Three Pillars

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I never met Sam, but since encountering his monthly column in *Chronicles* in 1989 or 1990, I knew his was a voice worth attending. In developing a white nationalist consciousness, I've had the benefit of to few such voices—and of these, fewer still that have been American. Be it Nash's "conservative intellectual movement," the Reagan movement of the 1980s, or the various sects comprising the often mislabeled "hard right," not one seemed uncontaminated by the liberal tenets of the antiwhite leviathan. Sam, though, was different. For despite his former ties to the Establishment and to the not always forthright palecons, he spoke not just to the reigning disorder, but to its malignant roots in the nation's ruling class—and thus to the issue of regime change.

Sam's two decades of antiliberal commentary memorably conveyed certain ideas key to our people's survival. Of these, three strike me as especially foundational. The first, requisite to any political project, designates the enemy against which white America must struggle if it is to reclaim control of its destiny. *Pace* antiliberalism's obsessive wing, this enemy is not the omnipotent Jew or the occult power of a well-heeled conspiracy, but the corporate, technocratic elites which took state power from the bourgeoisie during the 1930s. Because the hegemony of these elites depends on the suppression of the country's European civilization and *ethnos,* Sam thought "Middle America," the nation's white core, to be the likely axis of any resistance movement. But in addition to designating the enemy and the forces to be mobilized against it, Sam risked his "bread and butter" to warn of the right's bankruptcy, of its antipathy to any "revolution from the middle," and of the necessity of the "new nationalism." These three ideas—the conceptual pillars defining who we are, who our enemy is, and what politics ought to dictate our relationship to the enemy—represent not merely an invaluable part of Sam's legacy, but, I believe, the possible programmatic basis of a white American rebirth.

The New Class

Sam's "analytical gestalt," as evident in his one book-length work and his two important collections of essays, owed its greatest debt to James Burnham. A former Trotskyist conversant with the major debates of Europe's turbulent thirties and a later student of Machiavelli's so-called "science of power," Burnham bequeathed to Sam a way of thinking quite unlike the classical liberal (or liberal conservative) stance of the American Right. Burnham, accordingly, disclaimed the Old Right's "formalistic and

normative approach" to politics and focused his scientific method on the social-historical processes responsible for "the emerging patterns and forces in American and world politics." But while his modernist methodology favored scientific procedures and disparaged arguments built on ethical absolutes and transcendental certainties, it nevertheless differed from other modernist schools in rejecting the subversive impetus that liberal politics gives to scientific and naturalist doctrines. For this reason, Sam claimed Burnham's "counter-modernism" led not to the Gulag, the end point of the left's modernism, but to the Framers' republicanism.

Burnham's influence was especially prominent in shaping Sam's view of the managerial revolution. Seeing historical change in terms of Pareto's circulating elites, Burnham thought the crisis of the thirties had brought the bourgeois era to an end. Lacking mass support, as well as the specialized skills to run large, complex organizations, the old entrepreneurial class had had no alternative in this period but to cede to a "new class" schooled in the techniques of late capitalism. Yet unlike Marxists, who saw managerialism as simply another stage in capitalism's development, Burnham thought the transition from bourgeois to New Class rule, from America's Second Republic to its Managerial Imperium, tantamount to a revolutionary transformation, for the managers' "new modes and orders" rejected traditional social relations, family values, the transmission of property, and much of the internalized world of meaning characteristic of bourgeois society.

Given the New Class's roots in the decision-making centers of Washington's leviathan state and in similar apparatuses in the universities, the foundations, the mass media, and the major corporations, its members viewed the communal, social, and racial particularisms of American life as hindrances to the realization of their technobureaucratic order. Their main occupation was thus neither the advancement of the nation's biocultural project nor the mobilization and organization of its labor, but rather the supervision of a rationalized system in which the nation's particularisms were treated as functional impediments and economics as but one (though clearly the most important) of the various interrelated realms falling to their managerial expertise. As such, they took no account of the "deliberate sense of community" (Willmoore Kendall) native to the American political tradition and, like tyrants of old, endeavored to repress the historically established consensus derived from this deliberate sense. To this end, they took to manipulating public opinion, denigrating the traditional heritage, programming behavior, legislating the forced congregation of the races, and attempting whatever promoted their managerial *Gleichgestaltung*. The "cult of economic growth, material acquisition, and universal equality" legitimating such practices rested on a no less deracinated concept of existence, for the material and civil implications of this cult sought to extirpate the "little platoons," organic particularisms, and all those things expressive of white America's historic will. Not coincidentally, the "colossal aggregate" that

now makes up the United States is "held together not by any natural sense of historic community, but through the artificial bonds imposed by bureaucratic routines and disciplines, corporate market strategies, and the mass collective channels in which Americans move, play…and communicate." Even more ardently than Burnham, Sam came to regard the regime's liberal tenets as "an ideology of Western suicide," stifling not just the spirit of America's European origins, but the biological existence of those whose ancestors founded the nation and those who continue to embody its living essence. Indeed, Sam was rather categorical in arguing that the managers' leviathan state posed a life-and-death threat to the nation, for it denied European-descended Americans the right to preserve themselves as a people.

From Burnham, Sam also acquired a way of addressing the Jewish question. Though some have criticized him for his discretion in dealing (or not dealing) with this issue, it ought nevertheless to be stressed that despite the reticence his profession dictated, he significantly enhanced our understanding of their formidable institutional leverage. For managerial rule, as he explained on numerous occasions, fuses political, cultural, and economic powers into a single totalitarian concentration. This means that once an alien force succeeds in infiltrating a regime's decision-making centers, it acquires influence over nearly everything else. Moreover, the bloodless character of the managers' regime, its privileging of materialist and rationalist imperatives, its indifference to history, culture, and *ethnos*—these also foster a situation in which the system welcomes aliens into its inner circles and facilitates the implementation of their antiwhite policies, provided, of course, that they champion its interests and conceal their specific racial agenda. Contrary, then, to those who think the "disenfranchisement" of the Jews will automatically solve our problems, Sam's social-historical understanding of the leviathan's antiwhite impetus forces us to take a more realistic view of it, to accept that its just not outsiders, but certain developments inherent to modernity that are responsible for our present plight, and thus to acknowledge that modern America, in disavowing its biocultural foundations, has become what Philippe Grasset calls *un problème de civilisation*.

Revolution from the Middle

An analytically cogent understanding of the enemy would not be worth much if it did not also identify a force to oppose it. As Marx's labor movement freed socialism of its founders' utopian illusions, Sam lighted upon the managers' "grave digger." Thus, while Burnham saw no alternative to the managerial regime and concentrated on defending those localities of power and independence that had escaped its clutches, Sam was able to define a social force to challenge it. For long after the bourgeoisie made its peace with the New Class, white workers and small businessmen continued to pay the bill for its social engineering and therapeutic reforms. Indeed, the oppositional potential

of Middle American alienation was evident as early as the early fifties, when McCarthy mobilized wide swaths of middle- and working-class Americans against the regime's "suicidal" exercise of state power. Then, after the managers signed on to the cause of racial equality and Third World immigration, this populist disaffection assumed an explosive potential.

Sam's envisioned "revolution from the middle" was not, however, without its problems. Besides the fact that Burnham misread the character of the twentieth century's most important events (specifically the rise of fascism, the Second World War, and the Cold War), relied on a naive "science of power," and occasionally favored New Class interests, Sam's notion of Middle America (influenced by Donald Warren) was not entirely compatible with Burnham's theory of elites. For in relying on the managerial state for a variety of essential services (Social Security, Medicare, home loans, collective bargaining, etc.), Middle America had become so ensconced in its system that it no longer posed a distinct socioeconomic alternative to it; at best, it retained a capacity for cultural resistance, but even here it had lost much of the cohesion, rootedness, and independence of its prewar counterpart. Nevertheless, in the rumblings set off by McCarthy and then by the Wallace movement, the Reagan Democrats, the electoral campaigns of Ross Perot, David Duke, but especially of Pat Buchanan, Sam detected the early stirrings of a Middle American revolt, as whites rallied to maverick politicians championing "the American Way of Life and the historic culture behind it." Despite his terminology, then, it was mainly as a white nation struggling to reclaim its identity and its independence, rather than as a class or an elite, that Sam came to see Middle America. In fact, by the early nineties, his rhetoric had become noticeably more nationalistic, as he privileged an ethnoracial concept of the Heartland and an "America First" foreign policy.

Beyond Left and Right

In siding with Burnham's neo-Machiavellianism, Sam also diverged from the mainstream right, which had historically divided into libertarian and traditionalist currents. In his view, libertarians stressing the economic individualism of American identity were too closely allied with liberal modernity to constitute a distinct pole of antiliberal opposition, whereas traditionalists rejected modernity outright, concentrating on philosophical "esoterica" irrelevant to the great conflicts of our secular age. Both tendencies, he argued, ignored questions touching on social structures and historical change and instead put their faith in abstract moral ideals—which left them politically powerless. Burnham, by contrast, fully accepted modernist premises, even as he turned them against their liberal application. His conservative defense of traditional freedoms was based, as a result, not on metaphysical concerns, but on ones favoring scientific, empiricist, and historicist criteria that challenged "the conventional modernist categories defined by the left."

Yet however much the antimetaphysical, socially conscious, and historically informed realism characterizing Sam's thought owed to Burnham, he was nevertheless a more radical thinker than his mentor, oriented as he was to the social forces resisting the managers' regime and to the ideas undermining its legitimacy. Thus, in the eighties, while still favoring facets of Reagan's policies, he was already taking his distance from the Old and New Rights—arguing that the politically organized forces of American "conservatism" had either fled the field of battle or else deserted to the enemy, as they formed ranks with the neocons, made their peace with the Wilsonian-Rooseveltian tradition of millenarian globalism, and "crawled into bed with the managerial establishment." Worse, Reagan-era conservatives began what eventually became a wholesale conversion to the ideology of racial equality, effectively severing themselves from the people who created the civilizational heritage they ostensibly sought to conserve.

Besides betraying white America in embracing Big Government and its "rainbow" program of civil rights, affirmative action, feminism, Third World immigration, open borders, and faith-based imperialism, these so-called rightists helped empty the right of its political substance. This, though, was more than a matter of opportunism, for it reflected a larger sea change: Not only had the organized right for much of the latter half of the twentieth century begun accommodating liberal modernist principles, but the voting behavior of Middle Americans increasingly defied conventional political designations, as they supported politicians and policies combining elements of both the traditional left and the traditional right (economic liberalism and social conservatism). The conflicts that once distinguished right from left have, in fact, begun to cede to new ones, as Middle Americans committed to their national, racial, and civilizational identities array themselves against a cosmopolitan New Class hostile to these identities. In stressing, then, that the left-right convergence generates new polarities and that every concession to a "conservatism" supportive of the "oppressive, socially destructive, and anti-American liberal power structure" undermines the fighting capacity and principles of white America, Sam inadvertently recuperated one of the defining principles of the interwar heritage of revolutionary nationalism—again taking his distance from virtually all the "conservative" tribunes of his time. In this spirit, he argued that it was neither in retreat from the leviathan's aggressions nor in nostalgic appeal to the Old Republic, but only in "transcending the artificial and obsolete framework of right and left" that Middle America would prevail.

Indeed, no major American rightist, least of all Burnham, would go as far in this. Sam's development as a revolutionary anti-liberal, however, was stopped short of completion, for his fate, alas, was that of a transitional thinker, straddling two eras. Given that his counter-modernist analytic precluded any consideration that modernity might be cause for doubt, he did not see that left and right, designations born of the modern world, had become obsolete

as modernity ceased to be a viable historical force. Likewise, he refused all truck with postmodernism, ignoring that both the archaic and futuristic dimensions of twenty-first century nationalism are more faithfully upheld in its relativist and anti-foundationalist perspective than in modernity's scientific one. Without pursuing these ideas further, suffice it to note that Sam's counter-modernism was itself a form of modernism, subject to many of the same limitations, however much it avoided liberalism's more subversive practices and provided invaluable guides for our own movement.

Metamorphic Transformation

It is testament to Sam's integrity—and to the special qualities of his mind—that, as a product of an elite university, a former Senate aide and foundation fellow, a respected journalist and insider, he was able to look beyond the reigning ideas to work out an analysis that grasped the nature of our plight, the social forces to overcome it, and the ideas and organizations appropriate to our struggle. At the beginning of *Power and History*, there is a long quotation by Burnham that graphically captures something of the elemental force of this achievement. The quotation describes the slow, tortuous process by which a "strange species" of crab sheds its old shell in order to grow a new one, "without which it cannot live." The old shell clings to the crab's flesh at a thousand points, but it has to be discarded, no matter how painful the metamorphosis. Then, once the shell is gone and before the new one develops, there is a dangerous period in which the crab is "exposed to all its enemies on the seafloor." Sam, as I saw him, was not unlike Burnham's crab. Heir to a certain tradition to which he felt organically attached, he, in contrast to the overwhelming majority of self-described conservatives, realized the lifeless shell of the American right had to be discarded if the nation were to survive. In risking the dangers of this painful transformation, he would generate a body of ideas that promises our people the prospect of a future.

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