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## Can the Democracies Survive?

Jean-François Revel

**D**EMOCRACY may, after all, turn out to have been a historical accident, a brief parenthesis that is closing before our eyes.

If so, in its modern sense of a form of society reconciling governmental efficiency with legitimacy, authority with individual freedoms, democracy will have lasted a little over two centuries, to judge by the speed at which the forces bent on its destruction are growing. And, really, only a tiny minority of the human race will have experienced it. In both time and space, democracy fills a very small corner. The span of roughly two-hundred years applies only to the few countries where it first appeared, still very incomplete, at the end of the 18th century. Most of the other countries in which democracy exists adopted it under a century ago, under half a century ago, in some cases less than a decade ago.

Democracy probably could endure if it were the only type of political organization in the world. But it is not basically structured to defend itself against outside enemies seeking its annihilation, especially since the latest and the most dangerous of these external enemies—Communism—parades as democracy perfected when it is in fact the absolute negation of democracy, the current and complete model of totalitarianism.

Democracy is by its very nature turned inward. Its vocation is the patient and realistic improvement of life in a community. Communism, on the other hand, necessarily looks outward because it presides over a failed society and is incapable of engendering a viable one. The *nomenklatura*, the body of bureaucrat-dictators who govern the system, has no choice, therefore, but to direct its abilities toward expansion abroad. It is also more skillful, more persevering than democracy in defending itself. Democracy tends to ignore, even deny, threats to its existence because it loathes

doing what is needed to counter them. It awakens only when the danger becomes deadly, imminent, evident. By then, either there is too little time left for it to save itself, or the price of survival has become crushingly high.

In addition to its external enemy (once Nazi, now Communist), whose intellectual energy and economic power are primarily destructive, democracy faces an internal enemy whose right to exist is written into the law itself.

Totalitarianism liquidates its internal enemies or smashes opposition as soon as it arises; it uses methods that are simple and infallible because they are undemocratic. But democracy can defend itself from within only very feebly; its internal enemy has an easy time of it because he exploits the right to disagree that is inherent in democracy. His aim of destroying democracy itself, of actively seeking an absolute monopoly of power, is shrewdly hidden behind the citizen's legitimate right to oppose and criticize the system. Paradoxically, democracy offers those seeking to abolish it a unique opportunity to work against it legally. They can even receive almost open support from the external enemy without its being seen as a truly serious violation of the social contract. The frontier is vague, the transition easy between the status of a loyal opponent wielding a privilege built into democratic institutions, and that of an adversary subverting those institutions. To totalitarianism, an opponent is by definition subversive; democracy, for fear of betraying its principles, treats subversives as mere opponents.

What we end up with in what is conventionally called Western society is a topsy-turvy situation in which those seeking to destroy democracy appear to be fighting for legitimate aims, while the defenders of democracy are pictured as repressive reactionaries. Identification of democracy's internal and external adversaries with the forces of progress, legitimacy, even peace, discredits and paralyzes the efforts of people who are only trying to preserve their institutions.

Already besieged by this combination of hostile forces and negative logic, the democracies are also harassed by guilt-producing accusations and intimidation such as no other political system has ever had to tolerate. Like the "industry of vice"

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that reform groups used to talk about, there is now an "industry of blame"; it promotes the now universally accepted notion that everything bad that happens in the Third World is the fault of forces necessarily and exclusively located in the "more advanced" or "rich" countries, meaning, in almost every case—and for good reason—the democracies.

The major shareholders in this industry of blame are, first, the despots who oppress the peoples of that unfortunate Third World with impunity. Next come the Communist countries, exploiting the underdevelopment abroad that they cannot remedy at home and converting the poor nations into totalitarian military fortresses.

Here too, in what are termed North-South relations, foreign and domestic enemies of democracy are converging; their maneuvers are of no help at all in improving the lot of the poor countries, but they are marvelously effective in undermining the democracies' confidence in their own legitimacy, their own right to exist. The "progressive" support some Westerners give to the worst of the Third World regimes is merely a geographical relocation of what for sixty years was "progressive" support of the Soviet Union and, later, Mao Zedong's China: complicity by a part of the Western Left *against* the peoples of the less-developed countries and *with* the tyrants who enslave, brutalize, starve, and exterminate them.

It seems, then, that the combination of forces—at once psychological and material, political and moral, economic and ideological—intent on the extinction of democracy is more powerful than those bent on keeping it alive. Democracy is not given credit for its achievements and benefits, but it pays an infinitely higher price for its failures, its inadequacies, and its mistakes than its adversaries do.

**I**NDEED, democratic civilization is the first in history to blame itself because another power is working to destroy it. The distinguishing mark of our century is not so much Communism's determination to erase democracy from our planet, or its frequent success in pursuing that end, as it is the humility with which democracy not only consents to its own obliteration, but contrives to legitimize the victory of its deadliest enemy.

It is natural for Communism to try with all its might to eliminate democracy, since the two systems are incompatible and Communism's survival depends on the annihilation of democracy. That the Communist offensive is more successful, more skillful than democracy's resistance, will be seen by history as just another example of one power outmaneuvering another. But it is less natural and more novel that the stricken civilization should not only be deeply convinced that it deserves to be defeated, but that it should regale its friends

and foes with reasons why defending itself would be immoral and, in any event, superfluous, useless, even dangerous.

Civilizations losing confidence in themselves: an old story in history. They stop believing they can survive, because of an internal crisis that is both insoluble and intolerable, or under threat from an external enemy so strong that the only remaining choice is between servitude and suicide. I do not believe democracy is in either predicament, but it acts as if it were in both. It seems almost eager to believe in its own guilt and in the inevitable result of that guilt. Democracy's predecessors hid such beliefs as shameful even when they thought, or knew, they were doomed. But democracy is zealous in devising arguments to prove the justice of its adversary's case and to lengthen the already overwhelming list of its own inadequacies.

Are these inadequacies real or imaginary? Some are real, of course, just as there is real cause to blame specific democracies or the democracies in general for some of the injustice and misfortune in the world. But many of these alleged inadequacies and much of the democracies' responsibility for the world's ills are exaggerated or conjectural or purely imaginary. And besides, are those real faults serious enough to provide moral justification for totalitarianism to exterminate the democracies? And why are the imaginary flaws so widely credited in the democracies themselves, which thus consent to their own calumny?

If democracy does succumb, it will not be to the sort of internal crisis, an essential lack of viability, that nearly wrecked it between the two world wars. From 1919 to 1939, the democracies seemed to be eaten from within by an irresistible malady that raised a rash of right-wing dictatorships. One after another, they capitulated to authoritarian or totalitarian governments born of their own inability to govern themselves. In Central Europe, almost none of the parliamentary regimes established after World War I were still functioning ten years later. In Western Europe, first Italy went fascist, then Portugal, Germany, Spain. Of the great European powers, only Britain and France remained faithful to democracy, and in France democracy was so feeble, so incoherent, and so beleaguered that there were grave fears for its survival.

The situation now, as the century nears its end, is nothing like that. For the first time since 1922, when Mussolini took power in Rome, all of Western Europe is democratic. The Greek colonels' seven-year dictatorship (1967-74) ended with their fall and a reinforcement of democracy there. In Spain, the *Putsch* dreaded since 1975 was tried and failed. The most dangerous, most unrelenting attacks against democracy have come from the revolutionary Left: red terrorism in Italy, Spain, and West Germany, and a minority attempt in





1975 to saddle Portugal with a Communist military dictatorship.

Despite these trials, the old democracies have held firm and the new ones have survived and even developed. The laborious effort the Left periodically makes to frighten people with the specter of a neo-Nazi peril in Europe always collides with the brute fact that none of the fascist movements in Europe today has reached party status or has managed to elect a member of any parliament. As for the stupidly inflated notion of an "extra-parliamentary Left" that flourished in Italy and Germany around 1970, it expressed nothing more than the revolutionary Left's inability to seduce enough voters into making it parliamentary.

Yet while democratic institutions are no longer challenged politically from within, the societies, civilization, and values democracy has created are being increasingly questioned. Self-criticism is, of course, one of the vital springs of democratic civilization and one of the reasons for its superiority over all other systems. But constant self-condemnation, often with little or no foundation, is a source of weakness and inferiority in dealing with an imperial power that has dispensed with such scruples. Believing one is always right, even when the facts say otherwise, is as blinding and weakening to a society as to an individual. But assuming one is always wrong, whatever the truth may be, is discouraging and paralyzing.

Not only do the democracies today blame themselves for sins they have not committed, they have formed the habit of judging themselves by ideals so inaccessible that the defendants are automatically guilty. Clearly a civilization that feels guilty for everything it is and does and thinks will lack the energy and conviction to defend itself when its existence is threatened. Drilling the idea into a civilization that it deserves defending only if it can incarnate absolute justice is tantamount to urging that it let itself die or be enslaved.

THE same problem has invariably plagued the foreign policy of the democracies in the struggle against Communist imperialism. From the day President Truman declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure," the democracies were locked of their own free will into an almost insurmountable bind. For they laid down the condition that to have the right to resist absorption into the Communist empire, a country must be irreproachably democratic. In so doing, the West condemned itself to failure or opprobrium. It became the prisoner of an insoluble, self-imposed dilemma: either it allowed most of the planet to sink under Communist domination, or, too often, it would be called on to protect countries that did not have democratic governments.

The trap was a boon to Communist propaganda, which on this point was widely supported by the liberal Left in the democracies. And honesty does command that any democrat with consistent ideas deplore the hypocrisy of defending human rights and individual freedom while supporting authoritarian governments. The best of these may be no more than relics or revivals of archaic power structures, the worst are violent, police-run fascist regimes, or pseudo-democracies where elections are held only spasmodically; rarely, if ever, are they genuinely faithful to the ideal of the rule of law on which the West claims to base the legitimacy of its diplomacy and its defense.

From the outset, then, the game has been unfair. Strategic necessity is regarded as justification enough for a Soviet presence in another country, or a Soviet alliance with or aid to that country; anyone calling for further excuses is requested, even in the West itself, to mind his own business. A democracy, on the other hand, is not granted the right to defend the vital barricades of its own security unless the democratic imperative is obeyed. If it is not, the West's duty is evidently to cede the territory in question to the Communists who are unhampered by this democratic obligation.

Thus, defending the independence of South Vietnam in the 1960's and 70's was tinged with infamy because the South Vietnamese regime was hardly one of exemplary purity. But the Hanoi regime had no need to furnish guarantees of its purity to win the right to defend itself or to attack its neighbors. Progressive and even centrist opinion throughout the world granted North Vietnam "popular" legitimacy on trust, which its history after 1975 did not support, but which its totalitarian and aggressive behavior even before 1975 never seemed to diminish.

Better still: if Moscow's worldwide strategic interests so require, the Soviet Union is allowed to ally itself with traditional-style fascist regimes that dispense with even a façade of progressivism. And the Soviets can do so without bringing down on their heads the vehement criticism that world opinion levels at any democratic nation attempting the same expedient. The Soviet Union and Cuba, for example, loudly took Argentina's side against Britain in the 1982 Falkland Islands war simply because it was obviously in the Kremlin's interest to oppose the Western democracies; suddenly, no one in the Communist world minded the evil international reputation of the "odious and bloody fascist dictatorship" of the junta in Buenos Aires.

The Soviet Union, then, is licensed by most people to safeguard its economic interests and capitalize on its strategic advantages by realistic links with any government notorious for its disregard of human rights. But we hear only clamor and vituperation when a Western country is cornered

into collaboration with South Africa or the Shah's Iran or Turkey.

This double standard gives the Soviet empire an automatic advantage over the West: it not only can defend itself and expand without having to bother about the rules governing the foreign policy of the democracies, but its satellites and clients are also exempted. This is really a two-pronged advantage: although it need not respect human rights at home, the Soviet empire is free to condemn violations, real or fictitious, anywhere else, to exploit them and set its agents to exploiting them. It can even provoke violations, using terrorism to elicit repression in the Western countries or those associated with them.

The Soviet Union, then, enjoys the privilege of being entitled not only to defend its empire, but to enlarge it without being judged on the basis of its subject states' standards of living, social justice, political freedoms, or respect for human rights. When subjugated peoples rise against Communism, the West usually refrains from helping them, thus recognizing the legitimacy of Communist domination in all circumstances. The Communists, on the other hand, recognize the legitimacy of no government outside their empire, least of all in the democratic countries.

Conversely, the democracies suffer the theoretical handicap in their struggle with the Soviet Union of being responsible on all the above-mentioned grounds both for their own behavior and for that of their allies. For example, when military governments took over in Greece in 1967, and in Turkey ten years later, the question immediately arose in the democracies of whether these countries, which had broken faith with democracy, deserved to remain within the Western defense system. But when Poland declared a state of martial law to allow its army to shore up the shaky Communist-party dictatorship, Westerners immediately argued that no real liberalization is possible in a country like Poland because *it is a vital strategic zone for the Soviet Union*. Yet Turkey is just as essential to the West as Poland is to the Soviets. Driving it out of NATO, or even suspending weapons shipments to the Turkish army (which was done because of the Greco-Turkish conflict over Cyprus in 1974), means opening a fatal breach in the Atlantic alliance's southern flank.

**D**ETRACTORS of the United States and the "free world"—the expression is usually employed as a term of derision, as though there were not really a free world and a slave world—have always maintained that we cannot fight in the name of democracy by consorting with non-democratic countries. And, of course, it would be ideal if the democracies could survive by defending only other democracies. In most cases, however, this moral ideal runs up against local

traditions of government or de-facto situations the West cannot easily alter. President Carter's human-rights policy, under which he suspended American aid to the dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, produced no political improvement in those countries, but the Soviet Union leaped into the breach to increase trade with them. In Iran, Carter hastened the fall of what was certainly a detestably tyrannical regime—which was succeeded by a much worse one.

It takes a profound ignorance of history to blame American imperialism alone for the long Latin American tradition of coups d'état, military dictatorships, civil wars, corruption, revolution, bloody terror, and repression; all this goes back to the very founding of independent states nearly two centuries ago. On the African continent, it is striking that one-man, one-party rule has triumphed almost everywhere, in North Africa and Black Africa, in the former French colonies as in the former Belgian and British colonies, in "progressive" and "moderate" regimes alike. Even such leaders as President-for-Life Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, after opting for multiparty systems when their countries received independence, soon changed their minds on the ground that one-party systems are "more in tune with the African character." Some of the most barbarous examples of internal genocide, like the slaughter in Burundi, had nothing at all to do with Western "imperialism"; neither have some of Africa's most monstrous tyrants, such as Uganda's Idi Amin. And for the people of Uganda, the country's "liberation" from Amin by troops from "progressive" Tanzania inaugurated an era of suffering and martyrdom that has been every bit as abominable as the one that preceded it.

In any case, the free world's moral turpitude and political inconsistency are recognized, proclaimed, and condemned whenever it collaborates with largely or wholly undemocratic governments that violate human rights, whether it merely accepts them passively or assists them actively. To escape this contradiction and avoid condemnation before the tribunal of free-world opinion, the West must therefore deny itself the support, in its struggle against Soviet expansionism, of any country that is undemocratic and disrespectful of human rights. This principle means that the right of the democracies to defend themselves must be subordinated to the conversion of the whole world to democracy. Clearly, this can only lead to the disappearance of what subsists of democracy in today's world.

In short, without always going so far as to approve, we nevertheless consider it natural for the Soviet Union to defend its interests, increase its power, install its henchmen through a craftily spaced series of coups d'état and purges. No one asks these imperialists to make the people they

capture happy; no one thinks the Communists can be scolded into retreating. Nor does anyone in the democratic camp recognize his own right—not openly, at least—to fight Soviet imperialism with its own weapons. Instead, the free world again risks being accused of impure complicity with a reactionary “feudal” regime when it defends Saudi Arabia, say, against the undermining and subversion that the Soviet Union and its agents, including the Libyans, have been carrying on there for years. The moral is that the Soviet Union must be allowed to take over the Arabian peninsula unless all the countries there mold themselves to Western democratic ideals, an eventuality I would wish for but scarcely expect, at least in the immediate future, which is all that counts.

ALSO at stake in the immediate or very near future is the fate of southern Africa, especially that of the Republic of South Africa, which has earned the rightful hostility of all defenders of human rights for its official policy of racial segregation. That it should be excluded from all international sports events is not surprising—until we remember that the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, and Rumania, which have as many or more human-rights blots on their records, do take part in these events.

This is another example of the double standard. But athletics is just a side issue here. What really matters is whether the West should, as the most enlightened and respectable voices of Western public opinion recommend, refuse any political and strategic cooperation with South Africa until apartheid has been eliminated. Considering that, at best, it would take a long time to end racial segregation in South Africa, that the Soviet Union is already strongly entrenched in the region, and that the slow process of reform might be radically accelerated by an uprising of South Africa’s blacks, the West might gain little from abandoning South Africa and would certainly be seriously weakened. For, as we know, the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope is the main channel for our supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf. Moreover, South Africa’s soil holds most of the world’s deposits of rare minerals outside the Soviet Union, supplying most of the metals needed by the industrialized countries.

In other words, if South Africa were to come under Soviet influence, Moscow would control not only its own vast mineral resources, but also those of South Africa and Namibia, where the pro-Communist SWAPO (Southwest African People’s Organization) is likely to take power. The Soviet Union would then have a stranglehold on most and, in some cases, all the minerals vital to our industries. It could block oil shipments to us—if it had not already shut them off at the source along the Persian Gulf. That kind of economic

power would make the Soviet Union master of the West without recourse to war, nuclear or conventional, in Europe.

The Soviet Union’s great strength lies in its freedom to invade areas where history has left the decaying remnants of archaic regimes that are important to the West’s security or are sources of vital materials. Never mind that these regimes are replaced, as they always are, by bloodier, more repressive Communist police states and that the change leaves the area’s poor more starved than they were before. The Soviets still come out ahead. For local and world opinion perceive the *relative* advantages of the old regime and the horrors of Communist putrefaction only after the new regime is in power and irreversible.

When the West tries to protect archaic regimes or those of “modernistic authoritarians” like the Shah of Iran from disintegration, or attempts to restrain their abuses, it cannot help seeming to defend the Right against the Left, the past against the future, the billionaires against the poverty-stricken masses. The fact that when the Communist Left overturns the Right it brings with it rampant famine, the camps, and the boat people never works as a *preventive*. If the West tries to pressure an archaic regime into becoming more liberal, either it is accused of “interference” by outraged nationalists, or its well-meaning proselytizing shoves the country into unforeseeable chaos, as exemplified by the Islamic revolution in Iran. And while the Ayatollah’s bloody terror may now be partly anti-Communist for essentially religious reasons, the Kremlin knows very well that in the long run, when the brink of anarchy is reached, Iran may topple into the Soviet camp, but is unlikely ever to tip back into the free world.

The Soviet Union’s advantage over the free world is that neither world opinion nor, of course, its own muzzled public expects it to preach to its allies before associating with them, or to hold on to its satellites by any method but sheer force; it is not even required to provide enough food for the peoples it absorbs into its imperial system.

But “international opinion”—the phrase describes part of the free world’s public opinion plus Soviet propaganda—will not accept violation of the rules of democracy by the West’s friends. Even when such countries as Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore develop thriving economies that most other nations in the Third World envy and that would bring cries of admiration from the Western Left if they blossomed under Soviet banners, they are not appreciated. For they have curtailed their citizens’ freedom. The socialist regimes, of course, have obliterated freedom without even achieving comparable prosperity.

THIS inequality of duties that so favors the Communists over the free world, however, prevents no one from turning around



and equating the two sides when argument requires it. The technique for doing this seems fair but is in fact discriminatory: it simply consists of lumping the democracies and the Soviets together in iniquity.

This technique represents a change of tactics. Almost throughout the 20th century, the politically cross-eyed Left in the democracies has unsheathed its fury only against the crimes of the capitalist world. Around 1970, the amnesia that periodically rejected unsavory disclosures about the Communist world began to show cracks. Tell-tale scars remained after each new cleansing absolution. Soon the mass of facts grew too dense to deny out of hand. At this point a new hoax was devised.

It consisted of admitting the existence of Communist crimes and failures provided these could instantly be matched by equivalents in the capitalist world. Communism was now absolved not because it never sins, but because the democracies sin as grievously. In this new dialectical game, everyone is free, without necessarily being dishonest, to retail the misdeeds and failings of totalitarian Communism, but on condition that we hasten to present their capitalist twins. Any deviation from the rule is immediately vilified as "selective indignation" and earns the severe censure of impartial players.

For example, a doctrinally pure French Socialist, Louis Mermaz, president of the National Assembly since 1981, replied to a reporter's question about the gulags: "I am as horrified as you are by the gulags, which are a perversion of Communism. But I ask that you also condemn that monstrosity of the capitalist system: hunger throughout the world that kills 50 million people each year, 30 million of them children." The retort, remarkable for its speed, is less so for its objectivity. For the parallel is only apparent: the gulags are a "perversion" of Communism, but famine, according to the Socialist leader, is a product of the basic nature of capitalism. And while the magic of parallelism makes the Communist sin almost venial, that of capitalism remains mortal. Indeed, absolution is usually a one-way grant—to forgive the horrors of Communism. It seems unlikely that, if questioned on famine in the world, Mermaz would have replied with a diatribe against the gulags; he would have protested violently against the shocking malnutrition of some of our fellow humans, and he would have been right. That the gulags exist does not make Third World poverty less morally intolerable. But by what sorcery is the reverse true?

Besides, the magician was using phony statistics. As demographers know, some 50 million people die in the world every year. They can't all die of starvation and three-fifths of them can't be children. The fight against infant mortality in the poor countries has reduced its incidence, which is

why their populations are increasing. Nutritionists estimate the number of deaths annually due to malnutrition at 10 percent of the total *and this includes the Communist countries*, which slightly weakens the indictment of capitalism. Death from starvation in the Communist world may be better hidden, but the victims are just as dead as any others. Mao's successors have confirmed what demographers had already determined from their study of Chinese population patterns: that tens of millions of Chinese died of starvation in 1960-70.

A final objection to the Mermaz comparison: the gulags came into being by *deliberate* political decisions of Communist governments, whereas historically, capitalism has in fact rid Europe of the periodic famines that plagued it until the middle of the 18th century, as they now do the less-developed countries. Capitalism has even begun to relieve starvation in some of the poorer countries, India and Brazil for example, which now export foodstuffs. Much, enormously much, remains to be done everywhere before all mankind can enjoy the high nutritional standard that not even the capitalist West reached until the 19th century. But this problem has nothing whatever to do with the question at issue: the deliberate creation by an organized political regime of a repressive concentration-camp system that doubles as a system of government.

I AM not going here into why industrial capitalism, the first and only system of production that has wrested people from penury and that could perform the same service for those still experiencing penury, is the most decried. Nor will I waste time arguing at length that since the 18th century, the nations where industrial capitalism has developed also happen to be those where modern democracy took root. This does not mean that these countries have kept consistent faith with democracy, or that democracy is found wherever capitalism goes. But it does mean that two centuries of history are witness to a general concomitance between capitalism and democracy. I will only note that this monumental file of evidence has been filched and that the democracies themselves have adopted the Communists' image of the world and their perspective on history.

The falsest and most pernicious characteristic of this image and this perspective lies probably in the antithesis between socialism and capitalism, between totalitarianism and democracy. This functions in most minds as an interpretive grid, even for those opposed to socialism. Its imposition is not the least of disinformation's victories, for this disinformation no longer bears on events, but on ideas; it is philosophical disinformation, a sort of ideological mole that has burrowed into the understanding most of us have of these forces.

Adopting this grid means accepting the principle that any regime that is less than perfectly

democratic may be likened to totalitarianism and so loses its right to defend itself against Communism. Since the world is full of governments that are neither totalitarian nor democratic, their futures are sealed. For one thing, because none of the democracies, even those recognized as such, is perfect, and since there are oppressive features to any society, which regime can claim a genuine right to defend itself against Communism? None. And, following the same line of reasoning, if all that need be done to legitimize Communism is to show that capitalism has its faults, its vices and crises, then let world power be turned over to the Communists at once, on the principle that the best way to correct a limp is to cut off both legs.

The real antithesis is not that of totalitarianism to democracy or Communism to capitalism, but of totalitarian Communism to all the rest. Communism is a necrosis of economics, totalitarianism a necrosis of politics, of the body civic and of culture. As a dead society, totalitarianism can be contrasted with countless social forms now and in the past that cannot be called democratic as the term is understood in a few societies today, but which were not and are not dead, either. Medieval Europe, Ming China, African, Polynesian, and American societies before their contact with Europeans, the France of Louis XV and Napoleon III, Elizabethan England, the Spain of Philip IV, India under the Gupta dynasty and the Germany of Kant's day were neither democratic nor totalitarian, but they were all living societies that, each in its own way, created valuable civilizations.

The existence of injustice, persecution, oppression in a group is one thing; for a group to be a negation of human nature in *every* aspect of its structure and ideology is something else again. This is the group to which totalitarianism belongs. True, today we believe that to fulfill themselves, all societies should aspire to democracy, progress toward it, and finally achieve it. I certainly do. Nevertheless, thousands of social organizations down through history, while not comparable to modern democracies, were not negations of humanity and did contribute elements of civilization to our present patchwork culture.

Unlike capitalism, Communism is not an economic system, it is a political system that must necessarily asphyxiate an economy. We should therefore refuse to lump Communism in with other authoritarian systems or them with it. Totalitarianism endangers not democracy alone, but life itself. Communism is not simply one despotic political system among many, or one inefficient and unjust economic system among others. In normal life, despotism and inefficiency are among the rare qualities that can be corrected, as is shown by all of history—except the history of Communism. To survive, Communism seeks to destroy not just existing democracy, but every possibility of democracy.

Any society of any type in the world today can accede to democracy, with a single exception: Communist society, which cannot go democratic without destroying itself. Understandably, then, totalitarian strategists try to reverse or block this tendency in the still malleable world around them. What is less easy to understand is that they can recruit some of their assiduous disciples from among democracy's guides and thinkers.

**B**UT recruit them they do. Broad sectors of public opinion and of the West's political and cultural elite see the democracies as more reactionary, more damaging to the Third World, more aggressive militarily, especially as regards nuclear warfare, than the Soviet Union and its satellites. Westerners who favor an effective nuclear deterrent and a verifiable balance of forces are still viewed as "conservatives," "right-wingers," "warmongers," or, at best, as "cold warriors." Those "liberals" advocating unilateral disarmament or, at any rate, prior and increasingly juicier concessions to the Soviet Union without reciprocal guarantees are considered generous souls who love peace.

In practice, what these "liberals" are really promoting is an imbalance that would enable the Soviet Union to force its economic and political will on a growing number of countries without going to war, thus enlarging an already spacious orbit. For history teaches us that never, anywhere, have concessions coaxed the Soviet Union into making concessions. From this unhappy truth, for which they are in no way responsible, the democracies do not conclude that they must change their diplomatic approach, but that they must concede still more.

Indeed, anyone with his ear to the political ground might think the only danger to the West is Western arms and Western diplomacy. For example, the *New York Times* of April 2, 1983 announced that "An Adverse Impact Among Allies Is Feared After Reagan Remark on Soviet Superiority." That is, the real danger to America's European allies is not seen as possible Soviet military superiority but in America's plan to counter it by reinforcing West European defenses. Any President of the United States visiting Western Europe has been treated to demonstrations so hostile that an unsuspecting spectator would think he were the worst enemy Europe ever had.

True, the people often show better judgment than the elites and the activists. In 1982, a survey revealed that all the peoples of Western Europe except the Spanish thought the growth of the Soviet military potential was more important in explaining international tension than the growth of America's military potential. (This had its clownish side, however: by a margin of 45 percent to 21 percent, the French people believed that American interest rates and the dollar's role in



international finance were much more serious causes of tension than the USSR's bulging arsenal.)

Despite an improved and, by 1981, clearer perception of Soviet power, or perhaps because of the realism of that perception, most Europeans, and not just militant pacifists, said that if their countries were invaded, they would rather submit than resist. Asked in another poll, "If the Soviet army entered French territory, do you think the President of France should immediately open peace talks with the Soviet Union?" 63 percent of the French answered "yes," 7 percent favored the use of nuclear weapons, and 31 percent thought France should fight, but without using its nuclear missiles.

Now, one may very well prefer servitude to death. But we can also avoid putting ourselves in a situation in which that grim choice is all that is open to us. Yet the will to avoid such a situation is precisely what the West seems to lack. The relentless Soviet "peace offensive," therefore, has every chance of succeeding, that is, of persuading the West and the rest of the world to accept permanent military inferiority by portraying this as an absolute guarantee against war.

Any normal person naturally hates the idea of war, and, of course, this feeling interferes with proper public information about strategy, as though the information itself were dangerous. But a Soviet "peace" is synonymous with subjugation, for which the West is already being psychologically conditioned, and its continued pursuit will lead by imperceptible stages to a state of undeclared but total satellization. Even economic weapons, not to mention military deterrence, have been forbidden to the West, or rather, the West has forbidden itself to use them. This refusal to apply stern economic sanctions against the Soviet Union must have vastly reassured the men in the Kremlin. And if the West can no longer resort to a credible strategic deterrent or to economic weapons, what is there to prevent the Soviet Union from continuing to trample the sovereignty of other countries, other continents, the whole world?

The practical conclusion Communist leaders draw from Western military and economic passivity is that they can go right on doing what they have been doing. Jean-François Deniau, a former cabinet minister under Giscard d'Estaing, quoted a high Soviet official as having told him:

We took Angola and you did not protest. We even saw that you could have beaten us in Angola—the government was on our side, but it was within an ace of giving up—and that you did nothing to win; on the contrary. And when, to save ourselves, we sent in 30,000 Cuban soldiers; Ambassador Andrew Young, a member of the American cabinet, said it was a positive step and an element of stability. All right, we noted the fact and included it in our analyses. Then we took Mozambique. Forget it, you don't even know where it is. Then we took Ethiopia, a key move. There again we noted that you could have

replied via Somalia or Eritrea or both. No reply. We noted that and put it into our analyses. Then we took Aden and set up a powerful Soviet base there. Aden! On the Arabian peninsula! In the heart of your supply center! No response. So we noted: we can take Aden.

THROUGHOUT the course of relations between the Communist and democratic worlds, the question of which will destroy the other has always been obscured in the democratic camp by adventitious side issues. Communism's leaders have never concealed their belief that this is the only question that counts and that they are determined to answer it with a total Communist victory. No temporary compromise, they feel, can alter the final judgment of history.

If people in the West find it hard to bear this vision of merciless struggle between the two forms of society, if they sometimes drive it out of their minds, it is partly because the socialist cause was forged within the democracies themselves in the 19th century, was one of their offspring that then became an independent component of political life. We have trouble understanding that this offspring's heir presumptive, 20th-century Communism, has assumed the historical mission of destroying the democracy from which it issued. We persist in viewing it as just another political persuasion that may have degenerated, but which can mend its ways, calm down, participate someday in a global concert. To think otherwise, we feel, sins against tolerance. Unfortunately, the democracies are not making the rules in this game. The Communists in no way share their concern for tolerance and the coexistence of systems.

Communism considers itself permanently at war with the rest of the world, even if it must occasionally agree to an armistice. This is nothing to be indignant about. We must simply recognize it; unless we do, we obviously cannot begin taking suitable political countermeasures. The Communists' war is fought in many ways. If necessary, this includes military action, but to Communism's leaders, all forms of action are part of this war, beginning with negotiation, at least their very particular notion of negotiation.

In their minds, the aim of negotiation has never been to reach a lasting agreement, but to weaken their adversary and prepare him to make further concessions while fostering his illusion that the new concessions will be the last, the ones that will bring him stability, security, tranquillity. The Soviets' "peace" propaganda, which to them means convincing others not to defend themselves, always overlies a threat of war, of implicit intimidation that exploits our very justifiable fear of an atomic cataclysm. This belligerent demand for peace merely summons the democracies to buy their security with slavery; it is an elaborate way to say "surrender or be wiped out." It has been called "attack through pacifism."

Because in its social system, as in its foreign policy, Communism is meeting increasing disapproval, Communist leaders do not rely much any more on honey to catch their future victims (except, perhaps, in some badly informed Third World countries). Having given up trying to seduce the unwary by pretending to represent leftist ideals, they are stripping off their mask and using pure force. Unlike the Western leadership, which is tormented by remorse and a sense of guilt, the Soviet leaders have perfectly clear consciences, which allows them to use brute force with utter serenity both to preserve their power at home and to extend it abroad.

Many in the West take comfort from the internal weaknesses of Communism—especially its economic inefficiency. But I for one am more frightened than comforted by these weaknesses. A system that has grown so strong despite so many failings, that increasingly dominates the world even when no one wants anything to do with it, at least not the majority of the people in the countries it seeks to penetrate, and that, where it is in power, everyone except the *nomenklatura* longs to be rid of—this system must nevertheless embody a principle of action and a monopolization of power more effective than any mankind has ever known before. Communism and the Soviet empire are unprecedented in history. None of the classic concepts that make the past intelligible explains Communist imperialism. The Soviet empire does not follow the bell-shaped expansionist curve of previous empires. Yet the democracies persist in believing that it will decline of itself and inevitably grow more moderate.

The truth is, however, that *the longer Soviet Communism lasts, the more expansionist it becomes* and the more difficult it is to control. Other Communist states, notably Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea, have shown similar propensities for conquest. It does not follow that because Communism is showing signs of rot and suffers reverses, it will turn to the path of peace. Except when they were disintegrating, few other empires had to deal with as many national and popular rebellions as the Soviet empire has had since 1953. But it has withstood and quelled them without going to pieces. And these difficulties have in no way slowed its expansionist thrust.

Frequently, part or all of a Soviet ruler's reign is scarred by serious setbacks. This happened under Stalin from 1925 to 1935, it happened during the reign of Khrushchev, who for a while seemed to be digging the empire's grave, and in the years immediately following his fall: the break with China, the loss of Albania, North Korean and Vietnamese neutrality in the Moscow-Peking quarrel, insurrections in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, Rumania's new standoffishness, cracks in the monolithic Communist International. Yet never did the empire expand so much or so boost its military

power as in the years that followed this critical period.

The closer we get to the end of the century, the more Communist imperialism becomes the chief problem of our time. No other threat to world freedom has endured as long. Other totalitarian systems were defeated or simply crumbled with age. In many other unhappy countries that have been or still are ruled by dictators, democracy and dictatorship—or, at least, adulterated forms of dictatorship (and democracy)—have swept in and out like tides. Only Communist totalitarianism is both durable and immutable.

TO THE question of what should the non-Communist countries do, I am tempted to answer by turning to Demosthenes. "Some people," he said, "think they can stump the man who mounts the tribune by asking him what's to be done. To those I will give what I believe is the fairest and truest answer: don't do what you are doing now."

This is not as summary an answer as it seems, even to today's problems. What, indeed, *can* we do? To go on as we have been doing would guarantee the continued advance of totalitarianism, for, as experience has shown, it will not be stopped by its own weaknesses and internal failures.

A second option is based on the hope that the Soviet Union will change its ways voluntarily if we acknowledge its place in the sun and show clearly through concessions that we have no intention of attacking it. Anchored to peaceful coexistence and détente, this option has too adequately proved its harmfulness to warrant further discussion. But since we have yet to scrap it, I can only warn people not to count on it to save us. It will keep us out of war by ushering us into subordination or slavery.

A third choice proposed, reviving—horrors!—the "cold war," which we are so repeatedly admonished not to do, really does not exist, since there has never been a cold war. What is called the cold war has simply been a toned-down version of détente that has certainly not attained its theoretical goal of "containment." The democracies selfishly thought to use détente to guarantee their own security by signing treaties finally and officially confirming the subjugation of the peoples already under Communist dictatorship. In this they have failed. All we have succeeded in doing is abandoning these enslaved peoples to their masters. As he was being exchanged for a Chilean Communist, the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky found a cruel symbol of this complicity: "The Chekist [secret policeman] who took off my handcuffs, remarked for my edification, 'These handcuffs, incidentally—they're American.' And he showed me the stamp. As though I had waited this long to learn that since the Soviets took power, or just about, the West has been supplying us with handcuffs, literally and figuratively."

Yet this complicity has not brought us the security we expected from it. Never were the democracies more vulnerable, more baffled, more exposed to the blows of Communist imperialism than they were when the so-called *détente* period ended. The years since 1981 have been especially tragic, with confusion sown in the democratic camp by the Polish and Afghan affairs, by the democracies' gradual but irresistible acceptance of Soviet military superiority despite the more and more threatening, impudently biting, and brutal way the Kremlin talks to them.

Some responsible thinkers are pessimistic enough to believe that the West has become so docile that it can no longer call a halt without risking war. I have reached the opposite conclusion. I am convinced that the Soviets are intent on maintaining their nuclear superiority over Western Europe as a way to increase their pressure on us *without* being dragged into a general war while gradually disengaging the United States from the continent of Europe. Thus the Western nuclear deterrent remains the principal guarantor of peace it has proved to be for the past thirty-five years. The *nomenklatura* doesn't want to die either.

Once this first point is well understood, and

acted upon, the second article of a worthy foreign policy would be to reply to any Soviet encroachment with immediate reprisals, mainly economic, and to make no further concessions without manifest, equivalent, and palpable counterconcessions. The free world's revised foreign policy must and can have a precise objective: to make the Soviets understand once and for all that the irrevocable prior condition for resumption of negotiations and the granting of concessions of any kind is a definitive halt to Communist imperialism everywhere in the world.

Activating this new policy, which really would be no more than a return to normal diplomacy, presupposes an almost total Western intellectual reconversion, sound understanding—at last—of what Communism is and how it works, and a hitherto unprecedented harmonization and coordination of policy among all the democracies. This amounts to saying that while such a new diplomatic departure appears objectively possible, it seems to me highly unlikely because of the intellectual frivolity, indecisiveness, and discord of the men called on to apply it. And that is why I fear that democracy may not survive the closing years of the 20th century.

End  
Case  
File

287184

FI009

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Mrs. La Guire:

Thank you very much for brightening my day. Your good letter and common sense suggestions were an oasis midst the "cactus cries" of those who are, like Chicken Little, certain the sky is falling.

I'm going to round table your ideas with our people here. Thank you again, and thank you for your prayers. I'm most grateful.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Mrs. Maren La Guire  
362 Allamanda Circle  
Venice, Florida 33595

850128



362 Ullamanda Cir.  
Venice, IL 33595  
January 7, 1985

The Honorable Ronald Reagan  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Sir:

I just have to write and say I feel guilty accepting the raise in my Social Security, considering the tremendous problem of our national debt.

I am an active 75-year old, widowed since 1955 when I returned to teaching. I receive a Michigan retired teacher's pension of \$571.62 a month plus Medicare A & B and BC/BS coverage. Besides S.S. of \$745 a month now, I have income from investments after I got my children through college (with the help of my husband's life insurance). I could very well manage without this raise, and I have several friends who feel as I do. We would rather see the national debt reduced.

The truly needy should never be deprived of help they need. Isn't there some way to accomplish that without raising the S.S. of those with income above a certain amount?

I would like to comment on welfare cheaters who should be uncovered. I realize there are short staffs to investigate. Why not ask for volunteers from among suitable retirees, such as myself, to investigate cases after a short training? Also, there would be many who would volunteer to help welfare families budget and spend more wisely because of what we have personally observed among some of these families. You are daily in my prayers.

Most respectfully yours,  
Maren LaGuire



287183

PR003

January 28, 1985

Dear Ms. Graves:

Thank you for writing as you did. I'll see that your letter gets to Mr. Stockman.

Thank you, too, for all that you did in my behalf. I'm truly grateful. Let me assure you, I'm not going back on my word.

Thanks again and very best wishes.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Ms. Barbara Ann Graves  
1572 Ninth Street  
Astoria, Oregon 97103

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Thank you for your letter. You'll never know how much it meant to me. I've been frustrated by our inability to get our story through the wall of silence to the Black community. Right now we continue to try to persuade Congress to give us what we call "enterprise zones." It is a program to use tax incentives to bring business and industry into depressed inner city neighborhoods to provide jobs and opportunity for the people there. We're also battling to get a lower minimum wage for young people with no work experience so they can get that first job. The present minimum has priced them out of the job market. The Council of Black Mayors support this because Black teenagers have the highest rate of unemployment in the land. We'll keep trying.

You are right also about how government programs have kept Blacks in poverty, dependent on government handouts. I want to help them become independent.

Thank you again, and very best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

**RONALD REAGAN**

✓ Mr. Donald Wilson  
618 Communipaw Avenue  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07304

# Don Wilson Associates, Inc.

## CONSTRUCTION GROUP

618 Communipaw Avenue  
Jersey City, N.J. 07304  
(201) 433-8728

AH

January 8, 1985

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President  
White House  
Washington, DC 20222

Dear Sir:

I have wanted to write this letter for some time. I did not have the courage to appreciate your overall judgment for the Nation. It was difficult for me to accept some of your policies toward Black people. It was said that your cutting domestic programs would severely hurt Black people. I agreed with you because a great many people were laying around collecting handouts. Your cutting back has helped my people to use their creative abilities. We have taken your moves personal, but I realized that they were for the betterment of the Nation. Mr. President, you have given encouragement to many people who have not realized it yet.

Sir, your policies toward businesses sustaining their local communities are good policies which are helping to bring our Nation back to a strong working America. You have done what no other president has been able to accomplish: The creative ability within Americans to say "What can I do for my country, not what my country can do for me".

A strong America is a working America. What you have done should be shown and spoke of throughout the Black communities. Not the so-called middle class but in the ghetto. The people on the bottom should know your policies. The Republican Party need to come closer to the working poor of the community.

Whoever follow through with your policies will be the next president because you have totally turned this Nation around.

Sincerely yours,

*Donald Wilson*  
Donald Wilson

(UN)

once passed, in 1977, an increase in the Social Security payroll tax & in the amount of your pay subject to the tax. This measure was spread over several years and there are still a couple to go.

~~Some of them~~ We are going to present a plan to the Congress which will call for a further reduction of your income tax. I come in Congress are opposing this & want to leave your taxes some more. I promise I'll vote any effort to do that.

To Mr. Donald Wilson - 618 Commonwealth Ave.

Dear Mr. Wilson

Jersey City N.J. 07304

I thank you for your letter. You'll never know how much it meant to me. I've been frustrated by our inability to get our story ~~out~~ through the wall of silence to the Black community. Right now we continue to try to persuade Congress to give us what we call "enterprise zones." It is a program to use tax incentives to bring business & industry into depressed inner city neighborhoods to provide jobs & opportunity for the people there. We're also lobbying to get a lower minimum wage for young people with ~~not~~ no work experience so they can get that first job. The present minimum has priced them out of the job market. The Council of Black Mayors supports this because Black teenagers have the highest rate of unemployment in the land. We'll keep trying!

You are right also about your point. Programs have kept Blacks in poverty, dependent on handouts. I want to help them become independent.

Thank you again & very best wishes to you.

Admiral RR

To Mrs. Marion La Duire 362 Alameda Circle  
Venice Fla. 33595

Dear Mrs. La Duire

I thank you very much for enlightening my day.  
You good letter & common sense suggestions were  
an oasis amidst the "cactus" cries of those who  
are, like chicken little, certain the sky is falling.

I'm going to round table your ideas with  
our people here. Thank you again & thank you  
for your prayers. I'm most grateful.

Yours truly, RCR

To Mrs. Barbara Ann Thomas 1572 9<sup>th</sup> St. Astoria Oregon  
97103

Dear Mrs. Thomas

I thank you for writing as you did. I'll see that  
your letter gets to Mr. Stockman.

Thank you too for all that you did in my  
leaves. I'm truly grateful. Let me assure you I'm  
not going back on my word.

Thanks again & very best wishes.

Yours truly RCR

To Miss Margaret Dean P.O. Box 245 Ocell Oregon 97044  
Dear Miss Dean

I'm sorry to be so late in answering your letter  
but it just reached my desk. Believe me I understand  
your problem. In the quiet place I was raised in  
peacefully and I was witnessing the highways looking  
for my first job at the very edge of the great depression  
in 1932.

Not enough of that. I share your feeling about  
Texas, I hope, why we cut them 25% across the  
board in 1981. Unfortunately the administration before

Cheney  
my  
of  
RCR

End  
Case  
File



287180

PR007

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Peter:

Thank you for your letter. I can understand your interest in history. I'm something of a history buff myself although my main interest is in the history of our American West. As some historian put it, it was the most unusual march of empire in world history. It wasn't led by the military but by settlers who bet their lives and the lives of their families as they opened up the West in the face of hardship and hostile Indians.

If you are going to be in or near Washington at any time, let me know and we'll see if we can't arrange that handshake. Write me, but on the envelope put "Attention Kathy Osborne." That way the letter will get to me without any delay.

As you can imagine, there are times when I'm not in Washington. For example, in February, I'll be away from the 13th until the 18th. In March, I'll be in Canada the 17th and 18th. In April, I'll be away from the 5th to the 15th. And, the Economic Summit Conference in Germany will have me out of the country from the 1st of May until possibly the 10th, and that's as far ahead as I know my schedule.

Please give my best regards to Mrs. Todd and, if you like, show her this letter.

Best regards,

**RONALD REAGAN**

Mr. Peter Aviles  
Route 2, Box 1692  
Caldwell, Idaho 83605

~~Mr. Peter M. Aviles~~ To Mr. Peter Aviles

Rt. 2 Box 1692 Caldwell Idaho  
83605

Dear Peter

Thank you for your letter. I can understand your interest in history - I'm something of a history buff myself although my main interest is in the history of our American west. As some historians put it, it was the most unusual march of empire in world history. It wasn't led by the military but by settlers who bet their lives & the lives of their families as they opened up the west in the face of hardship & hostile Indians.

If you are going to be in or near Wash. at any time let me know and we'll see if we can't arrange that handshake. Write me, but on the envelope ~~write~~ put, "Attn. Kathy Osborne." That way the letter will get to me without any delay.

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Please give my best regards to Mrs. Todd and if you like show her this letter.

Best Regards  
R.R.

Peter asked me to get this ready to mail so I am taking the liberty of adding a postscript.

Peter is 25 yrs. old and has lived in my home for the past 23 yrs. He not only is non-vocal-he is unable to walk and can only use one hand to a limited extent.

He has an A.A. in Journalism from his community in California. He only missed then because my husband retired and we moved from California to Idaho to late for Peter to register - He wheels himself to his polling place rather than vote absentee.

We were going to take Peter to Hawaii for graduation but he asked to go to Washington D.C. instead - This surprised us since he had been there several times before - Our daughter lives in Rockville, Maryland which gives us a base to operate from and feed Peter's hunger for history and also expose him to a sample of politics - He was thrilled with his visit to a Senate session on one trip - Thanks for listening.

Dorothy Todd



32  
*Wheeler*

January 2, 1985

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

I am a nonvocal disabled citizen living in Caldwell, Idaho and am very concerned about rights for the disabled. However, this letter is not about that topic. I am a history buff and I am especially interested in the Presidents and the presidency itself. Attending a school for the disabled where history was "Who was George Washington" made me long for real history, so I read every history book that I could get and am mostly self taught on history. One of my dreams is to meet a President that I have read about. If you can arrange it I would be forever grateful. I wrote President Carter about this but he was not able to meet with me. Thank You,

Peter M. Aviles

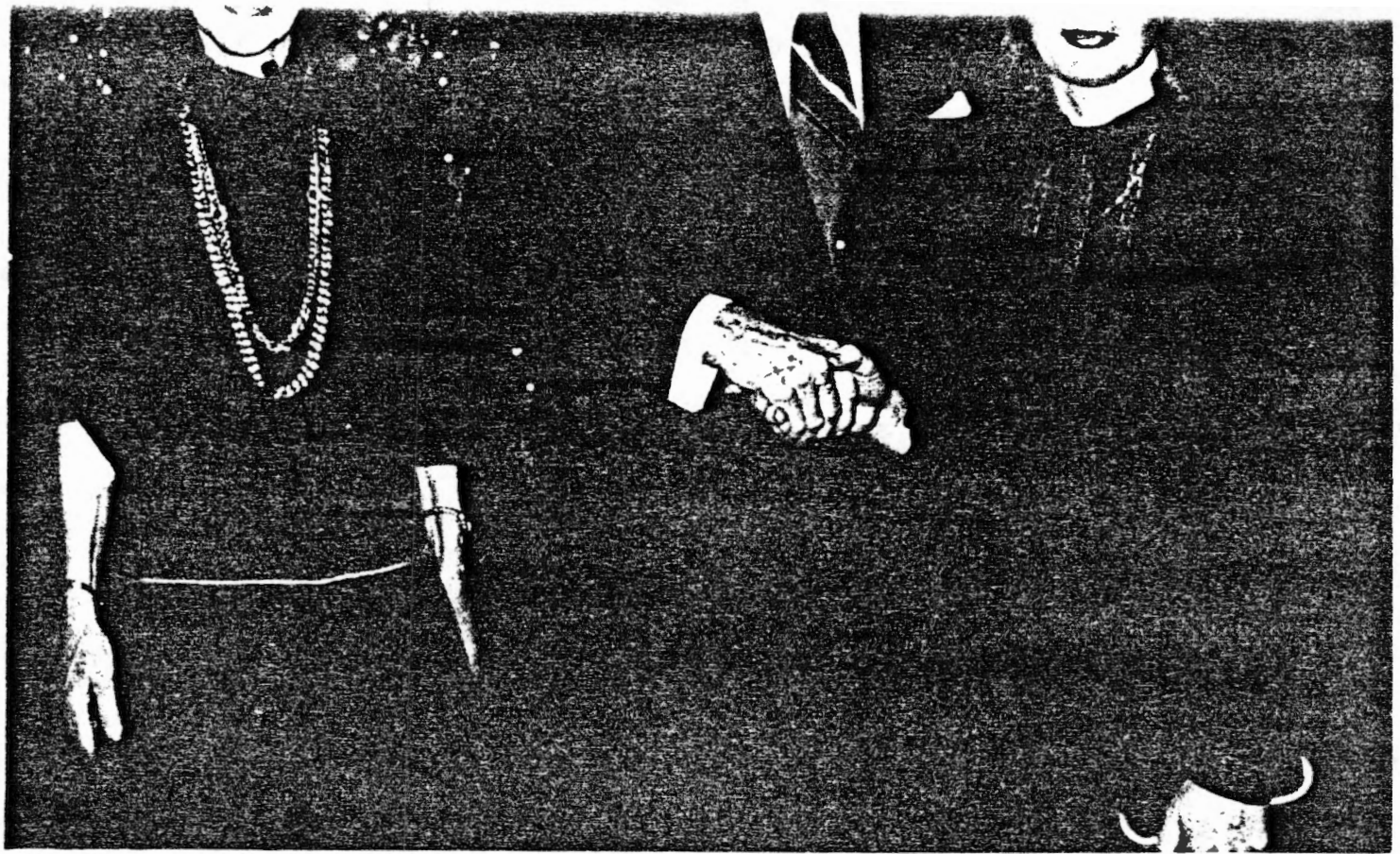
Rt 2 Box 692  
Caldwell, Id. 83605

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*He has an A.A. in Journalism from his community in California. He never missed voting in any election until this past November. He only missed then because my husband retired and we moved from California to Idaho too late for Peter to register - He wheels himself to his polling place rather than vote absentee - We were going to take Peter to Hawaii for graduation but he asked to go to Washington, DC instead - This surprised us since he had been there several times before - Our daughter lives in Rockville, Maryland which gives us a base to operate from and feed Peter's hunger for history and also expose him to a sample of politics - He was thrilled with his visit to a Senate session on one trip - Thanks for listening Dorothy Todd*

End  
last  
File



To Ruth Beal - With Every Good Wish &  
Very Best Regards  
Vance & Ronald Reagan

287179

PR005-01

Ruth Beal  
3014 Dower House Dr.  
Herndon, VA 22071

850128



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 17, 1985

MEMO FOR CATHY OSBORNE

FROM: TERESA BELL  
CMC/NSC

SUBJECT: Presidential Signature

Received the attached photo from the Social office for identification. I am told that you can arrange to have it signed by the President. The photo is of Mrs. Ruth Beal. Her husband, Richard Beal, recently passed away and Ruth was attending the WH senior staff party on his behalf. The President and First Lady have been so kind to Ruth and the children during Richard's illness and then death, I hope it's not too much to ask this one last favor.

Thanks for your help.

(x3684, Rm. 303, OEOB)

*Should get Money on line too. RR*

End  
Case  
File

287362

G1002

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Doug:

You must soon be appointed chief librarian of the Robert W. Service Foundation. Thanks very much for the book. Apparently he was being recognized very early in his writings. This book is well before his poems on Dan McGrew, Sam McGee, Yukon Jake, etc.

You were very kind and I really am most grateful and happy to have this volume. Our own personal Santa Claus sends her love.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Mr. Douglas Wick  
Columbia Pictures  
110 West 57th Street  
New York, New York 10019

850123



MJW

Douglas Wick  
Columbia Pictures  
110 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, New York  
10019





## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Scott:

I have your letter and was very happy to hear from you. Your mother keeps me posted on your progress and your intention to study architecture. I think that's great, but don't be surprised if you undergo a change of mind or, for that matter, more than one in the years ahead. I majored in economics and then wound up a sports announcer and later an actor.

I don't say this to suggest in any way your choice isn't the right one, it's just that in these next few years you'll be exposed to a number of new viewpoints and you should follow your own instincts. Architecture is a fascinating profession and a happy marriage between art and practical construction.

Scott, I shouldn't do this, but I have to argue with you a bit on your postscript about age 18 and the right to drink. Forgive me, but voting and soldiering are different than starting in on what we have to recognize is actually a form of drug. Now don't think I'm a hypocrite -- I enjoy a cocktail now and then before dinner and have a taste for a good dinner wine. I also recall feeling exactly as you do now and, looking back, I realize the Lord must have been watching over me. At that age (about 18) getting drunk seemed like the thing to do, the point of drinking. Then, before something too awful happened (although there were a few near scrapes) I realized that I was abusing the machinery, this body. We only get one you know. But more than that, I had an example to look at. My father was an



- 2 -

alcoholic; I loved him and love him still, but he died at age 58 and had suffered from heart disease for a number of years before his death. He was the victim of a habit he couldn't break.

Forgive me for playing grandpa -- but think about it a little. Become an architect or, if you change your mind -- whatever, and we'll celebrate your graduation with a champagne toast, and I'll furnish the wine.

All the best to you.

Sincerely,

Mr. Scott R. Osborne  
8966 Cliffside Lane  
Fair Oaks, California 95628

Mr. Douglas Wick - Columbia Pictures  
110 W. 57<sup>th</sup> St. N.Y. N.Y. 10019

Dear Doug

You must soon be appointed chief librarian of the Robert A. Service Foundation. Thanks very much for the book. Apparently he was being recognized very early in his writings. This book is well before his poems on Dan McFie, Sam Marlee, Jackson Joke etc.

You were very kind and I really am most grateful and happy to have this volume. Our own personal Santa Claus sends her love.

Sincerely RR

Mr. Scott R. Osborne 8966 Cliffside, Fair Oaks Calif.  
95628

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Forgive me for playing grandpa - but think about it a little. Become an architect or if you change your mind - whatever & we'll celebrate your graduation with a champagne toast & I'll furnish the wine.

All the best to you

Sincerely RR

I'd like to thank you for the beautiful watch,  
it was really the gift of you. I only wish I  
could thank you personally for not only the  
watch, but for everything you've given me.  
You can believe I'll keep them to show my kids and  
grandkids, just so they'll know all the kind things  
you've done.

I'd like to congratulate you on your  
landslide victory. There was no doubt in my  
mind that you'd win by a landslide, the only  
question in my mind was whether or not  
you were going to win all fifty states and  
Minnesota sure got sentimental. I don't think of the  
added embarrassment Mr. Mendenhall had  
facing every state plus his home state. Anyway,  
this country will become more of a union with  
you as President.

I'm a big senior now, finally,  
and I'm hoping to attend Cal Poly University  
at San Luis Obispo to study mechanical  
engineering. If I don't accomplish that, I'll probably  
end up in construction starting out as a  
construction superintendent and eventually  
work my way up to a partner in the  
firm. Thanks for everything, Scott Osborn

I'd just like to say  
one thing, I feel at age  
18 we're old enough to vote  
and to fight for our country in  
the event of a war, we should be able to



Before I forget,  
I'd like to wish both  
you and Miss. Susan  
a Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year.

End  
Case  
File

January 28, 1985

Dear Mr. Sears:

Thank you very much for your letter of December 18. I'm a little late in answering but it takes a while for letters to reach my desk.

There are no words to properly express my gratitude to you and my admiration for you. Yes, Rangers lead the way and Ranger William Sears is truly out in front. I'll do all I can to see that the enormous price you've paid will not be in vain. My heartfelt thanks and God bless you.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Mr. William Sears  
613 Southwick Drive  
Fayetteville, North Carolina 28303

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

WILLIAM A. JOSEPHINA SEARS, JR.  
613 SOUTHWICK DR.  
FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28303  
June 18, 1957

Dear Mr. President,

I received your autographed photograph from Mr. Ken MacDonell of the Veterans Administration on Thursday. Sir, I can honestly say it was one of the most exciting and memorable events of my life.

I served as an Army Ranger through four administrations. During your administration the military seemed to gain momentum and direction as did the rest of our country. I was most proud to serve with you as my Commander in Chief.

Most of my friends sort of expected me to turn bitter towards the military after I was wounded and paralyzed in Grenada. I have kept my vow of loyalty constantly both publicly and privately. I have no regrets about my choice of career. In fact I would do it all again. I believe in this great nation and wish to serve any way I can.

Thank you for your very warm greeting.

Rangers Lead The Way Sir,  
William Sears



January 28, 1985

Dear Mr. Abraham:

Thanks very much for your letter of December 19. But even more, thank you for what you are doing there so far from home. It was good of you to write and I'm grateful for your generous words and for your report on our standing there in Cameroon. You play a very large part in creating that good image of our country. We are in your debt.

God bless you.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Mr. Larry J. Abraham  
Coop/Mut/Nord  
B.P. 70  
Garowa, Cameroon  
West Africa

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

12/19/84

Dear President Reagan,

I am a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon, West Africa and I just want to tell you how well respected our country is among the people I have met here.

Whenever I am introduced as an American to a Cameroonian the response is always positive, praising our economic strength, our liberties and especially your strong leadership.

It certainly is a good feeling to be an American.

Have a wonderful New Year.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Abraham

Coop/Mut/Nord

B.P. 70

Garowa, Cameroon

West Africa

287366

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 28, 1985

Dear Captain Griffin:

Thank you very much for your good letter and, more important, for what you are doing. You are right that very few of our fellow citizens are aware of the part our flagships are playing in feeding the world and it's high time they did know. I'm going to see that some of our Congressmen hear about your experience in El Salvador.

Again, my heartfelt thanks and very best wishes.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Captain S. S. Griffin  
Northwest Landing  
East Hampton, New York 11937

Captain S. S. Griffin  
NORTHWEST LANDING • EAST HAMPTON, NEW YORK 11937  
January 14, 1985

*Copy of this?  
JAG*

Dear Mr. President:

*SA sample*  
Over the past several years it has been my good fortune to have been in command of American flag bulk carriers hauling the produce of the American farmer to third world countries. These ships have carried our grain to Egypt, Israel, El Salvador, Sudan and a cargo of fertilizer to Pakistan.

Almost all Americans realize one of our country's greatest resources is our farmer's productivity. They are aware of world hunger and our farm surpluses. Most understand the need for a defensive shield and fear conflict. Hardly any are aware of your program, which could be considered "food for peace". When I discuss my profession with others, the reaction is almost invariably "how wonderful". We are feeding the world's hungry, with excess American goods on American flag ships, and most think our aid is only military.

From what I have noted, it seems the primary way the people in the countries we visit realize the grain is from "The States" is the presence of an American ship in port, and its seamen in town. I must say, I walked the streets of El Salvador this past September with an intense feeling of satisfaction, as the local people, spotting me for an American, and knowing our ship was in port, gave a thumbs up signal and said "America, Si!". It creates a feeling you want to share with the world.

I write to suggest you let our countrymen know that you operate ships for peace as well as defense and that your aid is humanitarian as well as defensive. I sincerely believe all Americans will feel more secure with this knowledge.

Yours Respectfully,

*S.S. Griffin*

S.S. Griffin  
Master  
M/V SUGAR ISLANDER



12/19/84

Dear President Reagan,

I am a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon, West Africa and I just want to tell you how well respected our country is among the people I have met here.

Whenever I am introduced as an American to a Cameroonian the response is always positive, praising our economic strength, our liberties and especially your strong leadership.

It certainly is a good feeling to be an American.

Have a wonderful new year.

Sincerely,  
Leony J. Abraham  
Coop/mt/nord  
B.P. 70  
Garoua, Cameroon  
West Africa