

April 30, 1982

THIRTY YEARS ago, in 1953, when I had just been freed from the labor camp, I bought a radio receiver with the first money I earned. It was during my

exile in Kazakhstan, and it was considered a suspicious move: why should someone in exile buy a radio? But I listened intently, through the horrendous jamming, and tried to catch some bits of information from the Western nations' Russian-language broadcasts. I got to be so expert that even if I could only catch half a sentence, I could complete it from just those few words. For twenty years I listened constantly to Russian-language broadcasts from the West. I made use of the information, rejoiced in the successes, and was deeply distressed by the mistakes.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance these broadcasts could have if they were well directed. Of course, people in the Soviet Union still listen to them, but many become disillusioned, as I did. I fear that those who determine the general tone of America's Russian-language broadcasts did not understand at the beginning, and do not understand today, the main aim and purpose of these broadcasts. The objective should be to establish mutual trust, warm feelings, and contact with the oppressed people, and thus to tear them away, to help them tear themselves away, from their Communist oppressors. If this had been done over the last thirty years, how different things might be today! I can say without exaggeration that maybe we would not be thinking that there is danger of another world war.

But this has never been understood. In recent years the quality of these broadcasts has steadily declined—the Voice of America has not been good for some time now, and Radio Liberty is getting worse, much worse.

In order to formulate correctly the general direction the broadcasts should take, at least two questions must be answered. First, what is the situation in the countries to which the broadcasts are beamed? And second, what is the condition of those oppressed peoples, what are their needs, what kind of spiritual hunger do they have? With respect to the first question, the entire West, including the United States, seems to be bewitched, doomed eternally to a false vision of the situation in Communist countries. In the Thirties — during the most dreadful time of Stalinist terror, when Stalin was exterminating many millions of people — editorials in the United States proclaimed the Soviet Union to be a country of social justice. President Roosevelt extended a helping hand to Stalin, and American businessmen rushed to provide the technological assistance without which Stalin could not have built his industrial base. And at the end of the war, America and Britain made Stalin a gift of all of Eastern Europe. It should have been understood that the Soviet rulers were enemies of their own people. But this was not understood. Since, in the West, the government is elected by the people, Westerners like to think that the government and the people are one and the same. Even in this country that is not the case, as I see when I compare the opinions of the people I live among in Vermont with the news from Washington, D.C. And then consider that these differences of outlook are nothing

compared to the situation behind the Iron Curtain. In actual fact, in all Communist countries the government and the people are categorically opposed to each other. There is a gulf between them.

Failing to understand this was the great historical mistake that Roosevelt made in the Thirties and Forties. This mistake cost the Free World half of the globe — perhaps less than half in terms of territory, but more than half in population. And today the greatest danger is that the Free World's leaders will repeat Roosevelt's fatal mistake.

In fact, the same mistake *has* been repeated over and over again through the years. For instance, with Tito. Tito was the murderer, the executioner, of his people. Right after World War II, he shot hundreds of thousands of his fellow citizens. He even shot down American civilian planes near the Austrian border. All this was forgiven (and worse, forgotten), and he has been held up as a great statesman. The same error was repeated again with Cuba. It was proclaimed in the Free World that what had taken place in Cuba was a people's revolution. The same error was repeated again with North Vietnam. A totalitarian gang there seized the whole country, and American progressives proclaimed that it was a national movement for freedom. In Nicaragua, right under our nose, a totalitarian group of Communists seized power, and the Carter Administration hurried to help them financially.

The fatal historical mistake of liberalism is to see no enemy on the left, to consider that the enemy is always on the right. It is the same mistake which destroyed Russian liberalism in 1917, when the liberals overlooked the real danger, which was from Lenin. The same error — the mistake of Russian liberalism — is being repeated on a worldwide scale today.

And worst of all is China. China in the Eighties is like the Soviet Union in the Thirties; it is in need of everything. It seeks aid from America. If the U.S. provides it with technology and then with weapons, China may, for a while, serve as a safeguard against the Soviet Union, although even that is problematical. But if the U.S. arms China, China may take over the second half of the earth — that second half which includes America.

Never forget that Mao's government murdered millions — even more, probably, in proportion to the population than Stalin did. China is even more closed to foreigners than the Soviet Union. The West knows even less about it. When, thirty years from now, you read the Chinese *Gulag Archipelago*, you will be amazed: "Oh, what a pity, and we didn't know!" But you must know! You must know in time, and not when it is too late.

No matter what the Chinese rulers may say when they are looking for favors from the U.S., no Communist government ever cares about the rights, the development of its people. Communist governments are like

cancerous tumors: they grow wildly and have two aims only: first, to strengthen their power, and second, to expand their boundaries. Those are the aims of the Chinese government, as they are those of the Soviet government.

Now, to go back to the second point that VOA, Radio Liberty, and the other Western broadcasters should be considering: the inner state of the people toward whom the broadcasts are directed, their spiritual hunger, their frustrations, their aspirations.

Their main need is for knowledge. Information in the Soviet papers and on Soviet television is distorted beyond recognition. Those who live in the Soviet Union know, in a general way, what is happening in the world, but they know nothing of what is going on in the neighboring town, in the neighboring county. That is why foreign broadcasts are so important for them: only from such broadcasts can they get news about themselves, about what is happening to *them*.

Not to know what is happening in and to your own country is crippling. That is why the Voice of America's self-imposed limits are so misguided. What does the average Soviet citizen know about, say, Afghanistan? Everything he hears from the government is distorted. And yet the Voice of America, which could fill this gap, has placed limits on its own best sources of information. It refrains from using rich accumulations of material because it believes that it only has the right to broadcast in a way which will not irritate the Communist leaders. For instance, the émigré anti-Communist magazine *Possev*, published in Frankfurt am Main, contains plenty of material about Afghanistan; its reporters travel to Afghanistan and meet with Afghan resistance fighters. Yet the Voice of America does not broadcast such material to the Soviet Union because it comes from a magazine which is too anti-Communist. Instead, VOA feeds its listeners second-rate gossip about what diplomats in Delhi hear third-hand. Thus, instead of effectively giving us news, VOA helps to keep us ignorant. In order not to violate State Department policy, it gives us a stone in place of bread.

Here is another example: a major rebellion took place in Novocherkassk in 1962, but for over ten years there was not a word about it on Western radio broadcasts — not one! Either the broadcasters did not know about the revolt or it was not reported in "sufficiently proven" sources. If the broadcasters do not have documentary proof, they can't report on rebellions. And so it was not until ten years later that we heard from Western broadcasts about our own great rebellion in Novocherkassk.

Here is still another example drawn from my personal experience. In December 1973, when I was still in the Soviet Union, *The Gulag Archipelago* was published in the West. VOA — or, rather, one VOA announcer — read an excerpt from *Gulag* on the air. Immediately, Radio Moscow started screaming that VOA had no right to

interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, that the broadcast had fouled the international atmosphere. And what did VOA do? With the agreement of the State Department, it took the announcer off that assignment and forbade the reading of *The Gulag Archipelago* to Russia! More, for several years it was forbidden to quote Solzhenitsyn on VOA, so as not to discredit Communist propaganda. My book was written for Russians. Millions of copies were read in the West, but it could not be read to our Motherland!

But the Western broadcasters should be considering not only what the people of the Soviet Union know and don't know, but also what their concrete situation is. For 65 years, Soviet citizens have been working for a pittance. For 65 years, both the mother and the father in a family have worked, but their combined earnings are insufficient to support the family. They are never paid more than 10 or 20 per cent of what their work is worth. All the rest is taken by the government in order to produce weapons. Several generations of my people have gone hungry. We may even be approaching physical degeneration. We are poisoned with alcohol. Women are carrying a load which men could not manage, a double load as workers both inside and outside the home. Our birthrate has fallen sharply, and infant mortality has risen.

We are poisoned both physically and morally. Poisoned physically by military manufacturing that is carried out without any protection of the surrounding environment — there is no control of water or air pollution. And poisoned morally because for 65 years we have been inculcated with Communist lies.

This combination of poisons has brought my people to a state close to spiritual and physical death. All memory of our past, our history, and especially the history of the last century has been wiped out. The history of the last century is particularly dangerous for the Communists, because that history is their enemy. The Communists are systematically destroying all traces of the truth, so that soon we won't know anything about ourselves. I would compare this to when, in Stalinist times, the father and the mother of a family were both arrested, the children sent to an orphanage, and their last names changed so that they never knew whose children they were, what their origins were, what their past was.

Our people are in the same situation. They are deprived of any memories about themselves. Or they are like someone lying in bed, dying; and the American radio broadcasts are like a visitor — not a doctor, but a visitor — who comes in very self-satisfied, cheerful, beautifully dressed, and sits down, and says: "Now I will entertain you. Now I will tell you how I dress, how many suits I have, what a wonderful apartment I have, what I recently bought, how much money I save, what a good time I have. Do you want me to do a little dance for you?" And the visitor begins to do various dances in front of him.

That's how radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union are run today. They give us nothing to slake our spiritual hunger. Instead, a foreign voice reads us propaganda lectures on how to understand the world. Granted, these lectures come not from a Communist point of view but from a liberal democratic one. But after 65 years *all* propaganda has become repulsive to us.

That's just one aspect. It is the most important aspect for our people; but there is another side, the one that is most important for America. These broadcasts give a picture which does not correspond to the spiritual life of the American people. They speak of trite, superficial things, so that our people have a lower opinion of Americans than Americans deserve.

VOA broadcasts are full of frivolity. For instance, there are three different jazz programs, a program of pop music, a program of dance music, and then a youth program on which all of these are repeated. This is such a mistake. Perhaps those interested in jazz may turn on their radio five minutes earlier or turn it off five minutes later and in this way happen to hear something besides jazz. But the point is, we don't need VOA jazz programs, which are jammed, because our jazz fans have at their disposal jazz programs from the rest of the world, which no one jams. They can hear these programs perfectly. So VOA does not attract listeners that way; all it does is waste valuable air-time.

Or consider sports. With great solemnity VOA broadcasts programs on sports. But sports are a favorite subject of Soviet radio. It is the only interest which Soviet radio willingly fosters in our youth — because, in the Soviet Union, sports act as the opium of the people. They divert young people from thinking about their situation, about their history, and about politics — something the Western broadcasts should not be encouraging. Even worse, the stations find time to broadcast about hobbies. These programs repel and anger the Soviet listener and make him turn off the radio; he feels only contempt for a broadcast that tells him how people with lots of time at their disposal collect empty bottles, or labels from something or another. Or he is told, in great detail, about the conveniences of international travel — information of no conceivable use to him — when the time could be spent on subjects of value to him such as history and religion.

To sum up: Radio broadcasts from the United States do not give our people the spiritual help they need. That's one point. Secondly, the broadcasts present Americans as more trivial and less significant than they really are, i.e., they are doing America harm. And, thirdly, the stations limit even simple information about current events. In matters of foreign policy, they are overly scrupulous about sources, as witness the case of Afghanistan. So far as the internal situation in the Soviet Union is concerned, the broadcasts concentrate on material provided by dissidents in Moscow. If tomorrow the dissident movement should

be destroyed, that source of information would be lost altogether.

But there are great fields of information about the Soviet Union of which Soviet citizens need to hear, and which the American broadcasters either do not have or do not wish to use. Instead, there is wide coverage on Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. Half-hour after half-hour is spent on interviews with recent émigrés: how they like America; how they have found work; how much they earn; how they have furnished their houses. Not that there is anything wrong with this. But it is given disproportionate emphasis, and it replaces needed information about the situation within the Soviet Union. And what feeling does it arouse in the Soviet listener? Irritation. Most Soviet citizens cannot emigrate to the West. Only a certain number of Jews can. Why then boast about how well they are doing? It is tactless.

Our people want to be told about our workers, how they fare in our country, but the broadcasts do not speak of that. What is the situation of our peasantry? There is never a broadcast on that subject. The situation in the provinces? The cruel conditions of service in the army? People in the army listen to the broadcasts — there are many shortwave sets there. But nothing is ever broadcast about any of these situations.

The Soviet worker, the peasant, the soldier — all live under dreadful pressure, but their stories remain untold. Such information is widely available in the émigré press, and it could be broadcast to the USSR without much effort. But to do so would violate State Department policy. The Soviet rulers might get angry at the State Department and refuse to buy from the U.S. the modern electronics without which they cannot live.

The greatest spiritual need of our people is to become aware of themselves. If during the past thirty years the Western broadcasts had helped our people remember who they were, helped them to rise spiritually to their feet, the entire world situation would be different. Our recent history has been trampled and distorted beyond recognition; everything we hear is saturated with propaganda. It is hard for Americans to imagine such ignorance. The average Soviet citizen in essence knows nothing: what were the causes of the Revolution; how it occurred, and how the Bolsheviks took it over and instituted totalitarian rule; what people's movements there were against the Bolsheviks, and how they were suppressed; how our peasantry and our working class were destroyed by terrorist means. We need to know the truth about all this. If such knowledge were given us, we would — both civilian and soldier — become spiritually free of our government.

However, programming at VOA and Radio Liberty is now mostly in the hands of ideologues who are operating under the influence of myths, of false beliefs about Russia. And at the root of these myths we find Karl Marx. Marx claimed that the Russian people were "reactionary." And

from that claim it followed that all of Russian history was "reactionary" — the monarchy was "reactionary," Russian traditions were "reactionary," most Russian leaders were "reactionary," even our Orthodox religion was "reactionary." So what do the ideologues do? They shoot down two-thirds of our historical figures for fear that they might be called "reactionary." If some American journalist — just one — or some second-rate scholar has ever said about a Russian that he was "reactionary," then that Russian is eliminated from history: he no longer exists.

In this way, paradoxically, American broadcasts tend to help the Communists. The Communists fight to root out our memory of our history, and U.S. broadcasts do the same. Consider a recent example: Last September was the seventieth anniversary of the death — actually the murder — of the greatest Russian statesman of the twentieth century, Prime Minister Stolypin (1862-1911). In the five years prior to his death, Stolypin had succeeded in pulling Russia out of complete chaos and disintegration into a state of prosperity. The act of his murder inaugurated the great terror of the twentieth century. Yet both Radio Liberty and the Voice of America killed anniversary broadcasts on Stolypin. A fine broadcast had been prepared at Radio Liberty; it was dropped without discussion or explanation. The Voice of America had prepared an eight-minute reading from my chapter on Stolypin. The broadcast had already been announced, but it too was killed. These parallel actions show that there is no question of different administrators making independent decisions — there is an ideology that dominates the direction taken by both stations. No matter where one locates Stolypin — some consider him a liberal, others a conservative — he was a great Russian statesman, and I would like to underline the amazing fact that both American radio stations, independently of each other, censored their broadcasts in advance, even though their listeners had been told that the broadcasts would take place.

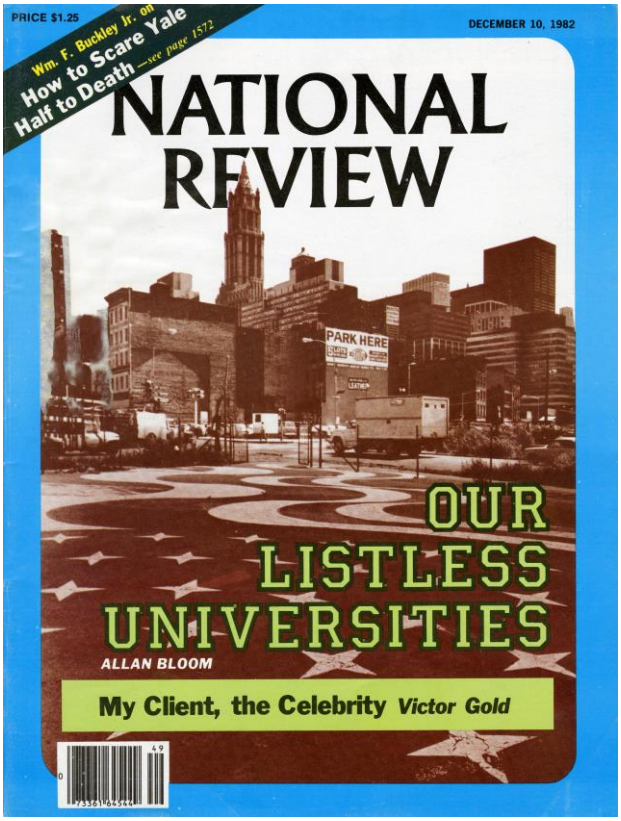
Consider a final example of the kind of self-censorship which prevents Radio Liberty and the Voice of America from satisfying the spiritual needs of their audience. Russian Orthodoxy, during the past 65 years, has suffered its own Golgotha. Constant efforts have been made to destroy Christianity in Russia, to root it completely out of memory and heart. That is the consistent policy of the Soviet government, and it has resulted in tens of millions of people not being able to go to church. Many live three hundred miles from the nearest church, i.e., they can have a child christened, but they cannot attend church regularly. American broadcasts once again could help fill this gap: they could carry services, mark Christian holidays, explain the divine services and Christian terminology, especially to children, who are almost totally deprived of religion in the USSR. Communist power seeks to deprive us of religion; and American radio broadcasts, directed by ideologues who

accept the stupid premise that Russian Christianity is "reactionary," follow the Communists' lead.

For thirty years the broadcasts have avoided any encouragement to Russian Orthodoxy to rise up and become an organized social power in Russia. I don't know anything about the American Polish-language broadcasts. I hope they have been excellent. I hope they have supported Polish Catholicism, strengthened it. But for the Russian people, the broadcasts ignore religion; it is as if they deliberately seek to avoid encouraging us to find strength in the Church, to create such religious unification as exists in Poland.

The year 1981 saw a sharp turn for the worse in Radio Liberty. I will say nothing about the 15 other languages in which Radio Liberty broadcasts, which I do not know. But the programs in Russian have degenerated to such an extent that, if they continue as they are going, it would be better to do away with them altogether.

Still, there is a Latin proverb that goes, "*Dum spiro, spero*" — where there's life, there's hope. Thirty years have gone by, but that does not mean that we should not begin again today. We do not know how much time history will give us, and maybe it is still possible to accomplish much if the Reagan Administration actively undertakes to improve U.S. broadcasts. I am not speaking about an increase in the budget, but about a fundamental change in direction. I have said much that needed to be said. The rest is in the hands of your Administration.



Our Listless Universities

BY ALAN BLOOM

December 10, 1982

I BEGIN WITH my conclusion: students in our best universities do not believe in anything, and those universities are doing nothing about it, nor can they. An easygoing American kind of nihilism has descended upon us, a nihilism without

terror of the abyss. The great questions — God, freedom, and immortality, according to Kant — hardly touch the young. And the universities, which should encourage the quest for the clarification of such questions, are the very source of the doctrine which makes that quest appear futile.

The heads of the young are stuffed with a jargon derived from the despair of European thinkers, gaily repackaged for American consumption and presented as the foundation for a pluralistic society. That jargon becomes a substitute for real experiences and instinct; one suspects that modern thought has produced an artificial soul to replace the old one supplied by nature, which was full of dangerous longings, loves, hates, and awes. The new soul's language consists of terms like *value, ideology, self, commitment, identity* — every word derived from recent German philosophy, and each carrying a heavy baggage of dubious theoretical interpretation of which its users are blissfully unaware. They take such language to be as unproblematic and immediate as night and day. It now constitutes our peculiar common sense.

The new language subtly injects into our system the perspective of "do your own thing" as the only plausible way of life. I know that sounds vaguely passé, a remnant leftover from the Sixties. But it is precisely the routinization of the passions of the Sixties that Is the core of what is going on now, just as the Sixties were merely a radicalization of earlier tendencies.

The American regime has always attempted to palliate extreme beliefs that lead to civil strife, particularly religious beliefs. The members of sects had to obey the laws and be loyal to the Constitution: if they did so, others had to leave them alone. To make things work, it was thought helpful that men's beliefs be moderated. There was a conscious, if covert, effort to weaken religious fervor by assigning religion to the realm of opinion as opposed to knowledge. But everyone had to have an intense belief in the right of freedom of religion; the existence of that natural right was not to be treated as a matter of opinion.

The insatiable appetite for freedom to live as one pleases thrives on this aspect of modern democratic thought. The expansion of the area exempt from legitimate regulation is effected by contracting the claims to moral and political knowledge. It appears that full freedom can be attained only when there is no such knowledge. The effective way to defang oppressors is to persuade them that they are ignorant of the good. There are no absolutes: freedom is absolute.

A doctrine that gives equal rights to any way of life whatsoever has the double advantage of licensing one's own way of life and of giving one a democratic good conscience. The very lack of morality is a morality and permits what Saul Bellow has called "easy virtue." a mixture of egotism and high-mindedness. Now, in feeling as well as in speech, a large segment of our young are open, open to every "lifestyle,"

But the fatal consequence of this openness has been the withering of their belief in their own way of life and of their capacity to generate goals. The palliation ol beliefs culminates in pallid belief. A soul which esteems indiscriminately must be an artificial soul, and that, to repeat, is what we are coming near to constituting, not by some inevitable historical process but by a conscious educational project. This project masquerades as the essential democratic theory without which we would collapse into tyranny or the war of all prejudices against all. Its premise is that truth itself must be prejudice or at least treated as such.

The tendency toward indiscriminateness — the currently negative connotation of the word *discrimination* tells us much — is apparently perennial in democracy. The need to subordinate the more refined sensibilities to a common denominator and the unwillingness to order the soul's desires according to their rank conduce to easy-goingness. The democratic ethos obscures the reason for the desirability of such self-mastery. This is the moral problem of democracy and why fortuitous external necessities like war or poverty seem to bring out the best in us. Plato describes the natural bent of the democratic man thus:

> He . . . also lives along day by day, gratifying the desire that occurs to him, at one time drinking and listening to the flute, at another downing water and reducing; now practicing gymnastics, and again idling and neglecting everything; and sometimes spending his time as though he were occupied with philosophy. Often he engages in politics and, jumping up, says and does whatever chances to come to him; and if he ever admires any soldiers, he turns in that direction; and if it's moneymakers, in that one. And there is neither order nor necessity in his life, but calling this life sweet, free, and blessed he follows it throughout.

This account is easily recognizable when applied to the middle-class youth who attend America's top colleges and universities. But Plato's description omits a more sinister element in our situation. Plato's young man believes that each of the lives he follows is really good, at least when he follows it. His problem is that he cannot keep his mind made up. Our young person, by contrast, is always plagued by a gnawing doubt as to whether the activity he undertakes is worth anything, whether this end is not just another "value," an illusion that men once believed in but which our "historical consciousness" reveals as only a cultural phenomenon. There are a thousand and one such goals; they are not believed in because they exist, they exist because one believes in them. Since we now know this, we can no longer believe, the veil of illusion has been torn away forever. The trendy language for this alleged experience is *demystification* or *demythologization*. This teaching now has the status of dogma. It leads to a loss of immediacy in all experience and a suspicion that every way of life is a "role." The substitution of the expression "lifestyle," which we can change at will, for the good life, the rational quest

for which is the origin of philosophy, tells the story. That is what I mean by nihilism, and this nihilism has resulted from a questionable doctrine that we seem no longer able to question.

All of us who are under sixty know something about this doctrine and its transmission, for since the Thirties it is what the schools have been teaching. For fifty years the only spiritual substance they have been trying to convey is openness, the disdain for the ethnocentric. Of course, they have also been teaching the three Rs, but their moral and intellectual energy has been turned almost exclusively in this direction. Schools once produced citizens, or gentlemen, or believers; now they produce the unprejudiced. A university professor confronting entering freshmen can be almost certain that most of them will know that there are no absolutes and that one cannot say that one culture is superior to another. They can scarcely believe that someone might seriously argue the contrary; the attempt to do so meets either self-satisfied smiles at something so old-fashioned or outbursts of anger at a threat to decent respect for other human beings. In the Thirties this teaching was actually warring against some real prejudices of race, religion, or nation; but what remains now is mostly the means for weakening conviction when convictions have disappeared.

The doctrine of cultural relativism did not emerge from the study of cultures. It was a philosophic doctrine that gave a special interpretation of the meaning of culture and had a special political attractiveness. It could appeal to the taste for diversity as opposed to our principled homogeneity. All kinds of people climbed aboard — disaffected Southern snobs who had never accepted the Declaration and the Constitution anyhow, Stalinists who wanted us to love Soviet tyranny without being too explicit about it, and similar types. No choices would have to be made. We could have the charms of old cultures, of what one now calls roots, along with democratic liberties. All that was required was an education making other ways attractive and disenchanting one's own. It is not so much the knowledge of other cultures that is important, but the consciousness that one loves one's own way because it is one's own, not because it is good. People must understand that they are what they are and what they believe only because of accidents of time and place.

The equality of values seemed to be a decisive step in the march of equality. So sure were our social scientists of the truth and vigor of democracy that they did not even dimly perceive what Weber knew, that his view undermined democracy, which stands or falls with reason. Only democracy traces all its authority to reason; other kinds of regimes can more or less explicitly appeal to other sources. When we talk about the West's lack of conviction or lack of will, we show that we are beginning to recognize what has happened to us. Exhortations to believe, however, are useless. It is only by thinking ideas through again that we can

determine whether our reason can any longer give assent to our principles.

But this serious reconsideration is not taking place in the universities.

II

Today a young person does not generally go off to the university with the expectation of having an intellectual adventure, of discovering strange new worlds, of finding out what the comprehensive truth about man is. This is partly because he thinks he already knows, partly because he thinks such truth unavailable. And the university does not try to persuade him that he is coming to it for the purpose of being liberally educated, at least in any meaningful sense of the term — to study how to be free, to be able to think for himself. The university has no vision, no view of what a human being must know in order to be considered educated. Its general purpose is lost amid the incoherent variety of special purposes that have accreted within it. Such a general purpose may be vague and undemonstrable, but for just this reason it requires the most study. The meaning of life is unclear, but that is why we must spend our lives clarifying it rather than letting the question go. The university's function is to remind students of the importance and urgency of the question and give them the means to pursue it. Universities do have other responsibilities, but this should be their highest priority.

They have, however, been so battered by modern doctrines, social demands, the requirements of the emancipated specialties, that they have tacitly agreed not to open Pandora's box and start a civil war. They provide a general framework that keeps the peace but they lack a goal of their own.

When the arriving student surveys the scene, he sees a bewildering variety of choices. The professional schools beckon him by providing him with an immediate motive: a lucrative and prestigious livelihood guaranteed by simply staying in the university to the conclusion of training. Medicine and law were always such possibilities; with the recent addition of the MBA, the temptation has radically increased. If the student decides to take this route, liberal education is practically over for him.

If he first turns his eye to what was traditionally thought to be the center of the university, he will confront — aside from a few hot programs like black studies, native studies, women's studies, which are largely exercises in consciousness-raising — the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities.

The natural sciences thrive, full of good conscience and good works. But they are ever more specialized and ever more separate from the rest of the university; they have no need of it. They don't object to liberal education, if it doesn't get in the way of their research and training. And they

have nothing to say, even about themselves or their role in the whole human picture, let alone about the kinds of questions that agitated Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz. Their results speak for themselves, but they do not say quite enough.

The social sciences are the source of much useful research and information, but they are long past the first effervescence of their Marxist-Freudian-Weberian period. Then they expected to find a new and more scientific way to answer the old questions of philosophy. Such hopes and claims quietly disappeared from the scene during the past 15 years. Their solid reasons for existence are in specialized study of interest rates, Iranian politics, or urban trends. Practically no economist conceives of doing what Adam Smith did, and the few who try produce petty and trivial stuff. The case is pretty much the same for the other social sciences. They are theoretically barren, and the literature read and used by them is mostly ephemera of the last fifty years.

The remainder is to be found in the humanities, the smallest, least funded, most dispirited part of the university. The humanities are the repository of the books that are at the foundation of our religion, our philosophy, our politics, our science, as well as our art. Here, if anywhere, one ought to find the means to doubt what seems most certain. Only here are the questions about knowledge, about the good life, about God and love and death, at home in the university. If, however, one looks at the humanistic side of the campus, one finds a hodgepodge of disciplines, not integrally related with one another and without much sense of common purpose. The hooks are divided up among language departments, according to the largely accidental fact of the language in which they were written. Such departments have as their primary responsibility the teaching of the language in question (a very depressing responsibility now that languages have fallen into particular disfavor with students).

Humanists in general are the guardians of great books, but rarely take seriously the naïve notion that these books might contain the truth which has escaped us. Yet without the belief that from Plato one might learn how to live or that from Shakespeare one might get the deepest insight into the passions and the virtues, no one who is not professionally obligated will take them seriously. Try as they may, the humanities will fail to interest if they do not teach the truth, even as natural and social science are supposed to do. To present the great writers and artists as representatives of cultures or examples of the way thought is related to society, or in any of the other modes common today, is to render them uninteresting to the healthy intellect. The comprehensive questions have their natural home in the humanities, but it is there that the historical-cultural doubt about the possibility of answering them is most acute. Professors of humanities more than any others wonder whether they have a truth to tell.

Philosophy should, of course, provide the focus for the most needful study. But it is just one department among many and, in the democracy of the specialties, it no longer has the will to insist that it is the queen of the sciences. Moreover, in most philosophy departments the study of the classic texts is not central. Professors "do" their own philosophy and do not try to pose the questions as they were posed by the old writers. I his is especially the case for the dominant school ot thought in the United States, the Oxford school.

Of all university members, humanists have the least self-confidence. The students are abandoning them, and they have difficulty speaking to the concerns of the age. They fear they may have to huckster — if they are not already doing so — in order to keep afloat. In their heart of hearts many doubt that they have much to say. After all, most of the writers they promote can be convicted of elitism and sexism, the paramount sins of the day.

There are, to be sure, many dedicated individuals in the humanities who know what needs to be done and can draw students' attention to the impoverished state of their experience and show them that great texts address their concerns. But the endeavor of these professors is a lonely one with little corporate resonance. The students are not reading the same books and addressing the same questions, so that their common social life cannot be affected by a common intellectual life.

It should be added that the humanities are also the center of some of the fastest selling intellectual items of the day — structuralism, deconstructionism, and Marxist humanism. The members of these schools — particularly rampant in comparative literature do read books and talk big ideas. In that sense they are the closest thing to what the university should be about. The problem with them, and all of them are alike in this respect, is that the books are not taken seriously on their own grounds hut are used as vile bodies for the sake of" demonstrating theses brought to them by the interpreters. They know what they are looking for before they begin. Their approaches are ultimately derived from Marx or Nietzsche, whose teachings are tacitly taken to be true.

It is small wonder that the student is bewildered about what it means to be educated. The new liberal education requirements some universities are instituting are little more than tours of what is being done in the various workshops. To be sure, they always add on a course requirement, in a non-Western civilization or culture, but that is just another bit of demagogy serving the indoctrination of openness. Serious physicists would never require a course in non-Western physics. Culture and civilization are irrelevant to the truth. One finds it where one can. Only if truth is relative to culture does this make sense. But, once again, this is our dogma, accepted for covert political reasons. This dogma is the greatest enemy of liberal education. It undermines the unity of man,

our common humanity in the intellect, which makes the university possible and permits it to treat man as simply without distinction.

III

Three conclusions have forced themselves on me about students, their characters and ways, conclusions that have to do with their education and their educability. They are not scientific generalizations based on survey research, but they are the result of long observation of, and careful listening to, young people in our better universities by one who is intensely interested in their real openness, their openness to higher learning.

1. *Books*. They are no longer an important part of the lives of students. "Information" is important, but profound and beautiful books are not where they go for it. They have no books that are companions and friends to which they look for counsel, companionship, inspiration, or pleasure. They do not expect to find in them sympathy for, or clarification of, their inmost desires and experiences. The link between the classic books and the young, which persisted for so long and in so many circumstances, and is the only means of connecting the here and the now with the always, this link has been broken. The Bible and Plutarch have ceased to be a part of the soul's furniture, an incalculable loss of fullness and awareness of which the victims are unaware.

The loss of the taste for reading has been blamed on television, the universal villain of social critics. But lack of reverence for antiquity and contempt for tradition are democratic tendencies. It should be the university's business to provide a corrective to these tendencies; however, I believe that the universities are most to blame for them. After all, they taught the schoolteachers. For a very long time now the universities have been preoccupied with abstract modern schools of thought that were understood to have surpassed all earlier thought and rendered it obsolete. And their primary concern has been to indoctrinate social attitudes, to "socialize." rather than to educate. The old books are still around, but one "knows" that they contain mere opinions, no better than any others. The result is true philistinism, a withering of taste and a conformity to what is prevalent in the present. It means the young have no heroes, no objects of aspiration. It is all both relaxing and boring, a soft imprisonment.

2. *Music*. While I am not certain about the effects of television, I am quite certain about those of music. Many students do not watch much television while in college, but they do listen to music. From the time of puberty, and earlier, music has been the food of their souls. This is the audio generation. And classical music is dead, at least as a common taste. Rock is all there is.

There is now one culture for everyone, in music as in language. It is a music that moves the young powerfully and immediately. Its beat goes to the depth of

their souls and inarticulately expresses their inarticulate longings. Those longings are sexual, and the beat appeals almost exclusively to that. It caters to kiddy sexuality, at best to puppy love, I he first untutored feelings of adolescents are taken over by this music and given a form and a satisfaction. The words make little difference; they may be explicitly sexual, or sermons in favor of nuclear disarmament, or even religious — the motor of it all is eroticism. The youngsters know this perfectly well, even if their parents do not.

Rock music caused a great evolution in the relations between parents and children. Its success was the result of an amazing cooperation among lust, art, and commercial shrewdness. Without parents realizing it, their children were liberated from them. The children had money to spend. The record companies recognized as much and sold them music appealing to their secret desires. Never before was a form of art (however questionable) directed to so young an audience. This art gave children's feelings public respectability. The education of children had escaped their parents, no matter how hard they tried to prevent it. The most powerful formative influence on children between 12 and 15 is not the school, not the church, not the home, but rock music and all that goes with it. It is not an elevating but a leveling influence. The children have as their heroes banal, drug- and sex-ridden guttersnipes who foment rebellion not only against parents but against all noble sentiments. This is the emotional nourishment they ingest in these precious years. It is the real junk food.

One thing I have no difficulty teaching students today is the passage in the Republic where Socrates explains that control over music is control over character and that the rhythm and the melody are more powerful than the words. They do not especially like Socrates's views on music, but they understand perfectly what he is about and the importance of the issue.

3. *Sex*. No change has been so rapid, so great, and so surprising as the change in the last twenty years concerning sex and the relations between the sexes. Young people of college age are very much affected by the sexual passion and preoccupied with love, marriage, and the family (to use an old formula that is now painfully inadequate to what is really meant). It is an age of excitement and uncertainty, and much of the motivation for study and reflection of a broader sort comes from the will to adorn and clarify erotic longings.

It is, however, in this domain that the listless, nihilistic mood has its practical expression and most affects the life of the students, the prevailing atmosphere deprives sex of seriousness as well as of charm. And, what is more, it makes it very difficult to think about sex. In a permissive era, when it is almost respectable to think and even do the deeds of Oedipus, shame and guilt have taken refuge in a new redoubt and made certain things unthinkable. Terror grips man at the thought he might be

sexist. For all other tastes there is sympathy and support in universities. Sexism, whatever it may mean, is unpardonable.

The great change in sexual behavior has taken place in two stages. The first is what was called the sexual revolution. This meant simply that pre- and extra-marital sex became much more common, and the various penalties for promiscuity were either much reduced or disappeared. In the middle Sixties I noticed that very nice students who previously would have hidden their affairs abandoned all pretense. They would invite their professors to dine in apartments where they lived together and not hesitate to give expression to physical intimacy in a way that even married couples would rarely do before their peers.

This kind of change, of course, implied a very different way of thinking about things. Desire always existed, but it used to war with conscience, shame, and modesty. These now had to be deprecated as prejudices, as pointing to nothing beyond themselves. Religious and philosophic moral teachings that supported such sentiments became old hat, and a certain materialism which justified bodily satisfaction seemed more plausible.

The world looks very different than it once did to young people entering college. The kinds of questions they ask, and the sensitivities they bring to these fresh circumstances, are vastly altered. The tension of high expectation has been relaxed; there is much they no longer have to find out. A significant minority of students couple off very early and live together throughout college with full awareness that they intend to go their separate ways afterward. They are just taking care of certain needs in a sensible way. There is, for a member of an older generation, an incomprehensible slackness of soul in all this. Certainly the adventurousness of such people, who are half-married but without the moral benefits of responsibility, is lamed. There is nothing wild, Dionysian, searching, in our promiscuity. It has a dull, sterilized, scientific character.

One must add that an increasing number of students come from divorced families and include in their calculation the possibility or the likelihood of divorce in their own future. The possibility of separation is not a neutral fact, allowing people to stay or go; it encourages separation because it establishes a psychology of separateness.

The result is inevitably egotism, not because the individuals are evil or naturally more prone to selfishness than those of another era. If there is no other thing to be attached to, the desires concerning ourselves are ever present. This tendency is particularly pronounced in an age when political ties are weak. People can hardly be blamed for not being attached when there is nothing that calls forth attachment. There can be no doubt that the sexual revolution plays a great role in dissolving the bonds founded on sexual relationships. What is

not sufficiently understood is that in modern society there is little else that can be the basis for moral association. There is a repulsive lack of self-knowledge in those who attack the "nuclear family" and are rhapsodic about the "extended family" and real "community." Looseness is thus made into an ethical critique of our society. The "extended family" is no more possible in our time or consonant with our principles than is feudalism, while the "nuclear family" is still a viable alternative, but one that needs support in theory and practice. It provides a natural basis for connectedness. One can give it up, but one has to know the price. There is simply nothing else that is generally operative in society at large.

But even more powerful than all of the above changes are the effects of feminism, which is still early in its career of reform and is the second stage of the great change of which I am speaking. The theme is too vast to treat properly, but one can say that it, much more than the sexual revolution, takes place on the level of thought rather than that of instinct. Consciousness must be altered. Women have been exploited and misused throughout the entire past, and only now can one find out their real potential. We are on the threshold of a whole new world and a whole new understanding. And Right and Left are in large measure united on the issue. There is an almost universal agreement, among those who count for university students, that feminism is simply justified as is.

The degree of common agreement comes home to me when I teach the Socrates fantasy in the *Republic* about the abolition of the difference between the sexes. Twenty years ago it was an occasion of laughter, and my problem was to get students to take it seriously. Today it seems perfectly commonplace, and students take it all too seriously, failing to catch the irony. They do not note the degree to which Socrates acts as though men and women have no bodies and lightly give up all the things that are one's own, particularly those one loves parents, spouses, children. All of them are connected with the bisexuality of the species. In doing this, Socrates shows the ambiguity of our nature and the degree of tension between our common humanity and our sexual separateness. The balance between the two is always fraught with difficulties. One must decide which has primacy; and this decision must be made in full awareness of the loss entailed by it. Our students no longer understand this.

It is here that a great difference between the situation of women and that of men comes to light. Women today have, to use our new talk, an agenda. They want to have the opportunity to pursue careers, and they want to find ways to reconcile this goal with having families. Also, it is their movement, so they are involved and excited, have much to talk about. The men, on the other hand, are waiting to be told what is on the agenda and ready to conform to its demands. There is little inclination to resist. All the principles have been accepted; it only remains to see how to live by them. Women

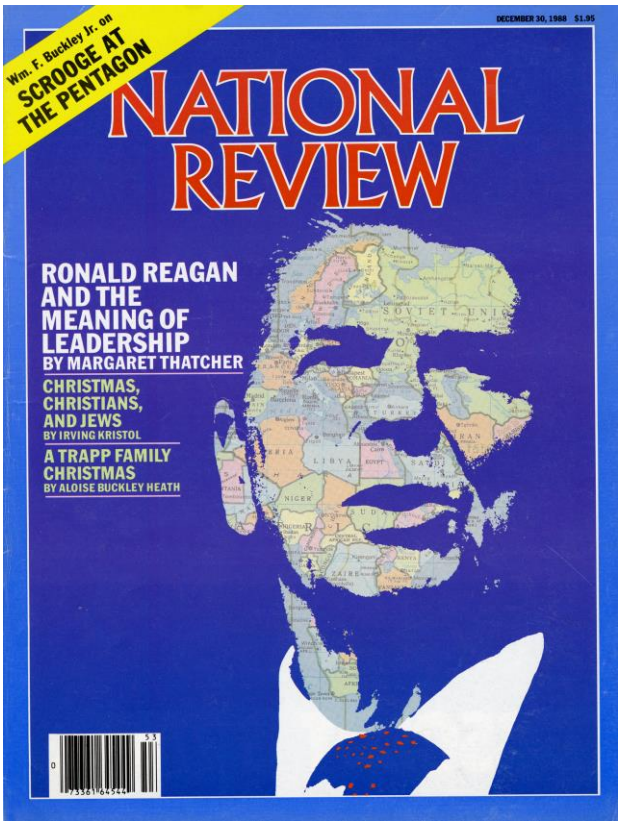
are to have careers just as do men and, if there is to be marriage, the wife's career is not to be sacrificed to the man's; home and children are a shared responsibility; when and if there are to be children is up to the woman, and the decision to terminate or complete a pregnancy is a woman's right. Above all, women are not to have a "role" imposed on them. They have a right of self-definition. The women were the victims and must be the leaders in their recovery from victimization. The men, as they themselves see it, have to be understanding and flexible. There are no guidelines; each case is individual. One can't know what to expect. Openness, again, is the virtue.

The result is a desexualization of life, all the while that a lot of sexual activity is going on, and a reduction of the differences between the sexes. Anger and spiritedness are definitely out. Men and women in universities frequently share common dwellings and common facilities. Sex is all right, but it creates a problem. There are no forms in which it is to express itself, and it is a reminder of differentiation where there is supposed to be none. It is difficult to shift from the mode of sameness into that of romance. Therefore advances are tentative, nobody is quite sure where they are to begin, and men's fear of stereotyping women is ever-present. It is love that is being sacrificed, for it makes woman into an object to be possessed. Dating is almost a thing of the past. Men and women are together in what is supposed to be an easy camaraderie. If coupling takes place, it must not disturb the smooth surface of common human endeavor. Above all: no courtship or courtliness. Now there is friendship, mutual respect, communication; realism without foolish fabulation or hopes. One wonders what primal feelings and desires are pushed down beneath the pat uniformity of the speech they almost all use, a self-congratulatory speech which affirms that they are the first to have discovered how to relate to other people.

This conviction has as its first consequence that all old books are no longer relevant, because their authors were sexists (it they happened to be women, they were maimed by living in sexist society). There is little need of the commissars who are popping up all over the place to make the point that Eve, Cleopatra, Emma Bovary, and Anna Karenina are parts of male chauvinist propaganda. The students have gotten the point. These figures can't move their imaginations because their situations have nothing to do with situations in which students expect to find themselves. They need no inquisition to root out sexist heresies although they will get one. And in the absence (temporary, of course) of a literature produced by feminism to rival the literature of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, and Stendhal, students are without literary inspiration. Teaching romantic novels to university students (in spite of the healthy perseverance of this genre, as indicated by the success of the Harlequin romances — I find one free in every box of Hefty garbage bags I buy these days) is a quasi-impossibility. Students are either not interested or use it as grist for their

ideological mill. Such books do not cause them to wonder whether they are missing something. All that passion seems pointless.

Notwithstanding all our relativism, there are certain things we know and which cannot be doubted. These are the tenets of the egalitarian creed, and today its primary tenet is that the past was sexist. This means that all the doubts which tradition should inspire in us in order to liberate us from the prejudices of our time are in principle closed to us. This is the source of the contentless certainty that is the hallmark of the young. This is what a teacher faces today. I do not say that the situation is impossible or worse than it ever was. The human condition is always beset by problems. But these are our problems, and we must face them clearly. They constitute a crisis for humane learning but also reaffirm the need for it. The bleak picture is often relieved by the rays of natural curiosity about a better way: it can happen any time a student confronts a great book.



Reagan's Leadership, America's Recovery

BY MARGARET THATCHER

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THERE HAVE not been many times when a British Prime Minister has been Prime Minister through two consecutive terms of office of the same President of the United States. Indeed, there have been only three such cases so far. One was Pitt the Younger, who was in Number 10 Downing Street while George Washington was President. Another was Lord Liverpool, who held the prime ministership throughout the whole period

in office of President James Monroe. And I am the third. It gives me a vantage point which, if not unique, is nonetheless historically privileged from which to survey the remarkable Presidency of Ronald Reagan.

I cannot pretend, however, to be an entirely unbiased observer. I still remember vividly the feelings with which I learned of the President's election in 1980. We had met and discussed our political views some years before, when he was still Governor of California, and I knew that we believed in so many of the same things. I felt then that together we could tackle the formidable tasks before us: to get our countries on their feet, to restore their pride and their values, and to help create a safer and a better world.

On entering office, the President faced high interest rates, high inflation, sluggish growth, and a growing demand for self-destructive protectionism. These problems had created — and in turn were reinforced by — a feeling that not much could be done about them, that America faced inevitable decline in a new era of limits to growth, that the American dream was over. We in Britain had been in the grip of a similar pessimism during the Seventies, when political debate revolved around the concept of the "British disease." Indeed, during this entire period, the Western world seemed to be taking its temperature with every set of economic indices.

President Reagan saw instinctively that pessimism itself was the disease and that the cure for pessimism is optimism. He set about restoring faith in the prospects of the American dream — a dream of boundless opportunity built on enterprise, individual effort, and personal generosity. He infused his own belief in America's economic future in the American people. That was farsighted. It carried America through the difficult early days of the 1981-82 recession, because people are prepared to put up with sacrifices if they know that those sacrifices are the foundations of future prosperity.

Having restored the faith of the American people in themselves, the President set about liberating their energies and enterprise. He reduced the excessive burden of regulation, halted inflation, and first cut and, later, radically reformed taxation. When barriers to enterprise are removed and taxes cut to sensible levels (as we have found in Britain in recent years), people have the incentive to work harder and earn more. They thereby benefit themselves, their families, and the whole community. Hence the buoyant economy of the Reagan years. It has expanded by a full 25 per cent over 72 months of continuous economic growth — the longest period of peacetime economic growth in U.S. history; it has spread prosperity widely; and it has cut unemployment to the lowest level in over a decade.

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT of these successes has been enormous. At a succession of Western economic summits, the President's leadership encouraged the West to cooperate on policies of low

inflation, steady growth, and open markets. These policies have kept protectionism in check and the world economy growing. They are policies which offer not just an economic message, but a political one: Freedom works. It brings growth, opportunity, and prosperity in its train. Other countries, seeing its success in the United States and Britain, have rushed to adopt the policies of freedom.

President Reagan decided what he believed in, stuck to it through thick and thin, and finally, through its success, persuaded others. But I still recall those dark early days of this decade when both our countries were grappling with the twin disasters of inflation and recession and when some people, even in our own parties, wanted to abandon our policies before they had had a proper chance to take effect. They were times for cool courage and a steady nerve. That is what they got from the President. I remember his telling me, at a meeting at the British Embassy in 1981, that for all the difficulties we then faced, we would be "home safe and soon enough."

The economic recovery was, however, but part of a wider recovery of America's confidence and role in the world. For the malaise of the 1970s went beyond economics. The experience of Vietnam had bred an understandable but dangerous lack of national self-confidence on the U.S. side of the Atlantic. Or so it seemed to outsiders. There was a marked reluctance in American public opinion to advance American power abroad even in defense of clear American and Western interests. And politicians struggled against this national mood at their electoral peril.

President Reagan took office at a time when the Soviet Union was invading Afghanistan, placing missiles in Eastern Europe aimed at West European capitals, and assisting Communist groups in the Third World to install themselves in power against the popular will, and when America's response was hobbled by the so-called "Vietnam syndrome." And not just America's response. The entire West, locked in a battle of wills with the Soviets, seemed to be losing confidence.

President Reagan's first step was to change the military imbalance which underlay this loss of confidence. He built up American power in a series of defense budgets. There have been criticisms of this build-up as too expensive. Well, a sure defense is expensive, but not nearly so expensive as weakness could turn out to be.

By this military build-up, President Reagan strengthened not only American defenses, but also the will of America's allies. It led directly to NATO's installation of cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe. This took place in the teeth of Moscow's biggest "peace offensive" since the Berlin crises of the early Sixties. That offensive included a Soviet walkout from the Geneva talks on nuclear disarmament and mass demonstrations and lobbies by "peace groups" in Western Europe. Yet these tactics failed, the missiles were installed,

and the Soviets returned to the bargaining table to negotiate about withdrawing their own missiles.

President Reagan has also demonstrated that he is not afraid to put to good use the military strength he had built up. And it is noteworthy — though not often noted — that many of the decisions he has taken in the face of strong criticism have been justified by events. It was President Reagan who, amid cries that his policy lacked any rationale, stationed U.S. ships alongside European navies in the Persian Gulf to protect international shipping. Not only did this policy secure its stated purpose, it also protected the Gulf states against aggression and thus hastened the end of the conflict by foreclosing any option of widening the war.

The President enjoyed a similar success in the continuing battle against terrorism. He took action against one of the states most active in giving aid and Comfort to terrorist organizations: Colonel Qaddafi's Libya. We in Britain had experienced Qaddafi's murderous methods at first hand when a member of the Libyan Embassy shot down a young policewoman in cold blood in a London square. We had no doubts about the reality of Libyan involvement. I therefore had no hesitation in supporting the American air strike, which has resulted in a marked reduction of Libyan-sponsored terrorism.

And, thirdly, President Reagan has given America's support to nations which are still struggling to keep their independence in the face of Soviet-backed aggression. The policy has had major successes:

- the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, due to be completed next February;

- the real prospect of Cuban withdrawal from Angola, encouraged by patient and constructive American diplomacy;

- and even the prospect of Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia.

These are all remarkable achievements, which very few observers predicted even three years ago.

Indeed, when we compare the mood of confidence and optimism in the West today with the mood when President Reagan took office eight years ago, we know that a greater change has taken place than could ever have been imagined. America has regained its confidence and is no longer afraid of the legitimate uses of its power. It has discussed those uses with its allies in the NATO alliance at all stages and with great frankness. Today our joint resolve is stronger than ever. And, finally, the recovery of American strength and confidence has led, as President Reagan always argued it would, to more peaceful and stable relations with the Soviet Union.

For strength, not weakness, leads to peace. It was only after the Soviet threat of SS-20s had been faced down and cruise and

Pershing missiles installed that the Soviets were prepared to embark on genuine arms-control negotiations and wider peace negotiations. It therefore fell to the President, less than four years after the Soviet walkout at Geneva, to negotiate the first arms-control agreement that actually reduced the nuclear stockpiles. And when he visited Moscow for the third Summit of his Presidency, he took the fight for human rights into the very heart of Moscow, where his words shone like a beacon of hope for all those who are denied their basic freedoms. Indeed the very recovery of American strength during his Presidency has been a major factor prompting and evoking the reform program under Mr. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities would have had much less incentive for reform if they had been faced by a weak and declining United States.

The legacy of President Reagan in East-West relations is the realistic appreciation that maintaining sure defenses, bridging the East-West divide, and reducing weapons and forces on both sides are not contradictory but policies that go comfortably together. Nothing could be more short-sighted for the West today than to run down its defenses unilaterally at the first sign of more peaceful and stable relations between East and West. Nothing would be more likely to convince those with whom we negotiate that they would not need to make any concessions because we would cut our defenses anyway. Britain will not do that. We will maintain and update our defenses. And our example is one which I hope our partners and allies will follow, because Europe must show that she is willing to bear a reasonable share of the burden of defending herself. That would be the best way for the NATO allies to repay America's farsighted foreign and defense policies of the Reagan years.

WHEN WE ATTEMPT an overall survey of President Reagan's term of office, covering events both foreign and domestic, one thing stands out. It is that he has achieved the most difficult of all political tasks: changing attitudes and perceptions about what is possible. From the strong fortress of his convictions, he set out to enlarge freedom the world over at a time when freedom was in retreat — and he succeeded. It is not merely that freedom now advances while collectivism is in retreat — important though that is. It is that freedom is the idea that everywhere captures men's minds while collectivism can do no more than enslave their bodies. That is the measure of the change that President Reagan has wrought.

How is it that some political leaders make the world a different place while others, equally able, equally public-spirited, leave things much as they found them? Some years ago, Professor Hayek pointed out that the social sciences often neglected the most important aspects of their subjects because they were not capable of being examined and explained in quantitative terms. One such quality which resists quantitative analysis is political

leadership. Which also happens to be the occupational requirement of a statesman.

No one can doubt that President Reagan possesses the ability to lead to an unusual degree. Some of the constituent qualities of that leadership I have referred to in passing — his firm convictions, his steadfastness in difficult times, his capacity to infuse his own optimism into the American people so that he restored their belief in America's destiny. But I would add three more qualities that, together with those above, enabled him to transform the political landscape.

The first is courage. The whole world remembers the wit and grace which the President displayed at the time of the attempt on his life. It was one of those occasions when people saw the real character of a man when he had none of the assistances which power and office provide. And they admired what they saw — cheerful bravery in the face of personal danger, no thought for himself but instead a desire to reassure his family and the nation by jokes and good humor.

The second is that he holds opinions which strike a chord in the heart of the average American. The great English journalist Walter Bagehot once defined a constitutional statesman as a man of common opinion and uncommon abilities. That is true of President Reagan and one of his greatest political strengths. He can appeal for support to the American people because they sense rightly that he shares their dreams, hopes, and aspirations; and he pursues them by the same route of plain American horse-sense.

Finally, President Reagan speaks with the authority of a man who knows what he believes and who has shown that he will stand by his beliefs in good times and bad. He is no summer soldier of conservatism, but one who fought in the ranks when the going wasn't good. Again, that reassures even those who do not share those beliefs. For authority is the respect won from others by the calm exercise of deep conviction.

The results of that leadership are all around us. President Reagan departs the political scene leaving America stronger and more confident, and the West more united, than ever before. I believe that President-elect Bush, a man of unrivaled experience in government and international affairs, will be a worthy successor, providing the forthright leadership which the world has come to expect from the U.S. President. We wish him well.

"I'd Rather Smoke than Kiss"

BY FLORENCE KING

July 9, 1990

I AM A WOMAN of 54 who started smoking at the late age of 26. I had no reason to start earlier; smoking as a gesture of teenage rebellion would have been pointless in my family. My mother started at 12. At first her preferred brands were the Fatimas and Sweet Caporals that were all the rage during World War I. Later she switched to Lucky Strike Greens and smoked four packs a day.

She made no effort to cut down while she was pregnant with me, but I was not a low-birth-weight baby. The Angel of Death saw the nicotine stains on our door and passed over; I weighed nine pounds. My smoke-filled childhood was remarkably healthy and safe except for the time Mama set fire to my Easter basket. That was all right, however, because I was not the Easter-basket type.

I probably wouldn't have started smoking if I had not been a writer. One day in the drugstore I happened to see a display of Du Maurier English cigarettes in pretty red boxes with a tray that slid out like a little drawer. I thought the boxes would be ideal for keeping my paperclips in, so I bought two.

When I got home, I emptied out the cigarettes and replaced them with paperclips, putting the loose cigarettes in the desk drawer where the loose paperclips had been scattered. Now the cigarettes were scattered. One day, spurred by two of my best traits, neatness and thrift, I decided that the cigarettes were messing up the desk and going to waste, so I tried one.

It never would have happened if I had been able to offer the Du Mauriers to a lover who smoked, but I didn't get an addicted one until after I had become addicted myself. When he entered my life it was the beginning of a uniquely pleasurable footnote to sex: the post-coital cigarette.

Today when I see the truculent, joyless faces of anti-tobacco Puritans, I remember those easy-going smoking sessions with that man: the click of the lighter, the brief oranger glow in the darkness, the ashtray between us — spilling sometimes because we laughed so much together that the bed shook.

A cigarette ad I remember from my childhood said: "One of life's great pleasures is smoking. Camels give you all of the enjoyment of choice tobaccos. Is enjoyment good for you? You just bet it is." My sentiments exactly. I believe life should be savored rather than lengthened, and I am ready to fight the misanthropes among us who are trying to make me switch.

A misanthrope is someone who hates people. Hatred of smokers is the most popular form of closet misanthropy in America today. Smokists don't hate the sin, they hate the sinner, and they don't care who knows it.

Their campaign never would have succeeded so well if the alleged dangers of smoking had remained a problem for smokers alone. We simply would have been allowed to invoke the Right to Die, always a favorite with democratic lovers of mankind, and that would have been that. To put a real damper on smoking and make it stick, the right of others not to die had to be invoked somehow, so "passive smoking" was invented.

The name was a stroke of genius. Just about everybody in America is passive. Passive Americans have been taking it on the chin for years, but the concept of passive smoking offered them a chance to hate in the land of compulsory love, a chance to dish it out for a change with no fear of being called a bigot. The right of self-defense, long since gone up in smoke, was back.

Smokers on the Run

THE BIG, brave Passive Americans responded with a vengeance. They began shouting at smokers in restaurants. They shuddered and grimaced and said "Ugh!" as they waved away the impure air. They put up little signs in their cars and homes: at first they said, "Thank You for Not Smoking," but not they feature a cigarette in a circle slashed with a red diagonal. Smokists even issue conditional invitations. I know — I got one. The woman said, "I'd love to have you to dinner, but I don't allow smoking in my home. Do you think you could refrain for a couple of hours?" I said, "Go — yourself," and she told everybody I was the rudest person she had ever met.

Smokists practice a sadistic brutality that would have done Vlad the Impaler proud. *Washington Times* columnist and smoker Jeremiah O'Leary was the target of two incredibly baleful letters to the editor after he defended the habit. The first letter said, "Smoke yourself to death, but please don't smoke me to death," but it was only a foretaste of the letter that followed:

Jeremiah O'Leary's March 1 column, "Perilous persuaders . . . tenacious zealots," is a typical statement of a drug addict trying to defend his vice.

To a cigarette smoker, all the world is an ashtray. A person who would never throw a candy wrapper or soda can will drop a lit cigarette without a thought.

Mr. O'Leary is mistaken that nonsmokers are concerned about the damage smokers are inflicting on themselves. What arrogance! We care about living in a pleasant environment without the stench of tobacco smoke or the litter of smokers' trash.

If Mr. O'Leary wants to kill himself, that is his choice. I ask only that he do so without imposing his drug or discarded filth on me. It would be nice if he would die in such a way that would not increase my health-insurance rates [my italics].

The expendability of smokers has also aroused the tender concern of the Federal Government. I was taking my first drag of the morning when I opened the Washington Post and found myself staring at this headline: NOT SMOKING COULD BE HAZARDWOUS TO PENSION SYSTEM. MEDICARE, SOCIAL SECURITY MAY BE PINCHED IF ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS, REPORT SAYS.

The article explained that since smokers die younger than non-smokers, the Social Security we don't live to collect is put to good use, because we subsidize the pensions of our fellow citizens like a good American should. However, this convenient arrangement could end, for if too many smokers heed the Surgeon General's warnings and stop smoking, they will live too long and break the budget.

That, of course, is not how the government economists phrased it. They said:

The implications of our results are that smokers "save" the Social Security system hundreds of billions of dollars. Certainly this does not mean that decreased smoking would not be socially beneficial. In fact, it is probably one of the most cost-effective ways of increasing average longevity. It does indicate, however, that if people alter their behavior in a manner which extends life expectancy, then this must be recognized by our national retirement program.

At this point the reporter steps in with the soothing reminder that "the war on tabacco is more appropriately cast as a public-health crusade than as an attempt to save money." But then we hear from Health Policy Center economist Gio Gori, who says: "Prevention of disease is obviously something we should strive for. But it's not going to be cheap. We will have to pay for those who survive."

Something darkling crawls out of that last sentence. The whole article has a die-damn-you undertow that would make an honest misanthrope wonder if perhaps a

cure for cancer was discovered years ago, but due to cost-effectiveness considerations. . .

But honest misanthropes are at a premium that no amount of Raleigh coupons can buy. Instead we have tinpot Torquemadas like Ahron Leichtman, president of Citizens against Tobacco Smoke, who announced after the airline smoking ban: "CATS will next launch its smoke-free airports project, which is the second phase of our smoke-free skies campaign." Representative Richard J. Durbin (D., Ill.) promised the next target will be "other forms of public transportation such as Amtrak, the inter-city bus system, and commuter lines that receive federal funding." His colleague, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D., N.J.), confessed, "We are gloating a little bit," and Fran Du Melle of the Coalition on Smoking OR Health, gave an ominous hint of things to come when she heralded the airline ban as "only one encouraging step on the road to a smoke-free society."

Health Nazis

THESE REMARKS manifest a sly, cowardly form of misanthropy that the Germans call Schadenfreude: pleasure in the unhappiness of others. It has always been the chief subconscious motivation of Puritans, but the smokists harbor several other subconscious motivations that are too egregious to bear close examination — which is precisely what I will now conduct.

Study their agitprop and you will find the same theme of pitiless revulsion running through nearly all of their so-called public-service ads. One of the earliest showed Brooke Shields toweling her wet hair and saying disgustedly, "I hate it when somebody smokes after I've just washed my hair. Yuk!" Another proclaimed, "Kissing a smoker is like licking an ashtray." The latest, a California radio spot, asks: "Why sell cigarettes? Why not just sell phlegm and cut out the middle man?"

Fear of being physically disgusting and smelling bas is the American's worst nightmare, which is why bathsoap commercials never include the controlled-force shower nozzles recommended by environmentalists in their public-service ads. The showering American uses oceans of hot water to get "ZESTfully clean" in a sudsy deluge that is often followed by a deodorant commercial.

"Raise your hand, raise your hand, raise your hand if you're SURE!" During this jingle we see an ecstatically happy assortment of people from all walks of life and representing every conceivable national origin, all obediently raising their hands, until the ad climaxes with a shot of the Statue of Liberty raising hers.

The New Greenhorns

THE STATUE of Liberty has become a symbol of immigration, the first aspect of American life the huddled masses experienced. The second was being called a

"dirty little" something-or-other as soon as they got off the boat. Deodorant companies see the wisdom in reminding their descendants of the dirty-little period. You can sell a lot of deodorant that way. Ethnics get the point directly; WASPs get it by default in the subliminal reminder that, historically speaking, there is no such thing as a dirty little WASP.

Smokers have become the new greenhorns in the land of sweetness and health, scapegoats for a quintessentially American need, rooted in our fadled Great Diversity, to identify and punish the undesirables among us. Ethnic tobacco haters can get even for past slurs on their fastidiousness by refusing to inhale around dirty little smokers; WASP tobacco haters can once again savor the joys of being the "real Americans" by hurling with impunity the same dirty little insults their ancestors hurled with impunity.

The tobacco pogrom serves additionally as the basis for a class war in a nation afraid to mention the word "class" aloud. Hating smokers is an excellent way to hate the white working class without going on record as hating the white working class.

The anti-smoking campaign has enjoyed thumping success among the "data-receptive," a lovely euphemism describing the privilege of spending four years sitting in a classroom. The ubiquitous statistic that college graduates are two-and-a-half times as likely to be non-smokers as those who never went beyond high school is balm to the data-receptive, many of whom are only a generation or two removed from the lunchbucket that smokers represent. Haunted by a fear of failing back down the ladder, and half-believing that they deserve to, they soothe their anxiety by kicking a smoker as the proverbial hen-pecked husband soothed his by kicking the dog.

The earnest shock that greeted the RJR Reynolds Uptown marketing scheme aimed at blacks cramped the vituperative style of the data-receptive. Looking down on blacks as smokers might be interpreted as looking down on blacks as blacks, so they settled for aping the compassionate concern they picked up from the media.

They got their sadism-receptive bona fides back when the same company announced plans to target Dakota cigarettes at a fearsome group called "virile females."

When I first saw the headline I thought surely they meant me: what other woman writer is sent off to a book-and-author luncheon with the warning, "Watch your language and don't wear your Baltimore Orioles warm-up jacket"? But they didn't. Virnile females are "Caucasian females, 18 to 24, with no education beyond high schools and entry-level service or factory jobs."

Commentators could barely hide their smirks as theyn listed the tractor pulls, motorcycle races, and machoman contests that comprise the leisure activities of the target group. Crocodile tears flowed

copiously. “It’s blue-collar people without enough education to understand what is happening to them,” mourned Virginia Ernster of the University of California School of Medicine. “It’s pathetic that these companies would work so hard to get these women who may not feel much control over their lives.” George Will, winner of the metaphorman contest, wrote: “They use sophisticated marketing like a sniper’s rifle, drawing beads on the most vulnerable, manipulable Americans.” (I would walk a mile to see Virginia Ernster riding on the back of George Will’s motorcycle.)

Hating smokers is also a guiltless way for a youth-worshipping country to hate old people, as well as those who are merely over the hill-especially middle-aged women. Smokers predominate in both groups because we saw Bette Davis’s movies the same year they were released. Now we catch Dark Victory whenever it comes on television just for the pleasure of watching the scene in the staff lounge at the hospital when Dr. George Brent and all the other doctors light up.

Smoking is the only thing that the politically correct can’t blame on white males. Red men started it, but the cowardly cossacks of the anti-tobacco crusade don’t dare say so because it would be too close for comfort. They see no difference between tobacco and hard drugs like cocaine and crack because they don’t wish to see any. Never mind that you will never be mugged by someone needing a cigarette; hatred of smokers is the conformist’s substitute for the hatred that dare not speak its name. Condemning “substance abuse” out of hand, without picking and choosing or participating discrimination, produces lofty sensations of democratic purity in those who keep moving farther and farther out in the suburbs to get away from . . . smokers.

An Exceptional Debate

The Obama administration's assault on American identity

BY RAMESH PONNURU AND RICH LOWRY

February 17, 2010

IT'S ALMOST a commonplace on the left that conservatives are "nihilists" for their opposition to President Obama. It's opposition for opposition's sake, an unprincipled exercise in partisan obstruction — mindless, toxic, destructive. When directed at Obama, "no" is an indefensible word, devoid of philosophical content.

Another, different charge has traditionally been leveled at conservatives — that they are "radicals." This criticism was made of National Review right at the beginning. Conservatives want to tear down the state, overturn precedent, reverse the direction of history. They are imprudent and incautious in their pursuit of a blinkered ideological agenda, in other words fundamentally unconservative.

So conservatives get it coming and going. Our opposition to the Left is deemed nihilistic and our affirmative agenda radical. These dueling critiques point to a paradox at the heart of American conservatism. We aren't Tories, concerned with preserving the prerogatives of an aristocratic elite or defending tradition at all costs. Instead, we're advocates of the dynamism of an open society. Through most of human history and still in many places in the world, that would make us the opposite of conservatives. Not in America.

What do we, as American conservatives, want to *conserve*? The answer is simple: the pillars of American exceptionalism. Our country has always been exceptional. It is freer, more individualistic, more democratic, and more open and dynamic than any other nation on earth. These qualities are the bequest of our Founding and of our cultural heritage. They have always marked America as special, with a unique role and mission in the world: as a model of ordered liberty and self-government and as an exemplar of freedom and a vindicator of it, through persuasion

when possible and force of arms when absolutely necessary.

The survival of American exceptionalism as we have known it is at the heart of the debate over Obama's program. It is why that debate is so charged. In his first year, Obama tried to avoid the cultural hot buttons that tripped up Bill Clinton and created the "gays, guns, and God" backlash of 1994. But he has stoked a different type of cultural reaction. The level of spending, the bailouts, and the extent of the intervention in the economy contemplated in health-care and cap-and-trade legislation have created the fear that something elemental is changing in the country. At stake isn't just a grab bag of fiscal issues, but the meaning of America and the character of its people: the ultimate cultural issue.

I

To find the roots of American exceptionalism, you have to start at the beginning — or even before the beginning. They go back to our mother country. Historian Alan Macfarlane argues that England never had a peasantry in the way that other European countries did, or as extensive an established church, or as powerful a monarchy. English society thus had a more individualistic cast than the rest of Europe, which was centralized, hierarchical, and feudal by comparison.

It was, to simplify, the most individualistic elements of English society — basically, dissenting low-church Protestants — who came to the eastern seaboard of North America. And the most liberal fringe of English political thought, the anti-court "country" Whigs and republican theorists such as James Harrington, came to predominate here. All of this made America an outlier compared with England, which was an outlier compared with Europe. The U.S. was the spawn of English liberalism, fated to carry it out to its logical conclusion and become the most liberal polity ever known to man.

America was blessedly unencumbered by an *ancien régime*. Compared with Europe, it had no church hierarchy, no aristocracy, no entrenched economic interests, no ingrained distaste for commercial activity. It almost entirely lacked the hallmarks of a traditional post-feudal agrarian society. It was as close as you could get to John Locke's state of nature. It was ruled from England, but lightly; Edmund Burke famously described English rule here as "salutary neglect." Even before the Revolution, America was the freest country on earth.

These endowments made it possible for the Americans to have a revolution with an extraordinary element of continuity. Tocqueville may have been exaggerating when he said that Americans were able to enjoy the benefits of a revolution without really having one, but he wasn't far off the mark. The remnants of old Europe that did exist here — state-supported churches, primogeniture, etc. — were quickly wiped out. Americans took inherited English

liberties, extended them, and made them into a creed open to all.

Exact renderings of the creed differ, but the basic outlines are clear enough. The late Seymour Martin Lipset defined it as liberty, equality (of opportunity and respect), individualism, populism, and laissez-faire economics. The creed combines with other aspects of the American character — especially our religiousness and our willingness to defend ourselves by force — to form the core of American exceptionalism.

II

Liberty is the most important element of the creed. To secure it, the Founders set about strictly limiting government within carefully specified bounds. Immediately upon the collapse of British government in America, the states drew up written constitutions and neutered their executives. They went as far as they could possibly go to tame the government — indeed, they went farther, and had to start over to get a functioning state. But even this second try produced a Constitution that concentrated as much on what government could not do as on what it could.

The Founders knew what men were capable of, in the positive sense if their creative energies were unleashed and in the negative sense if they were given untrammeled power over others. "It may be a reflection on human nature," Madison wrote in a famous passage in *Federalist* No. 51 describing the checks in the Constitution, "that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary."

The Constitution's negative character reflected its basic goal: to protect people in their liberty. In stark contrast, European constitutions, even prior to World War II, established positive rights to government benefits. As Mary Ann Glendon notes, these differences "are legal manifestations of divergent, and deeply rooted, cultural attitudes toward the state and its functions."

This framework of freedom made possible the flourishing of the greatest commercial republic in history. As historian Walter Russell Mead notes, over the last several centuries of the West, three great maritime powers have stood for a time at the pinnacle of the international order: the Dutch, then the English, and finally us. All three had powerful navies and sophisticated financial systems, and were concerned primarily with increasing national wealth through commerce.

Consider the very beginning. John Steele Gordon reminds us in his book *An Empire of Wealth* that the Virginia Company — a profit-seeking corporation — founded Jamestown. In New England, the Puritan merchants wrote at the top of their ledgers,

"In the name of God and of profit." Even before the Revolution, we were the most prosperous country per capita in the world.

In a telling coincidence, the publication of Adam Smith's world-changing free-market classic, *The Wealth of Nations*, coincided with the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Many of the Founders read the book. Without the medieval encumbrances and the powerful, entrenched special interests that plagued other countries, the United States could make Smith's ideas the basis of its economic dispensation. Gordon writes, "The United States has consistently come closer to the Smithian ideal over a longer period of time than any other major nation."

In the latitude provided by this relatively light-handed government, a commerce-loving, striving, and endlessly inventive people hustled its way to become the greatest economic power the world has ever known.

In America, there really hasn't been a disaffected proletariat — because the proletariat has gotten rich. Friedrich Engels had it right when he carped that "America is so purely bourgeois, so entirely without a feudal past and therefore proud of its purely bourgeois organization."

The traditional Marxist claim about the U.S. was that it was governed by the executive committee of the bourgeoisie. This was not intended as a compliment, but it was largely true. Look at the archetypal American, Benjamin Franklin, whose name comes from the Middle English meaning freeman, someone who owns some property. Napoleon dismissed the British as "a nation of shopkeepers"; we are a nation of Franklins.

Abraham Lincoln, a de facto Founding Father, is an exemplar of this aspect of America. "I hold the value of life," Lincoln said, "is to improve one's condition." There are few things he hated more than economic stasis. He couldn't abide Thomas Jefferson's vision of a nation of yeoman farmers living on their land forevermore, blissfully untouched by the forces of modern economic life. (Appropriately enough, Jefferson died broke.) Lincoln captured the genius of American life when he said, "The man who labored for another last year, this year labors for himself, and next year he will hire others to labor for him."

That sentiment is at the heart of the American economic gospel. American attitudes toward wealth and its creation stand out within the developed world. Our income gap is greater than that in European countries, but not because our poor are worse off. In fact, they are better off than, say, the bottom 10 percent of Britons. It's just that our rich are phenomenally wealthy.

This is a source of political tension, but not as much as foreign observers might expect, thanks partly to a typically American attitude. A 2003 Gallup survey found that 31 percent of Americans expect to get rich,

including 51 percent of young people and more than 20 percent of Americans making less than $30,000 a year. This isn't just cockeyed optimism. America remains a fluid society, with more than half of people in the bottom quintile pulling themselves out of it within a decade.

And so we arrived in the 21st century still a country apart. Prior to its recent run-up, total government spending was still only about 36 percent of GDP in the U.S. In Europe, the figure was much higher — 44 percent in Britain, 53 percent in France, and 56 percent in Sweden. (The difference is starker when only non-defense spending is compared.)

Politically, we have always been more democratic, more populist than other countries. Edmund Burke said of the low-church Protestants who flocked here, "They represent the dissidents of dissent and the protest wing of the Protestant religion." The Scotch-Irish who settled the hinterlands were even more cussed. It wasn't very easy to tell any of these people what to do, as colonial governors learned to their regret.

Later, in the 19th century, the Federalists tried to create a kind of aristocracy. They got rich and set themselves up as grandees. Knowing that many members of this self-designated ruling class started life in the same state they had, their neighbors didn't take kindly to these pretensions. The Federalist party wasn't long for this world — a lesson in how poorly elite condescension plays in America.

Today, we still have more elections for more offices more often than other countries. Even many judges and law-enforcement officials are elected. In the federal government, political appointees have greater sway over the civil service than is the case in other developed countries. As Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson have written, "There is virtually no sphere of 'administration' apart from politics."

In Europe, the opposite is the case and has become more so with the rise of the European Union. Brussels is arrogating more decision-making to itself, removed from the locus of democratic accountability in individual nations. When important EU questions are put to the voters in referenda, there is only one correct answer, and when nations vote the "wrong" way, elections are held over and over again until they succumb. This European-style politics of bureaucratic, elite high-handedness is dangerous in its undemocratic nature and anathema to the American character.

We have managed to preserve a remarkable national spirit. At over 70 percent, more Americans express pride in their country than Western Europeans do in theirs. In terms of demography, we are the youngest advanced country in the world, and our population continues to grow as that of Western Europe is projected to decline.

Americans are more religious than Europeans. In the 18th century, American religious dissenters supported

overthrowing state-supported churches because it would allow them to compete on an even playing field with other denominations. In that competition, America saw an explosion of religious feeling and became the most evangelical country in the world.

Religion gained authority and vitality from its separation from the state, and religion-inspired reform movements, from abolitionism to the civil-rights movement, have been a source of self-criticism and renewal. Today, 73 percent of Americans believe in God, compared with 27 percent of Frenchmen and 35 percent of Britons, according to a 2006 *Financial Times* survey.

All of this means that America has the spirit of a youthful, hopeful, developing country, matched with the economic muscle of the world's most advanced society and the stability of its oldest democratic institutions.

This national spirit is reflected in our ambitious and vigorous foreign policy. We were basically still clinging to port cities on the eastern seaboard when we began thinking about settling the rest of the continent. There never was a time when we were an idyllically isolationist country. We wanted to make the continent ours partly as a matter of geopolitics: France, Spain, and Britain were wolves at the door. But throughout our history, we have sought not just to secure our interests abroad, but to export our model of liberty.

This missionary impulse is another product of the American Revolution, which took English liberties and universalized them. The Founders thought we would play an outsized role in the world from the very beginning. We would be an "empire of liberty," Jefferson said. He believed that the flame of liberty, once lit on our shores, would inevitably consume the world.

This strain in American thought was expressed throughout the 20th century in the democratic idealism of Wilson, FDR, and Carter. At its best, this tendency has been tempered by prudence and realism so as to avoid foolish adventurism. Reagan exemplified the appropriate mix, as he avoided (with the painful exception of Lebanon) risky foreign interventions at the same time he ushered the Soviet Union to its grave through a shrewd combination of hard and soft power.

But make no mistake: America is still a martial nation with a no-nonsense, hit-back-harder Jacksonian temperament when challenged. Historically, it has responded to attacks, whether at Fort Sumter or Pearl Harbor, with overwhelming force and the maximum plausible effort to spread our democratic system. In this sense, George W. Bush's response to 9/11 — two foreign wars, both justified partly as exercises in democratization — was typically American.

Our defense spending constituted half of the world's defense spending in 2003. With a few exceptions (the British, the

Canadians), we are the only Western nation that is able and willing to conduct major combat operations overseas. Even when Afghanistan was considered "the good war"by the rest of the world, we had to do most of the heavy lifting.

None of this is to say, of course, that America is perfect. No nation can be. But one can only regard with wonderment what America stands for and all that it has accomplished in its amazing, utterly distinct adventure in liberty.

III

There have always been those who take exception to American exceptionalism. Europeans developed a cottage industry in travel writing about America, most of it — although not all, with Tocqueville the most important exception — scandalized by the riotous freedoms of these restless, stubborn, commerce-crazy, God-soaked barbarians. The America of these portraits was simultaneously primitive and decadent: "grotesque, obscene, monstrous, stultifying, stunted, leveling, deadening, deracinating, roofless, uncultured," as James Ceaser summarizes the critique in *Reconstructing America*. Many of America's European critics hoped that, over time, America would lose its distinctiveness. It would become just another developed Western country: more centralized, more elitist, more secular, less warlike, and less free. In short, a *quieter*, more *civilized* place.

The American Left has shared this maddened perplexity at its country's character and this hope for its effacement. Marxists at home and abroad were always mystified by the failure of socialism in the U.S. They thought that, as the most advanced capitalist society, we would have had the most restive proletariat. Instead we have had a broad and largely satisfied middle class. Even our unions, in their early history, were anti-statist, their radicalism anarchistic rather than socialist. At the Progressive convention of 1912, Jane Addams saw "a worldwide movement toward juster social conditions" that "the United States, lagging behind other great nations, has been unaccountably slow to embody in political action."

Hence the search for foreign models. In the early 20th century, the Left was fascinated with all things German and brimmed with enthusiasm for Bismarck's welfare state. Woodrow Wilson, in a sentiment typical of progressive intellectuals, deemed Bismarck's creation an "admirable system"; he was less admiring of the American Founding. Herbert Croly, the founder of *The New Republic* and one of the most significant progressive intellectuals of the era, was another Bismarck admirer. Croly advocated rule by "expert social engineers" to bring to these shores the best innovations of the modern dictatorial movements taking over in Europe.

New Deal intellectuals gushed over Bolshevism in the 1930s. FDR Brain Truster

Stuart Chase enthused, "Why should Russians have all the fun of remaking a world?" His statement captured the utopian underpinnings of the progressive project and the yearning for the kind of radical remaking of society that was readily attainable only in countries that gave themselves over entirely to the state. The other model was Italian fascism, which New Dealers studied closely and in important respects aped.

The New Deal was a watershed, but America didn't lurch all the way to socialism. The power of the central government increased, a welfare state was born, and unionization advanced. But even in the midst of the Great Depression, typically American attitudes still prevailed. In a 1935 Gallup survey, Americans by a wide margin thought the government was spending too much.

After World War II, a Left that had been gaining strength in Europe for decades finally realized its social-democratic ambitions. The U.S. followed a different course. In the academy, a perverse version of American exceptionalism took root: an exceptionalism of criminality, conquest, and oppression. America was special only in its misdeeds and failings; all cultures were to be celebrated except our own. The exceptionalism of Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky, in milder form, occupied the commanding heights of our education system. It has worked to trash our Founding, to wipe out our historical memory, and to create a guilty conscience among our ruling elite.

In politics, however, the country's progress away from its character continued to be "unaccountably slow." American government continued to grow, particularly during the Johnson and Nixon years; the states became ever more one of the federal government's key client groups rather than checks on its power. But the individualistic American character began to reassert itself after its mid-century dormancy. Americans saw the stagflation of the 1970s as an indictment of Big Government rather than a crisis of capitalism. Ronald Reagan won the presidency of a nation that, by European standards, was still a freewheeling cowboy economy and democracy — and made it even freer.

Deregulation exposed unions to competitive pressures that they could not survive. The U.S. quickly came out of its post-Vietnam defensive crouch. And religion, rather than fading away, became more publicly assertive in response to perceived threats. Bill Clinton's Democratic presidency did more to confirm than to alter these trends.

The Left's search for a foreign template to graft onto America grew more desperate. Why couldn't we be more like *them* — like the French, like the Swedes, like the Danes? Like any people with a larger and busier government overawing the private sector and civil society? You can see it in *Sicko*, wherein Michael Moore extols the British

national health-care system, the French way of life, and even the munificence of Cuba; you can hear it in all the admonitions from left-wing commentators that every other advanced society has government child care, or gun control, or mass transit, or whatever socialistic program or other infringement on our liberty we have had the wisdom to reject for decades.

IV

President Obama's first year in office should be seen in the context of contemporary liberalism's discomfort with American exceptionalism.

The president has signaled again and again his unease with traditional American patriotism. As a senator he notoriously made a virtue of not wearing a flag pin. As president he has been unusually detached from American history: When a foreign critic brought up the Bay of Pigs, rather than defend the country's honor he noted that he was a toddler at the time. And while acknowledging that America has been a force for good, he has all but denied the idea that America is an exceptional nation. Asked whether he believed in American exceptionalism during a European trip last spring, Obama said, "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." (Is it just a coincidence that he reached for examples of former hegemons?)

In this respect the president reflects the mainstream sentiment of American liberals. We do not question the sincerity of his, or their, desire to better the lot of his countrymen. But modern liberal intellectuals have had a notoriously difficult time coming up with a decent account of patriotism even when they have felt it. From Richard Rorty to Todd Gitlin, they have proclaimed their allegiance to a hypothetical, pure country that is coming into being rather than to the one they inhabit.

Given the liberal gestalt, it is perhaps unsurprising that every important aspect of American exceptionalism has been under threat from President Obama and his allies in Washington. Obama has frankly and correctly described their project as to change the country fundamentally.

On those occasions when Obama places himself in the context of American history, he identifies himself with the post-Wilsonian tradition — with, that is, the gradual replacement of the Founders' design. He seeks to accelerate it.

Already we are catching up to the European norm for government power. In 2010, government spending in the U.S. will reach an estimated 44 percent of GDP. With entitlements for the elderly on a path to explode with the retirement of the Baby Boomers, the trend is toward more convergence. In a strange reversal, last year it was an American president urging *continental Europeans* to spend more to

combat the recession. Two of his highest priorities would drastically, and probably irreversibly, expand the government's footprint.

American liberals have long been embarrassed about our country's supposedly retrograde policies on health care and energy, especially compared with Europe's nationalized health insurance and carbon rationing. So they tried to use their unprecedented power after the 2008 elections to bring the U.S. into line. They sought to limit carbon emissions. That legislation would simultaneously represent a massive indirect tax increase, an extension of the tentacles of government regulation into every sector of the economy, and an empowerment of new bureaucratic instruments to control and direct economic development.

Obama's health-care policy would change the relationship of people to government, probably forever, by further nationalizing our system. It would have the federal government, for the first time, order all Americans to purchase a specified product. And socialized health-care systems in other lands have become endless warrants for more taxing and spending, as both are justified as necessary to delivering adequate health care. Once the public is hooked on government health care, its political attitudes shift leftward. (The system's flaws, such as rationing, tend to be attributed to underfunding, so that even discontent with it ends up entrenching it.)

Free labor markets have been an expression of American individualism and a contributor to American dynamism. But President Obama has attempted to upend seven decades of American labor law in order to make it easier for unions to collect new members. Democrats hope to reverse the unions' decline. Tellingly, after the United Auto Workers helped wreck GM and Chrysler, the Obama administration handed it a large share of control over the two companies.

Corporations, meanwhile, are also becoming more dependent on government handouts. Rivalry between business and political elites has helped to safeguard American liberty. What we are seeing now is the possible emergence of a new political economy in which Big Business, Big Labor, and Big Government all have cozy relations of mutual dependence. The effect would be to suppress both political choice and economic dynamism.

The retreat from American exceptionalism has a legal dimension as well. Obama's judicial nominees are likely to attempt to bring our Constitution into line with European norms. Here, again, he is building on the work of prior liberals who used the federal courts as a weapon against aspects of American exceptionalism such as self-government and decentralization. Increasingly, judicial liberals look to putatively enlightened foreign, and particularly European, opinion as a source of law capable of displacing the law made under our Constitution.

Liberal regulators threaten both our dynamism and our self-government. They are increasingly empowered to make far-reaching policy decisions on their own — for instance, the EPA has the power to decide, even in the absence of cap-and-trade legislation passed by Congress, how to regulate carbon emissions. The agency thus has extraordinary sway over the economy, without any meaningful accountability to the electorate. The Troubled Asset Relief Program has turned into a honeypot for the executive branch, which can dip into it for any purpose that suits it. Government is increasingly escaping the control of the people from whom it is supposed to derive its powers.

Inevitably, the transformation of America at home is being accompanied by a shift in its policies toward the rest of the world. Since the 1940s America has been the crucial undergirding of the international order. Its power and sway are a stabilizing influence in every region of the world, and it provides international public goods, from the policing of sea lanes to humanitarian interventions. It is also, in keeping with its missionary history, the chief exponent of liberty in the world.

Obama is turning his back both on the overarching vision of freedom and on the prudence, and mislabeling his approach "realism." He has been positively allergic to the word "democracy." His administration has shown very little interest in defending human rights around the world, whether in China or in Cuba. During the Iranian election crisis, he was even cooler to the protesters in the streets than the Europeans were.

His hesitance to advocate American ideals is not a return to the realpolitik of Nixon or the first Bush. A deep naïveté informs his policy. He believes that our enemies can be persuaded, merely through sweet talk and blandishments, to abandon their cold-blooded interests and their most deeply held ambitions. This is impossible without developing the kind of leverage over them in which Obama seems to have little interest. Yes, Reagan negotiated with the Soviets, but only when they had a leader who was a reformer and the arms build-up and the prospect of SDI had tilted the correlation of forces — to use the Marxist argot — in our direction. Under the sway of Obama's anti-idealism, the U.S. is less interested in serving as a champion of liberty; his policies will also reduce our power, and thus our effectiveness should we choose to wield it again.

In many of Obama's performances overseas (the Nobel acceptance speech is an exception), there has been a dismaying defensiveness. It's almost as though he doesn't think we deserve to stand up for our ideals or for our interests, and believes that our record of sins, hypocrisies, and affronts makes a posture of apologetic passivity the only appropriate one. This posture raises a disturbing possibility: that the waning of America's civilizational self-confidence is part and parcel of the change Obama is effecting.

In Europe, we see a civilization that is not willing to defend itself: nations that will surrender their sovereignty, cultures that will step aside to be supplanted by an alien creed, peoples that will no longer make the most meaningful investment in the future by reproducing. There is a sense that history is over and Europeans are just waiting for someone to turn out the last light in the last gallery of the Louvre.

The popular revolt against Obama's policies is a sign that Americans are not prepared to go gentle into that good night. Other factors are of course in play — most important, the weak economy — but the public is saying "No" to a rush to social democracy.

Although the conservatives, libertarians, and independents who oppose Obama's health-care initiative may not put it in quite these terms, they sense that his project will not just increase insurance premiums but undermine what they cherish about America. Those Americans who want to keep our detention facility at Guantanamo Bay think it necessary to protect our security — but they also worry, more profoundly, that our leaders are too apologetic to serve our interests. Americans may want change, even fundamental change, but most of them would rather change our institutions than our national character.

It is madness to consider President Obama a foreigner. But it is blindness to ignore that American exceptionalism has homegrown enemies — people who misunderstand the sources of American greatness or think them outdated. If they succeed, we will be less free, less innovative, less rich, less self-governing, and less secure. We will be less.

As will the world. The Europeans can afford a foreign policy devoted nearly exclusively to "soft power" because we are here to defend them and mount the forward defense of freedom. Who is going to do that for us, when we are no longer doing it for ourselves? Who will answer the call when America is no longer home?

If our politics seems heated right now, that is because the central question before us is whether to abandon our traditional sense of ourselves as an exceptional nation. To be exceptional is of course not to be perfect. The old anti-imperialist saying — "My country right or wrong; if right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right" — has considerable wisdom. But Americans are right not to want to become exceptional only in the 230-year path we took to reach the same lackluster destination as everyone else.