



The Patriotic Impulse

by John Lukacs

I must now, in public, repeat what I privately expressed to the directors of the Ingersoll Foundation: my gratitude for their having chosen me as the present recipient of this honorific award. And I must add another source of my gratification, which is the very phrasing of it: the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters. How much more preferable Scholarly Letters are to their converse of "Literary Scholarship" nowadays, of which there is an unpleasant surfeit, and when there is inflation of what goes under the name of "literary scholarship" while the art of scholarly letters has become lamentably rare. And since it is customary at such an occasion to attempt some kind of a summary of one's philosophy, let me recall the title of Weaver's famous little book. *Ideas Have Consequences*—of course, since I am a philosophical idealist as well as a historian. But as a historian, I must constantly consider consequences. Events—a word that I prefer to "facts"—are revealed to us in a lesser way than they are seen by God; we can judge their importance or their significance (these two are not necessarily the same) only because of their consequences. So it is not only ideas that lead to consequences but consequences, too, lead to ideas—and from this my, perhaps unorthodox, sense of history follows.

I shall sum up its component realities very briefly. I say "realities," because ideas are realities, because the opposites are not the realist and the idealist view of the world and of human

nature but the idealist and the materialist one. There is my belief that history is not a science; that it is not an art, either, except in the sense that if history is an art, then so are all the other sciences. That human life is more than a material, that it is an artistic proposition; but that an artistic proposition, too, is inseparable from some kind of a spiritual one. That life is more than a product, that it is a task. That what matters in this world is what people think and believe—and that the material organization of the world is the superstructure of *that*: that is, a view of the structure of human events that is the very opposite not only of Marx but also of Adam Smith. That our problem is that of our consciousness and not of our so-called subconscious, since we can only think and speak about things that we know, and since the modern psychological categories of the "subconscious" are nothing else but projections, and often illegitimate projections, of intellectual categorizations of our consciousness into something that we do not know. That "subconscious" will not do as a definition to what is unconscious in our lives and in our minds: *that* truly exists, while the suggestion of the former to the effect that what is deep and hidden constitutes the truth, does not. That—and here I depart from categorical idealism—what men do to ideas is more important than what ideas do to men, because human ideas do not exist apart from their incarnation in human beings. That mind influences, indeed, that it intrudes into matters as much as or even more than matter can influence mind. That this is why history differs from evolution. That throughout history the influence of mind on matter increases, and that we must be conscious of this, which is probably why the evolution of consciousness is the only kind of meaningful evo-

John Lukacs is a professor of history at Chestnut Hill College in Pennsylvania. Last November he received the Ingersoll Foundation's 1991 Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters, for which this was his acceptance speech.

lution there is. That consequently history, as indeed life, is not a part of science but that everything that is human, including science, is part of the history of mankind. That therefore we must reject—or, more precisely, that we have outgrown—the deterministic categories not only of Marx and Freud but probably also of Darwin and Einstein.

You will understand that these convictions (they are convictions rather than opinions) and their frequent expositions in my writing of history have not been suited to endear me to the managers of intellectual commerce in our times. I have learned to live with this handicap—for handicap it is, and will so remain for some time—through a fairly wearisome but not altogether unhappy life. But I have chosen to speak tonight about another predicament, a predicament that involves more than my professional career. This is the predicament of my provenance. It involves the problem where I belong; and where I find my home.

I think that I am the first recipient of the Weaver Award who is not a native American. I need not say how much I appreciate the, very American, generosity of those who have tendered this award to me. Yet there are many American citizens, not born in this country, who have received all kinds of awards because of all kinds of achievements. But I dare to say that my case is different: because the instrument of my achievement as a historian has been the English language. That history consists of words rather than of “facts”—or, more precisely, that no fact can have any meaning independent of the words in which it is thought, expressed, spoken, taught, or written, is an essential principle of my writings and teaching of history. But in my case there is more to that.

I am very much aware of the condition that I belong to two countries, to two continents, perhaps to two worlds. I have lived in this country for two-thirds of my life, indeed, for three-fourths of my conscious life; and yet I belong to my native country Hungary as much as I belong to my adopted country of Pennsylvania. This recognition impressed me again and again this past spring when I spent five months in my native country, living and teaching there. But it was not independent from another recognition: that America, more precisely, Pennsylvania, and Chester County within Pennsylvania, is my *home*. This is so because of my American family, my American wife, my American children; this is so because of my protracted (and nowadays perhaps unusual) residence in the same place for about four decades. My participation in the affairs of my township, attempting to defend its landscape, belongs here, too, because of my affection for my part of this country, whereby I come to the essence of the matter. I think that I am a patriot while I am not a nationalist (in a passage in *Mein Kampf* Hitler said the very opposite about himself); and I think that this republic is in great and dire want of fewer nationalists and of more patriots, (though not necessarily of the odd kind such as myself). A passage by Simone Weil expresses this poignantly. “We must not have any love other than charity. A nation cannot be an object of charity. But a country can be such, as landscape bearing traditions which are eternal. Every country can be that.” To this I add that charitable love is human and not natural; spiritual and not merely material. Nature has, indeed, it feels, no charity of its own. That is why I am opposed not only to those so-called capitalists who want to cover this land with more cement and more concrete but also to those so-called environmentalists who have no feeling for landscape but who think that nature

and civilization are opposites, who think that the love of nature consists of the adoration and preservation of wilderness.

When Dr. Johnson said, “Patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels,” he meant nationalism not patriotism, since the word *nationalism*, in English, did not yet exist. (It is at least interesting that the *Oxford English Dictionary* marks its first appearance in English within the same decade of *communism* and *capitalism*.) Nationalism is a modern phenomenon. Nationalist phenomena appear of course earlier in history, too; but modern nationalism is essentially different from patriotism.

Patriotism is traditionalist; nationalism is ideological. Patriotism is rooted to the land; nationalism to the mythical image of a people, of a community that so often is not a real community. Patriotism is not a substitute for religion, whereas nationalism often is.

which is why I must distinguish the two. This is no place for a historical or even semantic analysis of the distinction between them. Except that I must sum up the essentials, because they have affected, and continue to affect, myself. Patriotism grows from a sense of belonging to a particular country; it is confident rather than self-conscious; it is essentially defensive. Nationalism is self-conscious rather than confident; it is aggressive, and suspicious of all other people within the same nation who do not seem to agree with some of the popular nationalist ideology. Patriotism is traditionalist; nationalism is ideological. Patriotism is rooted to the land; nationalism to the mythical image of a people, of a community that so often is not a real community. Patriotism is not a substitute for religion, whereas nationalism often is. It may fill the emotional needs of insufficiently rooted people. It may be combined with hatred—and, as Chesterton said, it is not love (which is always personal and particular) but hatred that may unite otherwise very disparate men and women. Or, as Duff Cooper once put it, “the jingo nationalist is always the first to denounce his fellow countrymen as traitors.”

Here is the source of my disagreements with some of our conservatives with whom I otherwise tend to agree about many things. I shall not expound on the strange tendency to exalt the virtues of untrammelled financial speculation, the virtues of inhuman technologies, and the dislike of conservation by many who otherwise identify themselves as “conservatives.” I am thinking of phrases and ideas such as, “What is good for America is good for the world”; or “Make the world safe for democracy”—once liberal and progressive (and, when you think of it, rather revolutionary) ideas expressed by Woodrow Wilson, which seem to have been accepted and propagated wholeheartedly by some of our conservative ideologues and spokesmen in our times. No, ladies and gentlemen: what is good for America is good for America; it is not our task to make the world safe for democracy; and democracy all over the world may make it a very unsafe thing indeed. When I read the proposition of a now very eminent and self-

proclaimed neoconservative spokeswoman that "the United States should be the policeman of the world," I am stunned and shocked. When I read an eminent conservative and self-proclaimed traditionalist lady exclaim that "God gave America the atom bomb," I find not the slightest trace of that Christian humility that should behoove a conservative, let alone a traditionalist.

I am uncomfortable, too, with the kind of fellow immigrant who soon becomes an unabashed American nationalist; whose knowledge of American history and of the English language is not really sufficient but who proclaims that on these shores he was newly born. I read one of them years ago and he made me shudder. They had asked him where he was born, and he said: "I was born when I landed in the United States of America." I am wearied as I read the writings of "conservative" ideologues born in Bessarabia, cheered on by those native neoconservative Americans whose vision of American history begins with Ellis Island. Yet I was also set back a bit a few weeks ago when I read a review of a biography of a different kind of immigrant, of the late Vladimir Nabokov with whom I have at least one thing in common, which is our love for the English language. His admiring biographer wrote of Mr. and Mrs. Nabokov as they had elected to leave America for good when financial success permitted them to do so. "They would always remain proudly American, but after this first departure, they would never settle in America again." Well, good luck to them, and they indeed deserved some; but an American passport does not a proud American make.

Some of you may, at this point, find that I am a difficult man to please. I only ask you to believe me when I say that this is not so, or at least I think it is not so. I am near the end of my remarks; but there is one more matter that impinges on the impulse of my patriotism. This is my love for the En-

glish language that is my language now—and not merely an acquired linguistic skill, or a useful instrument for the sake of practical communication. I wrote about this matter in my *Confessions of an Original Sinner*. It is a lifelong love affair with the English language. I have been married to it now, and there can be no question of divorce, or even of a long separation. When I am away from an English-speaking country I begin to worry about the dangers of absence, of my unfaithfulness to that dear thing in my mind. It is a dear thing, like my wife. As an English writer once wrote: "our language is a sulky and inconstant beauty and at any moment it is important to know what liberties she will permit"—again like my wife.

In the beginning, as the Bible says, is the word: not the picture, not the idol, not the number. I am pleased to be paired this evening with Mario Vargas Llosa, some of whose books I read—not only for the sake of doing my homework for tonight but for the purpose of pleasure—and whose ideas of patriotism and language I find, most agreeably, to be similar to mine. I do not now refer only to his brave attempt in the public arena, to defend and restore the liberties of his country. I refer to his constant pursuit of truthful language in his prose, to his preoccupation with the mysterious beauties of language in his excellent essays, including his book on Flaubert, reflecting his traditionalist addiction to the values and standards of Western civilization that includes, too, his interest in history (of which he has given many indirect evidences and a direct one, his affectionate memory of one of his teachers, a fine historian, Señor Porras Barranococha). Vargas Llosa may know, as I do, Scott Fitzgerald's lovely phrase, that "America is the willingness of the heart." Tonight Vargas Llosa and I are the grateful beneficiaries of something as important, and perhaps, more rare—of an American willingness of the mind. ◊

GREAT TOPICS, GREAT ISSUES

The Spanish Americas—April 1992—Richard Estrada on the Hispanic contributions to American culture, Mario Vargas Llosa on the difficult rise of the Latin American novel, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on bullfighting in Juárez, Mexico, and poems by Jorge Luis Borges. Plus Brad Linaweaver on Albert Jay Nock, William Murchison on LBJ, and Murray Rothbard on violence in New York City.

Law and Order: Crime and Punishment—May 1992—Thomas Fleming on the role of the executioner, Philip Jenkins on the drug war and personal liberties, Graeme Newman on the case for corporal punishment, and Theodore Pappas on vigilante justice. Plus, Murray Rothbard on street crime, Llewellyn Rockwell on vagrancy law, Richard Irving on taxi drivers and minority crime, and a firsthand account of life in prison.

Restoring the Republic—June 1992—Clyde Wilson on the republican approach, Samuel Francis on the nationalist approach, and E. Christian Kopff on the Augustan compromise. Plus Thomas Fleming on why we have the government we deserve, Theodore Pappas on Japanese-American trade, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on illegal immigration, and Murray Rothbard on repudiating the national debt.

BACK ISSUES ORDER FORM

Each issue \$5.50 (postage and handling included)

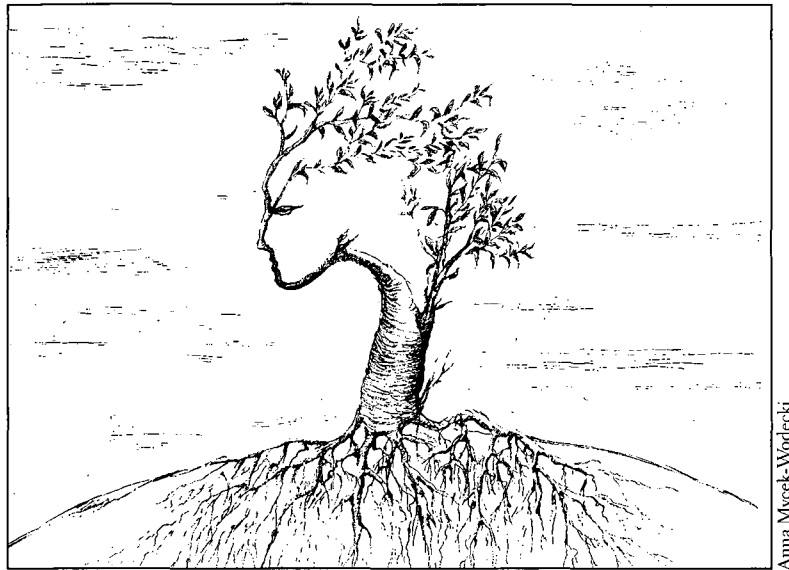
Title	Date	Qty.	Cost
THE SPANISH AMERICAS	APRIL 1992	_____	_____
LAW AND ORDER	MAY 1992	_____	_____
RESTORING THE REPUBLIC	JUNE 1992	_____	_____
		Total Enclosed	\$ _____

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail with check to: Chronicles * 934 North Main Street * Rockford, IL 61103

Consensual Citizenship

by Peter H. Schuck and Rogers M. Smith



The customary division of national laws of citizenship into the “principles” of *jus soli* (place of birth) or *jus sanguinis* (line of descent) denotes the objective criteria most often used to determine one’s citizenship. But the conceptions of political membership that have vied for supremacy in Anglo-American law implicate a different, more fundamental dichotomy—one between the rival principles of ascription and consent. These principles reflect quite distinct understandings of the origins, nature, and obligations of political communities, and each promotes certain values that Anglo-American legislators and judges have embraced at different times and often simultaneously. At least since the 18th century, Anglo-American law has embodied compromise doctrines that combine certain features drawn from each conception in the hope of producing pragmatic satisfaction, if not theoretical coherence. As we shall see, however, the two principles are not so easily blended.

In its purest form, the principle of *ascription* holds that one’s political membership is entirely and irrevocably determined by some objective circumstance—in this case, birth within a particular sovereign’s allegiance or jurisdiction. According to this conception, human preferences do not affect political membership; only the natural, immutable circumstances of one’s birth are considered relevant. The principle of *consent* advances radically different premises. It holds that political membership can result only from free individual choices. In the consensualist view, the circumstances of one’s origins may of course influence one’s preferences for political affiliation, but they are not determinative.

Peter H. Schuck is Simeon E. Baldwin Professor of Law at Yale Law School, and Rogers M. Smith is a professor of political science at Yale University. This article is based on their 1986 book, *Citizenship Without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity* (Yale University Press).

English law assumed from antiquity that all persons born within the dominions of the crown, whether of English or alien parents, were English subjects. Yet neither members of the royal family nor the children of English subjects could lose any rights due to birth outside the king’s domain. No theory of membership that could account for these diverse precedents was formally elaborated until 1608, when Sir Edward Coke in the landmark *Calvin’s Case* elaborated “the first comprehensive theory of English subjectship.” His theory based that status firmly on the ascriptive principle. Through it Coke established once and for all the common membership of Scots and Englishmen in one united community of allegiance, regardless of any contrary indications in any past or future man-made law. To reach this result, Coke appealed to natural law, thereby giving birthright political membership the strongest possible sanction.

Natural law dictated, he held, that one’s political identity is automatically assigned by the circumstances of one’s birth. Coke understood political identity as being at root a question of one’s allegiance as a subject to some sovereign. At birth, every person acquired such an allegiance. The subject owed complete obedience and service; the sovereign owed physical protection and just governance. Being imposed by the eternal law of nature, which was prior to all man-made law, both obligations were perpetual and immutable. Expatriation and denationalization—termination of the allegiance between a natural-born subject and his sovereign by either the individual or the government—were considered contrary to natural law and therefore impossible for either party.

The ascriptive view of Coke, although deployed for particular political purposes, has more universal attractions. It captures a widely shared moral intuition: many persons feel indebted to those who have nurtured them, including the broader political community into which they were born, despite the fact that they did not initially choose to receive that