

keep up with the costs. It's a vicious cycle."

Cedar Summit and other such farms are not utopias. Local banks, owned by faraway chains, are reluctant to give loans to small producers. The Minars needed plenty of equity in their farm to get the start-up money, and they are mortgaged heavily in equipment. Plus, they have had to deal with the local county and township boards, which are having a hard time trying to figure out how to classify such a business: Is it commercial, agricultural, or retail? Because Scott County is considered part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area even though it still mostly countryside, they have more bureaucratic headaches in dealing with the metropolitan council.

In a way, this is a blessing in disguise. Scott County and New Prague are considered exurban territory, somewhere between country and suburb. You can find clusters of subdivisions outside New Prague and near I-35 and other four-lane highways that take commuters to their jobs in the Twin Cities. The presence of commuters means that the Minars have another local market besides the grocery stores and regular farmers' markets for direct sale of their products.

What the Minars like most about their farm is what it means to and for their family. There are plenty of "chores" to be done. Besides working in the barn, Minar family members act as accountants, salesmen, marketers, computer programmers, technicians, and chefs. These jobs lured Mike and Dan home from the Twin Cities. The operation also involves the spouses of both Laura and Mike, along with extended family and neighbors.

"We have top-notch milk here, and we knew we could make good dairy products," Laura said. "But it's our family that's the middleman now. It's the perfect opportunity for all of us to work together again. It's so nice to have the family business back."

The spin-off jobs from the farm are what has Swain most excited about this project and others he hopes to start. "With all these jobs available, people from rural areas don't have to leave for the big city to find work, to find the kinds of high-paying jobs they want. They can still live right here and not have to commute. I think this is the way we can revive our rural communities as a whole; otherwise, they are going to die out."

He dreams of putting 40 such opera-

tions in the Mann Valley in Pierce County where I live; a buffer, like Cedar Summit Farms, against the urban sprawl of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Saving these farms will preserve much of the scenery of south-central Minnesota.

I wasn't the only one who was at Cedar Summit Farms to observe this new model for agriculture. Farmers from Wisconsin and Nebraska were taking a look, seeing how the principles of the Minars' operation could work for them—and not just at dairies, either. Couldn't an Iowa hog farmer market his own pork products through a micro-slaughterhouse? An Illinois corn farmer, his own corn syrup, cereal, or ethanol through his own micro-processing plant? Or a Kansas wheat farmer, his own bread through a micro-mill? The possibilities are endless.

The day of our visit, radio station KCZH, the "Voice of Czech County," was broadcasting live from Cedar Summit Farm with the help of the New Prague Chamber of Commerce, which is eager to drum up business for the area. A guest performer squeezed out Czech folk songs on a concertina. The ties that bind the Old World to the New in this area, which was so heavily settled by Czech and Slovak immigrants, run right through this micro-dairy, and not just in the wonderful Bohemian cream (milk mixed with brandy) that Cedar Summit produces. It was in Slovakia itself, several years ago, that Swain got the idea to establish micro-dairies. Touring the countryside, Swain happened upon a small village that took pride in a micro-dairy operation the local farmers had set up. Sadly, that dairy has now closed, but Swain carried the seed across the ocean in the hope that the cousins of these Slovaks in New Prague—and their neighbors across the Upper Midwest—could plant it themselves.

The day at Cedar Summit was a festive one; happiness beamed from the faces of the Minar family, Swain, and the other farmers in attendance. For the first time in a long time, they were excited about farming again, proud to be who they are. If farmers can be accused of feeling that the world is against them, often that's because it really is. The problems this attitude can lead to—anger, depression, resentment, suicide, and despair—are well documented in the Upper Midwest and in rural communities across America. Yet micro-dairies and micro-farms in general are fighting back. They offer a solution that's found in the farmers' own

hands, rather than those of people far away in Washington, the state capital, some bureaucrat's office, or a corporate boardroom. You don't need government socialism in order to fight corporate socialism; you just need a plan and the will to declare independence.

Sean Scallon is a reporter from East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

Letter From London

by Derek Turner

On Being a Pariah



In summer and autumn 2001, as Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Portillo, Kenneth Clarke, Michael Ancram, and David Davis slugged it out to see who would become the new leader of Britain's Conservative Party, colorful stories began circulating about Duncan Smith, who was widely regarded as the right's great white hope.

An ex-Army officer and the son of a World War II fighter pilot, Duncan Smith entered Parliament in 1992, in Norman Tebbit's old seat for Chingford (on the Essex edge of London). As Tebbit joked when he introduced his successor at a meeting, "If you think I'm right wing, you should meet this guy!" Soon, Duncan Smith became part of the internal opposition to the Maastricht Treaty—a brave move for a new MP. He spoke at a Monday Club meeting in 1996 and asked questions in Parliament about immigration and housing (which was received well locally, as many Chingfordians are part of the white flight from London's East End). He later became Tory spokesman on defense under William Hague and went along cheerfully with Hague's sensible policies on asylum, the *Macpherson Report*, and homosexuality. He seemed a dependable, if somewhat dull, standard-bearer for the right.

With such a *curriculum vitae*, he was never going to get good press (and never will—something he has yet to learn). But the media campaign against him was more savage than usual, reflecting how the ideological center of gravity has shifted—or become more obvious—under

the Blair governments. Even before his candidacy was formally announced, dark tales emerged that his supporters were all very “extreme.” The *Guardian* even suggested that some around Duncan Smith wanted a military coup. Meanwhile, MPs who supported Duncan Smith were described as “swivel-eyed extremists,” “lunatics,” and “nutters” by journalists and Labour politicians—in some cases merely for meeting occasionally with Italian Alleanza Nazionale MEPs.

Leftists always find the right curiously fascinating, and the further right the man in question, the sweeter the forbidden fruit—so they have a vested emotional interest in believing the worst of their enemies. And, of course, they love a good conspiracy, as do all journalists.

So Ken Clarke, Duncan Smith’s final rival, was not the only person delighted to discover that an elderly man, active in the Conservative Party for 53 years and whose name had appeared on a list of Welsh Conservatives who were backing Duncan Smith, was the father of the leader of the British National Party (BNP). Edgar Griffin had also been unwise enough to answer the BNP hotline in his son’s absence when a tabloid called. That was enough to have him suspended from the list of Duncan Smith’s supporters immediately and, two days later, expelled from the party.

The media moved into top “shock horror” gear. A spate of stories appeared about alleged BNP infiltration of the Conservatives—superficially believable at a time when many Conservative associations are imploding (the average age of the party’s members is now 65). So exciting was this concept that some journalists got carried away. In at least one case, the *Times* had to print a fulsome apology, cover legal costs, and pay substantial damages to a man it had accused of BNP entryism.

The main target of the attacks was the Conservative Monday Club, a pressure group on the right of the party. Predictably, Duncan Smith, although he had said as recently as September that the club was “what the Party was all about,” immediately distanced himself from the club. The uproar concerned the club’s expressed support for voluntary repatriation of immigrants. Ironically, voluntary repatriation is on the statute books, even under Blair—and why something *voluntary* could be so objectionable was never explained.

In recent years, the club has tried hard

to ingratiate itself with the Central Office, but to no avail. In a meeting that was more of a *fait accompli* than a discussion, the party chairman, David Davis, MP, (himself rumored to have “far right” tendencies) told club officers that they would no longer be able to espouse *any* policies on immigration if they wished to remain a Conservative group. The three MPs connected to the club were ordered to suspend their membership. On January 9, club members were asked to support a rule change that would say that the club was “committed to opposing the propagation of any kind of racial hatred” and welcomed any Conservative as a member “irrespective of their [*sic*] racial origin or religion.”

In themselves, of course, these aims are unobjectionable and, consequently, were endorsed by club members in the ensuing postal ballot. The new rules, however, will be interpreted as meaning that there should never again be any discussion of racial topics. In any case, these aspirations had already been realized within the club, which has had plenty of black and Jewish members over its 42-year history and has coordinated meetings with Muslim groups (on monetary reform, an eccentric hobby-horse for some club officers).

In the middle of the uproar, Duncan Smith’s advisors cannily released the biographical information that Duncan Smith’s grandfather had married a Japanese woman. The clear implication was that IDS (as he had, by now, been re-branded, so that he would seem hip) could not therefore be a “racist”; he could feel ethnic minority pain. The great white hope was becoming a one-eighth Japanese hope. This impression was strengthened when Duncan Smith began signalling that he might end Tory support for Section 28—the legislation that prevents public money from being used to promote homosexuality in schools—and said that he “would have no truck with racists” (which, in today’s parlance, means no truck with patriotism or traditionalism). He also suspended the activities of Conservatives Against a Federal Europe, of which he had long been a prominent supporter, on the grounds that there was no longer any need for it, as so many of its supporters were now in the Shadow Cabinet. Yet cynics suspect that this is just another way of ditching a controversial group that has been accused of seeking withdrawal from the European Union, which is also re-

garded as an “extreme” policy. (I have been at several CAFÉ meetings and can confirm that this certainly seemed to be the chief aspiration of many CAFÉ members—even some of the peers and MPs.)

With such close attention being paid to the Monday Club, it was inevitable that my magazine, *Right Now!*, would also fall within the sights of the modern Puritans. Some of our supporters and patrons are also supporters and patrons of the Monday Club, and there are many similarities between the two groups, except that RN has never been a Conservative publication.

Right Now! is a stock villain in the pantomimic far-left *weltanschauung*, and Labour ministers have attacked the magazine in the past. The Puritan attack, however, was a media blitz unprecedented in the magazine’s history. Stories (derived largely from a communist magazine) appeared in the Labour-supporting *Guardian* and *Independent*. Doubly and triply derivative pieces appeared in the *Times* and regional and foreign newspapers, and I had a cameo appearance on BBC Radio 4.

The articles all sounded rather similar, probably because almost none of the journalists concerned had bothered to contact me when writing their stories. Of course, it is often a waste of time talking to journalists anyway. Even when they do make contact, they rarely add any new information to their pieces. For instance—to add a Pooterish note—the *Independent* dutifully reported that I was a supporter of Clarke rather than Duncan Smith, as I had told the reporter, but added that “this was widely interpreted as a tactical move.” In other words, I was lying. (I wasn’t: By then, I had seen enough of Duncan Smith’s cowardice under fire.)

Journalists are, of course, notoriously lazy, and, in a histrionic era, the most colorful angle is generally their first choice. Most of the articles alleged that the magazine was hugely influential, said that our website was “linked” (a word beloved of leftists and journalists alike) to “extremists,” quoted from two articles (one about eugenics and one about immigration), and made great play of the fact that I had once described myself as a “neighbourhood nazi.”

My attempts to remonstrate retroactively were mostly fruitless. Hardly any of my letters to the editor were published, and, when they were, they were abridged

greatly. The journalists simply did not want to know about mitigating factors that did not fit in with their dualistic worldview. Our website is linked to all kinds of groups (including www.ChroniclesMagazine.org). The article about eugenics was very similar to one that had appeared in the *Spectator* a few months before (about which nobody had complained), and it was followed in the next *Right Now!* by an article *attacking* eugenics. The article on immigration had been written by Ezra Mishan, a respected environmentalist and economist. If a further Pooterish note can be excused, I was joking in 1987 when I described myself so colorfully.

This kind of sly censorship can be rather frustrating. Yet it is also darkly amusing to watch rank hypocrisy in action—journalists usually pride themselves on being liberal and open-minded. Moreover, it is curiously flattering to be outlawed from a society so unappealing and essentially nonviable. *Right Now!* has obviously rattled the moral guardians considerably. More to the point, the publicity resulted in a torrent of inquiries from members of the public who had not previously heard of the magazine and wanted to get sample copies or to subscribe. Nor has the publicity deterred those sympathetic people in public life with whom we are in contact; those who would be frightened by such phantoms would not be worth knowing anyway. A letter I sent to all Tory MPs elicited many interesting responses, signaling that there is widespread disgruntlement with Duncan Smith even at this most quiescent of levels and that he is far from secure.

Of course, difficult choices between inclination and expediency will always have to be made in politics. Duncan Smith may never have thought about the nature of the left or the long-term consequences of his recent actions. (Tory politicians are not noted for their interest in cultural politics.) I can also see why Duncan Smith might wish to shrug off his past and forget inconvenient friends. It is never pleasant to be attacked for what others have said, or to have your character aspersed and your motives given the worst possible construction, or for it to be said or hinted that you are a moral inferior. It is only human to want a quiet life. Yet such disapprobation will have to be risked by a Conservative leader at some stage if any real defense is to be made against the forces of anti-Westernism. Going on present form, it does not look

like Duncan Smith is cut out for the job.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, published in London.

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

Remembering Tender Mercies



In the years just before America's entry into World War II, thousands of people, shaken and scattered by the Great Depression, made their way to Houston, where the shipyards were booming.

My people wound up there, too. The place they lived was called West End, rows of little white houses set up on cinder blocks, neighborhood groceries, such as Chick Schreiber's near my grandparents' house off Washington Avenue, and buses that could take you downtown to see the picture show or to the Sam Houston Coliseum for the annual Fat Stock Show and Rodeo. Daddy and Uncle Harold saw Gene Autry there twice.

Grandma and Poppa, my great-grandparents, lived there. I spent a lot of time in that house on Malone Street with my grandmother and Momma, who helped to take care of Poppa when he had cancer. There were deer antlers in the house and a picture of Jesus on the wall. (Grandma was very pious and made her free-spirited husband keep his beer outside in an icebox.) I think there was a big chinaberry tree just off the front porch.

Momma was among Poppa's favorite grandchildren. I can't remember how many he had, and, with nine kids of his own and their offspring, I was often confused about just what kin all of them were to me. It didn't seem to matter. We were close in those days.

Cancer was a mystery to me. I hated to see Poppa like that. But he always kept his humor and omery ways, even then. I like to remember him as the lovable old cuss from the Rio Grande Valley who used to supervise the gutting and skinning of deer in Uncle Kenneth's yard.

When Poppa died, it hit us all hard. Grandma followed a few years later, and that was even worse, for I had figured out by then that all of us were going to die. Even Grandma and Poppa. Even me.

Death was hard enough to figure, but to watch them suffer was more than I could bear. I remember crying when Grandma couldn't recognize me anymore and wondering why God had allowed this to happen to that saintly woman.

I began wondering all over again when Momma told me she had cancer. We put her on prayer lists and asked friends to pray for her. I also wondered how she could do this to *me*. (Even our best wishes are tainted by Original Sin.)

Cancer and the Will of God remain mysteries to me: Momma called one day and asked me if I believed in miracles and I said, *Yes, I reckoned I did*. And she told me the cancer was gone. No treatment. No reason. Just gone.

I hadn't finished rejoicing when a friend of ours called a little later. I told her about Momma, and she was happy for us. Then she reminded me of her uncle, who had been dying for years. She was wondering what to pray for. Just pray for what's best for him, I said, leaving it to God to do the rest. And be thankful for what you have—and what you had but had almost forgotten. That was the best I could do for her.

In Horton Foote's *Tender Mercies*, Mac Sledge, a recovered alcoholic and onetime country-music star, has a moment like that, wondering why some things happen and others don't—why some people live and others don't. And he couldn't answer his own question. This beautiful little film, shot near Waxahachie, Texas, leaves off with Mac playing ball with his stepson, laughing and enjoying the tender mercies God has granted, and not asking questions he can't answer anymore.

So I thank God for the tender mercies he has shown us: for Grandma and Poppa, for Momma, for Washington Avenue and Malone Street, and for the memories, fading now, but still there.

Wayne Allensworth tries to remember Malone Street the way it was and always recommends Tender Mercies to friends.

