

# The Pied Piper

Crimson

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## of Liberalism

*Lowenstein: Acts of Courage and Belief*

Edited by Gregory Stone and Douglas Lowenstein  
Harcourt Brace Javonovich; 349 pp.; \$18.95

FEW PEOPLE of our generation have heard of Allard Lowenstein, and that is a shame. A leader of the young and an activist for peaceful change, Lowenstein was rarely out of the headlines during the '60s and '70s for his untiring captaincy of liberal causes. In 1980, at 51, he was the victim of an assassin's bullet. But today Lowenstein is in danger of becoming an unsung hero—one of the many who touched the pages of history but, holding no major office, became little more than footnotes in political textbooks. Allard Lowenstein should not be relegated to a footnote—especially not by the young people to whom he would have appealed, who have the ability and the responsibility to shape the future of American political policy.

A newly published book of tribute may ensure Lowenstein his deserved place in history. *Lowenstein: Acts of Courage and Belief* is his story, told in his own words and in those of such diverse writers as William F. Buckley Jr., Calvin Trillin, Jack Anderson, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy '54. A collection of articles and speeches by and about "the original activist," *Acts of Courage and Belief* is a moving testimony to a man who became for a time an American political legend.

ALLARD LOWENSTEIN served only one term in Congress, though he ran again and again, and less than a year as an ambassador to the United Nations. But somehow the man who, as David Halberstam '55 writes, "seemed to specialize in causes rather than jobs" managed to mold a great many lives and shape more than one man's share of history. Best known for initiating the Dump Johnson movement in 1967—a movement whose success stunned political leaders—Lowenstein was also one of the first to take on the evils of racial discrimination in Mississippi and organize students against the war in Vietnam. He was an outspoken opponent of the apartheid regime in South Africa, a fighter for individual rights in the Soviet Union,

and a dedicated critic of what he termed the "institutional inertia" of Congress and the United Nations—a stance that earned him seventh place on the Nixon White House "enemies list."

Born in 1929 and a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Yale Law School, Lowenstein first became politically active in the 1950s, working with Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. He went on to organize student activists while a dean at Stanford University, and later served in Congress and as national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). He was the U.S. representative of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and the U.N. Ambassador for Special Political Affairs in 1977. He was a close friend and aide of Robert F. Kennedy '48, and was active in the presidential campaigns of Eugene McCarthy and later Edward M. Kennedy '54. And he taught international relations at North Carolina State, and political science at Yale and Harvard.

The energy Lowenstein put into these and other activities was astounding. A man who drank chocolate milkshakes for breakfast as "fuel," he spent the last 30 years of his life "chasing about the globe in the service of causes." He was, as one acquaintance put it, a "one-man civil liberties committee." He was in Spain helping the organized opposition to Francisco Franco; he was in Southwest Africa investigating conditions, smuggling out anti-apartheid tape recordings, and gathering evidence of oppression to present to the U.N.; he was in Mississippi, long before the civil rights movement became modish, organizing the Freedom Summer and Freedom Vote in 1964 to protest racial discrimination.

"You could name the trouble place and learn that Lowenstein had been there," recalls James A. Wechsler. He turned up in Saigon in 1967 to observe the country's allegedly "free" elections. He was in Chicago in 1968 speaking out against police brutality to protesters outside the Democratic National Convention. He was in Prague in

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*ALLARD LOWENSTEIN*

1969, on the first anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia ("if the Red Army was really sent in at the request of the Czech people," he explained, "the anniversary of their arrival would be quite a festive occasion. I decided to go and see for myself").

Lowenstein argued early that U.S. military involvement in Vietnam was "immoral" and would only hurt America's cause and prestige abroad. He spoke against the commitment of American troops on college campuses, on "Meet the Press," and on the floor of the House of Representatives. When it became evident that the Johnson Administration had no intention of reversing its policy of escalation, Lowenstein took on the White House itself. The only way to change the Vietnam policy was to change the President, he reasoned.

In 1967, he organized the New York Coalition for a Democratic Alternative, later to be dubbed the "Dump Johnson" movement. Colleagues warned him that Johnson was not vulnerable to intra-party attack, but Lowenstein thought otherwise. He started the movement before he even had a candidate lined up for 1968. First he asked his old friend Robert Kennedy to oppose the President. Kennedy asked for time to think it over.

Most liberal activists waited for the Senator to make a move. If he chose to run, they would support him. If he chose not to enter the race, they would forgo the attempt to unseat the President. But "here Lowenstein differed," writes Halberstam. "He was determined to go ahead whether or not Kennedy made the race." After an unsuccessful appeal to George McGovern, Lowenstein approached Eugene McCarthy, a liberal Senator from Minnesota. McCarthy agreed to head the alternative ticket, and Lowenstein threw his energy into the campaign.

LATER, when Robert Kennedy decided to join the fray, he would ask Lowenstein to shift to his camp. Torn between friendship and respect for Kennedy and his commitment to back McCarthy, Lowenstein said no. Kennedy retreated to the back of the bus on which the group was riding, and scribbled Lowenstein a note. "For Al, who knew the lesson of Emerson and taught it to the rest of us," it

## Congressmen Seek to Open Files on Two Assassinations

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 16 — Former members of the now defunct House Select Committee on Assassinations have introduced legislation that would make documents concerning the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. available to the public.

The committee investigated the assassinations from September 1976 to January 1979. In its final report, it concluded that a conspiracy was "likely" in both assassinations but that such possibilities had not been adequately investigated.

The records, which are now kept at the National Archives, where the documents from the Warren Commission Report are also stored, would, under current law, be closed to the public for 50 years as Congressional records.

Representative Stewart B. McKinney, Republican of Connecticut, described the records as "colossal amounts of material."

The resolution would make all the records available "other than records the select committee voted to keep secret" and material in cases where the committee guaranteed confidentiality to witnesses.

The sponsors of the bill, all members of the committee, were Mr. McKinney, Harold S. Sawyer, Republican of Michigan; Robert W. Edgar, Democrat of Pennsylvania; Harold E. Ford, Democrat of Tennessee, and Walter E. Fauntroy, the delegate from the District of Columbia.

read: "They did not yet see... that if a single man plant himself on his convictions and then abide, the huge world will come round to him." From his friend, Bob Kennedy."

In 1968, in the face of growing opposition to his candidacy, President Johnson went on the air in New Hampshire and declared that he was no longer a candidate for reelection. Allard Lowenstein, at first single-handedly and then as the leader of those who saw a cause, had stopped the President cold.

William F. Buckley Jr. has called Lowenstein "the folk-hero of the American liberal-left," but the one-term Congressman was not beloved by *all* who desired change. He was scorned, during the civil-rights movement and again in his work against the Vietnam War, by the extremes of the Left as well as Right, for his insistence on working peacefully for reform through democratic institutions. No revolutionary, he repeatedly pleaded with student activists not to take up violence as a tactic of protest. The more radical—including the SDS and the man who ended Lowenstein's life with five bullets on March 14, 1980, Dennis Sweeney—denounced him as a reactionary trying to stem the leftward surge of the American student community. But Lowenstein could not support anyone who wanted to overthrow the established political system. Arthur Schlesinger '38 writes:

He was sure that the energy released in the turbulence of the 1960s could be turned from destructive to constructive uses. A man of reason, he abhorred violence; a realist, he understood that violence sundered the bonds of humanity and defeated its own objectives. His mission in the 60s was to replace violence by persuasion and to incorporate the disordered wrath of the New Left into the constitutional framework of American political action.

Lowenstein's greatest appeal was always to college-age men and women. He has been called the "world's oldest student leader," a "pied-piper" of young idealists. He enjoyed young people and befriended them, treated them as adults; it was not rare to find Allard Lowenstein, hours after a speech at a university, squatting Indian-style on the floor of a dormitory common room discussing, in an "uncannily lucid manner, what must be done about Rhodesia or Vietnam

or Mississippi or Harlem." And young people identified with his "casual, rumpled eloquence" and followed him—to Mississippi in the Freedom Summer of 1963 and to New England to knock on doors for Eugene McCarthy.

His, wrote Buckley, was a "hectic idealism." He dressed in windbreakers and slept in his clothes, "always on the go, a kind of hobo of lost causes." With his boundless energy, said Kennedy in 1980, and "his papers, his clothes, and seemingly his whole life jammed into briefcases, envelopes, and satchels—all of it carried with him everywhere—he was a portable and powerful lobby."

**W**HAT MADE this "human tornado" tick? What gave him the energy to devote his life to cause after cause? Eleanor Roosevelt, who worked with Allard Lowenstein in the '50s, once explained that "he will always fight crusades because injustice fills him with a sense of rebellion." His was a body that *could* not sit still, a mind that could not rest. "Whenever Al came to see me," recalls Kennedy,

I knew that he brought with him a challenge to be met, a wrong to be righted, a dream to be fulfilled. He would show up unexpectedly; he would pace the floor; he would loose a shower of ideas; he was impatient with our country's failures; he was hopeful for its prospects. Standing in a living room, he would try to move the world.

A year before his death, Lowenstein was asked why he never slowed down. "I just can't sit around becoming fiftyish, fat and bald when everything's falling apart," he replied.

Above all, Allard Lowenstein was not a quitter. He never seemed to stand a chance, but always continued the fight, often with success one could never have imagined. It seems fitting that, as one tribute notes, one of his favorite film moments was a scene from *The African Queen* in which Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart emerge from an unnavigable jungle river. Told that the stream is clearly impassible, the feisty Hepburn raises her head and replies, "Nevertheless..." It is a word that applies well to the tragically truncated life and efforts of Allard Lowenstein.

—Jean E. Engelmayr