the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 10, 1997

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WHY RENO IS WRONG ABOUT MICROSOFT
BRIT HUME

Reagan's Greatness

Giving a President His Due

by William Kristol

The Hillary Cult
CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

China: The End of Engagement
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the weekly Standard

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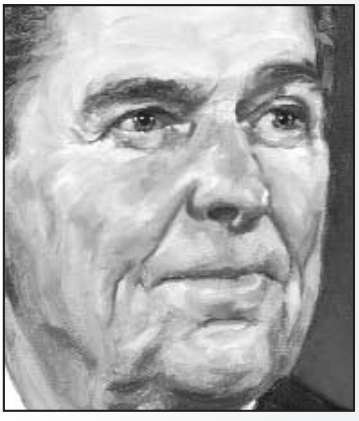

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Books & Arts

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Kowtowing-to-the-Dictator Awards

Chinese strongman Jiang Zemin's Victory over America Tour produced a level of self-abasing moral-equivalence mongering not seen since the Jimmy Carter era. Some of the highlights:

The Dianne Feinstein Laureate

As Confucius—or was it some forgotten Massachusetts politician?—said, the fish rots from the head. President Clinton is therefore this week's Dianne Feinstein Moral Equivalence prizewinner (so named for the California senator whose craven apologias for the Chinese government have set the standard for appeasement in our time).

During a joint press conference with Jiang, the president did utter some pidgin Hegel about how China would remain on the "wrong side of history" so long as its repressive practices were maintained. Then Clinton treated us to a remarkable disquisition on what democracy means: "I think it would amaze many of our Chinese guests to see some of the things that have been written and said about me, my family, our government. . . . And yet after all this time, I'm still standing here" (*and that damn Michael Kelly walks the streets a free man*, you could almost hear the president muttering).

But the president's most Feinsteinian moment came in a speech at the Voice of America where he reminded his listeners that Americans in glass houses shouldn't throw stones at Communist dictators. "Our crime rate is too high, too many of our children are still killed with guns, too many of our streets are still riddled with drugs," the president said. "We have things to learn from other societies as well. And if we expect other people to listen to us about the problems they have, we must be prepared to listen to them about the problems we have."

The Scrapbook counts at least three offenses against sound moral reasoning here. One is the insulting analogy Clinton draws between American street crime and Chinese political torture. Second is Clinton's suggestion that Chinese dictators have any standing to comment on a Western democracy—and that Americans have an obligation to listen. The president's third error is his biggest. He goes out of his way to second the Chinese critique of America's "social fabric." But he neglects to mention that President Jiang obstinately refuses to countenance any corresponding American complaints about the *fabrique Chinoise*.

Honorable Mention

Sen. Feinstein herself, it should be noted, had a very busy week squiring around her favorite foreign leader. She hosted a friendly reception for Jiang that only a third of her fellow senators showed up for; she attended the state dinner thrown by our president; and she met privately with Jiang. "I always felt he was underestimated," she told the *New York Times*. "This is really the first Chinese leader with a higher education." Good thing he didn't go to a French university, like Pol Pot.

Special Feinstein Media Prizes

This was a hotly contested category, as a number of press organs competed in portraying Jiang as the greatest closet connoisseur of American pop culture since Yuri Andropov curled up with a bottle of Chivas to listen to his jazz records. It therefore took distinctiveness to score a mention here. *Time* earns special honors with this clever explanation of why Jiang is stiff in public and prefers to read from a script when talking to reporters: "On those occasions when he allowed himself a little spontaneity, it tended to backfire. In a 1990 interview with Barbara Walters, he described the Tiananmen killings as 'much ado about nothing,' prompting outrage." With spontaneity like that, who needs a firing squad?

Not to be missed in the press category is *American Spectator* Washington correspondent Tom Bethell, henceforth to be known as the Walter Duranty of the Right. In an astonishing celebration of Jiang's regime in the magazine's November issue, Bethell sarcastically suggests that China's critics, when they talk about human rights, are really just resentful that it is a country "where intellectuals have been deprived of their rightful powers of agitation." (Bethell is apparently unaware that Jiang is the first Chinese leader with a higher education.) Bethell's joy contemplating the great economic leap forward he is sure China will soon take is dimmed only by the possibility he foresees that someday China may become democratic. Then, says Bethell, "intellectuals will have been restored to power. But until that happens, let us rejoice that there is at least one country in the world where they are not in charge." Bethell is not kidding.

Finally, The Scrapbook noticed this headline in the *Washington Post*: "Septuagenarian Displays Vigorous Health." The story was about how Jiang, 71, had splashed in the surf in Hawaii. He really enjoyed it. When The Scrapbook wants to read about the vigorous health of septuagenarians (which is not often), we expect the reporter to have found, at the very least, a 79-year-old Iron Man Triathlete. Taking delight in the vigorous health of the maximum leader is what they do in dictatorships.

Scrapbook

Racial Healing, Houston-style

Voters in the city of Houston, Texas, will decide this week on a ballot question, "Proposition A," that would end racial preferences, much as the California Civil Rights Initiative did. Gov. George W. Bush has declined to endorse the initiative, citing a policy of not "intervening" in local political issues. No member of the state's Republican congressional delegation has endorsed the initiative, either. They should all be ashamed of themselves.

Especially now, since the battle over this referendum has turned worse than ugly. Last week, Proposition A's organized opposition began airing a radio ad that for tastelessness and vulgarity has rarely been topped in recent American history.

The ad opens with a recording of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Dr. King's voice is then cut short by the sound of a gunshot. Next, as ambulance sirens wail in the background, a narrator sadly reminds listeners that "it happens over and over again: Just when our community starts to move ahead, some people try to turn back the clock." In case anybody misses the point, the narrator makes it explicit: "Sometimes they do it with bullets, sometimes they do it with laws."

Laws like Proposition A, that is, which you cannot vote for, apparently, without also endorsing "the forces of bigotry"—and King assassin James Earl Ray. The group that paid for this disgusting ad, "One Houston," has received a $10,000 donation from the city's outgoing mayor, Bob Lanier, whom President Clinton recently praised for his contributions to American racial healing.

With Successes Like This . . .

Even modest attempts to control the export of sensitive technology are being rebuffed by the White House these days. Included in the conference report of this year's defense authorization bill is a provision requiring computer exporters to notify the government in advance of prospective sales of supercomputers to countries such as China and Russia. If the secretary of defense, state, commerce, or energy questions the sale within 10 days of being notified, the sale cannot go through without an export license from the Commerce Department.

But the White House will have none of this. National security adviser Sandy Berger wrote to House National Security chairman Floyd Spence on Oct. 20 complaining that the reporting requirement "will tax sorely the resources of our export- control agencies and the intelligence community."

As for past diversions of supercomputers to Russia and China—which led to the provision—Berger says the fact that these supercomputers are in the process of being returned shows that "our policy has not failed, but is, in fact, successful."

Not that successful. In the Oct. 27 *New York Times,* Jeff Gerth and Michael R. Gordon spelled out in rich detail how 16 IBM supercomputers were illegally diverted to a Russian nuclear-weapons laboratory. Clinton administration officials learned of the diversion not through the enforcement provisions boasted about by Berger, but because a top Russian official mentioned in a press conference that the country had obtained supercomputers.

The proposed reporting requirements on the sale of supercomputers wouldn't necessarily prevent episodes like this, but they would be a step, albeit a small one, in the direction of restoring some sanity to the Clinton administration's reckless export-control policy.

Casual

The Shoes Make the Man

I've been thinking a lot recently about weekend footwear options for middle-aged men. Most men enter adulthood wearing sneakers for Saturday and Sunday outings, but very few men go to their grave shod that way. At some point in between puberty and senility, there is a moment in every man's life when he says to himself, "I'm getting a little old to be wearing sneakers all the time."

For many a man, I suspect, the tipping point comes while he is shopping for antiques. The saleslady approaches with a ready smile. But then her eyes dart down to the guy's footwear—to his sneakers. She tries not to let her expression betray the horror she feels at having to sell a precious heirloom to a guy dressed as if he were going to a driver's-ed course. But for the guy, the curse of self-consciousness has set in. He will never look at his cross-trainers innocently again.

At that moment his sneakers feel horribly, horribly overcomfortable. Maybe you've experienced this sensation. You're riding on a commuter train, and all around you people are in business suits. In this context, your casual clothes feel ridiculously soft and easy. You might as well be wearing pajamas. The comfortableness hangs on you like a cloying hug.

The man who decides he's getting a little old for sneakers faces a further dilemma. If not sneakers, what? Men are rarely forced to define their identities through their fashion choices. If a man wants, he can slide through life with two-piece suits that say very little about him. But casual shoes are clear personality markers. Choosing casual shoes, man is forced to confront the eternal questions: Who am I? What have I become? The unexamined foot is not worth shoeing.

Some men see their personality reflected in ankle-high suede boots. This is the kind of shoe George Peppard wore while playing those dashing characters in 1970s crime dramas. The man who wears these shoes is advertising to the world he is a playboy sensualist. He is the sort of man who has a pad, not an apartment. He has a white shag rug, not bare floorboards. If he wears ankle-high boots that zip up the side, there's a good chance the wine he drinks is rosé.

Loafers are another footwear option, so popular that they come in many styles. For example, some loafers come with tassels. One privilege of being conservative is that you get to wear tassels if you want to (in the same way that liberals get to wear facial hair). But tassels are not an option for me personally. My mother, who is already mystified by my political beliefs, might go over the edge if she thought I was taking fashion tips from Dan Quayle.

The urban upscalers I mostly live among are sometimes fascinated by the postmodern boot crowd. These people favor heavy steel-tipped black boots once designed for Italian storm troopers but now worn by art-gallery owners to go with their black shirts with pearl buttons and no collar. If you buy a large loft in a formerly industrial site in any major city, they give you six pairs of these black boots to close the deal—12 if you're a woman. Loft-dwellers don't want to be confused with thin-shoed corporate types. They want to be known as industrial-strength artists who need heavy working footwear.

Another option for upscalers is the hiking boot. This can be worn browsing at the farmers' market or strolling the Appalachian trail. The man who wears this shoe on weekend jaunts tends to be a quiet, reflective individual, ready to kick back and savor the organic richness of life. Unfortunately, such a person may also be a patsy in the suburban jungle. Though strong of calf, he won't put up much fuss if someone butts in front of him at the multiplex. When he goes to buy a four-by-four, the auto dealer will interpret his boots as the sign of an easy mark. No one needs a casual shoe that puts him at a disadvantage.

Other men will wonder whether a pair of cowboy boots might not best complete their rugged image. The rule here is, if you have to wonder, don't. People who should be wearing cowboy boots are born to them, as they are born to a big-sky birthplace and an unaffected taste for rodeo. Those who only want to be the sort of person who wears cowboy boots should not attempt the affectation.

Finally, there is the whole Hush Puppies line. These are normal-guy shoes, and as I look around The Weekly Standard I see a lot of men wearing them. They are unpretentious suburban-dad shoes—the kind of footwear that fits snugly against the brake pedal of the minivan. This is the sort of unobtrusive shoe most men pick, but I think it is a mistake for anyone to settle too quickly for normalcy. There are, for example, some really nice thigh-high super-polished riding boots on the market these days—the whole Marv Albert *noir* look that can get you so much attention at the local Safeway.

David Brooks

Bill Maher's Brain Twinkies

Perhaps if Andrew Ferguson took Bill Maher's *Politically Incorrect* with a grain of salt and recognized it for what it is, he would realize that its existence is positive for politics, not a plague on America ("Politically Incompetent," Oct. 27).

Bill Maher does not pretend to be a Beltway pundit. His show focuses on important issues in a manner that is light, humorous, and sometimes serious. Is this really much worse than receiving information from the bland 60-second blurb of a news anchor or from a red-faced, arrogant John McLaughlin?

It really does not seem to be much of a travesty that *Politically Incorrect* "is unquestionably the most popular chat show about politics now on the air, with almost as many viewers as *This Week* and *Meet the Press* combined." Wouldn't you agree that political gurus screaming conflicting facts at one another present just as asinine a display as Hollywood types yelling across a table?

Some Americans, after watching a *Politically Incorrect* episode, may become interested enough to pick up a newspaper the next day and read a story on the subject. The potential of *Politically Incorrect* to decrease political apathy in this country is enough of a reason to praise Maher. It is about time that there is a political show that descends from the elite perch and recognizes that Americans need political talk they can relate to, even if it is "*The McLaughlin Group* after a few beers."

Matthew Katz
Washington, DC

Andrew Ferguson's delightful critique of *Politically Incorrect* hits the mark in all respects but one. Ferguson writes that Steven Bochco "threatened to punch out Chevy Chase" and asks "Who among us wouldn't like to see Chevy Chase beaten up?" Well, in this instance, Chase was in the right. Chase criticized Bochco's *NYPD Blue*, in which hero cops routinely connive to prevent their suspects from "lawyering up." They deceive, manipulate, intimidate, and, when these measures fail, physically attack the suspect. Beaten up, indeed! Give Chevy Chase a medal for courage under fire while being confronted by an ego-wounded producer.

Richard Makover
Woodbridge, CT

Ferguson makes some valid points about *Politically Incorrect*. But the examples that he points out are much more the exception than the rule. It is unfortunate when a Hollywood ego goes for the quick gag and then short-circuits an otherwise interesting debate. But give Maher the credit he deserves. He seems much better informed than Ferguson would lead us to think. He is also not afraid to tell his guests that they're full of crap—a bit of honesty that I find refreshing. It's obvious that Maher wants the show both to entertain and to inform.

On balance, the show does its job very well. Balance is the key, and it's a virtue that Ferguson's article was unfortunately lacking.

Ron Fineman
Bakersfield, CA

The Vince Foster Mysteries

Byron York, like Kenneth Starr, fails to tell us some important facts ("Vince Foster, in the Park, with the Gun," Oct. 27).

When Lisa Foster made her tentative identification of a gun shown to her in May 1994, she described the gun being shown to her as silver-colored. Her report of the color, omitted by Starr and York, is crucial because the official death gun is black-colored.

Neither Starr nor York explains why she described a supposedly black gun as silver or why such a misperception failed to elicit any apparent comment from those present, including her attorney, a deputy of Robert Fiske, and at least two FBI agents.

One possible explanation is that she was not shown the official death gun in May 1994, but was shown a silver gun in order to elicit an identification that could be used in Fiske's report, without mentioning anything about the colors.

Starr and York also tell us of an oven mitt supposedly found in the glove compartment of Foster's car. Yet they fail to tell us that a park-police officer who searched the car testified under oath in July 1994 that there was "nothing out of the ordinary" in the glove compartment. And there is no mention of an oven mitt in the official evidence inventories for the car.

On page 27 of Starr's report, he quotes from a two-page medical report made by Dr. Donald Haut, the only M.D. to examine the body at the park. Starr tells us that Haut's report says that the death shot was "mouth-head."

However, Starr and York fail to tell us two important facts. Page 2 of Haut's report says the death shot was "mouth-neck," directly contradicting the official autopsy report. Moreover, the "mouth-head" phrase is on page 1 of Haut's report and was obviously altered so as to conceal a four-letter word and put "head" over it.

The government's failure to tell us the true facts about this case is matched only by an identical failure by the dominant media. York's article is a prime example.

Allan J. Favish
Tarzana, CA

Byron York responds: ***Allan J. Favish suggests the independent counsel's office substituted a phony pistol in place of the "official death gun" so that Fiske and Starr could claim Lisa Foster recognized the gun her husband used to kill himself. For the record, my source in Starr's investigation says that is simply not true. "The gun she was shown," he says, "was the gun recovered from Foster's hand." In addition, Favish's claim that Starr omitted Mrs. Foster's memory of the gun's color is false. On page 80 of the report, Starr says Lisa***

Correspondence

Foster "recalled what she described as a silver-colored gun." On pages 81-82, Starr writes that Mrs. Foster identified the gun, "although she said she seemed to remember the front of the gun looking lighter in color when she saw it during the move to Washington."

Regarding the oven mitt: According to Starr's investigators, it was not listed on the official evidence inventory because it was not taken into evidence. Not everything in the car was; for example, a canvas bag and a pair of moccasins were also in the car but not listed on the evidence report because the park-police officer who entered the items into evidence did not find them significant. Furthermore, when Starr's team showed the picture of the mitt to officer John Rolla, the man who had said that there was "nothing out of the ordinary" in the glove compartment, he remembered the mitt's being there. Another officer confirmed the same thing.

On the "mouth-neck" wound, Favish sent me documents indicating the phantom wound might have been an exit wound, as well as other materials indicating it might have been an entrance wound. According to Starr's investigators, there is an autopsy photo—a clear, professional photograph, not a Polaroid—showing a close-up view of the side of Foster's head, with no exit or entrance wound of any kind in the neck. There is also a clear photo showing Foster's body with a so-called trajectory-rod placed into the actual entry wound in the mouth and protruding out the actual exit wound in the back of the head.

No Set-aside of Set asides

The editorial in the Oct. 27 issue of The Weekly Standard ("Punting on Preferences") referred to the City of Houston's set-aside program and claimed that no leading Republican officials are supporting the Houston Civil Rights Initiative. Your conclusion was that Republicans are backsliding, nervous, and not advancing the agenda. Please be advised that on Oct. 20, 1997, I issued a special edition of The Chairman's Fax Report which stated strong support for the Houston Civil Rights Initiative on behalf of the Harris County Republican Party. Despite the failure of some elected officials to support this initiative, the Harris County Republican Party stands strongly in support of this important effort to end discrimination.

Gary M. Polland
Chairman
Harris County Republican Party
Houston, TX

A Warm, Fuzzy Relic

Tucker Carlson's churlish article about Christie Whitman deserves an answer ("Relic of the Eastern GOP," Nov. 3).

Yes, she's made mistakes, but what governor or president hasn't? And yes, she's more liberal than many Republicans, including me.

But her record includes 14 tax cuts; two laws, Megan's and Joan's, that protect schoolchildren from sexual predators; welfare reform; and higher school standards. Her policies over the last four years have resulted in more than 200,000 new jobs.

I have participated in all three of Gov. Whitman's statewide campaigns, and, contrary to what Carlson would have your readers believe, she is warm, compassionate, and a caring mother. She is smart, good on her feet, and, unlike a lot of Republicans I might mention, she does not waffle or flip-flop on the issues.

While openly pro-choice, she has campaigned, without hesitation, for pro-life Republicans. While Carlson sneeringly calls her naive for seeking the black vote, perhaps if more Republican leaders did the same we might begin to make inroads into that vote.

Far from being aloof, Gov. Whitman loves to campaign at the grass-roots level, and does so effectively.

Gov. Whitman, like Ronald Reagan, and unlike The Weekly Standard's editors, understands that you build a party by including people, though you may not always agree with them—not by excluding them.

Lyn Nofziger
Washington, DC

Render unto Gephardt

House minority leader Dick Gephardt is no ordinary politician. Wisely recognizing that hatred for the tax code is widespread, he endorsed IRS reform legislation and seized an issue that will help him with voters when he challenges Al Gore for the Democratic nomination. An even better demonstration of Gephardt's political skills is the way he conned Matthew Rees into believing that his tax plan is worthy of serious attention ("Dems and Taxes," Oct. 27).

The two guiding principles of serious tax-reform plans are a single rate and the elimination of double taxation. Both the flat tax and the national retail sales tax, for instance, satisfy these two criteria. Gephardt's proposal, by contrast, maintains five tax rates and actually exacerbates the level of double taxation in the current tax code. This is not a legitimate effort to reform the tax code, and Rep. Dick Armey and Rep. Billy Tauzin were right to include only serious proposals in the scrap-the-code tour.

Rees also errs by accepting at face value Gephardt's preposterous claim that a flat tax (or a sales tax, for that matter) would boost tax bills for the poor and middle class. Both the Forbes and Armey flat-tax plans provide roughly twice the personal exemption available under current law. It should not take a math whiz to figure out that lower-income families will be better off paying 17 percent of any income above $35,000 instead of 15 percent—or more—of any income above $17,000.

Genuine tax reform is needed. Unless he is willing to cast aside his class-warfare politics, however, Dick Gephardt will not be the one to lead the Democrats into the tax-reform Promised Land.

Daniel J. Mitchell
Heritage Foundation
Washington, DC

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the weekly Standard

Second Thoughts on the Flat Tax

In a just-mailed fund-raising letter on behalf of the Republican National Committee, Steve Forbes concludes with characteristic enthusiasm that "History is on *our* side!" Whose side? The side of wholesale, root-and-branch tax reform, not just "a minor tax cut or a few new loopholes." A brand-new tax code promises nearly everything Americans might want, Forbes believes—even a "return to traditional family values."

Forbes is not alone. Quite the contrary. The GOP is positively giddy over its recent hearings on abuses at the IRS and certain where that success must lead. "It's obvious that America wants sweeping change," House majority leader Dick Armey says. "We own this issue." House Ways and Means Committee chairman Bill Archer thinks scrapping the tax code and starting from scratch should be his party's one and only rallying cry during the 1998 midterm congressional elections: a new, single-item "contract with America." Anti-tax activist Grover Norquist, usually a reliable bellwether of GOP insider sentiment, reports in the latest issue of *Policy Review* that some version of Dick Armey's "flat-tax" proposal "has now become a consensus issue within Republican ranks."

In fact, it's getting close to the point at which any expression of doubt about flat-taxery is judged heretical in the Republican party and its conservative think-tank satellites. Rep. Billy Tauzin of Louisiana, the leading advocate for one kind of flat tax, a national retail sales tax, says "nothing short of total reform is even worthy of debate." On page 9 of this issue of The Weekly Standard, we publish a letter from Dan Mitchell of the Heritage Foundation in which he announces that "serious tax-reform plans" *must* include "a single rate and the elimination of double taxation." Any proposal that fails this test, he says, will not be considered "a legitimate effort."

Whoa, Nelly. This kind of talk is making us nervous. Because the particular tax schemes everyone seems so eager to line up behind appear to have serious political and substantive infirmities. These infirmities should be candidly acknowledged and dealt with, rather than rigidly ignored or denied. Real alternatives should be offered and debated. And all this ought to happen sooner rather than later—lest Republicans march themselves straight off the cliff.

Dick Armey's flat tax is an elegant thing. It is a postcard-sized tax return that would replace the bewildering array of current deduction and credit schedules with a uniform 17 percent rate applied to all earned income by businesses and individuals over about $35,000. Such income would be taxed once and only once; the "double taxation" of interest, dividends, and profits from the sale of capital assets would be abolished. This would make for a simpler and more transparent tax code, one likely to produce a "pro-growth" effect, as its proponents suggest. It would also go far to convince ordinary Americans that none of their neighbors was any longer getting away with something through the skullduggery of hired accountants.

The problem with the Armey flat tax isn't its simplicity or transparency—or even its "flatness," *per se*. The problem is what and who it would tax, compared with the present system. Another word for this problem is, pardon the expression, "fairness."

There are Americans who receive most or all of their income in the form of government benefits. These people, the very poor, are largely exempt from federal taxes now and would stay that way if Dick Armey has his wish. Then there are wealthy Americans who earn a significant share of their income from interest and profits on property. Under the Armey proposal, taxes on such income would disappear; that's what the elimination of "double taxation" means. Finally, there is the broad middle class of Americans, who earn 90 percent or more of their income in the form of simple labor compensation: wages and salaries. Such paycheck dollars represent roughly two-thirds of annual national income and account for an already disproportionate three-fourths share of federal tax revenue. What would happen to those dollars in Dick Armey's flat-tax future?

Well, logic suggests that if government benefits remain untaxed and taxes go down on income from

capital, then the federal tax burden must fall even more heavily on wages and salaries than it does at present. In other words, as a *class*, those Americans who bear the bulk of this burden (middle-income families in the, say, $30,000 to $80,000 income range) will have to pay proportionally higher taxes. And not just as a class. If the flat tax is to be "revenue-neutral"—that is, if it is to raise the same amount of money as the current tax code does—then middle-class taxpayers, on average, will effectively pay larger sums on Rep. Armey's postcard than they do now on the 1040 form.

Logic, schmogic say the flat-taxers: Look at the Armey proposal as written. It would double the personal exemption allowed by the existing tax code, and apply a 17 percent rate only to income over the $35,000 threshold. Lower- and middle-income Americans now pay their first dollar of taxes at wage rates significantly lower than that, so under the Armey flat tax they would all be better off.

Except that the devil is in the details, and even a postcard has details. Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes are higher than income taxes for most middle-class households. Payroll taxes would still have to be paid—separately—under the Armey flat tax. The Earned Income Tax Credit, which now provides some relief from those taxes, would be abolished. The employer share of payroll taxes would no longer be deductible, which would have some depressive effect on wages and hiring. Fringe benefits like health-insurance premiums, now exempt, would be fully taxed. State and local taxes, which are currently deductible for people filing itemized 1040 forms, would suddenly be considered taxable "income" by the federal government. As would the biggest sacred cow of them all, mortgage-interest payments.

Voilà: a middle-class tax increase—a tax code that traces a bell curve of revenues, on which poor and rich Americans would occupy the lower-tax extremes, and ordinary Joes would find themselves sitting, unhappily, up top. Is *this* the only acceptable alternative to punitively "progressive" marginal tax rates?

There are conservative economists who already see what's coming and worry over its effect. Stephen Moore of the Cato Institute proposes to preserve the flatness of Armey's tax. But he would make it optional for taxpayers. If you've organized your financial life around the existing tax code, and prefer to stay within its confines, Moore would let you. That would blunt a powerful political argument against the whole idea. Don't like the new flat tax? Fine, don't choose it. Moore also, importantly, would apply the flat tax to income from capital as well as wages and grant individuals a credit against their payroll tax debts. Jeffrey Bell and John Mueller propose to make the flat tax mandatory, but at a lower rate than Armey's and with a more generous payroll-tax credit and broader taxes on capital than Moore suggests. Either way, the distributional effects of the Armey flat tax—its middle-class squeeze—would be avoided.

But no one in the GOP who matters is yet paying these people much mind. Moore and Bell and Mueller wouldn't abolish double taxation, so they are apostates. Most Republicans continue to describe the Armey flat tax and its cousin, the retail sales tax—both tax wage and salary income most heavily; one when it is earned, one when it is spent—in quasi-theological terms. Liberate wealth-creating investors through one of these tax reforms, and all boats will rise, they sing.

Eventually, Democrats will figure it all out and unsheath their knives. Next year, if an Armey-model flat tax is the Republican platform, Democratic House and Senate candidates are going to hold up little "Dick Armey" postcards with the names of famous rich people printed on the top. The tenth line of those cards is going to be those rich people's tax bills. And the number on that line is going to be: zero.

Democrats will say such a tax scheme is totally unfair. Most Americans will think they're right. The GOP had best take its flat tax back to the drawing board and open a serious debate about its particulars and consequences—before it's too late.

—David Tell, for the Editors

The Hillary Cult

by Christopher Caldwell

Last week, as Hillary Clinton turned 50, a film crew from the Arts & Entertainment channel tailed her, gathering footage for a special to air this month. And, boy, were *they* kept busy. Hillary's birthday wound up being the most pageant-filled week of personalized adulation in living memory. *Time* ran a cover story. Peter Jennings took due note. Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts sent a "video birthday card." On Friday afternoon, the entire first lady's office was herded into an East Wing surprise party, each employee wearing the *Time* cover as a Hillary mask. Sheryl "All I Wanna Do Is Have Some Fun" Crow arrived to sing "Happy Birthday." Saturday

night saw a gaudy tribute at the National Italian-American Dinner. Then a party at the Fairfax Hotel for 75 guests, thrown by power wives Ann Jordan and Buffy Cafritz. On Sunday, staffers were back at the White House for another party (there goes the weekend in Rehoboth), this one a "state fair" of Hillary's life, with booths representing every decade.

But things were only getting started. On Monday, Hillary flew to her hometown of Park Ridge, Illinois. The town renamed her old neighborhood "Rodham Corner" and declared Monday, October 27, "Hillary Rodham Clinton Day." Chicago, too, held a day in her honor, and its chamber of commerce issued a 20-page booklet called *Hillary: The Early Years*. At the Chicago dedication of "Hillary Rodham Clinton Women's Park," the first lady was ready with a donation of tulips from the White House garden. She told the *Chicago Tribune* that "she hoped each spring their blooms would represent her presence in the city when she is unable to be here." Not the crassest gift ever to come from a politician, but surely the most eucharistic.

Hillary's Arkansas chum Linda Bloodworth-Thomason described the week as "just a simple, uncomplicated outpouring of love." Yet there was a deeper reason that the first lady's 50th was celebrated with many times the fanfare of, say, the president's just last year. Hillary is far more representative of the baby-boom generation, whose 50th birthdays are seen as a "national turning point" by virtually the entire spectrum of white, Ivy-educated feminists between the ages of 49 and 51. Ruth Mandel of Rutgers was more specific: "What we see in her is a heightened, intensified image of a struggle and a transition and a challenge and an opportunity that women are encountering at this moment in history." It helped that at this moment in history Hillary's popularity was at an all-time high. According to *U.S. News*, 67 percent approved of the job she was doing. Even better for her, the number of those who "hate her viscerally," according to internal White House polls, had fallen from 35 percent to a mere quarter of the nation.

> HER CHICAGO APPEARANCES TOOK ON THE TONES OF ALBANIAN WAR POETRY: *THIS SOIL IS THE NOBLEST SOIL BECAUSE IT GAVE RISE TO ME.*

A handful of cynics explained the birthday celebrations as an act of political opportunism. Hillary, they said, was taking the approval she'd won by bowing out of politics in the first place and misreading it as an invitation, a clamor, a groundswell to get back in. Hillary has indeed tested the waters of public policy once more, this time with a daycare initiative. The plan is still vague, but it appears to consist of three tracks, as the first lady told Katie Couric in a birthday interview: licensing ("Certainly, licensing is a big improvement over not licensing"), raids by social-service agencies ("They ought to take perhaps the model of the military and do unannounced inspections"), and high-tech surveillance of anyone who fits the profile of a child-abuser—or whatever ("It's not only criminal convictions . . . but it also may be other proceedings of accusations concerning the care of children"). The whole thing, Hillary has said elsewhere, might be best implemented by executive order.

And her qualifications for overseeing the nation's child care? Hillary stressed her Chicago upbringing: *I know from happy children*, she seemed to be saying. At the various shindigs, she and the friends of her youth remembered "the innocence of their childhoods." Hillary humbly acknowledged Park Ridge and the "lasting values" she absorbed there. At one point she said, "I had a village of adults, at school, at church, in the neighborhood—all that it takes to raise children." Her public appearances and photo-ops, up to eight of them a day, sometimes took on the tones of Albanian war poetry: *This soil is the noblest soil, because it gave rise to me*. But there was also a larger point. As Hillary said of her home block, "I think we need to re-create this in our country today." And she's going to see to it that all tomorrow's kids get an upbringing just like hers, even if they have to be roped into reindeer-teams by agents of the National Office of Daycare to do it.

No wonder we're so grateful to her! For it turns out that Hillary's mission is more challenging than any work any woman has ever done at any time anywhere. As Hillary told a *Time* journalist, "Perhaps it would be easier . . . if we could be handed a pattern and cut it out, just as our mothers and grandmothers and foremothers were." One's first reaction is disbelief at Hillary's claim of a generational monopoly on indepen—

Oops, sorry . . . that's one's *second* reaction. One's first reaction is: *What's a "foremother"?*

As *Time* noted, "She promises to lay out the problem's complexities with her customary intellectual rigor. 'You have to put the issue in front of the American people and get them to look at it honestly,'" she told the magazine. Honesty is a big thing for Hillary. Can you blame her? After all, the dishonesty, the cowardice, the self-interest of other people are the only things that have ever stood in her way. As she told Katie Couric, "Everyone should be willing to look

fearlessly at the implications of all of these challenges." When Couric noted Republican fears that Hillary's upcoming child-care conference "would lay the groundwork for massive government spending and regulation," Hillary replied, "Well, I think it's unfounded, and I hope that rather than just voicing their fears, which they have done, that they will listen and watch what happens."

That brings us closer to the reason that all of us are so spontaneously, so honestly, so un-self-interestedly pouring out our gratitude to her. Because Hillary's not like that! Hillary is a listener, the kind of person who, as many tributes put it, "keeps growing at 50." Other people don't learn, but she does. Says her former press secretary Lisa Caputo: "She's learned a lot about how to just let things roll off of her. She's learned a lot about herself and her limitations."

As for what she's learned, we have to go back to Couric: "Do you think you've learned from the experience of trying to reform the health-care system?" Couric asked. Hillary replied, "I certainly learned a lot from that experience. I saw how a proposal could be terribly misrepresented to people and distorted beyond all belief. But I also learned how important it is that we look for ways to bring people along in a debate, and not permit those who are ideologically opposed or financially involved in an issue to dominate the debate."

She won't make that mistake again. She's grown. Growing is what being 50 is all about, and as Caputo implies, it comes down to a basic modesty. One friend, the comedienne Jane Condon, points up Hillary's deep instinct for self-effacement by noting that she will even say, in mid-conversation, "Oh Jane, I get so tired of talking about me. Let's talk about *you*." A sure sign of a shrinking violet. And when Hillary's current press secretary, Marsha Berry, said, "She's not one to sit and pontificate about herself," she spoke for the first lady's entire staff.

She had to. For some reason, no one else would speak for the record.

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Justice Takes on Microsoft

by Brit Hume

BUY A COMPUTER RUNNING Microsoft's Windows 95 these days, and you get something extra. There is an icon on your screen that looks like a magnifying glass above a globe. It is labeled simply "The Internet." Activate it and it takes you through the process of setting up Microsoft's World Wide Web browser, called "Internet Explorer." Now in its fourth edition, Internet Explorer is a full-blown Internet-access program with all the bells and whistles expected of such software. There is no additional charge for it, and you don't have to use it. It does not prevent you from using a competing program, such as Netscape's Navigator, still by far the most popular Web browser and a major thorn in Microsoft's side. But a computer manufacturer that wants to include Windows 95 with new models cannot get the operating system without Internet Explorer. Furthermore, Microsoft does not allow manufacturers to delete either the program itself or that little icon from the opening screen, known in the world of Windows as the "desktop."

To users, the icon might look like a bonus—a powerful program thrown in free. But to Janet Reno's Justice Department, it looks like an illegal scheme by mighty Microsoft to squeeze out the competition. The department charged Microsoft on October 20 with violating the consent decree it reached with Justice on anti-trust matters two years ago. "Forcing PC manufacturers to take one Microsoft product as a condition of buying a monopoly product like Windows 95," Reno said, "is not only a violation of the court order but it's plain wrong." Joel Klein, Reno's anti-trust chief, insisted, "We're not taking sides in a browser war." To him, the case is simple. "We think the evidence will show unmistakably that these are two separate products," he said, "Everybody knows you have an operating system and you have a browser." Those statements suggest that Reno and Klein have some understanding of what's now happening in the world of computer software, but not much.

For one thing, Microsoft's operating systems have always been a combination of basic software needed to make a computer function and additional stand-alone programs intended to enhance its capabilities. By the time Windows 95 came along, the list of stand-alone additions had grown to include two word processors, a modem communications program, fax software, electronic-mail software, and a set of computer games. A manufacturer that wanted Windows 95 had to take the whole package. From the earliest days of the personal computer, each successive edition of Microsoft's soft-

ware has included new features that hurt, or even wiped out, the market for programs that other software houses had developed to fill gaps left by Microsoft. Software houses that had prospered handsomely swimming in Microsoft's wake did not like it when their markets suddenly shrank or vanished. Some have been complaining to the Justice Department for years. The department has been sympathetic, encouraged, some suspect, by the generosity many Silicon Valley firms have shown President Clinton's campaigns. Microsoft, by contrast, has refused to play that game, maintains only a small office in Washington, and does little lobbying compared with other firms of its size.

But the Justice Department has little to show for its pursuit of Microsoft, which dates back to 1993, when Justice took over a stalled Federal Trade Commission investigation. It isn't easy, after all, to get the courts to order a company to stop improving its product. But Justice seems determined to keep trying, and Reno, Klein, et al. clearly think they've caught Microsoft dead to rights trying to parlay its operating-system hegemony into domination of the market for Internet "application" software. It isn't nearly that simple. The reason is that Microsoft, for all its size and success, or perhaps because of it, has proved as slow to react to change in the 1990s as IBM was when it nearly drove itself off a cliff in the 1980s. In both cases, the problem was failure to recognize the importance of a new technology. In IBM's case, it was the personal computer itself. In Microsoft's, it was the Internet.

When Windows 95 first came out, that little Internet icon was nowhere to be found. The only path the new software offered to the Internet was through the Microsoft Network, the online service Microsoft had started in competition with America Online, CompuServe, and other such services. Microsoft thought these services were the hot trend in computer communication. The Internet, it seemed, was just one more place you could go through your online service. By the time Microsoft realized that the Internet, and in particular the World Wide Web, were the dog and the online services only the tail, Netscape had run away with the market for browser software.

For Microsoft, that was not the worst of it. A team of programmers at Sun Microsystems had developed a new programming language called Java that does something no other language can do—create Internet-based programs that will run on any personal computer, be it a Windows-based PC, an Apple Macintosh, or a Sun workstation running the UNIX operating system. At first, Java was used mostly to add slick features to World Wide Web pages, such as icons that move and sports scoreboards that change before your eyes. But Java has proved capable of much more. Its applications, known as "applets," can do virtually any task, from word processing to spreadsheet accounting. They have vastly increased the potential of the Internet and have caused some industry analysts to foresee the day when you won't need to keep any programs stored on your computer except your Web browser. The browser will hold the key to all the software available via the Internet. The consequences for Microsoft and its operating software are obvious: The company's domination of the personal computer desktop is seriously threatened.

> MICROSOFT IS GIVING AWAY THE BROWSER BECAUSE IT IS DESPERATELY TRYING TO KEEP ITS OPERATING SYSTEM FROM BECOMING IRRELEVANT.

To say that Microsoft has been in a hurry to add Web-browsing capability to Windows 95 is a huge understatement. It is no longer a matter of competing for a share of the browser-application market. The distinction between browsers and operating systems has been blurred to the point where it's not clear where one ends and the other begins. After all, there is now an entire class of software that literally cannot be run without a browser that can handle Java. The Justice Department's claim that Microsoft is using its dominance in operating systems to stuff a separate Microsoft program down the throats of computer vendors and users misses the point. Microsoft is trying desperately to keep its operating system from becoming irrelevant.

Does that mean Microsoft is a nice company seeking only to compete fairly? Hardly. Look at the suit filed by Sun Microsystems against Microsoft in federal court in San Jose on October 14. Microsoft has been forced to acquire license to use Java in Internet Explorer, but Sun claims in its suit that Microsoft is using an altered version of Java in the new edition of its browser. The purpose, Sun alleges, is to force Java programmers to write programs that will run properly only on computers using Windows 95, thereby defeating one of Java's main virtues, its universality, and helping protect the dominant position of Windows 95. Microsoft does not deny it has made the changes, but claims it has a right to make them. Unlike the action brought by Justice, this looks like a case worth watching.

Contributing editor Brit Hume of Fox News also writes a syndicated column about personal computers.

Diana and Arab Conspiracy

by Daniel Pipes and Hilal Khashan

When the Mercedes limousine crashed in Paris during that awful night two months ago, reaction in most of the world dwelt on the sad fate that had befallen Diana, Princess of Wales. But not so in Egypt and the rest of the Arab Middle East.

There, the presence of Diana's Egyptian companion, Emad Mohammed al-Fayed, known as Dodi, gave the event a political and religious cast, which inspired media coverage of a far different nature. If Western journalists mused on the purported drunkenness of the driver and whether the paparazzi had distracted him, their Arabic-speaking counterparts overwhelmingly agreed that, as a Beirut weekly put it, "There is no doubt about the presence of a conspiracy behind the death of Diana." Arabic-language publications promoted elaborate, ever more fanciful theories about the event. What to the world at large was a tragic automobile accident, to the Arabic press was a plot. Even official bodies joined in this apparent consensus: Libya's National Commission for Human Rights declared, "Only children believe that it was an accident."

Speculation in the Arab world focuses on three issues: why the couple had to be killed, who committed the crime, and how it was pulled off. As to the first of these questions—Why were they killed?—nearly all theories concern Dodi's father and religion. The father, Mohammed al-Fayed, is a highly controversial Egyptian-born tycoon who lives in London and owns, among other properties, the Harrods department stores. He has been embroiled in the shady side of British politics and for years has sought British citizenship, which, despite his persistent efforts, he has failed to win.

Arab journalists seized on these facts in their search for an explanation. Clearly, they reasoned, the notion that this foreign upstart should be step-grandfather to the heir of the English throne was too much for the royal family. So, it dispatched the upstart's son. The press saw confirming evidence everywhere, as in, for example, the extravagant funeral for Diana, which a Cairo magazine read as "new evidence about the role played by Buckingham Palace in this diabolic conspiracy."

Other explanations have to do with Dodi's Islamic faith. Diana had to be killed because the British government could not accept the involvement of the future king's mother with a Muslim Arab; or her marrying him; or her converting to Islam; or her giving birth to a Muslim child. An Egyptian security guard, quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, put it simply: "In the West, they hate Muslims."

What makes the Arab press especially intriguing is the manner in which it builds on its own hypotheses, reporting the merest whimsy as solid fact. Some journalists assumed that Diana had already converted to Islam: "Recite the Fatiha [the opening chapter of the Koran] for the soul of Diana," read one Egyptian headline, implying that she was a Muslim at the time of her death. Said another, "Murder was the easiest solution for the British government to deal with a Muslim princess." One account asserted that Diana had agreed to wear the *hijab*, Islamic modesty clothing, on her head. Others stated as fact that Diana was pregnant by Dodi.

Diana's presumed pro-Islamic attitude prompted more than a few Middle East journalists to portray her in a tragically romantic light. "Diana's life was the price of her love for Dodi," wrote one. Or, Diana was the "martyr of Arab love." The death "ended an Arab midsummer's dream," commented an Egyptian daily. Some writers made Dodi's Middle Eastern identity central to his appeal. Zulfuqar Qubaysi, a columnist, wrote that "Diana was impressed with al-Fayed the son and fell in love with him and wanted to marry him because of his romantic Arab nature, because he was Egyptian, Arab, and Muslim." Her decision sealed her life.

Now: Who killed Diana? By nearly all accounts, British intelligence did. Why in Paris? Obviously, to kill her outside Britain and so deflect attention from the British authorities. For good measure, Libyan strongman Moammar Qadaffi charged French intelligence with being complicit in the crime. Other suspects mentioned include British racist organizations, some of Mohammed al-Fayed's many enemies, and the enemies of Dodi's maternal uncle, arms merchant Adnan Khashoggi.

And how was Diana killed? The motorcyclists obviously were not photographers—how can one ride and take pictures at the same time? Instead, a drunk security officer at the Ritz Hotel was deliberately given the car to drive. Or the car was tampered with after having disappeared a year earlier—it locked in at over 190 kilometers per hour and could not be slowed down. Alternatively, somebody fiddled with the automobile's brakes. Finally, professional killers—those on motorcycles with their photographer's props—were hired to assassinate Diana and Dodi in a James Bond-style operation.

The Arab press excoriated the royal family with

gusto. The queen of England, it said, eulogized Diana only after she herself became a suspect in the "assassination." In the poetic words of a Cairo weekly, "They murdered the Princess and attended her funeral." So too the press lit into the British character. "Racism against Islam," screamed one magazine cover. "English racism till death," screamed another.

Nor were all conclusions theoretical. Some writers discerned foreign-policy implications in the accident, arguing that the couple's death confirmed that Europe was searching for a new enemy after the collapse of the Soviet Union and had decided to launch a religious war, in which the car crash was the opening salvo. A Libyan agency called for a commercial boycott of Great Britain and France as payback for their governments' complicity in the double-murder.

Why did Middle Easterners almost automatically assume a plot? Several explanations suggest themselves. First, the accusations against the royal family roughly reflect what a Muslim family might do if the roles were reversed. When Qaddafi accuses the Windsors of staging "an arranged crash," piqued that "an Arab man might marry a British princess," he inadvertently reveals what his own feelings would be if his daughter were to marry a British man. Muslim girls are forbidden to marry out of the faith or to marry a social inferior, and the police logs are brimming with cases where families have murdered their daughters or sisters for breaching these cardinal precepts. (Right now, a prominent case in Great Britain involves a Pakistani family very publicly intent on killing its daughter for her marriage to a Christian. The hunted couple, in hiding, has written a book about their ordeal, *Zena and Jack*.) Thus does the Middle Easterner's suspicion of foul play in Paris project his own outlook.

> WHY DID MIDDLE EASTERNERS ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME A PLOT? THEIR SUSPICION OF FOUL PLAY IN PARIS IS A PROJECTION OF THEIR OWN OUTLOOK.

Second, vehicular accidents take place relatively often in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein, for example, almost killed Yasir Arafat in 1969 after the PLO slighted Iraqi leadership of the Arab cause. Days after this criticism, an Iraqi army truck rammed into Arafat's car, breaking his arm. During Saddam's reign, over a dozen important figures have left the scene in like manner, most notably the dictator's defense minister, who was also his brother-in-law. After this incident, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak reportedly sent Saddam a letter demanding that the death be the last such "accident."

Third, Arab press reports viewed Diana's affair with Dodi as "an Egyptian and Arab conquest of Western territory." What they called "the battle for winning the heart of Diana" entailed not so much a love affair on his side as a political offensive against Christian Europe. One report even described the accident as Egyptian revenge for the Dinshaway Incident in 1906 (when the British responded to the death of one of their officers by executing four peasants). An Egyptian cartoon portrayed Dodi's relationship with Diana as Egypt's 72-hour reprisal operation for Britain's 72-year occupation of Egypt. Such an aggressive view of the lovers' relationship practically requires the British government to reply in kind, making the murder of Diana an almost logical step.

Westerners are hardly innocent of similar conspiracy theories. The Internet buzzed with wild speculations. One saw the long arm of munitions manufacturers, incensed at Diana's campaign for a ban on landmines, reaching into the Paris tunnel. Another had Diana not dead at all but faking her own death as a ploy to escape the media. One of Lyndon LaRouche's publications called Diana's death an event of "extraordinary strategic significance" because it "shakes the foundations of the world's most powerful institution, the British Empire." (Yes, LaRouche believes the empire still exists.) The LaRouchies are not quite sure who arranged the murder, but they know that it has "implications for every being on this planet."

These musings in the West remained confined to the fever swamps of politics. By contrast, it was the mainstream press in the Arab world that indulged in outlandish and bizarre theories. Such conspiracy thinking bodes ill for the Arabs in their dealings with politics. It indicates passivity and defensiveness, as well as a wish to avoid participating in the modern world. In this view of things, nothing happens of its own; some culprit—almost always British, American, or Israeli—stands behind every untoward event. If the Arabs hope to move on to a more responsible and mature form of politics, they would do well to leave the conspiratorial mindset behind.

Daniel Pipes is author of the just-published* Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes, and Where It Comes From *(Free Press). Hilal Khashan is associate professor of political science at the American University of Beirut.

Fixing Stained-glass Windows

By John J. Dilulio Jr.

Ram A. Cnaan is anything but a born-again religious crusader or right-wing Bible thumper. Instead, Cnaan, 46, is a brilliant, urbane, slightly balding, Israeli-born associate professor of social work at the University of Pennsylvania. "I am," he says, "a secular Jew, not a religious person." Politically, he is, if anything, a man of the Left.

But as the principal author of a new study of how older urban churches and synagogues serve poor communities, the good professor has the zeal of the convert. Prompted by his own data, Cnaan preaches the hitherto untold good news of these congregations' unique contribution to sustaining life in the poorest neighborhoods.

The story has gone untold, Cnaan says, because social-work professionals have cut their personal ties with "the religious community." Their research, preoccupied with abstract theories, overlooks the issue of who is actually in the trenches, helping "the neediest members in the community such as the hungry or new homeless." Unlike their counterparts in Israel and Europe, Cnaan argues, scholars in the United States "have failed to recognize how much important social work is done in poor communities by volunteers with no professional training" and, in particular, how vital "religious congregations and faith-based programs" are to the social health and future well-being of the people who inhabit inner-city America. Their research ignores "a willing and powerful partner in helping the needy in this era of devolution."

Cnaan's own work is based on a detailed survey of over 100 urban congregations that have owned property in six metropolitan areas (Chicago, Indianapolis, Mobile, New York, Philadelphia, and the Bay Area of California) since before 1940. The study was supported by the Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis and commissioned by Partners for Sacred Places (PSP), a national, non-profit, non-sectarian organization with offices in Philadelphia that helps congregations care for and make good use of older buildings for community programs.

Published under the title *Sacred Places At Risk: New Evidence on How Endangered Churches and Synagogues Serve Communities*, Cnaan's work has been vetted for methodological soundness and enthusiastically endorsed by me and by research colleagues at Public/ Private Ventures and other research organizations, as well as by George Gallup Jr. Its findings include facts like these:

• Ninety-one percent of the congregations actively serve the larger community and make their buildings available for day care, food banks, clothing drives, tutoring, after-school "safe haven" programs, health-care programs, job counseling, substance-abuse counseling, and more.

• On average, each congregation supplies 5,300 hours a year in community volunteer work, the equivalent of about two and a half full-time volunteers stationed year-round at each "sacred place."

• Eighty percent of the beneficiaries of church-anchored programs are not members of the congregation, and most are neighborhood children.

• The replacement value of the volunteer services, staff support, and space provided by the churches and synagogues—that is, what it would cost government or for-profit agencies to provide the same services—is at least $100,000 per congregation. Since the congregations receive under $10,000 in payment from the beneficiaries of their programs, they are giving more than 10 times what they receive.

• Seventy-five percent of the community services are provided in buildings or spaces owned or occupied by the churches and synagogues. As go the religious properties, so go the services they supply. Over a quarter of the properties are in severe physical disrepair. When church towers crumble or synagogue doors close, even the oldest, strongest, most volunteer-rich congregations don't rent rooms at the downtown Ramada or physically transplant themselves. They crumble, too.

Several sets of social-policy implications flow from this and other ongoing research on inner-city

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churches. Start with the extent and efficacy of church-anchored community programs in urban America. Ask not, How come, if the churches are doing so much, the neighborhoods are still so bad? Ask, How much worse would these neighborhoods be without the millions of dollars in social-service subsidies supplied by congregations? To the extent that religious architecture is community fate, corporate and philanthropic organizations have every reason to get behind the preservation of sacred places with dollars, and governments have every reason to facilitate their flourishing, by granting zoning waivers and implementing such measures as the "charitable choice" provision of the 1996 welfare-reform law, which allows religious organizations to receive federal funds for the faith-based delivery of social services.

Arguably, however, the most profound implication for social policy of these new findings is that supporting church-anchored volunteer efforts in poor urban neighborhoods is the only practical way to sustain and extend the recent success of police in big and medium-sized cities at putting crime and disorder on the run.

As has been widely reported, one key to New York City's dramatic reduction in crime has been policing premised on the "broken-windows" thesis developed by criminologists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. In their famous 1982 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Wilson and Kelling posited that if a broken window in a building goes unfixed, soon all the windows will be broken. The broken window, they argued, is a virtual invitation to incivility, disorder, and crime: "Where disorder problems are frequent and no one takes responsibility for unruly behavior in public spaces, the sense of 'territoriality' among residents shrinks to include only their own households; meanwhile, untended property is fair game for plunder or destruction . . . [and] a concentration of supposedly 'victimless' disorders can soon flood an area with serious, victimizing crimes."

William Bratton, New York chief of police from 1994 to 1996, applied the broken-windows thesis almost to the letter. In a 1995 essay, he stressed that, with "rare exception, residents, even in the highest-crime areas, usually do not talk about murder . . . and the other violent crimes that make the headlines." Instead, they focus on "street prostitution, low-level drug dealing, underage drinking, blaring car radios and a host of other quality-of-life crimes that contribute to a sense of disorder and danger in the street." Under Bratton's leadership, the NYPD not only cracked down on squeegee men but followed a well-developed strategy for curbing youth violence in schools, reclaiming public spaces, reducing car thefts, and more.

Kelling himself was a key adviser to Bratton, with a front-row seat for the implementation of the strategy. As Kelling beautifully details in his recent book *Fixing Broken Windows*, Bratton's efforts included everything from a new computer-assisted crime-data management system, to special narcotics and gun units, to a citywide offensive against crack houses, illegal liquor outlets, and other illegitimate businesses. As a result, New Yorkers haven't been so relatively free of crime and disorder since the Mets won the World Series in 1969.

Still, even the biggest devotees of quality-of-life policing, including Bratton, acknowledge that police alone cannot solve urban crime or cure the worst inner-city ills. Return to the words of the 1982 broken-windows thesis statement quoted above. Even with first-rate leadership, police can do only so much to restore a "sense of 'territoriality' among residents," to take back public spaces, and to give juveniles and young adults prone to high-risk behavior something better to do, someplace other than the streets to go, and some adult other than gang members to hang out with, turn to with problems, and count on in emergencies or for basic life necessities.

> IF WE ARE TRULY INTERESTED IN RESURRECTING THE CIVIL SOCIETY OF INNER-CITY AMERICA, WE MUST PHYSICALLY PRESERVE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS.

Thus, if we are truly interested in resurrecting the civil society of inner-city America, where fixing-broken-windows policing ends, "fixing stained-glass windows" social policy must begin. It must build on the community presence of both older and newer religious congregations, physically preserving both big-tower temples and tiny store-front "blessing stations" that are the symbol and substance of community norms of civility, sobriety, and responsibility.

Recently, Philadelphia joined the cities that have invited Bratton (now a private consultant) and members of his former NYPD brain trust to assist police in "fixing broken windows." Such forward-looking efforts ought to be encouraged at all costs. But Philadelphia and other cities are also striving to learn from the remarkable example of Boston, where police chief Paul Evans, probation chief Ron Corbett, and a

network of Dorchester ministers are working to link juveniles on probation with faith-based counseling and education programs in their neighborhood. Already, the police-probation-preacher partnership has effected a reduction in inner-city crime and disorder such that the city has not suffered a single gun-related youth homicide in over two years.

In many cities, district attorneys are taking the lead in forging such partnerships and trumpeting the need to support sacred places. In Brooklyn, the DA's office has proposed linking offenders with faith communities in their neighborhoods for support and guidance.

And in Philadelphia, the DA's office, led by Lynne Abraham, has expressed a strong interest in exploring new ways of working with faith-based social-service providers to help rescue the city's most severely at-risk youth and steer petty juvenile offenders away from the criminal-justice system and into adult-rich, values-centered alternatives.

Of all the windows that need tending in America's cities, those in churches and synagogues deserve attention first. After all, what police precinct or neon-lit police mobile unit can be more than a trivial presence in an inner-city neighborhood? "Ever notice," asked one veteran prosecutor at a recent meeting of the National District Attorneys Association, "how even on the most desolate streets there is always a church nearby, and how the church is often the only building around that's not sprayed top to bottom with graffiti?" It's time to notice these sacred places and to appreciate the service to the needy that goes on in them. With proper support, they have the potential to help consolidate social gains, as crime-weary neighborhoods begin to enjoy a desperately needed reprieve. ♦

China: The End of Engagement

By Robert Kagan

"It's a movie, not a snapshot," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger like to say when pleading for patience with their "strategy" of engagement with China. And apparently it's one of those movies in which nothing happens for a very, very long time.

Certainly nothing happened at last week's "historic" summit. A senior administration official told reporters after their meetings with the Chinese that "the general tone was intransigence. Friendly, cooperative-sounding intransigence." Long, painful negotiations on any number of issues—from trade to human rights—went nowhere. "After days and days and days," another official told the *New York Times*, "we have found it difficult to have even the most basic kinds of discussions with China." The administration professes to be pleased to have received ambiguous Chinese assurances that Beijing will stop violating its past assurances concerning its profligate proliferation of dangerous weapons and technologies to Iran. But for anyone not in thrall to the sacred tenets of engagement, the mere fact that these dubious assurances were the "centerpiece" of the summit is the surest sign that engagement with China is producing nothing—at least for the United States. For the Chinese government, of course, engagement is working splendidly.

Clinton officials may be so wedded to their China policy that no amount of failure can force a re-evaluation. But there is reason to wonder whether the strategy of embracing China in the hope of eliciting better behavior can survive much longer without achieving any gains.

It certainly should come as no surprise that engagement isn't working the way the Clinton administration once hoped it would. Some leading China scholars, in candid moments, predicted as much. David Shambaugh, head of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies at George Washington University—and a supporter of the administration's approach to China—wrote last year that, "because of its domestic politics, China cannot and will not reciprocate the Western pol-

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icy of 'engagement' because, on the one hand, the regime views it as a policy of subversion and, on the other, the costs of adapting to international rules and norms are too high." According to Shambaugh, the decisive fact is that China is a "dissatisfied and non-status quo power which seeks to change the existing international order and norms of inter-state relations." It does not want to be "integrated" into the U.S.-dominated international order; it does not want to accommodate itself to what the West considers international "norms." Rather, it wants to change the world to suit its own special needs as a powerful dictatorship on the rise.

Clinton officials have insisted they want to bring China into the international system and convince China's leaders that their interests lie in playing by the existing rules of the game. But Sinologist Kenneth Lieberthal has pointed out that "China wants the world to accept its 'Chinese characteristics' as part of the price of having the country join international councils." China "wants to be a rule setter and not just a rule accepter." Is it in America's interest to give way on this crucial point?

On some issues—for instance, on the subject of trade—the Clinton administration has so far been reluctant to let the Chinese rewrite the rules of the game. At the very least, the administration fears the angry reaction in Congress that such an accommodation might spark. The result, however, is that China is nowhere near meeting the requirements for entry into the World Trade Organization, even though the administration once hoped to bring China in this year.

But in other areas, the administration's resolve has been weak. Confronted by the prospect of having nothing substantial to show for last week's summit, for instance, the administration rushed into accepting Chinese assurances on nuclear non-proliferation so that the president could certify the Chinese as eligible to buy American nuclear-power plants. A more prudent approach would have put the Chinese on probation for six months or a year to see whether they would actually abide by their latest pledges, since their record of compliance in the past has been miserable. And on the subject of human rights, Clinton may have sparred with Jiang Zemin publicly, but privately it must have been clear to the Chinese that the United States was not demanding anything in the way of substantive progress—not the release of a single dissident, not vague commitments to reform, not a promise to ease repression, even a little, in Tibet.

The administration's stated determination to hold the Chinese government to some reasonable standards of international and domestic behavior may weaken further in coming months. Clinton has announced he will go to China next year, but can he afford to hold another summit as devoid of progress as last week's? Some senior officials are already considering letting China make the rules on issues like trade and proliferation. Sandra Kristoff, the National Security Council's top Asia specialist, reportedly said at a meeting on Capitol Hill a few weeks ago that "a China that makes the rules will have a greater stake in enforcing them." Whether her theory is correct or not, if this became the official line, it would mark a subtle shift in the administration's definition of engagement. Until now, officials have not talked about letting China participate in *making* international rules.

But that is what the Chinese are holding out for, and they may well have left last week's summit believing that "intransigence" is their best strategy with a president who seems driven to accommodate them. Intransigence and, of course, big contracts for American firms. The Chinese have been playing the same game with Clinton for three years. In 1994, they harangued then-secretary of state Warren Christopher during his visit to Beijing and told him to keep his nose out of their affairs. Meanwhile, back in the United States, they dangled contracts before a dozen hungry American corporations. The result: a wholesale reversal of the administration's policy and the formal "delinkage" of trade and human rights. (Christopher, it is interesting to note, was the only recent secretary of state not in attendance at last week's state dinner.) This time, the Chinese came bearing huge gifts for Boeing and other corporate giants, piling the cash high on the tables while they stiffed administration officials in the negotiations. The Chinese believe they have Clinton's number. Are they wrong?

The fact is, the administration's present engagement strategy may fast be approaching a dead end. In the coming months, if China continues playing hard to get, Clinton will either have to stand firm and risk a disruption in U.S.-China relations or, if he finds that prospect unbearable, begin bending the rules on more and more issues in order to cut deals with the Chinese. "You must accept my terms," Bismarck once threatened in a heated negotiation with Austria's foreign minister. "If not," he continued, rising ominously from his chair, "—then I must accept yours." This may be the only sense in which the Clinton administration's policy toward China can be described as Bismarckian. But that is not how the policy of engagement was sold to the American people, and it is unlikely to maintain their support for very long.

The Congress, meanwhile, is getting restive. Legislation introduced by Rep. Christopher Cox comes to

the House floor this week with the support of the top Republican leadership, and most of the nine separate bills addressing various aspects of Chinese misbehavior are likely to pass. Next year, Clinton will probably be meeting with Jiang in Beijing before the annual congressional vote on renewing China's most-favored-nation status. Another empty summit won't help the president win that battle either.

Looming over the horizon, of course, are more serious matters than the pas de deux of Sino-American summitry. China's geopolitical aspirations are clear enough. As David Shambaugh has put it, "Above all, China seeks to disperse global power and particularly to weaken the preponderant power of the United States in world affairs. . . . China's primary foreign policy goal today is to weaken American influence relatively and absolutely." The Clinton administration's strategy of engagement once purported to try to deal with this problem. Instead it is only making the problem worse. ♦

Washington's Most Formidable Liberal

By Matthew Rees

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, John Glenn is not the most shameless apologist for President Clinton in Congress. That distinction belongs to Rep. Henry Waxman of California, the senior Democrat on the House committee probing last year's fund-raising abuses. Waxman and his staff have gone to sometimes comical lengths in their attempts to derail the investigation into Democratic wrongdoing and shift the attention to Republican malfeasance. Consider a letter Waxman wrote in March to Attorney General Janet Reno raising questions about foreign involvement in a presidential campaign. A seemingly reasonable inquiry, except that Waxman wasn't interested in last year's contest: He wanted Reno to check out a report the Philippine government contributed $10 million to Ronald Reagan's reelection bid in 1984. It's as if Howard Baker, in the midst of the Watergate hearings of 1973, had asked John Mitchell to look into alleged wrongdoing in John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign.

But the letter hardly caused a ripple. To House colleagues, the tactic was vintage Waxman. Always a fierce partisan, he's been fanatically committed to defending the Clinton administration against scandal, including charges stemming from the abrupt firing of seven White House travel-office officials in 1993 and from the White House's retrieval of confidential FBI files. Last year, when a House committee chaired by William Clinger was set to release a report on Travelgate, Waxman led a walkout. Trailed by the committee's Democrats, he stormed out of the room, harrumphing, "I leave this committee with absolute disgust for it and its chairman!"

Waxman was mad because he'd failed to block release of the report, and he isn't accustomed to losing. In fact, he's the most formidable and successful liberal in Washington and has been for most of the last 15 years. He's smart, intense, partisan, highly ideological, and works harder than almost any other member of Congress. During congressional recesses, when nearly all House members are in their districts holding town meetings, he stays on Capitol Hill and eats lunch in the dumpy Rayburn cafeteria. When Congress is in session, he is sometimes the only member to attend meetings where staffers negotiate a bill's fine print. "He's not someone you take lightly," says Clinger. Indeed, Waxman has fought relentlessly to expand Washington's role in regulating tobacco, the environment, and health care. In the process, he's scored more legislative victories than any other member of Congress in recent memory.

When the fund-raising investigation started earlier this year, both Waxman and Rep. Dan Burton, the Republican who chairs the House inquiry, made soothing noises about bipartisanship. But conflict was

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Matthew Rees is a staff writer for The Weekly Standard.

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inevitable. There's a world of difference between the two men. Waxman is a short liberal Jewish lawyer from Los Angeles, while Burton is a tall conservative Protestant from Indianapolis who never finished college. If they were stranded on a desert island, they'd find nothing in common.

The moment Burton started to assert his authority as chairman, Waxman began denouncing the investigation as partisan and designed to bring down the president. He complained about everything from committee funding to the minority's role in deposing witnesses. Yet he rejects the Republican charge that he's acting as an adjunct defense counsel for the White House, citing his criticism of Clinton aides for failing to produce subpoenaed videotapes and his early call for an independent counsel.

Waxman's efforts to inoculate himself against the patsy charge have been clever, but as evidence of his independence they ring hollow. In the past eight months, he's had little to say about Reno's failure to appoint an independent counsel, and he hasn't expressed much concern about the Justice Department's hapless investigation. Any doubts about his ties to the White House were settled when it was learned that Don Goldberg, once a top committee aide close to Waxman, had gone to work for White House spinmeister Lanny Davis. So while Waxman denies he's doing the administration's bidding, he concedes that his role on the committee is "to point out how partisan and unfair the investigation has been and to show that it's not legitimate."

One way he's done that is by flooding Burton with letters complaining about the conduct of the investigation. These letters, some 45 of them, range from subpoena requests to charges that Republican investigators have been unprofessional. Released to the press, they help set the terms of the debate. Nothing is too trivial to complain about. In one letter, Waxman griped that Burton's investigators had "knocked loudly and persistently" on the door of a potential witness in Los Angeles and that they had resembled characters from the movie *Men in Black*.

By contrast, Waxman shows blithe unconcern about the 60 people under investigation in connection with alleged fund-raising violations who have fled the country or taken the Fifth Amendment. He acknowledged in an interview that these people's refusal to cooperate "makes it impossible to find out all the information that we would want to know about the campaign financing." Asked what the committee could do, he said meekly, "I don't know. . . . We could ask them to come back." Yet even if they decided to come forward, said Waxman, "I'd certainly be skeptical about whether they ought to cooperate with this particular committee's investigation." Waxman wouldn't be so passive if 60 tobacco executives took the Fifth or decamped to a foreign country.

Sure enough, when it comes to trying to discredit witnesses damaging to Democrats, his passivity recedes. Consider the conduct of Waxman's staff toward David and James Wang, witnesses in the Asian fund-raising affair. David Wang, a Taiwanese-born American citizen living in southern California, has acknowledged meeting with Democratic fund-raiser John Huang and giving him two $5,000 checks made out to the Democratic National Committee, then receiving $10,000 in cash from a John Huang associate. That's illegal. Because the transaction involved Huang, a key figure, the Justice Department supported securing Wang's testimony through a grant of immunity. Waxman voted for immunity on September 24, but for a different reason: David Wang, he said, had been put in "possible legal jeopardy" because Burton's staffers had questioned him without an attorney present.

This is where things get interesting. On October 3, two Waxman staffers, Kenneth Ballen and Christopher Lu, called Wang's father, James, who was alleged to have been present at the meeting with John Huang. Wang senior had no attorney present during the phone call, but that didn't stop Waxman's staffers from questioning him. They thought they heard him say he had not attended the meeting with Huang—his English is limited—at which point they faxed him a statement to sign confirming this. But their game of "gotcha" caught up with them when James Wang refused to sign the statement, turned it over to his lawyer, and instead signed a statement affirming that he *had* in fact been at the meeting with John Huang. How did Ballen and Lu respond to this embarrassing turn of events? At a committee hearing a few days later, they distributed a statement repeating the assertion—despite Wang's explicit denial—that James Wang had not attended the meeting with John Huang.

This behavior is emblematic of how Waxman and his staff have approached the investigation. They seem to be more interested in undermining the committee than uncovering fund-raising abuses that might implicate Democrats. In addition to Ballen and Lu, Waxman's top lieutenants are his veteran Capitol Hill staffers Phil Barnett and Phil Schiliro—known to GOP aides as "the Phils." They've succeeded because they know how committee investigations work, and a sympathetic press is working alongside them. But Waxman also looks more successful than he's actually

been by contrast with Burton, who has had to delay hearings, has been overruled by committee Republicans, and, most embarrassing, had a major staff shakeup in July. Waxman never tires of raising these issues—who can blame him?—and this has damaged Burton's already-questionable reputation.

The irony in Waxman's staunch defense of the administration is that Bill Clinton has done more to pull the Democratic party away from Waxman-style liberalism than any other Democrat in the past 25 years. When I put this to Waxman, he didn't buy it, saying he hasn't been a "staunch" defender of Clinton and noting that he and the president agree on some things, disagree on others. Sure enough, it's no secret that Waxman—like nearly all liberals—has been chagrined by Clinton's modest domestic agenda. The most striking example is health care. For years, Waxman was an enthusiastic advocate of overhauling—nationalizing—the health-care system, and seven of his staffers worked on the administration's health-care task force. But as a cosponsor of Rep. Jim McDermott's proposal for a Canadian-style universal system, he was deeply disappointed with the mish-mash Clinton proposed. Since then, the regrets have only multiplied.

Waxman doesn't shy from calling himself a "liberal Democrat," and he rarely supports legislation opposed by liberal groups. Distraught over how the "liberal" label was being used to malign Michael Dukakis in 1988, he wrote a ringing defense of liberalism for the *Los Angeles Times* a few days before the election. This puts him well to the left of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council—a group Clinton led while he was governor of Arkansas but whose only idea Waxman cites with approval is "reinventing government."

Unlike many other white Democrats, Waxman hasn't had to move to the center to keep getting reelected. Jews and gays are heavily represented in his Los Angeles district, while Republicans are not (last year, Waxman's GOP opponent endorsed Clinton). The district, which includes ritzy Bel Air (where Ronald Reagan lives) and Hancock Park, is filled with salmon-eating socialists from the entertainment industry. The median value of a home—$500,000—is the highest of any congressional district in the country. And while Waxman himself is not given to glitz, he can be personally pleasant, contrary to the conservative caricature.

Waxman got started in electoral politics in 1968, when he trounced a 26-year incumbent assemblyman in a Democratic primary at the age of 28. After six years in Sacramento, he breezed into the U.S. House in the Watergate class of 1974. Representing a district with hordes of wealthy people who like to dabble in politics, Waxman has no trouble raising money, which he quickly learned he could use to his benefit in Washington. Following the 1978 midterm elections, he defeated the more senior Richardson Preyer for the chairmanship of the Commerce Committee's Health and Environment Subcommittee by doling out a total of $24,000 in campaign funds to other members of the subcommittee (including Al Gore).

This willingness to take on the Democratic establishment became one of Waxman's trademarks. He and Howard Berman, a former California assemblyman now in Congress, dominated Democratic politics in Los Angeles in the 1970s and '80s. They helped elect numerous liberals to the state legislature and Congress, and they came within a whisker of getting Berman elected speaker of the state assembly in 1980.

But the Waxman-Berman machine is dead. Its candidates in the two 1992 Senate Democratic primaries—Mel Levine and Gray Davis—both lost. Berman is now in a more competitive district that requires him to spend more time on constituent work and less on liberal activism. But the main reason for the machine's decline is that Waxman's interest in national issues like tobacco and health care exceeds his interest in the often-grubby world of California politics. "I've distanced myself from that," he told me. "I didn't see any reason to be so involved in deciding the Democratic primary when there are a lot of good people who ought to win."

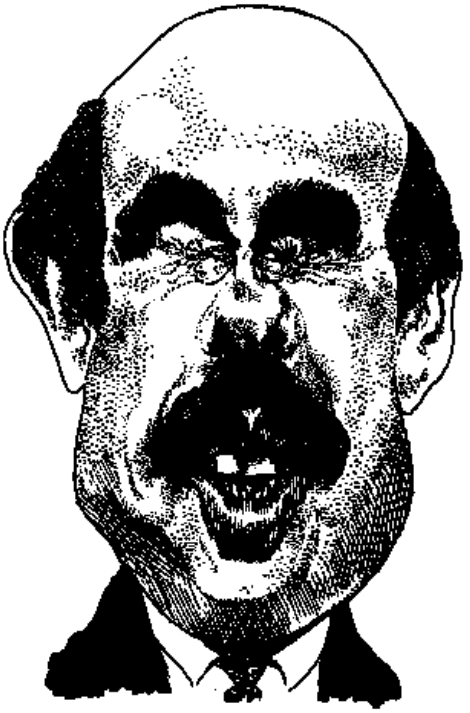
Waxman's dexterity in defending the Clinton administration and his mastery of the money chase risk overshadowing the most important thing about him: his legislative acumen. "During my years in the House, I don't think I ever dealt with anyone who was as prepared as he was," recalls former representative William Dannemeyer, a conservative Republican who regularly tangled with Waxman. "Dealing with Henry was one of the more frustrating experiences in my life."

It's easy to see why. Waxman was one of the first to jump on the anti-smoking bandwagon, and he has waged a personal crusade against the tobacco companies, culminating in the famous 1994 hearings when he had a group of tobacco executives testify under oath that they didn't believe smoking caused cancer. On environmental issues, Waxman used his subcommittee chairmanship to help pass a regulation-heavy Clean Air Act in 1990, after years fending off attempts by the

committee chairman, John Dingell of Michigan, to pass a watered-down bill.

But Waxman's greatest influence has been on health care, especially Medicaid, the government health program for the poor. When he arrived in Congress, total spending on Medicaid was slightly less than $13 billion. By fiscal 1996, that number had spiked to more than $161 billion. Not all of the increase is thanks to Waxman, but he's done more to raise Medicaid spending than any other member of Congress. With states picking up roughly 40 percent of Medicaid costs, he has been a loathed figure among governors.

Asked how he's been so successful, Waxman deflects the credit. "Whatever I've accomplished legislatively I've accomplished with Democrat and Republican coalition votes." The reality is a little different. Throughout the 1980s, when most of the Medicaid expansions were implemented, Waxman maintained a staff that simply knew more about Medicaid than anyone else on Capitol Hill. And even though Republicans controlled the executive branch, Waxman's staff often outflanked them, partly by cultivating contacts among the career employees at agencies like Health and Human Services. It was said that Waxman's aides had forgotten more about Medicaid than any other Capitol Hill health experts ever knew.



Michael Ramirez

Henry Waxman

Also key to the equation was Waxman himself. When fighting for Medicaid provisions, "he was like a little kid who would hold his breath and turn blue in the face until you agreed to give him what he wanted," says one Republican staffer. Sometimes he won his Medicaid expansions through the normal, public budget debate, but once he and his aides mastered the arcana of the budget process—particularly the all-important "reconciliation" stage—they were able to secure major policy changes without subjecting them to close scrutiny. "Fifty percent of the social safety net was created by Henry Waxman when no one was looking," says Tom Scully, a top Bush administration health-care aide. Waxman acknowledged the point in 1989 to health-care reporter Julie Rovner: "The reality is, reconciliation has become the way to adjust to the politics and policy of the budget. It's become the only place we can make policy changes."

Not only did Waxman understand budgeting, he was a master of timing. He would frequently spring his proposals on budget negotiators at the last minute and then warn them that he had enough Democratic support to defeat the entire package if his changes weren't made. That's what happened in 1990: In the closing hours of the budget talks, a bipartisan group of staff negotiators assented to Waxman's demands so as not to see all their work torpedoed by some seemingly minor changes to Medicaid that would cost "only" a few hundred million dollars.

Since the Democrats lost control of Congress, Waxman has been forced to trim his sails. Instead of championing Medicaid expansions, he's obliged to operate within the priorities of the Republican majority. Despite his ideological ferocity, for example, he worked with conservative Commerce Committee chairman Tom Bliley last year to pass the Safe Drinking Water Act and a pesticide bill. Liberal pressure groups didn't think much of the legislation but kept quiet after Waxman and his staff told them they wouldn't get anything better from a Republican Congress.

This cooperative spirit has yet to carry over to the committee investigating the Clinton fund-raising machine. Indeed, Waxman's combativeness is so great that he's repeatedly put up a stronger defense of the White House than the White House itself has put up. Investigate Webster Hubbell's involvement with the Lippo Group? Clinton officials reluctantly agreed to let Republicans do this. Not Waxman. He's consistently objected to this line of inquiry. His obstinacy raises the question whether he simply enjoys making life difficult for Republicans. In fact, says Waxman, there are many other things he'd rather be doing than tussling with Dan Burton. "I don't consider this a very productive use of my time," he told me. The White House surely would disagree. ♦

Reagan's Greatness

Giving a President His Due

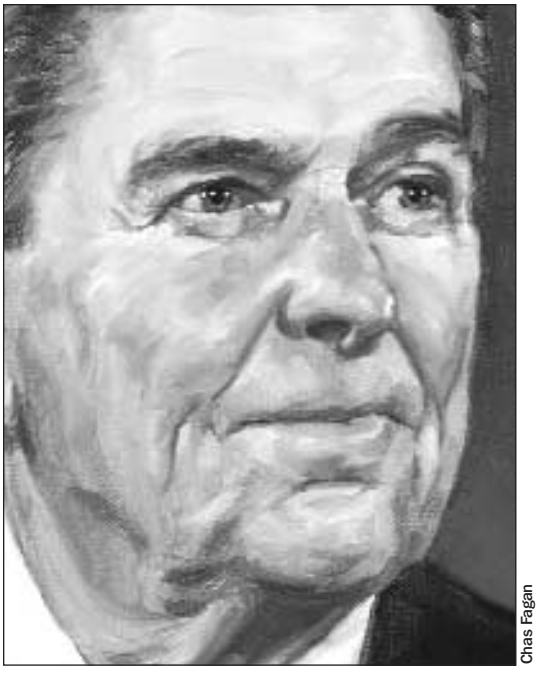
By William Kristol

Ronald Reagan is today a president without honor in his own country, a Republican without imitators in his own party, and a conservative without followers in his own movement.

This is so despite some superficial appearances to the contrary, and it is odd. After all, Reagan was the most consequential president since Franklin Roosevelt, the most successful Republican leader since Theodore Roosevelt, and the first true conservative to reach the apex of American politics since Coolidge. Reagan won the Cold War almost without firing a shot; he laid the groundwork for the GOP to escape half a century of minority status; and he decisively vindicated the claims of conservatism. Feared by the Communists, patronized by the Democrats, loathed by the Left, Reagan vanquished them all. Yet who today is a Reaganite?

Dinesh D'Souza is, and his fine new study of Reagan provides a fresh opportunity to consider Reagan's achievements and our neglect of them. Those achievements teach important lessons, and so does our neglect. For it turns out to be easier to ignore Reagan than to appreciate him—if appreciating him means facing up to challenges that we would prefer to avoid.

Reagan accomplished two great deeds as president—restoring America's economic health and winning the Cold War. The second, of course, is by far the greater, and D'Souza's discussion of Reagan's indispensable role in concluding "the supreme political drama" of the latter half of the century is the best part of the book. D'Souza reminds us of the magnitude of the event: "What will probably prove to be the most important historical event of our lifetimes has already occurred. We are unlikely to live through anything else of comparable significance." D'Souza convincingly shows that Reagan was "the prime mover" in his own foreign policy, "the architect of his own success." From the assault on détente to the Reagan Doctrine, from the deployment of the Pershing IIs to the Reykjavik summit, Reagan pursued policies that were anathematized by liberals and derided by the "wise men" of the day. He broke with *conservative* conventional wisdom as well when, in his second term, he brilliantly pivoted and helped Gorbachev along in the dismantling of Communist rule and the Soviet empire.



Chas Fagan

Reagan was, of course, a staunch anti-Communist. But his anti-communism followed from his patriotism. He was able to take the moral offensive against communism not only because he believed the Soviet Union evil, but because he believed America a force for good. The Reagan Doctrine—a determination to aid anti-Communist insurgents around the world—was a hard-headed and shrewd means of weakening the Soviet empire. But, as D'Souza points out, "Reagan conceived of his doctrine primarily in moral terms." He always emphasized the universal right to freedom and self-government. Unlike the sophisticates of his time (and ours), Reagan "defined the conflict between the West and the Soviet Union as fundamentally a moral conflict." Indeed, "Reagan saw himself as doing nothing more than clarifying what America stood for and against."

Reagan was confident that what America stood for was right. He was also confident—far more so than

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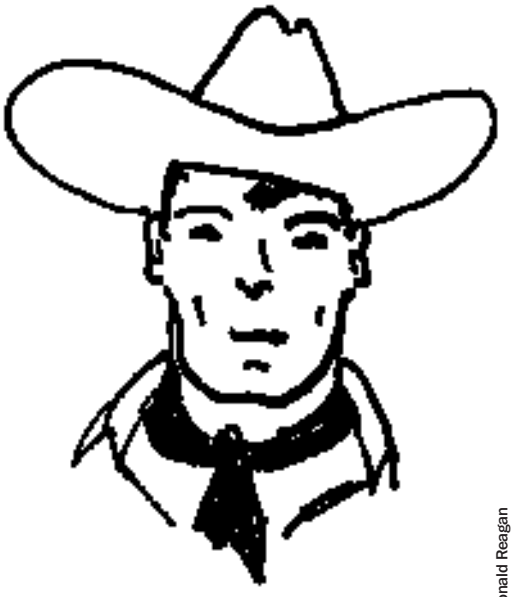
William Kristol, editor and publisher of The Weekly Standard, *co-authored (with David Brooks) the article "What Ails Conservatism?" in the September 15, 1997,* Wall Street Journal.

most conservatives—that his country would prevail. If he was remarkably prescient about the weakness of the Soviet system, that merely followed from his confidence in the American system. And it was Reagan's confidence that made possible his boldness. Elected with barely 50 percent of the vote, at odds with the entire foreign-policy establishment, Reagan in his first term set out, in the words of Sovietologist Stephen Cohen of Princeton in 1983, "to abandon both containment and détente for a very different objective: destroying the Soviet Union as a world power and possibly its communist system." (Cohen, of course, was condemning Reagan for pursuing a "pathological" strategy.)

But it was also Reagan's confidence in America that permitted him, in his second term, to move aggressively to take advantage of what Gorbachev felt forced to do in response to Reagan's tough first-term policies. For, as D'Souza reminds us, "at a time when no one else could, Reagan dared to imagine a world in which the communist regime in the Soviet Union did not exist." Reagan dared to imagine such a world because he really did believe that the West would not merely contain communism, but "transcend" it.

The point of transcending communism was not simply to allow America to come home again. Reagan's view of America implies a distinctive American role in a post-Cold War world as well. It implies an America that is militarily strong, morally assertive, and politically daring—in the service of advancing American interests and American principles in the world, and not because those principles are American but because they are morally superior to competing principles. This is all too much for today's politicians, who do not want to confront such responsibilities and who in one way or another have embraced doctrines of American retreat. For when you strip away the arguments of multilateral liberalism or Kissingerian "realism," you find a lack of confidence in American principles. Any politician who now embraced a Reaganite vision would need the courage to challenge the odd mixture of fearful complacency and willful shortsightedness that characterizes the mood of the American establishment today.



Self-portrait, 1981.

Ronald Reagan

Such a mood also infects the establishment of the Republican party. Reagan led the GOP to two stunning national election victories, the first of which brought in a Republican Senate for the first time in 26 years. He succeeded in handing over the White House to his vice president, giving the Republicans three consecutive terms in control of the executive branch for the first time since the 1920s. And it was the return of the GOP in 1994 to a Reaganite agenda—a return engineered by Newt Gingrich—that produced the victory that finally ended six decades of the Democrats as the majority party in the United States. Reagan Republicanism has proven to be winning Republicanism. And political parties presumably like to win. Yet today's Republican party, curiously, is not a Reaganite party.

One reason is clear: Reagan Republicanism is controversial Republicanism. Reagan challenged a sitting Republican president and took on prevailing Republican orthodoxies and principalities. He brought politically incorrect social conservatives into the GOP and committed the party to a pro-life doctrine that the cultural elite could not, and still cannot, abide. "Reagan Democrats" became Republicans because they were offered a new, not-traditionally-Republican, anti-establishment (and pro-American) vision. And it was the sense that Clinton and the Democrats had contempt for this vision that completed the movement of the Reagan Democrats into the Republican party at the congressional and state levels in 1994.

Since then, however, the Reaganite vision has been lost. The party has re-splintered into its pre-Reagan component parts. Much of the congressional leadership of the party is Nixonian—practicing a Republican version of old-fashioned Democratic interest-group, coalition-building politics, with a patina of Luntz-like happy-talk and no real consistency of message or moral vision. Meanwhile, Rockefeller Republicanism attempts a comeback in the Northeast, and Pat Buchanan and his spinoffs try to peddle a message that is a peculiar mixture of George Wallace and Robert Taft. Reagan overcame and knit together these factions by offering, as D'Souza says, a "unifying moral vision for America," a vision of patriotism and national greatness. But amazing as it may seem, few Re-

publican leaders are interested in setting forth such a vision today. If it is true, as D'Souza maintains, that "Reagan dominates American politics in the second half of the twentieth century," this is more evident in the Democratic party, with Clinton's clever appropriation of some Reaganite themes. Reagan's own party, which he led to the verge of triumph, shies away.

As for conservatives, they take pride in Reagan and claim his success as their own. But when they turn to contemporary politics, they seem as ready as liberals to proclaim that we live in an age "after Reaganism." Embarrassed to appear nostalgic, or ignorant of Reagan's superior gifts, today's conservatives neither study nor imitate his example. One commentator, while professing admiration for Reagan, has argued that Reaganism was in no way an innovation but simply "conservative common sense applied to the problems that had developed in the 1960s and the 1970s." D'Souza is convincing in rebuttal: In fact, supply-side economics was a break with previous conservative orthodoxy; the conviction that communism was not only dangerous but weak was rare among conservatives; the populist and moral appeal to Reagan Democrats was novel.

In any case, the proof is in the pudding. As D'Souza reminds us, Goldwater received less than 40 percent of the vote in 1964, and Reagan won almost 60 percent twenty years later. Those conservatives who "see Reagan as another Goldwater who happened to run at a more propitious time" are wrong. Reagan was able to add Nixon's silent majority to Goldwater's core of believers, thus creating a patriotic majority that was no longer silent, one that remains the basis of a possible lasting conservative realignment.

Like many before him, D'Souza attempts to explain the "secret" of Reagan, "to solve the mystery" of Reagan the man. Though he is perceptive in his analysis, D'Souza never quite unravels the personal enigma of Reagan. Along with everyone else, D'Souza takes note of Reagan's "optimism." But even more striking than Reagan's trademark sunshine was his extraordinary political courage. He simply was unafraid to stick to his guns when all around him, calculating the odds, fell away. Courage is the first of the virtues, and Reagan had it.

Dinesh D'Souza
Ronald Reagan
How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader
Free Press, 292 pp., $25

His courage and his optimism were connected in this way: Courage often goes hand-in-hand with the belief—not always an entirely rational belief—that your cause will prevail. Reagan was serenely confident that he, and America, would prevail. He believed in the American people and in American principles; he believed that men deserve to be free and that they have the capacity to govern themselves; and he believed these principles would be victorious.

Reagan believed this because he was convinced Providence was somehow on America's side. Reagan was perhaps not conventionally religious, but his confidence that God was looking out for America and for the right seems to have helped give him the courage to do all that he did. Such confidence rings strange in our postmodern ears; it seems to support

Peggy Noonan's quip that Reagan's example proves that "the unexamined life *is* worth living." Reagan's views were not unexamined, though. They may have been unsophisticated. But political greatness requires the courage to be unsophisticated.

In his concluding chapter, D'Souza joins many others in warning against yearning for "another Ronald Reagan." But why shouldn't we? As D'Souza emphasizes, Reagan was in many ways an ordinary man who became an extraordinary leader. Precisely because Reagan does not reach the heights of a Lincoln or a Churchill, he is accessible as a model to be followed by other ordinary political men. Surely we are entitled to hope for another Reagan. Meanwhile, as D'Souza suggests, we can work to reinvigorate Reaganism. In doing so, we honor Reagan. And we also credit Reagan's contention—made in his magnificent 1984 speech at Normandy—that ours is "the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man." ♦

Liberalism's Wreckage

A 'New Democrat' Chronicles Urban Decline

By Fred Barnes

There's a sure-fire way to get a laugh when speaking anywhere outside the Beltway: mention Mayor Marion Barry and the city of Washington, D.C. Calling Barry "mayor for life" draws a chuckle. Boisterous laughter erupts when you declare crime is down 23 percent in D.C. this year—and that's just in the mayor's office. (Any fabricated percentage will do, since it's a joke.) The biggest laugh comes in response to an old Leno or Letterman jibe that Barry established a political first when he was last inaugurated: He's the first political figure ever to ride to his swearing-in in a limousine whose license plates he made.

Okay, those aren't the wittiest jokes ever, but the point is people always laugh at them. What exactly are they laughing at? I think two things. One is the pathetic racial politics that elevated Barry to the mayor's office, then brought him back again after his drug bust. The other is the appalling condition of American cities like Washington. Things are so egregiously bad in D.C., from schools that open three weeks late to the absence of snow removal, that it's funny. David Frum, for example, says Washington is halfway to the libertarian paradise of no taxes and no government services. Taxes remain, but services are virtually gone.

Fred Siegel
The Future Once Happened Here
New York, D.C., L.A., and the Fate of America's Big Cities
Free Press, 224 pp., $24

Washington has all the characteristics of a laboratory of liberalism. The 30-year experiment has produced swollen welfare rolls, a mammoth but ineffective bureaucracy, a dwindling police force, a high crime rate, breathtakingly bad schools, crumbling infrastructure, high taxes coupled with a shriveling tax base, a shrinking private sector, white and black flight to the suburbs, and race-based politics. There's not much to like. As a young reporter in Washington in the late '60s, I went to places in Washington at night that I wouldn't visit during the day now. I'm like others from the Washington suburbs. As Fred Siegel notes in his account of urban collapse in Washington, New York, and Los Angeles, most of us suburbanites in the Washington area insist we're from Virginia or Maryland, not D.C.

The story Siegel tells brilliantly in *The Future Once Happened Here* is compelling and sad. Cities thrived until everything changed in the 1960s. The immigrant model for advancing in America "was not just modified but completely abandoned," writes Siegel, a history professor at Cooper Union and a fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute, the New Democrat think tank. No longer were the urban poor, now mostly black and Hispanic, expected to work hard and follow a reasonably disciplined lifestyle and in return be guaranteed a decent life. They were encouraged to go on welfare rather than take "dead end" jobs. When they committed crimes, it wasn't their fault. If poverty persisted, white racism was the cause. A "politics that promoted separatism in the name of reducing racial separation" was encouraged. Federal aid was aggressively pursued. When private-sector jobs vanished, they were replaced by "public service" employment or the dole. And what Siegel calls "dependent individualism" became a way of life, combining the absolute right to any lifestyle, however bizarre or self-destructive, with "an equally fundamental right to be supported at state expense."

The result: scary, unlivable cities. Yet many liberals remain in a state of denial. To them, the failure of lavish government spending only means more money was required in the first place. The persistence of poverty is proof white racism was

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even more deeply rooted than they had suspected. As for the power of economic growth to improve lives, they're scornful. "In the topsy-turvy world of New York City politics, the 1970s, when the Bronx burned and the city almost went bankrupt, are remembered fondly as an era of federal support," Siegel says. "By contrast, the boom of the 1980s, when minority families made major gains in income, was decried . . . as the decade of greed because federal subsidies failed to keep pace with the city's exploding budget."

Siegel marshals all the numbers of decline and decay in New York, Washington, and other cities. After World War II, New York had 1 million manufacturing jobs and 250,000 people on welfare. "Today the numbers are roughly reversed: New York has 1.1 million people on one form of public assistance or another and fewer than 300,000 manufacturing jobs." It's clear when welfare exploded. The rolls grew by 47,000 from 1945 to 1960, then by more than 200,000, to 538,000, by 1965. In the next six years, welfare jumped by 630,000, and "the character of the city [was] fundamentally transformed," Siegel writes.

If anything, Washington became worse off. "We can measure the fate of American liberalism by the distance between the high hopes raised by the promise of home rule in Washington, D.C., in the late 1960s and the current disdain for the District and its government," according to Siegel. Barry is the elected leader, but the city is mostly run by an unelected control board. The population is falling rapidly, the result these days of black flight to the suburbs. Once Washington's "shadow senator," Jesse Jackson has returned to Chicago. Between 1982 and 1992, Siegel points out, the number of public-housing units stayed the same, while the housing department doubled in staff and its budget nearly quadrupled. Meanwhile, there was one exception to the surging municipal employment—the cops. Their budget shrank.

In Los Angeles, the situation is better, but the interrelated problems of the police and race await solution. "Among the largest cities, L.A. has both the busiest and the smallest force, in terms of the police-to-population ratio," Siegel notes. So to maintain control in high-crime areas—and to protect themselves—the police act brutally. Though an ex-cop, former mayor Tom Bradley, a sweet-tempered liberal, didn't understand what was going on. Just before the 1992 riot, he proposed to cut the undermanned police force by 7 percent. After the riot, "the romanticization of the rioters by multiculturalists in the media and would-be black radicals" widened the psychological distance between blacks and whites. In the largely white San Fernando Valley, a movement to secede from L.A. burgeoned.

For all the horrors, there's some good news. Siegel says he's optimistic. In 1993, Republican mayors were elected in New York and L.A. Rudy Giuliani, by controlling spending and facing down racial racketeers, has palpably changed New York. Richard Riordan has spearheaded the economic revival in Los Angeles. Washington? Well, maybe the control board will get things under control. But the battle for the cities is hardly won, Siegel says.

In New York, a constituency for reforming the bloated city government and streamlining the economy is absent. In L.A., Riordan balked at changing the city's mindset on race. Had he supported the California Civil Rights Initiative last year, he could have established "a transtribal ethic for his fractious metropolis," Siegel argues. Heaven knows, L.A. and every other city needs one. ♦

The Founders' Friend

Thomas West Argues for 1776

By James W. Ceaser

For the more orthodox thinkers inside the academy today, the publication of Thomas G. West's new book *Vindicating the Founders* is not a joyous occasion. West is a scholar in search of justice. He aims to try a generation of intellectuals that has charged the founders with racism, economic elitism, and sexism. In a forum allowing for full due process, he requires the accusers to submit their case, and he affords the accused the right of reply. If the charges against the founders don't fit? Then readers must acquit.

If his jurisdiction allowed, West would clearly go even further. He would indict any who has made false allegations—if not for libel, then for gross negligence and wrongful harm. Reverence for the founders, he writes, "has long been out of fashion among America's elites," and it is debatable whether even the most rational nation can survive a permanent campaign against its own founding. Of course, not all scholars have participated in this campaign, but there have been enough of them to create a prejudice of anti-founderism in educated circles. "Leading sophisticates—writers, professors, and journalists, whatever their persuasion—seem convinced that there was something profoundly wrong with the origins of America," says West. This view does not yet prevail with the average citizen, but it has clearly begun to penetrate the broader community. West reports that he began his study in connection with a program for high-school teachers, where he had ample opportunity to observe how elite intellectual opinion is rapidly becoming a staple of America's secondary-school texts.

The growth of anti-founderism may account for the urgent tone of West's book, but he makes clear that he has no intention of conducting a show trial. He wants an honest judgment based on "truth" and an "historically accurate picture" (quaint standards indeed for someone writing history today). It is West's contention that there is no need to spin lies, invent myths, or indulge in lawyerly obfuscations to defend the founders. Given a fair chance, they are fully capable of defending themselves.

Thomas G. West
Vindicating the Founders
Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America
Rowman & Littlefield, 200 pp., $22.95

The verdict? It comes in two parts. First, on some counts, the founders are not guilty. On the question of equality and slavery, for example, West shows that, while the actions of many founders may be challenged and faulted, there can be no doubt that they meant the principle of equality to refer to persons of all races. As for economic elitism, West demonstrates that the founders' purpose in defending a right of property was not to protect the privileges of a narrow elite, but to open up society to the acquisition of wealth by the vast majority. He points out that it is insufficient to defend property merely as property, because some forms of property—feudal property, for example—do not serve the broadly democratic purposes that the founders had in mind. Property must be defined and understood in light of its end, which is to protect a natural right to enjoy the fruits of honest labor and industry.

The second part of the verdict requires taking into account considerations of equity. The founders, West acknowledges, are guilty of some of the charges made against them: They did not, for example, hold 1990s views about the roles of the sexes, and they understood marriage to be a monogamous and heterosexual institution. West contends that we must sooner or later "choose between two competing visions of equality and liberty: the founders' views, and today's."

He proceeds to present the founders' ideas on a range of matters that we today call the social issues: the nature of the family, the proper relationship between the sexes, the public's responsibility in sustaining those in need, and the qualities of character required to maintain a decent society and a functioning democratic polity. These subjects make up the heart of the book, as West performs a valuable service in bringing together many of the bits and pieces of the founders' thought that have been scattered and buried in obscure places. The need for such an account is clear: Until now, we have seen only part of the founders' political science—the part that treats general principles of justice, institutions of government, and political economy. What has been absent is a coherent statement of the founders' views on mores and social issues and how these connect to their political principles. The founders did not develop this element as systematically and impressively as they did some others—there is no social-issues *Federalist*—but, here as elsewhere, their thought is highly instructive.

In making his closing argument, West takes to task proponents of all the major strands of modern thought

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for contributing to anti-founderism—not only, as one would expect, liberals (for their charges of economic elitism and racism) and libertarians (for their opposition to the founders' insistence on the need to promote certain qualities of character and citizenship), but also conservatives. West's criticism of conservative intellectuals is perhaps unanticipated, because he shares with them an analysis of the problems of modern society and a concern with the twin threats of a radical egalitarianism and an understanding of freedom and rights that borders on license.

Conservatives, West argues, too often attribute our modern crisis to an unexpected but logical development of the founders' principles. The issue here for conservatives is that of political theodicy—of understanding the sources of modern distortions of liberty and equality and determining how these distortions have managed to acquire such prominence within our polity. Answering these questions in full lies beyond the scope of West's inquiry, but he does insist that modern problems in no sense grow out of the founding. To hold otherwise and find fault with the founders, he believes, is a grave error: "Conservatives need to recognize that there is no need to go beyond the Declaration, or reject the Founders' principles, in order to justify limits on the abuse of liberty. The idea of liberty in the Declaration contains its own limitations."

This is sound advice, with the obvious stipulation that West's warning not to "go beyond" the Declaration be understood in the restricted sense of not contradicting it. As West surely is aware, it has sometimes been helpful, even necessary, to go beyond (in the sense of going outside) the Declaration in order to know how to sustain a healthy liberal democratic polity. Some of the best instructors on questions of mores and social issues—among them many whom the founders consulted—begin with a framework other than the Declaration. Not all political science is contained in that document.

Americans can count themselves fortunate to have at the bar a scholar of West's erudition, good sense, and tenacity. Although some critics will surely question whether an advocate should also be allowed to act as judge in his own case, they can always exercise their right of appeal. But this time they had better be ready—Tom West is on permanent retainer as vindicator of the founders, and he is accepting no plea bargains. ♦

B&A

Our Low Dishonest Decade

Boogie Nights *and* The Ice Storm *revive the 70s*

By John Podhoretz

In the mid-'80s, I had an idea for a book modeled on *Only Yesterday*, Frederick Lewis Allen's wonderful instant history of the 1920s. Allen's book was written during the Depression, and it firmly established the enduring image of the previous decade: its flappers, rum-runners, a nation driven to ruin by financial and social excess. My book was going to have a narrower focus: It would be about the year 1979, and about how everything that went wrong during that year set the stage for the transformative conservative politics that followed. Nineteen seventy-nine began, you will recall, with evidence of a Soviet brigade in Cuba and mass strikes in England and continued with the election of the ayatollah in Iran and Communist revolution in Nicaragua. By the summer, there was an oil panic, and everyone in the country was forced to wait in long lines at gas stations. There was another panic when the orbiting Skylab began to fall toward earth, and nobody knew where or when pieces from it would land (they all ended up in the oceans). And it ended with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the taking of the American hostages in Iran. When I pitched the book to agents and publishers, they all thought it far too depressing and advised me to put the topic aside. Who would want to read a book about a horrible year that was the culmination of a horrible decade?

There is precious little nostalgia for the 1970s even now—why should there be fond memories of a decade in which America lost a war, communism seemed on the march across the planet, and every bad idea born in the disorder of the 1960s made its way from Haight-Ashbury and the Upper West Side of Manhattan into the wider culture? Even for those of us who came to consciousness during the 1970s, many things about those years seem like a weird dream, from the ugly clothing to the killer rabbit that attacked Jimmy Carter to the forced good cheer that manifested itself in the ubiquitous glyph known as the "smiley face."

Maybe the 1970s seem like a dream because we have barely been reminded of them since their conclusion; with the exception of the never-ending revivals and revisions of *The Brady Bunch*, pop culture has avoided the decade just as publishers avoided my book. No longer. The 1970s are the setting for two new movies—*Boogie Nights*, an epic set in the nondescript San Fernando Valley, and *The Ice Storm*, a miniature set in the affluent Connecticut suburbs. They have very little in common except

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that both deal with the demented sexual politics of the time. It may be indicative of how warped the 1970s really were that the movie that gets the sexual politics exactly right—*The Ice Storm*—is a total bust, while the movie that gets the sexual politics appallingly wrong—*Boogie Nights*—is a triumph.

The Ice Storm is a faithful adaptation of Rick Moody's good, precise little novel of the same name. On Thanksgiving weekend in 1974, 15-year-old Paul (Tobey Maguire) comes home from boarding school to New Canaan to find his family in genteel shambles. His ineffectual father (Kevin Kline) is having an affair with a glamorous neighbor (Sigourney Weaver). His mother and 13-year-old sister are both committing petty acts of kleptomania at the local drugstore. The sister is fooling around with a boy and that boy's prepubescent brother. And on the night after Thanksgiving, quiet hell breaks loose as an ice storm sweeps the Northeast. Paul finds himself with two dope-addled classmates in a lavish New York apartment, both of whom overdose because of a plan of Paul's that goes awry. His parents, together with all the parents of New Canaan, end up at a wife-swapping party. And a child dies.

The Ice Storm is meticulous, subtle, intelligent. The sensational set design and costumes, which are observed with clinical detachment, are a fitting objective correlative for the characters—the bad taste of their outfits, hair, and furniture mirrors the moral squalor into which they are falling. The movie's highlight is the wife-swapping party, in which a collection of drunken, middle-aged suburbanites turn into kids on a playground, choosing up sides—each man glassy-eyed with terror that he will end up with the one obese woman in the room.

But *The Ice Storm* is, finally, a lifeless failure. Ang Lee, who made the glorious *Sense and Sensibility* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, is a rare movie director because he is a man with a genuine sensibility—a sensibility so fine, in fact, that he can find almost nothing in any of these characters to like. Rick Moody's novel is, without its author quite knowing it, among the most conservative books of our time; his portrait of a world undone by the idea of casual sex is a frightening one. Moody does not spare his characters, even though he is clearly writing about his own family and himself; even so, his portrait of his parents is laced with humanity and understanding. Lee's movie is, by contrast, clinical and cold, almost as though the only emotions Moody's characters provoke in him are contempt and quiet rage. A movie like *The Ice Storm* can't possibly work unless you look at Kevin Kline or Joan Allen and feel as though one of those characters has something in common with you. Kline, a wondrously talented comic actor, is utterly at sea in this dramatic role; Allen, a terrific actress, just looks unhappy all the time. Only the actors playing characters who seem to enjoy their misbehavior—Sigourney Weaver and the young actor David Krumholtz in particular—are at all diverting.

ANG LEE'S *THE ICE STORM* IS A JOYLESS STUDY OF JOYLESS SEXUAL LIBERTINISM.

While *The Ice Storm* is a joyless study of joyless sexual libertinism, *Boogie Nights* is a wildly exuberant chiaroscuro of sexual degradation. *Boogie Nights* is a really troubling movie; it is a lie from beginning to end, a romanticized and false vision of what may be capitalism's most noxious industry. Writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson takes us on a two-and-a-half-hour journey through the world of hard-core pornographic moviemaking in the 1970s. And the world he shows us is an utterly benign one, full of sweet, stupid people who are just too dim and innocent to do anything but sell their bodies for sex on the screen. The late Robert J. Stoller, whose writings on sexual deviancy are among the best psychiatric literature ever produced in this country, made a close study of the hard-core industry in his book *Porn*. Stoller concluded that the world of pornography was a world of alienation—that the people who made their living in it were driven by rage at conventional middle-class life and the desire to destroy it. In *Boogie Nights* that world is presided over by a positively saintly director played by Burt Reynolds, who takes these lost souls under his wing and gives them a ready-made family that seems far nicer than the real families they come from.

Like *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, Hollywood's last attempt to glamorize and domesticate pornography, *Boogie Nights* never actually shows us what these people do for a living, because just a few seconds of hard-core action and the honey-sweet world Anderson is at such pains to create would be exposed for the sad sham it is.

And yet I have to say that *Boogie Nights* is a remarkable piece of work—engaging, involving, superbly acted, an amazing achievement for the 27-year-old Anderson, who may be the most talented writer-director to come along since Francis Ford Coppola's whiz-kid days in the late 1960s. There is not a moment in this very long film when the camera is in the wrong place, a character says the wrong thing, or an actor makes a wrong move. The movie follows the career of Dirk Diggler (the splendid Mark Wahlberg), a dim but cheerful teenager whose distinguishing characteristics are a rare ability to perform sexually on demand and an unusually robust manhood with which to perform. A high-school

G. Lefkowitz / New Line Cinema

Rollergirl (Heather Graham) with Boogie Nights *writer/director Paul Thomas Anderson*

dropout working as a busboy, he is being treated with vicious contempt by his mother and ignored by his father, and is saved from drudgery by Reynolds. When Reynolds isn't making a movie—he makes one a month—he is throwing a perpetual poolside party at his house, where he lives chastely and in separate rooms with his female star, played by Julianne Moore.

They are all dreamers. Moore dreams of regaining custody of her young son, but gives up neither the career nor the cocaine habit that stand in her way. Another actor, who works as a stereo salesman when he's not filming, dreams of opening a discount electronics store. An actress who never, ever removes her rollerskates wants to get a high-school-equivalency diploma. Reynolds dreams of art porn, hard-core movies that tell a story and deliver a message. Dirk gives him a chance by coming up with the idea for a series of movies featuring a kung-fu fighting detective and his sidekick, who get the bad guys in between sex scenes. We see Reynolds watching the editing of the godawful title sequence to one of these movies: "It's the best work we've ever done," he says with misty-eyed pride. And Dirk? Dirk dreams of stardom and, in true Hollywood fashion, does everything he can to blow it once he makes it to the pinnacle of the porn business.

Everything is going swimmingly in the 1970s, but the 1980s bring with them only heartache. Reynolds is forced to abandon film for the more profitable, less artistic videotape. Everyone does far too much cocaine. Dirk and a couple of guys get in over their heads during a botched drug deal in a dazzling sequence so intense and horrifying that it almost seems to have come from another movie. The English actor Alfred Molina does such astounding work as a psychopathic freebaser in this scene that even though he is only on screen for about 10 minutes, he deserves every acting award there is.

Boogie Nights ends on a weirdly cheerful note, as Dirk returns to the porn fold and we get a last, stomach-churning glimpse of the member that made him a star. Alone among his fellow Americans, Paul Thomas Anderson seems nostalgic for the 1970s, or at least for the sex-without-consequences attitude that is given such harsh treatment in *The Ice Storm*. Anderson's movie is a paean to that attitude. And that is the saddest irony of all, because Anderson based his main character on John Holmes, the real-life porn performer whose job literally cost him and countless others their lives. Holmes came down with AIDS and died in 1988, but not before he had infected many of his business associates. The AIDS epidemic is the true, enduring legacy of the libertinism of the 1970s, and as *Boogie Nights* proves, Hollywood still isn't ready to face that fact. ♦

Besides being chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Utah senator Orrin Hatch pursues a career as a songwriter. His most recent Prime Recordings song memorializes Princess Diana and Mother Teresa.

—News item

"Popular music in this country is one of the few things in the 20th century that have made giant strides in reverse."

—Bing Crosby

Not a Parody

Many Different Roads

Lyrics © 1997 by Orrin G. Hatch & Janice Kapp Perry

Princess Diana
Born to privilege and wealth
Moved in lofty circles
Yet found within herself
The will to walk among the sad and lonely
And lift them with a smile or tender gaze
She for whom true joy was so elusive
Gave her love to strangers in her way
Her final ride through somber streets of London
Brought tears and grief the world has never seen
This Princess who was champion of the lowly
In the hearts of all the world became a queen

Many different roads can lead to glory
Many different lamps can bring the light
In majesty she walked in humble places
Her common touch a candle in the night

Mother Teresa
With humility and grace
Gave her life to healing
The hurting human race
She saw in them the gentle face of Jesus
And lifted them to dignity and peace
Her worn and weathered faced smiled on the children
Bringing hope unto the least of these
Her final ride through the streets of old Calcutta
A moving scene no artist's brush could paint
This humble soul who lived her life for Jesus
In the hearts of all the world is now a saint

Many different roads can lead to glory
Many different lamps can bring the light
In poverty she shared a wealthy spirit
And helped the poor to see the face of God

Bridge:

A princess and a pauper
Walked the lonely roads of life
In many ways so different
And yet so much alike

Many different roads can lead to glory
Many different lamps can bring the light
Both rich and poor may write a golden story
That shines through time like candles in the night.