

FOR THE RECORD

I must break my custom of never replying to any review of a book I have written (“A Tale of Two Tyrants,” July 3). In this case I must express my high appreciation and gratitude for Professor Lee Congdon’s protracted interest in my work.

But I must correct this very important statement, not about my book but about my life: “Lukacs had always been grateful to the Red Army and to all those who helped to destroy the Third Reich... Lukacs left Hungary in 1946, two years before the Hungarian Stalinists consolidated their power—hence while he experienced Nazi tyranny he did not suffer communist dictatorship.” Exactly the opposite happened. I fled Hungary in 1946 because I was convinced that the Russians would continue to stay there, and that therefore Communists would be more and more powerful. I had nothing but contempt or, more precisely, disdain for Communists and Communism throughout my entire life. The fate of Hungary and of Eastern Europe was determined not by Communism but by the Russian armed presence. How could I have been “always”(!) grateful to the Red Army? This is a thoroughly wrong attribution of motives, without a speck of evidence in any of my writings (besides being entirely irrelevant to my *June 1941* book).

JOHN LUKACS
Phoenixville, Pa.

Lee Congdon replies

John Lukacs knows of my respect for him and for his work. I regret if I misrepresented any of his views. There can be no question concerning his disdain for Communism, but I do not think he will deny that he believes anticommunism to have done more historic damage.

I know why he left Hungary; my point was that he did not, as a result of that decision, experience Stalinist dictatorship. I know too that it was the Red Army, not the appeal of Communism, that maintained Rákosi in power. But it was Communists, not Red Army officers, who organized the despotism.

Finally, Professor Lukacs has made no secret of his gratitude to those—especially Churchill—who helped destroy the Third Reich. In the penultimate sentence of this book he writes of the strange fact “that the greatest instrument of the retribution of Germany and of the end of Hitler was Stalin’s Red Army.” Are we to find no gratitude in this sentence?

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

As Peter Wood describes his annual pilgrimage to the Parmenter gravesite in “Monumental Mistakes” (July 3), the simple beauty of that experience speaks with much greater moral clarity than does the nearly \$1 billion World Trade Center Memorial.

By designing an imposing structure at Ground Zero, we memorialize the spite of the living rather than the value of the dead. A memorial, it seems to me, is effective only if it guides you beyond yourself and connects you to someone since departed. If the locus of attention lies with the living, particularly emphasizing our desire to “get even” by grandiose architecture, we have turned our grief into folly (the lack of character) rather than wisdom (the application of character). Rather than kid ourselves that this billion-dollar expense in lower Manhattan is a memorial to those who perished, let’s at least be honest about what sadly it has turned out to be: a public oath for vengeance through empire.

Everyone who lost someone on 9/11 grieves deeply, yet something that should give public expression to that grief so the nation can share their burden doesn’t. Perhaps we can yet honor the dead by comforting the living rather than inciting them.

MIKE CLAPPER
via e-mail

COMMUNITY IS KOSHER

John Zmirak’s piece on Wilhelm Röpke (June 5) reminds me of a real issue we in Chicago’s Orthodox Jewish community have been groping with for close to two years now: whether to continue to patronize locally owned kosher grocery stores or to buy from the chains who now stock a full line of kosher products in various area outlets.

I must confess that, given that the Albertson’s affiliate Jewel-Osco is minutes from my home, I have often sold myself out to corporate America when looking to stock up on kosher foods, but I had a pleasant reminder over the Passover holiday this past spring. My wife and I were invited over for lunch at the home of a local rabbi whose spouse proudly told us that she and her husband only supported the traditional mom and pop stores that once exclusively characterized the kosher-food trade in the Windy City. Röpke, Belloc, and Chesterton would have been proud!
DAVID L. BLATT
Chicago, Ill.

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

Contents

July 17, 2006 / Vol. 5, No. 14

UPI PHOTO SERVICE



[COVER]

American Petrocracy

BY KEVIN PHILLIPS Among the shifting rationales for war in Iraq, the most plausible motive may be the least discussed: access to oil. **Page 7**

[EXECUTIVE]

Power of the Pen

BY JAMES BOVARD President Bush doesn't veto the laws that limit his power, he just signs them away. **Page 11**

[STRATEGY]

Zarqawi's Death Wish

BY JUSTIN RAIMONDO How elements of the Iraqi insurgency seek to goad the U.S. into war with Iran **Page 13**

[CULTURE]

One World Cup

BY STEVE SAILER In America, soccer fans fall into the distinct demographics of Latinos and latte liberals. **Page 18**

COLUMNS

6 Patrick J. Buchanan: Peace in the culture war?

35 Taki: Convenient fixes for an inconvenient truth

NEWS & VIEWS

4 Fourteen Days: Khalilzad: All's Not Quiet in the Green Zone; Sore Loserman Lacks Joementum; Specter Writes Bush a Get-Out-of-Jail-Free Card

ARTICLES

16 W. James Antle III: John Hostettler takes his stand in Indiana's "Bloody Eighth."

21 Chilton Williamson Jr.: Aristotle, Tocqueville, and our commercial society

23 Marcia Christoff Kurapovna: Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches contemplate reconciliation.

26 Leon Hadar: Roadmap to negotiations with Iran

ARTS & LETTERS

28 Steve Sailer: Anthropomorphic autos in "Cars"

29 Austin Bramwell: *Conservatives Without Conscience* by John Dean

31 Bruce Bartlett: *The Big Ripoff: How Big Business and Big Government Steal Your Money* by Timothy P. Carney

33 Ivan Eland: *Winning the Un-War: A New Strategy for the War on Terrorism* by Charles Peña

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIERS

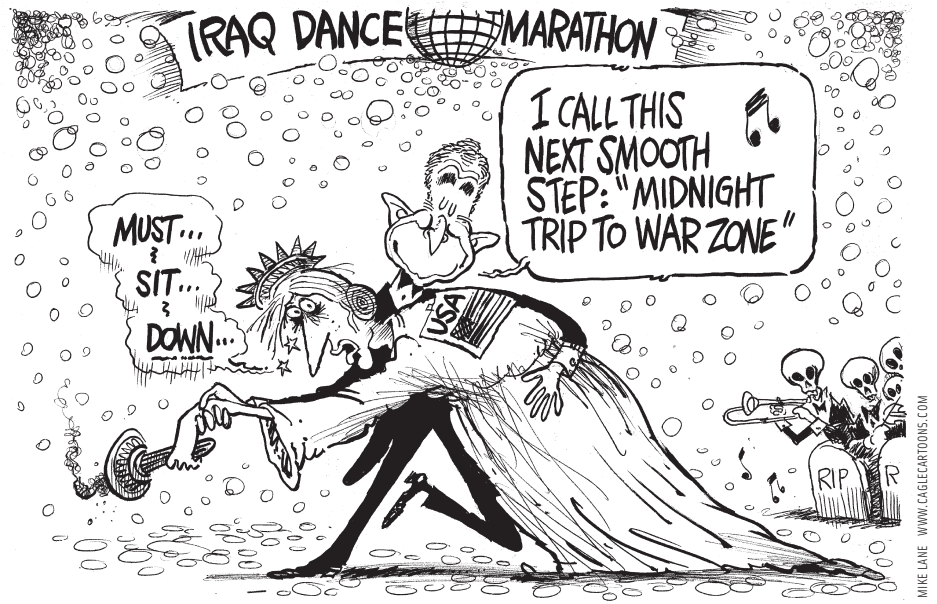
[IRAQ]
REALITY BASED

Looking, as one blogger put it, like a recharged Energizer bunny, President Bush returned from a five-hour trip to Baghdad—where he met with the newly selected Iraqi prime minister—full of jaunty optimism and talk of “building confidence,” “restoring security,” “moving forward.”

But it’s interesting to contrast the Bush photo op with the cable sent out at the same time by U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. The memo, leaked to the *Washington Post*, describes the life of Iraqi employees in the Green Zone—that is, the most secure part of Iraq—who have thrown in their lot with the American mission. Increasingly, employees have been complaining about Islamist harassment—women have been told to wear veils and not drive cars. Sad but true that Saddam’s Iraq was in many ways a more liberated place than the one the American invasion has created.

Khalilzad reports that guards at the Green Zone checkpoints “seemed to be more militia-like, in some cases seemingly taunting.” Some guards held Iraqi embassy employee badges up and proclaimed “Embassy”—a death sentence if heard by the wrong people. Most embassy employees are unwilling to tell their family members where they work, the embassy has begun shredding documents that show local staff surnames, and many staffers have begun to ask “what provision would we make for them if we evacuate.” The families of embassy employees, Sunni and Shi’ite alike, are leaving Iraq, thinking “the future is too bleak.”

This situation Khalilzad describes is one of massive disaffection from the American mission—a state where strict Islamism is on the rise, where the Americans can’t count on the loyalty of the Iraqis in their safe haven, where educated Iraqis are leaving.



Zalmay Khalilzad is not a “liberal journalist.” He is a neocon, a supporter of the invasion, but one who feels responsibility to tell his superiors the truth—and his reality bears little relation to the fairy tales being told from the Rose Garden.

[WAR]
BEYOND OUR CONTROL

On mondoweiss.observer.com, Phil Weiss reports from a conference at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, where professors Robert Art, John Mearsheimer, and Stephen Walt discussed international strategy before an audience of naval officers. (The latter two, of course, are authors of the much-noted essay on the Israel lobby’s distortion of American foreign policy.)

The panel was asked about the “path to success” in Iraq—a war they all opposed. When his turn came, Mearsheimer told the audience how he had enlisted in the Army as a teenager then attended West Point from 1966 to 1970. He went on, “I remember once in English class we read Albert Camus’s book *The Plague*. I didn’t know what *The Plague* was about or why we were reading it. But afterwards the instructor explained to us that *The Plague* was being read because of the Vietnam War. What Camus was saying in *The Plague* was that the plague came and went of its

own accord. All sorts of minions ran around trying to deal with the plague, and they operated under the illusion that they could affect the plague one way or another. But the plague operated on its own schedule. That is what we were told was going on in Vietnam. Every time I look at the situation in Iraq today, I think of Vietnam, and I think of *The Plague*, and I just don’t think there’s very much we can do at this point. It is just out of our hands. There are forces that we don’t have control over that are at play, and will determine the outcome of this one. I understand that’s very hard for Americans to understand, because Americans believe that they can shape the world in their interests. But I learned during the Vietnam years when I was a kid at West Point that there are some things in the world that you just don’t control, and I think that’s where we’re at in Iraq.”

Weiss concludes: “The panel was over. For a moment or two there was stunned silence, and then applause—at once polite, sustained and thunderous.”

[POLITICS]
DOVES AGAINST JOE

Antiwar voters have jeopardized the reelection of the Senate’s most outspoken Democratic hawk. Businessman Ned Lamont has mounted a stronger-than-expected primary challenge against Sen.