
EDITORIALS



THE REAL ENVIRONMENTALIST

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

One of the curiosities of the American environmental movement is that so few environmentalists look particularly suited for the great outdoors. Most look as though they would be more at home in the public library or listening to a lecture on the porcelain of Byzantium, assuming Byzantium possessed porcelain. Of course, occasionally the paradigmatic American environmentalist picks up his butterfly net or straps on his walking shoes and heads toward the wilds of a nearby botanical garden or public forest preserve. More frequently when the environmentalist ventures out of doors he is headed for a demonstration alfresco against some aspect of the twentieth century.

Well, I am all for protesting the twentieth century, the classical fashions of the eighteenth century being more to my liking. What is more, some of this century's encroachments upon the natural order have, indeed, been catastrophic. Yet the true American environmentalist is not the aforementioned urban sophisticate with a tendency toward nerdiness. If sheer numbers matter, if monies spent to protect the natural habitat are considered, the true American environmentalist is the hunter, the fisherman, the outdoorsman. His devotion to nature, even to the creatures he pursues, is genuine. He ventures into the great outdoors eagerly, rain or shine—and even into those purlieus where nasty insects and unappealing reptiles swarm.

It surprised me not at all this spring when President George Bush placed environmental concerns near the top of his political agenda. He is a member of Ducks Unlimited and Bass Unlimited, too. Since Ducks Unlimited was founded in 1937, it has raised \$337 million for the maintenance and reclamation of some 3,000 wetlands projects. Wetlands, the home of thousands of species of wildlife, are under constant assault, usually from agricultural in-

terests. America loses 400,000 acres of wetlands annually. Such private organizations as Ducks Unlimited willingly pick up the bill to protect as many natural habitats as they can. Some of these organizations are quaintly named, for instance: the Ruffed Grouse Society, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the White Tail Deer Foundation. All told, their membership far surpasses that of the more radical and politicized environmentalist organizations.

Few Americans have a deeper respect for the environment than the hunter or the pursuer of trout, bass, and less esculent fish. Some of the most inspired laudations penned to nature have been written by devotees of the hunt and the deep. Recall if you will the writings of one of the country's first and most effective conservationists, Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican. Most outdoorsmen recognize the true beauty of nature and the wonder of the creatures they pursue. The hunter and the fisherman have an abiding interest in keeping the environment unpolluted and congenial to their quarry. And they spend an enormous amount to preserve the environment both through voluntary contributions and through excise taxes and licenses.

The data available on America's outdoorsmen provide overwhelming evidence that when we think of the Amer-



ican environmentalist we should be thinking of hunters and fishermen. The *National Hunting and Fishing Survey*, published at five-year intervals by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the federal government, reveals that in 1985 more than 50 million sportsmen went afield with rod or gun. Just over 46 million fishermen, 16 years old or older, spent 976.6 million days and \$28.1 billion on their sport in 1985. That same year 16.7 million hunters spent 334 million days hunting and \$10.1 billion on the hunt. In 1985, 29,673,190 fishing licenses and 15,879,572 hunting licenses were purchased, raising respectively \$282,342,746

and \$300,760,758 for state governments' wildlife management.

In the 1950s federal excise taxes were levied on fishing and hunting equipment, raising still more money for wildlife management. Yet when similar legislation was aimed not long ago at the butterfly nets, the binoculars, and the other equipment of nonhunting and nonfishing environmentalists, they raised a ruckus of fearful proportions. This summer, as you swat flies and evade the poison ivy, remember the outdoorsman. He really relishes the environment and has willingly paid to keep it natural. □

BUSH AND THE CONSERVATIVES

George Herbert Walker Bush is the paradigmatic American of the present moment. That has now been made clear. We see it in his presidential decisions, his style, his holiday amusements in faraway Kennebunkport. He is upright, energetic, can-do. A man of character, possessed of the instincts of a fine officer, he is ceaseless movement, carefully scheduled. His government is going to be what the Europeans would call center right.

Where precisely that will lead us then depends on the right. After all, the center cannot lead. It merely absorbs. But today's right is not exactly poised to lead.

For one thing, the conservatives' most popular positions have already been implemented and to good effect. The Reagan Administration lowered marginal tax rates, and the economy flourished; though critics of the Reagan Boom have always reported on that Boom as though it were a weird Depression—for the better off, dancing in the streets; for the poor, Depression. Actually, as economist Martin Anderson notes, from 1980 to 1987 the Reagan Boom allowed an 84 percent increase in social welfare spending, America's largest increase in social welfare spending ever. The critics have also murmured in one sustained *concerto grosso* of gloom about the conser-

vatives' other popular program, the military buildup, though it accomplished precisely its purpose, an end to Soviet expansionism.

As for those conservative policies that have yet to be implemented, it is not clear there is a sufficient constituency supporting them or a galvanizing leader capable of creating that support. Controlling the federal budget, pressing for democracy in Nicaragua, legislation to sustain the traditional family, and continuation of the Strategic Defense Initiative are all dear to the hearts of conservatives, but all need leadership; and here the unhappy news is that the conservative leaders are either dead or exhausted from the struggles of the past fifteen years. That splendid generation of conservatives that numbered within its ranks William Casey, Barry Goldwater, Clare Boothe Luce, and Ronald Reagan himself has passed into retirement. Those conservatives in their sixties who popularized the views of conservative economists, social scientists, and strategic thinkers are weary. Is there a younger William F. Buckley, Jr. or Irving Kristol around? I do not know of one.

And there is worse news. The rallying points for American conservatism have always been personal liberty and anti-Communism. Rightly or wrongly in this age of Communist self-doubt and re-

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trenchment it is difficult to maintain one of those major rallying points, anti-Communism. If the Marxist menace really were to wither away, American conservatism might go with it. All that I can see that might replace anti-Communism as a rousing conservative tenet is patriotism, but among such highly individualistic people as American conservatives patriotism would hardly be a summons to much more than mild goose bumps as the flag passes by.

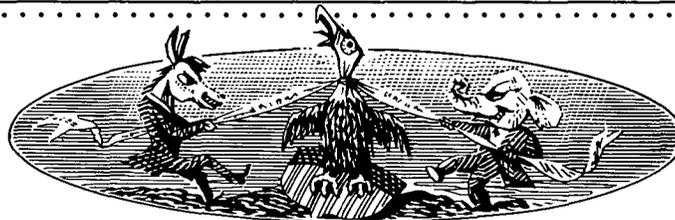
The detumescence of conservatism is not all that helpful to this Republican President. It is true that a vigorous conservative movement might fetter his freedom of action. Noisy criticism from the right could weaken him the way noisy criticism from the left weakened Jimmy Carter. But the American conservative movement has provided the Republican party with vigor and with foot soldiers ever since 1964. It is the major political base supporting the par-

ty. The Democrats have a dozen highly charged factions to support them. Their problem is to keep each faction from becoming an embarrassment. The conservatives are not so extreme. There is little to fear that they will embarrass the Republican party but rather that they will wilt away.

Finally, there is one other reason President Bush needs a vigorous conservative movement. That movement's intellectuals have devised appropriate

solutions to social problems that have defied the Democrats' favorite solution, big government. Without market solutions, say, to pollution or to child care, all George Bush is left with is a cheap version of the Great Society. His latest policy suggestions for child care and the environment come dangerously close to the old Great Society charlatany. Here again is evidence that the conservatives are not leading his center-right government. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



HERETIC AS HERO

by Tom Bethell

Bongo drums in the lead, the African American liturgical procession came solemnly down the aisle of Suitland High School's Anabelle Ferguson Auditorium. The congregation, a thousand strong for the 11 a.m. Eucharistic Liturgy, was all black and perhaps 75 percent female. Some had been waiting in their seats for an hour or more. Many were holding cardboard fans with plywood handles, dispensed free by local funeral homes. About twenty usherettes stood ready for any emergency, wearing nurses' uniforms and white cotton gloves. Suitland is way out in the Maryland suburbs; just about the entire congregation had arrived by car. But you had to walk the last few blocks because so many Plymouth Horizons, Dodge Omnis, Chrysler LeBarons, Chevy Camaros, Nissan Sentras, Broncos, Jeeps, Mercury Cougars, and Toyota Corollas were clustered outside the auditorium that every parking space was taken.

At last the proceedings were underway, and here came the rebel priest (as the *Washington Post* called him), Reverend G. Augustus Stallings, Jr., pastor of the newly formed Imani Temple. His assistant, or deacon, wore dreadlocks. Banners held aloft depicted an eccentric red, black, and green pattern remotely suggesting a cross. No crucifixes here, though. The bongos drummed, there was a monotonous shaking of beads inside some cylindrical African gourd, and the white-gowned female choir came loosely

steppin' down the aisle: Ah-men . . . Ah-go . . . Ah-men . . . Ah-go . . .

The balding, tonsured Reverend Stallings was wearing vestments with an odd, off-center, and noncanonical pattern in back. He seemed quite subdued, his hands held vertically together, Roman Catholic style, and proceeded up to the stage past a dozen unicams and swaying microphone booms. The media crowd was as usual on nonchalant safari, khaki jackets festooned with cameras and lens caps. But this is a story where the media have not been quite as impartial as they like to pretend. They have cast the Defiant Reverend as hero and wouldn't dream of giving him the Jim and Tammy Faye treatment.

Stallings is that authentic media-hero of our time, the defector or apostate. Not any defection will do, of course. One must defect from the central or core institutions of Western culture in order to achieve renown. And here was a black Catholic priest who was publicly and loudly walking away from the church, disobeying the local archbishop, James Cardinal Hickey, and starting up his own congregation with an "authentic" Swahili name, the Imani Temple. As he did so, he accused the Catholic Church of racism. Perfect! Marjorie Hyer of the *Washington Post* could scarcely restrain her enthusiasm, extolling in a series of page-one stories the "outspoken defiance" of "the charismatic black preacher." Here was a "David and Goliath story with racial implications," wrote another *Washington Post* reporter.

On the "racist" accusation, incidentally, I one day asked the Rev. Stallings

if he wasn't going too far in using this word. "Oh no," he said. "The bishops used it themselves in 1979." And indeed they did, in a pastoral letter entitled "Brothers and Sisters to Us," a document that in retrospect seems ill-disposed toward the U.S. and ill-advised in its comments about the Catholic Church. ("Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church. . . . The climate of crisis engendered by demonstrations, protests, and confrontation has given way to a mood of indifference. . . . RACISM IS A FACT," and so on.) Stallings merely echoed the charges, in if anything milder tones.

In response to Stallings's defection, Cardinal Hickey responded by suspending him from the performance of priestly functions. (Catholics who continue attending services by a suspended priest are in "noncompliance," as far as their own churchgoing obligations are concerned.) The Rev. Stallings responded to his suspension by saying: "I do not recognize [Hickey's] jurisdiction to determine who we are and what we are." He seemed not to grasp the church-state distinction, insisting on his (unquestioned) "rights to religious, spiritual, liturgical and theological self-determination," as though Cardinal Hickey were Cardinal Wolsey, and George Bush, Henry VIII.

On the one hand, Stallings insisted democratically that his legitimacy derived from the people, or congregation. The large turnout the week before at his service in the Howard University Law School chapel had demonstrated, in Stallings's view, that "the people

have spoken. . . . We will not allow someone [outside the black community] to decide what we are to do." A few days later he said in an interview: "We are saying [to Cardinal Hickey] that if you want us to remain" within the Catholic Church, "simply realize you have made a mistake, eat crow and go on to endorse what Imani Temple had the vision to do." Here he played the role of Defiant Heretic.

At the same time, however, Stallings insisted that he was still "in union with Rome" and "in communion with the Roman Catholic Church." Here he showed a sophisticated grasp of media dynamics and modern rebellion. No longer can you just state your principles and walk out, like Martin Luther. "If we had said we were going to be an interdenominational church, Hickey would have just cut us off," Stallings told an interviewer. "There would have been no need for all of the media focus, no need for people to make statements." In other words, you must both insist that you are obeying the urges of spontaneity and the need to liberate yourself from the repressive order, and yet (to get media attention) simultaneously insist that you are still working "within the system" to reform (i.e., subvert) it.

Media headlines have obscured the point that Stallings does not assert any doctrinal differences with the church. "I do not see the issues as being theological," he told Black Networking News, "because there are no theological, doctrinal or matters of faith with which we differ with the Catholic Church." What, then, is the dispute all about? "The question is," Stallings