

Weintraub and M. Delal Baer, is similar to what has been happening in Taiwan and South Korea and to what happened in Chile under General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. "Mexican presidents are not dictators in the same mold as Pinochet. But the pattern is a familiar one. Electoral democracy eventually came back to Chile, and it is making inroads in South Korea and Taiwan; and it is also coming, in fits and starts, to Mexico."

Salinas's six-year term expires in 1994. Under the present system of the *dedazo* ("pointing of the finger"), the incumbent will choose his PRI succes-

sor. But today, Andrew Reding, a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute, writes in *World Policy Journal* (Spring 1991), "the culture of *presidencialismo* appears more naked than at any time since the ill-fated reign of Porfirio Díaz," the dictator overthrown in 1911. The PRI, says the *Economist*, "cannot afford to maintain its reforming ways without securing real legitimacy for its continued rule. This means winning a presidential election which is seen to be fair." Many observers, both inside and outside Mexico, will be watching next year to see if that happens.

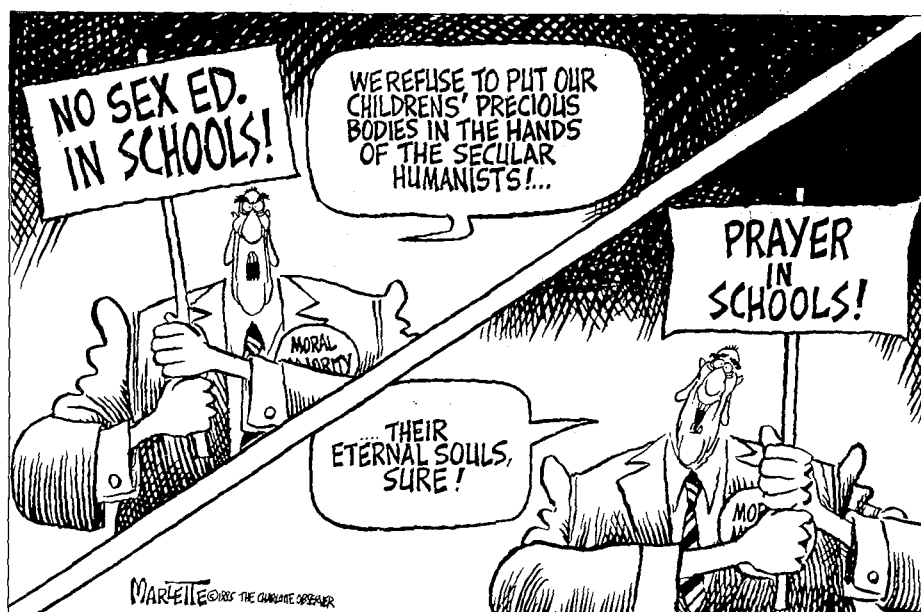
POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Politics Of Privacy

"Whose Body Politic?" by Alan Wolfe, in *The American Prospect* (Winter 1993), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Without Ronald Reagan and the Cold War to unite them, conservatives today are badly divided over

abortion and other moral issues. Before liberals congratulate themselves too loudly, warns Wolfe, a dean at the New School for Social Research, they had better recognize that similar dilemmas confront them. Should they, for example, stand by the principle of free speech or back various liberal groups' demands for university "speech codes," antipornography laws, and sexual-harassment regulations?



What is public, what is private? That sometimes perplexing question has long divided conservatives from liberals on such issues as sex education in the schools. More recently, it has divided conservatives from conservatives—and liberals from liberals.

Traditionally, liberals have regarded economic affairs as a public domain open to government intervention, and religion and speech as the realm of sacrosanct private rights. But the rise of cultural and "life-style" issues in American politics since the 1960s has vastly complicated matters. "As a result, it is not at all clear where people who believe in greater equality and social justice ought to stand," Wolfe writes. Liberals have tended toward a kind of cultural libertarianism based on a perpetual expansion of the right to privacy. But Wolfe believes that that route—followed by constitutional scholar Laurence Tribe, among others—is fraught with moral and political hazards. Conservatives stuck to an absolute defense of private economic rights for roughly the first 60 years of the 20th century and paid dearly for it. Their beliefs left them powerless to address some genuine public problems.

Absolutism in the pursuit of privacy likewise threatens liberals, Wolfe warns. Defending abortion rights, "the Left sometimes imagines children as fully public the moment after delivery and fully private the moment before." But if pregnancy is purely private, can the state do nothing to protect the unborn child of a crack-using mother? During the early years of the AIDS epidemic, San Francisco authorities bowed to gay activists' objections and delayed closing gay bathhouses. "It remains impossible to know," Wolfe remarks, "how many individuals are now dead because the right to privacy was deemed more fundamental than the protection of public health."

Wolfe says that only a few kinds of private behavior deserve automatic immunity from regulation—notably those occurring in the bedroom (but not the bathhouse). He offers no axioms for the rest. In fact, his point is that there ought to be no axioms, that "a politics of tolerance and accommodation" is the best way to deal with conflicts between the private and the public. Liberals, he argues, should try to secure their objectives through legislation rather than judicial fiat; they should speak of public responsibilities as well as private rights; and they should demand the tolerance of private behavior by gays and others but stop trying to "legislate positive attitudes" toward them through such measures as curriculum reform.

"We remain best off not trying to separate the public and the private each on its own island but instead building a bridge between them." Conservatives, take note.

Roosevelt Redux?

Writing in *Society* (Mar.-Apr. 1993), Seymour Martin Lipset, a George Mason University sociologist and a Senior Fellow at the Wilson Center, contends that Bill Clinton not only assembled an electoral coalition like Franklin D. Roosevelt's but will govern in much the same way FDR did.

Roosevelt was faced with complex and difficult problems for which there were no agreed upon answers. He integrated into his cooptive style of politicking and policymaking, a trial and error pursuit of answers. He assigned the formulating of policy to assistants and to groups in different cabinet departments with diverse, and often conflicting, approaches to a given area. Recognizing that different values and interests produced a variety of "solutions," he would assign the same problem to people or agencies with varying biases knowing that they would disagree and submit alternative policies to him. He also brought into the discussion individuals or groups from outside the White House, who represented distinctive points of view or elements within the party. By so doing, he gave each one the sense of being involved. At the same time, such procedures gave him the opportunity to make policy, to choose between alternative proposals.

The Roosevelt approach is the way to run the presidency. Some past presidents, like Jimmy Carter, never understood this. Ronald Reagan did understand this, as he noted when he said repeatedly that he modeled himself on Roosevelt. Bill Clinton appears to know this as well. Clearly, the Clinton presidency will be similar to the Roosevelt presidency. Unlike Carter, who let himself be taken over by . . . the liberal wing . . . Clinton is trying to keep in touch with all parts of the party and to cooperate with them. He has appointed people from different segments to administrative and policy positions. His sympathies and inclinations remain on the moderate side, since in any case, he knows that he has to be in the center to be reelected. Clinton, like Roosevelt, will let every faction have its say with him. He will continue the style by which he has run his presidential campaign . . .

Clinton, like Roosevelt and Reagan, will politick—he will work the Hill . . . The American presidency, which is not imperial, requires a head whose time is largely devoted to politics, not to administration. Roosevelt and Reagan understood this. Jimmy Carter and George Bush did not.