

**Chill Factors**

Arriving as it did near the eve of Halloween, Grover Norquist's article ("The Coming Clinton Dynasty," *TAS*, November 1992) was a chilling tale appropriately aimed at conservatives like me, who are thoroughly disgusted with George Bush. By the time this letter appears, either Bush will have squeaked by the hideous apparition of a Clinton presidency, or the monstrosity of a Democratically controlled presidency and Congress will be slavering to Gore the taxpayers.

The former does not render moot the thesis of the article. The Democrats have learned in the years after Watergate how to craftily usurp the powers of the presidency. A complacent electorate, leftist educators, and a liberal media have all abetted Congress in their drive to arrogate power to the legislative branch. Ironically, that icon of conservatism, President Reagan, had it in his purview to challenge the office of special prosecutor in the Iran-contra hearings but found it expedient, instead, to throw those who ably served him into the maws of a politically vindictive, self-accountable machine.

Is it any wonder, then, that George "Get Along, Go Along" Bush did nothing during *his* term to cut these extra-legal harpies off at the knees?

A plan of action, not planned inaction, can correct the deficiencies of the conservative movement. Between now and 1996, when (it is hoped) a very articulate and combative Jack Kemp will be the party's nominee, the following goals must be vigorously pursued:

- Work diligently to find a replacement for the moribund Rich Bond as Chairman of the RNC. . . .

- Discredit all reports and sources of reports often and emphatically which seek to portray the Reagan economic juggernaut as a freak aberration, fueled by funny money and profiting at the expense of the middle class and the poor. (I fail to see how the recipients of government largesse can be exploited by the rich, yet this nonsense goes unchallenged altogether too often.)

- Create more avenues of communication that will allow the expression of con-

servative values and economic theory to be encountered by the populace at large even if this means buying blocks of television or starting new cable stations nationwide. *The American Spectator*, *National Review*, *Insight*, the *Conservative Chronicle*, etc. are great—but it's people who are not exposed to conservative values who need to be reached! The success of Rush Limbaugh points the way to future converts and illustrates how attractive conservatism can be.

As is amply demonstrated in this fine article by Mr. Norquist, we are running out of room and options when our lives are proscribed by the opposition party.

I'll never forgive George Bush for ignoring our principles and assuming our vote, but thanks to Grover Norquist, I'll do my part to keep the monster in the basement for another four years.

—Michael R. Murray  
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

**New Enemies, A Love Story**

This letter is to express my sincere appreciation to P.J. O'Rourke (and all of the unsung heroes at *The American Spectator*) for preventing my untimely death. As fate would have it, I received my first issue of *TAS* on the evening of the recent presidential election, and had I not been cheered by O'Rourke's "1992 New Enemies List" (*TAS*, November 1992), I undoubtedly would have driven my pickup truck (Bush-Quayle bumper sticker and all) directly over the nearest cliff.

As a former Army officer, who volunteered to serve this country, I am more than a little nauseated by the thought of "The Oxford Commando" as Commander-in-Chief. As an attorney working in the law enforcement field, I am even more queasy at the thought of someday reading the words: "Writing for the majority, Justice Cuomo asserted . . ."

Having been an ardent P.J. O'Rourke fan for several years, I truly enjoyed the Enemies List. I felt it was one enemy short, however, without the inclusion of my current nemesis: National Public Radio. For my money, the most empty-headed, half-baked, politically correct, college-campus-socialism-spewing, bleeding-heart lefties this side of the UC Berkeley English Department can be found on NPR.

Time and space preclude a detailed description of the perpetually daffy liberalism that pervades NPR's programming, but suffice it to say it is no coincidence that their moronic ravings are carried almost exclusively by college radio stations. When not blaming every conceivable evil on "The Bush Administration," NPR features stories on such important topics as: an American opera based on the kidnapping of Patty Hearst; public misconceptions about the writings of Hillary Clinton; why more people now believe Anita Hill; and—my personal favorite—a British musical production that combines the works of Stravinsky with the music of the Sex Pistols.

I keep praying that someday P.J. will train his sights on NPR. Until then, please accept my late addition to the Enemies List, and my thanks for helping me through the first part of what promise to be four truly horrific years.

—Mike Ryan  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**My Enemies List:**

- HUD
- NLRB
- EPA
- SBA
- FHA
- OSHA
- UMTA
- AFL-CIO
- FDIC
- USDA
- RTC

—Joseph Moss  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Hot Under the Choler**

David Frum's reactionary choler blinds him to the message of my book, *Who Prospers?*, which he reviews in the November issue. His fundamental misreading is captured in his observation, "The bad news is that culture is infinitely important; the good news is that it is equally malleable."

Any serious reader of *Who Prospers?* and my first book, *Underdevelopment Is a State of Mind*, will know that I view culture as deeply rooted and persistent. I believe, for example, that Latin America's problems reflect a value and attitude system that has persisted for more than five centuries; that Japanese,

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Korean, and overseas Chinese achievement is rooted in the Confucian ethos, formulated 2,500 years ago, much as Jewish achievement has a lot to do with an ages-old value system; and that David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed* is on the mark in tracing American regional characteristics back through our colonial period to regions of pre-colonial Britain.

Culture *does* change, as an increasingly democratic Spain, a declining Britain, and a substantial—and growing—black American middle class demonstrate. But I repeatedly make the point that cultural change is difficult and slow—far from “malleable”—and better measured in decades than years. Although the word “government” may cause Mr. Frum's bile to flow, there is convincing evidence that political leadership can play a crucial role in cultural change and progress. Japan's transformation in the late nineteenth century under the Meiji leadership is a case in point.

The fringe nature of Mr. Frum's ideology is apparent from his definition of the “legitimate” middle class, which “derives its income . . . from commerce and entrepreneurship, [not] from government employment.” His social Darwinism and disdain of government apparently extend to education—the principal tool of the Meiji leadership's modernization of Japan. He is the only person I've seen in print who sneers at Head Start programs.

Mr. Frum accuses me of being motivated by “a striking faith in the power of social engineering.” He could not be wronger. Thirty years of work in foreign aid have taught me how intractable the problems of poverty, authoritarianism, and extreme social inequality can be. But at the root of human progress is a worldview that says, “I can change things; I can make things better.” By contrast, most poor people—in the United States, in the Third World, and elsewhere—see life as something that happens to them. We—government, business, the media, educators, clergy—can either try to help people understand that progress is possible and what it takes to make progress happen, or we can, as Mr. Frum would apparently have us do, be passive witnesses to the carnage of the survival of the fittest.

—Lawrence E. Harrison  
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts

*David Frum replies:*

Between 1868 and 1945, Meiji Japan endured, among other things:

- a coup d'état dethroning the dynasty of shoguns that had ruled the country for 250 years;
- rebellions against the coup that amounted to civil war;
- forced industrialization;
- mass famine;
- the forced imposition of a new religion, emperor worship;
- the forced imposition of a primary education system based on that religion;
- the razing, once by earthquake and once by enemy bombing, of the capital city;
- the conquest and loss of a colonial empire;
- four wars, the last of them involving total mobilization of the society and ending in abject defeat;
- two atomic bombings;
- and the beginning of six years of foreign occupation during which all the basic institutions of society, from landholding to the place of women, would be reordered by the conqueror.

If culture is as important and persistent as Mr. Harrison says, then that list of events should suffice to alter it, at least somewhat (although many wise observers of Japan wonder how much the country has in fact changed since feudal times). But if culture is as important and persistent as Mr. Harrison says, I somehow doubt that his sunny prescriptions for patching up America's—notably, more Head Start and a blue-ribbon commission to recommend ways to make television more moral—will do the trick. If the answer is as easy as Mr. Harrison says, the question cannot be very hard.

My complaint against Mr. Harrison's book is not that it banks too much on government, although I admit I think it does; my complaint is that if “culture” is as profound a force in human affairs as he says, it deserves a less blithe analysis.

#### **Roaring Calhoun**

I greatly appreciated the kind things that Peter L. Welsh said about my writings on Abraham Lincoln and the American Founding in his review of Garry Wills's *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (*TAS*, November 1992). I find myself obliged nonetheless to correct him on certain points.

It is not true that John C. Calhoun “shared Lincoln's interpretation of the

Declaration.” Concerning the proposition “that all men are created equal,” Calhoun wrote:

All men are not created. According to the Bible, only two, a man and a woman, ever were, and of these one was pronounced subordinate to the other.

Taking Jefferson's words in an utterly mistaken sense, Calhoun denied that they had any importance whatever, either in establishing American independence, or in forming the basis of our constitutions, either state or federal.

Mr. Welsh justly condemns Garry Wills for his “contempt for the sanctity of the Founders' Constitution.” He goes on to say, however, that this contempt “is most acutely observed in the practice of progressive jurisprudence.” He then cites the words of Mr. Justice Brennan, that

The genius of the Constitution rests not in any static meaning it might have had in a world that is now dead and gone, but in the *adaptability* of its great principle to cope with current problems and needs.

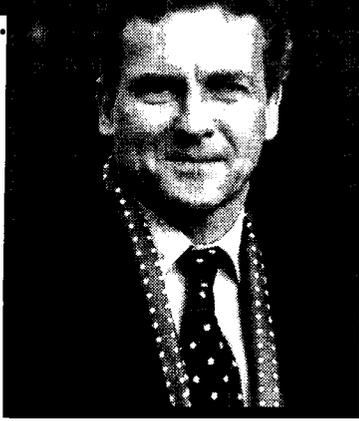
Mr. Justice Brennan's jurisprudence is certainly far removed from the unchanging principles of “the laws of nature and of nature's God” to which Jefferson and Madison and Lincoln subscribed. But it is not as far removed as that of Mr. Justice Rehnquist who, in “The Notion of a Living Constitution,” writes that if a

society adopts a constitution and incorporates in that constitution safeguards for individual liberty, these safeguards do indeed take on a generalized moral rightness or goodness. They assume a general social acceptance neither because of any intrinsic worth nor because of any unique origins in someone's idea of natural justice but instead simply because they have been incorporated in a constitution by a people.

That the safeguards of liberty in our Constitution do not have “*any intrinsic worth*” and that they have no foundation whatever in any “*idea of natural justice*” is positivism of the crudest kind. It means, moreover, that the safeguards of individual liberty and the safeguards of slavery, in the Constitution of 1787, stand upon the

(continued on page 96)





## A Quarter-Century

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

This magazine is now twenty-five years old. That is old enough to drink and to vote; and, if you review the choices we had in the late election, it helped to do both simultaneously.

I founded the magazine while studying for a graduate degree in history at Indiana University. The first few issues were put together at my off-campus residence, a house trailer that one would think Indiana University had now turned into a literary shrine.

But no, I am told university officials had our rusting old cocoon destroyed, fearing as they did that the virus might spread or that this relic of literature and rebellion might some day be used as a prop for a growing cult of personality.

Actually, the virus did spread. The anti-radical students who joined the staff (two, Publisher Ron Burr and Kapellmeister Baron Von Kannon, are still with me) were fetched by the free-market ideas of Milton Friedman and a hawkish stance toward Communism—all in all, the politics of Governor Ronald Reagan and of MP Margaret Thatcher. In 1968 many of us went to the Republican Convention to demonstrate in support of the Governor's valorous—if brief—campaign. Over the next few years, encouraged by the likes of Bill Buckley and Irving Kristol, and with the active participation of their generation's sons and daughters at large throughout the Republic, this magazine became the national magazine of non-radical students. As I recently wrote in *The Conservative Crack-Up*<sup>1</sup>: "Unlike the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, or any of a half-dozen wisen-

heimer magazines that in recent years have come and gone to the ooohs and amens of the culturati, *The American Spectator* originated as an off-campus magazine created solely by students. . . . *The American Spectator* was born wayward and destined to be skeptical."

I was at pains to lay out the magazine's origins and early adventures in that book, and I am at pains to do so again here, because the popular conception of the 1960s generation as radical and left-wing is demonstrably false. The vast majority of 1960s youth were not radical. In 1972 they voted for Richard Nixon; they supported the war in Vietnam, along with the rest of the American people, almost to the end. In recent studies it has become clear that the 1960s generation rarely smoked dope, engaged in zoo sex, or demonstrated for or against anything. My compeers were much like my colleagues at the early *Spectator*, but apparently the recent fabricators of American history want to avoid this prosaic truth. And now that the Savior Clinton is breaking out his bell-bottom trousers, dusting off his peace symbols, and preparing to welcome the surviving Mamas & Papas into the White House for granola wine, we are going to have to endure another—perhaps somewhat sanitized—reprise of 1967's "Summer of Love." Well, please remember that in that mythic summer, with Beethoven thundering in the background and plenty of beer in the refrigerator, my pals and I were pasting up the first issue of what has for twenty-five years pinned the tail on these donkeys while keeping the record straight and amusing.

Amusing! More amusing than Vaudeville! Than Monkey Island at the Zoo! Than almost any foreign trip undertaken by Jimmy Carter! Since the 1960s America has endured the longest period of reform in its history. TR's Square Deal had a beginning and end, so did the New Nationalism, the New Deal, the New Frontier, and even the grotesque and frequently criminally insane Great Society. The real zealots of the 1960s (as distinguished from the more modestly deranged types within the Kennedy and Johnson governments) have roared and stamped their feet for a quarter century; and with their personal liberation claptrap, their social engineering, their food phobias, their New Age revelations, and all the other absurd and risible guff these fevered buffoons show no signs of sobering up or shutting down. How could all this not have been a most amusing time for us? Now, with a second-rate governor from a third-rate state strutting into the White House convinced that he is an intellectual aristocrat but a poor boy made good, a moral colossus but a swank, a Baptist but a post-Christian cosmopolitan, and—who knows?—a man but somehow a woman, the amusement has just begun!

**T**he *American Spectator* has gone through several different phases. In the 1970s we were the first magazine of the conservative movement to welcome wayward Liberals into our pages. Eventually, such wandering Liberals as Kristol, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elliott Abrams, and other co-conspirators came to be known as neoconservatives. They were to be among the most effective of Reaganites. In the early 1980s,

<sup>1</sup>Simon & Schuster, 319 pages, \$23.