

Liberty

August 1993

Vol. 6, No. 6

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Waco:
will the truth
ever come out?

The Ungreening of the Media

by Jane S. Shaw

Somalia: Operation No Hope

by Jesse Walker

How Do I Hate NPR? Let Me Count the Ways

by Glenn Garvin

Government *vs* Wildlife:

Lions, Elephants, and Tigers Bite the Dust

by John McCormack

Lies, Damn Lies, and AIDS Research

by Brian Doherty

Also: Clinton's newest assistant liar, the economics of karma,
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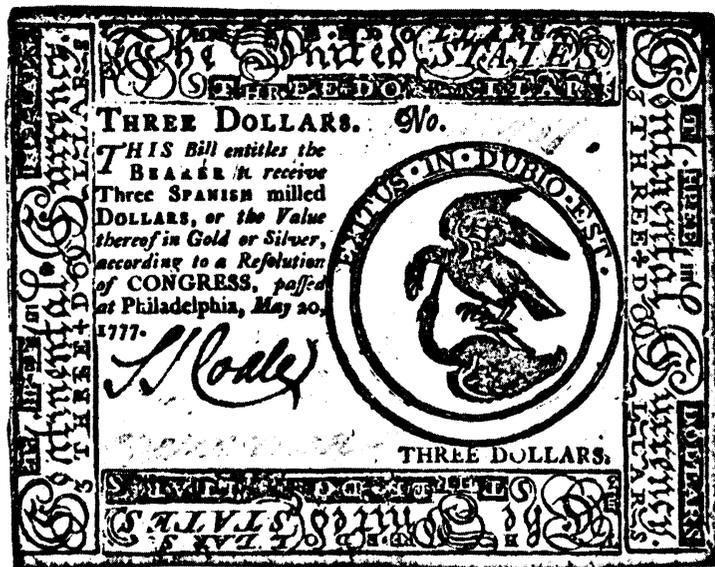
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August 1993

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Letters

The Voice of Experience

R.W. Bradford's essay on the Waco tragedy ("Mass Murder, American-Style," June 1993) is the only one I have read that identifies the government assault in Waco as *murder* — which it surely was.

Shortly after the Waco murders I drove to Missouri to attend a reunion of the U.S. Army Chapter of the "Chosin Few," who fought out of the Chinese trap at the Chosin Reservoir in November-December 1950. En route to Missouri I found few who condemned the FBI, with people often saying: "I feel badly about the children, but they were nuts, you know," as though death is a rational sentence for those who chose to march to the beat of a different drummer.

Only at the reunion (and among a few truck drivers encountered during the trip) did I find men who felt as I felt. Men who knew death and destruction, men who could recognize lawless killing when they see it. I am proud to have been with them, but deeply ashamed of my government. Bradford's essay and Cox's "Darkness at Noon" (June 1993) represent *Liberty* at its best.

Raymond Radke
Ferndale, Wash.

The Press Plays Ball at Waco

As an American, believing in freedom of the press, I'm shocked at the behavior of our news media, which regularly published information they knew to be false.

From the beginning we were told that the authorities feared mass suicide. Why? The group did not extol suicide. There were no suicide threats. Clearly, the story was generated by the authorities to mask their intent. Why did the press play along so willingly?

During the final siege, the news media gave us a clear video of tanks breaching the walls of the compound. I heard sounds of rifle fire and listened carefully

for automatic weapons. I didn't hear any. Surely, at this final moment, if they had so many automatic weapons, they might have used them.

The press reported that the Davidians believed Koresh to be God. The propagators of this story forgot that around this time of year, nineteen hundred and ninety-three years ago, a man was crucified when others alleged that He claimed to be God.

When Joseph Smith was hung and an early Mormon settlement burned, Brigham Young led a hardy band of young survivors west where they settled around the Great Salt Lake in an area so remote that no one would come to persecute them.

It seems to me that David Koresh must have had a similar idea when he settled on the plains outside Waco. I guess he didn't travel far enough.

Harry J. McArdle
Sound Beach, N.Y.

Fatal Intolerance

The characters of people and institutions are revealed most clearly when they are under stress. The Branch Davidian pogrom is so riveting because it unveiled so clearly the stupidity and the inhumanity of the present American regime.

Those people would be alive today if we did not have a President and Attorney General more concerned about demonstrating their good intentions than about gathering facts, drawing rational conclusions, and taking prudent actions.

The Davidians would be alive today if the fires of bigotry, hate, and intolerance had not been stoked so high — stoked not by Koresh, but by the anti-religious bigots of our secular cultural elite.

Thank you again for your courage and eloquence — and for reminding us just how far from the cultural mainstream we libertarians are, and just how far we have to go to create a society in which Waco-style holocausts will never happen again.

Greg Johnson
Athens, Ga.

Curricular Advice

When the great majority of brutal gay-bashings are no longer perpetrated by gangs of insecure males still in high school, then perhaps I'll agree with Stephen Cox ("Isn't Multiculturalism a

Good Thing?" April 1993) that schools needn't waste time teaching tolerance towards gays and lesbians.

For now, fundamentalist parents can choose to send their offspring to private Christian schools (as they have done to avoid "race mixing"), where the curriculum mimics the cartoon you ran to accompany Cox's article — equating gay and lesbian relationships with incest and Satanism.

In short, until you succeed in abolishing public education I'll continue to demand that schools, for which my tax dollars are taken, teach that gay people are not vermin.

Stephen Miller
New York, N.Y.

Give War a Chance

Once again, Robert Higgs fixates his harsh rhetoric on the Gulf War ("George Bush: RIP," June 1993). He asks, "Two years after the war, what can anyone say in defense of waging it?" The only beneficiaries, he concludes, were "oil-patch billionaires."

Apparently, Mr Higgs recognizes no distinction between the comparatively mild authoritarian reign of the Sabah family and the despotic rule of Saddam. That the Sabahs need little more than a police force to retain power, while Saddam uses almost unimaginable brutality to sustain his power, matters little to Higgs. That Kuwait has started no wars with its neighbors, while Saddam is directly responsible for approximately one million deaths is, I gather, insufficient reason for Higgs to conclude that an independent Kuwait is vastly freer than it would be under Saddam.

The answer to Higgs' question is clear. Syria and Palestine have concluded the U.S. just might have the will to broker a settlement with Israel and are sitting down to talk about it, an encouraging first step to peace; the repulsing of any tyrant's aggression has direct benefits (for the Kuwaiti people) and contributes something to the cause of freedom everywhere; and while the outcome is undecided, the Kurds are enjoying a modicum of autonomy and may yet gain their independence.

Lyndon Cramer
Ashland, Ore.

LP — The Place To Be

Jane Shaw's suggestion ("Just say 'no' to the Libertarian Party," June 1993) that libertarian political activists might better abandon the Libertarian Party and focus

continued on page 69

Letters Policy

We invite readers to comment on articles that have appeared in *Liberty*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct, typewritten letters are preferred. Please include your phone number so that we can verify your identity.

Reflections

Crumbling down — How delightful to see the Clinton administration crumbling before our eyes. The nation desperately needs another failed presidency. My only fear is that with about three and a half years to go, President Clinton may be trouncing too soon. —SR

Never having to say you're sorry — The Pax Americana ushered in by the fall of the U.S.S.R. is beginning to look a little peculiar: in June, American armed forces were bombing civilian populations on at least three different continents. Being the only superpower does have its advantages! —RWB

Put him out of our misery — As we go to press, the President's approval rating is around 36%, close to Jimmy Carter's 34% rating when he left office. For another perspective, Richard Nixon's had sunk to 24% when he resigned. Using this figure one can calculate the Presidential Resignation Index (PRI): the current approval rating minus 24%. I suggest that when the PRI reaches zero or below, the President ought to resign. Why should we be saddled with an ineffective Chief Executive for three and a half years just because of a Constitutional technicality? Let Al Gore have a shot at it. 12 points and counting. —JSR

Think of it as symbolism in action — Three months into the Clinton years, the Statue of Freedom has been removed from the capitol dome. No, it's not what you think; it just needs to be cleaned and refurbished. Capitol Police are maintaining a round-the-clock guard to protect Freedom while she sits on the Capitol lawn. Too bad they can't do the same thing *inside* the Capitol. —DB

Left and right: the prospects for barbecue — Recent events in Waco and Philadelphia have clarified the political spectrum immensely. Left-liberals are those who believe the government should immolate cults that espouse the amassing of weapons, deviant interpretations of the Bible, and religious apocalypse. Conservatives are those who believe the government should immolate cults that espouse vegetarianism, black separatism, and "organic hygiene." Liberals are considered advocates of big government because they prefer their combustion handled by federal authorities; conservatives, by contrast, are willing to leave the fiery business to the locals. —JW

David go liath — When David Gergen entered the Clinton White House a potential political problem arose over his membership in an all-male club, the Bohemian Grove. Not to worry, he resigned his membership in all clubs as per the "White House tradition." Funny thing, he didn't resign when

he worked for the Nixon, Ford or Reagan White Houses. In fact, the "tradition" began with Gergen. Nice to see he has settled in so quickly. —JSR

Accounting for waste — The General Accounting Office has issued a report saying that in the 1980s the Defense Department understated the cost of new weapons, overstated their capability, and exaggerated the Soviet threat. Imagine that. —SR

Justice not delayed — On May 24, Major General Harold Campbell, a two-star general at the Salsterberg Air Base in the Netherlands, described Clinton as "draft-dodging, gay-loving, pot-smoking, womanizing commander-in-chief." For this brazen display of public candor, Gen. Campbell was charged with violating Article 88 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The wheels of military justice grind exceedingly quickly and exceedingly coarsely. On June 18, Gen. Campbell was found guilty, reprimanded, fined, and mustered out of the service.

There are reasons for the swift resolution and harsh penalty, in comparison to ordinary criminal or civil courts. For one thing, the verbal opinions of officers in the military are not protected by the First Amendment, since the officers have voluntarily given up the right of free speech when they join the armed services. For another, Gen. Campbell could not make the sort of defense he'd have made if charged with slander — that is, he could not defend himself on the grounds that he had told the truth — because Article 88 makes "contemptuous words" toward the president an offense subject to court marshal, whether those words are true or not.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Uniform Code of Military Justice, here is what Article 88 says: "Any commissioned officer who uses contemptuous words against the president, vice president, congress, the Secretary of Defense, the secretary of a military department, the Secretary of Transportation or the governor or legislature of any state, territory, commonwealth or possession in which he is on duty or present shall be punished as a court martial may direct."

Sleep well, America. You are safe against the threat that a military officer might speak ill of the Secretary of Transportation. But the threat of unbridled insubordination remains: a General can utter unpleasant words about the Secretary of Health and Human Services with complete impunity. —RWB

Tit for tat — I don't comprehend the incredible fuss everyone is making over the alleged assassination attempt against former President Bush. Why exactly is it supposed to be permissible for George Bush to try to kill Saddam Hussein, but not for Saddam Hussein to try to kill George Bush? If any-

thing, we should be thanking Saddam for his courtesy; by waiting for Clinton to take office before making his move, he spared our nation the ignoble prospect of a Quayle administration. I sincerely hope that all the deranged loners of this nation will take this to heart, and hold off killing Clinton until the possibility of an Al Gore regime has similarly passed. —JW

Stirred, not shaken — PepsiCo came under assault: syringes were “found” in Pepsi Cola cans across the country, in cans packaged at diverse plants. The pattern was easy to determine; so easy, in fact, that even the government figured it out. Not long after the first news reports of the syringe “discoveries” aired, federal agents began arresting numerous “copycat” syringe-droppers for filing false charges.

Many people dismiss the severity of such crimes because of the size of the corporate victims. But this is one area where size truly doesn't matter. “Big Corporations” are made up of *people*: workers, management, stock-holders. Fraud against the one is fraud against the many. And, besides, when this type of fraud occurs, consumers also suffer. Consider the number of Pepsi drinkers who wasted precious cola because, in order to determine whether the cans contained syringes, they had *shaken the cans* before opening. —TWV

How to cut the deficit while increasing the deficit by \$3 billion per day —

The Senate finally enacted President Clinton's “Budget Deficit Reduction Act.” The measure will reduce budget deficits by \$500 billion during the next five years by increasing income taxes on the wealthy and taxes on gasoline, tobacco, and alcohol for everyone. The tax increases begin immediately, if not retroactively. As for spending cuts, they are scheduled to begin in earnest in 1997. (Unless Congress changes its mind sometime during the next four years.)

This Act comes only three years after the “Budget Deficit Reduction Act” of 1990. It also was designed to reduce the budget deficit by \$500 billion over the next five years by raising income taxes on the wealthy and increasing taxes on gasoline, tobacco and alcohol. Spending would be cut, with the first major reductions occurring several years into the plan.

In an action that got far less publicity than this year's “Budget Deficit Reduction Act,” Congress also passed a measure authorizing an increase in the national debt of \$270 billion. This was needed to cover the deficit for the next 90 days. Imagine how much the national debt would be going up if Congress hadn't passed both the 1990 and 1993 measures! —RWB

Lean back and enjoy it —

Writing in the *Washington Post*, Norman Lear defends Hillary Clinton's recent meandering thoughts about “becoming part of an ethically based spiritual community that links us to a higher purpose” and “redefining what it means to be a human being in the post-modern era.” “Let's face it,” Lear writes, “we are not a nation enjoying its material success.” Well, Lear may not be enjoying the centimillions he's made from TV sitcoms, but I'm

enjoying my paltry thousands. When wealthy people decide that material success isn't enough in life, why do they always start talking about reducing economic growth, which won't hurt them much but will leave the rest of us stuck at a material level they've long outgrown? —DB

Out of the closet, endlessly rocking — It is no surprise that numerous “moral” busybodies blustered and fulminated about the gay rights march in Washington on April 25. What is surprising is that some of my libertarian friends, while presumably not objecting to the notion of equality under the law regardless of sexual orientation, managed to express absolutely visceral disgust with the proceedings. They seemed to think that the march was somehow an affront to civilized society, irrespective of the justice of the demands being made.

Mind you, given the nature of such huge gatherings, what these demands were was uncertain. I suppose that many, perhaps most, of the people there thought they were marching in support of the usual leftist conflation of progressive causes, from remembering Oliver Tambo to supporting single-payer-national-health-care fascism. But certainly not all participants looked at it this way.

So what was I, neither leftist nor gay, doing there? And why did I find it both ennobling and liberating? *After all* — as some of my friends related with a shudder — *men were kissing and dry-humping each other in public, women were going topless whether men thought they were sexy or not, fetishism was publicly displayed, and many marchers showed disrespect toward people advocating their murder.* Shocking! Don't they realize that C-SPAN was there? How can they expect their political cause to be taken seriously if they misbehave and curse on C-SPAN?

Sometimes I think that it's hatred of homosexuals, not merely respect for the civilized verities, that motivate the screeds of my otherwise (classical) liberal companions. They even seem reminiscent of those right-wingers who might stand up for the rights of the Aryan Nation, Posse Comitatus, and the Branch Davidians, but sneer at any request by homosexuals for that same “live and let live” treatment.

I don't see why I should stop behaving the way I wish in public simply because someone is pointing a camera at me. I don't think that any busybody's desire not to see me kiss a loved one in public should dictate whether I can do so. And I don't see what's wrong with assembling in public to declare who you are sexually.

And hetero though I am, I was accepted and welcomed all weekend long by both friends and strangers, an experience I found both uplifting and symbolic of what freedom is all about. Yes, liberty is more than just buying and selling your justly earned property. And yes, liberty is more than just behaving yourself as long as you fit the definitions that everyone else around you has imposed.

All weekend I saw inspiring examples of citizens claiming public space for their own in such numbers that the state was powerless to stop them. The throngs of people filling D.C.'s Dupont Circle area became so thick

Liberty's Editors

Reflect

- CAA Chester Alan Arthur
- DB David Boaz
- RWB R.W. Bradford
- BD Brian Doherty
- DF David Friedman
- BK Bill Kauffman
- RK Richard Kostelanetz
- LEL Loren E. Lomasky
- SR Sheldon Richman
- JSR James S. Robbins
- JSS Jane S. Shaw
- SS Sandy Shaw
- ATS Aaron T. Steelman
- TWV Timothy Virkkala
- JW Jesse Walker

that enforcement of nudity and public drinking laws became hopeless. People on the subway spontaneously shouted, cheered, whooped, and clapped hands with strangers merely because they felt part of a community united by something. This something could have been anything — blue eyes, weight, admiration for actor Norman Fell — that made them all co-conspirators, all friends. The aura of spontaneous and self-chosen community elicited awe in this libertarian: I felt privileged to be part of this community. And I chose to be part of this community not because I'm not a social conservative, but because I love sex (most of the time) and love to shock (sometimes) and love watching people get together in charm, wit, and affirmation of the value and joy of their own lives (all the time).

And that's why, political message be damned, this event was worth celebrating. Because before politics there is self-chosen community, nudity, public displays of affection, and joy. No matter what specters haunt the gay community, no matter the emotional or biological dangers associated with gay lifestyles, gays freely choose how they live. In a civilized community there is no reason for imposing dangers on them, no call for hate, violence, and prejudice motivated by visceral and unreasoned aversion. The preservation of civilization depends far more on suppressing hate, violence and prejudice than on suppressing those *people* who choose to make love with members of their own sex. —BD

Akayev in '96! — Imagine a sanctuary in the mountains, a place without government regulations, a place without income taxes, and where your taxes from previous years are refunded. No, not Galt's Gulch — Kyrgyzstan! Since his election with 93.5% of the vote, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev has pursued aggressive free-market reforms. He dumped the inflationary Ruble to start his own currency, the Som, which he plans to back with gold by 1997. (It is currently kept afloat by IMF dollars.) He is also seeking to privatize industry, lower corporate tax rates, disband the armed forces, and push constitutional reform to weaken the central state. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen described this as "a bold and courageous reform program that should be a model for all states of the former Soviet Union." And not only there! Maybe Secretary Bentsen can pick up a few tips. —JSR

Choosy voters choose . . .

In January, I put a peanut butter jar next to my television. Since then, I have deposited a penny into that jar every time I have heard an apologist for Clinton's budget chicanery respond to criticism by saying, "Well, this is the same sort of thing Reagan and Bush did for twelve years."

The audacity of Clinton's apologists is astonishing. Clinton was elected on a platform of reducing the budget def-

icit and avoiding the old scams of the "twelve long years" of Reagan-Bush trickery. So now that they have the presidency they defend budget fraud on grounds that Reagan and Bush did it too?

It is also interesting that the same Democratic Senators and Representatives who reply to criticism of their chicanery by observing that Reagan and Bush did it too never mention that they had helped write the Reagan and Bush budgets, that they had convinced Bush to make his "historic compromise" on the budget in 1990, and that they themselves voted for the Reagan and Bush budgets.

Every time Clinton and his apologists put out this line, a thousand voters switch to the Republicans, who seem to have learned from their experience. And ten thousand voters switch to Ross Perot.

I haven't switched to any new brand of politics, but my peanut butter jar overflowed long ago, and the weight of pennies threatens to break my floor. —CAA

The progress of democracy — Seventy-two years ago, the winning presidential candidate refused to leave his home to campaign for office, limiting his activities to occasional meetings with reporters on his front porch. Today, the president is a guest on a call-in radio program in Waxahatchie, Texas, hoping to increase his personal popularity. —CAA

Hair today, gone tomorrow — It is hard to miss the Clintons' dramatic shifts in emphasis following the many political snafus of the new administration. But no one seems to have noticed the most striking: the Clintons' commitment to Interesting Hair has been completely abandoned. Evidence? They dropped the nomination to Chief Shyster for Procrustean Racism (or somesuch) of Lani Guinier, the woman with the most interesting hair in Washington, D.C. This troubles me, because I had expected the new Democratic administration to have one sure positive effect: a rise in aesthetic standards. And now even this hope is dashed. —TWV

Harding vs Clinton — Bill Clinton hasn't been around long enough for me to decide just how bad he is, but I'm afraid I'm already beginning to miss the Bush years — a disturbing sign. Thus far, Clinton's saving grace has

been that the mass death on his shoulders — the assault on the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas — is nowhere near as large as the Panamanian and Iraqi bloodbaths of his predecessor. If Clinton leads us into the Balkan quagmire, that last support for his relative good name will disappear like so



many campaign promises.

This would, of course, only continue a well-established political pattern that could be mathematically expressed as follows:

$$y_2 = y_1 + x$$

where y_2 represents the disgust I feel with whoever is currently president, y_1 everything wrong with the last chief executive, and x more disaffection than a mere variable can express. Jimmy Carter, by any objective standard a moralizing, economically ignorant disaster, started to look remarkably good once Ronald Reagan moved to Washington. Reagan, in turn, was made retrospectively palatable when George Herbert Walker Bush stepped to the plate. Will the trend continue?

The real problem, of course, is the presidency itself. I won't mince words: it's fundamentally odious. There is something about the office that corrupts even good men; even Thomas Jefferson, a hero of mine in his capacity as a private citizen, managed to become a statist during his eight years in power. Perhaps this is why I prefer lame executives like Ford and Carter to the likes of Bush, Reagan, Nixon, Johnson, and Roosevelt. Anyone who easily fits the role of Leader of the World's Greatest Superpower is creepy, period. These people exercise power with ease; they set up internment camps for Japanese-Americans, bomb Cambodian civilians, impose command economies with the flick of the wrist. By contrast, any ethical person saddled with so much power shifts about uneasily, unsure as to what to do or how. This makes for poor leadership, but then, it ain't *political* leadership that's gotten this civilization as far as it has, and I don't expect much better to come of politics anytime soon.

By this standard, the best president of this century was probably Warren G. Harding. Best-remembered today for the Teapot Dome Scandal — a relatively small blot next to the S&L debacle or Iran-Contra — Harding spent most of his time in office playing poker, getting laid, and ultimately, dying. His primary legislative program was to undo a few of the most awful legacies of his immediate predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, who between World War I, the Federal Reserve Act, the Income Tax, the Palmer red raids, the official introduction of racial discrimination into the federal bureaucracy, and a ton of cartelizing economic regulations was probably the worst president to slither through the Oval Office. He's the man to beat. Is Slick Willie up to the challenge? —JW

Jobs gridlock continues? — While the President was busy in April and May getting his hair cut, rolling over on Chinese trade sanctions, jogging, holding challenging meetings with children, shafting Lani Guinier, covering up Travelgate,

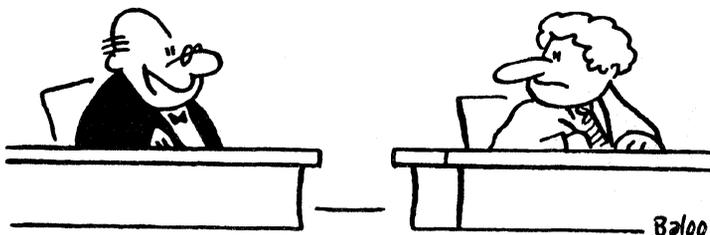
planning to raise taxes, getting confused about health care, dropping the Bosnian hot potato(e), and importing David Gerger for a political makeover, the private sector created 425,000 jobs. Not surprisingly, the President has taken credit for this. —JSR

Lani and Leoni — Lani Guinier, Bill Clinton's ex-nominee for assistant attorney general for civil rights, certainly has some screwball and pernicious ideas. She believes that all white people think alike and that all "authentic" blacks do too. She also thinks that racial minorities should be guaranteed not only proportional representation in any legislature, but also their "fair share" of legislation.

But let's be honest: This woman who drew the fire of conservatives and liberals alike (such as those at *The New Republic*) is onto something when she attacks standard democratic procedure. She writes, for instance, that majority rule is "illegitimate" because those who are "outvoted . . . don't count." That is absolutely correct. That was recognized 40 years ago by the brilliant libertarian legal theorist Bruno Leoni. In his lecture "Voting Versus the Market," Leoni attacked democrats for arguing that under majority rule every vote has equal weight. Leoni pointed out that democrats believe that majority rule is the best alternative to unanimity, which usually cannot be achieved. But, he wrote, that is like saying that 51 voters out of 100 are "politically equal" to 100 and that 49 are "politically equal" to zero. Thus, says Leoni, "we give much more 'weight' to each voter ranking on the side of the winning 51 than to each voter ranking on the side of the losing 49." Leoni was trying to show that the market is superior to majority rule, something Guinier presumably would not endorse. Her solution is supermajorities or concurrent majorities (in which a majority of a minority voting bloc would have to vote for legislation in order for it to pass). Leoni would reject both as phony remedies. He argued that supermajority rule would not change the principle of unequal weight that he had already elaborated; it would just change the numbers.

Leoni opposed voting because, unlike in the market, the losers always get something shoved down their throats. That's why Guinier takes the position she does: she wants blacks (at least "authentic" ones) to be able to shove things down the throats of whites, no doubt as restitution. Leoni, concluding that "no rule for decision making is really apt to give equal weights in the sense of equal possibilities to each and all the voters," wanted essentially to abolish legislation. Guinier doesn't want *equal* weight accorded to all, so that she would be unmoved by that reasoning. Were she a person of principle about minority rights, she would advocate freeing everyone from the tyranny of legislation, majorities and minorities alike. —SR

The wymmin vs the woman — This election cycle was supposed to be "The Year of the Woman." But it has turned out more weirdly androgynous than anyone could have imagined. During the campaign for the Senate seat vacated by Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen, Republican candidate Kay Bailey Hutchison came under a barrage of criticism. Hutchison, a strong supporter of abortion rights and state legislation to promote equal credit opportunities for women, was not attacked by conservative religious groups. No, she was the target of *feminists*. Gloria Steinem went so far as to call Hutchison "a female impersonator," while Cybill



"I don't especially like being a government employee, but underworked is better than underemployed."

Shepherd attacked her on the grounds that she "is no good for women and children." These attacks came even though Hutchison was opposed by, of all things, a man, Bob Krueger. Although Hutchison did win — by a landslide — it is instructive to note who had wanted her to fail. Apparently, "The Year of the Woman" was supposed to read "The Year of the Leftist Democratic Woman." —ATS

With friends like these . . . The Lani Guinier episode stands as another example of what it is worth to be a "Friend of Bill" — namely, nothing. The President has displayed a breathtaking willingness to chuck people overboard at the slightest hint of political risk, seemingly without realizing that the long-term consequences of this faithless behavior include alienating the voting public and shrinking his circle of political allies.

More importantly, the President showed his contempt for the American people by claiming not to have known that Lani Guinier had espoused radical views on the issues of race and the political process. He prevaricated in his usual legalistic way, by saying that he "hadn't read *all* of her articles"; but of course he need not have read *any* of them to know something was up. Setting aside for a moment that Mr Clinton had known Ms Guinier at law school; that they had crossed paths in Arkansas when she helped the NAACP sue then Governor Clinton over racially segregated schools; and that they had maintained social contact throughout. Even given what was printed in the popular press, how could Clinton not have known?

Guinier's general frame of mind was revealed in a quotation reported in *Business Week*, March 1, shortly before Janet Reno was confirmed as Attorney General. Referring to Justice Department reform, Guinier said that "the house-cleaning will have to take place with a pitchfork, not a broom." Perhaps Mr Clinton thought this was just exuberance, not to be taken literally.

The April 3 *National Journal* reported that a conservative group, the Institute for Justice, urged Clinton not to appoint Guinier, because it would mean "a return to the disastrous and divisive policies of racial quotas and forced busing."

Of course the President cannot be expected to listen to conservative groups who are likely to oppose his nominees in any case. But what about the *Washington Post*? The *Post* reported on April 13, 1993, that Guinier was edging out Washington lawyer Joe Sellers [an attorney with the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights] for the civil rights job at the Justice Department. Quoth the *Post*: "Some of Guinier's law review writings were said to be too controversial, but apparently not so."

The May 17 Connecticut *Law Tribune* had a lengthy review of Guinier's writings, including ver-

batim excerpts from her law review articles. In one she stated that "the Senate Judiciary Committee should begin evaluating federal judicial nominations with reference to specific goals for increasing non-white nominees." (I insert this in case anyone still thinks Guinier was not advocating racial quotas.)

By now Clinton may have known something of her outlook, and the May 17 *Political Hotline* reveals that he did. The President said he believed Guinier "will not use the Civil Rights division to implement her controversial theories . . . I think she has every intention of following the law of the land as Congress writes it." This was two weeks before the President claimed to have discovered that Guinier's "center" was not his own.

A few days later when ABC's Brit Hume noted that Ms Guinier had some "rather striking views about voting rights" and asked the President if he was familiar with them, Mr Clinton praised Guinier's experience in civil rights law, but added, "I expect the policy on civil rights laws to be made by Congress, and I expect the Justice Department to carry out that policy. . . . The president and attorney general will decide all matters of executive discretion." In other words, Guinier's policy input would be minimal. But why? When Hume persisted in asking if Mr Clinton knew of Guinier's opinions, the President turned away.

This represents only a small amount of evidence that President Clinton knew all along that Lani Guinier advocated controversial racial policies. If Ms Guinier would reveal the background to her nomination (when was she interviewed? By whom? What questions were asked? What documentation requested? etc.) we could reach a definitive description of the events. Until then, the Guinier episode stands as a case study in the Clinton Method: make a mistake; deny everything; throw someone to the wolves; claim ignorance. —JSR

Kids held hostage — The New York City school board elections illustrated several problems with a monopoly school system run through a more or less democratic process.

First, unlike monopoly schools run by undemocratic systems — as in communist countries but also some Western

countries such as France and Japan, where there's very little public control over the education ministries — activists can force their agendas on the schools, diverting them from a strict focus on education. This was classically the case in New York, where the ruling establishment's attempt to impose the multicultural, pro-gay "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum on all schools created fierce opposition, leading to the removal of Superintendent Joseph Fernandez. Emboldened by popular opposition to the Rainbow Curriculum, the Catholic Church teamed up with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition to try to take over the city's 32 community school boards. The cultural elite fought back, pulling together a coalition including the United Federation of



Teachers, key supporters of Mayor David Dinkins, People for the American Way, and gay activists. The two groups fought bitterly for the right to impose their own moral and cultural values on New York's one million schoolchildren. In the end, it was a draw. One report said that the religious right elected 51 of 87 endorsed candidates, while the cultural elite elected 50 of 84 candidates. Schoolchildren will continue to be pawns in a political struggle.

A second problem the campaign illustrated was the irrelevance of politics to most people. After a bitter and well-publicized campaign, including several front-page news stories, turnout increased from the normal 7 percent to 12.5 percent of the electorate. It seems hardly necessary to point out that letting parents choose the schools their children will attend would end this political warfare over who gets to propagandize a captive audience of impressionable children. —DB

Your mother wears combat boots — Willis R. Jones, an opponent of the Child Labor Amendment of the 1920s, insisted that "fathers and mothers are better prepared to pass judgment upon the needs and the welfare of their children than this Congress is, or than the Children's Bureau. I know not who the Children's Bureau is composed of: I have heard intimations that there are not many mothers connected with it."

Nice shot, Willis. The Children's Bureau's mission — to gather the nation's tykes unto the bosom of Mother Government — has been adopted and enormously expanded by the sprawling Department of Health and Human Services and big business-subsidized auxiliaries such as the Children's Defense Fund.

The years roll by, but the faces never really change. Little Justin and Tiffany are menaced by a new generation of child savers, led by co-President Hillary Rodham Clinton and HHS Secretary Donna Shalala. There are . . . well, not many mothers connected with it.

No, let us commit candor, the most heinous crime under our hate-thought statutes. Hillary has surrounded herself with the most fearsome crew of bull dykes this side of American Gladiators. The handful of procreative women in the Clinton orbit are mostly in the mold of the hapless Zoe Baird, the \$500,000 a year corporate shyster who cared so little for her

bundle of joy that she warehoused him with underpaid wetbacks.

Muckraker Ida Tarbell, *grand dame* Alice Hay Wadsworth, and other foes of female suffrage worried that women who engaged in — let's be decorous and call it "public service" — would lose their peculiarly feminine qualities. They were, in my view, silly to reject the franchise, but in other ways they were prescient. There is no discernible difference between the women who claw (or, in Hillary's case, sleep) their way into the Corridors of Power and their male counterparts.

The tender and humane — all right, nurturing — qualities associated with womanhood have manifested themselves only at the political fringe: I think of the heroic "little old ladies in tennis shoes" who constituted organizations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; or the black churchwomen of the Deep South who slew Jim Crow; or dissenters such as the late (American-trained) German Green Party celebrity Petra Kelly.

The only national lady politician we have who is worth a damn is Colorado Representative Pat Schroeder, irrepressible critic of the military-industrial complex. Many Beltway feminists dislike Schroeder because she is pleasant, reasonably attractive, and draws happy faces on her personal correspondence. She's a real person, quirky and idiosyncratic and — has this word been proscribed yet? — womanly.

The First Couple, by contrast, are the archetypes of the new unisex politics. Bill is a lying bastard and Hillary is an imperious bitch. You've come a long way, baby. Meet the new boss — same as the old boss. —BK

A modest proposal — President Clinton demanded that those who criticize his budget proposals come up with cuts of their own. Here are a few places to wield the cleaver. At the International Trade Commission, General Manufactures Division, Instruments and Precision Manufactures Branch, the government employs a full-time analyst to look into the volatile trade in "watches and clocks, dolls, toys, magic tricks and puzzles." In the Miscellaneous Manufactures Branch, another analyst keeps an eye on "arms and ammunition, games, sporting goods, fishing tackle, fairground amusements and traveling circuses." Either combine these two positions, or, for added savings, cut both and give the work to the person in charge of "typewriter ribbons, ink pads, date stamps, zippers, snap fasteners and buttons." That should obviate the need for the energy tax. —JSR

Realigned powers — Hardly a man is now alive who remembers that at the dawn of the Cold War it was liberals who launched a global crusade to contain and confront communism and conservatives, still under the sway of the Old Right, who opposed that idea as "globaloney." After the liberals' test case in Vietnam went so badly awry, most of them bailed out and spent the next two decades opposing U.S. intervention in the Third World (though they did not call for dismantling our worldwide network of alliances). Meanwhile, conservatives had been lured away from the Old Right by William F. Buckley Jr. and *National Review* to enlist in a globalist conservative campaign against

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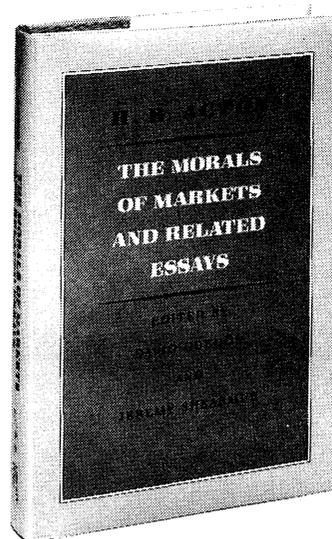
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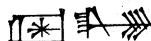
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communism. Conservatives charged that liberals weren't really for peace, they were just soft on communism.

Now there seems to be some evidence that the conservatives were right. Liberals were more skeptical than conservatives about Desert Storm, but they have been more eager than conservatives to send American forces to Somalia and Bosnia; witness such prime examples as New York *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis and the leftmost member of the U.S. Senate, Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.). Columnist Stephen Chapman writes that the difference between modern liberals and contemporary conservatives is that conservatives want to send U.S. troops anywhere American interests are at stake, while liberals want to send troops anywhere American interests are *not* at stake — and it turns out there are even more of the latter.

The debate over intervention in Bosnia shows liberals and conservatives reverting to type. Liberals see a problem and call for action by the U.S. government. Conservatives see a problem and point out that government action is likely to be both futile and counterproductive. If voters who supported peace candidates in the 1960s and 1970s were truly for peace and not just opposed to fighting communism, then we may be in for a major realignment of the peace movement in American politics. Could the Old Right make a comeback? —DB

So how do you explain Phil Donahue?

— In my view, today's emphasis on multiculturalism stems from a mistaken assumption that the advances of Western civilization (things like movable type, navigational devices, common law, and *Paradise Lost*) came about because Westerners were somehow "better" or "smarter" than those whose cultures didn't produce such things. This idea is so threatening to those who consider themselves as coming from non-Western cultures that it has led to bizarre constructions such as the insistence that Pharaonic Egypt was peopled primarily by black Africans, the idolization of American Indian cultures for their spirituality and sensitivity to nature, and denigration of Europeans for cruelty and discrimination against women (as if they were unique in these respects.)

If I read Hayek's *The Fatal Conceit* correctly, this assumption is completely wrong — backwards, really. Vasco da Gama and Mozart (to pick at random two dead white males who contributed to the advance of civilization) were smart, of course, and more talented than many of their peers. But they weren't necessarily smarter than their counterparts in other cultures. Rather, they didn't have counterparts, because they were products of the culture that evolved as a result of what Hayek calls the extended market order.

The extended order, which relies on prices and impersonal rules of conduct, freed people from having to depend for their livelihood on small groups with limited resources. Beginning with trade around the Mediterranean (Hayek guesses around 750 to 550 B.C.) people discovered and, over time, developed rules and customs that allowed them to deal with others without face-to-face contact or common goals. These relationships permitted division of labor, specialization, private property and expanding opportunities for invention and wealth. (Something similar went on in the Far East but, according to Hayek, the power of imperial China stifled it.)

Cultures that were not able to take part in an extended or-

der — perhaps simply because trade over long distances was too perilous to get the ball rolling — failed to develop the traditions, institutions, and wealth that led to greater productivity and leisure for reasoning, musical and literary development, and technical innovation.

All Americans (and most of the rest of the world's population) are products of the cultural evolution made possible by the extended order. But we cling to the idea that our ancestors created their culture. (If we take this one step further we hold the "fatal conceit": the mistaken idea that human intellect shaped the world and can improve it.) Thus, we have people who take inordinate pride in their ethnic ancestry because its achievements make them feel superior and we have people who feel a need to fabricate a more complex culture to keep themselves from feeling inferior.

According to Hayek, this is a big mistake. Geniuses didn't create the complex cultures; the complex cultures created the geniuses, and the complex cultures existed only as a result of the extended order. —JSS

Gang aft a-gley — Coercing people to reduce risky behavior: does it work? Two recent studies indicate that it doesn't. One study on the effect of mandatory motorcycle helmet-use laws reported that the lower rate of death due to head injury was countered by a higher crash rate, resulting in comparable overall death rates. In another report, the Highway Loss Data Institute (funded by the private Insurance Institute for Highway Safety) reported, based upon a comparison of 21 vehicles, that relative claim frequencies increased for 16 airbag-equipped vehicles (versus cars with no airbags, but with seat belts) and that for 18 of the cars, the relative collision (damage only) claim frequency increased relative to their performance when seat belt equipped. One possible reason for this is that people have their own ideas of what level of risks they are willing to accept. If the government coercively requires reducing that risk, then people may increase risk taking to get back to their own chosen level.

The greater risk-taking may also be a mechanism for avoiding coercive manipulation. In experiments with animals, scientists have discovered that avoiding manipulation by the experimenters can be a powerful motivation. In one study in which mice could increase or decrease their own cage light levels, the mice would always try to undo whatever the experimenters did. The mice decreased the lighting when the experimenters increased it. Mice, of course, like the dark. Even so, when the experimenters decreased the lighting, the mice would increase it.

And so it seems that the best laid schemes of mice and men go often awry. Well, *coercive* schemes, anyway. —SS

A Cabinet that makes sense — The Libertarian Party has appointed a "shadow cabinet" of libertarian-oriented individuals:

Agriculture: James Bovard

Commerce: Richard W. Rahn

Defense: Earl C. Ravenal

Education: John Taylor Gatto

Energy: Richard L. Gordon

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A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances after the Cold War by Ted Galen Carpenter. The passing of the Cold War is the most important development of the late 20th century. Yet Washington clings tenaciously to a host of obsolete, expensive military alliances, including NATO, that have the potential to embroil the United States in conflicts unrelated to its vital interests. Carpenter proposes withdrawal from those entangling alliances and a policy of nonintervention. 1992/212 pp./\$22.95 cloth/\$12.95 paper

Liberating Schools: Education in the Inner City edited by David Boaz. America's most innovative education analysts take a good look at American schools—especially those in the inner city—and offer proposals for major structural reform. The book, which includes the editor's thorough critique of the public school system, presents a compelling case for choice in education. 1991/220 pp./\$25.95 cloth/\$13.95 paper

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Sound and Fury: The Science and Politics of Global Warming by Patrick J. Michaels. The author, an environmental scientist, writes that despite the current hype and science-by-press-release, the greenhouse effect poses no serious threat to the world we know. The most disturbing finding of his study, however, is the willingness of some to distort science to expand the government's control over our lives. 1992/208 pp./\$21.95 cloth/\$11.95 paper

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Pretty impressive group of people, isn't it?

Members of the shadow cabinet will review actions of Clinton's cabinet and make public comments on them. The hope is that someone in the media will pay attention, and the cabinet members will find their way onto radio talk shows, and (perhaps) even have an influence on public opinion.

It's too early to know how effective the shadow cabinet will be, but this looks like one of the best ideas the Libertarian Party has come up with in a long time. —CAA

Don't let Hillary find out — Forget nanny problems. Supreme Court nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg has a bigger skeleton in her closet. When she and Judge Robert Bork served together on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, they voted together 90% of the time. —JSR

Big Mother is watching — I have an excellent babysitter who keeps my son in her home two afternoons a week. One day she asked me to fill out a form enrolling my child in the Child Care Food Program.

This government-funded program reimburses her for serving "nutritious, well-balanced meals." By joining this program my babysitter will receive \$1.45 for each meal she serves and 40 cents for each snack. In return she must prepare weekly menus, submit them to the sponsoring organization, Child Care Connections, and serve nutritious food such as 100% juice and whole wheat bread. From time to time someone will come by and check to see if she is, indeed, providing nutritious, well-balanced meals.

I've received similar sheets before, at preschools, but they always have a way of "opting out," usually by paying the full price for meals. This sheet offers no opting-out privilege.

My babysitter has only middle-class or affluent clients. We were already paying for our children's meals, content with what she served. She does not take in children from low-

income families and does not want to. (If she wanted to, she could enroll in another program which pays for food and day-care, too.) Naturally, an additional \$50 per week from the government is more attractive than asking us for more money.

This situation illustrates three points that I've known intellectually but haven't actually experienced until now:

1. Most transfer payments in this country do not go to the poor. Only about one seventh of all money transferred by the government is spent in means-tested programs.

2. The costs of most programs clearly outweigh the benefits. My son might have marginally better lunches as a result of this program. (He might also have marginally worse dinners, because he won't be as hungry and his parents won't be as concerned about his diet.) In any case, the cost, at \$1.85 per day per child plus the costs of administration and monitoring, far exceeds whatever benefit there might be.

3. The supposed beneficiaries of such programs (malnourished children in this case) are rarely the prime beneficiaries. One clear winner is the babysitter, but then there is the college graduate who comes sniffing around and the administrators hired to oversee the paperwork. The sponsoring organization, Child Care Connections, used to be staffed largely by volunteers; with the advent of federal money, they weren't needed any more. But what's a mom to do? —JSS

Welfare and immigration: the other half of the argument — Many libertarians who favor free immigration in principle have serious reservations about its implications in the world as it now exists. A Mexican who leaves Mexico to accept a better paying job in the U.S. makes both himself and the rest of us better off, but one who leaves a job in Mexico to go on welfare in the U.S. makes himself better off at our expense. Thus it is sometimes argued that the elimination of barriers to migration only makes sense if we first eliminate government redistribution.

One possible reply is that at present immigrants do not in fact come for welfare — that on average they receive less from government relative to the taxes they pay than those already here. Julian Simon has made this argument, and provided a good deal of evidence for it. Its principle weakness is that it describes the people who immigrate under our present immigration laws — laws which make it hard for the sort of people who would go on welfare to immigrate legally and risky for illegal immigrants to apply for welfare. The situation might be quite different in a regime of free immigration.

A second answer is that the argument, although correct, tells only half the story. The redistributionist tendencies of modern states are an argument against free immigration, but also an argument for it. The argument against takes the level of redistribution as given and points out its effect on who migrates where and why. The other half of the argument reverses the causation by considering the effect of migration on levels of redistribution. The harder it is for people to move from one country to another, the more attractive redistributive policies are. The possibility of redistribution tends to increase inefficient migration, but the possibility of migration tends to decrease inefficient redistribution.

Consider a government in a world of free migration, trying to decide whether to increase or decrease the level of "welfare" payments. Giving people money may be politically



"She said she'd decided to give up all her bad habits, and the next day she was gone!"

attractive, but collecting the taxes to pay for it is not. A 10 percent increase in levels will attract indigents from abroad, swell the welfare rolls, and increase costs by much more than ten percent. A 10 percent decrease will cause some indigents presently on welfare to migrate to countries with more generous policies, reducing costs by much more than ten percent. The existence of easy migration makes welfare state policies less attractive, with the result that levels of redistribution are likely to be lower.

While I have not seen this argument used in discussions of international migration, it is a commonplace in discussions of interstate migration. American supporters of the welfare state routinely argue that welfare ought to be Federal rather than state, precisely because state welfare is held down by the threat of interstate migration. Indeed, one possible explanation for why the U.S. moved more slowly than European countries towards a welfare state is that European redistribution was by national governments with control over immigration, whereas American redistribution was largely by state governments without such control.

The argument is also relevant to future trends in Europe. The European Economic Community is currently moving towards complete freedom of internal migration. If the argument I have given is correct, one result will be to put pressure on national governments to reduce their level of transfer payments. The result will be either a reduction in the European welfare states or a transfer of authority for redistribution from the national to the supra-national level. —DF

The big scam — The assumption that higher education was necessary to beat the post-Sputnik Soviets has thankfully fallen into history's dustbin, but the idea that a full college education is necessary for success in this world is still with us, as is the notion that the "best" education is a prerequisite for the best success. These two beliefs, taken together, constitute a powerful myth, whose power enables a class of scam-artists to fleece the American people on a grand scale.

Out of a belief in this myth parents are instructed to scrimp and invest from the time their children are born. The state is asked to support this myth, with loans (that are often not paid back) and with outright grants. Exploiting this myth, universities have raised tuition at a rate far faster than most people can raise their incomes (unless, of course, they be college professors, which is to say scam-beneficiaries), channeling ever larger salaries not only to professors but to an ever-expanding administrative apparatus.

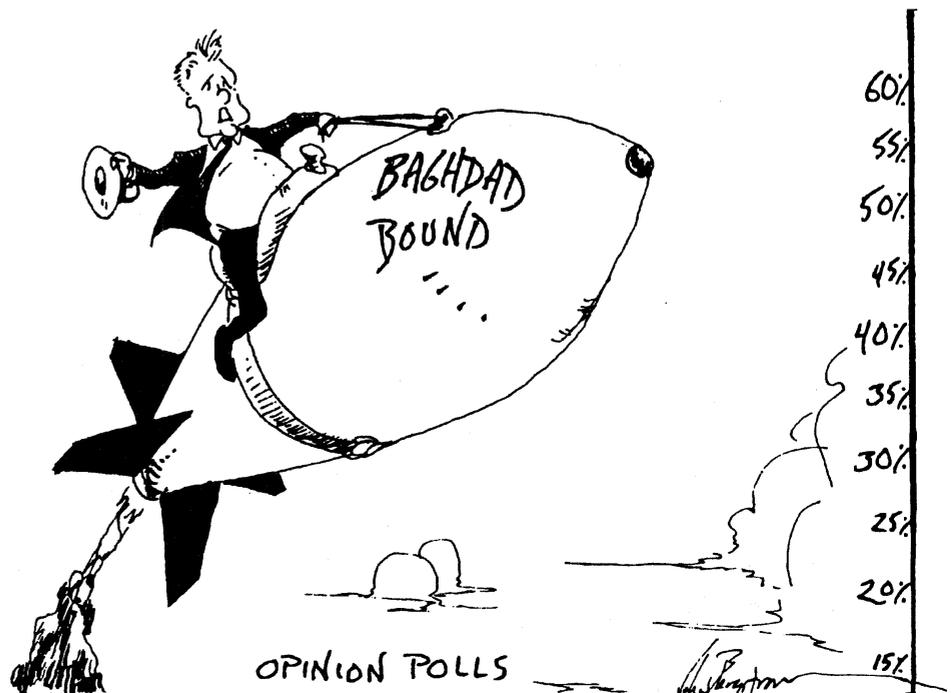
Universities have succeeded in creating among their customers a false competition for limited places. And why not? The parents of those selected to fill them will pay whatever is demanded and perhaps even make surplus "donations" as well. (At the end of high school, I thought of writing the universities to which I had applied:

"Congratulations. You have been chosen as my college for next year. You are very fortunate in this selection, as many others were considered. Please send a ten dollar confirmation fee.")

The heights of the "higher education" scam are astounding. Consider the idea that publicly funded universities should compete with the privates in hiring star professors who give "reputation" in a self-propelling myth, all at the expense of taxpayers, most of whom care not at all if their state university's Egyptology Department rivals Harvard's. If public universities are to exist at all, they should be teaching institutions, much as publicly funded junior colleges have always been. If only to get perspective on the myth of private universities, consider that private preparatory schools never acquired a comparable social cachet. (Imagine your state assemblyperson asking for money to support his local public high schools to be "competitive" with the nearby private preparatories.)

So successful is this higher-education myth that few consider that universities may not be worth the money paid out. Many 18-year-olds would rather not be in college full time, or may prefer postponing it, some no doubt out of a distaste for the paramilitary authoritarian structure of universities; so that parents' money spent contrary to their children's preferences is often wasted.

Indeed, there are reasons to doubt the practical and even social value of expensive higher education. Even for the full-time student, so much learning takes place outside the classroom, and the smart student learns that the best "education" happens after he or she graduates. Look around and you can observe that most people at the top, not only in business, but even in the cultural professions, did not go to the best schools. The explanation for this discrepancy is so simple it is almost obvious — the competition for getting into college, not to mention excelling there, has little to do with the competitions of post-graduate life. That last truth means that the most affordable college might ultimately be no less beneficial than



the one threatening to break the parental bank.

Don't over-estimate the purported social value of the purportedly better schools. As a self-employed alumnus of a second-level Ivy college, I've noticed that of the hundreds of people who have supported my literary and art activities in the past thirty years, only four went to my college; and of those four, only two paid me, each only once. Had I expected to survive on "old school ties," I would have died professionally ages ago.

Alternatives to higher education exist; indeed, they were once fairly common. The legal profession, for instance — to consider briefly another, even more notorious contemporary scam — used to have an alternative entrance route into its government-licensed ranks. Instead of going to an accredited law school, the aspiring lawyer could clerk for several years before being "qualified" to take the state bar examination. Abraham Lincoln, in fact, was admitted to the Illinois bar after years of private study only. The ultimate effect of abolishing such alternative routes was, of course, not the preservation of professional standards (whatever they might be) but restricting entrance to the profession to those with sufficient resources to invest in at least three years of post-graduate schooling. Just as anyone who has clerked for several years had sufficient experience to become a lawyer, so anyone who has worked for long as a doctor's assistant could practice medicine, including not only the dispensing of prescriptions but the referring of more serious illnesses to specialists. And this goes for many another occupation, as well.

Costs in higher education will continue to rise until the customers wise up. Nothing would undermine this scam more than the state refusing to give loans and grants; nothing would kill the scam more quickly than an expensive university's discovering that it did not have enough applicants to fill the available places. —RK

V. Orval Watts, RIP — "Orval Watts is a trained economist, sound and consistent. Is there another one?" The answer to Rose Wilder Lane's question, posed in a letter to

Jasper Crane in 1952, was "Sure. Mises, Hazlitt, and Hayek are also sound economists."

Rose Wilder Lane preferred Watts because she considered the others all to be soft on some political questions. Mises was a democrat, Hazlitt liked the British parliamentary system, and Hayek compromised with the welfare state. Watts, like Lane herself, harbored no such softness.

Orval Watts was an important figure in the days when the idea of liberty was at its nadir, the dark, dark years from the mid-1930s, when free enterprise was viewed as a failure and dictatorship *aka* "planned economy" seemed like the wave of the future, to its resurgence in the mid-1950s. Being an academic libertarian in those days was to take a road to obscurity; his academic career that began at Harvard ended at Northwood Institute in Midland, Michigan. Along the way, his affiliations included the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Southern California Edison, and the Foundation for Economic Education. Orval Watts trod that road with courage and good humor.

I first met Orval Watts in 1965. I was a high school kid, imbued with libertarian ideas gleaned from Ludwig von Mises, Ayn Rand, and the Foundation on Economic Education. I somehow learned of a series of lectures held at the Northwood Institute. Along with a couple friends (one a proud possessor of both a drivers license and permission to use his parents' car), I made the 150-mile drive several times, to hear the likes of Sylvester Petro, Ben Rogge and Ludwig von Mises lecture. Watts had organized the lectures and was always in the audience, asking tough questions, defending the most radical libertarianism, brooking no compromise. He was the first hard-core libertarian I ever met.

On March 29, four days after his 95th birthday, Orval Watts died. Although he left us fewer books of lesser import than did his contemporaries, Rand, Lane, Paterson, Mises, Hazlitt and Hayek, his energy and robust intellect played an important role in the renaissance of libertarian thinking, leaving an important mark on both individuals and institutions. We should remember him with affection and admiration.

—RWB

Medianotes

Tubes crossed — The greatest mystery of cable is how so many programs wind up on the wrong channel. The best science fiction program being produced today isn't on the mediocre Sci Fi Channel; it's *Mystery Science Theatre 3000* on Comedy Central. My favorite cartoon character never shows up on the Cartoon Network — he's Pat Buchanan and he's only on CNN. And despite all the funny stuff on Comedy Central, for real laughs you have to turn to the live Congressional coverage on C-Span. —JW

Gergen and Shields — In a press conference a few days after his appointment as "counselor" to President

Clinton, the nominally Republican David Gergen revealed that he had voted for Bill Clinton because "we needed to get the country moving in a positive direction." Gergen has been, for the past several years, the house rightwinger on the *MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour*, supposedly balancing out the left-wing views of Mark Shields. There we have it: the government-run television "news" program gives us a range of opinion that runs all the way from Bill Clinton to Bill Clinton. —RWB

Good day! — Since leaving the dissolute coast for the heartland I have become a regular listener to America's most

beloved radio personality. At 12:07 each afternoon the dulcet baritone cadences of Paul Harvey waft into my home or car or office. He's a welcome guest who supplies me with tidbits of news, corn pone humor, and the names of people who have been married — to each other no less! — for an improbably long time. But another reason I welcome Harvey is that the causes he advocates are to a surprising extent those that I also support.

Harvey abhors the Clinton proposed tax increase. On a daily basis he excoriates the profligacy of our elected masters and urges his listeners to inundate Congress with the message "Cut spending first!" Nor does he have much truck with American adventures abroad. On recent broadcasts he has highlighted anti-American riots in Somalia and the waywardness of food drops in Bosnia as symptoms of folly in parts of

Why is the public so receptive to pitches for radically limiting the scope of government as enunciated by Paul Harvey but virtually oblivious to those same proposals when presented by overtly libertarian sources?

the globe where we simply have no business. Throw sand in the gears of the Washington pork machine and restrict defense operations to bona fide defensive operations: these pleas are Harvey near-constants. They are almost as ubiquitous as the pitches for custom-crafted golf clubs and the incomparable Royal Dirt Devil. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that he could pass an ideological purity test administered by the ideologues of the Libertarian Party. Still, the core of the Harvey creed is unmistakably libertarian.

Good news to have so redoubtable an ally? Of course, but it raises the question: Why is the public so receptive to pitches for radically limiting the scope of government as enunciated by Paul Harvey but virtually oblivious to those same proposals when presented by overtly libertarian sources? For each person who cast a Marrou vote this past November there are a hundred regular Harvey listeners; for each reader of *Liberty* there are . . . no, the figures are too depressing to recount.

To be sure, not everyone who tunes in the Harvey broadcasts shares his politics. Some who care not a jot for things political may be fired by a passion for data concerning the matrimonial histories of nonagenarians. Still, one can reasonably infer a significant correlation between the size of the audience and receptivity of the message. Why then have overtly libertarian sources proven themselves so incapable of capitalizing on this sentiment?

No, I am not using a columnist's clever ploy of raising a question as the prelude to a dazzling display of punditry. Alas, I have no prescription to offer, only a suggestion concerning the direction in which we might do well to invest our energies. If it's not the message that's inherently unsaleable, then one must scrutinize the messenger. Libertarians wax eloquent in praise of entrepreneurship, but perhaps our problem is not being entrepreneurial enough in marketing our prod-

uct. What is Harvey doing right that we're doing wrong? A correct answer could prove infinitely more rewarding than any bout of wrangling over the fine points of libertarian doctrine.

And while you're pondering this conundrum let me tell you about an endearing Ozarks couple who recently celebrated . . .

—LEL

Clinton's gain is journalism's gain — H.L.

Mencken once proposed an organization of drama critics who have never written plays. Only two individuals, he said, would qualify for membership: he and George Jean Nathan. Later, after Mencken's and Nathan's sex comedy *Helioqabulas* was produced, the theoretical organization was reduced to no membership at all.

Mencken's jape was aimed at drama critics who had written plays and hoped to get them produced. It seemed to him that a critic could not be counted on to give an honest evaluation of a play if its producer were a potential buyer of the critic's services.

It seems to me that the same sort of thinking ought to apply to the relationship between politics and the news media: if a news reporter or analyst is to have any credibility, he must maintain some sort of critical distance between himself and the politicians about whom he writes. A newsman who is lusting after a political appointment cannot be expected to write about politicians without having a very obvious apple to polish.

Plainly, newsmen ought to maintain a critical distance between themselves and politicians, and ought not hop easily from one occupation to the other. But, no, I am not disturbed by Bill Clinton's appointment of David Gergen as a "special counselor." What is disturbing is that any news organization would ever hire Gergen as a reporter or analyst or editor in the first place. Before he became an editor at *U.S. News & World Report*, he was a member of the White House staffs of presidents Nixon, Ford and Reagan. In those Republican White Houses, he did the same sort of work that he is doing for Democrat Clinton: public relations (i.e. advising his employer how to deceive the press).

By all accounts he was very good at his work. "We had a rule in the Nixon operation that before any public event was put on [Nixon's] schedule, you had to know what the headline out of that event was going to be, and what the lead paragraph would be," he told reporter Hedrick Smith. "You had to think in those terms, and if you couldn't justify it, it didn't go on [the president's] schedule . . . You had to learn how to do the editing yourself."

Such work takes a considerable amount of skill and has, I suppose, many admirable qualities.

But the fact that David Gergen chose news manipulation as a career and aspired to return to this work precludes his having any credibility as a journalist. His qualifications for his job consisted of skills in spin doctoring, finding scapegoats for his boss's gaffes, manipulating reporters, and projecting a favorable image of his employer. All these talents work against the skills of a good reporter or editor, whose goal is to discover and write the truth.

As a journalist, Gergen was exactly as credible as Joseph Goebbels would have been if he had returned to journalism af-

ter his job with Hitler. *U.S. News & World Report* showed precisely the same judgment in hiring him that it would have shown if it had hired Goebbels. (Save your angry letters, Gergen apologists: I am *not* saying that Gergen is another Goebbels, only that Gergen's credibility as a journalist is precisely the same as Goebbels'.)

Of course, the insights that a person might gain as a spin doctor for a politician could serve a political reporter very well, just as experience as a shoplifter might serve a store detective well. But just as the thief who becomes a protector of property always has a suspicious air about him, the spin doctor-turned-journalist always has a distinct odor of mendacity.

A convicted thief could eventually gain reasonable credibility as a detective, if he demonstrated honesty on the job, so could spin doctor converted to journalist. But when the detective returns to a life of crime, he destroys whatever credibility he may have gained. The same is true when a news manipulator-turned-journalist returns to his old ways.

Any political reporter or analyst who is genuinely committed to his craft should take an oath: "Because my highest duty is to tell the truth as I understand it, I shall never aspire to or accept any appointment as a media advisor to any elected official."

So Clinton's appointment of David Gergen is a very positive development: Gergen is no longer masquerading as an honorable journalist. Clinton gained a sophisticated and skilled liar, and *U.S. News & World Report* unloaded one. —CAA

Calling Lord Randomfactor — Last night I saw an ad for nuclear energy. It featured the *de rigueur* attractive young woman, sitting before the camera to tell us that, although in college she had opposed nuclear power, she now knew that fission means clean air, blue skies, and a happy planet. She'd changed her mind. We should too. Etcetera. Fade to black.

Next commercial: a strikingly similar feminine voice exclaiming "I'm too young for gum disease!" Either (a) someone in the CNN Headline News hierarchy has a perverse sense of humor, or else (b) wow man, that was, like, *way too cool*. It doesn't matter which, my reaction stayed the same: I laughed — *hysterically*.

These synchronicity-laden media moments are not rare; I could write pages of anecdotes from both sides of the broadcast booth. But I'll limit myself to one favorite juxtaposition. A religious broadcaster is making a plea for aid for starving lepers. The screen is filled with images of men, women, and children missing fingers, toes, limbs. Give us help, intones the narrator. Give these people help. (Pause.) We'll be right back after these messages.

Fade to black. Silence. Then, a booming voice: I LOST THIRTY POUNDS IN TWENTY DAYS! —JW

No end in sight — On June 22, the *Washington Post* headlined a front-page feature: "A Year Later, Perot's Purpose Is Still Unclear: Questions Linger About Presidential Ambitions."

My first inclination was to remark on the unfairness of the press: Perot's purpose seems extraordinarily clear. He wants to be president, the big cheese, the boss of bosses. He seems to

have no other principles except this abiding ambition, though he cloaks his mission in a few characteristic themes.

Exactly the same can be said of Bill Clinton. After 16 years in public life, it's not clear what his purpose is, except the accumulation of personal power. He has changed his position on practically every issue. He was against abortion, now he's for it; he favored a middle class tax cut, now he wants a middle class tax hike; he thought it was a moral crime that we don't open our borders to Haitians with AIDS, now he favors keeping them out.

Yet the press has not had a word to say about his purposelessness. It maintains the public fiction that he is trying to provide a new vision for America. How else can we interpret the press's reference to his proposed tax increases as "Bill Clinton's deficit reduction plan"? Or its referring to his plan for a government takeover of medical care as "health care reform"?

For all Clinton's unhappiness with the press of late, it can hardly be said that the press has examined his record or his character very closely. Sure, the press no longer treats him as a hero, as it did during his campaign, when it engaged in a conspiracy to sweep certain unfavorable stories about him under the rug. (Can you imagine the press ignoring the tape recorded evidence of his mendacity that Gennifer Flowers made public if her ex-inamorata had been George Bush?)

Bizarrely, Clinton has interpreted the press's mild curiosity about some of his more flagrant violations of public trust (such as his firing the White House travel staff so he could replace it with a travel agency owned by a relative) as extreme hostility. He mistakenly believes that the media ought to snuggle like a lapdog.

In late June, under the tutelage of David Gergen, his new P.R. man, Clinton decided to try to buddy up with the press, so that it would cease its occasional bouts of honest reporting and return to those glorious days of hagiography on the campaign trail.

But why is the press beating up on Perot?

Probably because it fears that he may someday be elected. He doesn't play by the usual political rules. He is not beholden to a party organization, to elected legislators, or to anyone else. In sum, the press fears Perot for exactly the same reason the public likes him.

The Perotphobia is quite understandable. The network of obligations each President brings to his office acts as a brake on his power and lowers the risk that he will do something really bizarre. The knave you know is always more palatable than the knave you don't know. It's pretty plain that he sees himself as the savior of America, and he could quite easily justify to himself (and many of his followers) grabbing virtual dictatorial power by declaring some sort of "state of emergency" in response to Congress not acting the way he wanted it to. Ross Perot is just plain scary.

On the other hand, it is easy to underestimate just how scary the election of a Republican or Democrat is. As President, Ronald Reagan empowered police to stop and search automobiles and keep any cash they find, on grounds that cash is *prima facie* evidence of drug-dealing. As President, Bill Clinton has appointed his wife "health czar," in the process of enacting a complete government takeover of medical care. How much scarier could President Perot be? —CAA

Progress Report

The Ungreening of the Media

by Jane S. Shaw

It's been a long time coming, but the morning after of the media-environmentalist tryst has finally arrived.

There is good news on the media front. After two decades of headlines about "killer chemicals," accolades to professional scaremongers like the WorldWatch Institute, and subservience to environmental lobbyists, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* have turned over a new leaf. Two relative newcomers to the environmental beat, Keith Schneider at the *Times* and Boyce Rensberger at the *Post*, are re-evaluating the environmental record and challenging environmental rhetoric.

Widely talked about (in the circles I travel in) was Keith Schneider's five-part series in March headlined "New View Calls Environmental Policy Misguided."¹ He reported that, according to some scientists and public health specialists, some of our environmental laws are "based on little if any sound research about the true nature of the threat." Furthermore, they were approved without "even rudimentary cost-benefit analyses," and some were even "devoted to the wrong problems."

Gaining steam, the series then detailed costly flaws in toxic cleanup programs, questioned the reliance on animal tests to determine chemical carcinogenicity, reported on the rebellion by city mayors against the high costs of regulations, and even published a chart estimating how much it costs to avert a single premature death through various regulations (e.g., \$653 million per death averted from drinking water limits on

1, 2-dichloropropane).

One stunning article (March 22) describes how the garbage that was washed up on eastern beaches in the summer of 1988 led to an expensive ban on ocean dumping — even though ocean dumping had nothing to do with the waste! It was caused by overburdened sewage systems. In fact, Schneider pointed out, officials "have closed beaches more often than they did before 1988."

At the *Post*, Too

Over at the *Washington Post*, Boyce Rensberger wrote two articles this spring challenging global environmental scares. "'Greenhouse Effect Seems Benign So Far'" was the headline on a story² that is the antithesis of most national coverage of global warming. Rensberger cites scientific evidence that what warming has occurred during the past century took place at night rather than during the day and — at least in the northern hemisphere — during spring, fall, and winter, rather than summer. Both these findings imply that greenhouse warming (if it occurs) will not lead to severe droughts

or massive shifts in agriculture but will be beneficial or neutral in its effect.

In April, a front-page story by Rensberger³ pointed out that the ozone problem "appears to be well on the way to solution." He credited the Montreal Protocol, an international agreement to phase out chlorofluorocarbons, but he also discounted popular assumptions about ozone loss. He said that researchers report that "the problem appears to be heading toward solution before they can find any solid evidence that serious harm was or is being done."

While much of the material in these articles could have been found on the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal* over the past few years, they represent a major turn-around for the nation's left-liberal media. They signal that the elite press is no longer simply going to publish the environmentalists' press releases or treat environmental stories as simple conflicts between good environmentalists and evil capitalists.

Of course, there were important precursors to these two reporters'

work. Gregg Easterbrook has been quietly debunking doomsday myths for several years, first in *The New Republic* and more recently in *Newsweek*. But until now no one rallied around him (one of the most deflating experiences for a reporter is to be too far out front on a story). The monolith began to crack on February 7, 1993. Writing in *The New York Times Magazine*,⁴ Raymond Bonner, a reporter widely viewed as left-wing, condemned the World Wildlife Fund for deliberately misrepresenting the state of elephant populations in Africa

The Washington Post now suggests that greenhouse warming (if it occurs) will not lead to severe droughts or massive shifts in agriculture but will be beneficial or neutral in its effect.

in order to reap millions of dollars in donations from the public.

In Keith Schneider's case, one impetus for skepticism was his acquaintance with the late Warren Brookes. Brookes, who wrote for the Detroit *News* editorial page and had a syndicated column, began delving into environmental issues in the late 1980s. He tapped into a rich vein of hyped-up risks, excessive costs, and regulations that caused harms rather than reduced them. He began to point out the discrepancies between the claims and the facts in cases from asbestos to radon. While Brookes garnered respect from scientists and skeptics by the time he died suddenly in late 1991, much of the journalistic world was still scornful. Schneider, however, recognized that Brookes was "clearly on to a big story," as he said later. After his series ran in the *Times*, Schneider telephoned Tom Bray, who had been Warren Brookes' boss at the Detroit *News*, and acknowledged his debt to Brookes for helping him recognize the story.⁵

The Environmental String Runs Out

A change in the approach to environmental issues was inevitable. The

environmental string has been played out, both politically and journalistically. As the environment gets cleaner and safer, there is less and less actual clean-up to be done. Remediation also gets much more expensive, and the disparity between achievements and costs increases. This disparity is most obvious in the Superfund program, which even environmental activists criticize (not to the point of recommending abandonment, however). But virtually all environmental programs are riddled with costs out of proportion to benefits. The 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, for example, will force industry to pay at least \$4 billion per year to prevent acid rain, even though a 10-year government study (costing \$540 million itself) showed that damages from acid rain are minimal. Other provisions of the Clean Air Act are estimated to bring the total annual cost to \$21.5 billion per year.⁶

Journalistically, it's difficult to come up with new "scoops" identifying frightening pollution ills. The nation just had a brush with one — electromagnetic fields, which supposedly cause cancer "clusters." And fears about cellular phones set off a momentary frenzy on talk shows after a man charged that his wife had contracted a brain tumor from a cellular phone. But these scares seem to have fizzled out.

Alar — The High-Water Mark

If journalists covering these issues are more skeptical, this may be the result of the 1989 scare over Alar, a growth regulator for apples. In retrospect, the Alar scare was the high-water mark for environmental fanaticism. The hysteria over Alar was testimony to environmental activists' power to arouse fear and to change policy; but it was based on such flimsy evidence that it drained the environmental movement of credibility.

Behind the Alar scare lay the fact that by 1989 the EPA was running out of pesticides to ban. Alar, which EPA regulates as if it were a pesticide, causes apples to stay on the trees longer, giving them more chance to ripen naturally rather than in warehouses and to avoid falling from the tree prematurely. Alar became a "possible carcinogen" because on one test, when fed to mice in almost lethal doses, it caused tu-

mors. Most tests of Alar had turned up nothing, but in EPA methodology, one positive test of tumorigenicity can trigger action. EPA staffers were considering initiating proceedings against Alar, but in the view of the Natural Resources Defense Council they weren't acting fast enough.

As Michael Fumento outlines in his book *Science Under Siege*,⁷ NRDC built a case against Alar by enormously puffing up the estimates of risk based on highly selective data. NRDC charged that eating apples or drinking juice from apples treated with Alar would lead to 240 cases of cancer for every million children — by the time they were six years old! NRDC enlisted a public relations firm to conduct the campaign. CBS's *60 Minutes* broke the story and actress Meryl Streep appeared on the *Phil Donahue* show to warn parents against giving their children apples that might be tainted with Alar. The furor led school systems to stop selling apples in their cafeterias (including places like Los Angeles, which cannot protect its children from gunshot wounds and knifings). Uniroyal, the manufacturer, quickly

The 1990 Clean Air Act forces industry to pay \$4 billion per year to prevent acid rain, even though a 10-year government study (itself costing \$540 million) showed that damages from acid rain are minimal.

announced it would stop producing Alar.

But the NRDC went too far. Even government regulators were stunned. A joint statement by the FDA, the EPA, and the Department of Agriculture said that the NRDC claimed cancer risks 100 times higher than estimates that the EPA's scientific advisory board had rejected in 1985. Furthermore, Bruce Ames, a prominent biochemist at the University of California at Davis, pointed out in a letter to *Science*⁸ that people eat far more natural pesticides, by weight, than they do synthetic ones,

and the use of Alar (a growth regulator, remember) actually reduces the use of pesticides in the orchards and limits the toxins from molds that develop when apples fall on the ground. He noted that the loss of Alar could mean that fewer fresh apples will be available during the year and at higher cost, and parents may substitute less healthy foods for their children. Two years after the furor, even a United Nations advisory committee decided that Alar is not a carcinogen and stated that it is safe to eat as a trace residue on food.⁹

The campaign against Alar was so successful that the head of NRDC's public relations firm wrote a memo for NRDC describing the campaign and its effectiveness as a fund-raiser. When excerpts from the memo were published on the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*,¹⁰ a lot of people must have felt duped. Perhaps that was why, a few months later, *60 Minutes* attacked environmental groups for refusing to admit that acid rain in the U.S. is a trivial problem.

Similarly, the elevation of super-environmentalist Al Gore to the vice presidency may be the high-water mark for global environmental issues. During the campaign, people like me worried that Gore would be the Clinton Administration's environmental nemesis, pushing Clinton toward ever more stringent and dopey regulations.

But Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, while confirming his credentials as an environmentalist, may have undermined his reputation as someone for journalists to take seriously. While he discusses many environmental issues, global warming is one of the biggest and he treats it as a fact. Then he criticizes journalists for emphasizing "controversy and disagreement" among scientists. Says Gore: "In this case when 98 percent of the scientists in a given field share one view and 2 percent disagree, both viewpoints are sometimes presented in a format in which each appears equally credible."¹¹ While the 2 percent should still be heard, "their theory should not be given equal weight with the consensus now emerging in the scientific community about the gravity of the danger we face." It sounds as though he wants journalists to take sides, a point that Gregg Easterbrook found disturbing enough

to comment on in *The New Republic*.¹² Since the "consensus" on global warming is turning out to be 180 degrees away from what Gore imagines, Gore's standing and thus his doomsday fears are likely to fall.

What Next?

So what is in store for the environmental beat? In a while, we should start to see articles questioning or debunking the environmentalists' doomsday claims. But that won't be all. I think we will see environmental reporters doing

We will soon see environmental reporters doing what journalists do best: writing sympathetic stories about victims. But these will be victims of environmental regulation, not pollution!

what journalists do best: writing sympathetic stories about victims. But these will be victims of environmental regulation, not pollution!

Newspapers have blithely ignored the fact that environmental regulations kill. The reason may partly be the lack of identifiable victims. In 1989 two economists, one from Brookings and one from the Harvard School of Public Health, reported that the congressionally mandated tightening of fuel economy standards would increase the number of highway deaths because it would force manufacturers to build lighter cars, which are less safe. In fact, they estimated that the standards proposed for the 1989 model year would cause between 2,200 and 3,900 additional fatalities over the next ten years.¹³ Press attention to the study, even after the District of Columbia Circuit Court remanded the standards to the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration for review, was skimpy.

Such ignorance will not continue once identifiable and sympathetic people start to get hurt. I first noticed a change in a November 25, 1991¹⁴ article in *The New Yorker* (ironically, one of the

most shameless manufacturers of fake crises). This time, however, reporter Jeremy Bernstein reported on the battle being waged by the citizens of Aspen, Colorado, against the EPA. They were trying to get a trailer park delisted as a Superfund site. According to the EPA, the soil had too much lead from old mines and officials wanted to clean up the site — which would, of course, involve moving "tens of thousands of cubic yards of dirt, with its attendant dust," Bernstein pointed out. (And he noted that the blood-lead levels of the residents were below the national average.)

Resistance to the EPA was pretty rare in 1991 (or at least it wasn't reported much). But that will change, now that the EPA is going after people who put fill dirt into "wetlands."

You may remember that during the 1988 campaign George Bush promised "no net loss" of wetlands. Once in office, he actually set about accomplishing this. In 1989, government officials came up with a description of wetlands that was so broad that it included land that is rarely wet. (To be a wetland, it had to be *occasionally* wet and had to have vegetation typical of wet soil.) In Dorchester County, Maryland, the number of acres of wetland nearly tripled, and since then, people have gone to jail for putting fill dirt on dry land. William Ellen, a marine engineer, was jailed for six months for pouring two truckloads of dirt on land the Army Corps of Engineers considered wetlands — even though he was building duck ponds and actually adding 45 acres of wetlands to the property! The *New York Times* has yet to write about Ellen (*The Wall Street Journal* conducted an unsuccessful editorial crusade to get him pardoned), but Keith Schneider has done a more general story on the environmental backlash that is building.

As the governmental stick gets heavier, and as it is applied more often, more reporters will have to pay attention. It will take a long time before newspaper readers will absorb the message that most of the scares of the past ten years are exaggerations and that the remedies may be worse than the problems. But the process of education has begun. □

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Poem

Wednesday, January 27

by Marc Ponomareff

On January 27, 1837, the poet Alexander Pushkin was mortally wounded in a duel with Georges d'Anthès. The thunder of the Lepage pistols reverberates to this day, intruding into the thoughts of all who read and admire romantic poetry.

A foot-print in the snow appears
 Blue, for reasons unknown to men
 Who, wary of science, shed tears
 Upon both manuscript and pen;
 To fathom such wonders is not
 Their place — to notice them, their lot.
 The mind's eye, gazing west, arrests
 The philosophic commonplace —
 An incontrovertible fact:
 Of far more interest is it to
 Trace innumerable holes of blue,
 Their scattered shapes converging at
 A twenty-yard-long path, snow-bare,
 Above which dusk has blurred the air.

Here it was that guns, discharged, had
 Made shards of time, tranquility,
 And common sense. God must be mad.
 They marked the ten-yard boundary:
 The seconds — Colonel Danzas and
 D'Archiac — let fall from hand
 Their carricks; yet the heavens failed
 To open; no thunderbolts fell like hail
 In time to stop the pointless act —
 Composed, as are most villainies,
 Of trivial details, dregs and lees,
 Yet no less monstrous for this fact.
 The poet, on a snowdrift, coughed.
 A large, bearskin pelisse, though soft,
 Enwraught his frame in folds of ice
 Which crackled like a scripted poem:
 That lyric he'd attempted twice
 To finish before leaving home —
 Forever? He wondered . . . Perhaps.
 A raven clicked its beak: two taps
 Resounded from the tallest pine
 And echoed — somehow keeping time —
 The energetic tamping tight
 Of bullets into barrels black.
 The poet exercised his craft:
 Both bird and pistol were like night;
 Both gave the same, sharp cry; one sensed
 Their power to traduce the sky,

To become a wingéd omen
 And, in flight, to steal from man his
 Nerve and reason — A commotion:
 Heeckeren, angry, shook his fist;
 And Danzas clenched his jaw, and turned
 Away. The shrouded sun still burned;
 Its light made pale the poet's skin,
 While d'Anthès glowed from brow to chin:
 His face — as sleek, firm-cheeked, and round,
 And void of thought, as any plum —
 Bent over the two proffered guns.
 The crow inclined its head; no sound
 It made while widening its eye,
 In which lay clouds, refracted sky.
 The poet stood, his fear in check —
 Amongst the trees, huge shards of ice
 Dropped and shattered with each step
 Our hero took; a sound heard thrice;
 Like nails pulled from a packing case,
 They screeched while being torn from place,
 And something dark, from distant weald
 Released, bore down upon the field.
 The creak of wings, of Death set free,
 A chilling of the air — unheeded.
 Across the snow, four boots proceeded:
 Five paces reached the boundary . . .
 A shot . . . and nothing more is heard.
 Nearby, with mouth agape: a bird.

T'would fill me with the utmost pain
 To write of lead inside his breast:
 This pen can only twist in shame,
 And cease. God grant him rest.
 But first — I must pursue those tracks,
 Now in retreat, and leading back
 In haste from whence they came: foot-prints
 That, in fading light, have purple tints,
 The last of which, with myriad
 Whorls, surrounds one crimson dot — not
 A cipher, nor clipped Morse, this spot —
 But punctuation mark: the period.
 My representative, the crow,
 Looks on . . . The foot-print fills with snow.

Interpretation

In "Defense" of Janet Reno

by Loren E. Lomasky

She just couldn't help herself. Once ATF attacked the Davidians, bureaucratic ineptitude made the outcome inevitable.

Perhaps a well-placed Deep Throat itching to settle a score will provide details of the decision-making processes that preceded the fateful raid of April 19. Otherwise it's not likely that we shall ever know except in air-brushed outline what really generated the conflagration that consumed David Koresh and his little

troop of soldiers for God. Even before the killing flames had subsided a chorus of weepy, self-exculpatory "it's tragic what happened but we had no alternative" statements rolled like a river of phlegm out of Texas and Washington. The harmony with which they were delivered presents a remarkable counterpoint to the cacophony of blunders that for two months had played itself out around the Branch Davidians' compound.

To be sure, FBI agents grouched off the record about the amateurishness of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms operatives who precipitated the crisis, and Congressman Conyers supplied for the TV cameras some particularly graceless and unintelligent lashings out at Attorney General Reno. (One rubbed one's eyes in disbelief; was that really Rush Limbaugh declaiming against overly abrasive treatment of a Clinton cabinet member?) But neither in the immediate aftermath of the slaughter nor subsequently was there any real prospect of a general airing of dirty governmental laundry. All the key players and most of the minor ones

had every incentive to join their wagons in a tight circle of deniability against outsiders who might suggest that something had gone very wrong in Justice Department circles.

The president had already incurred annoying wounds while lurching unsteadily toward the appointment of an attorney general: although he must have been tempted to dump the mess entirely on the head of his third choice for the office, that would have been fatal for what remained of his image as the coolly efficient administrator. Nor could Janet Reno pass the buck to Justice Department underlings who had advised and reported to her without confessing herself abjectly incapable of exercising the leadership attached to her high office. The FBI and its director William Sessions had sweated through months of discreditable revelations. The erstwhile "world's premier law-enforcement agency" wished to risk no further charges of mission failure or willful breaching of lines of authority. As for BATF, the less said the better.

Thus all parties had reason to ac-

cede in what quickly became the official line. From Bill Clinton on downward, each of the players resolutely accepted "responsibility" for his or her role in the drama. But to accept responsibility was not by any means to admit wrong-doing. Wrong aplenty was done, they agreed, but exclusively by the crazed would-be messiah and priapic defiler of young girls, David Koresh. Despite a series of blandishments and general concessions, Koresh perversely insisted on immolating himself and his benighted followers — frequently though inaccurately described as "hostages" — rather than allow impartial mechanisms of law enforcement to proceed. Officials whose sworn duty is to uphold the law could not act otherwise, finally, than to undertake decisive action. And so the denouement, though terribly unfortunate — one cannot ignore charred crisps that had formerly been children — was something for which they could not responsibly be blamed.

Indeed, by catches in the voice and discreet wellings in the eye they ad-

vertised their personal sensitivity and the terrible emotional costs they themselves had been obliged to bear. Proving particularly adept at this rite of cleansing was Janet Reno who stoically made her passage from one network news interview program to the next as so many Stations of the Cross. Not recrimination but sympathy was her due, indeed the due of everyone except Koresh and his non brain-washed adult confederates.

Although it is possible that this recounting of events will eventually blow up, so far it has proved thoroughly stable. No one whose voice has any carrying power is inclined to tell the story any differently. Congressional Democrats recognize the need to show at least minimal solidarity with one of their own. Republicans, of course, acknowledge no such imperative, but their niche in the political ecology requires that they not display themselves as soft concerning what at least superficially has the appearance of a straightforward law-and-order issue. Moreover, prudent regard for the politics of gender makes them wary of engaging in another episode of female-bashing; far wiser to direct one's fire at presidential haircuts and improprieties in the appointment of low-level White House flunkys.

Nor should we expect the press to be assiduous questioners of the official line. Whatever degree it stands in an adversarial relation to office holders is as nothing compared with the contempt it holds for all varieties of low-brow Protestant religiosity excepting possibly that which emanates from Black churches. Their every instinct is to tell the story of the Branch Davidians as yet another episode of millenarian Bible-thumping reaping the whirlwind. And mouthpieces for mainline religious denominations, denominations which for most of this century have been losing members to less conventionally respectable churches, showed themselves much less inclined to suggest that Waco represents a dangerous breach of our nation's constitutional commitment to religious toleration than they are to make it clear to all who may be interested how distant they are from the Koreshians: *"They are a cult; we are a religion!"*

The upshot is a conspicuous absence of public probing. I have heard no suggestions that this might be an appropriate circumstance for the appointment of a Special Prosecutor to seek out malfeasance in the executive branch. Nor does it seem likely that any new Woodwards or Bernsteins will build reputations on the soot and ash of Waco. The smart money is on a perfunctory inquiry custom-designed to clear all fry large and small.

If that is so, then we may never be able confidently to explain why on a breezy spring day in Texas seven dozen individuals met death by fire. Specifically, there is ample reason to expect officials to dissemble concerning who advised whom to do what:

*Wrong aplenty was done,
Clinton agreed, but exclusively
by the crazed would-be messiah
and priapic defiler of young
girls, David Koresh.*

the so-called responsibility issue. Even the issue of the fire's cause may never satisfactorily be resolved. FBI raiders who "saw" it being set by residents of the compound may be in the grip of wishful thinking. Or, like the good soldiers they are, they may be brazening out a lie crafted by their superiors. As for the reports offered by the compound's survivors, how much confidence can one reasonably place in the testimony of persons who a few days earlier had professed to see in David Koresh the visage of the returned messiah. Like another killing in Texas some 30 years earlier, Waco is prime grist for the mills of conspiracy-mongers.

Nonetheless, and with due acknowledgement of the mendacity that lurks in Washington corridors, the "exposé" offered in the previous issue of *Liberty* by editor R.W. Bradford (to which senior editor Stephen Cox joins a qualified concurrence) is even less plausible than the Clinton crowd's diametrically opposed version. Bradford surmises that "this isn't just business as usual. The government is not just

lying. The government is murdering its citizens." In support of this indictment he supplies datum upon datum demonstrating that information readily available to the drama's prominent actors was sufficient for them to be able to ascertain that the siege and culminating assault were likely to yield scores of deaths, either by cultists' mass suicide or directly consequential on the demolition of the compound. Yet they proceed unchecked. Ergo, murder.

This is to assign to governmental officials both too much blame and too much credit. The task of assembling a cast of hundreds to conspire in a mass-killing and providing a script that affords each a "plausible deniability" allowing him to keep a poker face as he methodically carries out his assigned sanguinary role is the work of a master administrator. Does anyone really believe that this describes Janet Reno, the small-time prosecutor of Florida hoods whose prime qualification for elevation to the attorney generalship was forbearance from employing illegal alien nannies? No — unless her accomplishments also include world-class thespian talent. I watched her struggling to draw on reserves of dignity and control as she responded to probing questions from Ted Koppel. Despite the outrage one felt in the aftermath of the disaster that had just played itself out in Waco, a disaster that she had admittedly in one manner or another orchestrated, it was difficult not to feel sympathy, even pity for the woman with the glazed eyes and the raspy voice. She reminded me of one of Joe Louis' sacrificial "bums of the month" being taken apart in the ring, remarkable only for her ability to absorb punishment and somehow keep on standing. A mass murderer or an over-matched pug?

Remember, the Waco disaster was produced by the same folks who gave us the Challenger spacecraft's defective O-rings, secret Bible-toting missions to the Ayatollah, WIN buttons, decimation of the S&Ls, the light at the end of the tunnel in Vietnam, Watergate, the tax code, schemes for making Fidel Castro's beard fall off, mangled bodies of Marines in Lebanon, the War on Drugs, and doz-

ens of their ilk. Shall one ascribe to them Mafia-quality professionalism in killing? I confess that I lack the nerve to make such a leap of faith.

Let me, therefore, suggest an alternate explanation. Hannah Arendt noted that one of the most striking features of the bureaucracy of genocide is the "banality of evil" it displays. The human monsters who stained their hands with the blood of millions weren't the Mephistophelian figures of incalculable menace that we naturally assume are uniquely qualified to fill that role. Instead they were essentially accountant-types whose sums ranged over cattle cars and corpses and canisters of Zyklon-B rather than income receipts and depreciable properties.

Many readers of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* were morally outraged, taking Arendt to be concurring in the exculpatory plea that these second and third-tier Nazi officials were "just following orders" and thus at worst quasi-mechanical transmitters of evil rather than its fully guilty initiators. But although this outrage is understandable, it rests on a misreading of Arendt's thesis. For what she called into question was not the culpability of the little man in the glass cage but rather the anti-theological doctrine maintaining that great villainy demands great villains. (I call it an anti-theology because it is the inverse of the doctrine that a world displaying complex and beautiful patterns of orderliness bespeaks a Creator of infinite goodness and intelligence; the counterpart of the banality of evil is the banality of spontaneous mutation and Darwinian natural selection.) Arendt argued, convincingly I think, that unspeakable atrocity isn't the province only of prodigies of fiendishness but — and to embrace this conclusion is so dispiriting that one can appreciate the comparative attractiveness of the anti-theology — that banally ordinary individuals are capable of perpetrating the most extraordinary crimes.

I don't see any Eichmanns in the Clinton administration. (Myopia? I hope not.) It is not the banality of evil that surfaced in Waco but rather what we might call the *evil of banality*. What I mean is that under certain conditions, men and women of thoroughly prosaic

moral character, people possessed of virtue and vices, ambitions and inclinations not appreciably different in kind or degree of one's own, will be led through a chain of circumstance and institutional transmission mechanisms to generate horrible outcomes. Although the evil of the banality has a history virtually coeval with that of human race, its first theorization was supplied by the seventeenth century



philosopher Thomas Hobbes, whose depiction of the State of Nature illustrates how people who want nothing more than to get by are ineluctably led to the waging of a War of All Against All in which life becomes "nasty, poor, brutish, and short."

Murder, definitionally, incorporates malicious intent. But the raw material of the evil of banality is nothing

more exceptional than individuals who, through lack of imagination or opportunity of insight, find themselves caught up in a lockstep dance in which the commonplace motivations and actions of each become the enormity of all. It is not that the evil result was unforeseeable or could not have been averted. Rather, the claim is that people distinguished by little more than a certain stolidity of character — who are, in a word, banal — will regularly fail to exhibit the vision and the strength necessary to break out of their fatal lemmings' march. Once the mechanism is set in motion inertia will take care of the rest.

Waco remains shrouded in evasion and obfuscation, but the most likely hypothesis I can attach to the grotesque series of events is that it is an instance of banality. Let me spell this out.

Why on February 28 did BATF launch an ill-fated assault to serve an ill-judged search warrant? Particular decision-making details aside, we may observe that this is precisely the sort of interdiction the agency has been designed to perform. Its existence and the careers of its functionaries are predicated on separating people from weapons (and from illicit alcohol or tobacco products, presumably not relevant in this context) from which they do not wish to be separated.

Thus, coercive means are required. Most of the people with whom BATF has dealings are inclined to respond in conventionally rational ways to displays of coercive force. That is, the more massive the firepower arrayed against them, the more likely they are supinely to acquiesce to BATF's demands. One agent acting alone may meet resistance, but five acting together are more likely to procure a cowed submissiveness, and a dozen more likely still. So if sketchy reports filtering back to the bureau indicate that an eccentric gun-toting flock of sectarians commanded by a rock-'n'-rolling messiah is inclined to be obdurate, confronting them with a full-fledged invasion army of 100 agents may seem to be a remarkably good idea.

In practice, of course, the idea was remarkably stupid. But this is part of

BATF's course, nothing more than the product of routinely lethargic bureaucratic thinking. A governmental bureau, unlike for-profit concerns, is not under the discipline of market forces that tend to reward perspicacity and weed out dull insensibility. And labors on behalf of the state, especially when those labors are backed by badges and guns, are very forgiving of mistakes; a display of overwhelming *force majeure* redeems dubious planning. Only this time it did not.

Once BATF incurred (and inflicted) casualties, the die was cast. I don't mean this as a denial of causal possibility or even rational advisability. For much could have been salvaged if federal officials had immediately backed off, if they had apologized to the Branch Davidians for initiating violence and promised to investigate BATF and discipline responsible parties. But of all potentially advisable responses, this was the least likely to be adopted. Almost certainly it received no serious consideration in the corridors of power; probably it wasn't even mentioned in passing. For to reverse course would not only have been an admission that a terribly wrong choice had been made, it would have been to "reward resistance." Nothing is more antithetical to the disposition of the governmental juggernaut than to excuse failures to obey. The role of state agencies is to command and of citizens to obey, regardless of the wisdom or lack of same of official edicts. A government may patiently negotiate with and proffer bribes to foreign despots, but it loses face if it conducts diplomacy with its own citizens. So there was in practice no doubt that once the first coercive thrust had been repulsed, further and more intense coercion would follow.

No one not present in the compound can say with assurance what effect the fire fight with BATF provoked among the Branch Davidians. Probably, though, their spiritual idiosyncracies did not render them immune to anxiety that nearly anyone would feel at having become the target of overwhelming governmental power. Like other character traits, a propensity toward martyrdom isn't innate but has to be learned. So if an assault in force had immediately been launched, it's

likely that the sectarians would have given way. Some lives would have been lost, but once federal authorities decided that the internal doings of the Koreshians was their business, that was virtually inevitable. Wholesale slaughter, however, might have been averted.

But the ingrained habits of bureaucracy rendered even this second-best outcome unattainable. Once rashness had claimed its handful of victims on each side, timidity predictably set in. Justice department officials realized that something hadn't gone as it

If it was the evil of banality that devoured the Branch Davidians, then the crux of the problem is with the levers of power themselves.

should, and up and down the chain of command each was loath to take decisive action which, should it once again misfire, could jeopardize promotions and even pensions. So a period of buck passing and postponement of irreversible action set in. What followed were the two months of siege and ratcheting up pressure on the trapped cultists. No matter that it afforded time for the initial terror to crystalize into a conviction that they were indeed confronting the pitiless Antichrist against whom death was preferable to the apostasy of submission. I don't believe that it's an excess of charity toward federal officials to suppose that not one of them desired the reaction, but step by banal step it nonetheless emerged.

The fatuity of the compound's storming has been noted in these pages and elsewhere. Whom was the FBI trying to fool by blaring "This is not an assault" through loudspeakers as it launched its predawn assault? Why first shut off the compound's water supply and then choose a day with 30 mile per hour gusts for a showdown against a man who had predicted an "end with people de-

voured by fire?" Why was no fire fighting equipment on the scene? Policing child abuse is not under the aegis of federal law enforcement agencies, so why was rumored abuse cited as a rationale for deciding then to bring the siege to an end (and for BATF's initial engendering of the crisis)? And how does six hours of gassing children show solicitude for their welfare? Do these otherwise inexplicable loose ends not evidence a murderous conspiratorial design?

"Sometimes," Sigmund Freud once reminded his overly-sophisticated disciples, "a cigar is just a cigar." And sometimes what appears to be mindless incompetence really is. By the time Day 52 dawned nothing was more certain than that the Koresh affair would have a ghastly conclusion. All that remained to be determined was exactly when and how it would transpire.

It is a mark of our political culture that when there is a problem, any problem, it is expected that office holders will "do something." That they may be odd-on favorites thereby to make things worse rather than better is no bar to action. The Koresh holdout was indeed a problem. And so when a frustrated, perplexed, and increasingly desperate attorney general contemplated the prospect of her first major test in office stretching on and on like a bad dream that would haunt her until she was ignominiously escorted back to Florida, it is completely understandable that she would grasp at whatever expedient might be proposed for drawing it to a conclusion.

Janet Reno is, I'm persuaded, exceedingly conscientious. She surely must have listened attentively to the FBI's lengthy logistical briefings. Nonetheless, it appears that most of what she understood she misunderstood. For example, Reno was informed that the siege was being managed by the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue team. Her lawyerly mind inferred the presence of hostages. But to be a hostage is something imposed on one involuntarily, and since the adult Koreshians clearly had entered and remained in the compound of their own free will, it must be the children who were being held hostage. Child abuse!

What she did well understand,

though, was who pays the piper. Her boss had not enjoyed a sparkling first hundred days. Not least of the burdens he had borne was filling the post she now occupied. He would, then have made it clear that he hoped for something positive finally to come out of the attorney general's office. Time to act! And so when the FBI jerry-rigged an operational plan to resolve the protracted embarrassment, Reno was not disposed to scrutinize the details too meticulously. "A ring of snipers!" "M-60 tank!" "CS tear gas!" They excitedly proposed and she wearily nodded her assent, just as several weeks earlier she had somehow been persuaded to sign off on a mega-decibel stereo system through which to beam into the compound the slaughterhouse strains of terminal pig squeals and Golden Oldies.

How liberating it must have been to an FBI that had itself been weathering a series of discomfiting revelations and political attacks now to be able to dish it out against sitting-duck targets and to be the privileged purveyors of tactics to an attorney general who had shown herself delightfully amenable to buying whatever nostrum they wished to peddle. It was a chance to garner

It does not seem likely that any new Woodwards or Bernsteins will build reputations on the soot and ash of Waco.

public acknowledgement of their own professionalism in favorable contrast to the stoogery of BATF. Tanks, tear gas and TV exposure: it was morning again in America! And since if anything went wrong — they could — and did — piously intone that they had been faithfully following the attorney general's orders, on the morning of April 19 all systems read Go.

That's my reconstruction of Waco, but I readily concede the surface plausibility of a rendering that instead sees the government of the United States of America playing out a murderous vendetta against the Branch Davidians. If

BATF had designed with infinite cleverness a ploy to provoke a festering crisis with the sectarians it could hardly have chosen better. And if the Justice Department had been advised by a team of world-class experts on the theology of American primitivist millenarianism it could not more effectively have engineered in the minds of sectarians confirmation of the belief that arrayed against them was a pitiless Satanic force, that they were the saving remnant who the prophecies had foretold would be chastened and purged by fire, that their souls and those of their children were their dark foe's quarry, and that when the Antichrist lurched toward them in the guise of a metallic monster crushing their habitation and spewing noxious vapors, righteousness demanded that they be faithful unto death, faithful as had been Daniel in the lion's den, Hannah with her children, Stephen, Peter, and, archetypically, Christ nailed to His cross.

The cultists, then were given during their final weeks and hours of life good and ample reason to believe that they were the object of a killing conspiracy. But we leap beyond the evidence if we second their apocalyptic musings. An epistemically more parsimonious explanation is possible and thus preferable: that David Koresh and his disciples were the unintended victims of the evil of banality. It is likely that neither Bill Clinton nor Janet Reno nor the Washington and field operatives of BATF and the FBI desired a denouement of carnage by fire. And yet that is what their individually reasonable yet collectively disastrous choices procured.

The ashes of Waco have cooled and scattered, and the television cameras have relocated to new scenes of excitement and blunder. It's important, though, to keep its consideration alive as a touchstone for ongoing political thinking rather than simply as a specimen for the historians dispassionately to poke over. For the alternative explanatory accounts that have been discussed in this essay support markedly different practical conclusions. If the reason scores of people perished in Texas is because their deaths were willed by wicked government officials, then it is truly a shocking state of af-

fairs, but its remediation is straightforward: We must be more vigilant in ensuring that those who wield levers of power possess at least an ordinary degree of virtue and sensibility. Electing and appointing decent people will prevent tragedies like the one that played itself out in Waco.

But if it was the evil of banality that devoured the Branch Davidians, then the crux of the problem is not the people who wield the levers of power —

The task of assembling a cast of hundreds to conspire in a mass-killing and providing a script that affords each a "plausible deniability" is the work of a master administrator.

though no one can confuse the stumbling functionaries of the Clinton administration with the Best and the Brightest — but with the levers themselves. The tragedies that pop up with depressing regularity are inherent in the system. Their eruptions await only the nexus of circumstance rather than the extremes of maleficence. An inadequately constrained coercive state machinery will continue to grind up and spit out the hapless souls who fall under its wheels; who sits at the steering wheel is a secondary concern. Vigilance in the appointment and monitoring of one's governors will be only marginally effective. A melioration that is more than evanescent requires fundamental change in the vehicle's construction and the rules of the road on which it operates.

In retrospect, the most sobering aspect of Waco is not any specialness it may possess but what it shares with the ravaging of a generation in Vietnam, drug policies that have filled our prisons to overflowing and rendered the hearts of our cities unlivable, and scores of other state undertakings: mostly good people trying to do mostly good things create little corners of hell on earth. In Waco the flames just burned a bit more brightly than usual. □

Reappraisal

There is No Kill Like Overkill

by R. W. Bradford

Does ineptitude excuse murder? Does expedience justify burning children? Bradford reconsiders the case against the perpetrators of the Waco holocaust.

I find a great deal of merit in what Prof. Lomasky so eloquently writes. Certainly government is often banal and the evil of this banality was a major factor in the Waco tragedy. And I agree that the task that we who value liberty face is not that of putting new people at the levers of power, but the far more complicated task of building a consensus against the existence of the levers themselves. The problem of growing government power and of declining human liberty is not simply or even mostly one of evil men. It is a battle of ideas, especially moral ideas.

But disagreement always sparks more disagreement, and I find three of Prof. Lomasky's points singularly unconvincing and worthy of comment.

The Mass Murder Case

Prof. Lomasky finds Reno innocent of mass murder because she lacked intent to mass murder and is too inept to commit so large and complex a crime.

But as I understand the law, *intent to kill* is not necessary for homicide to qualify as murder. If, for example, a punk kills someone while attempting to rob a convenience store, he is not exonerated of murder because he only planned to rob the store and fired his weapon with the intention of frightening people into cooperation.

Further, I am not convinced that Reno did not intend to kill the inhabitants of the Waco compound. I am aware that *she says* that she did not intend to. But so what? Since when do

we expect murderers to confess that they intended to kill? Since when do we expect politicians to tell the truth about their intentions?

Prof. Lomasky's case that Janet Reno did not intend the deaths of innocent children is hardly more than assertion, based apparently on the fact that for Lomasky, "it was difficult not to feel sympathy, even pity for the woman with the glazed eyes and the raspy voice." Indeed, in the same paragraph in which Lomasky claims that murder by definition requires malicious intent, he comes very close to conceding the case: "It is not that the evil result was unforeseeable or could not have been averted." If the mass death of innocents was both predictable and avoidable, how can we avoid concluding intent? Later, he surmises, "How liberating it must have been to [the] FBI . . . now to be able to dish it out against sitting duck targets." *Sitting ducks?* Are we to believe that killing humans "like sitting ducks" is *not intentional*?

Prof. Lomasky does believe so. Somehow the fact that Janet Reno "lacks imagination or opportunity of

insight," she found herself "caught up in a lockstep dance" and was "unable to exhibit the vision and the strength necessary to break out of [her] fatal lemmings' march," should excuse what she did. Since when does it take extraordinary "imagination" or "opportunity of insight" to know that killing innocent children is wrong? Lack of imagination and insight might *explain* a crime, but it does not *excuse* it.

I agree with Prof. Lomasky that politicians and bureaucrats are inept and that the killing of the Branch Davidians was a complicated undertaking. But I am not convinced that ineptitude precludes complicated murders or even complicated mass murders. The politicians and bureaucrats of Nazi Germany were an inept lot, yet they managed to create and keep secret an industry of murder, a task far more complex than incinerating a group of buildings with 86 people inside.

Although Prof. Lomasky rejects the conclusion of my argument, he ignores the argument itself. I did not argue that Ms Reno is a mass

murderer on the basis of an examination of physical evidence, the statements of witnesses, or expert testimony. The evidence I cited was her own confession, and I made that plain in the first two sentences of my article: "Janet Reno, the nation's top law enforcement agent, is a mass murderer. We know this because she confessed to it on national television on April 19, 1993."

To support this claim, I enumerated statements that she made about the information she had at hand, and observed that it was obvious to any rational person (even an inept politician) that the course of action she chose, based on the information she had, could only lead to the death of a substantial number of people who were, by her own admission, entirely innocent. Since Prof. Lomasky does not challenge this argument, I shall not review and defend it here.

Instead I shall attack it. My argument was based on Janet Reno's statement, "I investigated [the situation] completely. I did all the — I asked [all] the questions, I talked to the experts when I had questions . . . I made the best judgment I could based on all the information that we had after inquiry, after talking with experts, after trying to weigh all the terrible possibilities that could take place."

I did not consider one possibility: that Reno was lying when she uttered those words. Successful politicians are characterized by adaptability, adeptness at misrepresenting situations and motives, and a skill at manipulating public opinion. It is entirely possible that Reno paid little attention to the Waco situation because she was preoccupied with political problems in Washington, that she uncritically accepted the FBI's plan of action, and that she developed the explanation for her actions — the explanation that amounted to a confession of mass murder — only as a public relations ploy, after the disaster had occurred. This suggestion is, I think, tantamount to Prof. Lomasky's suggestion that the Davidians were victims of "the evil of banality."

If this is the case, then Reno is innocent of mass murder, the crime to which she confessed; she would be guilty of mass negligent homicide — a

lesser crime, perhaps, but a serious crime nonetheless.

Carnage by Fire

I remain unconvinced that neither the FBI nor ATF "desired a denouement of carnage by fire," if only because past federal attempts to arrest (or serve warrants to) individuals or groups who hold unpopular views and exercise their constitutional right to own firearms have ended in fiery death and destruction of all evidence that might exonerate the accused. The siege of the Symbionese Liberation Army ended with their incineration. Gordon Kahl, who had survived an ambush of his North Dakota home by U.S. Marshals in February of 1983, fled to Arkansas where he was also consumed by fire in a confrontation with the FBI in June of that same year.

What would have happened if the FBI hadn't killed Koresh and destroyed all the evidence? We can only surmise. But we can see why the FBI might be concerned. According to Koresh's attorney, David DeGuerin, Koresh was confident that he would be exonerated in court after the standoff had ended, and was looking forward to defending himself in court.

Consider the case of Randy Weaver, the eccentric right-winger who was involved last year in a similar standoff in Idaho. Weaver had been accused of selling a sawed-off shotgun to a federal undercover agent but had not shown up for his trial in February, 1991. Explaining that he believed he could not get a fair trial, he had removed himself to an isolated cabin in northern Idaho, which he and his family had built from scrap lumber. There was an uneasy standoff, with Weaver and his family living peaceably in their isolated cabin, while U.S. Marshals "investigated."

A year and a half later, on August 21, 1992, "The group [of U.S. Marshals] came under fire from the fortresslike Weaver home, apparently without warning, and [U.S. Marshal William] Degan sustained a fatal gunshot wound," according to Henry E. Hudson, director of the U.S. Marshals Service. A siege began. It ended only after Col. Bo Gritz, a war hero who had known Weaver in Vietnam, got the FBI to allow Weaver to surrender peaceably.

Unlike Koresh, Weaver has now had his "day in court," and a lot has been learned about the confrontation. Weaver and another survivor of the siege were charged with the murder of Marshal Degan. At the trial, federal authorities were chastised by U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge for fabricating evidence (even faking photographs of the scene of the siege), hiding evidence that the assault on the Weaver family began with the U.S. Marshals firing the first shots, and withholding a wide variety of other evidence from the defense. We learned that the federal prosecutor had planned to drop the case against Weaver if he had shown up in court back in 1991.

The case against Weaver sounds ridiculous, if we are to believe the

I did not argue that Ms Reno is a mass murderer on the basis of an examination of physical evidence, the statements of witnesses, or expert testimony. The evidence I cited was her own confession.

Associated Press report of May 27: "Prosecutors have spent several days outlining for jurors their elaborate conspiracy theory, in which Mr Weaver and his family plotted for a decade to provoke a bloody confrontation with agents of a government they loathed." Apparently their theory is that in order to provoke a bloody confrontation with federal police, he isolated himself in the wilderness hoping that the feds would send a bunch of machine-gun toting agents onto his property to attack him and kill his wife and son.

As the case developed after Weaver's peaceful surrender, it emerged that practically every statement coming from federal authorities during the siege of the Weaver cabin was contradicted by subsequent statements from federal authorities and that many "facts" released by those authorities during the siege and dutifully reported in the press were simply false. The statement quoted above, for exam-

ple, contains two falsehoods. The agents did not come under fire "without warning"; in fact, they fired the first shots. The Weaver cabin was not in any way "fortresslike." It was constructed from scrap plywood, 2x4s and mill ends. As the siege progressed, the lies and contradictions continued: FBI and Marshal spokesmen variously reported that Degan had been killed by a single .223 caliber bullet from an AR-15 and from a .30-06 bullet from an old hunting rifle; the bullet was reported variously to have hit him in the sternum, the neck and the heart, while he was and was not wearing a bulletproof vest. During the week of August 24-30, federal spokesmen repeatedly told reporters that they were holding back because they feared Weaver's wife might get hurt, it turned out that a federal sniper had shot her dead while she held their infant daughter in her arms outside the cabin on August 23. Federal officials re-

The politicians and bureaucrats of Nazi Germany were an inept lot, yet they managed to create an industry of murder, a task far more complex than incinerating a group of buildings with 86 people inside.

peatedly reported that they were under fire from automatic weapons during the siege, just as they did during the Davidian siege. Yet when they searched the cabin and surrounding area after Weaver's surrender, they found not a single automatic weapon.

It is plain that if federal agents had managed to kill Weaver and burn over the site, as they did in the cases of Gordon Kahl and David Koresh, they would have saved themselves a lot of embarrassment.

The Initial Assault

I am not convinced by Prof. Lomasky's other argument that "confronting [the Davidians] with a full-fledged invasion army of 100 agents may seem to be a remarkably good idea." There were three problems with the original raid:

1) If there was substantial evidence that Koresh or his followers might react violently to any attempt to serve him with a search warrant, why did ATF inform local television stations of the attack two days in advance, and invite the stations to send reporters and camerapersons to accompany the assault? Surely, ATF had to know that seeking publicity in advance of the raid would give notice to those inside the compound, enabling them to prepare for a confrontation.

2) In the past Koresh had peacefully submitted to warrants when approached in a normal fashion, without an attack force of a hundred heavily armed men breaking into his home, while attack helicopters hovered overhead. Koresh also frequently left the compound. According to the affidavit filed supporting the search warrant, ATF knew that nearly all the guns in the compound were locked up and only Koresh had a key. Why wasn't Koresh served in the conventional fashion? Or, if ATF feared a violent confrontation (as it surely must have, else why did it put together a virtual army to serve the warrant?), why didn't ATF wait to serve the warrant when Koresh was off in Waco and the Davidians' guns locked away?

3) The original ATF attack was ostensibly an attempt to serve a search warrant because it suspected Koresh of violating a federal licensing law. Does violation of a licensing law justify an assault of this magnitude?

I have read the search warrant and the affidavit on which it was based. Here is what it contains:

- A report from a Sheriff's deputy that one afternoon he heard a "loud explosion in the area" and "as he drove toward the area where he thought the explosion had occurred he observed a large cloud of grey smoke dissipating from the ground";

- An anonymous statement that "Marshal Keith Butler . . . a machinist by trade . . . is associated with Vernon Howell . . . Butler has been arrested on seven (7) occasions since 1984 for unlawful possession of drugs . . . Two of the arrests resulted in convictions . . .";

- Statements that Koresh had reportedly engaged in sex with a variety of young women and had engaged in "child abuse";

- The statements of dissident Davidians and the families of Davidians that the Davidians possessed fully automatic weapons, whose possession requires a federal license;

- The statement by a United Parcel Service driver that Koresh or his representative had paid for C.O.D. items with cash;

- A search of Treasury records did not reveal that the Davidians had acquired a license for the possession of automatic weapons;

- A huge amount of evidence that the Davidians had acquired items that could be used to manufacture weapons requiring licenses (e.g. 30 cardboard tubes). None of the items purchased were illegal and none required licenses;

- The statement of an ATF agent who testified that on December 4, 1992, he had interviewed Joyce Sparks, a social worker, who told him that she had visited the "compound" on April 6, 1992, at which time she spoke to a 7-year-old boy who wanted to grow up so he could get a "long gun" like the older members of the group. "She said that during her conversation with Koresh, he told her that he was the 'Messenger' from God, that the world was coming to an end, and that when he 'reveals' himself the riots in Los Angeles would pale in comparison to what was going to happen in Waco, Texas";

- The statement of Robert Carvenka, a neighbor, that he had heard the sound of automatic weapons fire coming from the Davidian property. Carvenka had served in the military and could identify the sound of automatic weapons fire.

Does this evidence constitute "probable cause" that evidence of a federal crime was concealed on the Davidian property? I have my doubts.

Unless it is now illegal to "associate" with a machinist who has used drugs or to have noise that sounds like "an explosion" and have "smoke" coming from your house, these two bits of evidence seem pretty irrelevant.

The statements about "child abuse" and Koresh's having sex with young women are plainly red herring, since neither offense violates any federal law. The affidavit does not mention, by the way, the fact that these charges had previously been investigated and dropped by state authorities.

The UPS driver's statement that

Koresh had paid cash for C.O.D. items is simply irrelevant: use of cash is not illegal in the United States. Further, C.O.D. deliveries by UPS must be paid in cash unless the shipper specifically releases UPS from liability in the event that a check tendered for payment is returned for insufficient funds.

The statements by dissident members of the religious group are dubious. For one thing, the agent who took the evidence did not cite any evidence that any of the witnesses had even passing familiarity with automatic weapons or could distinguish between an AR-15 (a perfectly legal semi-automatic rifle) and an M-16 (an automatic rifle that requires a license). As I understand the law, this renders their testimony virtually worthless. Besides, the testimony of the dissidents ought to be discounted out of simple prudence. They had very strong motivations to cause trouble for Koresh. Consider the following case:

Let us suppose that you and your spouse had a horrible fight, characterized by fervent anger, ugly words and nasty accusations, resulting in your spouse moving out of the home. Let us suppose your spouse goes to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and tells them that you are distilling alcohol without a proper license.

The ATF checks with your supermarket and learns that you have over the past few years on numerous occasions purchased sugar and on a few occasions purchased yeast, and verifies with your local utility that you have purchased water. You have acquired all the ingredients needed to manufacture alcohol. The ATF also checks the Treasury's records and verifies that you have never acquired a license to make alcohol.

In every detail, this situation is identical to the Davidians': there is testimony from an angry former close associate

anxious to cause you trouble, there is evidence that you acquired the means to manufacture a product whose manufacture requires a license and there is evidence that you had not obtained the license. Is this evidence — "probable cause" — sufficient for you to lose your right to privacy in your home as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment?

The statement by Joyce Sparks, the social worker, is both irrelevant and contains an obvious fabrication. She

automatic weapons fire.

Does any of this, or all of it taken together, constitute "probable cause" of a violation of federal law and justify an armed attack?

Was ATF motivated by a simple, if wrongheaded, desire to enforce the law? In the past few years, ATF has been targeted by critics for abolition, and this year with Congress searching for ways to cut spending, it is especially vulnerable. It is certainly possible that ATF staged the raid to generate good publicity, to prevent its coming under the budgetary knife. CBS's *Sixty Minutes* reported that a huge sexual harassment scandal at ATF was about to surface when the raid occurred — perhaps ATF wanted to deflect public attention from this problem.

ATF probably expected its huge show of force to result in a quick surrender by the Davidians. It is not difficult to imagine how the story would play out on television, first on the local news, then on a network "reality program": stern-faced ATF agents get into their bullet-proof gear, load their weapons, and are transported to the remote location; they surround the fortress and attack; they fire off a few shots, perhaps killing a few evil cultists; they display the guns found at the compound, while an ATF agent explains that there was sufficient firepower

for a war (not mentioning that the guns were perfectly legal), a statement would follow from a high-level ATF bureaucrat explaining how the ATF had again protected Americans from civil destruction. And then the payoff: the congress-people who had been considering abolishing ATF decide they can make cuts elsewhere in the federal budget.

Waco: Some Truth Comes Out

Reproduced above is a letter from President Clinton written to Stephen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1993

Mr. Stephen Cox
University of California
San Diego, California

Dear Stephen:

Thank you for your letter. I share your concern about the recent situation near Waco, Texas. I was deeply disturbed by the tragic loss of life there. It is especially appalling that innocent children may have suffered at the hands of David Koresh and other members of the Branch Davidian cult.

The compound had been under surveillance for some time, and federal agents determined that cult members were illegally stockpiling weapons. The large number of guns and ammunition and the presence of children near such weapons led agents to begin seizure of the compound. That action provoked the first confrontation, which left four federal agents dead and many other people injured.

After peaceful negotiations had stalled, the appropriate law enforcement agencies, in consultation with Attorney General Janet Reno, formulated a plan that was intended to cause the least harm to cult members while forcing them out of the compound. Tear gas was used because it causes no permanent damage, and it is effective in evacuating the people from a targeted area.

As President, I take full responsibility for the actions of federal agents in Waco. I have ordered a full review of the case to be conducted by both the Justice Department and the Treasury Department to determine what happened and what can be done in the future to handle similar situations better.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

spoke to Koresh on April 6, yet the Los Angeles riots, which she claims he warned her would be repeated in Waco, did not begin until the end of April.

This leaves the testimony of the neighbor. Here we at last have reasonable testimony that an unlicensed automatic weapon was on the Davidian property. However, the affidavit did not mention the fact that the neighbor had reported the incident to the Sheriff, who had investigated the matter, and learned that Koresh had a "hell-fire device," which simulated the sound of au-

Cox, who wrote a critical analysis of the killing of 86 men, women and children near Waco, Texas, on April 19 ("Darkness at Noon," June 1993).

It is an interesting document. Clinton's statement that the children "may have suffered at the hands of David Koresh and other members of the Branch Davidian cult," continues his administration's absurd claim that the "ultimate rationale" (press spokesman

Numerous federal attempts to arrest individuals who hold unpopular views and exercise their constitutional right to own firearms have ended in fiery death and destruction of all evidence that might exonerate the accused.

George Stephanopoulos' words) for the attack on the Davidians was that Koresh engaged in child abuse. Clinton was echoing Reno's attempt to justify the final assault on the grounds that the children present were being abused. When pressed for details, she said that "the children were being forced to live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions."

This justification is false in so many ways that it is shocking that Clinton would continue to argue for it:

1) Child abuse is not a federal offense. If it were, it would not fall within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

2) The Davidians had already been accused and exonerated of child abuse by officials of Texas, under whose jurisdiction such charges fall.

3) The children who left the compound after the initial ATF attack but before the FBI assault of April 19 were healthy, happy, and well cared for, according to Bob Boyd, head of Children's Protective Services in Waco, the welfare agency in charge of investigating charges of child abuse.

4) The accusation that the children were subjected to unsanitary and unhealthy conditions conveniently omitted the fact that the cause of such conditions was the FBI, which had cut off sewer

lines and supplies of fresh water to the compound.

5) Most bizarrely of all, Clinton's claim omits the facts that, shortly before the children's deaths, the FBI attacked them with poison gas, and that the cause of their death was fire that resulted from the FBI assault on the compound. There was child abuse at the Davidian property, but the FBI was the perpetrator.

In the second paragraph, Clinton lies again: "The large number of guns and ammunition and the presence of children near such weapons led agents to begin seizure of the compound." According to virtually all claims by ATF about its original attack on the Davidian property, its purpose was to serve a search warrant, not to seize the property. Further, the affidavit supporting the search warrant includes the statement from a government agent that the guns were kept in a locked location that was kept secret from the children.

In the next paragraph, Clinton makes another curious claim: "Tear gas was used because it causes no permanent damage, and it is effective in evacuating the people from a targeted area." The FBI did not use what is commonly referred to as tear gas, technically known as chloroacetophenone, abbreviated CN. It used something much more powerful: a white powder, technically known as o-chlorobenzalmalononitrile, more commonly known as CS.

CS is described by *The Hazardous Chemicals Desk Reference* as "moderately toxic by inhalation" when dispersed into the air. Within seconds, it incapacitates its victims, causing extreme burning, tearing, coughing, difficulty in breathing and chest tightness, blindness, dizziness, vomiting, and nausea. According to Amnesty International, CS has resulted in as many as 80 deaths worldwide, and is "particularly dangerous when used in massive quantities in heavily built-up or populated areas . . . or when launched directly into homes or other buildings." In 1985, the *Washington Post* reported that Israeli soldiers and police in Gaza had "violated the manufacturer's printed warnings by firing the gas into enclosed areas such as rooms or small courtyards. Most experts agree that such misuses of the gas can be harmful, especially to small children." It

is so dangerous that an international treaty prohibits its use in warfare.

CS may also have played an important role in the fire that quickly engulfed the compound. According to its "Material Data Safety Sheet," published by the Chemical and Biological Defence Agency, its flash point is 386° F and its explosive concentration is 0.025 grams/liter (or about 1/1200 of an ounce per quart of air). Pouring CS into enclosed buildings for six hours might very well result in reaching the "explosive concentration" of 0.025 grams/liter, or about 1/1200 of an ounce per quart of air.

Maybe this has something to do with the warnings that it ought never be used indoors. It also suggests that the CS may have played an important role in the fire that quickly engulfed the compound, although ATF has subsequently produced an expert who discounts that possibility.

This is the chemical that the FBI poured into the Davidian buildings for six hours during the assault on April 19, the chemical that Clinton claims "was intended to cause the least harm to cult members." As if deliberately trying to contradict the Clinton administration's claim that its "ultimate rationale" for the gas attack was concern for the welfare of the children, the FBI admitted that they believed the children inside the buildings had no protection from CS gas.

In his final paragraph, Clinton attempts again "to take full responsibility" for the affair, apparently to try to mitigate his attempts to dodge responsibility during the first hours after the holocaust.

In the meantime, Janet "The-buck-stops-here-I-take-full-responsibility" Reno continues to bask in popularity. It has been so long since a politician took the blame when something went wrong that Americans see Reno as a hero, overlooking her role in the affair. "You've raised the responsibility and accountability of public service to an incredibly high level in a way we've never seen before," gushed Colorado Congressperson Pat Schroeder. "You're a lot more than a breath of fresh air." That's for sure — she was a gust of lethal gas. I wonder what Schroeder would have said if Adolf Eichmann had forthrightly taken responsibility for

continued on page 56

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Case Study

Operation No Hope

by Jesse Walker

The U.S. military will go anywhere, pay any price to . . . well, in this case to impose the U.N.'s idea of proper government on a Third World country.

On June 5, 1993, Pakistani troops deployed under the banner of the United Nations fired into a crowd in Somalia, killing civilians, including children. It was not the first time U.N. soldiers had fired on Somalis, but it has become the most publicized. The event was only the latest in a

series of actions against Mohammed Farrah Aidid, the powerful warlord reputedly guilty of mass murder, grand larceny, and, most damning in the eyes of the multinational force, resisting the dictates of the United Nations. The Pakistanis asserted that they had been under attack from Aidid's gunmen; the civilians, they said, had been used as human shields. Killing them was an unfortunate by-product of defending themselves. The U.S. government agreed.

That is certainly possible. It also evades the real issue. The U.S./U.N. mission in Somalia — "Operation Restore Hope" — was supposed to be a humanitarian one. Troops were there to protect food shipments, not to fight a war; indeed, we had been repeatedly assured that we were *not* being drawn into a violent conflict. How did this "humanitarian mission" devolve into the sorry spectacle of nervous troops shooting unarmed women and children? To answer that question, one must pose another: how did we get into Somalia in the first place — and why?

The Road to Intervention

In October of 1969, Major General Mohammed Siad Barre overthrew

Somalia's elected government and began two decades of dictatorial rule. Barre embraced the rhetoric of Marxism and the practice of third-world thuggism, sitting atop a corrupt, nonproductive national elite that casually murdered its opponents. Casting his eyes toward long-disputed Kenyan and (especially) Ethiopian territories, Barre began an intense military build-up sponsored by his new ally, the Soviet Union. In 1977 he invaded Ethiopia's Ogaden region. Victory seemed assured.

But a funny thing happened on the way to Greater Somalia: the U.S.S.R. switched sides. Suddenly, the East Bloc weapons — and then Cuban soldiers — were with the Ethiopians. Barre completed the Cold War do-si-do by moving into the Western orbit. His nation lost its war with Ethiopia, but by 1982 was one of Africa's largest recipients of U.S. economic and military aid, receiving over \$600 million during the '80s.

This shift in foreign policy did not bring an improvement in domestic human rights conditions. Barre's government killed tens of thousands. The National Security Service — the hated

secret police — intimidated any real, potential, or imagined dissidents it could find, often with the help of the paramilitary "Victory Pioneers." And, in classic totalitarian fashion, the central government declared war on all authorities and associations outside the state. The intention, in the words of Rakiya Omaar, was "to dismantle the institutions that allowed people to articulate their grievances and that provided a framework for the resolution of conflict." A Somali herself, Omaar served as executive director of Africa Watch until she was fired for opposing the U.N.'s intervention.

Meanwhile, though the economic rhetoric and surface reforms shifted from "socialist" to "capitalist," the system itself remained essentially the same: a privileged elite using the power of the state to live off the work of others. The Somali government and the private interests that depended on it stole land from indigenous farmers, camels and goats from herders, and food from aid agencies. Omaar and Alex de Waal give the details:

[The] "pencil looters" who sit in offices are the same people behind the

"gun looters" who raid villages, hold up convoys, and start wars. . . . The tactics used against the population are straightforward; storm villages (often at night) firing guns to frighten away villagers, and collect "taxes" at checkpoints on roads and bridges. . . .

In Somalia, the most poor and marginal rural farmers — the Rahanweyn and Digil clans and the Bantu peoples — were stripped of many of their assets well before Siad Barre was driven from power in January 1991. In 1988, a traditional leader of a sub-clan of the Rahanweyn, who had the misfortune to border Siad Barre's Marehan clan, described his relations with the Marehan as "total war." He estimated that more than half of the fertile riverain land once farmed by his people had been seized, much of it at gunpoint.

Lower down the Juba valley, the expropriation of land was on a far greater scale and had been going on for much longer. Much of it was sanctioned as "development." Meanwhile, as the local people became more vulnerable and destitute, they took work on the confiscated farms for a pittance, or turned to pilfering from the plantations and foraging for grass between the banana trees.*

The foreign aid establishment played a crucial role in this horror. Not only did Western policymaker's "structural adjustment policies" provide cover for the looting of the Somali populace; not only did U.S. military assistance, like Soviet assistance before it, bolster the strength of the Somali state against its own citizens; but food aid became a weapon in a war of deceit that paved the way for the current crisis.

As the '80s progressed, many ethnic Somalis began fleeing Ethiopia for Somalia, providing Barre with an opportunity to demand yet more aid from his foreign benefactors. They obliged. Barre's government claimed its country was holding 1.3 million refugees; in fact, the number was closer to 800,000 — perhaps less. What was happening to the food sent for the half-million-plus refugees who weren't there?

A lot of it was being sold — a help-

ful "income supplement" for any officer willing to take part in the system of institutionalized corruption. And some was going to the army, to ration its sporadic attacks on the Ogaden region. These attacks, in turn, provoked the Ethiopian government into more reprisals against ethnic Somalis, leading to more calls for aid to the growing refugee population. And so the cycle re-fueled itself.

Meanwhile, the refugee camps were not having a particularly helpful impact on the Somali economy. Nomads, who in the past had turned during droughts to the intricate mutual aid network of the Somali clan system, now had another alternative: the camps. Not only was a strong part of the indigenous economy thus eroded by the camp-aid system, but public health became a greater problem. Former USAID food monitor Michael Maren explains: "[T]he barren Somali economy won't support a lot of people in one place. Out in the desert, one family might have eight or ten square miles of land for grazing their camels and goats at any given time. In the camps they were packed into a few square yards. Sanitation, which isn't much of an issue when you're alone in the desert, became a source of disease and death. For many of the refugees, the camps might as well have been concentration camps. Once they were in, they were hooked. The desert was their barbed wire."

This too was at least partly planned. Maren comments:

African leaders like to settle nomads. Nomads make it hard to build a socialist state. Nomads can't be taxed, they can't be drafted, and they can't be controlled. They also can't be used to attract foreign aid. . . .

In addition, many African leaders, trying hard to be modern, view nomads as an embarrassment and a nuisance. From Bamako to Nairobi I've listened to Africa's elite discuss nomads as if they were vermin. They'd rather have their countries symbolized by gaudy, foreign-built hotels than by poorly clothed people with cattle.†

This view was only encouraged by

the dispensers of foreign aid and advice. Pastoralism simply didn't fit into their economic models, which favored sedentary living and wasn't capable of dealing with the unmeasurable "income" of a herder. Better to ignore the nomads' contributions to the economy than to come up with a means for measuring them. Better to give out economic advice that pretended the herders weren't there.

Individual aid workers protested the disastrous consequences of their employers' policies, but the agencies themselves, by and large, stayed quiet. Most, despite their status as "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs),

The end of old-fashioned imperialism brought something new and in many cases worse: tinpot indigenous dictators who denounce the West even as they rake in Western aid.

were dependent on government contracts, and those contracts meant steady income. Despite their rhetoric about teaching self-sufficiency, most of the aid agencies were basically in the business of dumping food abroad. And if the aid did more to prop up the government that was making the aid necessary than to alleviate the country's problems — well, then, that just means more contracts to deliver more aid. It's not that the relief agencies were run by cynical profiteers. Bureaucratic self-preservation had set in, and few groups were immune.

Following two years of civil war, Siad Barre was finally ousted in early 1991. During that time, he introduced a military tactic to his nation that would subsequently be implemented on a wide and tragic scale: deliberate starvation of the enemy. For most of this time, U.S. military aid to Barre's regime continued, despite widespread reports of rampant human rights abuses.

With Barre gone, the fighting only intensified. Kin-based gangs jostled for power, with the forces of Aidid and of Ali Mahdi Mohammed dominating the struggle. Both militias played the food-

* Alex de Waal and Rakiya Omaar, "Somalia: Adding 'Humanitarian Intervention' to the U.S. Arsenal," *Covert Action Quarterly*, Spring 1993.

† Michael Maren, "Manna from Heaven?: Somalia Pays the Price for Years of Aid," *Village Voice*, January 19, 1993.

weapon card.

The U.N. Stumbles

When the Marines first came ashore in Somalia, we were told that international intervention in the conflict was a necessity. Internal order had broken down, and regional intervention was out of the question. Who but the U.N., led by the American military, could bring peace?

How about Djibouti? The tiny country to Somalia's immediate north had invited representatives of each of the

Operation Restore Hope has devolved into a sorry spectacle of nervous troops shooting unarmed women and children.

major clans to a peace conference in July of 1991, six months after Barre's fall. At that time, the U.N. would not participate.

Or what about Eritrea? The reborn nation in what was previously (and, on State Department maps, still is) Northern Ethiopia offered to send in a peace-keeping force in 1992, and managed to get the agreement of both Aidid and Ali Mahdi — but not the U.N.

In fact, the United Nations was doing its best to ignore Somalia for much of the civil war, even as reports of mass graves, deliberate starvation, and senseless violence continued to leak out. When Ali Mahdi's faction requested a special session of the General Assembly to deal with the Somali mess, Undersecretary General for Special Political Questions James Jonah refused: "The consensus of views here is that it is most unlikely that the General Assembly could accept the convening of a special session. . . . We would suggest that you endeavor to discourage at the local level any idea for holding a special session on Somalia." The U.N.'s envoys to Somalia (a group that at one point included Jonah) were universally incompetent, incapable of talking to real Somalis or even trying to understand the intricacies of the conflict.

Until Mohammed Sahnoun came along.

Appointed envoy in April 1992, Sahnoun quickly began to talk with representatives of all the factions and everyone in-between, down to schoolboys on the street. For once, there was a U.N. envoy who earned the respect of Somalis, who actually lived in Mogadishu, who publicly criticized the U.N. bureaucracy, who stood a good chance of bringing the warring clan leaders to the peace table. For months, Sahnoun worked to break down clan barriers and get the Somalis to talk peace. Then, he was fired.

He had been too critical of his superiors in the U.N. hierarchy, too willing to act without "clearance," too unorthodox. Maybe he was too successful.

With Sahnoun out, the U.N. reverted to its old policy habits. Less than two months later, on December 9, 1992, the Marines hit the beaches. The military intervention was underway.

Operation Restore Hope

The mission was called Operation Restore Hope. By now, the name is a sick joke.

The original justification for the intervention was to guard aid shipments against looters; according to the U.N. and CARE, aid agencies were losing 80% of their cargo to bandits. But while this may have been true of the incompetent U.N. operation, private relief agencies were only losing 10–20% of their shipments. The Red Cross, which declined military escorts, continues to run a more efficient operation than the U.N.

Most efficient of all, but least wealthy in resources, were the local non-government organizations; over half the successful relief efforts prior to the intervention came from domestic self-help efforts. (Not surprisingly, Save the Children [U.K.], which tries to strengthen grassroots institutions by working through local groups whenever possible, has far outperformed the United Nations. The U.N., in fact, constantly snubs local talent.)

The famine itself peaked in the summer of 1992; by the time the Marines arrived, some regions were actually seeing food *surpluses*. By now, the prime killer in Somalia, after direct violence, is not starvation, but disease — a factor that the "rescuers," by herding

Somalis into germ-trap encampments, only exacerbated. At the same time, many farmers have started to have trouble selling their harvest because prices are being undercut by the aid shipments. American farmers, their exports subsidized, benefit. Somali farmers are hurt.

Meanwhile, U.S./U.N. efforts to confiscate weaponry have led, not to a decrease in violence, but to a concentration of weaponry in the hands of the most dangerous clans. It's easy to see why: those most likely to give up their guns were those most likely to use them only for defensive purposes. Those most likely to want to hang onto their guns but least able to do so were those least responsible for the orgy of violence — bit players on the destructive scene. And who were most likely to use weapons for sinister purposes, and most able to hold onto them? The biggest factions, of course — most notably, that of Farrah Aidid.

It's an anti-gun-control cliché that when guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns. Somalia proves the point.

When the media wasn't focusing on guns, they were denouncing that other

The famine itself peaked in the summer of 1992; by the time the Marines arrived, some regions were actually seeing food surpluses.

establishment bugaboo: drugs. Countless news reports, fanned by official military statements, blamed the drug *khat* for driving bandits to kill and steal without mercy; racist stereotypes of drug-crazed, gun-toting black people grabbing other people's food replaced serious analysis of the Somali situation. But in fact, *khat* is only a mild stimulant. Bandits may be chewing it, but there is no demonstrable causal link between the drug and their behavior, any more than there is between American military behavior and the consumption of coffee and cigarettes.

All in all, there was a lot of snide commentary in the American media at

the start of the operation about how Somalia was "the ideal libertarian state": no regulations, no gun control, no drug laws, no welfare — and, hence no order. Actually, outside of the southwest corridor from Mogadishu to Baidoa and Kismayu, statelessness spawned a spontaneous order that worked remarkably well. Said Samatar, a Somali professor of history at Rutgers, wrote about this in the Manchester *Guardian* only a few days before the operation began: "The rest of the country is relatively peaceful and well governed by an alliance of traditional elders and local leaders that has reemerged in the wake of the collapse of central authority."

For all his centralizing bluster, Siad Barre could never wipe out the associations that are the lifeblood of Somali civic life. Institutions like the *guurti* — the assembly of elders — continue to provide a grassroots, mutual-aid-based order that murderous governments like Barre's could never confer. Operation Restore Hope undermined this relatively stable situation. The initial intervention had been directed toward the violent southwest corridor, especially Mogadishu. The U.N. occupation forced the bandits into the once-stable countryside, where looting and diversion of food supplies soared.

As the months passed by, Somali opinion began to turn against the invaders. Before the operation even began, Samatar had warned against giving the impression that "the U.S. was about to recolonize their country." In the initial stages of any intervention in Somalia, he wrote, U.S. or U.N. troops would probably be seen as liberators, heroically driving away the rapacious warlords. If military action was to succeed, it must maintain this moral high ground. It must not begin to take all the trappings of imperial authority.

Operation Restore Hope did just that. Local networks were snubbed or misused in favor of a foreign power structure with its own agenda. The populace was stripped of its arms — and increasingly treated as an occupied nation. Which, it soon became clear, it was.

Is it any wonder that this "humanitarian" effort was doomed to failure? Is it any wonder that it has degenerated

into either massacres of unarmed women and children, or the callous use of civilians as human shields, depending on which reports from the field you choose to believe?

Cui Bono?

Ultimately, in order to determine why American lives are in jeopardy defending bad policy in the Horn of Africa, it's necessary to look past all the

U.S. efforts to confiscate weaponry have led but to a concentration of weaponry in the hands of the most dangerous clans.

obfuscation and ask ourselves who really benefits from our Somalia policy.

One oft-cited explanation for the intervention is the domestic goodwill it might have accrued for its originator, George Bush. That is all well and good, but does not explain why Bill Clinton would be so gung ho to not just continue but expand the policy.

Some observers have also suggested that Operation Restore Hope was fueled in part by the neo-conservative foreign policy elite's growing Islamophobia. With the (mis)perception of a "global intifada" driven by "resurgent Islamic fundamentalism" so widespread in Washington circles, it is argued, a subdued Somalia could provide the U.S. with a foothold against the alleged threat and a base from which to defend the "moderates" in power in Saudi Arabia.

Perhaps. But there is more to this intervention than that. In the end, four culprits stand out.

- First, there's the oil card. Four Western companies — Conoco, Amoco, Chevron,

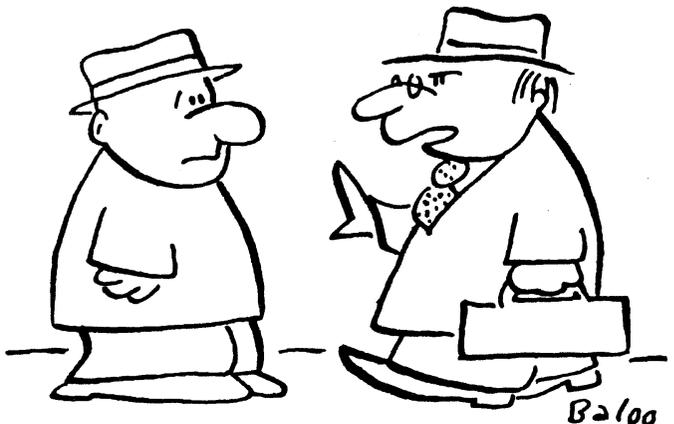
and Phillips Petroleum — control oil development rights to two-thirds of Somalia. This includes the land of the Republic of Somaliland, the secessionist northern region that declared its independence in May 1991 but has yet to receive international recognition. These are politically powerful corporations who want their overseas investments protected.

Could they have had any influence on U.S. policy in the region? It's very likely. In fact, during the initial stages of the operation Conoco's corporate compound in Somalia was transformed into the *de facto* U.S. embassy.

- The Pentagon has gained yet another excuse for demanding public monies. With the "humanitarian intervention" precedent set — intervention without even a pretense of serving the national interest — the search for a post-Cold War mission has broken new ground.

They've also gotten some valuable P.R. If a picture is worth a thousand words, could a picture of a Marine giving food to hungry Africans be worth a thousand dollars?

- The United Nations has also received a useful precedent. In Somalia, it established its right to send a multinational peace-keeping force into a "needy" country without that nation's consent — theoretically a legal requirement for such a U.N. action — when there is "no legitimate government" available to invite it in. Since the U.N. has conferred upon itself the right to determine political legitimacy, this could be very useful for it indeed. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Chali — who served as Egyptian for-



"Back off, buster — I happen to be a civil servant!"

eign minister at a time when Egypt supported Siad Barre's regime — is a fervent proponent of a strong, activist U.N. Operation Restore Hope has helped him toward this goal.

• Finally, there are the groups *Economist* reporter Graham Hancock calls "the lords of poverty." The international aid establishment — notable worthies like Red Cross, Save the Children (U.K.), and Oxfam excepted — is reaping a harvest greater than most

Somalis are apt to see for a long time yet, despite these groups' role in bringing the crisis about. Agencies like USAID and CARE have developed a perverse incentive to prolong world hunger: it's what keeps them in business. Expect more money to flow into their coffers. Don't expect them to improve the situation.

What To Do?

Somalia is a mess from which the U.S. must find a way to extricate itself.

But getting out is only the beginning. The United States should do something to help Somalia get back onto its feet — and to prevent new Somalias from coming along.

This is possible. But it will require a whole new approach to international relations: a willingness to let third-worlders — and, in the wake of the Communist crack-up, second-worlders — control their own destiny.

The end of old-fashioned imperialism brought something new and in many cases worse: tinpot indigenous dictators who denounce the West even as they rake in Western aid. In Somalia, that aid led to what amounts to a restoration of the worst aspects of the imperial past.

The U.S. should stop dumping its agricultural surplus abroad under the guise of "foreign aid." Ideally, it should dismantle the federal agricultural subsidy nexus that produces that surplus. At the same time, it should remove the trade walls that prohibit the importation of farm products from the developing world.

Even more importantly, it should stop dispensing economic advice to the third world when that advice amounts to urging policies of economic dependency. And it should stop funding the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the agencies that dole out such advice as a mandated corollary of their loans.

In the meantime, the U.S. should phase out the food aid. Maybe give the Somalis farm implements, or some camels, or something similarly useful to tide them over after the aid shipments cease. But the U.S. ought to stop subsidizing disease, despotism, and desperados in a vain effort to stop world hunger.

As I write these words, there are over 4,400 American troops in Somalia. That's almost twice the number sent over in December. By the time this article sees publication, there probably will be even more. And there will be more incidents in which innocent unarmed civilians are shot by the "peace-keepers."

This is a quagmire. It could easily become another Lebanon — or Vietnam. □

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Survey

How Do I Loathe NPR? Let Me Count the Ways

by Glenn Garvin

Glenn Garvin spends a week in the never-never land of NPR, and finds it only fit for the self-lobotomized.

Every few years I make an anthropological visit to my sister's home out West. My sister — her name is withheld to protect the guilty — is a lifelong bureaucrat who's never worked for anyone who had to show a profit, and she is deeply suspicious of the whole concept. She'll drive miles across the city to poke through the out-of-copyright videotapes at the public library rather than spend two bucks to rent one at the Blockbuster down the street. She regards any financial transaction between two parties not employed by the government as vaguely shady, if not downright illicit.

Needless to say, she listens to National Public Radio.

Every morning that I stay at her house, I'm awakened at 6 a.m. by the droning baritone of Bob Edwards, the anchor of *Morning Edition*. The program stays on until 8:30, when my sister dashes to her car and switches it on there to listen to the final half-hour on her way to work. And in the afternoon I usually have to leave the house to avoid being driven to homicide by the discordant tinkling of the *All Things Considered* theme, which echoes from her radio from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Of course, lots of people have favorite news programs. I don't think my father missed more than half-a-dozen telecasts of *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* in his entire life. But what moves my sister's obsession with NPR from the mildly eccentric to the downright bizarre is that it's her sole source



of news. She never watches network television news, and she'll tune in a local program only when she knows it's running a story about one of her bureaucratic projects. She subscribes to a local paper, but only for the local arts listings.

This has led to some grave disappointments in my sister's life. She is still perplexed that the ERA didn't make it into the Constitution, since, she told me, NPR reported that the election of Jimmy Carter made it a sure

thing. And she was dumbfounded when the Christic Institute's lawsuit, which alleged that the entire national security apparatus of the U.S. government was nothing more than a drug ring, was dismissed by a federal judge before coming to trial. NPR, she said, had made it all sound so reasonable. (The fact that the suit was filed by an NPR stringer, to my sister's way of thinking, only confirmed its validity.)

Once in a while, I gently hint to my sister that her worldview might be

slightly better-rounded if she would acknowledge that perhaps Linda Wertheimer is not the final authority on everything under the sun. My suggestions are always met with scorn. "You can get your news from giant corporations if you want to," she snaps. "I'd rather get mine from people who aren't motivated by profit. I'd rather get my news from *people who think like me.*"

For a long time I considered my sister a harmless aberration — an upscale version of the guys you occasionally read about who think they get secret messages from Elvis through their fill-

My sister regards any financial transaction between two parties not employed by the government as vaguely shady, if not downright illicit. Needless to say, she listens to National Public Radio.

ings. But as the years have passed, I've met more and more people who share her fetish for NPR. In fact, NPR itself likes to brag about the cultish devotion of its listeners. The network's 1991 annual report includes letters from a number of hopelessly fixated groupies who regard NPR roughly the same way John Hinckley regarded Jodie Foster. One listener boasts that he and his wife recently drove from Buckhannon, W.Va., to Portland, Ore., and back, listening to NPR every foot of the 6,500 miles. Another, from Randolph, Mass., flatly declares: "If I am informed at all about anything current, it is because I listen to NPR."

With my sister, these listeners share the peculiar belief that they're better informed because they obtain all their information from a single source — that exposing themselves to an alternative would not only not *add* to their knowledge, but would actually *subtract* from it. Most NPR listeners, I'm sure, wouldn't trust an economist who bragged that he accepted only the scholarship of Milton Friedman, or a

politician who read only the works of Lenin. But somehow they think their own understanding of the world is enhanced by basing it exclusively on a news organization that labors in an antiquated, one-dimensional medium and whose entire staff wouldn't fill the city room at the *New York Times*

This is something of a mystery — that highly educated, well-to-do people (for that is what NPR's listeners are, mostly) would adapt the kind of intellectual isolationism that we would ordinarily associate with survivalist cults holed up in the Ozarks. Like survivalists, NPR listeners are not exactly numerous — "There are more people falling off the face of the Earth than there are listening to NPR," observes Bill McCleneghan, ABC Radio's vice president for research — but, like survivalists, their very existence is a troubling enigma. You always have to wonder: Do they know something the rest of us don't?

Last month I decided to get to the bottom of this. I became an undercover NPR listener. To my family and friends, I kept up a facade of normality, reading my regular newspapers and watching television news. But, in the privacy of my bedroom, away from the world's prying eyes, I got up every morning at 6 and listened to all three hours of *Morning Edition* (the length of the program varies from market to market). And every afternoon at 5, I mixed a stiff drink and settled in for 90 minutes of *All Things Considered*. My conclusion: I'd rather be a survivalist.

You Don't Have To Be Ted Kennedy To Listen to NPR, But It Helps

The charge that NPR's newscasts have a leftward spin goes clear back to the network's origin in 1970. Just two years later, Richard Nixon, angered by what he perceived as programming bias at NPR and its television cousins at the Public Broadcasting Service, vetoed their appropriations. He later reversed his decision, to the eternal dismay of conservatives, who've been braying about NPR ever since. "Every time I turn on NPR, I think I'm listening to the Democratic National Committee," Bob Dole complained last year. Nixon and Dole, of course, are hardly arbiters of political neutrality. But the truth is

that you don't have to be a graduate of the Spiro Agnew School of Korrek Journalism to recognize a persistent liberal bias in NPR newscasts. The evidence is all over the place, and it doesn't take a microscope to find it.

Take, for example, NPR's coverage of the battle over Bill Clinton's \$16 billion "economic stimulus" package. During the week I listened (April 12-16), this was a hot topic. Readers of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and just about every other newspaper in America knew that Senate Republicans had — against all expectations — stuck together in maintaining a filibuster against the bill, and that it was in serious trouble.

But I'll bet my sister and her friends had no idea.

All week, NPR portrayed an indomitable Bill Clinton riding a tidal wave of public support against a faceless and — more importantly, in the context of radio — voiceless Republican rabble. During the first three days of the week, NPR ran eleven stories on Clinton's campaign for the package, all of them centered around speeches by the president or Al Gore. For three full days, their voices echoed over the NPR airwaves, accusing Republicans of fighting to withhold immunizations from poor children and of being anti-progress. Often their soundbites were followed by the comments of NPR reporters, adding that audiences were "enthusiastic" or the president's message "struck a nerve."

For good measure, there was an interview with Cokie Roberts, noted NPR expert on you-name-it, in which she allowed as how there's "more than a little racism" in anyone who opposes aid to cities. And "senior news analyst" Daniel Schorr urged Clinton to stand up "in the name of principle" and tell those dirty partisan Republicans: "No more Mr Nice Guy. This is your president speaking."

And where was the Republican rebuttal to all this? Well, it wasn't to be found on NPR. It wasn't until the afternoon of April 15, the fourth day that I listened to the network, that I heard a Republican voice on the subject of the filibuster. And even then, it was a Republican analyst apparently conceding that the filibuster would probably collapse, but insisting it was a moral

victory nonetheless. The theme of reporter Elizabeth Arnold's story was that Republicans had taken advantage of the fact that Clinton had been "briefly" distracted by the death of his father-in-law. (Those bounders!)

"But the candidate whose discipline seldom faltered during a tumultuous election year is back on solid footing," Arnold reassured her listeners. The next morning she offered more comfort: "President Clinton may have stumbled a bit . . . but he's not ready to take a legislative fall." Actually, he was; the White House was already offering desperate compromises to moderate Republicans in hopes of salvaging some of the stimulus package, and in less than a week it would be stone-cold dead.

NPR took a similarly partisan course in coverage of another of the week's big stories, the discovery of a document in Soviet archives stating that the North Vietnamese held back several hundred American POWs when the two countries signed a peace treaty in 1973.

All week, NPR stories quoted anonymous congressional staffers expressing doubts about the authenticity of the document. Fair enough; there are a lot

For a long time I considered my sister a harmless aberration — an upscale version of the guys you read about who get secret messages from Elvis through their fillings. But as the years have passed, I've met more and more people who share her fetish for NPR.

of troublesome questions about its origin and contents.

On the other hand, there are also highly qualified people who argue that the document is genuine, including Zbigniew Brzezinski. And the Harvard researcher who found it, Stephen Morris, was in New York, where the *New York Times*, the *Washington Times*, and ABC's *Nightline* all managed to find him.

But NPR couldn't. In fact, NPR couldn't locate a single academic or politician or POW relative who believed in the document. The only voice that appeared on the radio all week in support of its authenticity was that of Sen. Robert Smith (R-N.H.) — and that was taped off a *Nightline* broadcast two nights earlier.

Although NPR couldn't track down Morris (the researcher who obtained the Soviet document), reporter John Greenberg *did* manage to find someone to impugn him. Greenberg interviewed John McAuliff of the U.S.-Indochina Reconciliation Project, who dismissed the document as a fake because Morris has "been involved in an active polemic against people who favor normalization of relations [between Vietnam and the U.S.] . . . He has a viewpoint."

Now, if Greenberg had called some conservative think tank or political organization, he might have gotten an additional comment something like this: "John McAuliff has been involved in licking the boots of Vietnamese communists for more than two decades, first as a prominent anti-war activist and now as a professional apologist, and of course he can't accept the document because it would prove that, for all these years, he's either been hopelessly stupid or willfully deceptive in his depiction of the Hanoi government. He has a viewpoint."

Do you think Greenberg made that phone call? Do you think pigs have wings? In the NPR dialectic, only anti-communists are suspected of partiality. So the broadcast made no mention at all of McAuliff's background. Similarly, when Robert Siegel interviewed Eugene Terre Blanche, the head of South Africa's Afrikaner Resistance Movement, he introduced him as a "right-wing extremist." (Accurate, even mild.) But during the interview, Siegel referred to Chris Hani, the recently murdered head of the South African Communist Party, only as "a popular black public figure." (Especially misleading because it appears Hani was killed less because of his race than because of his party affiliation.)

You might think that after two decades of threats from Republicans to lay waste to NPR, its reporters (or their editors, if such exist, which I doubt from the windiness of some of the pieces)

would at least make an effort to be more circumspect about coloring their stories. But it doesn't seem to work that way. Several times I heard them tripped up by their own reporting. For instance, one morning reporter Kathy Lohr filed a story about the Operation Rescue training camp in Florida where anti-abortion protesters learn the tricks of their trade. Lohr solemnly informed her listeners that the camp's executive director teaches anti-abortion troops

NPR's 1991 annual report includes letters from a number of hopelessly fixated groupies who regard NPR roughly the same way John Hinckley regarded Jodie Foster.

"not to use their own name" when gathering information about doctors who work in abortion clinics. But the soundbite from the executive director himself didn't quite square with her interpretation:

It's just better if they don't know who's asking for the information. We can surprise them with information a lot better that way, and they can't go back and try to cover their trail. So that's important. Use *other* people that aren't as well known as *you* may be. [Emphasis added.]

Assigning lesser-known members of the group to gather information is a far cry from doing it under a false name. Ethically speaking, it doesn't even strike me as a close call. And I'll bet that if Lohr were reporting on how pro-choice people sometimes infiltrate anti-abortion groups to gather information for lawsuits, she wouldn't have condemned the practice.

Sometimes NPR reporters were so thoroughly contradicted by their own stories that it was downright funny. My favorite was a story about Clinton and the news media by Andy Bowers. The thesis of the piece was that "the first few months of the Clinton administration seem to have strained the bond between the people and the press" because reporters have been so rough on Clinton.

To prove it, Bowers interviewed some residents of Jefferson City, Mo. Said the first one: "Media is doing their typical bashing [of] the guy in charge, like always. It's nice to see them do it to a Democrat." Chimed in another: "They baby him. They follow him around, they really don't challenge him." Added a third: "I don't believe George Bush in his first 100 days made near as many people mad as Bill Clinton."

Yup, it sounds like the citizens of Jefferson City are just about ready to

NPR reporters are the kinds of people who voted for Michael Dukakis and Bill Clinton, not as the lesser evils, but enthusiastically, in the firm belief that what the world needs is better social engineering.

storm the offices of the TV networks with torches and pitchforks, demanding fair play for Clinton. Lest there be any confusion, Bowers interviewed University of Missouri Journalism Professor George Kennedy. He explained just what those untutored Jefferson City louts, with their poor command of English, were really trying to say: "There's a fairly widely held sense in the public that there really ought to be a kind of honeymoon, that simple fairness dictates that the new president ought to have a chance to get his program up and running before we start picking it apart." (I wonder if Kennedy thinks the public was well-served when the news media let the Vietnam War get "up and running" before asking any tough questions.)

By the end of his report, even Bowers seemed hopelessly confused by what he was trying to say. He quoted a Los Angeles Times poll showing that two-thirds of those responding think the press is too chummy with the government. And there were more quotes from Jefferson City. "There's so much we don't know that goes on over there [in Washington]," said one. "The only way a reporter is gonna get on the inside is by playing the game," declared

another. It sounds to me like what Jefferson City wants is not a honeymoon but a divorce.

A Herd of Independent Minds

Laurence Jarvik, a conservative critic of public broadcasting, once asked plaintively: "Why is it that there's room at NPR for a practicing witch, but not a practicing conservative?" (By the way, this was not — as the uncharitable might have suspected — a reference to Nina Totenberg, but to reporter Margot Adler, who actually casts spells and stuff like that.)

This, I suspect, has a good deal to do with the ideological leakage into NPR's news. It's not that the network's editorial brain trust meets each morning to plot the day's campaign to rid America of Republican taint. It's that the newsroom is composed almost entirely of like-minded people who share one another's major philosophical precepts. When my sister says that she wants to hear news from *people who think like me*, she's put her finger on the problem.

Their thinking is apparent both in what they report and their approach to it. They believe that government is the fundamental agent of change, that government can and should solve most problems. They believe most of those solutions involve spending large sums of money. They believe that taxes are not only an appropriate way of raising money, but an important social responsibility. They believe that, although individuals cannot always be trusted to make correct choices, bureaucrats usually can.

In short, NPR reporters are the kinds of people who voted for Michael Dukakis and Bill Clinton, not as the lesser evils, but enthusiastically, in the firm belief that what the world needs is better social engineering.

Their umbilical attachment to the state is most clearly visible when it comes to stories concerning taxation. NPR reporters will have their eyes put out with red-hot poker before they'll question the sanctity of a tax — any tax. Consider a story filed by Daniel Zwerdling, NPR's correspondent in Nairobi.

"Kenya's government is close to going bankrupt," Zwerdling said by

way of introduction. "Hospitals can't afford to buy medicines. The national telephone system is breaking down. Schools can't afford to buy benches, so children sit on the floor. And when you call the police to tell them thieves are breaking into your house, the police say they can't help you unless you give them a ride because they don't have cars."

And why is Kenya broke? "One root of the problem is that most of the people who are supposed to pay taxes never do," Zwerdling explained. And it must be the most important root, in his eyes, because he never identified another. The rest of the story was about a new tax-collection system that has been blocked by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi.

In point of actual fact, Kenya ought to be able to make its government work without collecting a shilling in taxes. Until recently, the country was getting a staggering \$1 billion a year in Western aid, which ought to have covered the entire Kenyan budget with money left over for doughnuts all around. But in 1991, the donor nations began cutting back because of the breathtaking waste and theft that go on in Kenya's 300 or so state-owned industries. (One particularly nimble Kenyan kleptocrat, former energy minister Nicholas Biwott, is estimated by the British government to have made off with "hundreds of millions of dollars" all by himself.)

Ask any foreign diplomat or independent economist in Nairobi for the top five reasons that the Kenyan economy is crumbling, and tax collection will be at the bottom of the list — if it's mentioned at all. But at NPR, it leads the hit parade.

If NPR reporters were scandalized by the reluctance of Kenyan cattleherders to keep funding London penthouses for that nation's thieving rulers, then imagine how they feel about comparatively affluent Americans who try to beat the tax system. As April 15 approached, NPR correspondents foamed at the mouth about the dire consequences of tax evasion. In North Carolina, NPR reported, the government will put your name in the paper. In Virginia, they'll put it on television. And stiffing Uncle Sam (who, coincidentally, funds NPR's sugar daddies at the Corporation for Public Broad-

casting) — well, don't even think about it. "If you plan to miss the deadline or try to do some fancy paper shuffling on deductions," warned *All Things Considered* host Linda Wertheimer in her sternest voice, "you may want to think again."

Her warning was somewhat undercut by the interview that followed, in which a *Forbes'* editor said the IRS only audits 1 percent of all tax returns. But Wertheimer did perk up considerably when the editor agreed that "if they [the IRS] catch you, they can kill you."

"What do you mean?" inquired Wertheimer excitedly. Her enthusiasm dampened only slightly upon learning that the word *kill* had been used metaphorically.

To their credit, NPR reporters do seem to have a vague notion that some Americans don't share their zeal for taxes. So when the White House floated a trial balloon suggesting that Clinton is considering a value-added tax (VAT), they tried to soften the blow. Bob Edwards interviewed NPR reporter Patricia Neighmond about how the VAT works. After she explained that it

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entails taxing each and every step of a product's manufacture, Edwards observed that as the taxes mounted, there would be "an increasingly higher price on the product."

"Well, it would seem so," Neighmond replied, apparently holding out some hope that friendly emissaries from the planet Zork would swoop down and pay the taxes, sparing Earthlings the pain.

Later that day, on *All Things Considered*, Daniel Schorr carefully instructed his listeners that they shouldn't blame Clinton for the VAT. "The fact is that having in February re-

jected the idea of a VAT tax, Mr Clinton is being forced to consider it again," Schorr affirmed. Alas, this raised more questions than it answered. Who, exactly, was forcing the president? Did Hillary have her cattle prod out again? Was Janet Reno threatening to send FBI agents over to the White House to practice Texas fire drills?

Schorr, obviously constrained by national security concerns, wouldn't say. But, he consoled, the VAT has its charms. "What makes it attractive," he noted, "is what has made it attractive to European countries and Canada." Here the veteran reporter was clearly the victim of a technical glitch. What he was trying to say was, *what has made it attractive to European countries and Canada, compared to being sodomized by a herd of rabid camels*. As the next morning's *Post* reported, "it would be hard to find a person, institution or program in Canada that is hated more" than the VAT.

Undaunted, Schorr continued: "On the plus side, a value-added tax could raise so much money that it might be possible to offer cuts in other taxes." As he spoke, I could almost hear a sigh of relief echoing from Takoma Park and the rest of the NPR ghettos around Washington. Schorr had saved the day. Most estimates have put the maximum potential revenue from VAT at around \$68 billion. Meanwhile, estimates of the cost of Hillary's new health program (which is what the VAT is supposed to fund) range anywhere from \$100 billion to \$150 billion. Only a steel-trap mind like Schorr's could have performed the complex mathematical functions necessary to turn a \$30 billion shortfall into a tax-cutting surplus.

Literally no subject is safe from NPR's love affair with taxes. Even a piece on how name-brand products are losing market share to generics ended with a wild (and, of course, unanswered) tirade by an anti-smoking nazi demanding a 40-cents-a-pack tax on cigarettes.

The flip side of taxation is subsidy, and NPR reporters never question the need for that, either. I listened in amazement to a story by Dan Charles on a new half-billion-dollar handout to military contractors to convert them into civilian industries. It sounded like a piece on some kind of arts-and-crafts

program for retarded kids, with arms merchants bubbling on about how they were learning to make golf clubs instead of missile launchers. Not once did it occur to Charles to ask a simple question: If it's in the economic interest of these companies to convert anyway, then why should the government pay them to do it?

The reason he didn't ask, I'm sure, is that he shares the belief of technocrats that economies and societies, de-

Did anyone listening to Morning Edition in Portales, N.M., or Senatobia, Miss., really want to hear Lynn Neary's eight-and-a-half minutes on yuppie angst about living in Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights?

prived of adult supervision, will quickly devolve into chaos and bedlam. Social engineers view the world as a huge Skinner box through which they must guide us pigeons with little rewards and penalties.

It's a vision enthusiastically shared by NPR reporters, who react with ill-concealed horror at any suggestion that the pigeons might seize control of the laboratory. One of the most telling moments of my ordeal-by-NPR came while Linda Wertheimer was interviewing a computer developer on what will happen when computers are linked into televisions — the so-called intelligent TV. He predicted the development of literally hundreds of new interactive television networks and services "that would give the individual TV viewer an incredible amount of power to program for their own tastes rather than have to rely on these programming guys."

Replied a perturbed Wertheimer: "Is there any way we can dodge this bullet?"

The idea that the government might impede rather than advance societal development is utterly alien to NPR. One morning I listened as John McChesney reported the announcement that the giant cable company TCI would spend

\$2 billion to build a broad-band fiberoptic communications network — the data superhighway that will permit the development of the intelligent TV. McChesney made the astonishing assertion that TCI was undertaking the project not because of the incalculable

The real secret of NPR news is that bad journalism is not just an occupational hazard, an occasional accident. Bad journalism happens on the quarter-hour at NPR. Bad journalism is policy at NPR.

billions of dollars in profits it may generate, but because of Bill Clinton's "aggressive promotion of an information infrastructure."

In fact, the private sector has been trying for some time to get the federal government to permit the creation of a data superhighway. MCI, AT&T, and Sprint already have the fiber-optic networks in place. But federal rules and regulations have prevented them from being hooked up to individual homes. McChesney is certainly aware of this — he even touched on the point later in his report — but that didn't stop him from declaring that the private sector was acting only because the government told it to.

You Want an Alternative, Look in the Thesaurus

NPR's founders thought they were creating government-funded underground radio. Their original statement of purpose called for programming that would "promote personal growth rather than corporate gain," and "not only call attention to a problem, but be an active agent in seeking solutions."

If it had worked out that way, NPR news might be a lot more interesting. But it didn't. NPR is not a national version of, say, a Pacifica station, where an announcer might analyze the virtues of different brands of LSD or urge people to go naked on Election Day. Instead, it's a house organ of respectable inside-the-Beltway liberalism — news written by and for aging yuppies whose idea of

adventuresome politics is telling Dan Quayle jokes.

In fact, NPR's toughest critics these days come from the left, and they hammer away at this very point. Quoting Democrats instead of Republicans, the critics argue, offers an alternative in roughly the same way that Cheez Whiz is an alternative to Velveeta.

One of the most savage recent critiques of NPR news came from Charlotte Ryan, a professor of sociology at Simmons College and co-director of Boston College's Media Research and Action Project. She studied every weekday broadcast of *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* from September through December 1991, reading the transcripts of 2,296 stories. (Her ennui threshold is obviously a good deal higher than mine.)

"NPR's regular coverage mirrored that of commercial news programming," Ryan concluded. "NPR stories focus on the same Washington-centered events and public figures as the commercial news, with the White House and Congress setting much of the political agenda. NPR's sources often paralleled those of *Nightline* and other network public affairs shows, with a similar tilt toward government sources and politically centrist or conservative think tanks and publications."

Ryan found that more than three-fifths of NPR's domestic stories were reported from Washington, and only 10 percent from the Midwest. The sources most commonly quoted were government officials. And, if you're one of those people who like their news drawn from and delivered by a politically correct mixture of races and sexes, then NPR definitely is not for you; you may be surprised to learn that Ryan found that most of the network's sources and commentators were the dreaded Pale Penis People.

Portions of her study must be taken with a grain of salt — Ryan is surely the only person in America who believes that Nina Totenberg's coverage of the last Supreme Court nomination was biased in favor of Clarence Thomas — but the week I listened to NPR, it sounded pretty much the way she described it.

The vast majority of stories reported on *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* come off the Associated Press

wire or are rewritten from the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Most of them are event-driven: Clinton makes a speech, the Labor Department issues economic statistics, the U.N. issues a new warning about Bosnia, Janet Reno does a photo op. Anybody listening to ABC or CBS radio news would hear nearly all of this, and without the numbing repetition. (One day I listened to *Morning Edition* report nine different times that the jury in the Rodney King trial was still out, with no new developments.)

Only once during the week I listened to NPR did I hear a story of any significance that didn't appear in all the other major news media. On April 15, John Nielsen reported, several days ahead of the pack, that the Clinton administration would sign the Rio de Janeiro biodiversity treaty that had been deep-sixed by George Bush. Good job. But mostly what the scoop illustrates is the precarious niche that NPR has carved for itself: It shuns the "alternative" label, but it doesn't have the resources or the talent to successfully compete with the mainstream media. Breaking a single story in a week is

Whatever you call it, eight of NPR's reporters are fully funded by corporations or foundations. I wonder what the founders would have said, back in 1970, if they'd been told that someday NPR would have a science reporter paid for by Hewlett-Packard?

hardly going to put the fear of God in Peter Jennings or Max Frankel.

Not even the most delirious NPR staffer would make that claim, of course. The standard — and cleverly hedged — boast of NPR people is the one NPR reporter Alex Chadwick made at a recent public radio fundraiser in Hartford: "We've evolved past being an alternative medium to being, I think, the dominant radio news organization in the country."

To which the only sensible reply is: So what? Being the dominant radio

news organization might have meant something in the days when Ed Murrow was broadcasting live accounts of Nazi air raids from London. But for the past 30 years, radio news has been on the scrap heap. A poll released earlier this year by the National Association of Broadcasters showed that only 16

Without taxpayer dollars, there wouldn't be any public stations to run NPR's programs. Of the total \$377 million spent on public radio in fiscal 1991, nearly half was provided by local, state, and federal government. Taxes are the lifeblood of the entire industry.

percent of Americans consider radio an important source of news, compared with 69 percent for television and 43 percent for newspapers. And just 7 percent picked radio as the "most credible" news medium. (By the way, Chadwick is most assuredly not talking about numbers of listeners when he uses the word "dominant." *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* have less than 3 percent of the radio audience at any given moment.)

Newspapers offer their readers depth and eclecticism. Television offers its viewers drama. Radio offers its listeners — well, not much. A headline service, to let them know what they can see on the evening news or read in the morning paper or find on CNN at any time of the day or night.

NPR reporters argue that they compensate for radio's shortcomings by offering longer stories. Whether longer is better is a debatable point. "In theory, I think it's great that there's someone out there doing long, highly produced radio news stories," says one industry insider. "But in practice, I don't know. I was listening to *Morning Edition* the other day on the way to work, and they ran this story on a ballet company for autistic children in South Africa. It went on for seven, seven-and-a-half

minutes. And finally I was thinking to myself, *Who cares? It's just too much.*"

When NPR tries to cover hard news, its stories — even when they stretch on for six or seven minutes — are rarely long enough to rise above the sort of shallow soundbite once-over for which television is so justly criticized.

John Burnett's seven-and-a-half-minute preview of the special election in Texas to fill Lloyd Bentsen's seat was typical. He reported that the interim appointee, Bob Krueger, would probably get into a runoff. But beyond that, it was pretty murky. Krueger "earned high praise in his two terms as a congressman." From who? For what? Dunno. His "brief record in the Senate has already come under fire." Why? Well, the only thing Burnett had time to mention was that Krueger broke with Clinton over gays in the military. Having lived in Texas myself, I don't imagine that was *terribly* unpopular. But we've already moved on to the Republicans. Leader: State Treasurer Kay Bailey Hutchison. She's running because "I want to go to Washington and change it." Into what? Sorry, gotta move on. There's a candidate named Richard Fischer, a buddy of Ross Perot's. He's spent \$4 million of his own money on this race. What's his party? What's his platform? Where is he in the polls? Too bad, we're outta here.

But if seven-and-a-half minutes is too little for hard news, it is assuredly too much for most NPR feature stories. Did anyone listening to *Morning Edition* in Portales, N.M., or Senatobia, Miss., really want to hear Lynn Neary's eight-and-a-half minutes on yuppie angst about living in Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights? (Sample quote: Violence "sensitizes you to all the other abrasions in the urban environment.") Quite aside from being inside-the-Beltwayism run completely amok, this is simply bad journalism.

And now we've come to the real secret of NPR news: Bad journalism is not just an occupational hazard, the occasional and inevitable accident that occurs in every news organization. Bad journalism happens on the quarter-hour at NPR. Bad journalism is, often, *policy* at NPR.

How shall we count the ways?

The dull scripts, so formulaic that even the reporters privately make fun of them.

Last year, when NPR was running a long, long, *long* series of stories on local people shunted aside by development in Latin America, several reporters formed a pool. Recalls one: "We bet on how long each story would go before it cued a strumming guitar, followed by a grandfather mourning his lost son, then singing long-forgotten revolutionary songs."

The infatuation with ethnicism, to the extent that NPR stories are sometimes barely comprehensible. NPR reporters love to have exotically accented English in their pieces, even if it's pure gibberish. Here's the way Nexis transcribed a quote from a Thai official whose tape-recorded English-language comments were included in a report by Mary Kay Magistad on problems on the Thai-Cambodian border: "We have spent a lot of money to neighbor of Cambodia, like you see here, and the business along the border, like the business [unintelligible] with Burma, the same that the people who live along the border, their trip — their trip, you know? It is the nature of the businessman." I've listened to the same quote three times on tape and I can't translate it any better than Nexis did.

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The star reporters who throw their weight around, getting away with crap that would have a college intern fired in 10 seconds. Nina Totenberg (one of the three powerful NPR women — Cokie Roberts and Linda Wertheimer are the others — to whom some male reporters refer collectively as “the fallopian jungle”) reported one morning on a topless dancer suing a Dallas club for age discrimination. She introduced her story with a crack about “sagging hopes.” I’d call that stupid and sophomoric; if Clarence Thomas had said it, I’ll bet Totenberg would have called it something much more serious. (In Totenberg’s defense, she’s certainly not the first allegedly feminist NPR reporter to use language that would be derided as sexist swill coming from a man. Susan Stamborg once opened an interview with novelist John Irving: “Mr Irving, on the basis of your brilliant writing, and your photograph on the dust jacket of *Garp*, most of the women on our staff have told me they’d like to run away with you.”)

Circle-jerk journalism, when reporters interview reporters. I don’t recall the last time I picked up the *Post* and found a front-page interview of Ann Devroy by David Broder. The *Post* — and, as far as I know, every other news organization in America — reports the news by reporting the news rather than interviewing other reporters about the news.

That’s not the way it works at NPR. Eight times in five days I heard NPR reporters interview other reporters — usually other NPR reporters. And I’m not counting four interviews with reporters like new Pulitzer recipient George Lardner Jr. who were, at least arguably, actual news-makers; nor am I counting several foreign journalists interviewed as part of larger stories about their countries. At best, these pieces were flaccid. I would be interested in what an economist thinks about the value-added tax. I might be interested in what a merchant thinks about it, or a truck driver, or a housewife. I am emphatically *not* interested in what an NPR reporter thinks.

But several of the interviews with reporters developed into something considerably worse than flaccidity. When Bob Edwards talked to Bill Sloat, a Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reporter covering the inmate takeover of a maximum-

security prison in Ohio, NPR used the opportunity to pass along unattributed rumors and speculation that Sloat could never have gotten past his own editors. Sloat started with the observation that “I think [the atmosphere at the prison] has grown a little more tense overnight. I have nothing to base it on, but it’s just a feeling.” He bottomed out by mentioning that six inmates had already been killed and he had “heard rumors that some of the bodies were mutilated. Now, nobody will confirm that.”

Sloat’s rumormongering, though, was model journalism compared to the interview Edwards did with Cokie Roberts the day before. Supposedly this was an interview about the Republican attack on Clinton’s economic stimulus package (Roberts being so much more knowledgeable about that than an actual Republican), but Roberts quickly shifted the subject to a special congressional election in the Mississippi Delta.

“There’s a black candidate versus a white candidate,” Roberts said. “And this is where you really see the words ‘city’ or ‘inner city’ become something of a code word for race. The white candidate, who’s a Republican, is saying that his opponent is a liberal from the city, as opposed to himself, who’s a conservative from the country. And that’s just sort of a way of letting people know that the opponent is black.”

I don’t think a deaf, dumb, and blind Martian could have gotten this story more ridiculously wrong. First, the Democratic candidate had just survived a brutal and highly publicized primary election. So everyone already knew he was black. Second, everyone already knew he was black *anyway*, because Mississippi is the most race-conscious place in America. “I can’t think of an election of any importance in my lifetime when everybody didn’t know the race of all the candidates,” says Sallie Anne Gresham, a native Mississippian and the managing editor of the *Delta Democrat Times*, the Delta’s largest newspaper. (Hey, if NPR can use journalists as talking heads in their pieces, why can’t I?)

Third, the majority of the voters in the congressional district are black. (So is Mike Espy, who resigned the seat to become secretary of agriculture.) So it wouldn’t exactly have been shrewd politics for the Republican to make an

issue of the Democrat’s race. And he didn’t. Instead, the Republican embraced the black vote, spoke frequently of his respect for Martin Luther King, and tried to appeal to the social conservatism of rural black voters by pointing out that his opponent was a liberal from the city. The Democrat, by contrast, made race an explicit issue; he campaigned in large part on the platform that black people could only be properly represented by a black congressman. He won.

The practice of putting reporting positions up for sale. NPR people prefer to use the euphemistic term “underwriting.” Whatever you call it, eight of NPR’s reporters are fully funded by corporations or foundations, confirms an NPR spokesperson. I wonder what the founders would have said, back in 1970, if they’d been told that someday NPR would have a science reporter paid for by Hewlett-Packard?

NPR officials insist that the outside funding has no impact on the way they report the news. But of course it does. NPR has eight, count ‘em, eight reporters on its science desk. But it has no labor reporter, no crime reporter, and until a few weeks ago had no Pentagon reporter. Can you guess which desk has seven “underwritten” reporters?

Underwriting also accounts for the fact that NPR has a full-time reporter in Kenya doing stories about tax collection, while it relies on a stringer to cover South Africa, where one of the most exciting stories of the decade is unfolding. Daniel Zwerdling, the Kenya correspondent, is funded with a \$100,000 grant from the Affinity Group for Southern Africa, a consortium of 50 or so foundations.

“It’s a group of foundations that are promoting economic development in southern Africa,” explains Michael Sinclair of the Kaiser Family Foundation, who coordinates the Affinity Group. “We went to NPR with a proposal to supplement their regular news reporting from southern Africa with regular reporting on economic issues.”

Now, the obvious question is: What if Zwerdling starts filing stories about acts of tyranny and expropriation in Zimbabwe, or an Iranian-backed secession movement in Tanzania — you know, things that don’t exactly encour-

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Exploration

Big Animals, Big States . . . Big Mistake

by John McCormack

The conventional wisdom that only big government can protect wildlife gets trampled by a herd of privately-owned elephants.

In the popular mind, preservation of wildlife is seen as best achieved by government bureaucracy; and private property is often seen as the destroyer of wildlife. But the history of wilderness and wildlife management in southern Africa offers powerful evidence that private property

rights and economic incentives protect wildlife better than bureaucratic management.

In southern Africa vast herds of animals were wiped out or reduced drastically between the 17th and 19th centuries as European settlers spread eastward from the Atlantic and northeasterly from the Cape of Good Hope. Until the late nineteenth century, popular support for the preservation of wild animals and their natural habitat was tepid. While there were some official efforts to protect certain species as early as the seventeenth century, those laws were frequently disregarded in settled areas and impossible to enforce on the frontier. Jan van Riebeeck, the Cape Colony's first governor, attempted to limit hunting in 1656 because herds had been reduced so drastically in just the four years since the first Dutch settlers arrived. In 1677 his successor, Governor van der Stel, banned the shooting of some antelope altogether because earlier hunting restrictions had not proven effective. By the middle of the 1700s, legal measures to protect hippo, rhino, buffalo, and eland had been taken as well. None of these efforts worked; vast herds were slaughtered. By the middle of the 18th

century, large antelope had been nearly wiped out in most of what is now the Cape Province and only small numbers of elephant and lion survived in remote areas. By the middle of the 19th century, the same process extended northeasterly into the Orange Free State and two species, the bluebuck and the quagga, were shot entirely to extinction. This occurred despite the passage of strict game laws with severe penalties in the Orange Free State in 1837 and in the South African Republic (now the Transvaal Province) in 1844. South African wildlife was as severely reduced as the North American bison by the late nineteenth century.

Large national parks were finally established at the end of the 19th century in those parts of South Africa furthest removed from the path of European settlement. What became the Kruger National Park was established in the most northeasterly part of South Africa on the border with Mozambique. As in the United States, the conservation efforts were led by politically influential people of comfortable economic and social circumstances.

Kruger, the size of Massachusetts,

is South Africa's oldest, largest, and most famous National Park, including habitat for virtually all the legendary African game animals. It was founded as the Sabie Reserve in 1898 after fourteen years of political struggle by Paul Kruger, President of the South African Republic. The near-subsistence Afrikaner farmers in the region vigorously resisted establishment of the park. They considered predators such as lion and leopard to be vermin, and the hoofed animals to be grazing competition for their cattle. Many poor white farmers believed they had a God-given duty to domesticate the wilderness and felt it unconscionable that they should have to eke out a living while large areas were reserved for animals.

By the latter part of the twentieth century, however, the comparative affluence of whites from blue-collar occupations and farms had changed matters radically. Kruger Park had overwhelming popular support from white South Africans. The Park was managed profitably and with strong political sense. Kruger was configured and facilities priced so that any lower-

middle class white could take his family in his own vehicle along the hard top roads of the park and stay over night in walled campgrounds. The Park was also popular with foreign tourists. It had become an unassailable national institution and state protection and management of wildlife was uncontroversial.

Conservationists promoted political as opposed to economic solutions to wildlife protection again in other provinces of the country during the twentieth century. Another large and two much smaller National Parks were established in 1931 in the Cape Province, where European settlement had been established first. The 2.4 million acre

The techniques used by private ranchers stand in stark contrast to the methods used in east and central African countries where elephant herds have been reduced by two thirds in just the last ten years.

Kalahari Gemsbok Park was created along the virtually uninhabited north-western border with Botswana. The same year the 19,000 acre Addo Elephant National Park was established to protect the last of the Cape elephant and the Bontebok National Park was established to protect the last seventeen Bontebok which had survived on a single ranch. (Those numbers have now grown to 300 inside the 6500 acre park and 500 in other reserves). The Mountain Zebra National Park was created on 16,000 acres in 1937 to protect the remaining members of that subspecies. Other National Parks totaling approximately 100,000 acres were created later in this century elsewhere in South Africa. Currently, the creation of several new National Parks in South Africa is under consideration, but these are consolidations of existing parks rather than entirely new entities. Although national wildlife management has been a popular success, there seems little chance of any more large parks being created in the country in the future.

Private game management has existed in South Africa in some form for much of the twentieth century. Just as it has been perceived in the U.S., however, private wildlife management in South Africa has traditionally been regarded as ancillary to state management of wildlife and wilderness land. The economically and ecologically successful management of private game reserves (totaling perhaps a quarter of a million acres) in the eastern Transvaal bordering the Kruger National Park is widely acknowledged. These private reserves are meticulously maintained, have luxurious facilities (including private airstrips and swimming pools), and provide superior game viewing. But to most observers, the relationship between Kruger and the private lodges of the Sabie-Sand seems much like that between Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding Wyoming and Montana "dude ranches." The latter seem clearly derivative of the former and to reflect merely a niche business serving the carriage trade rather than a fundamentally different approach to wildlife management.

The establishment of the right to profit from the sale of antelope venison and skins as well as the sale of hunting rights on private lands is relatively recent. The repopulation of African antelope on many of the privately owned farms and ranches that cover most of the country has impressed many environmentalists. (South Africa differs from the American West in that nearly all land is privately owned, aside from National Parks and areas reserved for native peoples; there is no analog to federal rangelands and forests.) Farms in the Cape Province and the Orange Free State that were emptied of wildlife over a century ago now have sizable herds of various antelope. Economic self-interest plays a large role. Private game ranching has been very profitable not only in South Africa but also in neighboring Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. Ranchers profit both from hunters' fees and the sale of meat and hides. Impala, springbok, and kudu venison have become popular in restaurants because they are exotic and offer relatively low-fat alternatives to traditional beef.

Economic considerations have driven much of this change. Antelope are

simply far more productive in converting some of the sparse and bitter grasses into meat than traditional European cattle or the variety domesticated by black Africans. Generally, wild hooved animals can graze on a much wider variety of grasses than ordinary cattle and can browse on bushes and trees cattle will not touch. They also require much less water to survive and therefore are not so liable to cause erosion around water holes with their hooves; do not require corrals; and are less susceptible to parasites and diseases such as those borne by the tsetse fly. Moreover, many hunters are willing to pay the landowner for the right to hunt and will pay additional fees for any venison they take or leave their kills to the owner.

Despite being the most densely populated province in South Africa, Natal has managed to expand wildlife on private lands while helping to raise the region's standard of living. While Natal has no large national parks it has some well run provincial parks which include significant numbers of lion and elephant. Apart from these "public" efforts many of the province's farmers have established voluntary ecological units known as "conservancies."

To Kenyans the elephant is simply a nuisance that tramples and eats their crops. Without property rights to the elephant, locals view them as problems to be disposed of.

Conservancies are groups of contiguous farms which cooperate to promote wildlife on their lands. Generally, farmers pool some of their funds to hire game wardens and to put up fencing where appropriate. The farmers profit from game ranching and from additional sources of meat. All conservancies exist on private land and are entirely privately funded. Currently, 130 conservancies cover more than two and a half million acres in Natal, about 15% of the province's land area. The antelope populations on these lands have grown to the point where they may actually be too large.

Antelope are not the only wild animals to prosper under a private property regime. The revival of the white rhinoceros population is among the proudest of the county's achievements in wildlife conservation. Saving the white rhino involved a concerted effort on the part of prominent private citizens, the Natal Parks Board, and farmers in Natal Province. Numbering only 50 in the early 1960s, the white rhino population has now grown to six thousand in several parks and on many private game ranches where they are hunted but where their numbers continue to expand. About a thousand white rhino have been exported from South Africa, many of which went to national parks in other African countries. A market for these animals has developed as well with the Natal Parks Board auctioning off white rhino and other game animals. An auction of five black rhino (now much more threatened than white rhino) for breeding purposes was held in Natal in early 1991. The winning bidder paid 2.2 million rand (about \$U.S. 800,000) for the five animals.

The lion and elephant populations are more problematic. Probably 90% of the lion and elephant in South Africa are in Kruger and the private reserves around it. The potential danger these animals pose to humans, domestic animals, and crops seems too great for them to be permitted in settled areas. Currently, all South African elephants live on large areas of fenced-in land with no crops or cattle and where the only humans remain in vehicles. Nevertheless, there are elephants and lions on the private lands near the Kruger Park. Despite having nearly wiped out its wildlife by the end of the nineteenth century, South Africa is now the only country where it is possible to hunt all of the "Big Five" (lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo) legally.

Given the success of private game ranching in the last few decades it may seem more than a bit puzzling why events took the direction they did in prior centuries. If indeed indigenous antelope are vastly superior machines for converting grass to animal protein, why didn't economic forces lead Afrikaners to develop game ranching in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

Both white and black Africans persisted in raising traditional cattle because the security of their property rights in cattle was far greater. Wild antelope cannot be herded, branded, corralled, or traded the way cattle can be. Title to the animals was not recognized legally until this century. Animals often migrate over greater distances than can be enclosed in some of even the largest

Wildlife populations on ranches and farms grew tremendously after 1967 when the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation granted farmers ownership rights to game on their land.

white ranches so that the benefits of one's wildlife habitat may go to hunters on other properties. To a black African who may own cattle directly but does not even have title to land the economic choices are obvious. He raises cattle because he can capture the benefit from owning them and providing a habitat for them. But he cannot benefit from providing good wildlife habitat on land he doesn't own for animals that are likely to go elsewhere if he doesn't kill and consume them right away. The improvement in wildlife management on private lands in the twentieth century was driven by the elimination of unclaimed land on the frontier which provided "free" hunting; a large tourist business which didn't exist before this century; the codification of property rights to animals on private land; and the development of private contract law which makes possible the management of entire eco-systems that overlie many individual landholdings.

The nearly 200,000 acre Sabie-Sand reserve, which borders the Kruger park on the southwest, has been successfully developed over the years by many landowners in cooperative private consolidation.* This reserve is a consortium

* See the excellent work of Nancy Seijas and Frank Vorhies, "Private Preservation of Wildlife: A Visit to the South African Lowveld," *The Freeman*, August 1989.

of about 20 smaller landholdings. No fences prevent game from going from one property to another. Theoretically, title to an animal passes when it moves from one property to another. Yet, one finds little evidence of opportunistic behavior on the part of individual landowners, either to hunt game to the detriment of the entire reserve or to create unnatural attractions for game on one piece of land. Since property owners frequently travel around their properties in Land Rovers showing wildlife to paying guests they are easily able to monitor changes in the local environment. Social pressure undoubtedly accounts for some of the success in enforcing management policies. Just as clearly though, the possibility of being excluded from the economic benefits of the reserve consortium is sufficient to keep landowners "honest."

Zimbabwe

The history of wildlife in other southern African countries is much like South Africa's except that the most serious damage to animal populations was not done until the early twentieth century. European settlement of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia before 1979) began in the country's central highlands in 1890 and spread out. When large national parks were established they were in the lowlands on the country's borders which were inhospitable to cattle and crops.

The 1974 Wildlife Management Act created a change in the fortunes of wildlife on private property in Rhodesia. It gave landowners rights to the game on their land, making it profitable for landowners to manage their property as wildlife habitat rather than as European-style farms. The same system remains in place despite the change from Ian Smith's white government to Robert Mugabe's self-described one-party Marxist state.

The techniques used by private ranchers stand in stark contrast to the methods used in east and central African countries where elephant herds have been reduced by two thirds in just the last ten years. Randy Simmons and Urs Kreuter have shown how private property rights protected elephants in southern Africa and Zimbabwe. Their articles were occasioned by the controversy over an international treaty ban-

ning trade in ivory. Simmons and Kreuter argued that the ban on legal ivory trade contributes to further reductions in the elephant population. They contrasted the record of Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa in managing their elephant populations with those of Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire, and Zambia, whose formerly great elephant herds seem now to be headed for extinction. In the southern African countries, legal hunting and culling of elephant takes place, which provides significant revenues for both the Park services and landowners. The population is managed so that the number of elephant in those countries has actually

Economic growth does not threaten wildlife. It is the only thing that can save it.

increased. The people and the animals of southern Africa have clearly benefited from legal hunting and trade in game products. The ivory trade is no threat to elephants: Simmons and Kreuter point out that "Zimbabwe has found that the best way to protect elephants is to give its citizens the opportunity to benefit from their presence."*

The most impressive part of the Zimbabwean elephant protection program is the way it has created "quasi-property rights" (Randy Simmons' phrase) to elephants even on those communal lands where there is no individual property in terms of land. Almost half of Zimbabwe is communal land (formerly Tribal Trust Lands under the Rhodesian government). These lands are similar to North American Indian reservations where land is dedicated to some group of people but where none of them can sell or borrow against any piece of it. There are still wild animals including 10,000 elephant in many parts of these communal lands. The Zimbabwean government has distributed *transferable* elephant hunting licenses to small villages in these lands. This

* Randy Simmons and Urs Kreuter, "Herd Mentality: Banning Ivory Sales Is No Way to Save the Elephant," *Policy Review*, Fall 1989.

means that people in the immediate vicinity of an elephant herd can legally kill some or sell the right to do so to some foreign hunter (which is usually what they do). These rights have protected the elephant population very successfully. Local residents have a significant interest in cooperating with police and game wardens, and maintaining elephant habitat. The situation differs significantly from that in Kenya. To Kenyans the elephant is simply a nuisance that tramples and eats their crops and even threatens their lives. Without property rights to the elephant, locals view them as problems to be disposed of. Local inhabitants who do not benefit from the game resent both the animals that occupy valuable land and the rich foreign tourists who come to photograph them.

Botswana

Botswana is twice the size of France but has only 1.3 million people, mainly concentrated on the country's south-eastern border with South Africa. It never attracted many white settlers and much of the country remains as it did when the only human inhabitants were Bushmen. Botswana earns considerable revenue from its enormous National Parks and reserves where controlled hunting is permitted. Profits are enough to pay for fairly thorough anti-poaching measures and game conservation programs. Private hunting lodges in the north of the country were the largest contributors to national foreign exchange earnings for the first decade after independence, until diamonds were discovered in the Kalahari in the 1970s. The hunting and tourist business is still the most successful industry in the northern region.

The country has a vast and highly acclaimed national park system which covers 17% of the country (one of the highest proportions in the world). The most valuable wildlife areas are in the north of the country, which benefits from the extensive Okavango river delta. This region contains a massive herd of about 70,000 elephant (more than remain in all of Kenya) and great numbers of almost all other kinds of African wildlife. The far drier southern two thirds of the country is home to over 90% of Botswana's people and its

cattle industry. Privately owned cattle compete with Botswana's wildlife for the thin grazing available in most of the country, where well-intentioned Europeans are responsible for having shifted economic advantage away from wildlife and towards domestic cattle. The European Community, in an attempt to reward Botswana, one of Africa's few functioning democracies, established a special program to import its cattle into Europe. The EC now pays four times the world price for Botswana beef. Not surprisingly, most of Botswana's beef goes to Europe, and the "national herd" has grown several fold to over three million (more than twice the number of people). Not only do these cattle compete directly with game for water and grazing, but they have led to some disastrous measures to meet EC standards. Game fences, extending hundreds of miles, have been put up to keep hoof and mouth disease from spreading from buffalo and antelope in the northern national parks to domestic cattle in the central and southern parts of the country. Large herds of wild game survived well enough south of the fences as long as the rains were sufficient. They have been cut off from the country's only perennial source of water in the north, their usual source of water during droughts. The drought of the early 1980s cut the wildebeest population of the central Kalahari from an estimated 250,000 in the mid 1970s to only about 2,500 by 1986.

Namibia

Namibia is an even larger and more sparsely populated country than Botswana. It does not have a well-watered area the size of the Okavango but nevertheless boasts a tremendous number of wild animals. The most famous of the country's several large national parks is the Etosha National Park (larger even than Kruger) in the north of the country. Although these large parks are home to many animals, two thirds of the country's wildlife ranges outside the parks on private land. Wildlife populations on ranches and farms grew tremendously after 1967 when the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation granted farmers ownership rights to game on their land, enabling them to profit from trophy hunts on their farms and to sell

venison to restaurants as far away as Germany and France. Ranchers can keep large herds of antelope on range they primarily use for cattle because antelope and cattle sometimes graze on substantially different grasses. Giraffe, which browse on trees, provide no grazing competition at all.

Lessons

There are several clear conclusions we can draw from the experience of wildlife management in Africa.

1. Bans on hunting and trade on animal products do not save wildlife. Such bans have not been enforceable over large areas because of the limited resources of governments and because of indifferent or corrupt officials. Legislation is simply not sufficient to protect a "public good" like wildlife.

2. National Parks, although financially and politically successful in southern Africa, are not going to be proclaimed over many more large areas of African wilderness. There is not enough of a political constituency in any country to add significant acreage to the Parks which were established between the 1890s and 1950s.

3. Private land ownership is critical to the survival of wildlife outside National Parks. In countries where political obstacles prevent the privatization of land the development of quasi property rights to game for local inhabitants is the next best step.

4. New contract law and perhaps some enabling legislation is necessary to allow the development of agreements so that private landowners can cooperate to sustain entire eco-systems.

5. Hunting is critically important to the survival of large herds of wildlife. Photo safaris make small herds of animals valuable but the value of the marginal animal drops dramatically if hunting is not permitted.

6. Economic growth does not threaten wildlife. It is the only thing that can save it. Just as poor white Afrikaners in the 19th century opposed wildlife preservation efforts, the far more numerous poor black Africans of the 20th or 21st will resist conservation measures unless they can realize economic benefits from wild animals and enjoy a standard of living that allows them to appreciate wildlife. It is the richer

societies that value wildlife.

Many Westerners oppose even legal hunting in southern Africa. Middle-class first worlders generally approve of operating African National Parks and private reserves profitably for photo safaris. Many of these people would like to rely entirely on this source of revenue and to ban hunting completely because they think it unnecessarily cruel. But only a few elephants are needed for a photo tourist industry. Protecting large herds in remote areas would be a pointless expense if there were no benefits to be gained from their existence. Only hunters willing to trek long distances into thinly populated areas free of tourist amenities are going to make protecting such large herds economical. Hunters are willing to spend far more time and money than "photo hunters," as a group. Not only do they make wildlife more valuable but their travel through remote areas helps significantly in anti-poaching efforts.

The fate of the southern African wildlife is substantially dependent on the sort of regime which emerges from the current negotiations between South Africa's National Party and the African National Congress. The Zimbabwean experience after 1980 has shown that wildlife can survive and even thrive in countries whose policies lead to general economic stagnation as long as property rights to land and wildlife are not radically changed. The experience of Mozambique and Angola after 1975 show that wide scale civil disorder and the effective abolition of private property rights lead to wholesale extermination of wildlife. If the South African negotiations lead to constitutional arrangements that protect private property rights, the outlook for the region's wildlife is very good. If private landholdings become subject to political decision-making, however, the outlook is quite bleak. If the country falls into a general civil war along racial and tribal lines South Africa's wildlife will likely be substantially wiped out, as it has been in so much of the continent. The economic and demographic weight of the country is such that the smaller, neighboring countries probably could not avoid fallout from a catastrophe in South Africa. □

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Peter Ferrara

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Short Story

Karma Accountant

by J. Orlin Grabbe

The economics of the cosmic soul.

The karma accountant was sitting at a table having a cappuccino when I arrived at the cafe. We often brooded together about the spiritual equilibrium of the universe.

"Café au lait." He grimaced. The milk hadn't steamed right.

"Do you note that down?" I asked. "Does someone get bad marks for bad coffee?"

He reflected. "Depends on the intent. Not for a pure mechanical failure, no. But suppose the waiter flubbed it because he was hostile to a customer. Or was just being negligent in general. Those are different matters."

The concept of karma seemed simple enough to me. Bad deeds built up karma (bad stuff) and good deeds cancelled it out. Once you get rid of all your karma you get to stop reincarnating and go to heaven or enter nirvana or something nice like that.

"What have you got so far?" I asked.

"See that couple sitting over there. The girl facing us is having the summer salad."

I looked at the girl with the pale face and dark eyes that would animate for a fraction of a second before settling back into comfortable moroseness.

"They're both having problems at the moment, but the one with his back to us is a Yugoslavian immigrant who is working in his brother's cloth business. He's about 17 percent happier and more positive than the girl, who is flunking out of her third semester at NYU. So he's chalking up a lot of credit transferring his energy and enthusiasm to her."

"How do you measure that exactly?" He had tried to explain the method before — very patiently, actually — but I was still somewhat confused.

He sighed. "Well, unfortunately, it's up in the air. There's been a great debate and organizational upheaval and we're moving to a new system. It'll be centuries, maybe millennia before we get the bugs out.

"We used to use the KAU," he continued, "or Karma Unit of Account. It was based on a simple weighted average of the

karmas of all souls, physically incarnated or not. So, in the case of that couple, I would take the ratio of the two karmas — that's his karma of KAU 4,790,241 divided by her karma of KAU 2,566,337,644,935 — and credit him with 17 percent of that amount."

"Wait a minute. Let me get this straight. You mean he gets 17 percent of 4 million over 2 trillion, something like that."

"Yes."

"Which doesn't reduce his karma by very much."

"Well. I don't know why you think that. If he reduced it by that amount every day, in only 8,634 years he would be a soul with no karma."

I guess you don't rush things in this business, I thought. "But if the girl only had a karma of, say, two thousand, the amount of karma reduction would be a billion times as much."

"True. But you're overlooking the essential reality. It's extremely hard for a person of high karma to make a positive energy transfer to a person of low karma. So the equation recognizes the basic fact that the ease of transfer from A (him, in this case) to B (her) is directly proportional to the karma of B, and hence credit to A is given inversely to B's karma to adjust for the lower effort involved."

"So what you are saying is if I had a karma of KAU 10 and another person had a karma of KAU 1, I could technically get rid of all my karma in less than six days — that is, 17 percent per day — but the probability of doing so would be small because I would find it extremely difficult to make a positive energy transfer to a person with KAU 1."

"No. No. No."

"Why no? Why not?"

"First, your karma is some exponential order of magnitude larger than KAU 10."

"I'm speaking hypothetically."

"Second, you would be doing good to work on any margin higher than 6 percent — that's the maximum reduction the average person is able to manage. Third, your math is wrong. If each day you reduced your karma by 17 percent of

the amount remaining, at the end of six days the amount of karma left would be $10 \times (1 - .17)^6 = 3.269$."

"That sounds like a rigged game. You'll never get to zero that way."

"Not if the percentage reduction is constant. You have to increase the percentage reduction each day in order to maintain the same absolute level of negation."

He paused to jot down notes. I looked around, but didn't see what he saw. Just the cafe's impresario smoking behind the bar, and a girl with short dark hair conversing with the chef. I motioned to the waiter and ordered a hamburger.

"So what's the new system all about?" I asked when he was finished.

He sighed again, as though just the effort of thought pained him.

"It all started with a debate over the intertemporal karma cancellation problem. You know about that?"

I didn't.

"I suppose not. Maybe an example will help. Hmmm. Suppose an Arkansas boy in 1933 in the depth of the Depression robs \$10 from his grandmother's cookie jar and spends it before being found out. Later he gets run over by a bus. He reincarnates as a girl in a middle-class New Jersey family, goes to the University of Pennsylvania, and gets a job on Wall Street. He — she — gets a raise one day and in her euphoria gives \$10 to a street person. So, and this is the classic question, does the \$10 donation cancel out the \$10 theft, karmically speaking?"

The hamburger arrived and I cut into it, but there was still some pink in the middle, so I sent it back to be cooked until it was done.

"So what's the answer — do they cancel out?" I asked once the waiter had left.

"That's the rub. Think of the issues. The dollar in 1933 buys about ten times more goods than in 1985, so the magnitude of the two incidents are different in real terms. Next we have to adjust for the environment. What does it mean in 1933 for a young boy to steal \$10 from his grandmother, as opposed to a young professional woman to give \$10 to a street person in 1985? For example, there was one school of thought on the Karma Policy Committee that no one should be credited karma cancellation for acts in eras where there is social pressure to perform them out of political correctness. Can trendiness be equated with good karma? Then there is the issue of individual motivation. What if the boy stole the \$10 to pay a vet to save his dog, an animal he loved more than anything in the world? On the other hand, one subset of the Karma Policy Committee considered the whole issue of individual motivation irrelevant,

sort of on "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" principle. Suppose the street person used the girl's \$10 to get drunk, wandered out into traffic, and caused a truck to veer into a crowded sidewalk filled with women and children."

"I see what you mean." The sheer magnitude of the problem was making me depressed. I consoled myself with an extra dollop of catsup.

"Okay. So one day the Council of All Souls petitions the Karma Policy Committee. The solution is simple, they argued. We create a market where those desirous of exchanging 1933 Arkansas bad karma for 1985 Wall Street good karma (that is, karma cancellation) can do so at an exchange rate that will be determined minute by minute in the intertemporal market place. Good karma buyers will get the lowest available price, while bad karma sellers will get the highest price."

"And that solved your karma valuation problem?"

"In some respects. Now we have markets for everything. Every karma type is priced relative to every other. Of course you need a numeraire. We arbitrarily took 1/10,000,000,000 of the total karma from the earliest building period at Catalhuyuk in Asia Minor as equal to 1.0, and the magnitude of every other price is determined by reference to that. For example, yesterday's closing exchange rate against 5th century karma from Attila the Hun's invasion of Gaul was 436,784 units of the latter to 1 unit of the former, because of all the bad karma being dumped on the market from the Attila period."

"Does it pay well? Your job, I mean. All this paperwork."

He cocked his head. "We get six percent karma reduction per century."

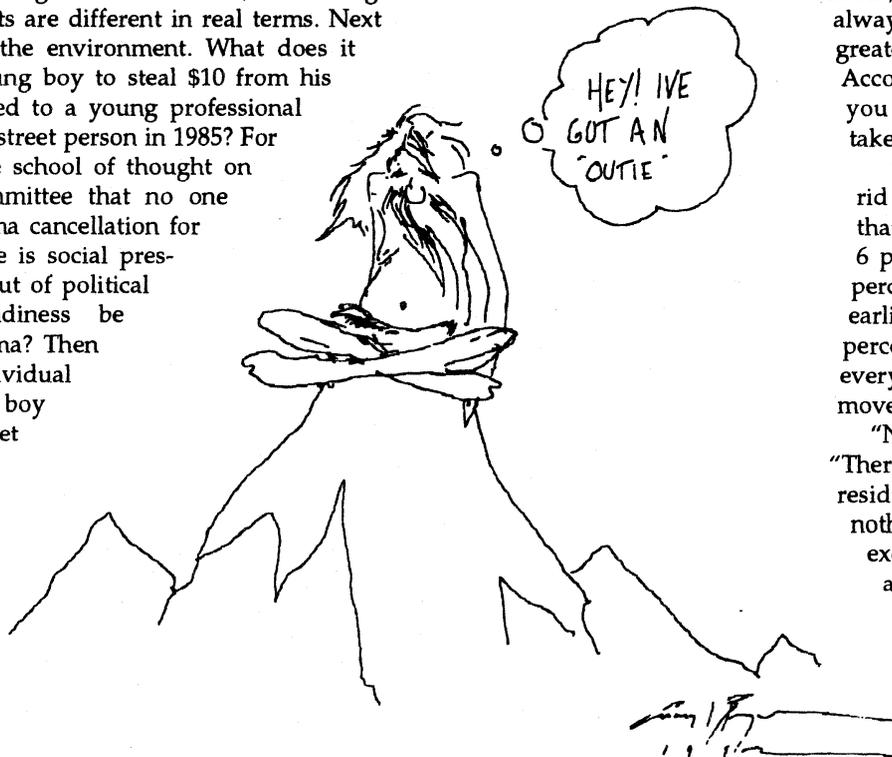
"Doesn't seem like much, does it?"

"But it's safe. There's no danger of our karma getting any bigger while we're doing this. It's like buying a bond. The interest may not seem like much, but at least you can always count on it being greater than zero. Accountants are like that, you know. We like to take the safe course."

"But you can't get rid of all your karma that way," I said. "Your 6 percent is like the 17 percent we talked about earlier. Taking away 6 percent of the remainder every year will never remove it all."

"No," he said sadly. "There will always be a residual, and there's nothing to do about it except to reincarnate and earn the final reduction the old-fashioned way."

"And to do that you're taking the risk it



might get bigger."

"Yes, although now that we have gone to the new system, there are karma futures markets, where you can hedge your risk by going long or short on karma of a particular type. Suppose you're going to undertake a particularly risky incarnation, say in a real soul-selling place like Hollywood. Well, you go short a certain number of 1990s Hollywood karma futures. That way if you build up more bad karma than you anticipated, you just deliver the excess into the expiring futures contracts. Of course, like any hedge, it works both ways. If you acquire less bad karma than anticipated, you'll have to buy back some of the contracts, and so end up with more karma than you would have without the hedge. But at least you know what your exposure is before you incarnate."

What a bunch of wimpy souls, I thought. "What kind of

spiritual coward would do something like that? What's the point if you don't take risks?"

He gazed quietly at me for a moment, and then laughed. He laughed and laughed. I felt embarrassed and looked around the room. The couple had stopped eating and turned to stare. Even the chef had taken note of us.

I was getting angry now. "What's so funny?" I demanded. "You. You . . ." he paused to restrain his filthy mirth. "You should talk. You shorted the first fifty contracts."

He was still laughing when I stalked out of the cafe and slammed the door. You pay the check, I thought. Jerk. I know this place. Go ahead, pull out your Universal Credit Card here. Try and explain that to them. They'll bust your chops for sure.

I walked on down the street.

As for me, well, I'm hedged, aren't I? □

Garvin, "NPR: News and Information for the Self-Lobotomized," *continued from page 46*

age economic development? What if he reports that a lot of the governments in Southern Africa are run by swindling brutes — and that economic aid only perpetuates their regimes?

"We don't have any control over the reporting," Sinclair says. But would the Affinity Group keep funding a reporter who did those stories? "I don't think that would play a role in evaluating the funding," he insists.

He sounds sincere, and I'm sure Sinclair believes his own words. I don't know if I do. And I wonder if Daniel Zwerdling and his editors do?

OK, I'm Convinced. Your Sister's an Idiot. What's It to Me?

Well, you pay for it. That may come as a surprise; through a propaganda campaign that's been successful beyond its wildest dreams, NPR has convinced most people that it no longer depends

on tax dollars for its existence. The NPR claim that less than 3 percent of its funding comes from the federal government is accepted as gospel almost everywhere.

But what that figure really represents is a clever bookkeeping trick. In 1987, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting — the quasi-independent organization in charge of distributing the annual \$300-million-plus federal subsidy to public broadcasting — stopped funding NPR directly and started giving the money directly to public radio stations, which then hand it back to NPR in the form of "dues." That covers about two-thirds of NPR's \$46 million annual budget.

Then there's the matter of that \$198 million satellite NPR uses to distribute its programming: yup, paid for with tax dollars. (NPR also makes a nice chunk of change by renting out the satellite's excess capacity to a private paging company.)

And without taxpayer dollars, there wouldn't be any public stations to run NPR's programs. Of the total \$377 million spent on public radio in fiscal 1991, nearly half was provided by local, state, and federal government. Taxes are the lifeblood of the entire industry.

So remember: *You're* paying Cokie Roberts \$60,000 a year for her half-baked ranting about racism in America. *You're* paying Daniel Schorr \$95,000 a year to demonstrate Martian mathematics. *You're* paying Linda Wertheimer \$97,000 a year for anti-tax-evasion public service announcements. *You're* paying Carl Kasell \$90,000 a year, Robert Siegel \$101,000 a year, and Bob Edwards \$134,000 a year to imitate the bloodless drone of HAL the computer.

Maybe you think it's a good deal. I'm sure my sister does. □

This article was previously published in the *City Paper* of Washington, D.C. Reprinted with permission.

notes to Shaw, "Black and White," *continued from page 21*

1. The *New York Times*, March 21, 1993, p. 1, and subsequent articles through March 26, 1993.
2. The *Washington Post*, June 1, 1993, p. A1.
3. April 15, 1992. p. A1.
4. "Crying Wolf Over Elephants," *The New York Times Magazine*, pp. 16-19 and ff.
5. Tom Bray reported this in his March 28 *Detroit News* column, "The Environmental 'Crusade' Is Over."
6. Barbara Rosewicz and Rose Gutfeld, "Clean-Air Legislation Will Cost Americans \$21.5 Billion a Year," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 1990, p. 1.
7. Fumento, *Science Under Siege* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1993), pp. 19-44.
8. Bruce N. Ames and Lois Swirsky Gold, "Pesticides, Risk, and Applesauce," *Science*, May 19, 1989, pp. 755-757.
9. Elliot Marshall, "A Is for Apple, Alar, and . . . Alarmist?" *Science*, Vol. 254 (October 4, 1991), p. 22.
10. October 3, 1989, p. 22.
11. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), p. 38.
12. See "Green Cassandras," *The New Republic*, July 6, 1992, p. 23.
13. Robert W. Crandall and John D. Graham, "The Effect of Fuel Economy Standards on Automobile Safety," *The Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (April 1989), pp. 97-118.
14. Jeremy Bernstein "Report from Aspen," *The New Yorker*, November 25, 1991.

Excursion

Salt Air, Hot Air, and Sport!

by John M. Taylor

Whichever way the wind blows, some people will always be willing to set themselves adrift.

Sailing is to ballooning what the marginally useful is to the utterly useless. Both sports — like all amateur sports — are nonutilitarian. Each is carried on for its own sake, as a disinterested end in itself, without thought of material gain or practical advantage. To this extent sailing and ballooning occupy common ground.

Yet even within the realm of sport sealed off from "real life" though it must be, inutility varies in degree. Whereas sailors are moderates, content with a sport that falls decently short of absolute pointlessness, balloonists are radicals, indeed nihilist in their embrace of a pastime that by any test wins the prize for unrepentant frivolity. Though I have recently and for the first time had occasion to sniff a few balloon baskets, I remain inclined toward the moderate camp. That said, however, I hasten to affirm that ballooning offers some illuminating perspectives.

The opportunity to observe the radical species came my way in Albuquerque at the 21st International Balloon Fiesta. This annual gathering, which is twice the size of the next biggest rally worldwide, draws more than 600 balloons from across the country and from overseas as well. Pilots, aircrews, groundcrews, groupies, and spectators have at it for nine days with a zeal that any regatta organizer would find impressive.

As a freelance accredited to the Fiesta, I had the unearned good fortune to venture aloft beneath a bal-

loon. Ivan Kerr of Michigan, an aeronaut of long experience, was my host and pilot aboard the *Black Arrow*. As he explains it, contrasting air temperatures make ballooning possible. Air when heated loses weight and in consequence gets squeezed upward if the ambient air is cold or at least cool. This fact of nature on which ballooning depends seems to me more readily comprehensible than the combination of forces that propels a sloop to windward. If two hundred years of ballooning require explanation, my hunch is that the essential simplicity of the sport does much to account for the durability of its appeal.

Durable indeed, but also limited. Wise men have always extolled the simple as an indispensable moral ideal, yet, they seldom come to terms with the practical reality: too often the simple is simply a bore and at times ballooning illustrates the point. Before I continue, let me concede that the sailor's parochialism has no equal, and that when you get down to it a day's sail is no more likely to enrich your fund of wisdom than a morning spent adrift in the basket of a balloon. And

yet there are differences no sailor could ignore.

By any nautical standard, the launching and retrieval of balloons is a lubberly affair that depends more on muscle than on skill. Ballooning commences soon after daybreak before the lower atmosphere warms. The ground crew begins by spreading a protective tarpaulin in front of the capsized wicker basket, facing downwind if that direction can be determined. On top of the tarp they unfold the envelope, *aka* the balloon. By means of a fan they achieve partial inflation of the envelope, at which point the pilot brings his propane burner to bear on the air trapped within. Gradually, as the air heats up, the envelope rises to a vertical position.

Meanwhile the groundcrew has all it can do to hold the basket, now upright, in place long enough for pilot aircrew and carping journalist to clamber aboard. On signal this nearly unmanageable contraption is released into the blue with the fond hope that an extra shot of heat from the burner will lift it above those power lines over yonder.

The disorder and seeming desperation I witnessed was in no way indicative of inexperience or ineptitude. Ivan & Co knew perfectly well what they were doing, and by all accounts do it as well as it can be done. It is rather that in the launching of balloons there is and can be no equivalent to the harmonious sequence that gladdens the sailor's heart: gentle heave on the mooring cable so to get way on to starboard; cast off; brief backing of the jib; and then sheeting home on the port tack which is precisely the maneuver intended; an

Whereas sailors are moderates, balloonists are radicals, nihilist in their embrace of a pastime that wins the prize for unrepentant frivolity.

orderly, serene departure does not depend on mere hope.

Nor is a balloon "landing" likely to convert many sailors. We came in for our collision with terra firma doing a good five knots and with no landing gear on that basket. OOOFFFF! Fortunately the ground crew was on hand to grab us before we bounced off in some unforeseen direction, perhaps from the shoulder, on which we had just fetched up, to the middle of I-25 itself. Imagine approaching the dock at five knots with no means of reversing your engine and you have the picture.

Hard knocks are nevertheless the least of it. If balloonists are in thrall to

the whims of some inscrutable deity, that deity without a doubt is The Random. Of all the vehicular sports known to man, ballooning may be unique in that the vehicle cannot be steered. A vagrant zephyr might carry you off in the direction you have in mind, should you be so hopeful, not to say naive, as to contemplate a destination; but then a contrary puff might just as promptly return you to square one.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the seasoned pilot will submit to fate with cheerful resignation. By regulating the temperature within the envelope, he can — with luck — adjust his altitude. But because he cannot steer he cannot navigate, and for this reason I maintain that ballooning offers meager scope for the cultivation of skill.

Indeed, Ivan asserted that the skill the balloonist most needs is to be good at dealing with people. *And why is that?* I asked, wondering with a cold heart what balloonsmanship could possibly owe to P.R. Because, he replied, "when you land a balloon more often than not you are treading on private property." Ah! to be a sailor, gone for days at a time, without the least desire, let alone the urgent need, to row ashore for an afternoon of trespass.

So why do they bother, Ivan and all the rest? Have they no gut feeling for sport? I would argue just the opposite. Narrow the choice to sailing and ballooning and of the two I would rate ballooning the more sporting. Though sailing exhibits the grace and dignity to be expected of moderation, the sport is nevertheless flawed. Every sailboat

regardless of intended purpose bears the taint of latent utility. Which is to say that any skipper worth his salt knows that come what may, short of a hurricane, he can count on getting from here to there, and that in setting sail he

The balloon constitutes the very model of inutility, an uncompromising statement of the sporting ideal. The habit of ballooning will purge your mind of utilitarian fantasies.

may even have some practical mission to accomplish.

By contrast, the balloon constitutes the very model of inutility, an uncompromising statement of the sporting ideal. Ballooning, unlike sailing, may not foster the habits of skill and precision. But by way of compensation the habit of ballooning will purge your mind of utilitarian fantasies. For this tonic, as well as for other benefits, humankind summoned the wit to invent sport and I for one take comfort from the knowledge that in at least one corner of this driven society the merely useful cuts little or no ice. I asked Ivan to name the chief pleasure he found in ballooning. Instead of serving up the predictable twaddle about teamwork, adventure, character building, and solitude, he simply declared that ballooning has no practical value or purpose whatsoever. May his tribe increase. □

Bradford, "There's No Kill Like Overkill," *continued from page 32*

gassing Jews at Auschwitz.

By the end of the tragic day, Clinton was trying to pretend he hadn't dodged responsibility, and to get on Reno's good side. After she finished her round of talk shows, he called her to say, "You should sleep well. You did a good job today." Janet Reno has learned her lesson well. When President Clinton decided to knife Lani Guinier in the back, Reno volunteered to take responsibility for that, too. But Clinton, apparently having learned something also, turned down her offer.

The polls show that about 80% of the American people are satisfied with the way the federal government comported itself in Waco. I doubt that this support is evidence of their collective "lack of imagination or opportunity of insight." They simply do not want to believe that their government has committed an atrocity of this order, just as citizens of Germany denied the existence of Hitler's death camps even after the war. The crime in Waco was less horrible than the crime in Europe and there is no conquering army to

display publicly the evidence of mass murder or to prosecute those who committed the crime. So it is far easier for Americans simply to deny the crime and go about their business.

Even if there were overwhelming public support for a thorough investigation of the tragedy, the massive destruction of evidence by the FBI would make discovery of the full story very difficult. Some of the truth about what happened is known, and it serves as a reminder of what a monster the bureaucratic state can be, banal or otherwise. □

Reviews

Rethinking AIDS: The Tragic Cost of Premature Consensus,
by Robert Root-Bernstein. The Free Press, 1993, 512 pp., \$27.95.

Lies, Damn Lies, and AIDS Research

Brian Doherty

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is more than just a disease. It is alternately a symbol of uncaring government repression, a badge of holiness or of disgrace, a symbol of the tragedy of liberation, a sign that there is no God, a sign that there is an angry God. It has helped change people's attitudes about prophylactics, sexuality, and homosexuality, and forced many to question the mindset that almost epitomizes western culture: the faith that we are able to control the natural world through our will and technologies, and bend it to our needs and desires.

More than anything else, AIDS functions as a mental and social fault line. Some say that we don't care enough about AIDS because its victims tend to be from socially marginalized strata; others say that we concentrate too many resources on it because its victims and their advocates are better connected to the mass media and politics than those associated with more widespread ailments such as cancer and heart disease. Though its status as a fatal illness should command enough respect, in public discourse it is somehow always more than just what it is; it has something to say about our culture, our safety, our efficacy, our compassion, our politics, our humanity.

"Silence = Death" goes the slogan,

so it has become impossible to avoid hearing about AIDS, even if the prophecy we've heard repeated from newspaper op-ed pages and the Oprah Winfrey Show and public service announcements for the past eight or so years hasn't yet come true and you still don't personally know anyone suffering from it. Everyone seems to think they know something about AIDS, perhaps everything they need to know. Everyone has an opinion, even if that opinion is based on no more knowledge than can be gleaned from a public health pamphlet advocating condom use. The voices shouting in the echo chamber of AIDS debate occasionally drown out rational discourse. But disguised by the hand-wringing and hysteria may be a story of single-minded government power pushing a bankrupt idea.

Rethinking AIDS by Robert Root-Bernstein, an associate professor of physiology at Michigan State University, is a heady and disturbing dose of rational discourse that shakes to its core the establishment AIDS industry of scientists, government, activists and the mass media. Root-Bernstein tries to demonstrate that our current scientific and public health approach to AIDS is fatally flawed; that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), commonly understood to be the cause of the range of diseases we call AIDS, may in fact be no more than a cofactor, if that.

Root-Bernstein is not alone in making such a claim. First and most famous

of the AIDS heretics is Berkeley molecular biologist Peter Duesberg, who first challenged the notion that HIV causes AIDS in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Cancer Research* in March 1987. As a result Duesberg ended up being informed by the National Institute of Health in October 1990 that his "Outstanding Investigator Grant" would not be renewed after it runs out in 1993. (The committee that made this decision had as members the mother of one of the children of Robert Gallo, alleged discoverer of HIV, and someone who holds a patent on an HIV antibody test.) Duesberg has become Gallo's *bête noire*; Gallo recently walked off the set while being interviewed by ABC TV's *Day One* "news-magazine" when they brought up Duesberg, and he vowed he'd do everything in his power to pre-

"Silence = Death" goes the slogan, so it has become impossible to avoid hearing about AIDS, even if what we've been hearing for the past eight years is false.

vent them from giving Duesberg's ideas any publicity. But joining the anti-establishment cause was Charles A. Thomas — a former Harvard biochemistry professor — and a society he founded in 1991, the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS Hypothesis, which counts among its over 40 members retrovirologists, epidemiologists and immunologists, all of whom question the HIV dogma.

Because of the overriding sociological noise surrounding AIDS, it helps to be fortified with some facts that go beyond the propaganda of the mass media/government/activist axis. It's important to start with the basics: what

causes AIDS, anyway? What is AIDS?

AIDS was first conceptualized in 1980-81 after doctors in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York began noticing many cases of Kaposi's sarcoma, pneumocystis pneumonia, consistent low-grade fevers and a cornucopia of unusual infections, protozoans, viruses and fungi in men aged 20-40 who were suffering from immune suppression for no noticeable reason. Because their common denominator was that they were sexually promiscuous young gay men, many with histories of drug abuse, the

HIV has been found in frozen blood samples dating back to at least 1959.

syndrome was first called GRID (gay-related immune deficiency). The search for a cause and a cure was on.

It seemed to bear quick fruit. On April 23, 1984, Margaret Heckler, Secretary of Health and Human Services for Ronald Reagan, proudly announced that a U.S. doctor, Robert Gallo, had discovered the cause of AIDS: a retrovirus, allegedly isolated in Gallo's lab, that came to be known as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). She also promised a vaccine by 1986.

Gallo's claim of discovery was only the beginning of the web of controversy, confusion and possible fraud that would surround the conceptual romance of HIV and AIDS. It turned out that the virus had already been discovered a year earlier by a French scientist, Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute. Montagnier had sent Gallo the virus to examine. A dispute ensued over right to claim discovery, and concomitant rights to patents on AIDS testing kits that depend on looking for antibodies to this retrovirus. This fight initially led to a compact between the French and American governments that would split royalties and name Gallo and Montagnier "co-discoverers" of HIV.

But recent revelations from the work of Chicago *Tribune* reporter John Crewdsen and an internal NIH investigation seem to indicate that Gallo willfully attempted to steal credit for the

HIV discovery, and that one of his early papers that purported to show how HIV causes AIDS, contained "misrepresentations or falsifications." Gallo himself has admitted that the virus used in developing his AIDS test was one of the ones sent to him by the Pasteur Institute. The French are now suing for all past and future royalties — which would amount to tens of millions of dollars — from Gallo personally and from the U.S. government, and for recognition of Montagnier as sole discoverer of HIV.

Meanwhile, billions of dollars have been funnelled by the U.S. government pursuing Gallo's "HIV causes AIDS, alone and unaided" thesis. But after nearly a decade, it has paid off with nothing. We still have no vaccine. And we still don't know how a retrovirus is causing the array of diverse ailments and infections that we have labelled AIDS. The problem is that not one example of a retrovirus has ever been known to cause disease in humans, since retroviruses parasitically require a living cell in order to reproduce.

It is important to remember that AIDS is not a disease per se but a *syndrome* — a catch-all name for a situation in which massive immunosuppression leads to the body's falling prey to a wide range of ailments, including pneumonia, dementia, wasting disease, candidiasis, lymphoma, tuberculosis and various sexually transmitted diseases such as herpes and Epstein-Barr Virus. These diseases were around before HIV was isolated; they will be around even if HIV were somehow eradicated. The "A" in AIDS stands for "acquired"; we diagnose massive immunosuppression as AIDS, supposedly, in the presence of HIV antibodies and when there is no other apparent reason for the problems in the immune system. But in around half of currently diagnosed AIDS patients, HIV has not even been checked for. As Root-Bernstein's book exhaustively demonstrates, most people diagnosed as having AIDS are suffused with biological conditions and engage in behavioral practices that are known to be immunosuppressive, with or without the mysterious HIV. I will return to this point later.

So how is HIV supposed to be doing its dirty work? According to the standard theory, upon entering the body it infiltrates and kills T-helper cells, a vital part of the immune system, by the bil-

lions. The precise mechanism by which it does this is not yet known, as even HIV partisans admit; they like to say that HIV is a "mysterious" virus. Without these mysteries the multi-billion dollar government-financed industry surrounding HIV would have little to do. On the subject of HIV's "mysteries," Kary Mullis, the inventor of the polymerase chain reaction that has enabled investigators to find viruses such as HIV, becomes caustic. She says, "The mystery of that damn virus has been generated by the \$2 billion a year they spend on it. You take any other virus, and you spend \$2 billion, and you can make up some great mysteries about it, too."

Over the past few years, Duesberg, the members of the Group for the Scientific Reappraisal of the HIV/AIDS hypothesis, and now Root-Bernstein, have been attempting to bring to public attention many anomalies that cast doubt on the notion that HIV, mysterious or not, could possibly be responsible for all the harms the standard paradigm claims.

Opposition to the HIV thesis is not monolithic. There are strong differences in emphasis between Duesberg, who

Despite a decade of activist and right-wing scare tactics, AIDS has never turned into the predicted plague breaking out of the initial risk groups of homosexuals, hemophiliacs and drug abusers.

until this book was the best-known of the AIDS heretics, and Root-Bernstein. Duesberg asserts that HIV is completely harmless, and even offers to be publicly injected with it under controlled testing circumstances; Root-Bernstein holds open the possibility that HIV has some role to play in immunosuppression. Duesberg places the entirety of AIDS causation on drug abuse; Root-Bernstein entertains a more nuanced, multifactorial hypothesis.

But the question of what does cause AIDS is secondary to establishing doubt that HIV is the sole explanation. It is not necessarily incumbent on one question-

ing HIV's role to counter with a fully worked-out alternative explanation.

And there are many reasons to doubt HIV's role as the sole necessary and sufficient cause of AIDS. Though it is supposedly killing T-helper cells by the billions, HIV is rarely detectable in large quantities in the bodies of those allegedly dying of its effects. What we call the "AIDS test" does not test for the presence of HIV itself — it tests for the presence of antibodies against HIV, which generally is a sign that the body has been exposed to, and beaten off, an infection. This is the same principle behind vaccination, in which you are injected with an attenuated form of a virus in order to engender an antibody response that will keep you safe from that virus thereafter. The virus itself is very difficult to find, generally detectable in no more than one out of 10,000 T-cells, hardly a large enough presence to be doing the damage it is alleged to do.

Since the mechanism by which HIV is supposedly killing T-cells is still uncertain, the HIV hypothesis is based largely on correlation assumptions that are both factually and rationally weak. HIV is often (though by no means always) found where AIDS is found; and Gallo

claims that the syndrome only appears after HIV appears; that there is no AIDS where there is no HIV.

This view is associated with the thesis that HIV is a dread new microbe, the same notion that has led some to aver that it must be the result of some biological warfare experiment gone awry (or fiendishly crafted to wipe out "undesirables"). Root-Bernstein lays to rest the notion that either AIDS or HIV is new to the world as of the late seventies and early eighties. Through painstaking reading of the extant literature, he has discovered many case histories dating back over the last century of people dy-

ing of a mysterious overload of opportunistic diseases such as Kaposi's sarcoma, pneumocystis pneumonia, candida infections and cytomegalovirus, all of which are now associated with AIDS. And HIV has been found in frozen blood samples dating back to at least 1959. Thus, the notion that HIV and AIDS burst on the scene together in the late '70s is without foundation.

Once this is realized, the tenuousness of the official HIV hypothesis becomes more and more apparent. The alleged "latency period" of the virus, another unusual attribute of HIV, is reputedly

will the "latency period" continue to stretch on infinitely in protection of the "HIV is the sole necessary and sufficient cause of AIDS" thesis that so many careers and reputations (including that of the U.S. government) depend on?

AIDS epidemiology also casts doubt on its status as a sexually transmitted single-cause microbe. In addition to anecdotal cases such as Marc Christian, Rock Hudson's lover who survived an estimated 600 unprotected sexual encounters with the dying Hudson without contracting either HIV or any illness, there is the simple fact that, de-

spite a decade of activist and right-wing scare tactics, AIDS has never turned into the predicted plague breaking out of the initial risk groups of homosexuals, hemophiliacs and drug abusers. The official Centers for Disease Control estimate that the prevalence of HIV in the U.S. population has remained steady since 1985: around one million. (And only about 3 percent a year of these on average go on to develop symptoms of AIDS.) The much-hyped epidemic didn't happen. For a supposedly infectious virus, HIV shows an almost human preference for certain types of people, and for males over females.

For example, over 90 percent of AIDS cases in the U.S. are male, though in Africa the sexual distribution is almost even. What is in the nature of this microbe to make it sexually selective depending on what continent it is on? According to Root-Bernstein it is not the microbe but the nature of the differing immunosuppressive hazards in the two continents' populations that makes the difference.

The lack of massive heterosexual spread through prostitutes is crucial in showing that AIDS is not a standard sexually transmittable disease. Root-Bernstein cites many studies showing



THOUGH THE PRODUCT HAS YET TO LIVE UP TO PROJECTIONS, THANKS TO AGGRESSIVE ADVERTISING WE HAVE SHOWN GROWTH IN ALL AREAS.

extended as people known to have HIV continue to live longer and longer. In 1986, it was assumed to be less than two years; by the beginning of 1992 it was between 10 and 15 years. No advances in knowledge of how HIV is doing its allegedly murderous work triggered these revisions, merely the observation that people continue to live healthily with HIV. Could this possibly indicate that HIV is not necessarily fatal, that a diagnosis of "HIV positive" need not be a death sentence, need not scare you into consuming AZT (the current FDA-approved AIDS drug that is a known cell killer and immune suppressor)? Or

that no significant increase in HIV seropositivity (showing antibodies for HIV) among non-drug abusing prostitutes can be found in any major Western city. A study in the *American Journal of Public Health* concluded that "HIV infection in non-drug using prostitutes tends to be low or absent, implying that sexual activity alone does not place them at high risk, while prostitutes who use intravenous drugs are far more likely to be infected with HIV." Prostitutes in this study do evince the normal range of known sexually transmitted diseases.

Luc Montagnier, HIV's actual discoverer, now admits that cofactors must be involved.

And for a sexually-transmitted disease, HIV is rarely detectable in semen. "In all studies . . . less than a third of the infected men had any HIV present in the semen and then generally less than one virus genome per milliliter of semen, or perhaps one or two dozen virus-infected cells per ejaculate, on average. Approximately the same number of viruses are excreted in the saliva of HIV-infected individuals and in vaginal secretions. This amount of HIV is considered to be incapable of transmitting disease," Root-Bernstein says (p. 34).

Another blow to the notion of HIV's power to kill is the fact that though there are over "6,000 verified cases of health care workers' reporting subcutaneous exposure to HIV-infected blood or tissue as a result of needle-stick injuries, surgical cuts, broken glass and so forth . . . only a few dozen health care workers are known to have become seropositive during the entire decade of the 1980s in the United States" (44). Compare this to hepatitis, a typical infectious disease, which causes about 15,000 accidental infections among health care professionals a year. Clearly, the notion of the single infectious killer retrovirus bringing down the healthy is improbable.

What does Root-Bernstein hypothesize is suddenly causing widespread immune collapse among so many people? No new killer microbe is necessary, he asserts, and he makes his case painstakingly;

this book's thoroughness does not necessarily make for fun or easy reading. Through case study after case study, medical citation after medical citation, he shows that the major risk groups for AIDS all have multiple immunosuppressive behaviors or risks that do not require the hypothesis of a single new cause. Multiple blood exposure to semen; the internal damage caused by anal sex and sex practices such as "fisting" which expanded greatly throughout the gay community in the 1970s and '80s; multiple blood transfusions; anesthetics and surgery; the overuse of antibiotics, opiates, and nitrate drugs; severe malnutrition; and exposure to infections such as cytomegalovirus and various sexually transmitted diseases, which are just as present in AIDS patients as HIV; all of these are known to be immunosuppressive or to expose the body to the risk of the multiple concurrent infections that characterize AIDS.

Root-Bernstein documents these assertions at copious and almost tiresome length, but it is important to show the reader that there are many possible common factors among those dying of immune suppression that are unfortunately being ignored in the rush to judgment on HIV. The studies that could help prove or disprove Root-Bernstein's theories are not being done, particularly his rather complicated, but compelling, explanation of how certain combinations of opportunistic infections that are as common in AIDS patients as HIV may lead to an autoimmune reaction in which the body's immune system turns on itself.

While this book can be understood by a lay reader, it does not condescend. It requires of readers a demanding level of thought about the workings of the immune system and the ability to remember the results of copious numbers of medical case studies.

Root-Bernstein makes a compelling case against continuing to channel funding for research on this disease on the assumption that HIV is the sole necessary and sufficient cause of AIDS. So how did we get to this state? Why are so many spending so much money on a wrong path?

There is a historical parallel. Years of time and effort were wasted searching for a "single cause" for cancer, which is now understood to be a multifactorial ailment. Again with AIDS it was as-

sumed that this seemingly new phenomenon must have a single, somewhat new cause — despite the fact that all that is new about it is its prevalence. Root-Bernstein blames this, in America, on a massive sociological explosion of risk behaviors involving sex and drug practices, and new attention to the health risks of hemophiliacs and recipients of blood transfusions. He blames the phenomenon, in Africa, on ancient problems of malnutrition, poor sanitation, and the modern spread of sexually transmitted diseases. But a retrovirologist like Robert Gallo (who had earlier claimed that a retrovirus he discovered was causing a form of leukemia) fought for the importance of his retrovirus turf, and managed to get the weight of the federal government and its research grant monopoly behind him. At that point, the fate of alternative approaches was sealed.

Don't expect this book to cause public breakthroughs any time soon. Though it is well-reasoned, thorough, calm, and professional, it is certain to be attacked with invective and a refusal to respond point by point, the fate that Duesberg has suffered for the last six years. Root-Bernstein claims that many of his colleagues privately agree with him but refuse to say so publicly in fear of losing their funding as well. The emotional energy of AIDS activists who see continued massive government funding as their only hope — and who consider anyone who isn't getting with the prevailing program to have blood on his hands — combined with the cultural weight of "official" explanations promulgated relentlessly in every part of our culture, produces a powerful backlash against heretics.

Even journalists who write about AIDS heretics are not immune from reprisals. One writer for the *Miami Herald* was fired for criticizing AZT after a letter-writing attack from Martin Delaney, director of Project Inform, an AIDS activist group. Project Inform — which is funded by Burroughs-Wellcome, the developers of AZT, whose sales depend on the HIV hypothesis — makes a practice of attacking the reputations and jobs of journalists who publicize questions about the hypothesis. Delaney circulated a six-page diatribe containing personal attacks on the AIDS heretics, accusing *Spin's* Celia Farber of spread-

ing misinformation and of being a threat to public health. He even argued that she should be prohibited from writing about the subject.

From the beginning the HIV thesis was marinated in fraud and possible professional and pecuniary gain. It appears to be based only on a correlational and epidemiological pattern that ignores other possible explanations. Its importance has expanded beyond the possible wasting of money; if Duesberg and Root-Bernstein are on the right track, then the cries of some radical gay activists are right: the government's promotion of "cures" like AZT and programs such as needle giveaways is claiming lives and ignoring real risks of immunosuppression. Government's domination of science can only be expected to lead to results like this. Instead of letting a thousand flowers bloom, the government has poured tons of manure on one superficially lovely scientific flower festooned with possibly fatal thorns.

But the diagnosis is not totally bleak: more and more people are beginning to question the orthodoxy. If you look hard enough, you can find the heretical thought even in the press: an article by Duesberg in the Summer 1990 issue of *Policy Review*, an article or two by iconoclastic right-wing journalist Tom Bethell in *National Review* and the *American Spectator*, and most of all the writings of the indefatigable Celia Farber of *Spin*. A floodgate is beginning to burst, especially after this summer's conference in which many doctors came forward to discuss cases that were obviously AIDS but in whom no trace of HIV could be found by even the most sophisticated methods. I have seen the anti-HIV thesis discussed more on TV and in magazines in the last six months than in the prior six years. Even HIV's actual discoverer, Luc Montagnier, now admits that cofactors must be involved. (He hypothesizes a form of bacteria called mycoplasma as a possible culprit.)

Anyone who cares about AIDS, is interested in a curious intellectual adventure, or wants more evidence of how centralization of power and responsibility undermines a flourishing intellectual climate and a healthy culture — healthy in many senses — should read this demanding, often shocking, and important book. □

Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, Sixteenth Edition, edited by Justin Kaplan. Little, Brown and Company, 1992, 1405 pages, \$40.00.

You Can Quote Me on This

David Boaz

The new edition of *Bartlett's* offers much fascination, combining the wealth of (mostly) Western civilization with a new attempt to be multicultural and attuned to popular culture.

There are two basic arrangements for books of quotations: by subject or by author. For most purposes, such as looking for a quotation to illustrate a point, subject is more useful, and most quotation books are arranged that way, including H.L. Mencken's *New Dictionary of Quotations* and George Seldes' *Great Quotations*. *Bartlett's* and the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* are arranged by author, which is useful if you want to find a quotation from a particular author. *Bartlett's* also has a lengthy index of keywords, in case you're trying to remember just who said "My love is like a red, red rose" (Robert Burns).

It's helpful to have at least one of each kind of book at hand. Why, though, does *Bartlett's* list authors by date of birth, requiring the reader to look in an author index first? Surely alphabetical order would be easier.

Chronological birth year order does allow one to note that some years seemed to produce bumper crops of quotable notables. The period 1818–20, for instance, gave us Emily Bronte, Frederick Douglass, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, George Eliot, Herman Melville, Queen Victoria, Walt Whitman, Susan B. Anthony, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Herbert Spencer. Almost a century later Leo Durocher, J.W. Fulbright, Greta Garbo, Lillian Hellman, Arthur Koestler, Ayn Rand, Jean Paul Sartre, C.P. Snow, and Lionel Trilling first saw the light of day in 1905.

The 1992 edition is the first to include a significant number of baby boomers (Stevie Wonder, the only one to make the 1980 edition, has fallen off

the charts), and it's revealing to note which of my contemporaries have achieved this degree of immortality: David Stockman, Oliver Stone, Arlo Guthrie, Joseph C. Stinson, Leslie Marmon Silko, Bruce Springsteen, Melinda Mathison, Louise Erdrich, James Gleick, and Michael Jackson (the youngest entrant) and Lionel Richie, as well as our foreign-born contemporaries Steve Biko, Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Salman Rushdie, Prince Charles, and Jimmy Cliff. One can only hope that books take longer to write and to seep into popular culture than rock music and movies. It's *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* remember, so Jefferson's wisdom and Dorothy Parker's wit take their place alongside "don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle," "keep on truckin'," and "me want cookie."

Despite the heavy representation of pop culture, editor Justin Kaplan seems wisely to have included fewer quotations culled from newspaper interviews than were in the previous edition. He has also, in the spirit of the age, made the volume more multicultural, a change most apparent in the pre-baby-boom generation: white men account for only 57 percent of these entries (many of whom came to prominence in the Sixties), far less than their percentage of earlier periods. Even then, virtually all of the citations are to Americans.

This book is slimmer than the 1980 edition, but that seems to have been achieved with smaller but still readable type rather than fewer quotations. Some 340 authors have been added and about that many deleted, with no losses that bother me.

The dozen years since the fifteenth edition have been marked by a worldwide turn toward markets, from Reagan and Thatcher to the New Zealand Labor Party's free-market reforms to the fall of Soviet communism. This histori-

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cal trend seems to have escaped editor Kaplan, of Cambridge, Mass., who has given us *more* quotations from Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Robert Heilbroner, while virtually eliminating F.A. Hayek and Milton Friedman, the intellectual gurus of the free-market revolution. A bust of Hayek now sits in the Kremlin, but Cambridge is holding out against the tide.

Hayek has been reduced to two quotations, neither of which reflects his particular contributions to social thought. Friedman is represented by three, including the wrongly attributed aphorism, "There's no such thing as a free lunch." Meanwhile, the towering figure of John Kenneth Galbraith receives eleven citations. (William F. Buckley, Jr., is unrepresented.)

As in 1980, the Bible is second only to Shakespeare in the number of quotations included. But Ayn Rand, who came in second to the Bible in a 1991 Gallup survey on most influential authors, gets only three citations. Margaret Thatcher likewise is represented with three quotations, none of which capture her free-market radicalism.

Quotations from recent presidents offer a similar surprise. John F. Kennedy leads the pack with 28 quotations, followed by Richard Nixon with ten, Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter with six, George Bush with four, and Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan with three. Again, Reagan's impact on the world, not to mention his reputation as the Great Communicator, seems to have bypassed Cambridge. However, when one tries to remember which Reagan phrases ought to be included, one is struck by how many of them are derivative: "city on a hill," "Evil Empire," "rendezvous with destiny," "Where's the Rest of Me?" (Surely John G. Magee's "I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth" was added to this edition because Peggy Noonan used those lines in the remarks she wrote for Reagan after the *Challenger* disaster, yet there is no reference to Reagan.)

Still, one would think that a few of his off-the-cuff remarks — "There you go again" or "We begin bombing in five minutes" — might warrant inclusion, along with some Reaganesque phrases about politics and government such as "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall" or "the ant heap of totalitarianism" or "The nearest thing to eternal life we'll

ever see on this earth is a temporary government agency."

Which reminds me, where is Barry Goldwater's "A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take it all away"? (For that, you'll need Bruce Bohle's *Home Book of American Quotations*.) The famous "extremism" quotation, however, is here ("Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice . . ."), though not cited to its actual author, Karl Hess.

One might assume that these curiosities don't represent any conscious bias on Kaplan's part, just a blindness to the political and economic changes going on in the world. Dictionaries of quotations are perforce behind the times; they represent the distilled wisdom, or at least memorabilia, of centuries. As market liberalism sweeps the world in the

The dozen years since the last edition have been marked by a worldwide turn toward markets. This trend seems to have escaped editor Kaplan, of Cambridge, Mass. A bust of Hayek now sits in the Kremlin, but Cambridge is holding out against the tide.

21st century, its architects will get their due. Still, it's disappointing to see a 1992 edition offering fewer selections from thinkers such as Friedman and Hayek. And Kaplan's response to an earlier criticism about the lack of Reagan quotations suggests a determined refusal to grant Reagan an important place in the world. Presumably the same animus is in fact reflected in the lack of quotations from Hayek, Friedman, and so on.

In the final analysis, I wonder if it's a good idea to have eight books of quotations sitting next to my word processor. Perhaps such a wealth of quotation is mere temptation, temptation to rely on the notions of others at the expense of original thought. As Emerson said, "I hate quotation. Tell me what you know." □

Fatherland, by Robert Harris. HarperCollins, 1992, 380 pp., \$6.50.

Kennedy Meets Hitler

Stephen Cox

Why do people enjoy books about historical events that never happened?

I'm not referring to books about capitalism's exploitation of the working class, the formation of the Oedipal complex, the aesthetic triumphs of post-modernist painting, or other things that *allegedly* happened. I'm referring to books about events that even college professors know to be unreal. I'm referring to books about what happened when the South won the Civil War, or the Russians bombed Dallas, or Hitlerism survived the second World War. The last topic is the subject of Robert Harris' novel *Fatherland*.

I can think of a number of explanations for the perennial popularity of this kind of book. An optimist would say that such books interest us by making us aware of how well things actually do turn out in this world: the South didn't win, the Russians didn't bomb us, Hitler didn't survive; how fortunate we are! A pessimist would say that these books interest us by making us aware of how badly things *may* turn out: the South might have won, the Russians might have bombed, Hitler might have survived; our fortunes hang by a thread!

Alternatively, one can explain the popularity of these books as a special case of people's interest in a certain kind of game-playing. Speculations about what might have happened if the conflict with the Nazis had continued beyond 1945 invite us to shuffle imaginary "forces" around in our minds in the way in which we shuffle counters around on a Risk or Diplomacy board. Of course, it's up to you to decide who's higher up on the intellectual chain of being: game-players who want the imaginary forces under their control to be fully abstracted from history and geography (as they are

in chess), or game-players who can attend to the action only when they have "armies," "fleets," and "nations" to push around.

I'm in the latter group, myself. I can't understand how anyone could care if K moves to Q3. But I'm not sure why I care if a little block of yellow wood manages to slide over a blue pasteboard surface labeled "France" and succeeds in "bombing" the hell out of a green surface called "Italy."

If, however, you also are attracted to the latter kind of game, you will probably be interested in *Fatherland*, which is a novel about what might have happened in the game of history if (1) Hitler's armies had beaten the Soviets in 1943, (2) Hitler's spies had discovered in 1944 that the British had cracked the communications codes used by Germany's submarines, and (3) Hitler's scientists had succeeded in 1946 in building an intercontinental ballistic missile.

According to Harris' novel, the result of these three movements on the game board of the world might be a Reich in permanent control of eastern Europe, a Reich that could preserve its submarines long enough to starve Britain into submission, and a Reich that could threaten the United States into exchanging a hot war for a cold one. *Fatherland* is set in Berlin in 1964, a Berlin that is geopolitically similar to the Moscow of 1964. Harris' Berlin is the capital of a vast empire of subject provinces and satellite states, expensively engaged, on its borders, in a military contest with the United States, noisily proud of its revolutionary tradition and its supposedly high level of material culture, but eager for a face-saving detente with its enemies.

Berlin in 1964 is preparing to celebrate Hitler's 75th birthday — and the visit of President Joseph P. Kennedy for

a summit conference with the Fuehrer. The plot is occupied with the efforts of a disgruntled police official to uncover embarrassing truths about the nature of a smugly well-established fascism — truths, for instance, about the little noticed disappearance of millions of the Reich's subjects. These truths are politically as well as morally significant, because they might upset the motions toward detente of even so morally reptilian a politician as Joseph P. Kennedy.

As characters, the policeman and his friends are well conceived, and the action that concerns them is well conducted, with the exception of the protagonist's somewhat implausible propensity for risk-taking — a propensity that does, however, help to keep the plot moving. Very fortunately, Harris never burdens the reader with the "technical" details that are apparently so interesting to habitual readers of espionage thrillers and military adventure stories. This novel is about human events, not about hardware.

Most of the interest of a book of this kind lies, of course in its ability to present a plausible reconstruction of a world that never happened. In this

Berlin in 1964 is preparing to celebrate Hitler's 75th birthday — and the visit of President Joseph P. Kennedy for a summit conference with the Fuehrer.

case, the reconstruction is rather convincing. The world of Nazis is presented concretely, from the viewpoint of people living their daily lives, riding the subways, driving Volkswagens, watching television. One gets the sense of thickness and weight that is the mark of social reality. Harris is clever at working in references to real historical personalities, not just the personalities that immediately come to mind when you think about Nazis but those that make you respond, Well, yes, come to think of it, so-and-so *would* be in on this, and that's something that *could* have hap-

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pened to him. The historical references are often most effective for their casualness:

World news. In London, it had been announced that King Edward and Queen Wallis were to pay a state visit to the Reich in July "to further strengthen the deep bonds of respect and affection between the peoples of Great Britain and the German Reich."

Another sign of realism is the strong though implicit political thrust of the novel. The King and Queen of England want to strengthen bonds of respect for a vicious dictatorship; Hitler, the President of the United States, and Nazi sympathizers in the American embassy are anxious for detente; Nazi officials bill themselves as proponents of "reconstruction": what is this but a critique-by-analogy of the relationship between Western opportunists, dupes, and fellow-travelers, and the vicious dictatorship that did survive World War II, the Soviet Union?

Harris is under no illusions about the nature of the Cold War that really happened. And he makes sure to point out that the Nazis were not alone in their campaigns of extermination; in this they had very effective competition from the Communists, who were not, to Harris' mind, simply "anti-fascists." The political message of *Fatherland* is universal; it's about tyranny itself, not just about Nazi tyranny.

All this having been said, there remain some problems. I have remarked that Harris' protagonist takes some improbable chances. He is also, at times, somewhat undermotivated; there are effective insights into his psychology, his personal reasons for disaffection with the regime, but they don't go quite far enough to explain his behavior. Harris' prose is workmanlike but seldom colorful or distinctive. He establishes motifs — references to churches and religion, for instance, and to art — that he might develop for symbolic purposes, but he fails to elaborate them.

The most serious problem, however, is an

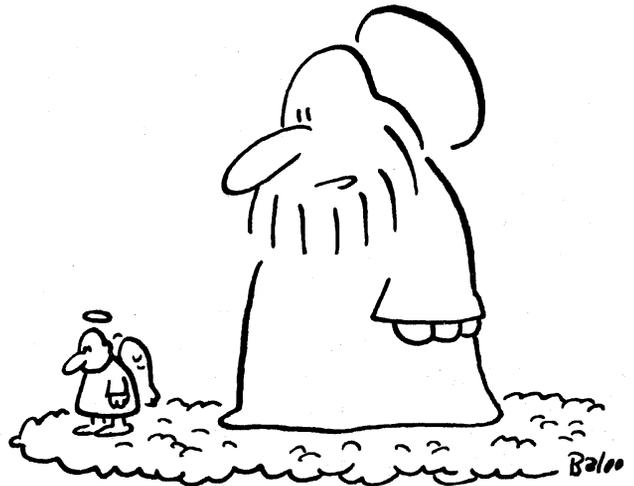
inability to come to grips with the inherent economic and political weaknesses of totalitarianism. In Harris' portrayal, the Third Reich is a little like Cleveland. Some things work well; some things don't; some people live happy lives; others don't; on the whole, the place is

The Third Reich is a little like Cleveland. Some things work well; some things don't; some people live happy lives; others don't; on the whole, the place is getting a little run down.

getting a little run down. But there's little evidence that Harris, who was a political editor for the *London Observer*, really understands how disastrously inefficient and self-destructive tyranny is. The novel's climactic analysis of the practical disabilities of totalitarianism comes from a character who predicts that

five years from now, or fifty years, this society will fall apart. You can't build on a mass grave. Human beings are better than that. . . .

Well, they're better than that, all right, but they're also worse, as the novel itself indicates. It wasn't a vague betterness that brought down the Soviet Union; it was the inherent incapacity of



"Oh, send them to Palestine, I guess — Nothing ever happens there."

totalitarian economies to protract their existence without falling back on modifications that destroy them from within, as the Soviet Union was destroyed.

But this, come to think of it, is a per-

spective you don't get from Risk or Diplomacy. Harris needs to get up from the game board and go read some Friedrich Hayek. Except for that problem, he's written a pretty good book. □

Booknotes

The Lying Machine — "Since 1985, senators, unlike house members, have been required to disclose publicly the annual costs of their mailings. There are nominal cost limits, based on state population, but once again, the loopholes are wider than Senator Howell Heflin (D-Ala.)." Okay, maybe humor isn't one of James T. Bennett's and Thomas J. DiLorenzo's stronger points, but their book **Official Lies — How Washington Misleads Us** (Groom Books, 1992, 320pp., \$19.95) is better than their jokes.

The focus of the book is the giant, self-promoting propaganda machine known as Washington, D.C., and Bennett and DiLorenzo take dead aim. From farm subsidies to drug policy they spare no bloated government agency from attack.

Of interest to all libertarians is the obscure way in which the federal government has grown in response to the supposed "poverty crisis" America faces. This "crisis," like most others, has been falsely manufactured so that the public will think that government action is not only a good idea, but indeed a necessary solution. Bennett and DiLorenzo prove this to be patently false.

One of the more popular notions spouted by modern liberals is that government spending on social programs was completely gutted by that mean and nasty Ronald Reagan. This is absurd. Reagan did little to curb the growth of government, with welfare spending increasing in real dollars from \$156.6 billion in 1980 to \$184.2 in 1988. In fact, "[b]y 1988, government at all levels spent enough on poverty programs alone (excluding Social Security) to give \$5,790 to each man, woman, and child below the poverty threshold. That adds up to \$23,160 for every family of four — or nearly twice the poverty threshold of income." Yet during the period of 1980 to 1988 the Census Bureau claims the

number of "poor" people was reduced only from 33.3 million to 31.9 million.

How could this be? Because for government bureaucrats to justify their existence there must be "poor" people. And who defines what a "poor" person is? The government. So it is plainly in government bureaucrats' interest to manipulate the data to "produce" more "poor" people. Bennett and DiLorenzo adeptly explain the ways in which the government perpetrates this kind of trickery, as well as deceptions in other areas.

Those who believe that government isn't the solution to people's problems have been largely ineffective in curbing state growth, and would be well served to find out more about the tools Washington uses to promulgate its expansion. *Official Lies* would be a good place to start. —Aaron T. Steelman

Thriller! — During a recent illness I decided to spend a couple of days luxuriating in an old pastime, novel reading. I read three novels by the current best-selling author John Grisham, to see what all the fuss was about.

It's about less than one might hope, but more than one might fear. The novels were hard to put down once you got into them. There is no very distinctive literary style, and certainly no purple passages. There is lots of intrigue but, almost no sex (quite unusual for today). The writing is always unsentimental, no-nonsense, and without sidetracks or irrelevancies: every page carries the action forward. But their main characteristic is the author's fine sense for *structure*. You begin with one scene, and become quite absorbed in it by the time the chapter ends, and the next chapter begins with different characters in a seemingly unrelated action, which turns out to be interestingly related to the first. The third then interlocks with the

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first two, and so on, until soon a complex web is woven and interrelating characters generated, resulting in a sense of richness and complexity. Yet the reader always knows where he is — nothing fuzzy, no loose ends. The author has a sure sense of structure that never lets us down.

The first novel, *A Time To Kill* (Dell, 1989, \$5.99), is by far the best one, set in a small Mississippi county seat and centered around the courthouse (the author grew up in Oxford, Mississippi, and still lives there) where a long and climactic trial is enacted, whose verdict centers around complex issues of racial discrimination. The story is very intense, and the author clearly feels strongly about racism. This is a worthy successor to *In the Heat of the Night* and *Mississippi Burning*.

The other novels are, by contrast, ex-

ercises in clever plotting, easily forgotten after the book is placed back on the shelf. *The Pelican Brief* (Dell, 1992, \$5.99) begins with the assassination of two Supreme Court justices (it is set mostly in New Orleans), and gradually uncovers a complex plot involving ecological crimes. *The Firm* (Dell, 1991, \$5.99; now a movie starring Tom Cruise) begins with a seemingly innocent banking organization, which is actually a front for an international organization corrupt almost beyond belief, in which the protagonist, a bright unsuspecting young attorney, is sucked in beyond his depth — his life threatened, he has to make some quick and fateful moral choices.

The author's experience as a lawyer is indispensable to the writing of these novels. Insane laws, legal loopholes, and most of all the way these laws are violat-

ed with impunity, figure prominently in each. There is a mark of authenticity to these details, which adds to the reader's knowledge as well as enjoyment. Libertarians will no doubt be pleased by the recurring theme of government waste and corruption. But the author's principal venom is reserved for the legal profession. Corrupt lawyers and legal practices suffuse these books from start to finish. The happy ending in each novel is only a thin cloak for the overwhelming presence of villainy in high places, a wasteland of wrecked human lives and an almost complete failure of the legal system to achieve any kind of justice.

Readers who want just an interesting story that keeps them hooked will be rewarded, if they have a sufficient span of attention to keep straight a large gallery of characters. Those who read with a desire for some cognitive input will get it in detailed insights into how the law actually works in people's lives. But with this knowledge will come a sense of frustration and perhaps hopelessness, and one may wonder how a nation can survive in the face of a power structure as inept and corrupt as this one. —John Hospers

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Not Working — Government intervention in the labor market, ostensibly designed to raise the level of real wages, has created high levels of unemployment — levels far higher than existed prior to the "pro-labor" interventionist policy. This is liable to shock the average American. Thankfully, Richard K. Vedder and Lowell E. Gallaway have provided a book that argues this thesis very well: *Out of Work: Unemployment and Government in Twentieth-Century America* (Holmes & Meier/The Independent Institute, 1993, 336 pp., \$34.95 hc, \$16.95 sc). Armed with an explanatory model they call the "Neoclassical/Austrian Approach," the two economists tell the story of unemployment in this century.

The most interesting portion of the book by far is the discussion of the Great Depression and its postwar aftermath. The period from 1929 to 1933 was a watershed in American history. Vedder and Gallaway dismiss the notion that President Herbert Hoover was a disciple of laissez faire, arguing that Hoover was an interventionist who

turned a minor economic downturn in the economy into the by now mythic Great Depression.

Hoover's first blunder was to pressure business leaders to keep wages high during the economic downturn: "The failure of money wages to fall in the downturn beginning in the fall of 1929 was largely a consequence of public policy intervention by President Hoover and his political allies. As a consequence of this intervention real wages rose rather than fell, and unemployment increased to previously unattained levels" (pp 89-90). The Smoot-Hawley tariff, and the Davis-Bacon and Norris-LaGuardia acts were all passed during Hoover's administration. This legislation had the result of further increasing wage levels to the extent that, "at the depth of the Great Depression in 1933, the real hourly wage of workers was some 12.5 per cent higher than in 1929, despite the fact that fully one fourth of the labor force was unemployed" (82). Nevertheless, as an interventionist, Hoover was a rank amateur compared to his successor, Roosevelt. Vedder and Galloway detail how FDR's policies helped to maintain double-digit unemployment almost until the start of World War II.

Their discussion of the immediate post-World War II era is also somewhat novel. The conventional (Keynesian) wisdom of the time was that the United States would suffer high unemployment after the war ended. This did not happen. Unemployment remained low throughout the mid-to-late forties.

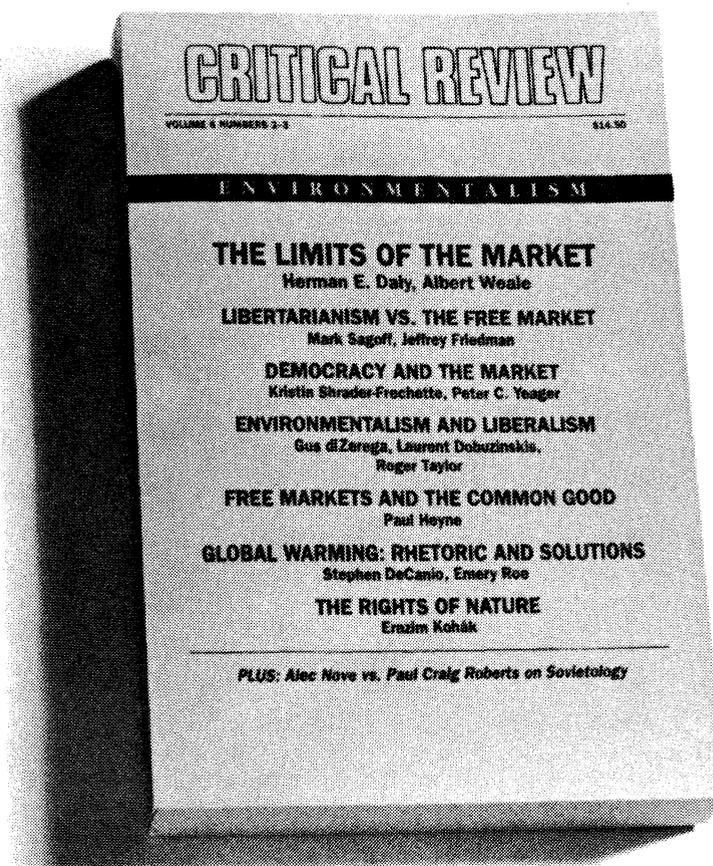
This boom was not the result, however, of "pent-up demand" (which became the standard explanation). According to Vedder and Galloway, "the evidence supports a distinctly non-Keynesian interpretation: a downward adjustment in labor supply and real wages, accompanied by a less stimulative (nondeficit) fiscal policy, served to stimulate investment and consumption spending. *Relative price adjustments* brought about what Keynesians considered an increase in aggregate demand, rather than the other way around" (171, emphasis added).

Out of Work is quite readable, despite Galloway and Vedder's frequent lapses into arcane mathematical formulae; their equations can easily be ignored. This book is interesting and

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valuable to anyone interested in history or public policy. Unfortunately, the people who really need to see it most — our benighted Labor Secretary Reich and President Rodham — will not likely be able to find time in their busy schedules to learn a little something from history. Instead they are condemning us to repeat it.

—Clark Stooksbury

Criticism Unbound — Aristotle, Horace, Dryden, Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, Sainte-Beuve, T.S. Eliot, Henry James, Virginia Woolf . . . the honor roll of literary critics and theorists. These are men and women who made the art of literary reflection something more than an art of shadows, a mere commentary on the commentary that literature makes on life. By illuminating the principles of thought and action from which literature proceeds, and by tracing the variations of literary self-expression through all the varieties of personality and circumstance, they made their art a fundamentally important vehicle of human self-understanding.

Within this great tradition, violent disagreement was taken for granted; no one expected intelligent people to regard literature from identical points of view. But there was general agreement, at least, on the nature of the enterprise. The great critics and theorists did not attach themselves to purely academic problems, or limit themselves to purely academic audiences; they addressed problems that they rightly assumed were of interest to all intelligent people. And they tried to address intelligent people in an intelligible style.

The great, public tradition of literary criticism and theory always existed in opposition to a pale and bloodless tradition of purely academic commentary, and it often needed to distinguish itself from feverish eruptions of party propa-

ganda misrepresenting itself as "literary criticism." At the present moment, these two dismal tendencies — the school of pedantry and the school of propaganda — have joined forces in the American university and its subject presses and journals. Where else but in the field of "literary theory," as currently practiced in American departments of literature, can authors be hailed as social revolutionaries for producing articles that make Indo-European phonetics look exciting?

To all of this the works of Frederick Crews present a welcome contrast. Crews is a distinguished academic critic of literature; more to the point, he is a distinguished *public* critic, the master of a vigorous and attractive style who uses that style to communicate penetrating insights into the intellectual life of the modern world. His earlier collection of essays, *Skeptical Engagements* (Oxford University Press, 1986), which is still in the bookstores and which ought to be read, was a magisterial critique of the strange distortions of the post-Marxist and post-Freudian ideologies that dominate current "high" academic discourse. His new collection, *The Critics Bear It Away: American Fiction and the Academy* (Random House, 1992, 234 pp., \$20.00), contains something almost unheard of in current discourse — an admission of a change of ideology, prompted by rational reconsideration. Twenty-seven years ago, Crews published an influential Freudian analysis of the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Crews gradually came to see that Freud's principles, and his own, were not well founded; and in *The Critics Bear It Away*, he explains *why he was wrong*. Such an unexampled display of honesty is sufficient to revive one's hope that literary criticism may once again become a medium for the disinterested search for

truth.

The Critics Bear It Away presents, in addition, vividly independent assessments of the works and reputations of Twain, Faulkner, Hemingway, Updike, Flannery O'Connor, and the writers of the nineteenth-century "American renaissance." To profit from this book, one need not agree with all of Crews' assessments. I disagree with many of his particular judgments. He is unsympathetic, for instance, to what I regard as two of the greatest achievements of American literature, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*. I am also disappointed by some of Crews' remarks on intentionalist literary theory. He quite properly regrets the narrow-mindedness of critics who imagine that we must always judge literary works in respect to some *one* authorial intention, but he neglects the contribution that intentionalist theory can make to our understanding of *competing* authorial purposes and preferences.

Yet throughout Crews' book, one feels that one is engaged with a strong, sensitive, and scrupulously rational mind, a mind with which it is therefore a pleasure either to agree or to argue. Each of the essays in *The Critics Bear It Away* provides a fresh and candid reconsideration of a major writer or writers and a clear and judicious account of the ways in which authorial reputations have been molded by critical fashions. In just one brief essay on Hemingway, for example, Crews gets to the core of that author's tragic psychological problems, demonstrates their crucial influence on his work, and illuminates the difficulties that other interpreters have had in coming to terms with the Hemingway myth — a myth that has exerted a formative influence on many American writers and that has for too long stood in the way of mature assessment of Hemingway's real accomplishments.

The Critics Bear It Away gives one a new appreciation for the complexity and vitality of American literature — and for the continuing vitality of American literary criticism. —Stephen Cox

If you agree with Robert Hutchins...

"... knowledge without wisdom has brought us to the edge of destruction and may at any time push us over the brink."

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Erratum

The final paragraph of David Friedman's essay, "Paying for Crime" (June 1993, pp. 53-54), was included by mistake; it was not the work of the author, and neither the author nor the editors intended it to be published. Our apologies to David Friedman and to our readers.

Letters, continued from page 4

their time and money on state policy institutes will not accomplish the goals of most of the "disillusioned LPers."

Policy institutes exert temporary influence on academicians and politicians. Of necessity, they focus on existing legislation and respond to the issues made topical by politicians. They are only as relevant as their last position paper. To assure their survival and prosperity, policy institutes must concentrate their efforts on specific issues. They must eschew the very type of long-term planning and activism for which the Libertarian Party was formed and to which it strives.

Many individuals with a keen interest in personal freedom and self determination never reap the benefits of the work of policy institutes. "The voter" is not the focus of any policy institute. Instead, they attempt to motivate politicians and media.

The Libertarian Party has a different reason for being. It wishes to elect political leaders. It addresses a broader field of topics and attempts to unite a more diverse coalition than any think tank could desire.

Cullene Lang
Sacramento, Calif.

Christ No Cultist!

Does Timothy Virkkala ("Cry cult!" June 1993) believe that people like Moses or Buddha or Jesus were psychopaths? It seems to me that they were the consummate libertarians of their times, Jesus especially. Here was a fellow who put his money where his mouth was, willing to pay the ultimate price for bucking the religious-statist coalition whose survival depended on keeping the human spirit shackled and inert, then as now. Jesus never intended to start some new religion.

His mission was to *rescue* in the true sense of the word — to rescue everyone from every kind of foolishness. Trust me.

Joanna Parker
Ocean Shores, Wash.

Some of Our Best Friends Are Editors!

John George and I are pleased that *Liberty* published R.W. Bradford's review of our book, *Nazis, Communists, Klansmen, and Others on the Fringe* ("Some of My Best Friends Are Extremists!" June 1993).

We acknowledge most of the errors Bradford meticulously details, and we've even found a few errors that he did not report. These errors are not central to any theme or argument; they approach irrele-

Notes on Contributors

Chester Alan Arthur is *Liberty's* political correspondent.

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R.W. Bradford is editor of *Liberty*.

Stephen Cox is Professor of Literature at the University of California and the author of *Love and Logic: The Evolution of Blake's Thought*.

Brian Doherty is a journalist and editor in Washington, D.C.

David Friedman is the author of *The Machinery of Freedom* and *Price Theory: An Intermediate Text*.

Glenn Garvin is the author of *Everybody Has His Own Gringo: The CIA & The Contras*. He is a Contributing Editor of *Reason* and was Editor of *Inquiry*.

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Loren E. Lomasky is co-author (with Geoffrey Brennan) of *Democracy and Decision: The Pure Theory of Electoral Preference*.

John McCormack, an American who was born in South Africa, has travelled extensively on both private and public reservations in Africa.

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James S. Robbins is a foreign policy analyst living in Massachusetts.

Jane S. Shaw is a writer living in Bozeman, Montana.

Sandy Shaw is co-author (with Durk Pearson) of *Freedom of Informed Choice: The FDA vs Nutrient Supplements*.

Aaron T. Steelman is a student at the University of Michigan and an editorial assistant at *Liberty*.

Clark Stooksbury is a graduate of Memphis State Law School and an editorial assistant at *Liberty*.

John M. Taylor is Director of Studies at the Al Dente Memorial Institute for Pasta Research.

Timothy Virkkala is assistant editor of *Liberty*.

Jesse Walker has just accepted a position as assistant editor of *Liberty*.

vance in the context of the whole book, so we won't bore the readers further.

Bradford's account of the National Hamiltonian Party was very interesting. We certainly would have included it in the book if we had known about it. It's not the only example of an organization not being quite what it seemed. Even at 520 pages, however, we had to leave out mountains of relevant and interesting material. We could easily do another volume of the same size.

As far as the editing of the manuscript is concerned I think John and I are in agreement with Bradford. *Nazis, Communists, Klansman* is a very

long book and deals with a fairly complex subject. The publisher changed editors on us midway in the project, and we had the feeling that both editors were terribly pressed for time. Neither John nor myself are professional writers and we could have used the copy editing that we didn't get.

Laird Wilcox
Olathe, Kans.

Editorial Suggestion

I don't like to see articles claiming the US Postal Service is flying a flag with the correct number of stars.

Steven Riggan
Pittsburg, Kans.

Terra Incognita

Detroit

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young puts taxpayers' money to work, as reported by the *Detroit Free Press*:

A deluxe portable toilet set up for Mayor Coleman Young's private Grand Prix party Sunday was guarded overnight by a Detroit police officer to make sure no one used it before the mayor. The mayor didn't use it either — he failed to show up. The 24-foot trailer was rented at an expense of \$1,200.

Honolulu

Novel technique for easing the lot of overburdened public servants, as reported by the *Honolulu Observer*:

A prison guard said that he had an inmate stab him with a sharpened screwdriver because he thought it was an easy way to get out of work.

Washington, D.C.

A leading electronic journalist speaks truth to power, as reported by the *Detroit News*:

CBS Anchorman Dan Rather speaking to the president on his recent collaboration with co-anchor Connie Chung: "If we could be one-one hundredth as great as you and Hillary Rodham Clinton have been together in the White House, we'd take it right now and walk away winners."

Jerusalem

Advance in the judicial regulation of commerce, as reported by the *Associated Press*:

A Jerusalem religious court has revoked Pepsi's *kashrut* license because the court had ruled that PepsiCo, Inc. had transgressed by using scantily clad women in its ads and sponsoring a concert by Guns 'N Roses in Tel Aviv on the Sabbath.

Santa Barbara, California

Equality before the law in the Golden State, as reported by the *News-Press*:

Irene Dorado, a multiple sclerosis sufferer confined to a wheelchair, discovered a tire on her van had been deflated while parked at the courthouse. Dorado, who had parked in the only parking spot available near the door of the courthouse, was surprised to learn that the culprit was Superior Court Judge James Slater, who was perturbed that Dorado, whom he knew was handicapped, had taken the parking spot normally reserved for his Porsche. The District Attorney acknowledged that Judge Slater had violated the vehicle code, but decided not to prosecute on grounds that Slater "is a highly respected judge on the bench and I consider him to be a very fine judge."

Los Angeles

Great moments in affirmative action as reported by the *Associated Press*:

A former *Jeopardy* writer says in a new book that clues and questions and categories sometimes were altered at the last minute to make them more "female friendly" — like replacing a category on weapons with one on clothes.

Washington, D.C.

Esthetic note from the nation's capital, as reported by the *Washington Times*:

"Hillary Clinton will become an international beauty image," predicted Christophe, hairdresser to the stars and the First Family.

Oglesby, Ill.

Esthetic note from America's heartland, as reported by the *Washington Post*:

After receiving a complaint from John Swartz, the building's janitor, the Post Office in Oglesby has covered up a mural depicting a battle between the Illinois and Pottawattomic tribes because it includes two men with exposed genitals,

St. Louis

Advanced journalistic technique, as reported by *Full Service Media*:

Francis Patrick Brady, the president of the company that owns KMOV-TV, apologized Thursday for the station's arrangement to have a male prostitute lure a Roman Catholic priest to a hotel. The station paid the prostitute's expenses, including the cost of the hotel room and a phone call to the priest, and on March 26 secretly filmed and recorded the priest.

Washington, D.C.

Investment note for the rich and powerful, as reported by the *Detroit News*:

Value Partners, the investment house that manages part of the First Lady's portfolio, has been selling short health care stocks since she became health czar.

Massachusetts

Progressive legislation in home of Edward Kennedy, Michael Dukakis, and Paul Tsongas, as reported by the *Washington Post*:

"Baked beans were recognized in Massachusetts as the official state bean, the result of a lobbying effort by elementary school children."

Syracuse, New York

A setback in the never-ending battle to save the environment in the Empire State, from the *Albany Times Union*:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has fined a Buffalo firm \$78,000 for illegally disposing of "environmentally harmful debris." The firm had dumped "trees, stumps, shrubs and topsoil" on a remote farm it owned 30 miles northwest of Syracuse.

Washington, D.C.

President Clinton's economic program picks up support, as reported by *The Senior American*:

"General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the former communist dictator of Poland, endorsed the Clinton economic plan."

(Readers are invited to forward newsclippings or other items for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

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with Liberty's Back Issues

continued from back cover

- "The Orwellian University," by Charles Thorne
- "Strange Subcultures of the Right," by John Baden

Plus articles and reviews by David Friedman, Bill Kauffman, James Robbins, Mark Skousen and others. (72 pages)

Volume 4

September 1990

- "Conversations with Ayn Rand (part 2)," by John Hospers
 - "Is Environmental Press Coverage Biased?" by Jane S. Shaw
 - "The Pro-Life Case for the Abortion Pill," by Dr Ron Paul
- Plus articles and reviews by Michael Krauss, James Robbins, Richard Kostelanetz and others; and a *fiction* by Harvey Segal. (72 pages)

November 1990

- "Smokes, But No Peacepipe," by Scott Reid
 - "Sex, Drugs, and the Goldberg Variations," by Richard Kostelanetz
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January 1991

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- "The Myth of War Prosperity," by Robert Higgs
 - "The Life of Rose Wilder Lane," by William Holtz
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May 1991

- "Christiana: Something Anarchical in Denmark," by Ben Best
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 - "California's Man-Made Drought," by Richard Stroup
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July 1991

- "Say 'No' to Intolerance," by Milton Friedman
 - "I Am a Casualty of the War on Drugs," by Stuart Reges
 - "Depolluting the USSR," by James Robbins
- Plus articles and reviews by David Friedman, Loren Lomasky, Sheldon Richman, Karl Hess, Richard Kostelanetz and others; and Mark Skousen's interview with Robert Heilbroner. (72 pages)

Volume 5

September 1991

- "Stalking the Giant Testes of Ethiopia," by Robert Miller
 - "GNP: A Bogus Notion," by R.W. Bradford
 - "Persuasion *versus* Force," by Mark Skousen
- Plus articles and reviews by Bart Kosko, Frank Fox, John Hospers, James Taggart, Karl Hess and others. (72 pages)

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- "The Road to Nowhere," by David Horowitz

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- Plus commentary on the L.A. Riots, and writings by David Kelley, Leland Yeager, George H. Smith and others. (72 pages)

Volume 6

September 1992

- "War on Drugs, War on Progress," by James Ostrowski
 - "Wilderness, Church and State," by Robert H. Nelson
 - "If Execution Is Just, What Is Justice?" by J. Neil Schulman
- Plus writing by Martin Morse Wooster, Ethan O. Waters, Jane S. Shaw, William Mellor III and others; and an index to back issues. (80 pages)

November 1992

- "The First Time: I Run for the Presidency," by John Hospers
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