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ISRAEL AFTER AMIR

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Casual

I, Pundit

A few months ago I was on a TV talk show I used to appear on fairly frequently. The host is a friendly, mild woman who tosses the assembled pundits softball questions and then ducks while we swing at them wildly. I liked being on this show a lot, and this particular day I didn't suspect trouble. The host was pleasant as always. She opened our little discussion by mentioning some bit of good economic news reported that morning: Orders for durable goods were, I think, up. Or was it down? Whichever, the economic news was good, as it has been for a couple of years now.

She asked me my thoughts, and though it's hard to have provocative opinions about orders for durable goods, up or down, I came out for good economic news.

"But Andrew," she said sweetly, "isn't the economy supposed to be in the tank by now? I seem to recall what you said this time a couple of years ago, when the administration's tax increases went through . . . ."

Sirens screamed, soundlessly; alarm lights swam, invisibly. My host was violating the most fundamental rule of TV punditry. It's true that during the 1993 budget debates I had appeared on this program, sat in the very same seat, and announced confidently that the Clinton tax hikes would break the fragile, precious reed that is the American economy. And it's true that the American economy did not break. It has performed like a trouper. It's true, in short, that I had been wrong.

That's not the point. The point is: This is TV. This is punditry. Sitting side by side before the camera, host and pundit enter into an unwritten compact. The guest gives pithy answers of rock-solid certitude. The host agrees never again to mention what those answers are. Exceptions are permitted, when, for example, the guest makes some outlandishly implausible guess—say, Alan Keyes will sweep 50 states in the presidential election next November—that, God help us, proves correct.

Otherwise, pundits' opinions are supposed to sail through the air, bounce off the satellites, enter the viewer's home, roil around a minute, then disappear into the ether where they belong. I discovered later that our host had been pulling this particularly nasty trick for a week or so—cornering right-wing pundits on the air (live!) and asking them why they, to a man, had been wrong about the consequences of the Clinton tax increases. Don't tell me there's no liberal bias in the media.

As it happens, in my own desultory career as a pundit, I have a long history of being wrong. I had the painful experience of going through my old clippings recently and finding an article from early 1988, datelined New Hampshire. I'd been trailing presidential candidates and wrote that one in particular had all but wrapped up the Democratic nomination, which meant, in turn, that he would be our next president, since it was impossible that a Republican could win in '88. That lucky winner's name was Dick Gephardt. As things turned out, he withdrew from the race before my article was back from the printers. My prediction, as we say in the trade, was "overtaken by events."

This glance through my clips reminded me, too, how wrong I—and most other conservatives—had been about Mikhail Gorbachev. At the State of the World Forum in San Francisco a few weeks ago, I had a chance to watch him at fairly close range, over the course of several days.

Hearing him talk airily for hours about stupefying banalities, you couldn't help but find his cluelessness touching. And to think that throughout the 80s, conservatives tried to brand him another Stalin, or at least another Brezhnev. What he was, was another Jimmy Carter: incompetent and feckless, indecisive and easily distracted. This more than anything explains why, when his far-flung empire was collapsing, he didn't roll out the tanks. He couldn't make up his mind.

That was not my reading of events as they took place, of course, and I hope no one ever cares enough to resurrect the clips that will show what my reading actually was. At the time—I admit it, I admit it—I was wrong. I don't think I am wrong now, though, and apparently my present interpretation more closely conforms to that of the Russian people, who during their long association with Gorbachev neither demonized him, as American conservatives did, nor canonized him, as did our liberals. Russians just didn't like him. And if the rumors are true that Gorbachev will seek the Russian presidency next year, be assured that he will be roundly defeated.

You may quote me.

Andrew Ferguson

Better Lunching Than Dead

I enjoyed "You Gotta Lunch Hurt" (Scrapbook, Sept. 18). I would like to point out, however, that I read the article in this world and have not yet passed on to the next.
Robert Gray
Miami Beach, FL

Being Prosecuted

Carl M. Cannon invokes me in his piece about special prosecutors ("The Vendetta Machine," Nov. 6), so I want to say how very annoying I find it to be tossed, along with my husband and other Reaganites who were attacked by special prosecutors, into the same pot with Clinton and those confederates of his who are being hounded right now.

The players in the so-called "Iran-Contra scandal" were congressional Democrats in a Cold War skirmish. If Republicans are "enjoying entirely too much seeing the[m] squirm," still, it is over political ambition locked mouth to mouth with personal financial gain that the Clintonites are being investigated. The two situations aren't comparable.

More annoying still is Cannon's condescending attitude toward those of us who, unjustly scorched by the special prosecutor's fire, feel that turnabout is not only fair play, but is imperative. Only when the people who set the prosecutorial fire and have till now been fanning it from a safe distance, namely the Democrats, get burned by it too, will the terms "partisan" and "criminal justice" stop being interchangeable.
Rachel Abrams
Great Falls, VA

Catching the Stealth Justice

Thanks to Jeremy Rabkin for acknowledging the role of the Conservative Caucus in opposing the confirmation of David Souter to be a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court ("The Sorry Tale of David Souter, Stealth Justice," Nov. 6).

As Rabkin indicated, we did indeed make reference to Souter's record of complicity in causing abortions to be performed at two New Hampshire hospitals on whose boards he served.

But, contrary to Rabkin's comment that our opposition to Souter was premised "solely on the basis of doubts about Souter's personal views on abortion," we had other reasons to challenge his suitability. For example, I observed during my Senate testimony that Souter "totally rejects higher law authority and . . . is purely a legal technician."
Howard Phillips
Vienna, VA

Handicapping Kristol

From his archly alphabetical, apparently arbitrary listing of the six men he has divined are the field for 1996, to his all but endorsement of Colin Powell, William Kristol has demonstrated that he may not be the political genius we thought he was, nor as ideologically trustworthy ("Six-Pack: Handicapping the Presidential Race," Nov. 6). After all, Lamar Alexander? (One would be forgiven for concluding that the article was ghost-written by Kevin Phillips.)

A Powell presidency would surely have brought the conservative revolution to a crashing halt. Has Kristol forgotten the Bush presidency which nearly undid eight years of Reaganism? What Kristol and the other Powell cheerleaders offered, what even Newt Gingrich seemed sanguine about ("a more inclusive version of the revolution") was, let's face it, a kinder, gentler conservative revolution. No thank you.
David Markey
Albany, NY

The Real Radical Roots

I sometimes think that writers and reviewers cite *Roots of Radicalism*, which I authored with S. Robert Lichter, without having read it very carefully.

Joshua Muravchik criticizes Adam Garfinkle's *Telltale Hearts* ("Why We Weren't in Vietnam," Nov. 6), which I have not yet read, for asserting that *Roots of Radicalism* documents the overwhelming difficulties young radicals had with their parents. Muravchik argues that we found only that such difficulties were somewhat more common among young radicals than other groups. He goes on to argue against the notion that the "New Left" was primarily characterized by generational revolt—a view he sees emerging from Garfinkle's misreading of our data.

Actually the picture we present is rather more complicated than either Garfinkle or Muravchik suggests. Whatever the tone of parent-child relations, we found both rebellion and continuity. The new leftists of Jewish background who dominated the movement in its early days were following in their parents' footsteps.

On the other hand, the non-Jewish new leftists who swarmed into the movement after 1965 were likely to be acting in sharp rebellion against their parents' social and political attitudes. Further, the nature of their emotional relations to their parents differs sharply for the two groups of radicals.
Stanley Rothman
Northampton, MA

Entanglements in Bosnia

Robert Kagan correctly argues ("America, Bosnia, Europe: A Compelling Interest," Nov. 6) that the U.S. has a compelling interest in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in light of its geographic position. Kagan, though, repeats an assertion seen in the press with increasing frequency. Yugoslavia's crisis did not begin when Germany recognized Croatia, as Kagan maintains. Indeed, by the time Croatia received recognition, over 10,000 people had been killed in Croatia, the city of Dubrovnik had been shelled, and the city of Vukovar had been destroyed.

The crisis in the former Yugoslavia began earlier, in 1987, when Serbia's president Slobodan Milosevic began to use Greater Serbian nationalism to slowly dismantle the delicate balance which had existed among Yugoslavia's republics. Slovenia's and Croatia's decision to leave Yugoslavia in mid-1991

Correspondence

was necessary and justified to escape Milosevic's power-seeking clutches.

The decision to recognize the two countries in December 1991, following Croatia's and Slovenia's successful defense against the Yugoslav army, merely represented the recognition of the new realities on the ground.

JOHN P. KRALJIC
NEW YORK, NY

By looking at Bosnia and seeing only Bosnia, we commit, according to Robert Kagan, a "failure of the imagination." We must, he argues, see "what is at stake in the Balkans." I agree.

Kagan correctly criticizes the Bush-Clinton evasions of policy as a failure, but then claims that "what is really at stake" is aptly addressed by investing our soldiers' lives and NATO's honor in a 60,000-troop force which will spend a year defending a peace where no peace exists, where demagogues have aroused hatreds, and where the "settlement" entails Serb and Croatian mini-states within Bosnia adjacent to their respective ethnic homelands.

Such a "settlement" is an open invitation to a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia—possibly after a Greater War down the road. For the U.S. and NATO to be the midwives to this rewarding of aggression and ethnic cleansing will send a terrible message to the aggressors, demagogues, and racists of the future.

JOEL WEISS
WINNETKA, IL

Robert Kagan makes a strong argument for congressional support of the president's commitment to deploy "U.S. troops to enforce a Bosnian peace agreement (should one be negotiated in the coming weeks)." A stronger argument can be made that, because the president's commitment on this exceedingly complex, life-or-death matter was made without its approval, Congress should endorse it only after due deliberation.

Further bloodshed in Bosnia (by Bosnians and "peacekeepers") can be avoided only if the warring parties lay down their arms. A genuine treaty negotiated in Ohio should involve no NATO enforcement. If no treaty is signed, or a signed treaty is violated, all bets are off and critical negotiations amongst the NATO allies to determine its responses will follow. Congress must be involved in these negotiations whose eventual outcome could be war.

LEE WOLMAN
BELMONT, MA

Regarding Bosnia, I have one thing to say to Clinton, Robert Kagan, and all the other like-minded around the country—you go first and stay for the duration.

If the U.S. is the only superpower, as we are alleged to be, then we should decide when it is important enough to sacrifice American children. We should not worry about what NATO or anyone else says. Superpower or not, we cannot stop all the pain, evil, and unfairness in the world. If NATO can't handle this local problem, what good is it?

As long as we have this commander in chief, who himself avoided serving when called, we should be very careful of what we ask our troops.

F.J. MITCHELL
ROXBORO, NC

We Like the Legal Ones

It irks me, but does not surprise me, to continually read that California's Proposition 187 is "anti-immigrant."

The press has linked Proposition 187 with "anti-immigrant" the same way it has linked "white separatist" to Randy Weaver. But when a conservative publication such as yours prints the same inaccurate and insulting description of Proposition 187 ("What Happened to Jack Kemp," Oct. 30), I must protest.

The majority of California citizens, who passed Prop 187 overwhelmingly, are not "anti-immigrant." We simply cannot afford and do not want to continue funding health, welfare, education, and myriad other benefits for illegal aliens who are rapidly bankrupting this state.

We have no problem with immigrants who legally enter the state and obey our laws. Words have meaning. Please don't join the rest of the media in labeling Californians falsely.

JOHN BLETHEN
SONOMA, CA

the weekly Standard

Israel After Amir

It is the nature of assassinations that they do change the world—but it is the nature of God's justice that the world changes in ways the assassin, wracked by rage or fury or madness or sociopathic self-interest, could never have anticipated. So it is with Israel's Yigal Amir. Amir's arrogant assurance that his thirst for vengeance against Yitzhak Rabin was an expression not of his sinful human soul but rather the will of God may lead, as Ruth R. Wisse points out on in her article beginning on page 28, to the ultimate triumph of the very policies his bullets were meant to destroy. If so, that would be rough justice indeed for the 2 million Israelis, 40 percent of the population, who harbor deep misgivings about the peace process. But rough justice is one of the ways that the God of the Old Testament deals with sinful men and the countries who produce them.

Judaism is a communitarian religion, which means that while Jews must take responsibility for their sins, they also must recognize that their crimes poison not only their own souls, but those of their families, friends, and neighbors. Amir and his confederates may consider themselves religious Jews, but if they have convinced themselves that an evil action can lead to a positive good, they might as well have been praying all these years to a totem or a household god for all that they understand of their faith.

Judaism is a religion largely concerned with behavior, with conduct. That is why one of the signal ironies of our age is that since its founding (and even before, as Yoram Hazony explains in his article beginning on page 31) the Jewish state's political discourse has been characterized by rudeness, ugliness, vituperation, even the occasional fistfight inside the Knesset. What the Rabin assassination proves, most of all, is how critical it is for democracies to foster and nurture a spirit of civility in their politics. It is true, as commentators noted at great length last week, that extremists opposed to the peace process have spent the last year talking about Rabin and the ruling Labor party in the most repugnant, ghastly terms. No less an opponent of the peace process—and of Rabin!—than opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu confessed on the David Brinkley show that the apocalyptic rhetoric of the extremists had something to do with Amir's crime.

It is also true that when it comes to irresponsible, hysterical rhetoric, the Labor party has its own legacy of shame to contend with—its rage at being unseated after 30 years of uninterrupted rule when Likud first took power in 1977 led to the habitual use of the word "Nazi" to describe Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, among others. That, too, was on display in the immediate aftermath of the assassination. It took Education Minister Amnon Rubenstein all of five minutes to declare Netanyahu and the Likud party the real killers. And while it is difficult to criticize a widow in her time of grief, the very fact that Leah Rabin emerged from mourning to accuse her husband's legitimate political rivals of murder suggests the extent of the civility crisis inside Israel.

Collegial political systems cannot long survive this sort of talk. The parliamentary rules of procedure in the world's most stable countries—the elaborate dance of Robert's Rules of Order, the amusingly archaic traditions of Britain's House of Commons, the head-shaking insistence in the U.S. Senate on couching all criticism in falsely friendly language—were necessary in order to ensure that political assemblies would not lead to civil wars. Earlier this year, California Rep. Robert Dornan went a little too far in a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives and, before the chair could speak, cheerfully agreed to exile himself from the floor for a day. Manners are habit-forming, even for those who don't feel like using them.

Though Americans do not know it, our nation probably has the most civil political discourse of any important nation in the world. Indeed, it is a mark of how civilized our discourse is that Americans are so concerned about it. We may live in the age of the soundbite, but often the soundbite is used as a weapon to ensure public civility. If a candidate for office runs a

negative ad, the negative ad may well backfire on him in the eyes of voters who deem it unfair. Let Dick Armey's tongue slip and an anti-homosexual epithet emerge, and there are days of stories, attacks, apologies. Let Bill Clinton try to tie Rush Limbaugh to Timothy McVeigh, and he must back down—his polls tell him so. The list goes on.

This is now such a regular feature of American political life that there is reason to fear the age of the stemwinding polemic is over. But if we have all but lost the capacity to speak plainly, if Americans have become too sensitive, maybe we should give some of our surplus delicacy to our friends, the Israelis.

That is not said in jest. As the response to the Rabin assassination indicates, America continues to have an almost mystical relationship with Israel, one that cannot be ascribed simply to the political clout of American Jews.

Israel is America's child. It would not have been born without the midwifery of Harry S Truman, and it would not today be the only truly Western nation devised in the 20th century were it not for the influence, the advice, the example, and (yes) the money of the United States.

Israel has had a difficult time growing up. A purely socialist country in its infancy, its economic policies boiled down to the complaint of a four year-old: "It's not fair that. . . ." In its adolescence, it has been overly dependent on Dad's car and credit card.

But if it is true that, as the essayist William Hazlitt said, no young man believes he is ever going to die, the Rabin assassination was the end of Israel's national youth.

Alas, it goes into its adulthood not all that well prepared. A child as ill-mannered as Israel won't do very well on its own. Now its people are learning why a stable, civil society requires a more formal affect than Israel now possesses. Now perhaps Israelis will turn to America for for a way out of the maze of misbehavior that characterizes their political system. Perhaps America, with all of our faults and tragedies, can give Israelis the kind of help that Maimonides called the noblest and wisest charity: We can help them to help themselves. ♦

President Powell—*Not*

by William Kristol

Two months ago, Colin Powell told Barbara Walters he was, "at the moment," neither Democrat nor Republican. He had been unable "to find a perfect fit in either of the two existing parties," and was intrigued by the idea of running for president as an independent, "if I were to consider a candidacy at all." He spoke even more favorably of the possible formation of a third party.

Last week, as he forswore a presidential candidacy in 1996, Colin Powell declared himself a Republican. He was, he said, "very impressed with what the Republican party is trying to do right now—trying to put the nation on a better fiscal balance; trying to bring government under control and make government smaller; trying to put more money back into the pocket of individual taxpayers." Powell acknowledged he disagrees with some aspects of the Republican agenda, and would act and work as a Republican in the months ahead to broaden the party's appeal "to the greatest number of Americans possible."

And so the most respected public figure in America joins the Republican party.

That continues to worry some conservatives, who fear his influence on the GOP. They consider centrist Powellism a greater danger to the conservative cause than radical Buchananism. Voters and Republicans clearly disagree: The extent of Republican support for a prospective Powell candidacy over the last couple of months suggests that he is far closer to the Republican mainstream than Pat Buchanan.

Indeed, we can look forward to Colin Powell speaking in prime time at the Republican convention in San Diego in August 1996. The contrast with the Republican convention in 1992 is so obvious it barely requires mention.

The most memorable speech in Houston was Buchanan's. Powell's appearance would surely be as galvanizing, though its result would be a happier one. And his visible support for a conservative Republican nominee will strengthen the Republican ticket in November.

Whom will he be supporting? Presumably Bob Dole, or Phil Gramm, or Lamar Alexander. But at a press conference one hour after Powell's, Newt Gingrich raised the possibility that one more hat may come flying into the ring—his own.

The media, armed with new poll data that show Gingrich getting trounced by Clinton, aren't taking the speaker very seriously as a presidential candidate. They think he's too divisive a figure, and, according to the conventional wisdom, the GOP primary electorate

is risk-averse and always anoints the established front-runner.

Oh? Current Republican primary voters demonstrated, at least in their responses to pollsters, a willingness to gamble on a Powell candidacy—despite their uncertainty about and disagreement with some of his views. They might well be willing to take a different sort of gamble on Gingrich. They might support him him because he personifies the newly victorious Republican agenda—despite their uncertainty about his prospects in a race against the president.

In any case, as Gingrich himself pointed out in his post-Powell press conference, "the fact is if you look at Republican primary voters my negatives aren't very high." Gingrich went on to note that the press had judged the Ronald Reagan of 1979 "a very polarizing figure, impossible to elect. It turned out he did okay after a while." (It's interesting that Gingrich seems to have reflected quite a bit on Reagan's ascent to the presidency.)

We'll know more within a week. The presidential campaign kicks into high gear this weekend in Florida, with a nationally televised debate and the Presidency III straw poll. If Bob Dole looks weak there, and at the same time neither Alexander nor Gramm seems to be catching on, then Gingrich may see both an opening and an obligation to run.

He suggested as much last week when he said he wanted "to sit down and look at where the situation is, how it evolves, what happens in Florida with the Presidency III, and what the mood is like in late November."

Gingrich's own mood must have been buoyed by Colin Powell's expression of admiration for the Republican party's "ideas and energy." After all, who's the architect of those ideas and the generator of that energy?

Would it really be so strange if the vacuum created by Powell's failure to run were ultimately filled by Newt Gingrich? ♦

Kill the Ethics Committees

by David Grann

The trial of the century in Los Angeles overshadowed its political equivalent in Washington: the forced resignation of Sen. Bob Packwood. The Oregonian lothario exited Congress quietly on October 1. There were no crowds or cameras, no white vans, but there was a delicious double irony at work. Though Simpson got away with murder, the judicial system worked—a jury of his peers found him not guilty. Packwood, on the other hand, got what he deserved, even as the congressional ethics process that nailed him revealed itself as an abject failure.

It took the Ethics Committee nearly three years to investigate the allegations of sexual and official misconduct, longer than even the O.J. trial. Those who celebrated Packwood's demise ignored the Senate Ethics Committee's brazen conduct. Seventeen of the 18 charges of sexual misconduct leveled against Packwood went beyond any legal statute of limitations; one allegation dated back to 1969. And the committee, showing little judicial restraint, equated kissing a hotel clerk with pinning a staffer against the wall.

"The Ethics Committee's performance . . . strongly vindicates the ability of the Senate to police its own," said its chairman, Mitch McConnell. He was wrong.

"The committee made a mockery of the process," says Stanley Brand, a former Democratic general counsel to the House. He's right.

As chairman of the Finance Committee, Packwood ruled over people who would eventually judge him. A longtime moderate, he endorsed radical welfare-reform proposals in order to curry favor with Majority Leader Bob Dole. No wonder Sen. Howell Heflin, a former Ethics chairman, concluded after the case: "It is simply too hard for members . . . to effectively judge one another."

But the best case against the current ethics process is that there is no consistency to it. Packwood gets the boot while Rep. Gerry Studds, who had sex with an adolescent page, gets his wrist slapped. Worse, the committee's probes create systemic corruption. McConnell must barter with Packwood on legislation if he is to effectively represent his constituents, while Packwood's best friend, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, must vote on Packwood's fate; not surprisingly, he was the only Democrat to oppose open hearings.

Heflin suggests turning over the process to an outside committee of former members. But if the GOP truly wants a revolution in Congress, the party must go one step further—and abolish the two ethics committees. It must let the courts convict and the voters vanquish.

Some, like the dignified Sen. Richard Lugar, have suggested as much. They have James Madison on their side, who wrote two centuries ago in the *Federalist Papers*: "No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment. . . . With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time."

Even those who sympathize with this position usually recoil from its political implications. Why give one's opponents such campaign fodder? Why take on Washington's powerful advocacy groups?

The answer to both questions is simple: ethics.

Members of Congress should be treated like everybody else. If they commit bribery or sexual harassment, they can and should be prosecuted in a court of law. If they lower the standards of the institution with dubious, but legal, behavior, they should be exposed by the press and penalized by the public. Since Watergate, public officials receive more media and public scrutiny than any profession; they also face stricter laws.

When the Select Committee on Ethics was formed in 1964, Brand notes, there was no Federal Election Campaign Act, no Ethics in Government Act, no code of conduct for members, and no special section at the Justice Department to target public officials. Now, the ethics process largely duplicates these functions. Meanwhile, corrupt officials can be expelled by a simple majority of their clients—the voters.

These checks work better than most people think. Last Congress, voters booted Rep. Dan Rostenkowski after the press revealed his financial wrongdoing; the courts continue to prosecute him. And only a few months ago, without a word from the Ethics Committee, Rep. Mel Reynolds got thrown in the slammer for statutory rape.

The real obstacle to such reform is persuading the American people that Congress won't be lowering the threshold of justice if it moves toward abolishing the committees. Hard, but not impossible. As it stands, the Ethics Committee increases public cynicism rather than diminishes it.

With its myriad secrecy oaths and arcane processes, the committee constrains the press and provides artificial cover for members. It placates, without purging. It wastes taxpayers thousands of dollars. And it distracts the majority of decent members from doing their primary job: legislating.

While turning the Ethics Committee over to an outside panel of retired members tries to address this question, there is only one difference between current and retired lawmakers: The former are accountable to the public, while the latter are accountable only to themselves. And an outside panel, even one composed of judges, poses the same danger of vigilantism as an independent prosecutor.

Of course, abolishing the Ethics Committee will not solve every problem. Some crimes will inevitably slip through the cracks (though probably fewer than now). And President Clinton or his successor might just unleash the Justice Department on Newt Gingrich or whatever congressional pol is getting in his way. But the press and independent watchdog groups have generally prevented such witch hunts. And juries—not to mention the voters—stand in the way of politicized prosecutions.

For those who claim the Packwood case obviates the need for change, they should reexamine the evidence. The GOP turned on Packwood not out of a sense of justice but because Packwood turned on them. After Republicans walked the plank on his behalf, voting against open hearings in spite of public opinion, he threatened to derail the GOP revolution with just such proceedings.

To rise out of this ethical morass, Congress should let prosecutors prosecute, the press sniff out scandals, and the voters render a verdict. While some say this would violate the Constitution, which requires Congress to police its own, just the opposite is true. Such a system would allow Congress to finally fulfill its obligations.

Justice was served in the Packwood case. Next time, it's unlikely we'll be so lucky.

David Grann is executive editor of The Hill.

The GOP Florida Frenzy

by Fred Barnes

Miami

Post-Powell, here's how important Presidency III, the Republican presidential straw poll in Florida, has become: When Jeb Bush, who's in charge of the Orlando event, dropped in unannounced at the CNN bureau here on November 8, he was put on national TV almost instantly. True, Bush believed he'd been scheduled for a live interview. But the CNN folks knew nothing about it. That didn't matter. They seated Bush in front of a camera so he could answer a few questions from Washington about Colin Powell's decision not to run for president, then more about Presidency III. Bush, son of the ex-president and former Republican candidate for Florida governor, was happy to talk up the November 18 straw vote.

It hardly needed the hype, the presidential candidates having supplied plenty. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, who called it the only important straw vote of 1995, spent lavishly on wooing the 3,500 delegates and dispatched his newest supporter, Governor Steve Merrill of New Hampshire, to campaign in Florida. Phil Gramm has visited the state 13 times, and that doesn't include trips by his wife Wendy. Lamar Alexander is honoring delegates who back him by sending each an "Official Presidency III Certificate."

All that was before Powell's announcement. Now, with the Republican field probably set—House Speaker Newt Gingrich is the only potential addition—the Florida poll will define the GOP race for the crucial months leading up to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary in February. And there are three possible definitions. One, if Dole crushes his foes, a Dole juggernaut will be created (or at least the appearance of one). Two, if someone, Gramm or Alexander, say, beats Dole or comes close, a two-candidate race will emerge—to the media's delight. Or three, if the ballyhooed debate on national television is a dud and none of the candidates makes a strong showing in the vote—well, that just might prompt Gingrich to declare his candidacy.

Dole, Gramm, and Alexander are the main players in Florida, though the other seven GOP candidates will join the debate moderated live on CNN by Larry King on November 17 and also address the delegates the next day. But Dole has the most at stake. With a big win, which is possible, he would firmly establish himself as the Republican frontrunner, far ahead of the pack. Added to the Merrill endorsement, the Powell dropout, and the probable Senate passage of a revised (balanced) budget on November 16, it might produce a bandwagon effect for Dole. Should he lose or win narrowly, he will have blown a great opportunity. Worse, the press will treat his campaign as damaged. Worse yet, he'll suddenly have a formidable challenger, most likely Gramm.

Dole starts with advantages. Florida Republicans are conservative, but not that conservative. "They're not ideological conservatives," says Dole adviser David Keene. Many are retirees who've migrated from the Midwest to Orlando or Tampa/St. Petersburg. As moderates, they're sympathetic to Alexander. Hardline conservatives dominate the Panhandle, where Gramm and Pat Buchanan are popular. But the most common characteristic of the delegates is: They're party activists or institutional Republicans, exactly the type with an affinity to Dole. (Ten of Florida's 15 GOP House members have endorsed Dole, while the other 5 are undecided.) An estimated 700 to 1,000 delegates are affiliated with the Christian Coalition. But they're divided, since Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed haven't endorsed a candidate. Dole will get his share of the religious conservatives, too.

A private poll of delegates—roughly four-fifths were chosen by lottery at GOP conventions in each of Florida's 68 counties—showed Dole leading with 30 percent, followed by Gramm with 11 percent, Alexander with 8 percent, Pat Buchanan with 7 percent. Congressman Dan Miller of Sarasota, a Dole supporter, says Dole should get "in the 40 percent range." Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager, will settle for a narrow win, figuring that would cap "a pretty good November" for Dole. Indeed it would.

William Bramhall

Dole "has left no stone unturned," says Bush. "It's an impressive show of force." When superdelegate slots were quietly offered to big GOP donors, a group of Dole supporters paid up and became delegates. And when Governor Pete Wilson of California quit the race in October, Dole aide Warren Tompkins was on the phone within hours to Jeannie Austin, Wilson's Florida chief. A few days later Dole arrived in Florida and made a beeline for Austin. She signed on, bringing 100 to 150 delegates with her. That's a significant bloc in a straw poll in which the winner will get 1,000 to 1,500 votes. Austin also helped engineer Dole's surprising triumph (46 percent) at the Florida GOP Women's Federation convention on October 21.

What Dole's handlers fear is the debate, which King will conduct in front of the delegates. It will include as much as one hour of free-for-all among the candidates, a format in which Dole rarely shines. Dole's representatives sought to limit the entire debate to 90 minutes, not the two hours favored by King. In any case, Dole is bound to come under sharp attack from Gramm and Malcolm (Steve) Forbes, Jr.. His response may affect undecideds and soft supporters. Dole, by the way, got off a subtle dig at Forbes on *Meet the Press* on November 5. "Some call him Steve," Dole said. "I know him as Malcolm."

Alexander is blessed with the strongest campaign team in Florida, led by Phil Handy, an Orlando developer who chaired Bush's gubernatorial drive in 1994. "It's not clear it's a three-way race for first," Handy says. "Dole's done a pretty good job. Lamar's done well, but I can't tell if it's enough to come in second." In a November 3 letter to backers accompanied by their official certificate, Alexander called Presidency III "the single most important political event of 1995."

Gramm has tried the hardest. He sent John Weaver, the operative who pulled off his tie with Dole in a straw poll in Iowa, to mastermind his Florida campaign. Gramm tried but failed to have delegates vote by secret ballot, suspecting some might be embarrassed to back him publicly. But Bush insisted on a roll call of the county delegations. "This is a convention," Bush says. "It's supposed to be fun and exciting."

Still, there's "a realistic prospect" of a Gramm victory, insists Gramm booster Ken Connor of Tallahassee. But Connor is wary of the Dole effort. "Bob Dole panicked and absolutely dedicated all resources, time, people, and money to pull this thing out." He's right about that. Even Lyn Nofziger, the old Reagan aide, has travelled to Florida for Dole.

No delegate's endorsement has been sought more relentlessly than Bush's. He's gotten phone calls, letters, personal pleas. Alexander started first, sending Bush a touching telegram on election night in November 1994 after Bush lost the governor's race to Democrat Lawton Chiles. More recently, Gramm, making a campaign speech with Bush in the audience, told a long personal story aimed at encouraging Bush to run again in 1998 (he will). In fact, Bush has heard from all the big players except Buchanan, who ran against his father in 1992. Bush has issued no endorsement. "But you can know for a fact Pat Buchanan's not going to get it," he says. ♦

Sailor, Curse No More

by Gideon Kanner

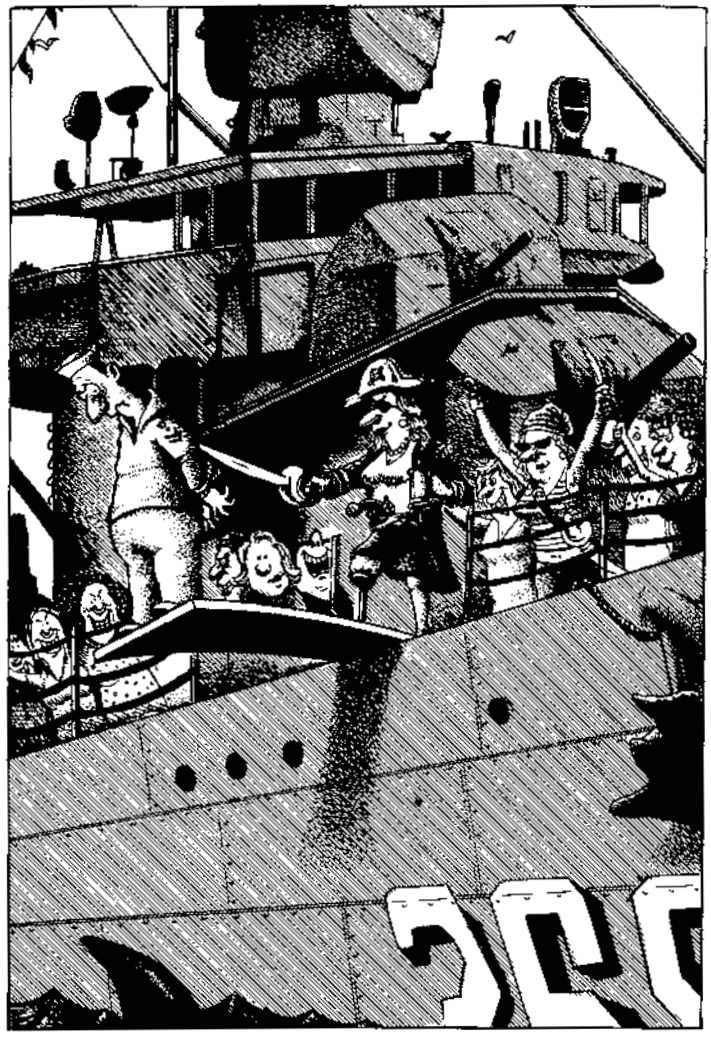
The whistle-blowing exploits of Lt. Paula Coughlin, who went public with her complaint that a bunch of loutish, drunken Navy fighter pilots mauled her at the 1991 Tailhook convention at the Las Vegas Hilton, are now history. So is her subsequent multimillion-dollar trial-court victory against Hilton Hotels (a feat known in the law of torts as a search for a solvent bystander), though the hotel's appeal is still pending.

But less well understood is Tailhook's perverse institutional impact on the Navy. This is illustrated by the travails of Capt. Everett L. Greene, court martialled for sexual harassment and recently acquitted. Greene's "crime" was—are you ready?—writing poems to one Lt. Mary E. Felix, who, the prosecution conceded, was probably flirting with him at the time.

The Navy policy under which Capt. Greene was prosecuted draws on the civilian law of sexual harassment, itself no model of clarity. In a hastily delivered 1993 decision, *Harris* v. *Forklift Systems*, the U.S. Supreme Court passed up an opportunity to explicate the criteria by which sexual harassment in the workplace should be judged and delivered itself only of the generality that the plaintiff need not suffer psychological damage to have a valid lawsuit. Beyond that, the court reiterated without elaboration its disapproval of a "hostile workplace environment." None of this is very helpful to a personnel manager trying to enforce acceptable standards of behavior in the workplace—and the problem is vastly more difficult in the armed forces, where the workplace is everywhere and often around the clock.

More important, the new Navy policy brands as "harassment" any acts or statements unwelcome to those toward whom they are directed. Despite the policy's apparent deference to the "reasonable person" standard for determining what is offensive, Navy regulations have it that such a person will be deemed to possess the complainant's sensibilities. Nor is offensiveness to be measured against "stereotyped notions of acceptable behavior." You might say the Navy has adopted a subjectively objective standard.

This reliance on subjectivity is especially inappropriate in a military setting, since people attracted to the armed forces often have quite aggressive personalities (a good thing, given the function of their profession). Another difference from the civilian context is that the Navy has chosen to escalate harassment from a civil to a criminal matter. In the new U.S. Navy, crime is now in the psyche of the beholder.



Sean Delonas

Gone are the days when a sailor could swear like a sailor. Capt. Mark Rogers, the No. 2 military officer in the White House, recently saw his promotion to admiral evaporate because he did just that. In this man's politically correct Navy, you can land in the brig for using language that, far from making the legendary sailor blush, offends a single sailor whose own twin sister might consider the language in question merely colorful and think the guy uttering it kinda cute. Or, in the earthy idiom of Capt. Theodore Grabowski, a witness in the Greene court martial: "Nobody knows what the hell to do."

The positively bizarre lengths to which the new policy is being carried became apparent during the Greene court martial—the first of a Navy captain in half a century. You might think that, given the gravity and rarity of such a proceeding, Capt. Greene must have stood accused of heinous misbehavior. Not so. Stripped to its core, the charge was that he wrote poems and sent small gifts to Lt. Felix, with whom he was serving. According to the *Navy Times*, when asked at trial if Capt. Green's behavior was sexual in nature, she replied: "I can't give you an exact statement. It just made me feel uncomfortable . . . the whole thing was very confusing to me."

Perhaps the poems Greene sent Felix were obscene? Not at all. They weren't what you might call literature, either. They included snappy stuff like, "Whenever you need to be adored, I will be there. Whenever you need to be befriended, I will be there. Whatever you need, now or in the future, I will be there for you." He also sent Felix little gifts like—in the words of the *New York Times*—"a bag of chewing gum and an old pair of men's running shorts." Odd behavior, doubtless—but the penalty Greene faced was up to eight years in the brig.

And if you have visions of Greene's picking on Felix and unilaterally lavishing his attention on her out of the blue, think again. Reports of the court martial made clear that Felix, the supposed victim, had been given immunity from prosecutors in exchange for her testimony against Greene. Just what her misdeeds might have been that would warrant a formal grant of immunity was not explained in any detail. But the Navy prosecutor conceded: "Maybe she was a little emotionally immature and she probably did flirt with Captain Greene."

Casting further doubt on the merit of Felix's case,

it turns out that she filed her formal complaint against Greene two years after the fact. Her explanation for the delay was that she had been led to believe that, as a result of informal mediation back in 1993, Greene would never be promoted. When she learned later that his name had been placed on a list for promotion to admiral, she decided to go public with her charges.

That such vindictive, soap-opera stuff should result in a criminal prosecution is simply bizarre. But even on its own premise, if the full force and vigor of military law were to be belatedly unleashed, why not against both miscreants?

If there was improper (though concededly not physical) "fraternization" here, both parties participated voluntarily. It takes some explaining in this age of gender equality why Felix was given immunity for whatever it is that she did, while Greene had to face the music. Indeed, the case gives new meaning to the old crack that military justice is to justice what military music is to music.

Is there a moral here? Though Capt. Greene now heads the SEAL team, he has just received word that he will not be promoted to admiral. It should be noted, however, that at the time of his supposed offenses against the weaker sex, he was heading the Navy Bureau of Personnel's anti-sexual harassment unit.

So there you have the moral for the brave, new U.S. Navy: He who lives by political correctness, dies by political correctness.

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Which Values Matter Most?

by Amitai Etzioni

Intellectuals are about as susceptible to fashion as car makers; a little less so than designers of ties. Currently "civil society" is as chic as it gets. The scholar to quote is Harvard political scientist Bob Putnam. From the headquarters of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York City to the paneled executive dining rooms of the World Bank in Washington D.C., his study of Italian local governments is lionized. Putnam found that the rich traditions of civic culture made for strong democratic institutions in the North, while both are lacking in the South.

Those who seek to stay *au courant* but are not civic minded enough to read a whole book can cite Putnam's headline-grabbing article "Bowling Alone." Half a dozen columnists feasted on it, telling Americans that they are losing their civil society. Membership in practically all voluntary associations has been dropping since 1960. As a result, these "mediating" bodies, which stand between the state and the individual, protecting our liberties, have been become flabby. Bowling serves as the arch symbol: While nobody actually bowls alone, people now tend to bowl with a few friends rather than with a bowling league. Watch for increasing democratic disarray, warns Putnam.

The call for restoring civil society in America is backed up by numerous other scholars who are "in" these days. Benjamin Barber at Rutgers, for instance, never tires of telling Americans that they must stop being mere consumers and again become active citizens. Harry Boyte at the University of Minnesota contributes a summons to a "new citizenship." Miss Manners is reported, on good authority, ready to help the cause with a guidebook of her own. Adam Seligman's *The Idea of Civil Society* provides heavy-duty scholarship on the subject for those who really want to do their homework.

One wonders how anyone has any time left to discharge their civic duty, given the numerous conferences, symposia, and seminars on the subject. Most everyone seems keen to restore civility in America and to export the ideals of a civil society to other countries, especially former communist ones. I just found in my mailbox a brand new newsletter listing selected international events and modestly entitled "The Civil Society: World Wide."

Like other recurrent fashions, these models of the good society are fitting but far from novel. They were already the rage among the ancient Greeks and were adopted by the founding fathers. Nor have they lost their appeal over the centuries. If we are to move forward as a nation, we shall have to agree with one another on our course. This is best achieved when those who have fundamentally differing views respect the same ground rules that make for civility at a town meeting: Thou shalt not demonize the opposition nor characterize all differences as matters of absolute values. Thou shalt recall that after all the shouting subsides, we will still have to work and live together, members of the same community.

While restoring or maintaining civility (take your pick) is surely desirable, the preoccupation with manners and voluntary associations can all too readily serve as a means of avoiding the tougher moral issues of the day. It is so much easier to extol the virtues of

civility than to talk civilly about the virtues we need to uphold. President Clinton has been playing it safe recently by talking a great deal (in seven speeches in eleven days, according to one count) about the need to find common ground—which *is* the civil thing to do, but saying precious little as to what that common ground might be or ought to be. It is here that the going gets tough.

As a society (forgetting for a moment the government and its deficits, taxes, and regulations), we must come to terms with a whole cluster of issues that will shape our country's moral infrastructure for the future. Shared values do not fly on their own wing; if they are to guide our lives, they must be sustained by specific social arrangements. Under prodding from social conservatives and religious groups, as well as from the work of several social scientists, Americans have increasingly come to realize that all these arrangements are in disarray. But there is little agreement on how they may be mended.


Sean Delonas

A good place to start is where Dan Quayle left off: with the number-one element of any society's moral infrastructure, the family. There is now enough evidence to convince anybody who will yield to data that children are better off, all else being equal, with their natural parents, all two of them. Some conservatives therefore wish to encourage or pressure women to stay home. Liberals still argue that any combination of adults can attend to children, from aunts to day care personnel. Communitarians favor peer marriages, in which both parents have the same rights and the same responsibilities; both participate in the education of their offspring. There might be still other ways to proceed. But, as Montesquieu put it, no wind will do for a sailboat that fails to designate a port. Without fundamental agreement about the makeup of the family, neither social mores nor public policies can be fashioned.

The second element of the moral infrastructure is the schools. Here, both religious advocates and liberals have been insisting that public schools (which still enlist 88 percent of American children) not teach values. It is often observed, correctly, that parents and churches best provide such education. But a flood of illegitimacy, drug abuse, and youth violence attests that they do not suffice. Should we wait until schools are privatized? Is there a way to agree on a limited program of character education in public schools? If yes, what should it encompass? Control of impulse? Empathy? And who will decide? Parents? Educators?

Last but not least, communities themselves serve as an integral part of the moral infrastructure. The very web of civil associations, churches, and neighborhood relationships favored by the civic-culture champions also helps sustain the moral order. It is here that people are appreciated when they live up to the moral tenets of the community and gently censured when they do not. But a community can only perform this function when there is a reasonably wide consensus as to which values shall be affirmed. It is a dialogue we keep shying away from, under such slogans as "It's the economy, stupid" and its Republican equivalents. ("I am not a preacher," said one GOP presidential candidate recently when asked about values issues. He spoke more candidly than several others, who hold similar non-positions.)

It is certainly true that America could benefit from more civility. Indeed, civil discussions might well be the first step toward a new social-moral agenda. However, what American society needs most is a widely shared understanding both of the moral state of the union and, above all, of which values are to guide efforts to mend it: Traditional? Religious? Spiritual? A new secular ethics? Simply being civil is not enough.

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Clinton's Welfare Deform

by Matthew Rees

In the late afternoon of November 8, Bill Clinton met with advisers in the Oval Office to discuss an analysis of the Senate's welfare legislation by the Office of Management and Budget. The study indicated that the bill—which Clinton was on the record as supporting—would push an additional 1.2 million children into poverty. That figure, coming after immense pressure on the White House from liberals to oppose Republican welfare reform, prompted Clinton to backtrack. Now his support for the Senate package is conditioned on an increase in the minimum wage and on guaranteed funding for programs such as child care and workfare. The president's reversal reflects the administration's deep division over welfare—and makes speedy agreement with congressional Republicans unlikely.

The division boils down to policy versus politics. One group, primarily welfare wonks from the Department of Health and Human Services, opposes Republican-style reform and has mounted a concerted campaign for two months to stop Clinton from signing what it considers detestable legislation. The other group, led by political advisers and the White House Domestic Policy Council, has been determined to fulfill the president's campaign pledge to "end welfare as we know it." Until late October, when the *Los Angeles Times* was leaked an earlier HHS analysis of the Senate's welfare package, the politics crowd looked to be the victor.

With the release of the budget-office study last week, the welfare wonks have moved ahead. But this shakeup did not occur overnight. Upon seeing the numbers from the original HHS study, Budget Director Alice Rivlin had expressed concern about the impact of welfare reform on children, and congressional Democrats including Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Henry Waxman, and George Miller had complained to the president. Then Marian Wright Edelman, president of the liberal Children's Defense Fund and an old friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton, published an open letter to the president in the *Washington Post* on November 3. She excoriated the House and Senate bills as "fatally flawed, callous, anti-child assaults" and warned Clinton that his decision on welfare would be "a defining moral litmus test" for his presidency.

The White House should have been prepared for this liberal insurrection. The HHS study, completed on September 14, contended that the Senate welfare proposal would push an additional 1.1 million children into poverty and would see the poorest 20 percent of families lose 6 percent of their annual income, or $800. The study concluded, "The severity of the impact of [the Senate bill] on poor families exacerbates the deteriorating economic situation for these families who have lost a greater share of their income in the past 15 years than families with higher income."

Presuming that the White House would shrink from signing any welfare bill with these effects, Donna Shalala, secretary of Health and Human Services and a cabinet liberal, personally gave a copy of the study to the president the day after its completion. The ploy didn't work. In his weekly radio address on September 16, Clinton laid out the major provisions of the Senate welfare package and embraced them, saying, "All these things have long been critical elements of my approach to welfare reform." Three days later, the bill passed the Senate with overwhelming support from Democrats—none of whom knew that an administration study critical of the legislation existed.

That was not the end of the story. The HHS study had been supervised by Wendell Primus, a deputy assistant secretary (and author of the notorious House Ways and Means *Green Book* falsely showing 1980s income gains going primarily to the rich), but both the Treasury and the White House budget office were involved. Thus, a number of liberals throughout the administration had learned of the study's existence and were intent on publicizing its findings—even if doing so undermined the president's political strategy. Their worst fear—that it was Clinton's senior aides who favored going along with the Republicans' welfare reform—was confirmed by a September 25 column in the *Washington Post*, in which Jack Anderson and Michael Binstein described White House chief of staff Leon Panetta exchanging "exuberant high-fives with aides" after the Senate vote.

A number of administration officials urged the White House publicly to acknowledge the HHS study. They encountered strong opposition from Bruce Reed, a New Democrat in charge of welfare reform, and Rahm Emanuel, a high-level political aide. The possibility of not releasing the HHS study was first broached at a White House staff meeting the day after it was completed; in subsequent meetings it was decided that if the study leaked, the White House would challenge its methodology. The coverup was deliberate. Before the White House released, on October 13, an interagency analysis of Republican budget proposals' impact on family income, Press Secretary Michael McCurry excised the section in which HHS spelled out the impact of welfare reform on children.

To no one's surprise, the suppression strategy

sprang a leak. Moynihan learned in early October that a study of the Senate bill's impact on children existed, but Clinton officials turned down his request for a copy. He held his fire until October 24; then, at a public committee meeting, he denounced the White House's refusal to release the report.

An HHS spokeswoman initially denied that there was any such study, only to be confronted three days later with Elizabeth Shogren's story describing its contents in the *Los Angeles Times*. The White House responded as planned: It challenged the study's methodology. "There are hundreds of . . . preliminary draft estimates as people work through and analyze legislation," said McCurry on October 27. "We're not going to provide . . . estimates or analyses that are less than accurate and less than complete."

The latest developments raise the possibility that Clinton will actually veto whatever welfare bill emerges from the House-Senate conference. But if he does sign welfare reform into law, his administration won't deserve much credit, or blame: It has been almost totally irrelevant to this year's welfare debate. The House bill, which passed in March, contains virtually no administration fingerprints, while the Senate bill emerged more satisfactory to the Clintonites only because Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole had to make concessions to moderate Republicans.

And so, even as the White House pounds Republicans for a budget it claims will harm the poor, until recently it has embraced welfare legislation its own analysts insist will have precisely that effect. The president's current qualified support for the Senate package gives liberals some hope, but plenty of administration officials are embittered.

Says one: "The controversy over the administration's welfare analyses is just another example of the bad judgment that has plagued the domestic policy decisions of this White House. So-called Clinton New Democrats are watered-down plagiarists of the conservative agenda." ♦

America Curries Disfavor

by Jonathan Foreman

If there's one thing that Pakistanis and Indians agree on, it is that the United States is to blame for all their troubles. In Kashmir an Indian army colonel explained to me, "All the militants, all these fundamentalists—the Americans are giving them money. The CIA." In Pakistan one of the country's leading filmmakers told me that the heroin warlords of the North-West Frontier owed all their power to the United States: "They are trying to destabilize our country."

On both sides of the disputed Kashmiri border, educated opinion has a vastly deluded sense of the subcontinent's importance to American foreign policy. At a recent dinner party given in London by the young heir to one of India's industrial empires, one of the guests was an attractive Pakistani woman in a suit with a short skirt. She had gone to boarding school in England. "How are things in Pakistan?" the host asked. "How is Benazir doing?"

"Well," she replied, "things would be getting better if it weren't for the Americans."

I looked up from my *buna ghosht* to see all the other guests nodding sagely. "Yes, it's the same in India," our host agreed.

I asked the woman what she meant. She was amazed at my ignorance. "The Americans control everything in Pakistan. Don't you know that Pakistan has the largest CIA base in Asia?"

"But that's because of the Afghan war," I said. "And it's not the largest in Asia anymore."

"No," she insisted, "the Americans are trying to control Pakistan."

I protested that the United States has hardly any interest in Pakistan; Americans could hardly care less about the country; they are barely aware of its existence. "That's only ordinary Americans," she explained. "Everyone knows how ignorant they are. But the elite, the State Department, the Senate, they do the manipulating." The Indians all agreed.

On my first day in Kashmir, a man who refused to surrender his camcorder was shot by Indian soldiers in Srinagar's Old City. The pro-government press—and my houseboat owner, Ahmet, who boasted of his connections in the police—announced that the victim was an American from Pakistan working for the CIA. When I tried to argue that the United States was unlikely to support a Muslim fundamentalist uprising in India, he pointed to Afghanistan and then refused to continue the discussion.

The militants themselves, mostly teenagers swaggering around with Kalashnikovs, can be found at evening prayers in a number of Srinagar's mosques. Their spokesmen would like American support very

much but deny they have received any. "Where is Bill Clinton?" they ask. "Why does he not help us? These Indian dogs are raping our women. They are killing us." (On the other hand, the militants are convinced that *the Israelis* are supporting the Indian occupation. The fact that the Indian government has long been unfriendly to Israel is immaterial.)

In India the "foreign hand" is everywhere. The leading newspapers use the phrase without irony, despite the fact that they rarely make even a symbolic effort to cover events outside the subcontinent. For all of Prime Minister Rao's more modern rhetoric, members of parliament dressed in the white homespun that was the uniform of the working classes 30 years ago continue to explain solemnly that it is the Americans and their multinationals that are responsible for India's poverty. Their minions in the state governments fought a losing battle to keep Coca-Cola out of India but have succeeded in closing the country's first Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet, in Bangalore, and shutting down Enron's vast power plant project in Maharashtra.

Point out to them that India is a rich country, or that the multinationals have been virtually excluded from India for 20 years—to the benefit of a small number of huge family-owned Indian corporations like Birla and Tata—and you are accused of neo-colonialism, or even a racial inability to understand India. Go further and question the spending of billions on India's nuclear program, its rocket-building efforts, and its abject failure to provide food, electricity, or even running water to tens of millions of citizens, and you are an agent of the foreign hand.

In Pakistan, everyone—supporters of Benazir, supporters of opposition leader Nawaz Sharif, separatists from Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province—believes that the United States was responsible for the death of President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq in 1988. The fact that U.S. ambassador Arnold Raphael died in the same explosion makes no difference. Rather, as I was told by a film producer based in Lahore whom I will call "Hussain," it shows how much the Americans hated Zia, what a threat he was to them, that they were willing to sacrifice their ambassador. American suggestions that the Soviet KGB might have been behind Zia's plane crash or, even more likely, agents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, are dismissed out of hand.

Hussain—who, with his long hair, tight black Levis, and beautiful actress wife, is about as modern and liberal as mainstream Pakistani intellectuals come—was himself imprisoned by Zia. Yet he believes that American policy is based on the fear that Pakistan will lead a resurgent Muslim Central Asia. (Would that either the Bush or Clinton administration could look so far ahead.) "After we beat the Russians," he explains, "the Americans thought we were too powerful."

Hussain believes that it was Pakistan that drove the Soviets out of Afghanistan. "We made great sacrifices during the war," he told me. "Many of us actually fought in Afghanistan. Not in uniform, of course, but many Pakistani soldiers fought and died there." Afterwards, "Zia was calling in a debt" from the United States.

Pakistan's tiny left, and Indian opinion generally, blame the United States for the tremendous power of the ISI, Pakistan's military intelligence service. During the Afghan war, the ISI was the conduit for billions of dollars intended for the Mujahedin. Most of the money did indeed go to buy arms and supplies, almost all of them for Gulbedin Hekmaytar, the most anti-American and fundamentalist of the guerrilla leaders. But a lot of the money ended up in the ISI's own coffers, making it a powerful force in Pakistani politics. Despite his own secular lifestyle, Hussain admires the ISI and its successes.

Like many Pakistanis, Hussain believes the United States is also responsible for the growth of a flourishing heroin industry in the lawless semi-autonomous tribal areas of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. The area was a haven for smugglers even during British rule, when, as now, central-government law applied only on the main roads. Senior Pakistani military officers are rumored to be involved in the industry, which has begun to market its product in Karachi and Lahore as well as overseas. Blaming the United States for this requires an even longer leap of faith than the scenario beloved of our own racial conspiracy theorists, that ghetto addiction rates are the result of a fiendishly brilliant and unusually effective federal government policy.

On the other hand, the United States *is* largely to blame for the vast quantities of infantry weapons—including Stinger missiles and rocket-propelled grenades—that are now turning up in trouble spots around the world, including cites like Lahore and Karachi. The latter is now one of the most dangerous cities in Asia, as political factions fight bloody street battles.

Washington's refusal to deliver an order of F16s bought and paid for five years ago is seen by Pakistani opinion as further proof of a sinister pro-India tilt—never mind that U.S. law forbids the sale as long as Pakistan is proceeding with its nuclear weapons program. Meanwhile in India, the fact that the planes

Sean Delonas

were sold in the first place, combined with American unease about the Prithvi rocket program, is seen as proof of a close Pakistani-American alliance whose aims are to undermine India's dominance of the region. Sen. Jesse Helms's confusion of the two countries during Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to Washington in the spring of 1995 has been construed in both countries as evidence of tilting toward the enemy.

As E.M. Forster observed in *A Passage To India*, the besetting Indian vice is a maniacal suspiciousness. As a result, the most moderate Clinton administration statements on Kashmir are seen as proof of an American conspiracy to foment rebellion in the Muslim-majority state. Even the 18-month delay in appointing an ambassador to New Delhi was deemed by the Indian press to be a Machiavellian ploy designed to humiliate India in front of its neighbors.

This suspiciousness makes anti-Americanism—here as elsewhere, a kind of intellectual disease—particularly virulent. But at its core is an extraordinary faith in American prowess. Only our own militia movement has anything like the same fearful respect for the federal government. Talking to Pakistanis and Indians about Washington's alleged machinations in Asia, you get the impression that there is *nothing* the United States cannot do. Like the Shadow, America's agents are everywhere; they know everything, and they act with such daring and skill that their works leave no trace—hence the difficulty of proving their presence.

This undeserved respect is paradoxically increased as satellite TV and cheap air fares increase familiarity with the United States. Often the most fervent believers in American conspiracy are those who have actually been to the United States. For many of them, an American city is still evidence not only of fantastic wealth and technological advancement but also of government so stunningly responsible, efficient, clean, and singleminded as to compete with memories of British rule.

The whole phenomenon of South Asian anti-Americanism would be amusing and flattering if Pakistan and India were not both nuclear powers whose paranoid elites see the decline of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to become mini-superpowers. Both governments have encouraged terrorists in the other country: the Pakistanis in Indian Kashmir, the Indians in Karachi.

Both send large numbers of guest workers and immigrants around the world. The Pakistanis dream of leading a resurgent, Muslim fundamentalist Central Asia; the Indians imagine building a zone of paramount influence extending as far south as Sri Lanka, as far west as Iran (which they have been assiduously courting), north to the borders of Russia, and east into China's westernmost provinces. Given that both countries have the technology and motivation to help our enemies and damage our interests in Asia and the Middle East, the United States should consider applying some of the influence they believe we have.

Jonathan Foreman is a freelance writer and former lawyer based in New York. He has recently returned from seven months in India and Pakistan.

No Turning Back: The Legacy of Rabin

By David Brooks

Jerusalem

The Israeli Knesset was closed last week, but leaders of the opposition party Likud came in and phoned each other, office to office, to remind themselves that they weren't really responsible for the murder of Yitzhak Rabin. If you interrupted to ask about the peace process they would answer by declaring their innocence on the question of Rabin. You could have asked them about the World Series or the weather in Rome, and they would have answered by pointing out how unfair it was that Labor politicians were tarring them for the murder of Rabin. Likud is a party transfixed, and defensive.

In fact, they weren't responsible for inciting the murder; Israeli TV showed videotapes of Likud chief Benjamin Netanyahu angrily shouting down those who called Rabin a traitor. But it was characteristic that Labor should so forcefully go on the political offensive after the assassination of its leader. It was not only Leah Rabin, the prime minister's widow, who claimed that Likud had blood on its hands; nationally televised memorial services were turned into partisan political rallies. And it was characteristic of present-day Israeli politics that Likud should be thrown back on its heels. Israeli politics has become a case study of how one party, Labor, can seize the offensive and force its opponents, Likud, onto permanent defense. Little has been left unsaid after the horror of the assassination, but few have stepped back to appreciate how effective the Rabin government was as a political operation, continuously pushing the peace process forward.

In a time of national polarization, the government did not try to gather a broad coalition to initiate change. Its decisions on momentous issues like ceding authority and land to the Palestine Liberation Organization in the peace agreements initially signed in Oslo in 1993 were made by a small, focused group. An entire wing of the party—the Rabin wing, ironically enough—was shut out. These hawkish Laborites, the Israeli version of Scoop Jackson Democrats, have now split off to form their own party, called The Third Way. They vote with Labor on all matters except the peace process. With the dovish faction already having gained dominance, it will now be easier for Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres to consolidate his leadership of the party he has inherited from Rabin.

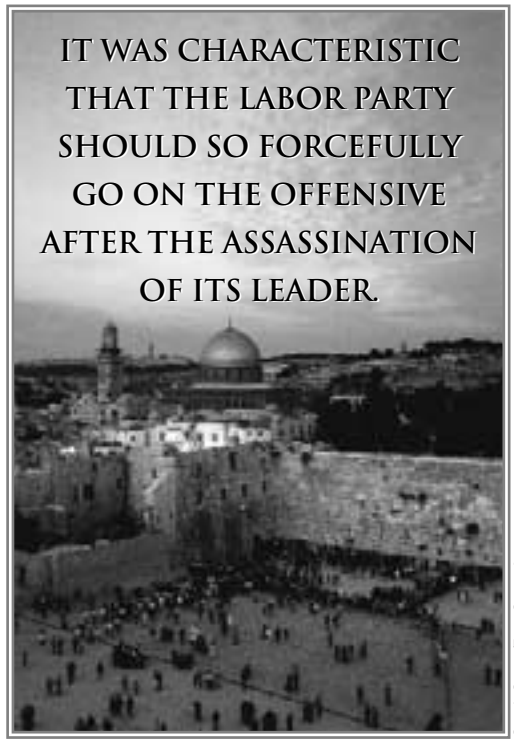
After becoming prime minister in 1992, Rabin moved aggressively, even against those who had once been his allies. In 1981, he asked a New York rabbi, Shlomo Riskin, to form a community in the occupied territories on the West Bank. Riskin helped create a town called Efrat, an upper-middle-class bedroom community near Jerusalem, and established himself as a voice for moderate to leftish settlers. But amidst the peace process, Rabin began attacking all settlers, calling them a cancer, and alienating people like Riskin. "A government can't ride roughshod over people. You can't railroad everything through," Riskin now says. In fact, on matters of substance, Riskin says he and other settlers could have supported Rabin. But what Rabin did was create a Manichean image of the process, a war between the light—those who supported him—and the darkness—those who didn't. This made for an effective storyline in the local and international media and energized support on the left, channelling the energies of Israel's culture war behind the Oslo peace processs.

The Rabin government has pushed its peace plan faster than anybody could have imagined. The strategy resembles that of Newt Gingrich: Adopt small measures now that make large measures inevitable down the road. For example, the vast majority of Israelis vehemently oppose giving parts of Jerusalem back to the PLO.

But in January, Arab residents of East Jerusalem will vote in elections for the Palestinian authorities. Once they have voted, with posters and U.N. observers

and all the democratic trappings, it will be very hard to say later that they do not live under Palestinian rule, but rather on land that will eternally belong to Israel.

There's some fancy footwork to disguise this truth—according to the Oslo agreement, Jerusalem Arabs will fill out their ballots in post offices from which they will be mailed immediately to the West Bank city of Ramallah. Officially, the Jerusalem votes will be counted as if they were cast in Ramallah. But that's nonsense. What isn't nonsense is that Labor official Yossi Beilin, a leading indicator of where government policy is going, is openly talking about ceding East Jerusalem to a PLO state called Palestine.



Sarah Stone/Tony Stone Images

The peace process has been something of a permanent revolution. "There hasn't been a month in the past 25 in which there hasn't been a concession by the government or the revelation of a concession," says Dan Polisar of Peace Watch, which monitors the Oslo agreements. Starting November 13, Israel will withdraw troops at the rate of one major West Bank city a week for six weeks. Once the Israelis withdraw from these Arab population centers and the PLO police forces take over, it will be virtually impossible to go back. The result, as everyone recognizes, will be a Palestinian state. "It is almost inevitable. What you see now is a state in the making," says Zalman Shoval, former Israeli ambassador to the United States.

Testimony to Labor's effectiveness is the fact that many of the policies that the vast majority of Israelis tell pollsters they oppose are coming to pass. If you ask Israelis whether they oppose a Palestinian state, they overwhelmingly say yes. If you ask them if they think the peace process is leading to a Palestinian state, they say yes. When asked, just before the assassination, if they support the peace process, they narrowly said yes. This is not logically consistent. But Labor has expertly maintained the momentum, and swing voters have been willing to go along. Throughout the long process, it appears that the tough issues are being put off and only small things are being settled, but by the time the tough issues come up—the permanent status of Jerusalem or Palestinian statehood—it will be clear that those issues have already been decided.

Aiding in Labor's efforts has been the Hebrew-language Israeli press, the most uniformly left wing of any in the industrialized world, and which actively supports the Oslo process. To the Israeli media, a radical rightist who said that Rabin has blood on his hands is an inciter of violence, but cabinet officials who say that Netanyahu now has blood on his hands are celebrated as champions of reasonable discourse.

Though facing this hostile media, Benjamin Netanyahu is generally thought to be doing an excellent job as Likud boss. He has pulled the party out of debt, improved management, and recruited new members. He's an effective spokesman, and he has made superb contacts internationally, in the United States, Germany, and especially Jordan.

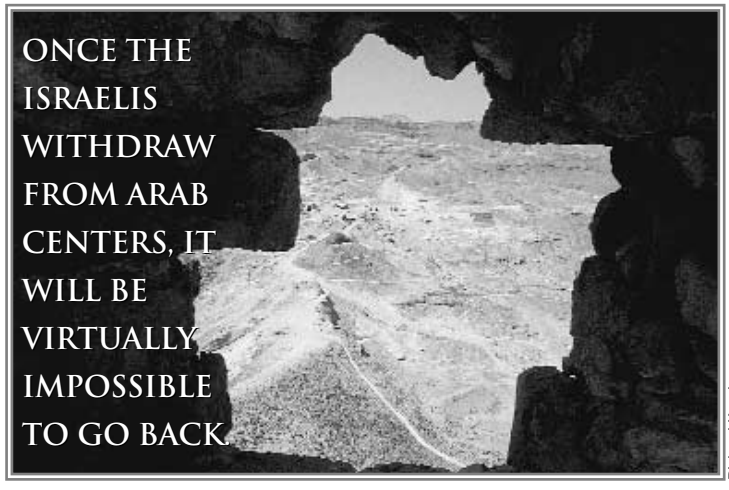
But he inherited a party that was intellectually adrift after the leadership of the inscrutable Yitzhak Shamir. After the end of the Cold War, leading right-wing Israelis lost touch with the flow of events. The consensus view on the Israeli right just after the Gulf War in 1991 was that there was no chance of a coming breakthrough in the peace process. Israelis would not soon forgive the Palestinians for dancing on the rooftops as the Scuds fell, it was said. The argument seemed plausible at the time, but it turned out to be wrong.

Then leading Israeli rightists argued that the Palestinians were hopelessly divided. They pointed out that more Palestinians had recently been murdered by fellow Palestinian terrorists than by Israelis. Off-the-record briefings from Israeli security forces sketched out the bitter feuds between Hamas, Fatah, and the various Marxist fronts. Fundamentalism was on the rise. If given authority over places like Gaza, it was said, there would be a civil-war-type bloodbath. Gaza is now in Palestinian hands. No bloodbath (so far).

Aside from their poor prognosticative powers, the Likudniks found themselves at a loss on the central issue in the entire debate: the status of the West Bank. They don't know what to do about it, nor what to say.

They were convinced, and remain convinced, that Israel is not defensible inside its 1967 borders. But what about the Palestinians? The idea of outright annexation, one of the many stratagems considered by the Likud government in the 1980s, was foolish then and is foolish now. Palestinian cities and villages dot the West Bank, and the mere sight of such cities as Nablus or Hebron make the point better than any negotiation: They do not look, feel, or seem anything like Israel, and never will.

For a time, many Likudniks argued that the nation of Jordan was the real Palestine, that the West Bank Arabs could move across the river and set up a Palestinian regime in Jordan, where they constitute a majority. But that version of Greater Israel has now been abandoned. Other Likudniks dreamed of cultivating Palestinian moderates, who would forsake nationalism in return for practical gains. This cultivation grew a few moderate mayors. They were soon assassinated, and that strategy too was abandoned. Without a convincing vision of a future Israel with a pacified West Bank, the Shamir government could only sit still and do nothing.



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The ethos of Likud was forged during the years of struggle, when Israel was practically a pariah nation and when its enemies could count on support from the Soviets. The Likud party, then in power, did not understand how the collapse of communism in 1990-91 changed the dynamic of Palestinian politics. Its leaders did not, could not, make the transition Ronald Reagan made around 1985, when he decided that *his* enemy, the Soviets, were psychologically crushed, that it was time to stop pounding them and time to start negotiating with them on his terms.

Likud was right to build the settlements because their existence brought home to the Palestinians that Israel was truly a permanent geopolitical fact and would sooner expand than disappear. In retrospect, however, it seems clear that Likud's Yitzhak Shamir was wrong not to follow up on the Madrid breakthrough to conduct negotiations on Likud's terms. Instead he just stalled, the epitome of a party whose vision and creativity had been spent.

Even with Netanyahu's leadership, Likud has still not completely caught up with the times. The ground is continually shifting underneath the party. For example, Likud said that it would adhere to the territorial principles laid out in the 1979 Camp David accords. But the Labor government has already conceded much more than Camp David, which renders that Likud position obsolete. Other strong Likud arguments have been overtaken by events.

Ze'ev B. Begin, son of the former prime minister and now a leading Likud politician, has a pocket computer organizer upon which he stores egregious quotations by Yasser Arafat—taken from speeches to Arab audiences in which Arafat promises to wage terror or capture Tel Aviv. The conclusion Begin draws is that Arafat is a terrorist with whom it is impossible to do business. That's a plausible argument, except that it made far more sense before Oslo. Now, the decision has already been made to do business with Arafat. Israel is committed to doing business with Arafat, and if Likud came to power it would be committed by treaty to doing business with Arafat.

Similarly, Begin argues that the Likud cannot contract out its anti-terrorist policy to the PLO. But in withdrawing from Arab population centers, Israel has already done so. In theory, Israel retains the right to go in and find terrorists, but in reality, as long as there are some places under Palestinian control, Israel will be dependent on PLO police for anti-terrorist protection.

Sometimes it appears that Likud is on the attack because its politicians can point out problems in the Labor-negotiated Oslo accords. But in reality, the party is responding to the agenda set by Labor and the PLO. Likud is forced to play by Oslo rules. And it would be forced to play by these rules even if the party prevails in next September's elections. Netanyahu has said his government would honor all of Israel's signed agreements, as he must. The key question, which will frame any negotiations, is this: Will a Likud government have the power to walk away from the table if PLO demands become unacceptable?

Remember first that the Oslo process has raised

Palestinian expectations and encouraged maximalist positions. As the Labor party has moved its policy toward pre-1967 borders, Palestinians have grown accustomed to the idea that they will regain control over land up to the old border, and even parts of Jerusalem.

Would Likud have the power to say no and leave the table? Likud member of parliament Tzachi Hanegbi, who is close to Netanyahu, has argued that it would. He says that Likud should immediately freeze all talks upon taking office. He acknowledges that a new intifada, a Palestinian uprising, would break out within weeks. "We will have to put it down ruthlessly," he told the *Jerusalem Report*, "No more kid gloves, no more rubber bullets or gravel-throwing machines. In war, like war."

That may not be possible, given that most Israelis would find another uprising intolerable to live through. And the image of this intifada may not be just kids with rocks. Now there are 30,000 trained policemen among the Palestinians, and on the West Bank these officers possess 4,000 rifles, 120 light machine guns, and 4,000 pistols. As Yasser Arafat said last summer, "We are now in the midst of negotiations, but if the Israelis think that we do not have alternatives—by Allah they are mistaken. The Palestinian people is ready to sacrifice the last boy and the last girl, in order for the Palestinian flag to fly over the walls of Jerusalem, its mosques and its churches."

Informed Israeli observers acknowledge that a Likud government would have relatively little room to maneuver. If it won a massive mandate in the next election and if there were blatant PLO violations, then the negotiations could be broken off. But Likud could not walk away if Israel were divided on the talks and the weight of world opinion favored the talks. Unless the survival of the country were clearly at stake, Israelis would probably not be willing to tolerate another period of brutal repression that would result in its becoming a global pariah yet again.

What Israel faces, then, is a situation in which Labor has pushed through an aggressive agenda, doling out concessions to the PLO gradually and avoiding detailed internal debate, and it has made its agenda impossible or extremely difficult to reverse, even if it should lose the next election. It is an impressive political feat, especially given the scale of political opposition.

After the assassination, many felt that the shock would usher in a new political mood, one of greater comity and lowered voices. That hope lasted about 36 minutes, until the first government minister blamed Likud for the killing, and it was utterly blown apart when Leah Rabin launched her television barrage the day after the funeral. In fact, the same divisive issues remain. But the horrible event will certainly not be without long-term consequences. And ironically it may not be the horror of the event that leaves the greatest impression, but one of the good things that happened afterwards.

Though extremely painful, the day of the funeral was also a proud one for Israelis. It allowed them to demonstrate their distinctive style on the world stage. The funeral was characteristically Israeli—massive security and complete informality. One needed credentials to gain access to Mount Herzl, Israel's version of Arlington Cemetery, but it didn't look like a credentials-only crowd. All over, there were thousands of soldiers shmoozing in little groups. Natan Sharansky was walking up to the funeral site in shirtsleeves. One fellow wore a dirty Pink Floyd T-shirt, and a tall, bronzed man wore beach sandals and a bright pink surfer's hat. They mingled with rich American benefactors. Everybody was given a plain blue baseball cap for protection from the sun, but none of the politicos wore them except Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak may have had the biggest entourage (several times the size of the American or Russian group), but the United States won the yarmulke award—the Americans all wore them, and Clinton fastened his with a bobby pin in the front, the functional equivalent of wearing high-water pants.

Israelis were immensely comforted by the massive concentration of political leaders. Few of their nations recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, yet the leaders had all come. Without even swiveling one's head, one could see Shevardnadze, Chernomyrdin, Chirac, Major, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Claiborne Pell, and Dan Rather—from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The *Jerusalem Post*, an English-language daily hostile to the peace process, nonetheless burst wth pride at the international prestige that Rabin had brought to his country: "It is clear that foreign observers have gone to the heart of the mattter and see him in the same light as the late Anwar Sadat—a man who made war when he felt he had to, and then risked all to become a maker of peace."

The tearful tribute by Rabin's granddaughter won the world's attention; Israelis thought Clinton's

speech was wonderful. But the most evocative eulogy was given by Jordan's King Hussein, who was making his first trip to Jerusalem in nearly 30 years. He spoke slowly and lovingly. He mentioned his grandfather, who had been assassinated in Jerusalem when he was a boy. To see Hussein there in Jerusalem, speaking with such warmth about an Israeli leader, was one of those moments of breathtaking historical change we have seen frequently since 1989.

This taste of international respectability was sweet to Israelis, who know little of it; they are far more familiar with worldwide hostility and media bias. If the Oslo agreement leads, as Likud's Cassandras fear it will, to armed conflict, then this sweetness will turn sour in the memory and history will judge the Rabin government's aggressive thrust for an agreement a catastrophe.

But if relations between Israel and the coming Palestinian state prove relatively non-violent, and there is free movement through Jerusalem, then Rabin's political strategy will go down as a model of how to push through difficult policies against heated opposition, and history will judge him the visionary peacemaker his eulogists all insist he was. ♦

Making War with the Word 'Peace'

By Ruth R. Wisse

Mourning for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will be more prolonged than for any bereavement Israel has yet known. The assassination of a democratic leader is a blow to the whole nation at once. Unlike the monarch or autocrat who imposes his rule on a people, the elected head of a democratic government represents every individual in his country, so that his murder is an act of aggression against all those he governs. Because Israel is a Jewish as well as a democratic state, the killing of Yitzhak Rabin struck simultaneously at the faith and familial pride of every affiliated Jew in the world.

Rabin had been a trusted leader. But the mourning for Israel's head of state is also compounded by the unprecedented political and moral confusion that he brought on his nation during this present term of office. Simply put, Rabin was elected with one mandate, and then implemented its opposite. Running well ahead of his Labor party in personal popularity, Rabin based his 1992 campaign on his soldierly credibility as a defender of Israel, and on the following promises: There would be no direct talks with the PLO, no return to the 1967 borders, and no additional state between Israel and the Jordan River (no Palestinian mini-state). Barely a year later, he had signed an agreement at Oslo with the PLO, giving legitimacy to the Palestine Liberation Organization and granting its leader Yasser Arafat ever-increasing powers for the disputed territories between Tel Aviv and the Jordan River.

Rabin had apparently been persuaded by his long-time rival for leadership, Shimon Peres, to arrange in secret a treaty with Arafat. Yet he never explained to his people (if, indeed, he ever explained to himself) the reasons for his reversal of policy. No doubt Henry Kissinger was correct when he eulogized Rabin as a thinking man, who had only reached his conclusions after long reflection. But Rabin did not make the people of Israel a party to his reflections. He sprung on the body politic a policy that was never revealed, defined, or articulated beforehand, and never clearly defined or debated thereafter. If they questioned the wisdom of Rabin's actions, Israelis were given no choice other than a massive display of resistance that would lead to the collapse of Rabin's coalition government.

Thus Rabin's murder arrested the political process in Israel at the worst possible moment. With an elec-

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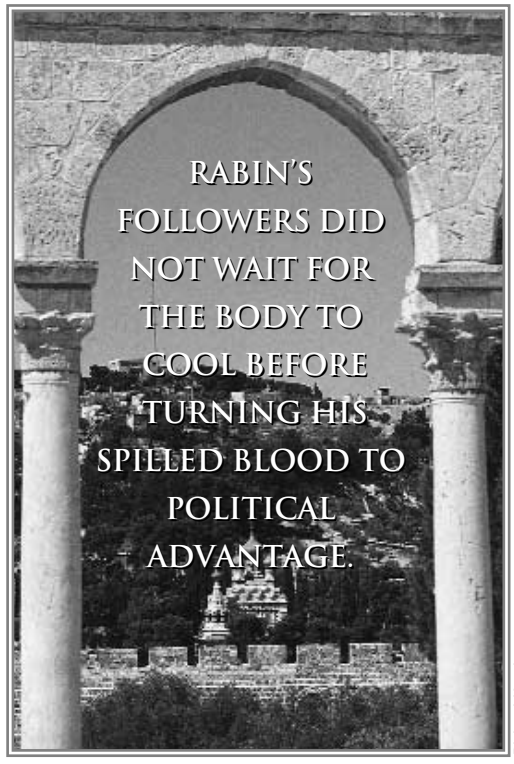
tion scheduled for September 1996, Israelis were to have their first chance to ratify or to repudiate an agreement that had been made without their electoral consent. Rabin would have been the all but exclusive subject of that election, especially since it will feature the nation's first direct vote for the office of prime minister. Rabin's murderer subverted the democratic process by denying Israelis the right to reward or punish their leader for imposing a proto-Palestinian state upon them.

Political assassins all too often destroy their side of the argument by bestowing martyrdom on their victim and on his cause. Within minutes of the fatal shooting, anyone attuned to Israel's political process, or, indeed, to the politics of the 20th century, would have realized that the young man who claimed to have been acting upon the will of God had almost certainly ensured the triumph of the very forces he had tried to stop.



Richard Kozak

Rabin's followers did not wait for his body to cool before turning his spilled blood to political advantage. Their tactics were twofold: Discredit the opposition by holding it responsible for the murder; sanctify their own politics by calling it the dead man's legacy. The code word for this process was, as ever, "peace," but now a demonic imagery had been added to the picture. Brandishing the blood-stained "song of peace" from the slain prime minister's breast pocket, Rabin's closest followers gave notice of how they intended to conduct the political discourse of Israel from this point onward. The tentative political process Rabin had initiated was to be declared an irreversible and sacred trust of the "man of peace." Not every last person at the funeral acquiesced in this plan. "You will forgive me," said his plucky granddaughter," if I don't talk about peace, but talk about my grandfather." Hers was the lone attempt to bring the man—and by implication, the political process—to human scale.

To appreciate the current drift of Israeli politics, consider the American response to the Oklahoma City bombing once it became known that the perpetrator was not a foreigner but a homegrown boy. The Democratic left initially tried to turn the disaster to political advantage by blaming it on the "lunatic" and "dangerous" right. President Clinton even ventured a swipe at conservative-tending talk radio as a contributing cause to the act of terrorism. But exploitation of the disaster quickly stopped and a sobered government and nation took better counsel.

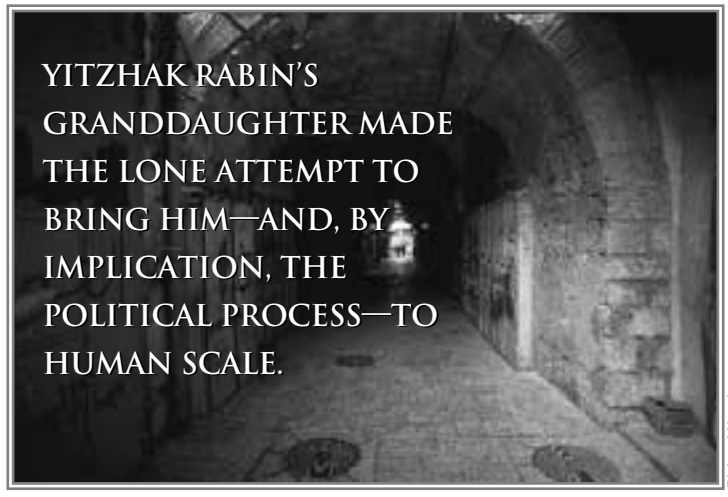
Far from being used to scapegoat the right, the anger of the Oklahoma City murderers triggered anxious questions about the actions of government agents at Waco and Ruby Ridge that may have unwittingly played into the hands of a recalcitrant minority, convinced of a punitive "system" at work against American citizens.

That is what is so sadly missing from the aftermath of the assassination: a genuine effort at national soul-searching that involves both parties, both political factions. Instead, the right is under assault without response or let-up. And it is sheerest cant for members of the Labor government (and the bereaved Leah Rabin) to cast the blame for a rhetoric of violence on the Likud opposition alone, since Labor is responsible for its introduction into the political debate over the Oslo agreement.

How so? The democratic process depends on the presence of at least two competing views on all major political questions, but if one side claims to be ushering in "peace" while simultaneously referring to its opponents as the "enemies of peace," it has effectively rendered them morally illegitimate, extreme, and evil by definition. Labor's tireless use of the "enemies of peace" epithet pushed opposing voices into the wings where they would have to be louder and shriller in order to be heard. The government of Israel is not responsible for the crime of Yigal Amir—of course not—but it certainly bears its share of blame for having turned brother against brother, Jew against Jew.

The effort to stifle debate on the peace process is a dangerous act, because what will happen in the next two years may well determine the nation's fate in perpetuity. The Labor party favors the strategic surrender

of some of the land Israel won or regained in the war of June 1967, and for some of its most influential members, that includes East Jerusalem. (Since the government has never revealed which land or how much land it considers negotiable, Palestinians have been circulating maps of what is now Israel that eliminate any Jewish presence whatsoever.) Likud and the settler movement in the occupied territories are not the only political forces arrayed against the Oslo process. The breakaway Labor group known as The Third Way was formed by desperate former colleagues and supporters of Rabin who realized that the government was working with no overall strategic plan, but simply improvising a policy of negotiated concessions to Arafat behind closed doors.



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While some concessionists seek at least verbal guarantees from the Arabs that they will halt their war against Israel, others on the left consider withdrawal from Arab population centers an independent goal, whether or not the residents pursue the destruction of the Jewish state. Thus, for example, the Israeli government knows perfectly well that in open violation of the Oslo agreement, Yasser Arafat has not eliminated the goal of destroying Israel from the PLO covenant. (Arafat confirmed this in his speech at Harvard, comparing the inviolability of the PLO covenant to the American Constitution.) It knows that Arafat continues to reassure his followers that he will pursue their holy war. The crowds chant: "In spirit, in blood, we will liberate Palestine!"

Either Rabin was not concerned about these speeches, or he had decided along with his closest advisers that strategic withdrawal was still preferable to policing Arafat's followers on a daily basis. He must have calculated that trying to contain Arab violence in a territory between Jordan and a smaller Israel was easier, at least as long as King Hussein remained alive, than a wearying intifada within the borders of Israel. While the merits of this approach are certainly debatable, they do not warrant any promise of peace. And if the government of Israel truly believes that strategic surrender is necessary or inevitable, it should say so, and be able to convince its politically sophisticated citizens to take the risk with open eyes.

In calling Israel's strategic withdrawal a "peace process," the Labor government has tried to camouflage the harsh political realities of decisions it believes its citizens would not otherwise accept. Like the leader who promises bread to a land of famine, or water to a people in the desert, politicians who promise Israelis peace are appealing to a craving so great that it can sweep reasoned doubt away. But preying on a people's hunger is politically irresponsible. As long as the government of Israel cannot control the supply of peace, it should be required to debate all initiatives and policies with full disclosure of the possible and probable risks they involve.

Following the murder of Yitzhak Rabin there has been a good deal of talk in Israel and abroad about fulfilling his legacy. Some take this to mean that concessions to the Palestinians and surrender to the Syrians should be made even more hastily and secretly than before, lest the democratic electoral process interfere with what the Labor party has decided to impose on Israel's citizens. Some within Rabin's party intend to use the tragedy to stifle political debate even further.

But if Rabin leaves a true legacy to Israel, it should include all he did for his country and what he stood for most of his life. As a soldier and citizen, he took part in one of the most heroic achievements in human history, the transformation of the Jews from a homeless people into a sovereign nation. But that sovereignty has not ended the particular hatred for the Jews that found its ultimate expression in the Holocaust, a hatred that still—still—finds expression in the attitudes of the Arabs who surround Israel and still—still—desire its obliteration. Nor has the creation of a Jewish state ended the harsh differences among Jews themselves.

For the sake of all that Rabin devoted his life to creating and preserving, for the sake of its sovereignty and its unity, the nation's future should not be the province of only one camp, only one faction, only one party. ♦

Arlosoroff's Assassination: A Cautionary Tale

By Yoram Hazony

This may yet turn out to be the ugliest period in the history of modern Israel. For now, it is only the second ugliest.

The ugliest period began on June 16, 1933, with the assassination of Chaim Arlosoroff, a popular Labor party leader. It seemed, incorrectly, that he had been killed by a follower of Vladimir Jabotinsky and his nationalist Revisionist faction, the forerunner of today's Likud, the main Israeli opposition party. The assassination set off a chain of recrimination and hatred which, in the ensuing 15 years, split the embattled Zionist movement into two rival organizations and served as an excuse for a wave of internecine persecution, torture, and violence that left dozens dead. Twice, it nearly resulted in full-blown civil war.

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the hands of a rightist fanatic on November 4 was by far the most horrendous political event since the declaration of the state. But the rising tides of hatred in Israel since the killing suggest that the lesson of the 1933 catastrophe has not been learned, opening the possibility that Rabin's death will become not an isolated event, but the beginning of much worse.

Haim Arlosoroff gained prominence as one of the fastest-rising stars in Labor Zionism in the 1920s, a time of steadily increasing fear and confusion for the Jewish national movement. Hitler's strength was growing rapidly in Germany; the eastern European regimes were awash with a virulent and menacing anti-Semitism; Palestine was being wracked by repeated rounds of anti-Jewish pogroms; Britain, formally committed to establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, was increasingly inclined to appease both German and Arab fanaticism.

Encircled by an ever-tightening ring of hostility, the dream of a renewed Jewish state, first articulated by Theodor Herzl in *Der Judenstaat* only three decades before, seemed to be slipping through the Zionists' fingers at precisely the hour of greatest need.

Within the official Zionist Organization, two trends emerged to cope with the crisis. The one, exemplified by Arlosoroff, called for conciliating the Arabs and soothing British anxiety over Arab sentiments, at a time when Arab demands were an end to Jewish immigration and the renunciation of the Jewish national home in Palestine. The other, led by Jabotinsky, called for an overt struggle to bring British policy to support immediate absorption of hundreds of thousands of Jews into Palestine, creating a Jewish majority and a Jewish state over Arab opposition.

In 1929, another series of Arab pogroms tore the length and breadth of Palestine, leaving 133 Jews dead. The ancient Jewish community in Hebron was destroyed. Britain's answer was the Passfield White Paper, calling for the suspension of Jewish immigration. Arlosoroff, then the head of the Jewish Agency's political department, championed retreat. In 1931, he announced his determination to seek "a rapprochement between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, starting from the basic principle that . . . neither of the two peoples shall dominate or be dominated by the other, regardless of what the numerical strength of each may be"—euphemistic for a policy of accepting Arab demands that the Jews renounce massive immigration and the goal of a Jewish state. As his position became more influential in the Zionist Organization, it was met with convulsions of fear, rage, and a sense of betrayal among eastern European Jews, who saw both their escape route and their most precious dream disappearing before their eyes.

Further fuel was added to the pyre with Hitler's accession to power less than two years later. Jabotinsky and his supporters poured their strength into organizing an international boycott of the Nazi regime. Arlosoroff went to Berlin to cut a deal whereby the Jewish Agency would purchase German goods in exchange for the transfer of some of Germany's Jews to Palestine. Both positions might have been considered reasonable under the circumstances, but Arlosoroff's

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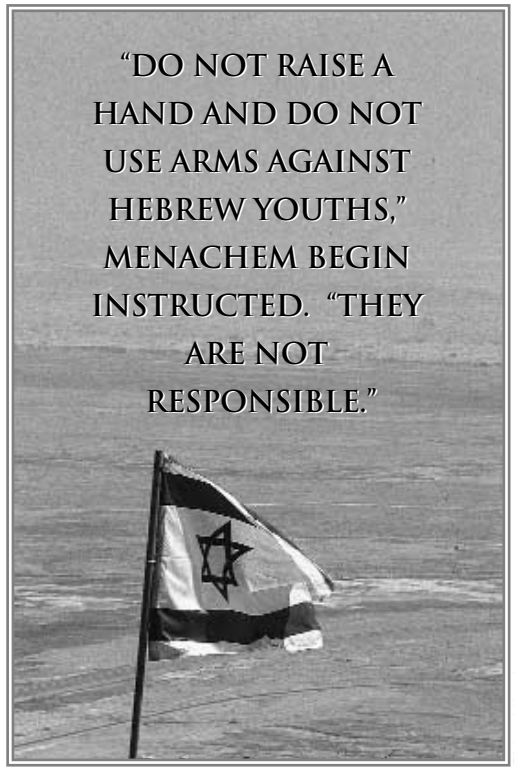
policy sounded the death-knell for the boycott—the one weapon with which ordinary Jews, the world over, could fight Hitler. Both sides called each other "traitors" in the aftermath, but it was Arlosoroff who gave up his life. On June 16, 1933, he was shot dead on a Tel Aviv beach as his wife looked on.

Avraham Stavsky, a member of Jabotinsky's party, was arrested, convicted, acquitted on appeal, and then, after the war, exonerated after a second investigation; to this day, the identity of the actual killer remains a mystery. But Stavsky's acquittal came too late to keep the unity of the Jewish national movement from being blasted apart. At the 18th Zionist Congress, held two months after Arlosoroff's murder, the Zionist left blamed the murder not only on Stavsky himself, but on the incitement of Jabotinsky and his entire party, and refused to be seated with them. The result was a walk-out by the Revisionists, who within months had left the Zionist Organization completely, setting up a competing organization. Jabotinsky's followers soon established rival groups in every conceivable field of activity, from sporting clubs to health funds to operations smuggling Jews into Palestine—and to the Irgun, Palestine's "alternative" Jewish military organization, which broke away from Labor's Hagana.



Richard Kozak

The independent operations of the Zionist right became an intolerable provocation for Labor, stoking a hatred of murderous proportions—including the decision to take party affiliation into account in distributing scarce immigration permits into Palestine, even during the Holocaust. In November 1944, the Hagana moved against the Irgun on behalf of the British, abducting and torturing the dissidents, and handing over to the British some 300 members of the resistance, many of whom were exiled to prison camps in Eritrea. As many as half the Irgun commanders favored resistance—a step that would have meant civil war. But the head of the Irgun, Menachem Begin, refused to allow it: "Do not raise a hand and do not use arms against Hebrew youths," read his written order. "They are not responsible. They are our brothers. They are being misdirected and incited. . . . This is the only way to save the Jewish settlement from a civil war, to save the country from destruction."

In June 1948, even after the Jewish fighting organizations had become uneasy allies in the struggle against British and Arab invaders, the threat of civil war careened into sight again, when an Irgun ship, the *Altalena*, carrying weapons and volunteers for the war, entered Israeli waters. So great was the distrust that Ben-Gurion feared a putsch; Begin feared a trap. Both were wrong, but fighting ensued nonetheless. The rounds of bloody skirmishing ended with the firing of what Ben-Gurion called "the holy cannon." It sank the ship. One of the 14 Irgun men killed by that gun was Avraham Stavsky. The man who fired it? Yitzhak Rabin.

It was a radio broadcast from Begin that night that again averted civil war: "Irgun soldiers will not be a party to fratricidal warfare," he announced, and the threat passed.

As it transpired, the bloodletting on the *Altalena* marked the end of the worst. The hatred remained even after the War of Independence, but the common work of building the Jewish state gradually eased the bitterness that had begun with Arlosoroff's murder. Even then, it took two more decades for the wound to heal sufficiently for any representative of the Zionist right to sit as a minister in an Israeli government.

The tear at the heart of the Zionist movement began with the sense of betrayal—on both sides—that led up to, and spewed forth from, the Arlosoroff assassination. The Jews in the east, seeing the Zionist Organization giving up on the idea of Jewish statehood, correctly understood that their most cherished dreams were being compromised by men who would lightly discard them; the Zionist Executive correctly felt that its legitimacy was being brutally challenged by an opposition that would not abide the results of a democratic system. In these basic claims, each side was right.

But in a sinking lifeboat, it no longer matters who is right. In 1933, neither the right nor the left possessed a leadership with the resourcefulness and presence of mind to close the breach and avert catastrophe. Had it not been for the anguished decision of Menachem Begin 11 years later to swallow his pride and refuse civil war, the bullet that felled Arlosoroff might have been the bullet that buried the Jewish state.

But today it seems that the peace that developed after the acceptance of the founding of the state was illusory. Yitzhak Rabin demonstrated that, even now, an Israeli government can be run perilously close to the rhetoric of Arlosoroff's ambiguous non-nationalism: "a rapprochement between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, starting from the basic principle that . . . neither of the two peoples shall dominate or be dominated by the other." These words are much the same as the slogans, "We do not want to dominate another people" and "Separation of the two peoples," which in the last two years have been used to justify giving up Hebron and Bethlehem and moving towards the *de facto* partitioning of Jerusalem. And the increasingly ugly public debate is the same debate as during the 1930s: Traditional and nationalistic Jews correctly understand that their most cherished dreams are being compromised by men who would lightly discard them (not least because of statements by members of the government referring to rabbis as "ayatollahs," settlers as "crybabies," and the mainstream political opposition as "collaborators of Hamas"); the government correctly feels that its legitimacy is being undermined, for example by accusations that decisions have been made without a "Zionist majority" in the Knesset. Again, each side is right. For whatever that's worth.

The question now is whether Israel can pull back from the brink, or whether Rabin's murder, like Arlosoroff's, will be the precursor to additional rounds of villainy, or even dissolution.

So far, the signs point to a repeat performance of the Arlosoroff catastrophe. The signal for a national witch hunt was given minutes after Rabin's death, with the official pronouncement by Health Minister Efraim Sneh that "the prime minister passed away at 11:10 p.m., as a result of a murderous act of violence and as a result of incitement." The lone gunman, therefore, was not alone; the political and intellectual left lost no time identifying the other criminals behind the killing.

Israeli television immediately broadcast a live interview in which Environment Minister Yossi Sarid declared that there was "one murderer but many inciters," as the crowd behind him chanted, "Bibi's a murderer! Bibi's a murderer!" beneath a banner reading, "Bibi: Rabin's blood is on your hands." "Bibi" is Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the opposition Likud. Deputy Education Minister Micha Goldman quickly announced that "today's act of depravity . . . is the product of members of the Knesset from the Likud, who will not succeed in dumping blame for the murder on the extreme right." Said Ran Cohen, head of the leftist Meretz parliamentary faction: "Full responsibility rests like the mark of Cain with the leadership of the political right." Labor member Avi Yehezkel dismissed right-of-center condemnations of the murder as "crocodile tears." Later in the week, Speaker of the Knesset Shevah Weiss blamed the murder on the "Nazicization" of Judaism in Israel. According to Asa Kasher, a prominent lawyer close to the government: "Now we'll see the leaders of the political right expressing pain and shock. . . . Now I say to them: Your hands have spilled this blood. Yours, Benjamin Netanyahu."

The popular novelist Meir Shalev provided the politicians with intellectual cover: "We know that we are once again not talking about left and right, but about a very simple fact: Murderers come from only one side of the Israeli political map." Best-selling author David Grossman pronounced Netanyahu "unfit" to lead the opposition and called on him to resign from public life as a result of his "indirect responsibility" for the assassination. Yizhar, one of Israel's best-known writers, observed: "The political right believes that soil is more important than people. Soil is more important than Arabs, of course, and today more important than Jews as well." Poet Yair Garboz: "We point an accusing finger . . . at the entire political right, without any exceptions, all of them." Comedian Tuvia Tzafir: "We are one people, perhaps. But two camps. Those who sing the peace-movement anthem and those who reject it; those who regard pieces of land as holy and those who consecrate the living man; those who 'wait for Rabin' [a Labor campaign jingle] and those who eliminate him."

And then there was Leah Rabin, the wife of the slain prime minister, who fingered the "verbal violence" of Netanyahu and other Likud members of the Knesset, as well as the worldview of religious Jews, as having "created the atmosphere" that resulted in the murder.

Where is all this going? Leave aside the question of whether the accusations of opposition "incitement" are correct or absurd. What is crucial is that the pot is already boiling, the heat is being turned up again and again. No Labor leaders have yet emerged who are

willing to criticize or even distance themselves from the vendetta against the entire political opposition, much less admit any responsibility the government may share in bringing the situation to a crisis. A thunderous silence pounds through the isolation of Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the architect of the Oslo accords and perhaps the one man with the standing to call off the dogs.

In the face of all this, the conservative opposition has thankfully, if uncharacteristically, followed Begin's example in refusing to return fire. Netanyahu himself published a book two years ago endorsing the Talmudic verdict that ancient Israel was destroyed by Jewish fratricide, while the Romans were at the gates, and that the lesson must be the complete extirpation of political violence from Jewish society. Last week, Netanyahu put his money where his mouth is by announcing that his party would support Shimon Peres's bid to succeed Rabin as prime minister, thereby guaranteeing continuation of the Labor government he has fought bitterly for three years. "The murderer wanted to end the Labor government with bullets," said Netanyahu, "and we will have no hand in that."

Netanyahu's gesture was pointedly ignored. Additional concrete steps to encourage national reconciliation have been proposed, but they are not easy to pull off. The massive memorial rally marking the first week after Rabin's death could have been an occasion for real mending, but the organizers rejected the efforts of organizations associated with the right to participate, thus transforming what should have been a national closing of ranks into yet another example of partisanship and division-mongering, humiliation and score-settling.

The terrible tragedy that Israel has suffered continues to unleash more tragedy. Yet the Jewish state goes about the business of cleaning up after the funeral as though the worst is over—when in fact it may have only just begun. ♦

Deciphering the Meaning of Election 1995

By Tod Lindberg

Maybe we should call it Newt's Revenge: Colin Powell announcing the day after the 1995 elections in no uncertain terms that he is a Republican and that his future lies with the Republican party. From his new party's point of view, Powell's timing was perfect. It dissipated most of the talk of the electoral results, and truth to tell, the GOP was delighted to change the subject.

Republican expectations for 1995 were sky-high. Although the number of races in this off-year wasn't significant, or the races all that interesting, Republicans were hoping for and even expecting results that would establish 1995 as a continuation of 1994's Slaughter of the Democrats. As the Kentucky governor's race goes, so goes the nation: Realignment, ho!

It was not to be. Here's what actually happened: The GOP lost the governor's race in Kentucky. A Republican governor was reelected in Mississippi. GOP hopes for achieving control of state assemblies and senates in Virginia and Mississippi went unrealized. The party lost a couple of seats in the New Jersey assembly, but still has a huge majority; and the takeover of the House in Maine, owing to a death, was reversed when Democrats picked up two seats, giving them a majority of one.

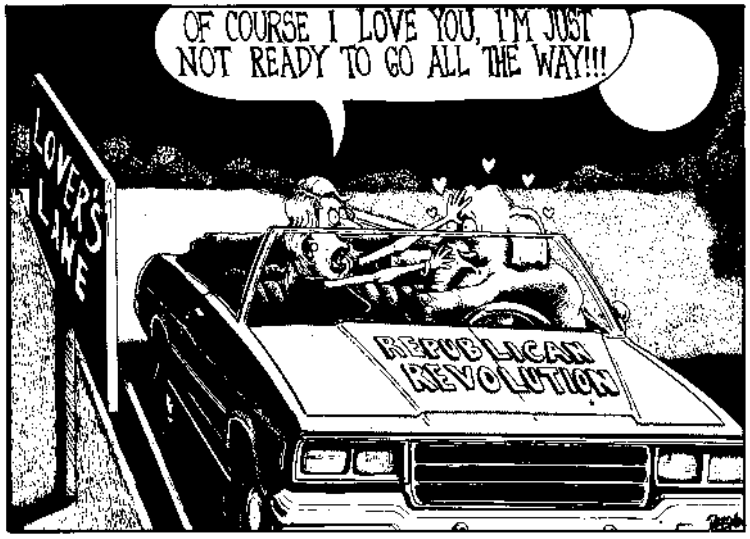
Are you still awake after that thrilling account? No matter. Democrats are still jumping up and down with excitement. Kentucky Gov.-elect Paul Patton, the highest profile Democratic winner, declared, "Kentucky has said no to Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole. Kentucky has said no to cuts in Medicare. . . . Kentucky has said no to the 'Contract with America.'" Democrats on Capitol Hill emblazoned those words on a chart and posed next to it in the Radio and TV Gallery in the Capitol.Democratic party co-chairman Christopher Dodd gloated, "The GOP's rising tide has ebbed. . . .If I were the leadership today in the Republican party, I'd be redrafting my ideas on Medicare and education, the environment. Because if they stick with those messages, I think 1996 is going to be a strong year for Democrats."

"Earth to speaker. Come in, Mr. Speaker," said

New York Democratic Rep. Charles Schumer on the House floor. "The American people don't want your type of revolution. They want change that makes sense. And yesterday they said overwhelmingly that the speaker's extremism just doesn't make sense." There were few voices asking the unspoken question: Isn't all this triumphalism for one governor's mansion—a mansion that hasn't been occupied by a Republican in decades—and a few state senate and house seats a bit much?

That all depends on which Republicans you speak to. The cheerful camp, led by Americans for Tax Reform president Grover G. Norquist, has a cheerful spin. The pessimistic camp, led by Free Congress Foundation president Paul Weyrich, sees dark clouds.

"Take heart," say the Norquistians. "What exactly did we lose? Okay, we didn't win the Kentucky governor, but we came the closest we have in 24 years in what once was but no longer is a solidly Democratic state, and as it happens, the Democrat only won by running way to the right of Clinton. Virginia is a disappointment, but probably suffered from inflated expectations, and we did pick up in the Senate. Besides, the lieutenant governor and tie-breaker, Don Beyer, is going to be the Democratic candidate for governor next time. This elevates his profile, but it also exposes him to casting unpopular tie-breaking votes, and that will help beat him in 1997. In Mississippi, meanwhile, Fordice crushed his opponent, the first re-election of a GOP governor there ever. We're still firmly in control in New Jersey. It would have been nice to keep Maine, and we should have, but we only got it two months ago by a fluke. Besides, we're going to pick up the Louisiana governor in a couple of weeks, and the party switches are still coming thick and fast. Not bad. We're still winning."



Sean Delonas/*New York Post*

"Not so fast," say the Weyrichites. "The Democrats and their friends in the establishment media have painted this election as a referendum on Newt Gingrich and the Republican Congress, and Republicans have failed to answer the charge. This was a defeat. Democrats knew how important these elections were, coming right in the middle of the budget showdown in Washington, and they threw everything they had at the Republicans. What they threw was entirely predictable, and it was folly not to anticipate and inoculate candidates against it, something that could easily have been done if only Republicans had been paying attention instead of merely assuming that they were riding some great tide of History. This fiasco plays right into the hands of those Republicans who routinely disparage the revolution and work to undermine it. Now they will be emboldened to redouble their efforts to sell us out, and the whole project is in danger of collapsing."

There is a certain convergence between the Weyrichites and the Democrats, even if the motives are opposing. The message: Revolution in trouble! As for the Norquistians, the sunny view does comport better with the results in 1994 or, more to the point, the elections in 1993, an off-year in which Republicans actually did clean up. It may not be very exciting to say so, but what we have here is a real mixed bag. Republicans didn't win; Democrats didn't lose. But Democrats didn't win either, nor did Republicans lose. Kentucky and Virginia are not, say, Texas and Arizona—states firmly in the Republican camp. Democrats held on to some things that have long been theirs. The closest thing to a test this year of how Democrats would fare in a Republican stronghold was the New Jersey Assembly. But New Jersey has not been a Republican stronghold for long. And the three seats the Democrats won still left them way down.

Politics is ebb and flow. Republicans just got a reminder that there is nothing inexorable about the movement in their direction. While James K. Glassman is certainly right when he says that the "secular trends" in political alignment are still clear, it does not follow that the electorate consists only of people who want to go Republican starting with the next election. Virginia Gov. George Allen campaigned furiously for a Republican legislature to implement an agenda that

Democrats in Richmond had largely thwarted during his first two years as governor. He didn't get it. But this certainly doesn't mean that Democrats have thereby rolled up the GOP and that Republican control is now beyond reach. "Allen, GOP Lose Battle for Richmond," the *Washington Post* headline gleefully proclaimed. But the martial metaphor is a bit misleading, insofar as the GOP "defeat" does not involve surrender; it only means getting ready for the state elections in 1997, in which Republicans will be in a stronger position than they were in 1995. Next time, if Democrats lose three Senate seats by attrition the way they did in 1995, Republicans take control.

The disappointment of 1995 is that it was not 1994, a year when Republicans successfully "nationalized" congressional elections. But still, it's a little hard to find national meaning in an election that included not a single contest for federal office. To be sure, Republicans did consider their gubernatorial and state legislative victories in 1994 of a piece with their congressional triumph. But in 1995, all we really have is Paul Patton's word for it that by electing him, Kentucky has repudiated Newt Gingrich and Gingrichism in all its forms. It's true that Patton went up with some anti-Gingrich TV spots near the end of the race. But it's also true that Larry Forgy had left unanswered a number of other attack ads that had nothing to do with Washington.

And if Kentucky repudiated the Gingrich revolution, did Mississippi then affirm it by returning Fordice, the Republican? Did a tiny swing toward the Democrats in the New Jersey Assembly really have more to do with Washington than a surprising, hitherto unsuspected GOP vulnerability in Middlesex County? All these analytical games reveal is that it's hard to draw many conclusions from these elections.

We may yet get a better test of how well the anti-Gingrich, anti-revolution line is playing. In the January election to fill the House seat of Norman Mineta, the California Democrat who left to take a fat lobbying job, Democrats are trying to cast the election as a referendum on Gingrich. Tom Campbell, a liberal Republican, is getting morphed into Newt much in the way 1994 GOP candidates morphed their Democratic opponents into Bill Clinton. Democrats are obviously field-testing a line of attack they hope to use in 1996. If Campbell loses, we're sure to see a lot of it next fall. But again, be wary of the spin: Democrats will try to make people believe that Americans are spurning Gingrich if Republicans *fail to pick up* a Democratic seat.

It's odd, but Democrats seem to have applied the venerable Washington principles of baseline budgeting to their political fortunes. With baseline budgeting, spending automatically rises every year, and politicians can claim to be cutting spending by making it increase just a little less. Government gets bigger, but Congress claims it isn't. Baseline budgeting is one of Washington's most pernicious and disingenuous tactics. It was invented by Democrats, and it's so warped that the whole notion seems to be warping their political judgment generally. Democrats have established the outcome of the 1994 election as the baseline for Republican achievement. So when Republicans fail to win a colossal victory, they lose.

Maybe this is just the Democratic party trying to cheer itself up, spin itself some momentum and rally the faithful for the big campaign next year. Maybe. But maybe Democrats are actually, honestly mistaking their "not losing" for "winning." This would be amusing. Because if you took the great Democratic victory of 1995—the one in which Americans repudiated Gingrich and the revolution once and for all—and reproduced it on a national scale next year and for every election thereafter forever, Republicans would be no worse off than they are now and Newt Gingrich would be House speaker until the end of time.

To the extent that the GOP has also been corrupted by baseline thinking, and its activists and party officials hubristically believed that their party's triumph is historically inevitable, last week's results served as a bracing slap to the face. The elections arrived at a tricky time for the GOP. Until their legislation is actually enacted—only one part of the Contract with America has become law, 11 months into the "revolution"—Republicans have no answer to Democratic doomsday rhetoric except "wait and see how wonderful it will be." Some Democrats understand this perfectly well. That's why they want Republicans to scuttle their own ship—to do what Chris Dodd and Charlie Schumer recommended, to "redraft . . . their ideas" and embrace "change that makes sense." Otherwise there will be a Republican budget bill that Bill Clinton will accede to. And in a year's time, the deficit will shrink, people's taxes will get cut, nobody will end up starving in the streets—and everybody will know it.

Will the electoral result encourage GOP moderates and liberals to ask for some attenuation of the Gingrich legislative program? Probably. But they are unlikely to get it. The party faithful on Capitol Hill are now more certain than ever that if the GOP doesn't deliver what it promised in 1994, the reality of 1996 is going to correspond to the Democratic fantasies about 1995: the GOP destroyed at the polls. That's the sort of fear that gets a politician going every morning. ♦

Gay Marriage and the Courts: Roe v. Wade II?

By Hadley Arkes

While conservatives are taken up with the business of Colin Powell, the Supreme Court is moving to the threshold of a decision as portentous nearly as *Roe* v. *Wade,* and hardly anyone seems to be paying much attention. Only a handful of lawyers, in Colorado, Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C., share the agony now of waiting.

By any sober reckoning, there should have been nothing to strain the wit of judges in the so-called, miscalled case of "gay rights" in Colorado, *Romer* v. *Evans*. Miscalled, because the law in question creates no disabilities for gays, withdraws no protections, imparts no inequalities. But the jolt came on October 10, in the oral argument before the Supreme Court. Justices Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor opened with questions that not only were hostile to the conservative side but actually revealed two judges in a stupor of incomprehension. Even with the aid of the smartest clerks, these judges, holding pivotal votes, plainly had no firm hold on what this case was about.

On the other hand, the truth that dare not speak its name is that the judges know full well what *Romer* v. *Evans* is about, and Kennedy and O'Connor came into the oral arguments with their dispositions firmly fixed. Over the past two years, a remarkable concert seems to have set in among judges, especially federal judges, on the matter of gay rights. There has been, among the jurists, an almost brazen willingness to strike down any law that implies an adverse judgment on homosexuality. The judges have moved here in rare harmony, as though they were being arranged by the same choreographer. Only last week came another notable move: The highest court in New York removed the bar to adoption by unmarried couples, including couples of the same sex. Step by step, the judges have been dismantling any provisions in the law that refuse to regard homosexuality as something less than legitimate or desirable.

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This new aggressiveness may have a political explanation: The judges have seen, in the advent of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the fifth vote to overrule *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*. That was the case, in 1986, in which the court refused to overturn the statute on sodomy in Georgia. It refused, that is, to discover a constitutional right to engage in homosexuality. That case was decided by one vote, and Ruth Ginsburg replaced Justice Byron White, who wrote the opinion in *Bowers*. There was every reason to expect that Justice Ginsburg would cast a decisive vote on the other side, and my own surmise is that some judges have been looking for a case—any case—that could be sent up on appeal and give the court the chance to revisit this question. To put it gently, the judges have been all too willing to give Providence a Helping Hand. In pursuing this mission, the judges have seemed willing to make use of any case, no matter how improbable; and in the case in Colorado, the judges embraced the most implausible argument in order to strike down the policy enacted in a referendum.

The voters had passed Amendment 2, an amendment to the state constitution, in November 1992. The aim of the amendment was to brake the tendency, spreading through the state, to treat "gays" as a class of victims on the same plane as groups suffering discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or gender. The amendment forbade governments at all levels to enact any statute that would treat homosexuals or bisexuals as a class entitled to "minority status, quota preferences, protected status or claim of discrimination."

Plainly, the amendment did not license an active regimen of criminal enforcement, to seek out and prosecute homosexual acts. It did not represent a return to statutes on sodomy. It merely forestalled legislation that would work in a sweeping way to forbid or punish all acts of private discrimination against homosexuals. That kind of legislation could strike at domains of privacy and the free exercise of religion: It might deny people the right to discriminate in the sharing of their homes with people whose erotic interests they find objectionable on religious or moral grounds. To put it another way, the amendment mere-

ly preserved the right of people, in their private settings, to respect their own moral judgments on homosexuality.

And yet, one would hardly understand that version of the case from any account that has appeared so far on CNN or National Public Radio. After the success of Amendment 2 in Colorado, a similar measure was passed by the voters of Cincinnati as an amendment to the city charter. When that amendment was sustained this past summer by a federal court of appeals, the report in the *New York Times* was rather typical: As the *Times* construed it, the federal court had "upheld the right of Cincinnati voters to deny homosexuals specific legal protections." In that respect, the reports in the press have mirrored the line taken by gay activists as they have challenged these amendments in the courts. That line was as audacious as it was implausible, but the Supreme Court in Colorado and a federal judge in Cincinnati were willing to absorb that argument as their own and strike down these amendments as unconstitutional. As the judges declared, with straight faces, the amendments deprived gays and lesbians of an "equal" right to participate in the political process and advance their interests through the law.

WHEN THE CLICHES ARE STRIPPED AWAY, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT GAYS ARE NOT FACED WITH THE SLIGHTEST DILUTION OF THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS.

What was so breathtakingly original in this construction was that the courts found this subtle denial of political rights without the aid of any of those measures that used to awaken our sensitivities in the past: The amendments disfranchised no one. They brought forth no literacy tests or contrivances to block voters from the rolls. They removed from no person the right to vote, to run for office, to contribute money or buy advertising to support any candidate or any proposition put before the voters in a referendum. Amendment 2 had passed by a vote of 813,966 to 710,151. The percentage of homosexuals in the state was estimated at about 4 percent, and yet this 4 percent managed to attract to its side the support of 46 percent of the voters. As Judge Jeffrey Bayless admitted, in the county court in Denver, "that is a demonstration of power, not powerlessness."

Robert Bork put it bluntly in a commentary on the Colorado case: What the gay activists were claiming here was not the equal right to participate in politics, but nothing less than the right to win. And yet, when the oral arguments opened in the Supreme Court, Justice Kennedy remarked, "I've never seen a statute like that." He recalled another case, from California, in which the approval of the voters would be required for any project in public housing. The plan might have been fueled by an animus toward blacks, but it might have sprung quite as well from a concern about property values and the intrusion of cheaper housing. In that case, as Kennedy said, "we could measure the need, the importance, the objectives of the legislature to control low-cost housing against the classification that was adopted." But here, he argued, "the classification was just adopted for its own sake, with reference to all purposes of the law." In Kennedy's reading, the amendment seemed to be barring legislatures from legislating in favor of a whole class of people—namely, gays and lesbians—on any matter that touched the concerns of the law. But what the amendment was really doing was removing from the legislature the power to legislate on a certain class of cases—those involving private judgments, or private discriminations, on the matter of "sexual orientation."

Even some of the defenders of gay rights have conceded the inaptness of Kennedy's argument and that it is embarrassed, most notably, by the Thirteenth Amendment: In forbidding "involuntary servitude," that Amendment put beyond the power of legislatures all over the country the possibility of legislating to protect property in slaves. A whole class of people—owners of slaves—were now cut off from the possibility of securing legislation to advance their interests.

When the filter of cliches is stripped away, it should become clear that gays are not faced here with the slightest dilution of their legal rights. If the law protects people, say, from assaults or racial discrimination, those protections of the law are still intact, and they cover homosexuals along with everyone else. So it was jarring, to say the least, to find Justice O'Connor utterly obtuse on this matter during the argument before the court. She raised the prospect of a public library refusing to allow homosexuals to borrow books, and it appeared to her that Amendment 2 would allow "no relief from that." In the same vein, Justice Stephen Breyer conjured up a city facing a rash of "gay-bashing." If the authorities put in a policy to forbid it, would the policy run afoul of Amendment 2? Justice Antonin Scalia quickly pointed out that the laws in Colorado already forbade the "bashing" of anyone, gay or non-gay. "So prohibiting the bashing of gays would not be a special protection, would it?" Or to put it more precisely, the law would not require any special provision to bar the bashing of gays. In the case of libraries and other public facilities, there may sim-

ply be a provision that bars discrimination on grounds that bear no connection to the service at hand. Gays may be protected from arbitrary discrimination in the provision of disaster relief, medical care, or library books—without the need to say anything about gays as a class apart, as a group deserving any special recognition or endorsement in the law.

When the slogans are cleared away, it becomes apparent that the rhetoric of gay rights has merely obscured to the judges the real class of victims here: The people who are threatened with the abridgment of their liberties or rights are the people who hold to the traditional Jewish and Christian teaching on homosexuality; the people who would have the temerity then to respect their own moral understanding in their own private settings. These people find themselves in the position of that wife of a shop owner in Boulder, Colorado, who gave literature on homosexuality to a gay employee. Her husband was then compelled, with the levers of the local law, to attend "sensitivity training." In this way has the new regime of "gay rights" made unmistakably clear just what moral understandings it means to punish and repress, even in their private expression.

My friend George Will is persuaded that when the justices settle down to the hard realities of judgment, they will concentrate their minds, read the briefs, and come down finally on the side of the state. Will, the most sober of men, has been strangely touched by the romance of "reason." Perhaps Kennedy and O'Connor will wake in time from their dogmatic slumber—or perhaps Will merely has an unbounded confidence in the power of "sleep-learning." But in any clear-eyed estimate, the side of "gay rights" seems to hold now a 6-3 majority. The same coalition that gave us the decision against term limits can add Justice O'Connor and easily put across this decision. There figures to be no political storm, no outrage in the land, because most people do not have even the faintest notion of what *Romer* v. *Evans* is about. Yet a loss in this case could bring about a vast remodeling of the laws on marriage and the family.

For the decision to strike down Amendment 2 would not be taken as a decision merely to guarantee "equal treatment" for gays. The decision would call into question any law that refuses to accord to homosexuality the same legitimacy or standing as that sexuality "imprinted in our natures." And with that decision, the court would also knock out the last prop that allows a state to hold back from accepting "same-sex marriage," the gift that is now being prepared for us by the courts in Hawaii. When a decision finally emerges from Hawaii, gay activists are counting on the "Full Faith and Credit" clause of the Constitution (Art. IV, Sec. 1) to spread the legalization of same-sex marriages to other states. That clause sustains the expectation that the driver's license granted in Illinois will be honored in California, or that the marriage legally performed in Kentucky will be honored in Massachusetts. The presumption would have to be set in favor of honoring these marriages from Hawaii—unless a state may still hold back, on moral grounds, from honoring certain kinds of union (such as the marriage of a man and his natural daughter). But with the case in Colorado, *the court is now likely to remove that ground of objection*. For if Amendment 2 were struck down, the point emerging from the case would be this: that a state may not incorporate, anywhere in its laws, an adverse judgment on homosexuality.

Some conservative writers have warned for over a year that the judges were heading in this direction, and they have suggested a simple move to head them off at the pass: a short constitutional amendment, of one sentence, that there is, in the Constitution, no right of homosexual marriage. (Prof. Charles Rice of the law school at Notre Dame has proposed a draft.) An amendment of that kind would not have to pass right away, or at all. The act of introducing or "moving" the amendment would itself send an important signal to the court: It would indicate that someone is watching; that the country is not going to remain passive while the judges add yet another revolution to *Roe* v. *Wade*. That might be enough to give some judges pause; it might encourage them finally to read the briefs, and concentrate their minds.

> THE COURT MAY KNOCK OUT THE LAST PROP THAT ALLOWS A STATE TO HOLD BACK FROM ACCEPTING "SAME-SEX MARRIAGE."

In the meantime, Republicans on Capitol Hill are too busy in the battle for the budget to notice this sideshow across the street. But they will look up, sometime in the spring, and discover that six justices have transformed the law on marriage and the family. What is needed, then, right now, is someone in Congress to sound the alarm and introduce the amendment—someone like Charles Canaday in the House or Don Nickles in the Senate. The means are at hand; and they require no measures overly complicated or refined. It remains simply to act. Now, if we dial 911, is there anyone, among the Republicans in Congress, who is there to take the call? ♦

In Search of Lost Cities

By Joseph Epstein

Ah, the past, that warm and cordial land, where one was so contented, so snug, and limitlessly happy, though one cannot remember just why. The past is the best of all places, no doubt about it, much superior to the present and, in the view of most people nowadays, certainly much to be preferred to the future. If one is old enough for the past to be longer than the likely future—regrettably, I qualify here—the tendency is to return fairly often to those thrilling days of yesteryear.

"Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear" comes, of course, from the dramatic prologue of the *Lone Ranger* radio show. A properly cynical person, listening to that prologue, might have remarked that those thrilling days of the masked rider's yesteryear included the absence of indoor plumbing, lots of gonorrhea and other jolly diseases to go around, no anesthesia for surgery, and many another nightmare that comes under the rubric of simple country living.

Contemplating the 1950s, the same cynic could rejoin with, "Return with us now to those thrilling days of race prejudice, fairly open anti-Semitism, the suppression of women, and sexual repression." But Alan Ehrenhalt, who has written an excellent book on the virtues of that complex decade, isn't likely to avail himself of that rejoinder. Nor, as someone who came of age during the decade—I was 13 when it began and a married man of 23 when it ended—am I.

"Insufficiently thrilling" is perhaps the first of many raps against the 1950s. People who went to university in those years were known as "the silent generation" and were deemed apolitical—clearly, it was thought, a marked deficiency. The formal, the reserved, the socially nervous (in popular sociology, the stick figures of the day were known as the "organization men," the "other-directed," the "status seekers") everywhere predominated, or so it was believed. Dwight David Eisenhower was president of the United States for eight of the

Joseph Epstein is the author, most recently, of With My Trousers Rolled.

decade's years; he twice defeated—crushed is more precise—Adlai Stevenson, intellectually perhaps the most attractive candidate for the presidency in this century. And let us not forget Senator Joseph McCarthy and the good ole boys from the House Un-American Activities Committee. Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end . . . and many people are pleased they did.

"Allen Ginsberg thinks of those years as a liberating time," Gore Vidal writes of the 1950s in his recent memoirs. "I don't. I remember only conformity and fear and silence." Finding oneself in even partial agreement with Allen Ginsberg or Gore Vidal, even when the two disagree, a thoughtful person will wish to reconsider his position and find yet a third place for himself. In my own view, the 50s was neither a liberating nor a frightening time. It was instead a comfortable and rather pleasingly boring time. Life had not become so politicized—and hence so divided—as it now is. It was a time of cultural seriousness. The word "lifestyle" had not yet come into play; people were content merely to have—and live—lives.

UPI/Bettmann

In intellectual circles, a key 1950s word was "community." It gave the title to Percival (brother to Paul) Goodman's book, *Communitas*. The attraction of socialism for intellectuals was in part bound up in the notion of community—the community of man and all that, which would come together only when capitalism was defeated. But then, intellectuals have always been keen for community, chiefly because they seem, by their very natures, unable genuinely to share in it. Community tends, I fear, to be a little like sex, in that those who talk most about it probably experience it least.

Ehrenhalt's *The Lost City* (Basic Books, 310 pages, $24) is about people who didn't talk all that much about community, but knew it in their daily lives. His book carries the word community in its lengthy subtitle: *Discovering the Forgotten Virtues of Community in the Chicago of the 1950s*. He remarks that the people who most disliked life in the 50s—academics, intellectuals, certain artists, disaffected radicals—have been allowed to write its history, and much of what they wrote sets out to prove that the good things about the decade "were a mirage." He thinks otherwise. He believes that the major themes of the time were contentment and stability, at least for the majority of Americans who lived through it. In his view, "majorities, however unfashionable or inarticulate, have a right to be heard." *The Lost City*, in good part, represents these majorities. Ehrenhalt's is history from the bottom up, as the left-wing academics have long wanted it, but without being a tale of victimization, which isn't what they have in mind at all.

The Lost City is a book that I read with the added pleasure of having known at first hand many of the things Ehrenhalt has written about. To the old vaudevillian question, "Vas ya dere, Charlie?," I can resoundingly reply, "Yep." This puts me in a position to certify that, in his many details, Ehrenhalt has got things dead-on right. Much of his book fixes on the year 1957. The author was himself 10 years old at the time. Richard Daley *père* was in city hall, Ernie Banks was at shortstop in Wrigley Field, a bruiser named Rick Casares was the main man in the Bears backfield, Sophia Loren was the great movie sex goddess (for me she still is), the top-selling record album was Nat "King" Cole's *Loving You*, and all was right with the world.

Ehrenhalt writes that "there is a longing, among millions of Americans reaching middle age, for a sense of community that they believe existed during their childhood and does not exist now." The search for what had made communities so vibrant in 1950s Chicago is at the heart of Ehrenhalt's project in *The Lost City*. Many things made for the social cohesion that goes by the name of community, and high on the list among them was the authority of leadership and the two-way loyalty that was at the center of the relationships between leaders and followers. Chicago was dominated by strong leadership:

Mayor Daley in city government, the Catholic Church in education and morals, parents in the home.

The city in those days was so firmly stratified as to be a sociologist's dream, a congeries of neighborhoods as isolated from one another as islands. A boy sociologist myself in those days, if I knew the neighborhood in which you lived in Chicago, I could have told you your ethnic group, religion, family income (roughly), whether you ate in the dining room or kitchen, and whether your old man came to table in a suit jacket or undershirt. Every neighborhood in those years was a little village, and, when young, one left the village only on rare occasions: to visit relatives, to go to a ballgame, to see a physician for an ailment requiring a specialist, to look at the grand Christmas decorations at Marshall Field's in the Loop, or to catch a stage show at the Chicago or Woods theaters. For the rest, the neighborhood contained everything one needed. In those days, ask a Chicagoan where he lived and after naming his neighborhood, he would invariably add either the nearest public park or, if he were Catholic, as a vast part of the city's denizens were, his parish.

Ehrenhalt describes life in a working-class neighborhood on the city's Southwest Side dominated by St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church; in Elmhurst, a newly expanded suburb west of the city; and in Bronzeville, the section of the city's South Side where Negroes (as the dignified name then was) predominated. His richest material is about St. Nick's parish and its surrounding neighborhood. So specific is it that it feels less like historical sociology than like memoir, causing one to wonder if Ehrenhalt himself didn't grow up in the neighborhood. He has its quotidian rhythms by heart (in the deepest sense): the comings and goings, the meals, the life on the porch stoop, the games in the alley, the corner bar, the deposit of pay checks on Fridays at the savings and loan.

In the 50s, people believed in the seriousness of sin, the formation of character, and the importance of posterity. It is not certain that most people believe any longer in these things, so crucial to the way Americans once lived. Things came apart, the center did not hold. Why? Ehrenhalt's answer is a complex one, but, put briefly, it is that people preferred choice over cohesion, and now we live with the consequences. In the matter of neighborhood bars, banks, butchers, and other shops, for example, market forces have ripped them up and buried them. For all its many virtues—the best of all lousy economic systems—capitalism is no respecter of either tradition or community. And as Ehrenhalt notes: "The difference between the 1950s and the 1990s is to a large extent the difference between a society in

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which the market forces challenged traditional values and a society in which they have triumphed over them."

Not least among those market forces are the ones that sent women out to work and thereby radically changed family life. In St. Nick's parish in the 50s, mothers were always home to keep watch over children in the streets, to prepare organized meals, to ensure respect for working fathers. The Church backed these arrangements up in every way. In its clubs and sodalities and innumerable charitable organizations, it also gave people a social life. A nun in her classroom was an authority from whom no appeal was possible. A priest was a minor monarch. The Church, as women in James T. Farrell novels used to say, was "the grand thing."

The neighborhood life, to be sure, was not everybody's bowl of borscht. Some found it suffocating, and wanted out, desperately. When I began teaching at a Midwestern university in 1974, my best students were almost all Catholic-educated, and the majority of them had a strong grudge against what they had been put through. Yet they could write English prose, many of them knew Latin, and they could argue well. Much that was unusual and interesting about them was owed to their upbringing in Catholicism, from which they earnestly wanted to free themselves.

The loss of authority of the Church itself is emblematic of the slippage that, in Ehrenhalt's view, is behind the loss of community in the Southwest Side neighborhood he describes in such fond detail. And behind this slippage of authority is the demand for choice. Authority makes demands: of loyalty, of commitment to standards, of constancy. "People," Ehrenhalt writes of the 50s, "stayed married to their spouses, to their political machines, to their baseball teams." Choice shuns all that. Choice advises one to stay loose, keep one's options open, travel light, never forget one's first commitment is to the self. You are Number One.

As a doctrine, choice was already finding expression in the writing of academics and intellectuals, who were sounding the clarion call against one of the decade's great straw men, "conformity." For those people who might be thought to conform—the parishioners of St. Nick's, the white-collar workers and middle-managers who bought new homes in the suburb of Elmhurst—conformity was not a real issue. They had, after all, come through the gray years of the Depression, followed hard upon by World War II. For them, the conformist 50s were a time, as Ehrenhalt writes, "when life as it was seemed so much better than life as it might have been."

For the rest of us, even the conformity, in retrospect, was useful, for it gave us something to run away from. Nor, in making our run, did we have to dye our hair purple and pierce three earrings through our *pupiks*. Bohemianism had not yet become pandemic. Art was still a matter of passion and seriousness, not all left-wing politics and gaudy performance. And an impressive roster of first-class artists, genuine non-conformists, still walked the earth; in literature alone, Frost, Faulkner, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Hemingway, and Nabokov were not only extant but productive. In other words, there was not only something to run away from but something to run toward. And, astonishing to report, in the 1950s, even the artists, as you will note from the roster of names just mentioned, were adults, fully fledged, not pony-tailed old guys in denim.

The most controversial part of Ehrenhalt's book is doubtless his section on the Bronzeville community. The 1950s was not a banner decade for blacks. Still a heavily segregated city, Chicago was even more firmly segregated then. Not only were there no places outside black neighborhoods where blacks with money could live, but a white person had to scramble to find a restaurant to which he could take a black friend or acquaintance. At Riverview, the city's great amusement park, our Coney Island, there was a concession at which, for half a dollar, one was given three lumpy baseballs to throw at a round target attached to a lever that, when released, would drop a black man

sitting on a swing into a tub of water. To stimulate business, blacks who had this extraordinary job became expert at taunting passing whites. Such was one emblem of race relations in Chicago in the 50s.

But Ehrenhalt maintains that within black neighborhoods there was powerful social cohesion, much more so than today. A strong newspaper, the Chicago *Defender*, stood guard over local conniving. Living conditions were crowded, usually dreary into the bargain, but there was a community life nonetheless, chiefly lived through the churches, whose ministers were men of genuine (here's that word again) authority. Bronzeville businesses—restaurants and nightclubs, insurance, even numbers-running—were authentically local institutions.

Some of the world's most wretched public housing—the notorious Robert Taylor Homes—all but destroyed the neighborhoods of Bronzeville. In the ironic way of progress, minimal integration finished the job. When successful blacks could find a way out of their old neighborhoods so as be able to bring up their children in safety, they took it and cut out—and who can blame them?—leaving behind people increasingly defined by their problems.

One step forward, two steps back. Integration dealt a death-blow to community in black neighborhoods; women's liberation takes women out of their homes, gives many among them vaunted self-esteem, and along the way helps loosen the bonds that hold families together; the birth-control pill is invented, sex education is taught in the schools, censorship is eliminated, and, *pooft*!, illegitimate pregnancy and rape increase. Make that three steps back for every step forward.

Ehrenhalt's pages on the somewhat bland suburb of Elmhurst are perhaps his most predictable, but here, too, his story is one of rise followed by a rather sad fall. Many of the people who moved to Elmhurst in the 50s were fleeing the blacks who were then beginning to take over the West Side of Chicago. But quite as many were seeking the tranquillity that the suburbs, with their practically nonexistent crime rates, offered as well as what seemed the more expansive life that more roominess promised. To have a son playing in the backfield of the York High School football team, to have a daughter who was a cheerleader, to be oneself a Jaycee, and one's wife a potent member of the PTA, all this seemed, for a time, very like heaven.

It didn't turn into hell, but in time the bright colors of this dream, too, wore away and became drab. Dr. Spock, whose famous book on child rearing did a great deal to undermine authority in family life, was no help. Neither was the phenomenon of the working mother. Off at a full-time job, she couldn't be expected either to watch her children or to do volunteer work for those organizations in churches and schools that could have created a sense of community in these new areas.

In Ehrenhalt's view, we have exalted choice over all other possibilities in American life, and because of this we have repealed a bargain that was central not only to the middle class but to nearly everyone in America. "The bargain provided us with communities that were, for the most part, familiar and secure; stable jobs and relationships whose survival we did not need to worry about in bed at night; rules that we could live by, or, when we were old enough, rebel against; and people known as leaders who were trusted with the task of seeing that the rules were enforced."

One can feel Ehrenhalt's longing for the older life, even though he knows all its flaws, foibles, and lack of freedoms. He also knows that he cannot have it back. He studies the past chiefly for what it can tell us about how we got to where we are. He is not a true reactionary, such as Evelyn Waugh, who refused to vote again for the Tories because, he declared, after eight years in office that they hadn't turned back the clock one minute.

One wishes one could feel even as qualifiedly hopeful as Ehrenhalt is about future generations' recapturing something of the better qualities of the past. He reminds us that the solid achievements of the Victorians followed the let-'er-rip spirit of the Romantics, with the generation of the 1960s standing in this analogy for the Romantics. He asks if it isn't possible that the generation raised under the new regime, with all its dissatisfactions, will "be tempted to move, in its early adult years, toward a reimposition of order and stability, even at the risk of losing something of the choice and personal freedom its parents worshiped?" He ends his book by saying that to eliminate this possibility is to deny the "natural desire of any generation to . . . correct the errors and excesses of the one before."

Would it were so. The more pessimistic among us may be more struck by Ehrenhalt's observation that "there is no real majority culture to rebel against. . . . We have not only lost the ability to enforce standards of conduct but we have lost any clear sense of what standards we would wish to enforce."

For now, though, the best one can say about this earnest and useful book, written without a scintilla of snobbery, is that it reminds us that the past can be a very nice place to visit, and it's a damn shame one can't live there. ♦

Movies

Mighty Pretentious

By John Podhoretz

Woody Allen, who turns 60 this year, is a relic. He may still look young; he may continue to attend basketball games with the adopted 24-year-old daughter of his one-time consort, Mia Farrow; he may still be showered with Oscar nominations, as he was in February for his farce *Bullets Over Broadway*. But he is a relic nonetheless, the last remnant of a time in American life when even the most critically and financially successful purveyors of pop culture longed desperately for the one award they were sure they could never receive: the mantle of "seriousness."

His latest film, *Mighty Aphrodite*, is a wan little comedy about Lenny Weinrib, a sportswriter who discovers that the birth mother of his adopted son is a hooker and porn actress. He sets out to save her life, rescuing her from her pimp and fixing her up with a young boxer. The whole movie is so thin and vapid it would hardly be worth noting except for one thing: It features a Greek chorus. Yes, a Greek chorus—20 men in robes and masks who shuffle back and forth on the stage of an amphitheater, commenting in unison on the plot.

Allen recognizes that the chorus only works as an incongruous comic device. "Lenny, don't be a schmuck!" the chorus shouts to Weinrib; Oedipus' mother Jocasta also appears, informing us that "I hate to tell you what my son is called in Harlem." (These jokes are funnier on paper than they are on screen.)

Allen has chosen a perplexing vehicle in which to employ the chorus, because despite its title, *Mighty Aphrodite* has absolutely nothing in common with a Greek play, whether tragedy, comedy, or otherwise. The movie has been assembled like a pre-fab house from the elements of every other Woody Allen movie in the past 10 years: New York landmarks, big-band music on the soundtrack, lush trappings meticulously designed by Santo Loquasto and beautifully photographed by Carlo Di Palma. The plot is stale and familiar as well: There's a troubled married couple exchanging acrid barbs, strange uses of flashbacks and fantasy sequences, and the requisite uncomfortable parallels to other movies (in this case, Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*) and Allen's own life (adopted children).

So why the chorus? The chorus is on display because Allen is clearly unhappy with the movie's fundamental lack of ambition. He finds it unsatisfying to make a mild little comedy—and indeed, considering how unsatisfying an experience it is to watch *Mighty Aphrodite*, who could blame him? His solution, as always, is to indulge himself, to load his work up with some absurdly heavy freight. The chorus lumbers about, gesturing weirdly and pantomiming broadly, with the mimetic correctness one expects from a Discovery Channel documentary but not from a major motion picture set on Manhattan's Upper East Side, circa 1995.

The Greek chorus may be the most pretentious device yet employed in a Woody Allen movie, although in terms of sheer pretension nothing will ever outdo his one-two punch from the late 1970s, *Interiors* and *Manhattan*. *Interiors*, his imitation of Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* and his first "serious" movie, featured dialogue so wretched that it became clear Allen believes seriousness and humorlessness were ultimately the same thing. "Suddenly," one *Interiors* character says, "I became hyperaware of my body." Another character denounces her new mother-in-law with this telling epithet: "She's a . . . VULGARIAN!" Would that be East Vulgaria, or Vulgaria Minor?

But Allen's masterpiece of pretension surely has to be *Manhattan*, in which he attempts to make fun of intellectuals but only shows his desperate yearning to be counted among their number. His characters spend the movie dropping names from Thomas Mann to Isak Dinesen; it's a trait Allen seems to want to parody, but he is more guilty of it than they. "I saw your article on Brecht in the *Atlantic Monthly*," someone says to literary critic Diane Keaton; "Yes, I've always been a sucker for Germanic theater," she replies. Brecht is a German writer, not a *Germanic* writer.

After those two films, Allen's writing took a turn toward the awkward and flowery from which it has never returned. "It is September," says a character in *Hannah and Her Sisters*. "Soon it will be fall." That would be the general sequence of events, it's true. In *Radio Days*, the best of his later movies, characters celebrate New Year's Eve on a rooftop, uttering fortune-cookie profundities like, "The years! Where did they all go? Time flies. Things change." It matters that these are all lines spoken by Gentiles; Allen seems to labor under the misapprehension that WASPs are so refined and precious that they don't use contractions.

Despite all this, there's something touching about Allen's pretentiousness, because it suggests that despite his fame, his Oscars,

his Bentley, his three collections of stories, his hit plays, he is still a New York University dropout, desperate to prove to the college graduates and the Ph.D.s that he is not just some dilettante. "I was thrown out of college for cheating on my metaphysics final," he once quipped in his wondrously funny stand-up comedy act. "I looked within the soul of the boy sitting next to me."

That was a joke, but it reflected a deep-seated intellectual anxiety. Like most self-educated people, Allen simply has to let people know that he, too, is well-read. For years, he let interviewers know that he sat around reading the works of the 19th-century German philosopher Schopenhauer "for fun," and that his original title for *Annie Hall* was the psychiatric term "Anhedonia." He made an entire movie, *Love and Death*, to demonstrate how well-versed he was in the cliches of the 19th-century Russian novel. (This time, it paid off; *Love and Death* is one of the six or seven best American comedies.)

This yearning for intellectual respectability was considered a mark of Allen's importance. In this, as in so many other ways, Allen reflected the aspirations of his loyal New York audience, a world of people who read book reviews as though they were books and whose idea of a profound literary experience is a gussied-up trash novel like Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* or Peter Høeg's *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. For more than a decade, before the taste for post-pubescent girls he revealed on celluloid in *Manhattan* was made flesh in the person of his semi-stepdaughter, Soon-Yi Previn, America's foremost wannabe was unquestionably one of the nation's two or three leading cultural figures.

His stature was largely due to the ministrations of the *New York Times*, which has long functioned as his in-house PR department; it is a mark of how gingerly the paper treats him that not a single one of Allen's movies has received an unfavorable review in the *Times*. Never! And the man has made 24 of them, including such unmitigated stinkers as *Another Woman* and the unwatchable *Alice*.

Allen himself has given former *Times* movie critic Vincent Canby credit for making his career as a director in 1969 with a rave review of *Take the Money and Run*, and judging from her dishonest review of *Mighty Aphrodite*, a movie she clearly disliked but still praised, Canby's successor Janet Maslin is determined to carry on the tradition.

Sean Delonas

But just as New York no longer dominates American culture, neither do its household gods and their pseudo-religions. Allen lost the Best Original Screenplay Oscar last year to Quentin Tarantino, writer-director of *Pulp Fiction*, whose position as the hot filmmaker of the moment parallels Allen's standing in the late 1970s. Even as he was, and is, keenly desirous of appearing to be a highbrow, Allen's ultimate artistic ambitions were middlebrow—he wanted to write *New Yorker* stories like S.J. Perelman's, plays like the Broadway wit George S. Kaufman's, and movies like Ingmar Bergman's.

By contrast, Tarantino is unashamedly post-literate. His influences are the television shows of the 1970s and the Hong Kong action movies of the 1980s and 1990s. He doesn't want to explore, portentously, the mysteries of the human soul in the manner of Bergman and Fellini; he wants to blow holes in people, in the manner of Chinese directors Ringo Lam, Tsui Hark, and John Woo.

Forty years ago, when Woody Allen made his brief foray into college life, fearsome scholars like Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss were living in New York, teaching works of philosophy to young strivers in their thick German accents while elsewhere in Greenwich Village literary reputations were being made and destroyed in the pages of *Partisan Review*. That world is no more; Allen and his perpetual sense of exclusion from it are among its last echoes.

The world belongs to the Tarantinos now, and Tarantino is not only a favorite among Academy voters. He is also the perfect creature of the post-structuralist American university campus.

The pointy-heads these days don't read philosophy and frighten their students; they study movies and suck up to the kids. And their students will go a lifetime without ever knowing there was such a thing as a Greek chorus—unless, that is, they see *Mighty Aphrodite*. ♦

New Hampshire Governor Merrill Backs Dole: Dole Wins "Most Sought-After Political Endorsement in the Country"

--Bob Dole for President Press Release, Nov. 8, 1995

Parody

BOB DOLE FOR PRESIDENT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
NOVEMBER 30, 1995

NEW HAMPSHIRE HERO DANIEL WEBSTER BACKS DOLE
Through Psychic Friends Network,
Dole Wins "Most Sought-After Endorsement of a Dead Person"

Republican Robert Dole's efforts to secure the support of all prominent politicians in the Granite State took an unprecedented turn today when the late Daniel Webster, who represented New Hampshire in the House of Representatives from 1813 to 1817, declared himself "a Dole partisan." Dole immediately named Webster to the position of General Chairman of Dead People for Dole, a senior position in the Dole for President campaign.

"Daniel Webster was one of the greatest orators this country has ever produced," Dole said in a statement. "Now, through the efforts of the channelers at the Psychic Friends Network, he will turn those formidable powers of persuasion on the 20th century residents of New Hampshire just as he did on the 19th, and for only $3.98 for the first minute and $2.50 per minute after that."

The Webster endorsement puts another nail in the coffin of the other Republican campaigns, so far unsuccessful in their pursuit of Granite State dead. "Lamar Alexander tried to get one-term president Franklin Pierce, but Pierce wouldn't budge," said Dole for President campaign manager Bill Lacy. "Phil Gramm hired Elizabeth Clare Prophet to sound out poet Robert Frost, but Frost said no dice. And even Steve Forbes's millions couldn't coax a nice word out of John Greenleaf Whittier."

"As Moses liberated the Hebrews from their Egyptian enslavement; as Spartacus liberated the oppressed of Rome; as George Washington liberated the tax-choked colonies from George III; so will Bob Dole liberate America from Bill Clinton," Webster said in a statement read by Dionne Warwick, the one-time pop singer and president of the Psychic Friends Network. She was recently named deputy campaign manager of the Dole for President campaign, and will concentrate her energies on securing the endorsements of prominent Iowans currently existing on another plane. . . .