the weekly Standard

JUNE 23, 1997

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ENOUGH WITH THE PRIZES
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

BULLY FOR AMERICA

What Teddy Roosevelt Teaches

BY DAVID BROOKS

The Coming of the Super-Preachers
JOHN J. DIIULIO, JR.

"Tear Down This Wall!" 10 Years Later
PETER ROBINSON

the weekly Standard

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Books & Arts

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The Subversion of Welfare Reform

The single greatest legislative achievement of the much-maligned 104th Congress was welfare reform. The new law ends the federal welfare entitlement for single mothers and requires states to get an increasing percentage of their welfare recipients to work.

But last week, two House committees approved an array of measures that would undermine the work requirement.

One amendment allows states to meet the "work" requirement by putting recipients in a classroom for training. It's been tried already, and it doesn't work very well. Another amendment, pushed by organized labor, declares welfare recipients can only fill jobs that don't interfere with the duties, work rules, or "promotional opportunities" of existing (read: unionized) government workers. In effect, it would forbid hiring welfare workers for any job that some government employee is doing, thus encouraging the proliferation of bogus make-work jobs. "If these two provisions are applied to welfare reform," says neoliberal welfare analyst Mickey Kaus, "then the liberals and the unions will have succeeded in substantially crippling the Republican effort to put welfare recipients to work."

These changes have only been approved at the committee level, which leaves time for sanity to return on the House floor. But there's little reason for optimism. Republicans have been spooked by the charge that they're a bunch of misanthropes. Most of them are not, of course, and in this case the tough original reforms were even politically popular. Let liberals defend soft welfare policies. Newt Gingrich might want to intervene now before any more damage is done to his party's signal legislative achievement.

Mobutu's Man

Let's say you were somehow involved with a bloodthirsty tyrant who had brought down upon his country a reign of corruption and terror. Suddenly the tyrant is in the world's headlines. Would you (a) try to keep quiet about the whole thing, or (b) issue a press release?

If you answered (a), you're a normal person. If you answered (b), you're a Washington lobbyist. In fact, if you answered (b), you're just like Edward J. von Kloberg III, chairman of the impressively named Washington World Group, Ltd. Von Kloberg is "lobbyist to the damned," with a client list that has included Samuel K. Doe of Liberia, Saddam Hussein, and Romania's Ceausescu. Last week, quite unbidden, von Kloberg faxed around town a statement taking up the cause of ex-President Mobutu of ex-Zaire. The statement bore the rather grand headline "The Mobutu I Knew." (Translation: "The Mobutu Who Hired Me as His Washington Flack During the 1980s.")

Von Kloberg protests the "wave of criticism of the ousted president—who is widely described as a 'parasite,' a 'kleptocrat,' and a 'brutal dictator.'"

Mobutu, a parasite? Wherever could people have gotten that idea? Von Kloberg dismisses such epithets as mere "political correctness" and goes on to extol the kleptocrat's "anti-Marxism" and friendly relations with the United States. Then he explains all the good work he did as flack for Mobutu's regime.

Even in Washington, where shameless self-justification is a highly valued skill, von Kloberg's memo stands as a masterpiece of the art. Mobutu was indeed a parasite—and also a thug, a butcher, and a running dog generally. And von Kloberg, who happily took the parasite's money and even now defends him, offers a perfect example of why "Washington lobbyist" has become an epithet all its own.

Mr. Minge Goes To Washington

Every two years, new members of Congress arrive on Capitol Hill portraying themselves as modern-day replicas of the famous "Mr. Smith" who went to Washington and cleaned up its crooked ways. Last month, one of these characters, Rep. David Minge, a Minnesota Democrat elected in 1992, was profiled on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*. He was described as having "a single-minded focus on cutting the deficit" and was praised for possessing a "stubborn integrity" that has led him "to challenge budgetary sacred cows." Unless, of course, these cows happen to benefit his con-

Scrapbook

stituents. Last week, Minge wrote an article for the Capitol Hill newspaper the *Hill*, in which he called for preserving one of the best examples of corporate welfare you can find: the tax break—that is, subsidy—for the ethanol industry. Minge moaned that "an elimination of this sound tax policy is short-sighted and would result in Congress revoking its commitment to American agriculture." Actually, the federal government's General Accounting Office recently concluded that the benefits of the ethanol tax break are minimal—leaving aside the broader question of whether such federal subsidies are appropriate. . So why does a deficit hawk like Minge support the ethanol tax break? Well, corn-growers can't get enough of this subsidy, and the most potent pressure group in his rural district is—you guessed it—the farm lobby. Hats off to Minge for attending to his local interest groups *and* getting praised for statesmanship in the *Journal*.

The President's Chum

Greg Norman, the high-flying Australian golf star, blew in to Washington recently for a two-week stay, trailing obnoxiousness and venom behind him. At the Kemper Open, held in suburban Maryland, the starter on the first tee introduced him thus: "Of all the golfers in the world, the following player is number one. But if he invites you over to his house to see his trophies, I'd advise you to respectfully decline."

This was a typical inside Washington joke, an allusion to President Clinton's having twisted his ankle on a visit to Norman's Florida estate earlier this year. A starter at a PGA tournament will sometimes use a light remark like this to make things more interesting for the gallery.

But after Norman fanned his drive into the right rough, he marched over to the starter, jabbed his finger in his chest, and screamed at him for several minutes, threatening to complain to the tournament chairman (which he did) and never to return to the Kemper. He left the gentleman—a club volunteer—bewildered and shaken.

Out on the course, it got worse. On the 16th hole, a fan of Norman's called out some encouragement to him: "Chum's in the water!" (Norman's nickname is "The Great White Shark"; chum is shark bait.) Norman raised his middle finger to him. And after putting out for birdie, he did it again (perhaps fearing that his fan had missed it).

These gestures were witnessed—and verified—by numerous bystanders, including reporters. Yet at the U.S. Open the next week, Norman lied about it, saying that he "was going to give the guy the finger, but I thought about it and then just went up with the fist. I've watched what President Clinton does when he's mad. Most people will point their finger when they get angry. He uses his fist. Watch him, and you'll see what I mean."

Norman did some more watching of Clinton at the White House, where he took a tour. The president invited him into the Oval Office for a little chat—just two buds who flout the rules and live merrily on. They deserve each other.

Clueless and Clintonized

My confidence in Senate majority leader Trent Lott was ebbing when along came "Clintonized Republicans" (June 9) by William Kristol settling the issue.

Sen. Lott, being from Mississippi, is no doubt aware of Mark Twain. But it's clear from Kristol's article that Lott missed some valuable Twain advice: "Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please."

Richard E. Hall
Palm Bay, FL

William Kristol concisely states what many conservatives now believe about Trent (Wind Sock) Lott and the Republican Congress in general. As a former member of the U.S. Air Force and a holder of an honorable discharge, I was outraged by Lott's stand on the Kelly Flinn affair.

In response, I made a copy of my honorable discharge, printed "Worthless Thanks to Trent Lott" across the front and mailed it to Lott's office. This, however, may be too subtle.

Next, I made several copies of the question and answer period that appeared with Kristol's article. When the party sends me requests for money, as it does on almost a daily basis, I will stuff the return envelope with a copy and a note saying that when Lott steps down, I will resume contributing money to the party.

The conservative cause will advance once these "Clintonized" Republican politicians understand they have no base.

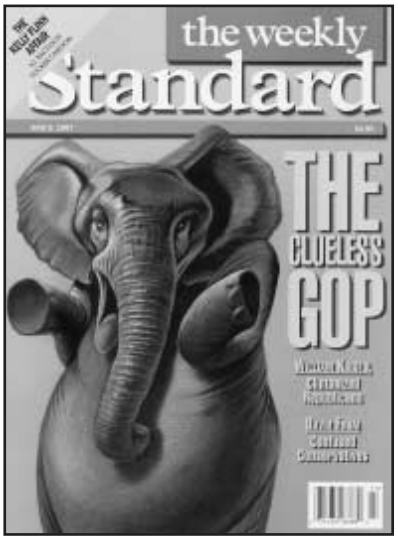
Gordon Matthews
Orange, CA

Bravo for the articles on the "Clueless GOP." During the 1996 election season I increased my contributions to Republican candidates and committees several-fold over any previous year. Barely were the votes counted before the inundation of fund-raising pleas resumed. I have a message for those sending the letters: not one nickel more until congressional Republicans stand up and stop acting like whipped dogs cowering in front of the AFL-CIO bosses and the *New York Times* editorial board.

I didn't give up my hard-earned after-tax dollars just so Republicans could keep the bigger offices. And I did not donate in anticipation of invitations to parties with senators and celebrities. I don't expect miracles or a "revolution." I do expect that they will at least try to reduce the stranglehold of government regulation and interference that pervades this country.

J. W. Pueschner
Houston, TX

William Kristol and David Frum ("Confused Conservatives," June 9) made some very good points regarding the "Clintonization" of Republicans. But I'm not sure they add up to a



clueless GOP unsure of its principles.

The Right is not suffering from complacency, counting on voters to reject the unacceptable liberal pol. Nor are we all Clinton Republicans, as Kristol speculates. The Republican party suffers from an inability to communicate with the American people. The party, along with its ideological allies, is irritated because it misunderstands one key point: The GOP does not have a real majority because it does not have the press on its side.

This leads people like Kate O'Beirne to attack Republicans for not doing honest things such as zeroing out the NEA. But how much air time can she and her colleagues muster when Alec Baldwin and hundreds of actors, directors, producers, and writers appear on countless talk shows and rally to the cause of protecting our children's right to experience art? I wish conservative pundits and journalists had spent a year trying to turn public opinion around on the subject before suggesting that GOP politicians walk off the NEA cliff. They might then understand why Republicans on the Hill are so gun-shy. They could also offer better solutions to what is now viewed as confusion and complacency. Then our commentators, a bit more experienced, could spend a year telling the GOP to learn how to get around the liberal domination of the press, rally public opinion, and make real change. That's what voters want.

Very little that David Frum suggests can be accomplished until conservatives learn how to sell their reforms. I'm betting that as recent history gets written, the failure to fully support Newt Gingrich for more than two weeks will prove to have been a source of much GOP failure. Had the GOP rallied around him along with conservative pundits, they would have learned from what was political necessity (backing one's leader) how to face down the liberal press and union cash. We wouldn't then be worried about whether there is a conservative crack-up.

Thomas Harding Jones
New York, NY

Cheaters Never Win

I enjoyed reading Tucker Carlson's "The Making of a Feminist Hero" and A.J. Bacevich's "The De-Moralized Military" (June 9). Both articles, however, overlooked one important fact. Prior to the contretemps that landed her in hot water, Flinn engaged in an affair with an enlisted man. That in itself should have gotten her bounced out of the Air Force, even before she took up with Gayla Zigo's husband.

Lt. Flinn was an officer with what can only be considered monumentally bad judgment. We should be thankful that the only thing she had to command was a single aircraft. One shudders to think of Kelly Flinn in command of a platoon. Flinn was lucky the double standard worked in her favor. A man facing the same charges without the publicity machine that worked overtime for Flinn would have been court-martialed and given a dishonorable discharge.

Correspondence

Credit should go to the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Ronald Fogleman, who forthrightly laid out what the case was really about to some Capitol Hill clowns, notably the dimmest of dimwits, Sen. Tom Harkin.

R.L. DiNardo
Jersey City, NJ

A J. Bacevich brushes up against an important issue only to be sidetracked by the minutiae. His focus on Kelly Flinn's adultery obscures the major issues involved in her lamentable case and serves the purposes of the liberal intelligentsia, who would have us believe that adultery was the defining element of the case.

Lt. Flinn was charged with adultery incidental to her insubordination, fraternization, and lying. One gathers that her superiors knew about her adulterous relationship, else they would not have issued orders for her to stop. The true ground for the charges levied against her is that she conspired with her lover to continue in adultery after receiving the orders.

Another point that was obscured by all the hype is Lt. Flinn's much-vaunted status as an Air Force Academy graduate. The Academy experience evidently had little effect upon Lt. Flinn, other than strengthening an overweening pride and self-centeredness. For four years she lived under an honor code that states, "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does," without any apparent effect on her own lack of honor. During those same years, the core values of the Air Force Academy were promulgated: "Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence In All We Do." Lt. Flinn was apparently unmoved by her exposure to these principles. I applaud Secretary Widnall, who had the courage to stand up to the preening classes and deliver a fair, even generous, punishment to an individual who daily dishonored the uniform she wore and the oaths of duty that she took so lightly.

Lance Robinson
Oak Harbor, WA

The Playwright's Pal

Lisa Schiffren's take on Wendy Wasserstein's play *An American Daughter* ("Isn't It Pathetic?," June 2) is characteristically thuggish and stupid. Whatever its merits (and I think it's terrific—though, as a friend of the author, I'm biased), the play is obviously an ambivalent treatment of the Washington liberal establishment. Schiffren chooses to interpret it as simple-minded liberal agitprop and then, with a self-congratulatory flourish, announces her own brilliant insight that the author unconsciously reveals the failures and sadness of this crowd. Whatever next? Schiffren discovers that King Lear is not a happy man? Wasserstein does extend human sympathy to all her characters. Schiffren understandably finds that confusing.

Michael Kinsley
Redmond, WA

Lisa Schiffren responds: ***One hardly knows what to make of so nasty and intemperate an attack occasioned by a critical review of a play that was almost universally panned. I did not say that Wasserstein writes "liberal agitprop." Nor do I question that the author intends to convey ambivalence about her peers. But (like most of its reviewers) I do believe that the play's protagonist was intended to be, on balance, sympathetic and a victim of the (stupid, thuggish) anti-woman Right.***

I am aware that the liberal cultural establishment (not to mention those of Wasserstein's friends given small roles in this play—as Kinsley is) and similarly disposed audiences identify with these characters. But my point was that audiences lacking such personal affinity are likely to find them self-righteous, insular, self-destructive, weak, and/or untrustworthy—in short, unambivalently tiresome and unsympathetic. I continue to guess that this is not what Wasserstein intended.

Hands Off Denmark

I was amused to the point of laughing when I read Tucker Carlson's "Strollergate" (June 2). He wrote "by last year, pornography was the country's [Denmark's] third largest industry." If this is true, then we Danish journalists missed the biggest story of the year. And can anyone believe that Denmark's second TV channel, TV2, let a producer of a documentary about child pornography actually state, "I know that children are not harmed by it"?

Carlson is right that it's not illegal to possess child pornography in Denmark. But remember that it's illegal for an adult in Denmark to perform a sexual act with a person under the age of 14. That makes it illegal to produce pornographic films with children under that age.

Too bad Carlson let his emotions supersede his reporting. I tend to agree with him that the Danish couple who left their baby outside an East Village café probably qualify as irresponsible parents. In documenting that, Carlson did a real service to your readers, including me. But I do not understand, perhaps naively, why he needed to besmirch Denmark.

Martin Burcharth
Cambridge, MA

Tucker Carlson responds: ***I can't comment on the condition of Danish journalism, but Burcharth does seem to have missed a story. According to data presented by researchers from the University of Minnesota at a regional meeting of the U.N.-sponsored World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children, held last April in Brasilia, pornography is indeed Denmark's third-largest industry, right behind furniture making.***

As for the kiddie-porn documentary I cited, Burcharth is right: It's hard to believe that such a thing was shown on Denmark's largest television station or that anyone, even a pornographer, would make such an appalling statement in public. But it happened, on Wednesday, August 17, 1994. The most shocking part of all is that, to this day, child pornography remains legal in Denmark.

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Casual

Techno-guru

Wherever I have worked for the past decade, I have been the office techno-weenie—the guy to whom co-workers turn for help with their computers (and printers and fax machines and, most recently, voice-mail). I have no training, but I'll pretend to be an expert about anything. And more often than not—with a bit of trial and a lot of error—I can make unruly computers behave. This is because I understand the minds of the people who build computers and write software. I understand them because of early-childhood imprinting. I shared a room with my big brother who became a hot-shot electrical engineer. The engineer's mind is hard to define but it can be described in action, and what it reduces to is this: His side of the room was neat, mine was a mess.

Engineers are people who, when they write reports, finish every chapter with a page that says—self-contradictorily—"This Page Deliberately Left Blank." I didn't just share a room with my brother, though, I also shared a closet, which had a string hanging down from the precise middle. His side was order, mine chaos. And there was the top of the dresser, which didn't need to have a line drawn down the middle since my half was dusty and overflowing with fossils, dead insects, and the other detritus of an active boyhood and his half was . . . deliberately left blank.

When he packed for college, my brother spent what seemed like at least a week inventorying every item on a yellow legal pad, down to the last sock. For the next four years, he used that same inventory to make sure he never forgot to bring anything home for the summer. When I later went to college, he generously offered me the inventory, which he must have stored in an alphabetical file. From an engineer, this was a love offering, but I was unappreciative. I just dumped everything I owned into a dozen boxes and stuffed them in the car. It's clear which of us you would want to hire to debug software.

Unfortunately, the engineer's love of order can lead to products that follow a set of rules, yes, but not rules that can be readily comprehended by the non-expert. Now it's true that these days computers and software aren't released straight from the engineers to the general public. There are experts on the "human interface" who take what the engineers have wrought and refine it for mass consumption. Still, there are moments when this "interface" fails and knowing the mind of the engineer is of incalculable benefit. Microsoft Word, for instance, which may be the most prevalent piece of software in American offices, will occasionally, under a very special set of circumstances, present the writer with a box that contains a choice which looks innocent but is fraught with peril: "Do you want to revert to the saved version of your story?" it asks. Before doing anything else, you must click either *yes*, *no*, or *help*.

The correct answer, as the connoisseur of engineer-think will discern, is always *no*. (Revert means to go back to something old, and is therefore bad, since engineers believe in progress.) Indeed, pressing *yes* in this case will irretrievably erase everything you've written in the previous hour or so. Most people get trapped like a deer in the headlights when they face this choice, though, because they deeply, deeply want to say *yes*.

On the other hand no one, but no one, presses the *help* button. And contrary to what unhappy software companies with flooded switchboards might like to think, this is neither stupidity nor laziness on the part of the consumer. After all, pressing the help button merely calls forth an explanation written by the same people who wrote the incomprehensible warning box, and why would you want to ask for directions from the person who just got you lost?

It makes far more sense to call a real person on the phone or turn to the shaman of our age—the office techno-weenie. Like all shamans, he depends on tricks (turning a computer off and then on again cures 90 percent of all ills) and the abiding belief of grateful colleagues that he has magical powers.

I do.

Richard Starr

the weekly Standard

No to Appeasement

The House of Representatives is scheduled to vote next week on the extension of China's most-favored-nation trading status. How it will turn out is anyone's guess; the House Republican leadership is split on the question, so its nose-counting whip system isn't operating. That in itself is a remarkable development. Significant defections from a traditionally "pro-China" GOP are a new thing. The shift of popular sentiment against business as usual with China is new, too. Come what may, it looks as though revocation of MFN will win more House votes than it has in a good long while.

There's a simple explanation. Elite America's Sinophile "engagement" dogma has had a very bad year. There has been fresh evidence of Beijing's horrific domestic repression. In particular, the plight of China's huge but persecuted Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian communities has finally come into sharp relief—the subject of a major grass-roots mobilization of religious conservatives led by Gary Bauer's Family Research Council. There have been almost weekly disclosures of Chinese arms sales and military technology diversions. The U.S. import/export imbalance—managed by Beijing to the advantage of People's Liberation Army-dominated firms—has reached its widest yawn, making plain how little the Chinese really care about free trade as an international principle. Then, too, the specter of Hong Kong's retrocession to the mainland, two weeks from now, has made a lot of people nervous. And China's apparent attempt illegally to purchase favorable U.S. election results last year has made a lot of people angry. With reason.

Everything has gone wrong. So the hat-in-hand toothlessness of American engagement with China—symbolized by Vice President Gore's champagne-glass toast to Premier Li Peng a few months back—has never been more obvious. And *that* is what's at issue in next week's House MFN vote. It will not, and should not, primarily represent a judgment on how best to strengthen the American economy. It will not, and should not, serve simply to express distaste for Chinese communism. Instead, the MFN vote will be an up-or-down vote of confidence on U.S. China policy writ large.

We have no confidence in that policy. And we urge members of the House who share our misgivings, Republicans and Democrats alike, to use the MFN legislation to register their own disapproval. They likely won't get another chance until this time next year. Things can only get worse in the meantime.

Note how mechanical and incoherent the standard arguments *for* MFN have become. Sandy Berger, the president's national security adviser, takes leave of his senses and suggests that communism is "dying" in China, that market development there already "substitutes for ideology." This is a particularly goofball riff on the favorite "high-minded" claim of U.S. corporate chieftains: that face-to-face contact with American businessmen has an invaluable tutelary effect on the Chinese, and that if we withhold that contact by restricting trade then there will be no one left in China to preach the gospel of liberty. This is an oddly Marxist argument for capitalists to make, with its assumption that politics always follows money.

But MFN proponents do not really believe this eyewash about the special, missionary powers of U.S. dealmakers. They can't believe it; it is flatly inconsistent with all the other propaganda in their briefing books. MFN revocation will have *no* meaningful effect on the Chinese, the Clinton administration and its allies announce. If we pull out, the French and Germans and Japanese will quickly take our place. Why a French Airbus salesman cannot teach democracy as well as an American Boeing representative has never been explained.

In any case, it simply isn't true that the China trade is a zero-sum game, or that Beijing holds all the cards, or that U.S. workers and consumers must inevitably suffer from the higher tariffs on Chinese imports that MFN revocation would bring. The United States is 40 percent of China's export market, an amount equal to 2 or 3 percent of its entire gross domestic product. Our purchasing power is irreplaceable to Beijing; if they could ship those billions in manufactured goods someplace else, they would be doing it already. And if they cannot ship those goods to America, then "replacement" investment and export opportunities for our allies will vanish before they emerge. Beijing rigorously plans its trade, remember. It does not, for the most part, allow foreign-owned industry to sell stuff in China. Rather, Beijing imports raw materials only to manufacture goods for re-export—to the United

States, more than anywhere else.

MFN revocation *would* hurt the Chinese, in other words. A lot. Would it hurt the United States? Not nearly so much as the spooky numbers thrown around by MFN's defenders imply. We exported $12 billion to China last year. Sounds large. It isn't. It is less than 2 percent of our total foreign market, a fleaspeck on the American economy—a share of GDP somewhere between ten and twenty *thousandths* of 1 percent. We have other export markets; China is not the only developing country on earth. U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky says American shoppers will eat the full cost of higher Chinese tariffs and wind up paying $590 million more each year for shoes and such if MFN is repealed. So what? That $590 million is a "tax" on the average American of less than half a cent a day. But even this allegedly daunting prospect isn't very likely. The United States has other, non-Chinese sources of low-cost imports, too. The Philippines, Malaysia, India, Latin America—all would probably be delighted to make our sneakers.

Read the Clinton administration's speech texts carefully; they know the truth full well. The American economy "will survive and flourish," Sandy Berger acknowledges, *however* MFN is decided. What cannot survive and flourish without MFN is current American China diplomacy. Trade is the one weapon in America's arsenal that grabs Beijing's attention. President Clinton doesn't want to capture Beijing's attention. He hasn't the stomach for it. He denies even that it is necessary. Instead we need "a dialogue that expands the full breadth of our bilateral relationship" with the Chinese, says Secretary of State Albright. The "overall trend," she insists, is in the right direction.

This is offensive. In the past few weeks, as the MFN debate has wound to its conclusion, Beijing has denied medical treatment to two seriously ill imprisoned Shanghai dissidents, the brothers Yao Zhenxiang and Yao Zhenxian. Gao Feng, a Protestant activist, and Zhou Guoqiang, a dissident poet, have recently had their prison sentences extended by fiat—because they refuse to confess their "crimes." They are on a hunger strike. In the same Heilongjiang province labor camp, trade union organizer Liu Nianchun is on a similar hunger strike. Liu was healthy when he entered prison in May 1995. He now has a cancerous tumor, festering sores on his jaw, a blocked intestine, and severe rectal bleeding. He is being tortured with electrical batons and deprived of water. Liu's wife says she has written letters and made appeals to "every official body I can think of" but "no one has paid attention."

The Clinton administration declines to pay attention to Liu Nianchun—and thousands like him. The Clinton administration declines to pay attention when Beijing purchases U.S. technology for use in its ballistic-missile modernization program. The Clinton administration declines to pay attention to almost every threatening or inhuman gesture the Chinese make—because serious attention would demand a serious penalty. A trade penalty. And a trade penalty would harm our "dialogue."

To be sure, China-directed toadyism is a bipartisan affliction. Senator Phil Gramm of Texas tells the *Wall Street Journal* that MFN revocation would "limit my freedom." If "I want to buy a shirt made in China," he thunders, then by God that's his right as an American. The Constitution guarantees access to cheap T-shirts made by slave labor, apparently. House speaker Gingrich, for his part, is busy trying to sabotage the MFN vote. He has appointed a ten-member task force to come up with "alternative" China legislation designed to give the House protective political cover for approval of an MFN extension. Gingrich has given the task force only one instruction: no trade sanctions. Gingrich's initiative is worse than useless.

Defying the speaker, Republican Chris Cox of California, a stalwart critic of Beijing, will attempt to bring ten separate pieces of China legislation to the House floor—some of which *do* involve specialized trade sanctions—next week or soon thereafter. But the main and inescapable question will still be MFN. America has only one president and one China policy at a time. President Clinton's policy is appeasement. This year's roll call on MFN will be a referendum on appeasement. The honorable vote is no.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Tearing Down That Wall

by Peter Robinson

Last month, a television producer wanted to interview me for a piece on the tenth anniversary of President Reagan's address at the Berlin Wall, a speech I drafted. We met at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., so the crew could film the interview in front of the actual documents. I was looking forward to seeing the papers after a decade: my two drafts and the dozens of revisions and alternative

drafts that circulated when the State Department and the National Security Council responded with such contempt and vehemence to what I had written. That was the purpose of presidential libraries, after all, to keep intact the history of small but important aspects of the administrations whose papers they house.

No such luck. Two thick files were present, each containing dozens of pages, but they were the files assembled by the researcher who worked with me on the speech. They showed a great deal of what had taken place—I had forgotten that one NSC staffer had so objected to several pages that he had meticulously lined out every word. But my own file—the file with my notes, my first draft, and my comments on each of the subsequent drafts—was missing. "It never got shipped from the White House to the archives," a member of the library staff said.

CORBIS-BETTMANN/UPI

The sign on the Wall says: Attention! You are now leaving West Berlin.

In the library's small amphitheater, an older couple sat alone among the rows of benches, seeing a short film: President Reagan appears on a blue platform; behind him, through a big plexiglass window, you can see the Berlin Wall. Above him tower the pillars of the Brandenburg Gate. The president fixes his jaw. He speaks with controlled but genuine anger—he had learned shortly before delivering the speech that in East Berlin, on the other side of the Wall, a crowd had assembled to hear him, only to be dispersed by the police. He enunciates his words deliberately, so that the last four words, each a monosyllable, sound like hammer blows: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this Wall!"

The work I did on the speech was the most notable of my professional life. It proved a monumental struggle to get to the point at which President Reagan could speak those words that seemed fanciful even at the time I wrote them—words that would come gloriously true two and a half years later (even if it wasn't Mikhail Gorbachev doing the tearing down). The Berlin Wall address is merely one of half a dozen or more Reagan speeches that even now remain important—the Westminster address, the "evil empire" speech, the address at Moscow State University. But historians will have difficulty getting the story of the Berlin Wall address right, and not only because documents have disappeared. Ever since the Wall came down, people in and around the government in those days have sought credit in part or full for the speech. In Europe, recent articles have attributed it to John Kornblum, a career foreign-service officer, now ambassador-designate to Germany, who actually fought it tooth and nail.

Kornblum didn't write it. And, in some very important ways, I didn't write it either. The key phrase came from a woman I met at a dinner party, and the phrase remained in the speech solely because of Ronald Reagan.

In May 1987, when I was assigned the task of drafting the speech, Queen Elizabeth had already visited Berlin on the occasion of its 750th anniversary, and Gorbachev was due in a matter of days. All I had been told back in Washington was that the president would deliver the speech in front of the Wall and that he would be expected to speak for about 30 minutes. In Berlin for a day and a half with the White House advance team, I needed material, and I had my notebook ready when I met Kornblum, the ranking American diplomat in the city.

Kornblum, a stocky man with thick glasses, appeared impatient. He spoke rapidly. He kept looking up, as though searching the room for a more important member of the advance party with whom to speak. His comments ran roughly as follows:

Berlin is the most left-leaning of all West German cities. Be sophisticated. Don't let Reagan bash the Soviets. Don't mention the Wall. Berliners have gotten used to it. Mention American efforts to persuade the East Germans to permit more air routes into West Berlin. Talk about American support for West Berlin's bid to host the Olympics. Here in Berlin, where the conflict between the Communist world and the West was at its most visible, Kornblum was saying President Reagan should talk only about a grab-bag of minor diplomatic initiatives.

That evening I had dinner with a dozen or so West Berliners at the home of Dieter Elz, a retired World Bank official. I was the only American present, and I related what Kornblum had told me. "Is that true? Have you gotten used to the Wall?"

There was a silence. The West Berliners looked at one another, as if deciding who would go first. Then

one man spoke. "My sister lives 20 miles in that direction," he said, pointing with an outstretched arm, "but I haven't seen her in more than two decades. Do you think I can get used to that?" Another man spoke. On his way to work, he explained, he passed a guard tower. The same soldier peered down at him through binoculars each morning. "He speaks the same language I speak. He shares the same history. But one of us is an animal, and the other is a zookeeper, and I am never quite certain which is which." Our hostess, Frau Elz, broke in. She was a gracious, pleasant woman, probably in her mid-50s, but she was angry. She made a fist of one hand and slapped it into the palm of the other. "If this man Gorbachev is serious with his talk of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, he can prove it. He can get rid of this Wall."

Back in the office, I adapted Frau Elz's comment about Gorbachev, making it the central passage of the speech. Two weeks later, after two drafts, the speechwriters joined President Reagan in the Oval Office. Tom Griscom, the director of communications, asked the president for his comments on the Berlin speech. The president said simply that he liked it. Griscom nodded to me.

"Mr. President," I said, "I learned in Germany that your speech will be heard by radio throughout East Germany. Depending on weather conditions, it might even be heard as far east as Moscow. Is there anything you want to say to people on the other side of the Berlin Wall?"

"Well, there's that passage about tearing down the Wall," Reagan said. "That Wall has to come down. That's what I'd like to say."

The speech was circulated to the State Department and the National Security Council three weeks before it was to be delivered. For three weeks, State and the NSC fought the speech. They argued that it was crude. They claimed that it was unduly provocative. They asserted that the passage about the Wall amounted to a cruel gimmick, one that would unfairly raise Berliners' hopes. There were telephone calls, memoranda, and meetings. State and the NSC submitted their own, alternative drafts—as best I recall, there were seven—one of them composed by Kornblum. In each, the call for Gorbachev to tear down the Wall was missing.

This presented Tom Griscom with a problem. On the one hand, he had objections to the speech from virtually the entire foreign-policy apparatus of the U.S. government. On the other, he had Ronald Reagan. The president liked the speech. Griscom had heard him say so. The president especially liked the passage about tearing down the Berlin Wall, the very part of the speech to which the foreign-policy experts were most vehemently opposed. If that passage had to come out, it would be Griscom's job to explain to Reagan why.

The week before the president's departure, the battle reached a pitch. Every time State or the NSC registered a new objection to the speech, Griscom summoned me to his office, where he had me tell him, one more time, why I was convinced State and the NSC were wrong, and the speech, as I had written it, was right. (On one of these occasions, Colin Powell, then national security adviser, was waiting in Griscom's office for me. I held my ground as best I could.) Griscom was evidently waiting for an objection that he believed Ronald Reagan himself would find compelling. He never heard it. When the president departed for the Venice summit, he took with him the speech I had written.

FOR THREE WEEKS, STATE AND THE NSC FOUGHT THE SPEECH. THEY ARGUED THAT IT WAS CRUDE AND UNDULY PROVOCATIVE.

On the very morning Air Force One left Venice for Berlin, the State Department and the National Security Council made a last effort to block the speech, forwarding yet another alternative draft. Griscom chose not to take it to the forward cabin. Air Force One landed. Hours later, President Reagan delivered his speech.

There is a school of thought that Ronald Reagan managed to look good only because he had clever writers putting words into his mouth. (Perhaps the leading exponent is my former colleague Peggy Noonan, who while a Reagan speechwriter appeared in a magazine article under a caption that said just that: "The woman who puts the words in the president's mouth.") There is a basic problem with this view. Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, George Bush, and Bob Dole all had clever writers. Why wasn't one of them the Great Communicator?

Because we, his speechwriters, were not creating Reagan; we were stealing from him. Reagan's policies were straightforward—he had been articulating them for two decades. When the State Department and the National Security Council began attempting to block my draft by submitting alternative drafts, they weakened their own case. Their drafts lacked boldness. They conveyed no sense of conviction. They had not stolen, as I had, from Frau Elz—and from Ronald Reagan.

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Those Crazy Americans

by Andrew Ferguson

EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING, but do you feel Bloated? Callous and Vain, perhaps? How about Schizo and Talky, Robotic and Obvious and Cutthroat? No? Not even the teensiest bit Powerless and Shortsighted? Then the patriotic editors of the *New York Times Magazine* have a simple question for you: *You call yourself an American?*

They'd never come right out and demand an answer, of course; editors at the *New York Times* are decorous ladies and gentlemen. But the question rises implicitly from every page of the June 8 number of the *Times* Sunday magazine. This was a special issue, a plump and portentous project, titled "How the World Sees Us." From 18 countries the editors ingathered prestigious contributors. How prestigious? "Three Nobelists; leaders from the world of finance, advertising and media; chefs," and so on. Very prestigious, in other words. The *Times* asked each to delineate some aspect of the American character, and the responses took the form of brief essays or transcribed interviews. Each contribution was given a one-word title—the adjectives (Robotic, Schizo, etc.) you see above. Also Trendy, Assertive, Relentless, Fleeting, and Hellbent. As an instance of How the World Sees Us, the special issue is unreliable; but as an instance of How the *New York Times* Sees Us, it is definitive.

Of course, not all the contributions were derisive. Some verged on the complimentary. The British historian John Keegan, in "Powerful," points out that we have a beefy, well-armed military, some of whose officers are even black. The Greek journalist/rich person Taki says we're Forgiving, and the German historian Josef Joffe, in a splendid opening essay, opines that the United States is rightly a model for the world. Two management consultants from Italy, whose names are too long to print here, think we're Plucky.

Not surprisingly, many of these compliments are backhanded. A novelist from Moscow named Victor Pelevin searched and searched and discovered something to love about America: our bold, expressive, colorful . . . graffiti. (Russian graffiti are totally derivative, complains this self-hater.) A young German Internet expert thinks Americans are "cool"; yet his only evidence is the 1960s sitcom *Hogan's Heroes*, which tends to undercut his argument. Vikram Chandra admires the technical proficiency and big budgets of Hollywood movies—especially (he's a writer) the big budgets—but gosh, they're so soulless. In the end he decides he prefers "cheesey Hindi movies with half-naked guys and babes dancing in the rain." Who can blame him?

But mostly the tone of the *Times*'s special issue is unmitigated contempt. In the specific examples the contempt is scattershot, often contradictory, but this seems not to matter to the editors. Gina Lollabrigida, who's been chunking up steadily since her starlet days, complains in "Vain" that Yank gals are obsessed with dieting. In "Bloated," the Brit writer Marina Warner says we're too fat. "Bigness still defines America," she writes, "but a bigness grown pillowy and flaccid and fluffy and fat like baby flesh." A fat Bigness? A Big fatness? Are we all really, as Gene Wilder said to Zero Mostel in *The Producers*, "big fat fat fat fatties"? Surely this is an odd charge to bring against the country that has offered Tyra Banks to the world. But Marina Warner's view is too large to be restrained by evidence. "This nexus of ideas," she continues, "[has] buried phallic hardness under an esthetic of polymorphous billowing flesh." So there.

Speaking of phallic hardness, Arnon Grunberg's got a problem. In the American vernacular: He ain't gettin' any. He's from the Netherlands but lives in Manhattan, and you would not believe the look his English teacher gave him when he tried to sleep with her. "You're my student," she protested. These Americans! So uptight! "Americans are unembarrassable," says Martin Amis. "They'll invite a camera crew into their toilet out of a general openness." These Americans! So uninhibited!

Are you confused? It would take a Nobel prizewinner to straighten this whole thing out, and the *Times*, as noted, has not one but three. Wole Soyinka, perhaps the greatest belletrist in all of Nigeria, clears it up like so: "Americans are so open, so uninhibited, but it's really all a façade. You censor language, you censor conduct." Not like in Nigeria. Then again, "something must be done about this shameless glorification of self-exposure. It's something my society would find soul-destroying." Better to keep busy with something wholesome and soul-enriching, like starving all the Biafrans.

Soyinka's views, though incoherent, at least have the virtue of originality. It's not every day that Americans are told they could improve their country by making it more like Nigeria. Most of the other contributors reach for pre-packaged criticisms. To recap: Americans, say the *Times* experts, are too fat and diet too much; they're straitlaced Puritans with no sense of privacy or shame. Does the special issue omit *any* anti-American clichés? No, they are all here. The *Times* overlooks nothing. It is the newspaper of record.

Thus: "Once they gave me a bottle of [Budweiser] in Texas," says a Belgian master brewer. "I said: 'This

is reinvented water. You don't need a brewery to bottle water.' It's an alcoholized soft drink." My God—European brewers don't like American beer? "You Americans may have everything but you don't have this: Our fervent, expressive passion," says Mayra Montero, a novelist who hails from that volcano of unfettered self-expression, Cuba. Another writer, Britain's Ian Hamilton, complains that when he writes for American publications, they often ask him to check his facts. (Barbarians!) The result, he thinks, is a loss of *joie d'écrire*, as the British say.

There is not, in truth, a great deal of *joie* in the special issue's *écrire*, either. Even what were once thought to be virtues prove deficient when measured by the *Times*'s contributors. Oral hygiene, for example. "Those with perfect teeth unwittingly suffer a loss," writes yet another German. "They cannot appreciate the idea that natural diversity or incompleteness is part of a person's character." I myself would have thought that people with little gray stumps on their gums were the ones suffering a loss, but what do I know? I'm an American—a Yankee—a jingo—a *flosser*.

But enough, enough. It would surely devastate the *Times* editors—who prize sophisticated hipness, being ahead of the curve, above all—to point out that there is something hopelessly retrograde about their orgy of anti-Americanism. It seems so . . . *so 1983*. The Soviet Union's collapsed, Reagan's retired, and the *Times*'s editors have yet to scrape the "U.S. Out of Nicaragua" bumperstickers from their Volvos. They should get hep to the times. How about a special issue devoted to "How *We* See *Them*"? On Britain: Can they learn to bathe? France: If we invade, will they fight back this time? India: What's with those suits? And, yes, Germany: Nothing a little fluoride can't fix. The great anti-American cliché once had to do with "getting on the right side of history." It is of course unreasonable to expect the editors of the *New York Times* to avoid clichés. But we still might get them to switch sides.

Senior editor Andrew Ferguson wrote last week's cover story on John Kasich.

The Pope Hits Home

by Russell Hittinger

In his fourth visit since leaving Krakow for Rome, John Paul II returned home last week at a crucial moment for his native Poland. Sometimes comically, but more often tragically, the cycles of modern European history either begin or end in Poland. The historian Norman Davies aptly called Poland "God's Playground." Today, this is truer than ever. Poland is the laboratory for an unprecedented experiment: Can a Catholic nation adopt liberal constitutional and economic institutions and still retain its Catholicism? Do Catholicism and liberal institutions stand to each other as a mutual blessing or a curse?

History has conspired to make Poland the most Catholic country in Europe, if not the world. The demographics over time are instructive: When Poland was partitioned among Prussia, Austria, and Russia in 1795, only 50 percent of the population was Catholic; between the two world wars, when Poland was briefly reunified, Catholics comprised 66 percent. But after the murder of some 3 million Polish Jews, and after the expulsion of Ukrainians and Germans by the Communists, Poland awoke to find itself 96 percent Catholic. The Poles have had only 50 years to reckon with the implications of such a religiously homogeneous society.

No matter how the Poles resolve this question, the pope insists that they reject the dichotomies afforded by elite opinion in the West. Neither Francisco Franco nor John Rawls—neither a clerical management of politics under the veil of civil authority nor a radically secularized and entirely procedural public order—will work for Poland.

Predictably, the Western media imposed precisely this dichotomy on the pope's sermons and allocutions in Poland. Take for example two widely reported comments about economics. In the homily he delivered in Wroclaw, the pope remarked: "May solidarity prevail over the unrestrained desire for profit and ways of applying trade laws which do not take into account inalienable human rights." Addressing the problem of economic dislocation and unemployment the next day in Legnica, he said that legislators have an obligation to "guide the national economy in such a way that these painful phenomena of social life find a proper solution." The Western press said the pope was inviting the Poles to choose between free markets and command economies and, on the basis of Catholic principles, to choose the latter.

But the pope was suggesting no such thing. The leitmotif of his sermon in Wroclaw was the rejection of a false dichotomy of liberty and moral virtue. Indeed, his remarks about solidarity were immediately aimed at the issue of European unity. Poland is soon to join

NATO, and, with an impressive economic growth rate of 6 percent annually, it will be a major player in the new economic union. The pope was saying that the unity of Europe cannot be understood merely by economic criteria. In Kalisz two days later, he maintained that the "permanent measures" of a civilization are religious, moral, and political. Only a "barbarian civilization," he warned, judges itself solely by rates of economic growth. At several stops along the way of his visit, he claimed that the vocation of Poland is to teach Europe something more profound "than high economic standards." Yet nowhere did he quarrel with those high economic standards.

His comment in Legnica about political management of the economy was carefully worded. He did not say that the state must be the only agent of justice with respect to the poor and unemployed. In the very next sentence, he emphasized the importance of "volunteer associations and works of charity." The pope knows perfectly well that free markets are an achievement and not a curse. Twice he went out of his way to praise the Poles for their "dynamic economy." What he was rejecting is the idea that markets in themselves supply the moral and religious criteria for the common good. In Poland, where some 70 percent of the population regularly takes communion, the people's piety should influence public policies on how to care for the poor.

It's an open question how the Poles will reconcile their commitment to political liberty with their commitment to their church. Just three weeks before the pope's visit, the Polish hierarchy and Solidarity lobbied—unsuccessfully—to stop ratification of the new constitution, which mentions in its preamble the parity between Poles who believe in the Christian religion and those who draw "universal truths from other sources." The opposition seemed intent on making the constitutional order depend on Catholic orthodoxy. At the same time, ex-Communists like the Polish president, Aleksander Kwasniewski, are fiercely critical of the Constitutional Tribunal, which last month struck down major provisions of a liberalized abortion-rights law five months after its enactment. Although the judicial action was based on a civil right to life described in ordinary juridical, rather than theological, terms, the church and Solidarity were blamed for turning the clock back on liberties enjoyed under communism.

The ex-Communist yuppies have transformed themselves into liberals who take the high road in debate about individual liberties. Yet their cultural authority is very weak. In a protracted political and cultural struggle for the soul of Poland, the secularists would have no reasonable hope of winning. For its part, the church is the more powerful force; at the end of the day, the situation will be resolved according to the path it adopts. If it moves into a position of reaction, the church could exercise a kind of veto power over the course of politics, but it would prove a Pyrrhic victory—not unlike the Republican Congress's shutting down the government.

With this in mind, the pope's address in Krakow to the Polish bishops was especially important. He pointed out that "in the previous system the Church created as it were a space where the individual and the nation could defend their rights; now man must find a space in the Church in order to defend himself, in a certain sense, from himself: from the misuse of his freedom, from the squandering of a great historic opportunity for the nation." In comparing the tyranny of foreign oppression with slavery to immorality and secularism, the pope was saying that the question is not whether a Catholic nation can enjoy political and economic liberty and still be Catholic, but whether those very liberties can flourish without Gospel values. These are fighting words, and the Polish hierarchy liked what it heard.

But the pope made two further remarks that are crucial to the political situation in Poland. First, he counseled the bishops not to confuse two kinds of criticism of the church. On one hand, there is political criticism that must be expected in a free and democratic polity. In fact, he noted that they must accept "whatever is correct in this criticism." Then, there is another kind of criticism that is a "coefficient of the Gospel message." Wherever the truth is preached, men and women will reject it. This should not be the cause of chronic political reaction on the part of the church. It goes with the territory, and this territory includes the religious mystery of human freedom.

Second, and most important, the pope strongly advised the Polish bishops to let the laity assume responsibility for political and economic development. "They certainly must be helped," he said, "but no one should take their place." Translated into concrete terms, if Beavis and Butt-head are kept off television in Krakow, it would be suicidal both to church authority and to democracy to have the cardinal archbishop's hand on the plug.

Whether the Polish hierarchy will be satisfied to have a Catholic-inspired democracy that is distinct from a clerically managed one is the key issue. The pope invited the episcopacy to engage in something like a highwire act, leaning in one direction toward a vigorous Catholic culture, while leaning in the other away from direct clerical intrusion into politics. It will take extraordinary prudence—even statesmanship—to pull it off.

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Bully for America

What Teddy Roosevelt Teaches

By David Brooks

Politicians decorate their offices with mementos of the power they have and portraits to remind them of the virtues they wish to possess. And if you go to a politician's office these days and look over his shoulder as he's charming you with his geniality, you're likely to spot the stern and determined face of Teddy Roosevelt staring down at you, looking not at all pleased. Bill Clinton has a bust of Teddy Roosevelt on his desk. George Bush gave TR pride of place in the Cabinet Room. Ross Perot has a Roosevelt bust next to the door leading to his office. When Bob Dole left the Senate, his fellow Republicans gave him a TR statue to take with him.

Meanwhile, Newt Gingrich constantly invokes the Rough Rider. Ultra-liberal senator and presidential hopeful Paul Wellstone used images of TR on his campaign posters, while ultra-conservative commentator and presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan touts him on *Crossfire*.

It's all a little odd, because ours is not an era in which Roosevelt would have felt at home, with its gentle focus-group politics, its rituals of self-exposure, and its soft gender-gap issues. Nonetheless, deep in the heart of many American leaders there seems to lurk Rooseveltian longings.

It's possible Theodore Roosevelt represents a style of masculine leadership that it is now impermissible to talk about—at least without getting ridiculed. But deeper than that, Teddy Roosevelt embodies a governing philosophy that has been drained out of the American debate, and many politicians of many ideologies instinctively feel its loss.

Roosevelt was a nationalist. One reason the Republican party seems so shallow since the departure of Ronald Reagan is that it has largely abandoned the nationalist impulse and with it the mystic chords of national memory that play in people's hearts. Republicans in the post-Reagan era can play to narrow self-interest—more money in your pocket—and they can play to the desire for freedom—get government off your back. But the GOP no longer speaks persuasively about a national destiny.

There are, of course, many different kinds of nationalism. Roosevelt's was a distinctly American kind that married nationalism to individualism. This tradition, which draws on Alexander Hamilton, Henry Clay, and Abraham Lincoln, balances individual economic opportunity with national political and cultural union. It believes in economic diversity mitigated by social cohesion. It is a tradition far less populist than the present-day Republican party, and far less anti-statist. Unlike the present-day Republican party, it is a tradition that calls forth government activism.

Before Americans learned to hate big government, they respected limited, vigorous government that tackled concrete problems. And when it was founded out of the husk of the Whig party, the Republican party was that kind of energetic government's champion. In the 19th century and up through the era of Teddy Roosevelt, the Republicans were the party of a dynamic federal government while the Democratic party stood for laissez faire and states' rights. When you look at the Lincoln presidency, for example, you see dizzying activism: Not only the strengthening of the executive prompted by the Civil War, but a slew of federal programs such as the Homestead Act, a land-grant college act, a Pacific railroad act, an act providing government loans and land grants for a transcontinental railroad, a banking act, and a higher tariff.

But this was not liberal activism of the sort we are familiar with. The Republican activists didn't use government to make an egalitarian utopia, and they didn't look to government to create a new sort of compassionate society, or to create a secure and comfortable nanny state. These Republican activists considered themselves conservatives, and with their concern for preserving order, protecting property, and promoting a distinctly American cultural heritage, they were right.

Obviously the leading lights of the tradition that culminated with Teddy Roosevelt are not religious

Senior editor David Brooks's last cover story for The Weekly Standard *was "A Return to National Greatness" (March 3).*

icons. They're not prophets who deliver unto us great truths about how to conduct politics at the turn of this century. But the Roosevelt example does suggest a different approach for today's Republican party, an agenda that will help Republicans accomplish the delicate balancing act that lies before them: Namely, as Gertrude Himmelfarb captures it in a recent essay in *Commentary*, "To discredit and dismantle the welfare state while retaining a healthy respect for the state itself and its institutions."

Teddy Roosevelt is still best known for his trust-busting and his attacks on the "malefactors of great wealth," a charge that doesn't seem very Republican to our ears. And it's true that TR was no great admirer of the business community. He grew up with inherited wealth and never really worked in business.

Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library

But TR was by no means anti-capitalist. He opposed some trusts—notably the railway trusts—because they discriminated against small businesses by setting lower freight rates or offering rebates for well-connected, big clients such as Standard Oil, the Armour Company, and the American Sugar Refining Company. Far from trying to soften the marketplace, TR was trying to help small companies compete with the big ones. "The true function of the state, as it interferes in social life," TR wrote, "should be to make the chances of competition more even, not to abolish them."

By crushing competition, Roosevelt felt the trusts had made themselves the enemies of the three values he championed in his 1905 inaugural address: "Energy, self-reliance and individual initiative." He was a walking advertisement for a certain sort of vigorous individual, whose life was taken up with striving, ambition, and moral responsibility. "The chief factor in the success of each man—wageworker, farmworker and capitalist alike," he preached, "must ever be the sum total of his own individual qualities and abilities. Second only to this comes the power of acting in combination or association with others."

It's the individualistic half of Roosevelt that is most congenial to modern conservatives. Searching for the core of Margaret Thatcher's philosophy, the British writer Shirley Robin Letwin concluded that Thatcherism was designed to promote the individual who possesses the vigorous virtues: who is "upright, self-sufficient, energetic, adventurous, independent-minded, loyal to friends and robust against enemies." That's a list Roosevelt would have admired. And Letwin argues that Thatcher tried to encourage home ownership, spread share ownership, and spur entrepreneurial activity by deregulation exactly to promote those vigorous qualities. In America the supply-side movement in the Reagan years argued for a reduction in marginal tax rates using the same moral vocabulary—because low rates would encourage risk-taking and entrepreneurial heroism. Under Roosevelt and Reagan, Republicans stood for the full, strenuous life over the secure, comfortable one.

Today, in a global marketplace, corporations rarely succeed in using monopoly status to crush competition. But corporations do seek unfair competitive advantage nonetheless, often by manipulating government. They lobby for corporate welfare programs that reduce the risks they have to take to create and design new products and find new markets. They seek environmental regulations that will reward their kind of pollution-control equipment and impose costs on their competitors' kind. They seek to entrench regulatory hurdles on, say, drug approval so that upstart competitors will not be able to afford the long lead times caused by the regulatory review process. A Teddy Roosevelt figure today, seeking to enhance competition and protect the upstart firm, might begin by declaring a Square Deal for American business. That would mean a radical reduction in those tax loopholes, corporate subsidies, and regulatory rules that give some companies competitive advantage over their rivals; in exchange, all companies would get a 1 or 2 percent cut in the corporate tax rate.

Second, while private trusts are no longer much of a problem, today we are faced with the public-sector

trusts: a Medicare system that doesn't allow people to take control of their own health-care choices, a social-security monopoly that takes pension responsibility out of the hands of individuals, a public-school trust that squashes vigorous competition. A Roosevelt agenda for today would dismantle these. It would encourage parents to become actively involved in selecting the best education for their children. It would encourage energy, self-reliance, and individual initiative when it comes to selecting a pension or choosing among health-care options.

These are not exactly novel ideas; they are part of the broader Republican agenda now. But the problem with the Republican party is not that it doesn't have good policy proposals. The problem is that it lacks a governing *philosophy*, a set of ideas to help Republican officials organize their thinking while they serve in government and use the power of government to conservative ends.

Instead, Republicans, overreliant on anti-statist rhetoric, have encouraged people to despise government or to think of Washington as some alien malevolence. In so doing, the Republicans have ended up soiling their own nest. Americans now distrust government so much, they don't trust Republicans to reform it. Moreover, voters have simply abandoned the public realm, retreating from politics into the realm of private concerns that is the natural milieu of Dick Morris and Bill Clinton—a president who goes on the radio and courageously supports safe car seats for babies.

Teddy Roosevelt, on the other hand, was a conservative who didn't have a bad conscience about serving in government. He believed that public service was the highest calling because he believed the country needed a dynamic federal government to hold together the heroic and rambunctious innovators and opportunists within its borders. TR was able to relegitimize public life in a time of corruption and apathy, exactly the sort of task the Republicans need to undertake if they are going to persuade the American people to accept their other reforms.

TR was a firm subscriber to that most conservative belief, the pervasiveness of sin. As he said in his final message to Congress in 1909, "Every new social relation begets a new type of wrong doing—of sin, to use an old-fashioned word—and many years always elapse before society is able to turn this sin into crime which can be effectively punished at law." He was more likely than today's free-marketeers to believe that people would use their strength in the marketplace to oppress others. Therefore, TR felt that government must work as a rapid deployment force to crush malefactors. He stepped in to clean up the meat-packing industry. With characteristic evenhandedness, he stepped in when coal operators were thuggish toward striking workers and he stepped in when miners' unions were thuggish toward the operators. He slammed both the Wall Street titans and the muckrakers who he thought were committing journalistic violence against them. Ever the buttinsky, TR even stepped in to make college football safer.

In many ways TR's style of conservative activism is his most influential legacy. The closest thing we have to it today is New York mayor Rudy Giuliani. Like Roosevelt, whose picture adorns Giuliani's office wall, the mayor straps on his armor each morning to battle entrenched interests that inhibit competition, whether it is the Mafiosi who rig the fish and trash-collection markets, or the education and police bureaucrats who inhibit competition between schools or precincts. Giuliani, like TR, believes that, done right, government activism is a good thing. He brags that his most important achievement is to demonstrate that New York is governable, that the problems of crime and incivility, which many people had concluded were beyond control, can in fact be meliorated by a strong magistrate.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT WAS A FIRM SUBSCRIBER TO THAT MOST CONSERVATIVE BELIEF, THE PERVASIVENESS OF SIN.

Teddy Roosevelt's attitude toward immigration offers a good example of how he married his faith in individual opportunity to his belief in an active government that fosters national union. Roosevelt supported relatively open immigration. He opposed the nativist sentiment that was prevalent at the time, as exemplified by the American Protective Association, an anti-Catholic group.

But TR was acutely conscious of the dangers of ethnic and racial separatism. "We freely extend the hand of welcome and of good fellowship to every man and woman, no matter their creed or birthplace, who comes here honestly intent on becoming a good citizen like the rest of us," he wrote in an essay published in 1894 in a magazine called the *Forum*, "but we have a right and it is our duty to demand that they shall indeed become so." That meant, in Roosevelt's eyes,

the immigrant had to leave Old World quarrels behind. It meant he had to learn English—"We believe that English and no other language is that in which all school exercises should be conducted." And it meant no ethnic voting: "We have no room in a healthy American community for a German-American vote or an Irish-American vote and it is contemptible demagoguery to put into any party platform [rhetoric] with the purpose of catching such a vote."

He summed up, "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism."

TR was not always as good as his rhetoric. His record on racial equality was mediocre. But his noblest intentions provide clear guidance to those who seek to follow in his tradition. "The time has arrived," he said in 1901, "when we should definitely make up our minds to recognize the Indian as an individual and not as a member of a tribe." Above all, the government, he insisted, should promote Americanism (a word that has since slipped into the category of phrases only used ironically).

From the beginnings of his political climb, Roosevelt's speeches rang with fervent paeans to American unity. And toward the end of his career, he delivered his famous New Nationalism speech in Osawatomie, Kansas, which opened with an invocation of the soldiers who died for the Union in the Civil War. Because of their sacrifice, we belong "not to one of a dozen little squabbling commonwealths" but to "the mightiest nation upon which the sun shines."

One way to promote a sense of national union, TR recognized, was to conduct an active foreign policy that demonstrates America's distinct national character and reminds diverse Americans of their common role in the world. His famous 1899 address, "The Strenuous Life," was in fact a foreign policy speech arguing that just as a great individual should choose a life of effort and ambition, so should a great nation. "We cannot sit huddled within our borders and avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond," TR declared. Later, in 1905, he argued that just as individuals have moral responsibilities, so do nations: "We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities." He put this creed into practice in a number of ways. First, he built up American military power, particularly the Navy. During his presidency he increased the number of American battleships from 17 to 27. The number of naval enlisted men rose by 19,000 to 44,500. He achieved these increases in military power at a time when Americans were bored by foreign affairs and suspicious of foreign entanglements.

Furthermore, he argued that America should play global policeman where agents of chaos threatened world order. He was an avid, maybe too avid, guardian of American power in the Western hemisphere. He

turned out to be a deft mediator (winning the Nobel Peace prize for helping to resolve the Russo-Japanese War) and believed that it was America's role to preserve the balance of power between other great nations. He warned that American foreign policy should be conducted on more than merely commercial grounds. And, being a nationalist, he strongly opposed the global idealism later advanced by Woodrow Wilson.

Domestically, Whigs and Republicans in the nationalist tradition have supported great projects designed to physically and spiritually unify the nation: canals, railroads, roads, and highways to knit the national economy. They have funded science and engineering projects like the Hoover Dam or TR's own Panama Canal to give the nation common pursuits. These efforts were not based on airy goals about a better society, like a vague war on poverty. They were literally concrete missions with concrete goals.

Teddy Roosevelt also used federal power to promote unifying cultural institutions. "There should be a national gallery of art established in the capital city of this country," he wrote to Congress in 1907. He had already, in 1906, played a key role in helping the federal government acquire the art collection of Charles L. Freer, which is now displayed in its own building on the Mall. Roosevelt set up the Council of Fine Arts Council, to provide guidance to government agencies on artistic matters. Unlike governors and senators today, who too often let bureaucrats make architectural and aesthetic decisions, Roosevelt was deeply involved in these matters. "Would it be possible," he asked his treasury secretary, "without asking permission of Congress to employ a man like [Augustus] Saint-Gaudens to give us a coinage that would have some beauty?" Roosevelt didn't spend arts money as we do today, out of the vague sentiment that art is good and there should be more appreciation of it. Rather, he spent public money to express a unifying American creed and to make manifest American glory. A genuine historian, he was careful to preserve and champion the national heritage. The National Monuments Act was passed in 1906; there would be 18 undertaken during TR's presidency.

Since this is a New World country, America's spiritual sense of itself has always been lodged in its natural frontiers, and TR was keen to preserve that as well. He has developed a bad reputation among some current Republicans as a proto-environmentalist. But it's simply wrong to read today's environmental pseudo-religion back onto TR. In fact, his environmental policy, like so much else, was a careful balancing of the need for individual initiative and the need to preserve the national patrimony. Here's a passage from a 1908 speech that is worth quoting at length, especially for the last seven words:

> There has been a good deal of a demand for unrestricted individualism, for the right of the individual to injure the future of all of us for his own temporary and immediate profit. The time has come for a change. As a people we have the right and the duty, second to none other but the right and duty of obeying the moral law, of requiring and doing justice, and to protect ourselves and our children against the wasteful development of our natural resources, whether that waste is caused by the actual destruction of such resources or by making them impossible of development hereafter.

Roosevelt was no enemy of consumption and had no guilt about his or the nation's wealth. His was a prosperous environmentalism. "The fundamental idea of forestry is the perpetuation of forests by use," he argued. His environmental guru, Gifford Pinchot, underlined the sentiment. Forests, he said, are not preserved "because they are beautiful . . . or because they are refuges for the wild creatures of the wilderness." The primary goal, rather, was to produce products to build "prosperous homes. . . . Every other consideration is secondary."

Roosevelt pioneered the national parks, set up a game preserve in the Grand Canyon, and even issued hunting regulations for the District of Columbia. The Newlands Act asserted that vast tracts of land were part of the American patrimony. It set up national control over resource policy. But these measures were supported by the forestry industry as well as conservationists. Roosevelt believed in preservation by use, a rough balance that ideally allows for economic opportunity and the safeguarding of national treasures, a balance not often evident in today's environmental movement.

Theodore Roosevelt was a creature of his time, and there are aspects of his governing philosophy that we wouldn't want to duplicate. Living when government was reasonably small, he did not appreciate the potential arrogance of government bureaucrats. He was more taken with the idea of disinterested experts than we could be after the lessons of Hayek and James Buchanan. He was a believer in the distinction between the civilized and uncivilized races. He lived in an age of consolidation, when small units were amalgamating into large companies and large organizations, so some of his formulae are inappropriate in our decentralizing age.

continued on page 23

continued from page 18

But these days the Teddy Roosevelt tradition is worth reviving even if the man himself is inimitable. This nationalist-individualist tradition is more optimistic and forward-looking than the styles of nationalism preached by Pat Buchanan or Michael Lind. It's more inspiring than the pure private-sector individualism of Dick Armey or the cut-their-pay-and-send-them-home populism of Lamar Alexander. It doesn't invade private life as aggressively as the social conservatives sometimes do, and it is not as mushy as the communitarians. There is an agenda that can be built on the back of the Roosevelt tradition: rolling back the nanny state; eliminating regulations and subsidies that inhibit competition; conducting a strenuous and democratic foreign policy; promoting national cohesion through cultural policy and national education standards to balance school choice; beautifying public spaces and the public infrastructure with nationalistic public projects; funding basic scientific research while restricting the use of technologies like cloning that violate American decency.

As Harvey Mansfield wrote in this magazine last year, one of the worst effects of the vast post-Great Society government is that it has caused Americans to lose all respect for our government. The welfare state was supposed to bring America together; instead it has stirred up resentment and weakened national attachments. A Republican agenda of limited but energetic government could restore lost luster to our public square. In this square, there should be a statue of TR, challenging us from a pedestal in the corner. ♦

The Coming of the Super-Preachers

By John J. Dilulio, Jr.

From a distance, Rev. Anthony Nathaniel Lucas, 31, could easily be mistaken for one of the 1,500 inner-city black youths, most of them male, who do homework, play basketball, learn martial arts, get medical check-ups, search for summer jobs, catch occasional meals, and pack the pews to pray at his Skekinah Youth Chapel in Southeast Queens, New York. Even up close, the personable Lucas looks like a late-teen version of Flip Wilson, the 1960s comedy sensation whose signature catchphrase was "The *devil* made me do it!"

But on this crisp Saturday morning in April, it's the devil who's in trouble as Lucas, dozens of other inner-city clergy, and hundreds of church volunteers crowd together under the auspices of the New York Theological Seminary for a "youth summit" dedicated to thanking Jesus and "finding ways to save our children and solve community problems." The seminary boasts a network of over 2,000 pastors in the metropolitan New York region—pastors like Lucas who minister to the spiritual and material needs of young people in the most jobless, drug-and-crime-infested urban neighborhoods.

Rev. Harold Dean Trulear, 44, is one of Lucas's mentors. Trulear's youth ministry in Paterson, N.J., was the untold story behind Joe Clark, the bat-wielding black principal who stopped violence and brought a sense of community to the city's worst public high school in the mid 1980s. "In the movie about Clark, they kept in the bat but left out the Bible," Trulear says of the 1989 hit *Lean on Me*. "I had a key to that school, and adult church volunteers worked with those kids, too. . . . But in today's Hollywood culture—in today's elite culture generally, I suppose—anything is less controversial or more acceptable than acknowledging the power of God and the good works of those who minister and solve social problems in His name."

Rev. Eugene F. Rivers III, pastor of Boston's Azusa Christian Community, could not agree more. After years as a member of one of Philadelphia's most violent street gangs, Rivers himself was saved ("both my hide and my soul") through the youth outreach ministry of the legendary Pentecostalist pastor Benjamin

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"Pops" Smith. Rivers and Rev. Jeffrey Brown lead a 43-church community-development and youth-outreach ministry in Boston's impoverished Dorchester neighborhood. Local police, probation, and community leaders have credited the program with driving down youth homicides and other juvenile crimes in Boston.

Joined by Trulear, Rev. Kevin Cosby of Louisville, Kentucky, and other black clergy from across the country, Rivers announced the establishment of a national "leadership foundation" earlier this year. The foundation is dedicated to mobilizing 1,000 black inner-city churches around a 10-point plan for reducing black-on-black youth violence, creating jobs, promoting literacy, and more. Rivers and allied ministers have been working on, writing about, and "praying on" this 1,000-church plan for a half-decade. "There are," insists Rivers, "thousands and thousands of black clergy out there, including many younger working-class folks, who love Jesus and aren't hiding out in the suburbs. They are willing to work for real with our most at-risk kids, including the potential super-predators, getting paid for maybe 20 hours but giving 80 hours and literally falling asleep in their clothes. . . . I've been at this for over 20 years now, and I know they are out there and ready to move."

In an article for this magazine 18 months ago, I warned of the "Coming of the Super-Predators" Rivers talks about—children of every race and region who are severely abused and neglected and could well grow into the largest cohort of remorseless, conscienceless street criminals and gang members this nation has ever known. Now it is time to speak of the "Coming of the Super-Preachers" whose mission it is to save the super-predators from themselves—to defuse the demographic time bomb through faith and love. Carrying out this mission among young black inner-city males could prove especially crucial because no at-risk youth population is more likely to suffer or inflict violent crime, father illegitimate children, mature without basic job skills, or end up in an early grave or a high-security prison. But are many such black super-preachers "out there," and if so, what, if any, difference might they and their church volunteers really make?

As Gallup reports, black Americans "of all faiths are in many ways the most religious people in America." Some 82 percent of blacks are church members, and the same number say that religion is very important in their everyday lives (compared with 58 percent of all Americans). Moreover, 86 percent of blacks, versus about 61 percent of all Americans, believe that religion, spirituality, churches, or faith-based organizations can help to solve contemporary social problems.

For this reason alone, churches are clearly the ideal—indeed, in most cases, the only—mediating institutions in black inner-city neighborhoods. A 1990 study of over 2,100 urban black congregations found that about 70 percent of the churches ran or participated directly in community outreach activities—staffing day-care facilities, offering drug- and alcohol-abuse prevention programs, administering food banks, building shelters, serving as safe havens, and more. In 1994, the *National Journal of Sociology* mentioned scores of solid studies showing that most urban black churches are involved in community efforts ranging from housing and health services to preschools and elementary education. Eighty-five percent of black churches in Atlanta, according to one study, are engaged in some type of outreach program beyond religious services to their congregations.

Likewise, a recent study of the hundreds of predominantly black churches affiliated with the Center for Urban Resources in Philadelphia reveals that almost all the churches serve both children and adults, including many who are not churchgoing congregants. The center's program includes, alphabetically: clothing, counseling, crisis assistance, drugs and alcohol, economic development, education/training, the elderly, family programs, health care, homelessness, housing, job development, leadership development, prison ministry, and youth. Seventy-seven percent of the churches, with congregations ranging from 9 to 3,200, administered one or more programs targeted on neighborhood youth.

The only remarkable thing about the fact of urban black church engagement with at-risk youth and community problems is that it has been so long ignored, denied, or trivialized by ostensibly objective researchers. "Many otherwise commendable treatises on the African American Community written by black and white social scientists during the period 1960-1980 almost completely neglected the Church as an important social institution," wrote Andrew Billingsley and Cleopatra Howard Caldwell in the *National Journal of Sociology*.

Similarly, criminologist Francis T. Cullen's co-authored article in a recent edition of the journal *Deviant Behavior* opened by admitting that while "criminologists have been generally indifferent or even hostile to the idea that religion inhibits criminal deviance, evidence of a consistent inverse relationship between religion and deviance—including crime and delinquency—has steadily accumulated over the last three decades."

Such intellectual hostility toward religion is a bit puzzling because, at least since the days of pioneering

sociologist Emile Durkheim, modern social theorists have speculated that self- and other-destructive behavior varies inversely with the strength of religious ties. Or, as Rivers has argued, "Forget Durkheim. Go back to W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois explained that black churches had been, and would of necessity continue to be, *even with* civil rights, the only authentic institutional agents of black social change and real economic progress in deeply racist, segregationist America."

Rivers believes the story changed by the 1960s. "You had a whole bunch of elites and experts and politicians, black and white, who tried anything but God in the neighborhoods and made black churches into liberal civil-rights-industry props. The real money and support, public and private, political and philanthropic, never reached the black churches or the streets, not even during the crack cocaine crisis." He puts it piquantly: "They cared more about saving the whales than they did about saving black kids. . . . The money and the help didn't reach" the inner city, and "with rare exceptions, it still doesn't."

CHURCHGOING CUTS BY 50 PERCENT MANY OF THE MAJOR CRIME AND OTHER LIFE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH GROWING UP MALE IN THE INNER CITY.

But what if it did? Is there any good evidence beyond the anecdotal to suggest that, were black inner-city youth outreach and community development ministries given adequate financial and other support, they could actually turn the tide against youth violence, adult crime, drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, joblessness, and other social ills that remain so heavily concentrated in predominantly black inner-city neighborhoods?

It is much too soon to answer that question. But there is a growing body of empirical evidence suggesting that, other things being equal, at-risk children, substance abusers, and even convicted criminals whose lives are influenced by religion are less likely to get into trouble with the law, remain addicted, or be repeat felons.

Consider the work produced by just one researcher, Dr. David Larson of the National Institute for Healthcare Research. Over the past decade, he has quietly revolutionized how major medical-school researchers in America and abroad view the evidence on religion in relation to physical and mental health outcomes. Dozens of Larson's studies indicate that faith and faith-based interventions are associated with a wide variety of health benefits ranging from less depression to longer life.

"As a researcher," Larson observes, "I don't see why public policy scholars shouldn't follow public health and medical researchers in taking religion seriously by systematically investigating the relationships, if any, between churchgoing or spirituality, on the one side, and social and economic outcomes, on the other."

Recently, Larson has tested the findings on faith and young black inner-city males reported in 1985 by Harvard economist Richard Freeman. Freeman found that churchgoing substantially increased the chances that young black males would escape poverty, crime, drug abuse, and failure in school. Larson and criminologist Byron Johnson are now finding that Freeman was probably even more right than he knew. In a study to be released later this year, they will show that churchgoing cuts by 50 percent many of the major crime and other life risks associated with growing up male in predominantly poor, black inner-city neighborhoods.

In May, Larson co-authored a study of the impact of Charles Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries on recidivism among male felons. The study found that inmates who received as little as 10 hours of Bible studies a year via Prison Fellowship were rearrested one year after release at the rate of 14 percent, while otherwise comparable (i.e., same offense history, same age) inmates who did not receive the PFM intervention recidivated at three times that rate.

New York Theological Seminary president Rev. M. William Howard Jr. is pleased but not surprised by such good research news on religion. "Our ministers and volunteers," he says, "do everything from latchkey ministries for youngsters in Harlem and the Bronx and elsewhere to prison ministries at Sing Sing and other prisons. We believe it works spiritually, and that what works spiritually helps socially, especially with our young, and most especially in minority urban neighborhoods that are in social and economic crisis."

Of course, neither inspiring testimony nor mountains of empirical evidence will be enough to get some intellectual, media, financial, and political elites to acknowledge and support the black inner-city ministers who are doing such good works. On the left, God is (still) dead, and among libertarians, churches are fine if they can do it all alone, but not if a penny of public support, direct or indirect, is required.

On the other hand, there is among some left-of-center liberals and Democrats a growing openness to rolling back the anti-religious dogma that was first read into the Constitution only a half-century ago.

Recently, Rivers's organization received a three-year core support grant of $750,000 from the Institute for Civil Society, a left-leaning New England foundation. But the institute is nonetheless committed to a problem-centered rather than an ideology-driven approach to social problems, one that includes even culturally conservative (pro-life, pro-abstinence outside of marriage, and anti-gay marriage) inner-city black preachers like Rivers.

On the right, last year many social conservatives and Republicans championed the Charitable Choice provisions of the welfare bill, a federal law that encourages states to involve churches as providers of welfare services (for example, job-search programs, maternity homes for expectant unmarried minors, drug treatment, and health clinics) while protecting the religious character of participating faith-based organizations. In Texas, Gov. George W. Bush has taken dramatic first steps to engage churches as agents of positive social change. Several other states are gearing up to do the same.

The real laggards on "getting religion" are big profit-making corporations and philanthropies. Not a single major corporation, for example, gives money directly to inner-city churches that run youth ministries. Likewise, even large, generally faith-friendly foundations give only for "training" and other secular purposes, passing the funds through intermediary nonprofit organizations that too often siphon away the big dollars and leave the churches with the chump change.

Robert Woodson of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in Washington, D.C., is a black Christian conservative who for years has fought such "ridiculous and short-sighted" elite bias against churches and other religious institutions. It is organizations like Woodson's and the hundreds of black pastors that are slowly but surely resurrecting the civil society of inner-city America, even as the foundations look elsewhere. There is reason to think that Woodson's mission, like Rivers's mission, should be shared by everyone in America, whether they live near the inner city or not. As it says in Jeremiah 29:7, "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." ♦

Rebels with a Cause

Christopher Cox and David McIntosh Take on the Leadership

By Matthew Rees

Among the many unhappy campers in the House GOP last week, two may have been the unhappiest of all: Christopher Cox and David McIntosh. Republican leaders had attached a couple of worthy but wonkish riders to an unrelated flood-relief bill (and had allowed it to get loaded down with special-interest pork). Then when the president vetoed the measure as promised, the Republican leadership abandoned the riders and caved. Cox, who had opposed the bill throughout on the grounds that it was pork-ridden, was disgusted. For his part, McIntosh told a reporter, "The leadership's position is, 'We lost, so let's get out of town quickly.' It's another example where people lose confidence in the Republicans' ability to lead."

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Cox and McIntosh, though themselves second-tier members of the House leadership, are increasingly willing to vote against it. Last year, by contrast, Cox supported every major appropriations bill, and McIntosh voted to reopen the government, in both cases setting aside their own strongly held positions. Yet twice in the past month, Cox and McIntosh—alone on the speaker's 23-person team—voted against the balanced-budget resolution.

This is especially notable because the two appear to be prototypical Gingrich Republicans. They're ambitious, brainy, and right-wing, and both have spent most of a decade in Washington battling liberals. Their work in the conservative trenches paid off when the Republicans captured Congress and their colleagues chose Cox to chair the House GOP policy committee and McIntosh to represent the large and

restless group of Republicans first elected to the House in 1994.

Coming after two stalwart years, their defection on the budget (though not on the tax package, which both support with reservations) signals brewing discontent with the House's exceedingly modest agenda. Gingrich seems to be getting the message: Last year he expended precious political capital to win over Cox and McIntosh, but this time around he didn't even lobby for their votes.

Cox and McIntosh's opposition to the budget has exacerbated tensions with the rest of the Gingrich inner circle. Republican aides mutter that Cox and McIntosh aren't team players, that they're hypercritical of every proposed initiative and a little too eager to go public. Cox is "way too calculating, he drives Newt crazy," says one, and relations between Cox and the speaker are "nonexistent." McIntosh is derided for saying one thing in leadership meetings, then telling the media the opposite. Says another staffer: "They have to be brought into the room, but neither one of them is seen as one of the guys." Cox and McIntosh downplay these charges, saying they bear the speaker no ill will. It's not clear the feeling is mutual: When asked to comment on his relations with the two dissidents, the usually garrulous Gingrich declined.

But Cox and McIntosh are building a record of principled opposition to the budget deal and to the GOP's general quiescence that could serve them well when House Republicans select their next crop of leaders. Their mutiny pleases conservatives. And, unlike many conservative favorites, Cox and McIntosh have enough experience to be credible candidates for higher leadership roles. Both passed up Senate bids next year and can expect to be in the House for some time.

Kent Lemon

Christopher Cox

One of Chris Cox's first acts when he came to the House from California's Orange County in 1989 was to join the Conservative Opportunity Society, the group Gingrich put together in the early '80s to generate free-market ideas and challenge the intellectual lethargy of Bob Michel's House Republicans. Cox fit right in. He was fresh from two years in the Reagan White House counsel's office studying matters like an overhaul of the federal budgetary process. And he ingratiated himself with the future speaker by mobilizing 16 out of 18 freshmen to support Gingrich's successful campaign for whip in March 1989, then the number-two job in the House for a Republican.

While his party was in the minority, Cox pushed the congressional reforms Gingrich talked about incessantly. In addition to procedural budget reform, he fought for cuts in committee staffs and term limits on chairmen. One project he initiated as a freshman—a survey of Washington's spending habits called the "Annual Report on the United States Government"—reflected his workhorse mentality. Until he got married in 1992, he spent so much time working that colleagues wondered whether his office doubled as an apartment (it didn't). Yet with a polished appearance complementing his intellectual rigor, Cox quickly earned notice as a GOP rising star.

Still only 44, Cox has scored some eye-opening legislative victories in the past two years. Some were important symbolic achievements, such as the abolition of the Interstate Commerce Commission and the privatization of the helium reserve. Others drew on his personal expertise. A securities lawyer at Latham & Watkins for eight years before coming to Congress, he was the lead sponsor of securities-litigation reform—the only bill enacted over Bill Clinton's veto. The chairmanship of the GOP policy committee is a perfect job for Cox, whose legislative interests range from China to the budget to the Internet. In leadership meetings he is a voice for restive conservatives.

But Cox is far from content with these accomplishments—and, like countless Republicans inside and outside Congress, he is increasingly disillusioned with the speaker. Publicly, Cox is still pro-Newt; they meet and talk "frequently," he says, when the House is in session. He also points out that a *Congressional Quarterly* survey shows he votes with Gingrich more consis-

tently than does even majority leader Dick Armey.

But while both Cox and Gingrich are big-picture types given to radical rhetoric about cutting government, Cox's conservatism is the less compromising. (This is a guy who in 1984 started a company to publish daily English translations of *Pravda* to increase awareness of the Soviet propaganda machine.) Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, a close friend from the Reagan administration, speaks for Cox as well as himself when he says, "So far this session, it's been a lovefest [between Democrats and Republicans]. And we didn't come here to have a lovefest." Announcing his vote against the budget deal, Cox challenged the Gingrich view that it was progress. "The Clinton-Congress budget is not historic," charged Cox. "It is a continuation of a pattern of unabated government growth established during uninterrupted decades of Democratic Congresses."

There are other differences as well. Cox would like to see Congress pass a version of the California Civil Rights Initiative (he's had CCRI prime mover Ward Connerly address the policy committee), while Gingrich says this is premature. And the two have broken over prominent issues like deploying troops to Bosnia, increasing the minimum wage, and renewing most-favored-nation status for China, all of which Cox opposed. Sources on Capitol Hill say he has expressed private doubts about Gingrich's commitment to conservative principles.

Kent Lemon

David McIntosh

The line on Cox among House Republicans is that for all his brains he is unlikely to rise much higher in the hierarchy. While some would have him replace Dan Burton as head of the House's investigation of the Clinton scandals, those who have worked alongside him complain that in meetings Cox is a persistent critic. He's not much of a backslapper, either, which is why some Republicans call him "arrogant" and "aloof" and—with his law and business degrees from Harvard and his knowledge of Russian—too smart for his own good. Says a friend, "The price of admission to big-time politics is to be able to suffer fools gladly. Chris doesn't do that well."

Asked about his alleged negativism, Cox offers this explanation: "The leadership's job is analogous to a board of directors, and the job of each member of the leadership is to question management's decisions. Working to improve these decisions is precisely our job." Perhaps, but Cox's demeanor doesn't go down well with his colleagues. Gingrich has said privately he wants Cox to work more closely with the leadership. After the budget vote and the coming MFN debate, that will be more difficult.

When David McIntosh was making his first run for office in 1994, Gingrich came to Indiana for a fund-raiser. They knew each other from McIntosh's tenure as an aide to Vice President Dan Quayle, and they were kindred spirits. But that didn't stop McIntosh from telling Gingrich that the tax-cut provisions of the Contract With America were too modest and that Republicans should have advocated repeal of Clinton's tax hikes.

Gingrich liked McIntosh's boldness and put him on the transition team after the '94 election, then made him a subcommittee chairman—one of three who were the first freshman subcommittee chairmen since Richard Nixon in 1946. McIntosh hired an experienced Capitol Hill conservative, Mildred Webber, to run his subcommittee and used it to push pet issues like regulatory reform and restrictions on political advocacy by federally funded interest groups. Both proposals infuriated liberals and thrust McIntosh into the spotlight. He withstood the attacks and didn't retreat, even though Gingrich wasn't sold on either idea. At a key juncture he rounded up 60 House Republicans to sign a letter pledging to kill an appropriations bill if Gingrich didn't have the advocacy measure attached.

For most of the '95-'96 budget showdown, McIntosh supported Gingrich and used his clout with the freshmen to dissuade the speaker from caving. McIntosh's attitude toward closing the government was cavalier: His constituents, he said, were telling him, "Go ahead. Shut it down, if that's what it takes to balance the budget." He stuck to this position even after Gingrich abandoned it, setting up the clash between the

two in which McIntosh eventually capitulated.

But McIntosh hasn't often retreated. Shortly after the shutdowns, he told a reporter Gingrich had displayed a "crybaby attitude" for punishing a couple of Republicans who broke ranks on a key vote—a pointed jab at Gingrich's complaint about being mistreated on Air Force One. A few months later, Gingrich asked McIntosh to work with moderate Republican Sherwood Boehlert to find a compromise on a regulatory reform bill. McIntosh, who had drafted the bill, didn't see the point of watering it down and opted to pull it from further consideration. This year, McIntosh made clear his dissatisfaction with the budget agreement in leadership meetings, but neither Gingrich nor any other top Republican made a serious effort to get him on board.

McIntosh hasn't been punished for his heretical vote on the budget. Yet not all is well between him and Gingrich. Asked to characterize his relations with the speaker, McIntosh politely says, "There's no animosity," and, "We both listen to each other."

McIntosh's stubbornness grows out of his career in the conservative counterestablishment, where compromise is a dirty word. After graduating from Yale, where he was a self-professed "liberal egalitarian," he attended the University of Chicago Law School and studied under free-market legal scholar Richard Epstein and Antonin Scalia, now a conservative justice of the Supreme Court. In their law-school days, McIntosh and a few friends from other law schools (including Spencer Abraham, now Republican senator from Michigan) organized the Federalist Society, which quickly became an influential network of conservative and libertarian law students, professors, attorneys, and judges.

> GINGRICH CREATED THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH COX AND MCINTOSH HAVE PROSPERED. BUT LIKE DR. FRANKENSTEIN HE IS LOSING CONTROL OF WHAT HE MADE.

After graduating from Chicago and spending a few years in private practice, McIntosh went to the Reagan Justice Department, where he worked for Ed Meese, then to the White House in the waning days of the Reagan administration to work for Gary Bauer, now a prominent conservative activist. McIntosh left Washington briefly in 1988 to manage Cox's first House campaign, then during the Bush years, he headed Quayle's deregulation effort, the Competitiveness Council.

It was there that he first gained wider recognition. The council became an effective tool for thwarting regulations favored not just by congressional Democrats but also by some in the Bush administration. By 1992, a *New York Times* profile would pronounce, "In Washington's power stakes, Mr. McIntosh is hot," and House Democrats would vote to abolish funding for his office.

McIntosh, now 39, hung out at a couple of conservative think tanks after Bush's defeat. When he launched his House bid in 1994, he didn't have much of a local presence; he had hardly lived in Indiana since high school. So he brought in Robert Bork for a fund-raiser (as did Cox in his first campaign). The Republican favorite missed the filing deadline for the primary, and McIntosh narrowly won the nomination; then he rode the Contract and Clinton's unpopularity to victory in the general election with 54 percent of the vote in a district held by Democrats since 1975.

Having declared their opposition to the budget—and with Steve Forbes blasting the budget deal in national TV ads—Cox and McIntosh must decide how significant a break to make with Gingrich. Cox says that as Congress labors to turn the balanced-budget resolution into reality, he intends to keep quiet: "The minority likes to use Republican internecine battles for their own purposes. I do not wish to hand them that tool." McIntosh is more prepared to mix things up. He sees himself as "in-between an inside critic and an outside critic" of the leadership.

There is another House Republican who fit this bill a few years ago: Newt Gingrich. Almost from his first day in Congress in 1979, Gingrich was a thorn in the side of House Republican leaders, and the pattern continued even after he joined the leadership a decade later. Gingrich, of course, created the conditions in which Cox and McIntosh have prospered—but like Dr. Frankenstein, he finds himself losing control of what he has made.

He shouldn't be surprised. In an institution populated mostly by people looking to be led, McIntosh and Cox are different: They're leaders whose passions run to policymaking, and their fervor is fed by confidence in their ideas. That presents a dilemma for Gingrich, whose colleagues will press him to ignore them. Yet in looking for ways to resurrect himself, the speaker could do worse than occasionally to heed the advice of these two cerebral activists. He might find in their ideas the basis for a principled, and popular, agenda. ♦

The Frittering Prizes

The Less than Glamorous World of Literary Awards

By Joseph Epstein

If writers can be said to have a leading hobby, that hobby is the collecting of grievances. How nicely they pile up, like a child's collection of Beanie Babies, one atop the other, a writer's grievances against his publisher(s), his editors, his agent, of course his reviewers and critics, his fellow writers, all nice and personal. But then there are the impersonal grievances, and leading this category is the batch of grievances writers feel for not having won the prizes they felt they richly deserved, especially considering the swine who have won them.

The prizes writers feel they deserve is a whole comedy unto itself. How great a comedy I first began to realize when some years ago I read, in Burton Bernstein's biography of James Thurber, that Thurber, this most minor of writers, late in his career, was disappointed afresh each year upon discovering that he had not won the Nobel Prize.

But even winning it probably isn't good enough. "Don't call X this morning," my friend Edward Shils once remarked to me over the phone apropos of another friend who actually had won the Nobel Prize for Literature. "They announced the Nobel Prize for Literature this morning and he didn't win it again this year. He's likely to be touchy."

The number of prizes given for writing is plentiful, even extravagant. The standard prizes—the Nobel, the Pulitzer, the Bollingen, the Lilly, the Lannan, the Tanning and the International, the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle, the National Medal of Arts, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Awards, the PEN prizes, the Booker and Whitbread in England, the Prix Goncourt in France—are only, as in the old joke about the anti-Semite, the tip of the greenberg.

I often read the "News Notes" at the back of *Poetry* magazine to discover prizes given to poets, and it turns out there are scores of them, some bringing fairly heavy bread, such as the $50,000 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. Many prizes are impressively specialized. Only a few weeks ago I discovered the Fortabat Foundation Prize for the best first novel by an Argentine. In *Publishers Weekly*, I learned about the Rea Award for the short story: $30,000. The *New York Times* recently carried small ads from publishers congratulating three different authors for winning the PEN/Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation, the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Non-fiction, and something called the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, now in its seventeenth year, given, I take it, for nonfiction. So many are the prizes floating around that contemporary literature sometimes begins to seem like one of those progressive schools in which everyone gets a prize, even the child who fouls himself in the most pleasing pattern.

> NO AMERICAN LITERARY PRIZE NOW EXISTS THAT HASN'T BEEN SULLIED BY HAVING BEEN GIVEN TO A MEDIOCRITY.

Prizes of course catch writers in that ample soft place between their greed and their vanity. As a sad case in point, I offer Exhibit A: myself.

I returned home late one afternoon to find a woman's voice on my answering machine, conveying the following sweet message: "Mr. Epstein, I am calling to inform you that your book of stories, *The Goldin Boys*, has won the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize. Congratulations. We are all delighted and hope you will be, too. I shall call back tomorrow with details. Thank you."

Well, thought I, here is a dandy way to end a day. I knew of Edward Lewis Wallant as the author of *The Pawnbroker*, a powerful Holocaust novel made into a dark and painful movie starring Rod Steiger. That Hollywood was connected to Wallant's name set fire to my own rather easily inflamed financial imagination. Wondering how much the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize was worth, I began estimating it at $5,000, and by bedtime, gathering the covers around me, I had it up to a pleasantly warming $25,000. Twenty-five grand would be a help, yes, no doubt about it.

The next morning when I spoke to the woman who had called, I learned that the jury who awarded my book the prize had two members of whom

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Contributing editor Joseph Epstein writes regularly for The Weekly Standard *about the literary life.*

I had never heard and one whom I heartily disliked. I also learned that the prize itself was to be given at a luncheon in Hartford, Connecticut. The woman said that they were "very excited" about my excellent book having won the Wallant Prize. "I am, too," I said, adding, in what I hoped was a sufficiently casual tone of voice, "Oh, by the way, what is the amount of the prize?" A slight clearing of my respondent's throat prefaced her announcing, "$250." Shit, I thought, blithely.

To make a short story mildly excruciating, I later learned that, in connection with receiving the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize, a speech was expected of me; that I could not get a plane in and out of Hartford in the same day, and so would have to stay the weekend; and that my host and hostess, who gave the luncheon in connection with the prize, expected me to be at their call in a way that made me feel rather less a distinguished prize-winner than hired help.

In the end, I chose to forgo the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize. I said I couldn't give up the weekend, not to mention the time it would take for me to compose an intelligible acceptance speech. So instead of winning the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize, I won the lifelong enmity of the donors of the prize, who soon thereafter wrote in to cancel their subscription to the *American Scholar*, the magazine I edit, saying that they had rarely met a more miserable human being than yours truly. Another day, I always say, another dolor.

I managed to keep my only other literary prize. In 1989, I won something called the Heartland Prize, for non-fiction, for a book of my literary essays, given by the *Chicago Tribune*, which brought with it a small glass statue of a book and $5,000. As it happened, my mother, then still alive, called just after I learned about it, and so I told her that I had just won $5,000 from the *Trib*. "Oh," she said, "we get that stuff in the mail all the time. I just throw it out."

Some wise person once said that, if someone tells you that you are the best at what you do, ask him who he thinks is second best, which is guaranteed to restore your humility straightaway. Something similar goes for literary prizes. The questions to ask here are: Who was on the jury, and, Who has won the prize before? The answers will generally return you to normal hat size instanter. Far too many hacks serve on prize juries and no American literary prize now exists that hasn't been sullied by having been given to a mediocrity, out of either a lapse in taste or a desire to seem politically correct.

I have served on a few literary juries. The one that pleased me most was that for the Joseph Bennett Award, given by the *Hudson Review* in the name of one of its former editors. The year I was on the jury the prize went to Andrei Sinyavsky, who wrote under the name Abram Tertz and who had survived the hardest of hard time in the Soviet Gulag. I have been a member of the jury for the Ingersoll Prizes, given by the Rockford Institute, which I was able to win for Jacques Barzun, who, for his own reasons, decided to turn it and its $15,000 check down. One year, too, I was appointed, at a fee of $1,000, a nominator for the MacArthur Fellows—the Big Macs, or so-called genius grants. I don't recall how many people I nominated, but none won.

Please note that none of the above juries involved any real work. Real work here means lots of reading. Being on a literary jury often entails giving up one's regular reading life in order to read the work of the writers up for prizes. I was once asked to be a member of a Pulitzer Prize jury for fiction. I said no without hesitation, for three reasons: because the Pulitzer Prizes in fiction have been very ragged, not to say wretched; because of the amount of reading involved; and because Pulitzer juries can be vetoed by the Pulitzer Prize Advisory Board, which has frequently done just that, vetoing prizes for, among others, Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* in 1921, Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1974, and Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It* in 1977.

Perhaps the best thing a Pulitzer juryman can do is keep one of the usual suspects from getting the prize. A friend of mine, who was on the Pulitzer jury for biography, some years ago recounted to me walking into the jury's first meeting and announcing, "Look here, boys, we aren't going to do the obvious thing and give this prize to Ronald Steel, are we?" Steel had written a much-fawned-over biography of Walter Lippmann that was the obvious favorite for that year, but with my friend's remark, Steel's boat was immediately dead in the water. The Pulitzer for biography that year went elsewhere.

More recently, I was asked to be on the jury for the National Book Awards. A small fee was offered—the exact sum, I believe, of the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize—for which one was expected to read, or at least intelligently skim, more than 200 novels and short-story collections. The prospect of all those jiffy bags coming into my apartment seemed depressing in the extreme. Thank you, I said, but no thank you.

I wonder, though, if I have not been too selfish in declining such jobs. Good work can be done in serving on such juries. In 1967, Hilton Kramer served on a National Book Awards jury and was able to win the prize for criticism for William Troy, a critic of the highest seriousness who had died long before and whose book was published by the rather obscure Rutgers University Press.

Learning that the prize was to go to William Troy, one of the officials for the National Book Awards came in to inform the jury that the prize could not be given posthumously and asked that they provide another book and (living) author. The Kramer jury

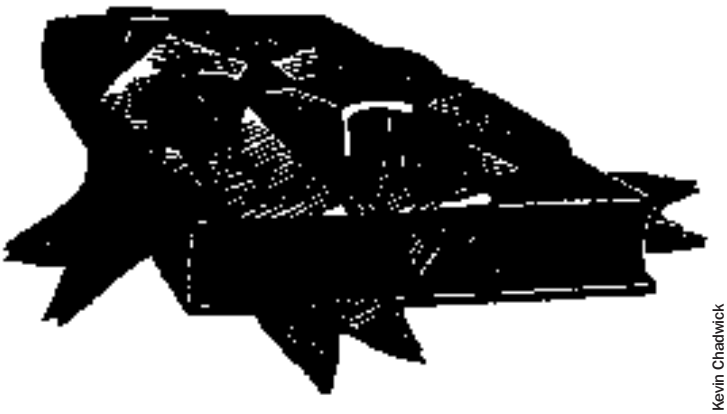
refused, saying that if the winner weren't William Troy then there would be no winner that year in their category. The official backed down, and the prize went to the late (though still splendid) Troy. I remember thinking at the time that this was a victory for high culture, for the good guys, for artistic integrity generally.

The reason I thought this is that, at the time, who won the National Book Awards seemed very important. By 1967, the prize had gone only to good writers; no mediocre or fake books had yet won it. It was a record worth preserving. If a book, especially a novel, won the National Book Award, it meant it was a work of substance. Winning it could make a writer's reputation. *The Moviegoer*, Walker Percy's first and best novel, had been a commercial and even a critical flop, but it redeemed itself and its author by winning the National Book Award for 1962. National Book Awards were worth having because they were given with real care. It all mattered, greatly.

Now take out a sheet of paper. Quick quiz. What book won the National Book Award last year? Who won the Pulitzer for fiction? Name the last three winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature? Go to your room, you idiot. I'll join you there in a moment, for I don't have the complete answers to these questions either. Cultivated chaps and chapesses though we are, why are we all so ignorant about this?

The reason is that none of these prizes, as the Victorians used to say, signify. Somehow there is a feeling that the giving of prizes in literature is, if not quite rigged, something damn close to it. It all seems a bit irrelevant, pointless, peripheral, the intellectual equivalent of the Special Olympics. The handing out of literary prizes seems, as F.R. Leavis once said of the Sitwells, to have more to do with the history of publicity than with the history of literature.

Some of these prizes have been vastly overrated to begin with. The novelist and critic William Gass gets nicely worked up at the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, arguing that it "takes dead aim at mediocrity and almost never misses." There is an element of hit and miss in many awards in the arts, Gass claims, "yet the Pulitzer Prize in fiction is almost pure miss. The award is not batting a fine .300 or an acceptable .250. It is nearly zero for the season." Only rarely is it given when it might do a writer some good; it usually passes by any original work, and when it is given to important artists, it is usually for their weaker books and long after it might be of any use to them. During their lifetimes, the Pulitzer bypassed Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Wolfe, Nathaniel West, and Flannery O'Connor.



Kevin Chadwick

When a literary prize bungles things so often, it loses its cachet, as the Pulitzer for fiction long ago did. The one exception here may be the Nobel for Literature. This prize itself began on a great bungle by not going, in 1901, its first year, to Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy was beyond any question the world's greatest living writer and the perfect candidate, especially given the phrase in Alfred Nobel's will about the prize going to writers of "idealistic tendency." Apparently everyone on the committee that year assumed that everyone else would vote for Tolstoy, and so they decided not to waste their votes on the obvious. As a result the winner was the redoubtable Sully Prudhomme, the French poet best known today as the man who won the Nobel Prize meant for Leo Tolstoy.

The Nobel was also not given to Henry James, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf. Closer to our own day, the Nobel Prize committee passed up Jorge Luis Borges, Vladimir Nabokov, Graham Greene, and (thus far) V.S. Naipaul. Only one writer, Jean-Paul Sartre, ever turned the Nobel down. W. H. Auden is thought knowingly to have blown it by making some objectionable remarks about Dag Hammarskjöld in an introduction to the latter's book, *Markings*. Auden's biographer, Humphrey Carpenter, recounts that not winning the Nobel Prize later became an obsession with Auden. "Toward the end of his life, Auden began to be preoccupied with not having won it, declaring that he would have liked it not for the honor but for the money—he said he would have used it to buy a new organ for the Kirchstetten church" near his final home in Austria.

The Nobel Prize must be the world's most remunerative prize—it is now worth well over a million dollars—but it also has the odd effect of making its recipients a little posthumous. Having won it, they find all

other prizes come by way of an anticlimax. With the exception of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, very few of its recipients have produced better work after receiving it.

Other prizes also seem to have had the effect of freezing writers. Consider the MacArthur Fellowships, which in recent years seem to have gone less and less to conventional writers and more and more to multicultural exotics: a Thai chef who juggles flaming garlic on Native American reservations, that sort of thing. But earlier, when the fellowships did go to more writers than they do today, it seemed to cause its winners to write less, if not to cease writing altogether. Not a bad thing, really, especially since most MacArthur fellows weren't quite first-class, and most were too prolific to begin with.

Still, the only serious question about the MacArthur Fellowships, which can pay a recipient more than $400,000 over five years, is, Where's mine? A friend once told me that, in his role as a nominator, he had put me up for a Big Mac; and another friend sent me a copy of his four-page recommendation of me, in which he portrayed me as the natural successor to H.L. Mencken and Edmund Wilson but more wide-ranging and deeper than either. It was heavy-handed puffery, but—who knew?—maybe the MacArthur Foundation might believe it.

In those days, the head of the Fellowship Program was a nice man well-named Kenneth Hope. I received several messages from him that year; you cannot know what it is like to return home and discover a message on your answering machine from Ken Hope of the MacArthur Foundation. "Ah, Hope," I would say to myself. "This is it. My fellowship is ready, my ship has come in, I can at long last get rid of this cardboard belt." But it never happened.

By now there are a number of people who make more than a nice living out of the literary-prize racket and its attendant scams. The mind is a great wanderer, and in weak moments my own often imagines the mail of Toni Morrison, filled with requests for $25,000 talks, still more prizes (to go with her Pulitzer, Nobel, and the rest), honorary degrees, and God knows what other little bijoux. The poet Rita Dove is another harvester of prizes. "Rita Dove, the former poet laureate of the United States," a recent *New York Times* story began, "thought there could be no surprises left for her after her appointment to that august post in 1993." Well, you will I know be shocked to learn, she was wrong, for in 1996 she won something called a Heinz Award for $250,000, given to "people who make a difference in their chosen fields." What this difference was went unmentioned in the *Times* story.

PERHAPS THE BEST THING A PULITZER JURYMAN CAN DO IS KEEP ONE OF THE USUAL SUSPECTS FROM WINNING.

Part of all this is, of course, affirmative action. Prize-giving was complicated enough before politics obtruded into it so heavily as it now has. The Nobel has often been awarded geopolitically, or multiculturally on the global level; it goes to a Third World writer one year, to an Eastern European writer the next, and only then to some usually predictable Western writer the year after.

Panels and juries for most literary prizes currently have to be made up of sufficient percentages of minorities, as they are called, and prizes, too, it is understood, must be parceled out the same way. "The only qualification a judge ought to have had is unimpeachable good taste," writes William Gass, "which immediately renders irrelevant such puerile concerns as skin color, sex, and origin." Alas, if Gass thinks this is any longer a serious possibility, I'd like to show him some real estate, perhaps something deep in the Everglades.

Gass says that some writers have been penalized by the Pulitzers for being "known to have the wrong politics." I don't think there can be any doubt about this. Conservatives, with a few notable exceptions, really need not apply for prizes given by PEN, or the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and many others besides. Today, a well-regarded novelist such as Mark Helprin has probably ended his own chances for any literary prizes by having written a few speeches for Bob Dole.

Gass writes, "I like to believe I could have voted a poetry prize to Marianne Moore even though I know she once wore a Nixon button." This has not always been the way things worked. Fifty years ago a mainly left-liberal group of poets approved the Bollingen Poetry Prize for Ezra Pound, after his having given clearly anti-Semitic radio broadcasts for Mussolini during World War Two that left him susceptible to charges of treason, which he was able to elude only through, in effect, a plea of insanity.

At the time of the Bollingen award to Pound, there was still a small body of men and women who constituted what was somewhat pretentiously known as the Republic of Letters. Its members were those who were genuinely devoted to literature, who recognized the real thing when they saw it, lived for it, and could themselves produce it. Their connection to literature was the main thing about them, surmounting their social class, race, sex, and certainly their politics. How else explain that the reactionary politics of so many of the chief figures of literary modernism did not deprive them of immense admiration!

No special pleading made membership in this Republic of Letters possible. One was either a true writer, major or minor, or one wasn't. Prizes

were awarded, not so lavishly as now, but they were never the mark of a writer's true stature. What gave a writer his stature was the opinion of his contemporaries—that small number of men and women who also knew the real thing when they saw it.

Today, no matter how wretched a writer, he can usually point to his having won a prize or fellowship or award of some sort. The breakdown in standards across the board in intellectual life is represented in good part by the vast number of available prizes that don't really find worthy recipients and yet—what the hell—are given out anyhow.

Too many prizes are given in the United States generally, of course. We have Emmy Awards for best soap-opera acting. There are Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Awards for younger writers, Cable Ace Awards for the best programs on cable television, Grammys and scores of other prizes for music. We live in a country, let it not be forgotten, with a Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame.

In the best of all worlds, literary prizes would help set standards for excellent work, reward genuine achievement, and publicize originality. As now constituted, literary prizes seem to do none of these things. Their real point is commerce, the stroking of writers, and the boosting of morale within the publishing business.

As for the stroking of writers, the need for this is endless, and how better than through prizes? Writing to Gore Vidal in 1965, the novelist Louis Auchincloss mentioned the chances of winning the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Rector of Justin*: "Do I care? Of course, I care. I have reached the age when I want prizes, any prizes. I want silver cups with gold lining such as I never won at potato races in children's parties; I want gold stars; I want ribbons." The Pulitzer that year went to Shirley Ann Grau.

For writers, prizes represent official praise. But for good writers, even the greatest prizes can't finally do the job. Thomas Mann, a Nobel laureate, used to refer to praise as "Vitamin P," which, as his diaries make plain, he preferred to take in large quantities. Mann knew a thing or two about praise, but the most important thing he knew is that, for the good writer, "praise will never subdue scepticism." Take it from an almost Edward Lewis Wallant Prize winner: all too sadly true. ♦

An Uncertain People

Elliott Abrams on the Dwindling American Jews

By Mark Miller

In the eyes of the American Jewish establishment, Jewish survival has always meant one thing: defending against anti-Semitism and the policies that foster it. The strategy has been to raise the wall separating church and state and to bring down the wall separating Jews from Christian America. But while pursuing these goals single-mindedly, the establishment has remained blind to the fact that the unwavering secularism of its means stands opposed to the single most distinguishing feature of the Jewish people: the Jewish religion. Now that secularism has become entrenched in American Judaism, it has brought with it a new crisis of Jewish survival for which the Jewish establishment has been caught wholly unprepared.

Elliott Abrams
Faith or Fear
How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America
Free Press, 256 pp., $25

The new threat comes from within the Jewish people—declining birthrates, declining religious affiliation, declining Jewish identification, and increasing assimilation. Jewish survival no longer means protecting individual Jews from acts of anti-Semitism; it means saving the entire Jewish people from self-wrought extinction.

According to a study by the American Jewish Congress, Jews here are past zero population growth. Where they once lived together in close-knit communities, they are now dispersed throughout the country. In his new book *Faith or Fear*, Elliott Abrams points out the astonishing fact that "12 percent of Americans of Jewish heritage are now Christians" and that one-third of Americans of Jewish ethnic origin say that Judaism is not their religion.

Reversing such decline will require new thinking. For Abrams, the best new idea is also the oldest: He argues powerfully in favor of Judaism over "Jewishness" as the answer to the problem of Jewish continuity. He recognizes that alternative forms of Jewish expression have not only failed, but have brought the American Jewish community to the brink of disaster.

Although his position is quintessentially a small-*c* conservative one, Abrams does not advocate the instrumental view of religion common among political conservatives—that religion is good for the masses solely because it makes them law-abiding and virtuous. For him, religion entails personal obligation. He also believes that the survival of Jews requires a religious commitment on the part of every individual Jew and on the part of the Jewish establish-

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ment. He demonstrates that the Jewish community is withering precisely because the majority of American Jews has chosen not to make such a commitment.

The trouble began with the large immigration of Eastern European Jews between 1880 and World War I. In the old country, Judaism had defined the life of virtually every Jew. In their mostly segregated and self-governing communities, Jews lived according to the dictates of religious authority, which set the boundaries of acceptable behavior and imposed the rhythms of the day, the week, the year. They had little choice but to stay in their own communities and conform.

Once they arrived in America, however, it was easy for many of them—especially the younger ones—to imagine that Judaism no longer applied. Where there had once been social pressure to conform to community practice, now there was pressure to abandon that practice and assimilate into the dominant culture.

Furthermore, as Abrams points out, the apodictic Judaism of the time was focused more on ritual than doctrine, so it had developed no vocabulary with which to convey the importance of continued religious practice.

From these circumstances came the impulse toward "safety through secularism," as Abrams puts it. With philanthropic, rather than religious, leaders guiding the community, American Jewry became committed to "life under the new sacred Law of the Constitution rather than the old Law of the Torah." To illustrate the phenomenon, Abrams surveys Supreme Court religion jurisprudence and the unwavering support that Jews have provided the secularist side.

While the Jewish establishment has endeavored to break down walls between Jews and Christians, it has not done so where the Christians have been believers, as Abrams notes. At one time—when Christianity was used to incite the murder of Jews—the suspicion of Christian belief might have been justified. But Abrams makes clear that those days are long gone. He records the efforts made in the Roman Catholic Church to reverse anti-Semitism and end active proselytization of the Jews. He also cites parallel efforts within Protestant mainline churches. "In most Christian denominations," he concludes, "a two-thousand-year-old war against Judaism is being called off and its direct connection to anti-Semitic violence admitted."

Kent Lemon

Elliott Abrams

Turning to the Jewish fear of evangelical Christianity, he argues that one of its most powerful sources is not the hostility of the Christians but the political attitudes—and, implicitly, the class attitudes—of the Jews. Because Jews have identified so strongly with liberal politics—abortion, gay rights, environmentalism, opposition to capital punishment—they perceive any attack on that political agenda to be an attack on the Jewish people itself.

Abrams is careful to draw a line between Christian belief and targeted proselytization, a legitimate reason for Jews to be suspicious of evangelicals. The Jews are partly to blame for any rift, though, because of their prejudice against believing Christians, which Abrams finds insulting and counterproductive. He also points out that, even in the face of proselytization, "the vast majority of Americans of Jewish heritage who are now Christian crossed that line not at the urging of a group like Jews for Jesus but because one generation drifted away from Judaism, and, with intermarriage, the next left it behind entirely."

Indeed, as Abrams argues, this "flight from Judaism"—accompanied by a massive effort to redefine what it means to be Jewish—is much more dangerous and troubling than Christian proselytization. Liberal Jewish leaders and those advocating "alternative forms of group cohesion" have "changed the borders of the Jewish community so that they suddenly include people and practices not formerly considered Jewish." Instead of bringing more outsiders into true Judaism, such efforts have merely weakened the borders enough so that Jewish people may feel perfectly comfortable crossing them on their way out. Judaism is indeed "a terribly demanding faith," as Abrams says,

and Jews will take any opportunity to find equally fulfilling but undemanding substitutes—such as Zionism, politics, even the Holocaust. Abrams considers these substitute sources of Jewish identity and finds them all unable to sustain any kind of Jewish commitment for more than a generation or two.

In the end, Abrams's argument comes down to a rather simple question: If "the central issue" is "continuity," then shouldn't we look to the one element of the Jewish community that has been most successful at it? "Do not the Orthodox and other traditionally observant Jews have the right to claim success—and to insist that their approach must be right?"

It is quite a step for a Jewish intellectual to arrive at such a position, i.e., that "Jewish" isn't antithetical to "intellectual." But part of it can be explained by the fact that the religion is meeting the intellectuals halfway. "Intellectual" is no longer antithetical to "Jewish." Where the religion of the immigrants was unable to answer the challenges of modernity, the Orthodox Judaism of today in part welcomes the reciprocal influence. The answer to the question "Why obey Jewish law?" is now infinitely more sophisticated than, "Don't ask such questions!"

Elliott Abrams is a severe, insightful critic of the assumptions that have brought the American Jewish community to its current predicament. Of course, his argument is premised on the idea that the Jewish people is something worth preserving. If the majority of American Jews do not think that preserving the Jewish people is worth a personal commitment, then we need only wait another generation or so for the problem to go away. ♦

B&A

Ozzie and Harriet in Tears

Dana Mack Dissects the "Antifamily Culture"

By Melinda Ledden Sidak

A few years ago, a friend of mine introduced her one-year-old son to the secretary of health and human services, Donna Shalala. "Oh hi, Peter!" Ms. Shalala exclaimed. "I'm in charge of *all* the nation's children!" After reading Dana Mack, you'll know just how right the secretary was.

Dana Mack
The Assault on Parenthood:
How Our Culture Undermines the Family
Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., $25

Children have been the principal casualties of the cultural and social revolution that has transformed America over the past 30 years. Mack presents a parade of horrors that includes abused children, meddling social-service bureaucrats, and the metamorphosis of educational institutions into social-service and personal-therapy centers. She shows with torrents of data, anecdotes, and interviews that a cycle has been created involving the steady growth and intrusiveness of government, the erosion of traditional moral values, and family disintegration.

Professional elites—such as social workers, educators, and therapists—have systematically usurped many parental responsibilities and undermined parental authority. This in turn has caused many parents to shirk their responsibilities, necessitating further interventions by the state. The result of these various depredations is what Mack terms the "antifamily culture." Even parents who struggle to raise their children to be productive citizens with strong moral values, the culture and the bureaucracy seem to thwart at every turn, often with the smug "We know best" attitude of Donna Shalala.

The worst offenders by far are the schools and the child-welfare bureaucracy. Schools today apparently have little time to teach such basic skills as reading, writing, and arithmetic. The curricula are increasingly crowded with courses on sex education, drug education, death education, sexual-abuse prevention, and "life-skills" courses. Among the horror stories recounted by Mack is a 1990 episode of ABC's *20/20* that "followed a public school field trip to a mortuary, where children were enjoined to touch the corpses." She tells of her own daughter's nightmares after seeing a graphic film on sexual molestation. Another mother tells Mack that after the "stranger-danger" unit, her second-grade daughter "refused for weeks to walk from her classroom to the school music room for pickup. She was afraid she would be kidnapped along the way!"

Mainly such classes involve the administration of personality tests and surveys that ask personal questions like, "How many of you ever wanted to beat up your parents?," and, "Tell something about a frightening sexual experience. Is there something you once did that you are ashamed of?" A worksheet on "family systems" asks the students how much money their parents make and which candidate their parents voted for in the last presidential election. Said one New Jersey mother, about the bombardment of 7-year-olds with luridly detailed AIDS lessons, "I don't think we've considered the burden of knowledge." Mack shows how

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relentlessly and callously the therapeutic and educational establishment robs children of their innocence.

If the schools are a mess, the child-welfare system is a nightmare. Readers are all too familiar with tragedies like that of Elisa Izquierdo, the 6-year-old New York child tortured and murdered by her mother. Too many children are repeatedly returned to abusive biological parents by social workers who have an almost mystical faith in the ability of counseling and social-service supervision to reform even the most recalcitrant offenders. Mack argues that one reason for such failures is that the system is stretched thin with frivolous maltreatment investigations. She cites numerous studies that show how the perverse incentives of federal child-welfare law and vague legal definitions of abuse and neglect have led to overreporting of child abuse.

Paradoxically, while some children like Elisa are returned repeatedly to the parents who torment them, in many other instances loving and conscientious parents have been subjected to hellish investigations by social workers—including the seizure of children and their placement in secret foster homes—and prosecution by politically or ideologically motivated district attorneys. According to Mack, "Parents have been convicted of child abuse for spanking, for grounding, for home schooling, and even for no reason other than a suspicion on the part of a mandated reporter or social worker that while conditions in the home are at present stable, they may be conducive to neglect or abuse in the future."

The list of culprits contributing to the antifamily culture includes other usual suspects—a mass-entertainment industry obsessed with sex and violence, the prevalence of material, as against spiritual, values, laws that encourage both easy divorce and messy child-custody battles, and financial and social pressures that encourage women with small children to work.

It is with this delicate topic of women, work, and children that Mack hedges. She lays out a convincing case that children are often harmed when institutions attempt to substitute for parents. She shows that day care is no substitute for a mother at home. She is even so bold as to state that "given the intense negative pressures on children from outside the home, at least one parent should devote the major portion of his or her energies to watching and raising the children." But who is that parent likely to be—Mom or Dad? What constitutes the "major portion of his or her energies"? And where should that supervision take place—at home or on the job?

At this point, Mack becomes Hillary Lite. She advocates measures like more telecommuting, on-site afterschool activities, more flex- and parental-leave time. She speaks admiringly of lavish but expensive Western European family-leave benefits. She wants hiring preferences for parents returning to the workforce after time off to raise children. She suggests that taking time off to have children and career "sequencing" are good ideas, but ultimately merely one option among many.

And though she argues convincingly against forcing welfare mothers to work while their children are young, she shrinks from encouraging women of means to stay home with their children as the morally right and personally responsible thing to do. One perfectly good option that neither she nor apparently anyone else who writes about this issue considers is that women who want to pursue full-throttle careers perhaps should choose not to have children. And she uncritically accepts the assertion that women work for financial reasons, not contemplating whether the economic explanation can be a mere excuse.

Mack's failure of nerve here is symptomatic of a more general tendency to let parents off the hook. Conservatives have to be careful not to let "the culture" become to them what "society" is to liberals—an amorphous and depersonalized blob that can be blamed conveniently for all bad or irresponsible acts committed by individuals. Sure, the schools are in terrible shape, but any teacher can tell stories of discipline meted out to a disruptive student that provoked howls of protest and threats of litigation by Junior's parents. Politicians of both parties are in a bidding war to see who can shovel the most money into the old failed system, presumably because they believe that to do so is popular with voters. Indeed, most parents tell pollsters that they are satisfied with their own children's schools and support (or at least do not actively oppose) sex- and drug-education programs, as Mack acknowledges. There is a lot of garbage on television, but maybe more parents should consider restricting television viewing to a few hours per week or forbidding it altogether.

Mack advances many valid complaints about the harm imposed on children and adults by things like easy divorce and the refusal of schools and churches to reinforce traditional moral standards. But how many of the parents whom Mack interviewed would themselves be willing to express disapproval or even—imagine it—to stigmatize a man or woman who commits adultery? Not many, to judge from the response to the recent Kelly Flinn affair. How many would ostracize a man who leaves his wife and small children for a girlfriend? How many would express open disapproval of a woman who shacks up with a lover in the presence of her children? Of movie stars and pop singers who have babies out of wedlock?

The fact is that most Americans today are unwilling to condemn—and thus discourage—behavior that was once deemed socially destructive or otherwise undesirable for fear of being labeled "judgmental" or "intolerant" or, worse, wanting to "turn

back the clock." We may live in an "antifamily culture," but almost no one—conservatives included—is willing to adopt the moral code that forms the foundation of a *genuinely* profamily culture. For although it is okay to be judgmental—even harshly judgmental—about behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and, of course, smoking, the ultimate crime, it is definitely not okay to be censorious about what used to be regarded as sexual libertinism. We live in a culture as repressive as any caricature of the Victorians. It's just that we have different moral crimes. Were the government half as judgmental and uncompromising about teen pregnancy as it is about cigarette smoking, the illegitimacy rate would plummet.

If Mack had not pulled back from exploring the full dimensions of her arguments, this important and passionate brief for a profamily culture might have been even more effective. As it is, her hesitancy causes her to recommend policies that are likely to prove ineffectual. She argues that government's intrusion has usurped and undermined parental responsibility, but she speaks approvingly of particular government programs, often quite intrusive. What's it going to be? She criticizes the caprice and corruption of protective-service workers but suggests that social workers empowered to hand out welfare checks and supervise the family would somehow be less invasive. She also appears to endorse "parental-rights" laws—as though giving judges and lawyers a whole new vague set of "rights" for a newly enfranchised victim class to litigate for the next several decades would be a solution. And she wants the FCC to become even more involved in regulating and requiring uplifting "educational" programs for children.

Mack's soft spot for government programs so long as they are "our" programs highlights another danger for the conservative offensive against the human fallout from liberalism. Conservatives like Mack have succeeded in getting many elites in government and the media to admit reluctantly that government programs and the 1960s cultural revolution produced some unintended, negative side effects, particularly with respect to children. The problem is that liberals have seized on these side effects as grounds for yet more government intervention. President and Mrs. Clinton, and the Children's Defense Fund and its allies, already have perfected this stratagem. The new role for reinvented government is to support parents and children against the antifamily culture that government did so much to create in the first place. Whether it is incinerating Branch Davidians or renting out the Lincoln Bedroom to raise campaign funds, everything, now, is "for the children."

It is encouraging that, in the face of all that Mack describes, many parents have fought back directly or devised alternatives such as home schooling and mission-oriented charter schools that attempt to protect children from the antifamily culture. Many parents continue to make great sacrifices, financial and personal, in behalf of their children. But the restoration of a truly profamily culture will not occur until individual Americans—including and especially those who profess conservative social values—are willing to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. ♦

Several incidents described in Robert Reich's book, *Locked in the Cabinet*, were distorted beyond recognition, according to Jonathan Rauch in *Slate*. Reich defended himself by saying the book was a memoir, not the work of a reporter. —*News item*

LOCKED IN THE WAR CABINET

Robert B. Reich
Secretary of Labor,
1861-1865

Chapter 12: A More Perfect Reich • 1863

President Abraham Lincoln came into my office looking anguished. Lincoln always came to me in times of trouble, as we had so much in common. He was born in a log cabin, I was born in a log cabin. He was well over 6 ft. tall, I was well over 6 ft. tall. He was known as "Honest Abe," I was known as "Honest Bob."

"I thought you told me that Lee's armies were retreating to Virginia," the president said testily. "Now I learn the Army of Northern Virginia has crossed into Pennsylvania and is confronting our troops in Gettysburg."

"I tried to convey to you the atmosphere of the meeting I had with our spies, Mr. President. I may have gotten a few of the minor details wrong," I replied.

Abe and I have always differed on what was said next. Lincoln later claimed that he said, "Go to hell, you self-aggrandizing twerp," but according to my notes he pleaded with me to go straight to Gettysburg and take over command of the Union forces.

I arrived at the battlefield early the next morning. General Meade or General Hooker (I can't remember who was in charge of the troops at the time, and since this is a memoir I don't have to do any research) begged me to address the men. "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers," I began, commencing a speech I had written that morning.

Next I surveyed the field. Between our forces and the Confederate army, a young man had tied himself to a tree.

"That's the journalist David Brock. He thinks everyone is shooting at *him*," an aide informed me.

"Nice nipple."

But there was no time to stand admiring Brock's exposed chest. Over to our left we heard gunfire coming from Little Round Top. What happened next is too well known to describe again at great length. In brief, Confederate forces routed the 20th Maine under Joshua Chamberlain, who fell back until they met me coming up the hill. We quickly formed what has become known as the Reich Line and beat back the southerners. Next, Longstreet's troops came out of the Peach Orchard and attacked the Reich Salient, but I led the troops in a perfect Reich Flanking Maneuver, and we pushed the enemy back into Devil's Den, where Matthew Brady took my picture.

At the dawn of the third day, General Meade and/or Hooker asked me what I thought would happen. "Pickett will charge here and here," I said with what in retrospect looks like amazing prescience, "and then the visitor's center and diorama of the battle will be constructed back there, with free shuttle service to the Eisenhower estate, and then Ted Turner will make a very long movie about the battle cruelly minimizing my role."

"You are our greatest military mind," the general exclaimed. But I was too busy to hear such praise. A runner had just arrived from Washington with an important invitation for that evening. "Four score and seven years ago," I muttered, preparing the address I would deliver at 9 p.m. Eastern on *Larry King Live*.