

of the "ultraconservative"—as they are called by cynical liberal entrepreneurs and writers—concerns and feelings fully legitimate. However, we also deplore the New Right's trivial faith in simplistic political slogans as an autonomous force, as well as the Moral Majority's reliance on righteous but worn-out platitudes, neither of which are adequate weapons in a confrontation with the glittering multitude of liberal socioexistential demands and promises. Yes, the anti-abortion issue, the antibusing impulse, the school-prayer postulate all can be potent political ingredients, but only as components of a larger sociomoral imperative endowed with multidimensional intellectual insights into modern man's condition. Then, such directives can be expertly and knowingly molded into a sophisticated analysis of the liberal detriment to humanness and Americanism, and—consequently—can be transformed into a cultural image that will serve as a political message. And such a stylish distillation of idea into political action can be obtained only through high culture, top-notch intellectual effort, functional scholarship.

There was one bright spot in the bleak November electoral landscape—the New York state gubernatorial race. There, Mr. Lewis Lehrman, businessman and economist, challenged all the liberal powers that be on the grounds of ideological contention. It was a unique challenge; not only was it made in the most hostile political environment possible, not only did it take up a cause that had been declared by all liberal and economic pundits as bankrupt, but even the economic reality of the particular historical moment testified against it and negated

its rationality. Yet Mr. Lehrman, entrenched in a sociopolitical argument well grounded in ideology, withstood all derision, invectives, and insinuations and persisted in his faith in the theory. According to all political experts, such an attitude when vying for votes is suicidal. What mattered, however, was that his claim, that supply-side capitalism is the best way to deal with our economic adversities, has impeccable intellectual credentials, and this, unexpectedly, has revealed itself to be a political factor of magnitude. Before he entered politics Mr. Lehrman founded a research institute and did his homework well: thus he fluently spoke the language of an ideologically motivated politician propelled by the intellectual elaboration of his ideas—a species that is doomed to extinction, if we are to believe experts on American politics. He came just two points short of a victory over a liberal master of slogans. In New York.

#### Self-Assessment

Like everybody else, Mr. James Earl Carter, the 39th President of the United States, has written his memoirs. After glancing at their literary style and attempting to probe some of the book's historical analyses and judgments of the political scene (and its performers), we are reassured in our belief that the mental mediocrity of Mr. Carter is of exceptional dimension. During his tenure we always wondered about the image that his PR men and the entire press assiduously fostered—that of Mr. Carter as an "intellectual," a Tolstoy reader, a connoisseur of both art and the passions of

body and soul. We rather thought of his mind as a reservoir of monumental trivialities. In a prepublication interview given to *Time* magazine, Mr. Carter concluded:

I am at peace with the knowledge I did the best I could.

He's right. *That* was the gist of the problem.

#### Space-Age Apostolate

Last year's meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops—held in November in Washington, D.C.—propelled the venerable shepherds into a sort of spiritual brawl. At its origin was the question: What to do about the threat of nuclear war?

It's not up to us to pass opinionated judgments on ecclesiastical pacifism, allegiance to the flag, or raised consciousness regarding affairs of this world—here and now, on this planet. All we can deduce from the impassioned pleas—from both sides of the division between the abolitionists and the supporters of the idea of deterrence—is that the inability to clearly distinguish between the purple and the red means deep trouble. It's also obvious to us that there's much more to this ideological conflict than meets the eyes of national newsmagazines and other such dispensers of cap-sulated knowledge. The amazing strength of Catholicism in Poland is in its relentless defense of the integrity of life—personal, spiritual, social—from the wholesale invasion of politics. American profreeze bishops seem bent on doing just the reverse—they exert themselves to invite politics into daily and intimate human existence. By doing that, they emphasize Catholic conscience over Catholic wisdom. Yet, as many have learned—from St. Augustine and St. Thomas to Pascal and Maritain—it's exactly the latter which determines the victorious Catholic resilience in times of confusion and peril. (LT) □

#### In the Mail

*America's Burke: The Mind of Thomas Hutchinson* by William Pencak; University Press of America; Washington, DC. Hutchinson was the last royal civilian governor of Massachusetts; his defense of traditional society is examined in the light of Burke's similar stance.

*The Creator in the Courtroom: Scopes II* by Norman L. Geisler; Mott Media; Milford, MI. *McLean v. Arkansas*, the creation-evolution trial conducted in 1981, is examined, particularly in relation to its handling by the media and to traditional Judeo-Christian values.

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