

"philosopher-gladicators" at RAND, there were all these bright young Harvard grads speed-reading great books, speed-hearing great music, speed-viewing great art at all hours of the day and night and ruling the country besides. Fairlie protests, "Power is no doubt necessary; President Kennedy was allowed to make it seem desirable...."

What was done with the power? "Crisis" were handled through the choice of appropriate "options." Unfortunately, John F. Kennedy believed it when he said, "Great crises produce great men." This is a very dangerous belief to be held by the president of the United States, especially by a president who adds in his brief tenure five divisions to the army and five tactical fighter wings to the Air Force. Having this faith in the character-building efficacy of crisis, having beefed-up the military, and being concerned with image, such a president might ignore Senator Keating's warnings about the build-up of missile bases in Cuba until the situation seemed critical. Then such a president might scare the hell out of all of us by issuing a last-minute ultimatum to the Soviets that involved intercepting their ships on the high seas. Not allowing Castro to have nukes was wise; handling it "a minute before midnight" a bit risky. Crisis-management is not a good substitute for policy, although crisis options are usually simpler and more clear-cut than policy choices, and the mandate that eluded one in an election can be gotten temporarily in response to crisis. The rhetoric

of crisis and mission has its uses, however: "If the zeal and the intelligence of the Kennedys were not to appear to be harnessed to personal ambition alone, they must be seen to be consecrated to a loftier and more strenuous ideal; and the nation, ennobled by their example, must consecrate itself in turn...."

The Eisenhower years seem now to have been years of tranquility. The Kennedy years brought promise and youth and vigor to the White House, and little in the way of legislative accomplishment. Johnson carried out what Kennedy started, in Vietnam and in a variety of domestic programs, yet he received the vilification of that constituency which had been John F. Kennedy's, the intellectual establishment. Kennedy's plans made real did not cure the ills of Americans, and Johnson and The System were blamed. Fairlie says it so well: Kennedy "in fact achieved so little that the people could hardly be blamed if they concluded that their political processes were inadequate to their tasks. If a leader of such exceptional vigor, commanding an administration of such unusual talents could not achieve his purposes, there must be something at fault with the political institutions which balked him. The fact that he was not, from day to day, exercising any political leadership within those institutions went unnoticed." The expectations raised by the Kennedy Administration far exceeded what they or any government could accomplish, and the disillusionment brought the erstwhile believers to the streets in the latter sixties.

Fairlie tries to dissociate the Kennedys' failures from those of liberalism, unconvincingly. The minds that wanted to bring their brand of the good life to nations all over the globe have tired of that, but not of imposing this vision on their fellow Americans. Kennedy, Johnson, McGovern — all were in tune with the *zeitgeist* of the liberal-intellectual elite of their times, and their failures were not merely due to their personal shortcomings. In Eisenhower's farewell address in which he warned us of the "military-industrial complex," he also warned against the distortions of education produced by government research contracts and "the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite." Quite prophetic.

Fairlie's book is well-written, engrossing, well-substantiated. It will do much to place the Kennedy years in proper perspective, and it helps explain the mood of many Americans today. The gap between promise and performance, between a *jihad* for freedom and the war in Indochina has proven disheartening. The author concludes about the American people, "Round and round they went, between 1961 and 1968, when they all fell down, tired of building nations, tired of stabilizing regions, tired of global conflict." The ability of government to increase the happiness of its citizens is very limited, and promises to that effect can lead only to failure, disillusionment, discontent, and upheaval.

D. W. Cooper

Book Review

Harry S. Truman

by Margaret Truman
Morrow \$10.95

The Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset once remarked that a real hero is a person with the strength to be himself. Pretentiousness is usually self-deception, and hypocrisy is a sin unto oneself as well as others. To be president of the United States, in part responsible for the future of the world, yet maintain a sense of self-honesty as well as sanity, is a difficult task. Add to this the complex and mystifying role of father, and the man who can still be true to himself is a gifted and rare individual. Such a man was Harry S. Truman, as his daughter Margaret Truman Daniel attests in a recent collection of memories entitled *Harry S. Truman*. This sentimental biography is also a revealing and intimate portrait of a president.

Beginning with the election of 1948, Margaret Truman, largely from personal correspondence and recollection, retells her father's political career and reminisces about family life. She includes the Truman heritage, youthful experiences, military involvement in the First World War, short-lived business ventures, association with the Pendergasts, involvement in local politics,

senate years and the Truman Committee, the Roosevelt-Truman ticket of 1944, the brief months as vice-president, the bequeathed presidency, termination of the war, postwar conferences, cold war origins and policy, and life in retirement. The scope of this book might indicate a long-involved political and psychoanalytical biography, but such is not the case. Margaret Truman is interested in portraying her father first as a man, then as the political leader. She is intent on describing human elements: emotions, convictions, loyalty, wit. She wants us to know that Harry S. Truman, burdened with enormous responsibilities yet considerate of the far-reaching effects of his decisions was moved by sincere intentions. This she illustrates by revealing the man known not as Mr. President but as "Dad."

In many ways Margaret Truman affirms her esteem for her father. His early criticism of Senator McCarthy for "reckless accusations" and "gutter tactics" confirms his hatred of demagoguery. His efforts in behalf of civil rights show a commendable dedication to equality and justice. His devotion to party loyalty as the bulwark of democracy is similarly laudable. His dismissal of General MacArthur is once more succinctly justified. The tribute

paid to General George C. Marshall is a necessary acclamation of an often ignored but distinguished statesman. Truman's dim view of newspaper objectivity accurately foreshadows present-day controversy. And the unfortunate fact that President Roosevelt snubbed and belittled Truman perhaps best explains his being thrust into the presidency unprepared and ill-advised for the challenges which awaited him.

No one should expect this book to be objective. In fact, sentiment is what makes it delightful and enjoyable. Everyone smiles kindly upon a daughter who insists that "father knows everything." No one will fault Margaret Truman for justifying all her father's actions or concluding that her father was an exceptional man. The admiration, affection, and respect which she shows for her father is evidence enough

"SEEN AT THE PENTAGON, shopping for a slightly used B-52: Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan. Seems the men of Liechtenstein have done it again: voted 2,128 to 1,675 (a much wider margin than two years ago) to deny women the vote. And the hell of it is, they don't export a single thing we could boycott."

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that Truman was a warm, understanding, sincere individual, at least as a father.

However exceptional Truman the man and father, this reviewer still hesitates to vindicate all the decisions of the thirty-third president, as his daughter assuredly does. If at times Margaret could forget her father was president, the world cannot. Nor can one escape the feeling that she has somehow lured the reader, with remarkable journalistic talent, into forgoing criticism or even doubts of Truman decisions and policy. Margaret Truman is perhaps as prejudiced against revisionist historians as they are narrow-minded toward her father. She ignores the fact that, as dedicated to peace as was her father, he made some contribution to the appearance of the cold war. Perhaps by misunderstanding Russia, or by understanding Stalin's intentions all too well, the policy of containment legitimized anti-Communist sentiment. It is unclear how Truman could have "specifically rejected the policy of containment" when that policy provided the philosophy of much postwar diplomacy.

This book abounds with examples of what is perhaps dramatic overstatement or exaggeration: devotion to fighting Russia, "the wily, determined foe" with an "arrogant thrust for world power"; "the cold-eyed men of the Kremlin"; "terrible Russia"; "The Russians continued to be impossible"; Henry A. Wallace's platform "would hand much of the world over to Joseph Stalin and Company"; Stalin sent orders to "seize power before the plan (Marshall Plan) would begin its restorative work"; force was "the only thing that Russians understood." Of course, Dad was accustomed to write the same way: "The Reds, phonies and the 'parlor pinks' seem to be banded together and are becoming a national danger"; "I'm sure Mr. Molotov is not so honest: He

represents a totalitarian state—a police government"; "There's no telling what they'll do, if we don't put up a fight now."

Margaret Truman is intolerant of historians who cannot accept her father's decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japan even if the motive was rapid termination of the war and the saving of lives. Perhaps this was a rationalization, or unpondered acceptance of the bomb as a legitimate weapon, or ignorance of the bomb's power. The fact that there was little consideration given to not using the bomb, Truman's statement years later that he'd do the same under similar circumstances, the belief that demonstration of the bomb was useless due to Japanese fanaticism, the psychological advantage that the nuclear monopoly might have provided in dealing with the Russians, and belief that the "rightness" of the decision "comes from the Japanese themselves": all these factors raise doubts about the president's decision.

I am not sufficiently confident or arrogant to defend the revisionists whom Margaret Truman assails. It is absurd to contend that President Truman alone caused the cold war and unprovable that it would have been avoided if he had followed another line. But if this book is more than a human interest story, if it is a refutation of revisionists and other historians critical of the Truman Administration, it fails to extinguish many of their questions concerning her father. Would the tension of the cold war have lessened if the Marshall Plan had done more than just "leaving the door open for the co-operation of Russia"? Was it expected that the Russians would not cry "deception" at the abrupt cancellation of Lend-Lease? How would the administration have reacted to the crises in Greece, Turkey, Korea, and China had they believed that the confrontations were not

Soviet-directed? Had Truman fended off the "pressures from American Jews that he found personally very irritating," might an alternative to a Zionist state have precluded the bitter Middle East tensions of later years? How does one justify support for Syngman Rhee of South Korea "who tended to be ultra-conservative in his views and rather dictatorial in his methods"? Prophecy is useless and the number of ifs endless. Still, in this book the doubts which might accompany any assessment of Truman policy are sustained by nonrecognition of them.

Margaret Truman's biography of her father is at times exaggerated, defensive, bitter, perhaps vengeful. But it is a remarkable attempt to present her father as humble yet confident, loyal but independent, decisive though responsible, authoritative yet humane. She believes her father's talents have been misunderstood, even unappreciated. The energies of this fine book are directed toward undoing misconceptions. Its hope is to present a real person, above all a father. And though no reader should accept a view of omniscience and flawlessness, the author has succeeded in convincing us that Harry S. Truman was more than an automaton delegating authority, coldly setting policy, oblivious to human feelings and needs. He was a true hero, as Ortega y Gasset said, because he maintained, throughout his political career as throughout his private life, a self-integrity, honesty, and sincerity that permitted his daughter to see little difference between the man she called Dad and the man called Mr. President. The role of father can seem as demanding as that of president. Margaret Truman is the only judge of Truman's success as a father, and she says, without hesitation, that he was exceptional. It remains to be seen how history will judge him as president.

Joyce Goldberg

WEAVER

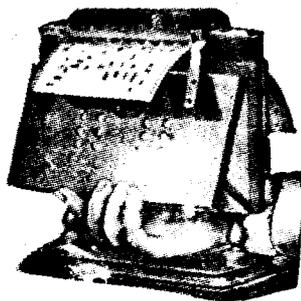
(Continued from page 4)

In any case, the curiosity of the human mind being what it is, many readers will probably still be reading despite my attempts to warn them that there was nothing to anticipate. Yet, for some reason which I do not claim to understand, some satisfaction may be derived from reading all this just the same. And those readers who have managed to bear with the article this far will probably read the rest of it too, provided that it does not grow to exaggerated proportions.

I am not so confident about the editor, however, and am beginning to wonder how much space I can reasonably expect him to provide for this article. After all, space is a precious commodity for editors, and I have little reason to expect that I will be allowed to continue much longer, considering that the space could just as well be delegated to articles on more pressing topics — or at least articles which have topics. Although

there are many things I would like to add in this final paragraph, I do not want to press the editor's patience too much. So I have written these last sentences in such a way that he can cut as many of the ones at the end as he needs to. Perhaps my cooperative attitude will help convince him to let the bulk of the paragraph stand. That seems like a fair compromise. It should also be interesting for the reader because regardless of how much of the paragraph

is printed, he will never know how many sentences were deleted. It also creates an interesting situation for me because I must now write every sentence as carefully as possible and hope that the editor will not wish to cut any of them. Surely if I become repetitious he will cut me off immediately. Yet how many sentences can I write in this vein without repeating something? Maybe if I stop now, and avoid padding the article, he won't cut anything.



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Correspondence



To the Editor:

James Grant's review of Tucker's *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* is quite inadequate. Mr. Grant fails to convey much of the logic and many of the assumptions which inform Tucker's position. I strongly disagree with Tucker. However, to dismiss him, as Grant does in essence, with the statement that "He has advocated what is probably an unwise course, but worse, he has not even done so for the right reasons," is unsatisfactory. Grant has not even told us what Tucker's "reasons" are!

To begin with, *A New Isolationism* is the latest in a trilogy of works by Tucker dealing with American foreign policy. The previous two volumes (*Nation or Empire?* and *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy*) contain a great deal of the analysis supporting Tucker's argument for isolationism. For example, Tucker proclaims in *A New Isolationism* that the U.S. is not dependent on foreign resources to sustain our economy. The data which purportedly supports this claim is delineated in *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy*.

Mr. Grant does not comprehend Tucker's perception of the Cold War which forms an important part of the isolationist thesis. Grant observes that for Tucker the "Cold War . . . is over . . ." But Grant does not realize that Tucker is asserting that the Cold War should have been over **two decades ago**. Tucker does not believe that the Soviet Union has been an expansionist power since Stalin's death. In other words Tucker is a Cold War "revisionist" for the period from 1953 onwards.

Grant also fails to note Tucker's startling (particularly for a liberal) treatment of nuclear proliferation. Tucker acknowledges that proliferation would occur, in the most unlikely event that his proposals were adopted, but this does not worry him! Arguments are presented as to why Tucker believes we should not worry about proliferation.

Tucker's book, given the neo-isolationist mood in the U.S., is being widely discussed and assigned in American foreign policy courses. *A New Isolationism* requires a much more searching review and analysis than it has received from Mr. Grant.

Very truly yours,
J. Tim Fennell
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor:

It would be heartening if David Brudnoy were, as you stated, "national affairs commentator on WGBH-TV in Boston." The national affairs commentator on the show on which Mr. Brudnoy appears is Louis Lyons, a revered and passionate liberal. He is joined, nightly, by other liberals. Only after years of nagging and complaints to the FCC by unliberals was Mr. Brudnoy permitted to join the newscast. He appears on an infrequent basis. In all fairness, however, he is treated by Mr. Lyons and his staff with the self-congratulatory deference of a plantation owner to a field hand permitted to enter the mansion house on special holidays.

Not that Boston's "public" TV station doesn't welcome new regulars. For the past couple of years, a new face, that of Mike Dukakis, has regularly appeared as whipmaster of its nationally-syndicated hour-long show, "The Advocates." As a result of this priceless TV exposure, Mr. Dukakis is now a strong contender for the Governorship. He is a Democrat, and a liberal.

It was suggested to WGBH that Arvi Nelson, a young Conservative who piled up a startling vote running for Congress around Boston, share the time given to Mr. Dukakis. WGBH paid no attention to the suggestion. Any TV time Mr. Nelson needs, he must pay for.

Sincerely,
Al Capp
Boston, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

What is more disappointing than David Brudnoy's hackneyed misrepresentation of medieval Christendom ("Perspective on the Family and Homosexuality," February): Gary North's failure to present a serious, authentically Christian view of homosexuality. With an exotic mixture of cynicisms, North stumbles into black comedy: "The wages of sin are death," he writes with the self-assuredness of one born on the right side of the railroad tracks (or The Judgment Seat), "but God offers an advance on people's salary from time to time." North fails, however, to consider Christ's greatest commandment, charity, that we love and forgive the sinner (whether a liar, a thief, or a homosexual) no matter how hateful his offense.

Sincerely,
Joseph P. Duggan
St. Louis, Missouri

To the Editor:

It is with great grief that I must confess I have a "mentality alien to responsible conservatism." It is Mr. David Brudnoy I have to thank for this self-awareness. Upon reading in *National Review* that Brudnoy felt Ali McGraw was the most beautiful girl in the world, I breathed a sigh of relief in spite of the slur to Racquel Welch. That's when I realized I was old old-fashioned. You know . . . typically Hoosier.

Brudnoy's article in *The Alternative*, "Queer-baiting for Faith, Fun, and Profit" was enlightening. I always had an "uncompromising and relentlessly antagonistic" attitude toward the "morally degenerate homosexuals." Neanderthal. How un-understanding. And, horror of horrors, I felt sorry for them.

Brudnoy delineated Biblical teachings covering homosexuality. He explained that God knew nothing of modern psychiatry when he smote the Sodomites. That kind of concerned me since I had always thought God knew everything. What God said kind of, well, was law. It was His way or Hell.

This gospel according to Brudnoy is somewhat enticing. We can be intellectual. Listen to both sides. Have understanding. Dialogue. Do our own thing with no inhibitions. We can all sit around smoking joints and mock the ignorant close-minded Christians.

Throughout my years as a young conservative activist, upon reading an article such as Brudnoy's that I consider a threat to the principles which I believe in, I would now pick up my sword and ready myself for battle with the forces of evil. Only, when one realizes the forces of evil are supposedly one's allies, the fight within tends to transfer to frustration.

My hope for America no longer lies with the so-called intellectual conservative leaders. My hope dies with the plain folks of Bean Blossom and Gnaw Bone, Indiana. They may be ignorant but they ain't dumb. A "homosexual man" is still a faggot.

Sincerely,
Mark Souder
University of Notre Dame
South Bend, Indiana

To the Editor:

I want to take a brief moment to congratulate you on the inclusion of David Brudnoy's article in the February issue ("Queer-Baiting for Faith, Fun, and Profit"). Its appearance at this time is quite important for the "new conservatism" represented by such groups as *The Alternative* and YAF.

For too long, the stereotype of a concerned conservative was that of a young man or woman who, standing on a "soap-box," was best known for condemning government incursions into the lives of people. Unfortunately, that same person was always seemingly able to look the other way when government interfered in the private lives of those members of

society with whom our young model conservative disagreed.

I am sure to some the advocacy of equal rights to all human beings — heterosexual and homosexual — portends the end of society as they know it. However, I have found that those most "uptight" are those who simply cannot practice the same thing that they preach. Advocacy of equal rights for homosexuals is not the advocacy of an increase in homosexual acts. The acts will go on among consenting adults whatever the law. It just seems a damn shame that our society makes criminals out of people for acts committed in the privacy of their own homes.

It is unfortunate for the "Gay Rights Movement" that the New Left has picked up their cause. A number of normally moderate or conservative people have been driven out of the conservative movement into the "residue of the Bomber Left" by our conservative brethren who, while writing pamphlets about the mind control of 1984ish Russia, continue to oppose laws that would allow people to live their own personal life styles — as long as they did not infringe on the rights of others.

I congratulate Professor Brudnoy on his hard-hitting article and hope that he opens some heretofore closed minds.

James A. Newman
Plains Regional Representative
Young Americans for Freedom
Faribault, Minnesota

To the Editor:

As an interested reader of *The Alternative*, I was dismayed to find an article which I consider to be far below your usual standards. I have just finished reading E. T. Veal's article "Booze and Pot: the Metaphysical Distinction." Mr. Veal's basic feeling about marijuana is one which I share; however, the mode he follows to prove his point is both false and dangerous. He states that "alcohol and marijuana are different things" and that "marijuana must stand on its own . . ." He then proceeds to attempt to prove the dangers of marijuana by praising many aspects of the consumption of alcohol.

Item: Marijuana users smoke pot at graduations; alcohol users do not drink.

Look more closely at any graduation, Mr. Veal. You'll find there either liquor or at least a number of people already high on it.

Item: Alcohol drinkers deplore the use of alcohol by teens and sub-teens. Marijuana users do not feel the same about marijuana.

Sorry, Mr. Veal. There are smokers who deplore its use by very young people; and, at the same time, there are parents who give their children alcoholic drinks at pre-school ages.

Item: Alcohol users go to a party for the party; marijuana users go for the high.

Sorry again, Mr. Veal. Have you ever asked people at a party if they would have come had there not been liquor there? I have. Try it. On the other hand, I have attended parties where marijuana was smoked casually and where the party, not the high, was the important occasion.

Item: (and I quote): "In the deepest folds of Bacchus, men see pink elephants. They are to the eye funny creatures, more likely to raise a smile than a whiff of terror."

Tell that to the parents of children killed by drunk drivers, Mr. Veal.

Let me state again that I share Mr. Veal's feeling that there are dangers in marijuana and that alcohol and marijuana are very different. But I am a non-drinker as well as a non-smoker, so not only could I give Mr. Veal some very convincing arguments about the "metaphysical distinctions" between pot and alcohol, but I could do so without praising the benefits or glossing over the disadvantages of either.

Mrs. Renee Utt
Bloomington, Indiana