

but also at seeing careerism on the list of excuses women may now use to deceive themselves and others.

Most important of all is the fact that whenever Dorothy behaves like a feminist, she advances her own fortunes. On camera in the soap opera, she defies the male doctors—and the fan mail pours in. Off camera she goes into her assertiveness-train-

ing routine—and the female producer pulls strings on her behalf. The point is that feminism as opportunism sits perfectly consistently with Michael Dorset's character, and as long as his newfound convictions aren't tested, we are free to laugh when his creation Dorothy spouts a lot of rhetoric in order to drive up the ratings and disport

herself on the cover of *Newsweek*. These tendencies in *Tootsie* have been flagged by vigilant critics as possible antifeminism. I would agree, and flag them again as possible humor. Those who tried to turn this movie into a feminist parable had their work cut out for them, because, after all, it's the story of a talented man who can only get ahead by pre-

tending to be a woman; and as a woman, he can only get ahead by pretending to be a feminist. There is also the added twist that an egotistical fellow like Michael would enjoy showing the ladies how it's done. To those who see this as a valuable lesson, I suggest that they take another look. It's really a pretty good joke. □



REAGANOPHOBES

by Patrick Wajzman

Monday night at a quarter past eight, Television News gave us some clippings that were curious indeed: of a country devastated by unemployment and misery; of a country whose rulers, notorious militarists, are rejected by the immense majority of the population; of a country so unhappy, so unfair, and so poorly managed that no sensible person could possibly want to live there.

I admit that for a moment I was moved by this painful report that provoked pity and indignation. What wounded land could this be about? The Soviet Union? Poland? East Germany? Paraguay? Salvador? None of the above: the program was

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on the United States of America, and for anyone with some knowledge of the United States, what took place was an intolerable job of intellectual intoxication.

To be sure, this was not the first time that Ronald Reagan has been presented, in our good Socialist France, as a primitive, narrow-minded, and incompetent leader; something of a dinosaur good for little other than hamming it up in front of cameras. Is he not regularly described as the most carefree President since Eisenhower, the most conservative since Herbert Hoover, the most antisocial White House host since Calvin Coolidge? Yet, there are erroneous judgments that one has difficulty accepting. All the more so since the American people themselves continue to trust their President, and believe in their majority (60 percent in a recent poll) that his

economic policies will eventually work.

Sensible facts, unfortunately, do not much disturb the princes who rule us and those who, on television, express meekly their desires. For a very simple reason: the denunciation of the failure of Reaganism corresponds, to their minds, to a political calculation. And one needn't be a genius to guess which one.

For Mitterrand-style socialism to have a chance of seducing the French people, our leaders believe that Reagan liberalism must play the role of providing the unthinkable alternative, and must show every sign of representing a historical disaster. It therefore becomes necessary to distort the defects of the economic system in force on the other side of the Atlantic, thereby discrediting capitalism.

Now this is precisely what French

television does when it insists upon the "disaster" engendered in the United States by policies supporting free enterprise, individual initiative, limited government, and fiscal restraint. After all, why should the French not believe in the virtues of an all-powerful State, with a controlled economy, a regulated society, and a population entirely on some form of assistance: since the Americans, as we are being told constantly, are failing pathetically in the opposite course? *Q.E.D.*

As can be seen, propaganda has its uses . . .

This Reaganophobia, however, is mediocre. For Reagan, like it or not, is far from failure. If nothing else, he has restored national pride to his compatriots. After the pain of the Vietnam syndrome, the humiliation of the hostage crisis, the negativism and defeatism that the Carter Administration made into a pathetic specialty, Reagan made being American once again a thing of pride. He restored the will to overcome hard times. This is already something, after all. It is in any case a far better attitude than the one that consists of blaming on imaginary scapegoats one's own failures.

But the American President has done even better. He has asserted with conviction his role of defender of the free world, letting the Soviets understand that they may not view the globe as their playground. During the six years that preceded Reagan's election, over one-hundred-million souls fell under the direct or indirect influence of the Soviet Union. For two years now, this destabilizing fantasia has ceased. Is this insignificant? □

There is opportunity in America!



Sarkes Tarzian Inc. Bloomington, Indiana

B O O K R E V I E W S

One day in late 1955, an unassuming, middle-aged man appeared at the office of the fledgling *National Review*, found an unoccupied chair, and sat down. After peering at a typewriter for a few moments, he proceeded to punch the keys. Forty-five minutes later, he departed. After this ritual had repeated itself, once a week, for several months, a young *National Review* staffer grew indignant. On all his visits, she protested, the typewriter repairman had never examined her machine.

This "typewriter repairman," it turned out, was *National Review's* lead book reviewer, John Chamberlain. Coming to the office for his weekly assignment, he would quietly compose his review at the typewriter with seemingly effortless grace. Then, his work completed, he would silently slip out of the office—careful not to disturb his colleagues laboring at their own projects.

These qualities of calmness, solicitude, and self-effacement are abundantly reflected in John Chamberlain's newly published autobiography. For more than half a century now, Chamberlain has been leading, as he puts it, "a life with the printed word." And what an abundant life it has been! In 1926, fresh out of Yale, he became a cub reporter for the *New York Times*; within three years, he was assistant editor of the *Times's* Sunday book review. In 1933, at the astonishingly young age of thirty, he rose to the eminence of daily book reviewer for the *Times*. For the next four years, he turned out five book reviews a week (plus sundry other essays) and solidified his reputation (in one authority's words) as the "finest critic of his generation." In the late thirties and forties, he occupied positions of influence at *Fortune*, *Life*, and *Time* under Henry Luce, with a professorship at Columbia's School of Journalism on the side. In the fifties, he was a founding editor of the *Freeman*, an editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, and a valued contributor to *National Review*. In the sixties, he became one of the most respected of conservative columnists.

Along the way, he raised three children and wrote several books (including two libertarian classics, *The Enterprising Americans* and *The*

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A LIFE WITH THE PRINTED WORD

John Chamberlain / Regnery Gateway / \$12.95

George H. Nash

Roots of Capitalism). Today, in his eightieth year, John Chamberlain continues indefatigably to expound the philosophy of "voluntarism" and free-market capitalism with the same robust reasonableness that has won him journalistic admirers for five decades.

Such a life is ample subject indeed for an autobiography, and one can only be pleased that Chamberlain has written his. But the importance of *A Life with the Printed Word* transcends the particularities of a richly successful career. For like so many other American conservative luminaries since 1945, Chamberlain in his youth was a man of the radical Left. How was it that this supporter of Norman Thomas in 1932 became a Reaganite a generation later? How did a quasi-socialist of the thirties come to write the foreword to

Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* in 1944? What, in short, prevented Chamberlain from becoming (in his words) "just another New York liberal" in middle age? The story of his intellectual journey from Left to Right is the principal subject of this absorbing memoir.

One source of Chamberlain's evolution lay in his temperament. A New England Yankee who came of age in the 1920s, he shared his generation's artistic and civil libertarianism and its apolitical distrust of crusading fanaticism. He never lost these early attitudes. Even in the politics-drenched thirties, Chamberlain retained some of his youthful skepticism of concentrated power. Indifferent to the early New Deal, he was drawn instead to the Brandeisian

trust-busting philosophy of his friend Leon Henderson and to nonconformists of the Left like John Dos Passos (whose own intellectual odyssey rather strikingly resembles Chamberlain's).

The sheer act of reading, one suspects, also helped to rescue Chamberlain from stultifying leftist conformity. Reviewing a book a day for the *Times*, he discovered authors like Albert Jay Nock, the grandfather of libertarianism, and Max Eastman, who had been to Moscow and seen not the future but the truth. Later on he encountered Rose Wilder Lane and Isabel Paterson, whose *God of the Machine* "hit me like a ton of bricks" in 1943. Chamberlain must surely be one of the best-read journalists of all time; the very act of confronting an endless variety of books for review shielded him from the certitudes of the cultural commissars. Chamberlain the literary critic, one senses, could never surrender his independence to anyone's party line.

Still another factor nudging him from the Left was his experience with the Communists and their sympathizers. The most harrowing episode occurred when Walter Duranty, the *Times's* famed Moscow correspondent, "almost casually" remarked to Chamberlain one day that three million Russians had died in a deliberate, artificial famine. (It was Stalin's method of liquidating the kulaks.) Chamberlain was aghast. How could Duranty be so callous about this gigantic horror? And why had he never even reported this story in his dispatches? Soon afterward, Chamberlain himself mentioned the murderous famine in one of his book reviews. Immediately the Communist journal *New Masses* demanded proof; Chamberlain replied by citing Duranty as his source.

Now the fat was really in the fire. In danger of losing his visa from the Soviet government, Duranty denied that he had ever said anything. The Communists, meanwhile, denounced Chamberlain with fury. Suddenly Chamberlain's reputation for veracity—and his job at the *Times*—were in peril. Fortunately, a fellow *Times* journalist, Simeon Strunsky, came forward in Chamberlain's defense; Duranty had also told Strunsky about the famine. Without this in-house corroboration, Chamberlain would likely have been fired by the *Times* and his journalistic career perhaps destroyed.

