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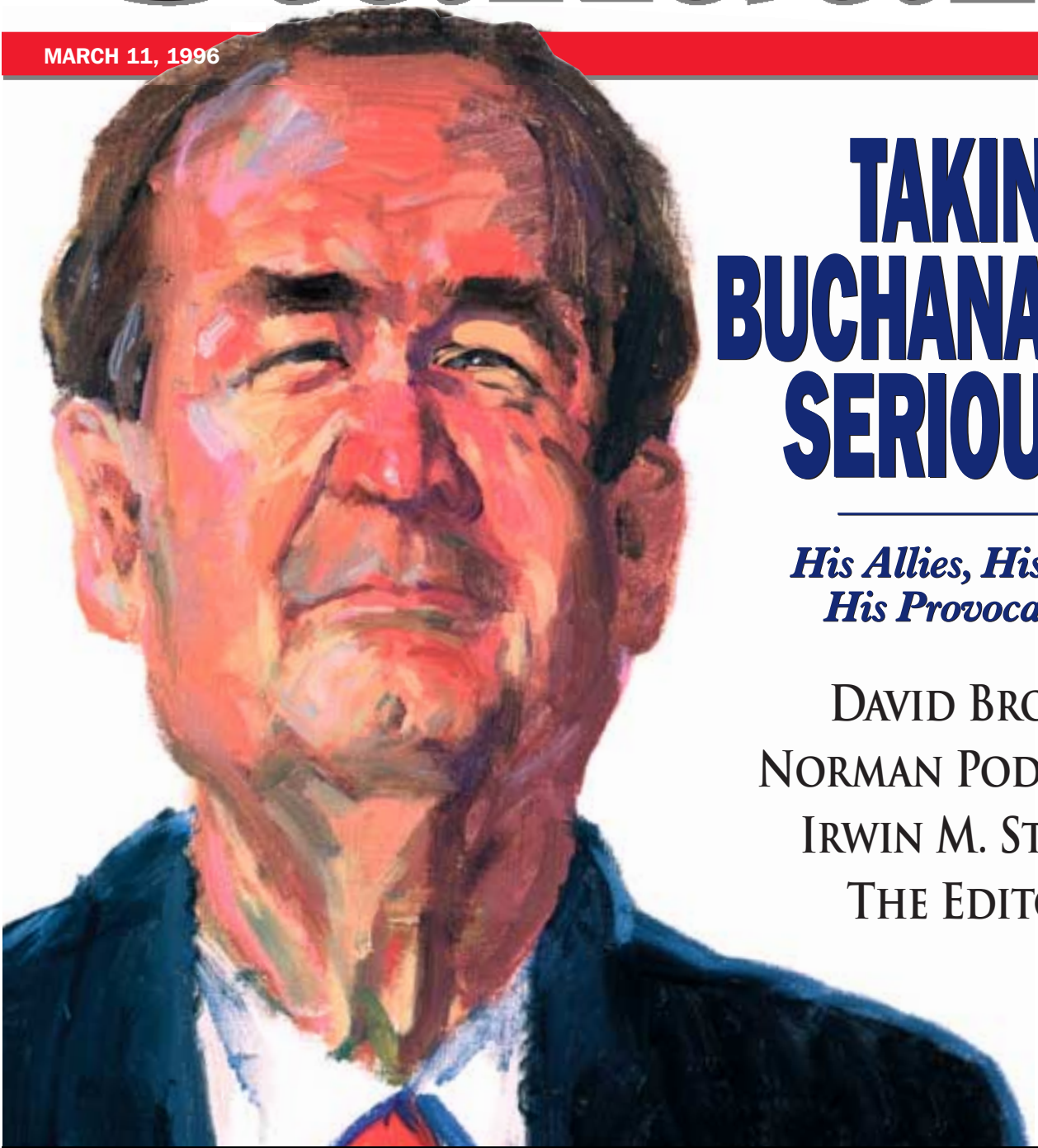

TAKING BUCHANANISM SERIOUSLY

His Allies, His Ideas, His Provocations

DAVID BROOKS
NORMAN PODHORETZ
IRWIN M. STELZER
THE EDITORS

Winslow Homer, Our Contemporary
DAVID GELERNTER

When Lefty Met Righty..., or, Sleepless in Hollywood
MICHAEL ANTON

the weekly Standard

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Hate Speech in California

Amid all the Republican gloom and doom, there's one development from California that's causing GOP spirits to brighten. On February 21, supporters of the California Civil Rights Initiative, which would eliminate race and gender preferences in state programs, submitted over a million petition signatures. That was more than enough to qualify for the November ballot. California is a must-win state for Bill Clinton, and he will probably be in the position of opposing the widely popular initiative.

Partly because of the political disaster they see coming in November due to CCRI, and partly because an attack on racial preferences is so deeply threatening to the Democratic party's coalition in general, leading California Democrats have already begun an extraordinary campaign of vituperation against CCRI's supporters. Several months ago, Willie Brown (then the speaker of the state assembly, now mayor of San Francisco) encouraged his followers to make life personally miserable for the two academics who authored the initiative. Now, Democratic state senator Diane Watson of Los Angeles has attacked Ward Connerly, the distinguished businessman who chairs the initiative campaign, for being married to a white woman: "He's married to a white woman. He wants a colorless society. He has no ethnic pride. He doesn't want to be black."

President Clinton has made much of denouncing hate speech. What does he—and for that matter, what do California senators Feinstein and Boxer, or White House chief of staff and former California congressman Leon Panetta—think of this hateful statement by a fellow Democrat?

Hemp Speech, Too

With all the hoopla in California about CCRI, other initiatives are getting precious little press. Two that deserve more attention concern the legalization of marijuana. One allows for medical use with a doctor's prescription; the other essentially opens the doors for free toking. Now, if you drug-war hawks out there are worried that one of these might pass, rest easy: The potheads have been trying to get both on the ballot since 1970 with no success. This year, though, after a medical-use bill passed the state legislature twice, only to be vetoed both times by Gov. Pete Wilson, they really think they have a chance.

But things aren't going all that well for them. At a recent rally in Los Angeles—on the grounds of the Federal Building, ironically, which is required by law to allow non-profit groups to assemble there—fewer than 100 people showed up and hardly anyone stayed for long. The reason? The rally was billed as a free concert, with bands performing all day, but apart from the bongo drums, stony silence reigned. One of the organizers admitted that the sound equipment had never arrived, probably because the guy who was supposed to bring it in his van stopped en route, got stoned, and fell asleep. This is a dopey way to run a campaign, fellas.

Dole Pineapple, Wishy-Washy Clinton

The Washington-based Pew Research Center recently asked 750 people for one-word descriptions of Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, and Pat Buchanan. The answers are, at the very least, illuminating. The four words most frequently used to describe Clinton were "good," "trying," "okay," and "fair." Tied for fifth were "honest" (no kidding) and "wishy-washy."

For Buchanan, "extreme," "radical," "conservative," and "ultra-conservative" rounded out the top four, with "racist," "scary," "jerk," "crazy," "nuts," "dangerous," and "frightening" also placing in the top 20. The top four for Dole were only a little bit better: "old," "conservative," "too old," and "good." But it may be a sign of Dole's troubles that the same number of people who thought of him as a "leader" and a "good man" also thought of the word "pineapple" when they were asked about him.

McGovern Revises

Revisionist historians usually wait more than 25 years before coming up with radical new theories to explain old events. George McGovern, the Demo-

Scrapbook

cratic party's candidate for president in 1972, has jumped the gun by a few years. In a February 26 letter to the *Wall Street Journal*, he cited six reasons he lost 49 states to Richard Nixon, all of which he says "had little to do with ideology." Among them: The failure of the AFL-CIO to endorse him "made it virtually impossible for me to mobilize organized labor," and he wasn't able to deliver his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention "until after 2 a.m., long past the bedtime of all but a tiny portion of the voters."

McGovern conveniently forgot to mention some of his less popular positions, ranging from his isolationism ("Come home, America" was the refrain from his convention speech) to his support for decriminalizing marijuana use. Nor should it be forgotten that his party had adopted a platform that was pro-busing and that called for amnesty for draft dodgers, ending capital punishment, and forbidding the sale of handguns. But give McGovern credit: He has handed some revisionists a new myth they can try to peddle for the next couple of decades.

The Reading List

The Reading List has a headache this week, because for almost a month now it has been attempting to plough through the Big Novel of 1996, David Foster Wallace's ***Infinite Jest***. The book runs more than 1,000 pages and is virtually impossible to decipher—it seems to be about a school in Massachusetts filled with tennis players who do a lot of drugs. Only it isn't Massachusetts, because Massachusetts has been taken over by Quebec. There's a movie that hypnotizes everyone who watches it, and an addict who goes into drug treatment. The Reading List usually hates this kind of Pynchonesque overwriting, but Wallace is an undeniably brilliant writer—so brilliant that it is difficult to put the thing down, even though holding it up in bed is enough to cause wrist dislocation. More reports as The Reading List nears the conclusion.

But ***Infinite Jest*** does bring to mind some great, brilliant, immensely long novels that only a maniac (or a reviewer) can actually finish:

Berlin Alexanderplatz, by Alfred Döblin. The elaborate, Joycean account of an ex-con making his way through late-1920s Berlin, made into an unwatchable 13-hour movie by the filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who died soon after. And who could blame him?

The Man Without Qualities, by Robert Musil. Much discussed last year because of a new edition, this unfinished 2,000-page novel about—well, it's a little hard to say what it's about, exactly. An international conference, a lot of people, some amazing satirical set pieces, but incomprehensible.

Finnegans Wake, by James Joyce. People have been arguing about it for years. Why, The Reading List doesn't know, since the List has figured out the truth about Joyce's final work: It only looks like it's in English. Actually, it's transliterated Swahili.

Casual

Mau-mauing the Flacks

What is the most despised profession in America? Judging from the amount of public scorn its practitioners receive, you might think the answer would be the law. And yet being a lawyer is still a position of high status in American society, a job that still gives a lawyer's parents some bragging rights in exchange for the $75,000 it takes to get that law-school diploma. (By the way, you always know lawyers of the second rank because they add the "Esq." after their names, even though the designation "Esquire" is simply an antiquated way of saying "Mister" and is not conferred by a body of experts, like a doctorate. The most comic use of it is with a woman's name: "Yours sincerely, Tiffany Rosenberg, Esq.")

Politician? Again, disliked as a collective, but admired individually. The same is true with the "media," even those local TV people who thoughtlessly tromp all over the lawns of the homes of the recently bereaved and are made out to be villains in movies and on episodic television shows. (During the recent snowstorm here in Washington, a friend who works for a local news station told me he was picked up and brought to work by citizen volunteers. "You mean" I asked, "that people volunteered to shuttle the employees of a hugely profitable TV station around town for free?" "Always," he said. That's not the sign of a profession people hate.)

Comedians have long told jokes about those intrepid souls who peddle insurance for a living: In Woody Allen's *Take the Money and Run,* for example, a prisoner on a chain gang who tries to escape is punished by being locked for three days in a hot-box with an insurance salesman. But targeting door-to-door bell ringers is a little like saying "groovy" or listening to the musical stylings of Mantovani.

There is one category of professional that those of us who write and edit for a living despise above all others—those hearty men and women who work in the field called "public relations." Call them "flacks," like we do, even though the very term is an act of disrespect. When it comes to dealing with flacks, all rules of decorum, politeness, even simple courtesy are off.

The flack lives by the unsolicited call. When I was working as the television critic for the *New York Post*, my phone would ring no fewer than 20 times a day. "Is John there? Hi, this is Hayley from Flack and Flack Public Relations." (For some reason, they're usually named Hayley or Tracey or Stacey, I don't know why.) "I'm just calling to follow up on some material I sent you about *Foofur*, the Saturday morning cartoon show. It's really special, you know—it deals with issues, like this week, Foofur learns to recycle. Hey, you know what? Foofur itself is going to be appearing at the mall in Paramus, N.J., next weekend, and we'd love to set up an interview."

Usually there was one escape hatch offered you from a long and agonizing pitch for something no rational person would actually be interested in. "Are you on deadline?" they might ask. "Yes, yes, on deadline!" I would reply, for the word "deadline" had some mystical power over them. "Oh! Well, then, I'll call back," they would say, and release the line.

Soon it became clear what was going on. All the flack had to do was assure her boss that she had made contact with journalists, especially when peddling some impossibly boring material. Later she would write a report in which my name, among others, would appear as someone with whom she had successfully "followed up," even if no article actually came out of it.

On the other hand, there are the flacks whose job it is to function as gate-keepers; control freaks who make it difficult, if not impossible, for a journalist to do his job. These are the ones who control access to celebrities or material that is in demand. And instead of the wheedling insistence that characterizes their *Foofur* brethren, they turn obnoxious and regal, taking on the character of celebrity itself. A friend of mine who works for a newsmagazine wanted to write a favorable piece about a television comedienne who would, six months earlier, have died with pleasure to get his call. Instead, the flack put him off for a week before finally explaining to him that she "isn't really interested in print these days."

After a while, you begin to learn that the only way to deal with flacks is to hang up on them, almost literally. When Hayley, or Tracey, begins her tap dance, you just have to say, "I'm too busy to hear a pitch" and get off the phone before she can schedule a time to call back. You really have no choice; if you're too pleasant about it, word will get around, and flacks will look forward to calling you. That would be like letting the world of unsolicited telephone salesmen know that you just love getting their calls in the middle of dinner. The consequences for your sanity could be disastrous.

John Podhoretz

Laughing at the Left's Cacophony

Matt Labash's article "Mr. Hackney's Opus" (Feb. 26) has everything an outstanding conservative journal should: poignancy, insight, and a healthy dose of humor (although I'm afraid much of the latter falls into the "if you didn't laugh, you'd cry" category).

The conversations described by Labash are precisely the type of counterproductive exercise at which liberalism excels: a group of academic and fringe leftists bemoaning their collective plight and ranting about all the ways white, Eurocentric male society keeps them down.

Considering conservatism's message of rugged individualism, a common American culture, equality of opportunity, and fair treatment for every citizen, one wonders how much longer these divisive figures will have any audience at all.

Jon Prescott
Patten, ME

Matt Labash's article on the National Conversation is riveting in its ability to make readers laugh, rather than cry out in outrage. He brings forth the truth of Sheldon's Hackneyed rhetoric.

Furthermore, the cartoon of the National Endowment for the Humanities bull by Michael Ramirez is perfect!

Nancy Jancourtz
Eastchester, NY

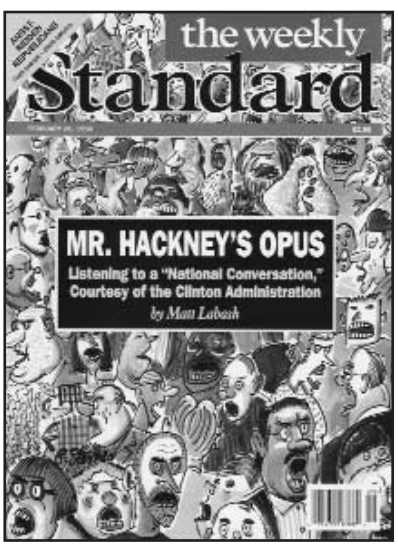
The Burden of Immigrants

Your editorial "Republicans and Immigration" (Feb. 26) warns that under pending Senate and House bills there are "almost 2.5 million people on waiting lists in the family immigration categories these bills would kill" and the "vast majority of them are related to full U.S. citizens, people who can vote."

Is this a part of the Republican revolution we haven't been told about—buying votes with taxpayer dollars? As Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation recently noted, under current immigration policy, the "U.S. welfare system is rapidly becoming a deluxe retirement home for the elderly of other countries."

In 1994, nearly 738,000 non-citizen residents were receiving aid from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, a 580 percent increase in just 12 years. The overwhelming majority of non-citizen residents are elderly, and most get on the taxpayer-pulled wagon within five years.

As Rector points out, without reform, the total cost of SSI and Medicaid benefits for elderly non-citizen immi-



grants will amount to more than $328 billion over the next decade, reaching more than $67 billion per year by the year 2004.

Elderly immigrants should be supported permanently by the relatives who sponsor their entry, so they do not become a future and permanent burden on the American taxpayer.

Daniel John Sobieski
Chicago, IL

I was amused by your editorial on immigration, which observed that "we're managing that [legal] immigration quite well—and to good effect."

Perhaps you were referring to some other country.

In the United States, our dysfunctional legal immigration system is groaning under 30 years of accumulated foolishness: millions of people on waiting lists, a large and growing education gap between natives and immigrants, a politicized and racialized visa lottery, a refugee system that admits few genuine refugees, and a political-asylum policy that is metastasizing to cover virtually everyone on the planet.

Nor are legal and illegal immigration as separate as your editorial's bromides suggest. A recent internal State Department study found that 90 percent of Mexicans waiting for legal immigration visas appear already to be living in the United States.

In fact, it wouldn't be too far off the mark to typify our entire legal immigration system as nothing more than a permanent rolling amnesty for illegal aliens.

As for "raw politics"—the GOP's prospects if it passes immigration reform—decades of polling show that Americans of all shapes and flavors are uncomfortable with high levels of immigration.

Naturally, if immigration reform is cloaked in a white hood, people of Asian and Hispanic ancestry will be frightened—but that can happen only when good men relinquish the issue of immigration reform to the kooks. The question is not whether there will be reform of legal immigration policy, but rather when and by whom—now, by men of good will, or later, by paranoids and rabble-rousers.

Mark Krikorian
Washington, DC

Insurance Coercion

As much as I enjoyed Tod Lindberg's piece on Bill Clinton's recently discovered recreational insurance ("State Farm Was There," Feb. 26), I suspect that Lindberg was thrown off the scent a bit when he spoke to defense lawyer Robert Bennett. Please allow a former insurance defense lawyer to add some perspective.

As most people have heard by now, Chubb and State Farm have made a joint down payment of almost $900,000 toward Bennett's legal fees in the Paula Jones case.

Lindberg writes that the Clintons first obtained umbrella liability coverage with Chubb in 1988. Then, in 1994, the Clintons apparently chose to change their coverage to State Farm. Though the Clintons did probably maintain

Correspondence

"continuous" coverage for themselves, Lindberg was apparently led to think that this continuity somehow bound State Farm to defend Clinton against claims that arose prior to the date of their 1994 policy, i.e., the allegations of the Paula Jones case.

This is not so, and State Farm's willingness to participate in this defense cannot be explained in terms of ordinary practice. While Clinton's umbrella policies probably included general provisions regarding defamation, I think one can safely assume that no sexual-harassment riders were written in.

Because the Paula Jones complaint seeks only $100,000 for defamation, $100,000 is likely the maximum exposure these carriers will face. Add to this the unheard-of extravagance of Bennett's billing practices, and the decision of Chubb and especially State Farm to involve themselves in this costly defense, rather than deny the claim, makes sense only if it was coerced.

Lindberg was quite correct to conclude, in his kind way, that these carriers have knuckled under to threats, actual or implied, of the bad press Bennett and his client could generate.

William Wade Matchneer, III
Alexandria, VA

Ever mindful of its reputation, the establishment press did nothing to dishonor the president when the story of his "bimbo insurance" was revealed.

But it's not surprising the Clintons are being given a free ride by the media. And while there's no state-run television in America for the Clintons to control, the media's liberal bias ensures that the administration will be covered in a manner that would make Boris Yeltsin smile.

Thomas M. Beattie
Mount Vernon, VA

They're Not Republicans

It's not surprising Ralph Reed cannot get his Christian Coalition to assimilate into mainstream Republican politics ("Social Issues Strike Back," Feb. 26). The vast majority are NOT Republicans—they are conservative Christian independents.

Since Reagan, people in "high places" have been making back-room deals with this group, as party loyalists hear the party being redefined by a bunch of independents.

Never reported are the results of a poll conducted by the Republican National Committee in 1993 of dues-paying members, which concluded that 60 percent believe the current laws on abortion are right and that homosexuality is a privacy matter.

Politics is about compromise, individual personal religious beliefs are not. I believe that's why our forefathers thought separation of church and state a sound principle.

Tommye Torian
Austin, TX

Numbers Are Not Enough

Bruce Chapman's review of *The Tyranny of Numbers* ("He's Numbers One," Feb. 26) correctly highlights Nicholas Eberstadt's point that statistics do not address the idea that pregnant mothers' attitudes are a large factor in the incidence of infant mortality and low birth weight. This issue of attitudes is crucial and is practically ignored by liberal policy-makers and money-spenders. Perhaps they forget that character is forged in families, rather than expensive, well-intentioned, but not very effective government programs.

Liberal political elites function most comfortably with "just the theories, ma'am"; they choose not to face, or are ignorant of, the attitudes that lead to poverty-inducing behavior.

After a debate at Dickinson College between conservative author Dinesh D'Souza and Harvard law professor Christopher Edley, Jr. (domestic policy maker in the Carter and Clinton administrations), I asked Edley about this phenomenon.

I cited specific at-risk young people who receive tens of thousands of dollars in educational, job-training, counseling, and other benefits, who nonetheless are carving themselves a place on the poverty-statistics chart with their self-destructive behavior. In response to my question about how more government dollars help these people, Edley shrugged his shoulders with regret. Just as I thought.

Beth Klein
Carlisle, PA

Health Care Portability

As president of the Health Insurance Association of America, I would like to respond to your editorial "An Ounce of Cure" (Feb. 19). It makes a critical error when it implies that objections we raised to the bill's group-to-individual portability provision are without merit.

The editorial contends that rates for individual purchasers won't rise significantly if group-to-individual portability is guaranteed because insurers can charge "anything they want." The editorial's idea seems to be that insurers will be able to avoid insuring the least healthy by offering them policies at unaffordable prices, with no net effect on the individual market overall. But this simply isn't a credible scenario.

The individual health-insurance marketplace is smaller and more price-sensitive than the group market. People who lose group insurance have to dig deep into their own pockets to continue coverage. Those most likely to take advantage of a group-to-individual portability provision will be the least healthy and the most likely to incur high medical costs. This will drive up costs in the individual market, and drive up premiums within state-imposed limitations.

The group-to-individual portability provision and its potential to precipitate across-the-board rate increases may well lead to fewer people with coverage. State-specific "comprehensive" or high-risk pools are still the best way to provide affordable insurance to medically at-risk individuals who don't have group coverage.

Bill Gradison
Washington, DC

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the weekly Standard

The Buchanan Accident

Political ideas have consequences. But political consequences don't always have ideas. Not very big ones, at least. Sometimes in politics things just *happen*, almost at random, products of unconnected choice and chance that only remotely involve The Issues. This naturally unsettles the serious people who explain and practice politics for a living. So they struggle against it, attempting to superimpose theoretical depth and practical logic on events that often aren't very deep or logical at all.

This year's Republican presidential race is a chaotic case in point. The campaign is going very badly. It has so far been a rancorous multi-candidate stalemate. Its principal effect has been to boost the standing of Pat Buchanan, a man whose style and substance many American voters find more than a little unpleasant and spooky. The longer this battle continues, the weaker it will make the GOP's eventual nominee, and the more it will thus limit prospects for a November presidential outcome that might help seal the rightward realignment of American politics.

> THE PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST BILL CLINTON'S FECKLESS INCONSTANCY NOW PLACES A PREMIUM ON "AUTHENTICITY" IN CANDIDATES.

So what does this *mean* about the ideological coalition that not 15 months ago swept the Republican party to national majority status? Have big, radically different ideas gained sudden currency, ideas that threaten the conservative realignment? Have forces that may fracture the Republican coalition been unleashed? And is there anything anyone can do to alter the current script and guarantee a happy ending?

American journalism now does its sober, professional best to discern the underlying political currents that have propelled Pat Buchanan's recent success. His economic platform is a collection of phobias about foreign trade, immigration, and heartless corporations. People are voting for him. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, the pundits argue: We are witnessing an eruption of economic populism at the Republican grassroots.

Are we, though? One searches the exit polls in vain for evidence that economic populism has determined more than a tiny fraction of Republican primary votes this year. On February 27, for example, Buchanan beat Bob Dole more than four to one among Arizonans who ranked immigration as the "most important issue." But only 10 percent of Arizona Republicans *did* rank immigration highest on the list of their concerns. Fewer still—a barely visible 4 percent—were primarily motivated by questions of "foreign trade." And, oddly enough, a plurality in this latter category preferred *Dole*, not Buchanan.

There *is* one, indisputably significant group of issue-driven Republicans for whom Pat Buchanan now holds special, vote-generating appeal: religious conservatives. They are supporting him by wide margins: 48 percent of them in New Hampshire and 54 percent of them in Arizona. But is that because they suppose that President Buchanan might realistically *accomplish* something more about abortion or school prayer than could, say, President Dole? Doubtful. Religious conservatives probably like Buchanan for a simpler (though no less salient) reason: He is now the national political figure who voices their convictions with greatest passion and candor.

Passion and candor matter a lot at the moment. The public reaction against Bill Clinton's feckless inconstancy now places a special premium on non-Clintonian "authenticity" in candidates for public office. In this year's presidential campaign, Democrats do not have much choice in the matter. But Republicans do. Asked why they voted as they did, Republicans in the New Hampshire and Arizona primaries—all Republicans, not just religious conservatives—said they wanted a man who, more than anything else, would "stand up for his beliefs." Republicans this year

are voting not so much for any particular set of legislative proposals, in other words, but for a *mood*. And Buchanan's is the most vivid and vigorously expressed mood in the field.

It's not clear, after all, that many of his ideas really are so "extreme" in the textbook sense of the word. This magazine doesn't agree with some of those ideas. But more than a few people, in both parties, *do*. What is arguably "extreme" about Buchananism is Buchanan himself. He is constitutionally opposed to the pieties that help make civil discourse civil. He has a natural, voracious, and often frightening appetite for the farthest edges of acceptable public debate. "I'm the bad guy," Buchanan gleefully informs the *New York Times*. And he plays that role with gusto, deliberately enraging and expanding the ranks of his enemies, and delighting (and isolating) his supporters in the process—a manner and strategy that have never once in history won an American presidential campaign.

So Buchanan represents current conservatism's least practical, most romantic *ultra* temperament. And unless Lamar Alexander's calculated "just plain folks" routine soon wins better reviews from actual voters, Republicans are left only two other moods to choose from. There's the gee-whiz libertarian futurism of Steve Forbes, whose unconcern for cultural conservatism is barely disguised. And the stolid, decent, painfully inarticulate Republican orthodoxy of Robert Dole.

Senator Dole's is the conservatism with broadest Republican and national appeal. He is also, at least by dint of experience in elective office (dare we utter such an "elitist" thought?), the best qualified of the three to manage the roller-coaster politics of the presidency. So why, with such advantages, his candidacy should be proving so obviously feeble—why he should be deadlocked in the race for a major-party presidential nomination with two *journalists*—is an interesting question. There are many answers. Few of them have much to do with big ideas.

The "revolutionary" rhetoric employed by Republican congressional candidates to such great effect in 1994 has worked to discredit American political orthodoxies of every stripe. And mainstream Republican conservatism, in particular, has been undermined in 1994's Washington aftermath. The revolution was over-promised. In legislative terms, it could not be achieved by narrow Republican congressional majorities over the obstructionism of a Democratic White House. And so if "revolution" is what's needed, and "insiders" like Bob Dole haven't managed to produce it, why *not* Pat Buchanan or Steve Forbes?

Less complicated, more obvious factors have also worked to elevate "outsider" Republican candidacies this year. Talent matters, as always. Buchanan, in particular, is a superb campaigner. Dole isn't. Money matters, too. Unburdened by fund-raising requirements and legal spending limits, a reasonably competent wealthy person can go quite far, even in a presidential primary campaign. Steve Forbes proves that.

And then there is workaday accident and happenstance. Several plausible and attractive mainstream conservatives declined to make the presidential race this year. A switch of just 1,000 or so votes in Louisiana and New Hampshire would have given those races to Phil Gramm and Bob Dole, which might have sharply shifted the campaign's momentum. Phil Gramm's campaign—and Pete Wilson's, for that matter—ran aground, unexpectedly, before the primaries even really began. And so on. Thus we have the field we've got.

No one can predict how or when the Republican nomination will finally be resolved. We won't even try. By the time the next issue of this magazine appears, voters in South Carolina, the New England states, Colorado, Georgia, and New York will all have cast their ballots. Those results will inevitably alter the already fragile, manic psychology of the campaign. It's a nerve-wracking spectacle for anyone who hopes for the defeat of the Clinton administration. Republican operatives and conservatives who prefer to win are pulling their hair with worry, and desperately hunting for a way to "clear the field" in favor of a candidate who could unite the party well in advance of November.

But, look: That's probably not going to happen anytime soon. To date, Steve Forbes leads the race where delegates to the August Republican national convention are concerned. He can afford to go on. Why on earth, then, would he drop out? Why, for that matter, should Pat Buchanan ever let another candidate beat him into silence? He doesn't need much money to continue. He has a core of committed supporters sufficient to keep him in the running for the rest of the year. And, truth be told, winning the race (or managing the race so as best to help the party beat Clinton) isn't an overriding Buchanan concern. He's the "bad guy," remember.

On the other hand, we're not prepared to concede November's general election, either. Much of the current Republican morass could be long forgotten by then. Early Republican primary results have been over-interpreted in our view, to conservatism's unwarranted disadvantage. In Congress, and especially at the state level, the GOP's winning 1994 coalition still seems reasonably coherent. The tidal waves of partisan and ideological alignment in America—population shifts to the West and South, congressional retirements and redistricting, and liberalism's general exhaustion and unpopularity—still work in favor of the GOP.

Just the same, as the presidential race unfolds, there's no reason to think things won't get worse before they get better. It didn't have to be this way. It's in some significant measure an accident that it *is* this way. But in politics, accidents sometimes count just as much as big ideas. And accidents have consequences, too. Alas.

— David Tell, for the Editors

Don't Play the Numbers

by Stephen Chapman

The economy is expanding, unemployment is low, and inflation is at bay—none of which is to the benefit of a political party intent on recapturing the White House. So Republicans, unable to point mournfully to the misery index, have been casting about for bad news to blame on Bill Clinton, even as they try to attribute any good news to the healing capacities of the GOP Congress.

A recent example comes in the form of a press release from the House Republican Conference. The Conference notes that home ownership has reached its highest level since 1982, and guess who it says is responsible? But a closer examination reveals the emptiness of the boast. It shows instead the danger of grabbing just any available political weapon, something Republicans will be increasingly tempted to do with the approach of the November election.

> BLAMING CLINTON FOR INTEREST RATES PERPETUATES THE FICTION THAT ELECTED OFFICIALS CAN FINE-TUNE THE ECONOMY.

"Why the dramatic rise?" asks the Conference. "After the first year of the Clinton administration, . . . as the Clinton Democrats' largest tax increase in history kicked in, *mortgage rates rose from about 7.1 percent in November 1993 to 9.2 in November 1994*. After the election of the first GOP Congress in 40 years, *mortgage rates began a steady decline and are now hovering around 7 percent*." The lesson is presented as clear and simple: "The Republican promise of a balanced budget, pro-family and pro-growth tax relief and our success in compelling the President to agree to these goals . . . have meant lower mortgage rates for families."

But, contrary to these claims, economic events did not flow from political events so neatly. Mortgage rates began a steady drop the month after Bill Clinton was elected and continued falling for nearly a full year, apparently oblivious to his proposed tax increase (unveiled in February 1993) and its enactment (six months later). They did begin to climb in November 1993 and continued upward until December 1994. But these ups and downs were unrelated to Clinton's tax increase and the GOP seizure of Capitol Hill. They were almost wholly the work of the Federal Reserve Board.

In 1993, as the economy continued the expansion it began in 1991, the Fed tightened its monetary policy, which had the effect of raising interest rates—including, in due course, the price of a home mortgage. But in July 1995, with the economy slowing and apparently on the verge of stalling, the Fed eased off the brakes, allowing interest rates to begin the descent to their current low levels. Economists may argue about whether Alan Greenspan and Co. were wise in managing interest rates this way; what no one really disputes is that it was they, and not others, who were responsible. According to Cato Institute chairman William Niskanen, who headed Ronald Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, the course of interest rates during this period "had nothing to do with fiscal policy."

Furthermore, the Conference's glib analysis is an act of political imprudence. By explaining broad economic trends as the near-instant products of good or bad fiscal actions, or even good or bad fiscal intentions, it perpetuates the fiction that elected officials in Washington have perfect control over growth, unemployment, and the general financial well-being of the nation. This belief did a lot to destroy the reelection effort of President Bush, whose realistic conviction that the 1990-91 recession would be ended only by time was taken to be defeatism, even callous indifference. Pat Buchanan, in the GOP primaries, and later Bill Clinton were able to depict Bush's inability to revive the economy with the flick of a finger as unwillingness to help victims of the recession. But the incumbent was right on the two important points: Federal action would have been an expensive placebo at best and a positive hindrance at worst; and the recession was going to end soon anyway. (In truth, it had ended before the campaign began.)

By trading on the notion that the economy can be fine-tuned, House Republicans invite the sort of

activist fiscal gimmicks that have lost favor even among liberal economists. A recognition of the Federal Reserve's crucial role, by contrast, goes with accepting that monetary policy, though the most important influence on the economy's short-term fluctuations, is a clumsy instrument and therefore one to be used with caution and humility. The urge to turn the month-to-month fortunes of the economy into a morality play is not hard to understand: Bill Clinton got elected largely because he skillfully exploited this myth, so it could be seen as fitting and just that the GOP retake the White House by turning the myth against him. But it remains a myth, and is no real friend of conservative economics.

Republicans also invite the charge of hypocrisy on their most potent theme: opposition to tax increases. No Republican voted for the Clinton tax increase—the heart of which was an increase in marginal tax rates for both individuals and corporations—but neither have congressional Republicans taken steps to repeal it. The top personal rate had been 31 percent; the Clinton measure raised it to 36 percent and added a 10 percent "surcharge" on taxable income above $250,000 (yielding a top rate of 39.6 percent). Meanwhile, it boosted the top corporate rate from 34 percent to 35 percent. These actions constituted a deliberate rollback of the greatest economic achievement of the Reagan administration, as well as a repudiation of the supply-side theory that lower marginal rates stimulate output.

So while congressional Republicans denounce Clintonomics, they have not sought to undo it. Their Contract with America ignored the rate increases, and their leadership in both houses has followed suit. This neglect is particularly glaring given that one of the first new rules enacted by the Republican House requires a three-fifths vote for any increase in income-tax rates, personal or corporate. If it is critical to block future increases, why is it not important to repeal recent ones?

Leery of being attacked for redistributing money to the rich, Republicans have voted to cut taxes in an entirely different way—through a $500-per-child tax credit. That change can be defended as merely a reclamation of some of the lost value of the personal exemption, gutted by inflation. But it does nothing to improve incentives for work and saving, which Republicans are supposed to care about.

It also leaves unrepaired the damage done by the Clinton hikes to Reagan's already-tattered 1986 tax reform. Efficiency-sapping tax dodges not worth the trouble to escape a 31 percent rate can be powerfully alluring when the gouge rises to nearly 40 cents on the dollar.

Ronald Reagan cut marginal rates that were far higher than these, delivering a much bigger windfall to the rich. But he never suffered for it politically. He made Americans understand that onerous levels of taxation on the affluent are bad for the economy and bad for persons of modest means. He also cultivated an understanding that Washington has the best effect when it concentrates on creating a framework for long-term prosperity, not worrying unduly about passing economic events. Today's Republicans are taking a different approach—at the peril of both the economy and their own political prospects.

Stephen Chapman is a syndicated columnist on the staff of the **Chicago Tribune.**

Affirmative Reaction

by Matthew Rees

When Senate majority leader Robert Dole announced last July 27 that he wanted to ban set-asides for women and minorities in federal contracting and hiring, he didn't do it quietly. He published an op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled "A New Civil Rights Agenda" and held a press conference in the Capitol. The speakers included prominent black conservatives like Armstrong Williams and Robert Woodson. Dole said that for too many Americans, "our country is no longer the land of opportunity but a pie chart, where jobs and other benefits are often awarded not because of hard work or merit, but because of someone's biology." The message was unmistakable: Repealing affirmative action would be a major GOP campaign theme and a priority for congressional Republicans.

But in the intervening seven months, Dole has hardly made a peep about affirmative action, and two of the presidential candidates who did—Phil Gramm and Pete Wilson—have dropped from the race. Dole's repeal of set-asides is not receiving wholehearted support from either House or Senate Republicans, many of whom believe the party is better off sticking with a less confrontational "empowerment" agenda. Creeping Kempism has infected the party brass.

How has opposition to race-based preferences—a no-brainer for most Republicans—become too hot to

handle? "Republicans are not comfortable talking about race," says Linda Chavez, president of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Washington and an informal Dole adviser. Representative Gary Franks, a black Republican from Connecticut, told the *Boston Globe* in August that Republicans "love to get political mileage out of [affirmative action], but when it comes time to vote, they don't want to do it."

Indeed, many congressional Republicans see an attempt to pass Dole's legislation (sponsored in the House by Charles Canady of Florida) as a bloody battle they are not prepared to fight. Already tagged as "extremists" over the budget, they are in no mood for a high-profile effort to curtail programs benefiting women and minorities. Rep. Chris Cox, a California Republican and leader of a House task force on affirmative action, says there is an "abundance of caution, introspection, and circumspection on this issue" among his colleagues. Understandably: As Clint Bolick of the Washington-based Institute for Justice puts it, "The liberal civil rights establishment will go into a paroxysm over the Dole/Canady bill."

Kevin Chadwick

J.C. Watts

Complicating matters is uncertainty about where the House speaker stands. On the one hand, Newt Gingrich has been a vocal critic of race-specific government programs. Last year, against the advice of aides, he signed a fund-raising letter for the California Civil Rights Initiative, the measure on November's ballot that would bar the use of race and gender preferences by that state.

On the other hand, Gingrich, who keeps a portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr. in his office, is not as hardline as some of his colleagues. In July, he helped scuttle a Franks amendment seeking to eliminate minority set-asides in federal contracting, and shortly thereafter he said on the *Today* show that Republicans should "spend four times as much effort reaching out to the black community to ensure that they know they will not be discriminated against, as compared to the amount of effort we've put into saying we're against quotas and set-asides." Before a conservative audience in Washington on the evening of the Million Man March, Gingrich delivered an impassioned speech on race and poverty. The march, he said, "ought to be a wake-up call for all of America. And maybe, in a grand wonderful irony typical of American history, all of us owe Louis Farrakhan a thank-you for having told all of us if the pain level is great enough for him to be a leader, then we all have a lot bigger challenge to lead."

The distilled Gingrich view is that Republicans should work to eliminate affirmative action, but they should also have something to put in its place. To this end, the speaker appointed a Minority Issues Task Force in the spring of 1995, which has been studying Kemp-style empowerment policies: enterprise zones, school choice and vouchers, tenant management of public housing, and deregulation of social services. On February 27, Gingrich attended a press conference where the task force's proposals were unveiled.

The chief advocates of empowerment in the House are task force co-chairmen J.C. Watts, a black Republican from Oklahoma, and Jim Talent, a white Republican from Missouri. Both say they are foes of race- and gender-based preferences, but their views are slightly more nuanced than those of other congressional conservatives, and neither is among the 96 cosponsors of Dole/Canady. Talent told me he has done nothing to stop Dole/Canady but doesn't want it "linked" to the empowerment package. Watts has been more outspoken in trying to persuade colleagues that moving too quickly on affirmative action would be a mistake. "We need to keep affirmative action policies in place to ensure equality of opportunity," he told me. Watts also says the GOP's race-related rhetoric has "reinforced some of the myths about the Republican party." Aides working for Talent and Watts are even more adamant; they're trying to push Dole/Canady off this year's agenda, arguing it undermines the empowerment program.

These sentiments are not mere anomalies. Kemp told reporters in July, "If '96 is run on dividing the races, I will not participate." Similarly, Rep. Jack Kingston, a conservative Republican from Georgia, told me the GOP's work on affirmative action could be counterproductive: "Why put kerosene on our fire, because that's all we'd be doing" by trying to repeal affirmative action. Kingston, who helped kill last summer's Franks amendment ending federal set-asides,

also believes it's premature for Republicans to pass the Dole/Canady legislation. He says, "We have not had the national debate on affirmative action that's needed." Canady calls this "silly," adding, "Anyone who has that idea might want to read the newspapers."

In the Senate, the mood is more subdued. As long as Dole is on the campaign trail, his legislation is unlikely to bubble up. His chief adviser on the issue, Dennis Shea, is now on Dole's campaign payroll. Another damper is that at least one of the two senior Republicans on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, Nancy Kassebaum and Jim Jeffords, could easily oppose the bill, preventing it from getting to the floor.

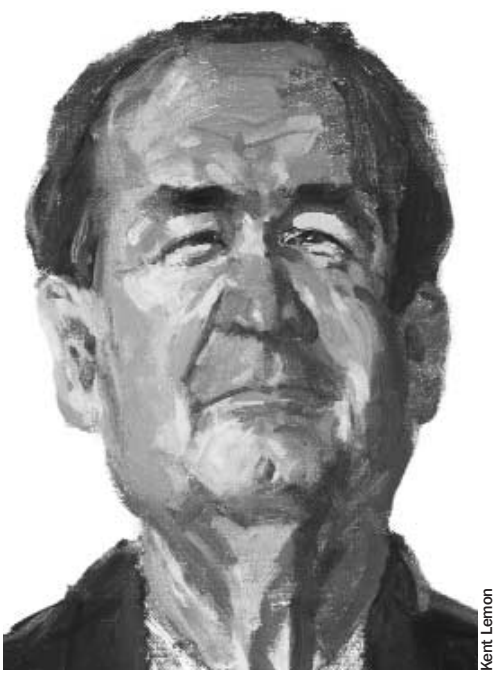
The backdrop for this reluctance to tackle affirmative action is political. With Colin Powell identifying himself as a Republican, and with black enthusiasm for the Democratic party waning (a *Los Angeles Times* poll shows just 58 percent of blacks identifying themselves as Democrats, down from 74 percent in 1992), an aggressive empowerment agenda could help the GOP with black voters. Yet the political arithmetic is stark: Much greater potential gains are to be had from an assault on affirmative action, which would alienate only a marginal number of black votes, while attracting many white ones. (Another *Los Angeles Times* poll last year found 78 percent of whites opposed to race-based preferences in hiring and college admissions.) Thus, the California Civil Rights Initiative is expected to mobilize many of the voters who helped Proposition 187 and Pete Wilson win landslide victories in 1994. Some say President Clinton's inevitable opposition to the initiative could cost him California in November, which would make it exceedingly difficult for him to be reelected.

With a highly compressed congressional schedule in 1996, Dole/Canady faces a lot of competition for floor time. Moreover, Republicans acknowledge that the bill is unlikely to get through Congress and would certainly be vetoed by the president. Sure, the fight would present exactly the kind of ideological confrontation that many congressional conservatives seek. But don't count on this happening anytime soon. "Unless someone comes to us with a compelling campaign reason for why [Dole/Canady] needs to be moved," says a senior House Republican leadership aide, "the natural tendency will be to say no." For the Democrats, that's cause for cheer. ♦

Buchananism: an Intellectual Cause

By David Brooks

He says his followers are peasants. He speaks for working men and their grievances. He rails and rouses audiences like a carnival barker. But Pat Buchanan's presidential run is in fact as close to an intellectual's campaign as we have seen in modern politics. The Buchanan campaign doesn't have a pollster, nor does it have much in the way of consultants and apparatchiks. Instead, it has writers. His campaign manager Terry Jeffrey spent four years writing editorials for the *Washington Times*. His staffer Justin Raimondo wrote a definitive history of the Old Right. His friends and propagandists, such as Thomas Fleming and Samuel Francis, are essayists, as is Buchanan himself.



Kent Lemon

Huey Long and other populists may have tossed off their rhetoric from the top of their head. But Buchanan's rhetoric and ideas have an intellectual pedigree. When Buchanan declaims about the culture war, or about the role of women, or about America First, he is working in part from ideas developed in magazines like *Chronicles* and *The Southern Partisan*, whose masthead lists Buchanan as "senior advisor." These journals are written, edited, and read largely by people who call themselves "paleoconservatives." And given its connection to Buchanan, paleoconservatism now qualifies as the most important new iteration of conservatism since the advent of neoconservatism in the 1970s.

The paleocons would deny to the death that they represent anything new. They believe they are the original conservatives and that *National Review*, the neoconservatives, and the likes of Newt Gingrich stole conservatism from them, its true champions. "Before true conservatives can ever take back the country, they are going to have to take back their movement," Buchanan has written. Their historical honor roll includes William Jennings Bryan, to whom Buchanan was recently likened in *USA Today* by Thomas Fleming, who founded *Southern Partisan* and now edits *Chronicles*; and the America First crowd, who opposed intervention in World War II.

But the paleocons are far from being middle class Know-Nothings with philistine literary and artistic tastes. Their criticism is unfailingly high-toned. They celebrate modernist poets T.S. Eliot and Allen Tate and critics John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks. Novelist and essayist Walker Percy was a contributor to *Chronicles*. The Rockford Institute, which publishes *Chronicles,* gave its first T.S. Eliot Award to the Kafka of Argentina, Jorge Luis Borges. The advocacy of political populism is accompanied by unapologetic literary elitism and by an unapologetic reactionary spirit.

In his 1993 book *Reclaiming the American Right*, Raimondo plumbed the depths of Old Right history, reviving forgotten figures such as Garet Garrett and Rose Wilder Lane (Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter, thought to have played a considerable role in the writing of the *Little House* books) and proclaiming them essential figures of true conservatism. The conservatism he describes was isolationist, traditionalist, rural, deeply ambivalent about capitalism, hostile to European ideas, and armed in holy war against the urban, modern elite—precursor indeed to the Buchananism of today.

"True conservatism" was on the march, the paleocons maintain, but in 1952 the Republican establishment robbed isolationist senator Robert Taft of the GOP nomination, giving it to the malleable Dwight Eisenhower. And along came *National Review*. "Buckley and his crowd *displaced* the Old Right in a series of ruthless purges," Raimondo writes. That opened the way for further incursions from the left over the decades: neocons, Opportunity Society types, supply-siders, Jack Kemp and his ilk. From that point on, the history of true conservatism is a series of martyrdoms, with the pseudo-conservative interlopers oppressing the remnant defending the faith. The historian M.E. Bradford's career was derailed by the neoconservatives, who helped spike his 1981 nomination as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities and put William Bennett in his place. Joseph Sobran, Samuel Francis, and Buchanan himself have been hounded by a *National Review*/neocon alliance on charges of racism and anti-Semitism. In the pages of *Chronicles*, the Heritage Foundation and the *New York Times* are lumped together as partners in the "Vile Center." Most conservative icons come under uncompromising assault from Buchanan's friends.

"Southern conservatives know, even if others do not, that Ronald Reagan is essentially a right-wing liberal, indeed a progressive," Eugene Genovese writes in his 1994 book *The Southern Tradition*, an intelligent and sympathetic treatment of southern conservatives and of Buchanan's role as their political leader. "[Reagan's] optimistic view of human nature should warm the heart of liberal theologians; his celebration of limitless material progress reaches poetic heights; and his devotion to the free market and to finance capitalism could hardly be stronger. In short, his radical individualism and egalitarianism represent much that southern conservatives have always loathed."

WHY SHOULD PALEOCONS LIKE GINGRICH? HE BELIEVES IN CONCEPTS LIKE PROGRESS, EQUALITY, AND SCIENCE.

Buchanan himself is not as rigorous as some of his friends, retaining personal loyalty to Reagan, but his presidential run is premised on the argument that the Gingrich revolution is a misconceived failure. And in truth, why should the paleocons like Gingrich? He believes in concepts like progress, equality, and science. Paleocons do not believe the future will be better than the past. They regard equality with abhorrence and are so hostile to science and technology that Fleming even laments the use of epidurals in the delivery room.

In his final column before his current presidential run, Buchanan describes his mission as an effort to save the Republican party for people like him: "There are two Republican parties today. The elder party has bought into the myth of Economic Man. It believes economics drives the world, politics is about economics, and money drives politics. . . . The new Republicans sense the struggle is broader and deeper." He uses his campaign catch-phrase, "conservatives of the heart," to describe the mission—a romantic conservatism, a conservatism of human bonds.

This is true radicalism, and Buchanan and his friends are aware of it. Their essays, like Buchanan's speeches, are not arranged according to rigorous logic. Rather they follow rhetorical melodies that occasionally culminate in startling crescendos, as in these excerpts from a Fleming essay in the January 1996 issue of *Chronicles*:

> Among the most dangerous of our theoretical illusions are the political fantasies that can be summed up in words like democracy, equality, and natural rights; the principle of one man, one vote and the American tradition of self-government. No one who lives in the world with his eyes open can actually believe in any of this.
>
> In the old democracy of America, O.J. Simpson might have been executed for marrying a woman of another race, but—setting the question of race aside—he probably would have been acquitted (if he had ever been brought to trial in the first place) for killing an adulteress. Everyday democracies do not intrude into the household, even in a case of murder, where it is an affair of family honor. Today, on the other hand, men are put on trial for sexually assaulting their wives, even if the couple are Christians who must acknowledge and pay what St. Paul called the conjugal debt.

Buchanan made the phrase "culture war" famous in his 1992 speech at the Republican convention, and that concept is central to paleoconservative writing. It captures the centrality of culture in the politics of Buchananism. And it captures the martial spirit that grips Buchananites. "I strongly believe in the politics of conflict, that you go into battle with your opposition," Buchanan once told John B. Judis of *The New Republic*. "You reach the position where you're both stalemated, you get a truce line, and you accept the compromise, but then you use the truce line to begin the next advance, and you keep at it."

For the paleocons, the culture war is literally being fought to the death, with Wall Street and media elites trying to subjugate ordinary Americans. "Middle class and traditional culture are impediments to overclass interests," Buchanan confidant Samuel Francis writes. "Broadly speaking it is in the long-term interest of the

overclass (not of anyone else) to 'managerialize' society so that all aspects of life are organized, packaged, routinized and subjugated to manipulation by the technical skills the overclass possesses, and that interest requires the undermining of institutions and norms that are independent of, and impediments to, overclass control."

In the February 1996 issue of *Chronicles*, Francis has an essay on the strategy of the Buchanan campaign that is, like so much of this literature, alternately brilliant and bizarre. Up until now, Francis argues, Middle Americans have been torn. They admired left-wing economics, but they couldn't tolerate left-wing cultural antinomianism. They liked right-wing culture, but had trouble stomaching the free-market economics that favored the Ruling Class. But Buchanan is something new: "The core of his message consists of a rejection of the thinly masked economic determinism espoused by Kemp, Gramm and Gingrich and an affirmation of the primacy of cultural identity, national sovereignty and national interests over economic goals. . . . The 'culture war' for Buchanan is not Republican swaggering about family values and dirty movies but a battle over whether the nation itself can continue to exist under the onslaught of the militant secularism, acquisitive egoism, economic and political globalism, demographic inundation, and unchecked state centralism supported by the Ruling Class."

Buchanan's votes may come from people who are simply interested in ending abortion, or who like the idea of tariffs, but Buchananism itself is a quest for total cultural regeneration.

During his 1992 campaign for the presidency, Pat Buchanan went to Okolona, Mississippi, to visit the grave site of his great-grandfather, a Confederate soldier who was captured by Sherman's army. The newsweeklies treated the trip as a cynical play for southern votes. But the visit was more serious than that; the Confederacy and the War of Northern Aggression (as Buchanan sometimes calls it) are constant motifs in Buchananite speeches and in the writings of the movement he now represents.

The paleoconservatives draw their inspiration from the small rural communities of the Old South. In their imaginings, those villages were populated by folk who worked close to the soil and led lives unpolluted by big business, big government, and mass media. Citizens were dedicated to tradition and subscribed to codes of chivalry and valor. The communities themselves were tight and hierarchical, exhibiting the qualities that strengthen families. Peter and Brigitte Berger once wrote that one can differentiate conservatives by how far back into history they want to return. If Newt Gingrich finds the laissez-faire 1890s somewhat attractive, the Buchananites long to return to the southern farms of the 1820s.

The Buchananites aren't mainly nostalgic for the magnolia-and-moonbeam South of upper class Tara. Their sympathy is for the yeoman farmers. Buchanan jokingly calls his followers "peasants," but in the paleoconservative literature the word peasant is used as a compliment, the way it is for blood-and-soil conservatives in Europe.

This world came crashing to its glorious end in the Civil War, the central event of paleocon literature. To Fleming, Abraham Lincoln was a racist and an incompetent president. The late Murray Rothbard once wrote, "We must always remember, we must Never Forget, we must put in the dock and hang higher than Haman, these who in modern times opened the Pandora's Box of genocide and extermination of civilians: Sherman, Grant and Lincoln. . . . Perhaps one day their statues, like Lenin's in Russia, will be toppled and melted down; their insignias and battle flags will be desecrated, and their war songs tossed into the fire."

THE BUCHANANITES AREN'T NOSTALGIC FOR THE MAGNOLIA-AND-MOONBEAM SOUTH OF TARA. THEIR SYMPATHY IS FOR THE YEOMAN FARMERS.

Many paleocons consider themselves secessionists. Buchanan himself speaks fondly of the Confederate cause: "The War Between the States was about independence, about self-determination, about the right of a people to break free of a government to which they could no longer give allegiance." There is no evidence that he despises Lincoln or that he seeks the break-up of the Union. Instead, the Civil War is an occasion for the romanticism crucial to his worldview. Looking for paragons of virtue to serve as foils for today's degraded culture, he describes in a 1993 column the southern soldiers at Gettysburg, who charged bravely and futilely under the command of General Pickett.

Many of us tour Civil War battlefields longing for lost worlds, for the chivalric virtues that were played out there. But then we head for the gift shop and return to more comfortable but less heroic lives. Buchanan the romantic does not. He struggles to restore the code of valor and glory that was exemplified on those battlefields, and which has come under assault by the forces of industrialization and the cultural Left.

There's something undeniably moving about Buchanan's romantic sensibility. But it really isn't possible to turn back this particular clock, at least not in the way Buchanan proposes. For Buchanan is at war not only with liberalism but with fundamental social changes of the last 100 years. Thus, the Buchananites not only object to the leftist view that human nature is infinitely malleable. They also deny that it is possible to devise policies and environments that can alter and improve human institutions and patterns of behavior. The paleocons believe this notion is at war with nature, and that modern conservatives have been infected by this sort of hubris, too. Modern conservatives build all these think tanks in Washington where wonks try to devise (market-oriented and family-friendly) programs to improve life.

Such social science schemes inevitably do harm, the paleocons argue, because they tend to undermine the ancient institutions that have evolved over time and are consistent with human nature. Global capitalism, they argue, also violates nature. "As an ideology capitalism, almost as much as communism, wages war on natural institutions," Fleming writes in his opus, *The Politics of Human Nature*. The paleocons cherish the local marketplace, where face-to-face trading encourages sociability and friendship. But they resent the impersonality of the global marketplace, in which mutual funds owned by God-knows-whom buy into and out of companies employing God-knows-whom, without any human contact between the (temporary) owners and the (temporary) workers and customers.

The rural communities of the South, the paleocons argue, were consistent with the transcendental order. For one thing, men and women had clearly defined roles that were based on immutable nature. In *The Politics of Human Nature*, Fleming cites Aristotle, who wrote that men are naturally more savage, courageous, and masterful, while women are softer, more modest, and more impulsive. These qualities, Aristotle said, made men fit to rule and women to nurture.

Pat Buchanan has reiterated these views in several columns over the past 10 years, which have been used effectively by his political rivals, both in 1992 and this year. But Buchanan has not really backed off, for the concept of an intractable human nature is his foundation. Fleming argues that the acts of bearing and rearing children are each woman's primary duties: "The dilemma we face today is not how to make women more like men, but how to let women be fully women." The problem, as he sees it, is that mothers have been cut off from the full range of their duties: "The mother is often no more than a 'facilitator,' an amateur coordinator of professional services provided by teachers, pediatricians, counselors and recreation specialists."

One of the qualities Fleming says he admires in women is that they don't go in for abstractions. He quotes G.K. Chesterton: "There are only three things in the world that women do not understand, and they are liberty, equality and fraternity." In the paleocon creed, women are to be admired for the same reason as peasants—for their interest in the here and now and their unwillingness to indulge in destructive schemes for the sake of a political abstraction.

If this characterization of natural differences between the sexes is incendiary, it pales next to paleocon ideas about natural differences between the races. The word "deracinated" pops up quite a bit in this literature to describe someone who has been stripped of his essential qualities and rendered only barely human. Paleocons are not shy about drawing racial distinctions, describing the qualities that characterize the different races. Samuel Francis, who was fired from the *Washington Times* last year for his racial opinions, regards the race war as a Marxist might see the class war. He writes often about the conflict between anti-white and white forces. For the paleocons, blood matters.

In the pages of *Chronicles,* all of the fine distinctions that Charles Murray and R.J. Herrnstein so painstakingly drew in *The Bell Curve* are disregarded. Raw prejudice is not uncommon, as in a 1996 Fleming essay: "Whatever trust we are to put in race and IQ correlations, black achievements in both Africa and North America give little indication that black people, taken statistically *en masse*, possess the kinds of abilities that are required for success in the modern world." Or Francis, in 1993: "If the demise of American civilization through racial and cultural revolution is already apparent on our horizon, in South Africa it has nearly arrived."

This is not to say that the paleocons long for a return to slavery. They do not shy away from expressing their true beliefs, and if they supported slavery they would probably say so. They merely believe in the social hierarchies. In those southern communities, they say, social roles were crucial to happiness and ordered sociability. "Aristotle recognized that a well-ordered society protected an ascending order of good through the institutionalization of rank," Fleming and co-author Paul Gottfried wrote in their book *The Conservative Movement*. They are talking about the social pecking order in old-time towns—the folks who live on the hill, the merchants on Main Street, the village idiot on the green.

On a larger scale, the paleocons contrast the virtues of the republic with the corruptions of empire. The empire throws its weight around in the world; the republic minds its own business. (Buchanan was a staunch cold warrior, but he is the exception. Most paleocons have opposed every American intervention of the 20th century.) Empires try to nationalize problems; republics sharply limit national powers and respect regional independence. "We are old church and old right, anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist, disbelievers in Pax Americana," Buchanan once wrote by way of summation. "We love the old republic, and when we hear phrases like 'New World Order,' we release the safety catches on our revolvers."

There you have it, the quintessentially Buchananite mixture of high principle and bad-boy bravado. It is futile to try to separate the good in paleoconservatism—the longing for the old virtues—from the bad—the view of race and sex roles. Ultimately, what is most striking in paleoconservatism is its very rejection of the idea of a nation formed in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. The paleoconservatives don't subscribe to the universalist ideas of the Founding, the notion that anyone could become an American by adopting certain ideas. Blood and soil are central to their creed.

The literature behind Buchananism supports Buchanan's claim that he is leading a social and intellectual movement, not just an evanescent political campaign. But it also demonstrates how this movement's views are at war with conservatism as we have properly come to understand it in our day. ♦

Anti-Semitism and a Presidential Candidacy

By Norman Podhoretz

A consensus seems to be developing among conservatives opposed to Patrick J. Buchanan that the best way to express their opposition is to avoid "name-calling" and "ad hominem attacks," to treat him with "respect," to acknowledge the validity of the issues through which he seems to have struck a responsive chord, and to provide better solutions than his to the problems he has succeeded in placing at the very center of this presidential campaign.

In other words, we are to cease and desist from bringing up Buchanan's record of hostility toward Jews, and not only are we to stop denouncing him as an anti-Semite, we are even to avoid such euphemisms as "extremist" in describing that record.

A few of the people who offer us this counsel privately believe that Buchanan is an anti-Semite, but they think that saying so will at best do no good and at worst will drive his supporters out of the Republican coalition and make Bill Clinton's reelection even more probable than it already is. There are, however, others who, while sharing this fear of alienating Buchanan's constituency, at the same time flatly deny that he is an anti-Semite, or declare themselves unconvinced.

My own impolite opinion is that deep down (or maybe not so deep) many of these conservative deniers and putative skeptics know very well that Buchanan is an anti-Semite. But if so, why are they reluctant to admit it? One reason, I would guess, is that they like his stand on abortion or some other issue and do not wish to see those stands tarnished by association with anti-Semitism. Another reason is that some of them may even be preparing to support him in the no longer inconceivable event that he becomes the Republican candidate for president in 1996—something they would be unable to bring themselves to do if they admitted, even or perhaps especially to themselves, that he is an anti-Semite.

Four years ago, the charge of anti-Semitism against Buchanan was so thoroughly documented in articles by Joshua Muravchik, Jacob Weisberg, William F. Buckley, Jr., and others that no one who remained, or chose to remain, unpersuaded then is likely to be persuaded now. Nevertheless it is important, if only for

Norman Podhoretz, a senior fellow of the Hudson Institute, retired last year after 35 years as editor in chief of Commentary *magazine. Among his writings on anti-Semitism are the articles "J'Accuse" (1982, about Israel and the war in Lebanon) and "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name" (1986, about Gore Vidal).*

the sake of political hygiene (not to mention the simple truth), to go over the evidence yet again before it is willfully forgotten or sanitized or buried under an avalanche of tactical electoral considerations that threaten to besmirch the honor of the conservative movement.

The story begins with a number of statements Buchanan made first on television and then in his syndicated column during the period leading up to the Gulf War. To be sure, intimations of an animus against Jews could be detected in Buchanan even earlier. Yet I for one, as an ideological ally of his during the Cold War and a friendly acquaintance, had been very reluctant to make too much of these intimations. And so I held my tongue.

IT IS IMPORTANT, IF ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF POLITICAL HYGIENE, TO GO OVER THE EVIDENCE YET AGAIN.

But then came the day when Buchanan declared on a television talk show that "only two groups" were "beating the drums . . . for war in the Middle East—the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." Not content with that, he followed it up with two columns compounding the offense. In the first, he named four of the Americans who were trying to drag us into war. All were clearly and identifiably Jewish (Rosenthal, Perle, Kissinger, and Krauthammer), but as he wrote in the second piece, it was "kids with names like McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales, and Leroy Brown" who would actually do the fighting.

That did it for many of us (led by A.M. Rosenthal in the *New York Times*) who had either been similarly reluctant to charge Buchanan with anti-Semitism or who had never before noticed anything amiss. For there was no mistaking Buchanan's meaning here: The Jews were proposing to send non-Jewish American kids to die for the sake of Israel in a war that nobody else wanted.

This was, of course, an egregious lie. The American Jewish community was neither alone nor especially prominent in advocating that Saddam Hussein be prevented from seizing control of the Persian Gulf. It was Margaret Thatcher and George Bush (no great friend of Israel, incidentally) who were "beating the drums" most loudly and forcefully, and non-Jewish notables too numerous to list who were responding. Nor was Israel the only nation interested in stopping Saddam Hussein. A majority of the Arab states (including even Syria, one of Israel's most intransigent enemies) joined the coalition, as did practically every West European nation.

In ignoring all this while singling out Israel and its "amen corner" in America, Buchanan was trying to discredit Desert Storm as a "Jewish war" (which was exactly one of the tactics used by his political forebears of the 1930s in their campaign to keep the United States out of World War II). At the same time, he was playing on the classically anti-Semitic canard of "dual loyalty"—in this instance, the idea that American Jews were subordinating the interests of the United States to those of Israel.

For me, this alone would have settled the issue of Buchanan's anti-Semitism. But there was more.

There was, to begin with, his otherwise inexplicable sympathy for the Palestine Liberation Organization. Buchanan was fierce in his opposition to all other "national liberation" movements that were influenced by Marxist ideas and armed by the Soviet Union, but for some strange reason he made an exception for the PLO. Thus, whereas with respect to South Africa he ridiculed the view that "White rule of a Black majority is inherently wrong" and insisted that "the Founding Fathers did not believe this," he actually went so far as to enlist the Founding Fathers on the side of the PLO, comparing its war against Israel with the struggle of the American colonists against the British in the 1770s.

It was inconceivable that Buchanan would be so tender toward any of the PLO's sister movements—whether the FSLN in Nicaragua or the FMLN in El Salvador—or about any other terrorist organization backed by the Soviet Union. But none of them was ranged against a Jewish enemy, and that by itself was evidently enough to override even the anti-Communist passions that one might have thought would always be trumps in Buchanan's political soul.

Finally, there was his obsessive railing against what he called "all this wallowing in the atrocities of a dead regime," by which he meant the hunting down and prosecution of accused Nazi war criminals like Klaus Barbie, Karl Linnas, Arthur Rudolph, and especially John Demjanjuk. Having devoted an enormous amount of energy to apologizing for or defending or pooh-poohing the gravity of the crimes committed by these men under the Nazis, Buchanan claimed vindication when an Israeli court finally ruled that Demjanjuk was not in fact the guard known at the Treblinka death camp as "Ivan the Terrible."

Now, if Buchanan's efforts on behalf of Demjanjuk had been confined to the assertion that this was a case

of mistaken identity, he would have been justified in claiming to have been right all along. In the course of those efforts, however, Buchanan went way beyond any such limited objective as protesting against a miscarriage of justice.

For example, he pushed the crackpot theory that the exhaust from the diesel engines used in the Treblinka gas chambers did not "emit enough carbon monoxide to kill anybody." And in one of his columns, he endorsed the vile concept of a "Holocaust Survivors Syndrome" involving "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics." The implications were spelled out by Joshua Muravchik in an article in *Commentary*:

> Diesel exhaust fumes were used not only at Treblinka but also at Chelmno, Sobibor, and Belzec, and were moreover employed extensively by the Nazi killing squads . . . inside the USSR. If such fumes cannot kill, then a good part of what has generally been accepted as having happened to the Jews at the hands of the Nazis cannot have happened. And if the testimony of survivors is inherently unreliable because of a "syndrome" that manifests itself in "fantasies," then much that we think we know may not be true.

In short, Buchanan used the Demjanjuk case as a way of lending plausibility to the main contention of the blatantly anti-Semitic Holocaust revisionists—that the number of Jews slaughtered by the Nazis had been vastly exaggerated.

Never, not once, did Buchanan retreat from or apologize for any of these anti-Semitic outbursts. On the contrary, falsely alleging that he was the victim of a "preplanned orchestrated smear campaign" by the Anti-Defamation League, he demanded that "the Jews" apologize to *him*. And only last week, when the Jewish Action Alliance challenged him to disavow his past anti-Semitic statements, he responded by accusing it of anti-Catholic bias.

Not so long ago the price of giving open expression to anti-Semitic ideas or sentiments was relegation to the margins of American political life. Certainly in the first three decades or so after World War II, no person who had said the things about Jews that Buchanan has said would have been considered fit for respectable political society, let alone qualified to run for high political office. Yet Buchanan has emerged as a serious contender for the Republican nomination for President of the United States.

Chances are that most of the voters now supporting Buchanan are unaware of his anti-Semitism. In 1992, when he was merely a protest candidate with little to lose, he defiantly adopted the slogan "America First," in full knowledge that the purpose of the original America First movement, founded in 1940, was in the short run to oppose American aid to the nations of Europe threatened by Nazi Germany and in the longer run to keep the United States from going to war against Hitler. (This identification with the America First movement casts a harsh light on his bizarre solicitude for Nazi war criminals.) In 1996, he has been more cautious, and if his political fortunes keep improving he will probably become more cautious still: He may even stop pointing to identifiably Jewish names like Goldman Sachs, Greenspan, and Rubin whenever he attacks the Mexican bailout. It will, then, be up to others to make sure the voters know that this man appealing for their support in a bid for the presidency is an unrepentant anti-Semite.

We are told to treat Buchanan's supporters with respect, and it is precisely because I do respect them and share their concern over the moral condition of this country that I believe many of them would consider *him* morally unworthy of *their* respect if they became aware of his anti-Semitic record. But even if I am mistaken about this, avoiding the issue will still exact a heavy price from the conservative movement.

Buchanan's ideas about the economy and foreign policy are wrong and indeed dangerous, and even if he were not an anti-Semite, they would provide sufficient grounds for working against him. But he *is* an anti-Semite, which means that for conservatives to remain silent about it while opposing him only because he is a protectionist and an isolationist is inescapably to suggest that anti-Semitism is of no great importance as compared with these other issues. Conversely, conservatives who ignore or deny or forgive Buchanan's anti-Semitism because they favor the positions he takes on abortion or immigration bring disgrace upon those very causes by accepting such a man as their leading spokesman.

NOT LONG AGO THE PRICE OF ANTI-SEMITISM WAS RELEGATION TO THE MARGINS OF POLITICAL LIFE.

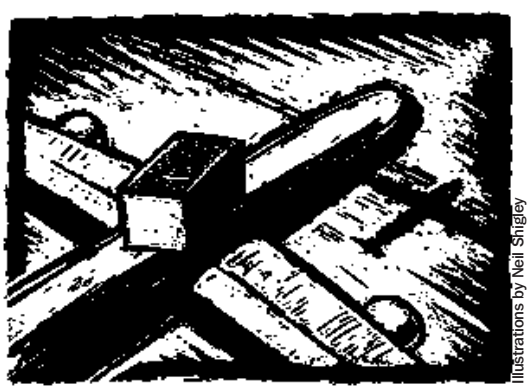
To say it again: The voters attracted to Buchanan deserve to be taken seriously, and the worries about our society that are driving them into his arms deserve to be addressed. But Buchanan himself deserves no such treatment from conservatives. What he deserves—and what the honor of the conservative movement demands—is that his anti-Semitism be taken seriously and that he be disqualified as a candidate because of it and because of it alone. ♦

Buchanan's Surprisingly Respectable Economics

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Buchananism is not mere 19th-century populism warmed over and updated. Rather, it is grounded in a set of ideas, particularly about trade and the nature of the American corporation, that have a firm basis in recent economic research and thought. That doesn't make Pat Buchanan right. But it does make him credible. Perhaps even academically respectable. And it leaves his opponents unable to formulate clear responses.

Start with the traditional Republican adherence to the doctrine of free trade. Pat Buchanan has certainly put that idea into play, as a Wall Street merger maven might put it. To respond by calling him a protectionist is to beg the issue, which is whether the facts of 21st-century life will make adherence to the old free-trade religion an intellectually acceptable position or an obsolete, knee-jerk reaction. Free traders teach us that America benefits from keeping its borders open to the goods and services of other countries, regardless of the behavior of those countries. Thus, if Japan wants to dump VCRs into American living rooms at prices set below cost, we should gratefully accept this gift—and others like it. And if the Japanese close their markets to our automobiles, they will be the losers, their consumers restricted to domestic models that will inevitably be expensive because of the lack of foreign competition.



Illustrations by Neil Shigley

There can be no quarreling with the theoretical underpinnings of the theory of free trade: If each country specializes in what it does best, and exchanges its products with other countries that are doing the same thing, the world's resources will be used most efficiently, output maximized, and costs minimized.

But even if we grant that an open trading system indeed maximizes economic efficiency and national wealth, we have not addressed the issue that Pat Buchanan, in his belligerent and therefore insistent manner, is demanding that the Republican party consider. It seems too obvious to need saying, but defenders of free trade persistently ignore the fact that such a policy has major consequences, not only for the size of the national pie, but for how it is distributed.

Free trade creates both winners and losers. The voters know that. That's why Iowa farmers, who thrive on exports, love free trade, while Michigan auto workers, who are hurt by imports, are less enthusiastically in favor of open markets. Unless the Republican party is prepared to say that an Iowa farmer is a more worthy beneficiary of its policies than is a Detroit auto worker, or even that consumers in aggregate are a more proper source of its attentions than workers, it cannot defend its traditional position in favor of free trade merely by proving that it increases total national income. For Buchanan's argument is not, in the end, that protectionism will increase total national wealth. He is talking about fairness, not efficiency, and calling for a trade policy that will funnel more of the national income we do generate to industrial workers—particularly those in the declining industries such as textiles and autos—and less to farmers, workers in export-dependent and usually high-tech industries, and consumers, who benefit enormously from the ready availability of foreign goods.

And, whether he knows it or not, an increasing body of economic research supports his position that free trade hurts low-paid workers and benefits shareholders and corporate executives. Which brings us to FPE—the factor-price-equalization theorem. This is the work of such academic luminaries as MIT's Paul Samuelson. They have long pointed out that free trade reduces the value of a nation's scarcest resource by subjecting that resource to competition from countries where it is more plentiful. Because the relatively scarce

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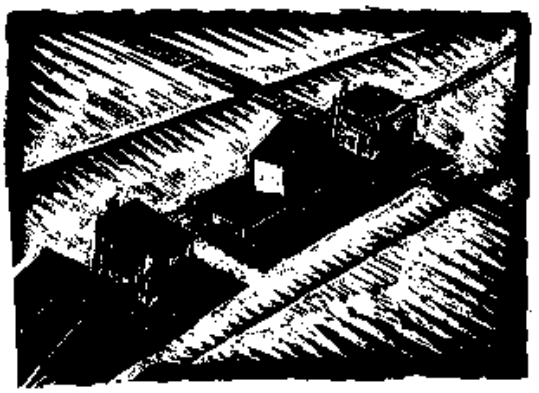
resource in America is labor, the opening of American markets will reduce that scarcity by making available at a reasonable price products that take a lot of labor to produce. Thus, Samuelson told an audience in Italy, "As the billions of people who live in East Asia and Latin America qualify for good, modern jobs, the half billion Europeans and North Americans who used to tower over the rest of the world will find their upward progress in living standards encountering tough resistance."



The obverse of this is that free trade makes more valuable the resource that is in ample supply, relative to our trading partners. In America that is capital, which is abundant here, scarce elsewhere. Trade opens up investment opportunities, increasing the possible uses to which American capital can be put—and increasing the return on that capital. So, along with lower wages for the unskilled, who must compete with Latin American peons and Asian peasants, free trade brings higher profits to investors, for whom it opens new doors—not a mixture of results likely to increase the political popularity of its advocates.

It gets worse. The dreaded FPE theorem cannot easily be dismissed with the usual "that's true in theory, but not in practice." For it is supported by several empirical studies that suggest that trade does indeed have an adverse effect on the wages of unskilled workers. So say such distinguished academics as the University of California's George Borjas and Harvard's Richard Freeman.

Add quite respectable recent studies of the impact of the free movement of people as well as of goods—immigration—and you have Buchananism of the mind as well as the heart. Professors Rachel Friedberg and Jennifer Hunt, of the economics departments of Brown and Yale Universities, respectively, conclude that the effect of immigration on the labor market is "small." So far, so good for the open-market advocates. But they go on to say that by "small" they mean that a 10 percent increase in the fraction of immigrants in the population reduces native wages "by at most 1 percent." They further find that "the upper bound on the wage impact [of immigration] is large enough to explain one-quarter of the rise in inequality in the United States in the 1980s, but the true effect is probably considerably smaller." This may sound like a minimal effect to an academic economist, but to a worker wondering why (or at least being told that) his or her wages are stagnant, and upset that the highly paid are getting richer while the lowest paid are getting poorer, all of this translates into the idea that immigration is bad for the worker. And that idea cannot be dismissed merely by labeling its proponents "nativists."

None of this is to say that protectionism is a solution to any of the problems of Buchanan's so-called army of peasants. As a recent study for the American Enterprise Institute by Jagdish Bhagwati and Vivek Dehejia makes clear, the FPE theorem is not without major theoretical problems, and the empirical evidence can be taken to mean that technological change, rather than freer trade, is the "explanation for the observed decline in real wages of the unskilled." Moreover, it would be far better to upgrade the skills of workers subject to competition from low-wage economies than to freeze them in jobs that will, in the end, fail to provide the sought-after steady increases in living standards.

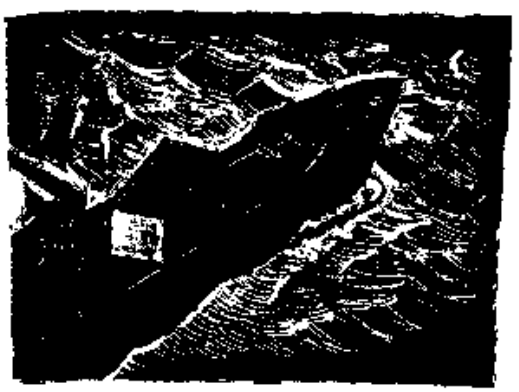
But, so far, Republican free traders have failed to make these arguments. True, Lamar Alexander has pointed out that jobs flow in two directions, from Germany's Mercedes Benz and Japan's Toyota to America, and from America's textile firms to Mexico and Asia. And the University of Arizona has released figures showing that Buchanan's despised North American Free Trade Agreement has increased total employment in that state, which abuts Mexico, by between 2,000 and 5,000 jobs. But none of Buchanan's rivals has come to grips with his contention that free trade does create losers, and not only in the short run. To do so would involve the painful process of deciding whether to propose policies to share the costs now borne solely by the losers, or remain true to the notion that any interference with the workings of the market will in the long run prove counterproductive.

Another quite respectable issue raised by Buchanan relates to the role of the corporation in American life. While attacking Buchanan as an old-line anti-big-business demagogue, Massachusetts governor William Weld and Bob Dole—the left and center of the party, respectively—seem to be agreeing with him that big corporations, fat with profits, and their managers, wallets stuffed with options and bonuses, should do more for their workers and their communities. Echoing the ideas now being put forward in

Britain by Labour leader Tony Blair, mainstream Republican candidates have responded to Buchanan's criticism of down-sizing in the face of Dow-rising by suggesting that corporate managers eschew mere profit-maximizing and heed the voices of "stakeholders" in addition to those of shareholders.

This attention to the needs of stakeholders would include retaining workers who, although no longer needed, have served the company loyally in the past; providing training programs that equip workers to move on to new jobs when the old ones disappear; considering the impact of plant closings on local communities; and accepting a host of welfare-like responsibilities traditionally left to private insurers or the government to provide.

The attraction of such an idea to liberal Democrats is obvious. With tax increases out of the question, exploding deficits out of fashion, and unfunded mandates more difficult to impose on reluctant state and local governments, the liberals are out of money. So they are looking to corporate America to fund the programs that the voters are unwilling to pay for with taxes, in the full knowledge that those costs will be passed on to the unsuspecting voters in the form of higher prices.



It is not the liberal Democrats, however, but Pat Buchanan who has forced the Republican establishment to confront the possibility that the role of the corporation in American life might be reconsidered, and that this institution might be converted into an instrument of social-economic policy. The idea is not a new one. Ever since the great work of A.A. Berle and Gardiner Means in 1932 (*The Modern Corporation and Private Property*), we have been aware of the divorce between ownership and control of large corporations. Widely dispersed shareholders possess neither the knowledge nor the weapons with which to bring corporate managers to heel if they behave in non-profit-maximizing ways. True, shareholders can always express their displeasure by selling their shares and, more recently, by voting them in favor of a potential takeover by new managers. But, by and large, non-owner corpocrats have wide latitude in running the affairs of most major corporations. And they have used that latitude to engage in a variety of not-strictly-for-profit activities, including extensive charitable giving that is more often related to the need of the chief executive for ego-gratifying social approval and good seats at cultural events than to any benefit for the company's shareholders.

Having conceded that they have a responsibility beyond mere profit-maximization, these corporate managers are ill-placed to resist demands that they expand their vision still more, to encompass the long-term interests of their workers and the communities in which their plants and offices are located, even if that means lower earnings-per-share. Indeed, if they were to ignore this issue completely, America's executive class would be flying in the face of advice by such conservative thinkers as Irving Kristol, who has long argued that the corporation is a social as well as an economic institution.

This idea ignores the argument that corporations can best see to the interests of all their stakeholders—maximize workers' wages, customers' satisfaction, and their communities' economic health—by behaving in the old-fashioned way. That is, by seeking to produce goods of the highest possible quality at the lowest possible prices so as to maximize profits, businesses will be led as if by an invisible hand to do good for all of their stakeholders. Not a very original idea, to be sure. And certainly not one with great appeal to those contending that the interests of stakeholders can be served only if large corporations—and, presumably, other businesses—abandon their profit-maximizing ways in favor of some broader objective.

As with Buchanan's trade policy, his plan to put new burdens on America's corporations would not be without its costs. Efficiency-enhancing changes would become more expensive, and therefore be deferred or, worse, indefinitely postponed; production costs would rise, reducing competitiveness and imposing higher prices on consumers; corpocrats would have still another reason for avoiding the iron discipline of profit-maximization. But some portion of the cost of change would be transferred from workers and from their communities to stockholders. Buchanan thinks that is a good thing; the Establishment doesn't know what it thinks. That has given Buchanan the upper hand in the argument so far. Free traders and pure profit-maximizers must now face Buchananism four-square and argue it down. We can no longer rely upon the dismissive power of the words protectionism, or Smoot-Hawley, or interference with free markets to do our work for us. ♦

Campaigning with Bob Dole and the Pips

By Andrew Ferguson

You keep hearing that Bob Dole has trouble "articulating"—articulating his message, his vision for America, the reasons he wants to be president. It seems to be the one enduring consensus to have emerged from the general electoral chaos of the past several weeks.

Lamar Alexander has made his rival's inarticulateness one of the reasons he himself should be president. He asks his campaign audiences to imagine Bob Dole appearing at the epochal pre-election debate with the hyperarticulate Bill Clinton. The president will "come out from behind the podium, and he'll feel the questioner's pain," Alexander says. "And we'll need a candidate who can respond with something more than talk about CBO and OMB and other Beltway kinds of talk."

Even Arizona Sen. John McCain, a Dole supporter, has felt the need to explain his candidate's twisted tongue. As majority leader, "Bob Dole's every day is consumed with being involved with 10 or 12 issues all at once," McCain told *Nightline* recently. The result: "When he's giving a speech or talking to a journalist, he'll bring up different issues that really seem, in some ways, disconnected."

> THE MAJORITY LEADER'S CAMPAIGN IS INDEED PRESIDENTIAL IN EVERY RESPECT. ALL IT NEEDS IS A CANDIDATE.

Thus the consensus among friend and foe alike: As a campaigner, Bob Dole ranks several notches below the firesnorting Pat Buchanan, down below even the snooze-monger Dick Lugar, and only a notch or two above tire king Morry Taylor, who campaigns with an open keg of lager in his RV. But consensi are often wrong, as those of us who lost money on President Bush's sure-thing reelection should know. If you really want to see how bad Bob Dole is on the stump, struggling to articulate, the best thing to do is go see for yourself.

Unfortunately, you'd be out of luck. For the surprise awaiting anyone who followed him around the last few days of February, just before the crucial South Carolina primary, was not merely that he campaigns badly, but that he barely campaigns at all.

Of course, the news has yet to get back to his campaign organization. "I think you'll be quite pleased with our press accommodations," a Dole staffer said when I called to reserve a seat on the campaign plane. "We have a nicely outfitted 727. Meals included, of course. Your baggage will be taken care of. Frankly, many of your colleagues in the press have commented that we're running a White House level operation here—certainly far more professional than what you'll get with the Buchanan campaign."

And he was right. The 727 has been dubbed, in an unfortunate pun, *Leader's Ship*. A full complement of flight attendants greet reporters as they climb aboard. Two large baskets beckon, one of fresh fruit, another of candy, along with coolers of iced soda and spring water. The cuisine tends to the nouvelle: chilled greens and sliced red pepper in a basil vinaigrette, blueberries and wedges of melon, cheese tortellini in an amusing pesto. Schedules are met with the precision of a Swiss security detail. The lowing herd of press moves from plane to bus to rally to bus to plane, seamlessly, in a mobile, self-sufficient cocoon. It is indeed like the White House: Reporters get pampered because there's scarcely any news for them to report. The blueberries are offered up as consolation.

Like a president, Bob Dole the candidate shuffles from place to place at the center of a scrum of middle-aged white guys, their hair well-combed like his hair, their backs straight, their suits dark, their smiles unchanging, all like his. Unlike a president, though, Dole takes for his companions not Secret Service beefcake but elected officials, who provide him with a special kind of security. He seems reluctant at times to venture forth without them.

After landing in Charleston the Tuesday before the South Carolina primary, Dole sits on *Leader's Ship* for several minutes, until a Cessna lands and pulls up alongside on the tarmac. There it disgorges the day's

contingent of white guys: Gov. David Beasley, former governor Carroll Campbell, an attorney general, a state party official. They troop up the gangway in solemn formation and then, a moment later, back down again, Dole in the lead, Strom Thurmond picking up the rear. They file past the reporters—Dole with a thumbs up, the rest with a wave—and duck into a waiting Ford Explorer, as choreographed as the Pips behind Gladys Knight, if the Pips were to join the Chamber of Commerce.

You might say it is the same at every stop—and it is—but in fact, there aren't that many stops. Today there is only the one; tomorrow, there will be one more, though the approaching primary is considered make-or-break for Dole's candidacy.

After spending the morning in Washington, Dole has come to South Carolina for a rally aboard the decommissioned World War II aircraft carrier *Yorktown*. The event holds breath-catching possibilities: the last political representative of the generation that saved the world, proclaiming one final mission aboard the windswept deck of an ancient ship where his contemporaries bled and died. As it happens, the rally is held below deck, in a room the size of a large cafeteria. No churning ocean spray to provide a dramatic backdrop, no wind to muss the hair.

Kevin Chadwick

And no mission to speak of. As the candidate is introduced, the Pips take their places on the dais in a line of folding chairs, sitting perfectly erect, hands on knees. A massive American flag looms behind them. Thurmond chews on something mysterious for several minutes. Dole speaks without a prepared text, as he prefers to do on the stump, and mentions the war only at the beginning of his remarks—recalling the men who had made the supreme sacrifice for the greatest country on the face of the earth. "That's what this is all about," he says. The crowd erupts. He quickly brings them to their seats. "This election," he says, "is about the economy and jobs and about crime and about health care." "This election," he says, " is about building the Republican party." "I got into public office," he goes on, "because I might be able to help somebody along the way. Maybe try to strengthen the economy, maybe cut taxes so we could create jobs and opportunity, maybe welfare reform. A strong defense. That's what it's all about."

Like a new life-form hauling itself up from the primordial depths, the speech evolves without apparent method, sprouting a free-trade arm here, a family tax-credit leg there. There are moments, after a burst of applause, when Dole stands silent and his mouth purses, and his eyes jitter rapidly like marbles in the bottom of a cup, and he holds the silence for two beats too long until you suspect, for a brief unsettling interval, that he has absolutely no idea what he just said, or is going to say next. "People ask: Bob, what's your vision for America?" he says after one such pause. "That's a very good question and you ought to know the answer. I know America's headed in the wrong direction. I know there's too much crime and too much drugs. We've got too many kids graduating high school who can't find California on the map. We've got major problems in America. And THAT'S my vision for America."

The crowd erupts again. It is a good crowd. They applaud when he waves his copy of the Tenth Amendment—one of the set pieces of his campaign appearances—and sit still as he reads it aloud, verbatim. "So I'm very happy to be here," he says in conclusion. "I see the young people out here. That's what this election is all about. It's about the future."

After the speech, Dole staffers are delighted, veteran reporters amazed. "That," says one who has followed Dole since the beginning, "was the best he's been in the whole campaign."

Dole hits about 500 voters directly at the *Yorktown* event, and he gets fairly good coverage on the local news. After returning to Washington for the night, he comes back to South Carolina Wednesday afternoon for another single event, reaching several hundred voters more. Two days of campaigning, and he is approaching a kind of landmark: 1,000 voters in 48 hours.

Wednesday's event is a "meet and greet" at a BMW plant in Greer. A tarmac press conference is to take place immediately after *Leader's Ship* lands at nearby

Spartansburg. At the small airline terminal, red carpet has been unfurled, camera positions set up, tape laid down showing the Pips where to stand.

The press conference is canceled.

The Pips are out in strength. Descending the stairs from the front of the plane are three governors and two United States senators, including Phil Gramm. Dark-suited and straight-backed, white shirts gleaming, they and the candidate pause briefly before the microphones.

"We're going out to BMW to talk about jobs and trade," Dole says. "That's what this campaign is all about." He steps back. Gramm and Beasley step forward and begin rattling off statistics about South Carolina's foreign investment and the number of jobs it created in the past year, the past decade. Dole nods grimly. Gramm is particularly voluble, unburdening himself of the knowledge and soundbites he had planned to use in his own campaign.

After several minutes, an aide motions Gramm toward the waiting car. "Senator Dole," a reporter calls out, "do you agree with any of that?" Dole ducks into the front seat and is gone.

He reappears at the BMW plant, a stark white behemoth set in a vast pasture. Its smokestacks are clean and quiet and smokeless; its employees wear blue smocks, looking very European. Dole tours the plant floor as forklifts glide by, dodging the contingent of Pips. No one in the press can hear what the candidate is saying, but he is here, after all, to meet and greet the voters, not the press. With the Pips he forms a reception line to shake hands—like a wedding with five unhappy fathers-in-law—and the braver of the plant workers walk briskly through. I can hear Gramm reciting trade statistics: "The American worker is the most productive in the world," he says, Dole nodding. And no thanks to presidential campaigns: Hundreds of the most world's most productive workers stand idly by, enjoying the show.

Then it is time for the photo-op. A spanking new, sky-blue BMW Z3 convertible roadster (yours for as little as $29,000) is parked in the center of the shop floor, fairly screaming to be sat in. Dole stands aside, admiring. Absent-mindedly, Gramm runs his hands over the leather interior seatback, squeezing it, squeezing it, squeezing. . . . Then, incredibly, the two senators open the doors and get in. As the cameras close in they lean back, hitch their elbows on the car door, looking satisfied but not quite comfortable: Bartles and Jaymes cruisin' for babes.

When he gets out, Dole moves quickly through the crowd of reporters. The scrum of Pips re-forms behind him. "The American worker is the most productive in the world," Gramm is saying. "Senator Dole," asks one reporter, who is lucky enough to get close, "what are you trying to say with your visit here to BMW?"

Dole draws up straight; the scrum slows. Close up in such moments his irreducible dignity comes through. Then he speaks. "What this shows is, we're the future. We're progress. They're the past." He turns to go with a final shrug. "That's what this is all about." And the campaign, for the day, is over. ♦

When Lefty Met Righty..., or, Sleepless in Hollywood

By Michael Anton

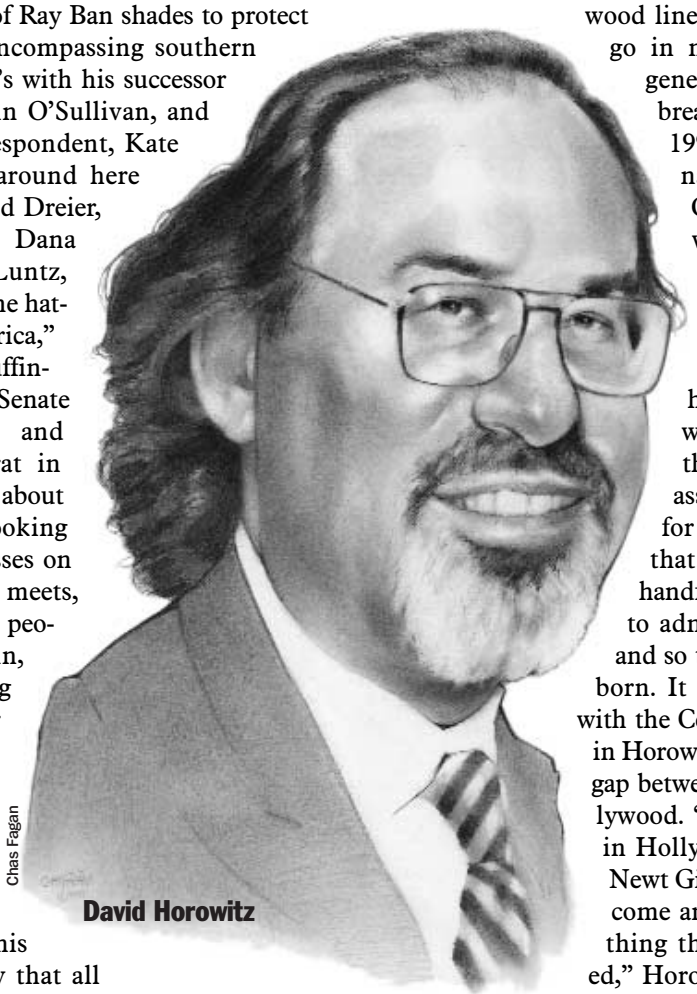
Look! There's Pat Sajak! And there, there's Ron Silver, fresh from his triumph as Henry Kissinger on TNT, having a cup of coffee. That's Linda Obst, the producer of *Sleepless in Seattle*. And over there, reclining in his chestnut leather sportsjacket, is John McTiernan, director of *Die Hard*s 1 & 3 and *The Hunt for Red October* (and also *Last Action Hero*, but there's no need to go into that). And it's only going to get juicier as the day rolls on and more "A-list" people (the going term in Hollywood for those who have Made It) show up, like Bill Maher, host of *Politically Incorrect*, and, yes! Tom Selleck.

But there by the bar, chatting with Sonny Bono, is—Bill Bennett? Mr. Virtue? Mr. What in God's

Michael Anton, who last wrote in THE WEEKLY STANDARD *about the need for a conservative bohemia, studies political philosophy at the Claremont Graduate School.*

Name Is All This Trash Polluting Our Culture, and Why Don't You Shameless Hollywood Types Do the Right Thing and Cut It Out? It can't be. And yet . . . it is.

And he's not the only virtue-obsessed right-wing Republican scourge here invading this stronghold of the entertainment industry, citadel of the popular culture, namely Paramount Studios, Hollywood, California. There's William F. Buckley, Jr. himself, sitting out on the patio having a turkey sandwich and a Molson Golden, wearing a pair of Ray Ban shades to protect his eyes from the all-encompassing southern California sunshine. He's with his successor at *National Review*, John O'Sullivan, and *NR*'s Washington correspondent, Kate O'Beirne. Somewhere around here are representatives David Dreier, Jack Fields, and Dana Rohrabacher. Frank Luntz, one of the architects of the hated "Contract with America," is here. And Arianna Huffington, wife of 1994 U.S. Senate candidate Michael and authoress and virtuecrat in her own right, is milling about with a big sincere-looking grin, planting social kisses on just about everyone she meets, or at least the important people. Such as Sam Nunn, media critic and retiring elder-statesman senator from Georgia, who after receiving his Arianna kiss, politely asks about her children. Astonishing!



Chas Fagan

David Horowitz

But the really astonishing thing about this gathering is not merely that all the right-wing scourges were invited (and not by Paramount, mind you; that would be way beyond astonishing) but that the Hollywood types knew who was going to be here and came anyway. "Here" in this case refers to the "Images of Ourselves: A Dialogue Between Washington and Hollywood" conference, put on jointly by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture and the National Review Institute. The purpose is to get the powers who run what John O'Sullivan calls "the two most unpopular cities in America" talking to one another. As David Horowitz, president of the Center and organizer of the event, notes, Hollywood and Washington have been at each other's throats since the McCarthy era and that unfortunate blacklist thing, and this applies especially to the Republicans. "Conservatives had given up on even trying to gain a foothold in this town," he says. That is, he is quick to point out, until he came along.

The conference grew out of this little group called the Wednesday Morning Club, an informal association of actors, directors, writers, and producers who, shall we say, don't necessarily toe the Hollywood line on every issue, or don't go in much for line-toeing in general. It was formed over breakfast on the day after the 1992 election (hence its name) by Lionel Chetwynd, the man who wrote TNT's *Kissinger and Nixon* and directed *The Hanoi Hilton*, along with some friends who were somewhat irked at how little debate there was in Hollywood during the election. Everyone just assumed everyone else was for Clinton, and that was that. But 'twas not so. A handful of people were willing to admit to apostasy early on, and so this brave new group was born. It has since become allied with the Center, enlisted, as it were, in Horowitz's crusade to bridge the gap between Washington and Hollywood. "[We've] created a venue in Hollywood where people like Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole can come and talk, and that's something that's really unprecedented," Horowitz says. Not that Gingrich and Dole have actually rushed from the LAX tarmac to have their limos take them into studioland for speaking engagements. But others have come, including Jack Kemp, Dick Cheney, and George Gilder. And look at all the conservative faces at the conference!

The gathering began quite early, in an amazingly plush auditorium where one figures the Paramount execs screen their latest pictures. The seats are more comfortable than the average CEO's office chair, which was lucky because the day consisted of six—count 'em!—panels, each of which, aside from maybe

the first, easily took over an hour and a half. There was also a lunch in the middle and a banquet in the evening at which Sam Nunn and Tom Selleck received awards, for what it was not terribly clear, except that it had something to do with "values." Note that word: It cropped up with the persistency of ragweed in a vacant lot in the speeches these Hollywoodsters gave about the culture: "social values," "family values," "fundamental values." . . . Only Bill Bennett, in his keynote address, mentioned values' long-lost bastard cousin, virtue.

The first panel was rather uneventful, although two of the themes that would dominate the conference came into sight right off the bat: the V-chip and Pat Buchanan. The V-chip is the little technological wonder that the president and certain United States senators think is going to save our kids from mind-numbing TV violence by allowing parents to block out hyper-violent programs. And Pat Buchanan is . . . well, you know who he is. Horowitz himself was the first to bring up Buchanan, in the context of praising Bill Buckley and *National Review* for rooting anti-Semitism out of the respectable Right. O'Sullivan, who followed, politely declined to get into the Pat Buchanan "controversy" but later was hissed when he referred to some of the things being said about Pat as "character assassination."

Chetwynd got off a double-barreled blast at both Buchanan and the V-chip, claiming that if we were going to have V-chips, we might as well have L-chips for language, S-chips for sex, and, for his house, a B-chip for Pat Buchanan.

With the second panel, entitled "Our Nation, Our Culture," things started to heat up. There was really no dialogue to speak of, despite the conference's title, just a slew of speeches. But what speeches! The audience got earfuls of inflammatory, accusatory statements from the politicos—with the exception of Susan Estrich—and culture-cons, and defensive, hackles-up responses from the Hollywoodsters. Mark Steyn, film critic for the *Spectator* in London, led off with a trenchant, sustained attack on American popular culture, once the "soundtrack to the 20th century," now a depraved pimp pushing its "coke and hookers" portrait of America on the rest of us. The villain of Steyn's spiel was Joe Eszterhas, the highest-paid screenwriter in Hollywood and author of *Showgirls*, the epic bomb about "lap-dancing in Las Vegas." The mention of Eszterhas really got Linda Obst into a frenzy, and she started to go on about how she had conceived *Flashdance*, one of her early films, as a "girl's empowerment picture" that would show some of the "finest aspects of the human character," but then how the studio hired Eszterhas to come aboard and do a rewrite, and he just ruined it, turning the thing into a freaking lap-dance movie.

"The market" turned out to be theme No. 3 of the conference. The great debate raging around this topic was whether Hollywood creates a demand for depravity or merely responds to one that already exists in the breasts of Mom&Pop&Buddy&Sis out there in the heartland. Not surprisingly, the politicos, especially the conservatives, argued the supply side, while the Hollywoodsters argued the demand side. One exception was O'Sullivan, who compared the relationship between Hollywood and the rest of America to that between pusher and addict. But he redeemed himself somewhat by calling Hollywood "the Athens of the new Hellenistic world" created by the global predominance of the English language. Still, he was far from sanguine about what the poets of this new Athens were cranking out.

> THE CULTURE-CONS WERE DEFENSIVE, TO THE POINT THAT THEY KEPT PREFACING EVERYTHING THEY SAID WITH "I'M NOT FOR CENSORSHIP."

And so were many of his fellow panelists. Every time some culture-con would bring up just how trashy so much of Hollywood's product tends to be, the Hollywoodsters would reflexively bring up the market and censorship; the market as in "What do want from us? It's a business, and that's what people pay to see"; and censorship as in "What do you want, the government telling you what you can and can't watch?" This in turn made the culture-cons defensive, to the point that they kept prefacing everything they said with "I'm not for censorship, but . . ." or even "No one is more opposed to censorship than I, but . . ."

The third panel was supposed to shed some light on how TV programming decisions are made. To that end, it featured Edgar Scherick, former ABC programming chief; former *Cheers* producer Rob Long; and Ken Wales, another writer-producer who told a lengthy sob story about how hard it was for him to bring *Christy*, the tale of a religious turn-of-the-century schoolmarm, to the small screen because of executive obtuseness. For some reason, Sam Nunn and Jack Fields were on this panel too, despite the fact that they

knew nothing about TV decision-making. For that matter, no one else seemed to either, or if they did they were having a heck of a time communicating it to the audience. Only Rob Long offered any real insight, which amounted to William Goldman's dictum that "nobody knows anything," meaning that all successes are flukes and TV execs are essentially like a bunch of blindfolded kids at a birthday party, wildly swinging the big stick of television programming at the piñata that is the American public. He also noted that execs tend to follow trends and copy successful shows. Considering how the airwaves are being assaulted by *Friends* rip-offs, it is an open question how many in the audience needed this pointed out to them.

After the lunch break, the fourth panel convened, on the topic of representing history and politics on the screen. Opinions ranged from "all art is a fiction" that "reflects the truth more profoundly than historical narratives" (Ron Silver) to "Hollywood getting history wrong is cultural murder" (Ronald L. Maxwell, producer/director of *Gettysburg*). All agreed, however, that the best defense against pop culture's distortion of history is an educated public and assured us that Hollywood posed no real threat to anyone's place in history, not even Richard Nixon's.

The most riveting moment came during the panel on sex and violence. The panel chair called on a woman, but who stood up but David Carradine, *Kung Fu* "Grasshopper" Kane himself, announcing that the woman had held her hand up on his behalf because his arm had gotten tired. The buzz in the room was that she was his "personal assistant," which ought to further illuminate the workings of Hollywood for you. Anyway, he started charging down the aisle saying that he's been "trying to do a spiritual show with family values but I can't sell it unless I kick somebody for at least four minutes out of every $43\frac{1}{2}$ minute show." He also noted, supporting the reflect-not-create theory, that he "took a lot of drugs in the 60s" and movies didn't make him do it.

Aside from this burst of excitement, the panel was basically three not terribly reflective Hollywood insiders (McTiernan, Bob Gale, producer and co-author of the three *Back to the Future* movies, and Carmine Zozzora, head of Bruce Willis's production company) getting skewered by an academician, Stanley Rothman, professor of government at Smith College, who pointed out, among other things, that Hollywood always likes to take credit for the good influences it effects but insists on denying even the potential for bad. After all, why do so many writers, directors, and actors loudly proclaim their desire "to make a difference" and inject plugs for various causes into their work if the medium has no effect on the public? This was utterly lost on Zozzora, the one participant most insistent that Hollywood merely reflects what people want. When an audience member asked why there were no films that showed religion in a positive light, he responded, in perfect seriousness, that the most recent attempt, namely *The Last Temptation of Christ*, had bombed, and so that was that as far as religious films were concerned.

Then it was on to the final panel, "What Can Be Done?" The answer: Not censorship, not the V-chip, not a rating system. In short, not much. This panel featured three members of Congress: Bono, Dreier, and Rohrabacher. The latter two used the occasion to give campaign speeches about welfare reform (Dreier) and the honest, hardworking folks back in the home district concerned about these very issues (Rohrabacher). Bono, to his credit, decided to use his skills from his days in the entertainment industry to keep the crowd in stitches. It would be impossible to do full justice to his remarks, so perhaps it's best to leave it at the fact that daytime talk shows feature women who mate with donkeys.

The culmination of the day was Bill Bennett's keynote address. Chiding not just Hollywood but all of America for what he called "unilateral moral disarmament," Bennett urged both the entertainment industry and advertisers to recognize the tremendous effect they have on the culture and on the behavior of the young. He was as against censorship as any of the Hollywoodsters—he referred to himself as a "First Amendment absolutist" and in fact noted that he opposed government intervention of any kind (thus completing the day's rout of the poor, maligned V-chip). Instead he called on Hollywood to be "self-governing," as it once was, back in those remote days when Louis B. Mayer was chairman of the California Republican party, and even those not so remote days when movies like *My Fair Lady* and *The Sound of Music* were winning the Academy Award for Best Picture. How elegantly simple! How perfectly succinct! The only solution, to be sure, and yet . . . how to pull it off? How to effect the transformation of one of the most notoriously self-indulgent and unrestrained communities in the country into an exemplar of responsibility and self-government? Bennett did not have an answer. But to his credit, he did manage to say in a matter of minutes what 35 panelists could not come up with over the course of nine hours. ♦

Winslow Homer and Our Contemporaries

By David Gelernter

The most moving objects in the current exhibition of Winslow Homer's work are not the paintings at all, but a pair of banged-up paint boxes in a display case. They seem to have soaked up considerable love. Homer never succeeded in getting a wife, though apparently he was in love at least once. Paint boxes were his companions. His fierce devotion to his paints and his craft fills the exhibition like a bracing breeze and seems to inspire everyone who passes through, no matter how casual his interest in the pictures.

The exhibition opened in Washington in October and is now at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, before it moves to New York's Metropolitan Museum June 20. It's a wonderful show, and if you wade in with the sporting vigor Homer demands—no dawdling in the shallow water—it is impossible not to hear this great 19th-century artist pass judgment on today's art world.

Homer was the artist of the pure joy—it goes beyond joy, really—of seeing. Other painters lusted after brilliant design or drawing or color, tried to convey the emotional substance of a scene or the character of a model or the solid thingness of the universe. Homer's mission was to get down on canvas the joy he felt seeing that girl dawdle alone, lost in thought, up that wooden ramp in the middle distance with the sun at her back. The orange-red of her blouse, wildflowers in the soft grass, a warm brown carpet of pine needles. To make interesting paintings he needed, more than any of his major contemporaries, to see interesting things. Van Gogh painted worn chairs and old shoes; he could have done a bravura portrait of a blank wall. Degas would draw a dozen tiny variations on one position of one model. But Homer needed to visit the front during the Civil War, the South during Reconstruction, Ten Pound Island in Gloucester Harbor, Key West, Cuba, the Bahamas, Bermuda, the Adirondacks.

In his mid-forties he sailed off to Liverpool and settled in the little North Sea village of Cullercoats for a year and a half. Someone asked him (not unreasonably) what on earth for. "Atmosphere and color," he explained. "Look at the fishergirls. . . . There are none like them in my country." At length he moved to the Maine coast and devoted himself to getting the ocean down on canvas. He threw himself at that problem again and again like waves slamming rocks, but it defeated him.

His obsession with the thrill of seeing underlies his greatest weakness. He trained as an illustrator; had a master illustrator's eye for detail. He did best when he suppressed it. The girl on the ramp (*The Morning Bell* of 1871) is *the* paradigm early Homer. Warm yellow-greens and orange-reds, long low cinemascope canvases, and middle-distance figures dominate his early art. In this painting the recipe cooks up beautifully. Where it fails, it is because he has allowed the strength of his drawing to be sapped by fussy detail. Thus *Milking Time* (1875): a powerful composition centering on three heavy slats of a cattle enclosure. A boy seen from behind peers at the cows beyond. His mother stands beside him, dead center of the picture, with a bucket and milking stool. Degas would have outlined the figures, merely sketched in their accouterments, and allowed us to revel in the force of the drawing (not that Degas would have been caught dead in a barnyard). Homer needs to tell us about the woman's two-toned sash, each fold of her dress, the tacks in the stool's seat, the two rivets that fasten the bucket handle. So instead of creating an authoritative work, a masterful work, he achieves only charm.

He understood this weakness and fought against it, painting out details and seeking purity. Again and again he struggles to simplify. Sometimes he succeeds—strips his figures to the bare outline, unleashes the power of his drawing, and leaves us in awe. In *The West Wind* (1891), we see from behind a woman on a sandbank silhouetted against luminous ripping surf. A huge gray-lavender cloud presses downward. Driven sand roars upward. The wild brushstrokes leap and crackle, and the painting nearly shudders with force. But here, too, he overdoes it. The late ocean pictures are over-painted, under-drawn; in a way, too simple. *Northeaster* (1895) is a paragon of austerity: rocks, sky, and sea. Originally two men stood on shore. He painted them out. But this ocean is

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David Gelernter, professor of computer science at Yale, is the author, most recently, of 1939.

overwrought in the manner of the hammered-copper doodads you pick up at random souvenir stands worldwide. Homer kept worrying the surface with brushstrokes, one ping after another. The colors don't shine, the foam doesn't breathe or glisten or tremble, and, worst of all, there is nothing for the eye to come to grips with, just a slick swell of ocean to roll off. The thing he is trying to paint is unpaintable. What haunts us in the end is not what these pictures show, but what they fail to show.

Yet his best paintings are lyric masterpieces. In oils he has a fine, big technique, not a dazzling one. He is Rudolf Serkin, not Horowitz; he has freshness, dignity, intelligence, depth. His technique in watercolors is overwhelming. In his *An October Day* (1889), a hunted deer swims a blue lake, disturbing the reflections of fall foliage. The colors of autumn are warm, ordinarily, but these particular rusts and yellow-greens are chilly, in defiance of logic and color wheels; he has painted the air itself. A casual, perfect blotch of blue-green to make a pine onshore. A blotchier blotch for its reflection. Rendering the mirror surface of smooth water is the oldest painterly trick in the book, but Homer makes it mesmerizing. The deer in the cold water, the canoe and its reflection in two quick parallel strokes, the pale blues and gray-yellows that give off light—they leave you with the sensation of seeing (as Wordsworth says) into the life of things.

Homer's paintings are mainly about America. Much of today's American art is about America, too, and the contrast is striking. It is not merely that Homer is patriotic. His view of the country has a nuanced richness that makes the monotonous conformity of present-day artists seem ridiculous.

Almost as striking is the cultural environment in which he worked. Though critical opinion acknowledged Homer's importance from his career's outset, critics loved some of his paintings and hated others. Occasionally they praised and blasted different aspects of one picture. Some of their complaints hold up, many don't, but on the whole these writers were balanced and intelligent.

Our contemporary critics, by contrast, have instituted a neo-Soviet policy of empty huckster-

THE AMERICA OF TODAY'S "ART COMMUNITY" IS VAPID AND BARREN NEXT TO HOMER'S.

ism. "You can see from the academies, from any exhibition, any review in the art magazines how art is received," says Gerhard Richter (who has turned out some of the best of present-day abstract paintings—snarling flocks of trapped bubbles in mud-orange glass with blue flashes, among other things); "It is accepted uncritically, and the attitude is 'get on with it, anything you do is interesting.'"

Homer loved his country intelligently and sometimes cantankerously. His Union sentiments are never in doubt, but the Civil War scenes with which he starts his career are striking for hard-eyed realism ("No sentimentality," said *Harper's Weekly*). His peacetime views are wry sometimes, or ironic; *Artists Sketching in the White Mountains* (1868) shows a small pile-up of painters (Homer included) at a scenic spot. Over the course of decades, he paints Adirondack forests devastated by indiscriminate logging—pictures intended, evidently, to shore up the rising conservationist sentiment of the day. Boys fish a rippling water-lilied pond with a barren field of stumps stretched out behind; oblivious woodsmen lean comfortably on their axes in wasted fields, rest their bags on broken trees. Homer and many others abominated a favorite Adirondack hunting practice: Dogs would drive deer into the water, where they were effortlessly shot, drowned, or clubbed by sportsmen in boats. Homer held up that kind of sport for inspection in a series of beautiful and chilling pictures, of which *An October Day* is one.

But in everything he paints, his love of America and (on the whole) her people is the ground on which all the rest is superimposed. His celebrated *Breezing Up* (1876)—a man and three boys in a catboat on a brilliant windy day—picks up the ebullient hopefulness of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Originally he'd painted the man holding the tiller, but he changed his mind and put a boy in charge—"whose bright eye [the *New York Times* wrote at the time] evidently sees such enormous horizons."

What Homer with his ambivalence and thoughtful irony brings home is not so much the hatred large parts of today's art community feel for this country but the sneering and unmodulated tone of the hatred. A painting by Frank Moore called *Freedom to Share* in the 1993 Whitney Biennial is a parody of Norman Rockwell's famous Thanksgiving illustration, *Freedom from Want*. In Moore's version, whites, blacks, and Asians mingle round the table as a (white) mother presents a parsley-decorated platter heaped up with drugs and syringes in the general shape of a turkey. "Like race, issues of gender and class and the critique of dominant culture inform much contemporary art practice," writes one perceptive critic in the 1993 Biennial catalog. "The first post-cold war Biennial," according to another, "inhabits a

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the W.L. and May T. Mellon Foundation

Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)

contradictory and unpredictable space, ruled by the hegemonic structures of a heretofore repressive power, uncertain of what is to come."

The America of the Biennial is vapid and barren next to Homer's, with all the sophistication of a kindergarten but none of the variety. Contemplate two pictures from the start and finish of Homer's career. In *The Veteran in a New Field* (1865), the returned soldier works with his back to us, scything wheat. A taut picture in three parallel strips: upper band of sky, then the swish and sparkle of wheat with the reaper picked out against it, and a band of stubble at the bottom. Nicolai Cikovsky shows in a fascinating catalog essay how Homer reworked the scythe by painting out the multi-blade model farmers actually used in order to substitute a traditional single-blade sickle. Why? To make a symbolic point: The nation's returning heroes were retired grim reapers, lately engaged in cutting down other men. To refer, also, to President Lincoln, so recently cut down. But the fraught undertone takes nothing away from the veteran's peaceful dignity.

In *The Gulf Stream* (1899), a sailor lies wearily on a dismasted small boat in rough seas, squinting at a sea-ful of sharks with a stubborn set to his jaw that constitutes a low-key, unhistrionic kind of defiance. Imminent death is a central Homer topic, and it suffuses his Adirondack deer-hunting pictures. Back during the Civil War, he had painted scenes like *Inviting a Shot Before Petersburg*, in which a Rebel soldier parades his defiance on the ramparts of the Confederate camp and we see, as a smokepuff in the far distance, the Union rifle shot that will kill him. He paints this favorite theme without sentimentality. Indeed, his detachment can be unsettling. In *The Gulf Stream* he seems to be daring himself to lose his cool, and he lays the sharks on thick; but the painting keeps its balance. Like *The Veteran in a New Field*, it is a portrait of death and heroism. What distinguishes good national art from bad is not jingoism but nuance, depth.

Strange times: The same day I saw the Homer show at the National Gallery in Washington, I visited the celebrated Vermeer show—two exhibits I suspect no art lover will ever forget. Serious scholars organize stunning shows, write about them in lucid, memorable catalogs, and the huge crowds clamor for more. An outside observer might guess that art in this country has never been more popular or better served.

And then we turn to the "art community" itself—on campus, running the galleries, publishing the culture periodicals; the group in charge of today's new art. Back

at the Whitney, one celebrated work by Robert Gober from the 1995 Biennial consists of a bundle of newspapers featuring made-up stories. About what? Welfare cuts and environmental disasters, naturally.

Of course there were bad artists and foolish critics in Homer's age, too. Of course the Whitney Biennial is notorious for its dreadfulness. I don't even want to claim that the Biennials are all bad: 1993's had interesting pieces by the Spanish expatriate Francesc Torres; and last year's included good abstractions by Harriet Korman and old master Cy Twombly. Mostly, however, it is the same tedious broken record about race, class, and "gender" we have been hearing for decades, variations on the themes of self-hatred and contempt—contempt for beauty, for America, above all for art itself. And like New Yorkers amid the blare of their renegade car alarms, most Americans have long since tuned the contemporary art world out.

It's bewildering—until you figure it out. They aren't the "art community," *we* are—we Homer lovers and Vermeer connoisseurs. And we are ripe for a renaissance. We lack only the new institutions—the anti-establishment art magazines, culture reviews, brave uncomformist galleries, new art institutes, *Salons des Refusés*—to support one. We need to rescue today's good young artists from the corrupt and demeaning environment in which they are trapped, to re-create an art criticism that can tell good from bad, to make the obvious connection between a public hungry for art, waiting forever in the cold just to get a glimpse of Homer and Vermeer, and the new artists who are capable of feeding it. Basking in Homer is a fine way to spend the afternoon, but to honor the man truly we ought to keep American art alive. ♦

Books

1994 and All That

By David Tell

Recent partisan politics is a mess of apparently contradictory evidence about American ideological appetites. The 1992 Democratic presidential campaign serves up *nouvelle* liberalism—less fat, light sauces, and lots of fresh ingredients in unusual, artistic combination. Voters swallow it but can't keep it down for long. By 1994, national tastes appear to have changed completely, in favor of a tart, palate-cleansing conservatism that produces the first Republican Congress in almost half a century and renders the Democratic White House virtually irrelevant.

But in 1996 conservatism's main course, a balanced budget, still sits ice cold and untouched on the plate. Most of this year's Republican presidential field looks like yesterday's pizza. And Bill Clinton's reelection, a laughable prospect barely a year ago, no longer seems farfetched at all. So what can it all mean? What kind of politics do Americans really want?

Two crafty new books by three of journalism's best and closest political observers address this question directly. The governing logic of the current American scene makes an era of renewed liberal activism inevitable and imminent, says one. No, something very close to the opposite is probably true, says the other.

Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr. frames his argument with a bold prediction: "The United States is on the verge of a second Progressive Era." *They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era* (Simon & Schuster, 352 pages, $24.00) describes an American swing vote primarily motivated by the job-security anxieties of a globalized economy. Government's ability to relieve the pressures of economic competition naturally declines as those pressures cross national boundaries. And frustrated by their politicians' ever-weaker response to their concerns, voters have lately indulged a perfectly natural impulse to throw the bums out.

In 1992, the bums were a Republican presidential administration. In 1994, a Democratic Congress got the bum rap. But notwithstanding such apparently irreconcilable lurches back and forth, Dionne argues, "the politics of the anxious middle" now heavily favors a lasting Democratic revival. Republicans have locked themselves into celebration of "the radical, unregulated capitalism of the Gilded Age" and "the fiercest forms of unchecked competition." And by ruling out the very *possibility* of government intervention against market-produced dislocations, laissez-faire Republicanism effectively turns its back on the Anxious Middle. The Anxious Middle is bound to return the favor.

Dionne writes a clear, lively prose and manages a respectful and balanced treatment of clearly opposed political philosophies while never once disguising his own preferences—no easy feat. He's also a gifted analyst and explicator of abstract phenomena and ideas; the book includes insightful mini-essays on the personalized "meanness" of contemporary

American politics, on the shifting role of the press, and on the legacy of thinkers and writers like Herbert Croly (on the Left) and Frank Meyer (on the Right). But Dionne is ultimately too comfortable in this world of social science. There is too little room in his philosophy for political reality—for people, events, and organizations, which he explicitly minimizes. The book runs its exercises *around* the evidence, not with it. How, exactly, will Dionne's forecasted resurgence of Democratic progressivism occur in practice? He cannot really say.

He vows it will happen soon. Okay: What will it look like? It will look like the last Clinton campaign, with its delicately spun mix of economic populism, self-consciously "third way" investments in individual "opportunity," and conservative music on questions of crime, family, and foreign policy. But campaigning is one thing, and governing is another, as Dionne himself is quick to admit. And hasn't governing Clintonism proved a miserable, unconvincing failure so far? Hasn't it been reduced (if it was ever anything more than this) to an intricate rhetorical defense of the governmental *status quo*? No. "The problem with Clintonism was that, in the administration's first two years at least, it was never really tried."

It turns out Dionne means Clintonism *was* tried but got botched in the execution. "Clintonism could work only if all (or at least most) of its parts could be put in place at once: if welfare reform could be *balanced* by health care reform; if deficit reduction could be *balanced* by new investment programs; if relief for gays in the military could be *balanced* by tax relief for middle-income families with children; if freer trade . . ." If, if, if. This is asking an awful lot from any president—and even more from his public. Dionne wants the modern presidency's "one issue at a time" rule suspended. He wants voters to see ideological coherence in the resulting jumble of initiatives. And he wants Democrats *outside* the White House to behave themselves.

These congressional and interest-group Democrats are targets of the book's harshest criticism. During the 103rd Congress, they too often fought with the White House and among themselves, dooming too many Clinton initiatives to an undeserved death and coloring those that survived with "reactionary liberalism." Democrats *en masse* proved themselves "not ready for the renewal that the party required and the discipline that governing demanded." True enough. So how will the Democrats solve their yawning problems of internal ideological and interest-group conflict and quickly retake control of the national agenda?

> REPUBLICANS ARE NOT THE ANARCHISTS THAT E.J. DIONNE IMAGINES.

Maybe they won't have to, Dionne implies; voters may just give them the ball by default, in a revolt against the new Republican Gilded Age. The new conservatism, he writes, in a rare lapse of decency, sees "no *fundamental* difference between free government and dictatorship." The only good government—according to the GOP, according to Dionne—is no government. And in an age in which most American voters want at least some vigorous government, the reins of power will be turned over to the only party prepared to provide it.

For all the elegance and nuance of Dionne's argument, this is, at bottom, a cartoon. Republicans are not the anarchists he imagines. Voters do not see them that way. And the central question of American politics is not "yes or no?" to government *in toto*, but rather (as always) a more modest "more or less?"

After all, Dan Balz and Ronald Brownstein helpfully remind us, congressional Republicans aren't contemplating the elimination of Social Security or Medicare, "the cornerstones of the American social welfare state." However ambitiously, they seek only to limit post-New Deal laws and regulation, not to abolish them. The (at this point moribund) Republican budget would shrink government spending from 22 to 19 percent of gross national product by 2002. In the early 1930s, the same figure was as low as 8 percent.

Balz and Brownstein, national political correspondents at the *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, respectively, have produced the best survey of post-1992 partisan politics yet written. *Storming the Gates: Protest Politics and the Republican Revival* (Little, Brown, 424 pages, $24.95) has a great many interesting things to say about the thinking now going on in and around the Democratic and Republican parties. "Ideas matter in American politics," the authors insist. But, *contra* Dionne, "results matter more." And it is their meticulous attention to political results—and how those results have been achieved—that makes the Balz and Brownstein prediction the more convincing one.

In America today there has been fashioned a "broad social consensus toward restraining the role of government," they write. "Of all the electoral possibilities that can be imagined for the next few years, the least likely is Democrats receiving a mandate to enlarge the scope of federal intervention in American life. Indeed, the momentum behind the drive to limit government is so powerful that it is unlikely to entirely stall no matter which party

is in power. . . . In the near term, nothing is likely to entirely reverse the course set in 1994 toward a smaller government."

In this telling, then, the aberrant election was 1992, not 1994. Even in victory, Bill Clinton failed to expand his party's base of support in any significant way; in swing counties and with key demographic groups, the authors report, Clinton managed only to match Michael Dukakis's 1988 numbers, and nothing more. What mattered in 1992, most of all, was the thorough dissolution of the Republican message and coalition, under the twin pressures of a failed Bush presidency and Ross Perot.

In two short years, that battered Republican vote-getting capacity has been painstakingly repaired under the philosophical banner of "limited government," as Balz and Brownstein exhaustively document. The Republican coalition, which now commands a solid working electoral majority across the country, is reasonably coherent and self-policing. And it is unlikely to rupture, they report.

A few pieces of this story have already been told in greater detail elsewhere. Still, there is a great deal of wonderful original reporting in the book. President Clinton is captured in the back of a limousine late in 1994, in full-scale denial, wondering at the "intense partisanship of the congressional Republican leadership, and the fact that they got away with it, that they haven't been punished for it in public perception." Newt Gingrich worries over the inclusion of social issues in his Contract with America: "If I put school prayer in, just think of the kind of column Al Hunt will write. He'll call the Contract a religious Right agenda." Clinton consultant Dick Morris tells White House chief of staff Leon Panetta to call him "Charlie," after Farah Fawcett's mysterious boss on that bimbo private-detective TV show from the 1970s.

Particularly well wrought are the book's extended analyses of partisan realignment in the South and of the Washington interest-group lobbyists and conservative policy activists who function in symbiosis with congressional Republicans. (The latter chapter briefly mentions this writer, whom the authors interviewed during their research.)

But Balz and Brownstein's true accomplishment is weaving the web of recent partisan history into a comprehensive, comprehensible, interconnected whole. The book's final judgments are far from rosy about the Republican party per se. There are no guarantees about any particular electoral result in the future, they caution Republicans. Post-New Deal politics is still "unsettled." The disenchantment of independents is real, and it may bubble up to interrupt the more "natural" processes of two-party politics at any time. Economic worries in certain sectors of the middle class are real, too; more than 4 in 10 American men with only a high school education personally suffered income declines in the 1980s. And the GOP's philosophical disinclination to intervene in the market to address such problems may complicate the party's effort to consolidate its recent successes. Against that background (and a weak Republican challenger), Bill Clinton may still be reelected.

Limited-government Republicanism may also, of course, eventually proceed further than most voters are prepared to follow, which then (and only then) would produce a genuinely "progressive" backlash. Still and all, "the conservative insurgency is likely to continue growing for some time before that reckoning," the authors conclude.

In the meantime, E.J. Dionne, God bless him, could not be more wrong. ♦

Movies

Richard III, Nazi

By John Podhoretz

The new movie version of Shakespeare's *Richard III* is remarkable for several reasons. The actor Ian McKellen and the director Richard Loncraine, who adapted it for the screen, have managed to distill a complex three-hour play into a successful, fast-moving film that isn't quite two hours long. It records for posterity one of the celebrated Shakespearean performances of our time, McKellen's Richard—a figure straight out of Nietzsche, a cold-blooded general with perfect self-knowledge, a post-Christian man who knows full well that his will to power sets him outside conventional moral boundaries.

> TOO OFTEN THE TRANSPOSITION OF SHAKESPEARE IS SIMPLY A WAY FOR DIRECTORS TO INDULGE A PASSION FOR SET DIRECTION AND EYE-POPPING COSTUMES.

Most remarkable, it is the first film version of Shakespeare that does in cinematic terms what Shakespearean directors have been doing to the Bard on stage for three decades now, largely inspired by Jan Kott's extraordinary book *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*. *Richard III* is not set during the Wars of the Roses; rather, it has been lifted out of its time and placed squarely in mid-1930s England. Richard's slow and steady ascension to power is depicted as a Nazi takeover of a glamorous jazz-age constitutional monarchy.

The conceit is beautifully and meticulously rendered. Richard's ironic opening soliloquy about his brother's rise to power—"Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by the son of York"—is played as a sycophantish toast at a swank party celebrating the York victory over the Lancasters. Richard speaks into an old-timey microphone, which whistles as he speaks. Then we follow him alone into a men's room, at which point the soliloquy turns bitter, raging, as Richard realizes that there is no clear reason why his brother should sit on the throne when he, Richard, won the battles that restored his family.

And on it goes. Richard's notorious seduction of the previous queen over the corpse of the husband leads her to take up heroin. Richard's eventual demise finds him falling into a hellish inferno at a building site straight out of a Futurist painting, to the strains of Al Jolson's "I'm Sittin' on Top of the World."

Other recent Shakespeare films have taken the plays out of the putative time and place in which they are set—I think particularly of Kenneth Branagh's sickeningly high-spirited *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which a cast of overacting weirdos spend two hours jumping around an Italian villa, singing and dancing and gamboling about like psychotics bereft of Xanax. But *Richard III* is a thoroughgoing reinvention, and in that regard it is very much of a piece with the contemporary stage treatment of Shakespeare.

In the past few years alone, I have seen a production of *Troilus and Cressida*, about the Trojan War, set in a British army outpost in northern Africa during World War II; *All's Well That Ends Well* set during the Italian Risorgimento in 1870; *Measure for Measure* in Weimar Germany; and *Love's Labour's Lost* at Yale University in the 1910s.

This effort to find the themes in Shakespeare that speak most clearly to a modern-day audience is a worthy one, and Kott's book is a brilliant examination of the ways in which Shakespeare explored most of the existential concerns of modern theater four centuries ago. In careful and loving hands, these plays can indeed reach audiences when they are intelligently transposed. Too often, however, the transposition of Shakespeare is simply a way for directors to indulge a passion for interesting set decoration and eye-popping costumes. Like fashion designers run amok, they reduce these great and profound works to the stature of an anorexic model whose greatest virtue is that clothes hang beautifully on her.

The movie of *Richard III* threatens to overwhelm the play with its own mannered take on the 1930s, but I think McKellen and Loncraine have done a wonderful job for the most part. Those who are not completely versed in the story of the Wars of the Roses can find the play heavy sledding—Shakespeare was writing about events familiar to his audiences and is inclined to use shorthand that is indecipherable today. By stripping the play down and focusing on Richard and his tyrannies, they have taken a hidebound work of genius out of mothballs and given it new and glorious life. ♦

Alan Keyes, who is seeking the Republican nomination, said he was starting a hunger strike to protest his exclusion from the Presidential debate today. —*Associated Press, February 29, 1996*

Parody

George Soros To Go On Hunger Strike Until Bond Market Recovers

Will Fast Until 30-Year T-Bill Yield Back to 6%

NOVELIST ANNE RICE REFUSES FOOD, WATER

SEEKS APOLOGY FROM LEHMANN-HAUPT

Starving Over Critic's Claim New Book "Too Bloody"

Olajuwon Declares Fast

Fouled Out in 112-109 Loss

"I Had the Lane," Says Hungry Rockets Center of Charging Call