the weekly
Standard
AUGUST 31, 1998 $3.50

MIKE BARNICLE'S DEMISE
KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON

THE EDITORS:

CLINTON MUST GO

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 48 • AUGUST 31, 1998

Cover photo: AP/Worldwide Photos

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except for combined issues dated July 6-July 13, Aug. 10-Aug. 17, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, and Dec. 28-Jan. 4) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-303-776-3605 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.50. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Natalie Harwood, 1-610-293-8540.

The Mea Culpa Speech Clinton Rejected

All day Monday, August 17, cable-TV junkies like The Scrapbook heard White House leaks about "The Speech." While the president was being grilled by Kenneth Starr and his prosecutors, White House officials were working the phones hyping the soon-to-be-delivered, long-awaited Clinton apology. Chief of staff Erskine Bowles, we were told, was busy briefing senior congressional Democrats about the imminent presidential *mea culpa*. Tim Russert reported what his White House sources were telling him: namely, that senior adviser Paul Begala was tap, tap, tapping away on a speech whose essence would be the "three C's": candor, contrition, and closure.

This speech was, of course, never given. But the so-called "Begala speech" actually did exist in draft form and was presented to (and rejected by) the president. The Scrapbook has obtained a copy:

My fellow Americans:

No one who is not in my position can understand fully the remorse I feel today. Since I was very young, I've had a profound reverence for this office I hold. I've been honored that you, the people, have entrusted it to me. I am proud of what we have accomplished together.

But in this case, I have fallen short of what you should expect from a President. I have failed my own religious faith and values. I have let too many people down. I take full responsibility for my actions—for hurting my wife and daughter, for hurting Monica Lewinsky, for hurting friends and staff, and for hurting the country I love. None of this ever should have happened.

I never should have had any sexual contact with Monica Lewinsky. But I did. I should have acknowledged that I was wrong months ago. But I didn't. I thought I was shielding my family, but I know that in the end, for Hillary and Chelsea, delay has only brought more pain. Their forgiveness and love, expressed so often as we sat alone together this weekend, means far more than I can ever say.

What I did was wrong—and there was no excuse for it. I do want to assure you, as I told the Grand Jury under oath, that I did nothing to obstruct this investigation.

Finally, I also want to apologize to all of you, my fellow citizens. I hope you can find it in your heart to accept that apology. I pledge to you that I will make every effort of mind and spirit to earn your confidence again, to be worthy of this office, and to finish the work in which we have made such remarkable progress for the past six years.

God bless you and goodnight.

What's interesting about this draft is what it tells us about Bill Clinton. The entire Washington establishment, most of Congress, and his top political advisers imagined the president could be prevailed upon to speak these words. He choked on them.

Hillary Clinton, Co-conspirator

What, exactly, is the line now for those who wish to stand four-square behind Hillary Rodham Clinton, feminist superhero? Is she extraordinarily smart, or extraordinarily naive?

For the first five years of the Clinton presidency, the emphasis was certainly on smart: First in her class at Wellesley, Yale law school, author of everything from erudite law-review articles to the bestselling *It Takes a Village*, not to mention architect of the magnificent but tragically doomed 1994 health-care plan.

But now we're apparently supposed to believe that she is not so smart after all. Last Wednesday, the *Washington Post* reported that according to the first lady's spokeswoman, Marsha Berry, Hillary "learned the nature of [the president's] testimony over the weekend." Added Berry, "She was misled. The president said that, and that's true."

This was widely interpreted as not-terribly-believable flackerly: Hillary, like all her husband's supporters, had been shocked and saddened—astonished!—to learn of the actual nature of his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. But maybe Berry's formulation was something cleverer, more in keeping with the logic-chopping "I didn't inhale" legalism of the Clinton White House. Hillary Clinton, remember, told Matt Lauer on the *Today* show on January 27 *not* that there had been no sex with Monica but rather, "That is not going to be proven true"—a crafty and lawyerly evasion, if ever there was one.

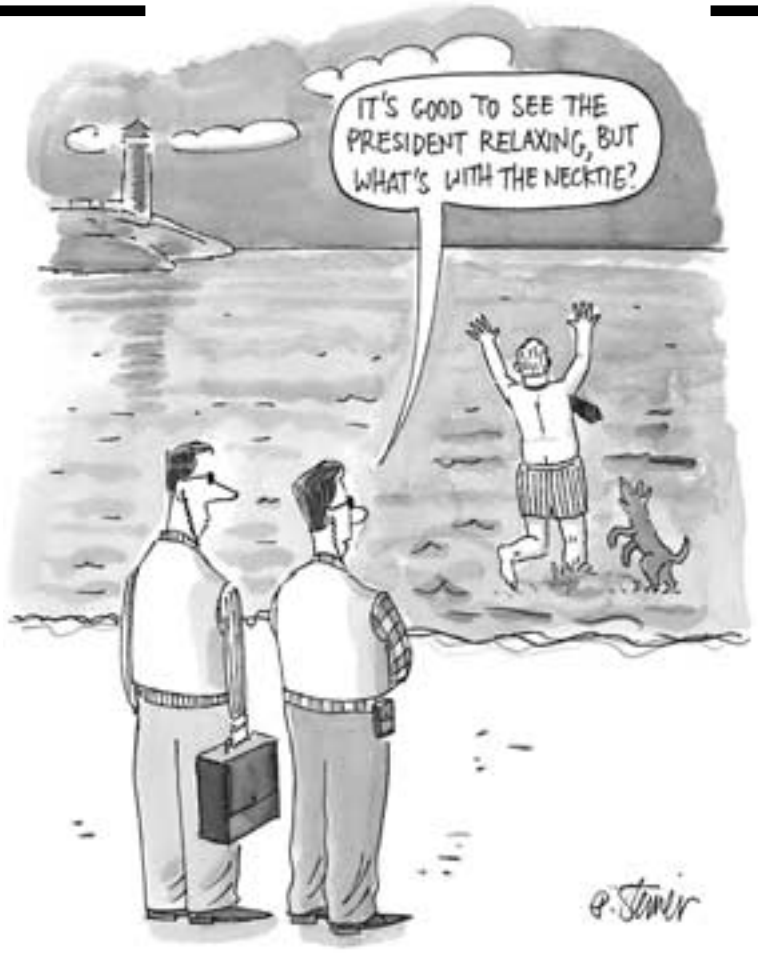
Assuming that Hillary knew the truth in January, then Marsha Berry's statement, when you parse it—and every White House statement must now be parsed—means something very damaging. Until the weekend before his testimony, Hillary was counting on Bill to be able to get away with perjury. She was "misled," not about the dirty deed itself, but about his testimony. She never expected he would have to admit to even some of the truth under oath.

Okay, so maybe she really is smart—in a certain way.

Discontent

Like one of those in-bred attack dogs, Steven Brill simply cannot relax his jaws once he bites. In his error-ridden article "Pressgate" in the inaugural issue of his magazine, *Brill's Content*, he took after Jackie Judd of ABC

Scrapbook



News for her reporting in January that Monica Lewinsky had a dress and that it was . . . well, you know. Brill made Judd out to be a credulous partisan, eager to report any rumor that the Starr-Tripp-Goldberg axis fed her.

Judd, of course, was correct about the dress, and she was brave in refusing to waver in the face of the ridicule worked up by Brill. Yet Brill is hardly a gracious loser. Asked recently about his criticism of Judd, he said, "I think it's more news today than it was back in January, where we didn't know whether [Monica Lewinsky] was going to testify. . . . Just because it wasn't ripe and necessarily appropriate to report it in January doesn't mean you just stay off it. And you know, now it seems like there may be something there, and that's completely appropriate. . . . I mean, because the issue is timing."

So Brill—who has anointed himself journalism's sage of sages—prefers that a story be over a half a year late.

Brill has been trotting out another spin, too: that he never objected to Judd's reporting about the existence of the dress; only to her "implication" that Monica and her mother had removed the evidence from it. But this, as ABC producer Chris Vlasto says, is "sheer revisionism." Judd had that story dead to rights. Brill portrayed her as a fool because of it. But it's not Judd who's the fool. You would think that, instead of perpetuating his defamation, Brill would apologize. But he is apparently no more capable of doing that than is the object of his campaign contributions—Bill Clinton.

Surreal Spin

Last week, John F. Harris of the *Washington Post* reported that there were White House talking points for staff who were being asked how they felt about Clinton's confession of sex with Monica. According to the script, the approved spin was that the president should be forgiven. Indeed, someone had even come up with what sounded like a fortune-cookie quote: "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself."

The Scrapbook wondered if this was a quote left over from research for all those "bridge to the 21st century" speeches Clinton used to give, or merely the first entry under forgiveness in Bartlett's Quotations. But Bartlett's turns out to be unhelpful. A Nexis search reveals that, if Dear Abby can be believed, 17th-century English clergyman Thomas Fuller is the author. *Forbes* once attributed it, on the other hand, to Fuller's contemporary George Herbert. The Scrapbook hopes the source is Fuller, since he is the author of, among many other undoubtedly fine works, a 1642 treatise called—no kidding—*Book of Monica*. The Scrapbook is now off to the library to look for a copy and will report back next week on its findings. Meanwhile recognition will be bestowed on the first reader who can authoritatively source the broken bridge quote. An even greater reward is in store for any reader who happens to have Fuller's *Book of Monica* in his personal library and would care to lend it to Scrapbook, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036.

NPR, in from the Cold

Back during the Cold War, all The Scrapbook's right-wing friends had nicknames for the notoriously left-wing news shows on National Public Radio—Morning Sedition, for example. It was with nostalgia for those days gone by that we learned recently of the new moniker for donors to NPR-affiliate KAJX of Aspen, Colorado. Cough up $75 or more during pledge drives, and you could be designated not the usual "friend" or "patron" but, yes, "comrade."

Staffers assure us that it's all for the sake of alliteration. It's "Komrade," with a K, as in KAJX. Yes, komissar.

Casual

Notes from Under Water

On a brilliant August morning on a waterway west of Seattle off Puget Sound, I find myself deep inside the USS *Ohio*, the oldest (18 years) of the nation's Trident submarines. The *Ohio* is armed with two dozen long-range nuclear missiles, each capable of killing millions of people. Together the 18 Tridents make up the sea leg of America's "strategic triad"—our sea, air, and land-based nuclear defenses.

I'm on a six-hour ceremonial cruise about 60 feet under the surface of Hook Canal with three dozen other civilians and the *Ohio*'s 154-man crew. We'll spend our time romping about this ship, whose cramped, windowless, perpetually bright interior was itself a state secret until the end of the Cold War. We'll listen to tapes of whale song recorded by the guys in the sonar room, fire off "water slugs" from the torpedo compartments, and look through the periscope. We'll enrich the coffers of the Pentagon by promiscuously purchasing USS *Ohio* mugs and caps.

And in a few hours the submarine will surface and we visitors will stand in the daylight on its topside—the length of two football fields. We'll climb aboard a tug and watch as the *Ohio* again sinks below the water—there to stay, somewhere out in the Pacific Ocean, in a location known only to its captain, until October.

But for now, I'm shooting the breeze with five of the chief petty officers, the senior enlisted men on the boat, in their makeshift lounge, the "goat locker." While the captain and the officers tend to the mission, the chiefs go about the minute-to-minute business of making the boat go, manning the weapons and the engines. They are the hands-on guys, all of them self-made, having risen through the ranks. And they have the quiet assurance and private amusement of people who know how to do what they do better than anybody else on earth.

"Two months is a long time to be cooped up together," I say. "What do you do if two of your men get into a fight?" (There are no women on submarines in the U.S. Navy.)

"You break it up," one of the chiefs says. "You get between them, tell your guy to cool down while somebody else says the same thing to the other guy."

"It doesn't happen very often," another says. "When people get less than six hours' sleep, they start to be grouchy. Like before an inspection, or if we're on alert."

"How do you keep up morale?"

"Well," says the master chief in charge of the nuclear reactor, "food is real important."

"We put a lot of stock in food," the weapons chief says. "The only way you can keep track of what time it is after a while is by the meal."

"Really?" I say, like an idiot. "Why is that?"

"No sun, no moon, always the same light," says the sonar chief.

"Can you call home?" I ask.

"Everybody can get eight messages from their family per mission. Fifty words each. Man, that means a lot. You get one, it's a real morale booster."

The sonar chief's wife is sitting with us. I ask her what the messages are like. "I wouldn't say something like, 'I had an accident with the car,' because he'd just worry."

I ask them what they like and dislike when it comes to the depiction of their way of life in the media.

"What bugs me is that old thing, that we're warmongers," the sonar chief says. "God knows I hope I never have to do my job."

The other chiefs nod and murmur their assent. "Knock wood," one of them says.

"But we're ready to do what we trained to do," the master chief says.

"It's ridiculous sometimes, like in *Crimson Tide*," says the weapons chief. "There's people running down four flights of stairs in fire gear. Did you see stairs like that? You'd fall on your ass. And Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington fighting over one key. It doesn't take one key to launch. You couldn't do it."

"You know the only movie that really captures what life is like on a sub?" says the sonar chief. "No kidding—*Down Periscope*, with Kelsey Grammer. I mean, it's stupid and all, but it's really right about how goofy it can get down here."

"Talking about movies, every boat has a different movie it gets obsessed with," says the master chief. "What was it the last time we went out? With the ack-ack-ack?"

"*Mars Attacks!*," says the sonar chief.

"Oh man! People musta watched that thing a hundred times."

"Ack-ack-ack," says the master chief, imitating the Martians in the movie.

"How do your kids cope with it when you leave?" I ask, barely noticing the pre-teen girl sitting in the corner. Almost in a whisper, her tone martini-dry, she says, "It's like a vacation."

"That's my daughter, folks!" her dad says with a grin. "Give her a hand!"

She grins right back.

John Podhoretz

The Disgraceful Legacy

Noemie Emery's explanation of the moral chaos that has blossomed during the Clinton years is on the mark ("The Clinton Legacy," Aug. 10/Aug. 17).

The Clintons and their followers have in fact stood morality on its head. For several weeks I have listened in disbelief as ostensibly intelligent journalists and analysts have had serious discussions over what form of perjury by President Clinton would be "acceptable" or "not important."

We are talking about the president of the United States giving testimony under oath—testimony that he had time to consider carefully before he gave it. There can be no defense of such behavior.

Arthur M. Shatz
Bayside, NY

The incontrovertible description Noemie Emery gives of the Left's "inversion of values" with its compass "re-set with north and south reversed" brought to mind a brilliant lecture by Rabbi Daniel Lapin.

Rabbi Lapin began with the premise that the various issues championed by the Left must be linked by some unifying principle. After all, without some point of cohesion, wouldn't one expect that the radical environmentalists might sometimes disagree with the radical feminists?

Then Rabbi Lapin demonstrated that the Left does have a unifying principle: a desire to turn the Bible on its head. What the Bible prohibits (for example, abortion), the Left celebrates; what the Bible requires (for example, that children honor their parents), the Left abhors; and where the Bible is silent (for example, smoking), the Left is free to make a moral crusade.

David A. Stoll
New York, NY

Holocaust Fibbing

It is important to clarify an inference concerning Leon Bass in Mark Schulte's article "The Holocaust Museum's Fib" (Aug. 10/Aug. 17). Whatever others may call him, Bass has consistently identified himself not as a "liberator" of the concentration camps, but a "witness" to the liberation.

What makes Bass unique is not the date on which he entered Buchenwald, but what happened after Buchenwald entered him. I have worked closely with Bass on Holocaust awareness and education programs for over 20 years. No one matches him in his ability to make palpable the horrors of the Holocaust, and, more important, no one matches him in making the lessons of the Holocaust real. As an educator, he is particularly good in the way he relates to young people—Jews and non-Jews alike. The incandescence

with which he breathes life into the horrors of historical memory is truly remarkable. It is a gift that cannot be overvalued and should not be disparaged.

The errors of others with regard to Leon Bass's background must not be allowed to obscure the extraordinary contribution he has made in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to thousands of young men and women.

Lawrence Rubin
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
New York, NY

Mark Schulte Responds: ***Leon Bass was not a "witness" to Buchenwald's liberation by the Sixth Armored Division on April 11, 1945. Bass and a small group from the 183rd Battalion spent a few hours at Buchenwald on April 16, 1945. But at the beginning of the film*** **Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II,** ***after the African-American 761st Tank and 183rd Combat Engineers battalions are falsely identified as having "helped free thousands of Jews at Buchenwald, Lambach, and Dachau," a survivor of Buchenwald, with Bass at his side, tells a synagogue audience that "this guy walked in on April 11, 1945."***

Later in this discredited film, Bass invents the story that many of his fellow soldiers were killed by German strafing during the Battle of the Bulge. "I looked at the grave registration trucks in which the bodies of so many of my friends were placed," he solemnly intones. In reality, one soldier from the 183rd was killed in this major battle (among 78,000 American casualties), and he died in a non-combat vehicular accident. During the entire war, the 183rd had three casualties, compared with the 6,652 suffered by the Sixth Armored.

Despite Rubin's attempt to shift the blame to anonymous culprits, Leon Bass is an unreliable chronicler of several pivotal events of World War II.

Ontology, Etc.

I am puzzled by your unfavorable comparison of Mike McCurry to F. H. Bradley, the last of the great British idealists (Scrapbook, Aug. 10/Aug. 17). That Bradley, being an idealist, was something of a neo-Hegelian (by way of being a neo-Kantian, as well) hardly seems worth mentioning unless you consider all forms of idealism the sort of metaphysical bunk the age of analysis has held it to be.

By contrast, McCurry's epistemological musings seem far more likely the result of the sort of cut-rate logical positivism that so frequently informs the philosophically unreflective and ill read in contemporary society. They believe that all meaningful statements are either tautologies or statements of verifiable fact, but that all else (and especially normative assertions such as

Correspondence

moral judgments) merely reports the subjective opinions of the speaker. It is the perfect ontology for those who believe there is never any moral significance to the facts because there is, in fact, no such thing as moral significance, regardless of what the facts may be.

Indeed, McCurry's recent performances suggest that the administration is relying on a typically bad reading of the early Wittgenstein, echoing the most famous sentence in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

D. A. Ridgely
Arlington, VA

Freedom and Free Trade

Lawrence F. Kaplan rightly sheds light on Mobil's curious ideas about encouraging political freedoms ("Mobilizing Foreign Policy," Aug. 10/Aug. 17).

The notion that we can foster freedom through commerce alone is too pat by half. Unfortunately, as Kaplan demonstrates, the U.S. government justifies its own inattention to human rights by parroting the self-serving rhetoric of the private sector. Gone is even the pretense of American exceptionalism.

Joel Campagna
Bronx, NY

Be a Man

Waller R. Newell's article was all too true, but he should have mentioned the strange things girls are taught to think about manliness ("The Crisis of Manliness," Aug. 3).Young women are told that church-going boys are scary while juvenile delinquents are misunderstood; that is why these days a boy will grow into a man only through virtue.

Don Schenk
Allentown, PA

The Perils of Smoking

Dennis Prager says he's never been a cigarette smoker ("The Soul-Corrupting Anti-Tobacco Crusade," July 20). And yet he's quite ready to contend that smoking doesn't interfere with the "soul, mind, conscience, or emotional growth" of people who use tobacco. He obviously doesn't know or care to try to understand what it's like to spend every day painfully aware of how lethal it is to smoke cigarettes, and how hard it is to kick the habit. Prager's statement that "the war against tobacco . . . has come to be far more dangerous than tobacco itself" is certainly contrary to my own experience.

Underage smoking and premature death are major public health-problems for all of us. Tobacco kills well over 400,000 people each year in the United States alone. That figure comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, one of the most respected public-health organizations in the world.

Almost 70 percent of all smokers would like to quit completely, but can't because the addiction is every bit as strong as addiction to heroin or cocaine. Prager seems to think these numbers are questionable, but he offers no figures of his own. He accuses anti-tobacco partisans of hysteria, but fails to mention that smoking kills more people than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides, drugs, and fires combined.

As a physician who specializes in adult, end-stage lung disease, I see many patients who suffer from smoking-related illnesses. Prager has no idea how painful it is to care every day for patients with smoking-related illnesses that have robbed their lungs of the ability to extract oxygen, or whose lungs no longer have the elasticity necessary to work properly, making it nearly impossible for them to breathe. Nor does he understand how difficult it is to tell such patients that there is little left that can be done to alleviate their suffering. Prager suggests that smokers save the taxpayers money by dying before they can collect Social Security and other benefits. Such thinking is very disconcerting.

I invite Prager to tour a local hospital's intensive-care unit to see these patients personally. They do not die a quick, painless death. Their deaths are often slow and very painful, caused by illnesses, such as emphysema and cancer, that rob patients of their quality of life, independence, and dignity. I see this every day, and it is a constant reminder of the evils of tobacco addiction. Many of my patients who have emphysema must use portable oxygen to breathe—and yet they continue to smoke because they cannot beat their addiction to nicotine. Sound dramatic? It is, but it is reality.

It is not uncommon for me to hear that these patients began smoking at age 10, 11, or 12. The appallingly low cure rate of lung cancer is also dramatic proof that patient education must begin early.

Having watched the terrible suffering that these patients and their families go through, I think it is imperative that we do everything within our power to stop even a single child from starting to smoke.

Prager is indignant that children are being taught to understand how dangerous smoking can be. He claims he'd rejoice if smoking was the worst vice his children engaged in, and comments that he is more worried about his kids' getting hooked on TV. I suggest he rethink his priorities. The indisputable facts are that smoking among high-school seniors is at a 19-year high and that 3,000 kids a day become regular smokers.

I sincerely hope that Prager's views are not the views of the majority of our country and certainly not the views of any of our congressional leaders. Opinions like his keep us from moving forward to develop a comprehensive national tobacco-control policy that, I hope, will some day put me out of the business of treating smoking-related lung disease.

D. Robert McCaffree
American College
of Chest Physicians
Northbrook, IL

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number.
All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
The Weekly Standard
1150 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036.
You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901.

the weekly Standard

Clinton Must Go

The leering jokes of late-night comics. The armchair analyses of prime-time experts and pseudo-experts. The headlines and polls and spin and back-room calculation of everyday politics. Suddenly now, all this round-the-clock Lewinsky chatter seems so far short of the mark as to be beyond endurance. For suddenly, ill prepared and still barely conscious of the situation, the nation must tap its deepest reserves of sobriety and courage to confront a truly extraordinary obligation. The president of the United States must be removed from office.

It was not uncertainty about the scandal's underlying facts that deterred us from saying this before. The truth has been obvious from the start, and subsequent developments have brought little more than corroborating detail. Bill Clinton and an office intern not half his age romped in the White House as if it were Joey Buttafuoco's Long Island garage. To conceal the affair, Bill Clinton explored frontiers of legality so distant that only people directly in his pay could claim to see them. While the world watched, Bill Clinton brazenly lied about the sex and the law alike. And then Bill Clinton's executive branch—with his approval—acted to sustain his lies before the twin bars of justice and public opinion.

No man, not least the president, is above the law. The president, who must be respected in order for the entire project of self-government to remain respectable, cannot be notorious for debauchery and dishonesty.

We have never been impressed by the argument that this is just a small, private embarrassment without consequence to the country's business. Monica Lewinsky was never just a small, private embarrassment to the president himself. Clinton always knew that were his sexual squalor revealed it would undermine his authority as the nation's leader. Which is why he lied about it in the first place. Clinton always knew, as well, that were the lies exposed as *criminal*, the damage would be deeper still. Which is why even at this late hour he continues to insist, insulting common sense and logic both, that his every word and deed have been "legally accurate."

No man, not least the president, is above the law. The president, who must be respected in order for the entire project of self-government to remain respectable, cannot be notorious for debauchery and dishonesty. And the administration the president directs cannot be allowed to serve as a king's court; the government cannot systematically deceive its citizens about the president's misdeeds. During the Lewinsky controversy, Bill Clinton has made war on each of these bedrock principles. The war has been outrageous, and THE WEEKLY STANDARD has objected all along.

But we have remained alert, at the same time, to a further principle, one less elevated but no less real. Republican government must be stable government. The president serves a uniquely weighty role in that stability. And so the presidency's regular four-year rhythms—and the popular electoral decisions that animate them—are not to be casually undone.

This functional requirement of American politics exists in tension with the system's ideals. The president is asked to embody the highest standards of individual conduct and public duty. But in practice, that the entire machine not slip its gears, he is actually allowed more latitude for error than other politicians. Congressmen and senators are engulfed by scandal from time to time; in most such instances, no great national price is paid. But it takes—and should take—more than commonplace wrongdoing prematurely to end a president's career. Before they turn against the chief executive, Americans will play elaborate psychological tricks on themselves—they will ignore their intuition and trim their convictions, all the while lunging at any excuse to pretend that they are doing something else. It is predictable. It is pardonable.

And it is the story of 1998. Maybe, the nation has told itself, Monica Lewinsky really is Bill Clinton's purely private peccadillo. Maybe his repellent behavior—the tightly wound ball of sex and lies and crime—really isn't so rare at all. *Maybe they all do it*. And maybe, just maybe, Monica Lewinsky is a fiction. Maybe the president is telling the truth. Clinton has survived all year by cultivating such cynical delusions. Here, too, he has committed a sin. And here, too, this magazine has tried to call him to account for it.

But we have until now deferred a final judgment on the fate of the Clinton presidency because we have always been confident that the national delusion would ultimately be arrested; that the president would be trapped for good in his lies; that there would come a day of reckoning on which he was forced to end his eerie quiet and confront the mess he has made of our politics. On such a day, we held faint hope, Clinton might still bow before the American civil religion. He might freely acknowledge his past corruptions, in other words, and atone.

For weeks before his speech to the nation on August 17, just such a course was urged on the president by some of his friends, in and out of government. They wanted him to make a full breast of it, to apologize—for everything. Noble philosophy is scarce around Bill Clinton; these people no doubt conceived their advice in exclusively tactical terms, as the best means by which he might secure his grip on the White House. No matter. Had he taken this advice, he could have made the country a precious gift. Whatever the motive, he could have offered the necessary tribute to virtue. He could have reaffirmed the axiom that in American public life, at the center of which lies the presidency, law and truth and probity really do matter.

And then—perhaps—Clinton could safely have served out his term. Greatly diminished, to be sure. But no longer a threat to anyone but himself.

Alas, it did not work out this way. The day of reckoning has come and gone. The Clinton presidency is now irretrievable.

In his August 17 address, Bill Clinton all but confessed the basic Lewinsky lie, and thus rendered useless the fundamental pretext by which the country has tolerated him these many months. Clinton otherwise expanded on the lie, however, with the preposterous suggestion that his dishonesty in practice did not constitute dishonesty in law. And then the president did something truly appalling. He refused all further blame. He expressed anger that he had been caught in what is "nobody's business" but his own; it is "past time," he said, for Americans to relieve him of responsibility for his own disgraceful actions. He should be left alone and unchallenged, in other words: the president as unquestioned and unrepentant villain.

It cannot be. If Clinton is now permitted to serve out his scheduled days in the Oval Office, the problem will not be that some urgent piece of the people's business may go undone. Three days after Clinton's Lewinsky speech, he was able to announce an apparently necessary anti-terrorist action overseas—all to the good, and just as an "ordinary" president would. But Clinton is not an "ordinary" president, and he must not be allowed to become one. That will be the problem with his continuing in office. Every time Bill Clinton appears in public to perform the work that only a president can, he represents a walking, brutal rebuke to the spirit of our constitutional order. And every additional day that the country lets him keep on walking, it will be endorsing and embracing that rebuke. It will be establishing the Clinton presidency—not just Clinton's tawdry character, but his contempt for the law and its habits and mores—as normative in our politics.

Impeachment, Alexander Hamilton wrote, is reserved not for punishment of technical violations of the law but as protection against broader "injuries done immediately to the society itself." The Clinton presidency has become just such an injury. America must now be led to recognize this by honorable public figures in both parties. The country must become indignant. And if its indignation proves insufficient to force Bill Clinton's resignation, then, yes, he must be impeached and convicted. Either way, Clinton must go.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Where Are the Resignations?

by William Kristol

"AT NO TIME DID I ASK ANYONE TO LIE," said Bill Clinton, lying, in his August 17 address to the nation. For seven months, the president asked his staffers and supporters to lie. He assured them—some of them personally—that he had told the truth when he denied a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Ann Lewis and Paul Begala; Madeleine Albright and Donna Shalala; Tom Daschle and Dick Gephardt: All of them were lied to by the president. And all of them, in turn, were sent out to lie to the rest of us on his behalf.

So now what? As the White House sees it, forgiveness would be proper and fitting. Bill Clinton couldn't bring himself to apologize, of course, either to the country or to his loyalists. But after his speech, according to the *Washington Post*, the White House *was* thoughtful enough to issue talking points to staffers so that they could be ready when asked about being betrayed by their boss: "Q: Do you forgive him for misleading you and the country? A: It's been said that 'He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself.' Of course I do."

Of course I do? Did no aide bridle at the presumption and condescension of this document? And who was the minion so lacking in self-respect that he could write it? As Charles Krauthammer said, "This is the point at which cynicism turns into moral depravity." And the night of August 17 was the moment at which loyal service to Bill Clinton (already morally problematic) crossed the line into self-abasement.

Does no one in the administration realize this? The president engages in sordid activity in the White House—*in the Oval Office*—with a 21-year-old intern. He lies about it. He attempts to cover it up. Now he admits (albeit grudgingly and partially) to the truth. Yet none of his staff, no member of his administration, and almost no Democratic official seems to want to hold the president truly accountable for his actions—by demanding that he resign. And, in the absence of Clinton's willingness to go, not a single person who works for him seems to have the honor to leave himself.

Are there no honorable men around the president? Can his staff and cabinet be lied to without consequence? They need not become vociferous critics of the president. A quiet, principled leave-taking would suffice.

Is this an unrealistically high expectation? I don't think so. I worked in two administrations, first for Bill Bennett, then for Dan Quayle. It goes without saying that neither of them would have done what Bill Clinton has done. It also goes without saying that, if either of them had done something even remotely so disgraceful, he would have resigned. But I honestly believe that, if either man had resisted resignation, my colleagues and I would have told him he had to go. Failing that, we ourselves would have resigned.

Bill Clinton is not a man of honor. But are there no honorable men around him? Can his staff and cabinet be lied to without consequence? Is there nothing that will impel them to depart? They need not become vociferous critics of the president. They need not denounce him. A quiet, principled leave-taking would suffice. But it would be refreshing if one of them refused to be complicit any longer in the ongoing lie that is the Clinton White House. Apparently, not one of them is willing to do that.

Back in February, Clinton spokesman Mike McCurry told the *Chicago Tribune* that he believed Clinton's denials. But he added that "truth to the contrary would be very troublesome to me, to the press, and the American people." Well, now we have "truth to the contrary"—and still, McCurry spins away, troubled or not. Yes, he had announced his resignation for October, well before Clinton's speech. That is a convenient time for both him and the administration. But how about now? Doesn't he or anyone else in the administration feel an obligation to depart now? It would not be so convenient. In fact, it would be difficult. But it would be honorable.

Personal loyalty is an admirable trait, and so is political loyalty. Up to a point. Government officials

work for the nation, not simply for the president. They swear an oath to the Constitution, not to the president. To remain loyal to a president who lies is to make oneself complicit in his lies. To remain loyal to a man who has brought shame to his office is to make oneself complicit in that shame. At some point, blind loyalty must yield to principled honor. When?

William Kristol is editor and publisher of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

THE ESTABLISHMENT TURNS

by Fred Barnes

JOHN PODESTA, the deputy White House chief of staff, gathered a dozen "talkers" in his office two days after President Clinton addressed the nation about Monica Lewinsky. Talkers? You know, the Washington lawyers, consultants, and ex-administration officials who appear on TV chat shows and defend the president. Former Clinton scandal-spinner Lanny Davis was there. So were Democratic lawyer Stanley Brand and former Clinton aide Don Baer.

Podesta suggested several things, such as polls, they'd do well to mention on the tube. He cited results of post-speech surveys that showed both Clinton's job-performance rating and public distaste for Ken Starr's investigation as high as ever. Later, an aide explained the White House intends to emphasize the gulf between anti-Clinton sentiment inside the Beltway and the more favorable climate for the president outside Washington. And if all goes well, the Beltway will see it's out of sync with America and ease up on Clinton.

The Beltway did back off a bit after the Lewinsky affair broke in January, but it won't again. Now the scandal has entered a new phase that's far more perilous for the president. Call it the Watergate phase, because the scenario that unfolded a quarter-century ago is likely to repeat itself. In Watergate, people did not instantly rise up and demand the head of President Nixon. Instead, the Beltway (Democrats, moderate Republicans, the press) led and the people eventually followed. The scandal was more than a year old before Nixon's poll numbers began to decline sharply. This time, too, the Beltway (Ken Starr, the press) is leading. The public, whose support for Clinton is as shallow as it was for Nixon, will fall in line.

I'm hardly the only one to recognize that the polls the White House finds so encouraging are politically insignificant. A number of Democratic consultants are skeptical of a strategy that relies on current poll numbers' enduring. "I've always been leery of them," says Bob Beckel, who ran Walter Mondale's campaign in 1984. He says two of the three legs holding up Clinton's popularity have already been chopped off. Clinton's personality? It's now seen as deceitful, not charming. His ability to provide an activist, usually centrist brand of governing? It requires a willingness by Republicans to compromise on terms Clinton finds palatable. Forget that. Which leaves the economy as the only source of his popularity, and it's shaky.

Another skeptic about the polls is Jeffrey Bell, a Republican consultant now advising Gary Bauer, a likely presidential candidate in 2000. There's widespread misunderstanding, Bell says, of how public opinion works. "As was equally true in Watergate, most voters have little or no desire to take down a presidency, particularly one they have voted for twice," according to Bell. "As long as the investigation is incomplete, voters are able to defer confronting a set of facts they would rather not confront at all, indeed would rather did not exist at all. . . . And the truth is that Starr has issued not a single report on even one major element of his investigation." Thus the issues in the scandal so far have been questions about process: Is the independent counsel out of control? Can a "protective privilege" be invoked to keep Secret Service agents from testifying? Will Clinton testify?

Now, with the appearances of Lewinsky and Clinton before the grand jury, the focus is turning to real issues of sex, perjury, and obstruction of justice. The president's speech furthered this shift, and Starr's report to Congress, expected around Labor Day, will complete the transformation. (In Watergate, the shift to real issues came with the sensational Senate hearings in the summer of 1973.) The questions will be: What kind of sex was performed in the Oval Office suite and by whom? Also, did Clinton tell the truth about his sexual relationship with Lewinsky when questioned, under oath, by Paula Jones's attorneys and later before Starr's grand jury? And what about the

gifts the president gave Lewinsky? Did his retrieval of them after they'd been subpoenaed amount to obstruction of justice? Worst of all for Clinton, sordid details about his trysts have begun leaking, mostly from Monica's camp. These—the stained dress, for example, and the kinky sex—rivet the public and are ruinous to what's left of the president's reputation.

There are two other developments that will affect the Beltway's leadership in resolving the scandal. One is the Washington establishment's turning away from Clinton. This was epitomized by the brutal response to the speech by David Broder of the *Washington Post*. Broder, likeable and enormously respected, is a bellwether, pointing the way for the media and everyone else in the Beltway elite. He zinged Clinton as a prolific liar and man of "staggering" selfishness. When Clinton asserted that Starr's probe has lasted too long, "his words could equally well have applied to his own tenure," Broder wrote. TV's prime establishment figure, Cokie Roberts of ABC, has been a Clinton critic far longer. After the speech, she took a new tack, suggesting the political class in Washington has "a responsibility to lead public opinion instead of following it." She clearly intends to.

The other new development is the spillover of the scandal into this fall's congressional campaigns. Despite the timidity of Republican leaders, GOP candidates are raising the issue. In South Carolina, Republican state chairman Henry McMaster told the *Greenville News*, "We'll use it." And congressman Bob Inglis is doing exactly that in his Senate race against Fritz Hollings. If Clinton perjured himself, he should be impeached, Inglis said after the speech. Hollings declined to comment. But—and this is the important point—he'll be forced to by Inglis or reporters. And this sequence will be repeated in races all over the country. Once the scandal becomes a lively political issue, it's obviously no longer a mere matter of process. True, Starr's role may still be debated. But I suspect Republican candidates and the press will spend a lot more time on Clinton and coerce Democrats into responding.

One person at the White House seems skittish about relying on polls to help ward off impeachment or forced resignation—the president. That's why he made such an ostentatious display of launching antiterrorist raids in Sudan and Afghanistan. "All that matters is whether Bill Clinton can establish in the public's mind that he can still do the job of president," says a Clinton adviser. Polls indicating people approve of his job performance *in the past* aren't enough. He must show he's not frozen in place by the scandal and can lead *in the future*. Along that line, here's a poll question that might really tell us something: Do you believe Clinton, though involved in a sex scandal, can continue to lead the nation effectively? If 70 percent of Americans say yes after they've been treated to weeks of ribald details and heard what's in Starr's report, then they may not be susceptible to the Beltway's leadership after all. But I'm betting they are.

***Fred Barnes is executive editor of* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

Après le Speech

by Jay Nordlinger

If President Clinton could count on anyone in the press, it was Eleanor Clift, the *Newsweek* writer known in certain quarters as "Eleanor Rodham Clift." She never wavered.

As late as July 25, she was saying, "My feeling is that he told the truth." Immediately after Clinton's Map Room speech on August 17, she observed that "this was a consensual relationship between two people." Monica Lewinsky "knew what she was doing, and she is old enough to have sex with whomever she wants." It was Linda Tripp's "betrayal" that "forced" Lewinsky into the open, transgressing a proper "zone of privacy." Clinton, said Clift, "is an empathetic president, and he will receive empathy in return." He is "not a CEO," who might lose his job over an affair with an intern: "He's been elected by the people."

And, inevitably, there was the independent counsel to kick. After a night's sleep, Clift announced, "Kenneth Starr is the one with the problem this morning, not Clinton."

August 17 was a day of reckoning for the entire Clinton orbit, and not least for those journalists who had defended the president through seven months of fevered debate. Some, like Clift, were happy to exonerate Clinton, standing shoulder to shoulder with him, as usual. Others were disappointed in him, but still bent on reviling his enemies. And a few opted to dump the president altogether, turning on him with the fury of those who have been suckered and burned. The pro-Clinton media were forced to come to terms with the moment—and, more painfully, with themselves.

Geraldo Rivera was fairly nervous about the speech. For weeks, he had been bracing himself for disaster. He said on July 30, "If there is a semen-stained dress, I will be disappointed to my very core. It will still be proof of just a sex lie," of course. But "it will be such glaring evidence of insincerity that it will demoralize even those who feel, as I do, that Ken Starr is way out of line." On August 13, following Clinton's appearance at a memorial service for victims of terrorism in Africa, Rivera said, "We saw him today in all his wounded glory. Our president, our commander-in-chief, mourning the murder of our fellow citizens. Look at him, ladies and gentlemen! Strong and sympathetic; compassionate; compelling. And, I think, enormously believable."

After Clinton made his partial confession, Rivera had a confession of his own: Clinton, in admitting his deceit, had "sent chills through my body." But Rivera did not stay chilled for long. He charged that Starr was "trying to parlay adultery into impeachment." And "to use a federal grand jury to go after something that is essentially the scarlet letter is, to me, an appalling breach in judgment that smacks of partisanship." Rivera—practically alone among journalists—was willing to accept even the president's claim of "legal accuracy" in his Paula Jones deposition: "That is technically correct." As for Clinton's statement that we must "move on," Rivera chimed, "He's absolutely right about that."

Steven Brill, of "Pressgate" notoriety, was a guest on Rivera's show, where he furthered his campaign against Starr, charging that the independent counsel was in gross violation of law and ethics, favoring pliant reporters with leaks intended to harm the president. Brill's view of the scandal is consistent, if peculiar. On CBS after the fateful speech, he said that Clinton had failed to "erase a lot of the legacy of the many, many weeks of coverage that we've seen. We need to remember that this started with someone working with a book agent, looking for a book deal; who teamed up, I think, with a prosecutor who was in quest of a crime, and then together, they basically teamed up—I mean, it wasn't a deliberate . . . —with a press corps that needs to fill a constant vacuum." Brill also continues to heap abuse on ABC's Jackie Judd for having been spot-on about Lewinsky's infamous dress. For Brill, Monicagate can be understood as a concoction of dark Washington forces, with a dash of presidential stupidity thrown in.

Margaret Carlson, meanwhile, is expressing a new, somewhat subtle indignation. Like her employer, *Time* magazine, she has assumed a stance of moral equivalence between Clinton and Starr, declaring a pox on both their houses. She allowed on August 17, before the president spoke, that it was "shocking" to read polls indicating that the public is unbothered by Clinton's "stonewalling." In a piece published on August 10, Carlson argued that it would behoove the president not to make any confession at all, for it is "one thing to have an abstract notion that he actually had an affair and covered it up" and another "to hear it from his own mouth, to have the fig leaf of doubt removed and be forced to confront our own moral laxity in being willing to overlook it." In this, she may have been thinking of herself and her colleagues in the pro-Clinton camp. So too when she commented on August 18

that, "in a sense, the president is protected from Hillary by her anger at Ken Starr." In her post-speech column, Carlson had to agree with Orrin Hatch's muttered evaluation of Clinton as a "jerk"—even if Starr (and here was the necessary symmetry) is a jerk, too.

Gene Lyons is an especially sorry case. He is the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* writer who sees an organized conspiracy to trump up evidence against the president and topple him. He said of Hillary on August 13—using one of the president's favorite phrases—that "she'll be there until the last dog dies." But Lyons had vowed a few days earlier that he himself would not. He told Robert Novak on CNN, "I would be bitterly disappointed" if the president lied about Lewinsky, "and although I don't think he should be impeached for that, he would no longer have my support."

Clinton's time of testing was a challenge for his rooters in the press, as well. Their numbers are fewer now; those who remain seem sillier. Even as they mouthed the usual points, their smirks were no longer present.

But Lyons, too, proved angrier at Starr than at a dishonest president. He began his August 19 column with an excerpt from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*—the novel's climax, at which the protagonist and his love are trapped by Big Brother. Lyons's message was that Americans should be afraid—very afraid—of police powers like those wielded by Starr. "Make no mistake," he warned: "Anything Kenneth Starr and his prosecutors can do to President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, they can also do to you." Citing the Bible, Lyons dared his readers to cast the first stone. Clinton's advisers and family had placed faith in the president. And "anybody who wishes to have fun at their expense—or at mine—for giving Clinton the benefit of the doubt, do feel free. Anybody can be lied to. Anybody's trust can be abused. Nobody but the bitterest of cynics can protect themselves, and then by believing in nobody." Lyons, for all his foaming about "illegal leaks" and a "sex-crazed media," scribbled like a man bereaved.

The journalist who broke most dramatically with Clinton was Lars-Erik Nelson, columnist for the New York *Daily News*. Nelson had been as contemptuous as any of the effort against the president, lashing out at "the Gestapo School of Interrogation" and Starr's "Night Ambush Squad," with its "police-state tactics." (Now it has fallen to MSNBC's Keith Olbermann to do the Third Reich bit: "It finally dawned on me," he said last week, "that the person Ken Starr has reminded me of, facially, all this time was Heinrich Himmler, including the glasses. If he now pursues the president, would not there be some sort of a comparison?" Olbermann later issued an apology.)

Nelson, before the speech, wrote that if Clinton lied, "he is unfit to lead the nation and ought to have the decency to resign." Nelson was unconcerned about legal points, "all trivial." For him, "the sex, if true," was unforgivable, and "the lie to the American public, if it has been a lie," was "reason enough to hound him from office." What truly galled Nelson was that a Clinton *mea culpa* "would make heroes of Starr, Linda Tripp, and Lucianne Goldberg," and who could abide the "vindication" of the "haters"?

After the speech, Nelson wrote another column, this one revealing the depth of his hurt. Clinton had acknowledged that "he is both a liar and a sexual predator." Now "we get our noses rubbed in it." Nelson, so stung, went all the way with his conversion, snorting that Clinton's fling with Lewinsky was no private matter: "Exploiting her sexually was an abuse of power, a violation of trust, a betrayal of office." Under President Gore, the dread Newt Gingrich "would be a heartbeat away from the presidency," but Clinton's resignation was nonetheless imperative. "To the officials who defended him," Nelson concluded, "this was a shattering betrayal." And not only, apparently, to the officials.

Thus, Clinton's time of testing was a challenge for his rooters in the press, as well. Their numbers are fewer now; those who remain seem sillier. Even as they mouthed the usual points—"a dismissed civil lawsuit"; "four years and 40-million dollars"; "a 20-year-old land deal"—there was a quiver of panic in their throats, their confidence undermined, their smirks no longer fixed. Their careers will no doubt continue undisturbed. But from now on, things will, somehow, be different.

Jay Nordlinger is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The President's Samurai

by Tod Lindberg

NO GOOD MORALITY TALE is complete these days without a wallow in the slough of victimhood, and the Monica Lewinsky affair is no exception. Those laying claim to the mantle of victim are many, ranging from President Clinton (in his blast against independent counsel Kenneth Starr when he was supposed to be apologizing) to Monica herself (who at last report was miffed that the Big He didn't have so much as a kind word for her). As the week of The Speech unfolded, though, the emerging consensus of official Washington was that the true victims were the poor souls whom Bill Clinton had callously and calculatingly sent out for seven months to do his lying for him: the loyal aides and allies who had taken him at his word.

That list is a long one, starting with the first lady, continuing through the secretary of state and other cabinet officials, to Democratic members of Congress, on to senior and junior White House staff, and down to a small army of Democratic consultants, pollsters, chief cooks, and bottle-washers sent out to feed the all-Monica cable programming. The closer to the Oval, the greater the sympathy: Poor Ann ("Sex is sex. A sexual relationship means what it says, and that includes sex") Lewis. Poor Rahm ("He said there was no sexual relationship. . . . And I believe him") Emanuel. Poor Paul ("I believe him completely, and I know he's telling the truth") Begala. Oh yes, and poor Hillary. How was she holding up? "She's a human being," her spokesperson reassured us.

No doubt there is a world of hurt out there. The president did have defenders who believed him. He also had a bunch more who, whether they believed him or not, put their mugs out in his behalf. But before we get too caught up in a victimology that, by the time it's finished, is going to assign martyr status to the Democratic party's entire cadre, let's not forget that this band of brothers voluntarily stepped out to propagate the president's line. And their willingness to do so was unpreceded by searching personal inquiry into the truth or falsity of the allegations against their president. On the contrary. They had their jobs to do, they had their talking points, and they did their jobs.

To understand what has been going on, one must consider an aspect of Washington culture generally regarded as a bit impolitic to get into. And that is the culture of Samurai Washington.

I first heard the term applied to the capital at a university roundtable discussion starring an important United States senator. Around the table we went, introducing ourselves and giving our professional affiliations. When it came the turn of a staffer traveling with the senator, he matter-of-factly gave his name, then said, "Samurai to Sen. [X]." It got a laugh. It's a funny line. But it's not merely funny.

The Washington aristocracy is not hereditary, as was the landed aristocracy of feudal Japan. But our latter-day daimyos are no less the sole masters of their domain, from the White House to the House and Senate office buildings, from the party committees to the cabinet departments. The generic Washington name for such a baron is a "principal." And, not to put too fine a point on it, if you are not a principal, you serve a principal. (Sometimes even if you are a principal, you serve a bigger principal.) And in exchange for the benefits of the patron who has you on retainer, you serve your principal faithfully and completely.

This is a phenomenon that applies to both political parties. If you speak to someone in Newtland, for example—that network of staffs and organizations emanating from the House speaker's office—you will get the Gingrich perspective on things. Oh, sure, there are plenty of topics on which the speaker is indifferent, or on which he wishes to encourage debate among his retinue. His samurai are not automatons. But on the issues on which he has decided to take a stand, he is not to be contradicted. Is he right? Is he wrong? Wrong questions. He is right because he is the speaker. To cease to advance his positions is to forfeit one's claim to his patronage. In other words, go find yourself another job. If you don't like the code of the samurai, perhaps you should pursue another career (such as journalism).

What you need in order to go out in the world and spread the word is not some deeply felt certitude about the truth or efficaciousness of the message. What you need is your talking points. You are certainly permitted to believe your talking points. But you are not required to believe them. And your self-esteem, samurai self-esteem, comes not from speaking truthfully and thoughtfully but from speaking well in the service of your master. How can they do it, these consultants—so people ask? How can they just stare into the camera and ignore the questions and spout

back the party line? The answer is really very simple: It's their job. Moreover, there is usually a sense of higher purpose, namely, that advancing the interests of the principal serves some good end. In politics, after all, your principal's enemy wants to defeat you. Your principal need not be perfect to warrant a vigorous defense. James Carville has noted that he owes everything he has to Bill Clinton, and that Bill Clinton's partisan enemies are out to get him, so Carville is going to be a defender of Bill Clinton. That is samurai.

You could say that the feudal baron owes a certain debt to his samurai. He should not send them off to battle for no reason. He should not let them be destroyed. And usually he doesn't. In the case of the samurai sent out to spread the word, that means maintaining credibility. Spinning is a time-honored Washington activity, and its premise is that there is some point of connection between the spin and the truth. Because of this convention, one may spin extravagantly but still be credible, at least as a spinner. If your party wins a special election, it is surely an indicator of a great victory to come, whereas to your opposite number, the loss was purely a product of local factors with no lessons to teach about nationwide trends. At least you will agree who won.

But every so often, and not infrequently in Bill Clinton's Washington, something goes wrong. It is the unique gift of this administration to take all the sins of Washington and magnify them a thousandfold. In this case, the baron of the Oval Office sent his spinners forth to lie for the cause. Presumably, he did so in the hope that the lie would never be discovered. But still, he did it.

This was surely a bad thing. But given Washington samurai culture, it was a natural thing. Clinton merely expected his staff to serve him. That, after all, is their job. And note well: Had he come clean about Monica Lewinsky at the outset in January, he would have sent the very same people forth to make the case for him, albeit with a different set of talking points. Does anyone think they wouldn't have gone?

Lanny Davis, that generally happy warrior, understands the situation well. On MSNBC the day after The Speech, he was asked about his feelings. It had been a hard day, he said. But "people like me aren't priorities here."

Spoken like a true samurai. Of course this is Washington, not feudal Japan. The samurai culture that people join here, they join willingly. They are free to leave. What's noteworthy is how many put aside their feelings, even under such extreme circumstances as Bill Clinton's demands create, and decide to stay. They did not create his lie, but they did propagate it without question. For this, they deserve no pity.

***Tod Lindberg is editorial-page editor of the* Washington Times.**

Mike Barnicle's Demise

By Kenneth Y. Tomlinson

Editor's Note:** For weeks,* **Boston Globe** *columnist Mike Barnicle waged a highly visible struggle to keep his* **Globe** *job, amid accusations of plagiarism and lying to his editors. Last Monday, while preparing this article for* ***The Weekly Standard*, former* **Reader's Digest** *editor-in-chief Kenneth Tomlinson faxed a letter to* **Boston Globe** *editor Matthew Storin suggesting that an October 8, 1995, Barnicle column was fabricated. "Would you ask Barnicle for evidence that events presented in the column did in fact occur?" Tomlinson wrote. Barnicle had no evidence. By Wednesday, Tomlinson's inquiry had forced Barnicle's resignation.*

The column was a magazine editor's dream. Mike Barnicle told the story of the friendship of two boys, forged out of a mutual love of baseball, in the cancer section of Boston's Children's Hospital. "And on those dreamy summer nights when the Olde Towne Team was home, the two of them would sit by a window on an upper floor in a hospital ward and listen to games on the radio as they looked at the lights of the ballpark off in the distance, washing across the July sky like some brilliant Milky Way all their own."

The parents—one couple white and trust-fund wealthy from Connecticut, the other black and apparently from Boston—became friends, too, a friendship deepened when the black couple presented the boys with Red Sox jackets and two baseballs signed by Mo Vaughn.

Soon the hopes of those days would be silenced. The father of the black child had lost his job—"laid off by one of those high-tech companies that survives only by 'downsizing,' a '90s word for unemployment, the type of management move that has brought economic death-sentences to so many households. And so it was that the [black child] died on a crisp fall day when his favorite game had long fallen silent from a strike. The combination of hospitalization and unemployment had nearly bankrupted the family, yet they had to fight on for their three surviving children. . . ."

One day, as foreclosure loomed over them, the Boston couple received a beautiful letter from the Connecticut family, recalling with great emotion those nights spent together at Children's Hospital. They explained that nurses had told them of the couple's plight. Enclosed was a check for $10,000.

With vivid detail, Barnicle described how the mother "lifted her head toward the perfect sky and, for a moment, she could hear her son singing his favorite song." She telephoned her husband, "and slowly, savoring each word," she read him the letter. "When she finished, neither said anything for a long time until, finally, the husband declared: 'There really is a God.'"

Now, my reaction may have been conditioned by memories of similar friendships from days when my son was a patient at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. But I wept when I read the Barnicle column. I also designated it the lead article for the January 1996 issue of *Reader's Digest*, where I was editor-in-chief. As I said, it was a magazine editor's dream.

The first sign of trouble came when Barnicle would not return calls placed by the *Digest* researcher assigned to check the facts in the story. When Barnicle finally did call, he asserted that all the details of the column were accurately depicted. He had spoken to both parents. All the details were accurate. All real. Even after the researcher assured him that we would preserve the privacy of these families—that we only needed to talk with them to verify facts in his column—Barnicle steadfastly refused to provide their names.

The *Digest* fact-checking process can be a pain for the stars of journalism, but the (costly) tradition is rooted in some unfortunate experiences from years

Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, who served as director of the Voice of America in the Reagan administration, retired as editor-in-chief of Reader's Digest *in 1996. He lives on a farm in Fauquier County, Virginia.*

gone by, when the magazine's founder DeWitt Wallace discovered even big-name writers were capable of cynically churning out fiction clothed as journalism.

But at this point, I had no idea that Mike Barnicle could make up a story about a kid dying of cancer and the wondrous things that came from his struggle. Surely Barnicle was just being a prima donna. So I turned to a research supervisor and asked her to go around Barnicle and confirm the essential facts through the staff at Children's Hospital.

She got great cooperation from the hospital. Everyone wanted to help because they all had read the Barnicle column and had been deeply touched. Only trouble was, no one associated with cancer treatment at Children's Hospital had ever seen anything like the events portrayed in the Barnicle column. A supervisor checked with nurses on all the shifts. She asked doctors, but no luck. Meanwhile, *Digest* researchers doggedly sought to unearth leads at the American Cancer Society in Connecticut and Massachusetts and the Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation. To no avail.

Finally, it dawned on even me that the column was a fabrication. Barnicle's deeply moving column was nothing but a cheap piece of pulp fiction. We killed the piece.

I was reminded of this experience two months ago when the *Boston Globe* forced the resignation of columnist Patricia Smith, who was caught fabricating characters and events in her column. "Barnicle," I thought, "you're living on borrowed time." Later, my confidence that the noose was tightening around Barnicle's neck increased when I saw a *Brill's Content* article on the Smith affair. The article cited allegations that star columnist Barnicle had been making up characters and events for years.

The most egregious material in the article came from a seven-year-old *Boston Magazine* article, which had taken a couple of Barnicle's classic columns and through exhaustive research documented that the compelling characters portrayed by Barnicle did not exist. There was more. Barnicle had shamelessly cribbed columns by Chicago's Mike Royko—after Royko publicly complained. Barnicle had even plagiarized a classic Christmas column from the legendary Jimmy Cannon.

It was mind-boggling that any newspaperman in post-Watergate America could get away with what Barnicle had been doing regularly for years. And not just get away with it—Barnicle was revered in his profession. He was a star on Channel 5 in Boston. Had his own spot on MSNBC. He was the New England correspondent for PBS's *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*—the show's much acclaimed vehicle to cast light on facts and views outside of Manhattan island and the Washington Beltway. For that matter, I had tried to put his voice in *Reader's Digest*.

Patricia Smith's firing, it turned out, did lead to heightened scrutiny in the *Globe* newsroom. And Barnicle's stuff finally hit even the *Globe*'s lofty fan. In a reckless act that was to journalistic standards what Clinton's relations with Monica Lewinsky were to presidential decorum, Barnicle was caught lifting jokes from comedian George Carlin's current best-seller—and passing them off as his own. Initially, the *Globe* suspended Barnicle for a month after he swore that he hadn't gotten the jokes from the Carlin book—he'd never even read the book. He got the lines from a bartender.

Within hours, local television was playing a tape of Barnicle holding up Carlin's book to viewers recommending it for summer reading. Even the *Globe* had had enough. On August 5, editor Matthew Storin demanded Barnicle's resignation. But as Storin would quickly learn, it's not easy to fire an icon.

You can make the case that the American media loved Mike Barnicle because, for all his posturing about being the voice of the common man, he found ways to serve up liberal stew in ways designed to make it palatable to the masses. He knew, for starters, how to dish punishment to conservatives. During the New Hampshire primary in 1996, he called Texas senator Phil Gramm "a thoroughly repulsive human being." Of Steve Forbes, he wrote: "Just watching him, it is not beyond the realm of imagination that somebody, someday, is going to show up and demand an answer as to why Forbes wanted to take nude photographs of the 1992 New Jersey Little League championship team."

But his skills went beyond invective. Last week, the *New York Times* described the source of Barnicle's

clout this way: "He had a strong voice, resonant to blue-collar readers even when he was taking liberal positions they despised. As recounted in the book *Common Ground*, in the midst of the anti-busing rage in 1974 he urged Senator Edward Kennedy to speak to angry demonstrators, 'You could tell them, Senator, that law knows no neighborhood; that justice is not confined to any one block, that fear must be put aside and the fact of law adhered to.'"

In the *Times* piece, former *Globe* editor Michael Janeway said Barnicle's crowning achievement was "papering over busing's wound. . . . The symbolic importance of someone like Barnicle became outsized." In other words, so outsized that he could get by with fabrications and plagiarism that would have destroyed the careers of other journalists bound by the profession's traditional codes of integrity.

And it was with the help of his media friends that what should have been Barnicle's darkest hour would become seemingly one of his greatest triumphs. Within hours of Storin's demand that the columnist resign, Barnicle mounted a masterful campaign for survival. He'd never read the Carlin book, he explained. Everyone knows journalists recommend books they haven't read.

He blitzed Boston television and the network morning shows, claiming his voice was being unfairly silenced. Quickly he was joined by such media giants as ABC's Ted Koppel and NBC's Tim Russert, urging the *Globe* to take him back. He even managed, perversely, to turn the Patricia Smith firing into a defense. Because her backers clamored for Barnicle's firing—on grounds that a white male member of the old boy's club should be treated just as the black female had been—his defenders said that it would be unfair to fire Barnicle for a lesser offense just to offer a politically correct appearance of evenhandedness.

But Barnicle's biggest score came on Don Imus's nationally syndicated radio and MSNBC television program. In a pathetic voice, he pleaded for support: "I'd like to tell you a story. It's a story about sleepless nights. It's a story about TV crews in the driveway at midnight and coming back at 5:30 in the morning, and ringing your doorbell at 20 minutes of six, and waking up a five-year-old. It's a story about me, it's a story about 1998, it's a story that I would write in a column if I still had a column."

Imus declared that Barnicle was welcome on his show any time he wanted, and he then urged his listeners to bombard the *Globe* with demands that Barnicle be reinstated. Immediately. He gave the publisher's phone number. What followed must have been a massive disruption that even Mike Barnicle could not have embellished. Staples, the office-supply company, even threatened to pull its advertising if Barnicle's column was not restored.

Channel 5 welcomed back Barnicle as if nothing had happened. Storin and *Globe* publisher Benjamin Taylor called a press conference to announce Barnicle's reinstatement—following a two-month suspension. Barnicle stood with them apologizing profusely—for the Carlin incident. Like Bill Clinton, it seemed Mike Barnicle could get away with anything.

For weeks I waited for the massive weight of evidence that Barnicle was a fraud and a thief to bring him down. Ironically, it was my son, Will, the same kid whose experiences at Sloan-Kettering had so drawn me to that Barnicle column, who first suggested I write about my experience.

The rest, as they say, is history. Events moved so fast that I got scooped by my own story.

On Monday, August 17, I faxed Storin a note explaining how we had discovered the column to be a fabrication and asking his help in confronting Barnicle. Much to my surprise, Storin offered his cooperation. I explained I had a Thursday deadline from my editors at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Storin turned my material over to assistant managing editor Walter Robinson, the respected newspaper veteran who had unearthed the Patricia Smith fraud. Robinson explained that he had been assigned the task of editing Barnicle when he returned from suspension. It seems his first job was to confront Barnicle with my questions. Over the course of the next two days I had repeated conversations with Robinson. Later he explained what had occurred between himself and the columnist.

At first Barnicle said he couldn't remember the column. He asked for time to collect his thoughts. Robinson called him again. This time Barnicle said he had heard the story from a nurse he had met with a friend in a South Boston bar.

Had the nurse met the boys and their parents at Children's Hospital?

No, she worked at another hospital where the Connecticut boy had later been a patient.

Did Barnicle talk with the parents before doing the column?

No, he got all the details from the nurse.

How did he obtain the poignant quotes from the mother and father of the black boy—the vivid account of the mother opening the letter and hearing her son sing and the line from the father saying, "There really is a God"?

Barnicle said he got it from the nurse (in the South Boston bar), who got it from the Connecticut woman, who was told these things by the mother of the black child who had died of cancer.

Had he confirmed any of this with the parents?

No, he hadn't talked with the parents. He didn't know the names of the parents. And he couldn't remember the name of the nurse.

Robinson asked Barnicle how he could do a column with precise quotes and vivid description based on a nurse in a bar who had heard the story.

Barnicle replied, "That's the way I do it."

During all this, Robinson called to ask if I had any documents from our research in 1995 to back up my claim that Barnicle had assured our researcher that he had spoken with both sets of parents. I faxed Robinson a copy of a 1995 memo by *Digest* research director Deirdre Casper, in which she wrote: "Barnicle did call me back but explained in no uncertain terms that he would not reveal the names of those involved. . . . I asked him if he's spoken to both sets of parents—he said he had. I asked if all details of the story were accurately depicted, or had he changed some/all to protect identities. All real, he said."

Once confronted with the facts, Barnicle agreed to resign.

With the *Globe* announcement that my query of Storin had set in motion events that led to Barnicle's resignation, I was besieged with media calls. That evening as a Boston camera crew wired me for an interview on our farm 50 miles west of Washington, I wondered aloud if Barnicle's resignation in disgrace would end his career in journalism.

"I wouldn't bet on that," quipped a cameraman. "By tomorrow Barnicle will be vowing he didn't make up the column, and he'll be back in the business."

Later that night, on MSNBC, Brian Williams interviewed Barnicle, who was in Hyannisport. Sure enough, Barnicle was vowing he didn't make up any column. He got the story from a nurse, and he believed her.

I looked up at the clock and saw that it was just past midnight. I went to bed. MSNBC went back to round-the-clock coverage of Bill Clinton. ♦

Matt Fong's Boxer Rebellion

By Tucker Carlson

Los Angeles

At noon one day in early August, Matt Fong walks to the podium in a lecture hall at the University of Southern California and delivers the speech that will define his campaign's positions on national defense. Fong, a California Republican who is running about even in his race against incumbent senator Barbara Boxer, speaks in a somber monotone as he explains the threats America faces in a post-Soviet world: unstable, nuclear-equipped dictatorships, the spread of biological terrorism, an increasingly belligerent China. Just last month, Fong says, the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States "delivered its report—and it . . . is . . . sobering."

A bit dry, perhaps, but Fong's positions seem sensible enough. They are certainly relevant to California, a state whose economy has long depended heavily on defense contracts. But hardly anyone is listening. With the exceptions of Fong's staff and a single reporter from a weekly political magazine based 3,000 miles away, there are 38 people in the room. The crowd is so small that before the speech each member of the audience introduces himself by name. Where are the media? Who knows? says a Fong press aide. "Maybe there's a freeway chase. In the absence of a professional football game, that's what people here watch on television."

Californians are famously bored with politics—Democratic consultant Bob Shrum once described a political rally in the state as four people standing around a TV set watching a paid ad—and during this mid-term election, the electorate seems particularly disengaged. Fong, who has been the state's treasurer

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for The Weekly Standard.

since 1995, has been around long enough to anticipate this, and his campaign isn't even going through the motions of retail politics. The candidate's schedule for the month of August lists just four speeches, all of them of the for-the-record policy-position variety.

Matt Fong's campaign may not be preempting freeway chases in California, but it is causing some excitement among Republican party leaders in Washington. "If he wins—and he's going to win—he's on anybody's short list for vice president," predicts one particularly enthusiastic official at the Republican National Committee. Fong has received an unusual amount of help and attention from the national party, both because his opponent is considered vulnerable, and because, in the words of Jack Kemp, "Matt Fong is a 21st-century Republican." It's hard to know precisely what Kemp means by that, but it probably has something to do with the fact Fong is Asian. As the *Los Angeles Times* artlessly put it last month, many Republican strategists consider Fong's campaign "a chance for the GOP to shake its image as a retrograde party dominated by whites in an era of increasing racial diversity."


Matt Fong

Kevin Chadwick

Fong expects to receive millions this cycle from the Republican party, and he'll need every dollar. A successful Senate race in California probably requires a minimum of $10 million. With donations capped at $1,000 per person, the fund-raising task is enormous. Members of Fong's staff freely admit that their boss spends at least 80 percent of his time trying to bring in money. "You think there are three meals in a day?" asks Anne LeGassick Dunsmore, Fong's finance director and a highly regarded veteran of political fund-raising in California. "Nope. You've got two breakfasts, a lunch, cocktails, and a dinner. Every time we don't have two breakfasts we lose $10,000. Every missed cocktails is $15,000. A dinner is $25,000."

Between events, Fong works the phones. A timer sits on his desk. Each call is limited to five minutes. Under ideal conditions it would take 1,000 calls to raise $1 million, though nothing about fund-raising in August is ideal. This time of year, says Dunsmore, "everyone who has a thousand bucks is on vacation." Fong presses on undeterred, reportedly working nonstop for stretches of 20 hours or more. In the first week and a half after winning the primary, his campaign claims to have raised $1.5 million.

If elected, Fong is sure to be one of the Senate's more articulate opponents of limits on campaign fund-raising. Setting caps on donations, he says with some passion, "stifles the freedom of speech of donors who want to give their candidates more." It's less certain how closely he would follow the Republican line on other domestic issues. Fong grew up in a prominent Democratic family—his mother, a long-serving secretary of state, became famous in the 1970s for eliminating California's pay toilets—and he has been a Republican for only about 10 years. He still seems uncomfortable with ideology. To date, for instance, Fong has consistently refused to define himself as either pro-choice or pro-life, claiming the labels are meaningless.

More likely, he realizes how significant the labels are and is fearful of alienating a significant block of voters. Fong has settled on a position that matches precisely what pollsters believe is that of the majority of Californians: Opposed to partial-birth and taxpayer-funded abortions, and in favor of parental consent for minors, he has pledged not to interfere with the legality of first-trimester abortions. In spirit, says campaign communications director Steve Schmidt, Fong is pro-life. "He's adopted," Schmidt says. "How could he be for abortion?" Privately, a number of others on Fong's staff say they consider him pro-choice.

Most of Fong's advisers seem not to care. The point, says a top Fong strategist, is that "Matt Fong is not a pro-life, right-wing Republican like [California gubernatorial candidate] Dan Lungren, saying 'I'm Catholic and proud of it.'"

Fong, those around him frequently point out, is proud to be a moderate—not mushy, but rather, "non-doctrinaire." In a state that produced Ronald Reagan, Fong is running as George Deukmejian, a sober-minded, fiscally sensible leader who may cut taxes, but won't quote the Bible or scare investors. "In this campaign," says a Fong aide, "there are no issues that are

polarizing. The question is, Which incumbent do you want?"

The Fong campaign is betting that many California voters don't want Barbara Boxer. Over her six years in the Senate, Boxer has never achieved above a 50 percent approval rating in the polls. A sizable group of Californians, in other words, is committed to disliking Boxer, and from the beginning the Fong campaign has sought to find out why. "Believe me," says one Fong strategist, "if we knew, we'd have it on television." The campaign has commissioned polls and focus groups on the subject and received no clear answer. Responses from participants at a recent focus group, says Schmidt, were typical: "It wasn't like, 'She's gone too far on the environment,' or 'She's a lunatic on the military.' They couldn't pinpoint what they didn't like about her. They just didn't like *her*."

By all accounts, Boxer hasn't grown any more likable in recent months. She ran her 1992 senate campaign against conservative Bruce Herschensohn almost solely on the issue that she was a woman, making frequent and loud references to the abuse Anita Hill allegedly suffered at the hands of Clarence Thomas. Sexual harassment, she explained at the time, is especially painful "if you are in your twenties and you are a woman in a man's field." After her victory, Boxer continued as a self-appointed spokesman for the sexually harassed, leading the effort to expel serial groper Bob Packwood from the Senate. Since January, however, Boxer (whose daughter is married to Hillary Clinton's brother) has said virtually nothing about the president's behavior with Monica Lewinsky. At one point, the senator flatly refused to answer questions from reporters on the subject, explaining that a leg injury prevented her from standing long enough to hold a press conference. Shortly after, she was seen dancing at a party.

In skillful hands, Boxer's obvious hypocrisy would make a devastating campaign issue, but so far the Fong campaign appears to have given her a pass. "The whole Monica Lewinsky thing is like the tarantula on the birthday cake," says a Republican operative who has advised Fong. "No one knows where it's going to go." Fong, for his part, seems to wish the whole subject would disappear. "On any questions about Clinton," a spokesman warns moments before an interview, "Matt really doesn't like talking about that right now."

Will Fong ever want to talk about Clinton? Maybe later, depending on where the president's poll numbers go. Fong's timidity can be frustrating to watch. On the other hand, he may simply be warming up for a career as a Republican in the U.S. Senate. ♦

Boris's Last Chance

What Is To Be Done About Russia's Economy?

By Leon Aron

The Russian financial crisis marks a watershed in that country's six-and-a-half-year-old attempt to build capitalism on the ruins of a giant, obsolete (mostly 1930s and 1950s vintage), urban, non-monetary, militarized, autarkic, state-owned economy, and to do so within the political framework of a one-person, one-vote democracy, badly divided on the most fundamental issues, without abrogating its citizens' rights and liberties.

Although the post-Communist societies of Eastern and Central Europe also have been engaged in the unprecedented task of simultaneously constructing capitalism and democracy, Russia's inheritance has set it apart and made the transition especially hard. The economy it inherited from the Soviet Union was almost completely militarized. The military-industrial complex consumed (directly and under various guises and subterfuges) at least half of the country's gross domestic product and supported a third of the population. Russia's agriculture was ruined by murderous collectivization, followed by almost 60 years of serfdom. The country had no living memory of private economic activity unstigmatized by state prosecution and unmarred by criminality. Its industrial nomenklatura was vast, powerful, and mostly left intact by the "velvet revolution" and allowed to continue to manage the economy.

Leon Aron is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His biography of Boris Yeltsin will be published next year.

Policy mistakes, corruption, incompetence, ignorance, and bureaucratic inertia aside, no market—no matter how vibrant—could have righted, in less than seven years, an economy so distorted that entire sectors became bankrupt overnight once prices were freed in January 1992. No market could have retrained and absorbed such multitudes of workers. The regime slashed defense procurement 90 percent, reduced military spending to under 5 percent of GDP, divested itself of 70 percent of the economy through the largest privatization effort in history, and created over 10 million private-sector jobs (and millions more underground jobs for cash or barter). Still, the federal government—not the new owners or local authorities—remained responsible for workers' salaries.

In addition, Moscow was saddled with the impoverished but vast Soviet welfare system: pensions owed to all women over 55 and all men over 60, free medical care, free higher education—and subsidies for housing that alone cost more than the entire defense budget. (The average urban Russian family pays no more than 3 percent of the real cost of its housing.)

The problem of obsolete industries and surplus labor has been central to the transition from pre-modern society to capitalism. Merry old England showed the way when, in the space of 30 years at the end of 18th and beginning of the 19th century, it forced off the land eight out of ten farmers and starved to death, branded, hanged, or shipped to overseas colonies tens of thousands of peasants and urban poor. Until the last decade, the South Asian economic tigers kept their surplus workers in check by authoritarian controls—as does China still, gratifying foreign investors by sparing them (so far) the complications of free union organizing and democracy and forcing workers to labor for meager wages in substandard conditions.

By contrast, the Russian government has just settled several coal miners' strikes by agreeing to pay $4 billion in back wages—nearly 5 percent of the entire 1998 budget. (Much of the money transferred by Moscow earlier to pay miners was stolen by mine managers and owners.) An ossified relic of 19th-century industrialization, mining is a classic surplus industry. It drains state treasuries everywhere—in Britain, Germany, Poland. But again, in Russia the burden is especially heavy.

Russia has rejected Asian-style "authoritarian modernization." Instead, it is a democracy, complete with free speech, a fiercely partisan press free from government censorship, a vocal political opposition, and multi-candidate elections. Representing its "surplus" population—the millions of dispossessed, the unemployed, the nominally employed, the lost, and the angry—is the hard-line Communist party of the Russian federation (KPRF), which still reveres Stalin. Free to organize, the party quickly rebuilt a national organization reaching down to the village level and reclaimed over 150 newspapers and magazines. Its card-carrying membership is above 500,000, at least 10 times the membership of all the other parties combined. Its candidates compete in local, regional, and national elections—and win, serving as mayors, governors, and deputies. In the 1995 national legislative elections, the Communist party and its allies garnered 22 million votes (of the 69 million cast) and secured a solid plurality in the Duma. In the 1996 presidential election, the Communist candidate, party chairman Gennady Zyuganov, garnered 30 million of the 74 million votes cast.

Following the tried and true Leninist maxim, "The worse for the regime, the better for the party," the Communist-led "popular-patriotic" plurality in the Duma has consistently resisted measures that could make the state solvent: a new tax code, a land code permitting the buying, selling, and mortgaging of land, and foreign participation in the economy. (It was a Duma-initiated law—vetoed by Yeltsin and then passed over his veto—that restricted foreign ownership of the government-controlled electricity monopoly, United Energy Systems, touching off the precipitous fall of the Russian stock market this spring.)

For four and a half years, the Communists—correctly fearing the emergence of "petty bourgeois" land owners, the Bolsheviks' worst enemy—have managed to sustain the prohibition on buying and selling land. The costs to Russia have been staggering. When last February the governor and legislature of the Saratov region, 450 miles southeast of Moscow, ignored the Duma and passed a law allowing the sale of land, the very first auction, in a small town, netted the local authorities $80,000 in a day. One can only imagine what untold billions would have poured into the federal treasury from the sale of millions of acres of state-owned land, and from the taxes on such transactions, had free commerce in land been permitted from the time of Yeltsin's first land-privatization decree in October 1993.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of enterprises continued to lose money. An estimated 25 percent to 40 percent of the economy was underground to avoid crushing taxes, and much of the rest effectively escaped taxes by resorting to barter. In 1997, less than 5 percent of the population filed income-tax returns. Minister of the economy Yakov Urinson called the state's support of bankrupt industries and the ensuing budget deficits "the price of social peace." Rightly con-

sidering low inflation and a stable ruble its greatest achievements, the government stoically refused to cover the shortfalls by printing money. Instead, it financed the deficit with short-term, high-yield government bonds known as GKOs. When payments fell due, they were covered by the sale of more debt. This pyramid scheme proved increasingly costly: This year, a third of the Russian budget was allocated to servicing domestic debt. An even steeper price was paid in the stifling of economic recovery. Investors, both Russian and foreign, saw little incentive for direct productive investment, when they could get a return as high as 40 percent simply by lending money to the government for half a year. This spring, investor flight from emerging markets in the wake of the "Asian flu," along with the drop in oil prices, finally toppled the pyramid.

When GKO yields leapt above 100 percent and the Russian Trading System index of stock prices plunged 187 points (from 571 points in October 1997), both indicators ended up almost exactly where they had been two years before, during the Yeltsin-Zyuganov presidential race. In responding identically to the two phenomena, the markets were precisely right. In 1996, before Russia's first free election of a head of state, the question was, Can a non-authoritarian Russia govern itself? Now the question is, Can a non-authoritarian Russia support itself? In both instances, a negative answer would mean not just a change of regimes, but the possible collapse of the entire political and economic edifice erected since 1991.

Boris Yeltsin

Kevin Chadwick

This is a qualitatively new crisis, the likes of which Boris Yeltsin and his regime have not faced before. At its heart is a chasm between civil society, hardened and embittered by decades of totalitarian dictatorship and by the chaos and pain of the free-market transition, on the one hand, and a weak, often corrupt state saddled with the back-breaking burden of the Soviet economy and welfare system on the other. Is the regime capable of narrowing the gap enough at least to keep itself and its currency viable? Does it have time?

To take the second question first, the equity meltdown is not a political problem. The stock market accounts for only a small part of the country's economy. Hundreds of middle-sized and small companies, which represent Russian capitalism at its best, are not traded, and very few ordinary Russians own stock directly or through the handful of fledgling mutual funds. A serious weakening of the ruble, on the other hand, will have a potentially devastating effect in a country dependent on imports for much of its food, cigarettes, and liquor, as well as most of its office and household gadgetry. The recent 34 percent devaluation of the ruble (from 17 cents to the ruble to 11 cents) may turn out to be an orderly retreat to a defensible standard—or it may be the beginning of an unstoppable downward spiral quickly leading to panic buying, hyperinflation, and a near-worthless currency. As always in such cases, which of the two scenarios prevails will be determined in the interplay of economics, politics, and psychology.

The initial shock may be softened by the mounds of hard currency that Russians have hoarded: an estimated $40 billion, or $267 (more than two months' average salary) for each of the country's 150 million men, women, and children. (Last February alone, Russians bought almost $3 billion.) It is precisely in the politically critical big cities that people keep most of their savings at home in dollars. These savings, which virtually every urban family has, may slow down the run on the dollar and buy the Kremlin some crucial time.

Whether the regime will use its reprieve wisely is uncertain. First, the government will have to continue to prove the seriousness of its intentions by going after some of the most conspicuous tax evaders. Reformer Boris Fedorov, recently appointed deputy prime minister, made a sound beginning when he pledged to

begin investigating the 1,000 richest Russians who "flaunt their wealth in the eyes of the nation but don't file their taxes." In July the government forced the largest company in the world's emerging markets, the natural-gas monopoly Gazprom, to pay back taxes by dispatching dozens of tax collectors to the company's headquarters, where they threatened to seize senior executives' dachas, limousines, and hunting lodges. The Kremlin will have to demonstrate its resolve by seizing and selling for nonpayment enterprises owned by the largest financial-industrial groups.

The most critical task, however, is political. State revenues, especially tax receipts, reflect the society's allegiance to the state. They go to the heart of the social contract and cannot be redressed by presidential decree. They require popular consensus and legitimation. With the Duma stubbornly obstructionist, the only way for the regime to gain the confidence of the country (and of investors) is to assemble a package of radical revenue-enhancing and budget-cutting measures and put it to an up-or-down popular vote. These measures would include the right to buy and sell land; a comprehensive and transparent tax code with fewer and far lower rates, along with harsh, enforceable penalties for evasion; the gradual phasing out of housing subsidies and state-guaranteed loans to enterprises; the lifting of restrictions on foreign banks (which currently account for only 4 percent of banking capital); and firm guarantees for foreigners who invest in Russian companies.

The regime could take its case to the people in either of two ways, under the constitution. Borrowing a page from de Gaulle, Yeltsin could call a referendum. Alternatively, Prime Minister Kiriyenko could submit the package to the Duma and request a vote of confidence in the government. If confidence were confirmed, the legislature would have to pass the measures as well. If, as is far more likely, the Duma rebuffed the government, Yeltsin could dissolve the Duma and schedule new elections.

Will Yeltsin roll the dice? Can he summon again the will that swayed the country in 1991, 1993, and 1996, when his leadership was instrumental in thwarting attempts at a Communist restoration? Of late, the president has been surprisingly engaged, focused, and spirited in his work on behalf of his young government. Although rapidly aging, tired, and occasionally incoherent, he is in better shape than at any time since the spring of 1996.

Will he succeed? Like every successful politician, Yeltsin has been lucky in his enemies. If, as on those previous occasions, the Russians judge the danger to be immediate, and if they see the president and his government as the only force capable of preventing chaos or stopping the "red wheel" of Communist restoration, then the regime—even saddled as it is with very high public-opinion "negatives"—might succeed.

These are two huge "ifs." Yet the Communists may have already made a serious political mistake when they refused to call the Duma back from vacation to consider the less sweeping emergency measures the government did propose. Gennady Zyuganov compounded the blunder by promising an open-ended national strike in October. Undoubtedly noticed by the public, both acts of reckless truculence make it easier for Yeltsin to appeal to the people—and win.

By definition, plebiscites are risky business. If he loses a referendum or a legislative election, Yeltsin will have to be prepared to consider a "government of national unity," a Russian version of the French *cohabitation*, in which a right-of-center president shares power with leftist, "popular patriotic" ministers. Like the French president, the Russian president enjoys sufficient constitutional powers (notably, control of the national-security agencies) to preclude a Communist takeover. By splitting the moderates and the radicals within the "popular patriotic" opposition, Yeltsin could probably defang the campaign of civil disobedience planned by the Left for this fall. And the Left, once part of a government of national unity, would at last be forced to share responsibility for the country and to show the people what the opposition can do besides obstruct. The country's learning experience might prove costly—but less dangerous than a potential leftist uprising amid the chaos of a crumbling regime.

Twice before when Russia's free-market transition hung in the balance did the reformers go to the people. On April 25, 1993—a year and four months after prices had been freed, when monthly inflation was in double digits—a majority of voters expressed confidence in Yeltsin and approved the regime's socio-economic policies. And again on July 3, 1996—after three years of radical demilitarization and privatization—the Russians voted against a return to communism when they gave Yeltsin his victory over Gennady Zyuganov.

For a century and a half, Russia has been wrestling with what have come to be called the "accursed questions": *Kto vinovat?*, Who is to blame?, and *Chto delat'?*, What is to be done? Both in the posing and in the answering of these questions, there has been an unsettling division of labor among political intellectuals: While progressive, Westernized liberals, from Alexander Hertzen on, obsessively addressed the for-

mer inquiry, the radical Left, following Nikolai Chernyshevsky, busily tackled the latter. Much of the tragedy of this century is traceable to this division.

The successive governments over which Boris Yeltsin has presided have been the first from Russia's liberal tradition since the great reforms of Alexander II to break the old pattern of recriminations and advance a program of change. Seventy-five years of communism may yet prove too heavy a burden and interrupt the monumental experiment in capitalism and democracy that Yeltsin has led. But the next few weeks promise to be as fateful an occasion as any in Russian history for the reformers to prove that they know what is to be done. ♦

A Corrupt Union and the Mob

By Eugene H. Methvin

On July 24, 1996, in the historic mahogany-paneled hearing room where grim-faced congressmen once considered the impeachment of President Nixon, chairman Bill McCollum of the House Crime Subcommittee gaveled for order. "There will be no photographs permitted of this witness," the Florida Republican instructed. A hood over his head, 50-year-old Ronald M. Fino was led to the witness chair, a screen protecting him from spectators' view.

For 15 years, Fino was business manager of the Laborers' International Union of North America Local 210 in Buffalo, N.Y., and for eight years, one of the union's national officials. "During this time, I witnessed the gripping control of the union and its membership by La Cosa Nostra, and the defilement of its workers' dues and benefit funds," he testified. For all those years, Fino was also an undercover informant for the FBI. In more than 4,000 meetings with FBI agents, he detailed the mob's secret "shadow government" within the union, and how it reached into the Laborers' Washington headquarters just two blocks from the White House.

Fino's testimony struck at the heart of an illicit alliance in which a Mafia-dominated union provided multimillion-dollar campaign contributions and Justice Department racket-busters were shackled. The House subcommittee had confidential information that federal prosecutors had been thwarted in their plan to take over and clean up the union. But subcommittee Democrats blocked subpoenas to compel testimony from witnesses who might have revealed the fix. Instead they heaped ridicule on the witness. "Mr. Fino, do you believe space aliens are linked to the mob?" mocked New York's Charles Schumer.

It's not hard to grasp why Democratic congressmen wanted to undercut Fino's testimony. The Laborers, under president Arthur A. Coia, had managed to snuggle up embarrassingly closely to the Clinton administration. Even before Bill Clinton took office, the Laborers made a $100,000 loan to his inaugural committee. Over the next four years, the union and its political action committee gave various Democratic groups and candidates $4.8 million. Harold Ickes, Clinton's first-term deputy chief of staff, was a New York labor lawyer whose clients included the Laborers, its "education trust fund," and its New York-New Jersey political action committee.

Coia was a regular White House visitor. He was invited to a state dinner for the Japanese emperor, to join the president in greeting the pope in Denver, and to fly with Clinton on Air Force One to Rhode Island and Haiti. The House Crime Subcommittee documented more than 120 contacts in three years between Coia and the Clinton White House, including cash contributions, personal letters, and social-political invitations.

The most important, for Coia, was a meeting in the Oval Office with President Clinton and Ickes on October 21, 1994. The White House had just asked the FBI for a "name check" preparatory to naming Coia to a prestigious presidential commission. The FBI's

Eugene H. Methvin, a Washington-based Reader's Digest *contributing editor, was a member of the 1983-'86 President's Commission on Organized Crime and directed its investigation into labor-management racketeering.*

response was stark: "Coia is a criminal associate of the New England Patriarca organized crime family." Moreover, the Justice Department advised that its racket-busters were going to file a suit "within the next several weeks" that "will accuse Coia of being a puppet of the LCN [La Cosa Nostra]." Associate deputy attorney general David Margolis, an organized-crime specialist, repeatedly telephoned warnings to the White House about Coia.

Nonetheless, in the Oval Office President Clinton presented Coia with a Callaway "Divine Nine" golf club and listened to Coia's complaints about the "low-level negative response" his union was getting to applications for federal job-training grants. The president assigned Ickes to look after Coia's concerns. Altogether, in the four fiscal years 1994-1997 after Clinton took office, the Laborers received $50.5 million in federal grants. The day after the Oval Office meeting, Coia wrote a check for $50,000 as a personal "soft money" contribution to the Democratic National Committee. He also gave Clinton a hand-crafted golf club bearing the presidential seal.

This, then, was the union whose penetration by the mob Ronald Fino had come before McCollum's subcommittee, at great personal risk, to describe. Fino had joined the Laborers when he graduated from high school in Buffalo in 1964. His father, Joe Fino, was an ex-con and career mobster. Buffalo's new Mafia boss recognized in the intelligent and gregarious young Fino an excellent front man for the union. Fino was made a salaried agent for the 3,000-member Local 210, a mob fiefdom, and in 1974 was elected business manager. Increasingly disillusioned with the mob, Joe Fino persuaded his Buffalo gang bosses to "keep Ronnie clean" so he could ascend the union's national political ladder and position himself to bring greater power and riches to the Buffalo mob.

And so he did. As the trusted son of a widely-known mafioso, Fino rose rapidly in the Laborers. On trips to Washington, New York, and Chicago, he was tutored by national and regional officers about the union's shadow mob government. "Telephones have cancer," he was instructed. All important business was to be conducted face to face. Fino was given the identities of "our people" in the union, told which Mafia families controlled them, and warned which union officials to avoid.

The union's No. 2 man was Arthur E. Coia, father of the current president and boyhood chum and minion of New England Mafia boss Raymond L.S. Patriarca. Coia senior became Ron Fino's mentor. An FBI bug in Patriarca's Providence, R.I., headquarters overheard Coia meddling in everything from union elections to decisions on who got kickbacks on coffee machines. His operating philosophy, recorded on FBI tape, was succinct: "Hit them, break their legs to get things your way."

Coia served as chairman of the trustees of the Laborers' multimillion-dollar job-training fund. In 1980, he promoted Fino to the board, explaining that the fund was to be used to provide jobs for gangsters and associates. Coia began to take Fino along on nationwide travels to inspect training sites—and to deliver "messages" to the union's mob operatives.

Fino was no innocent. When he was a child, his mother had told him that his father was "away in the Army." But when they visited Daddy, he realized the "army base" was actually Attica state prison. And his Uncle Nick was there too. His father and uncle were both "made" mafiosi, and killers. In high school, he saw his father's picture plastered over the *Buffalo News* as a Mafia capo and acting boss.

But working as a Laborer while still a teenager, Fino developed a rapport with the union's rank-and-filers—construction workers and manual laborers, for the most part—and a disgust for the "wise guys" who ran the union and gambled, loansharked, sold drugs, and loafed on the job. Later, as Local 210's chief executive, he found that his every move to improve his members' lot was blocked by Mafia bosses. They compelled him to pack the union payroll with ex-cons, mobsters, and their relatives. He had to forge records to award pensions to "friends" who had not earned them. The adviser who invested Local 210's $83 million in pension and welfare funds was kicking back to the mob.

The FBI had noticed that Fino, though a "younger generation" mob associate, did not hang out with the gangsters. At a tennis club, a friendly agent cultivated him, and Fino began to complain about the Mafia stranglehold on his union. "Why don't you guys do something about these mob guys?" he asked. "We could," came the answer, "if people like you would help."

Fino agreed, provided he would never be identified or called to testify and nothing he reported would ever be used against his dad. After one pow-wow with a Mafia boss, he was able to tip the Bureau that the mob had corrupted an employee in the FBI's Cleveland office. He reported on Mafia Commission decisions allocating control of different locals among mob "families." He described plans to control and bilk federally funded union training programs.

In the mid-1980s, Fino's mentor suffered a stroke.

Arthur A. Coia, by now the union's New England regional manager, succeeded his father as the Laborers' No. 2 national officer. He and Fino began meeting dozens of times a year, and, like his father, the younger Coia said he had to "answer to" New England's mob boss, Raymond "Junior" Patriarca, who had succeeded his deceased father. Coia also reported to New York's Genovese gang.

The mob takeover of the union was so complete that Fino could no longer stomach it. In Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Valparaiso, Ind., Laborers officials who tried to lead rebellions were murdered. In Fino's Buffalo local, two members, both mafiosi, were murdered because the mob suspected them of informing for the FBI. Fino's own dad died. In November 1987, after reading a *Reader's Digest* article exposing his union's Mafia ties, Fino contacted the magazine and promised to provide inside information. He also agreed with his FBI handlers to wear a wire, recording his conversations with mobsters, and to testify publicly if necessary. The Fino tapes helped the Justice Department convict dozens of gangsters and seize control of a corrupt district council comprising 12 locals and almost 7,000 members. Prosecutors found that the mobsters had looted the council's seven trust funds of more than $50 million, leaving members and their widows with penurious pensions and without needed medical care.


Arthur A. Coia

Kevin Chadwick

In February 1993 the Laborers' president Angelo Fosco died. As he later admitted in sworn testimony, Arthur Coia had flown to Chicago and received the blessing of the Chicago mob for his elevation to succeed his father in the union's No. 2 job. According to a Justice Department memo urging his removal from office, Coia recognized "that by receiving mob approval to get his job, he too was a product of [mob] control. The [mob] has controlled the upper levels of the union so that graft and corruption can continue unabated at the local and district council level."

While Coia settled into the high life of a Laborers' president, driving a red Ferrari and enjoying a Florida retreat and an opulent Narragansett Bay home in Rhode Island, Fino continued his undercover work for the FBI. Then one day, before a high-level union meeting, Sam Cardinelli, a Mafia soldier, announced: "Ronnie, I gotta frisk you."

"Put your f— hands on me and I'll break 'em off," Fino answered.

"Out of respect for your father, I won't do it," Cardinelli responded—and Fino's concealed recorder captured the encounter.

Fearing that his cover had been blown, Fino went to Danny Domino, another Mafia soldier and a former Local 210 officer who owed him favors. "Something's wrong," Domino told him. "I don't know what, but I'll find out." Days later, the gangster sent word via a relative: "They know you've been cooperating with the Justice Department, and been doing it for years. There's a contract on you. Danny says get out of town fast."

Fino fled Buffalo and has been in hiding for the past nine years, much of it as a federally protected witness. His testimony has helped convict many union officials. Several pleaded guilty once they learned Fino had taped their conversations.

Despite the highly publicized convictions of Laborers officials in New York and elsewhere, Coia, like his father before him, did nothing to disrupt Mafia control. The Justice Department appealed to him repeatedly to place the corrupt New York council under trusteeship. Instead, Coia spent more than $400,000 in union funds hiring lawyers and investigators to dig for evidence to discredit Fino. They found little.

Arthur A. Coia today remains president of the Laborers' International Union of North America thanks to an unprecedented bargain he struck with the Justice Department. Two weeks after his 1994 Oval Office meeting with Clinton and Ickes, Justice Department racket-busters delivered to the union a draft racketeering complaint, relying heavily on Fino's testimony. Then strange things happened—events that are the subject of a House Judiciary Committee inves-

tigation. The Justice Department had a track record of winning 19 straight racketeering actions against crooked labor unions. Its suit against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, for instance, produced a court-ordered trusteeship in just nine months. Yet Justice made what many critics consider a sweetheart deal with Coia. The union was allowed to undertake its own house-cleaning, under Justice Department oversight. Coia hired as the union's internal prosecutor Robert A. Luskin, the criminal defense lawyer who arranged the unique compromise. To gather evidence, he hired a former FBI official, and to rule on any charges Luskin pressed, he hired a respected former U.S. attorney.

Union dissidents and federal investigators complain that the Justice Department made a bad bargain. The union's surrogate cleanup crew has no power to subpoena witnesses. Luskin reports to Coia instead of to a federal judge, and has kept rank-and-file Laborers largely in the dark. Moreover, the government cannot turn over FBI electronic surveillance or other critical evidence of mob penetration that would be available under a court-supervised trusteeship.

As Coia's hand-picked cleanup man, Luskin from the start seemed to drag his feet. More than a year elapsed before he prosecuted Fino's Local 210 in Buffalo, one of the country's most notorious mob-owned locals. He waited two-and-a-half years to seek a trusteeship over the equally corrupt Chicago district council, whose top officers—all of them gangsters or mob associates—oversaw 21 Laborers locals, 19,000 union members, and $1.5 billion in health and pension funds. Indeed, Luskin did not secure this trusteeship until February 9, 1998, two days before the original three-year term of the Justice Department's oversight agreement expired. Justice and the union agreed to a belated one-year extension.

Before the Laborers' 1996 national convention, Justice asked Northwestern University law professor Stephen B. Goldberg to research the union's delegate-selection rules. He found them rigged "to discourage or discriminate against dissidents." Not one member of Long Island's Mafia-dominated Local 66, for instance, dared nominate veteran rebel Barney Scanlon. So Scanlon, 70 years old and "not afraid to die," nominated himself, and in federally supervised secret balloting actually won with a two-thirds majority.

Scanlon and other reformers proved to be a minor irritant. Coia's convention steamroller increased members' dues 27 percent to $228 a year, and eliminated their $1,500 death benefit. Then the convention voted to raise Coia's salary nearly 20 percent, to $250,000 a year, and to provide him with a new home in Washington. "Unconscionable!" protested Barney Scanlon. "The guy who pulls on his boots in the morning has to work for ten years to equal the salary you just voted."

The convention reelected the executive board to new five-year terms. But, at Justice's insistence, rank-and-filers were asked in a referendum if they wanted to switch to direct election when present executive-board members' terms end in 2001. By a whopping 78 percent majority, 49,964 to 14,246, they chose to select their vice-presidents by direct one-member, one-vote elections.

Halfway through the three-year Justice-Laborers agreement, in July 1996, the House Crime Subcommittee summoned Paul Coffey, the Justice Department crime-fighter who had called Coia a Mafia puppet, to explain why Coia was still in control. "Is he a puppet today? We're not sure," Coffey testified. "He did what you don't normally see puppets do; he said, 'I can kick them out, too.' He's got no choice but to get rid of the mob. The minute he decides he won't do it, or he's slow in doing it, he goes, too."

Today, two more years have passed. Coffey has retired, and Coia still runs the Laborers. Ron Fino and other critics complain that Coia has survived for nearly four years by adopting a shrewd damage-control strategy, playing the public role of reformer while moving chiefly against his rivals in the "shadow government" and ignoring the mob overlords in his Northeast home base. Indeed, federal informants report that the Genovese family is now in complete control of the union.

Last November, when the three-year oversight agreement was about to expire and the Justice Department threatened to take over the union, Luskin moved finally to oust Coia. The charges: Coia "knowingly associated" with Mafia members and permitted them to influence the union, breaching his constitutional and fiduciary duties. Coia also "improperly accepted benefits" from a union service provider. The union's hearing officer, though, decreed that both the charges and hearing would be secret. Rank-and-filers are still waiting for his decision.

Meantime, the government's oversight agreement ends next January, and union members continue to suffer embezzlement, assaults, and other outrages:

¶ In Fresno, Calif., Local 294 member Linda Cannon protested unfair hiring, fought harassment, filed internal union charges, and ran for office. "We are battling money, corruption, and more money," she proclaimed. She came within 16 votes of winning. The union's hearing officer, a seasoned former federal racket-buster, found intimidation so extreme he ordered a new election. The incumbents then wrote each mem-

ber, demanding he state whether he wanted a new election and return the letter—signed. "The business manager can use these letters to add to his blacklist for jobs," declared one member. Cannon lost again.

¶ The Chicago mob shamelessly pirated the 2,000-member Local 225 in Desplaines, Ill. Its business manager for 10 years was a "made" mafioso, Joey Mazza, whom Luskin forced out in 1995. Replacing him was the mob underboss's nephew. He engaged in illegal bookmaking and charged the union for airfare and hotel stays with a girlfriend, a union employee. He and two other officers spent $33,000 for "meals" in just 10 months last year, at which point Luskin sought a trusteeship.

¶ In California, San Francisco-area district-council boss Archie Thomas draws a yearly salary of $150,000. He put his son Craig, a convicted rapist, on a training-center payroll, violating a federal law forbidding union employment of violent felons. Craig packed a .38 caliber pistol on the job. As he rummaged for change in the cafeteria, the gun fired. Police arrested him for being a felon in possession of a firearm and seized illegal drugs and chemicals for manufacturing methamphetamine at his home. He was convicted of two more felonies.

> THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT GAVE AWAY TOO MUCH. RACKETEERS RAPED AND PLUNDERED THE UNION MEMBERS WHILE THE BOARD SAT BY.

¶ On July 31, 1997, in Hartford, Conn., vice president Steve Manos of Local 230 dared to question expenses at an executive-board luncheon meeting. The business manager erupted in profanity and called in the hulking sergeant-at-arms, who slammed the 53-year-old bantamweight Manos against the wall, hustled him out of the restaurant, and hurled him onto the sidewalk. A few months later, Ron Nobili, the reform-minded business manager of Bridgeport Local 665, at a meeting of all 10 Connecticut business managers, objected to $35,000 paid for billboard advertising to an ad agency owned by another business manager's son. The other business manager walked slowly around the conference table, flexing his fist, and slugged Nobili. In both cases, executive-board members of the union were present and did nothing to stop or reprimand the violent officials. Under the 1959 Landrum-Griffin Act, these Laborers' officials have a duty to protect each member's "right to express at meetings his views upon any business properly before the meeting." Luskin has made no move to call the derelict board members to account.

¶ Alex Corns, business manager of Daly City, Calif., Local 36, was part of a Gideon's army of rebels determined to defy Coia's convention combine. He opposed the dues hike, proposed salary cuts for top officers, and demanded a full accounting for every dollar spent on the cleanup process. For daring to protest, Corns saw his local's jurisdiction over fire-proofing work raided by other Laborers locals in the San Francisco Bay district council, depriving his members of jobs. His protests to Coia were ignored. After Corns appealed to the Justice Department, Luskin found Local 36's jurisdictional claim "beyond dispute" and concluded the raids violated the union constitution. Only then did Coia order an end to the retaliation.

Says Corns: "The Justice Department gave away too much. They saddled us until 2001 with the same Executive Board dominated by members who sat there doing nothing while the racketeers raped and plundered our members. The full three years is up, Coia's still in office enjoying his mansions and sports cars, he's got a $50,000-a-year raise, and we lose benefits and pay higher dues. What kind of justice is that?"

The Laborers' struggle offers lessons for the entire nation. University of Pennsylvania law professor Clyde Summers, who helped draft the Landrum-Griffin Act's "union members' bill of rights," told Congress in May that four decades of experience have shown a need to provide more safeguards against labor racketeers: "To maintain an effective democratic process in the national unions, all national, intermediate and local officers should be by direct vote rather than through conventions or delegates." A direct vote of members should also be required to raise union dues, he urged. These reforms would help rank-and-filers "maintain adequate control" and make it more difficult to "stifle democracy and opposition groups."

Meantime, the Justice Department's effort to cleanse the Laborers Union of the brutal shadow government Ron Fino so courageously exposed drags on. A recent issue of *Hard Hat Construction Magazine* paid him well-deserved tribute: "Unlike most mob informants, Fino volunteered. He was not trying to turn in mob associates in exchange for a lighter prison sentence, and he was not trying to get rich. He tried to do the right thing, and he has paid the price. He lost his good [union] job, he lost his family, and the Buffalo Cosa Nostra put a price on his head. He lives on the run, while many of the mobsters he incriminated are still leading the plush life." ♦

The Lesson of Black Mountain

Liberal Education's Short-Lived Utopia

By R. V. Young

Black Mountain College, that utopian experiment in higher education and communal living, lasted only a little more than two decades: from 1933 to 1956. Yet even now, the college continues to fascinate, because so many of the persistent quandaries of academic life converged in that single North Carolina hothouse. The conflicts that currently bedevil our campuses—between democracy and anarchy, intellectual cultivation and vocational training, teaching and publication, the lecture hall and the seminar—all thickened the air at Black Mountain. Its founder, John Andrew Rice, was himself a congeries of contradictions. Together, Rice and Black Mountain exemplify the emptiness of liberal idealism when it is unsustained by realistic principles.

America's most radical college arose from the ashes of a rebellion on another campus—that of Rollins College, in Winter Park, Florida. As recounted in Katherine Chaddock Reynolds's new biography, Rice was already a veteran of fifteen stormy years of teaching when he arrived at Rollins in 1930. He had left the Webb School in Tennessee, the University of Nebraska, and the New Jersey College for Women (affiliated with Rutgers) under duress. He was a classroom teacher of magnetic charm, and he was a witty, engaging conversationalist; but he was also opinionated, outspoken, and unwilling to suffer fools gladly. He would typically attract a following of students who regarded him as a mentor and sage—not just another teacher—and he always had colleagues who valued his intelligence and pedagogical talent enough to overlook his abrasiveness and unreliability. Still, some students found him intimidating, even cruel, and fellow faculty members whose teaching he disdained were offended by his sarcasm.

A lecture at North Carolina's Black Mountain College

But for Rice, the perennial enemy was the administration. He detested any and all administrators, and every facet of administrative bureaucracy, reserving special scorn for the registrar, who, according to the influential model of German universities, measured education in "units," or hours behind a desk. Reynolds quotes a characteristically outrageous statement by Rice: "If I went into an American institution of higher education to reform it, the first thing I would do would be to shoot the registrar—shoot him; not fire him; shoot him. He's the most awful pest in the whole lot."

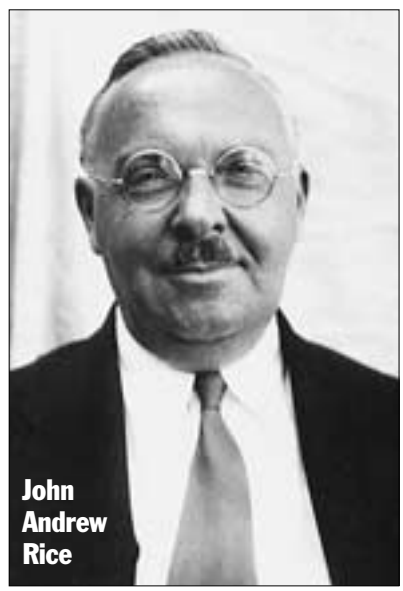
Rice was equally contemptuous of academic specialization, with its emphasis on narrowly defined research—another feature of American education that he attributed to German influence. Rice maintained that tenure, promotion, and other rewards ought to be distributed for performance in the classroom rather than for scholarship and publication. Yet his case against specialized academic research may be regarded as special pleading, since his own record of scholarship was negligible. Not that he wanted for educational opportunity. Rice studied Latin, Greek, German, English, and mathematics at the Webb School; he finished a B.A. at Tulane in three

R. V. Young is professor and director of graduate studies in the English department of North Carolina State University.

years and then went as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford, where he earned first-class honors in jurisprudence. By the time he was hired at Rollins, he had completed everything but the dissertation for a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Chicago and had spent a year in England on a Guggenheim Fellowship, researching a book on Swift. But neither the dissertation nor the Swift manuscript was ever completed. When Rice finally carried a book to completion—after he had left academic life—it was a series of autobiographical reflections, *I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1942.

No doubt, many students found in Rice's Socratic seminars an intellectual experience akin to revelation. On the other hand, when he was dismissed from Rollins College, the administration was able to quote students who had complained that his classes in Greek were devoted to wide-ranging discussions and personal counseling that had nothing to do with learning the language. A Black Mountain student would later say, "All his classes were the same. . . . They were all Rice. He taught Rice. . . . I learned one phrase in Greek the first year I took the language course. I never did learn the Greek alphabet." Reynolds writes that "after the first few years that Black Mountain College was operational, any pretense of a Greek language course was dropped." The question Rice embodies is never-ending in higher education: Is great teaching a matter of raising interesting questions and conveying a charismatic personality, or are there disciplinary skills and subject matter that are more important than the individual professor?

Rice ran afoul of the Rollins administration after only three years. Hamilton Holt, the college's president, was in many ways a prototype for today's academic administrators. He moved to Rollins straight from a successful career as a magazine editor and publisher. He had a knack for fund-raising, an abiding faith in public relations and slogans, and a near-total ignorance of scholarship and the life of the mind. John Dewey and progressive education were in the air in the 1920s and '30s, and Holt determined to put Rollins on the map and ensure its financial stability by making it a center of experimentation. He sought to discourage lecturing by invoking the "conference plan" of classes, which involved group discussions and exercises, individual study, and student-teacher huddles, all within a two-hour period. And he embraced the familiar panacea of "interdisciplinary" learning, which meant the hiring of a "Professor of Books," a "Professor of Leisure," and the like. Reynolds informs us that Holt "liked to mention his innovations as an 'adventure in education' and to assert that Rollins had 'put Socrates on the eight-hour day.'"


John Andrew Rice

When he accepted the job at Rollins, Rice believed that Holt was serious about the sort of reform that would turn conventional classes into unstructured, free-wheeling discussions, putting the emphasis on a professor's gift for personal interaction with his students. According to Reynolds, Holt offered Rice the position with the comment, "Well, I haven't got a single liberal on my faculty. Maybe I'd better have you." By the spring of 1933, both parties, not surprisingly, had become disillusioned. Holt was increasingly annoyed at Rice's widely reported sarcasm about his fellow teachers and some of the president's pet projects (e.g., a new chapel). More important, Rice had been an influential member of committees that challenged Holt on matters of faculty salaries, the place of fraternities on campus, and curriculum. In Holt's view, the president was the absolute master of the college, faculty members were employees like any others, and the purpose of faculty committees was to carry out the president's policies. When Rice emerged as an acerbic and divisive figure, Holt demanded his resignation.

Rice, however, was not without support within the Rollins community, nor was he without influence outside it. He would not leave without a fight. A large number of students were on his side, along with a significant portion of the faculty—many of whom were not fond of Rice personally, but who regarded Holt's actions as high-handed. Moreover, Rice's brother-in-law, Frank Aydelotte, was a well known and highly respected educator, the president of Swarthmore College. With Aydelotte's help, Rice induced the American Association of University Professors to investigate what Holt had done, and the drama that followed became one of the most celebrated academic-freedom cases of the century.

Holt and Rollins were rightly censured. The mass of accusations leveled against Rice were trivial or easily refuted, and their obvious frivolity and maliciousness succeeded only in diluting what could have been a serious consideration of the teacher's problematic relationships with his colleagues and students. But the obstinate Holt was undeterred, dismissing not only Rice but almost everyone who had publicly defended

him. Faculty members fired over the Rice affair and students who left Rollins in protest formed the core of Black Mountain College, which opened in the fall of 1933.

The heart of the Black Mountain experiment was its mode of governance. It was to have neither a board of trustees nor a president. Instead, the entire faculty would elect from among themselves a board of fellows, which in turn would choose a rector for the daily running of the college. Eventually, students too were included in the board's deliberations, and they were also allowed to sit in on general faculty meetings. Black Mountain, thus, was intended to be a community rather than an institution, run entirely by those who lived and worked together. (The subtitle of Martin Duberman's 1972 book on Black Mountain is significant: *An Exploration in Community*, not *An Experiment in Higher Education*.) The college was, in short, secular liberalism's version of a religious or monastic community. But monasteries depend for harmony and unity on a shared faith that shapes every aspect of life. At Black Mountain, there was no clear set of shared convictions about education or anything else, so that the tiny community had precious little to give it focus in the face of the tensions that inevitably emerge from a group of strong-willed individuals.

With his classical training, Rice maintained to some extent the traditional conception of a liberal education. When he called the goal of Black Mountain College "education for democracy," he was recognizing the need for a citizenry widely educated in the virtues of self-control, prudence, and thoughtfulness. Yet the college's laissez-faire approach to curriculum was a portent of the chaos that now besets us. Rice's neglect of Greek in courses that were, ostensibly, in Greek is telling. As a result of the rebellion against rote memorization, today's students are encouraged to express their opinions and speculate broadly before they have attained the knowledge to make their personal views worthwhile to anyone, including themselves.

All photos Louisiana State University Press

Josef Albers teaches a class on color in 1944.

Rice's reluctance to engage in the gritty, wearisome work of teaching a classical language might have been an individual failure. But more significant was the general Black Mountain policy of allowing faculty to teach whatever they wished and students to construct their own curriculum by shopping around in various classes until they found something that engaged and pleased them. The tacit message of this policy was that no subject or body of knowledge is more important than any other, that there is no particular virtue in the lengthy training and experience required by an academic discipline, and that education is more a matter of heeding one's whim than of being steeped in the intellectual and moral traditions of one's civilization. In this respect, Black Mountain College anticipated the extreme individualism and preoccupation with "diversity" that are so much part of the current scene.

Katherine Chaddock Reynolds
Visions and Vanities
John Andrew Rice of Black Mountain College
Louisiana State Univ. Press, 288 pp., $35

At the same time, Black Mountain was obsessed with communal living, so much so that a stifling collectivism was encouraged. Faculty members with small children lived in nearby cottages, but most teachers lived along with the students in the same large building that also served for classrooms and administrative offices. Faculty and students took almost all of their meals together, as education was supposed to take place continually. The college evaluated both faculty and students on their "contribution to the community" as much as on their academic performance. It is not at all difficult to see in this atmosphere the forerunner of the academic "communitarianism" that now dominates higher education, trumpeting diversity and individual freedom while imposing speech codes and political correctness.

One of Rice's greatest achievements at Black Mountain was considered to be his luring of the painter Josef Albers and his wife Anni to the campus. Yet the role the couple played illustrates some of the inherent contradictions of the enterprise. Albers was teaching at the Bauhaus when the Nazis closed it down in 1933, and he shared the austere, functionalist view of Walter Gropius. Although he knew hardly any English on his arrival, Albers soon became a dominant figure at Black Mountain, and his wife established a rather prominent weaving program there. Rice admired Josef Albers's gifts as a teacher, but was alarmed by his complete indifference to the art of the past and his neglect of artistic tradition. The severe practicality that Albers brought with him from the Bauhaus tended to diminish any real distinction between the fine arts and handicrafts, with Anni Albers embodying the equality of the loom with the easel. Reynolds observes that Albers and Rice both "placed a much higher premium on process than product," and in the absence of any definite criteria for educational content, conflicts degenerated into matters of individual style and personality, not of substance.

Finally, in 1940, Rice was forced out—not only of his position as rector, but of the college itself. The precipitating cause of his resignation was an affair he had engaged in with a student, but he had also accumulated years of bad blood with his colleagues and students. The faculty, Albers among them, became increasingly impatient with what they perceived as Rice's irresponsibility and indolence in handling his classes and administrative duties, and they tired of his unwarranted contempt for other residents of Black Mountain.

Yet the history of the college after Rice's departure demonstrates that strife was endemic to Black Mountain, its controversial founder quite aside. Martin Duberman's book recounts endless turmoil among the faculty during the college's final, post-Rice decade and a half. Inevitably, powerful personalities clashed in the absence of a curriculum with actual content. The schism between supporters of Eric Bentley, the historian-turned-drama critic, and those of Erwin Straus, the phenomenological psychologist and philosopher, is a case in point. Straus was an older man and an old-fashioned liberal, while Bentley was a young radical with Marxist leanings who openly praised the Soviet Union during World War II. Straus was a man of stiff, Teutonic aloofness, while the rakish Bentley admitted to sleeping with many of his students. And Black Mountain lacked a sufficient ethical principle at its center to impose order on these men and make it possible for them to work together in a common enterprise.

As for Katherine Reynolds's book, there is little to say. She has done a competent, workmanlike job, telling us as much about John Andrew Rice as anyone will wish to know. Though he is important in the history of higher education as the father of Black Mountain, he was not the most distinguished figure to work there: Its last rector, the poet Charles Olson, for example, was far more impressive. Yet Rice is the proper image for the Black Mountain experiment as a whole, in that both he and the institution failed to live up to reasonable expectations for them.

In its twenty-three years, Black Mountain College attracted a remarkable array of innovative and influential thinkers, artists, and writers, only to collapse in disorder. Unfortunately, the legacy of Black Mountain lives on in the nation's colleges and universities, both public and private. Protected by their size, prestige, and money, contemporary institutions can get away with the follies that caused small, poorly funded Black Mountain to crumble. University faculties forsake the scholarship of traditional disciplines to pursue their personal agendas, unconstrained by a coherent liberal-arts curriculum. Students, for the most part, follow their own interests, which, when not a matter of sheer educational faddishness, usually lead them to seek degrees that promise high-paying jobs.

Thus, liberal education gives way to an education in vulgar liberalism, which in turn is replaced by glorified vocational training. And this is not the sort of education that any serious country should prize. ♦

BCA

VIETNAM RECORD

How We Lost the War

By Andrew J. Bacevich

Jeffrey Record is a prolific defense analyst who served with the State Department in Vietnam. In his new study, *The Wrong War*, he ascribes the defeat of the United States in the Vietnam war to arrogance, ethnocentrism, a disregard for history, and policies that were contradictory to the point of incoherence.

And yet, Record has packaged that argument in a book that is itself strident in tone, heedless of culture, derelict in its use of history, and laced with contradictions. Perhaps the most curious thing about *The Wrong War* is the way in which it is not just an explanation of America's defeat in

Andrew J. Bacevich is a professor of international relations at Boston University.

Vietnam, but a compelling example of the attitudes that Record himself declares led to that defeat.

Record begins with a characteristically breezy assertion: The United States routinely investigates such disasters as plane crashes and presidential assassinations, but "there has been no such inquiry into the cause of America's failure in Vietnam." With *The Wrong War*, he aims to correct that ostensible deficiency.

The result—based entirely on readily available sources published in English—makes four main points. The United States lost the war because it misunderstood the nature of the conflict, underestimated the tenacity of its adversary, overestimated its own stamina and military prowess, and allied itself with a client that was from the outset incapable of commanding the loyalty of its people. "To be sure," the author notes, "these judgments have been made before," as indeed they have, repeatedly, beginning twenty-five years ago with *The Pentagon Papers* and continuing with a flood of histories, memoirs, conferences, and documentaries ever since.

To support his thesis, the author brings to bear an arsenal of opinion, with much the same fervor as General William Westmoreland tried to use American firepower to bludgeon his adversary into submission. As with Westmoreland, zeal isn't always sufficient. Within the space of a single paragraph, Record declares that Americans "accorded little intrinsic importance to South Vietnam" and quotes David Halberstam in 1965 describing it as "one of five or six nations that is truly vital to U.S. interests." Even among the war's sternest critics, in other words, Vietnam's strategic insignificance was not obvious in the mid-1960s.

Record's confusions are many. Lyndon Johnson's reluctance to mobilize the reserves was a huge mistake, he declares, depriving the Pentagon of "a vast reservoir of mature and well-trained manpower." Yet elsewhere the author skewers Westmoreland for misusing the forces he already had. Given the American insistence on huge base camps, creature comforts, and a one-year tour of duty, few of those serving in the war zone, according to Record, were gainfully employed. If this is true, sending still more troops to Vietnam would have had little bearing on the actual conduct of the war, and the mobilization issue becomes a red herring.

Similarly, in describing the rationale for U.S. restraint in prosecuting the war, Record notes and immediately dismisses administration fears of possible intervention by China. Given that China in 1965 "was on the verge of starting its long march toward the disaster of the Great Cultural Revolution," it appears obvious to Record that "Beijing had every reason to avoid war with the United States."

Jeffrey Record
The Wrong War
Why We Lost in Vietnam
U.S. Naval Institute, 208 pp., $27.95

In short, a reprise of Korea was improbable. A chapter later he returns to the topic and reaches the same conclusion, but concocts a different explanation: China was unlikely to intervene not because it was convulsed by internal turmoil but "precisely because the United States refrained from actions . . . that could have threatened the integrity of North Vietnam's territory and regime." One page later, Record backs away from the issue altogether, conceding that "it is too easy, in retrospect, to argue, as I have in these pages, that a war with China over South Vietnam's fate was never in the cards."

Record does not disguise his low regard for the U.S. forces that fought the war. Obsessed with firepower and technology, "the American armed forces were military misfits in Indochina." Blissfully ignorant of Mao's theory of revolutionary war, they assumed that they could win in Vietnam, as they had won elsewhere, by waging a "capital-intensive brand of conventional warfare that placed a premium on material and technological superiority." Pacification, in the eyes of American officers, was for sissies, not real soldiers.

Elsewhere, however, Record concedes that both the U.S. Army special forces and Marines devised innovative and effective approaches to pacification. Indeed, the shift by Westmoreland's successor Creighton Abrams away from attrition to population protection "fatally undermined the communist base in the South, propelling Hanoi toward increasing reliance on conventional military and diplomatic means to achieve reunification." In short, Record credits the misfits after 1968 with forcing the North Vietnamese to fight on American terms.

The author is adamant in his judgment of those who fought for and governed South Vietnam: They were craven, cowardly, and corrupt. Apparently considering this view to be self-evident, he offers little documentation to support his claim, none at all from Vietnamese sources. Indeed, the bibliography contains only three books by Vietnamese authors. Although Record does not hesitate to delve into the collective psyche of the North Vietnamese, to do so he relies on the testimony of American journalists like Harrison Salisbury and radicals like Gabriel Kolko.

Excluding the Vietnamese allows Record to explain the war as "the product of bad decisions by well-intentioned though arrogant—and ignorant—individuals," all of them Americans. He hurls charges against President Johnson, General Westmoreland, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara (branded by Record as the American Albert Speer). And he arrives at the most comfortable of conclusions: Defeat was an aberra-

tion, attributable to the mistakes of a handful of bumbling officials. Having purged the perpetrators, having identified the personal foibles and the specific errors of judgment that led to failure, we can rest easy. Having "explained" Vietnam, Americans need not fear its recurrence.

Yet, however inadvertently, this book serves a useful purpose. Reducing the reasons for American failure in Vietnam to a handful of familiar clichés—all of them rendered in language suggesting that war is simple—*The Wrong War* reminds us that smugness lives on, gets published, and even attracts admiring blurbs. At a time when the United States is becoming increasingly casual in employing its military might, such cautionary reminders are to be welcomed. ♦

A Bend in the River

Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Modernity

By Clifford Orwin

Why mince words? The 1502 scheme concocted by Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli—a rare case of collaboration between geniuses of the first order—proved an utter fiasco.

Their plan was to divert the Arno River, depriving Pisa of water and thus compelling its surrender to the besieging Florentines. It ended up yielding a lot of mud, at great cost to Florence and to the careers of its planners. Leonardo left town, never to work there again, and Machiavelli was soon driven from politics to write the works that have immortalized him. And that was that: a footnote to history, interesting, yes, but primarily because this odd couple of bunglers bore such famous names.

Except that according to Roger D. Masters, the recently retired Nelson A. Rockefeller professor of Government at Dartmouth, there was a lot more to it. Not satisfied with a distinguished career as an historian of political philosophy, Masters has now embarked on a new career as a popular historian. Having recently published a scholarly work on the intellectual relation between Leonardo and Machiavelli, he turns in *Fortune Is a River* to their one great joint practical endeavor. Bringing to bear his impressive command of both science and politics, he argues that the failure at Pisa is of great significance. Not only did the diversion scheme aim far beyond the intended immediate consequences, but it stands as a prototype for the whole modern scientific and political project.

Roger D. Masters
Fortune Is a River
Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli's Magnificent Dream to Change the Course of Florentine History
Free Press, 288 pp., $24

Machiavelli was second chancellor at the time, largely responsible for the Florentine Republic's foreign policy and diplomacy, while Leonardo was a hired engineer. They had collaborated on several military-engineering projects, and the stalemate at Pisa commanded their urgent attention. The Arno is also the river of Florence, and Pisa stands on it between Florence and the sea—which enabled her to impede the larger city's commerce. For centuries the policy of Florence had been to control Pisa, and the goal not only of Pisa but of all the political rivals of Florence had been to maintain Pisan independence.

In 1494 Pisa had successfully revolted, contributing to the collapse of the Medici regime in Florence and its replacement by the republic in which Machiavelli eventually emerged as a leading figure. In 1502, after eight years of efforts to recapture the city, the Florentines were willing to try anything, even so doubtful a scheme as Leonardo's. Protected by a thousand men at arms and supervised by a supposed expert on hydraulics, a legion of Florentine workmen was to dig, dig, dig, until the Arno flowed away from Pisa and with it the town's hopes of freedom.

Contending that the scheme was sound but beyond the capacities of those to whom it was entrusted, Masters may be right. But the margin for error was thin, and the plan impinged dangerously on the limits not only of Renaissance engineering but of the basic physics of the era. (Reliable calculations of the effect of the shape of a channel on the rate of water flow through it depend on Bernouilli's Principle, anticipated by Leonardo in one of his famous doodlings but not formulated with certainty until the eighteenth century.) In retrospect the chances of success seem slight.

It could be argued, of course, that Florence had nothing to lose but her ducats, since conventional methods of warfare had proved unavailing. In any case, Masters has bigger fish to fry—as did, he contends, Machiavelli and Leonardo. "Had the diversion at Pisa succeeded, it was hoped to go ahead with Leonardo's larger scheme of moving the Arno into a canal through Prato and under Mount Serravalle, transforming the economic basis of Florentine power." Leonardo's goal was to reroute the

Clifford Orwin is professor of political science at the University of Toronto.

Arno to make it navigable all the way to the sea—thus turning Florence into a port. Pisa would be bypassed, and the trade that was the lifeblood of Florence would no longer be hostage to middlemen. At the same time, malarial marshes would be drained and massive irrigation would increase the agricultural productivity of Tuscany. The balance of power in Europe would shift.

America figured in this scheme, Masters decides, because the enterprising Florentines had not been idly strumming their lutes while the Spanish and Portuguese ventured westward. Amerigo Vespucci was a Florentine, and he not only invested in one of Columbus's voyages but conducted two of his own to Brazil. Vespucci was the first to demonstrate by means of longitudinal observations that what had been discovered was America (Columbus would insist until his dying day that he had succeeded in reaching Asia), and it was Vespucci who got out the word of a vast new continent of boundless potential.

Vespucci's letters were published in Florence around 1503, and his kinsmen were close collaborators of Machiavelli in the chancery. Masters reasons that this must have lent further impetus to the scheme to divert the Arno. Only as an independent sea port could Florence hope for her fair share of the riches of America.

Like much else in the book, this remains conjectural. But also like much else in it, *se non è vero, è ben trovato*: "If it's not true, it's well concocted." The two men might well have had America in mind along with the other advantages of the plan. If so, however, this would only have deepened their eventual frustration, as the failure of the Pisan gambit doomed the plan in its entirety.

Masters doesn't comment on the ultimate feasibility of this comprehensive scheme, which involved nothing less than the human redesign of the landscape of Tuscany. He does argue that Leonardo and

Free Press / Biblioteca Reale, Turin

Leonardo da Vinci's Self-Portrait

Machiavelli drew very different lessons from its failure. Leonardo concluded that he needed a more reliable patron than a flighty and fiscally challenged republic (he was eventually to climb into the pocket of the king of France), while Machiavelli looked to the political remedy of recruiting a citizen militia.

Like any good popular historian, Masters avoids presuming too much

Free Press / Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

Machiavelli, in a portrait by Santi di Tito

knowledge on the part of the reader. Introducing the reader to the Italian Renaissance, he paints the backdrop of his tale as carefully and lovingly as the action. *Fortune Is a River* eschews the techniques of historical novels like Dmitry Merezhkovsky's *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci*, as it does the realm of historical psychoanalysis like Sigmund Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci: A Psychosexual Study of an Infantile Reminiscence*. While he cannot help but speculate about the motives of his protagonists, Masters makes no attempt at fully developing their characters. He gives only as much background and conjecture as he needs to tell a coherent story.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to this approach. The reader learns much about what both Leonardo and Machiavelli did, but little about who they were. Despite the inclusion of enough ribald letters to establish that Machiavelli wrote ribald letters, the reader who is seeking for the man behind the finely crafted mask will be disappointed. Of the layers upon layers of Machiavelli's mind, only the topmost were visible in his politicking and fornication.

Of Leonardo, there is not even locker-room banter to adduce. Where others have followed Freud in looking to his art for glimpses into his character, Masters has little to say apart from noting the novelty of the art's methods and its tremendous impact upon the artist's contemporaries. He is clearly more at home with the notebooks, but while these provide dazzling proof of the fertility of Leonardo's mind, they reveal little of the temper of his soul. If the paintings do give any insight, that soul was not an endearing one. Undisputed masterpieces of technique and innovation, they emit an enigmatic coldness. Leonardo appears to have approached his art primarily in a spirit of experimentation: Even in his art, the scientist prevailed.

For Masters the ultimate significance of the Arno scheme is that it was the first instance of the fundamentally modern stance toward the world of which he holds Leonardo and Machiavelli to be co-founders. He contends that Leonardo pioneered the extension of human power in natural science as Machiavelli did in political science, and that Francis Bacon's project of the conquest of nature for the relief of man's estate represented a synthesis of the two. So understood, their failures during their lifetimes were pregnant with their posthumous triumphs.

We have all read bad biographies of great human beings written by mediocre ones, but Masters rises above mediocrity not least in respecting the impenetrable privacy of greatness. He offers an intriguing tale of grand hopes and bitter disappointments. If the greatness of the men themselves remains elusive, we still have their works to which we can turn. ♦

Down to the Sea in Ships

The Sailing of the Ancient Jews

By Laurance Wieder

Aside from the stories of Noah and Jonah, two chapters of Ezekiel, and a handful of passages in the Psalms and Job, sailors receive very little notice in the Old Testament. But in *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times*, Raphael Patai contends that sea travel was no rarity for the Children of Israel. Rather, once they gained access to the coast, the Hebrews "learned to use the sea as a path to other lands in a manner no different from that of other circum-Mediterranean cultures."

Raphael Patai
The Children of Noah
Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times
Princeton Univ. Press, 224 pp., $24.95

Raphael Patai, who died in 1996, was an anthropologist, a Talmudic scholar, and an ordained rabbi who wrote more than thirty books—large, definitive studies with such titles as *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, *The Kingdom of Jordan*, *The Messiah Texts*, and *The Jewish Alchemists*. In *Gates to the Old City* he compiled a major compendium of Jewish legends, while his *Hebrew Goddess*, a scholarly investigation of the persistence of the mother goddess in Talmudic and cabalistic guises, informed Robert Graves's more widely known study, *The White Goddess*. (Graves and Patai subsequently collaborated on a book about Hebrew myths.)

Unlike much scholarship, Raphael Patai's books are modest, at least in demeanor, putting the material of their subject ahead of ideas about that material. Patai's method of asking how things were actually done is thoroughly Talmudic, but his technique of seeking answers from outside Israel is not so usual. In his chapter on boatbuilding in *The Children of Noah*, for example, he remarks that the practice of shading the cockpit of a vessel with a wattle canopy survives to this day in southeast Asia.

Patai's work always turns on the idea that Jews—the People Apart—never succeeded in living entirely apart. Israel's laws, rituals, kinship systems, and trade practices are not unrelated to those of surrounding nations.

Rejecting the incomplete historical picture of ancient Jews as a landlocked people, *The Children of Noah* assembles data from a wide variety of Near Eastern, Jewish, and Hellenic sources. In the ancient Babylonian epic *Gilgamesh*, for example, the god Ea gives Utnapishtim directions to build a boat in the shape of a huge cube, 120 cubits—at approximately a foot and a half to the cubit—in each direction. In Chapter Six of Genesis, Noah also receives instruction from the divine architect:

> Make thee an Ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the Ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the Ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the Ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the Ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

Scripture readers have always wondered what the Ark actually looked like. The 1560 Geneva Bible included a line engraving of Noah's flood, complete with rain pouring from the clouds and the rising sea filled with the supplicating arms of the drowning. The engraving shows the Ark itself as a three-story rectangle—more bargelike than the great Babylonian cube and not so shipshape as the Ark shown in the immensely popular 1942 children's version, *Picture Stories from the Bible*, where it looks like a double-ended dory with a deal cabin plonked on deck.

Patai reasons that the ratio between height, length, and width of Noah's Ark corresponds to ancient war galleys. He reproduces pictures of a Roman galley from a relief in the Vatican, a sailing ship on a

A poet living in Patchogue, New York, Laurance Wieder is co-founder of Chapbooks for Learning.

Art Resource

Jonah and the Whale in an early medieval manuscript

Hebrew seal from around the seventh century, a sketch of a ship from catacombs near Haifa, and a sketch of a ship from a city southwest of Jerusalem in the third century. While admitting that the dimensions of the biblical Ark—450 feet long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high—may have been exaggerated in order to be equal to its task of transporting all those animals, Patai notes that Utnapishtim's ark was reported by Berosus, a Babylonian historian, to be a hundred yards long and four hundred yards wide.

It's not everyone who can spend a lifetime with the kinds of questions Patai asks. What is gopher wood?—Lebanese cedar, he tells us. Pitch?—Bitumen. What was the window (*tzohar*) in the Ark? (A question that baffled the rabbis, who thought it might be an illuminating pearl hung in the Ark.) What about the animals' manure? Accommodations? Navigation?

But almost everyone will find fascinating the answers Patai provides. Noah's dove, sent three times to find dry land after the rain stopped, does the work assigned to a dove, a swallow, and a raven in *Gilgamesh*. Patai records that ancient Hindu merchants similarly used "shore-sighting birds" to locate land on overseas voyages. So did the sailors of first-century Ceylon, according to Pliny, because they were not able to steer by the stars.

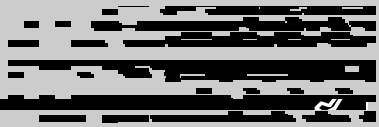
As in any work that is at heart a catalogue, this book affords most pleasure in the details. Patai finds information on ships' crews in Isaiah, Proverbs, and the New Testament's Acts of the Apostles. Maritime trade practices are adduced from verses in the Torah and the Book of Judges. Life on the high seas is depicted in a Talmudic commentary on First Kings. A slight hint of naval warfare appears in biblical sources, but Josephus gives a close account of the catastrophic encounter between the Jewish fleet and Vespasian's navy.

A chapter on laws of the sea and rivers details commercial arrangements as well as efforts to adapt Jewish ritual requirements to the sailor's life. Another chapter collects every mention of ships and the sea in the Old Testament and the Talmud—all the way down to such minor similes as, "Much Torah did I learn, and yet I did not subtract from [the learning of] my masters even as much as a dog licking from the sea," and "The beauty of the waves was deemed of a higher order than that of golden decorations."

In a chapter of sea legends and sailors' tales, Patai recalls the biblical stories of the sea resisting the creation, of Leviathan and other sea monsters. In the Talmud's account, the sea spares the righteous, gives and takes, threatens and punishes, converts idolaters, all in a spirit easily recognized from folk tales.

The penultimate chapter outlining Red Sea and Mediterranean ports serves as an antiquarian's Baedeker, locating and describing the places alluded to in Biblical, Hellenic, and Talmudic sources. Patai's last chapter takes up Lake Kinneret—also known as Lake Gennesareth, the Sea of Galilee, and the Sea of Tiberias. Israel's only major freshwater lake figures large in the Gospels. It is mentioned in Numbers and Deuteronomy, and is the site of three fortified cities named in Joshua: Hammath (called Emmaus by Josephus), Rakkath (identified with Tiberias or Sephoris), and Kinneret (in Roman times rebuilt as Gennesareth).

The chapter concludes with a photograph of a fishing boat from the beginning of the Christian era found in the mud of Lake Kinneret. The craft had been constructed of cedar planks joined by mortise and tenon, nailed to ribs made from naturally curved oak branches. As an emblem of Raphael Patai's last word on any subject, it fits: practical rather than theoretical, empirical rather than imperious, durable rather than glamorous—yet for all that a vessel with spirit, a freighter of mysteries. ♦



White House aide Sidney Blumenthal and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton were eager to take the offensive against Kenneth Starr. Blumenthal faxed in his suggestions from a European vacation.
—Washington Post, August 19, 1998

Hotel Cicciolina, Portofino

lunedì (Italian for Monday) il 17 agosto 1998

Dear Hillary & Bill,

Excellent speech! Love it! A few tweaks:

1. Where you call Kenneth Starr the "independent counsel" . . . Wouldn't it be more catchy—not to mention more honest!—to call him a "lowdown, fascist religious fanatic fool"? Could be a real applause line.

2. Where you say "I deeply regret that"—kill it! Too strong! Plays into their hands. Our attitude here should be the attitude of the American people: *Carpe diem!* Had we but world enough and time! Come live with me and be my love! More catchy—not to mention more open-minded!—would be to say, "I regret if what I did provoked priapic jealousy among certain prudish religious fanatics in the boondocks."
I mean, you know these people, right, Mr. President? You grew up among them. (No offense.)

3. In paragraph two, right before you say Monica Lewinsky, add the words "well-experienced." Let the American people get to know her as a person. I mean, she's been around the block a few times, huh?

4. "Now this matter is between me, the two people I love most, my wife and our daughter, and our God." A good stab, and I know you guys are rushed, but that's three. Cut "God."

5. "I had real and serious concerns about an independent counsel investigation that began with private business dealings 20 years ago . . ." I think you want to get the phrase "friggin' psychopath religious fanatic" in here somewhere, unless you think it would leave the wrong impression.

6. "This has gone on too long, cost too much, and hurt too many innocent people." Okay, I see what you're driving at here. But maybe it'd be more catchy—and, again, more honest!—if you replaced this with, "Up yours!"

Just a suggestion. Otherwise, great! A really stirring piece of writing.

Ciao bene!

Sid