

lution by the Bonus Marchers, Army veterans who knew how to use machine guns.

In the spring of 1941, gun registration laws—like those that had been enacted in Europe before World War II—were pending in 40 state legislatures. The purported reason was the need to control “Fifth Columnists.”

The justification for “gun control” often changes, but the reason is always the same: people control. The race riots of the 1960’s and “Burn, Baby, Burn,” much more than the murders of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr., caused the 1968 Gun Control Act.

In 1986, Congress prohibited more privately owned, legal machine guns, although there is only one known case of a registered owner (a cop) using one in a crime. In 1994, Congress banned evil-looking semiautomatic rifles with

“dangerous” features like bayonet lugs, though less than one percent of crimes are committed with such guns, and there has never been a documented case of a bayonet charge between drug gangs.

No city, no state, no nation has ever reduced its crime rate by passage of a gun law. So why are ever-more-stringent laws continuously proposed? People control. In January 1968, when the Supreme Court ruled that a prohibited person could not be required to register an illegal gun in *United States v. Haynes*, the city of Chicago immediately modified its registration law to exempt criminals and the mentally deranged from having to register their guns. Only the law-abiding need comply.

If a law cannot, does not, and will not reduce crime, and can be legally ignored by its claimed targets, it is not a reasonable law—and gun laws are not. It is a question of freedom, and the right to

protect self, family, and community from criminals, whether elected or not.

Without freedom there will be no firearms among the people; without firearms among the people there will not long be freedom. Certainly there are examples of countries where the people remain relatively free after the people have been disarmed, but there are no examples of a totalitarian state being created or existing where the people have personal arms.

Privately owned guns are an insurance policy. The fact that their owners *have no desire* to use them against a criminal or a criminal government is as immaterial as the fact that we keep our homeowner’s insurance in force though we have no desire for our house to burn.

—Neal Knox

Vice President, National Rifle Association
Silver Spring, MD

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

JOE OCCHIPINTI continues to be denied justice. As Greg Kaye reported in the October 1993 *Chronicles*, Occhipinti was the highly decorated undercover agent for the Immigration and Naturalization Service who was framed, tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison for doing his job too well. Fluent in three languages, Occhipinti had distinguished himself as an expert on Dominican organized crime—i.e., drug dealing, gunrunning, money laundering, and the counterfeiting of Food Stamps and Green Cards for illegal aliens—especially as it operates in the crime-infested area of upper Manhattan known as Washington Heights. But when his intelligence work led to so many arrests in the late 1980’s that the Dominican drug trade in this area was being seriously hindered, the heat came down on Occhipinti. It seems the Federation of Dominican Merchants and Industrialists of New York—a reputed front for the Dominican drug cartel—had donated large sums of money to Mayor David Dinkins, and ever responsive to the needs of his constituency, Dinkins led the fight to stifle Occhipinti.

Occhipinti was arrested and charged with violating the civil rights of the Dominican drug dealers—specifically, he

was accused of having mishandled search warrants—and was convicted and sentenced in 1992 to 37 months in prison. When Occhipinti appeared on the *Jackie Mason Show* to protest the conviction, Judge Constance Baker Motley abrogated Joe’s assignment to a minimum-security prison in Tennessee, ordered him shackled in body chains and leg irons as a “dangerous criminal,” and sent him to a maximum-security facility in Oklahoma, where he was released into the “general population,” meaning Occhipinti was left to fend for his life among drug dealers and murderers whom he himself had arrested years earlier. After seven months of this near death sentence, friends of Occhipinti convinced George Bush, in one of his last acts as President, to commute Joe’s sentence in January 1993.

Today, Joe Occhipinti seeks a new trial that will clear his name, release his federal pension, and restore his rights as an American citizen, which continue to be denied him because his sentence was merely commuted: he was not pardoned by President Bush. Judge Motley, however, has blocked his efforts. In his motion for a new trial, Occhipinti requested a change of venue, away from New York’s

Southern District, where he had uncovered corruption in the U.S. Attorney’s office. He also requested that Judge Motley recuse herself for conflict of interest. Motley—the first black female federal judge and longtime “civil rights activist” who, according to Kaye and the Occhipinti defense team’s December 1995 press release, was exposed by Senator James Eastland of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee as a former Young Communist League organizer—first delayed her decision on the motion for over a year and then denied it without explanation. Though this politically powerful judge holds the dubious distinction of being the most “overturned on appeal” jurist in New York’s Southern District, a Court of Appeals refused late last year to overturn her decision on this particular case.

New evidence concerning the conspiracy to frame Occhipinti has also surfaced since our first coverage of this story. A fellow who has held numerous diplomatic positions for the Dominican Republic, including Ambassador to Jamaica and Consul General to the United States, has come forward and signed two sworn affidavits. While he was stationed in America, Dominican drug lords in New York

tried to recruit him in their efforts to “eliminate” Occhipinti. Joe “was a threat to their illegal businesses, which included loan sharking, gambling, drug distribution, and the employment of illegal aliens,” he stated. According to Kaye, this affidavit is “replete with explosive revelations including naming the actual intermediary who delivered cash political contributions from the [Dominican drug] cartel to Mayor David Dinkins [and showing that] the Mayor was ‘head cheerleader’ of the cabal that demanded the prosecution of Occhipinti on civil rights charges.”

Most interesting is the sworn testimony of another witness, who was too afraid to come forward while Mayor Dinkins was still in office. His revelations are so shocking, says Kaye, that Occhipinti’s defense team took him to a private detective agency for a three-hour polygraph test, which he passed “with flying colors.”

Apparently this witness had spoken about Occhipinti with John Kennedy, Jr., who was one of the prosecutors assigned to handle many of the drug busts that derived from the information gathered by Occhipinti and his INS task force. According to this source, on the night of June 12, 1991, while conversing over drinks, Kennedy grew despondent and lamented the fact that he would be testifying the next day against an innocent man, meaning Occhipinti. “Occhipinti was an innocent victim,” Kennedy reportedly said. “He’d been set up by the government, drug dealers, and Mayor Dinkins, who the drug dealers had in their pocket. The case stinks to high heaven, it’s all about race, politics and power.”

Upon hearing this, the affiant claims to have chided “John-John,” calling him “a profile in courage.” Kennedy “did not say or do anything in response—he just sat there, his head hung down in shame. Then, after a long, awful silence, he said, ‘You just don’t understand the pressure I’m under.’” According to Kaye, if Occhipinti receives a new trial and “John-John” refuses to testify voluntarily, Kennedy will be subpoenaed.

The witnesses who have hesitated to come forward and to testify on Occhipinti’s behalf have had legitimate reasons to fear reprisals. Just ask former U.S. Congressman Guy Molinari, Staten Island Borough President and the person primarily responsible for convincing President Bush to commute Occhipinti’s

sentence. When Janet Reno’s Justice Department pressured Molinari to drop Joe’s cause, and he refused, the FBI tried to frame him. The *New York Post* reported on the plot against Molinari in a story last April 26, and a former law clerk named Alma Camarena has confirmed the scheme. The FBI reportedly came to her office in Queens and pressured her to “set up Mr. Molinari by wearing a wire against him. I said ‘yes’ only because I was afraid.” According to Kaye, this woman is not an “uninformed” witness: her father was once secretary of state of Puerto Rico.

Waco and Ruby Ridge have had their day in court, and it’s time for congressional hearings on this latest abuse of federal power. Congressman James Traficant (Democrat-Ohio), a former sheriff sympathetic to law enforcement officers, has entered hundreds of pages of evidence documenting Occhipinti’s innocence into the *Congressional Record*, and he has rallied some 40 fellow congressmen to support Joe’s cause, but thus far their efforts have been to no avail. “For the past two years,” said Traficant in a letter to Representative Jack Brooks (Democrat-Texas) in 1993, “we have been frustrated and stonewalled by the Democrat-controlled Judiciary Committee and the Clinton Justice Department. You have an opportunity to take a strong stand on the side of a brave and courageous law enforcement officer who fell victim to the insidious drug lords who continue to undermine American society.” Keeping up the pressure, Traficant wrote last year to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (Republican-Illinois): “Since Mr. Occhipinti’s conviction, an array of evidence has been uncovered which indicates that he may have been the victim of a conspiracy by Dominican drug dealers, and key facts in his case were withheld or mishandled by the U.S. Justice Department.”

Congressman Traficant deserves praise for leading this crusade on Capitol Hill, but in one respect he obscures the real issue at hand. Yes, Occhipinti was the victim of “insidious drug lords” and of “mishandled” evidence, but the rot highlighted by this case runs deeper than this. Mark Twain said it best, that America has “legislatures that bring higher prices than any in the world.” Drug lords, in other words, don’t operate in a vacuum, without political protection, and according to Kaye and Occhipinti,

the public would be “shocked” by the number of U.S. congressmen accepting contributions from drug cartels.

Readers interested in fighting the true kingpins obstructing the War on Drugs may contact the Joe Occhipinti Legal Defense Fund at P.O. Box 318, Manalapan, New Jersey, 07726. A copy of the four-and-a-half hour video called “Strange Justice: The Joe Occhipinti Story” can be obtained for a donation of \$23.95.

—Theodore Pappas

THE CIVIL WAR and Hollywood have been a pair ever since Ken Burns—because of potential profits, of course. But most of these recent pictures, with their emphasis on marketing rather than script or acting, have had more in common with Nintendo than any real war.

For the pittance of \$500,000, independent filmmaker Robby Henson has done the war justice. *Pharaoh’s Army* is a beautiful film and one of the best war movies made in years. Written and directed by Henson, based on a tale told by a Kentucky mountaineer, and set and filmed in Kentucky, the film concentrates on one small, half-legendary story, and yet encapsulates a war that was all the more bitter because it was fought among countrymen.

A young mountain woman named Sara Anders (played by Patricia Clarkson), whose husband is off fighting for the Confederacy, has been left behind on the family farm with her children. As the film opens, she is burying her daughter. Soon after the funeral, she is visited by five Yankee soldiers quartered nearby at Cumberland Gap, who have her name as a Confederate sympathizer and who consequently have come to take all her food. But when one of the young soldiers has an accident on the farm, they are forced to stay put until he is strong enough to move. That’s when the story begins.

The movie’s subtitle is “A Very Private Civil War,” and there are in fact no battle scenes. Here the real fight is between Sara and the Union captain, and the film follows the development and inevitable ruin of their friendship: it’s the great conflict writ small.

Effectively widowed, with one precious child left to her and a hardscrabble farm that must somehow feed them both, Sara is a taut, silent woman without much besides her boy, her cause, and

her pride. With her husband in the army, she is left behind to do the hating. Faced with an Indiana captain (played beautifully by Chris Cooper) who treats her with an unaccustomed kindness, she faces a painful trial of her loyalties, and by necessity she drags her young son along with her.

There are several wonderful scenes in the film, one of the best showing Sara rocking herself beside her daughter's grave, in an eerie and very real portrayal of overwhelming grief. Clarkson has another striking scene in which she goes to wash her dress (and her soul) in the creek. Henson acknowledges that "some people have been put off by how cold she is, especially at the end. But I wanted to be truthful to the Scotch-Irish women."

He has been truthful to that and to much more by creating a film that touches on many of the ironies of the war, without seeming labored. Many spanking-new immigrants from Europe ended up fighting to teach the South what it meant to be an American, and there is one here, a Pole nicknamed "Chicago" for his new hometown (he's a sympathetic character, played well and with a completely credible accent by Robert Joy). To his captain, who likes him, Chicago is nevertheless an outsider, who has inexplicably taken sides in an American fight.

The role both Northern and Southern pastors played in supporting (or inciting) their congregations is made crystal clear by Kris Kristofferson's half-fey Confederate preacher, and by the story the Union captain tells of how he was recruited at church. Also, the one black character in the film fights on the Southern side, to the astonishment of the Union sympathizers on screen and no doubt several in the audience.

Yet Henson, who like many Kentuckians had family on both sides of the war, does not consider his film pro-Southern. Perhaps it seems so only because Henson has so much compassion for his characters on both sides, and because today, not to demonize the South is by default to defend it.

Sometimes there is nothing so current as ancient—which in American terms means 19th-century—history. As American troops are once again sent off to fight somebody else's civil war in Bosnia, we would do well to be reminded by films like this one that war is a very hard necessity. I am not thinking so much of people's lives, even, though lives are

important enough: the hell of it is that there is no high moral ground in wartime. The nature of war prevents that. No one can fight, even for the most justified cause, and not do violence to his own ethics. War changes our souls, and seldom for the better, even when our cause is right. And if it is wrong?

Pharaoh's Army is available on video this month from Orion Home Video, and will be shown on PBS television stations this September and October.

—Katherine Dalton

WHEN CHRISTIANS invite Muslims into their homes, it sometimes happens that the guests wish to perform their ritual prayers at the specified "prayer time." This may be intended as a witness of their Muslim commitment, but it is not a religious obligation as such, as the prayers can be made up later, at home. This means that it is not an offense for the Christian host to ask the guests to defer their prayers until they return home, but of course it is also possible to accommodate their wish. In countries where there are many Muslim immigrants, churches have been asked to provide facilities for Muslim worship; until now, this request has seldom been granted, at least as far as the sanctuaries are concerned.

It is accepted as a matter of course that Muslims will not make their own mosques available for Christian services, and of course they cannot be faulted for this, because it would be inconsistent with the fundamentals of their faith. Muslims who take their faith seriously, and even many who do not, naturally understand a similar reluctance on the part of Christians. Christians, by contrast, often do not see the issue clearly enough to take a firm stand, perhaps thinking that by offering their facilities for Muslim worship they will win friends and perhaps eventually create an openness to the Gospel, but in fact the Muslims will generally regard the Christians as insincere, superficial, worldly, and impious.

Last December, while commenting on Bosnia, Republican Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, a Methodist who attends a conservative congregation, stated that while we intend to be even-handed in Bosnia, "We are not neutral: we are pro-Muslim." Surely Senator Dole does not mean to imply "anti-Christian," because, like many American Protestants, he hardly identifies the Or-

thodox Serbs with Christianity. In fact, to be "pro-Muslim" in such a situation is to be anti-Christian. Attitudes such as that expressed by Senator Dole are received by most Muslims as a sign of the weakness of the individual, of his faith, and of Christianity itself, and hardly contribute to interfaith tolerance.

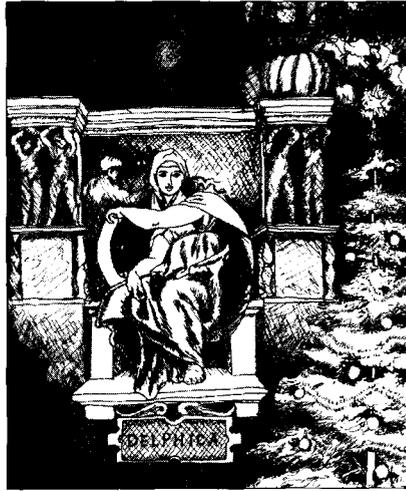
Tolerance makes sense only when different parties respect one another, and it is hard to respect a group or party that is lacking in confidence and self-respect. If any reader is aware of a similar situation anywhere in the world concerning a prominent Islamic official who has said, "We are not neutral, we are pro-Christian," we would be glad to hear of it.

—Harold O.J. Brown

OBITER DICTA: It's not too late to reserve a place at the annual conference of the Midwest C.K. Chesterton Society, which will be held from June 27-29 at the Cousins Center in Milwaukee. Past speakers at Chesterton Society conferences have included Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*. For more information, write to John Peterson, 740 Spruce Rd., Barrington, IL 60010.

We are pleased to announce that the first session of the Southern League Summer School will be held from June 30 to July 5 at the Kinard Conference Center in Leesville, South Carolina. The faculty of this school includes Michael Hill as well as Thomas Fleming. High school juniors and seniors, college graduates and undergraduates, may enroll. For more information, write or call The Southern League, P.O. Box 40910, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404-0910, (205) 553-0155.

Chronicles is now available at the following stores in and around Los Angeles: Brentano's, Century City Suite 190, Los Angeles; Bookstar, Inc., West Hollywood Ave., Los Angeles; News Spot, 10953 Kinross Ave., Los Angeles; Borders Bookstore, 330 S. La Cienga Blvd., Los Angeles; Westside International News Inc., 11949 Wilshire Blvd., West Los Angeles; Del Amo Book and News, 163 Del Amo Fashion Center, Torrance; Barnes & Noble Superstore, 16325-16461 Ventura Blvd., Encino; Barnes & Noble Superstore, 731 N. San Fernando Blvd., Burbank; Bookstar, Inc., Studio City Theatre, Studio City; Bookstar, Inc., 21440 Victory Blvd., Woodland Hills; Woodland Hills Newsstand, 19714 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills.



Athens and Jerusalem

by Thomas Fleming

The holiday season is responsible for some of modern America's most deeply felt traditions: cheap airline tickets on Christmas day, seasonal hymns like "Jinglebell Rock" and "Blue Christmas," ACLU suits against the school Christmas pageant, and the Andy Williams Christmas special, for which the divorced Mr. Williams (one of whose wives killed her lover, Olympic skier Spider Sabich) had to hire actors to play the family he did not have.

The one holiday custom I kept religiously was to listen to Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God, who every year came on the air to denounce Christmas as a pagan celebration. Alternating between biblical quotations condemning tree worship and news stories on the high rates of depression and suicide, Herbert W. (or, before they quarreled, his son Garner Ted) reveled in anti-Yuletide indignation. The Armstrongs were right about the Christmas blues. Even in the best of times Christmas can be depressing, if only because the reality of Christmas present can never live up to the imagination of Christmases past. But a few minutes of Herbert W.'s self-righteousness were always enough to restore my good humor. I might have been born in the wrong century, but at least, I would reflect, I am not a British Israelite.

I have never learned on what basis the British Israelites decided that the English are the lost tribes of Israel, but the condemnation of Christmas is all of a piece with fantasies about the children of Israel. Within Protestantism, there has always been a Judaizing strain that sought to purify Christianity of such pagan vestiges as icon-worship and holy water, Yule logs and jack-o'-lanterns, good works and Aristotelian philosophy. Every year at Halloween, I begin to think of myself as a persecuted minority. Here in the upper Midwest, our great Scottish holiday is boycotted by large numbers of Swedish and German Calvinists who mistakenly think themselves Lutherans. The same people would be shocked by Herbert W. Armstrong's attacks on the pagan German custom of worshiping evergreens, but they condemn all the customs surrounding All Souls' Day

and its ev as Satanism.

We ex-Anglicans (there are almost literally no believing Anglicans left in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America), we ex-Anglicans have always taken a more latitudinarian approach to pagan survivals. More than once, C.S. Lewis twisted St. Athanasius into saying that Christ was the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of ancient paganisms. The love He brought went deeper than Eros or Aphrodite, and in turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana, He revealed himself as the true Dionysus. If, as all Christians believe, Christ was the Logos, the divine Word through whom all things were made, then He was in the universe from the beginning, inspiring Hebrew prophets and pagan philosophers alike.

There is a hymn (Episcopalian, of course) which, after expressing thanks and praise for the prophets, moves on to the Greeks:

For Socrates who phrase by phrase
Talked men to truth, unshrinking,
And left for Plato's mighty grace
To mold our ways of thinking;
For all who wrestled sane and free,
To win the unseen reality,
To God be thanks and Glory.

Some Christians, believing that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a completely Hebraic compendium of all that our Creator wants us to know, profess to be shocked by such language, and this tendency to obscurantism was pronounced in many of the fathers of the early church. "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" asked Tertullian. In some of the fathers, hostility to learning can be explained as part of their general revulsion against pagan society; in others, they were conscious of their own inferiority in engaging intellectual combat with educated pagans. But even so erudite and polished a writer as St. Jerome felt guilty for his secular learning. Christ