

Father of His Country

My Dearest, It was with very great pleasure I see in your letter that you got safely down. We are all very well at this time, but it is still rainney and wett. I am sorry you will not be at home soon, as I expected you. I had rather my sister would not come up so soon, as May would be a much plasenter time than April. We wrote you last post; as I have nothing new to tell you I must conclude myself. Your Most Affectionate,

—Martha Washington (1767)

Give me leave, My dear General, to present you With a picture of the Bastille just as it looked a few days after I Had ordered its demolition, with the Main Kea [key] of that fortress of despotism—it is a tribute Which I owe as A Son to My Adoptived father, as an aid de Camp to My General, as a Missionary of liberty to its patriarch.

—Marquis de Lafayette (1790)

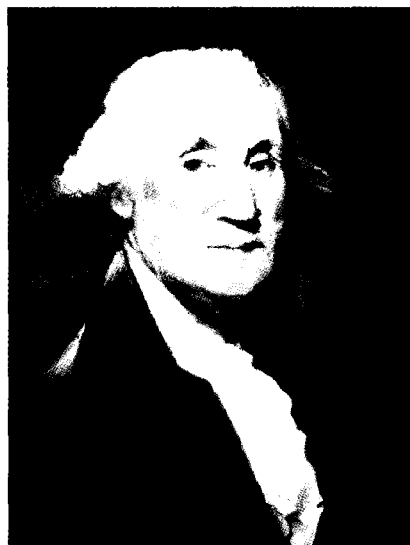
His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order; his penetration strong, though not as acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke; and as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known.... He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man.

—Thomas Jefferson (1814)

If ever a nation has been debauched by a man, the American nation has been debauched by Washington. If ever a nation has been deceived by a man, the American nation has been deceived by Washington. Let his conduct, then, be an example for future ages. Let it serve to be a warning that no man may be an idol. Let the history of the Federal government instruct mankind that the

mask of patriotism may be worn to conceal the foulest designs against the liberties of a people.

—The Aurora (1797)



The character, the counsels, and example of our Washington will guide us through the doubts and difficulties that beset us; they will guide our children and our children's children in the paths of prosperity and peace, while America shall hold her place in the family of nations.

—Edward Everett (1858)

So dignified his deportment, no man could approach him but with respect—none was great in his presence.... His judgment was always clear, because his mind was pure. And seldom, if ever, will a sound understanding be met in the company of a corrupt heart... In him were the courage of a soldier, the intrepidity of a chief, the fortitude of a hero.

—Gouverneur Morris (cited in 1932)

I have been distressed to see some members of this house disposed to idolize an image which their own hands have molten. I speak here of the superstitious veneration that is sometimes paid to

General Washington. Altho' I honour him for his good qualities, yet in this house I feel myself his Superior.

—John Adams (1777)

There was something about Washington that quickened the pulses of a crowd at the same time it awed them, that drew cheers which were a sort of voice of worship. Children desired sight of him, and men felt lifted after he had passed.

—Woodrow Wilson (1897)

My fine crab-tree walking-stick, with a gold head curiously wrought in the form of a cap of liberty, I give to my friend, and the friend of mankind, General Washington. If it were a sceptre, he has merited it and would become it.

—Benjamin Franklin (1789)

The fact that he was the intrepid leader through thick and thin—and remember, it was mostly thin—and triumphed made him irresistibly important and appealing. Right from the start as president, he set very high standards for the office; and dignity was among the most important of those standards. He created the presidential ideal, an American ideal, and of this, too, he was quite conscious.

—David McCullough (1999)

The image of George Washington kneeling in prayer in the snow is one of the most famous in American history. He personified a people who knew it was not enough to depend on their own courage and goodness; they must also seek help from God, their Father and Preserver.

—Ronald Reagan (1983)

Excerpted with permission from Peter Hannaford's The Essential George Washington: Two Hundred Years of Observations On the Man, the Myth, the Patriot (Images From the Past, Bennington, Vermont, 180 pages, \$19.50).

Correspondence

(Continued from page 11)

Ben Stein wonders why Hollywood doesn't touch the horrors of Communism. Part of the answer is that many of the oldtimers in Tinsletown didn't want to pour hot water on what they viewed as a failed experiment in socialism. They viewed Communism as a valiant try to enhance humanity that just got carried away even though their hearts were in the right place. These intellectuals don't want to revisit this era because it would reveal that socialism is just a step away from Communism. Coming to grips with what the Russians really did is too painful for true believers past and present.

—DAVE PELLINEN
Arlington, Virginia

Ben Stein's *Diary* is among the first things I read when my *American Spectator* arrives. Stein is interesting in a sort of superficial way, as well as witty, arrogant, and conceited, though sometimes his words are substantive and/or touching. He can also be mean-spirited. It seems he is forever being mistreated by airlines and airline people, and rarely fails to slam one or more of them in each issue. The same is true for lodgings where minimum-wage people must deal with him. According to his recent April diary, he complained to his first-class (how many of us get to ride there?) stewardess that his fish was tasteless (so what!), whereupon she had the temerity to let him know what she thought, i.e., that he complained about everything and she didn't appreciate it, whereupon he "slunk back to coach," where most of us slunkers and other peons ride. He knew perfectly well that the lady had nothing to do with preparing the food, but since he couldn't vent his spleen on the suspects he would just vent it on the stewardess. Stein said he planned "to get some amends [defined in Merriam-Webster as compensation for a loss or injury] out of United." One wonders what exactly that would be—the loss of her job, maybe, or just some medicine for the taste buds injured by that tasteless fish. Three cheers for the lady. Shame on Stein.

—JIM CLARK
Lexington, Kentucky

I was glad to hear Benjamin Stein had dinner with Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her husband David because I was just wondering about them the other day. And you know, I would much rather have read a cover article about their lives than that of Helen Gurley Brown.

—MICHELLE ULE
Ukiah, California

Kosovo and the Kingdom

In the fascinating feature by Matthew Stevenson ("Albania: Love It or Leave It!" *TAS*, April 2000) I found one mistake. The author wrote: "Turkish for 500 years, Kosovo was a spoil of the First World War, awarded to Serbia after it lost a fifth of its population fighting the Central Powers."

The spoils assigned to Serbia in 1919 included many areas: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the southern part of Hungary; they all became components of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In 1929, this kingdom was renamed Yugoslavia. Kosovo and Macedonia were gained by Serbia six years earlier, namely in 1913, at the conclusion of the Balkan Wars.

It shows still better how things in Southeastern Europe are messy and why we should not be involved in their setting.

—TED M. ZUCK
Pentwater, Michigan

Prosecuting Death

I am writing this as one who believes that the main problem with the death penalty is its lack of use, and as one who has the utmost respect for Byron York and his work. His disregard for the problems in Illinois, however, are dead wrong ("The Death of Death," *TAS*, April 2000). The problem, though, is not the death penalty itself; rather, it is the rampant corruption of the criminal justice system that abuses its power with such arrogant disregard for the law.

York failed to mention the cases of Rolando Cruz and Alejandro Hernandez, as well as the Ford Heights Four, and others. In the former, three men were indicted just days before a primary election in which the DuPage County state's attorney was far behind. The reason was the unsolved murder of a young girl abducted from her home. There was never any physical evidence against the three—no hair, no fingerprints,

not even a match with the semen in the girl's body. There was no history that tied any of the three, all petty punks, together. The new state's attorney (now Illinois attorney general) still proceeded with the fraudulent trial, in which the FBI testified as a defense witness for one of the men. Two of the three were found guilty and sentenced to death. These convictions were overturned on grounds so obvious that even I, untrained in the law, predicted. Written statements by the two convicted suggested the other's involvement. The prosecutors never put the men on the stand to testify, thereby negating the constitutional right to cross-examination.

Further specious evidence and lies sealed the verdicts against the men. These included references to a "vision statement" in which one of the defendants purportedly told another inmate unpublished details about the murder. However, the deputy who overheard this never wrote down anything about it! Suddenly, during the trial, he happened to remember it! He claimed that he told his supervisor about it, though, which the supervisor corroborated. Problem was that the supervisor was on vacation out of state at the time. Of course, the entire thought that a deputy would not immediately record such a conversation about the most sensational crime in the county is, in and of itself, unbelievable. The prosecutors introduced a footprint into evidence, knowing full well that the footprint was the shoe of a young friend of the slain girl, not any of the accused. Prosecutors also hid evidence pointing toward a man later found guilty of two murders (one of another little girl) who was placed in the neighborhood of the crime that same day (he had asked for work at a nearby church).

Retrials of these two resulted in one life sentence and one death sentence. In appealing these convictions, the DuPage prosecutors opposed using new DNA technology on the semen samples, on the grounds that nothing in the procedures in the court justified further testing. Clearly, the innocence or guilt of the convicted men was immaterial. DNA testing was allowed, pointing to the other known murderer. This evidence, combined with the proof that the supervisor had been out of town, got the

second conviction thrown out. DuPage prosecutors sought a third trial, which was finally thrown out. And there were plenty more examples of DuPage County corruption and incompetence.

This horrific example of prosecutorial abuses cost three innocent men a total of more than 30 years in prison; it cost the county and state several million dollars that could have gone toward honest police work; and the most likely perpetrator never was tried for the crime. The state's attorney behind most of the trial efforts moved on to higher office (and has joined in the anti-tobacco and anti-Microsoft charades, further prosecutorial excesses). Seven men were charged with abuses (none for attempted murder, as would have been appropriate). All were acquitted in the DuPage County equivalent of the O.J. Simpson trial. The current DuPage County state's attorney, himself a low-level player in much of the Cruz-Hernandez trials, even badgered the County Board into paying the legal bills for these miscreants.

I don't know this extent of details for the Ford Height's Four trials. Suffice it to say that the State's Attorney at the time of the convictions was Richard Daley, currently mayor of Chicago. Daley also oversaw wretched abuses against the owners of a day-care center accused of Satanic rituals and more with the kids (detailed in a *National Review* article some years back) and the trial of a stepfather accused in the disappearance of a young girl.

The problems in all these cases is that there is no punishment whatsoever for such abuses. There's not even a political price to pay in most cases. Instead, their legalized criminality continues, possibly even emboldened by getting away with their actions. What is the solution to these and other abuses? I honestly have no answer. There is no question that these men were on death row because of criminal actions. But the criminals were the prosecutors who lied and hid exonerating evidence, knowing juries would believe them over the accused.

Death penalty, where appropriate, yes. But we must add some penalty for the corrupt prosecutors who knowingly pursue innocent people.

—MICHAEL F. BURNSON
Elmwood Park, Illinois

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Utah Historical Quarterly

Professor Patricia Ann Owens, whilst reviewing a little-known monograph of feminist pith, *Women and Nature: Saving the "Wild West,"* reminds us of the late George Jean Nathan's ground-breaking insight, "Women have dirty minds":

Riley contends that the inclusion of women, including women of color, in the history of the environmental movement presents a holistic view and forms a more complete story. As societies' caregivers, women perceive nature in a distinct manner and offer more nurturing views of preserving the earth, its natural features, and its native peoples than do most men. Women described nature and pictured it in feminine terms and thus offered and developed alternative ways of viewing the landscape and making environmental decisions.

[WINTER 2000]

Minneapolis Star Tribune

The learned Elaine Tyler May, upon espying the bearded jailer of the Caribe, beholds visions of George Washington, famed agricultural reformer:

So what, really, is at stake? A small group of Cubans who were on the losing side of a revolutionary war came to the United States, and now control political power in Miami. Sure, they are angry at Fidel Castro. The dictator they supported, Fulgencio Batista, lost to the dictator now in power, Castro, who confiscated their property. No doubt, when the Tories found themselves on the losing side of the American Revolution, and the new government confiscated their homes and property, the losers went to England and fumed against George Washington. But the war was over, and it did not take 50 years for the United States and England to make their peace. The losers of the American Revolution did not flex their political muscle to force the leaders of England to hold a perpetual grudge against the United States.

[APRIL 18, 2000]

Jewish Journal

A scholarly dispute over the quiddities of the Mosaic Law as discovered in the correspondence page of an eminent journal of Israelite Thought:

Teresa Strasser is a whiny, bombastic narcissist who trashes her family, friends and ex-boyfriends. Strasser's columns rarely, if ever, contain an iota of Jewish content. Rather, they offer the reader an inside view to Strasser's pathetic Ricki Lake-esque personal life. I can watch talk shows for that. Most importantly as a 27-year-old Jewish adult, I am offended by Strasser's violation of one of Judaism's most vital commandments — *l'shon hara* or in colloquial terms, thou shall not gossip. If *The Jewish Journal* wants to lend a voice to Jewish adults I suggest it hire a person with some knowledge about Judaism. As for Strasser's column, it belongs in *Cosmopolitan*.

— NAME WITHHELD UPON REQUEST
[APRIL 14, 2000]

New York Review of Books

Professor Lars-Erik Nelson divulges the hitherto concealed story of how the Cold War was peacefully concluded not by American power and diplomacy but by one Ludmila Putin, the *New York Review of Books'* candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize:

What then precipitated the Gorbachev revolution? One answer can be found in the memoirs of the new Russian president, Vladimir Putin.... Starting in the 1960's Soviet elites had a chance to see the outside world and thus to measure their own country accordingly. By any international standard it was a failure. Families began enrolling their children in foreign-language schools in hopes of qualifying them for the highest reward their society could give: a job in the outside world as a diplomat, foreign trade official, Tass correspondent, or KGB spy.

Putin studied German in grammar school and was accepted into the KGB. His only foreign posting was in Dresden, East Germany, in the mid-1980's, but even that

exposure to a European Communist country gave his wife, Ludmila, grounds to complain about the empty shelves she found when she returned to Leningrad.

[MAY 11, 2000]

The Nation

A nostalgic and ever-hopeful Professor Frances Fox Piven recollects the good old days when the United States Senate was dominated by hoboes, a score of governors' offices were in the hands of our nation's gypsies, and panhandlers sat malodorously on the Supreme Court. It can all happen again, this time led by that paladin of today's poor people, the squeegee man:

Now may be the right time for poor people to re-enter national politics. A multifaceted movement seems to be emerging to challenge the corporate-reactionary alliance that has dominated the United States for the past two decades. The poor pay the heaviest price for that domination. They should be in the lead of the movement that dislodges it.

[MAY 8, 2000]

Late Edition

Another bizarre moment with the Clintons as Hillary confides in Wolf Blitzer a little-known fact:

I am a very strong supporter of law enforcement. For the last, I guess, 17 or so years, I have basically lived with a lot of professional law enforcement officers who have been assigned to my husband and myself.

[APRIL 26, 2000]

New York Times Book Review

Essays in the fantastical — Professor Alan Brinkley explains how President Ronald Reagan lost the Cold War and turned the world into the present Marxist Utopia governed by Microsoft:

In the first two years of the Reagan administration, the United States redefined its relationship with the Soviet Union and, in