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On 'Southern Manners'

I've just finished reading the second of John Shelton Reed's articles (Letter From the Lower Right, December 1991 and January 1992) praising his own manners, and those of other Southerners. I've encountered this in Southern print before, and it has never failed to annoy me. I was taught that bragging is bad manners, and that public sneers against "outsiders" is provincialism.

There is, of course, a difference between traditional northern and Southern manners. In the upstate New York region where I spent the more important of my formative years, we did not dwell on the fact that it was one of Washington's headquarters during an important period in the War of Independence, nor did we allude to our regional heritage on social occasions.

The best American manners I recall were those exhibited by the northern pre-World War I people, who were genuinely graceful and democratic. Such manners were well represented by FDR, who managed to conceal his innate snobbery with remarkable ease in public, and Hamilton Fish, one of his contemporaries, who more honestly did the same. They were members of my father's generation, and their manners reflected those of their fathers. I mention them as representative because both became well-known and many were exposed to their manners. Both my father and my grand-

fathers (one of whom was not an American, but a Scot) had the same ease, and took the same care to not carelessly offend others. In my view, they had the Anglo-American manners of their generation.

In recent decades American manners have shown a deplorable decline, due largely to the influence of various sub-cultures scornful of earlier traditions and customs. Such changes are also altering the South. Mr. Reed apparently resides in some pocket that time forgot, and writes as if Southern courtesy is still widespread, as in antebellum days. My experience with Southern manners in recent decades has been considerably less pleasant, but I will not follow his example and cite instances. That approach simply exacerbates a sad situation.

—Otto Scott
 Murphys, CA

Mr. Reed Replies:

My intention has always been merely to show that Southern manners are different, not that they're "better." It would be foolish to deny that many Southerners believe that, but others of us are quite ready to acknowledge that courtesy comes in many forms. (See, for instance, Donald Davidson's appreciation of Vermonters, in *Still Rebels, Still Yankees*.) My favorite definition of a gentleman is "one who never gives offense unintentionally," so I apologize to Mr. Scott.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

AN NEA GRANT has been awarded to an "artist" in Utah to erect a monument to the myth of a pre-Roe v. Wade "back-alley" abortion holocaust. Darin Biniatz, a 26 year old who has discovered that "art" is more profitable and less demanding than actual work, has received \$2,000 to create a "sculpture" called "No Choice (No Freedom)." The work will consist of a rust-red 40-foot I beam and a sealed box containing the names of 100 American women who supposedly died as a result of illegal abor-

tions between 1932 and 1989. The "sculpture" will blemish a tract of public land leased to Biniatz by the Bureau of Land Management. Previous works by Biniatz have also dealt with political subjects. Last year he filled a Plexiglas cube with air from Deer Valley and dangled it over a Salt Lake City intersection; a sign informed the public that "The Clean Air Is in the Box." In April he presented a work entitled "No Home for the Brave" about homeless children. These pieces persuaded NEA jurors to

fund the pro-abortion sculpture.

According to Galen McKibben of Montana's Helena Presents (which co-administered Biniáz's grant), the abortion sculpture was found "at the very top" of 160 applications. Juror Casey Jarman of the Salt Lake Arts Council explained that Biniáz's proposal "came at a time when the panel felt it made a strong statement and was worthy of funding." The decision to fund the sculpture came shortly after the Utah legislature, acting with overwhelming support from the state's electorate, passed a restrictive abortion law. The panel decided to subsidize the pro-abortion side of the Utah argument: in principle, anti-abortion Utahns were being taxed to fund a shrine to pro-abortion mythology—a situation of the sort Jefferson defined as the very essence of tyranny.

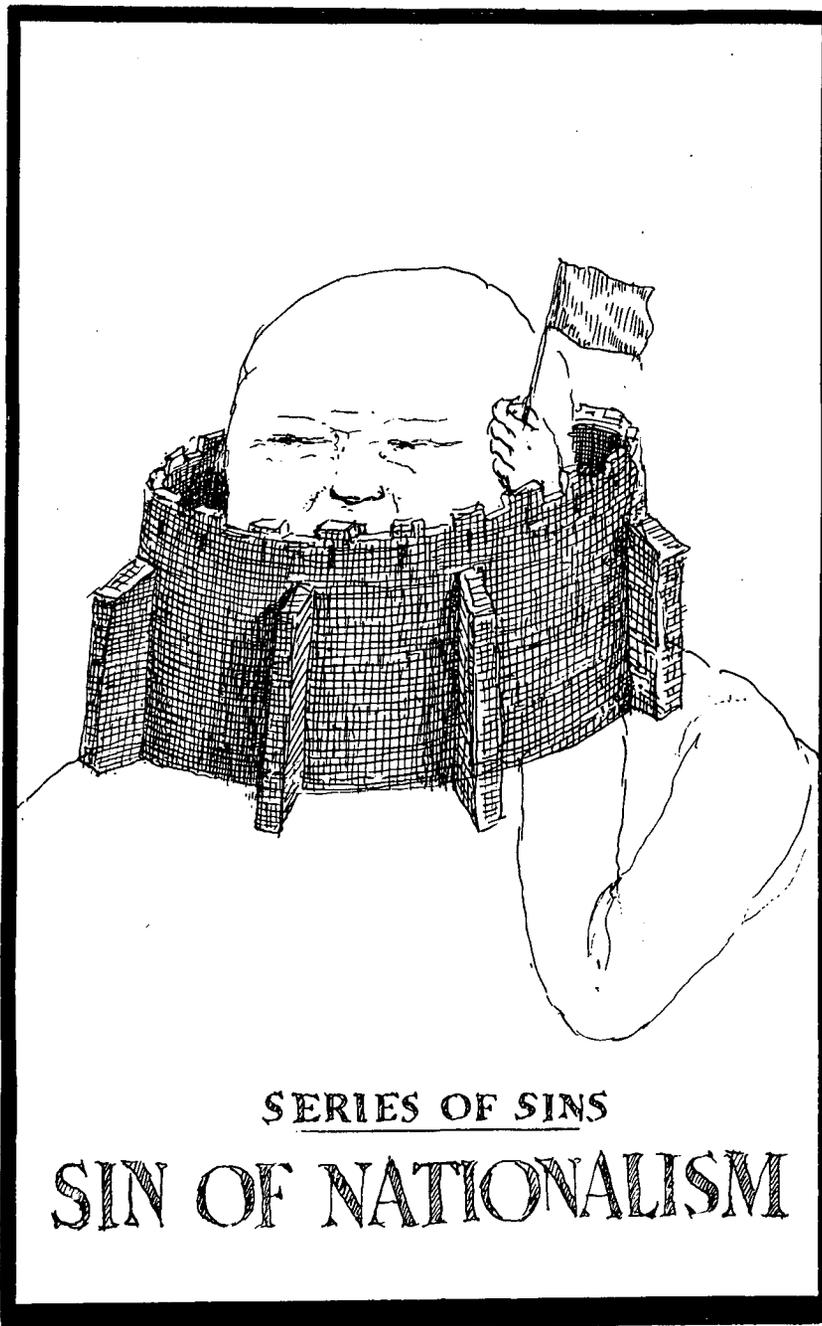
The names placed in the monument were provided by Susanne Millsaps, who is executive director of Utah's branch of the National Abortion Rights Action League. According to legend, hundreds of thousands of women died at the hands of "back-alley butchers" before the 1973 Roe decision. (For this reason it is significant that some of the names on the handwritten list provided by Millsaps were those of women who obtained abortions after 1973; legalization did not make abortion any safer.) Abortion advocates have borrowed heavily from the language and imagery of holocaust survivors. Signs declaring "Never Again!" are prominent at abortion rights rallies; Utah ACLU director Michelle Parish insists that permitting the state to restrict abortion "would be like allowing Nazi death camps." Through the NEA the federal government has placed its imprimatur upon the pro-abortion legend: the monument will offer tangible testimony of the "truth" of the myth.

Unlike the actual holocaust, the "back-alley holocaust" resides in the realm of historical apocrypha. Marian Faux, author of several books about the abortion debate, observes that "When I began to look into [illegal] abortion, several pro-choice reformers suggested that illegal abortion was not as dangerous as it had been depicted during the reform movement. Admittedly, an image of tens of thousands of women being maimed or killed each year by illegal abortion was so persuasive a piece of propaganda that the movement could be forgiven for its failure to double-check the facts." In fact, according to Faux, "women [were]

probably better off in the hands of competent but 'illegal' abortionists who did hundreds of the minor surgeries every week than with the family doctor who did one abortion a year."

Writing in the *Progressive*, Linda Rocawich strives to make vivid the "reality" of "back-alley abortions" for those "women and men who are too young to remember what we women did before January 22, 1973." She offers testimonies taken from a handful of women who obtained illegal abortions before Roe, but insists that "each individual included here stands in for the thousands of others like

her." The stories shared by Rocawich actually continue the work of debunking the pro-abortion mythology. With the exception of one terrifying story of a woman who beat herself into a miscarriage, the vignettes offered by Rocawich are not particularly unpleasant. "Carol" obtained an abortion in 1966 at the hands of a Cuban physician; the procedure was performed in a "child's room, just like every little girl always wanted. Pretty white bedspread, frilly curtain, stuffed animals. And it was clean. Really clean." The procedure was competently performed: "There were no complications, a little cramping is all."



Janusz Kapusta

In spite of all this, Rocawich insists that "Carol's safe, illegal abortion was still a horrifying experience." "Deborah" obtained an abortion in 1967 from "a trained physician" with a legitimate practice in a city in the Midwest. "Deborah" says that her abortion "was not painful . . . I don't remember pain." "Barbara" had an abortion in Philadelphia in the 1960's. "Barbara's" abortion had to be certified a "therapeutic" procedure by a psychiatrist. "I had to break down and cry. Say my life will be ruined," recalled "Barbara." In short order she admitted that she had "embellished" her story, "but not by much." (Her embellishments are indeed trivial when compared with the mendacities routinely wrought by the abortion-rights movement.)

Rocawich's roster of victims includes Kathryn Marshall, a woman who was raped in Dallas in 1971. Marshall didn't become pregnant, but we are asked to consider her a victim because abortions were illegal in 1971 and she insists that she would have gotten an illegal abortion. "Ginnie," a young woman who went to Canada to receive an abortion, is also mentioned by Rocawich. In all, her parade of horrors includes one woman who forced herself to miscarry, four women who received safe, clean, illegal abortions, and one woman who never became pregnant. If these stories are representative of "thousands" of others, where are all the victims?

Elements of the pro-abortion movement are laboring to create victims. "Menstrual extraction," a technique of early self-abortion described by writer Charlotte Allen as "a fad of the early 1970's bra-burning days," is being taught once again. Part of the "back-alley holocaust" legend has it that many women died after being driven to self-abort. But Salt Lake City gynecologist (and abortionist) Grant Bagley maintains that "menstrual extraction, as it is being taught by women's groups, is as safe as a legal abortion performed at the same stage of pregnancy." If this is true, another element of the "back-alley holocaust" myth is exposed as a fabrication. If it is untrue, Bagley and the feminists who are instructing women in self-abortion techniques are culpably indifferent with regard to the health and safety of women.

The efforts of Bagley and his ideological kindred may indeed produce a stream of victims, and the NEA will sustain the efforts of "artists" like Biniiaz to canonize such victims as martyrs in the

struggle against the "patriarchy." Surely the same First Amendment that is regularly tortured into forbidding the public display of Judeo-Christian symbols should prohibit the public subsidy of pro-abortion mythology.

—William N. Grigg

NEOCONSERVATIVE Republican Governor John Engler of Michigan inherited a \$1.1 billion budget deficit from his predecessor, moderate Democrat James Blanchard, when he took office last January 1, 1991. Engler eked out a narrow 17,595-vote victory over Blanchard by promising relief from Michigan's burdensome property tax structure, fourth highest in the United States, to Reagan Democrats in middle-class areas like Macomb County and Downriver Detroit. To balance the state budget and reduce property taxes, Engler proposed spending cuts, including abolition of all state funding for the arts, action that would have made Michigan unique among the 50 states.

Engler's proposal raised a maelstrom of opposition from artists receiving state subsidies and others on the cultural left. Leon Cohan, chairman of the Michigan Council for the Arts, termed the proposal to abolish state funding "a mish-mash of semi-intellectual, reactionary baloney." Sam Sachs II, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, said the action tended to confirm the state-subsidized art community's suspicions that "yahoos are taking over." Nancy Malitz, arts critic for the "Accent" section of the *Detroit News*, a poor would-be imitation of the "Style" section of the *Washington Post*, framed the proposal as proof "of an anti-intellectual attitude that makes people uneasy about the arts as a form of expression." This is a problem limited to America, Malitz complained, not Europe, where state-subsidized artists are treated as "visionaries."

The anti-Engler frenzy built into a crescendo on May 1, when one thousand demonstrators staged an "arts attack" at the state capitol in Lansing against the proposal. Much of their anger was directed at D. Joseph Olson, an Engler supporter, attorney, and insurance executive who serves as a director of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. In an adversarial column entitled "Arts Ogres' and Killer Bees," Olson characterized arts subsidy-seekers as "killer bees . . . driven not by reason but by some instinctive urge to attack anyone who disturbs the hive and to sting and

sting again." Cultural leftists attacked Olson and Engler as "fire-breathing," "misguided zealots" adhering to a "stringently ideological, shortsighted anti-arts policy."

Despite the rhetorical onslaught, Engler signed an executive order abolishing the Michigan Council for the Arts. On May 1, the Republican-controlled Senate failed to overturn Engler's order, despite the "arts attack" surrounding the capitol. Under Blanchard and liberal Republican William Milliken, the arts council was subsidizing rich areas at the expense of the poor and middle class. Public records show the MCA distributed more than one-third of its grants between 1981 and 1986 to artists in Oakland and Washtenaw counties, Michigan's wealthiest two counties on a per capita basis and home to less than one in seven state residents. Artists in 24 of Michigan's 25 counties did not receive any grants from the MCA during the same five-year period. MCA funding for the Cranbrook Academy of Arts and related facilities increased 742 percent from \$45,900 in 1975 to \$340,582 in 1990, while inflation rose only 239 percent. Famous as liberal commentator Michael Kinsley's alma mater, Cranbrook also has the distinction of being in Bloomfield Hills, which has the highest per capita income in the state.

Engler responded to these powerful class arguments as any neoconservative Republican might. He caved in to Republican plutocrats who support state funding for the arts and reinstated "temporary" tax dollars for three years to fund a new Michigan arts council. "The governor doesn't mind seeing money for capital improvements or structural improvements and maintenance," spokesman John Truscott said after Engler met privately on August 7 with subsidy-seekers, including Republican billionaire A. Alfred Taubman, who controls Sotheby's, an international auction house. The *Detroit News* said Engler emerged from the meeting "looking like a man who had been taken to the woodshed." Or a bank.

Engler threw a bone to critics and named Olson to the new MCA board, action that Cohan compared to "putting a fox in the chicken coop." He need not worry. Engler's tax-cut plan provides only palpable property tax relief for Macomb County and Downriver Detroit, and he has begun to bitterly attack the press for his own handler's incompetence. The smart money in Lansing is that Engler will become a one-term governor in 1994, just in time to make his "temporary" rein-

statement of the council “permanent.” Except for Olson, all of Engler’s appointees to the new council are statist, and include Shahida Mausi, director of the Detroit Council for the Arts and an evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1990, Mausi’s deputy, James Hart, penned this remarkable statement in *City Arts Quarterly*, subsidized by tax dollars from Joe and Josephine Six-Pack in Macomb and Downriver: “In the terrific street-level noise of a synchronic cultural clash, the bump and, yes, sometimes blood of multi-racial conflict is the whisper of this new multi-cultural polis.”

This polis, Hart says, is “Anti-Pater- nalistic, Anti-Racist, Anti-Sexist, Anti-Colonial, Anti-Imperialist, with long-held questions about essentialist naturalism and the natural unity of biology.” To date, Engler has not given any indication that he understands the statement’s significance, although I’m sure Irving Kristol would.

—Greg Kaza

POLLY WILLIAMS, a black Democrat in Wisconsin, has been hailed by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Reason*, and other neoconservative organs for her school choice legislation. And the Wisconsin Supreme Court has approved it: under- class public school students can now get more welfare, in this case free tuition, at “nonsectarian” private schools. Neo- conservative choicers hail the decision and the program, which may be ex- panded to include religious schools, but no real conservative should support it. Choice will destroy the independence— the essence—of private schools.

In almost all public schools today, par- ents fit into one of two categories: su- perfluous or “troublemaker.” They have no control or even influence over what their children are taught, even if it con- tradicts their religious or other deeply held beliefs. Parents can complain about the teaching of promiscuity in and out of the classroom, about condom handouts, ram- pant schoolyard theft, sex in the bath- rooms, leftist economics, anti-Western his- tory, made-up multiculturalism, and dumbed-down textbooks, but it will have no effect except to single out them and their kids as troublemakers.

Private schools offer an escape from all this, and a real education besides. But for how long? Schools that accept even one vouchered student will find their cur- riculums, admissions, academic standards,

and disciplinary codes subject to detailed regulation from the Department of Ed- ucation and the various civil rights agen- cies. Frank R. Kemerer, an education law professor at the University of North Texas, points out in *Education Week* that private schools have long had to fight for their independence. The Supreme Court in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* in 1925 ruled that bureaucrats can “inspect, supervise, and examine” private schools and “their teachers and pupils” to make sure that “studies plainly essential to good citi- zenship” are taught and that teachings “inimical to the public welfare” are barred. A decade ago, the Supreme Court reaf- firmed *Pierce* when it upheld Nebras- ka’s shutdown of a Christian school and jailing of its principal, who was also pas- tor of the local church. His crime? He had used parents as teachers. They were smart, motivated, and hardworking, but they didn’t have state licenses. Religious freedom, said the court, is irrelevant when it comes to state regulation of education, one of the most inherently religious of all activities.

All this has happened without gov- ernment funding. How bad will it get with vouchers? One precedent, says Ke- merer, is HUD’s voucher program. As soon as a landlord accepts a tenant with a rent voucher, he is subject to an in- credible array of federal regulations telling him to whom he can rent, at what price, for how long, under what conditions, how much upkeep he must do regardless of tenant vandalism, and when and if he can cancel the lease. Economics professor Es- telle James of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, has studied school vouchers all over the world and found the same pattern. Whether in Holland, France, Belgium, or any other country she examined, private schools that accepted vouchers invariably became semipublic.

In the United States, school choice will mean that private schools can’t offer distinctive curriculums. Christian and Jewish schools will have to water down their doctrinal teachings and even elim- inate classroom prayer and religious sym- bols, exactly as did the Catholic colleges that earlier took federal pottage. All-girl schools may have to include boys, and certainly all-boy schools will have to include girls. Religious schools will have to accept militant atheists. Just as the Civil Rights Act of 1991 makes it illegal for companies to use hiring or promotion tests that have a “disparate” impact on minorities— meaning those that don’t yield a racial-

ly proportionate result—private schools will be accused of discrimination unless their admissions, scholarship, and honors programs are ethnically equalized. Even discipline will have to be administered on a quota basis. Hillsdale College has found that it cannot accept even one federally financed student without being subjected to the full panoply of federal social en- gineering. It would be no different with primary and secondary schools.

There are other reasons to oppose school choice. Despite claims of com- petition among public schools, it can’t cre- ate—any more than Gorbachev could— a free market in a socialized industry. By allowing vouchers to be used at the few decent public schools, it can make them like all the rest. And it will cost a bundle: President Bush has \$500 million in his new budget “to support this growing movement.” The neoconservatives— statist like Bill Bennett, Francis Fukuya- ma, and Ben Wattenberg—advocate cen- tralized education because they want to construct the “first universal nation.” That means destroying the reactionary op- position: thus the drive to deracinate our private schools.

As American education has become more centralized, it has also become more left-wing, more dim-witted, and more an- tiparent. Only one small area of freedom remains: the private school, now under attack through “choice.” Polly Williams is a member of Milwaukee’s Black Mili- tia, an armed group which last year threatened death to whites if it didn’t get \$600 million. Do we need to know any- thing else about choice and those who advocate it?

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

ANTI-SEMITISM, said August Bebel, was the “socialism of fools.” Murray Roth- bard has responded similarly to the reck- less imputation of anti-Semitic motives by neoconservatives and their clients, say- ing that “Anti-anti-Semitism has become the conservatism of fools.” The non-re- sponsiveness of journalists and intellec- tuals to the gentile-bashing of Alan Der- showitz suggests that the problem underlined by Professor Rothbard goes well beyond neoconservative America. Public tolerance of Dershowitz as an an- gry victim of white Christian society may be a measure of American willingness to put up with anything lest one be seen as insensitive. Watching Dershowitz on tele- vision and then reading his autobiogra-

phy *Chutzpah*, I was struck by his deft manipulation of a particular image, that of an aggrieved member of an immeasurably victimized group, the victimization of which is somehow the inexpiable fault of white heterosexual Christian males. Curiously, it is never made clear who the victim is. It is not all Jews, for Dershowitz vents his contempt on German Jews and on those of his coreligionists who made it in America before him and whose names do not seem, at least to his ear, sufficiently Jewish. In fact, the only Jews he would admit as fellow victims are those who share his unutterable indignation against goyim and who support the present Israeli settlement policy on the West Bank. Dershowitz insists that the displacement of Palestinians is a "fifth-rate human rights issue" and that any criticism of that policy is only a mask for anti-Semitism or Jewish self-hate. Not surprisingly, he does support continued sanctions against the government of South Africa.

Another criterion of being an authentic Jew, for Dershowitz, is the willingness to embrace gay rights as a Jewish concern. In *Chutzpah* we learn that, unlike Poles who were "selectively murdered" by the Nazis, homosexuals were genuine victims of Nazi genocide. Homosexuals also shared the Jewish fate of being marginalized, again unlike the Poles who are presented as Nazi accomplices. Unfortunately, for this exercise in political correctness, Hitler killed two million Polish Catholics, a far greater number of victims than one can reasonably come up with for liquidated gays. Besides, unlike Polish Catholics, homosexuals swelled the ranks of the early Nazi movement, particularly the SA. The most important Nazi filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, was a crusading lesbian and celebrant of black Africa.

But Dershowitz's book is not about facts, any more than *Mein Kampf*. It is an extended diabolization in which, as in Hitler's ravings, the victimizer stands out always more clearly than the victim. And the victimizer is whomever Dershowitz happens to dislike and decides to present as an anti-Semite. When he comes to black anti-Semitism, he dismisses it as based on misunderstanding about the causes of discrimination. Jesse Jackson, by definition, cannot be an anti-Semite, because he is not an American white Protestant, Polish Catholic, or a member of any other group that Dershowitz sets out to diabolize. One is also impressed

by the sweeping character of the condemnations. WASPdom is relegated to the outer reaches of perdition because Dershowitz felt socially uncomfortable as a law student at Yale and because no establishment firm gave him a job upon graduation. Former students of mine have expressed the same complaints against Eastern European Jewish liberals who only hire their own kind in law firms and universities. Are they, too, justified in venting their hate in print—or in reaching for the Aryan equivalent of *Chutzpah*?

Having known real holocaust victims, it is doubtful that Dershowitz and his self-pitying friends have shared their fate. Those real victims know the difference between murderous thugs and Episcopalians law professors who may or may not have snubbed the abrasive Dershowitz on an elevator. Nor did our self-proclaimed hero suffer continuing degradation at the hands of American Christians, many of whose families fought against Nazi Germany. To the contrary, Dershowitz has benefited conspicuously from American Christian society, far more than yours truly who nonetheless thanks this country for giving his father refuge from real, not imaginary, Nazis. Reading Dershowitz I was reminded of the rhetorical question posed by Joe McCarthy in what I would like to believe was a sober moment: Why have those born with silver spoons in their mouths repaid this country so badly? Though Dershowitz worked for that silver spoon by putting those he knew were murderers back onto the streets, it seems in any case that America did well by him. Certainly he could not have come so far from his humble Brooklyn origins if American gentiles were even half as prejudiced as he suggests. Invariably he skirts this issue by praising America as an open-ended or deconstructed First Amendment or as something being resocialized by the Anti-Defamation League. Yet it is still a predominantly Christian Western country that puts up with him and rewards his insults with money.

My own sense of things is that Dershowitz would clean up his act if goyim were not such wimps. If American Christians and American Jews tried to build a relationship on mutual respect, Dershowitz would be forced to confine himself to professional activities. Though it is hoped that a less permissive criminal law system would deprive him of that option as well, he may be less offensive in the classroom or courtroom than as a

victimological autobiographer.

—Paul Gottfried

PRESIDENT BUSH'S 1993 budget called for additional reductions in defense spending totaling \$50 billion over five years. Liberal members of Congress immediately sharpened their knives to make even larger cuts. Bush's recommendations in regard to nuclear weapons were sensible. Termination of the B-2 bomber and Midgetman ICBM programs was justified, as both were far too expensive for the capabilities provided. The "build-down" of existing long-range missiles and warheads is to proceed over the rest of the decade in tandem with the dismantling of Russia's offensive systems.

However, four-fifths of the Pentagon budget goes for conventional forces. Despite the attention paid to the nuclear arms race, it is still the traditional combat services that do the real fighting and on which the United States depends for power projection and the active defense of its overseas interests. The move away from nuclear arms is not just because the danger of an ideological struggle for world domination has waned. Nuclear weapons have been shown to have limited value in extended deterrence or as a tool of world politics.

The 1993 budget indicated a shift in Bush administration priorities from previous budgets. The earlier five-year defense plan incorporated into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of October 1990 called for a massive reduction in conventional forces in order to keep funds available for nuclear systems. Now the ax has been turned on the strategic systems with Bush warning that he will not accept deeper cuts in conventional forces. This new scheme makes more sense, but it will be surprising if Bush can (or even tries very hard to) block further moves in Congress towards conventional disarmament. The disarmers claim that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States has a surplus in military capability, particularly in "European-oriented" ground and air forces, which it is alleged the country cannot afford because of the budget crisis. However, neither the facts nor experience supports such a conclusion.

The size of the military is commonly exaggerated. The United States never built up to the levels required to meet the country's global Cold War commitments. In 1982 these requirements were set by

the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a peacetime establishment of 23 active Army divisions, four Marine amphibious forces, 24 Navy carrier groups, and 30 active Air Force tactical fighter wings. Even if President Reagan's complete program had been implemented, force levels would not have reached these goals. Active forces peaked at 18 Army divisions, three Marine amphibious forces, 14 carrier groups, and 24 fighter wings. The Army peaked at 770,000 men in 1989, still far below the 950,000 it had in 1964, the last year of peace before Vietnam. The Reagan program modernized American forces, but the Pentagon never recovered the numerical strength it lost during the malaise of the 1970's. Now the Army is to be cut to 500,000 men.

During the Persian Gulf War the Army's crack "heavy divisions" were shipped from Germany to Saudi Arabia along with other units earmarked for NATO. Over 223,000 reservists were called to the colors. This indicates that the United States does not have a post-Cold War "military surplus." Throughout the Cold War, troops deployed to face the Soviets were used for a variety of other missions.

Yet defense cuts are proceeding as if the Persian Gulf War never took place. By 1995 the Army will lose six divisions, the Navy two carrier groups, and the Air Force nine fighter wings. The Armed Services will lose 25 percent of their personnel. Counting civilian Defense Department employees, over one million people will leave the military establishment. What this means was stated by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney: "If you take all of the force that's deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm . . . that's a little over 500,000 people. We're going to take a force of that size out of the United States military over the next five years."

Production lines for aircraft and heavy weapons are shutting down in an industrial sector where the number of firms engaged in defense work was already shrinking. It will be very difficult to (in current jargon) "reconstitute" the nation's fighting forces. In their 1991 *Joint Net Assessment* the Joint Chiefs estimated that by 1997 "it would take two to four years to restore production capability to 1990 levels for items whose lines have gone cold." And 1990 was a year of peacetime production levels after real defense spending had already been falling for four years. To make the current plan look reasonable, the administration is assuming that the

United States will have two years of "strategic warning" before anything dangerous happens. Apparently future enemies are expected to be very cooperative.

Defense Secretary Cheney says, "What we have presented here is a force that we think is the absolute minimum, irreducible capability that we have to have in order to defend the United States—under certain positive assumptions." Congress, though, sees the plan not as a minimum but as a starting point for more cuts. Yet the demands of war are always greater than anticipated even when realistic rather than "positive" assumptions are used.

For example, in 1979, the Pentagon drew up a plan for combating an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was thought that four Army divisions (two mechanized and two airborne), three Marine brigades, and three aircraft carriers would be required. When the real situation materialized, the United States sent seven Army divisions (three armored, two mechanized, and two airborne), two marine divisions, and six aircraft carriers plus the equivalent of a dozen Air Force fighters and a host of support units including armored cavalry and extra artillery—a force more than triple what was originally planned. Even this was not considered sufficient. Forces from Britain, France, and various Arab states were also called upon. Nearly half the conventional military might of the United States was needed to confront one Third World despot. The notion that the United States only needs a small "contingency army" should have been buried in the desert. But the notion persists because it serves those who want to raid the Pentagon budget. Whether the objective is to buy votes through "middle-class tax cuts" or to nationalize the health insurance industry, whenever anyone raises the question of where the money is to come from, the answer is "the peace dividend."

Liberals see defense as the only place in a budget of over \$1.5 trillion where extra money can be found for new social programs. Yet fiscal exigency cannot provide the rationale for American disarmament on the scale contemplated. The five-year plan adopted in the 1990 budget agreement cut \$246.4 billion from the prior July 1990 baseline projection for 1991-1995 defense spending. Yet this represents only 3 percent of estimated total federal spending during this period. Bush's new cuts will not make much difference to the overall budget even if doubled as the Democrats want, but they will

do substantial damage to the Pentagon. The reduction in military capability is thus disproportionately large given the meager fiscal benefits. And no money will be "saved." It will all be spent elsewhere.

Over the next five years, defense spending will fall from about 20 percent of the budget to 15 percent. In 1992 the budget deficit was larger than the entire Pentagon budget. In contrast major domestic programs are expanding at double-digit rates. It is clear that the military is neither the cause nor the solution of the government's money problems.

By 1996 defense spending will represent less than 3.5 percent of the GNP, the lowest level since 1948. A great many American soldiers paid for this earlier bout of parsimony with their lives when the Korean War broke out in 1950. Wars are fought, at least initially, with the forces built during the prior decade. Can anyone really be so optimistic as to place such a heavy bet on there not being a war on the scale of Korea or the Gulf during the next twenty years?

The 1990's have started out as a very violent decade. Conflicts are brewing throughout the world as new power centers and economic capabilities are created, providing the means to carry out old feuds as well as new ambitions. A failure to provide military forces commensurate with America's global interests will cost far more than money. It will cost lives in a future war that the United States might not find as easy to win as in the Gulf.

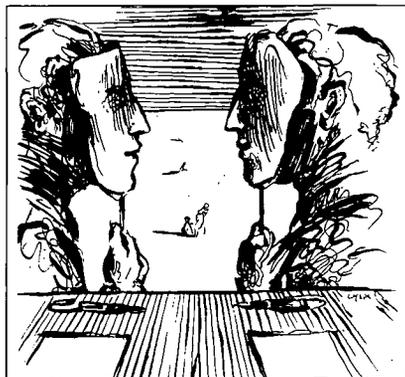
Disarmament programs are no more viable in the 1990's than they were in the 1920's and 1930's when another era of supposed peace turned out to be merely another interwar period. President Bush seems bent on following the dismal examples of the Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Then, as now, in the name of peace, arms control, and fiscal restraint the military was dropped to such a low level that it was unprepared for the next set of challenges and thus invited war. Only the President's continued support for missile defense systems shows any regard for reality.

Since the left actively promotes disarmament, it is up to conservatives who understand the lessons of history to champion the abiding value of a strong military. The failure of the conservative movement to do so bodes ill for the nation's future security.

—William R. Hawkins

Leveraged Buyout

by Thomas Fleming



“Every nation has the government it deserves.” Joseph de Maistre’s hard saying can give small comfort to Americans. Oh, it is true, we have a paper Constitution that promises a republican form of government, but all three branches of that government have for several generations conspired to evacuate the republican content from the system, leaving only a decorative and ceremonial shell of elections without issues, ghost-written speeches, and congressmen haranguing an empty chamber for the benefit of C-Span cameramen. The United States is a republic in the same sense that Great Britain is a monarchy. In theory, the Queen might declare a dissolution and summon new ministers more to her liking, but the attempt would bring her unfortified palace down around Her Majesty’s ears. Over here, it is the people who reign without ruling.

Whatever our form of government might be in principle, the real American system has little in common with the republic of our not-so-distant ancestors. If there is any doubt of this, we have only to consider the apparently inverse relationship between the quality of leadership and the quantity of power. In the beginning we elected Washington, Adams, and Jefferson but refused to grant them even a fraction of the power we cheerfully surrender to Jimmy Carter and George Bush.

It is not so much the form of government that defines a nation as the character of its governors. *The Leaders We Deserve* was the title of a provocative book by Alistair Mant, who describes bad leaders as men (typically) who cannot conceive of any value or significance beyond their own personal victories. They have learned, since early childhood, when to attack and when to flee, and they are bound by no loyalty to principle or institution. The Lyndon Johnsons and Margaret Thatchers, he argues, may be kind to those who serve them, but they are incapable of laughing at themselves, because they have no criterion beyond their own personal success. Such people do not become political leaders except in countries where the entire leadership class is dominated by such personality types.

In symbolic terms, our own ruling elite consists of George Bush (assisted and mirrored by James Baker, William Bennett, Newt Gingrich, and GOP chairman Rich Bond) on the Republican side; and Bill Clinton and/or Paul Tsongas among the Democrats. That we have sunk so far from the republic of Washington and Jefferson is no occasion for wonder—“All human things are sub-

ject to decay”—but that we fall so short of the glories of Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge, that is the festering wound in our national conscience.

What a contest it will be, assuming Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton receive their parties’ nominations. Unlike George Bush, Clinton is not even a credible imitation of a man. “Governor Elvis,” as he is sometimes known in his home state, is too cute for words, the Peter Jennings of politics, an Al Gore with the common touch, a male model who knows how to flirt and leer at the audiences that even he must despise for their gullibility. Bill Clinton is a very familiar type to those of us who went to college in the 1960’s: the well-dressed frat boy who is already planning his political career. (Isn’t that the real significance of his letter to the *National Guard*?)

A politician with a program to cure every human ill, Clinton only lacks a principle with which he can connect up all the little dots of his policies. Selected as his party’s dream candidate, a Southern moderate, Clinton has oriented his entire campaign toward keeping Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition within the Democratic Party. Even George Bush, the feeblest Republican candidate since Wendell Willkie, not excepting Gerald Ford whom he so much resembles, even George Bush ought to be able to mop up the floor with him, especially when more of the governor’s rejected mistresses come back to haunt him.

Mr. Tsongas, it must be said, is both more intelligent and more honest than the front-runner, but are we ready for a moralizing prig who made his money as a lobbyist? Tsongas does have the ability to laugh at himself, but that is one more sign of his superiority over lesser men. Jerry Brown, for my money, is the best of the lot: smart, clearheaded, and brave enough to tell America the truth about itself, that we no longer have the best Congress money can buy. If we must have social democracy, then we would be better off under Brown, who promises something like German efficiency in the service of Catholic social thought, than under either of the more prominent liberal candidates, Clinton and Bush.

Mr. Bush, to his credit, makes a good impression on foreigners who do not speak English. He wears his clothes well, and unlike Clinton who can never shut off his coprophagous grin, the President knows how to appear grave on serious occasions. Unfortunately, he is another Monroe—Marilyn, not James—who