

system, discrimination, poor environmental conditions, and satanism—all of which are destroying this country and the moral values of its citizens; the struggle against these evils is what some governing bodies have against Mr. LaRouche, and fighting against drugs heads the list.

If we don't conquer these evils that are taking over the system, where men in high office are gambling and grabbing more power and money, then we are a lost country, because we have allowed the baby to be thrown out with the bath water—we are lost, and the world will be no better off.

Six months too early, 20 years too late

by Nina Ogden

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: An Autobiography

by Ralph Abernathy

Harper and Row, New York, 1989

640 pages, hardbound, \$25

Three days after witnessing the assassination of his friend Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy asked a fundamental question in a sermon called "My Last Letter to Martin." "We were never separated until the other day, as you know," he said. "I was right behind you as I have always been. I don't know why they got you and left me. I can't help but talk about it."

Much has been said to condemn this book. But beyond the self-indulgent jealousy and vulgarity which have earned it infamy, it is a tragic story of defeat. Its loudest critics have played the biggest roles in the tragedy and must now reflect on the injunction: "Judge not lest ye be judged. For with . . . what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged."

The civil rights leaders who never adapted to the hopelessness of the last 20 years can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The best of the others were left behind by history. The worst of them, who are among the loudest critics of this book, became witting traitors.

The sad story of this book is Reverend Abernathy's unconscious adaption to that hopelessness and to his own weakness. He says, "When I took over from Martin, I did so after the civil rights movement had peaked and the SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] had already begun to decline in influence. In Montgomery, [Alabama] we had begun in hope and had won a great victory. We had grown in strength and purpose at Birmingham and Selma

. . . but we had lost our fighting edge and the singleminded allegiance of our people."

Contrast this with his light-hearted description of an Advent season almost 40 years ago, in the days preceding the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of 1955, when Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy were young ministers in their first major churches. "As soon as Martin and [his wife] Coretta moved to Montgomery we called on them and from the beginning he and I became inseparable. Though both of us had heavy responsibilities as pastors of important churches, we tried to meet for dinner every day to talk and make plans. . . . Because of Jim Crow [racial segregation policies], we could only have dinner at home. So, the four of us had dinner every night, with Coretta preparing the meal one evening, Juanita [Abernathy] the next—and usually conversations among the four of us would last beyond midnight.

"For me it was exciting because we were talking about large and important projects. . . . Martin had some general ideas about the means of attaining freedom, while I had the specific understanding of Montgomery that he lacked. . . . Both of us recognized the seeming impossibility of the task but we also understood that change was inevitable and imminent. . . .

"It all seemed so reasonable and yet so remote on those autumn nights when we sat over a bowl of soup or a plate of stew and outlined the future. Then as we put the final touches on our plans, God intervened with a plan of his own and a more urgent timetable."

It was the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott: The first major battle of the civil rights movement in the strategy of nonviolence unfolded. Dr. King said, "When we say, 'love your enemies' we do not mean to love them as a friend or intimate. We mean what the Greeks called *Agapē*—a disinterested love for all mankind. This love is our regulating ideal and the beloved community our ultimate goal. As we struggle here in Montgomery, we are cognizant that we have cosmic companionship and the universe bends towards justice." King stressed the words of Mohandas Gandhi, "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood."

This battle in Montgomery, the younger brother of the independence movements of the developing sector of the previous decade, set the moral standard for the decade to come. Shortly before his death, Dr. King examined those events in his essay "Pilgrimage to Non-Violence." "The past decade has been a most exciting one," he said. "In spite of the tensions and uncertainties of this period something profoundly meaningful is taking place. Old systems of exploitation and oppression are passing away, new systems of justice and equality are being born. In a real sense this is a great time to be alive. Therefore, I am not yet discouraged about the future. Granted that we face a world crisis which leaves us standing so often amid the surging murmur of life's restless sea. But every crisis has both its dangers and its

opportunities. It can spell either salvation or doom. In a dark confused world the kingdom of God may yet reign in the hearts of men." King's description of salvation or doom has been the question of the last two decades. Doom, demanded the oligarchy in 1968, the year they murdered Martin Luther King and rolled their tanks into Prague.

What Dr. Abernathy and virtually every other leader saw as the "decline of influence" of their movements, the enemy saw as a total rout of the expectation and optimism that had resulted from the liberation movements in the developing sector and the American civil rights movement in place of Dr. King's dream to "be able to hew out of the mountains of despair a stone of hope." A nightmare of dope, injustice, and genocide descended.

Ralph Abernathy wrote his book 20 years too late and six months too early. When he entitled that book *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, he never dreamed it would be the Berlin Wall or that as many people would sing "We Shall Overcome" in Leipzig as sang it with him in the 1963 March on Washington. Six months ago, last summer, when he finished his book, the answer to his question, "I don't know why they got you and left me," would have been contained in the words he spoke when Dr. King named him to succeed him as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the event of his death: "I do not look forward to filling the shoes of Martin Luther King. I don't think anybody can fill them."

Today, we are living in the most hopeful Advent season in two centuries. The freedom train is expected by the citizens of all nations in the world at the same time. Today, Dr. Abernathy's answer can be the same one we must all answer—we were left to fight for victory.

A Tavistockian's view of leadership

by Daniel Platt

On Becoming a Leader

by Warren Bennis

Addison-Wesley, New York, 1989
226 pages, hardbound, \$19.95

We may assume that this is one of those books that the yellow-necktie set will want to be seen carrying around; the jacket sports glowing endorsements by Yuppie avatars Tom Peters and Harvey B. Mackay. However, there are reasons

to believe that this book represents a more sophisticated intervention into the corporate milieu than your average "guide for the upwardly mobile."

Early in his book, Bennis poses a useful and provocative question:

Two hundred years ago, when the Founding Fathers gathered in Philadelphia to write the Constitution, America had a population of only 3 million, yet six world-class leaders were among the authors of that extraordinary document. Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Adams, and Franklin created America. Today, there are 240 million Americans, and we have Oliver North, the thinking man's Rambo.

What happened?

In the two or three pages that follow, Bennis draws a fairly accurate and insightful sketch of America's journey through the achievements of the 18th and 19th centuries, the promise of the 20th, and the decline in the postwar period, culminating in the rebellion of the 1960s, the Me Decade that followed, and today's Yuppies, a decline which Bennis attributes to "the mistakes and crudities of the organization men." Very well; so what does Professor Bennis propose to do about this?

Well, it looks as if Professor Bennis may be exercising a little sleight of hand here. He has drawn much of the material for this book from a series of interviews he conducted with a selection of people he wishes to portray as exemplary contemporary leaders. Interestingly enough, the ones he seems most taken with are all connected in some way with Hollywood, arguably one of the key agencies behind America's postwar decline! Of these purported leaders, the one he quotes most frequently is Norman Lear, an important manipulator of culture via the medium of television, and founder of People for the American Way, which has worked to displace the old farmer-labor-minorities combination that once characterized the Democratic Party, replacing it with an emphasis on hedonism, malthusianism, and, most recently, the defense of Satanism. Bennis is also very impressed with Mathilde Krim, wife of Hollywood mogul Arthur Krim and founding chair of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, an organization which has deployed itself against the traditional public health measures—embodied in the respective 1986 and 1988 California ballot initiatives Propositions 64 and 69—in favor of the impotent "condoms and clean needles" approach.

An intriguing aspect of Bennis's approach is that he carefully avoids any discussion of what these people actually stand for, preferring to have them utter platitudes about what they feel has made them successful at whatever it is they do. He quotes an innocent-sounding passage from a report on education by the genocidalist Club of Rome, revealing little about the organization. Why?