

# EDITORIALS



## THE DUKE DID HIS BEST

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

And so the Democrats have lost another presidential election, the fifth in twenty years. Jubilation prevails amongst the Republicans; and, slumped alone in the blood-streaked ring, the Democratic challenger reflects on the might-have-beens. He has my sympathy. For weeks his so-called allies have murmured against him from behind flabby hands—he isolated himself from wise counsel, they argue; he was slow to respond to Republican scurrilities; he was a pug contender. In truth, he fought hard using the only tools in his arsenal, that is to say using the prejudices and ideas of 1980s liberalism. Democrats who murmur against him today are simple cads, unworthy of his respect.

Similar recriminations were whispered about Walter Mondale four years ago. Yet both contenders are seasoned politicians who before bearing the Democrats' cross had been the repositories of praise for their intellects, their ideals, their progressive records. Pamphlets and books full of hope, bilge, and the promise of a liberal revival can be found in your local library. In their pages Mondale and Dukakis are frequently mentioned as prospective liberal messiahs.

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

What words of consolation can we offer Governor Dukakis as his former allies make him their scapegoat? I shall say: "Take heart! You did your best. And in 1992 your successor will do worse—at least if the cads in your party continue to avoid their critics and to blame the fortunes of their party on bad breaks and Republican skullduggery."

They have been blaming others for their sorry condition throughout the 1980s. Ronald Reagan's success was attributed to "teflon," to "magic," to the wizardry of PR hacks. Rarely did liberal grumblers take note of his policies' benign influence on the government, the economy, and foreign affairs. While they groused about illusory woes, real gross national product expanded by over 20 percent, inflation dropped by two-thirds, employment expanded faster than in any major industrial nation, and unemployment hit a 14-year low. The real median income dropped 7 percent under Ronald Reagan's predecessor. It has climbed 10 percent in the 1980s.

Ironically, American liberals of every variety would be in much better odor with the electorate today if they were not so dominant in the universities and the media. If, as in other Western countries the national media were not the virtual monopoly of one point of view, the liberals might have to face up to their critics. If America had a two-party

media, fatuous liberals could not indulge the luxury of dismissing conservatives as cranks for positing that the liberal coalition contains too many incompatible zealots to ingratiate itself to the American people.

With our present one-party media, the liberals can tune out their critics and politely exchange their canards untroubled by the fear that anyone will make them rethink a decaying certitude. Thus they say George Bush was a mudslinger. They also say he was a militarist, a McCarthyite, and a racist. At the Democratic convention he was portrayed as a wimp and an incompetent, and Jimmy Carter has called him "effeminate" and "silly." They say that he ran an issueless campaign, yet despite their doubts about his themes he made military spending, crime, traditional values, and the liberal political philosophy the issues of the campaign. In fact, his liberal critics can say anything they want because they do not listen to those who disagree. Now they bawl that this

country was founded on liberalism, and they pretend that the liberalism of the Founding Fathers is the same as their liberalism, which is to say that of Alan Alda and Jesse Jackson.

Of course the liberalism of the Founders was the liberalism of John Locke, Adam Smith, and English Whigs. It more closely approximates the ideas of George Bush than those of his liberal antagonists. Today's liberals have drifted into radicalism—an unpleasant fact that the American people try to point out to them at every presidential election. My guess is that in the years ahead this liberalism is going to become even more remote from that of the Founders. An axiom of ideological politics is that if indulged the extremists set the agenda, and if the liberals do not rid themselves of their radicals and revise their primary system, their agenda is going to be set by the Rev. Jackson. In fact, unless the liberals face up to their problems, their candidate in 1992 will be the Rev. Jackson. □

## PARDON OLLIE

"Action this day" was a Churchillian invocation. Or as the American philosopher Satchel Paige would put it in more relaxed tones, "Don't ever look back. Something may be gaining on you." And then there was Vince Lombardi's observation that a team never stands still. It's always getting better or worse. The point is that though the scenery may look like it's standing still, nothing stands still unless it is dead, monotonous, and at room temperature.

During the recent campaign Ronald Reagan, the oldest American President by six years, demonstrated that he is very much alive by campaigning across the country for his successor, Vice President George Bush. In fact, no President in history has campaigned so selflessly and vigorously. Ike never turned out for Richard Nixon until late in the 1960 campaign and then all he did was brag about himself, discredit-

ing in the process his struggling Vice President. Now the President can make another bold stroke on behalf of his successor: pardon Ollie North and his fellow victims of masked politics.

Ronald Reagan's presidency has been the most successful in the postwar period. He has changed the economy and the way Americans view government, convincing them that individual effort and not government creates wealth and that onerous taxation cripples growth. He has dampened the ardor of terrorists and of the Soviet Bloc for mischief. He has revived the economy and was well on his way to reviving the presidency until the Iran-contra hullabaloo.

That unexpected deviation and the natural wear and tear that his vigorous presidency has sustained have weakened the office. He can revitalize it by issuing pardons for Ollie North, Albert Hakim, John Poindexter, and Richard



Secord. Their prosecution is growing increasingly preposterous as prosecutor Lawrence Walsh spews out his vaporous charges, but the damage being done to the doctrine of separation of powers is real, and the office that Ronald Reagan hands over to George Bush will be an impotent foreign policy instrument unless the President takes his stand now.

The Democratic Congress has been waging a guerrilla war not just against this President but against the entire executive branch's ability to conduct foreign policy and control its budget. House Speaker Jim Wright has conducted his own foreign policy in Central America and at his pleasure leaked classified information. Congress has created unnecessary agencies answerable to it rather than to the President. Now the independent counsel is waging a political campaign beyond the reach of the electorate. The President should have done with this futile strife and

pardon North. His pocket veto of the Whistleblower Protection Act preserved the presidency from future congressional encroachments on presidential terrain. A pardon for North will be equally salutary.

**B**etter still, the President could give Walsh the old heave-ho. He has the authority to do so, and Walsh deserves it. He has cost the taxpayers nearly \$11 million. By law he is required to follow Justice Department policy and he has blatantly breached that policy by insisting in his recent brief that Congress is in charge of foreign policy—tell that one to James Madison. Yet his most egregious breach of Justice Department policy is to charge defendants with criminality even while admitting that they may not have broken the law. Walsh's claim is that though North might not have broken the law he acted in defiance of Con-

gress's will. So do millions of other Americans every time they act contrary to the prejudices of the House's Democratic leadership. Shall we prosecute these Americans, too?

In America a citizen is jailed for breaking laws, not for causing congressmen displeasure. In the absence of laws proscribing North's activity, Walsh's pursuit of him is purely malicious and political. Walsh is a threat

to the American sense of justice. He is also a threat to the authority of the President. Ronald Reagan in one bold act ought to remove that threat so that George Bush will finally be free of Iran-contra harassment. The voters have just demonstrated that they do not share the Democrats' excitement about Iran-contra. Go ahead, Mr. President: pardon Ollie, fire Walsh. □

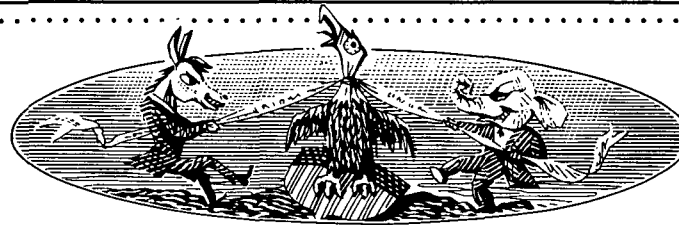
## JUNK DANGER

**A**s this election campaign should have demonstrated, the average American thinks for himself on politics, untutored by elites. Last spring none of this city's political sages believed that defense could be made into a campaign issue. George Bush, however, understood the public's concern for maintaining national security, and

he addressed the matter, making it a campaign issue. More spectacularly he addressed the public's concern that liberalism had gone too far in social engineering. The elites rolled their eyes, but Bush, it is now clear, had taken a proper measure of the electorate.

The average American also thinks  
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# CAPITOL IDEAS



## GUIDELINES FOR PRESIDENT BUSH

by Tom Bethell

**E**ight years ago I offered congratulations to President-elect Ronald Reagan, happy as I then was to see the last of Jimmy Carter. That was long before Reagan won the Strange New Respect Award, of course. (Incidentally, Michael Kinsley of the *New Republic* predicts that Dan Quayle will end up winning the award; I hereby record the prediction, and alert Mr. Quayle to the liberal perception that he can be bullied into adopting their policies.)

Today we all congratulate President-elect George Bush. Whatever follows, we are grateful at least that Michael Dukakis has been sent back to Boston. Who knows, maybe he will be the Democratic nominee once again in

1992 (although I doubt Jesse Jackson will countenance any such thing). Meanwhile, our thanks to Mr. Bush.

What has changed in eight years? Among conservatives in 1980 there was far more euphoria than I detect today. There was at that time a far greater sense that real change was possible. (What an odd prospect for "conservatives" to relish, by the way. Does this not tell us better than anything the true nature of the times we live in?) Now, some of the liberals, enraged by Bush's victory, are promising to exact "revenge." This was supposed to have been "their" year. But Bush unfairly beat them with "negative campaigning," meaning he pointed out that their man was a liberal, something they had hoped to conceal with the connivance of the news media.

At an election-night victory party held at Richard Viguerie's headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, both Viguerie and Conservative Caucus Chairman Howard Phillips were delighted at the prospect of liberal wrath to follow. Perhaps the fake, papered-over unity of the Reagan years would come unglued at last. Reagan had suckered the con-

servatives into thinking he was one of them; Bush would be capable of no such legerdemain. If the liberals came after him, he would have only two courses of action: capitulation, or reliance on conservative policies and advisers. If the former, Bush will sink without a trace. If the latter, he can prevail in the policy arena as successfully as he did in the electoral. Kinsley (who is off to England for seven months to edit the "American Survey" section of the *Economist*) predicts capitulation. But that may just be wishful thinking.

What is the conservative agenda? There are three key issues: impose no new taxes; move toward the deployment of Strategic Defense; appoint pro-life judges. Everything else (including contra aid) is secondary. The first should be easiest for Bush in view of his "no tax increase" pledge. He campaigned so unambiguously on the point that any retreat would be a serious setback. All that is required is for Bush to wield the veto and to relish the prospect of painting his opponents as greedily trying to reach into the taxpayers' pockets once more.

Notice the word "relish." Republicans should enjoy having the upper hand, rhetorically. They should not merely win but enjoy doing so. The problem is that, so often in the past, they have shrunk from the indispensable conflict that must precede victory. If the liberals, in their fury, make that conflict inevitable, they will have done us all a great favor.

**R**epublicans, as a rule, are insufficiently aware that they stand on moral high ground. Here, then, are one or two moral guidelines. The U.S. Congress today is filled with big spenders because the old institutional restraints on spending broke down at the time of Watergate. (This happened in the guise of reform, incidentally.) Today there is a trillion-dollar tax pot in Washington, with 535 congressmen and senators enjoying exclusive rights to siphon as much as they can out of this common pot and back into the pockets of their constituents and campaign contributors.

In view of this arrangement, lawless in its essence, voters rationally elect

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