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LE REFORM PARTY, C'EST MOI

Perot's Crowning Catastrophe

by Tucker Carlson

the weekly Standard

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Cover art by Chas Fagan

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Newt Continues to Bug His Troops

Leading conservatives in the House of Representatives are angry, yet again, with Newt Gingrich for caving too quickly to Bill Clinton. The subject: anti-terrorism legislation. When Clinton convened a summit meeting with the leaders of Congress on the subject two days after the bombing at the Atlanta Olympics, he used the occasion to press for measures the Republican Congress had already defeated. Gingrich, who has said he goes weak in the knees whenever he is in proximity to the president, readily agreed to take up again the provisions his troops had already rejected. This was in sharp contrast to Senate majority leader Trent Lott, who staunchly said there was no time to consider such legislation before the August recess.

After heated negotiations, a House bill, minus a provision on so-called roving wiretaps, was due to be passed at press time. The central irritation is that conservative House members feel they were railroaded into acceding to Clinton. In this case, however, Gingrich surely had a point; as a political matter, the president could really make hay out of two—count 'em, two—rejections of tough-on-terrorism ideas by the supposedly tough-on-crime Republican House.

Stop with the Mail

Newspapers love to report on pieces of partisan fund-raising mail that are mistakenly sent to the opposing camp. It doesn't happen every week (quite), but it happens often enough to have become an annoying trope. We live in a world of junk mail, and the fact that a Republican receives a form letter that begins "Dear Fellow Democrat" really shouldn't be a news story any longer. More annoying, politicians who have nothing much to say take every opportunity they can to make hay out of these meaningless events.

Just the other week, Byron Dorgan, a Democratic senator from North Dakota, got a fund-raising letter from Newt Gingrich. Instead of just throwing it away, he took to the Senate floor—where once such men as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay inspired the nation with their oratory—to say, "Mr. Speaker, I hope you won't be offended when I tell you I've never had the slightest urge" to carry a "Friend of Newt" card. The *Washington Post* dutifully printed the item.

Enough already. But one type of story we do enjoy, and want to see more of, involves the ridiculous fake opinion surveys that appear in political mailings as a method of getting people so wrought up that they will send in big donations once they're finished. This week's prize goes to the Republican National Committee and the "CRITICAL ISSUES Double Poll" that's part of its newest direct-mail package. This "poll" includes such impartial and balanced questions as: "Immediately upon taking office Congressional Republicans voted for a series of reforms of the way Congress does business. Liberal Democrats built this corrupt system and resisted all attempts to fix it. Did Congressional Republicans do the right thing?" And: "The federal Medicare program will run out of money early in the next decade. The liberal Democrats have known this for years, but they refused to fix it. Now Congressional Republicans have a plan to make sure Medicare will be there for every American. But the liberal Democrats have opposed it at every turn. Is it time to fix Medicare before it goes bankrupt?"

We agree with much of the substance of the RNC's complaint against liberal Democrats—but how stupid do they think Republicans really are?

Michael Lind, *I-I-I-I* . . . (Letter to Follow)

What finally drove anti-con intellectual Michael Lind over the edge? A good case can be made that it was Bob Dole's use of the third-person singular when talking about himself. Lind, by contrast, likes to use the first-person singular when he's talking about other people. This could be what created the unbridgeable gap between Lind and his former allies in the troglodyte wing of the Republican party. On page 99 of

Scrapbook

his recent *Up from Conservatism*, Lind manages to employ the first-person singular at the astonishing rate of three ***I***s per sentence:

> ***I*** had never paid much attention to either [Pat] Robertson or the religious right when ***I*** picked up a copy of *The New World Order* in 1991. ***I*** expected to be amused by the promised explanation of world events like the Gulf War (during which ***I*** held a minor position in the State Department). Instead, ***I*** was shocked to discover that Robertson, whom ***I*** had assumed was a conventional evangelical like Jerry Falwell, had accused President Bush (for whom ***I*** had voted, and for whose administration ***I*** had briefly worked) and the Council on Foreign Relations (which ***I*** had joined after being nominated by William F. Buckley, Jr.) of being part of a Judeo-Masonic-Satanic conspiracy.

Enough about my significance—what do *you* think about my significance?

Even Worse News About Illegitimacy

Charles Murray writes:

A colleague phoned Monday with a question: In my Weekly Standard piece last week ("Bad News About Illegitimacy," Aug. 5), why hadn't I mentioned that Michigan and Texas changed their reporting procedures in 1994, thereby making their illegitimacy numbers for 1994 show an artificial jump? Not a problem, I replied. Take the Michigan and Texas numbers out of the calculation, and the figures for the rest of the nation are even worse than the national figures I described.

But what about the size of the increase from 1993 to 1994? he persisted. If things were even worse in 1994 without counting Michigan and Texas, they were also worse in 1993.

Well, he's right. The headline in the fictional newspaper article that began my piece should have read, "Illegitimacy Even Worse Than Thought." If we take the 48 states minus Michigan and Texas—which had been drastically undercounting their illegitimate births—as a more accurate representation than the official national total, then the United States exceeded 30 percent of births out of wedlock not in 1992, as I said, but in 1991. Blacks passed the 70 percent mark not in 1994, but in 1993. Whites did not pass the 24 percent mark in 1994; they were already within a whisker of 25 percent by 1993. More generally: All the reported increases of the last several years need to be jacked up a notch.

Everything else in the article continues to apply. The changing attitudes toward illegitimacy among the elites have so far failed to change behavior, and illegitimacy is seeping out of very low-income groups into the working class and middle class. There was big news this year about one of the nation's most important social trends, and nobody noticed.

Memo to the *New York Times*

Hey, nice in-kind campaign contribution to the Re-Elect Clinton Committee in the form of that seven-part series on the Clinton record! We were just wondering: Do you really believe all that bilge, or what?

Casual

Gourmet Dung for a Happy America

Coming home from work the other day, I stopped by our local fancy bread store and bought a walnut olive loaf ($4.25) and a bottle of Evian water ($1.25). As I counted the change from my $10, I began to wonder: Now that staples like water, bread, and coffee come in upscale versions, what will be the next product to go gourmet?

My first thought was that we are about to enter the age of the gourmet Slurpee. Some ex-hippie from Oregon will begin selling sun-dried-tomato Slurpees at $5.15 a pop, and psychologists and pottery instructors will eye each other across Navajo-motif Slurpee bars wondering, "Is she looking down on me because I only ordered the spinach-and-feta-cheese Slurpee while she ordered the arugula-cappuccino Slurpee with orzo sprinkles?"

But on second thought, Slurpees won't be the next big thing. Slurpees are, after all, a product of industrialism, and we only gourmet-ize products that a 15th-century jailer would be embarrassed to slop out to an unrepentant blasphemer: bread, water, overstrong coffee. We feel we are touching something elemental in the human experience when we rip open a loaf of bread that will go stale in 15 minutes because it is entirely free of preservatives. We feel purified if we can twist open a bottle of water that has gone untreated since it sat organically in a puddle in France. The whole gourmet trend of the 1990s is an attempt to return to the fundamentals, to the natural rhythms of life, and thereby learn to appreciate the colors of the wind.

And so the people who want to get back in touch with the rhythms of nature, who want to simplify their lives of the excrescences of modern commercialism, will rediscover dung. Yes, dung. There's something earthy and authentic about manure. The Masai tribe of Ethiopia, who star in numerous Kodak commercials, make wonderful hair sculptures with the stuff (they also make cocktails of cow blood and cow urine, but we're a few years away from that). In the Americanized version, dung could be rubbed on boots from the L.L. Bean catalogue, where it would emit an aroma consistent with the great outdoors.

When the dung craze hits, consumers will be able to tread in Swiss goat manure, Ukrainian wild boar manure, and Madagascan lemur droppings. The variety is key here, for one of the features of our gourmet craze is that we must take a simple item and turn it into a thousand items. You can't just walk up to a counter and order coffee; you instead face a menu of 657 different kinds of coffee, and once you have chosen from among them you walk up to the coffee-fixins table and confront dozens of creams (skim, half & half, cinnamon, vanilla . . .) and a comparable number of sweeteners (honey, sugar, unrefined sugar, Equal . . .). That's so each of us, and not some distant corporation, can be in control of his own coffee-inspired ingestion beverage.

It's the same with dung. It doesn't really matter what flavors of dung become popular, so long as they are expensive. For this is at the heart of the craze for upscale coffee, water, bread, pasta, and other gourmet items. The key is not the flavor; it's how expensive everything is.

In the 1960s, sociologists took a look at rising affluence and predicted that soon we would all become so rich that we would scale back the work week to, say, three days out of seven. All the rest would be leisure time. If you can afford to buy a week's worth of bread, coffee, pasta, water, and other basic items after a mere two hours of labor, why work such long days?

But as Americans have grown richer, our expectations have soared even higher than our incomes. So we have ended up feeling compelled to work more, not less. And rather than treating ourselves with leisure, we find it necessary to treat ourselves with costly consumer goods. Once upon a time, all you expected out of a loaf of bread was that it would give you something to hold on to as you ate bologna and mustard. Now we want breads that will purify our bodies, identify us as possessors of refined taste, and improve our souls. So naturally the new gourmet breads cost more.

And so, as we grow richer and more refined at the same time, we become more and more nostalgic for the products associated with poverty and the state of nature. That's why the most refined sweetener these days is unrefined sugar. And that's why dung is the logical extension of current trends. Soon friends will walk up to each other, sniff, and remark:

"Pacific manatee dung?"

"No, actually, Yellowstone wolf droppings. Collected it myself."

"Cool."

David Brooks

Always and Forever O.J.

Christopher Caldwell's observations on the Simpson trial accurately identify our national inability to speak with intelligence and clarity about race ("Why the Simpson Case Endures," July 29). As an attorney actively engaged in the defense of civil-rights and discrimination litigation, I have learned that one of the worst accusations that any individual or business can face is that of racism or "racial insensitivity." As Caldwell correctly observes, playing the race card can trump all other considerations, including, as tragically demonstrated in the Simpson case, life and death. Certainly the country's "current institutional and cultural standards" seem almost completely unable to weigh competing interests and claims of racial injustice.

While our racial divide has been frequently remarked upon, the underlying cause is more difficult to see. The civil-rights movement was a noble and uplifting manifestation of the human spirit. But it is of limited use in judging our current racial landscape. The notion that our society is characterized by pervasive white racism and vulnerable black innocence is a failure. That it might be seen as an explanation for the legal travails of wealthy celebrities like O.J. Simpson would be laughable, were the results not so tragic. The latest irony of the American Dilemma is that the fervor that inspired the successful fight against Jim Crow now serves as a barrier to further progress.

Rick Esenberg
Mequon, Wisconsin

Christopher Caldwell is bravely truthful, but because he does not place the O.J. trial in the larger social context, he seriously understates his conclusions, both about the impact of the trial and the depth and strength of the white reaction.

If Caldwell is right that "civil rights politics . . . may be the only politics we have," then a growing number of whites and Asians will draw the inescapable conclusion that they are disenfranchised by the system.

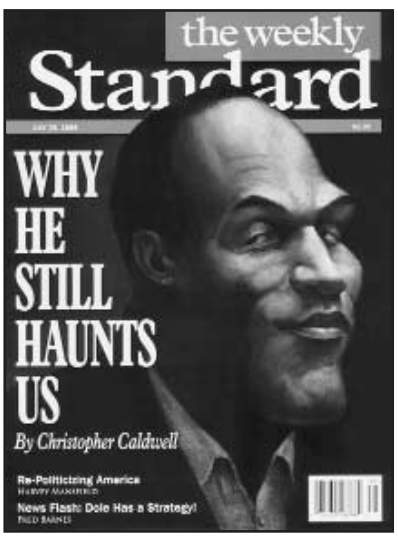
George Mellinger
Richfield, MN

L'Affaire Klein

The real reason for the media outrage about Joe Klein's lying is not the lying , the denials that he wrote *Primary Colors* ("The Media's True Colors," July 29). This issue merely provided an excuse and a screen for the liberal media to vent their long-suppressed fury.

What they were really mad at was Klein's exposure, in the novel, of the sleaziness, the corruption, and the pathological dishonesty of their darling, Bill Clinton.

This also explains why they were in such a frenzy to identify the author of



the book. Until they knew who wrote it, they had no target to attack. And that frustration further fed their fury.

Norman Wexler
Greenwich, CT

A Life of Farrakhan

Midge Decter's review of my book *Prophet of Rage* ("Farrakhan's Apologist," July 29) betrays a sorry and transparent craving for polemics, not for information about the theology and mythology underlying Louis Farrakhan's rise in public life.

Prophet of Rage was never intended to be a heavy-handed, anti-Farrakhan bludgeon. That is what Decter wishes it had been—and that is the text she is free to write. But I defy her to identify the audience for such a book, other than habitués of her neoconservative salon.

The book was intended to let Farrakhan's record speak for itself. It is a record so damning, hyperbolic, and theatrical that it doesn't need the fog of ideology—liberal or conservative—to drive home his sense of mission, his near-messianism, and his contempt for all—black and white; Christian, Moslem, and Jew—who do not have the requisite "wisdom" to embrace his "truths," as he persists in dubbing his elaborate and vengeful fictions.

Inexplicably, Decter is convinced that an "objective" account of Farrakhan "inescapably" buys into "the idea of a congenital and irremediable black inequality." Just how she gets from point A to point B escapes me, but the converse carries far more gravity. It is exactly a "non-objective" account of Farrakhan, one driven by the prism of ideology and blatant contempt, that "inescapably" buys into "the idea of a congenital and irremediable black inequality" since it patronizingly assumes that blacks—possibly the largest readership for a Farrakhan biography—are so hobbled by their condition in America that they must take orders from a nice Jewish boy like me on how to think about this man whom so many label our worst bogeyman, and who is using the nation's present deficit of compassion to advance his tainted cause.

Arthur J. Magida
Baltimore, MD

A Few Good War Flicks

John Podhoretz's essay "*Independence Day*: The Last War Movie" (July 29) is right on target, except for one slight misidentification: Howard Hawks's *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) is not a war movie. It's a comedy-adventure about a bunch of seat-of-their-pants airmail pilots in a fictional banana republic.

Podhoretz might have cited Hawks's war classics *Sergeant York* (1941) and *Air Force* (1943). Like most, if not all, of his films, they hold up beautifully even on the home screen.

Robert Finehout
New Brunswick, NJ

Correspondence

Equality That Delivers

Harvey Mansfield's article "Re-Politicizing American Politics," (July 29) is provocative, correctly pinning down the Democrats generally, and liberals specifically, for the problems emanating from big government: the removal of political issues from public discourse. One must, however, question whether Mansfield understands America's founding principles. Mansfield states that the "principle 'all men are created equal' seems to promise more than it can deliver." He decries the American Left for the rampant egalitarianism that plagues our country. On this point he is correct, for the Left does not want to make men equal in all ways. The equality of the Declaration, however, is not even remotely similar to the egalitarianism that leftists find appealing. Yet Mansfield does not offer a compelling response to the Left's impossible claims and rejects the Declaration by reading it out of the Constitution. Only the Declaration provides the Constitution with its principles and only the principles stemming from it stand in opposition to the problems associated with radical modernity. Without the Declaration, the Constitution is nothing but positive law.

Erik S. Root
Upland, CA

One Vote for Clinton

William Kristol's outrageous assertion that "Bill Clinton is not the president we deserve" is another attempt to smear the Clinton presidency ("A President We Deserve," July 22). Kristol, normally a bright and decent political observer, hits below the belt with his contention that Clinton's character and performance are not good enough for America.

Clinton is not only a check against the extremist tendencies of Newt Gingrich and the GOP majority, he is also a strong leader who is moving America forward. He has demonstrated strong character throughout his life and presidency, being the first president to have the courage to stand up to the powerful NRA and the tobacco industry. He has repeatedly articulated bright new policy ideas that integrate the best of the Right and the Left. This is a president America deserves.

Porter McNeil
Springfield, IL

More Dole-drums

David Frum accurately portrays the great difficulty that Bob Dole faces in the coming election ("Don't Count on Dole," July 22). Having seen Dole speak last year, I came away with the queasy feeling that he lacked vision, passion, and the ability to articulate a blueprint for America.

The cheerleaders of the party tell us not to worry, that the election is months away. But this same mantra has been repeated since early this year, and the candidate's performance remains disjointed.

Can the Republican party salvage a win from a potentially devastating loss, one that would undo conservative gains? The answer is yes, but it will require boldness: Bob Dole should renounce his position as Republican nominee and stand aside for his wife, Elizabeth Dole. Sen. Dole would show us that he is a winner after all, willing to sacrifice his own interests for those of the party and country, just as the Founding Fathers implored.

David E. Baum
Rochester, NY

I share David Frum's misgivings about the Dole campaign. At times, it appears that the candidate has a checklist of constituencies and is working his way down it. But I will grant him this: His list is more complete than Frum's.

I'm a gun-owner, a member of the NRA. If we can't claim to have handed Republicans Congress on a silver platter, they can't honestly claim that they could have done it without us.

But I have yet to see an account of the '94 election in any conservative outlet that mentions us, let alone credits us. And conservative Republicans tend not to acknowledge our interests today. Prolifers get the partial-birth-abortion ban (even though Bill Clinton vetoed it). But the repeal of the Clinton gun ban just isn't a priority. Apparently, the GOP doesn't mind our money, labor, and votes—but it would rather not do anything to earn them.

Ignoring gun-owners is a serious threat facing Republicans, and you act as if you don't realize it. On the day that we decide that neither major party is our friend, you will not find a Libertarian party with millions of new members so amusing. And that day is closer than you think.

Brett P. Bellmore
Capac, MI

The Gravity of Pet Theft

In "Pet Legislation" (Scrapbook, July 29), the Standard may be trying to be cute or funny. In reality, you are uninformed. Pet theft is a serious problem here in Missouri and possibly elsewhere. Dogs have actually been stolen off chains in backyards. People sell the animals to dealers, who then sell the animals to research laboratories.

Jean S. Wall
Washington, MO

Memo to Sister Ireland

A note on Evan Gahr's review of Patricia Ireland's new book ("What Some Women Want," July 22): I suspect that, much to Ireland's feminist chagrin, What Women Want is . . . a man—preferably a soulmate and husband. This is certainly true of the single professional women I know, particularly of those in their forties. Ireland's form of feminism doesn't offer much hope for them.

Marka Lazar
Jacksonville, FL

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VICTORY

Modern liberalism's central pretension—its insistence that the federal government must guarantee national solutions to our most glaring domestic problems—is dead. The centerpiece of the American welfare system is to be abolished by Bill Clinton's signature on Republican legislation. "I never thought I would see it come to this under a Democratic president," says Roxie Nicholson, a Labor Department policy analyst and bitter critic of the bill. Roxie and all the rest of us.

Federal entitlements do not end every day; indeed, none has ever ended before. And it means something especially big that this one entitlement—Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the automatic federal assistance program for unmarried poor mothers—is ending at this specific juncture in American politics. Now at the high-water mark of public approval in its post-1994 battle against the "extremism" of a Republican Congress, the Democratic party is nevertheless unable to defend the basic anti-poverty program it has spent decades expanding.

President Clinton's willingness to kill AFDC is therefore a big-picture concession of philosophical failure, a ratification of American conservatism's advance. And it is this fact, we suspect, not the welfare bill's likely consequences, that really explains the torrents of incoherent editorial fury now being directed Clinton's way. The president is approving "atrocious" legislation that will likely "throw a million more children into poverty," the *New York Times* thunders. "Mr. Clinton acquiesces in legislation," an even angrier *Washington Post* inveighs, "in which the federal government washes its hands of responsibility for welfare mothers and children."

About the bill's design and intention, this criticism is hysterical to the point of dishonesty. And about the president's approval of the bill, it is therefore unfair. The legislation replaces AFDC's cash entitlement to individual beneficiaries with a $16.4 billion lump-sum "block grant" to the 50 states. Those states will now use this block grant to finance and administer welfare programs of their own devising. And they will do so under modest and elastic federal restrictions. Federal welfare funds may no longer be spent on mothers under 18 who fail to stay in school or live with an adult. The money will only be available to non-working welfare householders for two years at a time, up to a maximum of five years.

But states may grant hardship exemptions from the overall five-year limit to a fifth of their welfare caseloads. The shorter two-year work requirement only applies to those seven states (with just 5 percent of the nation's welfare recipients) that do not already hold federal welfare-reform waivers under previously existing law. And nothing in the new welfare legislation prevents any state from funding more extensive and generous benefits with its own tax dollars. Given such latitude, is there a state government anywhere in the country vicious enough to fashion a welfare program that produces long bread lines of homeless children? Are there voters anywhere in country who would tolerate such a result? We don't believe it.

Neither do we believe the reflexive argument of wiseguy punditry that electioneering imperatives entirely explain the achievement of welfare reform this year. President Clinton has a well-earned reputation for manipulating word and deed in the service of narrow political interests. But is it really so "terminally gullible," as the *Post* puts it, to imagine that "anything" about his welfare decision was honorable? The *Post* is offended that on welfare reform Clinton is "unwilling to put his own political standing at even marginal risk." "Marginal" is the word for it. The president is 20 points up in the polls against a Dole campaign that was largely lifeless even *before* it "lost" welfare as an issue.

Bill Clinton will now probably be reelected. That's too bad. But what exactly is new about it? Precisely because he did not really *need* to sign this bill, the remote possibility must be entertained that on balance Clinton simply thought it was the right thing to do.

It was. Republican congressional incumbents, for their part, now finally have a large, palpable legislative win to brag about, a powerful campaign argument

with which to retain control of the House and Senate. This fall, Republicans will claim the bulk of the credit for the most significant federal initiative in domestic policy since the Reagan budget of 1981—for the most significant reversal of social policy, particularly, since welfare began its descent into hell in the 1960s. The GOP will deserve that credit. Because this bill has one, overarching virtue that even its severest critics do not much bother to deny.

AFDC is indefensible. It is the economic skeleton and nervous system of a culture of illegitimacy that now claims more than 70 percent of all newborn black babies, wrecking the American inner-city landscape and generation after generation of its helpless residents. The federal government has been "washing its hands" of responsibility for this travesty for decades—by maintaining AFDC in its current form and delaying the hunt for a more effective and genuinely compassionate alternative.

We do not know what that alternative should be, critics of welfare reform warn. No, we do not. But on the reasonable expectation that at least one of the 50 states might find it, and by insisting that the search finally begin, the 1996 welfare reform does something very, very good.

History will record this bill as the signal accomplishment of the 104th Congress and the first Clinton administration—and as a victory for American conservatism writ large. Not bad for two years' work.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Here Come the Pitchforks?

by Christopher Caldwell

Late on the night of July 27, Pat and Shelly Buchanan were getting ready to go see *Independence Day* when they found a message from Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour on their answering machine. Reached at home, Barbour informed Buchanan that his speaking duties at next week's Republican convention would consist of one soundbite, to be inserted in a five-minute "other candidates" video. After weeks of veiled hints and open warnings from Barbour and other GOP higher-ups that Buchanan would be excluded from a key role in the San Diego festivities, the message was plain enough. And it got plainer on Sunday. When Bay Buchanan, the candidate's sister and campaign manager, phoned someone she describes as "one of the adults in the Dole campaign," she was told that no one was available to talk to her.

> DOLE IS PUTTING BUCHANAN IN A POSITION WHERE, IF HE DOESN'T ATTEMPT TO WRECK THE DOLE CAMPAIGN, HE LOSES FACE.

The next day, Bay Buchanan denounced the offer as "an affront." Two days after that, her brother was standing before a hundred reporters in Washington's Hyatt Regency to explain his plans. Buchanan opened with a few conciliatory remarks. He had planned to offer a list of platform suggestions long before "the little contretemps of the last couple of days." Aside from an embrace of the flat tax, these were largely the ideas—protectionism, opposition to immigration, uncompromising opposition to abortion, deep suspicion of foreign aid—that were the centerpiece of his failed primary effort.

In putting such a list forward, he said: "These are not take-it-or-leave-it proposals; they are ideas which will emphasize the difference between the Republican party and Bill Clinton." But Buchanan *does* have take-it-or-leave-it proposals, and senior aides happily fill in the blanks. He insists that Republicans purge from the platform all language referring to abortion as "a matter of conscience"—because "it's not: it's a matter of right and wrong"—and denouncing "hatred and bigotry"—because "that should go without saying." He further insists that Dole name a pro-life running mate, and that the convention's tone not be set by pro-choice governors Weld, Whitman, and Wilson.

And in the give-and-take with reporters that followed his remarks, Buchanan was more combative. "I am more committed to these ideas and issues," he said, "than I am to any party label." There seems little doubt what Buchanan is hinting at: If he doesn't get sufficient respect from the Dole camp, he'll try to take the 3.1 million votes that were cast for him in the primaries and bolt the Republican party. Buchanan claims he'll take a "wait-and-see" attitude towards the convention. If this is a bluff, it's a bluff that's going to be called. He's planning to address his delegates and supporters

from a rented hall in Escondido, California, on Sunday, August 11, the night before the convention begins. By that time, Dole has said, the vice-presidential nominee will have been picked and the platform settled. If it's Colin Powell? Then Buchanan will, his aides say, *definitely* bolt.

Obviously, whatever votes Buchanan might get in November will come out of Dole's hide, which means a Buchanan candidacy could be fatal. But are those 3.1 million votes Buchanan's to take? Quite possibly, if we are to trust the results of a questionnaire the Buchanan campaign mailed to 130,000 supporters in the wake of the primaries. Of 30,000 responses, Buchanan said, two-thirds urged him to go to the convention with an open mind and decide there whether to endorse Dole. Twelve percent favored an immediate endorsement, and 22 percent urged Buchanan to announce as a third-party candidate.

Pat Buchanan

Kent Lemon

And Buchanan has a vehicle for getting on the ballot: the U.S. Taxpayers party, run by conservative activist Howard Phillips. Phillips has been suggesting that Buchanan make a third-party run since 1986 and renewed the invitation at a dinner in May. The Taxpayers party is an umbrella organization. It and its affiliates—including the American Independent party in California, the Independent American party in Nevada, and the Constitution party in Pennsylvania—already appear on 23 state ballots, are awaiting final certification on 9 more, and are "very likely," according to a spokesman, to appear on 8 more still. Phillips's name appears as a place-holder on the ballots.

The Taxpayers party is holding its own gathering the weekend after the Republicans, in Coronado, across the bay from GOP headquarters in San Diego. Buchanan has been invited to address the group. "It's my hope," says Phillips, "that if the GOP convention has been unsatisfactory he'll cross over the bridge and accept our nomination." Senior Buchanan officials pointedly decline to rule it out; indeed, voices within the Buchanan camp argue that Dole is trailing so badly no one will blame Buchanan four years from now for a Dole loss.

The Dole campaign has been spoiling for a fight with Buchanan for weeks now—as a way of showing that the Republican party under Dole will not repeat the "mistakes" of the 1992 convention, of which Pat Buchanan's fiery "culture war" speech has become the symbol. "If he wants to be our Sister Souljah, let him," an unnamed Dole aide told reporters in July. But when Bill Clinton used his attack on Sister Souljah to declare his independence from Jesse Jackson, he made his point and then brought the party back together. Jackson *was* invited to address the Democratic convention. Dole, by contrast, is putting Buchanan in a position where, if he doesn't attempt to wreck the Dole campaign, he loses face.

The Buchananites think that's not only selling them short, but also bad politics: "If they think Bush lost because he was too far to the right," says a senior Buchanan aide, "they can't read polls." He has a point: The closest Bush came to Clinton in the late stage of the campaign was immediately following the opening night of the convention, when Buchanan and Reagan spoke. As Buchananites like to point out, John Chancellor described the speech as "excellent," David Brinkley as "outstandingly good." The *Houston Chronicle* reported a ten-point bounce for Bush after the convention's first night. The Dole campaign would have a point if it argued that a drumbeat of negative press coverage damaged Republicans in the *aftermath* of Houston; but the belief that Pat Buchanan's 1992 speech drove voters away all by itself is not the open-and-shut case the Dole campaign thinks it is.

Those close to Dole say the campaign is not taking the Buchanan threat seriously at all. "He's too smart to bolt the party," says one Dole adviser. "We're not going to elect an independent president. And where does that end Pat up for 2000? In a fringe group with Howard Phillips. He's much too smart to fight the last war. He'll be smart enough to see this convention as an opportunity to solve his own problems."

What does the Dole campaign want from Pat Buchanan? For him to keep on doing exactly what he's doing: playing the radical, so that Dole can present himself as a moderate within the party. Even if

Buchanan doesn't peel off a huge chunk of the Republican base, the Dole strategy is a frivolous one. If Buchanan is as off-the-reservation as Dole portrays him, isn't America better off voting for a party that has no such elements to contend with?

Buchanan's "new conservatism of the heart" may be full of untested and even unconservative ideas, but it is certainly a viscerally felt thing for Pat Buchanan, and he may be willing to face a great deal—even ostracism or humiliation—in its service. ♦

Falling Down on the Job

by Eric Cohen

At the Potomac Job Corps Center in Washington, D.C., disadvantaged youths aged 16 to 24 live in dorms, work on reading, and learn trades. Some study to become house painters, others to become bricklayers, carpenters—even cosmetologists. And all of them study American history. Well, sort of.

The class is not called American history but "Intergroup Relations/Cultural Awareness Training." There are seven students in this particular section—five blacks, two Latinos—whose average reading level is roughly eighth-grade. Today's subject is the black experience in America.

"Our black ancestors helped to make America rich," the teacher explains. "We had a hand in the greatness of this country." One black student shouts, "Backbone!" A Latino student wonders, "Then why haven't there been any black presidents?"

The teacher is ready. She's probably faced this query before. "We've had a black president. His name is Abraham Lincoln. His name is Warren Harding. And there are others. Abraham Lincoln's mother was a black slave who sat in the kitchen while Mr. Lincoln took his oath of office. I have a little book that lists them all, all the black presidents."

She pauses, peering out at her class of high-school dropouts. Every one of them seems to be new to this story of Lincoln's mother. The teacher continues, "There is no reason for your mouths to be open. They wouldn't be if you understood the history behind the slavemaster's relationship with the African-American female. No one wants you to know this, but it's there. Just go to any African-American-university library. You just need to read. That's where you get this information."

The reaction is immediate. Intense. "I have been lied to my whole life by people I've trusted," exclaims one enlightened student. "By your teachers!" another commiserates. "That's right," says a third: "His mom was in the kitchen."

One could dismiss this incident as isolated, rare—unrepresentative of a curriculum that focuses on skills development. Or one could take a few minutes to flip through the course packet, which includes the Chinese zodiacal calendar, "Hispanic-American Word Search," and the names and addresses of government anti-discrimination agencies. All this for the bargain-basement price of more than $1 billion, the federal appropriation for Job Corps in 1995.

One might have expected Job Corps to be a prime target of Republican budget hawks. Not so. Last February, the Associated Press asked Bob Dole to name one social program that works. His reply: "Job Corps." According to House speaker Newt Gingrich, "As the American workforce adapts to an economy moving into the information age, Job Corps will continue to help prepare our young people for the challenges ahead." "A model program," says William Goodling, chairman of the House Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities. "The only program that works . . . for hard-core unemployed youth," says Sen. Orrin Hatch.

ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED THE JOB CORPS TO BE A PRIME TARGET OF REPUBLICAN BUDGET HAWKS. NOT SO.

But a fair assessment demonstrates Job Corps's utter failure. Last year, the General Accounting Office audited six different Job Corps sites with an average Labor Department ranking of 50 out of a possible 109. The findings are depressing: A third of Job Corps enrollees drop out within the first three months; only 36 percent complete vocational training; in 1993, only 14 percent of all "terminees" received jobs related to their training; and roughly 40 percent of funds at the six centers was spent on students who did not finish vocational training.

To top it all off, about 15 percent of job placements reported by the six centers were potentially invalid: Many employers stated that they had not hired students allegedly placed at their businesses; other employers could not even be found.

A substantial part of Job Corps's training is provided by national contractors through sole-source Labor Department agreements with unions and building-industry associations. Most of these contracts are at least a decade old; several are over 25 years old. The department's justification for sole-sourcing, rather than full and open competition, is that the contractors are able to place students nationwide. The problem? About 84 percent of union-provided training is in construction-related occupations, which account for only about 4 percent of the national job market.

"Government training programs are almost inevitably bureaucratic, arbitrary, and inflexible," says Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute. "Almost all of them are oddly detached from the realities of the job market."

But Job Corps is just one example, a single appropriation (though by far the largest) in the maze of voced and job-training programs sponsored by the federal government. All together, there are roughly 150 such programs, administered by 15 different departments and agencies. "Almost every department, from the Department of Agriculture to the Appalachian Regional Commission, seems to offer at least one training program," Tanner explains. And they constitute one of the most expensive myths in the American economy. The cost to taxpayers? Twenty-five billion dollars and rising.

But like any good myth, the job-training story is inviting to believe. First, there is the literature. Very impressive. There are biographies of job-training success stories. There are graduation pictures. There are pictures of President Bush embracing Job Training Partnership Act Presidential Award winners. There is even a quotation from Goethe: "Treat people as though they were what they ought to be and you can help them become what they are capable of being."

And there are the statistics. During a visit to the Advanced Career Training Center in Baltimore, I was told numerous times by director Ella Cain that her program places 85 percent of its students in training-related jobs. She was manifestly proud. But if one includes early dropouts and official waivers (say, for pregnancy) and excludes students placed in make-

work government jobs, the placement rate is 16 percent.

Then, there is the visit. Just a few weeks ago, Sen. Rick Santorum, a staunch conservative, toured the Keystone Job Corps Center in Drums, Pennsylvania. "I am extremely impressed with the operations of the [center]," he said. Which is no surprise. Job-training personnel are expert hosts. "Much of our time here is spent with visitors, people who are investigating the program," offers Don Doggendorf, vocations manager at the Potomac center.

There, I was given a tour by three senior administrators, including the director, Curtis Price. "Our mission is to motivate these students, to get them to understand what it means to be a productive member of society," he said. "We're giving these at-risk youths a second chance," Doggendorf added as we walked. Everyone was upbeat. Everyone believed he was helping to secure a brighter future for down-and-out kids with no skills and troublesome attitudes.

The sincerity and professional dedication of these Job Corps officials should not be doubted. But virtually everyone who has analyzed job-training programs—that is, everyone outside the bureaucracy that administers them—has concluded that they fail dismally.

"Job-training programs, although well-intentioned, have not proven effective in raising the long-term hourly earnings of participants," says Mark Wilson of the Heritage Foundation. "They do not achieve this primary goal—better-paying jobs—because there is little, if anything, the government can do to alter the effect of neglecting the first 12 years of school." According to labor economist James Heckman of the University of Chicago, "The return is just very, very low."

And some would say, altogether a myth.

Eric Cohen is a student at Williams College and the publisher of the **Williams Free Press.**

Shopping at the Gender Gap

by Fred Barnes

Bob Dole doesn't like the gender gap. "It annoys him," says an adviser to his presidential campaign. According to Dole pollster Tony Fabrizio, "it irks him that the White House says he's done nothing [for women]." Dole believes this is a "bad rap," says another senior Dole adviser. And it *is*, insists Rep. Susan Molinari of New York, Dole's personal choice for keynote speaker at the Republican convention: "He's got a tremendous record on women's issues." Dole is so obsessed with the gender gap that he brings the subject up frequently in meetings with aides. "He says things like, 'There's a gender gap. We're going to close it.'"

Yes, Dole has a strategy for doing just that. Unfortunately, it's not likely to work. Dole has targeted upper-middle-class professional women as potential supporters, and he's wooing them ardently. The trouble is most of them, because they're pro-choice or otherwise culturally out of sync with Republicans, have long since realigned out of the GOP. Closing the gender gap between them and average American males is probably impossible. But there's another gender gap, one involving married suburban women, a culturally conservative bloc that includes millions of homemakers and evangelical Christians. They're normally part of the Republican coalition. But Dole hasn't won them over yet. And he's doing practically nothing that would appeal to them.

"Right now Bill Clinton is ahead among married stay-at-home mothers for the first time for any Democratic presidential candidate since Lyndon Johnson in 1964," says a Republican strategist. Well, not quite. Dole leads Clinton 44 percent to 42 percent among white female homemakers in a recent national survey by American Viewpoint, a Republican polling firm. But that's breathtakingly bad news for Dole. To have a shot at defeating Clinton, he needs to capture homemakers by a landslide, not a whisker. Among all married white women, the news is worse: Clinton leads 47 percent to 38 percent. If Dole can't prevail among married women, he might as well forget about becoming president.

But all Dole's maneuverings are aimed at attracting upper-middle-class women, some of them unmarried and feminist. He's fuzzed his position on abortion and picked Molinari, who is pro-choice, to give one of the longest speeches at the convention. In press releases issued by his campaign, Dole touts his support for the Violence Against Women Act, which funds studies by feminist scholars, and the Glass Ceiling Commission. His aides boast of his appointment of a woman chief of his Senate staff and the first female secretary of the Senate. Dole also spotlighted women in his July 24 speech on aiding small business. "One of the greatest

economic stories of recent times," he said, is "the number of women who are small-business owners. . . . I'm proud to say that not only was my father a small-business person, but so too was my mother."

There's nothing wrong with this pitch—except that it's not the way to appeal to the women whose votes Dole actually has a chance of getting. "The continental divide of American politics is not defined by gender, but by other demographic characteristics such as marital status, childbearing, and church attendance," says Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition. "The smartest thing for Dole and the Republican party to do is to aggressively appeal to suburban married women with values issues such as education, crime, and welfare." Some Dole strategists agree with Reed. "A lot of people in Washington think the way to deal with the gender gap is to talk up women's issues," argues a Dole strategist. "Wrong."

Dole doesn't have to wipe out the gender gap entirely, and he couldn't if he wanted to. Some of the gap is structural and sheerly the result of Republican gains among males, not Democratic gains among females: For nearly two decades, men have trended Republican and women haven't. In 1980, Jimmy Carter narrowly lost to Ronald Reagan among women (47 percent to 46 percent) but was clobbered among men (55 percent to 38 percent). Reagan and George Bush won a majority of women in 1984 and 1988, but Republicans don't have to do this to win. In 1994, for example, women voted Democratic in congressional races (54 percent to 46 percent). This was more than offset by men (57 percent to 43 percent). The result: The GOP captured the House and Senate.

The 1994 gender gap—the differential between how men and women voted—was 22 points. But Fabrizio, the Dole pollster, has calculated that the structural gap in presidential races is 10 points. The problem for Dole is the gap is higher now. Fabrizio says it's 3 points higher. Linda DiVall of American Viewpoint pegs it slightly higher. Whatever the gap, it would be acceptable if a surge of male voters to Dole were the cause, but it's not. The cause is women's skittishness about him. The biggest gap of all is among white working women. Next come married white women.

Gary Bauer, the head of the Family Research Council and a critic of the Dole campaign, says Dole will never attract conservative married women while appealing to feminists. Bauer said he spoke recently to a conservative Catholic group, the National Hibernians, which had canceled a speaking invitation to President Clinton after he vetoed the ban on partial-birth abortion. The group was two-thirds female, but their disenchantment with Clinton didn't translate into support for Dole. Bauer said leaders of the organization estimated members would back Clinton by 65 percent to 35 percent.

Dole is doing one fruitful thing to improve his image among women: trying to change his style. Fabrizio contends Clinton has stolen his approach to women from the book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. The president now speaks more softly and has changed his body language, Fabrizio says. "It

looks like he's read the book 15 times." Dole hasn't gone that far, but Don Sipple, a Dole media consultant, screened a video of Dole for several focus groups of women. Dole appeared in a relaxed, informal, and conversational setting—no suit and tie—and women liked him better. Dole probably won't be able to recapture this stress-free, amiable style while campaigning. But expect his TV commercials to feature it. ♦

GOP Platform Diving

by Matthew Rees

WHATEVER THE MEDIA SAY, the skirmishes at this week's Republican platform committee meetings in San Diego leading up to the GOP national convention won't amount to much. The real battles have already been fought in Washington, behind closed doors, with conservatives, mostly congressional staffers, squaring off against a less conservative crowd allied with the Dole campaign.

The fights in Washington—some cordial, some nasty—were over the first draft of the platform, not the final version. But the draft is of immense importance: It's the document the delegates on the platform committee work from. They will make cosmetic changes and perhaps add language to mollify Pat Buchanan, but most of the final draft will parallel the first.

So the struggle over the draft language—on abortion in particular—was about real stakes. And the conservatives succeeded in securing rhetoric a few clicks to the right of what top Dole officials would have liked. Credit Bill Gribbin, deputy chief of staff for policy to Senate majority leader Trent Lott.

Gribbin was responsible for writing the draft and adjudicating the disputes. He's an old hand at this, having drafted the platform in 1992, 1988, and 1984. With his expertise and institutional memory, Gribbin drove the process, said a Dole aide. He's also been a good soldier in dealing with Dole people, despite his ideological instincts. A former history professor, Gribbin has worked for conservative senators John Tower, William Armstrong, and James Buckley (not to mention President Reagan and Vice President Quayle). He is staunchly pro-life and maintains close ties with outfits like the National Right to Life Committee. In April, he wrote an article for this magazine about harassment of pro-life groups by the Internal Revenue Service.

Even with Gribbin in charge, Dole officials sought to leave their imprint on the platform. The Dole campaign assigned aides to hover over the congressional staffers who helped Gribbin in the drafting process. And Gribbin kept in close touch with top Dole aides Sheila Burke, Bob Lighthizer, Vin Weber, and particularly Paul Manafort, the veteran Republican fixer who is managing the GOP convention. Gribbin shared his platform language with this group before sending it to San Diego.

This honest effort at cooperation was not entirely successful. As Manafort tells anyone who asks—and even those who don't—San Diego will not be a repeat of the 1992 Republican convention in Houston. That means deemphasizing abortion. But when Dole declared in June that he wanted a "tolerance" provision in the platform to refer only to abortion and not to other issues dividing Republicans, Rep. Henry Hyde, platform committee chairman and a pro-life stalwart, erupted. Hyde and Dole, with the assistance of Gribbin and Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager, hammered out a compromise a few weeks later that was temporarily acceptable to both sides. Hyde remained confident he could eventually make the abortion language more acceptable to pro-life forces, but he failed, and the compromise agreed to in July is what appears in the draft platform. A multi-paragraph hodge-podge, it includes both strong pro-life language calling for a human life amendment to the Constitution and big-tent language welcoming a diversity of views.

Hyde failed because Manafort, presumably acting with the knowledge of top Dole officials, dug in his heels. When Hyde named Kay James, a prominent pro-life advocate employed by Pat Robertson's Regent University, to chair the subcommittee handling abortion, Manafort vetoed the appointment, then rejected numerous subsequent nominees because they weren't sufficiently pro-Dole.

Manafort's attempt to stack the committee writing the abortion language angered Hyde, but the congressman opted not to protest publicly. Asked about James on July 31, Hyde demurred, pointing out that she had been given another position with the convention. Asked how much meddling there had been by Dole operatives in the drafting of the platform, Hyde replied, "An appropriate level."

Others aren't so sanguine about Manafort's interference. "Paul's problem is that he's seeking some level of control over the process that's not really achievable," says a senior Dole adviser. Indeed, Manafort's interventions may make it *less* likely that the Dole campaign will get everything it wants, if he alienates the platform committee. What Manafort must remember, says this adviser, is that presidential candidates never get their way on everything in the platform. In 1976, Reaganites wrote most of the platform even though Reagan wasn't the nominee, and in 1992 conservatives inserted a repudiation of the Bush tax increase into the platform. Neither the Ford nor the Bush people were particularly happy with these developments, but they wisely kept quiet.

What does all of this add up to? A certain amount of infighting is inevitable, and probably healthy, when a party manifesto is being drafted. The silver lining for Dole and his party is that the pre-convention spats may preempt the bitter feuds most Republicans want to avoid in San Diego. A fight-free platform week will disappoint reporters, but it's the kind of news the Dole campaign desperately needs. ♦

No Room at the Con

by Matt Labash

If Buchananites thought they were the only ones being jilted by officials at the Republican National Convention, they now have dinner companions. Grousing over coveted space in the packed-to-the-rafters San Diego Convention Center has become something of a hobby horse for conservative advocacy groups these days. For months, futile attempts have been made to secure scarce exhibit space and/or "special" press passes (for non-traditional media). Movement stalwarts and Republican party fellow-travelers such as the Media Research Center, Accuracy in Media, the

Family Research Council, and the Eagle Forum (to name a few) say this is the hardest it's ever been to get access.

And now convention officials have made it even harder: by saying the groups won't get any. After months of unanswered phone calls and logistical disarray, the convention's assistant manager, Michael Hook, issued a form letter saying the convention will be "operating according to a policy which prohibits advocacy group displays in all areas controlled by the convention." The policy, says Hook, is the same as in '88 and '92. "That's bull," says Don Irvine of Accuracy in Media, who said he manned two booths in Houston four years ago.

Unfavorable comparisons with Houston are a common refrain, because San Diego conventioneers are dealing with about one sixtieth the exhibit space. Complicating matters is the San Diego Host Committee's abandonment of "The Presidential Experience"—a planned retail emporium outside the Convention Center that would have accommodated many of the disgruntled parties but fell through because of space limitations.

Bob Hood, a San Diego-based special events contractor, is the convention's master vendor and licensee, commissioned by the convention to decide who actually gets vending space. He says the perceived slight was simply a spatial and financial consideration. It's better, he says, to have actual retail vendors selling jewelry, children's clothing, and campaign buttons (since the Host Committee gets a cut of their profits to help defray costs) than to have advocacy groups giving away freebies and staking out their issues in an effort to boost membership.

An additional benefit, Hood admits, is skirting the prickly business of the Republican convention looking like it's endorsing one advocacy group over another. "It makes their job easier in some kind of who-gets-what," Hood says, "because nobody gets any."

And how. Most advocacy outfits are getting exactly zero special press passes (for their newsletters and other publications), which are mostly being distributed to

college newspapers. This doesn't mean, says convention spokeswoman Anne Gavin, that the short-shrifted should take it personally. Gavin had 600 requests for about 100 passes—in addition to the 12,000 working journalists. And anyway, she says, the passes wouldn't get the groups all that far—just "a seat behind a column off to the side—they're horrible."

Adding insult to injury is the meticulous vetting of prospective merchandise, should an advocacy group sneak any merchandise onto an actual vendor's table. Convention officials have to be concerned about any over-the-line offerings: the occasional expletive-laced bumper sticker, portraits of Hillary as dominatrix, the coaster with the sweaty and smitten Bill and Al coupled in unbuttoned cutoffs. But this year, it seems, sensibilities are a little extra-delicate. When a Media Research Center employee phoned Bob Hood to pitch a T-shirt with a picture of Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, and Bryant Gumbel under the header "Team Clinton," she was told, "No, no, that's too political. The convention doesn't want anything that's too political."

"They want nonpartisans at a political convention," says one frustrated observer. "That's like saying we're having the Super Bowl, but we don't want any sports fans."

Hood says the standards aren't really that stringent. He was simply speculating that the T-shirt may be inappropriate according to the Republican National Convention's informal guidelines as outlined to him by Michael Hook (who gets final say).

"If they have shirts that reflect negatively upon the Dan Rathers and Peter Jennings of the world, the convention may feel uncomfortable having that merchandise available for sale," says Bob Hood. And besides, *somebody* has to draw the line. "There's a lot of strange people out there who think what they do is interesting. I've seen some bumper stickers that were a chuckle, but they were inappropriate and offended various groups. I found it offensive, and I'm a pretty liberal guy."

Are you sure that's the word you want to use, Bob? ♦

Ross Perot and His Very Strange Party

By Tucker Carlson

Even on cable television, it doesn't get much stranger than the episode of Lenora Fulani's public-access talk show, *Fulani!*, that aired last month in cities across the country. The program's introduction, a 60-second montage of film clips and still photos set to music, opens with footage of the host, an angry look on her face, addressing an outdoor political rally. "I'm honored to be with you here today," Fulani shouts into a megaphone while raising a clenched fist into the air. "Now, let's kick some, all right?" Seconds later she is extending a warm greeting to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. More clips follow: Fulani laughing with Al Sharpton, looking solemn and supportive with Tawana Brawley, screaming at a stunned Bill Clinton during a news conference.

Kent Lemon

By the time the introduction ends, even the dullest viewer gets the point. Lenora Fulani is an extremist, and she's not shy about it. All of which makes what happens next even weirder: The camera pulls back to reveal Fulani sitting on a bench in a television studio. With her is Fred Newman, a Marxist psychotherapist who, like Fulani, was for years a leader in the now-defunct New Alliance party, a group once described by the FBI as "armed and dangerous." Seated between them in a dark suit, grinning happily, is . . . Russell J. Verney, the man in charge of Ross Perot's most recent campaign for president.

It's hard to imagine a more incongruous tableau—a leader of the radical center communing with members of the radical fringe. Yet from the start it is a lovefest. "Lenora, it's a pleasure to be here with you and Fred," begins Verney, who goes on to toast their "common interests, common goals" and thank both Fulani and Newman for their efforts on behalf of Perot's latest political vehicle, the Reform party. Newman responds with equal enthusiasm. "This coming together to me has been a marvelous and wonderful thing, and I think Perot has given us so much by providing this leadership," he says. "I've become more and more of a fan of Ross Perot over the last several years."

The feeling is mutual. Newman, Fulani, and their followers have become some of Ross Perot's most important political allies. Four years ago, New Alliance party lawyers advised the first Perot campaign on achieving ballot access in the 50 states. Four years later, former members of New Alliance party—self-described "Newmanites"—hold leadership positions in a number of branches of the Reform party. In California and New York, Newmanites were instrumental in getting Perot a place on the ballot in time for the approaching election. Come November, they will turn their considerable energy and experience to getting Perot elected president. For Fulani and Newman, the partnership with Perot has resulted in a stunning improvement in both prestige and power. For Ross Perot, the arrangement has amounted to one of the most unscrupulous political calculations in memory.

The Newmanites

A certain amount of eccentric behavior can be expected from members of any political organization. And in a nascent third party, which must create

quick coalitions to grow, it is guaranteed. But the Newmanites are no ordinary political eccentrics. Newman himself has since the mid-1960s founded a series of small, often bizarre political organizations, among them a "revolutionary cadre collective" called the Centers for Change, and the International Workers party. In 1974, Newman briefly allied himself with the godfather of the authoritarian fringe, Lyndon LaRouche. Several years later, in 1979, Newman created the New Alliance party. Among the early members was a psychologist from Pennsylvania named Lenora Fulani.

Newman and his followers quickly earned a reputation as odd, even by the standards of New York's radical Left. New Alliance members opened—and to this day still run—a constellation of psychotherapy centers that offered a brand of Newman-inspired counseling called "social therapy," a highly political understanding of emotional development based on the theories of Soviet psychiatrist Lev Vygotsky. A number of former patients have described social therapy as a recruiting tool used to isolate individuals from their families and friends while enlarging the New Alliance party, a group fanatical in its devotion to Newman. "When Newman was happy, everyone was happy. When he was angry, everyone was terrified," recalled a former party leader several years ago. An extensive FBI investigation in 1988 came to a similar conclusion, describing the New Alliance party as a "political/cult organization."

For a group that was always relatively tiny in size, the New Alliance party put up an amazing number of candidates for elected office. Lenora Fulani first ran for lieutenant governor of New York in 1984, moving on to presidential campaigns in 1988 and 1992. During her first race for president, she garnered enough votes to qualify for hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal matching funds (which were later the focus of charges of financial mismanagement by the Federal Election Commission). In the New Alliance party, the difference between politics and therapy was never clear. At a fund-raiser in 1992, reported Bruce Shapiro in the *Nation*, Fulani made the connection explicit. "The more you give, the more you grow," she said. "Take it out of your rent. It feels very, very good."

Fulani's pitch is not always so soothing. Over the years she and other Newmanites have expressed a consistent and unapologetic hostility toward Jews. During a 1985 speech in Harlem, Fred Newman, who was himself born into a Jewish family, announced that "Jews as a people" had sold their "souls to the devil," thus becoming "the stormtroopers of decadent capitalism against people of color the world over." Newman has expressed similar sentiments in such plays as *No Room for Zion* and his 1992 work *Dead as a Jew*. Fulani is a longtime associate of, and vigorous apologist for, race-baiters like Louis Farrakhan and melanin theorist Leonard Jeffries. "I do not believe it is insignificant that a slumlord is Jewish," she asserted on one occasion. During a July 1992 appearance on the talk-show *Sonya Live*, during which she also came out in support of Ross Perot, Fulani explained that black anti-Semitism can be squarely attributed to "the very backward and reactionary role that many Jewish people have played, I think, under the guise and politics of Zionism." Black "assimilationists," she told the host, have made the situation worse by their willingness to "pander to Jews in this country."

THE NEWMANITES ARE NO ORDINARY POLITICAL ECCENTRICS. NEWMAN HAS FOUNDED A STRING OF SMALL, OFTEN BIZARRE GROUPS, AMONG THEM A "REVOLUTIONARY CADRE COLLECTIVE."

Rants like these—combined with their habit of infiltrating and taking over other political organizations—have made the Newmanites loathed and feared by just about every mainstream politician who has come into contact with them, including those who might otherwise be sympathetic ideologically. Concluded the *Nation*'s Shapiro: "One cannot support Fulani, whether with a vote or a contribution, without aiding the jackboot movement behind her." David Dinkins seemed to feel the same way. So wary was the former New York mayor of being tainted by the Newmanites that upon discovering that the New Alliance party had been gathering petitions to aid his 1989 campaign, Dinkins demanded that the Board of Elections reject the signatures.

Ross Perot has had no such compunction. Indeed, in the past year, Russ Verney, Perot's campaign manager, has maintained nearly continuous contact with Newmanite leaders, meeting with them at conferences, trading memos, and above all urging the group to become involved with Perot's Reform party. Newman and Fulani have responded by organizing their followers to work for Perot by distributing literature and collecting the signatures needed to put the candidate on state ballots. In California alone, Newmanites claim to have convinced well over 10,000 people to register with the Reform party. Not long ago, the collaboration

became complete when Newman and Fulani folded virtually the entire membership of the New Alliance party, which disbanded several years ago, into the Reform party. For the Perot campaign, the merger has been a windfall of volunteers and votes, particularly in black and gay communities, where the Newmanites traditionally have been strong, and Perot weak.

Of course, the arrangement has had benefits for the Newmanites as well. Fred Newman and Lenora Fulani are no longer simply washed-up members of the lunatic fringe, but key players in a growing movement. And so are their followers. Such developments excite Jim Mangia. Mangia, a gay activist and longtime New Alliance member from Los Angeles, recently became secretary of the California Reform party. "The gay community is in on the ground floor in the formation of a major and competitive political party in America," says Mangia. "*I'm* an officer—that says something about the inclusiveness and diversity and vision of the Reform party and of Mr. Perot. I think he would bring that with him to the White House." (Mangia dismisses Perot's anti-homosexual positions in 1992, including his pledge not to appoint gays to cabinet-level positions, as "a manufactured political attack by the Democratic party.")

Lenora Fulani

Kent Lemon

Mangia points to a press conference he recently held with Verney and fellow Perot supporter Georgiana Williams (who first gained prominence when her son Damian beat truck driver Reginald Denny nearly to death during the L.A. riots) as evidence of Perot's inclusive spirit. After all, says Mangia, "Russ Verney called *me*. He knew who we were. That was a reaching out to the constituencies that we represent. I mean, he could have called Ralph Reed."

Mangia is right about one thing: Russ Verney knew who the Newmanites were. In 1992, in fact, it was Verney, then the head of the Democratic party in New Hampshire, who physically kept Lenora Fulani from speaking at a forum for presidential candidates. At the time, Fulani was considered too fringe. Verney blocked a doorway with his body, thereby preventing her from coming inside. It is an experience both Verney and Fulani chuckle about now. These days, Fulani says, neither Perot nor Verney seems in the least concerned about the past controversies that have surrounded her. "They're all adults," she says. They understand.

Certainly Russ Verney does. Asked about Fulani's close, and well-known, relationship with Louis Farrakhan, Verney responds nonchalantly, "I'm not made uncomfortable with anything. I welcome everyone into the party to help build a new political party." There is only one criterion for membership, he says: "We do not support or encourage or welcome anyone who has hate in their heart. We only want people full of love."

It is not clear whether Verney is being sarcastic when he says this. If so, it wouldn't be the most cynical statement to come out of the Perot campaign this year.

Perot Crowns Himself

Just ask Dick Lamm, Perot's sole opponent for the presidential nomination of the Reform party. Lamm, the former governor of Colorado, isn't likely to beat Perot on August 18 when the party's nominee is chosen. But he doesn't need to. Simply by joining the race, Lamm will have taught the country more about Ross Perot's antidemocratic instincts than a thousand attack ads.

Consider how Lamm and Perot became the Reform party's contenders. Originally, Perot had promised to send a nominating ballot to every person who had signed a Reform party petition. Candidates who received at least 10 percent of the vote would be declared eligible for nomination. It sounded simple enough, but before long the process disintegrated. Thousands of people who had signed petitions—including a large number in Dick Lamm's home state of Colorado—never got ballots. Others who had never signed a petition did. A New York man who had been involved in Perot's 1992 campaign got four ballots; before he could figure out what to do with them all, a

call came in from Perot's Dallas office with news that another ballot was in the mail. Those who called the party's toll-free telephone number for help (which happens to be identical to the number for Perot '96 campaign headquarters) were not asked whether they were registered with another political party—or even if they had already voted. They were told only to leave a name and address and a ballot would be on the way. A finally tally of the votes was repeatedly postponed to allow more ballots to be sent out. Throughout the process, Perot, a man who can talk for an hour and a half about the need to reform the election process, seemed unconcerned by the chaos, or by the awesome opportunity for voter fraud it presented.

By the time all the votes were counted and the results released on the last day of July, fewer than 5 percent of the 880,298 ballots sent out had been returned. Of these, Perot received just 27,833 votes. Which is to say, a grand total of about 557 people in each of the 50 states voted for Perot. Even for a candidate of the Reform party, it was not much of a mandate.

Of course, Perot didn't need much of a mandate; what he got was good enough for him. Nor will he be held accountable for the disorganization that accompanied the voting, since there is nobody in his party to block or correct any decision that Ross Perot makes. Republicans and Democrats who behave erratically—by, for instance, refusing to debate primary opponents simply because they don't feel like it, as Perot recently did—have a national organization to which they must answer. Perot does not. As yet, despite much fudging on the subject, there is no national Reform party. There are only state chapters. Such an arrangement has a number of benefits for Perot, and he has fought to maintain it, rebuffing the efforts of party activists who would like to create an independent oversight committee. Hence, there will be no platform drafted at the Reform party's August 11 convention in Long Beach, Calif. The reason: Perot didn't want one drafted there.

Two months into his campaign, Dick Lamm has become familiar with the power of Perot's whims. Shortly after entering the race, Lamm asked Perot for a list of Reform party members, with which he hoped to raise money for his cash-starved campaign. After initially agreeing to the request, Perot then reneged, claiming the Federal Election Commission would consider the list a gift in excess of permissible contribution limits. (Legal opinions on the subject vary dramatically.) Outraged, Lamm took the controversy public, embarrassing the Perot campaign. In early July, Verney, who—conveniently—runs both the election process and Ross Perot's campaign, replied with a letter in which he explained that the Perot camp would be happy to make the list available. The only caveat: Lamm would have to submit all proposed fund-raising letters to Verney, who would then check them for signs of "negative campaigning." It was the equivalent of the Dole campaign demanding to approve all of Pat Buchanan's direct mail. "Some people saw it as being sort of censorship," explains Tom D'Amore, Lamm's chief campaign aide, diplomatically. Lamm declined the offer.

CYNICAL REPORTERS HAVE COME UP WITH A THEORY: LAMM IS A PATSY RECRUITED BY PEROT TO MAKE THE RACE LOOK LEGITIMATE AND REVIVE MEDIA INTEREST IN WHAT MANY SUSPECTED WOULD BE A SIMPLE CORONATION.

Perot's obvious unwillingness to relinquish his control over the Reform party has led some of the more cynical reporters covering the campaign to toss around a conspiracy theory of their own: Dick Lamm is, if not an agent of Perot's, then at least a straw man, a patsy recruited by Dallas to make the race look legitimate and revive media interest in what many suspected would be a simple coronation. It is not an entirely nutty idea. At times, even Lamm himself seems convinced his entrance was a set-up. "One could say Perot suckered me into this race," he said recently.

More likely, though, Lamm suckered himself. Invited to speak at a convention of Perot supporters in early June in Los Angeles, Lamm found himself on stage and remembered how much he loved it. Years out of politics and hungry for attention, Lamm may have concluded that the humiliation of losing was worth the free television exposure. In any case, says D'Amore, once Lamm spoke to the Perot people, he was hooked: "He went on a date and came back engaged."

Judging by the state of Lamm's campaign so far, his marriage to the American people may have to be postponed. According to D'Amore, "probably a dozen" heads of state branches of the Reform party have come out in favor of Lamm. If true—and it probably is—these would be among the Lamm campaign's most important allies in the effort to wrest the party from Perot. Yet, D'Amore can't seem to remember their names. Instead, he refers to them as "Minnesota"

or "that guy in Oregon." He's equally vague when asked about his candidate's chances for winning the nomination: "Hard to say. Better than they were two weeks ago." Honest, yes. Yet somehow one expects more enterprising spin from a campaign manager.

Fun with Dick Lamm

Then there's the problem of the candidate himself. Democratic pollster Stan Greenberg once described Dick Lamm as "Tsongas with euthanasia." But Lamm is both more and less than that: a man fixated not so much on the Hard Issues as on the morbid ones. At public appearances, he regularly attacks people on life support for wasting money. "We can keep a *corpse* alive," he says bitterly. In an April 1985 op-ed in the *New York Times* Lamm explained how he would handle the then-raging famine in Ethiopia. "The United States," he wrote, "should give no emergency food relief to countries that are unwilling to adopt long-term economic reforms and population control programs." After all, Lamm mused, "the late Alan Gregg, a vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation, once said that overpopulation is a cancer and that he had never heard of a cancer that was cured by feeding it."

Dick Lamm

Kent Lemon

As if the Kevorkian-like outbursts weren't enough, Lamm sometimes has trouble keeping his high self-regard under wraps. Asked recently by the *Los Angeles Times* to explain his now-famous statement that older people have "a duty to die and get out of the way" in order to "let the other society, our kids, build a reasonable life," the 60-year-old candidate didn't blush. Instead, he smiled and replied that bringing up "these tough subjects" was just "classic Dick Lamm," more evidence of his "impressive record of anticipating the problems of society."

Lamm doesn't play much better in person. In fact the biggest surprise at a recent Reform party convention in Virginia—the first time since the race began that Perot and Lamm appeared before the same audience—was what a poor speaker Lamm is. Though a number of news accounts have described the former governor as a little short on humor, one really has to see Lamm at the podium to get the full flavor. As he blathered on to a room of third-party enthusiasts in a municipal office building in Charlottesville, it was hard to miss: "Success is not a permanent geopolitical status . . . "; "We simply cannot continue borrowing from our children . . . "; "All history tells us . . . ," and so stupefyingly on. Listening to it, you could almost see the bumper stickers: "Lamm '96: It's Midnight in America." Plus, Lamm has a disconcerting tendency to crack a smile just as he is saying something particularly unpleasant, which is usually. And his speaking voice—high, whiny, ineffectual—is enough to make Ross Perot sound like Edward R. Murrow by comparison. Minutes into the lecture, the crowd looked restless.

After finishing his speech, Lamm headed for the lobby, where he was surrounded by reporters, each hoping the candidate would at last say something interesting. He didn't, until an elderly woman in a surprisingly low-cut dress made her way through the crowd to ask a question. Suppose your 88-year-old father needed a liver transplant, the woman said. What would you do? This was it, the chance to witness Lamm's legendary candor. The cameramen focused in on the exchange. "My father wouldn't accept a liver transplant," Lamm replied. So much for Tough Choices.

Back in the lecture hall, Perot took the floor and was being greeted with hearty enthusiasm. After Lamm, the Texan suddenly seemed better than ever: witty, upbeat, sane. Which, if you listen to the conspiracists, may be the whole point of the Lamm candidacy. Either way, it is clear that in this race Perot is by far the more skilled candidate. So superior, probably, that rigging the race against Lamm is pointless. Yet perhaps irresistible. As one network reporter who covers him puts it, "Perot is like an Albanian politician: He knows he's going to win the election, but he wants to steal it anyway."

Most of Lamm's supporters seem to sense there is truth in this, but they toil on nonetheless.

The New York Lamm Committee (Pop. 2)

Over lunch in Manhattan not long ago with both members of the New York Committee for Richard Lamm, it becomes clear why. These are the people who want a third party for the sake of a third party, and not just because they hate politics. No, these are poor souls who at one point really believed Perot when he swore it wasn't about him, betrayed activists who will almost certainly stage anti-Perot demonstrations when the Reform party holds its convention next week. Charles Riggs is one of these people.

A graphic artist in his early 40s, Riggs can barely contain his enthusiasm as he explains why he supports Richard Lamm for president. A waiter approaches, forcing Riggs to pause just long enough to order a Cobb salad with no lettuce or bacon, and a glass of pink lemonade. The waiter is confused—a salad with no lettuce?—and waits for Riggs to explain. But Riggs doesn't; there isn't time. With the convention weeks away and closing, Riggs has only days to convince the residents of New York state (and, via his home page on the Internet, the world) that Richard Lamm is the man to break the stranglehold of the decaying two-party system and lead America into a brighter tomorrow. Riggs clamps his eyes shut and sways in his chair as he rails almost stream of consciousness against America's inefficient allocation of health-care dollars. Riggs feels so strongly about topics like these—issues he is sure Lamm will confront in a way Democrats and Republicans do not—that he recently took $1,000 from his retirement account and sent it to Lamm for President. "I won't have a retirement fund anyway unless this country gets back on track soon," he reasons.

It's not exactly a cheery vision of the country's future, and as Riggs heads for the mens' room, the Lamm Committee's other member, a 21-year-old college sophomore from Queens named Scott Farrell, tries to put a lighter gloss on the whole enterprise. What really scares him, Farrell says, is Perot. His authoritarian impulses. The weird people who follow him. "You've got to get Perot out," says Farrell. "Or else all of this just becomes an ego-based movement. Like a cult." ♦

Notes on the Americanization of Israel

By John Podhoretz

Report that you are just going to, or have just been back from, Israel, and the response is invariably the same: "How *are* things there?" people ask, in the manner in which they might inquire about a relative whom they feel a little guilty for not visiting lately. *How* are *things there?* The question is asked by Jew and Gentile alike, by Zionist and sympathizer for the Arab cause.

Here's how things are there. There's a new prime minister and all, but more important, at the McDonald's in Jerusalem, next door to the Tower Records and down the block from the Ben and Jerry's, my niece Avital and my nephew Boaz, six-year-old twins, tore into their *Hunchback of Notre Dame* Happy Meals. "*Yesh li* Frollo!" Boaz announced proudly, as he pulled out a little figure of the villain from the brand-new Disney movie whose arms popped out at its sides when Boaz pressed its head down. "I got Frollo," he was saying. He and his sister had already seen the movie, dubbed into Hebrew; it premiered in America on June 21, only six days before it arrived in Israel. They could have seen it in English, too; they understand English with ease, but don't speak it well, and they like to be able to go home singing the songs. And they love to sing—Avital spent much of the trip serenading me with "Macarena," a peppy little dance number from Spain that became a sensation in Israel a few weeks before it hit here.

Disney has penetrated even to the Judean hills of the West Bank, to a Jewish settlement called Eli. There I met another Avital—the eight-year-old daughter of my friend Yoram, who grew up in Princeton but now

lives in Eli with his American-born wife Ya'el and their five children. The Judean hills are gorgeous and stark, as though the Scottish highlands had somehow popped out of the desert, and nestled in them is this bizarre place with 80s-era tract housing laid out on an unerring grid. The settlement may be geostrategically at risk, but the 230 families who live in Eli are as safe, day to day, as they would be on a lunar colony; Yoram's three-year-old daughter walks herself to school. Avital informed me that she speaks not only English and Hebrew, but French as well. When pressed to speak it, she could only come up with one word: "*Bonjour*." After which her six-year-old sister Tchelet said, "You know that from the movie."

"What movie?" I asked.

"*Pocahontas*," said this daughter of a deeply religious couple who do not keep a television in the house.

Sean Delonas

Yoram and Ya'el are indeed rigorously Orthodox Jews and profound Zionists, but they are Americans too, and the CD player in the house plays soft rock from the 1970s and 1980s. Their children speak English with the same indelibly accented cadence as Boaz, Avital, Alon, and Noam—my sister Ruthie's four Israeli children. Where do they get it? After all, they have grown up speaking English, but somehow the Hebrew sing-song whine mysteriously makes its way into their speech no matter which language they are chattering away in.

Otherwise, you would hardly know these kids were not American—or rather, you might think them a little *too* American, in the manner of Soviet spies in potboiler novels who were raised in a fake Midwestern town somewhere in the Caucasus. My nephew Noam knows everything about popular culture—everything. He is a sponge, remembering not only every movie but the text of every video box and every report he hears on CNN, or MTV, or Sky, or any of the other entertainment news he receives on the 40-odd channels of Jerusalem cable. He named, for me, Arnold Schwarzenegger's movies in order. His brother Alon, a beautiful 10-year-old boy, has long brown hair flattened down on his head and held back in a pony tail. Why did it look so wet? "Mousse," he replied.

When I took Alon and Noam to Tel Aviv for the weekend, I thought we might drive north to the ruins of the Roman city of Caesarea. No chance; these are boys, after all, and they wanted to do boy things. This meant not Middle Eastern food—"We eat hummus all the time," Noam informed me, "we're bored by it"—but McDonald's (again). Not the memorial to Rabin, but an evening showing of *The Rock*, with Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage. ("To me, it was like every other movie," said Alon, who I remind you proudly is 10. "There was a mission, and there were hostages, and there was time running out, and there was a lot of explosions.")

And then there were the water slide and the amusement park, where they ran off and I sat, like the other adults, fanning myself in the 100-degree heat. The teenagers who populated the Meimadion Water Park in Tel Aviv were jaw-droppingly immodest. The girls were dressed to look like extras in music videos—the bared midriff is now as much a part of Israeli fashion as the chador is in Saudi Arabia. In America, the girls would desperately try to look blonde; in Tel Aviv the girls are dark and work to accentuate the exoticism of their looks. The boys go around like a combination of Michael Jordan and a ghetto kid in Los Angeles: pants belted around the crotch, loose-fitting shirts seemingly made of mesh.

At the park, the adults kept themselves in the shade and talked on cellular phones. There are far more cellular phones per capita here than in America, and if life in Israel is any indication, we'd better get rid of the things fast, because they make going out anywhere a frenzy of overstimulation—there is a constant

and persistent ringing in the air, bringing to mind the Edgar Allan Poe warning about the "tintinnabulation of the bells, bells, bells." Cellular phones are so prevalent that stores have sprung up that allow you to accessorize with designer cases for your extra batteries that look like sunglasses frames.

Every now and then, but only every now and then, you are reminded that Israel is a country at perpetual war. My sister does not talk about what will happen when her sons go away to college; she talks about when they will go into the army. Five years ago, I sat with my sister and brother-in-law and Noam and Alon at 3 in the morning, all of us in gas masks, as the air-raid sirens went off in Jerusalem during the Gulf War. The twins, babies then, were too small to wear masks, so they had to be put into sealed bubbles with air filters. Alon, then five, would entertain himself during the war by imitating the low, loud whistle of the siren, a noise that would make my sister stiffen.

I was struck, as I have been on every trip I have taken to Israel in the past 20 years, by the country's sheer peculiarity. It seems fitting, this peculiarity, fitting to a country that has at once no history and the history of civilization itself written on its every square foot. Israel is tiny and meaningless, yet consider the fact that you have read to this point in this article—if it were about Sri Lanka, do you think you would have gotten this far?

As everyone recognizes, Israel exerts a fascination all out of proportion to its size, its geopolitical importance, the small glories of its democracy, or the petty tyrannies of its occupation of the West Bank. The American engagement with Israel is now of such long standing that it is (with the possible exception of Cuba) the only foreign-policy issue that has continued to interest and obsess the United States these past 30 years. Europe has faded, the Communists no more, Latin America come and gone, Vietnam a vacation paradise, South Africa of little concern. But Israel and the Arabs? Still with us. Always with us.

And yet there is one population in the United States among whom interest in Israel has noticeably dropped, and that is secular Jewry. My plane to Ben-Gurion Airport from Kennedy in New York was stuffed to the gills with Israelis returning from vacation and evangelical Christians who wanted to walk where Jesus walked. There were few secular American Jews. This is a remarkable change from 25 years ago. In 1970 my sister Naomi went to Israel to attend college, followed by my sister Rachel, who spent a few years on a kibbutz. I remember going to meet them at Kennedy when they came home for vacation. The terminal was filled with Americans just like my family, secular Zionists awaiting the return of their prodigals, who emerged from Customs dressed in the up-from-hippie attire of the day—boys with long hair (no different from today) and beards (different) toting gigantic packs on their back, deeply tanned girls in peasant skirts. Where had they been? On a kibbutz, or hiking in the desert, or on an archaeological dig, or in the intensive Hebrew-language immersion program called an Ulpan.

And you could see in their eyes that any number of them had decided to do what their parents nominally were proud of but internally dreaded—make a home for themselves in the Jewish state. They had found something there, and for decades American Jews argued about what it was. Had they discovered a clue to identity in an increasingly identity-less world? Did they feel like big American fish in a small Israeli pond? Were they running away? These were, after all, kids who did everything they could to stay out of the United States armed forces, yet were willing to submit themselves to the discipline of the Israel Defense Forces.

This is all gone. The secular American Jews who did make *aliyah*—who settled in Israel—seem roughly the age of my third sister, Ruthie, who went there for college 19 years ago, graduated, married an Israeli, and lives in Jerusalem still. Americans in Israel are a large but (sorry, Ruthie) aging population. Far more Israelis leave Israel for America every year than the other way around—an estimated 750,000 Israelis permanently reside in the United States, one eighth of the country's population permanently missing.

For a time Israel was a twofer for American Jews: It was an oppressed winner. The period of their deep involvement dates back to the victory in the Six-Day War, when Israel won a great lopsided victory against a numerically superior foe. The world loves a victor, and what better victor than one surrounded by hostile countries whose ----- it had just kicked? You could feel the interest begin to drain in 1973, when the Yom Kippur War proved a much tougher fight, a sadder and costlier victory. Then, in 1982, the strategically sound but politically disastrous war in Lebanon inspired the first genuine change in temperature in the American Jewish community, and gave the opponents of Israel inside Jewish America their first real opportunity to make their case against the Jewish state. Finally, the beginning of the intifada in 1987 allowed the world media to make a case that Israel was now oppressor, not oppressed. Whether American Jews agreed with that or not, suddenly Israel wasn't so much a winner, and so some of its cachet was lost.

There was a small spasm of enthusiasm again dur-

ing the Gulf War, when Israelis were once again victims, threatened by Saddam's Scuds. The war's end came and with it the American Jewish romance with Israel returned to the state in which it remains: a businesslike kind of marriage in which many mutual needs are satisfied but from which the ardor has faded. Even the popularity of the Oslo peace process and the martyrdom of Yitzhak Rabin could not quite bring it back.

But if the American Jewish marriage to Israel has cooled, the Israeli love affair with all things American seems to have taken over the country altogether. This was not true 20 years ago, when most Israelis considered themselves morally superior to America and Americans—harder, tougher, forged like steel in the oven of the Middle East. This was certainly an attitude my three sisters and their friends shared in the 1970s. At least, they said, Israelis aren't wimps; they're *men*. (This may explain why it is that it is common to find an American woman married to an Israeli man, like Ruthie, but far less common to find an Israeli woman married to an American man. American men in Israel seem only to marry other diaspora Jews, like Brits and South Africans. Or perhaps the Americans who marry Israeli women bring them back to the States.)

American Jews mostly agreed with my sisters; worshippers of guilt that we are, Israelis gave us a whole new way of feeling guilty. Now we could feel *physicall*y guilty, ashamed of our own cowardice, because there were these tough Jews somewhere who could shoot guns and fight like the generals of Biblical times. Of course, Israelis in the 1970s did have it far worse than American Jews, compelled as they were by bitter circumstance to be warriors instead of businessmen.

Or was it bitter circumstance? It is a truth seldom acknowledged, but nonetheless unavoidable, that the better Americans got to know Israelis, the less they liked and admired Israelis as a people and Israel as a nation-state. Israelis, as a rule, have this in common: They are rude, abrasive, and often intolerable. (My family, of course, excepted.) For decades, Zionists have sought to explain and examine Israeli behavior as a logical outgrowth of the country's desperate position in the Middle East. A nation whose men must serve in the army until their fifties is not a place where conventional manners will prevail, especially when people live on top of one another in an area that, until 1967, was smaller than Rhode Island. They brought the rough-and-tumble manners of the Eastern European ghettoes with them, or the general pushiness of the Arab marketplace where Sephardic Jews sold and bought their wares.

With all due respect, I think these arguments are merely an excuse for the tragicomic truth about Israel's culture. Israel is the only nation that gestated in the amniotic fluid of socialism, and the bad manners and ugliness are almost entirely attributable to the take-no-prisoners political tactics of the second generation of Zionists, who came from Odessa and Eastern Europe with a rotten idea in their heads and the rotten disposition that came from believing in it.

Which is why the Americanization of Israel, not only in its culture but in its politics, is welcome, though it has led to a frenzy of criticism about creeping materialism and a loss of egalitarian spirit. Americans may not know it, but we are (when we are not shooting each other) a well-behaved and polite people. In his first six weeks as prime minister, the very American Benjamin Netanyahu has acted with dignity and restraint in the face of very old-timey Israeli assaults from fellow Likudniks David Levy and Ariel Sharon. And, finally, while secular American Jews are increasingly severing their ties with Israel, religious American Jews like my friends Yoram and Ya'el are reigniting Zionism. They are wedding it not to the weird universalist socialist doctrine that waylaid it in the early 20th century but to very specific, very Jewish ideas.

> CELLULAR PHONES ARE SO PREVALENT THERE IS A CONSTANT RINGING IN THE AIR, BRINGING TO MIND EDGAR ALLAN POE'S "TINTINNABULATION OF THE BELLS, BELLS, BELLS."

Israelis like them are geostrategically problematic, no question; they have found their purpose in incorporating the West Bank into Israel, and this purpose sets them foursquare against the world's enlightened opinion. Will they succeed? Will their success mean that Israel will find itself forced to maintain dominion over a hostile Palestinian population with rocks ever at the ready?

They know this, the same thing that secular American Jews used to know, and that is true to this day: Israel is a miracle of a country. It shouldn't exist, not by any rational standard or reckoning. It does. It shouldn't be a major military power. It is. It shouldn't be one of the world's central places. It is. We shouldn't be too quick to assume that anyone on this earth is controlling its destiny. ♦

American Politics and the Kennedy Afterlife

By Noemie Emery

The afterlife of John F. Kennedy is flourishing, amassing vast sums for his heirs and for others, underwriting the biography and information industries, keeping the gossip afloat. New books appear on his parents, his children, his rivals, his wife, and his in-laws. His children, like it or not, are and will always be celebrities. People cheerfully pay hundreds of thousands for knick-knacks once owned by his wife.

Aesthetically, the afterlife has been good, presaging the attractive influence of Ralph Lauren. Politically, it has been something else. The impact of the Kennedy afterlife on American government has been to distract and derange two generations of leaders; obsessing some, maddening others, holding still others in thrall. It has contrived to seduce Gary Hart, warp and diminish Jimmy Carter, and bring Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, two of the smartest men ever to hold office, to grief. Bill Clinton is merely the latest to base his own claim to power on bearing the Kennedy mantle. Sadly, he may not be the last.

The four presidents from 1933 through 1963 were seen as successful and validated as such by public opinion: FDR won four terms, Eisenhower two, Truman was elected in 1948 after serving all but a month and a half of Roosevelt's fourth term, and Kennedy was thought safe for 1964. By contrast, the four after him all were thrown out of office: Ford and Carter denied reelection, Nixon forced out just short of impeachment, Johnson compelled to withdraw. None established himself as a national leader. Mesmerized by the image of Kennedy and haunted by the afterlife, his successors were drawn into erratic behavior that compromised their ability to govern the country. Each failure made the image seem more bright. "Kennedy could not be blamed for the imitations that followed," writes Texas professor Paul R. Henggeler in *The Kennedy Persuasion: The Politics of Style Since JFK* (Ivan R. Dee, 776 pages, $27.50). "He simply proved so effective at presenting himself that he transformed the way his successors saw themselves. While politicians would have manipulated their image whether Kennedy had come about or not, the appeal of the Kennedy style drove them to distraction. They altered their personae and rhetoric in ways that were often confusing and artificial, and sometimes distracting. Greater attention to personal image took energies away from the real work at hand."

> THE IMPACT OF CAMELOT HAS BEEN TO DISTRACT AND DERANGE TWO GENERATIONS OF LEADERS—SEDUCING SOME AND WARPING OTHERS.

The most tortured of all was Richard M. Nixon, Kennedy's contemporary, his most direct rival, and his onetime friend and ally, who collided early on with John Kennedy's character and was shattered by it. It is a story told in Christopher Matthews's subtle and beautiful *Kennedy & Nixon: The Rivalry that Shaped Postwar America* (Simon & Schuster, 377 pages, $25). Henggeler's job is to tell us that Nixon was not an exceptional case, merely the most dramatic and complicated. Matthews's is to show us, dramatically, how devastating the impact of the afterlife could be.

Kennedy and Nixon both wanted to be president in order to be a world leader, and had little interest in domestic issues. Non-, even anti-ideological, they belonged less to their parties than to the Cold War consensus that believed in containment just short of direct provocation and wanted to keep, not extend, the New Deal. Nixon defended the Taft-Hartley bill that effectively ended the New Deal expansion of government, but thought it too hard on the workers and unions. Kennedy attacked it but wanted to rein in big labor. Nixon campaigned in 1946 as a "practical liberal," Kennedy as a fighting conservative. In 1958, a newspaper article defined them correctly as moderates, with strong leanings towards the positions of the other party.

Neither would fit today's parties or Congress. But if Nixon, who as president enacted several liberal measures, would be today to the left of his party, Kennedy would be out of his own. A true Cold Warrior of

Noemie Emery writes frequently on political leaders for The Weekly Standard.

Reaganesque temper, he called the Evil Empire a slave state run by despots and eagerly backed the military build-up. In a diary entry in 1945, he chided Franklin Roosevelt for "the emphasis he put on rights rather than responsibilities," correctly fingering the downside of FDR's legacy. He called Sen. Joseph McCarthy "a great American patriot," cheerfully pursued domestic Communists, and thrived on his bouts with the Left. "He *hated* the liberals," said his friend Benjamin Bradlee. He called Nixon's rival Helen Gahagan Douglas "not the sort of person" he wanted to work with, dismissed the "Hiss types" as "sort of Adlai," and explained his early sympathy for McCarthy's purges: "I did not identify with them, so I did not get as worked up as other liberals," he said of the senator's victims. "I agree that many of them were seriously manhandled, but they represented a different world to me." (In 1968, his brother Robert denounced "rich New York liberals" as selfish and silly, compared them unfavorably with blue-collar ethnics, and dismissed them as "sick.")

"Before the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates, JFK didn't dislike Nixon, to the annoyance of many," said Bradlee. The two had a thirteen-year record of cordial relations, in which they more often than not were political allies, cheered each other's successes, exchanged many small favors, and were invariably gracious and friendly. Kennedy invited Nixon to his office parties, defended him against liberals, enjoyed his victories over Voorhis and Douglas, and in the 1950 Senate race gave Nixon a $1,000 check from his father. Nixon wept in 1954 when he thought Kennedy was dying and assured Kennedy's aides he would not use his office to take advantage of Kennedy's absence by voting to break a Senate tie. So comfortable were the two in each other's political worlds that early in 1960 Kennedy told several friends he would vote for Nixon if he could not win his own party's nomination. Joseph Kennedy gave Nixon a similar message with a promise of financial backing. An alternative future presents itself, in which Kennedy helps to facilitate a Nixon presidency and becomes a trusted adviser. But Kennedy won.

The election—a very close run—would swing on emotional themes.

Campaign season. Kennedy has Allen Drury's Advise and Consent *under his arm.*

Utterly charming and emotionally cool, Kennedy seemed untouched by the emotions he aroused in so many. But Nixon craved approval without the means to bring it about. In all these relationships (even with strong types like his wife and his brother Robert), Kennedy was the person sought after, the one whose attention-affection-interest-fidelity was longed for and seldom obtained. Nixon was the perpetual supplicant, toyed with by Ike; a man who, before his marriage, drove his future wife to and from her dates with other men.

The friendship, which seemed so well matched, had never been equal. Kennedy liked Nixon and respected his talents. But Nixon, like many, saw Kennedy as an ideal. Matthews seems to agree with Nixon that the election was stolen, most likely by tricks in Cook County, Illinois. But the reason it was close enough to be (if it was) stolen was the effect of emotion at work. Always detached, from himself as from others, Kennedy was able to distance himself from his rival. But Nixon, normally an aggressive, not to say brutal, campaigner, could not free himself from the need to please, or appease, his old friend. From their first Great Debate (in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, where they met in 1947 to argue Taft-Hartley), Matthews ascertains the dynamic that would assert itself when the two men did battle. Nixon addressed himself directly to Kennedy, as if he were the only audience. Kennedy ignored him and spoke to the crowd. Kennedy was judged the winner. So was it in the 1960 Great Debates:

"Just as he had in McKeesport,"

writes Matthews, "Nixon ignored the audience and fixed his attention exclusively on Kennedy. He seemed intent on getting Kennedy to realize that when it came to goals, there really wasn't much difference between them. Worse still, he seemed to crave Kennedy's *approval*," obliquely agreeing his administration lacked judgment and energy. But it was not only what Nixon said: "More than either contestant's words, it was their images that affected the American judgment. Each time Kennedy spoke, Nixon's eyes darted toward him in an uncomfortable mixture of fear and curiosity. . . . When Nixon was on, Kennedy sat, sometimes professorially taking notes, at other moments wearing a sardonic expression, as he concentrated on his rival's answers. Sargent Shriver would note that it was his brother-in-law's facial language, more than anything he said, that decided the results of the Great Debate." Throughout the campaign, Kennedy would be the aggressor, setting the terms of the race and the arguments, making Nixon address him on *his* issues.

Kennedy, at first glance the charming young lightweight, was the far stronger person, more composed, more controlled, and less vulnerable. Matthews suggests Nixon was psyched out by Kennedy, whose eyes, like a headlight, could freeze him. Certainly, it kept him from the brutal assaults for which he was famous. "The 'old Nixon,' the hard charger of the Voorhis and Douglas races, the Hiss case, and all the other street fights," would have decked the young upstart, or so Matthews tells us. But he did not. "For whatever reason," Matthews writes, "Nixon never once unleashed the kind of scorched-earth raid on the enemy that had made him such a ferocious campaigner in the past." Kennedy got to him, as he would get to others. Even when put in his grave.

The sudden death of a successful rival rouses complex emotions: relief, horror, shock, sorrow, wild lashings of survivor's guilt. ("Erase the *assassin* image," Henry Cabot Lodge told Nixon before the debate in Chicago. Nixon had left Dallas only hours before Kennedy was shot.) Lyndon Johnson had felt these as much as did Nixon. But five years later, when Nixon became president, the emotional baggage common to both of them had been deepened and made still more complicated by the residue of prolonged and direct competition.

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A SUCCESSFUL RIVAL ROUSES COMPLEX EMOTIONS: RELIEF, HORROR, SHOCK, SORROW, WILD LASHINGS OF SURVIVOR'S GUILT.

Like Johnson, he was wedged between memory (John Kennedy) and a living Kennedy Brother (Edward), and the sense that he might have owed his office to the untimely death of another Kennedy (Robert). Like Johnson, he defined himself in terms of the Kennedy image and came to find it oppressive.

Insecure, doubting himself and his powers—"I think in his own mind, he felt it was very strange that he could get elected," Matthews quotes H.R. Haldeman as saying—he came to believe that the only way he could establish himself in his office was by tearing the Kennedys down. He tried to "investigate" the Bay of Pigs and the Diem assassination, hoping to spotlight John Kennedy's errors. War rooms were set up to spy on Ted Kennedy, going to great expense of time and money to "catch him in the sack . . . with his babes." Thus, Nixon would try to copy John Kennedy's style and cadence, while stripping the White House of all signs of his presence; take Ted Kennedy aside to console him after Chappaquiddick, while trying to blacken his character; invite Jacqueline Kennedy and her children to the White House and treat them with great sensitivity, while trying to call her husband and their father a murderer. Through it all, he saw himself as the beleaguered party, even after he had crushed McGovern, less secure after his historic blowout than Kennedy was with less than 50 percent of the vote. The cluster of crimes that make up Watergate, while reading today like something from *Gaslight*, doubtless seemed to Nixon entirely defensible pre-emptive efforts to level the field against a relentless and all-powerful enemy. He broke into the Watergate to keep track of one of John Kennedy's political managers whom Nixon had endowed with magical qualities; tried to make a comprehensive taped record to defend the accomplishments of his administration against historians biased toward Kennedy; tried to plant crimes on men who "deserved" them, as they had gotten away with so much. Again, all this seemed justified to him. The Supreme Court called it illegal, and the country agreed. Kennedy, who had won Round One in 1960 in head-to-head combat, won Round Two years later, forcing Nixon to knock himself out. It was a delayed action rout, planted years earlier. The triumph belonged to the ghost.

A charismatic force with his own avid following, Ronald Reagan was not awed by the Kennedy image and could set him in place as a hero in history, whose reputation would not threaten his. A new generation of Democrats would not be so fortunate. Unable to fill out their own wan personae, they opted to try to

use his. In October 1987, Joseph Biden was forced from the primary contest when he was found to have plagiarized numerous people, among them Robert F. Kennedy. Months before, scandal had put an end to Gary Hart, who had tried to cast himself as a better legatee than JFK's brother Teddy but proved instead that his main claim to the Kennedy legend was the hunting and catching of babes.

Bill Clinton, who actually met Kennedy as a teenager, wisely did not try to copy him. Instead, he improved on the theme of succession, presenting himself not as a copy but as the true and designated heir. A film clip of the Rose Garden meeting was made the centerpiece of the biographical video, but with changes that altered its meaning. As Henggeler writes, "For dramatic purposes, the film was edited into a closeup of Clinton and Kennedy. It was also shown slow-motion and in reverse, so that Kennedy moves into Clinton, instead of sweeping past him. In the original clip, Clinton looks down briefly to see Kennedy's hand before reaching to shake it. Played in reverse, however, Clinton appears to bow humbly and avert his eyes *after* shaking Kennedy's hand . . . a dramatic subtlety that only a Hollywood production team could catch." The difference was vivid and meaningful in the hands of Harry Thomason and company; what was really a routine passing moment had become the investiture of the Prince of Wales. But, like other efforts at transference, this too did not last. Clinton, who has since tried to be Reagan, Truman, and both of the Roosevelts, survives by morphing into other people. Thirty-three years after John Kennedy's murder, Democrats have yet to supplant him with a different model of governance. Which may be why his spirit still walks.

John Kennedy, who loved government and wanted to bring out the best in his people, brought out the worst in a series of leaders, by which respect for them, and for their office, was greatly diminished. In the process, those who pretended to his throne turned into his rivals—or, as Whitewater suggests, into Richard Nixon instead. ♦

Books

Rehabilitating the 60s

By Peter Collier

The last time I saw Paul Berman—the only time, really—was over lunch at the Hotel Intercontinental in Managua in 1987. He expressed a distant sympathy for the Sandinista commandantes because they were the first New Leftists to take power on the international scene, but he also realized that they had become nutty professors in their jerry-built laboratory of revolution (though he was inclined to implicate Ronald Reagan in their cheesy totalitarianism). One detail from that day stands out particularly in my memory. When the rest of the small group of Americans rose from the lunch table to go watch the historic reopening of *La Prensa*, an independent newspaper long suppressed by the Sandinistas, Berman decided instead to meet with the leader of some small socialist sect who claimed to be independent and, in the manner of democratic socialists everywhere, thought himself morally purer than everyone else—even though Berman's companion didn't stray far from the party line.

You can see Berman's ideological journey as the search for the Third Way—the Holy Grail of those who can't admit that life's real alternatives are binary—or as simply another example of looking for love in all the wrong places. Either way, he is still on his journey in *A Tale of Two Utopias* (W.W. Norton, 351 pages, $24), a literate, somewhat derivative, episodically provocative, and frequently irritating book about the 1960s, its heritage, and the shape of things to come.

Berman is a classier act than the nostalgia artists who persist in regarding the Sixties simply as a paradise lost. He does not shrink from the dark side of this vexed era, acknowledging that, yes, there was an addiction to mayhem and mischief and infantile histrionics, and that, yes, there was a "criminal subculture"—whose dimensions, Berman now admits, were larger than he would have acknowledged back there in Managua. In fact, his criticism of leftism has made the leftover Left at the *Nation* and elsewhere condemn him as a right-wing wolf in the sheep's clothing of socialism. But such an attitude only reinforces Berman's conviction that he is the Last Honest Man and reveals a stunning blindness on the part of his leftist critics. For in truth, *A Tale of Two Utopias* is one of the most ambitious defenses of Sixties radicalism yet attempted.

While the efforts to harness the energy of all the glorious hugger-mugger of 1968 in the service of some large utopian project failed miserably, Berman says, the purified essence of the Sixties—that "uprising in the zone of the spirit"—produced the "gay awakening"

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and other victories, some of them, like the process of liberation in Eastern Europe, of world-historical proportions. Comprising four extended and related essays, *A Tale of Two Utopias* moves along at its own quirky pace with plenty of flashbacks and flash-forwards and opportunities for the author to strut his acquaintance with European and Latin American revolutionary history, and do his nightclub imitation of Hegel.

"The Moral History of the Baby Boom Generation" begins with a flurry of theorizing about the nature of the revolutionary impulse that created the international New Left. In Europe, a generation came of age afflicted by an "illegitimacy complex" because there were no more fascists to fight as their parents had (or at least said they had) in heroic underground actions. In America, a corresponding group felt oppressed by the comfort zone their parents had created after being traumatized by the Great Depression and World War II. But whatever the nationality, the great and unifying discovery of this generation of young people, says Berman, was the Other—in Third World countries and in the ghettos of their own land and, it must be said in retrospect, in the ghettos of their own minds as well. From this discovery came the credo Berman thinks elevated the era, although others might say it was responsible for the most destructive outbreaks of jungle fever: "I struggle for others, therefore I am."

In America, identity-through-action, which Berman believes was "a grand idea morally," took on a distinctive shape. He focuses on the story of SDS's emergence out of the good gray socialism of the League for Industrial Democracy. After Jim Miller's *"Democracy is in the Streets"* and Tom Hayden's *Reunion*, both of which Berman uses in his account, this subject has the feel of a thrice-told tale. Berman has a

good nose for ideological putrescence and catches better than his sources the stench of moral equivalence in the reluctant condemnation of communism that emerged from those busy days of manifesto-writing in Port Huron, Mich. Moreover, Berman does bring into close focus—in a way no other man of the Left has—the way the Left "finally went mad" a few years later when SDS devolved into its logical extremes of the Progressive Labor Party and the Weathermen. But as Ignazio Silone said, politics is the choice of comrades, and Berman can't bring himself to harden the soft spot in his heart for the Sixties characters whose ultimate crash and burn he documents. Some readers will have to work to suppress their gag reflex when Berman praises the contribution of the so-called red-diaper babies (the children of Communist party members) to the New Left. He thinks they grew up uncontaminated because of the Khrushchev revelations, but thanks to the Fifties and McCarthyism and the "American spirit of intolerance" brought to their task "energy and courage as family traits." What about other aspects of that genetic inheritance, notably the insouciant willingness to see democracy afloat on an ice-cube in the Gulag?

Something of this ambivalence informs his portrait of SDS founder Tom Hayden as a sort of Everyman of the New Left whose career he sees as a summary of the promise of the Movement and also of the way this promise died—or at least entered a state of suspended animation. Berman is fascinated by Hayden and his homemade existentialism in the way the bookish are always fascinated by those they consider men of action, especially if those men of action are a bit bookish themselves. Mercifully, he spares us another gloss on Hayden's thoughts about Camus, but he repeats the truism that Hayden "had a knack for integrating bits of Catholic humanism into his left-wing thinking." Afflicted myself with another element of Catholicism—guilt—I thought back to the People's Park riots of 1969 when Hayden, who had been thought of as "the next Lenin" as early as 1963 when the Movement was supposedly still in its *innocent* stage, holed up in an attic deep in Berkeley trying to channel the street action. At one point he implied that it would be a good thing if the Black Panthers ("our Vietcong," in his term) upped the ante by bringing down an Alameda County sheriff's helicopter. At this, Panther field marshall David Hilliard, to his credit, issued a famous response: "Just like you, Tom. Get a nigger to pull the trigger."

SOME READERS WILL HAVE TO WORK TO SUPPRESS THEIR GAG REFLEX AS THEY READ THE PRAISE OF THE RED-DIAPER BABIES IN THEIR NEW LEFT DAYS.

During the dry labor that failed to produce the monster birth of the Revolution, Hayden and his fellow Lenins joined affinity groups and fighting collectives to get ready for the apocalypse. But the only combat they saw was in the lacerating "torture sessions" with their female comrades over issues of heterosexual male privilege. Berman believes this marked a crucial transition in emphasis in the Left community from "what one did to who one was." And who one was, of course, would become the defining issue of the new age of identity politics.

Which brings Berman to his next essay, "The Gay Awakening." Here he leans heavily, probably a little too heavily, on Martin Duberman's *Stonewall*, a book based on oral histories from those involved in the 1969 gay uprising in Greenwich Village. Berman sees Duberman's book as an exemplary exercise in the New Left academic discipline of "history from below." He regards the rebellious drag-queen kick dancers who poured out of the Stonewall bar to defy the surprised police as a bizarre vanguard who made their history from below on the streets even as Duberman has made it on the page. In shifting the focus of leftism from the Other to the self (or, perhaps, in the perne and gyre of such theorizing, to the Other who is also the self), they started a movement that developed into an agenda of incremental gains and savvy politics that led to a "revolution in middle class customs"—a revolution that allowed more conservative, integrated gays to demand "a place at the table." Thus, while Woodstock Nation faded into the Sixties wilderness like Raleigh's Roanoke, Queer Nation planted its flag squarely in the national polity.

Berman doesn't spare the goon squad of outers from ACT-UP any more than he has spared the loonies of the New Left: "In any movement based on building up cultural identity, sooner or later someone will . . . take into his own hands the right to make decisions for all, and to unmask traitors and to carry out the execution." But he is oddly circumspect when it comes to the one subject that would seem to be central to any analysis of the impact of the 1960s on the gay awakening—the cataclysm he refers to only elliptically as "the epidemic." But to deprive the descendants of the drag queens who fought at the barricades of Stonewall their share of credit for AIDS is like depriving Robespierre of his credit for the guillotine. For in addition to making history in the streets, of course, these radicals

also made history in the bathhouses. And just as the Stonewallers kicked up their heels at the police who harassed them in 1969, so their heirs kicked them up at public-health authorities a few years later. Thus gay activists in cities like San Francisco violently denied the sexual etiology of AIDS and fought against the closure of those dank places that were its petri dishes. Why? In part, at least, because their "culture"—that radical movement they had filched from the Sixties—was under assault. It is curious that Berman, who prides himself on not flinching from the hard truth and on being ever ready to explore chaos (and ever willing to confuse it with complexity), doesn't follow this byway of the awakening.

In "Zappa and Havel," he huffs and puffs to inflate a metaphor out of the fact that the late rock musician Frank Zappa was in Czechoslovakia on the eve of its liberation and drew mobs of admirers, while U.S. ambassador Shirley Temple Black walked around unnoticed. Right: Of the two types of American culture—Sixties and non- or anti-Sixties, the one life-affirming and the other life-denying—the former has saved the world. Such a view is congruent with Berman's notion that the crowning achievement of the New Left was an "undertone of analysis and self-criticism" among the young rebels who, even as they were presiding over the suicide of the Movement they had created, "pulled old left ideas out to sea where they drowned." It is all very well for someone to want to rehabilitate the 1960s, but to say that the lefties of the era did the heavy lifting against communism calls even the law of unintended consequences into question.

In "Zappa and Havel" Berman reveals himself as someone eager to redeem his reluctant skepticism about leftism (and keep his honorary membership in the club) by the depth of his cynicism about America. Describing a visit to Prague in 1990 as communism was crumbling, he talks of the disquieting pro-Americanism he discovered among the natives, a dizzying outbreak of false consciousness he does his best to correct. (He has already accused the French of what might be called false appetite for liking Big Macs and of false esthetics for liking Hollywood movies.) On one occasion, a Czech acquaintance takes him on a walk and gestures derisively at an example of gray, prison-like "socialist housing." Berman's response: "What oceans of delusions about America lay in that single sneer. Any American could have told him: You want to see housing projects? I'll show you housing projects. Ever hear of the Bronx, buddy?" All very clever, yet of course this delusion, which might not be a delusion at all, went beyond Czech borders. On Boris Yeltsin's first visit to America in 1989, he was given a tour of Washington's slums meant to make him feel good about himself and his country. Yeltsin dismayed his hosts by blurting out that what he was seeing would certainly be considered good housing back home.


Paul Berman

Kent Lemon

Berman works hard to convince Czechs that mentioning "Martin Luther King and Ronald Reagan together, as they did, was not possible." He wins "a point or two" by bringing up the U.S. "fondness for invading the little republics of Latin America." But these people are stubborn. They *believe* in the United States, have taken strength from its example during their long travail, and are not ready to give up without a fight. Berman is left with a vague hope that theirs is actually a self-parodying, Hollywoodized version of America, which is obviously what he himself thinks America is. With luck, they will eventually "get a clearer idea of American bleakness and social decay and the me-first ethic in its capitalist manifestation."

At the same time he is wondering why the people of Eastern Europe just won't take no for an answer, Berman is doggedly pursuing his thesis about how the aborted utopia of 1968—his *annus mirabilis*—bore delayed fruit in the utopian yearnings of 1989. He finds a harmonic convergence in the fact that Havel himself was in the United States in 1968 and breathed in the intoxicating fumes of this remarkable moment. Havel was still under the influence years later when Reagan "terrified half the world" with plans to deploy Pershings and cruise missiles. Like any self-respecting alumnus of the 1960s, Havel was opposed. But soon French intellectual André Glucksmann, another of Berman's heroes, arrived in Prague to set him straight. Glucksmann, who had himself careened through a series of personae that took him from gabby New Leftist to murderous Maoist and finally to anti-Soviet anti-totalitarian, convinced Havel that America was a "defender of freedom" and the USSR the "source of nightmares." For Glucksmann to deliver the word

that anti-Soviet conservatives had been crying into the night for almost half a century makes the message okay, as far as the nepotistic Berman is concerned.

Berman tries to tie things up with an inquiry into the "End of History," an essay in which he contrasts the ideas of Glucksmann and Francis Fukuyama regarding where we go from here, now that the Left has killed off leftism and utopia has been domesticated into a manageable and mundane concept rather than an invitation to unleash what Freud called "the wolf within the man." It is interesting to see Berman try to arbitrate between these two, but their ideas make his own seem precocious and slightly adenoidal by comparison—someone who knows how the game is played but isn't himself yet ready for the big leagues. ♦

Books

Byatt Goes to Babel

By J. Bottum

If conscious novelists are the novelists who cannot begin writing until they know what they're going to say, then unconscious novelists are the ones who have no idea what they're going to say until after they've said it. Though no writer has ever managed to achieve either perfect consciousness or unconsciousness, there is nonetheless an observable difference between a writer like Charles Dickens, who tends to figure out what it all means at the end of his novels, and one like Henry James, who tends to know from the beginning.

What makes A.S. Byatt's new work, *Babel Tower* (Random House, 623 pages, $25.95), so fascinating is that the author—who is as severely *conscious* a novelist as we have writing in English today—has for the first time attempted to write an *unconscious* novel. Byatt, who found wide popularity with her Booker Prize-winning *Possession* in 1990, typically uses her books to nest narrative within narrative, like close-fitting Chinese-boxes. But in *Babel Tower* she has sent those narratives out to clash like ignorant armies on the page—in the hope, one presumes, that some meaning will emerge victorious.

If *Babel Tower* were about anything other than London in the 1960s, the confusion of it all would be enough to wreck the book. As it is, the 60s probably were this confusing at the time, and the novel manages to catch the real tenor of those strange days. But the most interesting aspect of *Babel Tower* is watching a writer like A.S. Byatt, whose instincts are always to tie off the loose threads, write a book about all the threads coming unraveled.

After a pair of carefully constructed novels in the 1960s—one of which, *The Game*, is thought to describe the sibling rivalry her sister, Margaret Drabble, described from the other side in her own novel *A Summer Birdcage*—Byatt embarked upon a series of books about Frederica Potter, a young lady-in-waiting of the "new Elizabethan Age" that began with the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953. *Babel Tower* is the third volume in a planned tetralogy relating Frederica's life and times, following *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life*. Byatt interrupted the sequence in 1990 to write the witty and well-received *Possession* (a sort of highbrow takeoff of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in which the lives of modern scholars parallel and parody their Victorian subjects) and the superb 1992 novella *Morpho Eugenia* (a tale of High-Victorian research into manners, eugenics, and the social life of ants, recently filmed as *Angels and Insects*).

In *Babel Tower*, she takes up the life of Frederica, now with a young son and a failing marriage, after the death of her sister with which *Still Life* closed. A studious schoolgirl and a university success, Frederica grew up almost entirely on books, and a constant theme of *Babel Tower* is what reading does to people. Almost no one in the novel has a sane understanding of the written word. Frederica's school-age son still hasn't learned to read. Her husband, the blueblooded Nigel Reiver, keeps pornographic magazines locked in his briefcase and despises his wife's world of books. A would-be pop star—the twin brother of the lover Frederica finds in London after escaping from her squire husband—sets a tower of classic books on fire during a concert. The flames spread across the stage and badly injure him.

But he's not the only one to be burned by books: Frederica's life is seared by reading. Taught to believe that only literature offers wisdom and salvation—but at the exact moment at which literature itself, under the influence of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, was declaring that salvation lies only with sex—she has been unable to escape her self-conscious, book-learned desire for unselfconscious surrender. But though her anti-intellectual husband is the only man whose performance in bed brought her a hint of what Lawrence might have been writing about, her marriage has grown unbearable. And early in the novel Frederica—the sexy bookworm,

the fishnet bluestocking—escapes her Chatterley life in the country for a chattering life in London's world of books. Byatt devotes the largest portions of *Babel Tower* to Frederica's attempt to build a career in the city while her divorce, with its spying detectives and bitter custody battle, slowly comes to trial.

Frederica assumes the usual work of a literary scrounger: teaching adult education and evening courses, hacking out book reviews, and vetting manuscripts for publishing houses. On her recommendation, a publisher takes on an author, Jude Mason, and prints his anti-utopian fantasy, "Babbletower"—a sort of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* meets George Orwell's *1984*, with a dash of the Marquis de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom* thrown in for flavor. The book (long portions of which Byatt sets throughout *Babel Tower*) is promptly confiscated as pornography, and London's literary scene buzzes with the comments of its supporters and detractors.

Meanwhile, Frederica helps to gentrify her rundown London neighborhood. Her son Leo plots to bring his mother and father back together. Her bereaved brother-in-law (an Anglican priest) organizes a dial-up spiritual hotline. Several of her friends help a Royal Commission investigate the British public school system that may have twisted her husband into a prostitute-frequenting sadist and Jude Mason into a homosexual misanthrope. And again meanwhile—one of the ways in which Byatt captures the compressed feel of the 60s is by making *Babel Tower* a book of innumerable "meanwhiles"—the swinging 60s of the Beatles and Carnaby Street begins to gather steam. The sadistic "Moors Murders" of the Nietzsche-quoting Ian Brady and Myra Hindley capture the British headlines. Sex seems easy. Kennedy dies.

As though admitting the impossibility of making a single narrative of it all, Frederica begins to keep a commonplace book in which she sets down her random thoughts, interspersed with newspaper clippings, letters from her husband's lawyers, quotations from fashionable 60s authors, and snippets from D.H. Lawrence and E.M. Forster.

Jude Mason's "Babbletower"—which recounts the collapse of a would-be utopia based entirely on sensuality into murder and sexual torture—serves as a deliberate shadow of the novel that contains it, allowing Byatt to record her reservations about the Decade of Love and her 1990s knowledge of how it all turned out. Though Frederica and her friends are outraged when a jury finds "Babbletower" obscene, Byatt's presentation of the conflicting experts' testimony suggests she herself is not so sure. Byatt is willing to grant the old order at least some virtues: The divorce court that allows Nigel's lawyer to brutalize Frederica—and thus seems an example of the oppression the new order needs to destroy—is the same court that goes on to resolve the custody fight over Leo with sensitivity and wisdom.

> IF *BABEL TOWER* WERE ABOUT ANYTHING OTHER THAN LONDON IN THE 1960S, THE CONFUSION OF IT ALL WOULD WRECK THE BOOK.

If "Babbletower," the book-within-the-book, is one shadow of *Babel Tower*, Frederica's commonplace book is another shadow, reminding the reader of the confusions the 1960s wrought in English literature. Frederica has become "juxtaposed but divided, not yearning for fusion," and her paste-up job here is "an art-form of fragments, juxtaposed, not interwoven, not 'organically' spiralling up like a tree or a shell, but constructed." She has given up on making a single narrative of her life and times, content instead to rest in confusion.

Byatt's usual Chinese-box technique, ordinarily very neat and well-considered, gives way in *Babel Tower* to juxtaposed stories and battling voices. Passages from "Babbletower" jostle with passages from Frederica's commonplace book, only to be elbowed aside by court transcripts, long discussions about the latest trends in 1960s science and pop music, and Frederica's reader-analyses for her publishing house. Real literary and historical figures from the 60s make cameo appearances, undifferentiated from the fictional characters.

And yet *Babel Tower* is not simply a postmodern collage like the commonplace book—and for the same reason that Frederica Potter-Reiver is not Antonia Susan Byatt. Frederica is only a passive reader, but A.S. Byatt is an active writer. The fictional character may unconsciously represent the swirling confusions of her times, but the author has to perform the conscious work of making her character a representative figure.

The result is that Byatt remains a conscious novelist, even when trying to write an unconscious novel. If she seems designless, it is by deliberate design; if she seems confusing, it is by clearheaded choice. Confusion is not a very satisfactory answer to the puzzle of the 1960s, and one wishes Byatt—with the unique resources of her ongoing history of Frederica and the New Elizabethan Age—had found something better. But of the puzzle itself, we're not likely to find a more deliberate, clearheaded account than *Babel Tower*. ♦

Under pressure from the Clinton administration, network television executives agreed to provide new "educational programming" for children. —*News item*

PICKS FROM THE PREZ

Bill Clinton's Fave Raves for Kids Who Yearn to Learn

America's network executives have really come through with the programming this week. And I think I speak for the Federal Communications Commission and the entire regulatory apparatus of the federal government when I say: Keep up the good work, guys! Or lose your broadcasting licenses!
–W.J.C.

BARNEY AND FRIENDS (Mon. PBS) The big purple guy shows the value of community service by enrolling the whole gang in a federally sponsored neighborhood work program much like my administration's bold initiative AmeriCorps. Kids learn the fun of sharing, cooperating, and being subsidized by the federal government. And don't the kids look great in those new school uniforms!

SESAME STREET (Thu. PBS) All the kids on the Street go wild over two new lovable-huggable characters, including Snuffleupagus' long-lost brother, Stephanopoulos! "Steffy" is a tiny bundle o' luv with a big shock of black hair that he just can't seem to keep combed! He and his new pal, "Icky" Ickes (who hardly has any hair at all!), teach kids some lessons about subtraction when a local congressman (Dom DeLuise) cuts their budget by two thirds. Will Bert and Ernie ever get to go to law school?

MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS (Fri. FOX) Zordon sends the Rangers deep into outer space to face the evil Lord Zed—but only as part of a multinational peacekeeping action. The strict rules of engagement forbid any fighting or yelling. Parents be warned: The Rangers get slaughtered. But at least they—and your kids—will learn new strategies in conflict resolution!

And for older kids:

BAYWATCH (Mon. Syndicated) Water-safety tips and marine biology are thematically interspersed with lotsa action. In tonight's episode, hunk David Hasselhoff tugs at your heartstrings with his tearful, but not really surprising, confession that he can't read or count past 14. And kids learn the principles of pneumatics when they discover how Pamela Anderson Lee manages to stay afloat!