

THE POLITICS OF RACE—mayoral candidate Rudi Giuliani realized after the September 12 primary that to win as a Republican in a Democratic town like New York, he would have to get a large chunk of liberal and centrist Jews to desert David Dinkins' ticket. As soon as the primary was over, therefore, the Giuliani campaign started raising the black menace, taking an ad in the daily Yiddish newspaper linking Dinkins with the dread Jesse Jackson. And, as a special coup, Giuliani and his chief adviser Roger Ailes named as honorary chairman of the Giuliani campaign the famed Jewish stand-up comic Jackie Mason. The thinking was twofold: to "humanize" the grim and pale Republican Torquemada, and to capture Jewish votes by elevating one of their own.

But, oy, what a floperoo! What Giuliani did not realize is that if you take that same Jackie Mason who did so well on Broadway in 1987 with his racial and ethnic one-liners, and put him into the highly-charged atmosphere of modern politics, an explosion might well occur. Nor did he realize that Mason had once been affiliated with Rabbi Kahane's ultra-militant Jewish Defense League. Hence his surprise when Mason, candid as always, proceeded to deliver himself of a series of anti-Dinkins and anti-black blasts: "Jews will vote for any black, however incompetent, out of a sense of guilt"; "Dinkins looks like a black model without a job"; and "Jews help blacks a lot, but who ever heard of a black giving a Jew a quarter?"

Crash! The sky fell in. Jews, blacks, and everyone else—even Ed Koch!—denounced Jackie Mason. Given a press conference the next day and a chance to apologize, Mason made things worse by reiterating his deeply felt position. Giuliani promptly fired the miscreant, and Mason was at last shanghaied into another press conference where he duly apologized for (you guessed it) his "insensitivity."

Just as it seemed, however, as if Giuliani might escape this awkward

incident without undue damage, bingo! our intrepid media, hot on the scent, came out with a haymaker. For *Newsweek* disclosed that, at a meeting attended by Giuliani, Mason, and several *Newsweek* editors a few weeks earlier, Mason had delivered himself of similarly anti-Dinkins and anti-black remarks, and that Giuliani, far from leaping up and slapping Mason in the face, had actually *laughed!*, albeit "nervously," and, of course, had gone ahead with naming him as his honorary chairman. Mason was reported to have said Dinkins was "a fancy *schvartze* with a mustache," and "full of s--t by nature." Giuliani tried to explain that he had not really heard or understood the fast-talking Mason, and had only been polite, but *Newsweek* retorted that there were only about six people in the small room, and besides, Rudi had *laughed*.

Somehow, of all the epithets, it was the *schvartze* tag that stuck, the charge being that *schvartze* is a terribly derogatory term for blacks. But is it? Technically, the answer is *no*. In some areas, Yiddish is a language of infinite subtlety. For example, there are a large number of nuanced terms for the English phrase, "a clumsy oaf." You can say *schlemiehl*, *schmendrik*, *shmeggegi*, or *schlimazl*, each having its own delicate shade of meaning. (An old Jewish joke goes, "A *schlemiehl* is the sort of waiter who is habitually dropping hot soup down a customer's neck; a *schlimazl* is the sort of customer who gets his neck poured on.") But whereas English has many words for blacks, there is only one word for black in Yiddish, and that word is *schvartze*.

So, technically, *schvartze* can hardly be a derogatory term, only descriptive. The problem, however, is that Jews in New York have been accustomed, when in the presence of blacks, to refer to them as *schvartzes* in the confident but sometimes naive assumption that the *schvartzes* remain blissfully ignorant of this Yiddish term. Thus, in the presence of one's black maid, "How's the *schvartze* doing?" Or, walking

down a crowded New York street, "Hmm, I see that the *schvartzes* are out in force tonight." It seems, wonder of wonders! that after several decades, the *schvartzes* caught on to this innocent custom, and were not very thrilled by it.

Giuliani has not been alone with his race problems. As was revealed in mid-October, on David Dinkins' paid staff was an infamous black militant named Sonny Carson. Carson heads an organization called the Campaign to Honor Black Heroes, an outfit with no address or telephone, and few members. The committee surfaced in late August after the allegedly racist murder of a black youth named Yusuf Hawkins in Bensonhurst, a largely white neighborhood in Brooklyn. Carson and the young toughs who constitute the committee marched across the Brooklyn Bridge on August 31 to protest the murder, and received the desired TV footage, including the injury of many police and the arrest of 44 of Carson's colleagues.

The Dinkins people say that they paid Carson and his committee \$9,500 for their valiant efforts in bringing out the black vote in Brooklyn on primary day. Dinkins's critics question Carson's electioneering prowess, and point out that his protest marches ended abruptly: in other words, the money was a payoff to keep Carson's goons quiet for the remainder of the campaign.

Critics have also dug up some allegedly anti-Semitic statements Carson made in 1968, and a 1974 conviction for kidnapping and attempted murder. When Carson proceeded to call a press conference to tell his side of the story, he came flanked by his young goons, who sported leather jackets and gloves with studded knuckles. Thundering that the charge of anti-Semitism was absurd, Carson clarified that his position is that he hates *all* whites, with no discrimination as to creed or religion. Capping even this, Carson explained that he could not possibly be anti-Semitic, since, as everyone knows, "we [the blacks] are the true descendants of

Abraham. How can we be anti-ourselves?"

Whatever else he is, David Dinkins is not quick on the uptake. Asked about Carson's press conference, Dinkins declared, in the great befuddled understatement of the campaign, that "He's apparently a person who doesn't like white people." A few hours later, however, Dinkins rallied, reading a prepared statement denouncing Carson's bigotry and intolerance, which he has fought all his life, blah-blah-blah, Had I But Known.

With the help of Carson and new questions about Dinkins' tax returns, Giuliani's fortunes have risen, as two *Daily News*/ABC polls (one taken on October 15, the other one a week later on October 22) make clear. On October 15, Dinkins led by the seemingly insurmountable 53 percent to 34 percent. Only one week later, Dinkins led by a mere 45 to 41 percent. The most striking and critical change occurred, as might be expected, among liberal and centrist Jews. Whereas Jews voted for Dinkins by 46 to 36 percent in the first poll, on October 22 Jews chose Giuliani by 44 to 26 percent.

And so the race is even as we go to press.

—Murray Rothbard

"TRADE WITHOUT FRONTIERS"—when the European Economic Community talks about barrier-free trade, the wall begins at Spain and the US is left on the wrong side of it, as the Bush administration, which has supported the coming federation of Europe, is beginning to discover. In October the EEC voted 10 to 2 to adopt a set of as-yet nonbinding rules that recommend to European television stations that they spend a majority of their airtime running European shows. Hollywood's billion-dollar business in European rights is threatened. In some parts of Europe 70 percent of the entertainment shows come from the outside—many, many from the US. What tourist in Rome hasn't tuned into *Dallas*?

"Local content," said Carla Hills, the US trade representative, in complaining about the rules, "is the enemy of free trade." She is quite correct. But the issues are, at least ostensibly, wider here: it is not just American profits that

anger France, the most militant EEC country on the television question. It is that old bugbear of cultural imperialism and *franglais*. "Culture is not a piece of merchandise, like other things," says Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, the EEC's executive branch. "I say to the United States: Have we the right to exist, to perpetuate our traditions?"

As a regionalist, I sympathize. One of the downsides of your free market/open borders/devil-take-the-lowest-paid hardy garden variety of American capitalism is that it tends to do to regional tradition what Sherman did to Charleston.

Unfortunately, European state socialism's answer to American cultural imperialism is a cure that looks to be a lot worse than the disease. The EEC's idea is not just to promote the French film industry for the French, but—while excluding the US and the rest of the world—to create within the Community a single market of 320 million captive viewers: a French film industry for Europe. And what that means, as the Germans are already admitting, is films, drama, and situation comedies—in English. For English is the language of cultural diplomacy today. It must have been bad enough, for a good French patriot, to watch his local breadmaker abandon Godard for Clint Eastwood. Yet surely it will be a thousand times more painful to watch Godard abandon French.

Nationalism has its uses, and its abuses. The European film schools, which have been targeted as beneficiaries of EEC largesse in a typically misapplied social-democratic attempt to beef up the local product, will profit. Barring a trade war, so will some European filmmakers and distributors, probably largely at Hollywood's expense. But that is all. For all the noise the EEC is making about revived culture, its eye is only on the money. Its plan cannot work, because what is being hailed as nationalistic in fact is not—France is not only distinct from America, but from its friends in the EEC, and heaven help that country if its proverbial chauvinism has withered to the point that France has forgotten what German or Italian cultural imperialism is like.

Judged even on the basis of its own plans, the EEC protectionism that is

supposed to preserve the creative culture of these individual states of Europe clearly will not work. Whether it is today or ten years from today, Europe is going to soon discover that the great cultural bugbear is not America, but itself. (KD)

THE SOVIET EMPIRE these days offers a formidable challenge even for the most experienced Kremlin watchers. While economic collapse, the communications revolution, the threat of another nuclear disaster like Chernobyl, the decline in life expectancy, and the environmental crisis are all tinder for fires of change, the power of nationalism still remains central.

Shortly after World War II there were perhaps 70 states recognized as sovereign nations in the world. Now the count is approximately 170. The breakup of the British Empire into a commonwealth of independent nations seems in retrospect as inevitable as water running downhill. There is no reason that this same growth of national identity should not play out in the Soviet Union, a country composed of over one hundred different nationalities and covering one-sixth of the earth's surface.

Of all the places in the Soviet Empire where nationalism is asserting itself, the three Baltic nations have a unique claim. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia once enjoyed the status of independent statehood between 1920-1940, and they receive *de jure* recognition from the United States as well as countries in Western Europe. Much of the population has living memories of their freedom and how it was lost. Last summer the Kremlin was forced to admit of the Secret Protocols of the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939 that led to the forced annexation of the Baltic nations into the Soviet Empire. On the 50th anniversary of the Pact in August, 400,000 Balts formed a human chain across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to dramatize peacefully their desire for freedom.

Within the Baltic nations, Lithuania, with its special links to the West, may play a key role. Its immediate neighbor is Poland, where the Soviet Union tolerated the peaceful ascent of Solidarity to political power. Soviet restraint thus far on the use of force in

Poland, whatever the reason, is a powerful incentive to further national sovereignty in neighboring Lithuania.

The effect of the Polish model on Lithuania does not depend simply on its proximity. There is a deep historical and cultural connection that goes back to the 14th-century union of the two countries—making the second largest nation in Europe—and the conversion of Lithuania to the Catholic faith. The importance of a common faith is reflected in the fact that St. Casimir is regarded as the patron saint for what are now two separate countries—Lithuania and Poland.

An estimated 70 percent of modern day Lithuania is Catholic, and 80 percent of its 3.6 million citizens are ethnic Lithuanians. Both Latvia and Estonia, on the other hand, are historically Lutheran, and nearly 50 percent of their population is non-native. This past September it was announced that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev will meet with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican while he visits Italy in late November. This unprecedented visit of an Eastern European pope will reverberate throughout the world but especially among the Catholics of Eastern Europe. Since he has agreed to receive the Soviet leader, the diplomatic minuet would only be completed when the Pope reciprocates and visits the Soviet Union. However, John Paul II has insisted that he will visit only if the Ukrainian Catholic Church is legalized and he can visit his flock in the Ukraine and Lithuania. The impact of his visit could be revolutionary.

In the midst of these religious developments, the leaders of the popular political movements in the Baltic nations have issued statements calling on the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to assist them in becoming independent. The legal claim of the Balts, or any other of the 15 Soviet Republics for that matter, for the right of secession is supported in article 72 of the Soviet Constitution. Western legal recognition of the sovereignty of each of the Baltic nations lends further, if marginal, force to their assertion of independence.

If Gorbachev allows the Pope to visit, which seems likely, look to Lithuania first to see if the Soviet Empire will begin its transition to a Soviet

Commonwealth of independent sovereign nations.

—Michael Warder

“IMPERIAL CONGRESS”—many in the conservative movement are denouncing it these days. From all over the right, we hear worries about slipping presidential prerogatives, or denunciations of Congress’s “meddling” in foreign policy.

But I would argue that it is the Imperial Presidency that threatens our freedom. Too often, Congress simply lays down in front of the executive steamroller. When it attempts to recover a crumb or two of its constitutional prerogatives—as with the War Powers Act or the Boland Amendment—it is condemned for treading on “presidential” territory.

Some conservatives—who on other days pooh-pooh Reagan-Bush budget deficits as meaningless—even make a cause out of the size of Congress’s budget, which totals .08 percent of federal outlays. Of course Congress’s budget should be cut—all of Washington needs a meat axe taken to it. But in a city of executive-branch sinkholes like HUD, Congress is hardly the place to start. Given the gargantuan government we have—which also violates the Constitution, of course—it is in the taxpayers’ interest for Congress to have sufficient staff, if only to throw a few roadblocks in the way of the executive behemoth. We should also remember that all the congressional staffs put together wouldn’t fill one bureau in HHS.

The Founders, steeped in the English parliamentary tradition, knew that liberty is threatened by kings and dictators, not legislators. They saw the progress of representative government as the wrestling of power from the executive. That’s why they wrote the Constitution as they did.

Article I vests “all [all] legislative power” in the preeminent branch of government, Congress. Congress alone has power to raise and spend taxes, borrow, regulate commerce, coin money, declare war, create federal courts and determine their jurisdiction, and establish the armed forces.

Article II admonishes the President to carry out the laws passed by Congress. He may veto those laws, but his

veto can be overridden by Congress, the final authority. The President may also recommend legislation, but as *National Review* co-founder Frank Meyer wrote 25 years ago, “Recommend means *recommend*, not demand, not pressure, not go to the people to arouse demagogic pressures against the Congress.”

The President is named commander-in-chief of the armed forces; he may appoint ambassadors and judges, but only with the consent of the Senate; and he may negotiate treaties, but again only with the consent of the Senate. There is no mention of foreign policy as a presidential entitlement. His role as head of the armed forces has a foreign policy dimension only when Congress has declared war (the Founders not having envisioned Uncle Sam as global gendarme).

Article III shows that the Founders intended the judiciary, despite Warren Court imperialism, to be the “least-equal” branch. Not only does the Constitution allow Congress to establish (or abolish) all federal courts aside from the Supreme Court, Congress can also—except in certain narrow areas such as lawsuits between states—determine the jurisdiction of the federal courts, including the Supreme Court.

For example, Congress could, by simple majority vote, take abortion cases out of the hands of the Supreme Court and other federal courts, and leave this question to the states. That such a simple and Constitutional solution to *Roe v. Wade* occurs to no one is ample proof of a shriveled Congress and a swollen executive and judiciary.

To argue that the Framers intended Congress to be the paramount branch of government is not to defend our present representatives and senators. With pitifully few exceptions, today’s members of Congress represent a sort of reverse evolution from 1789. Humans have turned into monkeys, albeit with law degrees. Nonetheless, Congress remains the branch of government closest to the people. As its retreat on the pay raise showed, it *can* be influenced. A whiff of popular opposition makes the members sit up and take notice. A hint of possible defeat will make them do anything, even the right thing.

The Armand Hammers of the world

can sway the presidency or the judiciary. The rest of us cannot. That's why believers in a limited constitutional republic must not join the attacks on Congress as an institution, for the alternative is what Meyer called "the uncontrolled power of a President elected with a specious quadrennial 'mandate.'"

If we want to recover our freedom—so diminished in this century by despotic Presidents, bureaucrats, and judges—we must curb the executive and the judiciary, and Congress is our only weapon. The Founders gave us that weapon in the Constitution. It is up to us to use it.

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell

THE PEACE CORPS is going to the aid of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. President Bush has proposed the sending of the Peace Corps to Hungary and Poland, and Peace Corps director Paul Coverdell and staff are busy making the necessary arrangements. Peace Corps press officer Jim Flanigan says this marks "no great departure" from the Peace Corps' original intent. The Peace Corps will remain a "people-to-people" organization that will assist "any nation that requests assistance." Even the sending of the Peace Corps to the Soviet Union wouldn't mark any radical break with tradition, he says, because "the Peace Corps doesn't see any ideological bounds to the pursuit of peace."

This is nonsense. The Peace Corps has never been sent to the Soviet-bloc nations of Eastern Europe, and this alone is enough to mark a radical break with the past. Moreover, one of the Peace Corps' original functions was to counter the Soviets' influence in the Third World—or, as the Peace Corps' first director, Sargent Shriver, put it in 1961, "Either we do the jobs [in the Third World], or the Communists will." Peace Corps Volunteers in Eastern Europe, therefore, could only mean that either the Cold War is over (in which case, do we still need the Corps?), or that the Peace Corps will not only dig the ditches that the Communists would have dug abroad, it will now also dig the ditches that the Communists would have dug at home.

This globalization of the Peace Corps' activities runs counter to the

goals the organization has pursued for thirty years. President Kennedy sought the creation of an agency that would deal specifically with the problems of the impoverished Third World, and it is a gross insult to lump Poland and Hungary in with what President Kennedy, Sargent Shriver, and Hubert Humphrey called the "critical nations" of the "underdeveloped world" which needed liberating from "poverty, disease, hunger, and illiteracy."

Poland is one of the most heavily industrialized countries in all of Europe, and Hungary has experienced great industrial development since decentralization of its economy began some twenty years ago. Life expectancy in Poland and Hungary is approximately 66 years for men and 74 years for women, while life expectancy in Pakistan and Niger—the type of Third World countries in which the Peace Corps has traditionally worked—is 52 and 44 years, respectively. The infant mortality rate in Poland and Hungary is approximately 19 per 1,000 live births; in Pakistan it is 125, in Niger 145. Literacy in Poland and Hungary is 98 percent; in Pakistan it is 26 percent, in Niger 13. Approximately 89 percent of Polish households have a piped water supply; only 15 percent in Pakistan and 12 percent in Niger enjoy such a luxury. *The Economist* ranks Hungary 7th in world health (defined as people per physician and per hospital bed) and Poland 28th. Pakistan is 132nd, Niger 194th.

Whatever the problems plaguing the countries of Eastern Europe—hard currency debt and low productivity, a suppression of free speech and mobility—poverty, hunger, disease, and illiteracy are certainly not among them. When in 1961 the Division of Program Development and Coordination divided the Peace Corps' focus into four geographical areas—Latin America, Africa, the Far East, and North Africa/Near East/Asia and Pacific—it did not set aside a special division to deal with the political problems of Paris, Rome, Budapest, and Warsaw.

If the Peace Corps can now be sent in at the mere request from a nation—any nation—for assistance with a problem—any problem—then the staggering social problems now paralyzing America ought to take prece-

dent. How can we justify the allocation of our money, skills, and manpower for the teaching of English in a foreign country with a 98 percent literacy rate, while East St. Louis and the neighborhoods of Washington, DC, wallow waist-deep in crime, drugs, poverty, and disease? Indeed, the rate of disease and illiteracy in America's inner cities is higher than that in Poland and the new Hungarian Republic combined.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of President Kennedy's call for the formation of the Peace Corps, and next year will mark the organization's third decade of service. If the Peace Corps Volunteers are to be no more than Boy Scouts for democracy, then let's put them where they can do the most good—in the Third World neighborhoods of Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, DC. (TP)

SELECTIVE PERNICIOUS AMNESIA is the endemic disease of Establishment politics. Its symptoms are evident whenever the Soviet Union does something awful—like delivering six sophisticated Su-24D bombers to Libya, as it did in March 1988, or excusing the sinking of an advanced Soviet attack submarine in the Norwegian Sea last April, a submarine that, the Soviet Union admitted, carried two torpedoes with nuclear warheads at a time when our Navy was no longer placing nuclear torpedoes on its submarine fleet.

Within days after such peace-endangering outrages, and after a few ritualistic criticisms, a great silence descends, and within a few weeks these Soviet breaches of the peace are forgotten.

At the risk of causing offense I want to recall something that the Soviets unsuccessfully tried to pull off last May and that is already forgotten. The coup needs a little background because it deals with the light-year distance between Soviet rhetoric and Soviet deed that still exists, even in the Gorbachev era. Recall President Gorbachev's speech at the plenary meeting of the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly, December 7, 1988, in which he demanded—and in Latin yet!—that international treaties must be observed. The crucial paragraph of his speech reads as follows:

The Geneva accords [on Afghanistan], whose fundamental and practical significance has been praised throughout the world, provided a possibility for completing the process of settlement even before the end of this year. That did not happen. This unfortunate fact reminds us again of the political, legal and moral significance of the Roman maxim; *Pacta sunt servanda*—Treaties must be observed.

The crucial phrase is the Latin one. That "Treaties must be observed" is one of the first principles of international law. Without strict adherence to international commitments, there can be no international law.

International morality being what it is, and journalistic knowledge, especially about Soviet history, being rather limited, there was little concern that at the moment of Gorbachev's UN address the Soviets were in violation of the 1988 Geneva accords on Afghanistan. Nor was Gorbachev ever asked just what the USSR was doing in Afghanistan in the first place. Or why Soviet treaties that guaranteed the independence of the three Baltic countries, or the Ukraine, or Georgia, were not being observed. Instead, a *New York Times* editorial (December 8, 1988) went bananas about President Gorbachev's UN speech:

Perhaps not since Woodrow Wilson presented his fourteen points in 1918 or since Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill promulgated the Atlantic Charter in 1941 has a world figure demonstrated the vision Mikhail Gorbachev displayed yesterday at the United Nations . . . Breathtaking. Risky. Bold. Naive. Diversionary. Heroic. All fit.

We come now to May 13, 1989. On that day, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze announced that the Soviet Union was proposing Soviet violation of a treaty with the US. (The treaty had gone into effect in June 1988. It provided for elimination of Soviet and American nuclear missiles in the 300-to-3,500 mile range.) With no advance notice,

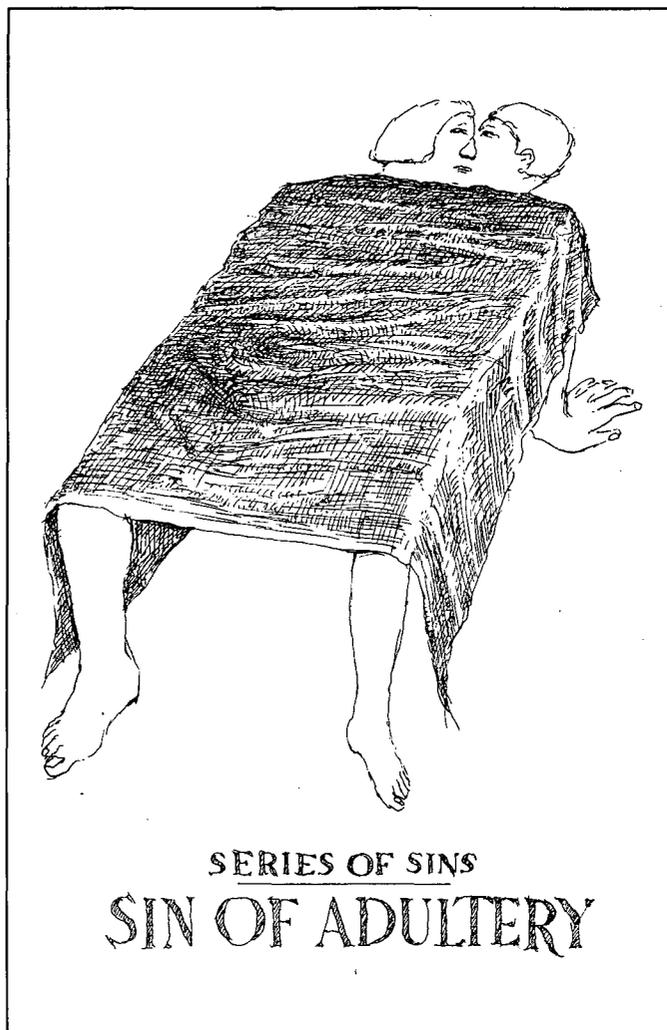
Shevardnadze blustered that if the US dared to modernize its vestigial Lance short-range missiles, *which the INF treaty allows*, the Soviet Union would, despite its solemn obligation, quit dismantling its SS-23 missiles.

Shevardnadze's threat of Soviet noncompliance with a just concluded arms agreement, said former Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle, was "the unscrupulous tactic of unilaterally revising the terms of an agreement by deliberately violating one of its obligations—a tactic easy for the Kremlin, which is unburdened by coalition politics or public opinion, but unthinkable for any Western democracy." William Safire laid it on the line by describing Shevardnadze's threat as the same old Soviet "duplicitous." He said that "while the US considers treaties to carry the force of law, Mr. Gorbachev has just vividly demonstrated that he does not consider his nation bound by treaty any

more than did his predecessors."

One could well ask, at hearing Shevardnadze's threat, whatever happened to President Gorbachev's cry "*Pacta sunt servanda*"? Dan Rather didn't ask. Peter Jennings didn't ask. Tom Brokaw didn't ask. And now, like other Soviet outrages which have occurred in the era of Gorbachev the Good, it's all forgotten and forgiven. Imagine how the nightly news would have denounced President Bush had he issued a treaty-breaking ultimatum similar to Shevardnadze's. Yet today's Soviet threat to violate the agreement is long forgotten and/or forgiven, in the interest of world peace.

The Western reception of the Gorbachev UN sermon was another documented case of credence given by Western political elites to Soviet rhetoric—another case of the collective amnesia that afflicts the West and the American media.



Janusz Kapusta

Shevardnadze's (read Gorbachev's) attempted act of intimidation didn't work this time. Lucky us. But we have been given fair warning once more. Negotiating treaties with the USSR is the riskiest enterprise in modern treaty diplomacy because the Soviet leadership will use every trick, every stratagem to betray, breach, circumvent, or negate Soviet agreements, yet all their duplicities will be forgotten. The tow-

ering dilemma for the West is that in the world today arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union are unavoidable, inevitable, and, above all, potentially detrimental to the security interests of the free world.

Any skepticism regarding my thesis about faith in Soviet treaty promises should be tempered by the following fact: from November 20, 1984, when *The Wall Street Journal* first called the

Krasnoyarsk radar "a clear-cut Soviet violation" of the ABM Treaty, until October 24, 1989, Soviet spokesmen lied about the installation. It took five years for the Soviet Union to admit that the Krasnoyarsk radar was indeed a violation. The confession recalls something Alain Besançon, the French Sovietologist and historian, once said: "In Russia, even the truth is a lie."

—Arnold Beichman

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Despite the zippity-doo-dah rhetoric that many conservatives have spouted for the last decade, the United States in the 1990's will encounter challenges that neither the "right" nor the "left" is prepared to recognize, much less meet. The challenges go far beyond the "relative decline" that Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* prophesied in 1988. Mr. Kennedy argued only that the United States would be unable to keep pace with the redistribution of economic power toward the Pacific Rim and the transfer of military might that will follow it. He never broached the much more serious threats that today signify the rapid unraveling of American society: high school and college students who don't know when Columbus discovered the New World and who think the slogans of Karl Marx are drawn from the US Constitution; urban murder rates that even *idiots savants* would find difficult to calculate; drug wars fought with arsenals the Vietcong would have envied; political corruption that makes the senators of ancient Rome look like Eliot Ness's picked men; and a population so frightened of thrift and sacrifice and so addicted to instant gratification that it often prefers foregoing reproduction altogether to the responsibility of bearing and raising children.

Yet these signs of moral and social decomposition are not as alarming as the prospect, celebrated vociferously by right and left alike, of the United States' speedy absorption into a transnational or global economy that threatens to extinguish American national and cultural identity itself. Ignorance, crime, corruption, and avarice are vices

that can be cured, regardless of how drastic the medicine. The danger of economic globalism is that, like the AIDS virus, it destroys the very mechanisms that enable the patient to recover, even as it entices him into the illusion that the disease is harmless.

That illusion is the dream of universal material acquisition that has animated the consolidation of the American Republic into what may be called "MacNation," a colossal aggregate bound together not by any natural sense of historic community but through the artificial bonds imposed by bureaucratic routines and disciplines, corporate market strategies, mass media, and the mass collective channels in which millions of Americans move, work, play, eat, spend, vote, and communicate daily. Having broken down the institutional distinctions and regional diversity that once characterized the Republic and its cultural identity, the dream and its current material incarnation in economic globalism are now in the process of folding MacNation into MacPlanet.

Last March, the prominent Japanese economist and management consultant Kenichi Ohmae told an audience at Washington's Institute for International Economics that "national borders are disappearing," a development Mr. Ohmae welcomes, at least for other peoples' nations, even as traditional Japanese nationalism enjoys a renaissance. Many self-proclaimed conservatives greeted Mr. Ohmae's prediction with hearty approval, and *The Wall Street Journal's* Walter S. Mossberg reported on the appearance of conservative "one-worlders," "economists and academics who believe that in a global economy, with goods and especially capital surging across politi-

cal borders, the economic fortunes of individual countries aren't important anymore."

But if national borders aren't important anymore, neither are trade deficits, or mass migrations, or even "national interests." The same logic that dismisses borders and populations as meaningless features of national identity also implies that the nation itself is an artificial abstraction that can possess no interests for which individual "citizens" (another artifice) should be expected to sacrifice. It's no accident that the "conservatives" who sing the progressive utopia of the global economy are usually the same ones who drool over a Wilsonian "global democracy" in place of concrete national interests as the proper goal of our foreign policy.

Indeed, the ideology of economic globalism logically involves a kind of social and political nominalism that denies any meaning to groups smaller than "humankind." Not only nations but also classes, ethnic groups, religious sects, local communities, and families are artificial identities that merely thwart the fulfillment of universalist, cosmopolitan, humanist perfection and that have about as much permanency as a group of Las Vegas poker players. Contemporary globalism, economic or democratist, right or left, has a remote ancestor in the ruminations of the ancient Stoics, who argued for a "city of the world" that would transcend city-states and empires. Closer relatives are the political fantasies of the Enlightenment and their Marxist derivative that "the international party shall be the human race." But whatever despots the universalist dream could inspire in earlier eras, only in this century has it been able to assume the technological and