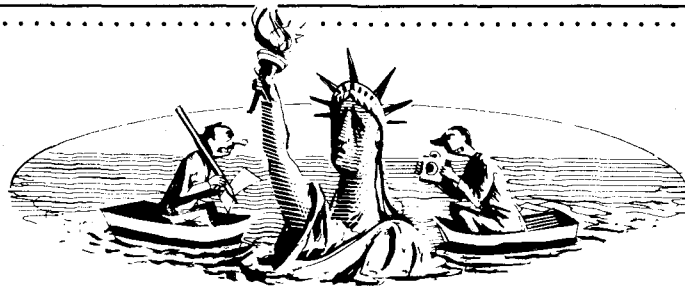


PRESSWATCH



HEROES AND OBJECTS

by Michael Ledeen

Heroes of the Month:

To Jonathan Yardley for his *Washington Post* article of October 20 on Secretary of Education William Bennett. "Bennett is the best friend higher education now has in public life, because he cares so deeply about educational standards and is in a position to do something about them," Yardley writes, and then adds:

but because he works for Ronald Reagan he is not given a chance. Bennett, like Reagan, is a buzzword: If Reagan does it, it must be wrong, and if Bennett says it, it must be wrong.

As Yardley recognizes, this is part and parcel of the growing intolerance of many of our leading universities to conservative ideas and their advocates. At the same time, American higher education is quite clearly dropping in

quality, becoming more and more obsessed with money, and defaulting on the moral education of our students. Insofar as Bennett is one of the few national figures regularly to lambaste the universities for their shortcomings, he is one of the most hated men on campus.

Full marks to Jonathan Yardley for spelling it out.

To Tom Wicker, for his confession of error in the *New York Times*, entitled "Getting It Straight," in which he listed some of the egregious mistakes he had made in recent months in his *Times* column. It was an honest, good-humored admission of fallibility from which many of our overstuffed columnists could learn, and we salute Mr. Wicker for his candor and his humanity.

The Mystery of the Soviet Stockpiles

Shirley Christian broke the story in the *New York Times* several days earlier, but it remained to Joanne Omang of the *Washington Post* to put the matter

into political context on October 22 (there's a lesson there: if you want information, read the *Times*, if you want to know what Washingtonians are likely to try to make of it, read the *Post*). The story was the discovery of "ten tons of arms" in Chile. These weapons and ammunition were hidden away in northern Chile, and were valued at more than \$10 million.

Miss Omang pronounced that while it is clear from these discoveries that the Soviet Union and Cuba are working hard to destabilize Chile, they have now "undermined some of Pinochet's critics and strengthened his 13-year-old government, at least temporarily . . ."

This is the sort of remark that passes for wisdom at the *Post*, which is always more interested in the "who's winning, who's losing" side of things than in the significance of events. But there's a real question in there. You may recall that when Israel invaded Lebanon four long years ago, the Israelis found an enormous stockpile of weapons, far more than the PLO could possibly have used in a war against Israel. Intelligence analysts wondered why, and several answers were provided:

- Maybe it's a sign of status in the Middle East to have lots of weapons (a sort of military potlatch), so the PLO built up a treasure-trove.

- Maybe the PLO were offered lots and lots of weapons, and couldn't say no (unlikely, to be sure, since they seem to have paid for their weapons).

- Maybe it's part of a Soviet plan of advance stockpiling of weapons in various theatres around the world, in the event they or their surrogates have to fight a major engagement.

The same questions can be raised about the Chilean case. Why so very many weapons and shells and mortars? For whom were they intended? I don't know the answer, but it's a great question that deserves serious consideration.

Who is the Mysterious Mr. Shevardnadze?

The new batch of Soviet leaders is getting a good press in these parts, but one

could hope for a bit more information about them. You might have thought our journalists would learn from their shortcomings during the Andropov affair, when they waxed rhapsodic about the "moderation" of the former KGB chief, crediting him with a taste for White Horse Scotch and American jazz, fluency in English, and closet liberalism. Overlooked in the general rush to praise the new dictator was his background as butcher of Budapest. Similar oversights are with us today, most notably in the case of the new Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. Comrade Shevardnadze was Minister of the Department of the Interior from 1965-1972, and then sent to become First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Georgia. In both capacities he was in charge of "anti-corruption" campaigns, the sort of thing that Gorbachev is waging nowadays, and for which he is receiving near-universal praise.

You will not read much about Shevardnadze's anti-corruption campaign in Georgia if you stick to the American press; in order to get decent details, it's necessary to lay your hands on *samizdat* publications. I have found a particularly interesting one, consisting of the signed confession of Yuri Tsirekidze, who was convicted in April 1973 of "extensive bodily injury leading to fatal consequences" and "refusing help to a suffering person." These criminal acts were carried out in the Investigatory Detention Center in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Tsirekidze's actions were part of a vast purge carried out under the supervision of Shevardnadze: in the two years preceding the trial of Tsirekidze, some 25,000 persons were arrested in Georgia, of whom 9,500 were Party members, and 7,000 were members of the youth organization, the Komsomol. It's almost impossible to describe the confession, so I will provide lengthy excerpts. The translation was done by Soviet émigrés living in New York City. I am grateful to Yuri Yarim-Agaev, executive director of the Center for Democracy in New York, for his help in ob-



taining this rare insight into the biography of the Soviet foreign minister:

I was sick of the agents, they made all sorts of demands and conditions and forced me to work as an agent. *If you refuse to work for them, they will expose you as an agent so you have to work for them, or danger threatens.* I worked in prison and in labor colonies and helped them in undercover work . . .

After being arrested on July 20, 1970, I was transferred to the KPZ (preliminary findings room). In 24 hours I was transferred to the SIZO #1. I was placed in Special Building #2, room #43.

. . . Special Building #2, which is isolated from all other sections of the prison, was established in 1966 and was designated solely for undercover work. The old section was re-equipped and 10 rooms were opened with all kinds of equipment for broadcasts and recordings. In this building only agents or objects who had been processed with the help of agents were placed. The rooms were not communal, they were for only 5-7 peo-

ple. No one else was placed in this building . . .

In room #45 Agdgomelashvili (an agent) beat Mikhelashvili (a Jew) on assignment from Panfilov (chief of operations), in room #44 agents . . . beat and cut with a razor the object Datusani, in room #37 agent Usupyan on assignment from Panfilov and Svimonishvili beat the object Valeri Kukhianidze, whose internal organs got so beat up that he spit blood, after which he died in the Central Prison Hospital and was "written off."

The agents Gurami Gogua and Tedo Dolidze were beating the object in room #38, including Kobakhidze, who had his legs strung up until they wrung a confession out of him. . . . In every room sat agents who worked with an object on a corresponding assignment for which they gave out narcotics, alcohol, allowed meetings with and packages from relatives and even visits with prostitutes—all of which was illegal in the special rooms and offices—they promised freedom, etc.

They were often given the assignments to beat objects such as for the purpose of ex-

tracting a confession, but also due to the personal interest of the administrators. . . . In a word, beating went on in all the rooms, and the groaning and howling of the objects was heard all over the building. . . . In general, it was a slaughterhouse.

On orders of the procurator Lezhava and his brother (head of SIZO #1) and on assignment from E. Shevardnadze, I was told, the object Roman Enukidze was sent to me. He was in a group . . . of the Bureau of Land for Gardening . . . Lezhava, Svimonishvili and others promised me that if I handled this case they would free me, since Shevardnadze himself had given his word.

I processed the object Enukidze, I put all my energy into it. He had been under observation before. I put him in touch with his home and convinced him of everything. I made him confess, as I had made Doloyan and Botadze, to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR.

Well, you get the idea. As the *samizdat* editor concluded, "the widespread use of torture . . . coincides with the

term of Shevardnadze as Minister of the Department of the Interior and First Secretary of the Central Committee." It was Shevardnadze who created the Special Building #2, where torture went on almost uninterruptedly, under cover of an anti-corruption campaign.

As for the unfortunate Tsirekidze, he was of course the fall guy for the KGB and MVD officials who ordered him to carry out his acts of brutality and torture. And one of those officials was eventually promoted to stand alongside the moderate and progressive Gorbachev as a representative of the new peace policy of the Soviet Union.

If you want more of the real biography of the Soviet foreign minister, talk to the Georgian community in exile in Queens, New York City. Better yet, write to your local paper and ask that one of their ace investigative journalists be put on this story. □

EUROPEAN DOCUMENT



AIDS: A BRITISH VIEW

by Christopher Monckton

The responses of governments and public agencies to the threat to mankind from the rapid spread of AIDS and its related diseases have been dangerously and perhaps fatally inadequate. On the one hand, they want to prevent the disease from becoming one of the biggest killers man has known. On the other, they are over-anxious to avoid offending high-risk groups or arousing unreasonable discrimination against known carriers of the disease. They are allowing an understandable sensitivity to the rights and feelings of minorities to outweigh their higher duty to protect the lives of all their citizens.

The authorities in some countries in Africa (where the very high infection rate leads many to believe the disease may have originated) are now refusing to report AIDS cases to the World Health Organization, which now has a small, under-funded but growing program to combat the disease internationally. These irresponsible attempts at concealment will obviously make the

task of worldwide eradication of the virus even harder than it already is.

In the United States Dr. Everett Koop, the Surgeon-General, has recently issued a 36-page report advocating the stepping-up of public education on the dangers of transmitting AIDS through promiscuity (heterosexual as well as homosexual) and through the re-use by intravenous drug addicts of possibly infected hypodermic needles. Privately he admits that, if his campaigns against smoking, drink, and drugs have made little impact, a campaign to change people's sexual behavior will have still less chance of success.

At the end of October a committee of the National Academy of Sciences produced a 390-page report entitled *Confronting AIDS*,¹ describing federal anti-AIDS funding as woefully inadequate and calling for a \$2 billion annual program of public education and research on the disease in the hope of finding a vaccine against it. Yet the report concedes that there is little chance of finding a cure in the short term.

Both these reports continue a wel-

come trend among official announcements about AIDS away from earlier misplaced and complacent attempts at reassurance and towards a more honest exposition of the full facts. *Confront-*

ing AIDS, for instance, bluntly states: "There is no agent currently available to treat the underlying disease process, no one has been known to recover from AIDS, and those exposed to the virus



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¹National Academy Press, \$24.95.