

that local, state, and federal officials have concocted a gigantic cover-up entailing such diverse phenomena as the New York governor's office, the Ku Klux Klan, the New York City mayor's office, the Irish Republican Army, and now I suppose one has to mention church sanctuary. But innocents are going to suffer when this show ends. There are the future victims of Miss Brawley's assailants, and there are the many victims of rape, child abuse, and racist assaults. Getting them to bring their stories to the police has been difficult enough in the past. Given the lurid picture of the courts and the police that Miss Brawley's showmen are painting, these victims are going to be

even less willing to make their suffering known. Hence the animal savagery of our streets will continue and perhaps get worse.

The final victim of the Brawley hijinks, of course, is the legal system. It may be biased as the showmen say, but it is still the only instrument for justice that the victims of criminal violence have; and it is the public's best defense against America's street psychopaths. The antics of the Brawley entourage and the attendant defaming of New York's criminal justice system, plus the absurd leniency of New York's officials toward Miss Brawley and her showmen, now threaten this last line of defense against thugs. That is the fun-

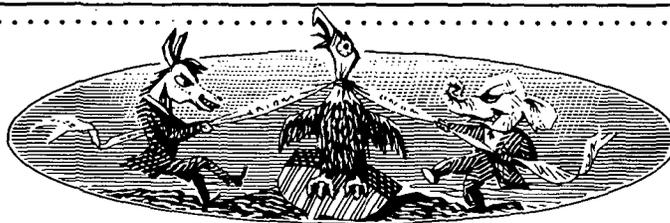
damental tragedy of the Brawley farce.

Months ago, when his masterful and amusing novel about this city was with the printer, Tom Wolfe worried that critics would think that he stole his story from the city's daily newspapers. He feared that the critics would mark down *The Bonfire of the Vanities* as another of Wolfe's works of journalism, rather than appraise it as his first work of fiction. He had reason to worry; the rogues and the con men portrayed in his novel are on daily display in this city's news stories, and the Brawley case abounds with Wolfean characters. But Wolfe was making seri-

ous points about the dangers of the streets and about the city's criminal justice system. The Brawley case is a reminder of how serious Wolfe, the satirist, really is. New York is sliding toward the State of Nature envisaged by the seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, wherein life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

To prevent further decline New York's law enforcement officials had best arrest, try, and punish criminals. And for a certitude those who ignore subpoenas and defy the courts ought to be put in the slammer too. The whole Brawley entourage strikes me as a promising target for this salutary process. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



REAGAN, ARMAND, GORBY & COCKBURN

by Tom Bethell

Readers of this column should beware of predictions about U.S.-Soviet affairs. At one point I reassuringly promised that President Reagan would sign no arms control agreements, at another that he most assuredly would never go to a Moscow summit. Too optimistic, as always! Undaunted, I have nonetheless been thinking lately that Reagan, in his chummy friendship with Mikhail Gorbachev, may unintentionally have introduced an unstable element into the life of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

First of all we should recognize that the Soviet system, although materially hopeless compared with free markets, is nonetheless remarkably stable, having survived for seventy years. Secondly, there can be no doubt that Gorbachev really does want to restructure the Soviet Union internally, in order to make the economy work better. But restructuring a stable system almost certainly means destabilizing it; and restructuring Communism certainly means undermining it. So you can't have both Communism and perestroika. And that means you can't have so-

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator's Washington correspondent and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution. A collection of his essays, The Electric Windmill, was published this spring by Regnery Gateway.

cialism and perestroika, whatever Armand Hammer thinks.

Hammer, chairman of Occidental Petroleum Corporation and friend of Lenin, wrote a piece for the *New York Times* after the Moscow summit saying he believes that "Mr. Gorbachev has committed himself to making Socialism (not Communism) work in his own country by raising the standard of living of his own people and that this ambition is his single-minded priority." That may be, but the distinction between Communism and socialism is a false one: Communism is nothing more than stable socialism, administered by people who do not intend to let others vote them out of office. If Mr. Hammer is implying here that Gorbachev himself does make a distinction and has given up on Communism then he certainly will be deposed—by the Communists (or "conservatives" as I see they are now called in the U.S. media).

We know that in the normal course of events the Soviet Communist party does not permit itself to be undermined by well-meaning reforms, however much the general secretary of the party might desire such changes. "Conservatives" have always thwarted such restructurings in the past (for earlier Soviet rulers have tried to make Communism work better by rearranging things). To keep everything unchanged—Communists really are "con-

servative" in this sense—they have always used the argument that with so dangerous an enemy as the United States, now is not the time to tinker. This strategy has successfully kept the party's power and perquisites undiluted for decades.

By now Gorbachev has seen enough of Reagan to know what a harmless old codger he is, and presumably he has been able to persuade his chief underlings of this undeniable truth. At the same time, of course, it is becoming harder and harder to disguise the fact that Communism is a materialistic system that doesn't deliver the material goods. For these reasons, it seems, the Soviet strongman has been permitted to press his reforms much further than normal. Nonetheless, I believe that Gorbachev will not be permitted to go any further. Perestroika is doomed to fail.

Readers have the advantage this time because I am writing before the vaunted Communist party conference in Moscow, whereas you will be reading it after the conference is over. I predict (safely enough) that nothing will change, that the "conservatives" will prevail, and that Gorbachev will be politely rebuffed. The Soviet economy will, therefore, continue to stagnate, as it has all along. The solution for the Soviets will be to retain Mr. Gorbachev as their smiling front-man so that

Commerce Secretary William Verity and his contingent of useful idiots keep the credits flowing.

This will keep the new missiles under construction and the specialty stores stocked with caviar for party elites, without at the same time allowing anything very destabilizing in the way of perestroika to occur. It should not be too difficult to contrive such a balancing act: Get rid of perestroika in fact if not reality, in order to preserve the privileges and immunities of the party; and keep Gorbachev as a figurehead lest Western credits be endangered. The main goal of the Communist party conference could be summarized this way: Keep the *New York Times* happy.

Do conservatives in the U.S. likewise relish the prospect of Gorbachev failing to implement his reforms? Let us now take a look at the anti-perestroika murmurings on the American left. Esther Kingston-Mann, a history professor at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, worried in *In These Times* that the Soviet reformers "cannot ignore the troubling possibility that their 'newly liberated' entrepreneurs might acquire wealth and power beyond their numbers and go on to subvert the social security provided to the

(continued on page 12)

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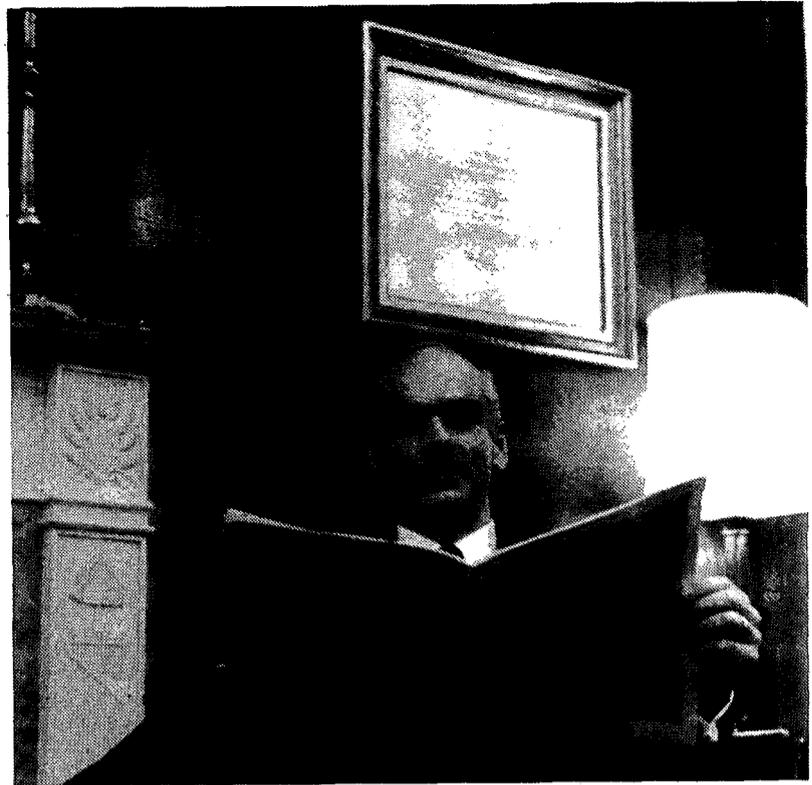
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majority of the population. They must fear that ordinary citizens will consider the proposed changes a breach of a longstanding social contract. After all, the Soviet leadership has always tried to justify its policies and explain away the need for political oppression by focusing on advances toward equality and social justice."

She obviously thinks that the system works pretty well for "ordinary citi-

zens," protected by their "social contract" (a good new euphemism for Communism, incidentally), who receive "social security" in return for "political oppression." Not a bad deal! But perestroika could subvert it with inequality and injustice.

The most forthright attack on what's been happening comes from Alexander Cockburn in the *Nation*. His father, the late Claude Cockburn, was in his hey-

day in the 1930s a member of the British Communist party and the London correspondent for *Pravda*. Alex, a chip off the old block, now positions himself well to the left of Gorbachev and the current (wishy-washy) *Pravda*. In a June 4 column entitled "Lenin, Thou Shouldst, etc." Cockburn writes:

I'm all for *glasnost* and *perestroika*—at least as articulated to me in Moscow last

November by Boris Kagarlitsky—but on the international side Gorbachev's alleged intimates and advisers, Arbatov and Burlatsky and the others, are becoming singularly unimpressive, mostly because they, like their boss, seem resolved to see the world in entirely bipolar terms, with the ancillary goal of saying or doing absolutely nothing to upset the Atlantic powers, or to deny themselves an honorary doctorate at Tufts some time in the near future.

Is this where it is all going to end, the heritage of October, the tradition of Tukhachevsky and Dimitrov [tyrannical Bulgarian strongman], with bilateral commissions adorned by a former chief of the CIA [William Colby] and the head of Novosti, jointly denouncing "adventurism"?

Cockburn mocked Soviet "détente-niks" who are "ready to sell out world revolution anytime for the sake of a cocktail party at the Council on Foreign Relations." Particularly disturbing to Cockburn: "Arbatov and the other Soviet détente-niks had no visible misgivings" in signing a document under whose rules of conduct "invaluable Soviet support for the Angolan revolution would be regarded as illegitimate, as probably would similar Soviet efforts to defend the revolution in Vietnam and Nicaragua." A columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* in addition to the *Nation*, Cockburn went on to recall the glory days of Leonid Brezhnev, "who did after all preside over the consolidation of the Soviet Union as a modern industrial state and, relatively speaking, a golden age for the Soviet working class, aside from sponsoring the exemplary acts of proletarian internationalism," i.e., the invasion of Afghanistan and the creation of client states in Africa, that Cockburn is now horrified to see under attack in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.

Thus spake Cockburn. Can the *New York Times* be far behind? Far more discreetly, of course. From the paper of record we may expect nothing more dramatic than muted editorials urging the Soviets to proceed with a greater degree of circumspection. But make no mistake, the protection of Soviet "gains" will be the goal.

Cockburn has a point, of course. For those (admittedly few) who are clear-headed enough to recognize that Communism is what they *want*, and not something that the world has been accidentally saddled with, perestroika must not be allowed to go so far as to undermine the legitimacy of Communism. David Satter in the *New Republic* believes that glasnost has not gone so far as to "analyze underlying causes." Newly published books "indict Stalin, not socialism," Satter writes. But even as his article appeared, Bill Keller reported in the *New York Times* that Soviet intellectuals were "on the verge of official heresy—the idea that Stalin was no accident, that something in Com-

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"... a potent voice for conservative legal thinking in law schools and in the government."

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munism made him likely, if not inevitable." Keller quoted a writer in *Novy Mir* as implicating Lenin himself in "the Soviet legacy of terror and repression," adding that the Communist system, "with its concentration of power in one party and state-ownership of all income-producing property, tends to produce tyrants."

Even Solzhenitsyn's friend, Igor Shafarevich, the author of a remarkable book entitled *The Socialist Phenomenon*, identifying the Western hunger for socialism as a death wish on a large scale, has recently been published by *Moscow News*! It seems, then, that glasnost, if not perestroika (in a sense the distinction between the two corresponds to the distinction between talk and action) has gone far enough to risk delegitimizing the whole enterprise. Words are dangerous things, and Communism is now as imperiled by them as Catholicism would be if *Osservatore Romano* were to publish papally sanctioned articles attacking long-held church dogmas.

Cockburn, of course, has allies among the Soviet "conservatives," perhaps the best known being Yegor Ligachev, the number-two man in the ruling Politburo. He is often identified as Gorbachev's most influential opponent. According to the *Washington Post's* Gary Lee, Ligachev recently visited Togliatti, 600 miles east of Moscow, for presentation of the Red Banner of Lenin to the country's largest (Lada, son of Fiat) automobile plant and congratulate its workers' "successes in cultural and economic construction."

"Foreign voices want the USSR to have a political opposition," Ligachev said indignantly, perhaps thinking of Reagan and his CIA advisers on those bilateral commissions that give Cockburn heartburn. "They are dishing up to us the idea of a multiparty system. But if we consider the 'advice' that our country's economy be placed on the footing of Western market economies, little remains of socialism. All that [advice] is aimed at weakening the political stability in the country, upsetting social justice and stimulating a far-reaching stratification in the society."

Well said, Ligachev! Notice the echoes of *In These Times's* Esther Kingston-Mann, not to mention the *Nation's* Cockburn. (The *Nation* itself has editorially taken an innocuous "good liberal" position: "We can only hope that the conciliatory tone of Reagan's speech signals a U.S. decision to intervene on Gorbachev's side in the party struggle under way in Moscow," etc.) Notice also that Ligachev, unlike Armand Hammer, really does understand that it is socialism that is threat-

ened by perestroika, not just the Communist party.

So the bedfellows are strange, are they not? On the one hand we have Cockburn, Ligachev, anonymous Soviet bureaucrats, assorted "conservatives" of the CPSU. And with them undoubtedly stand many American leftists, likely readers of *In These Times*, *Mother Jones* and such, who share Cockburn's views but not his candor.

On the other hand we find Reagan, Gorbachev, Armand Hammer, Victor Navasky (the editor of the *Nation*), and with them a host of well-meaning liberals too numerous to mention.

For once I'm in bed with the liberals, with Reagan, and with Armand Hammer too. For Ligachev is right. The Westerners' advice may not be, as he says, aimed at "weakening political stability" in the Soviet Union, but if

heeded its effect would certainly be that, and if good things happen unintentionally, that is good enough for me. Then again, perhaps it was not so unintentional. Rumors from CIA hands hint that the late, great Bill Casey may very well have cooked this whole thing up in Langley, Virginia, slyly enlisting an unwitting Armand Hammer in his cause. Colby indeed! I see the fine hand of Casey . . . □

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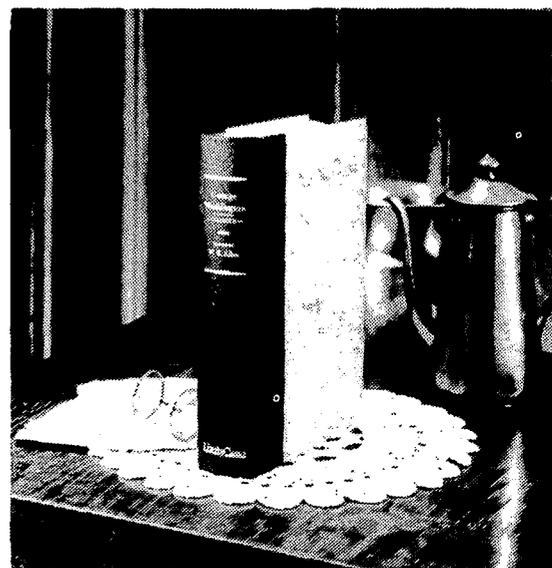
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Victor Gold

FIGHTING MIKE'S FIGHT: HOW BUSH CAN LOSE

An old campaigner explains there is an alternative to slugging on Dukakis's terms.

BUSH SUPPORTERS SEEKING PLATFORM TO REFLECT A MORE HUMANE PARTY

Supporters of Vice President Bush are hoping to use the 1988 Republican platform to make two key statements: that Mr. Bush is a leader who is ready to move in directions that President Reagan has not tried and that the politics of Michael S. Dukakis are out of touch with the majority of American voters . . .

As envisioned by Mr. Bush's aides, the platform will attempt to spell out what Mr. Bush's leadership would mean. For example, they say it will stress that the Vice President will make such issues as education a priority and that it will receive more Federal money than it has under President Reagan. . . . [They] also expect the platform to reflect the Vice President's contention that the Republican party must become committed to the environment . . .

—New York Times, June 22, 1988.

Call it the Quarry Strategy.

Once, in the not-too-distant past, there was a heavyweight contender named Jerry Quarry. Good size, strong heart, could deliver and take a punch. But a fighter with a problem: he had a bad habit of missing the obvious, playing directly to his opponent's strength and away from his own.

Two examples: the first, Quarry's fight plan in his match against Muhammad Ali; the second, his fight plan in his match against Joe Frazier. Ali, as we know, was one of the best boxers (as opposed to sluggers) in heavyweight history. Frazier, on the other hand, was one of the sport's most feared sluggers (but only a fair boxer). Obviously, Quarry's best chance at beating Ali was to force him into a slugging match. Instead, he opted to box the boxer, and lost. Obviously, Quarry's best chance at beating Frazier was to outbox him. Instead, he opted to slug it out with the slugger, and lost. When last seen, Jerry Quarry was doing a song-and-dance act at Don Ho's in Honolulu.

Victor Gold is The American Spectator's national correspondent.

Now consider George Bush, when last seen being advised by unnamed "aides" to "move in directions that President Reagan has not tried," the better to "reflect a more humane party."

Call time. Get out the corner stool. Tell the Republican contender to inhale-exhale ten times, sit back, unwind, and listen. Before he moves into the middle and late rounds, let's remind him—along with those unnamed "aides" in his corner—exactly what this match is all about: how he got here, how his opponent got here. A review is in order, quick and to-the-point: a strong dose of between-round smelling salts to lift the media miasma and clear the mind.

First, let's talk about those "humane" (sic) issues the *Times* says are "envisioned by Mr. Bush's aides" to "spell out what Mr. Bush's leadership would mean." Among other things, according to the *Times*, this translates into trying to beat a Democrat by promising to spend more federal money on education (an attempt to out-dance Ali), and trying to

out-bid Michael Dukakis on issues concerning the environment (trading left hooks with Joe Frazier).

Don't misunderstand. There's nothing wrong with including planks about education and the environment in the Republican platform of 1988. It's just important to recognize that, fairly or unfairly, these issues play to Democratic not Republican strengths, i.e., if the elections of 1980 and 1984 had been run and decided along those lines, George Bush wouldn't be Vice President of the United States.

Next, let's take up this business—also attributed to Bush "aides"—of their candidate's need to establish his own "identity" in order to win in November. That's simply an old campaign canard in new semantic dress. Remember "vision of the future"? This time a year ago—in fact, up until Bush flattened his Republican opposition in the Super Tuesday primaries—experts were saying that his candidacy wouldn't get past the early rounds because it lacked "vision." That theory having been

knocked out of the ring, we now hear it said that George Bush is suffering from some sort of identity crisis.

Wrong again. George Bush already has an identity and any attempt to change it at this late date is likely to leave him open to counter-punches. What's more, unless his "aides" succeed in obscuring it, Bush's identity should give him the winning edge this fall. Who is he? He is, nothing more, nothing less, than Ronald Reagan's Vice President, a key figure in an administration that has given the American people eight years of—but let a non-partisan observer finish the thought: At the concluding ceremony of this year's economic summit in Toronto, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, noting that "the Reagan era" was drawing to a close, described it in glowing terms as a period that will go into history "remembered as one of peace and prosperity."

Inhale-exhale, repeat ten times: *Peace and prosperity, peace and prosperity . . .* You wouldn't know it if all you listened to was Michael Dukakis and his allies in the liberal news media, of course. The Democrats' fight plan, you see, is to talk Iran-Contra, Noriega, Meese—whatever it takes to obscure the Reagan record; which brings us to the final point that needs to be made before the Bush-Dukakis match moves into its middle and late rounds:

Whichever way you cut it, history will look back on the election of 1988 as a referendum on the Reagan era. This translates, if George Bush is to win, into a campaign based on the question, *Do you like the policies of the past eight years that have brought the country peace and prosperity, or do you want to change?*

It's that simple. Not more federal money for education, George, not the environment. Just Reagan, peace, and prosperity. All other roads lead to Don Ho's. □

