

LETTERS

A Bas Burnham

Years ago I swore a mighty oath never again to write for, in, or to NATIONAL REVIEW, but Jim Burnham's article "The New Left and the Right" (July 16), has denied that resolution. In criticizing my recent article in *Ramparts*, Burnham shows himself to be the living exemplar of why I left the right wing, and illustrates again a line in that article which he doesn't mention: "James Burnham . . . whose only hint of positive interest in liberty in a lifetime of political writing was a call for legalized firecrackers. . . ."

It is precisely because the right wing is now, as it was in 1790 and 1848, dedicated to the preservation of the "inherited structure" of "civilized order" that I am now on the New Left. Jim Burnham's Right is the oldest Right of all: the Right of Torquemada, of Louis XIV, of de Bonald, of Metternich. He can have it. As somebody who is a member of the Party of Liberty, I know that the Party of Order, our historic enemy, remains that enemy today. Burnham's beloved order is the despotic, frozen Order of State tyranny; I stand, in contrast, with that true order which emerges out of liberty. In the words of Proudhon, one of the Old Right/New Left heroes: "Liberty, the Mother, not the Daughter, of Order."

Burnham is also perceptive in stating the ultimate political test: "On which side of the barricades do you line up?" Looking back in history as well as at current crises, it is clear that Burnham and I are consistently and ever on the opposite sides of the barricades. Not only *vis-à-vis* the student revolution (which, Burnham carefully omits, also includes Prague, Warsaw, and Belgrade as well as Western cities) and in France where the anarchist-New Left revolution in embryo was scuttled by the Communist Party, but also in revolutionary situations of the past. Burnham is out there on the barricades of yesteryear, alongside Louis XVI, Charles I, George III, Metternich, Czar Nicholas, and Kaiser Wilhelm, always with the frozen, caste societies of the "civilized" Old Order. I can see Burnham now, also, helping the slave-masters of the South rounding up the slave rebels under Nat Turner. He is welcome to his glorious lost causes. As a libertarian, I am delighted to be on the other side.
New York, N.Y. MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

Mr. Rothbard neglects to note—his depleted powers to reason having sunk not quite below the level of self-service—that

his boycott of NATIONAL REVIEW was instituted some time after NATIONAL REVIEW's boycott of Mr. Rothbard was instituted. That happened some years ago, after the editors arrived at the melancholy conclusion that however shrewd or useful his occasional aperçus in economics, said editors declined to inhabit, along with Mr. Rothbard, the overcrowded quarters of *Freak House*. His current bender with the New Left is nowadays remarked only in the fever swamps of the humorless Left, and by a few humane lepidopterists like ourselves, who know (for instance) whose friend Proudhon ("property is theft") was; and who pause, every now and then, to desire for Mr. Rothbard a speedy recovery, inasmuch as his talents do not quite achieve, like de Sade's, such reaches as warrant a general indulgence in his present inclination to perversity. —ED.

Herberg on Assassination

When a much hashed-over subject gets to Will Herberg ["Political Assassinations," July 2] it becomes an entirely new question, with a fresh and original approach which is a joy to any reader. The integrity of Mr. Herberg's writing always gets right to me. His conclusions are always completely justified and satisfying to a sometimes reeling mind.

Who else would put his finger on the true causes of the recent "political" assassination of Senator Kennedy?—"We are the most ethnically heterogeneous country the world has ever seen . . . every foreign quarrel becomes in some sense an American quarrel . . . the tensions out of which political assassinations come are bound to grow and multiply."

Mr. Herberg says he has been told this reflects a pessimistic outlook. Perhaps, but it is a truly realistic one. To use an old-fashioned word, his article was a great "comfort" to one who had just recently heard from her church pulpit: "The Kennedy assassination was not surprising: after all, our country was founded on violence, the dead bodies of the Indians, and for one hundred years the bodies of the black slave. . . . I will not say we are personally guilty but I will not say we are not."

You have my gratitude for Mr. Herberg's intelligent, lucid and original analysis.

Forest Hills, N.Y. MRS. A. E. BONBRAKE

Mr. Thoreau's Time Bomb

I am ecstatic over Frederick K. Sanders' essay on Thoreau and the civil social order [June 4]. It is unquestionably one of the best pieces I have seen in NR in five years of reading the magazine (Garry Wills' remarkable article on prejudice and the Negro in September '65 comes to mind in comparison). As one seeking to understand his relation to conservatism as well as to his contemporaries in this revolutionary age, I shall be undertaking a study of the relevance of conservatism to the



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