

by Senators McGovern, Church, and Clark, who were joined by younger men such as Senators Dodd and Tsongas and Representatives Studds and Moffett, to name just a few. These "New Politics" liberals had accepted many of the more fantastic assumptions of the New Left concerning the nature of the war. Persuaded by a major disinformation campaign initiated by Hanoi in 1973, they believed in the alleged repressiveness and unpopularity of the government of South Vietnam.³ Added to this was a notion that the "ethics of clean hands" should replace the "ethics of consequences" as the basis of U.S. political decisions. The ethos of the sixties had triumphed.

Thus, what began as a noble cause ended in national disgrace. Congress' decision to abandon South Vietnam (and Cambodia) to totalitarianism was an act of contempt for the 55,000 young Americans who sacrificed their lives. It was also an act of contempt for more than 300,000 brave, young South Vietnamese soldiers, not to mention the tens of thousands of Cambodians, Koreans, Thais, Australians, and New Zealanders who also made the supreme sacrifice in defense of a noble cause. America was quite capable of fulfilling President John F. Kennedy's promise, that it would pay any price, bear any burden, to protect another people from tyranny. By *choosing* not to keep that often repeated promise, the U.S. Congress stained the nation's honor.

Stephen J. Morris

Poor Little Rich Boy

THE IMPERIAL ROCKEFELLER: A BIOGRAPHY OF NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER. *By Joseph Persico.* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1982) \$16.50.

The salient question about Nelson Rockefeller is why he never became president. That job was his life's ambition: he yearned to be president, assumed that he would be, and strove throughout his life to achieve that goal. He possessed great advantages in this quest. He was a member of a family with incredible wealth and unequalled contacts. He could hire the ablest, brightest assistants. He was intelligent, energetic, with broad practical experience in national and international

3. For example when the Senate and House Foreign Affairs committees held hearings in 1973 and 1974 on the situation in South Vietnam, they only called upon people like Bella Abzug, Don Luce, Gareth Porter, and Fred Branfman to testify. The committee members either did not know, or more likely did not care, that these "expert witnesses" were in fact fanatical supporters of Hanoi. Mr. Branfman, co-director of the Indochina Resource Center, was the brother-in-law of a convicted Viet Cong terrorist named Nguyen Huu Thai, whose murder victims included American soldiers in Saigon. It was not surprising that he and his fellow witnesses gave testimony to the Congress which was a colossal series of falsehoods about the repressiveness of the Thieu regime, designed to aid Hanoi's victory.

politics. Yet Nelson Rockefeller never came close even to winning his party's nomination, the penultimate step to the presidency.

Rockefeller's lack of appeal to Republicans can be explained in part by resentment against his inherited wealth and presumed patrician heritage, his unparalleled Eastern establishment credentials, and his liberalism on domestic issues. All of these factors are handicaps in the Republican Party, although not in the Democratic Party nor in the country as a whole. Franklin Roosevelt sprang from an older and more distinguished line than Rockefeller. This presented few problems for F.D.R. and aroused resentment principally from his own class, who believed he had betrayed them. The wealth and liberalism of the Kennedys proved strong advantages in their political careers.

But Nelson Rockefeller was a Republican, and the Republican Party is controlled by the middle class. Professionals, corporate executives, entrepreneurs, small businessmen, and their spouses are the heart of the Republican Party. Such people are not particularly comfortable with those of aristocratic lineage and inherited wealth and rather resent both. Patricians do not exemplify the Republican model of virtue, success achieved through individual effort. Thus such politicians as Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., John Lindsay, and Nelson Rockefeller have found it difficult to attract a broad national following in their party. Only Theodore Roosevelt successfully overcame this disadvantage. He did so by transforming himself from a rather sickly upper-class child into a Badlands cowboy and the hero of San Juan Hill and by the good fortune of being vice president when McKinley died.

The Democratic Party, on the other hand, welcomes scions of wealthy families. The party of the poor admires money when it is accompanied by grace and style. Inherited wealth in a Democrat is romantic, glamorous: such a politician is one of the people, yet above them. He is presumed to be disinterested; to care about the common man's problems, even though he has never experienced them; to recommend policies because he thinks them best, not because they will make him or his friends rich. That the child of a wealthy family is willing to cast his lot with the party of the disadvantaged suggests admirable unselfishness. Thus Robert Kennedy could win a fanatic following by casting himself in 1968, according to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., as "tribune of the underclass," the would-be president of "all who are not represented." As Rockefeller once stated, if he had been a Democrat, the road to the presidency would have been far easier.

Rockefeller was encumbered by other serious disadvantages in presidential politics. His personality, according to Mr. Persico, made it very difficult for people to like him. He was cold and impersonal. He did not much care for others and was too proud to act as if he did. He paid a price for this attitude: "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Rockefeller was indifferent towards people in general and the many talented men who toiled for him in particular. This is somewhat unusual, for the challenges an important politician and his staff must overcome together tend to create mutual affection and personal loyalty. However, Rockefeller took others' sacrifices on his behalf for granted:

"The king cannot help, if footsore soldiers must march through the night—the kingdom must be saved. He saw his life in that crusading light and assumed that his subordinates shared his outlook."

Mr. Persico writes that Rockefeller's treatment of his staff inspired the Kleenex Theory: "A Kleenex tissue is a useful item with a definite, if limited function; it is not however, a possession that is cherished much beyond its immediate value." Such treatment could not evoke much love in his subordinates. Thus they were motivated largely by self-interest not the foundation of a very lasting commitment. Unless an employee's contributions are properly appreciated and rewarded, an able aide will unhesitatingly move along when a better opportunity arises.

Some indifference to one's lieutenants is unavoidable in the career of a man with great ambition and demanding duties. The need to accomplish the objective at hand at times must overwhelm all other considerations. But Rockefeller's remoteness indicated a coolness of temperament that constituted a great barrier to the presidency. A man who is indifferent to others and cannot conceal his indifference will have difficulty gaining the affection and support of the party stalwarts who do the work that wins delegates and primaries.

Rockefeller's remoteness may be explained in part by a fear common among those possessing great wealth, beauty or power, the apprehension that they are not loved for themselves, but flattered for the advantages they can confer. Suspicion of others' motives makes difficult the intimacy which is the basis of friendship. Moreover, Rockefeller was never forced to develop the talent of winning friends nor making himself pleasing to others because his wealth ensured that he would always be surrounded by those eager to please—no matter how he behaved. An indisposition to please others was reinforced by the belief that he had earned the right to lead, that merit entitled him to the highest office. Like Coriolanus, he refused to stoop to win. Henry Kissinger explains this behavior as Rockefeller's unwillingness to appear to be seeking anything for his own advantage because he had been blessed with so many privileges.

Whether a man attains the presidency is not determined solely by his own virtues but also by luck and the quality of his opponents. Rockefeller had the misfortune to compete against the shrewd and tenacious Richard Nixon. Mr. Nixon labored tirelessly in the party vineyards from his vice presidential nomination in 1952 until 1968, when he was nominated for the presidency the second time. He knew what was necessary to win, and he did it. Rockefeller and his staff viewed him with condescension and could not believe that he could defeat them. Yet "the opportunist" easily outmaneuvered Rockefeller whenever they competed.

Mr. Nixon viewed Rockefeller with the bemused disdain of the professional for the amateur. Their contrasting approach to politics was encapsulated in an episode during the 1968 campaign. After candidate Nixon had overwhelmed all opposition in the primaries and amassed a commanding lead in delegates, Rockefeller proposed a "battle of the polls" in which he and Mr. Nixon would debate and then commission a nationwide poll, whose results would be distributed to the convention and presumably influence its choice. Mr. Nixon correctly described the

proposal as ludicrous: it was launched at the last minute, and he could not be compelled to accept it.

Rockefeller was perceived as a liberal in a party that was moving to the right. This factor and his divorce explain his defeat for the Republican nomination in 1964, the only year in which Mr. Nixon was not a competitor. His bitter fight with Barry Goldwater forever alienated that faction of his party that was to be dominant thereafter.

Rockefeller's last years were filled with frustration. He resigned the governorship in 1973 to devote himself to one of his many study panels, the "Commission on Critical Choices for Americans," a vehicle to promote himself and remain in the public eye while preparing to run for the presidency in 1976. Mr. Nixon's resignation and the accession of Gerald Ford disrupted this plan and made him willing to accept the vice presidency, an office he considered far beneath his talents but nevertheless his last, slim hope for the presidency. Like all of his predecessors, he proved unable to make as much of the job as he had hoped. Gerald Ford found it impossible to run with him on the ticket in 1976; this was the end of all his hopes for the presidency. The conservatives, whom he had alienated in 1964, were dominant, and he lacked any base.

Despite Rockefeller's inability to become president, he was a failure only according to his own impossibly high standards. He was four times elected governor of New York, and he led that state with an iron hand throughout his tenure. He bested many able men with whom he clashed, including media darling John Lindsay and the formidable Robert Moses. The decline of the Republican Party in New York since his departure is eloquent testimony to Rockefeller's leadership, now absent. For almost any other man, his many accomplishments would have been enough.

Mr. Persico has a talent for identifying interesting, revealing anecdotes, of which there are many in this book. He writes clearly, simply, and vividly. It is easy to believe that in Mr. Persico, Rockefeller lived up to his reputation of hiring the ablest assistants. The author appears to be candid about his former employer but neither salacious nor gossipy. The pathos and mystery surrounding Rockefeller's death are described straightforwardly and fairly. The author has resisted the temptation to sell his book by melodramatizing Rockefeller's personal life or overemphasizing the significance of such events in a career filled with great events and accomplishments. This book is not in fact a biography of Nelson Rockefeller, but the author's recollections of his former boss. Rockefeller's career remains unchronicled and the wellsprings of his character unexplained.

W. Scott Burke

Religion and the Fall of Capitalism

THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM. *By Michael Novak.*
(American Enterprise Institute/Simon & Schuster, New York, 1982).

Theologians have never found it very easy to come to terms with capitalism. The warning that a camel may find it easier to pass through the