

principled grounds that they were illegitimately created or expelled in the first place, is to confuse the political crest with the massive wave of social change. It simply makes conservatives and neoconservatives look like reactionaries, and does nothing to advance their legitimate political aims.

*Robert Asahina is an editor of Harper's.*

#### ARAM BAKSHIAN, JR.

Fifteen years ago I was a promising 23-year-old critic and congressional aide, blissfully unaware of the existence of this august journal. Life was full of promise. Five years later, all that changed. Working in the Nixon White House as a speechwriter, I was approached by a rather rum character who introduced himself as R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. and invited me to become a contributor to what was then called *The Alternative*. I have been one ever since, but that isn't the only rut I'm stuck in. A decade later, I'm back in the White House writing presidential speeches. Is there no hope?

As for my views, I have always been a free-market, conservative Republican with a strong belief in the importance of moral and cultural underpinnings in any society worth living in, which I suppose also makes me a traditionalist. I believe that what Ronald Reagan has managed to pull together is a combination of (a) the traditional Republican vote from the bulk of both party wings; (b) sane and awakened members of the intelligentsia whose numbers are negligible but whose insights and influence are important; and (c) large chunks of the old "working class" Democratic coalition that are now culturally and economically conservative and middle class. Assorted loud, single-issue constituencies have played an important but distinctly secondary role in this realignment. They deserve to be heeded and treated fairly, but they are not at the heart of the overall realignment I believe is taking place.

My own views have changed very little, but then I had already reached the age of reason in 1967—if the statisticians are to be believed. I have always had my doubts about this.

*Aram Bakshian, Jr. is Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Speechwriting at the White House.*

#### FRED BARNES

Back in 1967, my wife and I locked arms, marched across Memorial Bridge, and surged with a mob of thousands toward the Pentagon. The building was supposed to levitate, given the moral strength of the antiwar movement. But it didn't rise

an inch. Or so I thought at the time. Looking back, I'd say the antiwar crusade did have the effect of levitating the Pentagon quite a bit (figuratively, of course) and of making victory in Vietnam politically impossible. What a mistake; I wish I hadn't marched.

The war in Vietnam was the central event of the post-1945 era; and it's nice to see a revisionist view of it emerging. But it's one thing to say that the American effort was, as Ronald Reagan put it, "a noble cause," and another to act on that. Vietnam is gone, and little can be done to change that, even with the most conservative, anti-Communist President this country is likely ever to see in the White House. Given public opinion that flits between hawkishness and dovishness and the need to get along with queasy European allies, a President doesn't have that much latitude in foreign affairs; I hate to say it, but it's true. His best shot now is to stand firmly in El Salvador. If that sounds like containment, so be it. If established Communism is to collapse in the Soviet Union and its satellites, American foreign policy won't be the catalyst; Communism will fall of its own immorality, cruelty, and economic inefficiency. The day approaches.

At home, Reagan had better stop acting like a *New Yorker* caricature of a conservative. People really don't cotton to the fact that their President, even an amiable one, likes to hang around with the Lear-jet crowd. The President needs a new set of friends. More important, it would be nice if he figured out what has happened to his economic program, namely that it's been savagely undercut by rapid monetarism at the Federal Reserve. Tax cuts are fine, but you've got to have enough dough in the system for a supply-side revolution to take hold. Liberal economists and conservatives now pilloried as "supply-side extremists" happen to have been right on this point. Fed chairman Paul Volcker eased up before the election, but he may resume the monetary crunch after the voting. If Reagan allows that, look out.

*Fred Barnes is National Political Reporter for the Baltimore Sun.*

#### MARTHA BAYLES

Looking back over the last fifteen years, I find myself wondering why I never became a feminist. As a Radcliffe student interested in poetry, I was well situated. Friends encouraged me to read Sylvia Plath and explore my own oppression. The trouble was, I found her husband Ted Hughes a better poet. And although I was not above claiming oppression

for myself, on the whole I considered other things more important.

The issue for me in the sixties was not really the war, and certainly not feminism. It was race. I graduated in 1970 and began teaching in a city school, trying zealously to overcome racial prejudice in all its forms. When busing came to Boston, I began to part company with my sixties cohort, who appeared increasingly to know

nothing about the situation of ordinary black people—or white people, for that matter—living in the same city. I wondered how they could possibly be so oblivious, and feminism turned out to be part of the answer.

Boston was about to fly apart, and too many educated women were parading around expressing the great gut feeling of their movement: that

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love and marriage was a machine to destroy their identity. Their agonies reminded me of my junior high students, terrified at 13. I wondered where all these women had been at

13, when the big battle is supposed to occur between the tomboys and the cheerleaders—while on another part of the playground, the boys play hardball.

To me the feminists had failed to grow up: They were still worrying about how turning into a woman was going to take all the fun out of life. It seemed self-indulgent to fuss about such an adolescent problem when real adolescents all around them were about to go through a tangible hell.

Today I see men and women my age clinging to feminism as a way of retaining that old sixties worldview without actually viewing the world. Their finicky concern for sexual equality allows them to invest their self-centeredness with political significance. It also keeps alive the incredibly tiresome conviction that the sixties generation is more perceptive about social and political matters than people who grew up in dull, boring decades like the thirties, the forties, the fifties—or even the seventies.

I mention the seventies because the college students I now teach have been well indoctrinated into feminism. Yet in spite of this, and in spite

of not being able to predict which way they will go politically, I do find one encouraging sign. On the whole, they appear to consider other things more important.

*Martha Bayles is film critic of The American Spectator.*

#### A. LAWRENCE CHICKERING

At the end of the sixties, while trying to be ideologically mischievous in my job at *National Review*, I was fortunate to be rescued from my squishy *New York Times* liberalism by some radical black intellectuals with whom I had become friendly. They helped me see the value of emphasizing social and psychological independence for minorities—a view shared by conservatives and libertarians.

Reagan's leverage to press major policy changes will be limited for the rest of his term, so he should concentrate on educating the country to a new public philosophy and idealism. The race issue is an excellent predicate to promote a decentralist and genuinely pluralistic vision—encouraging a social tolerance that is impossible so long as social policy is aimed at making everyone above average in income, status, and reading scores.

On race especially, small policy reforms could make an important difference. Nothing would disturb the ideological idiom more than replacing publicly provided services with contracts or vouchers. Most important would be substituting vouchers for the current legal services program. In other words, stop paying white radical poverty lawyers to take clients away from the indigenous, private minority bar. The current system is emasculating the natural minority leadership class and permanently radicalizing all minority groups. By substituting vouchers or contracts for social services, a combination market-political patronage system could permanently change our political landscape.

After a rocky first year, coherence and calm seems to be emerging in the Administration's foreign policy. But although the strident first-year rhetoric is finished, positive articulation of a clear global strategy, including defense needs, will be critical to avoid further defense cuts. The Reagan Mideast proposals should become "talking points" as opportunities multiply through competition between Hussein/Arafat and (less openly) Begin/Assad for Washington's attention and future reservations at Camp David.

On the economy the President should pay close attention to monetary policy and should take care to

appoint people to the Fed who can be decisively influential. Excessively tight monetary policy over much of last year sabotaged the President's program—causing a far deeper recession than necessary, lasting longer. It could happen again, as pressures to undo the damage lead to extreme policy in the other direction.

Although controlling the budget is obviously critical, political obstacles will be great until after the 1984 election. I would go for flamboyantly bipartisan reforms (cuts) in social security, avoiding the disastrous partisan wrangle of last year, which aborted a significant beginning of reform. The politics of encouraging long-term economic reform has suffered from the President's serious overselling of supply-side economics. The disincentives to save (double taxes on corporate equity income, taxes on nominal, not real, capital gains, etc.) are still great and were very imperfectly corrected by last year's tax program. The prospect of future, increased inflation under President Kennedy maintains incentives to save through real estate, fine arts, and comic books, rather than in more traditional, productive ways. Restoring long-term growth depends on reducing the tax-burden on saving, a burden which is high in relation to our trading partners. Over time, we should move in the direction of a flat tax on consumption, and remove saving from the tax base altogether.

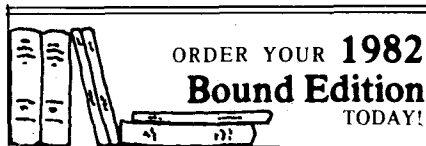
The next two years will be a holding period, waiting for the economy to pick up. Our burden outside is to keep up the pressure, and don't expect that those inside will ever satisfy us. Our unhappiness is an important part of the political context within which they must act. If the time comes when those inside and out seem to be enjoying a *rapprochement*, only two possibilities can explain it: Either we are going soft, or they are abandoning their policy responsibility, under difficult institutional and political circumstances, to do the best they can by our values.

*A. Lawrence Chickering is executive director of the Institute for Contemporary Studies.*

#### TERRY EASTLAND

Fifteen years ago, as a freshman at Vanderbilt, I was elected class representative to the student body government. I found campus politics boring, however, and despite the tumult of the times, was not much interested in national politics. Even so, I was a conservative, not yet by reflection but in my bones.

Politics became an immediate concern after Vanderbilt, while I was



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