

chaste," "has frequent intercourse or relations with persons infected or exposed to AIDS," and "personally uses condoms in some form of deviant, aberrant or socially unacceptable . . . behavior."

•In Spandau prison Mr. Rudolph Hess—no relation to Alger—committed suicide. Miss Joan Rivers's husband, the confusingly named Edgar Rosenberg, took his life after finishing Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American*

*Mind*. Finally, after studying bottom fish for several months in the Bering Sea, Mr. Dimitri Vinogradov, 30, a Soviet zoologist visiting Aberdeen, Washington, ditched his gloomy colleagues and entered a local bar shout-

ing, "America's great . . . I love America." After he has completed his application for political asylum and passed all the requirements for citizenship, have you any doubt as to how he will vote?  
—RET

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

### Democrats and Communists

Re: "Democrat Foreign Policy Scandals," by David Brock, *TAS*, August 1987. Department of amplification: Rep. Schroeder resigned her association with Nicaragua Network in October 1985. The Network was originally represented to us in early 1985 as a politically independent, people-to-people organization, and on that basis we agreed to assist them. Several months later, when it became clear that such was not the case, we terminated our association.

That same year, by the way, Rep. Schroeder also lent her name to a fund-raising effort for the Committee for a Free Afghanistan Dinner for Afghan Relief.

—Daniel Buck  
Administrative Assistant  
Office of Patricia Schroeder  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Before I address the lack of substance in David Brock's "Democrat Foreign Policy Scandals," I would like to point out that the graphics which accompany the piece (gentlemen before firing squads) are an excellent example of the violence emanating from the frustrated right in its sad decline. I can only assume that such imagery is meant as a warning for the elected officials and anti-war activists whom Mr. Brock portrays as traitors and communist agents. It should be noted that Mr. Brock's friends, the Contras and Death Squads, prefer more graphic forms of murder, such as dismemberment and mutilation.

The usual right-wing hysteria over communism has dwelled upon its supposed closed and secretive nature. What seems to upset Mr. Brock and his fellow disinformers is the opposite: It is the honest and open way that those of us opposed to U.S. foreign policy in Central America have taken our case before the American people. We of the left did not need to sell weapons to Iran, hand cash through car windows, hire mercenaries, or beg foreign dictators when we raised funds for our truly humanitarian aid to the people of Central America. We cannot afford to keep Archbishops, publishers, and retired Coca-Cola barons in the imperial style they desire, but we can con-

tribute educational materials, medical supplies, and farm implements to a fellow people of the Americas who have shared with us the tragedy of the Reagan years.

—Michael Hersh  
National Lawyers Guild  
Georgetown University Law Center  
Washington, D.C.

The August 1987 issue is a bit out of focus, apparently unable to distinguish between vital reporting and sophomoric satire. Specifically, I refer to the editorial decision to emphasize one of the world's safest, most irrelevant sports—Carter bashing—while at the same time downplaying David Brock's timely and trenchant "Democrat Foreign Policy Scandals," one of the most important essays ever published in *The American Spectator*.

My point about the Carter piece is really three-fold: 1. The Carters are not worth the ink. Everyone already knows about their sublime fatuity. 2. P. J. O'Rourke's prose is breathless and his thinking altogether thin. 3. You should simply have done a special edition of *Current Wisdom*, devoting the whole to the Carters' compilation of nincompoopery.

In contrast, Brock has brought together a compendium of indictments against some of the most scurrilous knaves ever to get on the congressional dole. This was your cover story, and you shied away from giving it the prominence it deserves.

All of which brings me to the conclusion that the *Spectator* has lost its bite, its capacity to deliberately offend, enthrall, and enlighten. Have you at the ripe old age of twenty become respectable? Has the eastern establishment co-opted you? Have you become chic? Are you going to merge with *Cosmopolitan* or *Rolling Stone*? Maybe you should move back to Indiana, where it is apparently safe to be unabashedly iconoclastic.

Say it isn't so. Send P. J. O'Rourke back to places where people apparently find him witty. Publish more Brock, more insight.

—Harold Alderman  
Cotati, California

David Brock replies:

Mr. Buck's letter compels me to review the sordid history of Rep. Schroeder's

involvement with the Nicaraguan Network. Mr. Buck told the *Washington Times* in April that Rep. Schroeder agreed to the endorsement of the Network and joined the group's advisory board but had not done her "homework" on the group before allowing it to use her name. His letter here appears to be consistent with that explanation. But Rep. Schroeder, confronted by interviewer Peter Boyles on Denver radio Station KNUS on March 21, asserted that she had never been aware of the endorsements. "I never knew I was on that letter and the Nicaragua Network advisory board," Rep. Schroeder said. "My name was put on the fundraising thing by staff, and when I found out about it I wrote and told them to take it off. I did not give them authority to use it. . . . I feel very angry that they're using my name, but what can you do?" Rep. Schroeder also maintained that Sister Agnes, her Denver aide, was not involved in Nicaragua Network fundraising or lobbying activities. But Sister Agnes was in fact the Rocky Mountain regional director and a national board member of the Nicaraguan Network during the time she served on Rep. Schroeder's staff. As to the Afghan relief endorsement, is Mr. Buck suggesting some sort of moral equivalence between the victims of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the Sandinistas?

Mr. Hersh misses a central point of my argument. The left indeed has conducted an "open" campaign on behalf of the Sandinista junta and the Communist FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador. Such activities proceed in the open because they are overlooked or tacitly endorsed by inquisitors in Congress and the media. But those who were actively promoting democracy in Central America—Oliver North, John Poindexter, Carl Channell—were forced to operate secretly by a political culture that treats anti-Communism as a crime. Further, I find Mr. Hersh's characterization of those funding the Sandinistas and the FMLN as "anti-war activists" and "truly humanitarian" to be "incredible, chilling, mindboggling," to quote Sen. Daniel Inouye from another context.

While I doubt that material about the hapless Carters could ever wear

thin, I thank Mr. Alderman for his comments. Further, I would direct him to several other important reports on the "scurrilous knaves" published recently. (This may become a scandal yet.) J. Michael Waller and Joseph Sobran report in the *National Review* of July 31 that, among other instances of malfeasance, "One Democrat who gets furious about shady contributions to the contras is said to have taken a \$500 campaign contribution from a pair of Soviet spies on whose behalf he had interceded." And *Newsweek*, in a July 27 dispatch on "The Other Aid Network," says that "agents from U.S. Customs also started looking into several [Sandinista support] groups' operations, investigating a charge that there were weapons in some shipments, but dropped the probe in the face of Congressional complaints."

### A Former Communist Corrects

Having just read a review of the book *Cause at Heart: A Former Communist Remembers* (University of Georgia Press) by Harvey Klehr in your July issue, I write not to take issue with a considerate review but to provide a substantial correction of fact. The book is clearly stated to be a memoir—not, as Professor Klehr writes, an autobiography; and two authors are clearly listed, not myself alone. The review nowhere mentions my friend and co-author Richard Nickson, whose collaboration in writing the book, from first to last, was total. A book involving taxing work over many years merits proper credit.

—Junius Scales  
New York, New York

### Libertarians Are Conservatives, Too

In two recent issues, book reviewers have used the word "libertarian" as if to describe an exotic disease that threatens the health of their own (different) versions of true conservatism. In one case, the main thesis of the book reviewed is grossly misrepresented. The other review reflects a substantial misunderstanding of the libertarian perspective. Let me propose a temporary truce to sort out these issues.

The more egregious of these reviews is William Schambra's review (*TAS*, July 1987) of Robert Higgs's *Crisis and*

*Leviathan*. The main thesis of the Higgs book is that the major national crises of this century, combined with a change in political ideology, have led to a progressive increase in the powers of the federal government, a thesis for which Higgs provides substantial documentation. Although Higgs also makes a reasonable case that many of the powers exercised during these crises

were "... unwise, unnecessary, and, more often than not, unconstitutional" (Schambra's words), his primary objective was to explain the level and character of federal powers *after* each successive crisis. There are some problems with the Higgs thesis, specifically why some crises have not led to a significant increase in federal powers and why some of these powers have not been exercised in the subsequent periods. Schambra, however, does not address the main thesis of this book and ignores these issues. Moreover, Schambra grossly misrepresents this book as a crude Marxist-like explanation of the origins of these crises in the desire for power and profits. There are occasions, as Higgs recognizes, during which a temporary reduction of some liberties is necessary to preserve the potential for future liberty. Schambra, however, appears to rationalize any use of power in the name of duty, honor, and country, and he expresses no concern about the accumulation of these powers over successive crises. One need not view history "... through the lens of doctrinaire libertarianism" (again, Schambra's words) to question whether some of these powers were unnecessary or unwise during the crises or to worry about the accumulation of these powers.

The review by Herbert Schlossberg (*TAS*, September 1987) of Tom Sowell's *A Conflict of Visions* is much more thoughtful. Schlossberg admonishes Sowell, however, for not grounding the "constrained vision" in religion. Sowell's religious beliefs are not obvious, but that is irrelevant. He makes a convincing case, however, that one *may* distill a constrained vision from the lessons of history, a perspective that does not deserve Schlossberg's dismissal as "... a sort of ancestor worship." One might also observe that religion has sometimes been the origin, and the church the agent, of an unconstrained vision. Schlossberg uses the word "libertarian" to describe those who share a constrained vision but who do not necessarily come to this vision from a religious perspective. He recognizes that conservatives and libertarians often disagree on some issues, such as defense, abortion, and victimless crimes. He is incorrect, however, to attribute these differences to "... the social atomism of that [libertarian] philosophy." Libertarianism is a *political* philosophy about the relation of individuals and the state, not a comprehensive philosophy. As such, it is consistent with a wide range of views on religion, personal behavior, and most other issues. For libertarians, it is important to distinguish between a virtue and a requirement, between a sin and a crime, in part because there is no consensus

on what constitutes virtuous or sinful behavior. Libertarians acknowledge the communitarian dimensions of social life but insist that these relations be voluntary, rather than be imposed by the state.

For different reasons, both Schambra and Schlossberg would exclude libertarians from conservative political discourse. For Schambra, libertarians are "profoundly subversive" because they favor limits on the powers of government. For Schlossberg, libertarians are "good pagans" because they do not derive their political views from some true religion. If either Schambra or Schlossberg has his way, I wonder who would be left. Maybe they could argue with each other.

—William A. Niskanen  
Chairman, Cato Institute  
Washington, DC.

*William Schambra replies:*

I thank Mr. Niskanen for pointing out some additional, technical difficulties with Robert Higgs's thesis. I still suspect, however, that there may be other, more substantial problems with the book whose chief conclusion is that the American political system is one of "participatory fascism," different "only in degree" from Hitler's Germany, willing—to quote but one additional statement from the closing paragraph—to send "tens of thousands of men to their deaths bound in involuntary servitude as conscripts in the military adventures embarked upon by ruling elites." I did not suggest anywhere that this book was "Marxist-like," though. To have done so would have been to miss one of its wonders—that it could have been written by a non-Marxist.

*Herbert Schlossberg replies:*

Mr. Niskanen misrepresents both the spirit and letter of my review. Far from thinking of libertarianism as "an exotic disease," I value the contribution libertarians have made to some aspects of the political debate. I'm especially appreciative of the creative use some of them have made of economic thinking, in particular the ideas of the Austrian school, to show the damage that the dominant statist mentality has done to American life. In the past I've been critical of such conservatives as George Will, who link their agenda with the fortunes of the idol state. And surely a piece which lavishes strong praise on Sowell's work and the particular book under review should not be regarded with such hostility by a libertarian spokesman.

Far from excluding libertarians from the discourse, as Mr. Niskanen alleges, I intended to highlight the differences within which the discourse exists, differences which his letter acknowledges.

The question is how we can build bridges based on shared convictions with people with whom we also have strong disagreements. To pretend the differences aren't there, which he apparently favors, is not the way to do it.

As to the specific criticisms, I don't "admonish" Sowell for not grounding his convictions in religious ideas. This is careless writing. I point out his skewed selection of sources, speculate on why the bias is there, and place the work in the context of modern cultural history. Surely that's the job of anyone who reviews an important book like *A Conflict of Visions*. What's the beef? I may have made mistakes in conducting that operation, but my critic doesn't point out what they were. And is he adding something new by saying that religion may be the engine of the unconstrained vision? My review made precisely that point in speaking of the World Council of Churches.

The one substantive disagreement between Mr. Niskanen and me that emerges from his letter is the nub of the problem between conservatives and libertarians. He thinks a political philosophy can be abstracted from other philosophical issues and treated in isolation. He doesn't believe a political philosophy is derived from or at least closely related to an anthropology, an ethic, a metaphysic, and so on. That's why he believes "communitarian dimensions of social life" are all voluntary, whereas I would say many of them—family, citizenship, and so on—are not, having an organic quality. We don't need a "temporary truce." We need to have a prolonged conversation with mutual respect and no attempt to sweep differences under the rug, and at the same time work out strategies for dealing with our mutual adversaries. Mr. Niskanen's approach trivializes the importance of the differences and makes it more difficult to capitalize on the agreements.

**Hard on Bloom**

I write to applaud Charles Kesler's "The Closing of Allan Bloom's Mind" (*TAS*, August 1987). It is the best critique of Bloom's best-selling book I have seen. Part of my problem with Bloom is trying to determine what he is talking about at any given point. He skips up and down the great chain of being like a trapeze artist and talks oracularly of Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche. But it isn't clear what he is saying about these worthies; above all, it isn't clear how they are relevant to any reform in education.

But Kesler puts his finger on the basic flaw in Bloom's book when he calls attention to its anti-democratic and, more specifically, its anti-American character. In reading it I was  
(continued on page 57)



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# EDITORIALS



## IS IT LIBERAL CONVERGENCE?

*Kitty Hawk, North Carolina*

Do my eyes deceive me? Here I am at my annual retreat by the sea. Once again I repair to this historic beach to recharge my cerebral batteries by poring over books and scholarly journals written in many languages. Again my diligence is rewarded by a discovery of significant import to all students of political zoology.

In an English-language journal, misleadingly named *Bon Appetit* (August 1987), who do I see pictured in a full-page advertisement endorsing Rose's Lime Juice but my old pal Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., distinguished historian and a prude who views the commercial impulse as disparagingly as the Rev. Jim Bakker now views the sexual impulse. Professor Schlesinger is a liberal, and so his fall into the capitalist embrace comes as a surprise, and a tip-off that in Ronald Reagan's decade historic changes have occurred.

Some, of course, will fear that Professor Schlesinger has been ill used by the tycoons of Rose's Lime Juice. There he is seated in a book-lined library, a stately old-fashioned typewriter at his side (we progressive conservatives use word processors), and a woman posing suggestively atop his Chippendale desk. She is Miss Tama Janowitz, a trendy authoress of New York lit, and she too urges Rose's Lime Juice upon us.

Doubtless many of the professor's liberal admirers scrutinized the advertisement for evidence of coercion. Was he being used against his will? Are there signs of physical abuse upon his person, his bow tie soiled, his glasses upside down? Is there a furtive signal to notify the authorities, perhaps a rude gesture with a finger, which would be so unlike Professor Schlesinger, perhaps a silly smile? Or his eyes, do they betray evidence of a Mickey Finn? If Miss Janowitz were on my Chippendale I would have to be drugged, I can tell you. Yet in the 1980s we all have

our price, eh Professor Schlesinger?

This was not always the case. There was a time when liberals parted company with conservatives over things mercenary. Professor Schlesinger's record in this department is irreproachable. Back in 1954 when one of capitalism's foremost twentieth-century evangelists, Professor Friedrich Hayek, came out with *Capitalism and the Historians*, Professor Schlesinger derided its "fiery dogmatism" and admonished against Hayek's absorption with the capitalist act. Ever since, Professor Schlesinger has been repelled by America's crass materialism, and the Reagan decade has evoked his warmest eloquence repeatedly: "Reaganism," he confirmed in the *Wall Street Journal* late last year, "has meant . . . a righteous sanctification of the unbridled profit motive, a worship of the fast buck. . . ."

Yet there he is in *Bon Appetit*, flaking for Rose's Lime Juice, a co-conspirator with Miss Janowitz, and both apparently are advocating vodka-typling in the hushed confines of one's library and while operating a typewriter. It is all highly irregular, or is it?

The truth is that liberals are no freer from the commercial impulse than conservatives. Political observers have

known this for years. Professor Schlesinger is not the first anti-capitalist moralizer to be caught *in flagrante delicto* endorsing capitalism's widgets. Recall, if you will, Lillian Hellman's endorsement of Blackglama mink coats; and Miss Hellman was a left-wing rigorist far beyond the mild hallucinations of Professor Schlesinger.

As the 1980s roll on with wealth spreading and unemployment declining, we are seeing that liberals have the same earthly desires as conservatives. The only difference seems to be that the liberals remain sheepish about admitting their materialism. Perhaps with the passage of time our liberal friends will become more enlightened and come to enjoy capitalism without

guilt. Certainly Professor Schlesinger's advertisement gives us grounds to hope.

This is not a call to promiscuous capitalism. Surely restraint must be maintained. But liberal critics of capitalism must be open and positive about the natural human impulse, as they say in the boardrooms, to "cut a deal."

What I believe I have discovered here by the sea might be called 1980s liberal convergence. The liberal publicly scorns the conservative but adopts his values. Democratic presidential candidates promise not to become entailed by the "special interests," read radicals. Mary McGrory, the liberal columnist, admits to purchasing her first Mercedes Benz. Professor Schlesinger falls in line with the Lime Juice Trust. □

## CONSERVATIVES, TAKE HEART

*New York*

Fellow conservatives and other adepts of humane and normative behavior, take heart. Pay no heed to those popinjays among the intelligentsia who report with unseemly exuberance that the heyday of Reagan conservatism has passed. As has been the case for many years, the current wisdom is mostly flabdoodle, thrilling, compelling, and wrong. It may be more inescapable today, blaring as it does into every corner of life thanks to broadcast media, but that does not make it any truer and should make it all the more tedious.

As for those sad sacks sedated in the current wisdom's idiot vapors, think of how unhappy their recent experiences have been. For nearly seven years they have believed that nuclear war would come on the morrow or economic collapse or the suspension of habeus corpus or worse. In other times and other lands their forebears believed that the world was flat, that the sun revolved around the earth, that a dirty old sock worn around the neck would cure illness. No, today's conservatives have no need to be saddened by the current wisdom. Besides, 1980s current wisdom

is usually incomprehensible to an intelligent mind, and no sooner has one familiarized himself with the bogus facts and faulty logic than the intelligentsia has moved on to new absurdities.

Conservatism passé? Come, come! What will the politicians replace it with, a more extravagant welfare state? higher taxes? still more accommodations to terrorists and to the liberators of Afghanistan? As the seven mediocrities now campaigning for the Democratic presidential candidacy are demonstrating daily, antiquated liberalism has nothing to offer beyond the array of extreme policies that almost knocked the Republic off its feet in the late 1970s.

I say laugh off the dirges about conservatism's demise and take heart from the 400-year-old wisdom of that suave Florentine statesman Sr. Francesco Guicciardini, a counselor to princes and popes who upon inspecting the current wisdom of his day observed that one "need not be surprised at our ignorance of things that happened in the past. . . . If you think about it carefully, you will find we do not have



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