

they bombarded baseball leaders across the country with demands that Steve Carlton apologize, and that baseball cancel its plans to induct him into the Hall of Fame.

What do one's views of contemporary history have to do with baseball prowess? Not a damned thing, of course, but in a world of Political Correctness everyone has to toe the totalitarian line.

Did Mr. Carlton have the courage of his alleged convictions? Did he stand tall like the Bosnian Serbs and tell World Opinion to go to Hell? What do *you* think? No, it only took a few days for Steve Carlton to cave. In a statement released by his business manager, Mike Sheehan, Carlton angrily denied that his views are anything like those portrayed in the Jordan article.

No, no, no, said Carlton, the "article has almost no truth in it....It is wrong about my baseball career, my personal beliefs, my family life and my new hometown." Etc. And Carlton went on to insist on his lifelong record of deep respect for every person, "be they Jewish, Black, or white." (Presumably, blacks were thrown into the picture to

cover every possible angle." What, no denunciation of "homophobia"? No insistence on undying support for Nafta?

Mr. Carlton having groveled sufficiently, touched his head to the floor and backed slowly out of the room, the gracious Lords at the American Jewish Committee nodded their approval. The AJC withdrew its protest, and AJC spokesman Marc Palavin agreed that "the sentiments Mr. Carlton expressed are

laudable." Mr. Palavin added: "We're glad to see him agree that anti-Semitism has no place in baseball." Whew! Well, I'm glad *that's* settled!

In the meanwhile, off in the corner, Pat Jordan and *Philadelphia* magazine editor Eliot Kaplan "stood by" their story. The interesting point is that it hardly matters whether the story was correct, or whether Carlton was egregiously misquoted or not. The important point, for the American Jewish Committee and for American culture, is that Mr. Carlton hastened to deny the story and to bow the knee to the AJC. The important lesson for this story is not Truth, but Power.

(For this revealing slice of

Americana in *anno Domini* 1994, see the *Los Angeles Times*, April 14).

And so, thanks American Jewish Committee, for saving American Jewry, once again, from the burning pit. But please, next time, would you please wait a little bit before lowering the boom? Because it really would be nice to find what the next poor SOB has to say *before* he is forced to retract it. Just for a few days? Okay? ■

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Rumor Unfounded

by M.N.R.

A friend of mine recently heard, as solemn fact from a self-proclaimed reliable source, that I had become a convert to Catholicism. Amusingly enough, this is probably the longest-lived rumor in the history of the modern libertarian movement. As long as four decades ago, a friend waggishly warned me that I "was setting out on the road to Rome." The rumor is, as usual, not true, as in the case of most movement rumors that have not been sifted and published by Sarah Barton.

There is, through all the revelry, a serious point about the persistence of this rumor. For it reflects the inability of most libertarians, who are not only ignorant of but implacably hostile to religion in general and Christianity in particular, to conceive how

anyone could possibly be an admirer of Christianity or the Catholic Church without being an actual convert. From a generation and a movement that knows little more about history or theology than The Inquisition or the complete works of Ayn Rand, this comes of course as no surprise. ■

American Spy in Washington

The Conservative Mind and Mindless Conservatism

by Joseph Sobran

It may not be fate, but it is certainly thought-provoking that Richard Nixon and Russell Kirk should have died within a week of each other.

Nixon's reputation, ruined by Watergate, seems to have been redeemed by his graver sins. Liberals who used to accuse him of "shredding the Constitution" are now generously giving the man credit for—what else?—shredding the Constitution.

You don't "shred the Con-

stitution" by breaking a few laws. You shred it by *making* laws: laws the federal government isn't authorized to make. Wage and price controls, the EPA, OSHA: *these* are violations of the Constitution. And these are the things liberals think make Nixon, in the end, a forgivable figure.

Throughout the week of Nixon's funeral and the endless discussions and eulogies, I was struck by one fact: The liberals who had loathed him were, almost in spite of themselves, finding more reasons to praise him than the conservatives who had supported him and *wanted* to praise him. Until then it wasn't noticed how much of Nixon's life had been dedicated to appeasing liberals. And until then, I must say, his efforts hadn't succeeded very well, if being driven out of the White House with the threat of imminent impeachment is any measure.

Conservatives had backed Nixon as long as liberals were attacking him. That seemed to be the *only* reason they could find for backing him. I know. I was one of them, reasoning shrewdly that if Anthony Lewis hated him, he

couldn't be all bad. If only I'd known what the Anthony Lewises would be saying at his funeral! Namely, that he wasn't all bad.

One commonly iterated theme of the week was that Nixon had "defined an era" in American politics. I thought he did just the opposite. With Nixon, American politics *lost* any semblance of definition. He spread confusion everywhere, less because he was "tricky" than because he was so confused himself.

Nixon was a perfect specimen of the post-Landon Republican, who entirely accepted politics on the terms established by Franklin Roosevelt. Nixon was convinced that the country really belonged to the Democrats, that the New Deal and the Great Society must never be challenged, that the Constitution and the foreign policy of the Founders (now known as "isolationism") must be abandoned. Far from having the "vision" imputed to him, Nixon wore his FDR blinders to the end.

This is why he was so uninspiring, and also so devious. For Nixon, politics could never be a matter of principle. It could only be a matter of tactics, ranging from dirty tricks to show-biz surprises. In this sense his anti-Communism, the Watergate break-in and the "China opening" were all of a piece. Even his boast that he had the support of the "silent majority" was an oblique admission that there was no articulable justifica-

Food for Thought...and Action!

(From the *Los Angeles Times*)

	<u>Singapore</u>	<u>Los Angeles</u>
Population:	2.75 million	3.5 million
Homicides per year	58	1,100
Rapes per year	80	1,855
Robberies per year	1,008	39,227
Car thefts per year	3,162	65,541