

into the hotel from our New York offices over the "twix," a machine that copies documents that are transmitted by phone.

I finally came out of that room with a draft. I had snipped and cut and scotch-taped whole globs of material from the research and thus learned one of the great secrets of the speechwriter's art: how to use a pair of scissors and rolls of tape.

At this stage of the process, different techniques are used by different staffs. In the case of the conservation speech, we used the Keogh technique which means that once the original draft left my hands I never saw it again. Other staffs use different techniques. My writer's ego prefers another crack at a first draft, but Keogh's policy was reasonable.

The candidate ultimately delivered a speech quite close to my original draft. I mention this not to place undue emphasis on the quality of the draft, but to point out that a writer never really knows just how or even if his draft is going to be delivered until he hears the words coming from the mouth of the boss. Sometimes the spoken words and the words of the original draft are the same. More often than not, however, the boss will have done something different: added, deleted, expanded . . . you never know.

All of which brings me to the final point: a speechwriter has to be sensitive enough to be hurt every time his stuff isn't used, but tough enough to know that there are going to be times when some or even all of his stuff will be ignored by the boss. That is the nature of the business, and those who are not emotionally or professionally prepared to accept that fact should go into another writing field. Political speechwriting demands that the writer recognize that what he is doing is producing raw material from which another is going to pick and choose, to do with as he wants.

All in all, I suppose speechwriters can be divided into two categories: first, there is the speechwriter who puts the emphasis on "writer" as in *speechwriter*. His strength is in his love of words for their own sake, for nuances and cadences and rhythms and the ability and desire to write and rewrite until the thing glows and shines. His drawbacks are that speechwriting simply doesn't allow enough time for the kind of care he wishes to give to his creations.

The second kind of speechwriter puts the emphasis on "speech" as in *speechwriter*. He knows that speechwriting isn't to be confused with poetry or *belles lettres*, that it must stand or fall on its own peculiar rules

and that the most important rule is to get the thing done in good enough shape either to be delivered to an audience or to be reworked by the boss. His strength is in his ability to see speechwriting as a partnership, to be willing to listen to others whose literary taste may be limited, but whose political savvy is priceless. His weakness lies in his inability to transmit to a political speech the kind of outside help it needs, the kind that comes only from an association with and a love of literature and language.

The *speechwriter* can grind the stuff out and most of it is pretty good; the *speechwriter* doesn't work so well on demand but comes up with phrases that are alive and jumping up and down all over the text waiting to become sounds. A lucky politician has one of each on his staff. A really lucky politician has one writer who is both.

The speechwriter must try to solve the big problem: you have to give the boss what he wants—but you also have to give him what he needs. They are not always synonymous. The second worst mistake a speechwriter can make is to begin to think that he knows better than the boss what the boss needs; the worst mistake is to give him only what he thinks he wants. □

Paul P. Somers, Jr.

Necroliberation: A Theory of Justice

ONE OF THE MOST oppressed segments of the American population today is the dead; no other group has contributed so much and received so little in return. For the extinct, segregation and blatant discrimination have been primary characteristics of American political and social life since that English settlement vanished from Roanoke Island nearly four hundred years ago.

In no state of the Union, for example, is a dead person permitted to own property, no matter how much he might have accumulated during his lifetime. *Robbery* is the only term for this grave crime committed by a greedy state on behalf of grasping heirs.

A full chronicle of the raped rights of the dead would fill a law library, but a few representative statutes will give some idea of the scope of these infringements. In Indiana, for example, it is unlawful to dance with a dead person. Deceased persons, referred to hereafter as DPs, may not purchase liquor by the drink in Louisiana. California forbids a DP to register at a hotel or motel. Similarly, it is illegal there for a person who is living to share a hotel or motel room with one who is not. In New Mexico, Nevada, and Connecticut, a dead one may not succeed himself to state or national elective office. Georgia will not permit a DP to play in a marching band, while in neither Florida nor New Hampshire may one who is no longer living ride in a railroad passenger car. DPs in Michigan may not massage or be massaged for pay by a member of the opposite sex. The state of New York forbids them to drive

cars, but a person who becomes deceased on an underground passenger train is entitled to ride through to his stop, provided he has retained his ticket stub.

The federal government has also kept its oppressor's eye on this class of outcasts, providing prison terms for DPs found guilty of assembling in groups of five or more. Such outrages are common, with the Deadmann Act, which makes it a federal crime to transport a dead person across state lines for immoral purposes, being one of the most notorious.

"But what can I do?" you ask, wringing your little hands, "I, who am, after all, just one person, one atom in the manswarm?"

To begin with, we can all watch our language. How many times have you found yourself saying: "That guy's a dead ringer for my Aunt Laverne?"

Now, think how that must hurt.

Or, have you ever . . . I must admit that I have . . . have you ever been in "dead earnest?" Do you have trouble getting off "dead center?" Probing still deeper into your secret prejudices, ask yourself if you'd want your daughter to marry one.

The road of the righteous is a narrow one, and greasy water flows deep in the gutters.

Yet, it's not enough that we merely raise our own level of consciousness; we must act forcefully for positive social good. The next time you hear a mummy joke, gently remind the would-be humorist that departed denizens have rights and feelings, too. And if that doesn't work, ask him if he'd like to meet his ancestors.

There are still other, more emphatic ac-

tions, like taking a defunct one to lunch. Think how bored and hungry they must get, hanging around all the time without any rights or highs or anything. Help a DP change a tire or cross the street. A concerned woman knowing a dead lady who's been letting herself go, might give her some hair-styling tips, or show her how to apply eyeshadow.

The final stage in the struggle is, of course, political involvement; revolutions aren't won by making Johnny Carson apologize for smirking as he says: "my monologue is dying." Terminated taxpayers are exploited because they are politically powerless. And it's no wonder: without due process, their names are removed from the voter lists (except in Chicago) as soon as they die. Surely, one good court case should be sufficient to end this travesty. When the Declaration of Independence sets forth certain inalienable rights, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," it nowhere excludes the no-longer-with-us from the umbrella of its benefits. Obviously, removing the dead from the voting rolls deprives them of liberty, which is dearer than life.

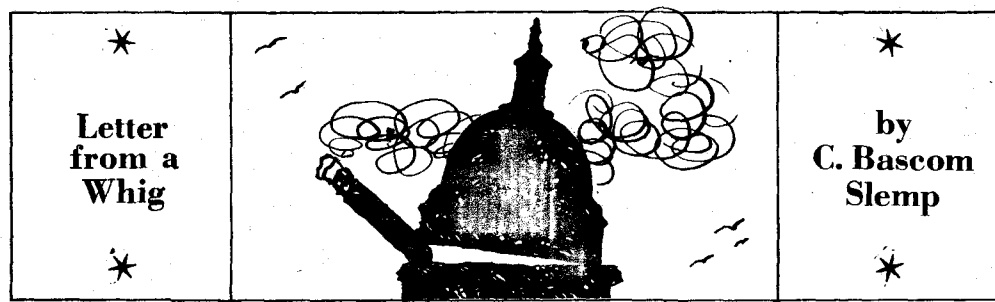
While the courts are deciding this issue, other steps may be taken. DPs should refuse to relinquish their suffrage, making it plain to living kin that any effort to report their death will be resisted. If the government isn't informed of the death, it can't steal the vote. DPs as well as their living advocates should immediately begin writing to their elected officials. Just imagine the impact on a congressman who receives

a letter from a constituent he knows to be dead. That should rattle his filibuster.

Activists should organize a Deceased Citizens' League, named, perhaps, The Dead Hand, to dramatize the political plight of the discontinued, to point out, for instance, such abuses as requiring job ap-

plicants to submit to a physical examination. Such tests are obviously discriminatory, catering as they do to the peculiar abilities of the living. Perhaps employers might be induced to accept an autopsy instead of the conventional physical. At any rate, pressure must be exerted on all employers to hire the inanimate.

This coordinated political activity should build to a crescendo, a cataclysmic climax of activism, specifically: the Dead Persons' March on Washington. Just think of it! Ten thousand posthumous patriots wading in the Reflecting Pool! Not even a federal marshal could bust George Washington or Robert Frost or General Grant. □



Congressional Reorganization

(WASHINGTON)—In a letter to his colleagues, a GOP congressman recently wrote: "There are some Democrats who are stating that the President has lost the confidence of the people and should resign. Quite clearly, if that is so, the congressional member himself should do likewise." This statement was prompted by two recent public opinion polls. In a Sindlinger Company poll Congress received a positive rating of only 25.7 percent (2.1 percent excellent, 23 percent good), as compared to a negative rating of 69 percent (47 percent fair, 22 percent poor, and 4.8 percent no opinion). Similarly, a poll by Louis Harris revealed a negative rating of 69 percent for Congress, as compared to a positive rating of 21 percent, and 10 percent not sure. When the public was asked to rate Congress in specific areas (including its handling of Watergate, impeachment, the economy, energy, and inspiring confidence in government) the results were even more negative, ranging from 72 to 88 percent.

The results of these polls serve to illustrate that if Watergate has eroded the stature of the Presidency, Congress' continuing inertia and unwillingness to assert itself has also threatened the Constitutional Trinity.

In 1946 Congress undertook its first major effort in reorganization. This resulted in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Less than two decades later (1965), Congress found it necessary once again to initiate reform proceedings. And again, in 1970, a legislative reorganization was passed. But despite these various reorganizations Congress has still found itself incapable of dealing with some of its most basic tasks, including the raising and spending of the tax dollar and now the energy crisis. Thus, the question has once again arisen, what can Congress do? (Reorganize, of course!)

A special committee, known as the Select committee on Committees (under the chairmanship of Missouri Democrat, Richard Bolling), has recently come up with a proposal to structurally reorganize the present 21 standing and 125 subcommit-

tees of the House of Representatives. That some reorganization is needed is a point that finds no contention in Congress. Overlapping jurisdiction has consistently handicapped and delayed the passage of legislation. To illustrate the point. During the Ninety-second Congress over 350 bills and 30 resolutions covering the entire spectrum of fuels and energy-related issues were introduced, but no legislation came to the floor of the House for consideration. Thus far in the Ninety-third Congress, six Senate, six House, and a number of joint committees have conducted a wide variety of hearings on energy problems. But to date only fuel allocation and conservation measures (with the possible exception of the Alaskan pipeline bill) have been decided upon.

Illustrative of committee jurisdictional problems is legislation which would facilitate the construction of oil superports. Three House committees (Interior, Public Works, and Merchant Marine and Fisheries) held hearings on the subject of oil superports. Merchant Marine and Fisheries and Interior were able to come to agreement on a common bill, but Public Works would not compromise. As a result both committees passed bills, but the House Committee on Rules (unwilling to antagonize either committee) has refused to grant a rule for either committee's bill. The legislation can consequently not come before the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Bolling Committee's recommendations are the culmination of one year of hearings and debate. The committee has proposed reducing the number of standing House committees by exactly one, although three committees would be abolished (Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Internal Security, and Post Office and Civil Service). Nevertheless, the committee's recommendations are significant.

The major revisions in committee jurisdictional assignments would be to curtail the all-powerful czarship of Ways and Means Committee Chairman, Wilbur

Mills. Mills has had almost total control over all economic-related legislation, including health insurance, foreign trade, and taxation. Under the Bolling proposal Ways and Means would lose its jurisdiction over foreign trade (which would go to the Foreign Affairs Committee) and health insurance (which would go to a new committee on Commerce and Health). The House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs would be redesignated the Committee on Energy and Environment and it would assume the authority for most of the legislation in those two areas. Another change would be to divide the Education and Labor Committee into two committees. This has been one committee which has been dominated by liberal congressmen, but one which has also perennially failed to attract conservative members because of a "graveyard syndrome."

Other changes would include reorganizing the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and renaming it the Commerce and Health Committee. Again, this committee would assume the jurisdiction implied in the name and lose its energy, transportation, and environmental role. The Public Works Committee would be renamed the Public Works and Transportation Committee. In addition to its present responsibility for the Highway Trust Fund, the Public Works Committee would also assume responsibility for mass transit (currently with Banking and Currency), railway transportation, and civil aviation (currently with Commerce), as well as most of the responsibilities now held by Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

The Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (the newest of the twenty-one standing committees) would assume responsibility for elections and campaign finance. The areas for the committees on Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and Government Operations would also be expanded. House members would like to see the House Foreign Affairs Committee raised to the prominence of its Senate counterpart and the reorganizational proposal represents an effort to accomplish that goal. The Government Operations Committee would also gain high visibility by incorporating the responsibilities now held by Post Office and Civil Service.

Needless to say, the curtailment of fiefdoms and empires produced an outcry from the chairmen who would be stripped of their all-powerful roles. Wilbur Mills argued that the separation of taxes from benefits would "lead to potentially disastrous consequences, both for the beneficiaries and for responsible fiscal policy." (Although there hasn't been much of the latter lately.) Mills also argued that much of the jurisdictional reshuffling could result