

THE OTHER MCGOVERN ■ CONGRESS DISCOVERS THE BORDER

JANUARY 30, 2006

# The American Conservative

## All the President's Power

**Executive  
Overreach  
From TR  
to Bush**



## GREEK VS. GEEK

The recent caricature in *The American Conservative* (Dec. 19) of my book by one Gary Brecher is not just a mishmash of factual errors but unhinged and, sadly, nothing new. The author writes as the “War Nerd” for *The Exile*, “a Moscow-based alternative newspaper,” and has been publishing the same hate-filled drivel for some time.

Consider the most recent (July 2005) attack entitled, “Victor Hanson: Portrait of an American Traitor—The War Nerd puts local Fresno academic Victor Hanson (Doctor Victor Hanson) on trial and recommends the firing squad.” In that rant, laced with profanities and hatred, self-described Fresno-resident Brecher went on to suggest arson in addition to bullets: “That column got me so furious I daydreamed about driving down Highway 99 to Hanson’s farm and setting all his orchards and vineyards on fire. I kept thinking of what the Spartans said when one of their neighbors threatened them: ‘Your cicadas will chirp from the ground,’ meaning, ‘We’ll burn your f---ing olive orchards if you mouth off again.’”

About the same time as that earlier tirade was published, our roadside vineyard was in fact set on fire by an act of vandalism and was put out by the local Mid-Valley Fire Department—a fact brought to the attention of the editor of the Moscow-based newspaper.

*A War Like No Other*—the title comes from Thucydides—has been reviewed in some 30 journals and newspapers, by both conservatives and liberals, classicists and generalists, and the assessment of the book is a matter of record. Given past criticism from *The American Conservative*, I would expect an ideological attack on the book, but the choice of this reviewer reaches a new low.

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON  
via e-mail

## Gary Brecher replies:

I can’t believe Professor V.D. Hanson dragged himself away from Cheney’s Christmas ham to whine like a girly-man about my review of his book. And to accuse me of setting fire to his Fresno winery. It gave me a good laugh, but then again, I’m not sure how funny it is that someone this paranoid is so adored by the current administration. From what I hear, Scooter Libby considered Hanson to be his guru. It all makes sense in a scary sort of way.

Hanson’s letter is so weird and rambling it took me a while to get his point. Then it hit me like a diamond bullet: my review of his book ruined his Christmas holiday. There’s no pleasing some people.

Funny thing is, Hanson never answers a single one of my points. Instead he rambles about a War Nerd column from two millennia ago. Kind of makes me wonder if I got to him in that article too.

I said that not one single phrase from Hanson’s new book makes sense, and I stick by that. So here’s an open challenge: if you, Victor Davis Hanson, can explain what the hell you were talking about in the following sentence, please enlighten me. Make my Peloponnesian day, dude: “We [Americans], like the Athenians, are all-powerful, but insecure, professedly pacifist yet nearly always in some sort of conflict, often more desirous of being liked than being respected, and proud of our arts and letters even as we are more adept at war.”

## DIFFERENT COLOR, DIFFERENT STANDARD?

I have been actively following your magazine’s commentary on multiculturalism and Muslim immigration in Europe. As an ardent supporter of immigrants and a self-conscious Polish-Jewish-American, I have found your emphasis on the assimilation and the adoption of native culture by immigrants to be an interesting perspective that I have not heard enough of.

Westerners like myself who revere the “immigrant experience” should temper our romantic view with the difficult reality of unassimilated ghettos and the anti-Western animosity felt by some modern immigrants. We cannot have the functional multiethnic society we desire if all groups within it are not citizens first and ethnics second.

That said, I am concerned about an omission in the most recent issues of *TAC*. You covered the riots by the Muslim underclass in France and used them to show the threat that immigrants pose to Western identity. Recently, another riot broke out in Australia, smaller in scale but similar in spirit, and equal in its threat to national identity. Thousands of Australian youths rioted against the Muslim minority, beating and screaming racial slurs at innocent citizens. Where is your outrage? Are you such defenders of Western culture that you will ignore the same bestial behavior you condemn among the Muslims? I thought you defended Anglo and Western traditions of civic and personal responsibility. Your silence makes it seem that you are more interested in defending the Anglo ethnicity than the ideals—which wouldn’t separate you much from Muslim rioters in Paris.

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Somerville, Maine

## KUDOS TO KAUFFMAN

Wonderful article by Bill Kauffman (“Free Vermont,” Dec. 19): I have an implicit respect for someone who can use “rebarbative,” “elsetimes,” and “eidolon” in a single article.

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