

## Mr. Rockwell Replies:

A charming and spirited letter, but Mr. Racho has fallen victim to a number of anticapitalist bromides. The movies were not destroyed by low-brow market tastes, but by government intervention. From the mid-1930's through the late 40's, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Supreme Court, bludgeoned the wonderful old free-market studio system that gave rise to the equally wonderful Hays Office. In its place, the antitrust police mandated independent ownership of theaters and production, thus separating the responsibility—moral and financial—that would naturally link movie-makers and movie theaters.

There were bad and immoral movies made then, and there are bad and immoral movies made now. The market won't put a stop to all evil, but it does force those with evil intentions to go about their misdeeds indirectly, namely, by convincing people voluntarily to cooperate with their plans. If Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt, and Mao had been capitalist moguls with murderous dreams, instead of heads of state, they might have published grotesque novels or made bad films. But their ability to wreck havoc on society would have been limited by those they could have pulled into their profitable orbit, not by the numbers of troops they could draft into their armies. Therein lies the difference between government power (in which the ability to do evil is nearly unlimited) and market power (in which it is severely limited).

As to the rest of Mr. Racho's claims, it's rent control, not markets, that de-

stroyed housing in Manhattan and San Francisco; I'm against abortion (and where would that industry be without government subsidies and restrictions on adoption?); I'm all for the right of CEO's to fire workers (far too few people get fired these days); I'm all for the Internet despite pervert.com (just as I'm all for books despite Foucault); and credit markets are a blessing (but abolish bankruptcy laws and bring back debtors' prisons). As for the claim that "the free market hasn't saved us from anything," I would mention hunger, disease, and barbarism, all of which would quickly prevail in its absence. Worse, we wouldn't have *Chronicles*.

## On Homosexuality

In an otherwise cogent and incisive article ("The Last Respectable Bias," December), William A. Donohue somehow manages to dance all around, but never quite name, the one faction in our society that would go a long way toward answering his rhetorical question, "Why the cheap shots against Catholicism?" That faction, of course, is the militant and highly organized homosexual rights movement.

Does Mr. Donohue think that his example of the gay night club in Chicago called the "Convent," where the bartenders dress as priests, the waitresses as Catholic schoolgirls, and drinks named "Holy Water" are served in a "Hell Room," is just another case of garden-variety bigotry? Or that the gay-led vilification campaign against New York City's John Cardinal O'Connor and the bla-

tantly open desecration of Catholic churches there is not also part of a long-term strategy unique to gays? Other recent examples in this vein are legion. Using their favorite mantra, "Stop the Hate!" as cover, gay activists and their p.c. sympathizers across the country pursue a genuinely hate-driven vendetta against Catholics and Protestant evangelicals. Again, the reason is obvious: while our major institutions—public schools, big media, Hollywood, and big government—have been supinely susceptible to blandishments and threats, only those of a strong, biblically based faith have remained immune to all the feigned moral outrage and propaganda trumpeting the line that homosexuality is a perfectly normal and wholesome "alternative lifestyle" deserving of equal standing with heterosexuality. Realizing that this is the one segment of society that can't be coerced into cooperating, gay activists are bending every effort to cheapen and marginalize traditional religion to the fullest extent possible.

Though not a Roman Catholic, I have long been an admirer of Mr. Donohue's dual talents of great investigative journalism and lucid expository writing. While not accusing Mr. Donohue of "gaining in maturity" (liberalspeak for caving), I do think that writing a lengthy article about anti-Catholic bigotry with nary a reference to homosexual activism is like writing about the perpetrators of the holocaust without mentioning Adolf Eichmann.

—O.M. Ostlund, Jr.  
State College, PA

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## CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

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**THE BIPARTISAN** "nationalist" coalition which has been emerging in response to the cosmopolitan policies of the Clinton administration scored several notable victories in the week before Congress adjourned for 1997. The House defeated an attempt to extend NAFTA to the countries of the Caribbean and Central America. This measure was clearly linked to the corporate hunt for cheap Third World labor, since this region can't promise large markets for American-made exports. Firms which had relocated their factories to Central

America wanted a "level playing field" with those who relocated to Mexico under NAFTA. Opponents cited last year's \$16 billion trade deficit with Mexico to make the case against opening American markets to more imports. NAFTA needs to be corrected, not compounded.

A legislative package put together by Representative Chris Cox (R-CA) took aim at Clinton's trade-based China policy. All nine bills passed with over 300 votes each. Most of the bills dealt with human rights or national security issues, but others limited trade with firms using

slave labor or connected with the Chinese military. Another bill cut off concessionary loans to China by the American-funded World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Transnational business opposed all the bills. Beijing has convinced business that only by working for appeasement can its investments in China be protected.


The struggle between national and private interests peaked in the battle over Clinton's request for a new grant of "fast track" trade negotiating authority. Under fast track, Congress would surrender

its constitutional duty to regulate foreign commerce and be prohibited from amending presidential requests to change American law to conform with executive agreements. Just as executive agreements were conceived to circumvent the Senate's role in treaty-making, fast track is designed to cripple Congress's ability to guide trade policy.

In place of elected representatives, a host of private-sector advisory committees have been created. Former Clinton trade official Jeffrey Garten has admitted that "the executive branch depends almost entirely on business for technical information regarding trade negotiations." The transnationals have imparted to the administration their "globalist" orientation, which fits well with Clinton's Woodrow Wilson liberalism.

The House of Representatives is the natural place for a countermovement. The House is rooted in local communities, the building blocks of the territorial nation-state. While the media concentrated on the influence of labor unions and Dick Gephardt's presidential ambitions versus Vice President Al Gore, the bid for fast track could not have been derailed by these forces alone. The Republican Party, the ultimate "party of big business," holds a majority in the House, and its leaders remain solidly in support of Clinton's trade policy.

**M O V I N G ?**



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To defeat fast track, a block of Republican members had to form around a more traditional conservative perspective. About one-third of GOP House members can now be counted among its ranks. No vote was taken on fast track. Despite an all-out effort by the White House, GOP leaders, and an army of business lobbyists, the bill was pulled for lack of support. On the earlier vote against extending NAFTA, 83 Republicans had joined 151 Democrats to form a majority.

A poll conducted for the *Wall Street Journal* found that 76 percent of rank-and-file Republicans and 70 percent of independents opposed fast track. Unfortunately, the Republican half of the nationalist coalition in Congress has not yet gelled sufficiently to produce consistent majorities in the face of a party leadership still heavily influenced by liberal philosophy and transnational interest groups.

The data clearly show that the mounting trade deficits under Clinton have harmed the American economy, slowing growth and holding down incomes. With the crash in Asian markets making hash of the assumptions underlying the President's policies, the opportunity brightens for the nationalist coalition to solidify and make Clinton the lame duck he deserves to be. The open question is whether a presidential candidate will emerge by 2000 to carry the nationalist perspective to the White House, or whether the U.S. House will have to go it alone.

—William R. Hawkins

**THE REBEL FLAG** and Ole Miss go hand-in-hand—or rather, they did, until recently. The University of Mississippi's football team is named the Rebels, and students and alumni have had a long tradition of waving the Confederate Battle Flag at home football games. But the tides of time and political correctness have washed up on Ole Miss's shores, and this past fall, head football coach Tommy Tuberville, a longtime opponent of the flag, argued that Ole Miss would never win a national championship unless the flag disappears from the stands. His argument, used successfully by flag opponents at other Deep South schools, was that black athletes aren't willing to play for a team identified (however tenuously) with the Confederacy. Ole Miss's student senate—partially

swayed by Coach Tuberville's argument but mainly pursuing its own agenda—passed a resolution to discourage the waving of the flag. But neither the coach nor the senate counted on the tenacity of Rebel fans. While some alumni responded to Coach Tuberville's scare tactics, Ole Miss students continued to show their school (and Southern) pride. Having failed to win their argument by persuasion, the student senate turned to force, voting to ban all sticks in the football stadium, ostensibly for reasons of public safety.

The senate's imperious action made some students' Southern blood boil, and they came up with ingenious methods to skirt the ban on sticks. Some attached their flags to cardboard tubes from drycleaners' hangers, while others used rolled-up copies of the *Daily Mississippian* (the liberal campus newspaper, which had supported the stick ban) as substitute sticks. The students were supported by a coalition of Southern heritage organizations led by the League of the South, which printed up 1,000 Battle Flag placards and distributed them to fans attending the Ole Miss-University of Arkansas game. The League ran out of placards in 15 minutes.

Buoyed by their success at the Arkansas game, the League organized a rally in support of the Battle Flag and to distribute 10,000 placards at Ole Miss's final home game. Despite threats of violence a few days before the rally, the League did not anticipate the intensity of the opposition that they would face. The opposition did not come from Ole Miss's black community—those attending the rally said that they received not a single complaint or rude comment from any black student, alum, or faculty member. Instead, it was led by a small but vocal coalition of self-identified gay, lesbian, and feminist students, who were aided in their cause by a single white supremacist with a megaphone. The estrogen coalition shoved League members who were handing out placards, ripped up some of the placards and threw them in the mud, and shouted obscenities. One League member, Israel Contreras, was even called a "Nazi."

Despite the opposition, many Ole Miss students and fans thanked the League for handing out the placards and brochures explaining the history of the battle flag. They understood that the controversy was not over white supremacy, but over the preservation of tradi-

tion—both Southern and American. Southern symbols are not *anti-American*; they are the most visible and emotionally charged of *American* symbols. Should they fall, what will be next?

We already have the answer. The New Orleans School Board has changed the names of 22 schools over the past five years. Most recently, a public elementary school has been renamed after Dr. Charles Richard Drew, a black surgeon. Previously, this school had been named after a prominent Southern slaveholder—George Washington. Welcome to the brave new world, in which the Father of our Country is consigned to the memory hole.

—Scott P. Richert

**THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL** of honor (CMH) is our nation's highest award for valor under fire. The criteria are stiff: a deed of such exceptional bravery that failure to do it would draw no criticism; two eye-witnesses; and, above all, the risk of life. In our nation's history, we have awarded only 3,427 such medals. Of those, 568 were awarded posthumously. In other words, if you have a CMH, you did something heroic and extraordinary to get it, and there is a one-in-seven chance that you died doing it. (If you were a Marine, the odds were one-in-four.)

Until now.

Congress has recently required the Army and the Navy to tap the World War II honor rolls of our nation's *second* highest award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC; in the sea services, the Navy Cross), for candidates for an upgrade to the CMH. One catch, however: potential upgradees must be of "Asian-American or Native American Pacific Islander" descent.

What started as a provision inserted by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) into the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996, has become a full-blown research project—initiated last October—involving three full-time, professional historians working at the Presidio of Monterey.

It's not easy to discover the justification for this latest experiment in affirmative action. Scott Welch, the project's spokesman, was eager to discuss the team's findings to date (55 Filipinos, 53 Japanese-Americans, one Korean-American, and one Chinese-American won the DSC in World War II), but he is either unwilling or not permitted to specu-

late as to the underlying reason for the project. In fact, his boss, Dr. James C. McNaughton, the project's director, would not even let him reveal the amount of money that the taxpayers have coughed up for this project.

The Army's public-affairs office was only slightly more forthcoming. They revealed the size of their budget—over a half-million dollars—but when asked why the project existed at all, a Lt. Colonelette Tallon replied, "It's the law, Congress directed it."

But why did Congress direct it? The Navy's spokesman for their parallel project (also a woman) was more honest: "I have no idea. Who am I to second-guess the Congress of the United States? But sometimes I see these things and just shake my head." The Navy, out of some 3,500 Navy Crosses awarded, found only one possible candidate for upgrade under the provision: a Hawaiian destroyer captain, one of many ships' captains who got the Navy Cross in World War II. No upgrade was recommended.

John Tajami in Senator Akaka's office admitted that the law originated in affirmative action: in essence, because we were at war with Japan, a climate of prejudice may have prevented Asian-American soldiers from receiving due recognition for battlefield heroism. Might not a similar climate have adversely affected proper recognition of German-American war heroes? Tajami thought that was possible, but, to his knowledge, no one raised that question during consideration of the law. (In fact, Tajami could not remember any debate at all.)

We probably shouldn't look to Akaka to seek redress for under-recognized German-American (or Italian-American, for that matter) war heroes. As his spokesman pointed out (as did Welch), 15,000 German-Americans were not interned in camps during the war. (Nor, of course, did any German-Americans officially renounce their citizenship during the war, as some 5,000 Japanese-Americans did.)

What evidence is there that the Army discriminated against Asians in awarding the CMH? One test might be the number of Medal of Honor recommendations for Asians that were downgraded to a DSC. All servicemen know that zealous company-grade officers often recommend awards for their troops only to have them downgraded at the battalion or regimental level. But those hoping to prove discrimination in the case of

Asian troops will find the data uncooperative: only six of the 53 DSC's awarded to Japanese-American soldiers (the Asian group toward which we might expect to find the most hostility) were originally recommended as Medals of Honor.

This upgrade project has not received the kind of attention that other military affirmative action schemes have. After all, a half-million dollars is a drop in the bucket of untold billions that the Armed Forces have spent trying to make everyone equal: everything from refitting heads on aircraft carriers to entrusting multimillion dollar aircraft to the unqualified. No lives will be lost as a direct consequence of upgrading a few medals. But the bits of cloth, as Napoleon put it, for which men are willing to sacrifice so much may now be worth a bit less.

—Christopher Check

**CLYDE A. SLUHAN's** death on November 6 deprived The Rockford Institute of one of its most devoted and effective patrons. One of the original directors of the Institute, Clyde had served a term as Board Chairman, and at the age of 85 was still an active member of the Institute's Executive Committee.

Born in Cleveland, Clyde grew up in the Lutheran Orphans' Home of Toledo where, as reported by his son Elliott, a profound belief in God and a dedication to service became central features of his life. The Campus Crusade for Christ, Jews for Jesus, and the Gideons were some of the organizations that benefited from his involvement and gifts.

After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan University with a major in chemistry, Clyde Sluhan worked in several manufacturing firms. His chief concern was how to create a better water-solvent lubricating/cooling fluid for high-speed metal-working machines. In an interview several years ago, he told how he labored "night after night, three and a half years, three and a half thousand tries," until he hit on the right formula for just such a fluid.

Once satisfied with the product, he founded Master Chemical Corporation in 1951. It eventually became a primary national supplier for automotive, aeronautic, and other industries involved in cutting and grinding metals. The success of the company in a competitive field was due to the high quality not only of the product but of the training programs in the sale and uses of the product



that the company conducted across the country. Clyde himself attended these seminars, and his engaging personality and wealth of knowledge proved invaluable to his company.

His family was the centerpiece of Clyde's life. His wife Marian worked with him in the business from the very beginning, and she eventually served as Vice President for Administration and as Corporate Secretary. Bill Sluhan succeeded his father as President and Chief Executive Officer of Master Chemical. His two sons and a daughter, Sally Wright, and six grandchildren were a constant source of pride and delight to him. Clyde was so grateful for the blessings he had received that he wanted to do all he could to make sure that America would remain the land of opportunity for coming generations. Hillsdale College, the Heritage Foundation, and the Social Philosophy and Policy Center at Bowling Green State University were some of the institutions that benefited from his patronage.

On November 2, Clyde and Marian Sluhan flew to Chicago for the Institute's annual board meeting and the awarding of the Ingersoll Prizes. He had had serious heart problems for the past six months and was not feeling well. As it turned out, he was not well enough to attend either event, but returned home and entered the hospital. At the funeral service, Marian said, "He really wasn't well enough to make the Chicago trip, but he was so committed to The Rockford Institute that nobody and nothing could persuade him not to go. So he did."

—John A. Howard

**THE JOHN RANDOLPH CLUB's** eighth annual meeting was, by all indications, the most successful. Over 100 people from across America converged on the once-splendid Congress Hotel on Chicago's Lakefront for the three-day gathering, which included a black-tie dinner celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Chronicles*.

Continuing the John Randolph Club's tradition of debate between the partisans of liberty and the partisans of order, the meeting also expanded the debate into other areas. Addressing the question, "The Future of America: Nationalism or Secession?" from international, national, and regional perspectives, the speakers discussed growing

tensions within the United States, as well as assaults on American sovereignty from without. The weekend began with a speech by John O'Sullivan, editor of *National Review*, who argued in favor of a vibrant American nationalism and warned the audience of the dangers of restricting free trade and failing to restrict immigration. On Saturday morning, Paul Gottfried and Srdja Trifkovic discussed federalism—both real and imagined—in Europe, while James Jastras examined "Fascism at Home and Abroad." *Chronicles* editors Chilton Williamson, Jr., and Bill Kauffman and League of the South President Michael Hill argued that America is a nation of regions, although they all agreed that those regions are rapidly losing their distinctive identities under assault from Washington, D.C., New York, and Los Angeles. Chicago columnist and radio personality Tom Roeser, in a lively luncheon speech, defended the "evils you know" in Chicago as preferable to the "evils you don't know" in Washington.

On Saturday afternoon, the speakers focused on particular issues facing America today. Rockford Institute Executive Vice President Christopher Check, formerly a captain in the Marines, described our "New World Army" as a failure in its traditional mission and a threat to American freedom, while E. Christian Kopff delivered a rousing denunciation of free trade ideology. Two distinguished legal scholars, Stephen Presser of Northwestern University and William Quirk of the University of South Carolina Law School, discussed remedies to curb the imperial judiciary. The afternoon was capped off by a heated debate over the question, "Nationalism or Secession?" Sam Francis and Chris Kopff took the nationalist side, while Thomas Fleming and Clyde Wilson defended devolution and insisted upon the use of secession as a political threat. While both sides agreed that a revitalized federalism is desirable, the nationalist team claimed that secessionist movements play into the hands of the centralizers, while the secessionist team argued that excessive nationalism can destroy regional and local identities.

To celebrate *Chronicles* 20th anniversary, the editors of *Chronicles* (and assorted friends) roasted the man who has guided the magazine for 13 years, Thomas Fleming. In a series of wicked (but moving) tributes, the roasters discussed Dr. Fleming's known affinity for

neoconservatives, Swedes, and other upstanding folk. The roast ended on a flat note, when Chilton Williamson, Chris Check, and Scott Richert attempted (in vain) a rendition of two Gilbert and Sullivan parodies composed by *Chronicles* managing editor Theodore Pappas.

The evening ended with a call to arms by Tom Fleming, recently named President of The Rockford Institute. Declaring that "the age of exploration has ended, and the age of reconquest has begun," Dr. Fleming briefly sketched the failures and betrayals of American conservatives. He called for a revitalized American right, recaptured from "the cynics, hucksters, and blow-dried office-seekers who speak for the conservative movement." "Our first duty," he argued, "is to defend our religion, our heritage, our culture from the attacks of the multicultural left, of course, but also from the attacks of the universalist left, from conservatives like Sidney Hook and Bill Bennett who lie in telling us that Western civilization is a set of a few books and abstract principles, universal and open to anyone willing to take a few courses in citizenship and the great books." To a standing ovation, he declared, "The counterrevolution has begun."

## EPICYCLES:

- **Burn, Baby, Burn:** While the Confederate battle flag has come under fire at Ole Miss, symbols of **Mexican nationhood** are increasingly prevalent in America. The Mexican national anthem was played at the groundbreaking of a bilingual public school here in Rockford. The Mexican flag has become a prominent feature at Hispanic political rallies such as Jesse Jackson's anti-Proposition 209 rally on the Golden Gate Bridge last fall. Not surprisingly, some Americans see the elevation of Mexican political symbols as an attack on American sovereignty. In Santa Cruz, California, a decorated Vietnam veteran, dressed in his fatigues, climbed to the top of the Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building and burned a Mexican flag. According to the Santa Cruz *Sentinel*, James Wainscoat, the president of the United Veterans Council, shouted "Viva California! Viva America!" while torching the flag. Interviewed by a local TV station, Wainscoat stated: "I was trained in special forces, military intelligence, and insurgency warfare, and what I see happening

in the Chicano movement is a full-line insurgency. If it isn't addressed and stopped, they'll take the Southwestern states without a shot."

• **Two Small Steps for Rockford:** Citizens of Rockford are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Although the federal magistrate still controls the **Rockford school district**, his grip is weakening. Despite the best efforts of Rockford's political and media powers, voters elected two school board candidates who have vowed to fight the case all the way to the Supreme Court. And the day after the school board election, a state judge ruled that Rockford's tax protesters (told by Rockford's mayor, Charles Box, to "belly up and pay") have been right all along: the use of a special tax to raise \$150 million for "discrimination remedies" is illegal. The federal magistrate, who had ordered the school district to impose the tax, may now turn to a federal tax; if he does, however, the case may go all the way to the Supreme Court, where legal observers believe the taxpayers will win. Watch these pages for further updates.

**OBITER DICTA:** The proceedings of the eighth annual meeting of the **John Randolph Club** were recorded. Each audiotape covers one session, while the tape of the *Chronicles* anniversary dinner includes Tom Fleming's rousing speech on reclaiming the American right as well as his comrades' hilarious roast of him. For prices and ordering information, please see the advertisement inside the front cover.

**Richard Moore**, a poet from Belmont, Massachusetts, has contributed three new poems to this issue. Mr. Moore is the author of nine books of poetry, translations of Plautus and Euripides, a book of literary essays, and a novel, *The Investigator*. His most recent book of verse, *Pygmies and Pyramids*, was published by Orchises Press. Mr. Moore gives frequent readings in the Boston area.

*Chronicles* is illustrated this month by **Stephen Anderson**, a folk artist from Rockford, Illinois, who was recently featured on the TV show *Wild Chicago*. Mr. Anderson, who is self-taught, is affiliated with the Phyllis Kind Gallery in Chicago and New York.

Are you looking for an extra copy of *Chronicles* to give to a friend? In Wash-

ington, check out the University Book Store, 990 102nd Avenue, N.E., Department 301, Bellevue; Barnes & Noble Superstore, 19401 Alderwood Mall Parkway, Lynwood; Bulldog News, 1103 N. 36th Street, Seattle; and Eagle Harbor Book Company, 157 Winslow Way East, Bainbridge Island. In **Oregon**, *Chronicles* is available at Borders Books, 2605 S.W. Cedar Hills Boulevard, Beaverton; Peterson's, 922 S.W. Morrison Street, Portland; Rich's Cigar Store, 820 S.W.

Alder Street, Portland; Powells Bookstore, 1005 W. Burnside Street, Portland; and Barnes & Noble Superstore, Washington Square Too, 10206 Washington Square Road, Tigard. In **California**, Bay area readers can find *Chronicles* at Borders, 400 Post Street, San Francisco; Stacey's Bookstore, 581 Market Street, San Francisco; Juicy News, 2453 Fillmore Street, San Francisco; and Borders, 588 Francisco Boulevard West, San Rafael.



**The Book of Exodus.** A bureaucratic empire enslaves a people and forces them to work most of the year for Pharaoh's IRS.

**Johannes Althusius, *Politica* (LibertyClassics).** One of the foundational works of federalist theory.

**James Madison et al., *The Federalist*.** The classic defense of the Constitution.

**Herbert Storing, ed., *The Anti-Federalist* (University of Chicago Press).** A concise one-volume collection of writings in opposition to the Constitution. Read the letters by "Brutus" in conjunction with Hamilton's contributions to *The Federalist*.

**Thomas Jefferson, *Public and Private Papers* (Library of America).** Jefferson's concerns about the concentration of power helped lead to the Bill of Rights.

**M.E. Bradford, *Original Intentions: On the Making and Ratification of the United States Constitution* (University of Georgia Press).** The Constitution as a Southern document.

**Clyde Wilson, *The Essential Calhoun* (Transaction).** The concentration of power is not simply a 20th century phenomenon; Calhoun attempted to restore true federalism 150 years ago.

**Raoul Berger, *Government by Judiciary: The Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment* (LibertyClassics).** The classic indictment of the Imperial Judiciary.

**William Quirk and R. Randall Bridwell, *Judicial Dictatorship* (Transaction).** How we got to where we are, and where we can go from here.

**Stephen Presser, *Recapturing the Constitution: Race, Religion, and Abortion Reconsidered* (Regnery).** A call to action.

***The Westerner*.** Walter Brennan plays Judge Roy Bean, "the only law west of the Pecos" and, like most judicial dictators, a complete scoundrel. It's a fairy tale with a happy ending: Gary Cooper kills the judge.

**1776.** A musical rendition of the American founding, which presents a surprisingly sympathetic view of the Founders.



## Anthems for Doomed Youth

by Thomas Fleming

Rockford is becoming for me what the Rouen Cathedral was for Monet or the village of Selbourne for Gilbert White: a place intrinsically no more interesting than any other but as worthy of close attention as any human community. Rouen Cathedral is beautiful, but Europe has hundreds, even thousands, of beautiful churches. Monet, by depicting Rouen in every possible light, weather, and season, made it his. For good or ill, I am making Rockford—a light industrial suburb of Garrison Keillor’s Lake Wobegon—my own mythical universe.

One chapter in the ongoing saga of federal tyranny in Rockford is the construction of several superschools that will transfer more money from the hands of parents and children to the pockets of public contractors, lawyers, and education bureaucrats. The other day the undisputed king of Rockford talk radio interrupted my breakfast to ask what I thought of the groundbreaking ceremony for a planned magnet school. According to an announcement from the school district, the ceremony would begin with a playing of national anthems: first the American, and then the Mexican. I agreed to go on the program to discuss the implications, and as soon as the host read the announcement, the lights on his telephone lit up and stayed lit throughout the two hours I was in the studio.

The callers often prefaced their remarks with “I am shocked” or “I can’t believe it.” To me the only surprising part is the surprise itself. Magnet schools, which are supposed to attract ethnic diversity without coercion, ought to be called Venus Flytrap schools, because however sweet the nectar smells, the end result is death—death to community schools and parental influence and an end to the remote chance that students might

learn anything but propaganda. The underlying assumption of all these programs that march under the banner of school choice (here in Rockford the magistrate and master call their system “controlled choice”) is the Jacobin-Marxist conviction that the state rules and experts decide. Fathers, who were once regarded as symbols of sovereignty and divine power, are reduced to the status of taxpayers and laymen.

The token Republican columnist working for the Gannet machine’s “Rockford” newspaper described the outraged callers as “xenophobes,” a word he probably had to look up in the dictionary. What he neglected to mention is that one of the callers had a Latin American wife, another was a Mexican immigrant, and several claimed to have spent years in Spanish-speaking countries where they never expected to hear the “Star-Spangled Banner” played at soccer matches and never asked for their children to be given English-only instruction paid for by Spanish, Mexican, or Ecuadorian taxpayers.

What people objected to was not so much the celebration of Mexican cultural heritage as it was the explicit acknowledgment of dual loyalty and dual sovereignty. Flags and national anthems are not cultural expressions; they are statements of political allegiance. When radical students carried the hammer-and-sickle or the flag of North Vietnam or burned the American flag, everyone knew what they meant: they were renouncing their allegiance to the United States. When Chinese students, in “pro-democracy” demonstrations, waved American flags and set up models of the Statue of Liberty, the communist government interpreted their symbolic gestures—quite properly—as a threat to the regime.

No man can serve two masters, and Mexican-Americans can