

EDITORIALS



KIRKPATRICK

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Some Americanos have a curious avidity for making matters more difficult than they are. Perhaps they fear idleness. Possibly they forgot to read the instructions. Quite often they simply lack the grit to face up to the requirements of the task at hand; they are deluded or lazy or inescapably timid.

Consider those handwringing Democrats now demonstrating on the op-ed pages of our great and good daily papers. Listen as they cerebrate earnestly on the tube: "The oldest political party in the world, where lies its future?" The party has captured but one presidential race since 1964, and the 1976 victory was attended by certain incomparable conditions, never to be repeated one prays. Moreover, the indefatigable *Wall Street Journal* recently noted that though Democrats outnumber Republicans in the House of Representatives by 253 to 182 this is more a reflection of their ability to gerrymander than their ability to fetch support in congressional districts. Nationwide their congressional delegation

snagged a mere 39,000 more votes than the Republican delegation.

So now the party's sages are coming out with blueprints for a happy future. Just recently the party's governors assembled in Washington with a learned treatise, "Facing the Facts: The Democratic Governors' View From the States." All these exertions are quite unnecessary and only make matters more difficult than need be. After all, the Democratic party was the most successful political organization throughout the middle decades of this century. Its policies still reign over vast areas of American life. Democrats seeking renewal should look to their roots. Look to FDR, HST, and JFK. Now, my Democratic friends, look around you today. If you really want to find a modern-day proponent of the policies of these successful Democratic pols you will find yourself looking right into the face of Jeane Kirkpatrick, possibly the most popular Democrat in the country.

She is admired by voters of both parties. She has overseen a long and quite successful tenure at the United Na-

tions. She writes and speaks eloquently. And for those New Age Democrats so given to envisaging America as a land of victims hounded by oppressors, she—being female—qualifies as a capital victim; but then, according to the calculations of George Gilder, so do 70 percent of her fellow Americanos, who account for more than three-fourths of the nation's wealth.

What is more, she labored for the party in every presidential campaign of her adult life until 1980 when she took up the campaign of a fallen-away Democrat. He promptly showed the good sense to hire her, though her politics have not markedly changed since she voted for Adlai Stevenson. She has been a friend of Big Labor, a friend and loyal supporter of Hubert Humphrey, and to the end she supported Scoop Jackson. Ambassador Kirkpatrick has, then, impeccable Democratic credentials. That she resisted the gaudy promises of McGovernism cannot be held against her. McGovernism's rise marked the beginning of her party's incompetence.

Unfortunately, few of her party's soul-searchers will include the politics of Jeane Kirkpatrick in their meditations, which merely demonstrates again

the disingenuousness and futility of their exertions. They hoot derisively at Ronald Reagan when he claims an affinity for the policies of past Democratic statesmen; but they validate his claim by shunning the legitimate heir to HST and JFK, Ambassador Kirkpatrick.

They ignore her because, unlike yesteryear's successful Democratic party that favored internationalism and growth, the New Age Democratic party shies from such burdens. Behind all its rumble bumble about caring and compassion it is the party of isolationism and no-growth. More and more voters understand this. At the local level, where these large national issues are irrelevant, they still frequently vote for the party of splendid years gone by. At the national level they increasingly vote for the party that promises to preserve the splendors. They do as Jeane Kirkpatrick does, and her support among traditionally Democratic voters, such as Jews, Hispanics, and blue collar workers, should suggest to New Age Democrats the extent of their problems. That the New Age Democrats fail to recognize her significance is obvious. That some in the White House remain ignorant is amazing. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.



PEKING MARX

Oh unhappy day! Henceforth a question to be asked many times on college campuses, in think tanks, and wherever else our *soi-disant* Marxists gather will be: "Where were you when you received word that China's Communist Party newspaper, *People's Daily*, had abjured Marxist principles?" The horrible news was revealed in a December 7 unsigned editorial arguing that it would be "naive and stupid" to rely on Marxist principles to modernize China. "We cannot use Marxist and Leninist works to solve our present-day problems," the iconoclastic editorial concluded. "Times are changing. . . ."

As with such similar questions as "Where were you when Pearl Harbor

was bombed?" or when John Lennon was murdered, one's ardor for the question will tell us much about he who answers it. I know of an art prof on a college campus dear to me who laments that so few of his colleagues teach art history from a "Marxist perspective." When word reaches him of Peking's historic tergiversation I expect he will become quite emotional. Possibly there will be calls for a physician or, worse, a mortician.

Red China, as we used to call it, was for Yank Marxists of the 1960s and 1970s an exemplary plot of land; at least it was for Marxists who felt the need to point to an earthly plot where their abstract hooey could be boomed

as successful and wholesome. China was so peaceful—as peaceful as the grave. It was so egalitarian—as egalitarian as the penitentiary. And affluence's crapulent face was not seen. But now the *People's Daily* has blurted out its apprehensions that unless China departs from rigid Marxist dogma it might "lose touch with reality and be left behind." How will the news be received here? Marxism remains quite popular on our campuses along with dozens of other archaic enthusiasms. In fact, as the world hustles along on its busy course, taking up all the ever-changing problems that history presents to us, academe's radical profs are increasingly in danger of, as the *People's Daily* puts it, being "left behind." Many campuses are now

dominated by junior faculty members whose student years in the 1960s were spent in Marxist reveries. Will the word from Peking snap them out of their ideological dream world? My guess is no, and under them their campuses will become living museums, somewhat like colonial Williamsburg. Adults will visit them as tourists wishing to see for themselves the fauna of the 1960s.

Imagine, teaching art from a "Marxist perspective." Why not a Baptist perspective or an engineering perspective or the perspective of a militant in the animal rights movement? I can well imagine the seminars of this last fanatic. There the bewildered students sit as the ideologue probes the "critical

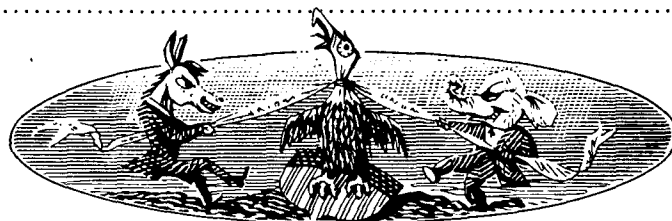
questions" regarding Henri Rousseau's jungle animals: Were they placed in dignified settings? Were the jungles progressive, were the beasts merely presented as nutritional objects? The life of the mind in our time is often intensely ideological, and as ideology botches more and more political issues the ideologues grow ever more bizarre.

Marx, of course, was bizarre from the start. That his writings ever gained purchase on Western minds is evidence of how effectively a gifted haranguer can play on our baser impulses, for instance, envy and jealousy. He held almost no accurate ideas about life, and his greatest contribution to knowledge came not in the realm of economics, politics, or history, but in the realm of warfare. He provided men with a com-

PELLING new rationale for killing each other off. Since his expiry more people around the globe have been slaughtered in his name than in the name of any religious messiah or prophet ever heard of.

I am pleased by this editorial in *People's Daily*, and I shall long remember where I was when I heard of it. With colleagues, I was laying plans for establishing a sperm bank for conservative geniuses. I suppose the thing can only get me into hot water. So many conservatives will be expecting my solicitation. But now the news from Peking emphasizes the need for new leadership in the world, and I say conservatives must answer history's call. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



DUCKS AND BEES

by Tom Bethell

For conservatives, the weeks following President Reagan's re-election were not at all auspicious. Reagan himself seemed to go into a protracted hibernation, but by the latter half of January somebody will presumably

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have aroused him, so that he may emerge in time to read the Inaugural Address. Soon thereafter he will be expected not merely to stand outside the Capitol building, but to go inside it, there to read a second speech, entitled the State of the Union Address. At that point I imagine that Mr. Reagan will be free to return to California, if he so wishes, where he may chop wood and ride horses to his heart's content. But by then there may well be a big row developing in Washington requiring his attention.

As I see it, the bad news for conservatives is that Reagan no longer has to face the electorate, and therefore worry about what they think. Some conservatives, I'm afraid, have deluded themselves into thinking that this is to their advantage: No longer is it necessary for the Administration to appease all those special interest groups—senior-citizen lobbies and so on—who are responsible for our fat-tened government. But this is one of those false analyses that has been quietly encouraged all along by the shapers of the liberal consensus.

Gentlemen, the liberals want us to believe that the extensiveness of government is mere response to the will of the people. Indeed, the liberals would like to believe it themselves. But deep down they know it isn't true. They know that

the real reason we have so much government is that they have worked tirelessly for fifty years to attain that goal, and that the popular will, insofar as it has to be taken into account (and alas it does, because the Constitution mandates elections), has been and remains the principal obstacle to further expansions of government power and liberal (meaning illiberal) influence.

Thus the liberals sense, probably correctly, that the present moment is an opportunity for them, notwithstanding their earlier bogus alarms to the effect that a re-elected Reagan, free at last from the moderating influence of the voters, would proceed full speed ahead to implement his right-wing ideology. But the minute Reagan was re-elected they were singing a different and more triumphant tune. There was a scarcely disguised gloating, for example, in a recent article by Robert G. Kaiser, an associate editor of the *Washington Post* whose job it is to furnish left-of-center policy analysis for the Within-the-Beltway crowd.

"Republicans," he wrote, "have a landslide winner at the helm, but they also have something Washington hasn't seen (except in the unrevealing special case of Richard M. Nixon) in a quarter century: a lame duck President."

For lame duck President read lame duck electorate.

That's what Within-the-Beltway advocates really mean by lame duck, and alas there is ample justification for their relishing this state of affairs, even if their analyses are not forthrightly expressed. The precedents Kaiser alludes to—Nixon's and Eisenhower's second terms—are also the only periods in U.S. history when we have experienced a

