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the weekly Standard

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WHY THEY HATE CCRI

Big Business, the diversity lobby, and the battle over racial preferences in California

by Heather Mac Donald

the weekly Standard

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4 SCRAPBOOK
Jack 'n' Jude, again; Dr. Benjamin Spock, paleocon; and more.

6 CASUAL
Joseph Epstein focuses—oops, concentrates—on "focus."

8 CORRESPONDENCE

11 EDITORIAL
The Assault on CCRI

13 FEELING MINNESOTA
Boschwitz-Wellstone II: Hot race, cold state. *by* **Fred Barnes**

16 IT'S 1973 ALL OVER AGAIN
A reelected Clinton would face trouble. *by* **Michael Barone**

18 CLINTON'S FAT LIPPO
The Indonesian scandals begin. *by* **Christopher Caldwell**

20 AMERICANIZING BRITAIN
Can the Tories come back, once more? *by* **Irwin M. Stelzer**

21 GORBACHEV'S REAGAN
The last Soviet surveys his world. *by* **Angela Stent**

40 PARODY

24 WHY THEY HATE CCRI
Out West, the big wagons circle to defend preferences. *by* **Heather Mac Donald**

27 COP BLOC
The police unions turn out to behave . . . like labor unions. *by* **Eric Felten**

BOOKS

30 HILLARY THE SEDUCTRESS David Brock falls for the first lady. *by* **Midge Decter**

33 REBECCA WEST'S LEGACY She had verve, audacity, and lasting brilliance. *by* **Donald Lyons**

36 BACK TO SCHOOL A journalist drops out to ponder the masters. *by* **Paul Cantor**

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Jack Kemp's Brain, Part III

After a brief intermission, we now return to our coverage of the co-dependent relationship between Jack Kemp and supply-sider Jude Wanniski. In an October 11 memo, Wanniski applauded the debate performances of Bob Dole in Hartford and Kemp in St. Petersburg. "The instant polls taken after both debates indicated Clinton and Gore were the easy winners, and if I were scoring according to Oxford standards I would agree," Wanniski wrote. But "this national conversation we are having about who will be in charge of the national family for the next four years is not about debating points."

Now listen to Kemp echoing Wanniski the very next day on CNN's *Evans & Novak*. "I lost the debate on debating points but won the debate on outlining Bob Dole's vision of the future. . . . We're not electing an Oxfordian debater."

In the same memo, Wanniski praised Dole and Kemp because they "avoided the pleas of Republican intellectuals—from the *Wall Street Journal* and Bill Kristol's *Beltway Standard*—that they take off the gloves and attack Clinton's character." Here's echo #2: When Novak asked Kemp about our editorial last week, "Saving the GOP from Dole-Kemp '96," in which David Tell made the point that Dole and Kemp will have to shoulder much of the blame if the GOP loses the Congress, Kemp replied that "it's the type of attack for which the *Beltway Standard* is getting known for in order to try to boost their circulation."

Wait, it gets worse. We've written about the way in which Wanniski's obsession with Louis Farrakhan has already had a deleterious influence on Kemp, who praised the Nation of Islam honcho in a *Boston Globe* interview last month. In his recent memo, Wanniski wrote: "In his speech in St. Louis, Farrakhan answered Kemp's challenge to renounce anti-Semitism and bigotry once and for all as a prerequisite to national reconciliation with the Jewish community." Yeah, sure: The only two people in the country who bought this, apparently, are Wanniski and—you guessed it—Kemp. Here's what the VP candidate said on *Evans & Novak*: "I was pleased to see that statement. I would hope that there would be a response from the Jewish community." Five days later, at a rally celebrating the one year anniversary of the Million Man March, Farrakhan blamed America for the "genocide" of Native Americans and blacks and added, "I see [Qaddafi] as a victim of America's evil. I consider him a freedom fighter."

Some of the Wanniski-Kemp stuff is just foolishness. Some is worse. This is worse. The Republican party's candidate for the vice presidency has no business speaking friendly words about America's most pernicious demagogue.

New York Times Out of Time

On October 15, Bob Dole gave a major speech in California attacking Bill Clinton's character. The next day's *Washington Post* reported it atop the front page. But the *New York Times* buried its story about the speech on page A15, choosing instead to run not one, but two news analyses about the speech on its front page, evidently considering its own interpretation of the news more important than the news itself.

That's not surprising. For truth be told, the *Times* has been utterly out of it this election season. Part of the problem seems to be partisan news judgment by the editors in New York. On October 12, for example, the editors put the rah-rah headline "President Wins Tomato Accord for Floridians" on the front page, while the *Post* made the decision more on newsworthiness when it put this minor story on page 12 under the more straightforward headline, "U.S., Mexico Reach Tomato Accord."

The *Times* has shown itself comically unsophisticated to boot. On Sept. 29, it ran a breathless front-page story featuring the astonishing revelation that while Jack Kemp had been a supply-sider in the 1980s, Bob Dole had not!

Worst of all, the *Times* has wildly overemployed the cheapest of all tricks, the mood-of-the-people piece. That's when a reporter interviews 12 "average folks" and miraculously discovers that the mood of

Scrapbook

the people confirms all of the reporter's pre-existing prejudices. This is a newspaper version of the focus-group fraud Andy Ferguson wrote about two weeks ago.

Praeteritio, Oh, Oh, Oh

Move over, Socrates, Cicero, and Cato; make room for Bob Dole. He joined these classical masters of rhetoric during the debates by employing a favorite tactic of theirs: It's called praeteritio (translation: "the process of passing over"). The speaker promises not to mention something, but by saying so, he allows himself the opportunity to mention exactly what he wants. He makes the point by "passing over" it.

Best example from Dole in the first debate: "And I won't comment on other things that have happened in your administration, of your past, about drugs." From the second debate: "I have a little foundation for the disabled called the Dole Foundation. We don't talk about it."

Dole could stay on this tack in order to keep the attacks on Clinton's character and behavior above the belt: "I will not mention the fact that Clinton violated campaign-finance laws by allowing an Indonesian family to donate $425,000 to the Democratic party," or "I will not discuss the lowlife pothead who gathered 900 FBI files for the Clinton White House."

Also on the Latin watch: In Charles Krauthammer's "Bibi's Tunnel, Yasser's War," in our Oct. 14 issue, we made the mistake of assuming that the plural of *casus belli* was *casi belli*. How foolish we were! *Casus belli* is the plural as well, because *casus* is, you guessed it, actually a fourth-declension noun. We thank Professor Harvey Mansfield of Harvard for calling this to our attention and for defining grammar up.

Live Long & Don't Prosper

You don't have to be a right-winger to agree with Bob Dole that America used to be better. That elderly hippie Dr. Benjamin Spock, apostle of disarmament, macrobiotics, daily meditation, and weekly group therapy, was himself an eyewitness to the time of "tranquility, faith and confidence and action" that Dole evoked in his acceptance speech, and Spock too regrets its passing. Born in 1903, he has seen in his lifetime "a progressive coarsening" of speech and entertainment and a "souring of many commonly held beliefs." In every decade of the century, he wrote two years ago in *A Better World for Our Children*, there have been enormous changes, some for the good but, "in retrospect, even more . . . harmful." Our leftie friends shouldn't worry, though, about dispensing parental pabulum from inside the world of Benjamin Spock; even though the book is subtitled *Rebuilding American Family Values*, Spock largely blames Republicans for everything that's gone wrong in America ever.

Casual

Take A Flying Focus

Andrew Ferguson's recent evisceration of focus groups, another of the fine frauds of our day, is but the opening shot in a war I believe we must wage to the bitter end—a war on the word "focus" itself.

The word has been driving me bonkers and beyond. I see it every morning all over my *New York Times*, where political candidates inevitably need to "focus" their campaigns; social programs require "focusing"; and U.S. foreign policy, now that the Cold War is long over, must be—ah, but you will have anticipated me—re-focused. This very morning's *Times* carries two fine focus-filled headlines: "Stars Focus Their Power, and the Issue Is Abortion" and "Dying Zapatista Leader Is Focus of Only Accord So Far."

Searching for relief, I pick up the *New Yorker*, where I discover even so stalwart a critic as Arlene Croce, apropos of the directors of the Pacific Northwest Ballet, writing: "One of the ways they did not deviate [from Balanchine] was in their focus on female talent." They're doing it in London, too, for in the current week's *Times Literary Supplement* I read that "One of the great merits of Tadié's biography [of Proust] is the way he brings into focus an image of the young Proust as a formidably curious and active person. . . ."

Not only in the press is everyone focusing away like mad, but athletes, too, are all asquint, trying to obtain a focus. "The main thing," says Michael Jordan, more times than I care to recall, "is to stay focused." I would argue, contra Michael, that nowadays the main thing is to *say* "focused."

The other day I sat in a meeting with a group of successful and intelligent businessmen. We were there to discuss the future of an institution, of which we are all trustees. Had I a dime for every time the word "focus" came up, I could have paid to fly first-class to this meeting instead of the usual steerage. These guys who, unlike me, have met plenty of payrolls and are, in Henry James's phrase, "seamed all over with the scars of the marketplace" appeared to be certain that what our institution needed was to establish its focus, perhaps narrow its focus, or maybe widen its focus, but, once focused, to keep its focus, yeah brother, amen. I looked down at the notes I took during the meeting, which read: focus-off, go focus yourself, and take a flying focus.

What is it about the propensity of certain inelegant words to catch on and spread like an upwind California forest fire? The word "impact" had a run of this kind ten or so years ago. Such good old words as "influence" and "effect" were given early retirement, and suddenly everything had an "impact" upon everything else. Then the damn word was converted to a participle, and all things began "impacting" upon every other thing. Then it appeared as a noun, so that things had "impacts" all over the joint. Thus far focus hasn't yet been turned into "focusization," though give it time. Academics have taken to using the hideous plural, "foci," as in "The foci of this paper are three." Foci, for anyone who reads with his ear as well as with his eye, as Robert Frost claimed the best readers do, has all the intrinsic beauty of the word "pinkeye."

Certain words don't just catch on for no reason. They catch on because people feel good saying them. People like to say they are "intrigued" all the time because it makes them sound intriguing. For a time they liked to say "special person," I suppose because it made them seem rather special themselves in being able to discern specialness in others. (Today, of course, one cannot buy a non-satirical greeting card without the word "special" in it; and "special" itself has become a Hallmark word.)

People must also like to say "at this point in time"—which was first brought to us by John Dean and the Watergate crew—because it so felicitously conveys a false precision. People are very hot for the word "process," from peace process on down, and my guess is they feel it makes them subtle thinkers, able to capture the flow and delicate dynamics of political and social change. What, really, could be more intriguing than focusing on the impact of so special a process as watching a language fall apart, at least at this point in time? Few freakin' things.

So let's return the word "focus" to ophthalmology and optics, whence it derives. If you are a heavy user of the word yourself and don't know what you would do without it, may I recommend replacing focus with such solid older words as "concentrate" and "emphasize"? I think you'll find they work well—swell, even. Just relax, stop focusing, kick back, and blur out.

Joseph Epstein

Focus Groups vs. Ideas

Once again, The Weekly Standard unapologetically points out the utter lunacy to which our political system has resorted. In "The Focus-Group Fraud" (Oct. 14), Andrew Ferguson puts into words what so many conservatives have been feeling for the past couple of years.

Whatever happened to genuine ideas? It used to be that the Republican party was the party of ideas and ideals. Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich have reduced this party to one of sound-bites and polls.

For all of his complaining that President Clinton runs his foreign policy by headlines and photo-ops, Bob Dole has followed Clinton's lead and based his entire campaign on headlines and photo-ops. Don't get me wrong. Dole's criticism of Clinton is right on the mark. Clinton has been asleep at the wheel on taxes, teenage drug use, and foreign policy. And that is a problem that Ferguson does not fully investigate. By focusing too much on a dozen people, our candidates have lost sight of the overarching themes that move people.

Maybe a Dole rout will wake up the rest of our party. We cannot continue to run on 52 issues. Either the issues relate to each other, or Republicans are as much existential candidates as the Democrats we accuse.

William R. Still, Jr.
Alexandria, VA

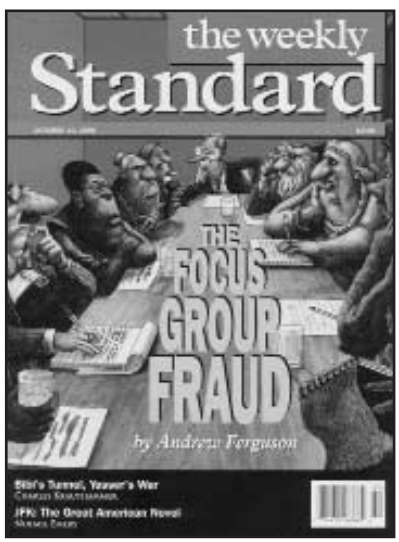
An Entitlement Discussed

If you ever expect to transcend the customary conservative journalistic myopia about Agent Orange, it would help to familiarize yourselves with the legal framework and scientific data surrounding the controversy ("An Entitlement Is Born," Oct. 14).

To begin with, in 1991 Congress passed legislation that tasked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with regular reviews of scientific literature on dioxin and to determine whether there was a significant statistical association between dioxin exposure and adverse health effects. The aim was to find a neutral scientific panel and transfer the function away from a Veterans Administration scientific panel, which was widely criticized for alleged bias in resisting the finding of any association.

Thus, your article is inaccurate in suggesting that congressional activists sent NAS "back to work" when it found no association on its first review or that "canny Veterans Affairs administrators" are behind the expansion of benefits.

The contention that the case on Agent Orange is "flimsy," "wispy," or that it may be "a hoax" is itself flimsy. Earlier (industry-sponsored) studies that buttress this case have since been demonstrated to have been internally manipulated or premature—later studies of the same incidents are showing significant adverse health effects. Numerous recent studies demonstrate serious health problems. Based on new studies, spina bifida was upgraded in the second NAS report.



Although the law provides for only two categories of scientific conclusion (thumbs up or down, based on a preponderance of evidence), NAS has insisted on creating four categories. Limited/suggestive association is the second highest category; service-connected disability has been awarded in this category previously for multiple melanoma and several respiratory cancers. No one complained then.

The article betrays several other shortcomings. It suggests that there are no mental-health benefits for veterans. What about post-traumatic stress disorder? And yes, Persian Gulf veterans are indeed demanding compensation for exposure to chemicals; there's a lively political/scientific controversy over what's popularly called Persian Gulf Syndrome.

One final thought: Why do people who advocate hawkish foreign-policy solutions shrink from compensating the soldiers who pay the price for implementing those policies?

William T. Bennett
National Vietnam Veterans Coalition
Washington, DC

Across the Pond

Irwin M. Stelzer's article on Tony Blair and Britain's reconstituted Labour party ("The Bill Clinton of the Sceptered Isle," Oct. 14) states flatly that "tax increases are politically impossible; George Bush's current status as a private citizen and the Tory party's impending defeat are both proof of that proposition."

Maybe so. But it doesn't seem to have hurt Bill Clinton any.

The more exact statement would be, "It isn't hurting Bill Clinton now." Bush's mistake was to break his pledge, in public, closer to the election (and contrary to the wishes of many of his supporters). Clinton's own hike may have helped the Republican landslide of 1994, but it seems that tax-increase damage lasts only a year or two. Attacks on Clinton for the tax increases early in his term (to say nothing of those proposed but voted down), no matter how true and justified, do not appear to matter anymore to the American voter.

Of course, parliamentary government doesn't have fixed election dates. A tax increase could theoretically bring down a government well ahead of schedule. Ask Margaret Thatcher about the poll tax sometime.

Donald Weatherwax
Esparto, CA

Peace in Israel

I can always trust Charles Krauthammer to shed the light of truth on the dark lies and deceptions of politicians ("Bibi's Tunnel, Yasser's

Correspondence

War," Oct. 14). Even in the current Israeli/Palestinian chaos, Krauthammer's words ring true.

By not making a sincere and feasible peace agreement with Israel, Arafat and the Palestinian leadership are dooming their own children's future. Israel/Palestine could be the Hong Kong or Singapore of the Middle East. Ideally located at the hub of Africa, Asia, and Europe, not to mention the Persian Gulf, Israel/Palestine could have the best economy in the world. The children and grandchildren of Palestine could have peace and prosperity like few generations have ever experienced. Palestinian leaders either cannot conceive of this future or are deliberately denying it to their descendants for short-term political gain.

Mike Coffey
Knoxville, TN

As a longtime admirer of Charles Krauthammer's clear thinking on the subject of Israel, I write to thank him for his article. However, I question his conclusion. I am old enough to remember 1956, when the United States gave Israel unequivocal guarantees of free passage through the Suez Canal in exchange for withdrawal from the Sinai, but they were promptly ignored by Nasser, who barred Israeli ships from the canal with no response from the United States. So much for relying on Uncle Sam's guarantees.

Gideon Kanner
Los Angeles, CA

Culture Wars Continue

In "Miracle of Pop" (Oct.14), Mark Gauvreau Judge breaks new ground in cultural criticism. Because classical and pop are two different musical "idioms," there are no grounds for esteeming the one more highly than the other. He thus liberates "cultural conservatives" who suffer guilt about their appetite for pop music.

If only someone had come up with this handy concept sooner. Now conservative lovers of comic books can follow the adventures of their favorite superheroes uncensured by humorless prigs who think the novels of Hemingway or Dickens more worthy of their time. They have Judge's own words for their retort: Comic books and novels are "two different idioms" and "can be individually appreciated as such." "Once it is intellectually acceptable to think that [literary] idioms can be as different as apples and oranges, it becomes possible to love ["The Adventures of Superman"] and the [novels] of [Hawthorne] with equal passion."

Sure, some comics are violent and salacious. But, hey, that's no reason to toss out those that are really funny and upbeat: "The simple acknowledgment of different [literary] idioms, and that there can be high and low achievement within those idioms, opens up a new kind of acceptance for conservative [comic book] fans who can't stand the obnoxious clamor of [the X-men] yet don't want to jettison [the Archies] with it."

Judge's "Rule of Different Idioms" is simply unanswerable. So the next time a conservative comrade berates you for browsing in the literary section of a 7-Eleven, remember Judge's closing line: "[Spiderman is] no [Dickens], but then, he's not supposed to be."

Thomas Spence
Dallas, TX

Not a Feminist Invention

I enjoyed Pia Catton's essay "Judy Chicagoland" (Oct. 14), but I was puzzled by her reference to "mythical creations of feminist ideology like 'Primordial Goddess.'" The goddess in question, best known as Cybele, Ishtar, or the Biblical Astarte, is mythical enough, but her cult is no ideological invention. Widespread in the ancient world, it predated both the Hellenistic pantheon and Hebrew monotheism. Scholars such as James Frazer, Robert Graves, and Herbert Miller wrote of this religion—and its possible origin in primitive matrilineal societies—decades before modern feminism's pernicious politicization of history.

Douglas Borton
Tucson, AZ

Good Old Newtie

In "What Happened to Newt Gingrich?" (Oct. 21), David Brooks cites several examples of the emotional side of the speaker. There are two other instances of that same emotion that are perhaps most telling especially within the setting where they happen.

These occur in Gingrich's Renewing American Civilization course. He becomes obviously overwhelmed following the showing of Chamberlain's address to his men at Gettysburg. This happens again after the reading of Sullivan Ballou's letter to his wife prior to the battle of Bull Run.

America, it seems, for Gingrich, really *is* apple pie and baseball, hard work, and amber waves of grain. He still gets a moist eye when he sees Old Glory or hears "America the Beautiful." He believes that we are not Chinese Americans, Irish Americans, or African Americans. To Newt Gingrich, we are all just plain old Americans.

Gingrich believes that America is now at a critical crossroads, that if she continues down the road of big government, rampant drug use, rising crime, victimization, and more, then America, the nation that Gingrich truly loves, is doomed to become something future civilizations just read about—much as we do the Romans.

So Brooks is correct when he says Gingrich uses a military mode of thinking about politics. For Newt Gingrich, this is a war. A war in which Gingrich's America will be lost if he and his party lose.

What happened to Newt Gingrich? Nothing. It's just that Gingrich is smart enough to realize that it's better to compromise and lose the battle than not to and lose the war.

Donald Kirche
Saranac Lake, NY

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The Assault on CCRI

It's been a rough couple of months for supporters of Proposition 209, the "California Civil Rights Initiative" that would ban the use of ethnic and gender preferences in state employment, contracting, and public education. Though CCRI maintains its steady 15-point public-approval margin in the latest statewide Field Poll, the "yes" tally hovers perilously close to 50 percent—and on this sort of referendum, undecided voters tend to pull the "no" lever. Proponents have been struggling—so far unsuccessfully—to finance a televised ad campaign on behalf of 209. And they have at the same time been forced to contend with a ghastly fusillade of innuendo and dishonesty fired their way by defenders of the preference regime.

> BOB DOLE'S STUMPING FOR THE CALIFORNIA CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE WILL BE DECRIED. BUT QUOTAS ARE WRONG, AND HE IS RIGHT TO SAY SO.

Up north, Bay Area groups like Californians for Justice and the Ecumenical Peace Institute have been circulating "Vote No on 209" flyers featuring a white-hooded man with a baseball bat and labeling CCRI "Klan-approved." Down south, Cal State University-Northridge has hosted a widely publicized September 25 "debate" on 209. Speaking in the affirmative, over the vehement but fruitless objections of CCRI chairman Ward Connerly: former Klan kleagle David Duke. Northridge spokesmen offer pro forma denials of partisan trickery in the affair, which involved taxpayer dollars. But the president of the school's student association did say, "I don't care if it's fair," and campus president Blenda Wilson—who had authority to block the farce, and didn't—is a donor to the anti-209 cause, which now routinely uses Duke's visit as "evidence" of CCRI's "essential racism." A forged letter from Duke to Connerly, who is black, expresses gratitude for private "words of encouragement" and a "very generous" financial contribution.

Hot on the heels of Dukegate, and less than a month before the election, came an October Surprise: There was a news leak about a lawsuit filed against Connerly by a disgruntled former employee. Plaintiff's attorney Thea Offenbacher originally acknowledged to the *Sacramento Bee* that the case might have a certain, well, CCRI-relevant educative effect: "If we can help the world in that regard—to show what kind of mentality he really has—all the better." Offenbacher now insists the suit is totally legit. In fact, she speculates, Connerly "may have put himself in the spotlight on 209 to avoid *this* thing." Interesting theory. In any case, suspicions about the timing of the disclosure, according to Offenbacher, are flat-out "incorrectamundo." Right.

Least but not last, the Republican party, with much the same spirit of dull-witted squishiness that now thoroughly infects California's business community (see Heather Mac Donald's cover story, which begins on page 24), has poohpoohed CCRI and affirmative action as appropriate political issues for most of this year. Jack Kemp has been the worst offender. In his debate with Al Gore, Kemp failed to correct a badly inaccurate account of his position on CCRI and instead said "thank you"—*thank you*!—when the vice president twice praised Kemp for being "a lonely voice in the Republican party" against racial discrimination. Two weeks earlier, at a press breakfast in California, Kemp had worried aloud that 209 might "tear up" the state, and he promised that Bob Dole was "not going to campaign on a wedge issue" like that.

Incorrectamundo, Jack. Four days after the Gore-Kemp debate, Dole issued an elegant five-paragraph endorsement of CCRI during a speech in San Diego that formally inaugurated the Republican "gloves-off" initiative against Bill Clinton's public character. Twenty-four hours later, in his second and last debate with the president, Dole went out of his way to express support for 209 again—in the course of a deft 30-second critique of crude official quota classifications. "I'm disabled," Dole pointed out. "I shouldn't have a preference." All indications now are that the Republican

presidential campaign plans an all-out, high-dollar grab for California's 54 electoral votes. And that CCRI will be a more than minor part of the effort.

Should men of good will who long for the race- and gender-neutral polity that 209 portends be pleased by this development? That depends. In any forthcoming controversy about affirmative action, Dole will certainly have the better and more honorable arguments at his disposal. Where federally administered preferences are concerned, President Clinton performs a particularly seedy cup-and-ball routine. While "I favor the right kind of affirmative action," as he told his town-hall audience in the second debate, Clinton claims also to be "against quotas" and "any kind of preference" for the unqualified. Why, "I've done more to eliminate affirmative-action programs that I didn't think were fair and to tighten others up than my predecessors have since affirmative action has been around."

Once more—is anyone still counting?—a lie. The president has proactively eliminated nothing. In March 1995, he signed congressional legislation that killed a widely derided tax break for broadcasting corporations that sell properties to minority investors. He hadn't wanted to do it. (Six months later, his government-wide review of affirmative action concluded that the very same tax break had been a good idea.) A few weeks after that, the White House grandly abolished a lone contracting set-aside for "disadvantaged small businesses" at the Pentagon. And three months after that, the Defense Department quietly restored the program.

That's the Clinton affirmative-action record in its entirety. The Supreme Court has ruled that federal preferences are constitutionally permissible only in response to identifiable discrimination—not for reasons of "diversity" or generalized disadvantage—and only on behalf of identifiable victims. The Clinton administration has simply ignored the court.

Where California in particular is concerned, the president now says he is opposed to CCRI because "I'm afraid it will end" what he calls "those extra-effort programs" to ensure that qualified people aren't overlooked in hiring and educational admissions. His aides elsewhere warn, echoing California opponents of 209, that the initiative would cripple gender-discrimination protections for women. Women might be fired by their employers when they become pregnant, they suggest.

An even worse lie. CCRI's "clause C" carves an explicit exception to its general prohibition against discrimination for "bona fide qualifications based on sex which are reasonably necessary to the normal operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." The language is lifted almost directly from the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is plainly intended to preserve such women-friendly things as secondary-school field-hockey programs. The state constitution's overarching strictures against gender discrimination would otherwise remain fully in force. As would comparable federal law.

And is affirmative action in California now simply a matter of "those extra-effort programs" the president sweetly invokes? Are Californians never advanced over their fellow citizens purely by dint of race or gender or ethnicity? The average SAT scores of newly enrolled black students at Berkeley are hundreds of points lower than those of Asians and whites. Almost a sixth of black students who entered the school in 1994 were "admitted by exception," meaning they failed to meet minimum eligibility requirements. Meanwhile, the California civil service now contains many more black and female employees, on a proportional basis, than their percentage of the statewide labor force would suggest, and the state has lately adopted a regime of "goals and timetables" to redress *these* employment imbalances. State agencies now employ 54 separate hiring goals for whites and men. In fact, so perverted has California's affirmative-action system become that there are now more white goals than black ones.

This "idea," if that's the word, deserves to die.

Dole has taken up the CCRI cudgel because he's decided California is his last chance at the White House. There's reason to doubt the gambit can work. True, the campaign is buoyed by a recent Field Poll that has him down just 10 points—from 22 in the first week of September. But that September poll reflected a Democratic post-convention bounce, and a pre-convention August poll had Clinton's California advantage over Dole at . . . 10 points, just where it is now. The West Coast race may not have moved quite so far in the Republican direction as Dole would wish, in other words. And no presidential candidate has ever come from 10 points down, this close to Election Day, to carry California.

Will Bob Dole's sudden intervention on behalf of CCRI help the initiative? It comes late. Bob Dole is "getting tough." His pronouncements on preferences will be decried as so much raw-meat desperation. In short, he could take 209 down with him.

Which would be awful. Still, supporting CCRI is the right thing to do. Having complained that Dole didn't do it sooner, we're not prepared to suggest that he not do it now. But he and his campaign should take the trouble to do it well—as Dole has begun to do during these past few weeks.

The passage of CCRI might not redeem this miserable election. But it would be a start.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Feeling Minnesota

by Fred Barnes

Minneapolis

THE PARADOX OF THE 1996 ELECTION is that the country is moving in a Republican direction, and it's Republicans who are on the defensive. President Clinton and the Democrats have shamelessly hijacked dozens of their ideas—from a balanced budget and tax cuts to teen curfews and Megan's Law—and Republicans have gotten little or no political benefit from it. Instead, they're frantically defending themselves against Democratic assaults on the few ideas Democrats have not embraced (Medicare restructuring, cuts in federal education aid, regulatory reform). The one exception to the national trend is the Minnesota Senate race.

What's different here? Only one thing: Republicans are doing to Democratic senator Paul Wellstone what Democrats and organized labor have done to GOP House members across the country. Beginning in May, Republicans targeted Wellstone with an expensive barrage of TV ads tagging him as an egregious liberal on issue after issue. And Wellstone made the mistake of doing what most of the targeted Republicans did: nothing. This allowed the television spots to frame the campaign debate between Wellstone and his Republican opponent, former senator Rudy Boschwitz. Now Wellstone, like so many anxious Republicans, spends a good deal of his time rebutting the idea that he is far outside the political mainstream.

Boschwitz, who was defeated by Wellstone in 1990 after serving two Senate terms, touts the significance of the Minnesota race. Should he win, "it means we'll keep control of the Senate," he says. "If I win, it means other Republicans will win and we'll keep control." In truth, Republicans are likely to hold the Senate even if Boschwitz loses, but a pickup in Minnesota would all but guarantee an expanded GOP majority (now 53-47). Republicans are expected to carry the open Democratic seat in Alabama and have roughly a 50-50 shot at capturing each of four other seats of retiring Democrats (Louisiana, Arkansas, Georgia, New Jersey) and ousting incumbent Democrat John Kerry in Massachusetts.

Paul Wellstone Kent Lemon

But nothing would *feel* better to Republicans than defeating Wellstone, 48, the Senate's most obstreperous liberal. As a rookie senator, he made a point of dissing Vice President Dan Quayle in person. And while billing himself as impervious to influence by special interests, he has championed the agenda of virtually every liberal pressure group, including trial lawyers. After Republicans took over the House and Senate in 1994, Wellstone noisily balked at their efforts to curb the welfare state. This was politically brave, but Wellstone was also sanctimonious about his rearguard actions. "I was saying, 'Silence is betrayal,'" he recalls.

Wellstone sounds like a pseudo-Marxist version of Bill Clinton. Campaigning for reelection, he talks up innocuous middle-class issues such as broadening the Family and Medical Leave Act and providing a tax break for college costs. But he also fancies himself a hero of class warfare, standing up to corporate power. In a radio debate on farm issues on Oct. 7, he boasted of challenging major commercial interests. "When you've got to fight for ethanol, you're taking on the oil companies," he blurted. "And when you've got to fight for family farmers for a decent price, you're taking on Cargill and the grain companies. And when you've got to fight to make sure that farmers are able to make sure that their grain is, in fact, put in the trains and goes to market, you've got to take on the railroad companies. You've got to be willing as a senator from Minnesota to be downright populist and take on those large special interests who are the big givers and heavy hitters and dominate Washington."

In nearly every appearance, Wellstone sprinkles his comments with references to evil corporate interests. In a debate before the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, he attacked tax loopholes "that go to tobacco companies and oil companies and pharmaceutical companies." Boschwitz, he said during a debate here, protects subsidies for "large coal companies, tobacco

companies, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies."

Does Wellstone, a former political-science professor at Carleton College, believe all this stuff? He seems to. Boschwitz says his opponent is a throwback to the 1960s, a notion that irritates Wellstone. "I'm still trying to figure out Rudy's fixation with the '60s," he says. "This is when we passed Medicare, Medicaid, medical assistance. This is when we passed the National Education Act for financial aid to higher education. This is the decade of the civil rights movement." Wellstone describes himself as a senator "in the Hubert Humphrey tradition."

Boschwitz, 65, was urged by many Republicans to run in 1994 for the seat of retiring GOP senator David Durenberger. "My family didn't want me to," he says. "My business needed me. I just wasn't ready. It took me a bunch of months to get over 1990." Boschwitz is hardly a Gingrich Republican. A GOP official characterizes him as "economically conservative, socially ambiguous." Nevertheless, the contrast with Wellstone is sharp because Boschwitz, who owns a home-supply business, reveres the free market and loathes government economic intervention. "I like free markets," he told me. "I think most people do. I hope so." Boschwitz favors the Dole tax cut, opposes the family leave mandate, supports regulatory relief, tort reform, and a balanced-budget amendment.

Republican success in Minnesota in 1994—Rod Grams won the Senate race and Arne Carlson was reelected governor—and Wellstone's blazing leftism assured a full-blown effort at taking Wellstone's seat. The hook for the campaign—Wellstone is "embarrassingly liberal"—came from Boschwitz himself. "I can't tell you how many people have told me Wellstone is an embarrassment," he says. "Thousands."

First came more than $1 million in TV ads aired by the National Republican Senatorial Committee. They dubbed Wellstone "ultraliberal" and "unbelievably liberal." He was accused of being "too liberal with our money, too tough on hard-working families." These were followed by a clever series of ads, one featuring Wellstone's induction into the "1967 Liberal Hall of Fame" in front of a sparse audience consisting of spaced-out hippies.

The TV assault has had the effect of defining Wellstone, which is exactly what Democrats and the AFL-CIO did with early advertising in the reelection races of dozens of House Republicans. "You're better off when you define your opponent," argues Boschwitz. "We couldn't define him" in 1990. You're even better off when your opponent doesn't respond vigorously. Though he's raised more money than any candidate in Minnesota history, Wellstone said he lacked "the ability to respond" over the summer. The attack ads "had some effect," he conceded, "but not a great effect." At the least, they allowed Boschwitz to pull even in polls, and the race has stayed a dead heat.

Unwittingly, Wellstone has adopted the language of his opponent's ads, thus reinforcing their message. He insists Boschwitz is an embarrassment. Wellstone's backing of family-leave legislation "has nothing to do with being embarrassingly anything except for trying to come through for families," he said in a debate with Boschwitz. And more: "It is embarrassing that you have supported balancing the budget on the backs of our parents and grandparents," he told Boschwitz. "It is embarrassing" that Boschwitz backed weakened environmental enforcement and voted to cut education spending and "lined up" with "tobacco interests" and "corporate polluters." Boschwitz was unfazed. Compared with Wellstone, "Ted Kennedy is a conservative," he said.

Despite Boschwitz's early tactical success, Wellstone remains a formidable foe. He is an energetic, effective campaigner. He has built up a grassroots army of volunteers that Boschwitz can't match. The money he didn't spend last summer he can use now for a late media blitz. And he's helped by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, which may be the nation's most politically correct newspaper (it backed the North Carolina school officials who expelled a 6-year-old boy for sexual harrassment). The paper gave Wellstone space on Oct. 14 to justify his vote against welfare reform. "I did the right thing," he said. The next day, the paper announced on the front page that Wellstone had opened a 9-point lead over Boschwitz in the Minnesota Poll. But that was only when minor candidates were listed in the question for poll respondents. When just the major candidates were listed, Wellstone's lead shrank to 3 points, inside the poll's margin of error. That's exactly where the race was in the September Minnesota Poll, which didn't have a question involving minor candidates. In other words, the paper played up a new question to make Wellstone look strong.

But the biggest problem for Boschwitz is the political environment. "It's bad," says Jon Lerner, Boschwitz's campaign manager. "The reason we're close is because of the bad environment. If it were good, we'd be way ahead." "Rudy runs between 15 and 20 points ahead of Bob Dole," according to Lerner. "If Dole loses by 25 points here, that's going to be a problem." In 1994, things would have been different. Wellstone says as much. But two years later, there's a new "mood piece," as Wellstone puts it, and he believes he gains from having tried to thwart Republicans in Washington. "You can run [Wellstone's] way in Hawaii and in Rhode Island and in Massachusetts," Boschwitz says. "We'll see if you can do it in Minnesota." ♦

It's 1973 All Over Again

by Michael Barone

Election year 1996 is looking very much like election year 1972, when most voters decided to return an incumbent president to office despite doubts about his honesty and trustworthiness. Will a Nixon-like victory for Bill Clinton be followed by the aftermath of the November 1972 landslide—the two-year slide into Watergate disgrace? Of course, history never precisely repeats itself, but the answer could be yes. One has the sense that voters—certainly Clinton supporters—are putting the possibility of a crisis in the presidency at the back of their minds and hoping for the best.

Which is what most Nixon voters did in 1972. But with one difference: There was a lot less information available at that point in 1972 about Nixon scandals than there is today about the Clinton scandals. A whole generation of journalists made successful careers out of Watergate, but most of those careers were made in 1973 and 1974; *Washington Post* metro reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein may have been writing about Watergate every week in the summer and fall of 1972, but CBS news rookies Lesley Stahl and Connie Chung waited until 1973 to get up at 5:00 a.m. and stake out the houses of Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman. In 1972 Watergate was followed in depth only by the *Post*; the *CBS Evening News* scheduled a three-part series, though after pressure from the Nixon White House, it ran only two segments; the *New York Times* offered some coverage; otherwise, in the words of Theodore White, "The rest of the American press came in nowhere."

Nixon, like Clinton, tried to keep the lid on until after the election, but Nixon had more success: Clinton has had to weather congressional investigations, while Nixon was able to get all House Banking Committee Republicans and several Democrats to quash chairman Wright Patman's move for an investigation in the fall of 1972.

On Election Day 1972, most voters were aware of the burglary of the Democratic headquarters and the arrest of Nixon campaign staffers Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt there, but the exact connection of the burglary to the Nixon campaign was a matter of conjecture. Nothing was yet known of other major scandals—the FBI burglary of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, the "dirty tricks" squad. It was possible for a voter to imagine that a second Nixon term would be dominated by investigation of scandal, but it was also possible to imagine that the Watergate story would end with the trials of the burglars. And such might well have been the case had Judge John Sirica not given 35- and 40-year sentences to the burglars in March 1973 and urged them to cooperate with Sen. Sam Ervin's Watergate committee.

This fall, voters know more things about more Clinton scandals and still seem disposed to vote for the president. But the Clinton team's frantic efforts to postpone disclosures through November 5 may not avail them afterwards. Many questions remain open. So does the office of independent counsel Kenneth Starr, and if he has been holding back indictments pending the election, he is likely to seek them very soon thereafter. On the skein of land deals and cover-ups referred to as Whitewater, the statute of limitations has mostly passed, but not on possible perjury in congressional hearings or grand jury sessions. Starr has been looking into the White House travel office affair, in which the Clintons could be accused of abusing law enforcement personnel or committing perjury, Clinton advisers could be accused of perjury or, depending on how Rose Law Firm billing records reached the Clinton family quarters, obstruction of justice.

> THE CLINTON TEAM'S EFFORTS TO POSTPONE DISCLOSURES THROUGH NOVEMBER 5 MAY NOT AVAIL THEM AFTERWARDS.

Then there are the FBI files *someone* caused to be sent over to the White House. That person—Craig Livingstone, or his superior William Kennedy III, or whoever—could be prosecuted and put under great pressure to produce more evidence. Though the press has shown little curiosity about discrepancies between Livingstone's account and that of his assistant Mari Anderson, they may perk up after the election just as prosecutors or congressional investigators start zeroing in.

And then there is the Paula Jones lawsuit. The Supreme Court has unaccountably agreed to consider Bill Clinton's argument that as president he is not subject to civil suit. It's preposterous for the chief executive in a republic to claim the sovereign immunity of a king or queen; if Clinton's argument is accepted, he won't even have to pay his MasterCard bill until after he leaves office. In the more likely event the court rejects the president's argument, Clinton will have to go on trial on charges of sexual harassment. A state trooper has already testified that the trooper took

Jones to Clinton's hotel room; it is hard to think what legitimate business Clinton might have intended to do with her there. And what about these six-figure contributions from Indonesian nationals?

Clinton may hope to be sheltered from scandal by pardons or by the ouster of the independent counsel or the retirement of House Government Operations chairman Bill Clinger. But pardons are likely to produce the same lasting damage Gerald Ford suffered after pardoning Richard Nixon. (Ford, like Clinton, avoided an explicit commitment not to pardon beforehand, but that availed him nothing.)

If the Democrats win control of Congress, that will shut down at least some investigations of Clinton. But the Democrats who have been so unswervingly loyal to him in Term One may not be when the second term is in full swing; they may decide, as Republicans like Howard Baker and Lowell Weicker did in 1973, that it is their duty or in their interest to investigate Clinton independently and aggressively. Sen. Russ Feingold, the Wisconsin Democrat, has already said he might support an independent counsel on the Indonesian contributions. Similarly, an 89 percent pro-Clinton press may develop a heartier appetite for Clinton scandals once the Clintons are safely installed for a second term; there may be a lot of reporters out there who would like to be the next Bob Woodward.

This we do know from the Nixon example: A president who wins reelection despite a generally low opinion of his honesty and trustworthiness can plummet in weeks from 50-plus percent to 25 percent in the polls. He can lose his natural advantage in dealing with Congress. He can be weakened abroad—which is to say that the United States will be weakened as will those whose freedom depends on its strength.

During the Watergate years, Joseph Alsop liked to say, "Politicians are like toilet fixtures. It is enough that they serve their intended purpose. They need not be beautiful." Voters reelected Richard Nixon in 1972 though he wasn't beautiful. But when scandal struck in 1973 and 1974, they decided he wasn't serving his intended purpose, and they pitched him on the trash heap. Could the same happen to Bill Clinton? Not exactly the same, surely, and perhaps not anything of the same magnitude. But quite possibly something like it—and that is something Americans may want to ponder before they vote.

Michael Barone is co-editor of the **Almanac of American Politics.**

Clinton's Fat Lippo

by Christopher Caldwell

The scandal over foreign campaign donations to the Clinton campaign—to date, three shady contributions of "Asian money"—has broadened with amazing speed. Close Clinton associates are being accused not only of campaign finance fraud, but also of profiting off White House connections, politicizing the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and using the Commerce Department to drum up business for political allies domestic and foreign.

In September, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Korean electronics giant Cheong Am had disguised an illegal $250,000 contribution to the Democratic National Committee by claiming the money came from the company's new American subsidiary. Only problem: The American subsidiary hadn't generated the profits to cover the donation. To get the contribution, President Clinton consented to a one-on-one meeting with Cheong Am chairman James Lee. "There have been absolutely no violations of any law," said Al Gore. Yet a month later, it was widely reported that Gore himself had taken part in a $140,000 fund-raiser at the Hsi Lai Buddhist temple in Hacienda Heights, Calif. The fund-raiser was riddled with violations of law—including raising money at a religious event, disguising the identity of donors, and making donations through proxies.

But no story is richer in suspicious detail than the revelation last week that Indonesian "landscape architect" Arief Wiriadinata and his wife Soraya, who had been living for some months in northern Virginia, had personally donated $450,000—more than all but a handful of American corporations—to the Democratic National Committee. There are no limits on the amount of money you can donate to a political party, nor are there restrictions on giving by legally resident aliens—but Wiriadinata had returned to Indonesia by the time most of his money was donated.

The Wiriadinatas are linked to Indonesia's Lippo financial group, run by the multibillionaire Mochtar Riady and his son James. Soraya's father was one of the group's founders. Arief works for the Indonesian outlet of Sea World, owned by the Riadys. In the 1980s, the Riadys were part owners of the Worthen Bank, based in Hot Springs, Ark., and in 1985 they helped save Clinton from a catastrophic embarrassment. A

$52 million lending scheme, involving a fly-by-night firm that went bankrupt, obliterated the Arkansas state pension fund. Worthen Bank issued tens of millions in new stock to refill the pension coffers.

John Huang, who met Bill Clinton as a Worthen intern in Arkansas in the 1970s and later became head of Lippo's American bank operations, went to work as a deputy assistant secretary of commerce in the Clinton administration. Now an official at the Democratic National Committee, Huang arranged the Korean donation and the Wiriadinatas' $450,000 donation.

As William Safire has reported, Lippo hired former Clinton Justice Department official Webster Hubbell, Hillary Clinton's Rose Law Firm partner, shortly before Hubbell's indictment on charges of bilking his clients. Lippo paid Hubbell $250,000 for a few weeks of never-specified work, in what may amount to a foreign-financed defense fund.

A host of Hubbell-like Arkansas cronies have a piece of the Lippo action. Joe Giroir, former managing partner of the Rose Law Firm, is a Lippo representative. Then there's Clinton's mysterious golf buddy, Mark Grobmyer. Grobmyer has worked with Riady and is now the principal in an Arkansas international trade firm called Commerce International. In recent years, Grobmyer has taken to traveling to Jakarta and other Asian capitals drumming up business. He reportedly solicits prospective clients by showing them a White House business card that lists him as a "liaison."

The "liaison" post is presumably his job as White House liaison to the Center for the Study of the Presidency, a New York-based foundation that provides the White House with interns. According to the center, Grobmyer himself solicited the post. (In June 1993, at a dinner honoring Jay Rockefeller, Bob Dole, and Ron Brown, Lippo donated $30,000 to the center.)

Republicans, led by House government oversight chairman William Clinger, have asked for a record of all White House visits of both Riadys, Huang, and Grobmyer over the past months. What they're wondering is: Is there an alliance between Clinton and the Riadys? Are foreigners buying influence in the federal government? Specifically, did these donations generate any quid pro quo?

They are focusing on the possibility that the Riadys are acting as go-betweens for Suharto and are trying to modify Clinton human-rights policy in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. There's a whiff of opportunism about the charge, and it's not just because two longtime East Timor activists were recently given the Nobel peace prize. With some exceptions (Chris Smith and Bob Dornan in the House, Jesse Helms in the Senate), Republicans have never been overly exercised about East Timor. The Clinton administration, while its record on human rights in East Timor is not perfect, is restricting Indonesian access to instruments that could be used for torture and other human-rights abuses.

Yet Republicans think this scandal goes far beyond U.S. human-rights policy. They suspect specific tit-for-tat trade favors have been done for the Lippo group. During a Ron Brown trade mission to China shortly before his death, the Chinese awarded a billion-dollar hydroelectric-dam contract to the Louisiana company Entergy—financed by Lippo. Now, remember that Lippo is an Indonesian company. Using an American trade mission to drum up business for an Indonesian company is, to say the least, irregular and revives the question whether Ron Brown was using the Commerce Department as a *sub rosa* fund-raising operation, especially since similar charges had brought him to the brink of a criminal indictment by the time of his death. Former Commerce Department official John Huang's career does nothing to allay the worry.

> USING AN AMERICAN TRADE MISSION TO DRUM UP BUSINESS FOR AN INDONESIAN COMPANY IS, TO SAY THE LEAST, IRREGULAR AND REVIVES THE QUESTION WHETHER RON BROWN'S COMMERCE DEPARTMENT WAS A *SUB ROSA* FUND-RAISING OPERATION.

Republicans also want to know whether the Immigration and Naturalization Service was used to assist the Wiriadinatas into the country. Illinois representative Henry Hyde wrote attorney general Janet Reno last week to ask questions about Wiriadinata's green card. Arief Wiriadinata was admitted on a P-47 nonimmigrant visa, a category for fine arts and performing arts that generally doesn't confer permanent residence or a green card. For a green card, he should have come in on an employment visa. As for Soraya Wiriadinata, who is hugely wealthy, there is *no information whatsoever* on her in INS computers, Republicans say.

Thus, the "Asian money" scandal brings together three of the biggest fears of the swing voters most courted by both parties: hard-to-control immigration, the global economy, and the sense that those who profit from it are buying control of the political system. Sen. John McCain has called for an independent coun-

sel. Wisconsin Democrat Russell Feingold has seconded the call. The upshot would seem to be bipartisan hearings that could shine the light on Republican abuses as well.

That's fine by McCain: "I've said for a long time that there would be an instance of flagrant abuse that would finally outrage the American people. And this is it." ♦

Americanizing Britain

by Irwin M. Stelzer

Bournemouth, England

OPEN YOUR EYES and you are in the still-pretty Victorian seaside town of Bournemouth, with clean beaches and a museum that houses the pre-Raphaelite paintings and *chotchkes* that newly rich families of the Victorian period so loved to collect. Close your eyes and listen to the speeches of the Tory politicians gathered at the Conservative party conference here, and suddenly you are back in America—or rather, back in the America of C-SPAN and CNN's *Inside Politics*.

Determined to deflate Labour party head Tony Blair's claim that he is a tough-minded leader in the style of Margaret Thatcher, Tory chairman Brian Mawhinney tries a little Lloyd Bentsen: "I know Margaret Thatcher, and you are no Margaret Thatcher." John Major offered Blair his sympathies because the health of the British economy made it impossible for him to use the Clintonite slogan, "It's the economy, stupid." These sorts of jibes, and the sound of Louis Armstrong warbling "What a Wonderful World" in the background, are only the surface manifestations of the complete Americanization of British politics.

More telling is the mad rush by British politicians to update the venerable American "born in a log cabin" story. For American politicians these days, of course, something other than actual birth in a log cabin is required—a drug-addicted brother, an alcoholic stepfather, a sister who died of lung cancer. Now British politicians also feel compelled to show they have suffered at the hands of the Fates and have persevered.

John Major told the crowd in Bournemouth: "When I was born, my father was 66, and my mother"—pregnant pause, if I may be permitted a bad pun—"was surprised." A low-earning circus performer, gnome-seller, and baseball player, the elder Major was forced to move his family to the Brixton slums and died when his son was only 13. "Financially, the roof fell in. Nothing special about that. But for us, it changed our life. My mother coped—as women do. I left school at 16 because an extra five pounds a week mattered."

Although they admit to borrowing this Oprah-izing tactic from the Americans, British spin doctors are careful to point out that they won't carry the process of "humanizing" their candidates to American extremes. One senior Tory strategist told the *Times* of London: "Anything that makes a person empathize with John Major is an election-winner. . . . But the Americans go too far with the way they make the president mention his third cousin twice removed who is a paraplegic and deaf." And indeed, Major's recitation of his history is remarkably free of Bill Clinton's characteristic self-pity and emphasizes that the individual, not some village, has primary responsibility for coping with the misfortunes that may befall him. Society's responsibility, as Major sees it, is restricted to the not-so-trivial chore (especially important in class-ridden Britain) of giving people "opportunity and choice. . . . And by 'people' I don't mean 'some people.' I mean everyone. Opportunity for all."

Just as in America, where Bill Clinton brags of throwing women off welfare while Bob Dole brags about signing welfare checks, it's hard to sort out the new ideological fault lines in British politics. If the Labour party's lurch to the right (described here two weeks ago) wasn't enough for an observer to absorb, consider what it was like listening to Tory promises in Bournemouth. The chancellor of the exchequer promised to preserve the welfare state, committing the Conservative party to spending some 40 percent on government services in perpetuity. Riotous applause. The prime minister went him one better: The National Health Service, he said, "will get more—over and above inflation—year, on year, on year, on year, on year through five years of the next Conservative government." Rapturous applause.

If the American political parties have decided to fight for the sympathies of the mythical "soccer mom," Britain has chosen "Sierra man" as its key voter. This legendary figure is a self-employed electrician who lives in a suburban development and drives a Ford Sierra—a car designed, so says Ford, to appeal to "middle-England family men in their thirties and forties." These are voters who deserted Labour in the 1980s, and Blair wants them to "come home." He feels Sierra man's pain at past Labour policies: Sierra man

"was doing very nicely. . . . His instincts were to get on in life and he thought our instincts were to stop him."

The Tories say Labour still wants to stop Sierra man. They claim to be the true representatives of "the hard-working classes," led by a man who understands their problems and is not the prisoner of the left-wing chattering classes. The Tory claim to be a non-exclusionary big tent has some validity; the proportion of Tory MPs who attended the snooty Eton school has declined from about 25 percent to 10 percent since 1960. But not everyone is convinced that trading reliable blue blood for new blood is a good thing. One Conservative MP said of his colleagues, "They retire early and sober to read another chapter of Hayek . . . and relax by watching *Star Trek*. They may not frighten the enemy, but by God, they frighten me."

Major isn't scared; he sees his new allies as the product of the meritocracy he advocates. And he may just parlay his "opportunity for all" slogan into a come-from-far-behind election victory if he can persuade voters that Blair's candidacy is merely "New Labour, old school ties." Blair says Major's dig is an example of the way his rival is importing "American-style" character-assassination techniques.

With six months to go until the general election, Major might—just might—make the pollsters look foolish, as he did in 1992. If he does, it will be because he accomplishes two things. First, he will have to maintain at least a façade of party unity on the question of British participation in the European Monetary Union that France and Germany are about to create. The majority of Tories, the so-called Euroskeptics, want Major to say no to monetary union—and say it now. The prime minister adamantly insists that Britain's interests will best be served by continuing to negotiate the details of union, while postponing the decision whether to trade the pound in for the Euro (the new single currency). With the help of leading Euroskeptic Baroness Thatcher, who was persuaded by party elders to bestow a unity kiss on the PM in full view of the delegates, Major forced the dissenters to swallow their skepticism in the interests of comity.

Second, the prime minister will have to use his image of decency and homespun niceness to recreate the large gender gap that favored the Tories in 1992. One real difference between the two countries: British women tend to vote Conservative. In 1992, the Tories outpolled Labour by only 4 percentage points among men, but by 13 percentage points among women.

Major came to Bournemouth seeking to overcome the defeatism rampant in his party, and he succeeded in part by attacking Tony Blair directly and personally. The party faithful were buoyed by the realization that their candidate is willing to deflate the Blair balloon by calling attention to his privileged background, his inexperience (the job of prime minister is "too big a task for your first real job"), and his socialist roots. "It simply won't do for Mr. Blair to say: 'Look, I'm not a socialist anymore,'" Major mimicked. "'Now, can I be prime minister, please?'"

This is the red meat on which the Tory rank and file can feed, and it clearly invigorated the party's foot soldiers. But many MPs with whom I spoke weren't biting. They feel that the election is lost, not a bad thing in the eyes of those who want to move their party to the right. These Tories, many of them dyed-in-the-wool Thatcherites (and admirers of Newt Gingrich's Contract with America), want to roll back the welfare state, reduce income taxes and eliminate capital-gains and inheritance taxes, keep their distance from any European federal state, restore the institutions that are essential to a civil society, and crack down on crime and pornography. In defeat, they will unite behind a candidate for party leader who eschews the conciliatory approach of John Major in favor of an ideologically purer one. And that, in turn, sounds a little like American conservatives these days as they try to find a silver lining in a coming Dole defeat.

Irwin M. Stelzer is director of regulatory policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Gorbachev's Reagan

by Angela Stent

Mikhail Gorbachev arrives in Washington this week to promote his new memoirs. They cover his political career before the collapse of the Soviet Union and highlight his contribution to the transformation of communism. He will undoubtedly receive a warmer welcome here than he does in Moscow. Just four months ago, the Russian electorate delivered its verdict on the former Soviet president when it gave him 0.5 percent of the vote in the first round of the presidential election.

The man who changed the world still bears the psychological and physical scars from the recent election campaign, during which he was attacked and

wounded by a drunken man in a crowd. "The campaign showed me how great the Russian people are and in what terrible conditions they live," he mused one afternoon recently in his comfortable office at the Gorbachev Foundation, housed in an old building on the outskirts of Moscow. I found him in a philosophical mood, eager to reminisce about his time in office. Some of his judgments may surprise his more ardent admirers in the West.

Most Americans are puzzled by Gorbachev's electoral fiasco. He still enjoys great popularity in Europe and America for enabling the Eastern European and Soviet peoples to overthrow the Communist system. People will long debate whether Gorbachev was the sorcerer's apprentice. Did he improvise when reality came crashing in on him and he was confronted by tidal forces he had unleashed but ultimately could not control? Or was the collapse of communism the result of a calculated strategy?


Michael Ramirez

Whichever is true, the 1980s were a decade of momentous change, and the dominant figures then on the international scene seem like colossi compared with those who followed them—at least as Gorbachev sees it. Indeed, Gorbachev is nostalgic for those heady days. "Ronald Reagan was the greatest Western statesman with whom I dealt," he says. "He was an intelligent and astute politician who had vision and imagination. We were both committed to ending the arms race, to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. President Reagan was farsighted enough to respond to our initiatives on arms control. Together we made a more peaceful place. The presidents who succeeded Reagan don't have this vision and statesmanship."

The second greatest Western politician, according to Gorbachev, was Margaret Thatcher. "Even though we disagreed ideologically, I admired her and enjoyed debating with her. She also had vision, like her friend Ronald Reagan."

When asked about Helmut Kohl, who, after all, was responsible for giving the Soviet Union some $60 billion in return for German unification, Gorbachev shrugs and expresses irritation. He derides what he calls "Helmut-Boris sauna diplomacy." Because of the German chancellor's political longevity—he has been in office since 1982—Kohl has developed a strong personal relationship with Yeltsin, unlike Reagan and Thatcher who were private citizens when the USSR collapsed. Gorbachev regrets the passing of the great Western statesmen of the '80s. "We need new political thinking in the 1990s, but there is no longer any new political thinking."

He reserves his most scathing comments for some of his fraternal socialist allies, most especially Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu. "In the summer of 1989, he asked us to invade Poland rather than permit a coalition government in Warsaw with non-Communists," he says, incredulous. "Erich Honecker was also condescending toward us. He said that East Germany had introduced perestroika seven years before we did and had done it better." Indeed, Gorbachev expresses little regret for the demise of East Germany. "I believed in freedom of choice, and I did not stop Eastern Europe from choosing its path, unlike George Bush, who did not observe freedom of choice in Panama."

Gorbachev is highly critical of Yeltsin and his entourage and of those who support the Russian president, both at home and in the West. The two men have been antagonists since Gorbachev fired Yeltsin in 1988 for criticizing the slow pace of reforms. Yeltsin eventually got his revenge in 1991, when he created the Commonwealth of Independent States and left the last Soviet leader without a country to govern, forcing Gorbachev to resign.

There is one issue on which Gorbachev is unyielding, as are many in the Russian establishment who do not support him. "According to the Two Plus Four Agreements under which Germany was unified," he argues, "the United States, Germany, Britain, and France promised us that they would not expand NATO east of Germany." This is not how the Western negotiators interpret the agreements, and they stress that Gorbachev understood the provisions at the time. Nevertheless, opinions across the Russian political spectrum concur that NATO enlargement violates the treaties that ended the division of Germany.

This year's unsuccessful election campaign has drained the Gorbachev Foundation's finances. The former Soviet president and his advisers are hopeful that his book tour will revive the foundation's fortunes. "I am optimistic that new projects with Western partners can be found," he insists. The man who helped to end the Cold War hopes to find the respect and moral and material support here that have so far eluded him in post-Communist Russia.

Angela Stent is a professor of government at Georgetown University.

Why They Hate CCRI

By Heather Mac Donald

Barry Shapiro is hopping mad. "Are these people fools, thugs, charlatans?" he sputters. "These people" are the advocates of the California Civil Rights Initiative, the historic ballot proposition that would eliminate state-sponsored race and gender preferences in California, and they are threatening his job. Shapiro is a professional "diversity trainer," and he has made a very good career out of affirmative action. "Teaching people about discrimination turns out to be surprisingly lucrative," he admits.

Shapiro is not just complaining about the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), however, he is fighting back. And he is joined in his efforts by a massive mobilization of the cultural elite, which has fanned out across the state in a vicious campaign to preserve California's race and gender spoils system. The stakes are enormous. Not only do thousands of sinecures like Shapiro's depend on affirmative action, but the elite's very self-definition does as well. Race and gender preferences serve as daily proof of the moral inferiority of ordinary Americans, who allegedly need such correctives to counteract their indelible prejudices. But should CCRI pass, it will ignite a chain reaction that could bring down the entire national edifice of quotas and set-asides.

And so all the usual suspects have turned out to defeat CCRI—professional advocacy groups, university professors and bureaucrats, reporters and editorial writers, and the Hollywood glitterati. They are accompanied this time by some leviathans of the California economy—big corporations, law firms, and above all, the affirmative action industry: people like Shapiro who explain, police, and promote quotas. Like a tracer dye, the fight over CCRI has revealed the ties between all of these entities, united by a common commitment to group rights.

The command center of the "No on CCRI" campaign is the civil rights network. Groups such as the NAACP, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the National Organization for Women, and the Feminist Majority are blanketing the state with speakers and tens of thousands of videos and leaflets denouncing the initiative. But the propaganda efforts of these groups depend enormously on their connections to the establishment. The NAACP, for example, held an anti-CCRI symposium for select lawyers, businessmen, and Hollywood moguls at the prestigious Los Angeles law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher; when a lawyer from the opposing camp showed up, he was told to leave. Business executives who serve on the board of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights Under the Law, a left-wing advocacy group, provide the committee's president with entree to their CEOs. MALDEF's affirmative action coordinator is denouncing CCRI in Los Angeles classrooms, invited in by sympathetic administrators and social studies teachers. Greasing the entire effort are millions of dollars from such national foundations as Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie; businesses are contributing as well.

The lovefest between the advocates and the corporate establishment depends partly on corporate self-interest. Businesses pay off the anti-discrimination machine in the hope of inoculating themselves against litigation. But the relationship has another basis as well: There exists inside corporations a parallel network of activists who share the same goals as, and maintain close contact with, the civil rights groups. This is the internal affirmative action apparatus, a fearsome bureaucracy that just grows and grows. Pacific Bell, for example, employs diversity managers, equal employment opportunity investigators, and affirmative action officers. Their functions sound more appropriate for Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood than for a business enterprise: The diversity manager "does training on who we are—fat, skinny, etc." explains Rita Reining, a manager of affirmative action compliance.

Given this internal cheering squad for affirmative action, it is little wonder that Pacific Bell is "educating" its employees about CCRI. A lobby display called "Affirmative Action: Do You Know the Facts?" greets visitors to the company's offices. "We want to make

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sure that our employees understand the implications of their vote," explains Anna Wong, head of equal employment opportunity. "Our position is: 'Please understand that [CCRI's] proponents purport to ensure no discrimination, but the issue goes deeper than that.'" So deep that the company has also distributed brochures on affirmative action to its employees, televised a forum on CCRI to all its offices, and organized diversity brown-bag lunches. In addition, employee groups organized by racial and sexual identity are registering voters who share their opposition to the initiative.

Southern California Edison, the second largest electric utility in the country, is also pelting its employees with pro-affirmative action videos and pamphlets. The CEOs of Chevron and Atlantic Richfield, at the urging of their equal opportunity and government affairs divisions, announced their support for affirmative action this spring and followed up with informational brochures.

Kevin Chadwick

These efforts are the more remarkable in light of the fact that CCRI would ban race and gender preferences only in *public* employment, education, and contracting. But diversity-mongers in the private sector know that a CCRI victory would undermine the fragile legitimacy of all preferential treatment.

The corporate affirmative action lobby scored its greatest success to date at Pacific Gas & Electric, a utility based in San Francisco, closely allied with Mayor Willie Brown. PG&E's CEO, Stanley Skinner, publicly opposed CCRI in August; behind that announcement, says Claude Poncelet, a government affairs official at PG&E, lay the efforts of various ethnic employee groups that are "taking an active role" in the CCRI debate. The company timed Skinner's announcement to coincide with "Diversity Month," described by Poncelet as a "major happening" that "celebrates the diversity of PG&E employees."

A shareholder and customer backlash against PG&E and a lobbying campaign by Gov. Pete Wilson seem to have quashed, for the moment at least, what was a growing movement among other California companies to denounce CCRI publicly. But many corporations continue to work against CCRI behind the scenes. Emissaries from large northern California companies, such as Hewlett-Packard, Bank of America, and ARCO, are speaking to newspaper editorial boards and writing op-eds about the value of diversity, according to Mary Anderson, executive director of the Business Roundtable. The Roundtable itself, an influential group of 75 large California companies, issued a proclamation in support of affirmative action and diversity last August and hired a Sacramento public relations firm to poll and conduct focus groups on CCRI.

Corporate diversity officers belong to organizations such as the Northern California Diversity Roundtable, the Silicon Valley Diversity Forum, and the Aerospace Diversity Forum, and all of them are caucusing on CCRI. The West Coast division of the American Association for Affirmative Action, a national group of public and private "affirmative action professionals," met at Apple Computers this September for a "'Professionals Respond to CCRI' Training Meeting." The invitation made a barely concealed appeal to self-interest: "If CCRI to [sic] passes in November much of the work that we have done and that we currently do will be jeopardy [sic]"—in other words, watch out for your jobs! Barry Shapiro, who heads the West Coast division of the "Four A's," as it is called, perfectly articulated the elitist assumption of the anti-CCRI effort. The training meeting, he said, would "allow diversity professionals to talk back because we know more than you do." Those who attended the meeting decided to leverage their "knowledge" by hosting anti-CCRI parties, joining the speakers bureau run by the National Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights, and registering voters. The national Four A's has contributed $6,000 to the anti-CCRI campaign.

Another national affirmative action organization, the Industrial Liaison Group, is boycotting California. Under pressure from minority advocates, the group moved its annual conference from Los Angeles to Arizona and, in case anyone missed the move's significance, portentously renamed the meeting "From Hollywood to Phoenix." Many attendees sported "No on CCRI" buttons, provided by on-site anti-CCRI campaigners. Some particularly political conference planners regretted the move, however. "We should've kept it in California and rubbed Pete Wilson's nose in it,"

fumes Rita Reining of Pacific Bell. "Arizona's no great shakes either," she says, referring to its long opposition to Martin Luther King Day.

Universities are the other great branch of the affirmative action triumvirate, after government and corporations, and they are furiously networking with their business and government counterparts to fight CCRI. Stanford University's Byzantine affirmative action bureaucracy is typical. In addition to an Office for Multicultural Development, complete with staff, a multicultural educator for student affairs, and a vice provost responsible for faculty diversity, each graduate department and school, as well as the undergraduate admissions office, boasts its own affirmative action officers. Stanford is a perfect host, therefore, for an adult education course called "'With Justice For All:' A Leadership Forum on Diversity." Its purpose, according to Sally Dickson, director of multicultural development, is to find "creative ways of talking about race in light of CCRI." In fact, the course, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, is a barely disguised anti-CCRI organizing tool: According to the course catalogue, it will give participants the opportunity "to form a network with their peers." Corporate diversity officers constitute nearly a quarter of the lecturers, second only to Stanford staff. Lockheed-Martin, Hewlett-Packard, Silicon Graphics, and Pacific Bell are all packing off sundry "diversity initiatives managers" and "diversity directors" to warn forum participants about the dangers of dismantling affirmative action.

Barry Shapiro's credo—"We know more than you do"—could well be the official slogan of this elite mobilization. Affirmative action is too "complex" an issue to be entrusted to voters, according to CCRI opponents. "Should 23 lines [CCRI's length] be the law that addresses these issues?" asks Lloyd Loomis, a diversity officer at ARCO. The similar brevity of the 14th Amendment and the anti-discrimination clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is apparently of no import. A ballot initiative is "too simplistic," announced the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, taking its stand against CCRI. Opponents say they prefer the legislative process—not surprising, given the California Assembly's flawless record of keeping every proposal to end affirmative action bottled up in committee.

The claim of "complexity" goes beyond the form of the initiative to its content. What was once the great ideal of the civil rights movement—equal treatment under the law—is now derided as foolishly "simplistic." Speaking of Ward Connerly, the California regent who spearheaded the abolition of admissions quotas at the University of California, ARCO's Loomis complains: "He has a simplistic outlook: Go color-blind."

Instead of voting on affirmative action, ordinary citizens need to be "educated" about its complexities, say CCRI's opponents. "There is a vacuum of information out there," asserts Julene Perez-Gonzalez of the Carnegie Corporation. Perez-Gonzalez is right: There is a dearth of information about affirmative action, but that is solely the result of stonewalling by affirmative action proponents, who have fought tooth and nail to keep admissions data and actual hiring criteria secret.

Ironically, among the clods who are allegedly ignorant about affirmative action are minorities themselves. "In the Latino community, there are constituencies who misunderstand affirmative action," laments Rafael Gonzalez, head of MALDEF's CCRI "education" campaign. "The everyday Joe and Julie, living in the suburbs, think it involves quotas." Naturally, Gonzalez and his colleagues are working desperately to correct that misimpression.

They might not get far, given the caliber of their arguments. Forced finally to justify affirmative action to a wide public, CCRI opponents are pulling out one howler after another. Preferential university admissions policies are not quotas, maintains MALDEF's Gonzalez, because blacks and Hispanics are still in the minority in the student body. Piling nonsense onto a non sequitur, Gonzalez adds: "It's not that more qualified whites are being denied a spot in the university, they can't get in because the university is already full."

Amazingly, Gonzalez's ludicrous "It's-not-a-quota-unless-the-beneficiaries-end-up-in-the-majority" reasoning is quite popular. "Prime contractors complain that they are losing business to minorities and women," says Diane LaCome, a diversity consultant and lobbyist for minority and women contractors, "but they are still getting 90 percent of all procurement money." Diane Martinez, a state assemblywoman from Los Angeles, put the matter more succinctly. Given that the state has not met its onerous contracting goals, she snapped at a (white) legislative opponent, "That leaves you and your ilk 93 percent of the pot." Such racial essentialism would make a South African separatist proud.

Dismantling contracting set-asides will "eliminate competition" for state contracts, argues LaCome, an astounding proposition that would surprise the numerous low-bidders who have lost jobs because they did not meet the state's race and sex contracting "goals." CCRI opponents are also perpetrating outright lies: "If we are not allowed to bid, we'd be back in the 1950s," warns LaCome, as if CCRI would actually forbid minorities or women from bidding on a contract or applying for a job. The Feminist Majority and

the American Civil Liberties Union have declared that CCRI will plunge women into a state of virtual peonage.

The contempt for the public behind the anti-CCRI campaign is finally so unbounded that it spills over onto the campaigners themselves. The "equity community," Barry Shapiro tells me, also suffers from prejudice. "Check the sisters out," he commands. "Are women free of prejudice just because they are victims of sexism?" Apparently not: "Women need to work real hard on their stuff," he announces. Summing up his opinion of his fellow diversity trainers, Shapiro sighs: "There but for the grace of God go I; I thank God I'm not an oaf, a thug, a fool, or a charlatan."

Shapiro is a fitting symbol of the anti-CCRI effort: He is a hypocrite as well as a snob. I ask him if he would hire a black contractor who bid $750 for a job on his house over a white contractor who bid $500. "No," he answered, but added: "Affirmative action is very complex." It is just that inscrutable complexity that, with any luck, might doom affirmative action at the polls. ♦

Cop Bloc:
The Trouble with Police Unions

By Eric Felten

So questionable is the Clinton administration's record on fighting drugs that FBI director Louis Freeh pressed a scathing memo into the hands of the president last year denouncing the president's lack of leadership. The letter was brutal enough that the White House is keeping the text under wraps. Even so, Clinton's failure in the fight against drug-related crime didn't keep the president from being hailed last month as a "tough crime fighter" by the president of the nation's largest police union. Gil Gallegos and the leadership of the Fraternal Order of Police delivered a remarkable endorsement of Clinton on Sept. 16—the first time the union has given the nod to a Democrat. The police endorsement effectively inoculates the president against the charge that he is soft on crime.

Gallegos made no bones about the FOP's real reason for endorsing Clinton: "Labor is our principal issue," he said. In other words, it's Clinton's stand on labor issues, not crime, that makes him the choice of the police union. The White House supports collective bargaining; the administration pushed through a hike in the minimum wage; and Clinton's plan to add 100,000 new cops to the streets is seen by the union as a promise of 100,000 new union members.

Public-sector unions have long been core Democratic constituencies; the one exception to this rule had been police unions, partly because rank-and-file officers are overwhelmingly conservative. But the idea that police unions are primarily devoted to reducing crime is a fundamental misconception. Think of it this way: Sanitation-workers' unions are not devoted to trucking away garbage; they are committed to getting their members the most money for the least amount of work, together with lifetime guarantees. Similarly, teachers' unions can hardly be said to be devoted to the education of children; they are committed to maximizing pay, perks, and job security. Not only are garbage removal and education secondary to the unions' bread and butter, they are at odds with union goals. The more cities have to pay to get rid of trash, the less often they can afford to have the garbage carted away; the more schools spend on teachers, the less they can spend on textbooks.

These same pay and perk priorities define police unions. And they have comparable results: The more a city spends on each patrolman, the fewer cops the community can afford. But pursuing extra pay isn't the only activity of police unions that is inconsistent with the broader goal of enforcing the law. When it comes to protecting the job security of bad cops—those who are brutal, corrupt, or mentally unstable—it might be said that police unions are actively *opposed* to fighting crime.

"Police unions represent the lowest common denominator in law enforcement," says James Fyfe, who teaches criminal justice at Temple University. For the most part, "unions provide legal defense to any

Eric Felten, a writer and jazz musician in Washington, D.C., last wrote for The Weekly Standard *about big-band music.*

member, whatever they are accused of doing. And in some cases, the unions hinder justice." Police unions are primarily concerned with protecting the interests of their members, not the broader issues of public safety and civil rights, says Fyfe, who was a New York City policeman for 16 years. "The constituency of a police union is police officers, not the public."

Consider the resistance mounted by the FOP when the FBI investigated possible police brutality in Prince George's County, Maryland. By the time Jeffrey Gilbert was dragged into jail, accused of murdering policeman John Novabilski, he had been severely beaten. His face was bloated and parti-colored, his eyes swollen shut from the pummeling. His chest bore distinct boot prints. (Fair enough, some may be tempted to say.) But later, the police admitted they had arrested the wrong man.

When the FBI began investigating whether the officers lawlessly visited street justice on their suspect, it could have served warrants at the cops' houses. But the FBI says that in an effort to gather evidence without needlessly embarrassing or intruding on the officers, it arranged a phony federal-local task force and called the policemen involved in Gilbert's arrest to meet FBI agents at a warehouse. When the officers arrived, FBI agents seized their uniforms, boots, and weapons and searched their patrol cars. The policemen were given sweatpants, T-shirts, and sandals to wear home.

The Fraternal Order of Police went ballistic. The local lodge was outraged that the chief of Prince George's County police had not blocked the FBI action. "Our members feel that the command staff could have worked this another way," said local FOP president John Bartlett. "They could have said to the FBI, 'Look, threaten me all you want, but I'm not going to let you do this to my men.'" Never mind that the FBI had told the department hierarchy that *any* intervention on its part would be an obstruction of justice; Lodge 89 of the FOP took a vote of "no confidence," denouncing the department's leadership. It didn't end there: Gallegos wrote a bitter letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, complaining that the FBI investigation was an effort to "humiliate and offend sworn police officers."

The state's attorney for Prince George's County, Jack Johnson, came under attack when he prosecuted several officers accused of beating a handcuffed prisoner outside a pizza parlor. When the officers were acquitted on appeal by a jury—after first having been convicted by a district court judge—local FOP chief Bartlett warned that if Johnson didn't stop prosecuting excessive-force cases, the union would muster all of its political power to defeat him when he comes up for election in 1998.

"I don't think the FOP is very serious about addressing the serious problems of law enforcement," Johnson told the *Washington Post* last May. "I hear more concern about protecting their pensions, about working fewer hours, about the officers' having second jobs. But in terms of focusing on discipline and making certain the officers are doing the kinds of things we expect of them, I don't think the FOP has been very helpful. In fact, I think, to a large extent, they've been less than helpful."

If the officers had indeed whaled on a suspect who had been subdued, then they committed a crime. But it is not the sort of crime the FOP seems particularly interested in getting tough on. Johnson says the police department in Prince George's County is "for the most part a good one" and that the vast majority of policemen are good officers who would like to get "the bad ones out of the department." But that doesn't happen because "the unions have not met their responsibility to help get the bad cops off the street."

Union rules in most any bureaucracy demand that a thoroughgoing process be followed before any worker can be disciplined, let alone fired. This may not be a particular hazard in a parks and recreation department, but even in benign government positions, overzealously defended job security has real risks—full-blown civil service protection is one of the things that kept Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrman on the job to provide a convenient racial excuse in the O.J. Simpson case. The *Los Angeles Times* found that of the 44 "problem officers" cited in the 1991 Christopher Commission, 31 were still on the job in 1995. Los Angeles police chief Willie Williams complained in a speech last year to the International Association of Chiefs of Police that his efforts to weed out the few bad cops in his force had been blocked by union-won rules. "There are very few government agencies where you can simply fire someone with racist tendencies," Williams said.

Brutality isn't the only criminal problem made more problematic by the police unions. Officers' unions are rarely aggressive about rooting out corruption in the ranks and have even been implicated in facilitating graft. When the Mollen Commission led to a crackdown on police corruption in New York last year, the city's police union, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, may have taken the concept of protecting its members too far: Police officials and the Mollen Commission accused the union of gathering

information on corruption stings—called "integrity tests"—in order to warn the targeted officers. "Certain members of the PBA have been very aggressive in precincts where integrity tests have been conducted," said deputy police commissioner John Miller. The union had been "trying to educate officers about specifics about how tests are conducted and how to detect them," like warning officers to look for the sort of surveillance vans used by sting teams. Prosecutors claimed the PBA had scotched investigations into more than 40 officers.

Such accusations "sound like an alibi from an inept prosecutor about not being able to make a case," PBA spokesman Joseph Mancini told the *New York Times*. Not exactly the tenor one expects to hear from a "tough on crime" organization.

The union may also have thwarted corruption investigations by enforcing the code of silence. According to one of the principals in the Mollen Commission, the union had a built-in conflict of interest. When a group of officers was accused of shaking down businesses, robbing from drug dealers, or some other form of corruption, the PBA would provide legal representation to all of the suspected officers. Since the same lawyers represented all the defendants, prosecutors were rarely able to get any of the officers to break ranks. The situation has improved, however, partly because of public outrage at what appeared to be corruption-coddling: When 33 NYPD officers were arrested in the 30th precinct this year, the PBA publicly announced that it would not provide lawyers for them.

The PBA, it should be noted, was one of the police unions that did not endorse Clinton. But as with the FOP support for the Democratic ticket, the PBA's support for Bob Dole is an extension of the union's politics, not a devotion to the candidate most likely to stop crime. Sen. Al D'Amato is one of the PBA's prime patrons, as well as a co-chairman of the Dole campaign.

Police unions regularly resist efforts to remove not only officers who are corrupt or brutal, but even those psychologically unfit for duty. Steve Stanard, a psychologist whose firm, Stanard and Associates, does mental-fitness tests for more than 300 police departments, tells of an officer who returned to work after part of his brain was removed in surgery: "He failed every psychological fitness test we gave him. But the union's doctors insisted he was fine. He's still on the job." Stanard insists that unions "want to have good people on the street," but he admits that "the police unions absolutely have to support their members, regardless of the psychologists' recommendations."

As much as one might be inclined to voice solidarity with policemen, it is frightening to imagine how difficult it is to remove officers suffering from depression or alcoholism or worse. Day in and day out, police have the power to deprive people of their liberty. Officers are armed and sanctioned to use lethal force if necessary. In many ways, the police are a sort of domestic military—armed, uniformed, and governed by rank. But police departments have few of the powers that the military has to enforce command and control in the troops or to retire the mentally unfit. "In the military, it's a breeze to get rid of someone who is not psychologically fit for duty," says Stanard. But the military doesn't have to worry about getting sued under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the 1991 Civil Rights Act, or local administrative law.

All of which brings us to the question whether police officers should be accorded the same sort of union-negotiated civil service protections enjoyed by bureaucrats and other municipal employees. Administrative due process can help protect cops from abusive or corrupt superiors; it can shield them from being sold out by opportunistic politicians; it can give them peace of mind to do their jobs with confidence. But the flip side of such a process is that the public is left at the mercy of a few rogues, brutes, bigots, crooks, and psychotics with badges and guns.

The police unions not only favor process, they are eagerly lobbying Capitol Hill for legislation called the "Policemen's Bill of Rights," a bill that would extend union-style protections to every cop in the country, union or no. If anything, we should be moving in the opposite direction, limiting officers' rights rather than expanding them. If police departments are quasi-military operations, perhaps policemen should be held to quasi-military standards of conduct, and their behavior judged by heightened quasi-military standards of justice.

For a paradigm, look to the uniformed division of the Secret Service. There was one sticking point that threatened to derail Clinton's endorsement by the the Fraternal Order of Police: For all his pro-union credentials, the president has resisted efforts by the FOP to unionize uniformed officers of the Secret Service. The reason offered by the administration for keeping the union out is simple and revealing—FOP rules could compromise the president's security.

If unionization of the White House police force threatens the president's safety, might not the unionization of local police forces pose a threat to public safety? With the FOP's endorsement in his back pocket, don't expect Clinton to address that question anytime soon. ♦

How Hillary Rodham Seduced David Brock

By Midge Decter

Of the making of books about the lives and loves of the 42nd president of the United States and his first lady there seems to be no end. Why this should be the case is not quite so easy to answer as some might think. True, Clinton's presidency has been dogged by scandal—sexual, financial, and political—and scandal is fast becoming the great profit center of the American publishing industry. On the other hand, as the present quadrennial silly season nears its end, there is good reason to believe that large numbers of the consumers of these books will be quite prepared to cast their ballots without reference to any of the misbehavior that they have with such voracious appetite been reading about. They will have gobbled up the stories of Bill Clinton's sexual frivolities and all-around light-mindedness along with those of Hillary Rodham Clinton's heedless and aggressive campaign to hold herself above the law, and yet they will march themselves to the polling place and cheerfully vote to keep the Clintons in the White House. In short, they may be licking their chops as readers, but as citizens they seem to be unmoved.

The latest contribution to this general puzzlement is David Brock's long and at times wearyingly detailed portrait of Mrs. Clinton, *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham* (Free Press, 422 pages, $26). Unexpectedly, for those familiar with Brock as the man who authored a book exposing the lies of Anita Hill as well as a famous article in the *American Spectator* bringing to light some of the less appetizing aspects of President Clinton's compulsive womanizing back in Arkansas, this book turns out to be not an exposé but rather a gentlemanly defense of a lady Brock believes has been too much maligned.

The story, as Brock tells it, goes roughly like this. Hillary Rodham, highly earnest and socially conscious midwestern Methodist girl, attends Wellesley in the '60s, where she proves to be not only brilliant but a leader and where she finds her true radical calling. From there she goes to—where else?—Yale Law School. At Yale, she acquires the necessary professional standing with which to express her now more mature and even more heated passion for social justice. She also meets and settles down to keep house with a young man who harbors in his breast the very highest of political ambitions. He has the charm and originality she lacks, while she has the dedication and organizing drive he lacks. (In the metaphor offered to Brock by Guido Calabresi, who taught them, he was "a hot bath" and she was "a cold shower.")

> FROM THE MAN WHO AUTHORED THE BOOK EXPOSING ANITA HILL'S LIES COMES NOW A GENTLEMANLY DEFENSE OF THE FIRST LADY.

When the time comes for the two new-minted lawyers to go out into the world, he heads home to Arkansas to set upon the course that will one day bring him the highest prize in the land. She, however—so David Brock tells us—is torn. On the one hand, there is her already highly burnished love of social activism, which she will express through her work for the Watergate committee in an effort to impeach Richard Nixon, not to mention her eventual chairmanship of both the Children's Defense Fund and the Legal Services Corporation. On the other hand, there is the deep temptation to her soul involved in the recognition that she is indispensable to Bill Clinton's political career.

Plagued by ambivalence, she consults friends about whether she should actually marry Clinton and risk burying herself in the alien wasteland of Arkansas. Some, staunch feminists like her, predictably say no. But to make the author's long, indeed needlessly long, story short, she follows her heart in both directions. While continuing to look out for the welfare of the poor and the children on the national scene, she marries him and takes over the management of his political career, which from time to time, whenever deprived of her special determination, threatens to falter.

She also goes to work in a Little Rock law firm in order to support the family, the governorship of Arkansas being a job that pays only

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$38,000 per year. She does not actually seem to work very hard at lawyering, there being so many works for the social good on her plate. But little by little she does manage to see to it at least that the Clintons are not hard up.

Now, after serving his first term as governor, Bill—who only a short time before has been known to the citizens of Arkansas as "Wonder Boy"—loses a reelection bid. This induces in him a terrible funk, while she merely rolls up her sleeves and sets about organizing his comeback. Two years later he is governor again, and thanks to her successful guidance remains so until he and she are ready to turn their attention—aided both by his widening circle of buddies and her so carefully amassed Rolodex—to his future presidency.

In telling his tale, David Brock is not so loyal to his purpose as to hide from us the fact that Hillary had also played a considerable part in Bill's failure to be reelected in 1980. For one thing, she refused to allow him to do what traditionally helped all politicians in Arkansas to win elections: namely, buy black votes. But far more important, while the Arkansans seemed to have made their peace with Bill's ill-concealed sexual improprieties, they were not feeling at all kindly to their young governor's wife, who in their view both dressed like a slob and behaved like a snob. It may have been all right up north at Yale to be a "hippie" walking around in sloppy long skirts and flat sandals with no stockings and using truck-drivers' language, but it was far from all right for the lady to whom they had extended the courtesy of making her husband governor. And it was exceedingly troublesome to them that she had married him but continued to use her maiden name.

Part of Bill's comeback, then, involved the imposition on Hillary of a marked change of style. (How the lady's history does seem to repeat itself!) She was required, for instance, to take his name, to trim and style her hair and tint it an attractive color, to lose weight, to exchange her heavy eyeglasses for contact lenses—and, perhaps, to be a little more guarded with her tongue. All of which, as with everything else in her life up to that point, she seems to have accomplished with determination and dispatch.

Sean Delonas

Once Bill is securely in the governor's mansion, the story continues, his career goes from strength to strength, particularly among the leadership of the national Democratic party, while his private life goes from weakness to weakness. Along the way, "I'll just ask Hillary; Hillary knows more about it than I do," becomes his constant refrain. (Or so, at least, Brock would have us believe. That some of these hot-bath public acknowledgments of his wife might have been offerings to her in compensation for his sexual misconduct has evidently not occurred to Brock.)

In any case, it is thus that the legend of the coming Clinton "co-presidency" moves into the public domain. And before long, her decision to give up some of her true identity—which requires her to appear on *60 Minutes* in response to the tabloid exposure of her husband's 12-year affair with one Gennifer Flowers and profess her wifely loyalty and understanding—finds its proper reward in the corridors of the highest power in the land.

Given the nature of such an account of Hillary's marriage and career, it is hardly surprising that a goodly part of what David Brock calls her "seduction" turns on the idea that Mrs. Clinton unwittingly permitted herself to be drawn into that widely entailed mess called "Whitewater" for her husband's sake. Thus many, many pages in the book are devoted to detailing what Hillary might or might not have known, might or might not have paid sufficient attention to, might or might not have been intentionally concealing, with respect to the scandal that nearly sank her husband's presidency (and that may yet do so).

This part of *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham* seems intended to be exculpatory, but as is unfortunately the case with most carefully detailed summaries of Whitewater, by the time one reaches the end of the welter one has lost one's grasp of the central point. A terrible boredom sets in.

The question of whether Hillary Clinton is as much implicated in Whitewater as her detractors like to think is not nearly as important an issue as the one that David Brock manages to stand squarely on its head: how she came to be canonized as a feminist saint. Ought it

not seem strange that a woman who knowingly set out to play a big role in the world by sitting on the shoulders of a husband she had so much reason to despise has been taken by the sisterhood of strivers to be their major "role model"?

Did such women march through the streets, and teach and preach and legislate the rights of women to achieve and be recognized on their own, for *this*? If it was the ability to change society that Hillary was after, shouldn't she have run for office herself?

The answer is, of course, that the ladies from *Time* and *Newsweek* and the major newspapers, the vast majority of women's studies professors, the members of NOW and NARAL along with their fellow travelers among the women's organizations and foundations—not to overlook all those conscience-tortured *grandes dames* from Hollywood—came to sing Hillary's praises not for her achievements as a woman but for the reliability of her leftist sympathies.

Most of her ardent admirers probably do not know that she did such things as: apprentice herself to the radical community organizer Saul Alinsky; work as a summer intern in a notorious Communist law firm; serve on the board of the New World Foundation, which distributed most of its money to groups on the hard left; fight Ronald Reagan as chairman of the Legal Services Corporation and win. But no matter how vague a knowledge her admirers have had of her pre-presidential career, they could have had no doubt on which side of the political divide her heart could be counted on to lie. It was simply a matter of deep calling unto deep, and the fact that she was actually playing the most traditional "woman's role" in politics be damned.

Nor is it likely that the Hillary fan club will be distressed to learn from Brock's book that it was she who first invited Dick Morris into her husband's career to coach him for a move rightward. They would take such cynicism only as another sign of her savvy as well as her indispensability to Bill. For a similar reason, the very same women who have righteously taken to ruining lives and livelihoods by claiming "sexual harassment" will cheer at the reelection of Hillary's compulsively sexually misbehaving husband. Because first things come first: in this case, the conviction that his last years in the White House will be spent back on the left where he belongs. Hillary has as much as told them so.

IT SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN THAT IT WAS HE, NOT SHE, WHO BROUGHT THE CLINTONS TO WASHINGTON. AND IF THEY ARE TO STAY, IT IS HE WHO WILL HAVE DONE IT.

And as for David Brock, it is interesting and no doubt valuable to have a detailed account of Hillary's earlier life all in one place. But it is not at all hard to understand what really drove Hillary, and Brock need not have gone to so much effort to find justification for her behavior. For what seduced Hillary, hardly either unique or especially interesting, was her own terrible itch for power.

Clearly whatever power and glory she was able to garner for herself as an activist—and after all, especially given her age, she had been showered with considerable amounts of both—was not enough. *Imagine being able to run the whole country*. Now there's seduction for you. Especially if you yourself don't have to go through the altogether grueling and disagreeable process of asking a lot of tiresome people to vote you in.

Hillary may be a hard worker, but she is not willing to put up with disagreeableness; that's why she gets testy, instead of conveniently shifty, when she feels that her privacy is being violated. Moreover, if you know exactly what is needed in the way of new programs and legislation—as every leftist does with certainty—what right has anyone to question either your behavior or your motives?

Which brings us to the main source of the book's characteristic obtuseness. Bill Clinton may sometimes be unmanageably undisciplined, and he may lack deep and steady principle, but he is very clever. Not too many people, among them his wife, know when—and how—to please multitudes. He may need advice, but there are certain qualities that go into success as a politician, and they cannot be acquired from the outside. They are not so easy to define, but certainly among them is a gift for *bonhomie*. It is a gift that happens not to be found in Hillary Rodham Clinton's personal armamentarium, and all the restylings and retoolings in the world can't provide her with it. It should never be forgotten that it was he, not she, who brought the Clintons to Washington. And if they are to stay in place for the next four years, it is he, and doubly not she, who will have been responsible for it. Given the fiascoes of the first two years of the so-called "co-presidency," brought about in considerable part by her heedless certainties and her basic lack of respect for the processes called democratic government—again, a leftist tic—even Brock should have difficulty sustaining the foolish notion that she is the brains of the family.

Perhaps one day, when some woman makes her own way into the White House, Hillary's portrait

in the feminist pantheon will be quietly stowed away in well-deserved obscurity. And David Brock will return to his proper calling, the unearthing of dark secrets. ♦

Books

Rebecca West's Legacy

By Donald Lyons

She was the Katharine Hepburn of letters, an outrageously dogmatic and stylish egoist who earned her arrogance by sheer intelligence, a flaming feminist who could be very hard on the male character and yet loved men and was loved by them. Her beauty was in her language—and very mannered it could sometimes be. Infuriating and intoxicating, partial and partisan, Rebecca West is looking like one of those writers who will live. She wrote a lot, and only a little will live, but that little is choice, or, as Spencer Tracy pronounces it when speaking of Hepburn in *Pat and Mike*, "cherce."

She was born Cicily Fairfield in London in 1892 to Charles, a handsome but feckless journalist, and Isabella, a bright and educated woman. In 1901 Charles ran off to Africa (why was never clear); Isabella, ailing and poor, moved her three daughters to Edinburgh, where Cicily won prizes in school but preferred acting to studying. Isabella brought the family back to London so that Cicily could go to the Academy of Dramatic Art, but Cicily was pretty much a failure there. Doubtless, she was already too strong a personality to be good at impersonating others. Instead, she got a job at a new suffragist journal, *The Freewoman*, and was soon writing aggressively polemical articles for its pages. On November 30, 1911, still 18, she published her first review—of a book about women in India; it began, "There are two kinds of imperialists: imperialists and bloody imperialists."

A bit scared of what her mother would think of such language and such a tone, Cicily decided to adopt a pen name and chose Rebecca West, the name of the heroine of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*—an emancipated vixen who, conscience-stricken by the wiles she has worked on her much older lover, commits suicide. It was a brave but ominous choice, this abandoning of her given name with its oddly Wildean echoes (the two young women in *The Importance of Being Earnest* are called Gwendolyn Fairfax and Cecily Cardew) for that of a deeply torn "new woman."

One of the books West reviewed for *The Freewoman* in 1912 was *Marriage*, a novel by the prolific and popular H.G. Wells, then 46. She was amusing about Wells's implausible female characters, finding them "the reaction towards the flesh of a mind too long absorbed in airships and colloids." This sauciness brought an invitation to lunch at Wells's country place. The married philanderer took his time with West, but by the end of 1913 she had seduced Wells. It was the great love of her life, great but crazy.

In August 1914, on the very day England declared war on Germany, West gave birth to a boy called Anthony Panther West ("Panther" was Wells's love-name for her; she called him "Jaguar"). West and the boy lived in a separate establishment, visited from time to time by Wells, playing Santa. Neither parent—the absentee Wells and the part-time West—admitted parenthood; calling his mother Auntie, the boy grew up embittered and self-conscious about his bastardy. He was to nourish a lifelong resentment principally if unfairly against his mother and would express it in wounding novels and other writings. The business was selfishly and messily done by the parents; everybody involved was forever damaged; there's no credit to be had.

By 1923, West had put Wells out of her life and sailed off to conquer New York as a coming writer. After hot flings with Max Beaverbrook, John Gunther, and others, West met Henry Andrews, a courtly and cultivated banker of 35 who was a great fan of her prose. In 1930, they wed. It was, though sexual for a time, basically a marriage of friendship, of comfort, of companionship: the classic "settling-for" after youthful passages of violent and desolating passion. They traveled, most memorably to Yugoslavia. In 1939, they bought a rural seat in Buckinghamshire: Ibstone House, a Regency pile with a farm, a great walled garden, and a view of the Chiltern Hills. They stayed married, despite a fair amount of straying by both parties, until his death in 1968, whereupon West sold Ibstone and moved back to London, where she died in 1983.

She was 90 and had been complaining, "I wish I wasn't half dead and half alive, it's not good for one's style." She was, above all things, a writer, and she lived a writer's life of observation, solitude, conferences, negotiations with publishers, feuds, reading. Writers' lives are in their books more than their days. That said,

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West's life was rather more interesting than those of most writers—more readable than, say, the life of Virginia Woolf or Willa Cather. If nothing else, she was never silent and she was never dull.

Carl Rollyson, a professor of English at New York City's Baruch College, is a professional biographer who has done lives of Marilyn Monroe, Lillian Hellman, Martha Gellhorn, and Norman Mailer; he is working on Susan Sontag. Despite the trendy promiscuity of that list, he has in *Rebecca West: A Life* (Scribner, 511 pages, $35) done a solid job of rooting in all the relevant archives and talking to all the surviving witnesses.

The book is a vast improvement on Victoria Glendenning's cozy, chatty, defensively worshipful 1987 biography. But, like so many professional biographers of writers, Rollyson is weak on what's most important: the work. He is generally content with a quick summary and a survey of contemporary reaction. Plus a little strained standard-issue Freud, as when he sees the "image of Charles Fairfield" in West's writing about powerful male figures like Prospero. (Is there something inherently Freudian about the very enterprise of biography? Even an excellent work like Frederick Brown's *Zola* is awash in Freudian-familial speculation.)

What work of West's will survive? A lot of what she wrote was reviews—some of it collected and rethought in books of literary criticism. Her first book, a 1916 take on Henry James, is, though fitfully insightful, largely vitiated by her irritation at James's refusal to create spunky suffragette heroines like herself. Her best criticism is perhaps contained in 1957's *The Court and the Castle*. A meditation on society and human imperfection, the book seeks a mean between irresponsible individualism (symbolized by Hamlet and Byron) and the utopias of her early socialist mentors, Shaw and Wells. With great warmth and perception, though very much this side of idolatry, she makes Trollope and Proust avatars of artists respectively at home in and transcending elaborate social structures.

She wrote novels, but her imagination was too powerful, too colonizing, too imperial ever really to let characters breathe. What she wrongly criticized Tolstoy for—a stifling judgmentalism—disabled her own fiction. Where she really excelled was as a sort of philosophical reporter—a real-life role and a literary genre she more or less invented to pour her genius into.

SHE WROTE NOVELS, BUT HER IMAGINATION WAS TOO POWERFUL, TOO COLONIZING, TOO IMPERIAL EVER REALLY TO LET CHARACTERS BREATHE.

Though theoretically a lifelong socialist—which meant little more than that she went on voting Labour—she had as early as 1924 braved the displeasure of the high English Left, incarnated in the likes of Bertrand Russell, Harold Laski, and Wells. She had then sided with Emma Goldman's radical rejection of Bolshevist Russia as essentially and not just opportunistically tyrannical. Told she was giving aid and comfort to the Tories, she retorted that to "reject a conclusion simply because it is held by the Conservative party is to be as snobbish as the suburban mistress who gives up wearing a hat or dress because her servant has one like it."

After World War II she became obsessed with the idea of treason. She wrote, first in the *New Yorker* and then in the book *The Meaning of Treason*, a study of the dingy radio traitor William Joyce, aka Lord Haw Haw, who had broadcast from Berlin during the war. After exhaustive efforts to understand the man, West wound up endorsing the capital verdict against him. She also went to Nuremberg to report on the trials there and wound up refining her concept of treason as an option for death over the sane values of family and nation. (The ensuing book was *A Train of Powder*.) This view of nationalism as life-giving got her into more trouble with the Left.

Her most explosive run-in with the cultural commissars came in 1953 when, in a series of articles for the *Times* of London that were reprinted in *U.S. News & World Report*, she pooh-poohed the widespread dogma that Senator McCarthy had instituted some sort of reign of terror and decried as absurd the notion that the House Un-American Activities Committee was the moral equivalent of the Kremlin. She saw Soviet communism as a real menace in America and the world, one that warranted severe vigilance. She treated Whittaker Chambers as a hero, endorsed his view of Alger Hiss, and called his autobiography *Witness* a "masterpiece."

Even the centrist Left—embodied in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.—came down on her for one or another of these heresies; but, characteristically, she bristled, refused to recant, and flung back as good as she got. She insisted to the end of her life upon bearing witness to the evil of communism, refusing, for instance, to attend a luncheon honoring her old friend Paul Robeson lest she be seen as condoning his Stalinist politics.

When, in 1974, a book about West and Wells that she had cooperated with appeared, the doyenne of the hard-but-glamorous Ameri-

can Left was ready to pounce. Lillian Hellman reviewed the book in the *New York Times*. Hellman, who was herself later to make easy bucks lying about her liaisons and much else, accused West of seeking an "easy buck" by a "betrayal of what two people were together." Hellman also—in a paragraph not cited by Rollyson—attacked West's credentials as a socialist, indeed as a decent human being, saying with feigned concern, "I hope I am wrong but my mild research turns up no pleas Miss West ever made for the miserable miners of Wales, for those in the Cockney slums, for the hungry Irish, or for the servants Wells paid for." ("Miserable" is good, but "hungry" may have been a wee bit outdated.) Fashions in Stalinist abuse change, and Hellman's rhetoric of venom may seem a bit quaint now, when a similar attack might cite a lack of demonstrated solidarity with welfare mothers or lesbians. But such nonsense was not stingless then, and it is to West's honor to have been its target.

But Rebecca West's greatest purchase on writerly immortality is her epic account of three voyages to the Yugoslavia of the late 1930s, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Published in 1941 when the Yugoslavia she had come to love so absorbingly was under the Nazis and her friends there "now all dead or enslaved," the 1,200-page book is a cathedral of rapture and wonder and torment. It poses as a travel book, and it more than works on that level. Hers is in fact a seventeenth-century sort of book, sweeping up perceptions of and reflections on everything under the sun in its babbling course to the sea, like, for example, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

Black Lamb begins with West's queerly prophetic feeling when, ignorant of Yugoslavia, she reads in 1934 in a newspaper of the assassination of its king, Alexander, in Marseilles by an agent of Mussolini. It ends with an event that she makes us see as intimately related to the assassination: the London blitz. The book has an overarching moral plot: the spiritual and lyrical greatness of the Serbian people and culture as opposed to the half-Germanized and legalistic Slav Croats on the one hand and the effeminate torpor of the Turkified Slav Muslims on the other. The book's villainess is Gerda, the life-poisoning German wife of their lovable Jewish-Serbian government-supplied guide.

Rebecca West

Chas Fagan

The book's political passions make for unsettling reading today when—in a new round of Balkan horrors as if to bookend the century—her beloved Serbs are widely portrayed as genocidal villains. It was my good fortune to have read *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* before the current wars; my sympathies became hers as her glorious, enthused, vividly colored, joyously populated prose washed over me. It's one of those out-of-body reading experiences like *War and Peace* or Proust. Her language is a uniquely hypnotizing cocktail of ecstasy and pomp. For example, here she is at the very end of her volcanic experiences, looking back to see if they make sense: "I now find it most natural that the Dalmatians, in peril like our own, built churches and palaces, deliberations in stone on the nature of piety and pleasure, under the seaward slopes of hills that were heavy on their crests with Turkish fortresses, and desolate to landward with the ruins of annihilated Bosnia. I find it most natural that the Macedonian peasants should embroider their dresses, that they should dance and sing. For, of course, art gives us hope that history may change its spots and man become honorable. What is art? It is not decoration. It is the re-living of experience."

Like D.H. Lawrence, Rebecca West had, for all her crotchets, a near-infallible radar for what made

for life and health in a society; her witness on our culture of perversion would have been invaluable. Here she is on the blitz:

> Often, when I have thought of invasion, or when a bomb has dropped nearby, I have prayed, "Let me behave like a Serb," but I have known afterwards that I had no right to utter such a prayer, for the Serbs are brothers, and there is no absolution for the sins we have committed against the Serbs through our ineptitude. Thus we were without even the support of innocence when we went to our windows and saw London burn: and those who see the city where they were born in flames find to their own astonishment that the sight touches deep sources of pain that will not listen to reason. . . . We may recognize that the streets that are burned are mean and may be replaced by better, but it is of no avail to point out to a son weeping for his mother that she was old and plain.

Rebecca West is the English Edmund Wilson, and it is perhaps not entirely accidental that their most passionate and exasperating books should have appeared at the close of the low, dishonest 1930s. Wilson published his deluded history of socialism, *To the Finland Station*, in 1940; West's Serbian dithyramb-cum-elegy came out in 1941.

Lately I've been carrying around a paperback of *Black Lamb* with a photo of the beautiful (and destroyed) bridge at Mostar on the cover. More than once a stranger has come up to me, looked at the picture, frowned, and said, in accented English, "It was five hundred years old, you know." I did know, thanks to Rebecca West. ♦

Books

Back to School

By Paul Cantor

I happily teach a Great Books course at the University of Virginia, but I occasionally worry that I am not keeping up with developments in popular culture. So once a year I try to attend the seminar given by movie critic Roger Ebert at the Virginia Film Festival in Charlottesville. Thus I have to take my hat off to my mirror image David Denby, the movie critic for *New York* magazine, who clearly takes the deficiencies in his education more seriously than I do mine. Feeling that he had become too immersed in media culture, he enrolled in the two core-curriculum courses at Columbia University, Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, courses he had taken thirty years before as an undergraduate. *Great Books* (Simon & Schuster, 492 pages, $30) is Denby's account of his year-long return to the classroom.

I find it very difficult to arrive at a single and stable reaction to *Great Books*. Perhaps the reason is that Denby refuses to ally himself clearly with either side in today's culture wars. At one point, he proudly reveals that he once threw a tomato at Ronald Reagan (it missed), but at another point he gives a withering critique of a feminist Take Back the Night rally at Columbia, for which he has already been scolded by no less than Joyce Carol Oates in the *New York Times Book Review*. I admire the fact that Denby is not predictable in *Great Books*, but unfortunately he is inconsistent as well. When he is good, I want to stand on the sidelines and cheer, but when he is bad, I want to give him the hook and send in someone who knows what he is talking about.

Denby is at his best when systematically demolishing the arguments that left-wing academics have made against Great Books courses. He points out that, far from overwhelming students with a uniform set of precepts to be passively absorbed and parroted back, the classics of Western literature and philosophy engage in a complex dialogue with one another, and thus potentially with us as well. As Denby writes, "The *Iliad* in its ambivalence about glory and death challenges most of our current ideas about what is right and wrong, what is true, what is heroic, and finally, what is human." In core courses like Columbia's, later works answer earlier ones, correcting them, modifying them, complementing them, refuting them, reinterpreting them, but never quite displacing them. As Denby argues, studying such works is thus not a process of indoctrination; rather students first learn to think for themselves by engaging the great thinkers of the past.

Denby has nothing but contempt for the current tendency to dumb down the college curriculum. He also rejects the notion that a syllabus ought to reflect the ethnic composition of the students taking the course. As he repeatedly points out, students should come to college precisely to be challenged, to encounter ways of thinking unfamiliar to them, and not to reinforce their ingrained prejudices, even if in the process they are humbled a bit. After all, "college students are not that vulnerable." Denby asks: "Don't you truly feel good about yourself by meeting high standards in school and work? Did Michael Chang become great because someone handed him, when he was young, a list of five

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great Chinese tennis players?"

Denby does a superb job of analyzing the mentality of the academic Left and the self-serving character of its attack on the canon. Trying to be scrupulously fair, he talked to some of the most vocal opponents of the core courses at Columbia, including an assistant professor with the marvelous politically correct name of Siobhan Kilfeather. Though acknowledging the validity of some of her criticism, Denby goes right to the heart of her mistake:

> Kilfeather made the classic error of the academic Left: She confused literary study (and her own professional interests) with reading itself. One advantage of Lit Hum was that it avoided the procedures of graduate school—the specialized teacher working with specialized students, the depressing professionalization of literature and the subsequent deployment of books in "fields" and "conferences" and all the rest of that career-enhancing bureaucracy. . . . Kilfeather was a firebreather, but her ideas led to nothing more radical than reasserting the bureaucratization of literary study.

Denby exposes the inner contradictions of today's radical pedagogy, especially the way it merely substitutes new forms of authority for old: "The left-academic revisionists gave exams, too, exams that enforced *their* narratives, which ran counter to the traditional ones." Denby has an acute eye for how left-wing academics mirror the very middle-class way of life they profess to despise but in fact secretly envy and emulate: "They had given up history, given up their own judgment, and had allowed, of all things, *market* principles—satisfy the customers' needs—into the curriculum." Above all, what Denby makes clear, and what will come as a surprise to most people outside academia, is the rampant careerism of today's radicals, which he observes in the toadying of graduate students at an academic conference:

> The students' statements were radical in content but obsequious in tone. . . . They sidled up apprehensively to any established professor in sight, nodding their heads in agreement. Revolutionaries? Radicals? This was a job hunt. The graduate students embracing "theory" were university careerists. . . . The pressures of the job hunt had enforced a desperate conformity. . . . A good part of their radical critique of the curriculum, I now saw, was produced by nothing more earth-shattering than the evident desire to claim turf, get themselves noticed, and find a job somewhere.

Anyone who has so much as walked through a Modern Language Association convention knows the truth of this statement.

Conservatives would be hard-pressed to formulate their criticism of the academic Left more incisively than Denby. One can only hope that his strictures will be taken more seriously by mainstream academics because he goes out of his way to distance himself from the political and cultural Right. The book is filled with jabs at heartless Republicans and the benighted forces of Christian fundamentalism. Indeed it is a measure of how radical the academic world in America has become that an ordinary left-leaning, bleeding-heart liberal like Denby finds himself so estranged from its beliefs and its educational policies.

If only Denby had confined himself to countering the academic Left and making the case for studying the Great Books. But something made him think that attending two classes at Columbia now qualifies him to comment on every writer from Homer to Virginia Woolf, from Plato to Nietzsche. Did he learn nothing about *hubris* reading all those Greek tragedies the first semester? Never has an author's disclaimer—"any remaining errors and misconceptions in the book are entirely my own responsibility"—been more necessary to let the friends who read over his manuscript off the hook. Many of Denby's mistakes are simple errors of fact. For example, he writes: "When Plato wrote the *Republic*, Greece was breaking up, just the way Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union have broken up in our time," as if there had ever been a nation called Greece in the ancient world, and not merely a set of Greek cities like Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes. Or when talking about what Nietzsche called the "slave revolt in morality," Denby refers to it as the "transvaluation of all values," which is how Nietzsche designated the movement intended to advance beyond the slave revolt.

And Denby's errors are frequently more serious than slips of memory or of the pen. He often fundamentally misrepresents the thinkers he is describing. Denby takes up the highly controversial topic of Aristotle's view of slavery, a key issue for opponents of the canon, who like to condemn canonical Greek authors as apologists for a slave-holding society. Denby does not help matters by stating Aristotle's position this way: "He decided that slaves were not fit by nature for rational thought." In fact Aristotle's view is exactly the reverse: In Book I of the *Politics* he argues that only those who are not fit for rational thought are by nature slaves. Since most actual slaves are fit for rational thought, Aristotle thus opens up a distinction between those who are slaves by nature and those who are slaves merely by convention, and he inclines to the opinion that slavery of that second category is unjust. Aristotle ought to get credit for being one of the first to question the justice of slavery, but Denby misreads the *Politics* so completely that he provides simple-minded critics of Aristotle with ammunition against him.

One of the most telling incidents Denby recounts from his year at Columbia concerns a public lecture given by Leszek Kolakowski, per-

haps the greatest scholar of Marxist thought in this century, author of the magisterial three-volume study, *Main Currents of Marxism*. It is a sign of the times that Denby reports that Kolakowski created a great deal of unease in his academic audience, and even caused some to walk out, with his uncompromising condemnation of the folly of Marx and Marxism. Denby himself listened respectfully to Kolakowski and clearly learned from the lecture. But Denby has a lingering emotional attachment to the Left that compels him to challenge Kolakowski, raise doubts about his motives (referring to his "bitterness"), and even question his knowledge of Marx.

Quite a spectacle: the movie critic of *New York* magazine claiming that the foremost historian of Marxism of our time does not know his Marx. According to Denby, Kolakowski denies "the youthful Marx" and ignores his so-called "humanist" writings. Did a library card not come along with Denby's registration fee at Columbia? I count 61 pages in the first volume of *Main Currents of Marxism* devoted to Marx's early writings, and far from downplaying their importance, Kolakowski concludes: "These are the fundamental principles of Marx's theory, from which he never departed." Kolakowski was in fact one of the first to refute Georg Lukács's desperate attempt to salvage Marx's reputation by turning attention to his early writings from his late.

I do not expect Denby to accept Kolakowski's authority on faith, but he does owe it to a scholar of such stature to take a look at his writings before irresponsibly accusing him of ignoring an important aspect of his subject. The Kolakowski episode is symptomatic of everything that is wrong with Denby's book as an account of the Western canon. The one thing he evidently never acquired in his year at Columbia was knowledge of his own ignorance—perhaps the most valuable lesson he could have absorbed from Plato and his account of his great teacher, Socrates. At times Denby is willing to admit to his confusion, and occasionally he even has an inkling that something in the works he is reading may be escaping him, that Plato, for example, may not be quite as foolish as he looks to Denby. But generally he is content to romp his way through the classics, telling us which ideas are still relevant today and which are hopelessly outdated, which meet his approval and which do not. There is something charmingly American about this intellectual insouciance. It is the charm of a freshman or sophomore, coming to the great thoughts of the past for the first time. But Denby is over 50 now, and as a professional journalist he ought to have learned something about the simple need to check his facts.

QUITE A SPECTACLE: THE MOVIE CRITIC OF *NEW YORK* MAGAZINE CLAIMING THAT THE FOREMOST HISTORIAN OF MARXISM DOES NOT KNOW HIS MARX.

In general, Denby is much better at discussing literature than philosophy. But even on literature, Denby can miss the boat. For me the low point of the book is what by all rights should have been the high point, the chapter on *King Lear*, by Denby's own admission the greatest of all canonical works. Unfortunately Denby chooses *King Lear* as the occasion for a meditation on the aging and death of his mother, which is supposed to parallel the lesson of Shakespeare's play. To his credit, Denby acknowledges: "The play is about fierce, pre-Christian aristocrats, not American Jewish mothers." But he goes ahead with the story of his mother's death anyway, which would be maudlin under the best of circumstances but, juxtaposed to the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies, sinks quickly and inevitably to the level of pure bathos. Throughout Denby's account one can admire his impulse to familiarize himself with the Great Books, to come to feel at home with them, in a sense to make them his own. That is the thrust of the mainstream of American education at the moment. But in Denby's account of *King Lear* one realizes how this goal may result in bringing the Great Books down to our own level and in the process stripping them of a good deal of their greatness.

If one cannot learn much about the Great Books themselves from reading Denby, one can learn a lot about what is going on in today's universities. He made an admirable effort to get to know the students in the classes he took, and he is quite shrewd in analyzing their character or lack thereof. He explains clearly what it is about contemporary American life that makes it difficult for students to understand the classics of the past, as in this account of their bafflement with Oedipus:

> True Americans, they were used to the claims of victimization but had trouble comprehending a man who is destroyed partly through his own greatness. . . . The therapies and living strategies that had turned "know thyself" into "absolve thyself" . . . had left the students unprepared for Oedipus' fierce assumption of personal accountability.

Denby pays particular attention to the plight of genuinely religious students in the contemporary secular university, where, in a glaring lapse of the sensitivity supposedly

prevailing on our campuses, their beliefs are often treated with open scorn. He gives several interesting accounts of attempts by orthodox students of various faiths to reconcile their religious beliefs with what they were studying and being taught.

Unfortunately Denby chooses to use the presence of religious students at Columbia as an argument against Allan Bloom and his account of contemporary academic life in *The Closing of the American Mind*: "They were essentialists, sure enough, and Allan Bloom was wrong if he did not understand, in his fulminations against relativism as a student norm, that students like these existed everywhere in American universities." Indeed, as part of his attempt to distance himself from the cultural Right, Denby is careful to criticize Allan Bloom as often as possible. If this strategy helps Denby's astute observations get a fair hearing these days, well and good, but the fact is that all of Denby's points about contemporary students can be found in *The Closing of the American Mind*, expressed just as eloquently and often more incisively.

Consider what is probably Denby's most forceful statement on the nature of contemporary students:

> The exact temperamental identity of the sexes is now a received idea among undergraduates; indeed, in the secular university, this belief is as close as the students are likely to come to a sacred doctrine. . . . *Students will not countenance the notion of distinctions between people because they assume that all distinctions are invidious.* [Denby's italics] . . . The students want to be truly tolerant and open-minded, and many of them are, but they live in a hypersensitive society, and they fall into the trap of confusing blandness and caution with tolerance.

This sounds an awful lot like a "fulmination against relativism as a student norm," and indeed, asked to identify this passage, most people would attribute it to *The Closing of the American Mind*.

Denby repeatedly echoes Bloom's account of the flatness in the souls of today's students, their hesitation to generalize or pass judgment, their unwillingness to take a real stand on anything. Denby himself refutes his claim that the religious beliefs of students contradict Bloom's argument that relativistic tolerance is the dominant dogma on today's campuses: "They valued openness and respect more than genius and their notion of religion was naive: Religion was simply *moral*, an area of ethical transcendence removed from the rest of life."

Denby also echoes Bloom in his account of how feminism has poisoned the relationship between the sexes and de-idealized love:

> Listening to the students, I was sure that radical-feminist language had colored the language of sex for everyone; if nothing else, it had helped destroy the old language of romance. In class, the students talked about sexual "roles," about "power" and "transactions." In two classes about feminism and relations between the sexes, I doubt I heard the word "love" spoken even once. Literature was about power, sex was about power. . . . For many students power was sexy but sex was not.

This passage sounds just like Bloom's last book, *Love and Friendship*. Given all these similarities, rather than bashing Bloom, Denby should be acknowledging his debt to him.

In the end, I am willing to overlook the manifest and manifold faults of Denby's book for the sake of the good it might do. Academic radicals end up being the principal target of his polemic, and they will benefit more than anyone from reading his book. They need to take seriously Denby's heartfelt and timely warning that they are committing intellectual suicide, pulling the very ground out from under their own feet. In their scorn for the canon, they are systematically undermining any remaining claim they have to respect or support from the society that has been paying their salaries as teachers.

But Denby has something of value to say to conservative defenders of the Western canon as well. He warns them to be careful in choosing the rhetoric with which they promote the cause of the Great Books. If they emphasize the traditionalism of canonical works, they in fact do them a disservice by, quite frankly, making them sound boring. The canon needs to be presented as a way of opening up issues for our students, of actively retracing the debates that have brought us to where we are today. Though he repeatedly expresses his distaste at finding himself in agreement with right-wing defenders of the canon, Denby in his last words on the subject is generous to the conservative cause:

> I agree with William Bennett and other traditionalists to this extent: Men and women educated in the Western tradition will have the best possible shot at the daunting task of reinventing morality and community in a republic now badly tattered by fear and mistrust. These books—or any such representative selection—speak most powerfully to what a human being can be. . . . They scrape away the media haze of secondhandedness.

In an epilogue that begins "culture-ideologues, both left and right, are largely talking nonsense," this passage constitutes an astounding concession to cultural conservatism. Though Denby is evidently unable to overcome his emotional attachment to the Left, he ends up in effect reversing the common understanding of the culture wars. He shows that today the radicals are the real conservatives, contributing to the perpetuation of our dumbed-down media culture, while the conservatives are the real radicals, offering the great classics of the Western tradition as the most effective means of liberating students from the orthodoxies of our day. ♦

THE EASY QUESTIONS

There are no greater paradoxes in contemporary political life than those that arise from the knowledge of our own mortality. Life, as Simone Weil astutely observed, ends in death, and in between time's winged chariot hurtles on (Donne, bien sûr). And so as I confront the hard question, "Should I pick up a carton of milk on the way home from work?" I cannot help but be acutely aware of how limited my time on this sphere is, and how complex are the dilemmas that confront those of us who think deeply in this post-modern, post-industrial and post-ideological age.

Reinhold Niebuhr had to walk six blocks from his apartment to the nearest Gristede's, and yet found time, even while composing Moral Man and Immoral Society to purchase whole milk (which spoils faster) three times a week, and make an extra stop at a nearby D'Agostino's, where the Carnation nondairy creamer was 19 cents less a can. But today, the consumerization of American life leads to a distinct fin de siècle alienation born of an overabundance of choice. In my case, I can stop and buy milk at the 7-Eleven, which takes me four blocks out of my way, or I can pull up to the closer Safeway in the hope that the line at the express check-out aisle will be short.

There are no easy answers to this set of alternatives. Let us assume for the sake of argument that I will stop and pick up the carton of the milk on the way home. If I go to the 7-Eleven, I will have to pass by the sticker on the exit door that measures my height. Somehow I feel that man's constant need to measure is a form of dehumanization, so eloquently addressed by Ionesco, while the implication that we are all stick-up artists robs us in a subtle way of our moral autonomy, to borrow from Willie Sutton. On the other hand, if I go to Safeway, I will be confronted by even deeper dilemmas which I have previously addressed elsewhere (see my essay "Paper or Plastic? An Inquiry," The New York Review of Books, January 29, 1995).

If I skip the milk altogether I can probably add a little extra butter to the Kraft's Macaroni and Cheese so beloved of Thomas Mann and make the orange powder deliquesce that way. But if I saved time by not schlepping milk, would I really use those moments productively, or would I just linger longer at the newsstands looking at German girlie magazines? The Kraft's does taste better with whole milk, though with skim I can take it or leave it.

And though I teach at Princeton, I don't understand what this 2% milk is. Is it skimmed less than skim milk or is it skimmed more? Nor do I buy Harold Bloom's thesis that Oswald Spengler was lactose-intolerant and that if he'd been drinking Lactaid he'd have looked on the brighter side of things. In the end these are probably not questions that can be addressed by an a priori call to high principle, but must be better resolved in a more ad hoc frame of mind.

Ultimately life is a series of contingencies and we are mere cave dwellers searching out answers in shadows. And so if I lay the milk or non-milk options out before me, I must rely ultimately on a legitimate call to traditional authority: eenie, meenie, miney, moe. Catch a tiger by the toe. If he hollers let him go. Eenie, meenie, miney moe.

No milk. The heart weeps.

Michael Walzer