

that night, a toast which was in essence a serious call to a devout and holy life, a life of involvement in Conservative effort. Amidst some undergraduate foolishness he was elected a member of the Party of the Right (the Party having been formed after he graduated from Yale): he stomached the foolishness rather better than I, except when an alumnus of the Party proposed a toast in a form which seemed to him a parody — and even more, a profanation — of the Mass. He recalled afterwards it had reminded him of a French movie in which an unfrocked priest had in fact consecrated a flagon in a tavern, and another priest there present had heroically drained the flagon to prevent the profanation of the transubstantiated wine. A generally awkward situation all around, I recall, and made more awkward by the fact that what was (and properly) a matter of high import to the guest was only dimly apprehended by the members of the Party.

I could add other vignettes — Mr. Buckley, glasses on, listening to Handel's *Messiah* on the stereo and carefully following the music in the score, or arguing a grammatical point at length in a Tuesday meeting at *National Review*, or saying to a member of his crew "I hope you have better sense than to come out for the legalization of marijuana," or manfully (but unhappily) braving the crowds at the Traditionalist Caucus at the 1969 Y. A. F. Convention, or mixing the vinegar in the right proportions for the anchovies and peppers at his favourite luncheon restaurant, where he is (one guesses) the favourite customer. Perhaps they round out, but they do not alter, the picture I have of him and of his importance to Conservatism.

A formidable public personality but shy and ill at ease in crowds, liking the company of family and friends and the solitude of the ocean (what crowning ironic bliss that last Christmas Eve the other boat in the anchorage should belong to Dr. Benjamin Spock), a generous and good man, enjoying small pleasures, puzzled like any exurban father about the "generation gap" (happy at signs his son might turn out to be a Conservative after all), a public wit and privately that rare man who is a hero not only to his chauffeur but to his brothers and sisters, he is existentially the central figure of modern American Conservatism. Though some may doubt how conservative he is or fault him for his failure to take the Conservative tide at the flood ("Why doesn't he run for the Senate?"), and some deplore *National Review's* Ivy-League background and East-Coast range of interests, he is nonetheless (though he would deny it) not just the "onlie begetter" but the main-stay of the present Conservative movement in America.

This does not mean that what he says is always centrally important to the development of this Conservative movement. For philosophical guidance one looks instead in Mr. Buckley's words, to "Mission Control" in Wood-

stock. And if one seeks a key to Mr. Buckley in his books, it should be sought in his introduction to Edgar Smith's *Brief Against Death*, in his introduction to his sister's posthumous collection of stories and short pieces (*Will Mrs. Major Go To Hell?*) and especially in Whittaker Chambers' letters (*Odyssey Of A Friend*). For in them, I think, the man is revealed apart from his role as Conservative Hero, and I do not believe the role does him justice.

I would guess also that the role bothers him. A thousand thousand admirers are not necessarily a good bargain for those few, those happy few who started a Conservative journal of fact and opinion back in 1955. He might

Beer And Beethoven

Petr Patr

The Tchaikovsky Album, Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbia M7x30830, 7 records.

When, after Abbie Hoffman comes to preside over this fated Republic and Herr Doktor Marcuse is ensconced in the Justice Department and the thousands of liberated debutantes and young masters are sent out on their virtue patrols to pick through our libraries and police our cultural redoubts for fascist residue, it will be discovered that until the early 1970's the master works of Petr Illich Tchaikovsky were kept under lock and hoof. Historians will further note that late in 1971 this famous journal of humane letters riveted together its courage hoisting the pennon of this much abused Russian master, and exhorting that he be accorded the hearing — indeed the celebrity, his achievements warrant. For the time has arrived to give this hypersensitive neurotic the stage.

In a recent issue we announced the formation of "The Petr Illich Tchaikovsky Society," and heaved all our considerable cultural might into bringing this repressed genius to the public's attention. Always working within "the system," we pledged to flood the nation with disquieting bumper stickers, articulate decals, arch — though provocative — sweatshirts and petitions to the FCC.

Now the system responds! Columbia Records has released *The Tchaikovsky Album*, a meager collection of Tchaikovsky which comes perilously close to being too little too late.

Why we had to wait until this late hour for the liberation of Tchaikovsky confounds me. Perhaps his exile to the back shelves was just one more egregious symptom of that Cold War madness which, seizing us at the end of World War II, left us abject ingrates to the heroic Red Army, the conqueror of Hitlerism and liberator of all of Eastern Europe. The Soviets' historic victories and their enlightened administration of all liberated regions paralyzed the American tycoons with trepidation, and they dropped a curtain of silence around all of the USSR. Even many of those

well be forgiven a desire like Henry V at Agincourt to have not one man more, though I am not aware he has any such desire. Henry V would not be at his best in leading millions: that does not mean he will turn the millions away. Nor does it mean his usefulness is gone when there are millions to be led. If nothing else, he is still the king. □

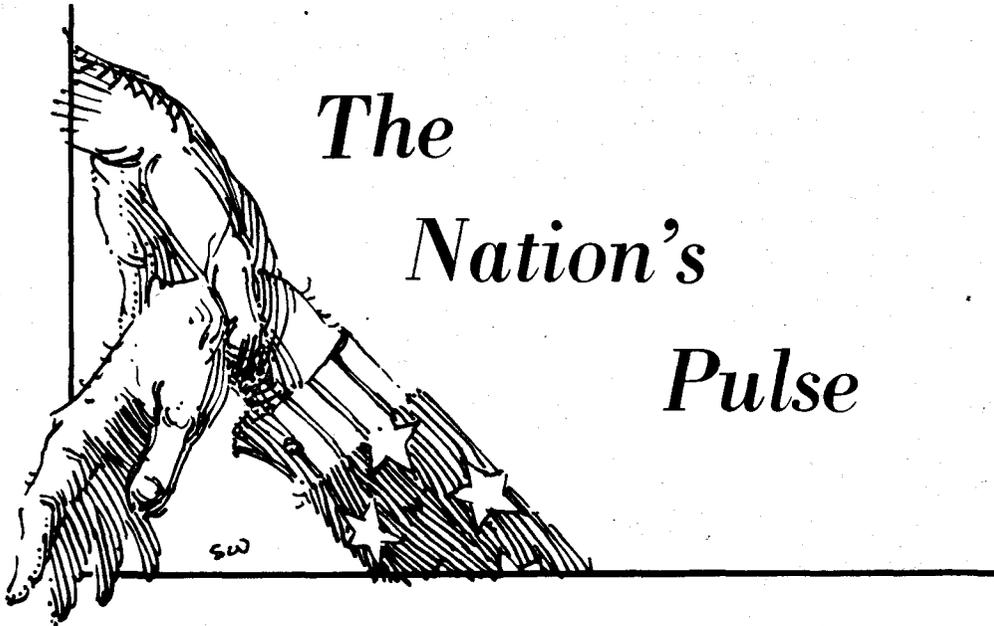
Jared Lobdell graduated from Yale where he served as chairman of the Party of the Right. After doing graduate work at the University of Wisconsin at Madison he moved to Green Bay where he now teaches. His essays have appeared in *National Review*, and he has edited *Insight and Outlook* and been associate editor of *Ralley*.

areas to which the Reds had brought their unique civilization suffered isolation. A parade of benign Russian gestures was rebuffed. And Americans were not even allowed authentic translations of the esteemed Dr. Lysenko. Grim rumors spread about Mr. Stalin's penal reforms, and of course the reputation of Russian culture suffered.

At any rate, all Americans ever heard were disfigured performances of the subtle *1812* and the lilting *Marche Slave* — forever emphasizing a mystifying martial strain. The present collection corrects these chimerical interpretations, for Mr. Ormandy's rendering is more authentic. Yet, I am afraid that while the sound of these records is very pure and the orchestra is obviously a capital bunch, Mr. Ormandy is just not my ideal candidate to lead the crusade for Tchaikovsky. True enough he is a virtuoso public relations man — how else has he managed to convince reviewers to intone those mortifying hosannas to his puny labors — but when he attempts to lead an orchestra in a serious piece of music like the E Minor symphony, well — to snatch a phrase from the memorable Dr. Johnson (Lyndon Baines) — what can you expect when the dog won't hunt? From Mr. Ormandy I have come to expect little more than fleas. His tempos are erratic, and his sense of balance is that of a dipsomaniac. The brass either comes in like a drunk at a funeral service or suddenly expires beneath a startling frenzy of strings. Sometimes the orchestra hums along merrily, and at other times it breaks into a rampage. The brass is unstructured in the F Minor symphony, and in the E Minor it is so feckless that I got the impression Mr. Ormandy thought he was doing the *Serenade for String Orchestra*.

Nevertheless his performance of the B Minor symphony deserves a beer on the house, his version of the *Serenade for String Orchestra* comes off all right and he serves up a juicy treat, I suppose, for balletomanes. As the entire album is priced especially low, it is probably a sound purchase for acolytes.

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The Nation's Pulse

Mr. Nixon On The Serpentine Path

Marshall Jay

It is not given to ordinary men to fathom the calculus by which the mind of Richard Nixon finally fixed upon Lewis Powell and William Rehnquist as nominees for the Supreme Court. It was a serpentine path, indeed, which wound its way at last to their door; but considering the qualifications of the gentlemen in question, one is bound to wonder whether and why a straight line wasn't thought possible in the first place.

It is generally conceded that both Powell and Rehnquist will be confirmed without much fuss or fireworks. It is also generally conceded that the Liberals have been had. The long knives were drawn, and the saliva was running; but when dinner-time came, there wasn't any racist roast to carve. Liberals, who jerk their knees up whenever anyone from south of the Potomac is nominated for anything, will harumph and puff about Powell, if for no other reason than that he hails from Virginia and is known to be less than wildly enthusiastic about massive bussing and coddled criminals. But try though they may — and it is not likely that they will — Lewis Powell simply cannot be made to look like Harold Carswell.

Similarly, it will be whispered that Rehnquist's political ties with the Nixon-Mitchell axis are unseemly in a man about to don judicial robes, but such an argument will not be taken seriously this side of Ramparts or *The New York Review of Books*.

Barring some hitherto undiscovered skeleton, in short, the likelihood is that Powell and Rehnquist will be confirmed before the *New York Times* can think up forty-seven reasons why residence in Virginia or employment with the

Justice Department ought to be *per se* disqualifications for service on the Court during Republican administrations.

All this, however, might have been foreseen weeks ago — or so one supposes. Richard Poff, that admirable gentleman, might have been spared the anguish of knowing that his life's ambition will now remain unfulfilled. The country might have been spared the anguish of imagining Robert Byrd upon the Court. And the "ABA Six," especially Mrs. Lillie and Mr. Friday, might have been spared needless embarrassment.

Was it really necessary to put the nation through four weeks of political gymnastics in order to get two conservatives (at least one of whom had to be a Southerner) on the Court? We shall, of course, never know the whole truth. Even the most determined Nixon-haters will not accuse him of having planned this one from the outset. It's simply too neat, too perfect, too "too." There are others, however, who not only think that the caper was planned in exquisite detail from the outset but praise it as the most artful political fandango of Richard Nixon's long career.

The whole thing really began, they say, when it appeared that the Liberals — contrary to earlier indications — were going to raise a stink about Poff. Ever since the Carswell defeat, it had been generally acknowledged in Congress that Poff was next in line for the Southern seat and that, because of his long service and many friendships on the Hill, he would be confirmed with only token opposition. The Poff strategy, unfortunately for

that most private of public men, ran afoul of two stubborn facts: (1) the Liberals, with the election only a year away, were desperate for issues and, barring anything else immediately on the horizon, another Supreme Court nomination fight appeared as good as any; (2) there were *two* seats open.

And so it was that the Liberals signaled their intentions: Poff would be confirmed if and only if the other seat were given over to a certifiable Liberal. This proved too high a price for the President, who had his sights set on both seats. Poff, who only a few days before had been viewed as a great boon for the Southern strategy, all of a sudden became a liability. His removal, whether by choice or force (or both), ushered in the new game plan, which called for decoys to draw the Liberals' fire.

Whether Powell and Rehnquist were part of the plan from the outset, we shall probably never know. What we do know is that the Liberals used all, or nearly all of their firepower in what turned out to be a mere preliminary skirmish — indeed, ambush. When the noise died down and the smoke cleared, there was the President on prime time television, every eye in the nation focused on him, dropping not one but two — count 'em — conservatives into the hopper. Altogether, a splendid victory for the forces of judicial restraint — and for Richard Nixon.

One hopes, however, that it will not prove to have been bought at too high a price. The Court, alas, has fallen upon hard days. Some believe it to be in peril. The egregious excesses of the Warren era, the Fortas and Douglas scandals, the Thornberry caper, the Haynesworth and Carswell nomination fights — these are damaging blows to an institution whose most important line of defense is the esteem of the people. One more such blow, and the Court may be done in altogether. One hopes that the Republicans, in their understandable zeal to redress the imbalance of the recent past, will not succumb to the opinion that the solution lies in creating a conservative counterpart to the Warren Court. That might please some real or imagined Republican majority in the short run, but it would do so by destroying the function of the Court as the authoritative voice of a Constitution. The principles of which cannot be surrendered to party line or popular whim. □

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