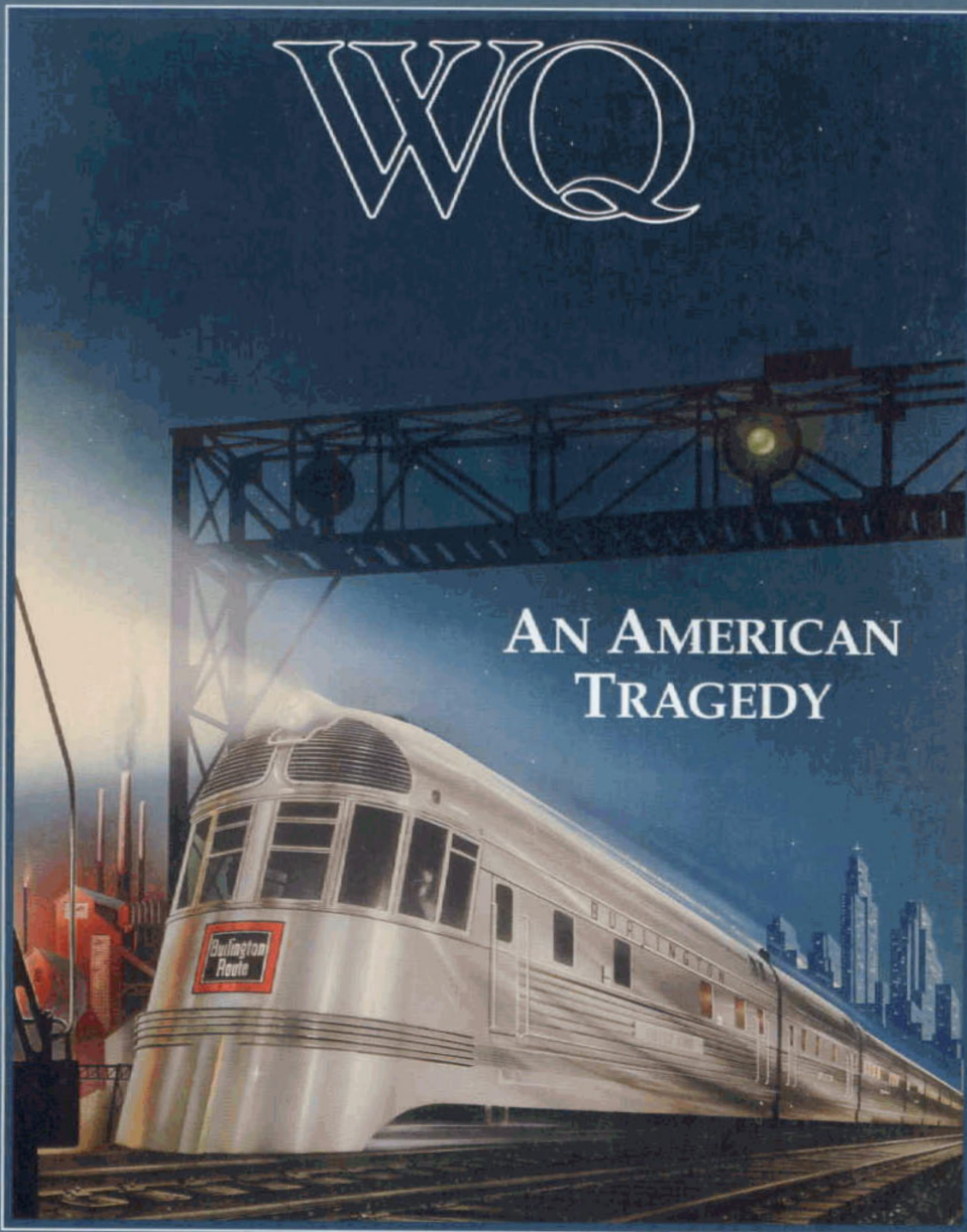


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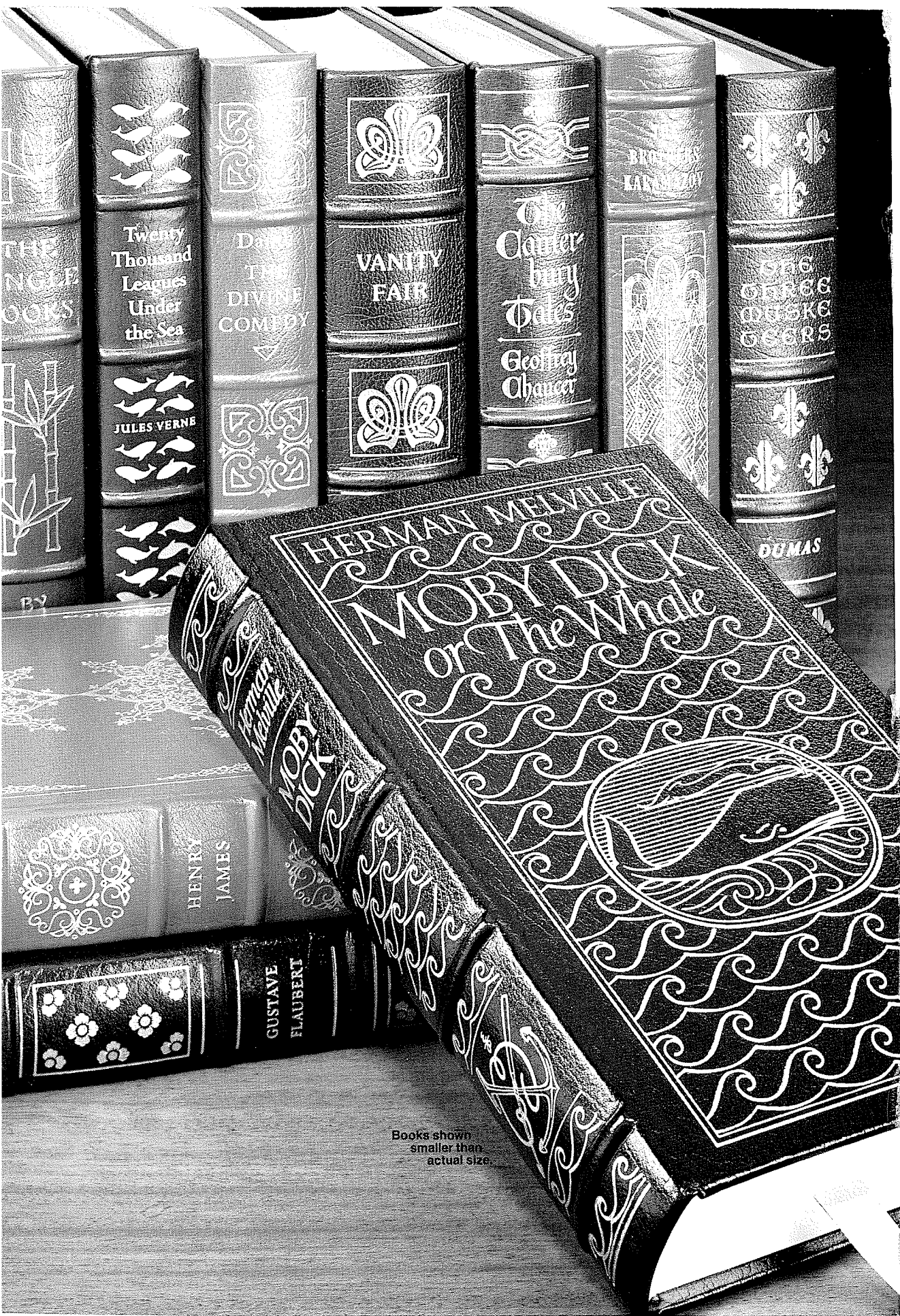
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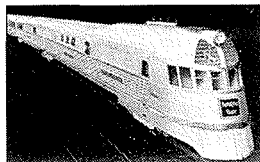
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|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4. Editor's Comment | 125. Periodicals |
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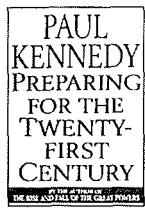
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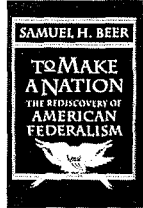
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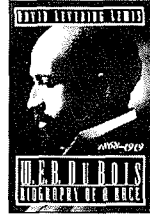
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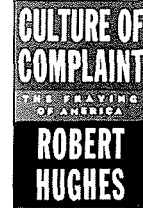
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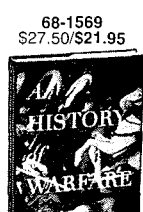
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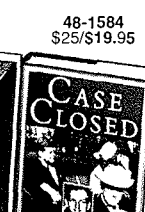
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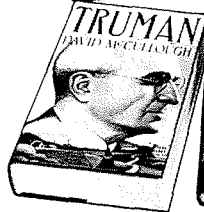
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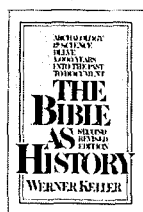
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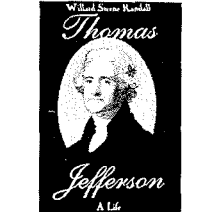
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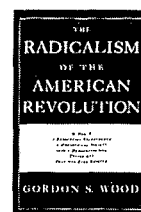
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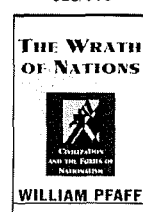
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EDITOR'S COMMENT

We are often asked what the *Wilson Quarterly* is. It's a good question. A "review of ideas and information" is one answer we sometimes offer; "newsmagazine of the world of ideas," another. If both fail to satisfy, we pass on what others say. The (London) *Times Literary Supplement* recently came up with "retro-humanist journal." Whether that was praise or a put-down, we're not sure, but we find it an epithet worthy of some small dilation. "Retro:" definitely. A conviction that knowledge can rise above the play of political or other interests marks us as positively 18th century. Not that we have ignored the assorted critiques of positivism; we've identified the base beneath our superstructure and self-deconstructed to a fare-thee-well. We're just not convinced that an awareness of one's own interests doesn't go a long way toward freeing one from slavish service to them. Now that we think of it, we find that the 18th century has come in for a bad rap. For too long, we "moderns" have forced it to stand for an arrogant faith in progress, reason, and objectivity. But consider Diderot, the great polymath editor of the 18th century. Identifying with his magpie endeavors, we see far more modesty and doubt in the man than most people do. We think he realized there was something almost absurdly arbitrary in his presentation of the "knowledges" of his time—something that mocked his every effort. And yet he proceeded, in the spirit of play, constructing that great educational wheel, *The Encyclopedia*, and pushing it, almost Sisyphus-like, into an uncertain future. That kind of faith inspires us, so much so that we might even call ourselves followers of Diderot: fellow pushers of the great wheel.

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AT ISSUE

A Civilizing Mission?

It's at least something to think about, now that the 20th century is behind us, a century that, by historian John Lukacs's reckoning, began in 1914 and ended in 1989. That most vertiginous of centuries began with a resounding bang, one that dealt a near-mortal blow to all the big ideals and to all the gods.

In fact, the only god that came through the horrors of Verdun and the Somme unscathed was irony. Not merely unscathed, it rose within the pantheon. After World War I, as Paul Fussell relates, irony became the only attitude that a thinking person could assume. But it was even more than an attitude. It was a deeply rooted orientation toward the world, marked by doubt, skepticism, and uncertainty. And on no ideal did it focus with more exquisite ferocity than on the ideal of civilization, by which was meant, of course, Western civilization.

That ideal was a blend, perhaps unholy, of legacies as diverse as the Jewish and Christian religions, Roman and Germanic law, Hellenic rationalism, Renaissance individualism, Enlightenment progressivism, assorted democratic and parliamentary traditions, and, not least, scientific, technological, and industrial know-how. Whatever can be said for or against this amalgam, it proved so dynamic a force that it compelled Europeans to venture beyond the boundaries of their continent to the four corners of the earth, giving rise to vast colonial and imperial projects.

Irony of ironies, though, these projects, which were carried out by the more powerful European nations under the name of what the French called *la mission civilisatrice*, may well have planted the seeds of future doubts about the meaning, direction, and value of civilization. For one, they exposed Europeans to other civilizations, and though the usual response was to view the other forms as deficient, primitive, and therefore deserving of condescension or eradication, some Europeans recognized

the value—and often the superiority—of what they encountered. Colonialism had another equally doubt-inducing effect. Because it encouraged brutal forms of exploitation, including slavery, it was not long before the civilizing mission seemed to have no greater effect than that of barbarizing the civilizers.

The quest for empire was not the only thing to bring out the contradictions of Western civilization. The West has had no shortage of in-house critics to point out its failings. Karl Marx was only the most influential of the modern age. And what he and others said about the pathologies of our civilization seemed to many to be borne out by the Great War—a war that not only confirmed people's worst suspicions, but helped bring into being a would-be utopian alternative, the Soviet Union.

During the "century" that saw the birth, life, and death of the Soviet Union, a complicated argument over the question of civilization took place. One could say that this argument was the subtext of that century's history. The question itself consisted of many subquestions: Was there really something called civilization worth preserving, or was it just one of the "big words" in the great game, another weapon of "power politics" (that wonderful 20th-century redundancy)? Was it a mixed legacy, whose bad could be separated from its good, or was the whole package rotten, an "old bitch gone in the teeth," as Ezra Pound put it? Was it fatally Eurocentric, or did it contain universal, even eternal, truths? Indeed, could civilization be defined as an ever more capacious ideal, one that slowly, progressively comprehends the best that is thought and felt in all the world's cultures? And, not least, was civilization, however defined, worth fighting and dying for? At times, many people—among them the most intelligent and well-meaning of people—thought not.

When we look back upon the abysmal

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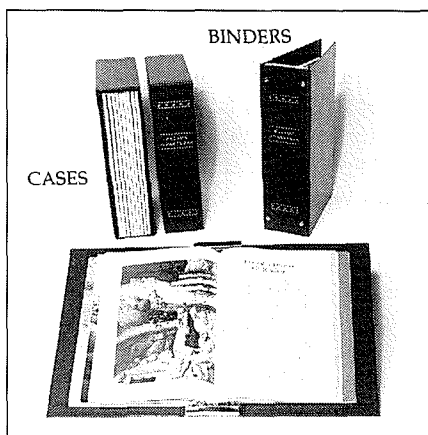
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record of the 20th century, what emerges as perhaps its most remarkable aspect is that, somehow, the defenders of an ideal of civilization not only managed to keep the faith but also to prevail. So much of the intellectual energy of the 20th century was devoted to debunking and unmasking, so much to exposing the feet of clay, that relatively little serious attention was given to discerning what should be preserved. Morality was aestheticized, with high culture embodying the Nietzschean principle that life was justifiable only as an aesthetic experience. Character went the way of so many other ideals. According to intellectuals, there were no heroes. Great men or women mattered little in the tide of human events; the "forces" of history made history. Yet history showed otherwise. Individuals of the stature of Churchill and Walesa turned historical tides. And fortunately the common people proved wiser, finally, than most intellectuals. Even as high culture explored new reaches of relativism and pushed irony to its limits—and how Hitler loved the Weimar ironists for preparing the way for his ascent!—popular culture in the West preserved a core of simpler sanity. The films of Humphrey Bogart upheld a notion of character and virtue that no Sartrean treatise on "bad faith" could effectively, much less popularly, cancel.

But a civilization cannot fare well for long when its head is severed from its body. Popular culture ran on borrowed time and dwindling spiritual and intellectual capital for most of the 20th century. That Ronald Reagan, a Hollywood actor, should have been one of the stronger supporters of the ideal of civilization in the closing decade of the 20th century says a great deal about how precarious the situation had become (which is neither to forgive his excesses nor to devalue his accomplishments). We must remember that Reagan was the product of an earlier popular culture, one that began to die in the 1960s. The ethos of that earlier culture helped shape his resolve to wage a determined struggle against a demoralized but still powerful Soviet empire; that determination was essential in convincing Soviet lead-

ers that no easy solution to their problems was at hand. Given his achievement, it hardly matters that many of Reagan's beliefs were derived from a highly sentimentalized popular-culture version of civilized values: They gave him the strength and vision to hold fast and finally to triumph.

But the popular culture that Reagan derived sustenance and direction from is now largely dead. What we see in its stead, in the United States and throughout the West, is a frightening thing. Dominating films, TV shows, and music is the old ironic mode of 20th-century high culture, now cheapened into a feckless cynicism that comports extremely well with what has become popular culture's main function: advertisement. Serving now primarily as an advertising medium to drive manic consumption, popular culture projects an endless procession of fashionable styles and attitudes while suggesting the toys and accoutrements to go along with them. It does this, moreover, even while mocking itself and its own devious ploys. It invites everyone in on the lie of false happiness, creating a kind of fellowship of hip and cheerful nihilism. The priests of this cult will come and go; for the moment, though, we have the likes of David Letterman, Rush Limbaugh, and two entirely charming fellows named Beavis and Butt-head.

We have come to a peculiar pass. Civilization, thought to be on its last legs, staggers through the last round of a long and bloody fight and unexpectedly—*mirabile dictu*—KO's its biggest challenger. Stunned, punch-drunk, and lurching back to its corner, victorious civilization stares into the crowd of its screaming fans and recognizes . . . almost no one. Shaking its head in disbelief, it is not even sure what *it* is any more, much less what the stakes of the fight were or what the prize is. The fans don't seem to care, either. They're having fun, though it looks like a violent, savage sort of fun.

This, then, is where we stand: in the parking lot outside the arena where civilization scored its last-round stunner, uncertain where to go next.

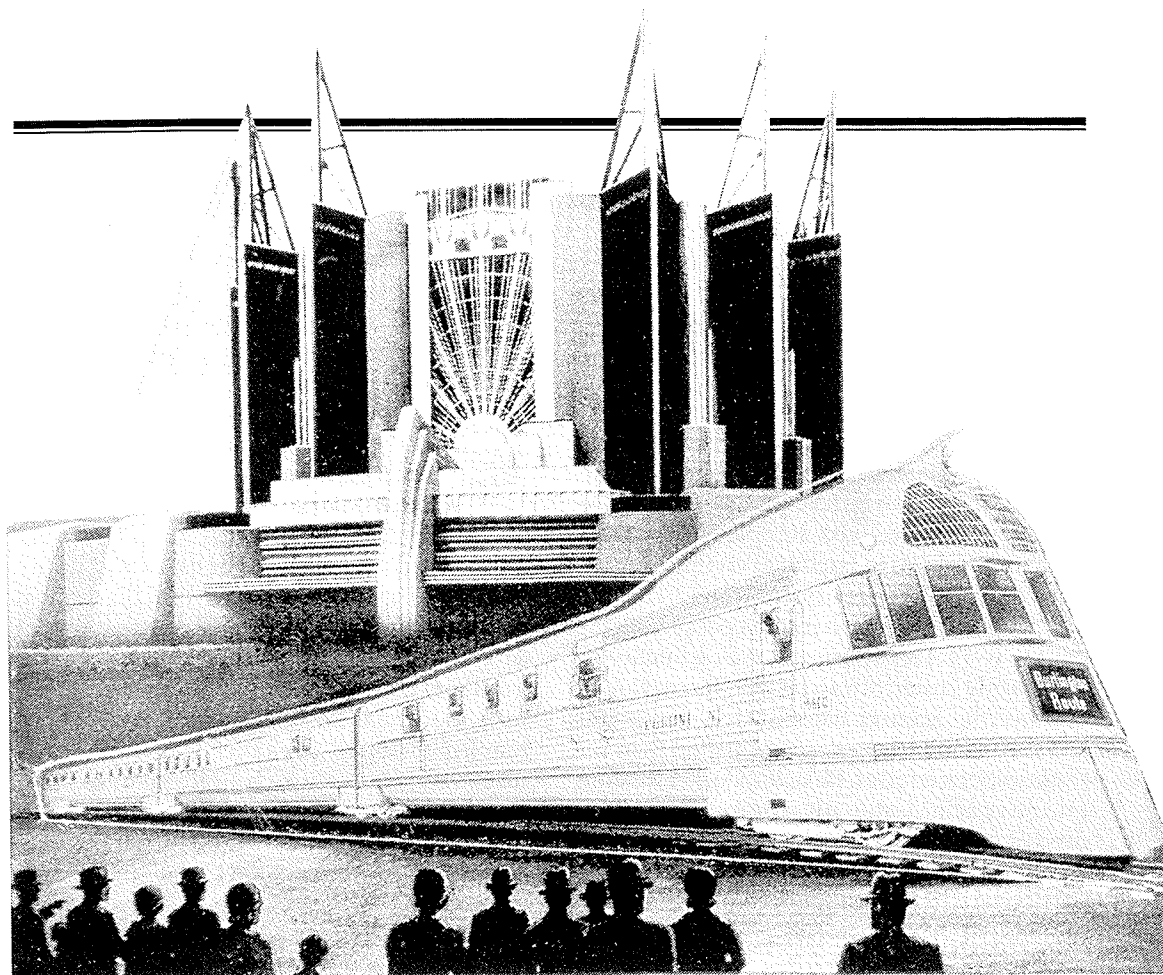
But history abhors a vacuum as much as nature does. There are already those opportunists around the world who have taken decisive advantage of civilization's self-doubts—one might even say its identity crisis—to pursue their own dubious ambitions. One such miscreant, Saddam Hussein, was scolded back into line, though so far his people have suffered far more than he has. Others have carried out their misdeeds with complete impunity.

Is there reason to hope that civilization can snap out of its postvictory doldrums? There is. That hope resides in what some people call the culture wars. This argument among intellectuals, mainly American so far but, increasingly, others from around the world, is important less for what it has yet accomplished than for the questions it raises. First, it focuses attention on the crucial issue, on culture, provoking needed debate on what the term itself means. It presses us to consider such conflicts as the particular and the relative versus the universal and eternal; it raises the question of

whether or not the teaching of values should be returned to the center of education; it asks probing questions about both high culture and popular culture, what shapes them and how they shape us.

Such questions must be asked. The responses they elicit may well become the substance of the civilizing process in the 21st century. We will hear many shrill answers, of course, and many narrowly partisan or provincial views, but even these will be preferable, as part of an argument (a truly multinational argument) over values and ideas, to the nihilism of the international popular-culture machine, which preaches only the maximization of pleasure and selfishness under the false dispensation that nothing else matters. The argument is essential if civilization is to recover a backbone and a firm sense of itself. One could even say that it is the essential condition of any true global security.

—J.T.



The Lost Promise of the American Railroad

BY MARK REUTTER

A whole new breed of train took to the American rails during the 1930s, emblazoning names like Flying Yankee in American mythology. Fashioned from sleekly proportioned metal and powered by high-tech diesel engines, the new streamliners slashed city-to-city running times and made American rail passenger service the envy of the world. Here Mark Reutter recalls these days of promise—as well as the blunders that put America far behind in the worldwide race of high-speed rail.

N

early 60 years ago, on May 26, 1934, a train unlike anything ever seen on rails pulled out of Denver's Union Station and raced east across the Colorado plains. Boasting a stylish curved prow and fluted silver sides, it had been dispatched on a mission to prove the value of radically re-

designed railroad passenger equipment. Its goal was to make the longest and swiftest land run in history. To reach Chicago by nightfall, the train would have to cover 1,015 miles—one-third of the continent—in under 15 hours. No locomotive in railroad history had ever traveled more than 401 miles nonstop, and the fastest passenger train on the Denver-Chicago route, a deluxe steam-powered "flyer," took 25 and three-quarters hours to make the run.

A main-line passenger train in the 1930s was supposed to be big and blunt, powered by a steam locomotive with churning driving rods and massive wheels. The *Zephyr*, though, was low-slung and sleek, with an unconventional "cab forward" design that put the engineer's compartment right at the front of the train. It was not just the *Zephyr's* appearance that was different. The train was the product of several advanced technologies of the day. Its shimmering silver skin was the result of a breakthrough in metalworking. Its cars were not coupled like those of a conventional train but joined in a light-weight, semicontinuous, "articulated" tube. Most important, the train was powered not by steam but by a revolutionary compact diesel engine. Not a few railroad executives scoffed at the *Zephyr* that bright May morning, and newsmen on board the train labeled its attempt at the world record "chancy" at best.

On the first leg of the journey, the train was held to an unremarkable 50 MPH in order to break in a new armature bearing in the diesel motor. Diesel technician Ernie Kuehn lay face down on the floor of the engine room, alert for the tell-tale scent of burning metal. No damage was detected, and the train covered the 34 miles between Fort Morgan and Akron, Colorado, at 70 MPH. On a monotonous stretch of highland plains past Akron, engineer Ernest Webber pushed the brass throttle to the top notch. The 600-horsepower diesel engine responded by knocking off the next 129 miles in 86 minutes, covering the 12 miles between Otis and Yuma, Colorado, at 104 MPH, and the four miles from Yuma to West Schramm at 109 MPH. Then the *Zephyr* raced across three miles in 96 seconds flat—a pace of 112 and one-half MPH.

"You almost forget you're moving until you look out at those fence posts going by and realize they're telegraph poles instead," wrote a *Chicago Herald* reporter who was on board. "It's a trip to defy imagination," agreed the *Rocky Mountain News* correspondent. There was much laughter when a motorist tried to race the *Zephyr* on a parallel road and fell behind in a cloud of dust. Twice the train out-paced a biplane. By the time it reached Lincoln, Ne-

Burlington



Zephyr

braska, 483 miles from Denver, the clock showed an elapsed time of only six hours and seven minutes. A railroad official announced that the train had broken the nonstop distance record set by Britain's premier train, the *Royal Scot*, in 1928.

As word of the *Zephyr's* progress spread—news bulletins were dropped off at prearranged intervals, then telegraphed to radio stations and newsrooms—the train attracted bigger and bigger crowds. In town after town across rural Iowa and Illinois, fire sirens shrieked and church bells pealed to signal its approach. Outside of Galesburg, Illinois, farm trucks and Model Ts packed the right of way for eight miles solid. As the train dashed toward Chicago—"a cynosure of national interest rivaling airplane flights for new records," said the *Chicago Daily News*—its progress was monitored by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's staff in Washington on an NBC radio hookup.

When it finally touched down, snapping the Western Union timing tape stretched across the tracks in Chicago, the *Zephyr* had traveled 1,015 miles in two seconds under 13 hours and five minutes, beating its own target by two hours. It had averaged an unheard-of 77.6 MPH and established world records in nearly every category of long-distance speed and performance. Of particular satisfaction to many Americans was the fact that it had beat the record of Germany's *der Fliegende Hamburger*, previously considered the fastest rail vehicle on Earth.

From Halsted Street Station, the train proceeded slowly to the Century of Progress world's fair on the shores of Lake Michigan, just opening for its second year. When the *Zephyr* was rolled out on a stage that evening as the grand finale to a pageant on the history of American transportation, the crowd surged forward to touch the "silver streak." After order was restored, Ralph Budd, president of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad,

led the train's mascot, a Rocky Mountain burro named Zeph, out of the baggage compartment, and presented him to officials of the fair. "It was a sweet ride," Budd exclaimed.

The *Zephyr* was born out of the imaginations of four men who brought to creative focus a variety of economic, technological, and political developments. In addition to Ralph Budd, they were Edward G. Budd (no relation), inventor of the all-steel automobile body; Harold L. Hamilton, founder of a company that built self-propelled gas-electric "doodlebug" railcars; and Charles F. Kettering, head of General Motors Research Laboratories. With the Depression hanging over the country, these industrialists gambled that an ultramodern train of unprecedented speed would recapture lost passenger traffic, create a market for new railway products, and invigorate a far-flung industry threatened with slowly advancing paralysis.

The passenger train always had been more to America than a means of transportation. It was a historical force that opened up and then bound together a nation of scattered territories and states. The first trains of the 1830s were primitive affairs, little more than enclosed wagons that bounced roughly along on iron rails, but they sped up travel enormously. Three days of hard travel across the Appalachians by stagecoach were reduced to 24 hours when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad lived up to its name by reaching the Ohio River at Wheeling, in what is now West Virginia, in 1853. As track was laid deeper into the continent, stagecoaches and canals were eclipsed. After the Civil War the railroads began another great surge, paced by the industry's embrace of many technological advances of the time: George Westinghouse's air brakes, Samuel Morse's telegraph, Henry Bessemer's steel, and the first really powerful steam locomotive, the American-made Mogul. By the

Mark Reutter, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is the author of Sparrows Point: Making Steel (1988). He is working on a book about the impact of diesels on railroads and railroaders. Copyright © 1994 by Mark Reutter.

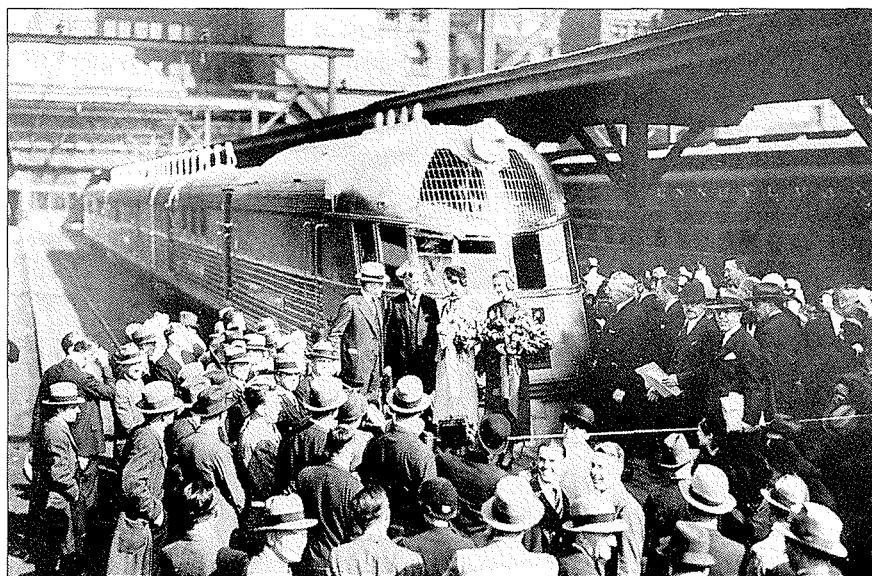
turn of the century, passenger trains connected every major community in the United States and names such as the *Phoebe Snow*, *Wabash Cannon Ball*, *Black Diamond*, *Fast Flying Virginian*, *Sunset Limited*, *Royal Blue*, and *Empire State Express* were celebrated in songs and stories.

At first, the "horseless carriage," invented in the 1890s, posed little threat to railroads. Between 1896 and 1916, railway passenger traffic tripled, while journeys on added-fare Pullman sleepers increased fivefold. The high-water mark was reached in 1920, when 1.2 billion passengers boarded 9,000 daily intercity trains and rode a total of 47 billion passenger-miles.

But soon the automobile began to take its toll. Henry Ford, who had introduced the Model T in 1908, began slashing prices after he opened his Highland Park, Michigan, assembly line in 1913. Between 1920 and 1930, the number of registered cars on American roads increased from eight million to 23 million. While intercity express trains more than held their own (the New York Central routinely dispatched five sections of the crack *20th Century Limited* in 1928), the auto began to make significant inroads into the short-haul passenger business. The biggest impact was felt on railroad branch lines. Automobiles and buses were slowly destroying the feeder system that brought passengers and profits to main-line trains.

Ralph Budd watched this trend with growing alarm. Tall, lean, and clean-shaven, wearing wire-rimmed glasses, he was the antithesis of the cigar-chomping, million-buck railroad mogul immortalized by writers Frank

Norris and Matthew Josephson. Budd loved nothing better than to put in a 16-hour day at a remote outpost of the railroad quizzing employees and poring over maps. Like many farm and small-town boys of the 19th century, he had gone into railroading because it was the nation's premier industry. Starting as a \$1-a-day surveyor for the Chicago Great Western after graduating from a Des Moines, Iowa, trade school, he was only 27 when he was picked in 1906 to build the railroad needed for the Panama Canal project, and he was 40 when



The Zephyr is christened in Philadelphia on April 18, 1934. Burlington president Ralph Budd is at left; carmaker Edward G. Budd stands beside him.

he was named president of the Great Northern Railway. The appointment made him the youngest chief executive of a major railroad. When he took command of the Burlington in 1931, the 11,000-mile railroad was staggering under the impact of the Depression and the weight of heavy passenger obligations. The fact that the Burlington had lost a fifth of its passengers between 1926 and 1929—and then lost half of what was left between 1929 and 1931—was sufficiently shocking to call for radical treatment.

Budd knew that he had some things working in his favor. Railroads benefited from the natural efficiency of steel wheel on steel

rail: minimal rolling friction. (It takes only a fourth as much power to propel a passenger railway car as to propel a highway vehicle moving on rubber tires.) He was also aware of the importance of passenger revenues in railroad economics. Freight brought in the lion's share of revenues, but as long as passenger trains earned more than their out-of-pocket costs, they could help defray the enormous expense of track and other fixed capital. Many secondary passenger trains were not even meeting their costs, however, the chief reason being the high cost of operating steam locomotives. Having grown to 60–70 feet in length and weighing 200 tons apiece, steam locomotives inflicted a severe pounding on track and on themselves. The wear and tear showed up in costly roadbed repairs and unproductive time spent in roundhouses. The solution:

lighter and less expensive trains that would attract more passengers.

Budd later said that he was encouraged to experiment by the political environment of the time. Revival of the rail industry had been one of Franklin Roosevelt's campaign planks in 1932. Roosevelt's emissary to the industry, Joseph B. Eastman, said Washington might be willing to relax antitrust regulations so that railroaders and suppliers could experiment with new materials, new methods, and especially new kinds of locomotives. "It is in technical improvement that the salvation of the railroad passenger business lies," Eastman declared.

In September 1932, Ralph Budd paid a visit to the Philadelphia factory of another man named Budd. Edward Gowen Budd had got



Diesel engines are installed in Rock Island Rocket locomotives at General Motors's Electro-Motive plant in La Grange, Illinois, circa 1938. The famous "E" locomotives were capable of an impressive 117 MPH.

his start as a machinist apprentice in 1887, when Philadelphia was still America's forge. He had helped build the first steel passenger car for the Pennsylvania Railroad before starting the Budd Company in 1912 to make pressed-steel frames for the auto industry. Possessing a showman's flair, he once perched an elephant on top of one of his steel auto bodies—and dared wooden-body makers to do the same. The crash of 1929 badly hurt his auto-body business, but it gave the entrepreneur a chance to explore new markets for steel. "A Depression is a period in which you have time to think," he declared. In 1931 he came out of a spell of thinking with the idea for a lightweight alloy to use in the building of trains. The alloy was one in the stainless steel group that metallurgists called 18 and 8. It consisted of low-carbon steel with 18 percent chrome and 8 percent nickel. First produced in Germany by Krupp, it outclassed ordinary carbon steel on several counts. Strong and light, it was also so malleable that it could be drawn into fine wire or easily formed into deep-drawn, graceful shapes. The term stainless described another of its virtues: It did not rust. The metal kept its silver sheen even when exposed to organic acids, and wind and rain only brightened its natural glasslike finish.

Despite its attractive properties, stainless steel had found few uses—mostly for hypodermic needles, false teeth, and decorative novelties—because no satisfactory way had been devised to fabricate it. After much research, Budd's company came up with its patented "shotweld" method. The inspiration for the invention came from lightning, Budd said, in particular lightning's ability to melt a piece of metal so quickly that the adjacent woodwork is not discolored. Where two pieces of stainless were to be joined, a machine passed a strong electric current through the metal, forming a rigid bond that was hidden because it cooled before it extended to the surface. Budd called it "stitching steel with threads of lightning." With shotwelding and a related innovation, Budd inaugurated the modern age of metal fabrication and snatched

the lead in developing what would become one of the most prized "miracle metals" from under the nose of the Germans.

Ralph Budd wasted no time commissioning the Philadelphia metalmaker to build the *Zephyr*, giving him carte blanche to design it "without any restrictions except those which are inherent to railway equipment, namely the gauge of the track and the clearances within which the outside dimensions must be kept." The *Zephyr* began to take shape on the Budd company's drafting boards in 1933. Its unconventional prow was designed not solely with beauty in mind, but to reduce air resistance. Windtunnel tests at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology had established that the train's resistance to motion at speeds of 95 MPH and above would be less than half that of a train of regular coaches. The three-car train had a tubular shape in which both the roof and side frames carried loads formerly assumed by the subfloor structure. This allowed Budd to do away with the heavy center sills and concrete-laid subfloors of conventional equipment without sacrificing safety or stability. Because the train had a lower center of gravity, it would be able to negotiate curves at high speeds.

In Philadelphia, Edward Budd stuffed the latest technology into the train, using the products of 104 U.S. manufacturers, including Freon air conditioning from DuPont, radio reception by Stromberg-Carlson, and new battery-retardation brakes by Westinghouse. The interior design of the *Zephyr* was also daring. Gone were the arch roofs, wooden-paddle fans, heavy curtains, and other Victorian holdovers of standard railcar design. Gone, too, were the violently (and justifiably) damned red-plush coach chairs that "on a hot summer day made you break out with prickly heat even before you sat down upon them," as one Midwest traveler recalled. Paul Cret, head of the architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania, installed soft-cushioned seats upholstered in pastel shades, recessed fluorescent lighting,

wide double-paned windows, and other comforts and conveniences—all wrapped in a train that was 196 feet long but weighed only 97 tons, or little more than a single conventional railway car.

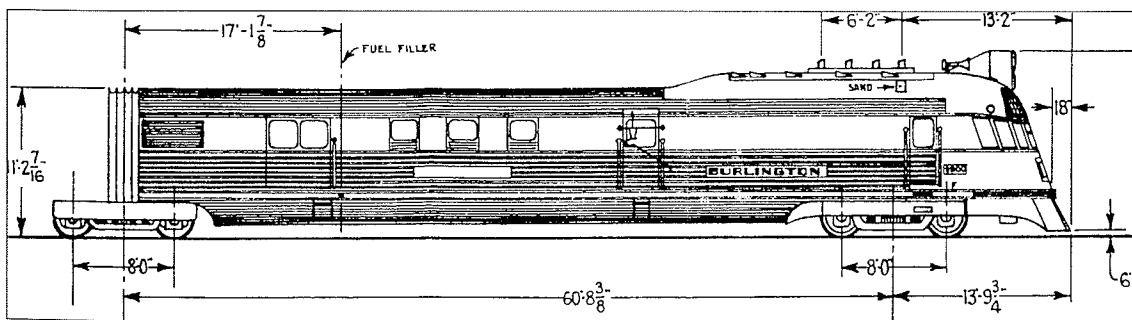
The only thing needed to bring the *Zephyr* to life was a suitably modern engine. That came in the form of General Motors' brand-new model 201A diesel engine. While not strictly the first diesel to appear in railroad service, the streamliner's power plant was the first diesel to be used for high-speed passenger service. Ever since Rudolf Diesel built a crude 20-horsepower prototype in 1897, engineers had dreamed of adapting the diesel to railroads. Using as much as 37 percent of the potential thermal energy in each gallon of fuel oil, the diesel was four times more efficient than a steam engine and had double the thermal efficiency of a gas engine (which relied on a spark plug rather than compressed air for combustion). The catch was that a diesel was highly efficient only when operating at a slow and steady speed. That explained why the engine found its first widespread application in World War I submarines and ships that traveled at constant speeds for days on end. Moreover, a diesel took up a lot of space, not only for the engine, but for the maze of pipes needed for the intake, compression, and exhaustion of air.

The GM diesel grew out of the vision and tenacity of two engineers, Harold Lee Hamilton and Charles Kettering. Hamilton, a former professional baseball player and rail-

roader, figured out how to build a reliable self-propelled gas railcar, or "doodlebug," to be used on lightly traveled railroad lines. In 1930, Hamilton's Electro-Motive Company and an allied concern, Winton Engines, were purchased by General Motors at the urging of Charles Kettering, GM's chief of research. Kettering had been working for several years on a diesel engine design and he needed Hamilton's organization for its knowledge of electric drives, fuel-injection systems, and other engineering esoterica.

After 1931, there was something of an international race to "sweat down" the diesel, or increase horsepower per pound of motor weight, in order to build a high-speed engine. "Some topside men in General Motors kept advocating that the corporation get into the diesel engine business not by the development route that Kettering was pursuing but by purchasing rights and know-how from one of the old-established European companies making diesel engines," notes T. A. Boyd in his biography, *Professional Amateur* (1957), but Kettering refused to budge. He found an important ally in the U.S. Navy. Interested in developing an improved diesel for submarines, the navy agreed to cosponsor the research and, in effect, insulated Kettering from GM's bean-counting "topside."

By early 1933, the Kettering-Hamilton team had tapped the potential of lightweight diesel with their breakthrough 201A model. Hamilton took the news to Ralph Budd. "Immediately I was set afire because I knew that that was something completely revolutionary and better—so much better—than



anything we had ever had," Budd later recalled. He paid a visit to the GM research labs in Detroit, where he talked to Kettering about putting the diesel in his forthcoming *Zephyr*. "We wouldn't dare sell you this thing," Kettering told him. "We don't even know if it will run." But Budd placed his order in June 1933, giving the GM engineers 10 months to deliver. As Budd explained, "I knew that if General Motors was willing to put the engine in a train, the national spotlight would be on the corporation. They'd simply have to stay with it until it was satisfactory. I knew they'd make good."

After barnstorming the West on a 12-state exhibition tour, the *Zephyr* went into regular service between Kansas City, Missouri, and Lincoln, Nebraska, at the end of 1934. Despite double-digit unemployment in the farm belt, the train attracted so many riders that customers had to be turned away. To meet the demand a fourth car was added, and the company made plans to buy five more *Zephyrs* from the Budd Company for other Midwest routes. By the end of 1935, revenues were twice what they had been when steam trains ran on the line, while operating costs had been reduced from 65 to 35 cents per mile. Although the initial \$250,000 cost of the *Zephyr* was approximately double that of a steam train, the lower operating costs more than compensated. The bottom line showed \$95,000 in profits in the *Zephyr's* first year of service.

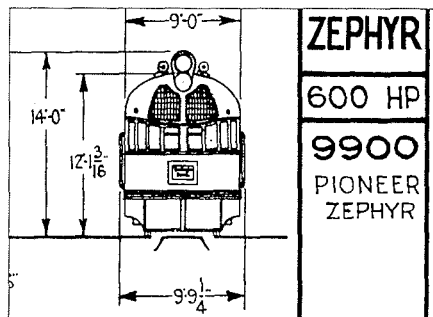
The Union Pacific Railroad was also in an experimental mood in 1934. From the drawing boards of the Pullman Company and the test labs of the University of Michigan came "Tomorrow's Train Today," a three-car aluminum-clad train featuring such novel touches as a bubble-top cab for the engineer and a waterfall grille splashed across its prow. While not

technically as advanced as the *Zephyr*, the train proved so popular that the UP's young Wall Street banker-chairman, W. Averell Harriman, sent it around the country on an exhibition trip. The first stop was Washington, D.C., where President Roosevelt was given a personal tour of the train by Harriman and his wife, Marie. Huge crowds were on hand as the train embarked on its first coast-to-coast tour, heading west on the Pennsylvania Railroad. The train's high-speed exploits filled the pages of metropolitan papers and the screens of movie houses. "They really don't run this Union Pacific train," people joked, "they just aim and fire it."

In Washington, Joe Eastman was taking steps to ensure that the fledgling revolution did not die from a lack of money or from bureaucratic timidity. A crusty, charismatic New Englander long known as the "most liberal mind" in the public utility field, Eastman had been named coordinator of transportation by FDR in 1933. After the Burlington and UP streamliners were built with private capital, Eastman approached Harold L. Ickes about the possibility of advancing Public Works Administration (PWA) funds to railroads seeking to build the next round of streamliners. Ickes agreed, and \$3 million was lent to three railroads for diesel streamliners and switch engines.

Eastman then faced the task of encouraging General Motors to build the world's first diesel-locomotive plant. GM officialdom was still divided over the wisdom of investing in railroad motive power. Hamilton and another executive went to Washington to ask Eastman

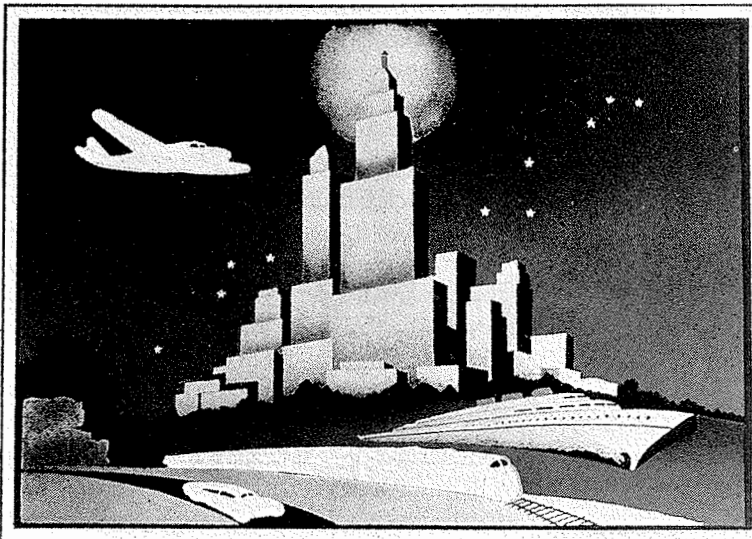
for his advice. If GM was convinced that its locomotive could effect major operating economies for the railroads, Eastman told them, it could surely win a lucrative share of the locomotive business and smooth the cyclical ups and downs of auto-making. Eastman sug-



gested that the corporation finance diesel sales on an installment plan similar to the one offered to auto buyers. Electro-Motive company historian Franklin Reck says that this novel idea helped sway GM headquarters.

The first PWA-funded streamliner rolled

out of the factory in April 1935. Built for the New Haven Railroad by Goodyear-Zeppelin Corporation, the blue-and-silver *Comet* bolted back and forth between Boston and Providence, Rhode Island, achieving speeds of 109 MPH. It was closely followed by the Baltimore



With its spirit of elegant modernity, the streamline style spread far beyond trains. A greeting card captured the spirit, as did the sophisticated ladies who posed for a publicity still in a Union Pacific lounge.



& Ohio's *Royal Blue* and *Abraham Lincoln*, both built by American Car & Foundry of St. Charles, Missouri. The *Abraham Lincoln* was pulled by the world's first standard-sized, 1,800-horsepower diesel locomotive. Built by GM, the locomotive was tested repeatedly over the next two years against the best steam power on the railroad. Its impressive performance—"she's the pullingest animal on rails," exclaimed George Emerson, the B & O's chief of motive power—resulted in a raft of orders for GM locomotives and heralded the eventual dieselization of American railroads.

Across the country railroads found the new streamliners had only one flaw: They did not have enough cars to accommodate all the people who wanted to ride them. By 1938, nearly every important railroad had bought—or if it could not afford to buy, had rebuilt from standard equipment—a streamliner of its own. In all, about 90 trains were placed in service. Streamliners now blasted west out of Altoona, Pennsylvania, around famous Horseshoe Curve on the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Broadway Limited*. They skimmed along the desert sands of New Mexico on the Santa Fe's *El Capitan* and *Super Chief*. They cut through the piney woods of Mississippi on the Gulf, Mobile & Northern's *Rebel*. They wound up and over the Sierra Nevada at Donner Pass on the Union Pacific's *City of San Francisco*, sped through the wheatland oceans of Kansas on the Rock Island's *Rocky Mountain Rocket*, and threw their horsepower against the head winds of coastal Maine on the Boston & Maine's *Flying Yankee*.

In breathless magazine accounts such as "The NEW ERA of Railroadng," the public was informed that railroad presidents were consorting with "artists and designers" to give expression to new creations. In 1937, the New York Central hired artist Henry Dreyfuss to completely overhaul the *20th Century Limited*, at a cost of \$800,000 per trainset, and the new *Limited* became one of the era's leading symbols of everything that was fast and modern. The

Zephyr itself "starred" in a Hollywood action-romance hit, *Silver Streak* (1934), rushing a polio-stricken child to the safety of an iron lung. Movies of the era often showed characters boarding the glistening new trains, and many a Tinsel Town starlet served as mistress of ceremonies at streamliner christenings.

"We are trying to revive the interest and the romance that people used to see in the iron horse," Frederick Williamson, president of the New York Central, said. The streamliner did that and more: It promoted advances in construction that swept across the fields of transportation, architecture, and consumer goods. Automobiles, for example, became less angular and boxy. The Ford Motor Company's new sedan, the Lincoln *Zephyr*, had more than a name in common with the glamorous Burlington train. As one car historian wrote, it "represented an entirely new idea in automotive design." Railroad streamline art influenced advertising, architecture (notably, Radio City Music Hall in New York), and the design of ordinary consumer products, Robert Reed writes in *The Streamline Era* (1975). Housewives were pictured in ads scrubbing their "convenient, up-to-date" aluminum pots as a miniature streamliner rushed around the kitchen sink. Streamlined furniture, streamlined corsets, even streamlined coffins were sold to a receptive public.

What quickened the public pulse as much as the glamor of the streamliner was its tremendous speed. The *Zephyr's* dawn-to-dusk dash to Chicago was a preamble to the "greatest speed-up of rail service the world had yet seen," in the words of industry journalist Donald Steffee. On routes where trains had loped along at an average of 35–40 MPH since World War I, the new streamliners quickened the overall pace to 55 MPH or higher, shrinking the running times between most terminals by about one-third. The quantum leap in train speed is made vividly evident by industry reports. In 1928 there were only two trains scheduled at 60 MPH or more;

by 1936 there were 644. The new trains covered a distance of 40,205 miles, of which 29,301 were scheduled daily. By 1939, total mile-a-minute mileage jumped to more than 65,000—and the 10 fastest trains in the world were all U.S. streamliners.

The acceleration was accomplished by eliminating dead time and by reducing stops and slowdowns. The diesel locomotive was crucial in making these increased efficiencies possible. The diesel gained top speed much more rapidly and smoothly than a steam locomotive, owing to the steady rotating power delivered to the driving wheels. A diesel could round curves at elevated speeds and did not have to stop for coal and water. The success of the diesel gave rise to an improved generation of steam locomotives, which posted some remarkable speed records on individual runs in the late 1930s. Ultimately, though, the speed game was ruled by the diesel.

The increase in speed occurred in all parts of the country. In the East, where schedules were already tight, 40 minutes were cut from the running time of the *Congressional* between New York and Washington after the Pennsylvania Railroad completed electrification of the line in 1935. (At three hours, 35 minutes, the *Congressional* was about 50 minutes slower than today's express *Metroliner*.) The leisurely eight-hour schedule between Chicago and St. Louis of 1925 was reduced to four hours, 55 minutes by the *Green Diamond*. Houston was brought two hours closer to Dallas by the Southern Pacific's *Sunbeam*. Service between Kansas City and Oklahoma City was chopped from 12 hours to seven by the Frisco's *Firefly*. Streamliners commonly ran 100 MPH to meet their schedules; one Midwest train was *scheduled* at 108 MPH between stops in Kansas.

The testing ground for the economics of high-speed service was the corridor between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Between these cities "there was probably more transportation competition than anywhere in the world," noted *Fortune* magazine. In 1935,

Ralph Budd first took on the competition—Greyhound, Northwest Airlines, and the family car—by announcing a six-and-one-half-hour run between Chicago and the Twin Cities. Diesels would make the trip in three and one-half hours less than steam-driven trains (and 115 minutes faster than Amtrak does today). Thus were born the Twin City *Zephyrs*, with Budd-built cars and GM-powered engines. Believing their corporate honor was at stake, both the Chicago & North Western and the Milwaukee Road responded by introducing their own streamliners, matching the Burlington's scorching pace and its comfortable seats, air-conditioning, elegant dining cars, and reduced round-trip fares. "If transportation competition ever justified itself, it did here," *Fortune* said. The new service resulted not in the waste of facilities but in their highly profitable use. The Milwaukee's *Hiawatha* immediately started to gross well over \$3.50 a mile, or three times its operating expenses. The Twin *Zephyrs* carried an average of 316 people a day (up from 26 through passengers on average under the old steam regime), and the C & NW's *400's* performed equally well. Greyhound offered discount fares and even attached trim to the sides of its buses in an effort to imitate the streamliners, but to no avail. Additional fast trains were scheduled. Overall, the railroads carried more than four million passengers between Chicago and the Twin Cities between 1935 and 1939.

Another travel market that was expanded by the mating of speed and comfort was the New York to Florida trade. The *Silver Meteor*, put into service by the Seaboard Railway in 1939, trimmed eight hours off what had been a 33-hour run between New York and Miami. By 1941, six more fast and luxurious trains were in operation between New York and Florida. Coach travel had increased 1,200 percent, and Florida had become "a playground for people who never had been farther south than Asbury Park, New Jersey," one observer said. In short, reawakened passenger

departments discovered what John B. Jervis, an officer of the Mohawk & Hudson, had noticed a century before. "The expectations of the public have been so much excited in reference to rapid traveling," Jervis wrote to his board of directors in 1831, "that they will not be satisfied with moderate speed, say 10 or 12 miles per hour; they must have 15 as a regular business."

When Ralph Budd met with President Roosevelt and Joe Eastman at the White House in September 1939, he could report that the rail-passenger business had turned a corner. Railroad patronage, measured in passenger-miles, had increased 23 percent over 1935 levels nationwide and 38 percent over those of 1933. A pattern of decline that had begun in 1920 had been reversed. Budd pointed out that the industry had taken tremendous strides in improving the business of moving people. Under private ownership and mostly with private capital (the PWA loans for streamlined trains had ceased in 1936), railroads were offering better transportation to the public than ever before. And this improvement had not been achieved at the expense of safety. Statistics collected by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), which was now chaired by Eastman, showed only three fatalities resulting from accidents in five years of running speedy streamliners, a tribute both to safe railroad practices and to the engineering excellence of the railway equipment and locomotives. Nor did the improved service add to the price of rail transportation; in fact, coach fares had dropped from 3.6 cents a mile to 2 cents a mile after 1936.

Roosevelt and Eastman listened intently. Hitler's invasion of Poland earlier that month had forced an immediate rethinking of the government's plans for military readiness. Transportation loomed as one of the more pressing concerns. A number of experts were urging Washington to nationalize the railroads, citing the precedent of World War I. Budd argued against federal seizure. Why not,

he suggested, work through existing organizations, notably the ICC, the Association of American Railroads, and the Shippers' Advisory Boards, to make the necessary arrangements? Budd's idea won over the White House, and on May 28, 1940, President Roosevelt named him federal transportation commissioner, a post he held until America entered the war 18 months later.

Just as Budd had predicted, railroads proved to be one of America's more important wartime assets. At the height of the war, they carried four times the passengers and twice the freight they had handled in 1939, without the kind of congestion that had brought rail traffic to a near standstill during World War I. "It was inconceivable that we could have waged a two-front war without railroads which hauled 90 percent of all Army and Navy equipment and supplies and more than 97 percent of all troops," one authority noted.

The secret to this achievement lay primarily in the technological innovation that had occurred between the two world wars. The advent of the diesel locomotive was a breakthrough, along with the introduction of centralized traffic control, improvements in rights of way, and the use of heavyweight rails. On many roads, diesel locomotives provided the extra horsepower to muscle war-swollen freight and passenger trains over the line. Diesels hauled troop trains mile after mile, week in and week out. Although the low operating cost of the diesel was important, the feature that made it nearly indispensable was its around-the-clock dependability. On that score alone, it took only half as many diesel units as steam units to handle a given tonnage over the same distance in the same time. This in turn represented an enormous saving in fuel and labor.

Another spillover of diesel-streamliner technology was the development of dynamic brakes in freight locomotives. Without the prior development of high-speed passenger service, this revolutionary application would probably have been delayed for another decade. By simply operating a lever, a freight train

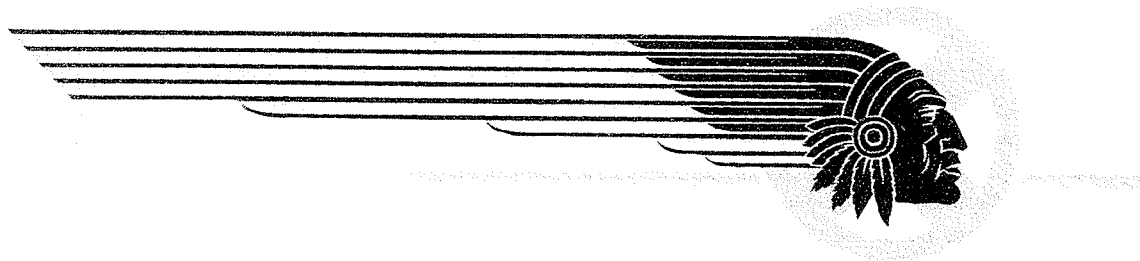
engineer could change the electric traction motors into generators, thereby reversing their function from drivers to retarders. When dynamic brakes went into use on mountain grades, the problem of smoking wheels diminished and time-consuming stops for wheel cooling were largely eliminated.

After Pearl Harbor, the pioneers of the diesel streamliner were deeply involved in the war effort. Hal Hamilton's organization kept producing locomotives and was also pressed into service to develop diesel engines for the navy's LSTs (landing ship, tank). The "567" diesel gained worldwide renown for its reliability. During the week after D-Day, more than 300 LSTs shuttled tanks and heavy artillery between the allied fleet and the Normandy beaches. The Budd Company converted its railcar factory to the emergency manufacture of war goods, turning out the famous bazooka projectile and earning the army-navy "E" award for outstanding war production. In 1944, an ailing Edward Budd received the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' highest award, a medal for "outstanding engineering achievements." The father of the stainless-steel streamliner died two years later at his Philadelphia home at age 76.

The surge in wartime traffic was not an unmitigated blessing. Not only did the rail-

roads' physical plant, equipment, and roadbed suffer heavy wear, but in the crush of people and matériel, trains were delayed, connections were missed, and many a benighted traveler spent at least one trip sitting on his suitcase in an "old rattler." Moreover, for millions of young soldiers who rode the troop trains to Oakland Pier or Norfolk, the railroads took them away from loved ones and toward a hazardous future. No doubt unpleasant associations with railroads were seared into the minds of many Americans. But under Joe Eastman before his untimely death in 1944, the Office of Transportation cooperated with railroad personnel to ensure that hundreds of thousands of cars and locomotives moved night and day. The trains got through.

Had Hitler shown like judgment and not sacrificed Germany's fine rail network to his autobahns, *Railway Age* magazine pointed out in November 1943, the state of the world might have been different: "Germany is suffering now from the plan of her 'master-minds' to subordinate railway to highway development and her ultimate defeat may be attributed to the failure of her railways—assisted in such failure by our own Flying Fortresses—to stand up under the job of supplying transportation during a long war."



II

A spirit of optimism prevailed in the railroad industry at the end of World War II. "Railroad men never have been so full of ideas for developing passenger business," *Fortune* reported. "There is, for example, talk of streamliners, complete with bars and

lounges, that will leave New York and Chicago in the morning and arrive in Chicago or New York after dinner, and charge as little as \$10 or \$12 for the trip." Carriers were making surveys of passenger preferences, and railcar builders were preparing

for the biggest boom in history. Paced by the New York Central's order for 300 light-weight coaches, the Budd Company announced plans to quadruple its car-building capacity. Budd and other builders believed that at least 13,000 of the industry's 28,000 passenger railcars would be replaced over the next five years. They expected to build more than 3,000 cars a year.

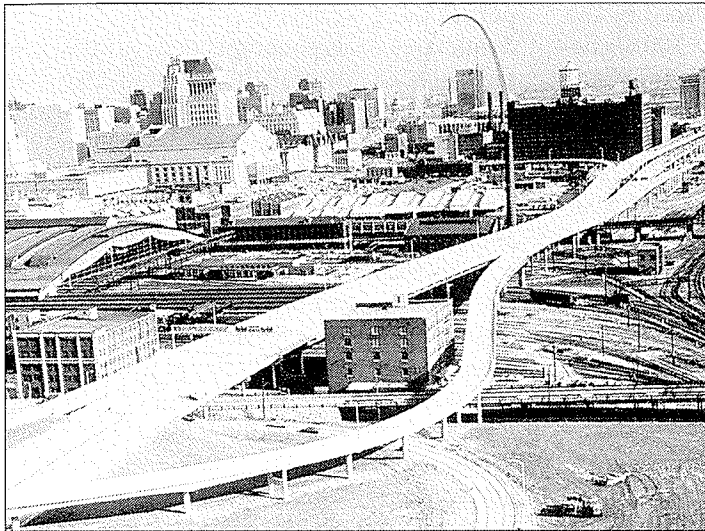
While it was widely believed that airlines would eventually dominate long-distance trips of 600 miles or more and that cars and buses would eat into the short-haul business, nobody gazing into a crystal ball in 1946 could have predicted what happened next. Railroads then handled two-thirds of the nation's commercial passenger traffic, and the New York Central alone carried more people than the entire U.S. airline industry. Who could have imagined that railroad passenger volume would plunge from 790 million riders in 1946 to 298 million by 1965; that such legendary streamliners as the *Liberty Limited*, *Royal Blue*, 400's, and *Orange Blossom Special* would be discontinued or turned into locals, shorn of dining and sleeping cars; or that the U.S. government itself, in the form of a 1958 report by the ICC, would complacently assert that the passenger train was rolling down the track to oblivion and would in all probability "take its place in the transportation museum along with the stagecoach, the sidewheeler, and the steam locomotive"?

There were several standard explanations for the collapse of the world's best rail-passenger service. Many observers, watching the diversion of traffic from railroads to cars and planes, declared that the day of the train was past, its work done. GI Joe had voted with his feet, it was said, preferring the go-anywhere, go-anytime convenience of his car and the speed of the plane. "We are a nation on wheels," declared Lucius D. Clay, the retired army general who headed the 1954 government committee that would help launch the interstate highway system, "and we cannot

permit these wheels to slow down." In academic circles this phenomenon was known as the "railroad downfall theory," and it worked by analogy: Just as horse-drawn stagecoaches were overtaken by railroads during the 19th century, so railroads in the second half of the 20th century would be buried by automobiles and airlines.

Another body of opinion was built around the view that railroaders, preoccupied with hauling freight, had willfully abandoned their human cargo, practically slapping passengers in the face with high fares and chronic bad service. "I am the Unwanted Passenger," E. B. White lamented in the *New Yorker*. "I am all that stands between the Maine railroads and a bright future of hauling fast freight at a profit." Freight, in fact, did appear to remain a solid revenue base until the 1957-58 recession, when the curtain parted to reveal the extent to which truckers had skimmed off the lucrative end of the business. Battered further after 1959 by the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which shifted vast amounts of bulk freight from rails to barges and cargo ships, even railroads that carried few passengers—the Lehigh Valley, Ann Arbor, and Western Maryland, to name three—began a tortuous descent into wholesale route abandonments or receivership.

In retrospect, the passenger train did not succumb because the jet turbine was more efficient than the diesel engine, or because Americans owned 60 million cars, or because railroad managers implemented fewer and fewer new ideas after 1950. Behind these effects lay a more profound cause: a change in the very ground rules of transportation. After World War II, government became the railroads' biggest competitor, as first Congress and then the White House jumped into the transportation business. Released from the stringencies of the Depression and the discipline of war, federal expenditures for airports and highways rocketed to dizzying heights, driven by the politics of the Cold War and the pork barrel.



Making a more apt symbol of the age than the Gateway Arch looming behind it, an interstate cuts across the "throat" of St. Louis Union Station.

The public promotion of roads and runways, with government construction, government maintenance, government policing, and government signaling, made it easy for truckers and airlines and bus companies—not to speak of motorists—to compete with railroads that built and maintained their own rights of way. At the same time, the passenger train was hobbled by an unusual array of shortsighted government regulations, tax policies, and labor laws that drained vital capital and squashed the enterprising spirit of the 1930s. In the words of an exasperated Ralph Budd, who retired from the Burlington in 1949, the industry was denied "the equality of opportunity" to compete for postwar passengers.

As the world of tires and wings overtook the railroads, the great Gothic city terminals that once echoed with the bustle of travelers and the clatter of baggage carts began to resemble the relics of a fallen empire. "Year by year the railroads have simply been drifting out of the public consciousness," David P. Morgan, editor of *Trains* magazine, wrote in 1958. "Nobody hangs around the depot to see the 5:15, assuming it's still there, and a generation of Americans has never been inside a train." Without any-

one realizing that it would be the start of a postwar pattern in other industries, America let the technological advantage built by the two Budds, Hal Hamilton, and Charles Kettering slowly slip away.

Speed, cost, and efficiency were the three elements that had made the streamliner such a luminous success in the 1930s. Remarkably, all three were undercut or penalized by government policies in the postwar period. For example, *Railway Age* reported in 1944 that the industry was thinking of fielding daytime expresses that would run between New

York and Chicago in 14 hours, a two-hour improvement over the fastest overnight schedules. Cars on these trains would connect with the fleet of West Coast trains at Chicago, making the coast run in about 36 hours, so that a passenger leaving New York on a Saturday morning would arrive at Los Angeles Monday morning. But the ICC effectively killed this idea before a single train left the station. In 1947, the agency imposed a 79-MPH limit on all passenger trains not equipped with special signaling devices in their locomotive cabs. The rule, which went into effect in 1950, further restricted trains running on lines without other trackside signals to 60 MPH.

The problem with the regulation was not just the estimated \$80 million it would cost the carriers (the equivalent of roughly \$400 million today), but the minimal improvement it would make in passenger safety. Because some of the fastest stretches of track were used by so few passenger trains a day and under such safe conditions, several railroads argued that special signaling was not warranted. The railroads' line of reasoning irked ICC commissioner William Patterson, who complained in a hearing, "When you get to the final analysis here, it is

a question of whether you [the railroads] should determine how these funds should be used or whether the government should. . . . And hasn't Congress given the commission that responsibility?"

Another obstacle placed in the path of the streamliner was the 15 percent federal excise tax on common-carrier tickets. Originally established as a wartime measure to discourage civilian travel, the tax was continued after the end of the war, and unhappily it succeeded all too well in its original purpose. "The additional 15 percent added to the cost of rail transportation has often been the deciding factor in the choice of the private automobile over the rail service," regulatory commissioners said in a 1954 report. Between 1945 and 1953, the tax added \$1.4 billion to the federal treasury, while boosting the price of a one-way first-class ticket between New York and Chicago from \$35 to \$40.25. (The tax was lowered to 10 percent by Congress in 1954 and rescinded at the request of the Kennedy administration in 1962.)

Local property taxes also hurt the passenger train. Unlike cars, trucks, and buses, which travel on public roads, passenger trains used stations and rights of way that were taxed as private property. As the cost of local government rose after 1945, municipal tax collectors found passenger-railway properties too tempting to overlook. By 1955, the railroads in Chicago were paying more than \$12 million in Cook County taxes. The New York Central became the single biggest taxpayer in New York City. In 1956, it paid \$6.6 million in taxes on Grand Central Terminal alone.

Taking their cue from the cities, a number of small towns and counties placed special taxes on property owners for the support of airports. This put the railroads in the maddening position of being able to calculate exactly how much they were being required to contribute to the welfare of their competitors. A 1958 government report found this example in Montana:

Cut Bank, population 3,721 in 1950, had an airport covering 1,703 acres which cost \$4.3 million, mostly provided by the federal government, perhaps for military reasons. Through the city and county airport levies, the Great Northern in 1956 contributed \$2,241 for the support of the airport, and the ad valorem tax of Western Airlines, which serves the airport, was \$22.92. There were 587 air passenger loadings at the Cut Bank airport in 1957, so that the cost to the Great Northern was \$3.82 for each of those passengers, compared with a tax cost to Western Airlines of 4 cents per passenger.

Passenger trains were further burdened by full-crew laws passed by many state legislatures at the behest of organized labor. These laws required a fireman aboard every diesel passenger train, even though there was nothing for the fireman to fire. Both the fireman and the engineer were paid under "basic-day" rates unchanged since 1919. One hundred miles constituted a basic day for the crew. As a consequence, crews were changed a total of eight times on a passenger train running the 1,000 miles between Chicago and Denver in 16 and one-half hours, and the crews shared a total of 10 days' pay. Restrictive union work rules had been a matter of controversy in railroading for years. But the issue of "featherbedding" took on added urgency in a period of inflationary wages. During the 1930s, when the streamliner movement got under way, the average pay of a railroader was 70 cents an hour. With railroad wages climbing to \$1.94 an hour in 1954, the costs of the old practices soared. "This type of labor agreement has loaded wage costs so heavily on the passenger train that these costs alone have often been the decisive factor necessitating the discontinuance of the operation of trains," an expert declared to Congress in 1954.

High operating costs were a greater problem than loss of patronage: Through 1955, the number of passengers carried on an average intercity train was only slightly less than the average carried in 1939. But the inflationary

spiral had a deadly outcome. Capital that should have gone for improved equipment and faster service was dissipated in wages and taxes.

The effect on American railcar-builders was profound. Orders for passenger-train cars sank to 109 units in 1949 from a 1945 peak of 2,993. "We carbuilders have literally knocked ourselves out designing and building new types of equipment," Edward Budd, Jr., son of the founder, told the Association of Passenger Traffic Officers in 1957. The carbuilder found that it was selling more rail equipment abroad than at home: The title of a company advertisement announcing delivery of a new streamliner in 1955 made the bittersweet boast, "None But the Best for Canada."

To be sure, rail executives deserved part of the blame for the declining state of the passenger train. Many companies were too prone to compete foolishly among themselves rather than against buses and planes, dispatching trains out of the same cities at the same times instead of spacing departures throughout the day on a cooperative basis. As often as not, passenger trains stopped only in the downtown stations of cities and rolled past the expanding suburbs that were home to many potential riders. And it is fair to say that some companies became defeatist and used train losses to try to convince state railroad commissions that passenger service was no longer necessary or desirable. On the Southern Pacific and New York Central, management combined trains and downgraded food and sleeping car service. The emphasis was on retrenchment—on keeping people *off* trains.

Frequently, the government's own regulatory apparatus served to accelerate the slide. There were a number of reasons for this. Railroads, America's first big industry, were also its most highly regulated. Federal oversight began with the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887. The industry was also bound by state laws, city ordinances, and 48 state public-service commissions whose cumulative decrees,

sociologist W. Fred Cottrell quipped, "exceeded the French Code in size." Established at a time when railroads ruled the transportation world, the overlapping laws and agencies compelled carriers to provide passenger service on money-losing branches and otherwise denied management the right to make crucial economic decisions. Obtrusive regulations, such as the signaling requirement, deprived railroads of their flexibility to respond to changing conditions or to experiment with new technology, and bred a negative, antagonistic approach to passenger-train problems.

Congress also suffered its own failure to modernize. Its thinking on railroads remained stuck in the 19th century, when railroad robber barons seemed poised to take over the entire American economy. In 1943, for example, the New Haven and Pennsylvania railroads sought permission to invest in commercial airlines. Presented with a golden opportunity to encourage the integration of air and rail service in the New York area, Congress instead let the authorizing legislation die in the belief that railroads were seeking to monopolize aviation.

A different regulatory environment was established for air carriers. In 1938, aviation enthusiasts pushed through Congress the Civil Aeronautics Act, which *promoted* as well as regulated air transport. The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) provided direct operating subsidies to most airline companies and indirect subsidies to all carriers by fixing high rates for air mail. But such public underwriting of private enterprise paled next to the 1946 Airport Development Act. The law called for construction of more than 2,000 new airports and authorized \$500 million to help cities and states build them. The aid was justified on the grounds of national defense and the argument that Washington had always offered financial help to promising new forms of transportation, including railroads in the 19th century. But amid all the rhetoric there was plenty of old-fashioned logrolling. "Every town had its congressman, ready to proclaim the . . . absolute necessity for airline service," wrote former

CAB official Charles Kelly, Jr., in his book, *The Sky's the Limit* (1963). Subsidies would be needed "just to get the feeder lines on their feet. . . . At least that was the theory." Washington also began to spend huge sums on control towers, approach-light lanes, weather-reporting systems, and a cadre of federal air traffic controllers. By 1960 the federal government had spent more than \$2 billion on such "airway aids."

With Washington's help, the airlines experienced a tremendous boom. "Civilian aviation is now a giant grown fat by government subsidies," a 1959 congressional report noted. Between 1946 and 1959, the airlines' share of commercial intercity travel leaped from a negligible six percent to a commanding 39 percent. The increase came almost entirely at the expense of the passenger train. Airlines drew comparatively few patrons away from highways, but gained an overwhelming share of the "business class" travelers who had previously traveled in overnight Pullman sleepers or daytime parlor cars.

By 1959, the railroads' market share (excluding commuters) was down to 29 percent—only two percentage points above intercity bus volume. Even the most progressive railroads had trouble stabilizing passenger service. Despite vigorous sales campaigns to spur travel on its flagship *Afternoon Hiawatha* linking Chicago and the Twin Cities, the Milwaukee Road saw yearly revenues from the line drop to \$1.7 million in 1960 from a peak of \$2.2 million in 1948.

A fundamental shift in federal spending priorities helped pave the way for America's postwar car culture. Highways, historian Bruce Seely points out in *Building the American Highway System* (1987), once were considered the responsibility of local and state government. During the Depression, Congress agreed to underwrite new programs to build roads and bridges in order to create jobs for the unemployed, but rejected an \$8-billion plan for a national system of highways after

critics labeled such roads "extravagant speedways, designed to serve the luxurious few." Washington's involvement grew with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1944, which authorized \$500 million a year for postwar highway building. Yet it was not enough. With cars pouring out of Detroit in record numbers, highway supporters argued that congested and obsolete roads would throttle the economy.

On July 12, 1954, Vice President Richard M. Nixon waved the promise of a \$50-billion road-building project before state governors assembled at Lake George in upstate New York. At a time when the federal budget totaled \$71 billion, this was very big money—roughly equivalent to \$1 trillion worth of construction work today, transportation historian Tom Heppenheimer notes. "America is in an era when defensive and productive strength require the absolute best that we can have," Nixon declared. Using notes prepared by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who could not attend the conference, Nixon spoke of "a grand plan" of expressways that would solve "the problems of speedy, safe transcontinental travel" and help "metropolitan area congestion, bottlenecks, and parking."

In his diary, James C. Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, reported that Nixon told a cabinet meeting that highway building "would be a good thing for the Republican Party to get behind," and pointed out that "in California [Governor] Earl Warren got the reputation of being a great liberal because he built schools and roads. We are now ready to build roads and it is very popular." Eisenhower, who had been greatly impressed by the German autobahns when he was supreme allied commander in Europe, agreed.

Eisenhower picked as his key adviser on highways a man who was accustomed to thinking in sweeping terms—retired general Lucius Clay, the hero of the Berlin airlift. From the outset, the Clay Committee couched the road-building project in Cold War terms. The

threat of atomic attack demanded a national superhighway system to speed the mass evacuation of cities, General Clay said. In one survey it was estimated that expressways could save 225,000 additional lives in Milwaukee alone (though it was estimated that 210,000 would still perish). Dubbing superhighways "roads for survival," Clay and his colleagues wrote in their report to President Eisenhower, "It was determined as a matter of federal policy that at least 70 million people would have to be evacuated from target areas in case of threatened or actual enemy attack. No urban area in the country today has highway facilities equal to this task. The rapid improvement of the complete 40,000-mile interstate system, including the necessary urban connections thereto, is therefore vital as a civil-defense measure."

Out of a series of financial schemes that satisfied Eisenhower and the Democrats in Congress came the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956, described by Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks as "the greatest public-works program in the history of the world." A principal feature of the act was the establishment of a Highway Trust Fund that would collect money for highway construction from increased taxes on gasoline, tires, and commercial road vehicles. In effect, urban drivers would subsidize rural drivers and the crowded Northeast would support road-building in the sparsely populated West. South Dakota and Utah could not underwrite interstates on their own, but with a national fund that pooled money from all car and truck travel, superhighways could be built across the country.

The unprecedented legislative and financial support marshaled on behalf of interstate highways completed the transformation of the railroads from a proven national resource to a rusty relic. Ralph Budd and other executives had seen the industry make more significant changes in a decade than in the whole half-

century before, but in the public's eyes, railroads were run by whiners or plunderers. Eleven years after V-J Day, the train was no longer considered essential to the nation's transportation needs or even to its defense.

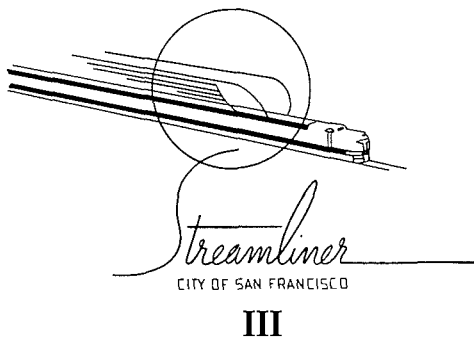
The fact that Washington's encroachment on the transportation business not only violated the principles of free enterprise preached by the Republican Party but contributed to the downfall of an important taxpaying industry only added to the sense of frustration and betrayal among railroad officials. "When the president signed the bill, I told him he had just signed the death warrant of American passenger service," Howard E. Simpson, president of the B & O Railroad, recalled in an interview. An apparently indifferent Eisenhower replied, "We'll see."

Simpson was right. The impact of interstates would be little short of shattering. Between 1956 and 1969, a total of 28,800 miles of interstate highways were opened to traffic. In the same period, 59,400 miles of railroad were taken out of passenger service. General Motors, like many other manufacturers, bailed out of the passenger-train business in the 1950s, although it continued to make diesel freight locomotives at its plant in La Grange, Illinois.* America's rail-passenger service dwindled from 2,500 intercity (noncommuter) trains operated in 1954 to fewer than 500 in 1969. By that time it was impossible to ride a train between Houston and Dallas or Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Gone was the South's first streamliner, the *Rebel*. Other trains that figured prominently in the great speed-up of the 1930s—the Chicago & North Western's *400's*, the B & O's *Royal Blue*, the Milwaukee Road's *Hiawathas*, the Union Pacific's *City of Portland*, the New Haven's *Comet*—were excised from the timetable or combined with

*Before his retirement in 1956, Hal Hamilton, president of the Electro-Motive Division, wanted to experiment with new forms of railroad motive power, including electric and turbine generation, according to his son, Kent Hamilton. But his ideas were turned aside by GM chairman Harlow Curtice. "Curtice pulled my father into his office and said: 'Hamilton, you're not selling enough parts. You're building your engines so they last too long. Now you've got to cheapen up those engines so that they won't last as long so we sell more parts.'"

other trains. Cars built for the world-famous *20th Century Limited* were sold to the Mexican National Railways, which ran them out of Guadalajara and Mexico City.

On lines where passenger trains still ran, service was often threadbare. Only a masochist would want to ride the Erie-Lackawanna from Buffalo, New York, to Hoboken, New Jersey, just across the Hudson from Manhattan. The railroad offered one train a day, a local with nothing but coaches, that left Buffalo at 5:15 P.M. and arrived at Hoboken at 3:35 A.M. Save for the popular Metroliner trains that began operating in the New York-Washington corridor in 1969, the once-blazing torch of American intercity passenger service had dimmed to a faint dot on the horizon when the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) took over virtually all intercity service in 1971.



During the same years that American railroads fell into decrepitude, officials in Japan and Western Europe took the bright ideas of Edward Budd, Hal Hamilton, and other American inventors and figured out how to use them to propel passenger trains to a new threshold of speed, safety, and energy efficiency. Their achievements have revived worldwide interest in steel-wheel transportation. Trains in France currently top 175 MPH. Trains in Japan and Germany use between one-sixth and one-eighth as much energy as a jet plane carrying an equal passenger load. The safety record of such trains is nearly flawless. And like U.S. streamliners of yore, high-speed

trains in Japan and Europe have been a commercial success, earning revenues substantially over costs.

It is difficult today to appreciate how primitive Japan's railways were in the years following World War II: Those were the days when Japan's industrial reputation rested on the manufacture of little trinkets found in American cereal boxes. Built in narrow gauge and served by archaic steam locomotives, Japan's rail system was an antique assemblage of short lines whose construction had been financed by British traders in the 19th century. The first step in the rejuvenation of the Japanese National Railways (JNR) was political rather than technological. In 1949, the railroad was reorganized by the U.S. military government into a quasi-public operation, its management separated from the Ministry of Transport. The second step was the selection of Shinhi Sogo as JNR president in 1954. Appointed after the capsizing of a JNR ferry resulted in Japan's worst-ever peacetime sea disaster, Sogo recognized that his first task was to improve safety. Once he got the railway functioning as a national system, he introduced the first intercity streamliners to Japan.

But Sogo knew that his organization had to address the technological gap that existed between his country and America. Following a tour of the United States, he expanded the Railway Technical Research Institute in Tokyo and launched programs in applied research and systems engineering. In 1956, the same year that President Eisenhower signed the interstate highway bill, Japan's minister of transport, at Sogo's urging, formed a commission to study the costs and traffic demands of the Tokyo-Osaka corridor. The group called on the government to consider new railways an integral part of national transportation, parallel with highway construction and new airports. Three years later, the ceremonial first spade of dirt for construction of a new high-speed super-railroad was turned. The Shinkansen, or Bullet Line, debuted in October 1964, and soon the railway was dispatching blue-and-ivory trains that ran between Osaka

Has Amtrak Missed the Train?

Amtrak started operations inauspiciously on May 1, 1971, a year after the bankruptcy of the Penn Central railroad forced a reluctant federal government to enter the passenger rail business. After only two months of operations, Amtrak's modest federal start-up grant of \$40 million was nearly exhausted. And when its first president, Roger Lewis, asked for authority to buy new passenger equipment, President Richard M. Nixon's White House turned him down, forcing Amtrak to rely on a ragtag fleet of old cars and locomotives.

Since those chaotic early days, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, or Amtrak, has compiled a mixed record. On the positive side, it has replaced much of its antiquated rolling stock with Superliner and Amfleet cars. Its operating deficit has been sliced from 44 percent of total costs in 1984 to 21 percent last year. (Amtrak received \$351 million in federal operating subsidies last year.) A number of dilapidated depots, notably Washington, D.C.'s Union Station, have been restored, and ticketing and reservation services have improved greatly.

Yet against these accomplishments must be weighed the poor performance of many Amtrak trains, whose slow schedules and infrequent service conspire to make trains a marginal presence outside the Northeast Corridor. Today, Amtrak accounts for less than four percent of common carrier travel nationwide, while buses claim 10 percent and planes 86 percent.

Amtrak's problems partly stem from the politics surrounding its birth. It was overseen during its early years by Nixon administration officials whose commitment to passenger trains was less than wholehearted. Secretary of Transportation John Volpe slashed 49,500 miles of railroad passenger service to 23,000 miles and cut the number of intercity trains from 450 to fewer than 250. A private railroad that wanted to be relieved of its intercity passenger routes was required only to pay Amtrak an amount equal to its 1969 passenger-service losses. Before long, Amtrak was the underfinanced master of all the nation's intercity passenger trains.

For a time, the railroads that had dumped their passenger service continued to operate the trains under contract to Amtrak. Even though Amtrak now operates its own trains, the freight railroads still own most of the track. This divided responsibility leads to buck-passing between the two. One result is that long-distance train service is slower today than it was when Amtrak took over in 1971—and measurably slower than it was during the streamliner era of five decades ago. The schedule of the New York–Chicago *Broadway Limited* has gone up from 16 hours in 1940 to 20 and one-half hours today; the *Southwest Limited* requires 50 hours between Chicago and Los Angeles on the same route that took 39 and three-quarters hours under the Santa Fe Railway.

In recent years, Amtrak supporters have blamed the railroad's plight on President Ronald Reagan, who took an extreme laissez-faire position on Amtrak's subsidies and repeatedly rejected plans that would have improved service. But some of Amtrak's "friends" share the blame for its current state. They include nostalgia buffs who seem satisfied to have Amtrak operate trains like those they knew as children and local political interests that want to use the railroad for a variety of purposes, such as serving out-of-the-way towns or providing jobs for the homeless. These friends seem unable to conceive of passenger rail as a business and a technology, not as a social agency or a trip down memory lane.

Another perennial problem is high labor costs. When it passed the legislation creating Amtrak in 1970, Congress did not demand any relaxation of restrictive work rules from railroad labor. Despite some improvement in union work rules, about 60 percent of revenues today are consumed by wages.

The Northeast Corridor is the happy exception to Amtrak's woes. In 1976, Paul Reistrup, Amtrak's second president, purchased the Washington-Boston mainline of the bankrupt Penn Central, giving Amtrak total control of passenger operations. Reistrup's bold move, together with fresh capital committed by

Washington (\$1.6 billion for track rehabilitation and \$150 million for station improvements), resulted in a New York-to-Washington speedway that allows travel at up to 130 M.P.H., which begins to approach the kind of rail system in place in Japan and under rapid development in Europe.

The public has responded to fast, frequent trains by making Amtrak the largest single common carrier in the New York-Washington market. Its share of the air-rail passenger business is 43 percent and growing. Amtrak is trying to duplicate this success by rebuilding its line from New York to Boston. But it has displayed little enthusiasm for starting other high-speed corridors. The reason may be traced to its history: To protect its annual subsidy in Congress, Amtrak must curry favor with organized labor and other constituencies, and they are quite content with the status quo.

Amtrak's structural inadequacies have convinced many transportation specialists that if high-speed rail is ever to take hold in the United States it will have to be developed outside the Amtrak system. Several groups have come forward with plans for the construction of high-speed intercity rail. A consortium led by Morrison-Knudsen Corporation and GEC Alsthom, a French-British venture, is seeking permission to build a 620-mile route that would link Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio using 200-M.P.H. French-built trains. The project has created a Texas-size political dust-up. An earlier attempt by other businessmen to build a Shinkansen-like railroad between San Diego and Los Angeles was defeated after citizen groups objected loudly to high-speed trains near their homes.

Despite such opposition, the basic concept of high-speed rail is sound and could be applied on a number of routes where travel is heavy, such as Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Jacksonville, Milwaukee-Chicago-Detroit, Philadelphia-Harrisburg-Pittsburgh, Kansas City-St. Louis, and perhaps San Francisco-Los Angeles. Marketing studies indicate that if rail travel between two cities is reduced to three hours or less, many businesspeople will choose rail over air.

The best option for introducing trains that at-

tract the public would be to use the proven technology of steel wheel on steel rail. "Maglev" trains that float above a magnetic guideway may prove workable in the future but are not practical today. The trains would need to use tracks barred to freight trains and free of grade crossings so that total safety and high speed could be achieved. A similar sort of "dedicated" passenger service was suggested by federal Transportation Coordinator Joseph Eastman back in 1936.

One way to overcome the financial obstacles to high-speed rail would be to tie the service to hub airports, then encourage airlines to invest in rail as an alternative to unprofitable "short-hop" air routes. Passengers from, say, eastern Pennsylvania and Maryland could check their baggage at rail stations and ride directly to Virginia's Dulles Airport for long-distance and international flights. Integrated rail-air ticketing could be provided, and airlines could be awarded coveted airport gates as an incentive to invest in modern ground transportation.

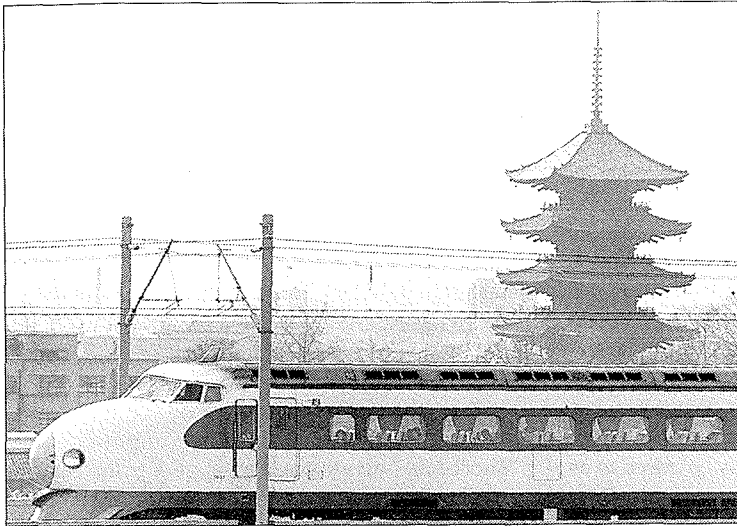
Another idea would be to split high-speed corridors into two discrete parts. A private company would buy the equipment, run the

trains, and price tickets without public subsidies, while the federal government would maintain the rights of way, much as it supports highways and airport terminals. Such a venture would parallel developments in Japan and Europe, where government railroads have been broken up into smaller, quasi-private companies in order to lower costs and to encourage private investment.

High-speed rail advocates face a formidable opponent in the highway lobby, which has dominated American thinking about transportation since World War II. Yet there are signs of change. Some market-oriented conservatives now propose to put highways in the hands of private investors, who would charge tolls reflecting the true cost of the facilities. This idea has aroused interest in the Clinton administration. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña has argued that such pricing of car travel, coupled with the introduction of fast intercity trains, could save the country huge sums that otherwise would be spent on highways.

—Mark Reutter





Seizing the future: A Japanese bullet train, part of a fleet that relied heavily on borrowed American technology, speeds through Kyoto in 1966.

and Tokyo at 115 to 125 MPH, setting world speed records.

The bullet trains represented the coming of age of Japanese industry in many respects. To build the railroad, Sogo tapped into virtually every field of Japanese civil engineering and manufacturing. In all, 4,000 experts were mobilized from the ranks of the nation's automakers, steel companies, electric-machinery makers, and other industries. In many areas, the Shinkansen applied technology found in America. It incorporated the lightweight cars and two-axle trucks of the Budd Company and included dynamic brakes pioneered by Electro-Motive. Propulsion for the Japanese trains was provided by overhead wires using alternating current (AC) developed by George Westinghouse and first installed successfully by the Pennsylvania Railroad on its New York-Washington main line. (Under Sogo, the JNR also dieselized many of its rail lines, thus gaining efficiencies from yet another American innovation.)

Imported or not, the Shinkansen was that rarest of phenomena, a large-scale construction project that earned a profit from the start. Ridership on the Tokyo-Osaka line climbed 300 percent in the first five years of operation.

By 1976, the line had grossed \$7.5 billion, equal to six times its \$1.2-billion cost. Expanded to connect nine of Japan's 10 largest cities, the Shinkansen continues to be profitable following JNR's breakup into six regional passenger carriers in 1987.

High-speed rail has played an impressive part in reducing transportation costs in Japan and limiting the nation's oil imports. The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis found the Shinkansen to be nearly three times more productive

than aircraft serving the same route in terms of labor efficiency, five times more productive in terms of capital charges on equipment, and eight times more productive in terms of energy consumed. And Japan's bullet trains have carried nearly four billion passengers since 1964 without a single reported fatality.

Europe, too, appreciated the value of the American passenger train, as well as the diesel engine used by U.S. forces during World War II. The first "American-style" lightweight cars made their debut on the Continent in 1949 on France's Paris-Strasbourg line. In Germany, a pair of lightweight diesel trains that borrowed heavily from the original *Zephyr* design began running between Hamburg and Frankfurt in 1953. American Car Foundry reported a similar pattern of overseas enthusiasm for its railroad equipment. In 1950, the railcar builder introduced the low-slung Talgo train, only to find it unsalable among hard-pressed American railroads. The Talgos, however, became a great success for the Spanish National Railways. By virtue of a tilting mechanism that enabled the trains to round curves at high speed, the Talgos reduced the travel time between



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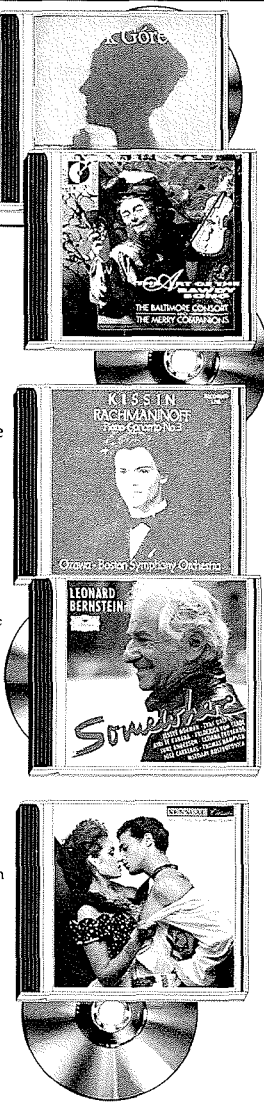


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Madrid and the French border by one-third.*

With improved equipment, several railroads started to experiment with the kind of high-speed running that had enthralled the American public before the war. On March 29, 1955, the French startled the world by running a test train at 207 MPH. The tests convinced government and business officials (the state owned a 51 percent stake in the French railways) that existing railroads could reach speeds of at least 140 MPH without sacrificing safety or comfort. A team of engineers got to work on developing such a railroad, using AC propulsion and lightweight car bodies built under Budd Company patents. Steadily, the French increased passenger speeds until *Le Capitole*, the first train scheduled to run at 125 MPH in Europe, entered service in 1967 between Paris and Toulouse.

In 1973, the first oil-price shock struck Europe, turning the spotlight on fuel-efficient forms of transportation, especially railroads. Exactly eight years later, the French completed their new electrified line from Paris to Lyons, employing the TGV (*train à grande vitesse*, or train of great speed). A technological marvel, the train covered the 270-mile route in two hours. Critics of the venture fell silent when the service became a commercial success as well. The \$2.3 billion invested in the project was repaid by 1991. Over the same years, the number of railroad passengers carried in the Paris-Lyons corridor increased by 75 percent, while travel by plane between the cities dropped by 48 percent.

Inspired by the success of the TGV, most other European nations have taken on the construction or rehabilitation of railroads as national projects. Germany is rebuilding 2,500 miles of track to allow trains to run at 186 MPH in its InterCity Express (ICE) system. Its new line between Hamburg and Munich has been carrying full trains since 1991. Italy's stream-

liners have sharply reduced travel time between Naples and Milan. Spain became the latest member of the high-speed elite when trains began operating between Madrid and Seville in 1992. In Sweden, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, new rail links are being promoted aggressively as part of the economic unification of Europe. By the year 2015, the Community of European Railways projects a 18,000-mile high-speed network stretching from Athens to Glasgow and from Seville to Stockholm.

The success of high-speed trains abroad raises serious questions about the direction and wisdom of America's transportation choices. Despite the hundreds of billions of dollars poured into highways and airports, America has less mobility today than it did 40 years ago. The average speed of traffic in an urban area is 7 MPH, "the same speed that a camel caravan traveled 2,000 years ago," according to James Costantino, director of the Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Society. With both urban and suburban highways clogged with traffic and many airports reaching the saturation point, much transportation is getting worse instead of better. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that \$100 billion is needed to end airport congestion and flight delays that cost billions of dollars in extra fuel and wages. Up to \$600 billion is the price tag for rebuilding America's interstate highways, with their cracked pavements and worn-out bridges.

Rail service *within* metropolitan areas has enjoyed a comeback in recent years. Even Los Angeles, the mecca of cars and freeways, has jumped on the bandwagon. But with Washington largely indifferent to intercity rail service outside the Northeast Corridor, the most efficient means of travel between cities a few hundred miles apart languishes. If the passenger train does undergo a renaissance, as the Clinton administration advocates, the technical know-how of high-speed railroading now belongs to France, Germany, Japan, Spain, and Sweden. This

*Some 40 years later, Talgo-inspired engineering would re-cross the Atlantic in the form of Sweden's X-2000 passenger train. When Amtrak tested it last spring between New York and Washington, its tilt system for curves was hailed in the news media as "revolutionary."

places America in the ironic position of having to repurchase the fruits of its own engineering from foreign manufacturers.

I'll take the right side and you sit in the fireman's seat, and we'll see if we can get the old girl started." The date was May 26, 1960, when a group of railroad officials and suppliers gathered on the grounds of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago to pay their last respects to the train that had opened a new era in land transportation. Exactly 26 years after it had hurtled across the prairies on its history-making run, the world's first dieselized, stainless steel train had reached the end of the line.

Harry Murphy, president of the Burlington Route, made informal remarks to the audience. He recalled how his predecessor, the visionary Ralph Budd, had decided upon the train's name. He had been rereading Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in which the god of the west wind, Zephyrus, promised renewal. Budd thought the name perfect for a fast train that would run across the Midwest. And for over a quarter of a century the *Zephyr* had breezed past farms and small towns on various Burlington routes, destined to run off 3.2 million miles in its daily duty of hauling passengers and mail with

speed, comfort, and reliability.

"Now after carrying more than one million passengers, the train has earned an honorable retirement," Murphy said. "At this great museum, those who knew the *Zephyr* in the past, rode on it, or just watched it go by, can renew their acquaintance and relive their memories of it, while children who are too young to have known the train during its period of service can go through its cars and learn from the pictorial displays inside about the important role it played in revolutionizing transportation."

It was a bittersweet moment, for the *Zephyr* renewed but ultimately failed to save America's private-sector passenger train. By the time of the streamliner's retirement, the industry had declined so precipitously that no technology, no matter how efficient, could rescue it. The business was beyond the therapy of traction power. After Murphy spoke, he handed the brass throttle to Lenox Lohr, president of the museum. The diesel engine was started one last time and the wail of its horn flooded the museum grounds as Lohr yanked on the whistle cord four times. Then the diesel was turned off and a small group of admirers climbed a platform that flanked the cars and filed slowly past the still-gleaming silver streak.

THE LOST PROMISE OF THE AMERICAN RAILROAD

Much has been written about the first 100 or so years of railroading in America, when the industry roared forward in tandem with the U.S. economy. Seldom discussed, like some embarrassing relative who went to pot, are the years since 1940.

For the most part, railroad literature consists of individual histories of the dozens of railways that sprouted during the industry's heyday. Many of these books—and there are literally hundreds of them—are more anecdotal than historical, and, as often as not, emphasize pictures at the expense of text. In recent years, however, a number of company histories that transcend the genre have been published. Among the best are James D. Dilts's **Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore & Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828–1853** (Stanford, 1993); Maury Klein's **Union Pacific**, 2 vols. (Doubleday, 1987, 1989); and Allen W. Trelease's **North Carolina Railroad, 1849–1971, and the Modernization of North Carolina** (Univ. of N.C., 1991). These books serve as antidotes to the "railroads as robber barons" school of history, epitomized by Matthew Josephson's **Robber Barons** (1934), which continues to poison public attitudes toward the industry.

Dilts, a Baltimore-based independent scholar, notes that America's first railroad, the Baltimore & Ohio, cast the mold for many others. Launched in 1827 by a group of Baltimore worthies concerned about their city's future prosperity, the B & O was partially underwritten by the city government and the state of Maryland. The pattern of collective municipal effort and public subsidy was repeated in many parts of the country. The first great railroad boom pushed rail mileage past that of canals and plank roads in the early 1850s. Route mileage reached 30,626 by 1860 and shot past 250,000 in 1916.

What was the impact? Robert W. Fogel, an economist at the University of Chicago, won a Nobel Prize in economics last year partly on the strength of his **Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History** (1964), which argues that railroads were not nearly as essential to the growth of the 19th-cen-

tury U.S. economy as is generally believed. His view remains highly controversial. The more conventional interpretation is advanced in George Rogers Taylor's **Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860** (1951); **The American Railroad Network, 1861–1890** (1956), by Taylor and Irene D. Neu; and Edward Chase Kirkland's **Men, Cities and Transportation: A Study in New England History, 1820–1900**, 2 vols. (1948). Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., the dean of American business historians and editor of **The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business** (1965; Arno, 1981), emphasizes that the railroads did much more than build up steel and other industries. "The swift and widespread adoption of the railroad, together with the telegraph and ocean-going steamship. . . helped to lay the foundations of the modern American economy and to transform the nation into the world's greatest industrial power. The large corporation, the craft union, the investment banking house, and the regulatory commission all moved toward their modern form in meeting the financial and operational needs of the new instruments of transportation."

The nuts and bolts of railroading are the subject of many specialized books. John H. White, Jr., senior historian emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, artfully conveys a vast amount of information on the evolution of rolling stock in two beautifully illustrated books, **The American Railroad Passenger Car** (Johns Hopkins, 1978) and **The American Railroad Freight Car** (Johns Hopkins, 1993). Carl W. Condit's **Port of New York**, 2 vols. (Univ. of Chicago, 1980, 1981), deals with the building of Grand Central Terminal and Pennsylvania Station in New York, the two greatest private civil-works projects of their day. On a more intimate scale, the central role of the railroad depot in rural America is explored in H. Roger Grant and Charles W. Bohi's **Country Railroad Station in America** (1978; Center for Western Studies, 1988).

The colorful lingo and folklore of trainmen were the subject of several studies in the 1940s, on the eve of the shift from steam to diesel power

that was to sweep away many of the old railroad ways. Notable examples include **The Railroader** (1940), by W. Fred Cottrell, **Railroad Avenue** (1945), by Freeman Hubbard, and **A Treasury of Railroad Folklore** (1948; Bonanza, 1989), edited by B. A. Botkin and Alvin F. Harlow. Even in 1940, Cottrell, a Miami University sociologist, had to remind readers of the railroads' "glorious past." He recalled that in small-town America every "air jammer," "baby lifter" and "club winder"—occupations defined in Cottrell's 21-page glossary—earned enough to be considered a man of substance, and was entitled as well to a certain amount of swagger by dint of his role in such a daring enterprise.

The neglect of the years after railways stopped expanding extends to the field of technology. Studies of the effects of post-1930s diesel propulsion, central traffic control, and other innovations are scant and superficial. Two exceptions are **Railroads in the Age of Regulation, 1900–1980** (1988), edited by University of Akron business historian Keith L. Bryant, Jr., which contains profiles of railroad executives and companies through the 1970s, and **The Life and Decline of the American Railroad** (Oxford, 1970), by John F. Stover, a Purdue University historian.

As the sickest part of the business, the passenger train has suffered from similar neglect. No one has bothered to write a comprehensive history of railroad passenger travel. By far the best documentation of the private-sector passenger train's problems comes from government reports and from the pages of railway and business magazines. Highly useful are the **Reports of the Special Committee on the Railroad Passenger Deficit Problem**, issued by the National Association of Railroad and Utilities Commissioners (1952, 1953, 1955, 1957). They document how federal airline subsidies undermined the economic viability of intercity rail service, and how ill-designed labor contracts exacerbated the problem. James C. Nelson's **Railroad Transportation and Public Policy** (1959) is a helpful, if

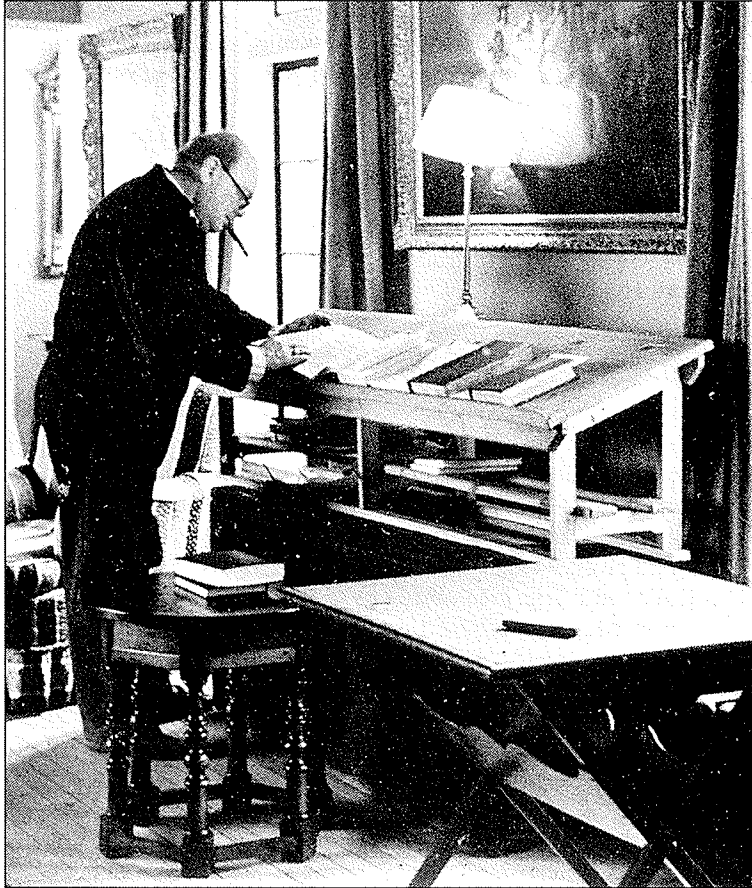
dry, supplement on the shifting nature of federal transportation policies. Other sources include the special issue of *Trains* magazine (April 1959), "Who Shot the Passenger Train?," and John Walker Barriger's **Super-Railroads** (1956), a forward-looking work suggesting ways in which rail service could be improved through public and private investment.

The development of Amtrak has revived interest in passenger trains, though most observers pay more attention to transportation politics than to improvements in service and technology. **Amtrak** (American Enterprise Inst., 1980) is a strongly argued critique of existing passenger service by economist George W. Hilton, cited by the Reagan administration in its attempt to cut off Amtrak's public subsidies. In **Off the Track** (Greenwood, 1985), Donald M. Itzkoff, a congressional staff member, also criticizes Amtrak's performance, but places much of the blame on Republicans in the White House. Amtrak also comes under unflattering scrutiny in **Supertrains** (St. Martin's, 1991), by Joseph Vranich, president of the High Speed Rail/Maglev Association.

One of the more valuable books of recent years on American railroads is Albro Martin's **Railroads Triumphant** (Oxford, 1992). The professor emeritus of history at Bradley University begins by asking why "an innovation as clearly revolutionary" as railroads came to be "despised and rejected" by the public. In no uncertain terms, he blames government overregulation for the plight of the railroads, and breathes a sigh of relief that the "stinking corpse" of this sort of regulation was buried with the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. The law reduced federal regulation of freight rates and otherwise freed the industry to compete with truckers and other rivals. The revival of the rail-freight business in recent years owes much to this measure. Martin thinks that even passenger rail will stage a comeback, and he writes serenely that we are at the dawn of "a new railroad age."

—Mark Reutter

CHURCHILL THE WRITER



Winston Churchill's political accomplishments alone inspire awe, yet he was also a prolific author, writing history as he made it, with a sweeping view and bold judgments. He capped his literary career with a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. Because Churchill thought through so many political problems in his books, James W. Muller writes here, they provide a window into the mind of this extraordinary statesman.

BY JAMES W. MULLER

The years have been kind to the memory of Winston Churchill. Half a century has passed since his rousing rule of Britain during World War II, and while he still has his critics, and against them his defenders, the controversies that attended his career are muted or stilled now. Since the war, the empire he cherished has dissolved into a host of sovereign nations, and John Bull himself has had to swallow hard and learn to be a good European. Seen against such changes, Churchill's Britain looks all the more resplendent. When we survey his nation's story, nothing has happened since his time to gainsay his hope that the Battle of Britain might prove its "finest hour," as he urged his countrymen to make it in one of his war-time speeches.

The recollection of those speeches, once a common bond among citizens in the English-speaking countries, has now become the privilege of the old. In a new age of spin doctors, ghostwriters, and media experts who adroitly trump up mediocrities into national figures, Churchill's invocation of our common liberty and his mastery of the English tongue have an aura of antique virtue about them. We hardly expect our politicians to equal his style of politics, but in case they surprise us we call them Churchillian.

Yet in coming to grips with Churchill's achievement, we cannot avail ourselves of the expedient by which modern men, as long ago as Montesquieu and Rousseau, excused themselves from imitating the valor of the ancients: supposing that the ancients were more than men. For Churchill lived in our century, died in 1965, and fought our wars or those of our parents or grandparents. Some among us remember him still, while for the rest he springs to life in the lifeless memory of modern electronics, which is notoriously unreceptive to the divine. There appears to be no doubt that he was a man like us.

As prime minister during World War II, Churchill wanted the new generation to ponder afresh the possibilities of greatness. A week before Christmas in the stern days of

1940, he paid the first of his annual visits to Harrow, his old school, where students ended the Michaelmas term by gathering to sing the songs he had once praised as "the greatest treasure that Harrow possesses." He joined in the singing with an uncanny memory for the words he had learned half a century before. When the program ended, he asked the students to sing two more of the school songs. One of them, written by Edward E. Bowen in the year of Churchill's birth, was called "Giants":

There were wonderful giants of old,
you know,
There were wonderful giants of old;
They grew more mightily, all of a row,
Than ever was heard or told;
All of them stood their six feet four,
And they threw to a hundred yards
or more,
And never were lame, or stiff, or sore;
And we, compared to the days of yore,
Are cast in a pigmy mould,
For all of we,
Whoever we be,
Come short of the giants of old, you see.

The song goes on to describe "splendid cricketeers" and "scholars of marvellous force" among those giants, whose feats gymnastic and academic are daunting and unmatched. Yet the final verse of the song offers the boys an entirely different message:

But I think all this is a lie, you know,
I think all this is a lie;
For the hero-race may come and go,
But it doesn't exactly die!
For the match we lose and win it again,
And a Balliol comes to us now and then,
And if we are dwarfing in bat and pen,
Down to the last of the Harrow men,
We will know the reason why!
For all of we,
Whoever we be,
Come up to the giants of old, you see.

The prime minister and old Harrovian then remarked that the boys had been singing of

the "wonderful giants of old," but he asked them if anyone could "doubt that this generation is as good and as noble as any the nation has ever produced, and that its men and women can stand against all tests." There appeared to him no room and no excuse for shrinking.

On the other side of the ocean, accepting an honorary degree from Harvard University in September 1943, Churchill sounded a similar theme, bidding the students "remember that we are on the stage of history, and that whatever our station may be, and whatever part we have to play, great or small, our conduct is liable to be scrutinized not only by history but by our own descendants."

It is probably some longing for contact with what Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature," in both our statesmen and ourselves, that encourages readers to embark upon long books about Churchill. Longest of all—indeed the longest biography ever written, and indispensable for studying Churchill—is the eight-volume official life begun by Churchill's son, Randolph, and recently completed by Martin Gilbert.* The distinguished Oxford University historian tells the story so carefully, and obtrudes so little, that he allows the reader almost to reconstruct Churchill's life day by day in its richness and unexpected texture. Those who prefer a less austere narrator may turn to the three-volume life by William Manchester, *The Last Lion* (1983–), which would seem a very long work if not for the contrast with the official biography. Legions of readers have devoured its first two volumes and eagerly await the third. Different as they are in their approaches, the

*Randolph S. Churchill wrote the first two volumes of *Winston S. Churchill* (1966–88) and Martin Gilbert wrote the remaining six. There are also 14 companion volumes of documents, with another nine volumes planned.

two biographies, while not uncritical, are both admiring.

The reader who scrutinizes what Churchill used to call "the reverse of the medal" will find no dearth of debunkers, including most recently John Charmley's *Churchill: The End of Glory—A Political Biography* (1993). The critics raise questions about Churchill's long career that must be tackled by defenders not content to rest with the sort of picture that Parson Weems long ago drew of George Washington. Yet the parson's school of biography, despite its shortcomings, satisfies the curiosity of ordinary readers better than do the biographies that follow current academic fashion and whittle great men and women down to modest proportions. The discovery that the Father of His Country sported false teeth, however gratifying to a leveling spirit that resents his high reputation, adds little or nothing to an understanding of his achievements.

Accordingly, most readers have little use for the debunking kind of history, except if somebody deserves to be debunked; but then they may be less interested in reading about the person. In Churchill's case they have a settled view that he was equal to his reputation. That he or members of his family had ordinary human failings, as some recent books have charged, misses the main point. Readers are drawn to him not because he was an ordinary mortal but because they sense that he was somehow larger than life—as the young André Maurois saw when he was posted to his battalion during the Great War and came to think of Alcibiades as "Winston Churchill, without the hats." People read about Churchill with the same fascination that Maurois felt as he observed him in person: in hopes of peering round the curtain that separates a middling life from one that is grand, or of profiting from Churchill's example, or at least of

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being warmed and heartened by it. His very faults and foibles, which have come in for their own share of attention, command interest as the peculiarities of a magnanimous man. Not that one can achieve Churchillian stature simply by smoking his trademark cigars or sipping Pol Roger champagne. But the advice once offered by the British embassy in Washington to a solicitous host is as instructive now as it was then: "Mr. Churchill's tastes are very simple," since "he is easily pleased with the best of everything."

To hold up Churchill's life as exemplary and worthy of study is to borrow a leaf from his own book. Winston himself sought instruction in the career of another Churchill, his father, Lord Randolph (1849–95), who was described by his friend Lord Rosebery as "the shooting star of politics." Winston Churchill tells us in his autobiography that "for years" he read "every word" his father spoke "and what the newspapers said about him." Lord Randolph, who by his mid-thirties was chancellor of the exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, seemed to his son "to own the key to everything or almost everything worth having." He died when Winston was 20 and just out of Sandhurst, several years before he was elected to Parliament, but the younger Churchill concluded his maiden speech in the House of Commons by acknowledging "a certain splendid memory which many hon[orable] members still preserve." Winston Churchill began his political career aiming to vindicate that memory, taking exception to the military budget proposed by his own party's minister, just as Lord Randolph had done in the crisis that abruptly ended his own career as a minister in 1886.

But the young parliamentarian soon embarked on a more thoroughgoing effort to appropriate the family inheritance. His chief work during his first few years in the House of Commons was writing the official biography of Lord Randolph, a project that he addressed with a single-mindedness startling to his gentlemanly circle. Published in 1906, the book was emphatically a political biography, eschewing his father's private life to examine his public career, and particularly his brief ascendancy in the mid-1880s. The climax of the book is Lord Randolph's resignation from Lord Salisbury's Tory government in 1886, when, his son wrote, he had "rated his own power and consequent responsibility too high." Nonetheless, Winston Churchill concluded from his father's example that a statesman must sometimes diverge from his party, even at the risk of sacrificing his office.

As the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* advised its readers in its review of *Lord Randolph Churchill* (1906), "No one who cares for politics will willingly put it down when it is once in his hands.

People who do not care for politics had better not touch it." Lord Rosebery, noting that the author had managed to overcome what might have been the "insuperable" obstacle of not having "known his father, politically speaking, at all," pronounced it "a fascinating



Winston in Vanity Fair, 1911.

book, one to be marked among the first dozen, perhaps the first half-dozen, biographies in our language."

The biography was reprinted in 1952, with a new preface describing Lord Randolph's Tory Democracy as a harbinger of the democratic revolution of the 20th century. Winston Churchill's fascination with his father was as durable as the book. From the time he was at Harrow he followed Lord Randolph's speeches, which he used to learn by heart from the newspapers: The father's astonishing memory was replicated in the son. Winston Churchill learned from his father's power as an orator, from his insistence that the Tories embrace the new democratic electorate, and from his difficulty cleaving to a party line. He used to visit Lord Rosebery in the old statesman's latter years because he loved to hear him talk about Lord Randolph. It made up in some measure for the conversations he had never had with his father. Afterward, when he wrote his autobiography in the 1930s, he revised his explanation of his father's fall from power, attributing it to the nation's wish for "quiet times" and "political repose." He might later have written the same about his own fall from power in 1945.

After World War II, at the urging of his son and daughters, Churchill set down on paper what he called a "private article" that had begun as a reverie at the dinner table. In it, he imagines that Lord Randolph reappears on a November afternoon in his son's studio at his Chartwell estate. Asking what has become of the world in 1947, Lord Randolph is astonished to hear of Britain's experience of socialist governments, women's suffrage, and especially the world wars. He also asks about his son, who explains that he supports himself and his family by writing "books and articles for the Press." With delicious irony, Winston Churchill forbears to mention his own political career. Lord Randolph, who in life was doubtful of his son's prospects, is nonetheless impressed with his evident political acumen

and admits that he "never expected" him to "develop so far and so fully." He wonders why Winston "didn't go into politics," telling him, "You might have done a lot to help. You might even have made a name for yourself." Thereupon he vanishes, and the story ends. After putting this "private article" in a drawer for a decade, Winston Churchill made some final revisions in the late 1950s and then willed it to his wife. It was published posthumously in 1966 as "The Dream."

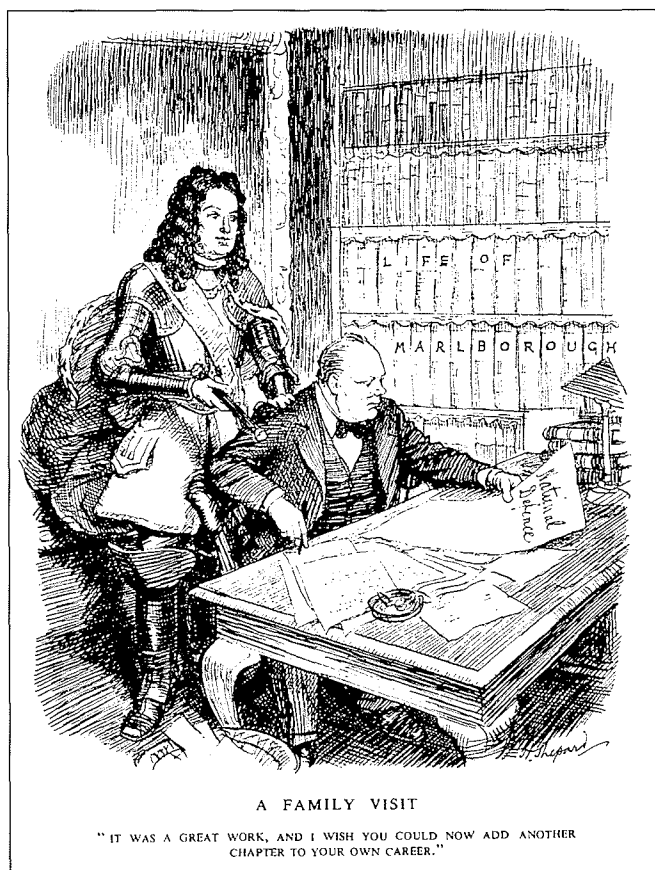
Yet Lord Randolph was not the only Churchill who served as a model for Winston. His meteoric success in the late 19th century had burnished the gleam on a name that had been pre-eminent in England for generations. Looming far above Lord Randolph in the family story was the first Winston Churchill's son John, mastermind of the Grand Alliance against King Louis XIV at the beginning of the 18th century. Serving his sovereign as both minister and captain-general, he bested the French in four great battles during the War of the Spanish Succession. For his service to the nation he was made the first Duke of Marlborough by a grateful Queen Anne, who arranged to build the palace near Oxford that took its name from his victory at Blenheim. In that monument to the glory of his ancestor Winston Churchill was born in 1874, and there he made his proposal of marriage to Clementine Hozier in 1908. From childhood he read everything he "came across" about Marlborough, and even before he was elected to Parliament, his evident literary talent attracted a publisher's proposal that he should write the duke's biography. But the idea was put off by the Boer War—Churchill dashed off, handsomely paid, to cover it for the *Morning Post*—and afterward by a more durable obstacle.

Churchill's reading had shown him the greatness of Marlborough, yet he had also read of the duke's coming of age in a dissolute court, of his treachery to several sovereigns, and of his notorious avarice. With the rest of his generation, Churchill had learned modern

history from the great Whig historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose *History of England from the Accession of James II* (1849–61) depicted Churchill's ancestor as an exemplary villain. Despite his undoubted talents and abilities, Macaulay's Marlborough was a man who carried selfishness, bad faith, and mendacity to the highest pitch. Churchill had an even closer bond with the Victorian writer than most of his contemporaries: His earliest triumph at school had been his faultless recitation of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1846), and his reading of Macaulay when he was a young officer in India during the late 1890s had helped form his prose style. With a pang Churchill had discovered the historian's judgment of his ancestor, and for years it put him off writing the life of Marlborough. At length he learned to see the story differently. Over lunch with Lord Rosebery, the last obstacle was removed. His father's friend told him of a little known,

out-of-print book by John Paget that vindicated Marlborough against the charge of betraying his countrymen's descent on the French coast in 1694. Churchill was so pleased with Paget's refutation of Macaulay that he wrote a new preface and arranged for Paget's book to be republished in 1934. Paget helped him to the conclusion that Macaulay's aspersions on Marlborough's conduct and character were unjustified, thus clearing the way for the great biography of his ancestor to which Churchill devoted so much energy in the 1930s.

If writing the life of his father was the cornerstone of his political education, marking the era when he readied himself to hold ministerial office, then writing the life of Marlborough was the capstone, marking the era when he readied himself for the supreme



A Punch cartoon, 1938.

trials of his wartime prime ministry. Keeping his distance from the murky irresolution of Tory governments during his "wilderness years" between 1929 and 1939, Churchill immersed himself in the political history of the 18th century. Enjoying ready access to the first duke's papers at Blenheim Palace, visiting his battlefields on the Continent, and testing ideas in conversation with research assistants from Oxford, he grew more deeply appreciative of Marlborough's clairvoyance as strategist, diplomat, statesman, and servant of the crown.

In his biography, Churchill traced his ancestor's service to five sovereigns, from Charles II to George I. He studied Marlborough's deft abandonment of James II in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, his victories on behalf of William III, and, above all, his lead-

ership of the allied coalition against the French in the age of Anne. As captain-general, Marlborough never fought a battle he did not win, and Churchill pondered his military genius. As prime minister in all but name through most of Anne's reign, Marlborough balanced the different interests of domestic parties and foreign allies, breaking the power of Louis XIV before his own enemies at court secured the duke's fall at the end of 1711. Marlborough's successes and travails in forming a national government and an international alliance to defeat a Continental tyrant would later prove instructive to his descendant in the struggle against Hitler. Churchill's *Marlborough, His Life and Times* (1933–38) is generally acknowledged to be his literary masterpiece. Its four volumes have been called "the greatest historical work written in our century," which opens for its reader, as it did for its author, "an inexhaustible mine of political wisdom and understanding."

Thus, to understand what Churchill was, one must read not only the books *about* him but also the books *by* him. This brief account of the two biographies that Churchill wrote, to which one might add several dozen brief lives he limned in *Great Contemporaries* (a book of essays published in 1935), may suffice to introduce his shelfful of books. Everyone knows that Churchill saved Britain in the war against Hitler; yet his leadership in the Battle of Britain was only what the Greeks might have called the *aristeia*, or crowning deed, in a long and varied life. Aside from his political career, Churchill was also a precocious, talented, and voluminous writer. Beginning with five books he wrote before entering Parliament at 25, his writing career spanned six decades, culminating with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. Sorted for display in a bookstore, his works would greet the reader on many different shelves because of the variety of his subjects. In addition to his autobiography and collected speeches (standard works for a politician, honed to an uncommon standard by

Churchill), he wrote a political novel, eyewitness accounts of three Victorian wars, an east-African travelogue, multivolume histories of the two world wars, the two great biographies and many shorter sketches, political and philosophical essays, and his four-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (1956–58). Almost all of his books were best-sellers. Some have never gone out of print, and many have recently been reprinted both in Britain and in the United States. In 1974, to mark the centenary of his birth, his books were collected into a 34-volume set, and a selection of his essays filled four volumes more.

How Churchill's manner of writing diverges from contemporary historiography may be gathered from the two biographies. Where the contemporary historian modestly aims to make a contribution to his field, Churchill frankly aspires to write books that will hold their own against all comers for several generations, or longer. Where the current historian shrinks from making judgments on questions of politics and morals, sidestepping controversy to fetch up on the barren country of mere fact, Churchill the writer pronounces and argues in the same manner as a practical man of state. Where the contemporary historian neglects politics and war to uncover the underlying causes of human affairs in sociology, economics, or psychology, Churchill cleaves to political and military history, arguing that politics and war are most important. Where the contemporary historian cautiously circumscribes a subject, writing a specialist monograph to illumine a little corner of the field, Churchill boldly broadens his subject to take in the whole human experience. Finally, where the current historian is content to write for a small circle of fellow specialists, Churchill offers his work to a large audience of lay readers.

Perhaps Churchill's approach and method strike academic specialists as off-hand or old-fashioned; perhaps the grandeur of his prose diverts us from the perspicuity of his thought; perhaps we are simply loath to grant

Reading Churchill

The best start for reading Churchill is his autobiography *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* (1930, reprinted 1987), which rivals Mark Twain for adventure and good humor.

Of the works that Churchill wrote before he was elected to Parliament, most impressive is *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan* (1899). Unfortunately, only this rare two-volume first edition published by Longmans, Green, and Company has the complete text and the full flavor of his exuberant narration.

Though Churchill's early novel has its flaws (he tells us in *My Early Life* that he "consistently urged his friends to abstain from reading it"), the reader who seeks an appreciation of his prescience and detachment should ignore his advice and read *Savrola: A Tale of the Revolution in Laurania* (1900, reprinted 1976). After all, Churchill himself arranged in the 1950s for the book to be republished. Prowlers in used bookstores should beware lest they pick up novels by the American Winston Churchill (1871–1947), a popular novelist and sometime politician who has no relation to the English statesman, though the two once met for dinner in Boston: *Savrola* was the only novel that the English Winston

Churchill wrote. His mature philosophical musings are in *Thoughts and Adventures* (1932, reprinted 1991), originally published in the United States as *Amid These Storms*.

The 20th-century events that Churchill observed and superintended are retold with gripping immediacy in *The World Crisis*, 5 vols. (1923–31, abridged ed. 1992) and *The Second World War*, 6 vols. (1948–54, reprinted 1986). Churchill's great biographies are *Lord Randolph Churchill*, 2 vols. (1906) and *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, 4 vols. (1933–38), neither of which is currently in print. *Marlborough*, which shows Churchill's grasp of politics and his narrative power at their best, also exists in an abridged edition. The reader whose time is cut into small pieces might opt instead for Churchill's brief lives in *Great Contemporaries* (1935), reprinted as recently as 1991 but once again out of print.

The reader with no time at all might scour books of quotations, which Churchill himself commended in *My Early Life*: "The quotations when engraved upon the memory give you good thoughts. They also make you anxious to read the authors and look for more." In most such books Churchill's own good thoughts cover page after page.

that a practical politician could also excel as a scholar and historian. Whatever the reasons, Churchill's books, though always popular with the general reader, have been neglected by scholars. Those who do consult them approach them warily, fearing lest they be ensnared by special pleading, as in the biographical vindications of his ancestors, or by personal apology, as in his memoirs of the world wars. To a historian trained in impartiality, it is startling to realize that Churchill recounts Marlborough's early experience as a courtier in order to teach a lesson in political morality: not only how, but also when and why, one may rightly desert one's king. To a political scientist trained to consider political

debate as no more than a cover for a contest of force, it is hard to grant that there might be more to Churchill's defense in *The World Crisis* (1923–31) of the Dardanelles campaign—which cost him his post as first lord of the Admiralty in 1915—than simply an attempt to rescue his own falling political star.

Certainly his books were written with an eye to a particular political situation. Churchill himself disclaims his works as impartial historiography, putting the reader properly on guard. Yet scholars have too quickly dismissed his unfamiliar approach as illegitimate, and the ground of their complaint may more properly be turned against them. Of Churchill's books it might be said, as it was of the

A Sampler

It is no doubt true that he rated his own power and consequent responsibility too high. Like many a successful man before him—and some since—he thought the forces he had directed in the past were resident in himself, whereas they were to some extent outside himself and independent.

—Lord Randolph Churchill (1906)

I have made or implied no criticism of any decision or action taken or neglected by others, unless I can prove that I had expressed the same opinion in writing before the event. . . . [T]he whole story is recorded as it happened, by the actual counsels offered and orders given in the fierce turmoil of each day. . . . Nothing of any consequence was done by me by word of mouth.

—The World Crisis (1923)

I always loved cartoons. At my private school at Brighton there were three or four volumes of cartoons from Punch, and on Sundays we were allowed to study them. This was a very good way of learning history, or at any rate of learning something.

—Thoughts and Adventures (1932)

Battles are the principal milestones in secular history. Modern opinion resents this uninspiring truth, and historians often treat the decisions of the field as incidents in the dramas of politics and diplomacy. But great battles, won or lost, change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, new atmospheres, in armies and in nations, to which all must conform.

—Marlborough: His Life and Times (1937)

Whatever one may think about democratic government, it is just as well to have practical experience of its rough and slatternly foundations. No part of the education of a politician is more indispensable than the fighting of elections. Here you come into contact with all sorts of persons and every current of national life. You feel the Constitution at work in its primary processes. Dignity may suffer, the superfine gloss is soon worn away; nice particularisms and special private policies are scraped off; much has to be accepted with a shrug, a sigh or a smile; but at any rate in the end one knows a good deal about what happens and why.

—Great Contemporaries (1935)

man himself, that you see all their faults at first blush and spend your life discovering their hidden virtues. In forsaking the inhibitions that make much 20th-century historiography sterile and lifeless, Churchill did not simply play to the crowd. He also adopted an ap-

proach to history more akin to those of Gibbon and Macaulay, whom he took and studied as models, than to the emerging fashion in historical writing. In Hegel's terms, he resuscitated original history—history as written by its participants—even though it was supposed to be dead and buried. Churchill brings to life the choices faced by political leaders, which gives his books the same immediacy and interest that animate Thucydides' history. The Englishman might have borrowed his purpose from the Athenian, who meant his book to be "a possession for all time."

Every biographer has drawn upon Churchill's books, which offer a source as unavoidable as it is attractive. Yet in a way the writings have been slighted even by the Churchill scholars. Biographers are drawn to Churchill's accomplishments in politics and war. They fit his books into their account of his deeds, treating them mostly as projects that occupied time and energy, and earned money, but slighting his absorption in them and their importance as a window on his soul.

Several theories have been advanced to explain Churchill's motive for writing. There is some truth to the claim that his books owed their being to his wish to live like a lord without inherited wealth, a desire that forced him to live from pen to mouth. Indeed, Churchill took pride in his ability to support his family by his writings; even in his youth he commanded record-breaking royalties. After the

Great War he declared at a party that it was “very exhilarating to feel that one was writing for half a crown a word!” His chief motive for the ephemeral newspaper pieces he frankly called “pot boilers” may have been pecuniary, but the money motive hardly suffices to account for his grander and more enduring works. Most biographers have only a superficial understanding of Churchill’s writings because they fail to see past this obvious but inadequate explanation.

There is more evidence for the claim that Churchill wrote to put his name before the public. In the summer of 1897, as a green subaltern in the Fourth Hussars, he wrote to his mother from the Indian frontier that he had ridden his “grey pony all along the skirmish line where everyone else was lying down in cover. Foolish perhaps but I play for high stakes and given an audience there is no act too daring or too noble.” But he was playing to an audience larger than merely his brother officers. He was disappointed that autumn when his war dispatches were published unsigned, since it had been his design (in his 23rd year) to bring his “personality before the electorate.” The publication of the dispatches as his first book soon thereafter allowed him to put his name forward. (He had not yet attained the ironic reticence that charms the reader of “The Dream.”) That so many of his published works are autobiographical—from his early novel *Savrola* (1900) to his histories of the two world wars, the first of which Arthur Balfour called Churchill’s “autobiography disguised as a history of the universe”—lends credence to the view that he wrote to raise his own banner.

Or perhaps also to defend it. In Churchill’s description of his father’s estrangement from the Tory leadership, many discerned an attempt to justify his own departure from the party in 1904. (He joined the Liberals, but gradually returned to the Tories during the 1920s.) His epic history of World War I, with its pivot on the Dardanelles campaign, may be

considered an attempt to vindicate his conduct of the Admiralty against his critics. Churchill himself wrote to his wife that the book was “a g[rea]t chance to put my whole case in an agreeable form to an attentive audience.” In 1946, the year after the fall of his government, Churchill explained in a letter to his successor, Clement Attlee, that he was writing his memoirs as an explanation and defense of his “conduct of affairs” during World War II. Critical accounts of his prime ministry published immediately after the war whetted his appetite to set the record straight, and, as his literary assistant William Deakin later told Martin Gilbert, Churchill thought of the memoirs “as his monument.”

That remark suggests that Churchill’s writings had a purpose beyond the assistance they might give his political career, that he sought through his books to attain not just fame or the good opinion of his contemporaries but a kind of immortality. Even as a young man he was acutely conscious of the shortness of a mortal life, an awareness perhaps heightened by his father’s death in his 46th year and his own premonition—fortunately not borne out—that he too would die young. He was fully aware that a statesman’s fame depends only at first on his reputation among his contemporaries and later on the judgment of historians. He admired the serenity of Marlborough, who never wrote an account of his achievements but relied on his victories, and the noble monument of Blenheim Palace, to preserve his name. Yet he knew that his ancestor’s glory had been tarnished by the historians until his descendant came along to defend him. To write history himself, or to make at least a contribution to history, was therefore for Winston Churchill a way of seeking a more lasting vindication.

But the novel that he wrote as a young soldier in India—the first book he undertook, though not the first work he published—casts doubt on the sufficiency of that explanation as well. Its hero is the young statesman Savrola, who leads a popular revolution against the

military dictator in the imaginary nation of Laurania, whose shores are lapped by the Mediterranean. Savrola is an honorable man with a splendid gift for oratory, but behind him is a rude and unruly democratic party often stirred by less savory leaders. Uneasily coexisting with Savrola's ambition is a contempt for what Churchill later called the "rough and slatternly foundations" of democracy. Like Churchill, he is a reflective man—a reader of history and philosophy. His study is strewn with many of the books that Churchill read while his brother officers slept away the long Indian afternoons: works by Schopenhauer, Kant, Hegel, St. Simon, Johnson, Zola, Gibbon, Boccaccio, Darwin, Plato, Thackeray, Lecky, and Macaulay, as well as the Bible.

Even if his purpose had been strictly practical, to plumb these books for their political intelligence, Churchill would have assembled here a remarkably meaty, if idiosyncratic collection. So all-embracing was his ambition that he was unwilling to leave such serious books to the "Senior Wranglers" at the universities. In fact, he might have gone to Oxford himself when he returned from India in 1899, except that he "could not contemplate toiling at Greek irregular verbs after having commanded British regular troops." Even without formal training, however, Churchill gave himself a remarkable education. Not every aspiring parliamentarian would have devoured volume after volume of the *Annual Register*, making notes on debates that took place decades ago and deciding what his own position would have been, before taking his seat in the House of Commons in 1901. His study of history and philosophy, culminating in his reading of Plato's *Republic*, was still more unusual. Churchill's writing was rooted in the same desire as his

reading: a yearning to answer the great questions of politics and philosophy for himself.

To live with the dozens of books that Churchill wrote is to be reminded forcefully that the man who fascinates historians was more than a politician. His friends were surprised by Churchill's ability to turn away from the urgent affairs of state to his writing. His capacity for detachment from the world of human affairs was also attested by his love affair with painting, ably and lovingly described by his daughter Mary Soames in *Winston Churchill: His Life As a Painter* (1990). As Churchill tells us himself in his essay "Painting as a Pastime" (1921–22), "One is quite astonished to find how many things there are in the landscape, and in every object in it, one never noticed before. And this is a tremendous new pleasure and interest which invests every walk or drive with an added object. . . . I think this heightened sense of observation of Nature is one of the chief delights that have come to me through trying to paint." But in his novel he gives us another unmistakable sign of this detachment. At the height of the revolution, Savrola breaks away from politics to climb the stairs to his roof, where in a small observatory he trains his telescope upon the stars.

This contemplative side to Churchill's hero, which springs from a sense of the insufficiency of human things and a yearning for things above us that are more enduring, belongs as well to Churchill. He tells us in *My Early Life* that "a man's Life must be nailed to a cross either of Thought or Action." As a man who held almost every important cabinet post in the British government in the course of his long political career, Churchill certainly chose the action of a political life. Yet his writings show that his choice was not so simple, for in them we see how reflective a political man may be.

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THE RISE OF EUROPE'S

The formation of the European Community and the end of the Cold War had one common and quite unintended result: Both gave encouragement to the nationalist urges of numerous regions within Europe's established nation-states. What these stirrings will finally produce in places such as the former Yugoslavia, Scotland, or Lombardy is impossible to predict. But three of our contributors—Alastair Reid, William McPherson, and David Gies—look at three different cases to show what has already come to pass. Our fourth author, G. M. Tamás, explores the ideological foundations of this unsettling ethnic nationalism.



THE SCOTTISH CONDITION

Some years ago, I came across a few references to the Fourth World, a geopolitical coinage that was meant to embrace all those ex-nation-states, ethnic and religious minorities, and other sovereignties lost through the twists of history, small races swallowed up at some point by larger, latter-day states. The Fourth World

remains, however, a linguistic abstraction. Unlike the countries we group together as the Third World, which do have realities in common, those entities that make up the so-called Fourth World are unlikely to pool their grievances or make common cause, for their situations are utterly separate and unique, some of them very ancient indeed, as in the case of the

LITTLE NATIONS



BY ALASTAIR REID

Basques of Spain. The demands of such enclaves may very well occupy an international small-claims court for the next century. At present, we are made only too brutally aware of the ruthlessness and mindlessness of their impatience. In talking about thwarted nationalism, however, one fundamental point has to be made: While it is quite possible to under-

stand from the outside the arguments, legal and historical—the entire rationale behind the surges of nationalism—it is impossible to apprehend the nature and intensity of the feelings involved.

I am aware of those feelings, though in a milder form, through my growing up in Scotland, and although I have often enough explained Scotland's case to friends from elsewhere, I know how impossible it is to make them feel how it feels, for it is something close to the bone and fiber of being. The kind of nationalism I am talking about arises from situations in which a smaller country is taken over by a larger power, which imposes on it a new official identity, a culture, and often a new language, suppressing the native identity and driving it inward to become a secret, private self. In conditions of such subjugation, a people is forced to become both bilingual and bicultural. That duality lies at the heart of suppressed nationalism. While many such takeovers have had successful conclusions in human history, some decidedly have not; it is from these that nationalist feelings arise, from situations of deep discontent, from a resentment of a ruling authority coupled with a deep fear of losing the particular ways and myths of being and believing that have always told a once-independent people who they were.

For a very long time, whenever I went back to Scotland, I put out an extra-wary antenna to pick up any trace of what we used to call the "Scottish Condition." The Scottish Condition can show itself fleetingly in the smallest of gestures, a sniff or a sigh, or it can take a voluble spoken form, but it has lurked for a long time in the undercurrents of Scottish life. It wells from ancestral gloom, from the shadows of a severe Calvinism, and from a gritty mixture of disappointment and indignation, and it mantles the Scottish spirit like an

ancient moss. "It's no' right," that cry that echoed through my childhood, is one wrenched from the Scottish soul, implying a deep unfairness at the heart of things. I grew up under a low cloud of girth and grumble, never quite understanding what the injustice was, for it was never identified. It was just something in the air, a kind of national weather, a damp mist of dissatisfaction.

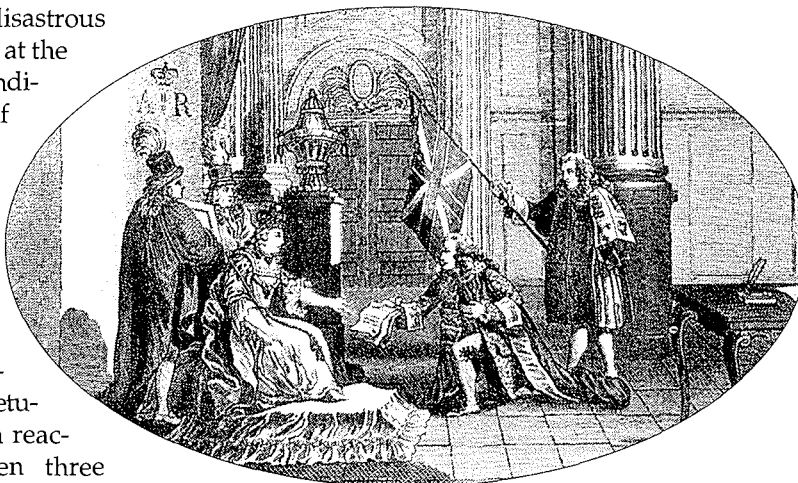
Scotland would qualify as a senior member of the Fourth World. In essence, the Scottish Condition stems from the fact that, since 1707, Scotland has been an ex-nation, a destiny that its people have never quite accepted or even understood, but one that they have so far been unable to alter. The year 1707 is a date as dire as doomsday to Scottish ears. In 1707, the parliaments of the sovereign countries of England and Scotland signed an Act of Union, yielding up their separate sovereignties and parliaments to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain, ruled over by a British parliament. But the omens were not exactly favorable to union: The two countries had fought each other on more than 300 occasions, according to Sir Walter Scott, and were accustomed to regarding each other as enemies. Although the majority of Scots were opposed to union, Scotland was in an impoverished condition, its coffers emptied out by the failure, in 1699, of its ill-planned colonial enterprise in Darién (in present-day Panama), on which it had banked for survival. It badly needed access to the rich trading markets of England and its colonies, and the fact that union brought immediate economic relief to Scotland swept aside deeper considerations and ignored the wishes of the majority. By the terms of the act, Scotland retained certain autonomies—it kept its own legal code, the body of Scots law; it kept the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; it kept its

own educational system; and it was granted representation in the Parliament in Westminster. At present, there are 72 Scottish members of Parliament out of 650, a proportion that is a constant reminder of their minority status.

While the Act of Union was always seen as a Scottish sellout, there could have been no way of knowing how much it was to become an English takeover. Whatever expectations may have been, no "union," in any deep sense of the word, took place, no national self-image was replaced by another, no "British" meta-character evolved. Citizens of the United Kingdom rarely refer to themselves as British, except when traveling abroad, for "Great Britain" exists more in a diplomatic and legislative sense than in a human one. Union suddenly handed the Scots a dual nationality: Officially, they were British, but in their own minds, their own mirrors, they were Scots. No such duality afflicted the English. For them, "Britain" and "England" were synonyms from the beginning, an assumption that has always infuriated the Scots. In the eyes of the English, Scotland had gone from being a troublesome neighbor to becoming a remote northern region, a market, an occasional playground, a ghost of its former fierce self. From the beginning, English culture dominated, but it took some time for it to dawn on the Scots that by the terms of union, England appeared to have made considerable gains, while they, on the contrary, had acquired an ambiguous identity. At first, there was a degree of confidence among the Scots that they would remain stoutly themselves, and would hold together in a cultural sense. But the Scottish self, with the passing of time, became an increasingly resentful one, as Scottish affairs were given short shrift in the proceedings at Westminster. To be left with a culture, a history, and a national character, and yet to have no longer any political control over the terms of national ex-

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istence, amounts to a disastrous emasculation. That lies at the heart of the Scottish Condition. The distinctness of Scottish nationality had little to sustain it but memory, and so, for almost 300 years, the Scots have wallowed in an aggrieved nostalgia, uncertain of what it means now to be Scottish, and gnawing perpetually at the problem. In reaction, they have taken three courses: Some have left Scotland behind, to find fortune in some other country; some have taken the Union at face value and gone south to England; some have stayed at home, to see what Scotland would become, to see what would become of it.



Queen Anne receiving the Act of Union in 1707

I had a geography teacher in Edinburgh who used to tell us gleefully (he was English), “The Scots are like dung, only good when spread.” History may very well bear him out. I am always astonished by the ubiquity of Scottish emigrants. What they took with them was an austere self-sufficiency and a sturdy independence, determined to make the most of what they found. Since what they found was generally more than what they had left behind, they prospered, the homeland a flinty, waning memory. I am aware that my Scottish beginnings, frugal and somewhat severe, splendidly prepared me for a peripatetic life, since I have always felt my needs to be few, and portable. Of the Scots who remained, however, a fair proportion of them accepted, and still accept, the Union, moving to England to enjoy a life in which their Scottishness lies all but buried, or is kept as a kind of fancy dress. While the case for union can be argued coherently, it is contradicted by the grumble of discontent that underlies Scottish realities, a grumble that has never gone away.

That the Union was engineered by a minority of Scots became clear when, in the first

half of the 18th century, the Highlands twice rose in armed rebellion. The ruthlessness with which an English army put down Prince Charles’s rebellion in 1746, and the brutal subduing of the Highlands that followed, left no doubt as to where the power lay. Yet in the latter part of the 18th century, Edinburgh enjoyed such a flowering, intellectually and architecturally, and housed such a concentration of distinguished thinkers, that it could justifiably claim to be an influential European capital. The “Scottish Enlightenment,” as it came to be called, gained for the Scots such renown that Voltaire wrote, “It is from Scotland that we receive rules of taste in all the arts, from epic painting to gardening.” Around 1750, a visionary lord provost of Edinburgh, George Drummond, set in motion the plan to build a New Town to the north of Edinburgh’s craggy, overcrowded center. The New Town took 50 years to complete, but the grace of its broad avenues, its ample squares and curved terraces, all with a unifying Georgian facade, make it even today as elegant a piece of city as you could ever find. By some curious architectural alchemy, the New Town seemed to summon into being, as though to fill its graceful mold, the extraordinary men of the time—law lords, men of science, social thinkers, philosophers, many of them holding university chairs.

David Hume and his friend Adam Smith remain the most illustrious names from that period, but their peers were many, and with Scotland in a relatively settled state, it seemed for a time that the Union might allow it to maintain a purely cultural identity, relieved of having to govern itself.

That was the fervent belief of the Enlightenment's favorite son, Sir Walter Scott. No one could have been a more dedicated Scot than he, yet he saw union as a forward step, relieving Scotland of its ancient rages and bringing it a relative prosperity. Bewitched by Scotland's vivid and violent past, Scott proceeded to mummify it in all his many writings, lighting it with the candle glow of nostalgia. That prevailing view locked Scotland into the fixed attitude of looking backward, the present and the future being out of its hands. As my history master in Edinburgh was fond of saying, Scotland was from 1707 on a country with its future behind it. Yet Scott has to be credited with a certain prescience: In one of his letters, he wrote, "If you unscotch us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen."

Improbably enough, Queen Victoria contributed to the mummification of Scotland's image. On the death of Prince Albert in 1861, she virtually took refuge in Scotland, where she encouraged the cultivation of a historical identity for the Scots by reviving the ancient fabric of clans and tartans and helping to create the image of Scotland that still shows up in the whisky advertisements. That image persists, and the Scots are certainly not innocent of exploiting it. Scotland's summers, which can be glorious, are thick with tourists, and the degree of tartan hype makes it not too difficult to imagine a quite different future for Scotland, in which it turns into a living museum, a heritage park for global travelers.

As I grew up, I felt the Scottish past intruding thickly into the present, in the form of ruins and history lessons and a litany of heroes and battles, the past of pugnacious nationhood. In our playground games, the English

were always the enemy; occasional English children at school were regarded as Martians, beings beyond us. That past is monumentalized all over Scotland, and it is thickly and meticulously documented in the National Library in Edinburgh, studied, pored over, and fed on. Scotland was something that had been lost; it was The Past, and the past in consequence was held in some reverence, throwing a long shadow on the present. The other shadow was cast by a long-engrained Calvinism, severe, judgmental, unforgiving. In Scotland, I once remarked to a passing neighbor on the beauty of the day, to hear her mutter in reply, "We'll pay for it."

A Scottish identity, which the Scots had once worn easily and naturally, had by the 19th century become for them a kind of secret self, which could only emerge on certain occasions, such as sporting confrontations, but which otherwise hung about like a rueful shadow. Scottishness became a kind of free-floating nationality, something like a dress suit, to be worn on unspecified occasions, a pointlessness. None of the compensatory forms that nationalism could take, in the arts, in sporting competition, provided more than a brief venting of steam. The country lived, it seemed, in a state of mourning for itself. I recall feeling this secretiveness about things Scottish as a child. I remember being puzzled by it, as I was by the habit Scots have of looking warily at the sky, as though something darkly unforeseen might fall from it.

It seems that at the heart of nationalist discontents lies always a dilemma of language. As often as not, when smaller states or cultures are overrun by larger powers, they are overrun at the same time by a dominant outside language, so that the native language becomes secondary, separate, secret even. To speak it is a subversive act. A language imposed from the outside forces a people to become bilingual in order to survive, and saddles them with a dual nature. That duality is experienced over and over again simply in the act of speaking. When the public use

of Catalan was officially banned in Franco's Spain, the language became for the Catalans a secret weapon, a readily available expression of defiance and complicity, a bond felt in the tongue. Now that Catalonia has its own language restored to it, Catalans use it aggressively and ubiquitously.

It is Scotland's curious linguistic situation that feeds its cultural ambiguity, that underlines its discontents and keeps them palpable. While Scotland and England were still independent countries, the language used by the Scots had much the same relation to the English of England that, say, Dutch has to German today.* The two languages, Scots and English, had, after all, a common source, and were mutually intelligible, at least in their written form, to English and Scots alike. But English was certainly the more dominant of the two, particularly since, from the 16th century on, the Scots had used an English version of the Bible, and through it were well familiar with written English, although they pronounced it in their own manner. After union, however, it became clear that English culture, and the English language in particular, had no intention of moving over to accommodate the Scots in any mode or manner. Scotland needed the Union more than England did, and as their merchants went south to better themselves, they were obliged to conduct their business in the English language, a tacit condition they had no choice but to accept. It was English that was taught in Scottish schools—English was the official, public language, and was synonymous with "correctness." I remember well, at school in the Scottish Border Country, that we would speak in our own local fashion in the playground, but as we entered the classroom, we crossed a linguistic threshold and spoke English. A Scots word used in class made us laugh aloud: It was an irregularity. Speaking English was, to us, speaking "proper," which rendered our own local speech improper by implication, secondary,

*Gaelic, at least since the 14th century, has been largely confined to the northwest Highlands, where its use has steadily declined.

somehow inferior. David Hume, although the staunchest of Scots, would nevertheless send his manuscripts to English friends for them to weed out his Scotticisms, which he did not consider appropriate to serious discourse. Yet I treasure the Scots I still have, for its downrightness and for its blunt vocabulary, for words as wonderfully apt as the verb *to swither*, which means to be of two minds about something, like an undecided voter. I also feel, as is often the case in bilingual situations, that I write English with especial care, feeling it somehow a foreign language, and having to dominate it as a form of self-defense.

It is no longer accurate to say that Scots today is a separate language, as once it was; rather, it is a linguistic mode, a manner of using English, yet with a rich extra vocabulary of Scots words. In speech, the Scots reject the mannerisms of "English English" for a blunt directness, a spare and wary address; ingrained in the Scottish spirit is a downright egalitarianism that insists on taking others as they present themselves, whatever they may represent, a natural democracy of feeling. The way the Scots speak among themselves, in their own words, has remained domestic and intimate. But although all Scots are well schooled in English, even the remaining Gaelic speakers in parts of the Highlands, it still has the feel for them of a foreign language, something that, although they live comfortably enough in it, does not quite fit them. Among themselves, they modify it so that it does, but to outsiders they speak English. As Robert Lewis Stevenson put it, "Even though his tongue acquired the southern knack, he will still have a stray Scot's accent of the mind."

Every time I hear a Scot speaking with an Englishman, I am acutely aware of how different are the two modes, the manners of speaking the language. The "official" English accent, called variously "Oxford," or "BBC English," or "Nobspeak," is a curious phenomenon. It is left over from the Empire, an accent that is clearly designed to command, that implies a

whole morality and a view of history, and carries a certain condescension, a superiority, a distancing. It is not a regional accent, though it became the language of a ruling class. It can be acquired, and is, by Scots as well as English, through the agency of institutions such as the English public schools. It is in utter contrast to the manner in which the Scots use English—direct, vigorous, unadorned, even blunt. The different speech modes embody all the differences of history, of nature, of human manner, and although on an everyday level they co-exist easily, they still speak across a distance of being.

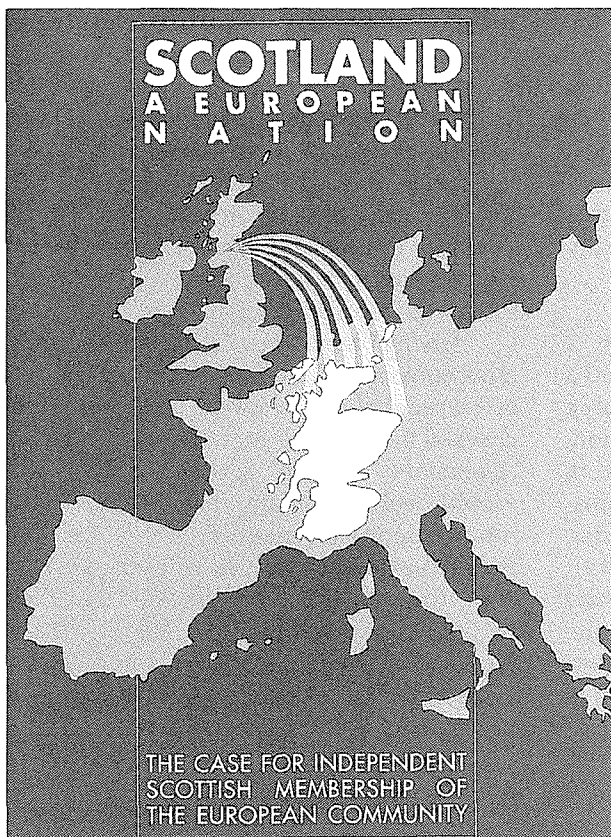
I grew up with the labyrinthine arguments of Scottish nationalism ringing early in my ears. Every Scottish community seemed to have at least one blunt and vociferous nationalist, an agent provocateur who hectored those who came to listen about the string of injustices they were supposed to be suffering. I used to go to meetings of the Scottish National Party (SNP) occasionally, as schoolboy and student, and what I recall most of all is the petulance, the air of injury that hung over those gatherings: Their speakers were daring—even provoking—their audiences to admit to buried feelings of having been wronged, exhorting them to turn their secret sense of injury into a banner and, in election years, to vote accordingly. But there were Scots, patriots enough in their own eyes, who rejected the badgering of the SNP, hoping for a different, though yet undreamed, expression for their nationalism. Indeed, the nationalist movement has always been beset by ardent factionalism. The plain reason is that nationalist feelings, although present in every Scot, vary in degree from white-hot to infinitesimal, and take on so many different forms that the only common ground of agreement among Scots is the sense of having been wronged. It is to be hoped, however, that the day of “grievance” nationalism is waning, for it has led not so much to clear thinking about Scotland’s situation as to something verging on a gloomy expectation of disappointment.

Where Irish nationalism burned, Scottish nationalism barely smoldered. But Ireland had

been conquered, while Scotland had merely made a questionable deal. Ireland, besides, had a history, a religion, a language, a clear identity, something to fight for, to die for.

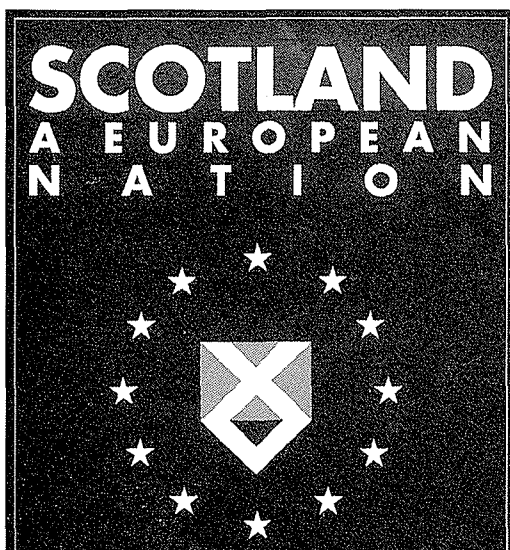
Scotland had no such incendiary cause, only a slow fire that often seems to have gone out, only to flare unexpectedly at times. “The English yoke” had meaning in Ireland, but in Scotland only irony, for Scotland had not been oppressed, only slighted. Instead, English culture and language became so dominant as to saddle the Scots with enough of a duality of being to make their conflict an inward one. The Irish had a tangible enemy, England; in Scotland, the argument really took place between separate parts of the self, a circumstance as paralyzing to the Scots as it was to Hamlet. Scotland has been less a subdued country than a self-subduing one. Scottish nationalism does not turn violent, except possibly on sporting occasions, and its notion of civil disobedience amounts to no more than sticking stamps with the queen’s head on them upside-down on their envelopes, all of which might suggest that the Scots have become so accustomed to their aggrieved state that it feels like home to them.

During the last 50 years, national feelings have seethed in Scotland at irregular intervals. In the 1970s, as the vast oil fields of the North Sea were being discovered, there was a lot of muttering in Scotland, muttering that brought the SNP into the fray with the slogan, “It’s Scotland’s Oil.” The campaign brought the SNP a lot of votes; in the two elections of 1974, it found itself with first seven and then 11 Scottish Nationalist members of Parliament, enough to force the Labour Party, then in power, to commit itself to devolving some power to Scotland and Wales. In 1977, after weary years of commissions of inquiry and parliamentary committees, separate acts for Scotland and Wales were put on the Westminster agenda, to be preceded by a national referendum. On March 1, 1979, the Scottish electorate was given the opportunity to vote yes (for a form of Scottish self-govern-



The Scottish National Party calls for a politically autonomous Scotland as a nation among nations within the encompassing embrace of the European Community.

ment) or no (opposing it). It seemed that Scotland's moment was arriving; but the result only intensified the national frustration. With an electorate then of 3.8 million, 32 percent voted yes, 30 percent no, and 37 percent did not vote. Of the votes cast, as the SNP was quick to point out, the yes votes had 51.6 percent as against 48.4 percent voting no. The results, however, could by no stretch of



the imagination be called emphatic. More important, the government had set a threshold for the referendum: 40 percent of the electorate must register a yes vote for devolution to proceed to the next stage. So the referendum failed to carry, and Scotland slumped back into a kind of stupefaction. What always infuriates the Scots is English indifference to their difference, and the Scottish MPs took their revenge by voting with the Tories to bring down the government, thus propelling into power Margaret Thatcher, who, during her 11 years in office, inadvertently did wonders for the cause of Scottish nationalism by uniting the Scots in the loathing they felt for her. With her party holding only 12 Scottish seats out of 72, the Scots felt that she in no way represented them. She in turn made it clear from the beginning that she had no interest whatsoever in any Scottish claims to a devolution of power, and that in her book the Union was not open to question.

Thatcher was mightily indifferent to the Scottish situation, but, worse than that, she patronized the Scots. Curiously enough, it was to her accent, which she had gone to great pains to acquire, that she owed much (though certainly not all) of her extreme unpopularity in Scotland, an accent that grated on Scottish ears. Hackles rose at its presumptions of rightness, its lofty self-assurance, its dismissiveness—all Scots have endured similar English schoolteachers, similar public pomposities, to the muttering point. I have heard Thatcher's voice on

the evening news suddenly cut through the clishmaclaver of an Edinburgh pub, abruptly stilling the conversation, and causing a dark flush to spread collectively up the necks of its grim listeners. Such moments are at the inexplicable core of nationalism; it is at such moments that it occurs to me all over again that the Union, from the beginning, was not really a very good idea.

Ten years after the referendum, a group of concerned Scots formed a Campaign for a Scottish Assembly and, after a year of consultation, published a Claim of Right for Scotland, a document that laid out, in a clear and dispassionate manner, the case for Scotland's having an elected assembly of its own to deal with Scottish affairs. The document also stressed the need for constitutional reform in the United Kingdom, and made its case so sensibly that most intelligent Scots today view it as something of a blueprint for an inevitable future. The Scottish National Party, however, clinging to its grievances, refused to associate itself with the Claim of Right, instead pressing somewhat wishfully for full Scottish independence under the somewhat wishful umbrella of European union. The squabbles over independence or devolution effectively splintered the main argument: that Scotland should govern itself directly, in some form or other.

The cautious expectation at present is that, should the Conservatives lose the next election, which seems increasingly likely, Scotland will eventually get a Scottish assembly sitting in Edinburgh, with control over Scottish affairs, and limited fiscal powers. All emotion aside, it makes sense. It almost came to pass in March 1992, when the Labour Party was confidently projected by all the polls to win power from the Conservatives, and had promised a devolved assembly to the Scots. The whole country fizzed with expectation. The

polls, however, were wrong, and the Tories returned to power. I was in Scotland in the wake of that election, and I have never felt it so deflated, so dashed, so desolate, for John Major soon made it clear that his party would not budge from its stance on the Union. The SNP's fanciful plan for an independent Scotland in a European union seemed also suddenly inconceivable, and Scotland has since remained dormant, lying in wait.

Among themselves, the Scots are nothing if not contentious, obstinate in argument. Yet, as I write that, I remember being frequently checked in my youth for making such broad statements. "You can't generalize," my elders would declare, shaking their heads, an admonishment I resented bitterly, since they themselves seemed to do so with alacrity. I see now, however, that when they said that, they had Scotland in mind, for while most Scots partake of the national discontent to a greater or lesser degree, they are very far from unanimous about how to remedy it. Nor are they unanimous in their resentments, which run all the way from the small and snifty to the voluble and impassioned. After Scotland was deprived of its public existence, it really turned into countless secret countries, private Scotlands, from the sentimental to the politically committed. For that reason, Scottish self-government, while generally wished for, is infinitely disputed, causing some to voice the view that, were Scotland granted its own assembly, such a body might be the beginning of its country's troubles, rather than an end to them. I doubt that. I think that the Scots have shed in large part their ancestral gloom and their defeatism, if not their contentiousness, and will do very well at taking charge of their own affairs. In spite of nearly 300 years of ambiguous history, Scotland has persisted as a reality in its own mind, and it certainly has the energy and the imagination (and the humor) to become one in a responsible, political sense.



THE TRANSYLVANIA TANGLE

Driving through the rolling Transylvanian countryside from Cluj toward Tîrgu-Mures one wintry Sunday afternoon some six weeks after the fall of Ceausescu in December 1989, I passed a group of about 100 peasants—virtually the entire village, it appeared—clustered with their priest around a cenotaph. Curious, I backed up the car and joined them. The cenotaph commemorated Romanian heroes of former wars. It was being dedicated again that day to include, especially, the fallen heroes of December. When I approached, the peasants were angry, and suspicious. At first they were afraid I was Hungarian. Their fear was palpable and, I have no doubt, genuine.

Eventually the stories poured out. "It

doesn't matter what will occur, only that the Hungarians don't come back," one very old woman told me. "I have lived under the Russians. I have lived under the Germans. Anybody but the Hungarians." Although Romanians formed an absolute majority of the population of Transylvania, and had for centuries, Hungarian nobles—a minority within a minority—had been their overlords for most of the preceding 1,000 years. The woman who addressed me had, in fact, been born in the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when Transylvania was under direct Hungarian control and the Hungarian government pursued a harsh policy of Magyarization among all its subject peoples. She had lived

through two world wars and under two

BY WILLIAM McPHERSON

monarchies, through the unification with Romania in 1918 and the annexation by Hungary from 1940 to 1944, and finally through 45 years of communism. And today, or maybe yesterday, Hungarian peasants had attacked Romanians in their fields, in their villages, with pitchforks. They had burned their houses.

"Which houses? Who was pitchforked? Where?" I asked. "Here?"

"No, not in our village."

"In what village, then?" Everyone now seemed to be talking at once.

"Not the next village, a village beyond." I left in search of the village, but I never found it. It was always a village beyond the next village. And the same was true in Hungarian villages—stories of Romanians attacking, marauding, raping, pillaging, burning, but always in other villages.

So I made my way to Țirgu-Mures. By the time I got there, I was very familiar with atrocity stories. And by the time violence actually broke out in Țirgu-Mures, little more than a month later, the rumors had escalated to the point where "they were killing our children."

I do not know of a single Romanian or Hungarian who had been pitchforked, or of a village that had been burned, or of a child who had been murdered. I do not believe there were any. But there were many rumors, and soon the stories became all too real.

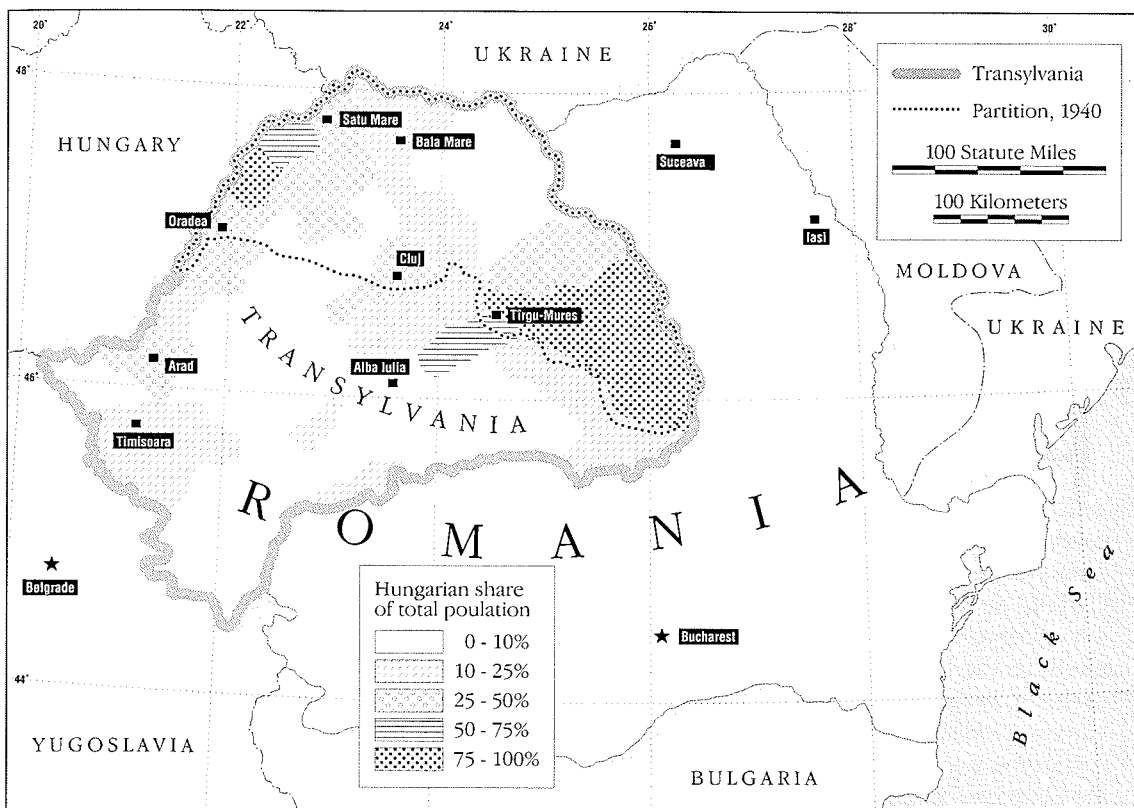
For two days, on March 19 and 20, 1990, Romanians and Hungarians battled with clubs and pipes and bottles in the center of Țirgu-Mures, a once largely Hungarian city whose population is now almost equally divided between ethnic Romanians and Hungarians. Romanian peasants arrived on buses and in trucks from the nearby villages of Hodac and Ibanesti to join the fray. The first death toll was six; the second figure announced was three; local police and medical sources said eight; the

Helsinki Watch investigating mission found five. At least four of the dead were Hungarians. Two hundred sixty-nine—perhaps more—Romanians and Hungarians were wounded, some viciously. András Süt, the best known writer in the Hungarian language in Romania, lost an eye. It was not, as so many Romanians say of their revolution, a "movie," a "scenario," though it seems likely to have been a manipulation. The difference between movies and life is that in life the scenario can kill.

Figures vary as to the number arrested and convicted for crimes committed in those days—42? 47? (accurate figures are extraordinarily difficult to come by in Romania)—but it is clear that of those arrested only two were Romanians; the great majority were Hungarian-speaking Gypsies. Seven of the latter, unable to read their statements (which had been written by the police), were tried and convicted under a Ceausescu-era decree of being social parasites; five are still in prison.

Two days after the disturbances a parliamentary investigating commission was established. Its first report was never officially released. A second report was written because the first was deemed inaccurate, and finally was presented to Parliament in January 1991. Neither report addressed the controversial role the police and the army had played in the events, the worst ethnic violence in Romania in years, in which real people really died as they had during the events of December 1989. (The role of the secret police and the army in the final days of the Ceausescu regime has never been clarified either.) The final report did point out that among the guilty were "some agents of the former political police" whose names it was not able to reveal because it did not have enough proof, largely because of the lack of an intelligence service at the time, an arguable state of affairs that was in any event immediately rectified.

William McPherson, a former Wilson Center Guest Scholar, is a writer and journalist. He is the author of two novels and has written extensively on Romania in the Washington Post and elsewhere. His book on the country, where he has lived for most of the last four years, will be published by Simon and Schuster. Copyright © 1994 by William McPherson.



MapLine / Paul Woodward

A week after the events in Tîrgu-Mures, hinting darkly at foreign “agents provocateurs,” the provisional government of that time reconstituted and rehabilitated the former secret police, known as the S curitat —officially dissolved shortly after the fall of Ceausescu three months before but in fact only reshuffled, under the inoffensive name of the Romanian Intelligence Service (Serviciul Rom n Informa ii or SRI).

“From humanity, through nationality, to bestiality,” the 19th-century Austrian dramatist Franz Grillparzer wrote. It was once explained to me that all the seemingly irrational attitudes and behavior in Eastern and Central Europe can be construed as the result of a series of interlocking, more or less aggressive, inferiority complexes: The Austrians feel inferior to the Germans, the Hungarians to the Austrians, the Romanians to the Hungarians, the Slovaks to the Czechs and the Hungarians, the Bulgarians to the Romanians, etc., etc. The

Albanians, in this view, are at the bottom of the explosive heap. “Kiss the hand you cannot bite”—a common Romanian expression that describes a particular mode of survival—applies not only to Romanians. In this part of the world, the Balkans and Mitteleuropa, where the borders of peoples correspond only roughly to the borders of political states, hand-kissing is the custom. But every inferiority complex implies a corresponding superiority complex, and the converse of the duplicity suggested in the statement, “Kiss the hand you cannot bite,” and implicit in it, is the straightforward message, “Bite the hand you can.” That seems to be the custom, too.

In the terrible, tangled politics of Romania, the past is always present, never forgotten and never forgiven—especially in Transylvania, the largest and richest and in many ways the most beautiful area of Romania. Enclosed within the great protecting arc

of the Carpathians, the Bihor Massif, and the Tisa Plain, it is—or has been—rich in gold and silver, vital salt and copper, forests, rivers, and fertile earth. Its history is complex, with an early mysterious gap of some 1,000 years, and inextricably entwined with the idea of the Romanian nation struggling to be born—and of the Hungarian nation fighting to establish and then to preserve itself against the forces of Constantinople and of Vienna, the Ottoman invaders and the Hapsburg Empire.

Fierce Magyar horsemen crossed the Carpathian passes from the northern Urals and the steppes of Central Asia at the beginning of the tenth century to terrorize the Christian West with their arrows. Before being driven back to the Carpathian Basin, they succeeded in dominating whatever indigenous peoples were (Romanians, as the Romanians claim) or were not (nobody, as the Hungarians claim) in Transylvania, as well as the Slavs and Germans in the rest of the region. By the year 1000, Stephen the Great had brought his warrior nobles to the still-united Christian Church, for which Rome later canonized him, and the Kingdom of Hungary was established under the Crown of Saint Stephen: a gift, it is said, of the pope. Although a part of Hungary, Transylvania was ruled for the next 300 years by its own Orthodox princes, who gradually became Magyarized, especially after 1365, when Catholicism became a qualification for holding land and titles. The Romanians, after the Great Schism of 1054, had remained loyal to the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople.

But how the mighty are laid low. Hungary's King John I, who waged war against the powerful Hapsburgs, was forced to kiss the hand of Süleyman the Magnificent a year after the disastrous Battle of Mohács in 1526, which is to the Hungarians what the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 is to the Serbs: the burial ground of their greatness as a nation. After Mohács, the Turks occupied Budapest, and Hungary was split into three parts: Royal Hungary to the west and north, which became

part of the Hapsburg Empire; the middle triangle of the Turkish *pashalik* of Buda, which was increasingly absorbed into the Ottoman Empire and now included a large Sephardic community; and Transylvania—Erdély as the Hungarians call it—a semi-autonomous principality nominally loyal to the sultan and jealously coveted by all and which, until 1686, remained largely independent. Encouraged by an influx of Hungarian nobles fleeing the *pashalik*, the purest Hungarian culture was here preserved, free of extraneous influence of Turk and Jew and German and Slav—and presumably of the autochthonous Romanian as well. Thus for some Magyars here and abroad, the cradle of Hungarian civilization indisputably lies within Romania today—in that exact same Transylvania which a fact sheet from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes as “the cradle of the Romanian people and the inexhaustible source that has kept alive and constantly strengthened the Romanity, East and South of the Carpathians.”

As a people, the Romanians are presumed to descend from the Dacian tribes who inhabited present-day Romania (including Transylvania) and Trajan's Roman legions who conquered them in A.D. 106. Rome abandoned its province of Dacia 170 years later but left its language with the people, who remain an isolated “island of Latinity in a sea of Slavs,” as the somewhat inaccurate saying goes. It is inaccurate because the Magyars are not Slavs. Surrounded but certainly never enslaved by the Slav—and German and Latin—people, the Magyars are equally if not more isolated by their language, which does not belong to the Indo-European family but is related to Finnish and more distantly to Turkish.

As a country, however, Romania is young, younger even than the United States. On the edge of three great and contending empires, Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian, it was formed by the union of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, but it did not gain real independence until 1878, when it was at last released from some 400 years of Turkish suzerainty and—with the arrival from

Germany of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen line—turned its face toward the West, toward Europe. Three years later, Carol I, prince of the Regat, or Old Kingdom, since 1866, was crowned king of Romania. The dynasty he founded held the throne until the communists forced King Michael to abdicate at the end of 1947. The deposed king now lives in exile in Switzerland but remains a source of considerable irritation to the present regime.

Until the 19th century, it was not possible to think in terms of nationalism or nationalistic movements in this part of the world. What united people, and what separated them, was social class. At the top was the single political class: a tiny group of nobles, an often charming and well-spoken supranational elite who, like the royal houses of Europe after Queen Victoria, were mostly related or otherwise connected to one another. In Transylvania, whatever Romanian aristocracy there was having long since been Magyarized, these nobles were entirely Hungarian, although the circumstance of their being Hungarian was far less important than the astonishingly privileged circumstances of their birth.

Shortly before his death in 1991, one of the last survivors of this class, Ioan de Mocgony Stircea, born an Austrian in Bukovina but bearing both Hungarian (Mocgony) and Romanian (Stircea) names, a “double baron” who could trace his ancestry to Charlemagne and who once possessed the “the greatest fortune in Romania after the king’s,” told me quite unself-consciously, “When I was arrested [by the communists], 43,000 of my peasants marched in protest in Timisoara. Our family founded Moldavia in 1212.” During World War II he saved 1,000 Jews from deportation from Bukovina. “We used to run our places with them,” he said. His places included a 200-year-old oak forest of 54,000 acres, and this after the most thorough interwar land reform in Europe. In another place in Transylvania, “we had all the stone.” He had places in every region of the land-banks, too. Prompted by

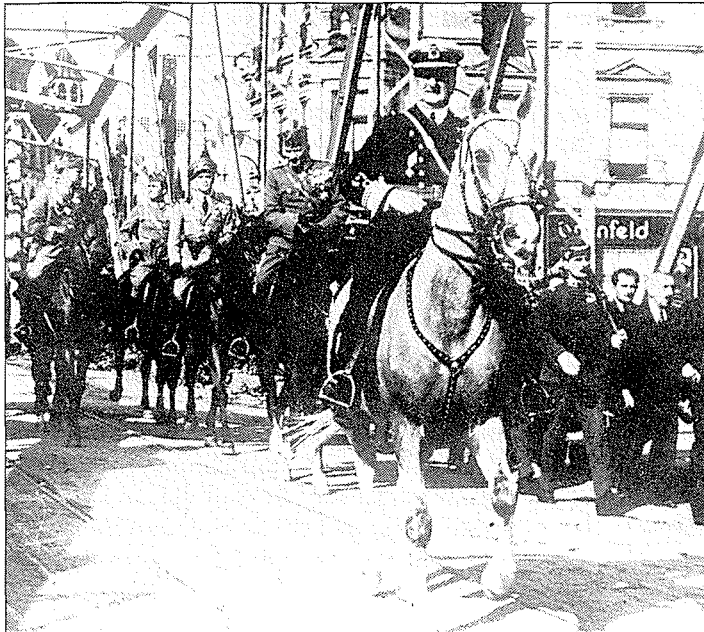
President Truman, he organized the Romanian anti-communist underground, joined by 314,000 peasants, many of them “his.” After 15 years in prison, and penniless, he was released and made his way—with four bottles of *uica*, four bottles of vodka, and a sandwich in his knapsack—to Switzerland, and to his wife. “Luckily, she inherited.”

Below that loftiest aerie, for centuries there was the vast sea of peasants. Then came 1848, the year of revolution in Europe. The peasants—Hungarian as well as Romanian—had been subject since 1517 to “the lords of the land in absolute and eternal servitude,” as the Werbóczy Code, or Tripartitum, put it. (Serfdom was abolished in Wallachia in 1746, and in Moldavia in 1749.*) Although there had been several violent rebellions, more violently quelled, it was only in 1848 that what in Transylvania had been primarily a social conflict—serf against virtually absolute lord—became clearly, strongly national: Romanian peasant against Hungarian peasant.

The Romanian majority demanded status as a nation equal to the three long-recognized “nations” of the land: the Hungarian nobles, and the lesser, quasi-noble Germans and Széclers (a Hungarian subgroup). The Romanians demanded equal recognition of their Orthodox church, which had been merely “tolerated” alongside the four “privileged” religions: Catholicism, Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Unitarianism. They also wanted the right to their language in schools and in administration and legislation (rights, incidentally, which the Hungarians in Transylvania are claiming today). In exchange for social equality and the abolition of serfdom, the Hungarians demanded that Transylvania, still under the rule of Vienna, be incorporated into the Hungarian state.

By the end of 1848, serfdom had been reinstated and all the Romanian demands rejected. In 1867, Hungary and Austria resolved

*Until the 19th century, the word *român* (Romanian man) in both principalities was synonymous with “serf.”



Admiral Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary, leads his troops into Nagy Varad, a town in the part of Transylvania that Hungary acquired in 1940.

their quarrels, and Transylvania was incorporated into the Hungarian "unitary" state under the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. An intensive campaign of Magyarization began. The Romanian demands that had been rejected since they were first formulated in 1791 continued to be rejected until 1914.

With the signing of the peace treaties at the end of World War I, Romania more than doubled its size and population, from about 137,000 to 295,049 square kilometers, and from 7,160,682 people in 1912 to 15,541,424 in 1920. For the first time in history, the vast majority of the Romanian-speaking people were united in one political state—excessively centralized after the French model, and now with significant minorities and cultural differences. Although Romania gained Bessarabia from the ruins of the Russian Empire, Bukovina from Austria, and Southern Dobrudja from Bulgaria, România Mare, or Greater Romania, came into being largely at the expense of Magna Hungaria, defeated in the war and shrunk to one-third of its former size by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, losing three-fifths of

its population in the process. Most of those three-fifths, however, were not Magyars but other nationalities. The Hungarian census of 1910 indicates that Magyars were a minority in their own country, making up only 48.1 percent of the 18.3 million inhabitants. (The largest minority—14.1 percent, almost entirely in Transylvania—was Romanian.) Twenty years later, Magyars composed 89.5 percent of the 7.2 million inhabitants of post-Trianon Hungary, which had become in fact a "unitary" state.

The popular response in Budapest to its radically diminished status in Central Europe after 1918 was "*Nem, nem soha!*" (No, no, never!) After a

brief interlude in 1919 as the Hungarian Socialist Republic under Béla Kun—enthusiastically assisted in its fall by the invading Romanians—a truncated but now ethnically homogeneous Hungary settled into the fascist regime of Miklós Horthy, an admiral who no longer had a sea. István Lázár, the Hungarian author of a history of his country that seems otherwise predictable in its national feeling, wrote that "the chief and, at times, the only rallying cry heard during the quarter century of the Horthy period concerned the enlargement of the country, rectification of its borders: 'Dismembered Hungary is not a country, undivided Hungary is heaven.' . . . From the very first moment, Horthy and his White Army made efforts to revise the borders."

In 1940 Horthy succeeded. The Vienna Diktat—the Second Vienna Award whose anniversary is still dolorously noted in the Romanian press every August 30—forced Romania to cede northern Transylvania to Hungary, the so-called "Horthyist tongue," an area of 43,243 square

kilometers—two-fifths of the territory that Hungary had lost to Romania under Trianon—with a population of 2.6 million. According to not-always reliable Romanian statistics, 50.2 percent of them were ethnic Romanians, 37.1 percent Hungarians and Széclers. (Hungarian figures allot Romanians a less generous portion, 48.4 percent, and Magyars an additional four percentage points.) Admiral Horthy rode triumphantly into the Transylvanian capital of Cluj—Kolozsvár, now that it was Hungarian again—on a white horse, as he had in Budapest in 1919. Romania had had its revenge in 1918; now, in the implacable dialectic of progress and violence that followed 1848, it was Hungary's turn. The notion of heterogeneity within a single imposed political framework, which the Ottomans, the Austrians, the Russian tsars, and finally their Soviet heirs tried to realize, was never deeply rooted in the Europe of the West, much less in the East, and it had died with the archduke at Sarajevo; the Soviet empire was simply an anachronism. Neither Hungary nor Romania gave it much more than lip service.

Although the Vienna Diktat was reversed after World War II when a defeated Hungary once again retreated to the borders established by Trianon, it is in this "tongue" where Romanian nationalist feeling is most intense today. It is fueled in part by Hungary's refusal thus far to sign a treaty with Romania, such as it signed with Ukraine and Germany signed with Poland, stating that neither country has any territorial claim on the other. Romania, for its part, refuses to sign an agreement guaranteeing minority rights, saying that its minority policy is exemplary and is in any event an internal matter. Both Hungary and Romania rather disingenuously justify their refusal on the grounds that the inviolability of borders and minority rights are already affirmed in various international agreements, including the Helsinki Final Act. Despite Helsinki, three East European states have broken up since 1990, two of them bordering Romania.

The Helsinki Final Act, to which both countries are signatories, prohibits the changing of borders by force—but not by peaceful means, a loophole left in order to allow for the eventual reunification of Germany. It is worth noting that the Vienna Diktat was *technically* a peaceful arbitration, as both parties—certainly Romania—are doubtless aware. However, Budapest has said unequivocally that it has no territorial claims on Romania and considers the current borders permanent, "irrespective of their being just or unjust," as a statement of the six Hungarian parliamentary parties put it. The political parties that head the governing coalitions in both countries—the newly renamed Romanian Party of Social Democracy in Romania (formerly the Democratic National Salvation Front) and the Hungarian Democratic Forum—in an attempt to maintain their tenuous holds on power, play to varying degrees the nationalist card, which has always and everywhere served as a useful distraction from more immediate problems.

As to Admiral Horthy, Hitler's ally who died in exile in Portugal 36 years ago, he was reburied in Hungary on September 4 of last year, with much of the grandeur of a hero's funeral. The obsequies were covered live on state television, and the mint issued gold and silver coins in commemoration. Although Hungarian prime minister Jozsef Antall (who died last December) chose not to attend the ceremony—his wife did—he praised Horthy as a patriot and anticommunist. So far, at least, the Romanians have not reburied with such honors their wartime leader, Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was also a staunch anticommunist and Hitler ally and was executed for that in 1946—though many would if they could.

This cursory sketch of a history that has consumed untold thousands of pages and the productive lives of nationalist Hungarian and Romanian historians alike may explain, if it does not excuse, Romania's current fear of Hungarian irredentism, a fear that sometimes seems to verge on the irrational, and Romania's attitude toward the restive Hungarian minority within its borders.

As Ceausescu pursued his vigorous policies of industrialization and homogenization in the last two decades of his rule, the populations of the great Transylvanian cities—Cluj, Oradea, Tîrgu-Mures—began to change character. The factories needed workers. Large numbers of Romanian peasants from the countryside and especially from other regions, particularly Moldavia, moved in to the stark new blocks on the edges of town which they had first been brought in to build. The proportion of Magyars diminished. The new arrivals had a different accent, different values—more Balkanic, the Transylvanians would say, less civilized. They had more children. The population of Cluj is now 328,000.

Urban Transylvanians—Romanian as well as Hungarian—are proud of their heritage, and scornful of the Byzantine and slothful ways of Moldavia and Wallachia, where Bucharest is located. The newcomers, in turn, were envious—and of course the Hungarian language, still heard daily on the streets, was impenetrable to them. It was clear that these cities possessed a kind of provincial imperial style, however faded—almost a grandeur quite unlike anything in the places where the new residents had come from or the cities they had seen. It was also clear, to Hungarians and Romanians alike, that living conditions were steadily improving across the border, in Hungary, while at home the reverse was true. To divert attention from this disastrous economic condition, the already chauvinistic Ceausescu became even more stridently nationalistic, and to a paranoid degree. Hungarians became his scapegoat. The message sank in, especially among those who did not know any Hungarians.

After the dictator fell, Hungarians remained the scapegoats, blamed, with the Jews, for bringing communism to Romania because a disproportionate number of the early communists were one or the other or both, the indigenous Communist Party in Romania at that time numbering only about 1,000, which made it the smallest such party in Europe.

The displaced workers in the great industrial complexes, resentful of their lot and fearful of their future, by and large, form the popular base of the Romanian nationalist parties today, which repeat in one form or another the old Ceausescu propaganda. These people elected the virulently nationalistic mayor of Cluj, Gheorghe Funar, a laughingstock to the outside world but a man to be reckoned with in Romania. He ran for the presidency in 1992 and placed third, getting almost 11 percent of the vote. He heads the largest nationalist party in the Parliament, the Party of Romanian National Unity, a vital part of the ruling government coalition. The Party of Social Democracy (formerly the Democratic National Salvation Front), which ranked first with 28 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections, also includes among its embarrassing but necessary allies the extremist România Mare and Socialist Labor parties. The former is headed by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, whose notoriously anti-Semitic journal of the same name declares in a banner headline each week: "The year 1993 Continues the Fight against Hungarian Fascism." The president of the latter is Ilie Verdet, Ceausescu's prime minister in the early 1980s; its vice president is Adrian Paunescu, a favorite of Ceausescu's, who tried to seek refuge in the American Embassy when the crowd spotted then attacked him in December 1989.

Amild nostalgia for past glories—a common enough phenomenon in the world, especially in a diminished present—does not necessarily entail a fanatical irredentism or a virulent nationalism; it is only nostalgia, neither the most constructive of human feelings nor the most malign, but familiar to all. The emphasis, however, is on mild. With all this, a few things must be kept in mind.

First, Hungary would be destroyed if it suddenly returned to its 1914 borders. The great majority of Hungarians know this full well. Instead of 11 million not entirely satisfied Hungarians, the state would contain an additional six million very unhappy Romanians, and another million each of Slovaks and Serbs,

not to mention Ukrainians, Croats, Slovenians, Ruthenians, and so on. The dream of a Greater Hungary, which figures far more prominently in the minds of Romanian extremists than in actual Hungarian designs, would be a nightmare, not only for Hungary but for Europe. Incipient Hitlers, of which there are several waiting in the wings (as has been amply demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia), would sprout like mushrooms after a rain.

Second, it is in no one's interest to escalate ethnic conflict to a point where it cannot be controlled. Open, armed conflict would utterly destroy both countries. The horror now being enacted in the former Yugoslavia has been salutary in this regard. Fortunately, neither the Romanian people nor the Hungarian people are toting Kalashnikovs, and the military leaders of both countries are generally behaving responsibly.

Third, fanning nationalist flames in order to deflect attention from the real and difficult problems at hand is in the narrow interest of certain groups in Romania, and in Hungary as well, who wish to maintain power, to augment it, or to achieve it—not by force of argument or superiority of political program but by manipulating in the most cynical way (or the most stupid) the passions of those unhappy people most grievously affected by the changes in their countries, particularly the economic changes. These latter are not the old communists who were in power before—they have adapted all too well to the new situation in both countries, which is one of the problems—but those who were miserable before and, bearing the brunt of economic changes and a new and unfamiliar capitalism whose laws are more akin to the laws of the jungle than to the modern (and to varying degrees mixed) market economies, are indeed more miserable now.

In this vein, Antall several times stated that he felt in his soul that he was prime minister of 15 million Hungarians. Only 11 million of them live within the Hungarian border, a fact not lost on any of Hungary's neighbors. Just before Funar was elected mayor of Cluj,

the Hungarian minister of defense, Lajos Für, said that the safeguarding of Hungarians everywhere was inseparable from the security of the Hungarian state. "This nut in Cluj is the direct result of the Hungarian defense minister's popping off," a high Western diplomatic source told me. The Romanian government immediately accused the Hungarian government of being "irredentist and revisionist." In the autumn of 1993 the Hungarians lobbied forcefully (but fruitlessly) against the admission of Romania into the Council of Europe and the granting of most-favored-nation status by the United States. Shortly afterward, Romania's President Ion Iliescu accused the Hungarian government of using Hungarians from abroad as a "subversive fifth column" in neighboring states—an old charge: It was the reason, in fact, that Romania at first refused international observers for the 1992 national elections. The Hungarian government was "shocked." And on and on. The polarizing effect of these actions makes radicals out of moderates. Bad money drives out good, as the economists say.

Fourth and finally, no rational person could argue that the Magyars are a persecuted minority in Romania today, although without doubt some injustices have been inflicted upon them, and innumerable smaller and larger harassments. Nonetheless, it is irresponsible and a degradation of the language to speak, as some have done in this regard, of "ethnic purification." Magyars may be envied, even feared, but they are not despised. That misfortune falls on the Gypsies, disdained by Romanians and Hungarians alike.

So what then do the Magyars in Romania want? Essentially what Romanians in Transylvania before Trianon wanted: to be citizens, not subjects. In the local context, that means first the right to public education, local government, and the administration of justice in their mother tongue by their own people—all of which were enunciated in the Declaration of Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, the birthday and since 1990 the national day of today's Romania. Although there are Hungarian schools

in Romania, most of the promises in the declaration, repeated in January 1990, have never been kept. In an attempt to achieve their goals, Hungarians formed the Democratic Union of Magyars in Romania, the first new political party in Romania after the fall of Ceausescu. It is not a monolithic organization, however, but a coalition of some 16 different parties and associations spanning the political spectrum and held together largely by their self-identification as Hungarians against the attacks of the extreme nationalists.

Specifically, Hungarians want the 400-year-old Hungarian Boylai University in Cluj re-established. It was incorporated into the Romanian Babes University in 1959 and effectively terminated a few years later under Ceausescu. In the early autumn of 1993, however, the decision was taken to begin by yearly stages the teaching of the entire curriculum in Hungarian as well as in Romanian. As of last October, out of almost 3,500 first-year students, some 500 are in the Hungarian section. (Of course, some Magyars enroll in the Romanian section.) They can compete for entrance in the Romanian section, too, so if they fail at one they have a chance at the other. Now the more radical Magyars want a completely separate university, with a separate administration. Andrei Marga, the Romanian rector of the combined university, called Babes-Boylai, and an intelligent and rational man, is worried. "This is a potential source of serious conflict in Cluj," he says. There are so many. Older Romanian physicians remember 1940, when the Romanian medical faculty there was closed and they had to move it to Sibiu, which was outside the "Horthyist tongue." Many of these doctors now vote for the nationalist parties, whose support is not limited solely to the urban proletariat. Physicians have considerable influence in Romania. They are not inclined to be sympathetic to demands such as the call for a separate university.

Below the university level, Hungarians want history and geography taught in their own language. They want bilingual street

signs in areas where minorities make up a significant proportion of the population. They want a law on national minorities enacted, and a ministry of minorities. They want collective rights for their community, an embryonic concept that the Hungarian government is promulgating in international forums. In his biography, *With God, for the People*, the Calvinist pastor László Tokés, a hero to all Romanians in December 1989 but today a hero to only a few, wrote: "The concept of 'the rights of the individual' has always sounded somewhat strange to me. Individualism is a kind of alienation, and in many parts of the world, community has been lost as individuality has thrived." True enough. Tokés is honorary president of the Democratic Union of Magyars in Romania and leader of its radical wing.

Hungarians also want a somewhat hazily defined cultural, not territorial, autonomy. The word is anathema to Romanians because they consider autonomy the first step toward the dismemberment of Romania. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Antall, seeking to bolster his party's plummeting popularity at home by focusing the attention of the nation on Hungarians abroad, recently vowed to support Magyar aspirations to autonomy within Romania, which he characterized as "fundamental."

Autonomy is a difficult problem, but one might think that bilingual street signs, common for years and still seen in many Transylvanian cities, would be a simple and insignificant concession. But in the increasingly divided city of Cluj, the fanatical mayor has changed the names of many streets to eliminate any that honor Hungarians and has threatened to melt down the statue of a Hungarian king in the center of the city, although the king, Matthias the Just, was the son of a Romanian noble and born in Cluj. There, the most minor concession—any conciliatory gesture at all—is viewed as opening the gates to the Hungarian invaders. It is no wonder that the Hungarians joke, "We are a double minority. First, we are clever. . . ."

In a normal country, in a normal time, Funar would be laughed out of office—and investigated for corruption as well. Neither the country nor the times are normal, however. Last summer the headline in a local newspaper loyal to the mayor proclaimed, “Hungary Planning Surprise Attack In Next Five Months.” The distinguished elderly woman who showed it to me believed it. She also believed that Hillary Clinton had adopted an extraterrestrial, and proceeded to describe the creature to me. His skin was a green crust, and he was an “absolute vegetarian.” She had read it in the newspaper.

Absurd as some of this may seem, it is just such absurdities that could be the cause of serious ethnic conflict, particularly in a country where rumor replaces information and the economy is headed over the brink of disaster. Another absurdity: The largest money-making machine in Romania—and the largest scam going in all of Europe—is a pyramid scheme called Caritas, which has been running in Cluj for 18 months now and has attracted the savings of virtually the entire adult population of the city plus some three million other Romanians—more than one-sixth of the adult population—with the promise of a sevenfold return on investment in three months. As of October 1993, it was taking in the equivalent of almost five million dollars each day. Cluj now boasts several Caritas dollar millionaires—in a country where the average monthly income is less than \$70 and annual inflation approaches 300 percent. Caritas—no connection with the international charity of the same name—is run by an obscure accountant from Fagara and promoted by Funar, who has gotten rich off it. Right now, it is the single factor uniting Hungarians and Romanians in Cluj: They all want to be rich. The only good thing this indicates is that if Romania ever really gets its economy going, ethnic problems will fade fast. But when

Caritas collapses—as it must—the repercussions will be staggering.

Tristan Tzara, founder of the Dadaist movement, was born in Romania. So was absurdist playwright Eugène Ionesco. Surely there is some connection.

“This is the Balkans,” the editor of Romania’s largest newspaper told me a while ago, making the connection. “We are at the gates of the Orient. Everything is dangerous, and nothing is serious.”

That is the Balkanic excuse, but the rest of us can only hope he is correct. The “power” needs scapegoats. When Caritas collapses, it will need them desperately. In Romania, the most popular scapegoats are first Gypsies and then Hungarians, followed at some distance by Jews. Hungarians and Romanians have lived together in Romania for hundreds of years, usually with a reasonable degree of peace and within living memory too. If left to their own devices, there is no reason to believe that they cannot continue to work out existing problems or others that may arise. There is reason to believe, however, that neither Romanians nor Hungarians are left to their own devices. The Romanian Intelligence Service is quite keen on maintaining an undefined “national spirit,” which it appears to find under threat from foreign influences both sacred and secular. If the Hungarian government is up to a tenth of what the Romanian government seems honestly to believe, then there is a very big problem.

“We don’t have a functioning economy,” a Romanian told me recently, “but we do have history.” The springtime of hopes that began in the euphoria of December 1989 had pretty much faded when the leaves were still in bud. Right now, except for the Caritas millionaires, the mass of the population does not have much else besides history. For this and other reasons, ethnic tensions are kept on the simmer but still below the boil.

A COUNTRY IN SPAIN

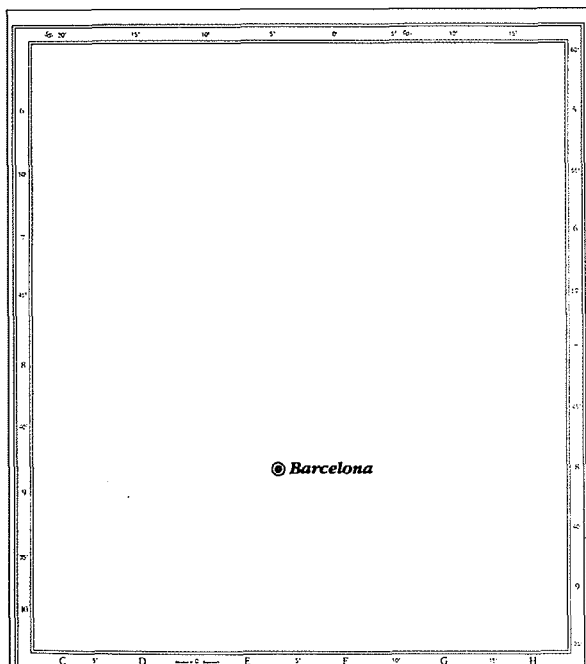
BY DAVID T. GIES

At their outset at least, the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona appeared to be organized by people who had nationalism, not sports, foremost in mind. Consider the curious fact that the three official languages of the games were English, French, and Catalan. Why Catalan and not Spanish? Because Olympic Committee rules allow for the use of English, French, and the language of the country hosting the games. More to the point, the organizers had no doubt that Catalan was the language of their country.

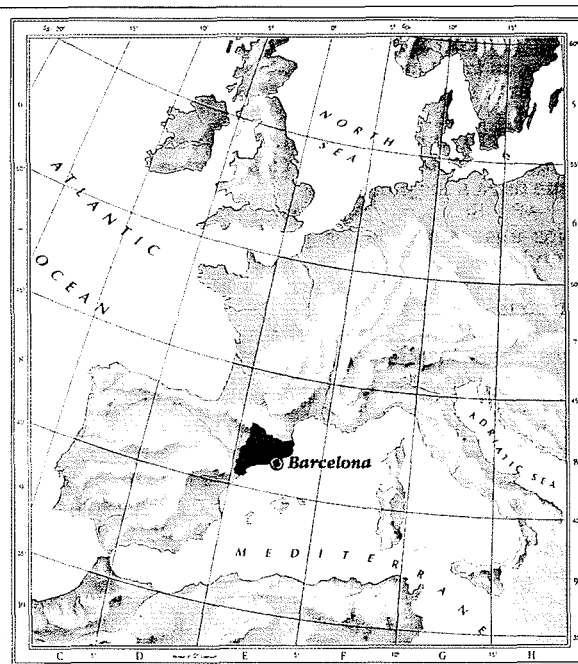
But Catalonia a *country*? Yes, if one be-

lieved an advertisement, designed and paid for by the Generalitat, the governing body of Catalonia, that appeared in several international magazines. This provocative piece of self-promotion located Barcelona in Catalonia, "a country in Spain," the copy read, "with its own culture, language, and identity." In case readers missed the point, the advertisement depicted the "country" of Catalonia in sharply colored relief on an otherwise borderless map of Europe.

The advertisement was only part of a campaign by the Catalan organizers of the Olympic Games to inform the world of their



IN WHICH COUNTRY WOULD YOU PLACE THIS POINT?



IN CATALONIA, OF COURSE.

This is where Barcelona is, in Catalonia, a country in Spain with its own culture, language and identity.

A country with a population of only six million people, which has experienced a growth which has made it one of the richest of Europe.

A country in which many foreign enterprises - European, North American, Japanese - have invested and are still heavily investing.

A country which has understood and embraced the genius of Picasso, the force of Miró, the imagination of Dalí, the visionary approach of Tàpies, the work of Montserri Caballé and Jordi Canyamà, the mastery of Pau Casals, the Gaudí of Gaudí.

A country which is visited every year by 16 million people from all over the world for its climate and its unique natural, sports and cultural facilities.

A country with the know-how to get the

Olympic Games for its capital, Barcelona. Now you know where Barcelona is, in Catalonia, of course.

**GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA
AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT
OF CATALONIA**

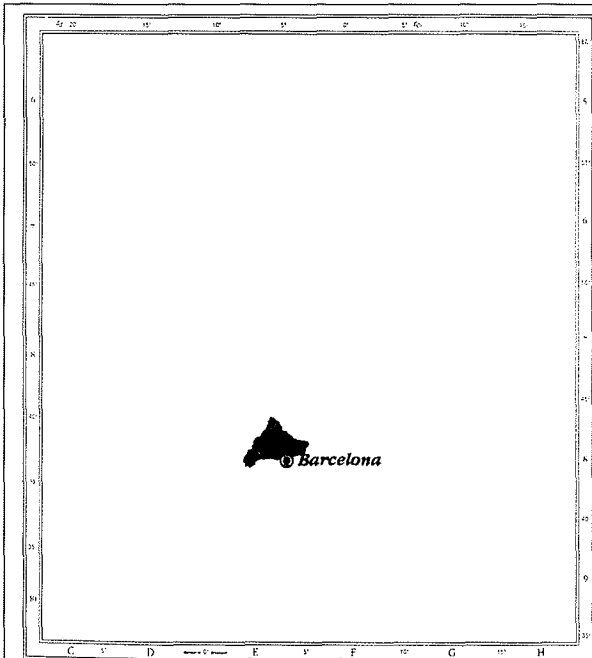
independence from the Spanish state—the very state that had contributed nearly 70 percent of the funding for the games. To be sure, the Spanish language was heard throughout the games, but the Catalan national anthem played before the Spanish anthem as the games got under way each day.

Even the timing of the advertisement was provocative, appearing as it did just two days before King Juan Carlos's scheduled mid-July visit to the Olympic Village. Jordi Pujol, the president of the Generalitat, did little to smooth matters when he proclaimed, "We are a small country, but we are moving forward." And when tourists finally arrived in Barcelona for the games, they were greeted with signs that read, "Catalonia: A Country in Europe."

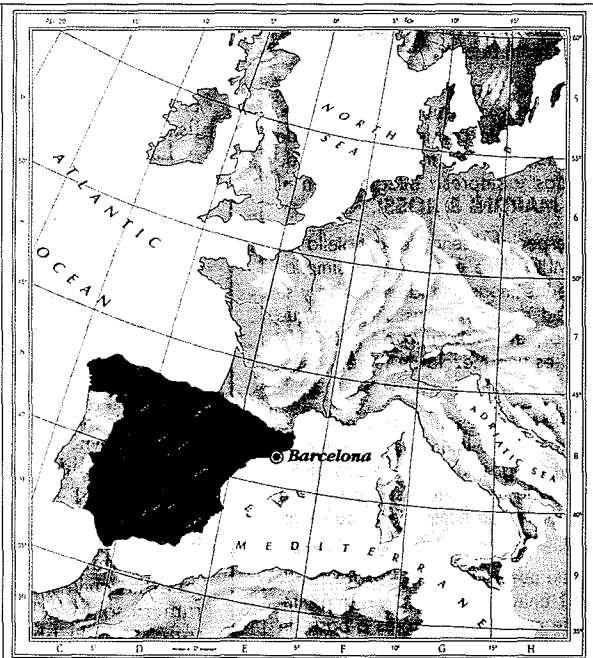
Madrid reacted with official indignation—and a smattering of unofficial humor. *Cambio 16*, Spain's leading newsweekly magazine, published a parody of the Generalitat advertisements by two well-known political

cartoonists. In the first block of the cartoon, the question, "In which country would you place this point," was reproduced as in the original. In the second block, the point, Barcelona, is revealed to be a livid boil on the backside of Spain's president, Felipe González. Less imaginative responses simply wrote the ad off as an imbecilic mistake, a betrayal, the latest idiotic effort by the Generalitat to fan the flames of an old and often bitter controversy.

At the center of the controversy is the autonomous region of Catalonia, which lies in the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula. Occupying some 32,000 square kilometers, it is roughly the size of Belgium, and consists of the provinces of Barcelona, Tarragona, Lérida (Lleida in Catalan), and Gerona (Girona). It looks, in writer Ian Gibson's words, somewhat like a fan opening upward toward France, with its base perched southward near



IN WHICH COUNTRY WOULD YOU PLACE CATALONIA?



IN SPAIN, OF COURSE

This is where Catalonia is, in Spain, one of the oldest nations in Europe, proud of its rich identity based on the several languages and cultures of its peoples.

A country which encompasses in a varied and fascinating culture peoples like the Catalans, Basques and Galicians, each with their own tradition, history and language,

with their own identities which are inextricably linked to Spain.

A country that has made available all its resources so that Catalonia and Barcelona can show themselves to the world as being the best possible venue for the Olympic Games.

A country that has proved itself gene-

rous with Catalonia and Barcelona because their worldwide success is the triumph of all Spaniards.

A country with the know-how to get the Olympic Games for its beloved Catalonia and its capital, Barcelona.

Now you know where Catalonia is. In Spain, of course.

Valencia. Its six million inhabitants constitute about 16 percent of Spain's population, and many of them carry in their heads a rich and complicated history of their region.

Invasion by the Arabs in A.D. 717 and recovered for Christianity in A.D. 801 with the help of Charlemagne, the area became first the County of Barcelona and eventually an independent kingdom. In the 11th century, an expansionist Barcelona conquered territories south and west of the city. In the 12th century, allied through marriage to the daughter of the King of Aragon, the Count of Barcelona (Ramón Berenguer IV) became the King of Aragon and Catalonia. Further conquests in Valencia, Mallorca, Sardinia, and Sicily strengthened the power of the kingdom and extended the influence of the Catalan language. By the 13th century, the local powers (mostly the aristocratic elite) had created a parliament whose main function was to dictate laws, defend local rights and privileges, and check the powers of the king. This parliament eventually gave way to what is now the local government, called the Generalitat. When the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon fused shortly after the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1469, and later, when their daughter Juana married the son of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, Catalonia came increasingly under the will of the Hapsburg rulers. While the central government, soon to be permanently located in Madrid, outwardly respected the area's local rights, it refused to grant it permission, for example, to trade with the New World. The cession of the French side of the Catalan area in 1659 in the so-called Treaty of the Pyrenees and the loss of central-government support following the War of the Spanish Succession reduced Catalonia to the status of a mere province in the larger nation-state.

That Catalonia today should wish to dis-

tance itself from the central government should come as no surprise to those who know the record of Madrid's past dealings with the region. Felipe V, the first Bourbon king in Spain (reigned 1700–46), was so incensed at Catalonia's support of the Hapsburgs during the War of the Spanish Succession that he organized a campaign against the ancient kingdom that included the elimination of the Generalitat, the suppression of the Catalan language, and the closing of the University of Barcelona in 1714. But this and subsequent attacks over the centuries only stiffened the backbone of Catalonians and fed enthusiasm for separatism. Catalonia has always had individuals eager to rally support for independence, the most articulate of these in the 20th century being E. Prat de la Riba, who published his *La Nacionalitat Catalana* in 1917, re-energizing the debate over regional rights. The fall of the Bourbon monarchy in 1931 and the proclamation of the Second Republic, whose Parliament approved the Statutes of Autonomy for the region in 1932, seemed to bring full autonomy closer to reality.

But Francisco Franco, for reasons similar to those acted upon by Felipe V (the Catalans sided with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War), squashed those hopes of autonomy in 1939. As Robert Hughes observes in his hugely entertaining *Barcelona*, the civil war had been more than a class struggle. Franco saw clearly that the Catalans were also animated by strong feelings of local nationalism and that these were bound up with the preservation and use of their language. The repression was extreme, if uneven. A Barcelona student in his early thirties recently related to me an incident from the mid-1960s, one that had decisively marked his attitude toward the Francoist state. One day he and his grandfather were having a chat

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on the street in downtown Barcelona. A policeman happened to overhear them and promptly slapped the young man's grandfather with a stiff fine. The crime was "deviant activity"—speaking Catalan, a language that Franco had banished from all public discourse, from the public schools, and from the media for years following the Nationalist victory in the civil war. Everyone was supposed to speak in Christian, that is, in Spanish. Thousands of books were burned, and even the Catalan national dance, the *sardana*, was formally banned (although the fiercely independent Catalans danced it frequently and defiantly in spite of the ban). Inconsistently, by the mid-1960s, Catalan was tolerated in the universities and in private secondary schools. However unevenly applied, though, repression inevitably backfires, and today the reclaiming of Catalan rights and privileges forms the background of a game of political cat-and-mouse played between the politicians in Catalonia and those in Madrid.

The idea that Spain is synonymous with Castile is one that the Franco regime repeated ad nauseam during the first decades of the dictatorship, but it was never as deeply embedded in Iberian history as Francoist historians would have had people believe. In fact, it was developed a mere century ago by a generation of writers struggling to find an identity in a world that was changing more rapidly than they might have wished. The Spanish Empire in America finally crumbled by 1898, and intellectuals began to propagate the belief that the essence of Spain, its soul, was to be found in the dour, self-negating, stoical Castilian farmer. Even philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) thought that Castile had made Spain what it was in his day.

Residents of Catalonia, where nationalist sentiment was on the rise, had a decidedly different view. Their resistance to the idea that Castile somehow meant Spain ran deep, and it encouraged them to turn their eyes away from the center. Many residents of Barcelona considered themselves to be more European than Spanish—and many still do. To them, the

axis of Barcelona's economic and cultural life turns to Paris rather than to Madrid. "Well, Barcelona is Europe," announces one of the characters in Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's 1977 novel, *The Manager's Solitude*, and that statement reflects a broad-based popular sentiment. Many of Europe's major philosophical and political movements entered the Iberian Peninsula via Barcelona in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (republicanism, anarchism, federalism, communism). And Catalonians point with pride to their great artists, including Antonio Gaudí, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and Pau Casals. Of course, such pride can sometimes get the better of a people. With little real justice, many residents of Barcelona claim to be culturally superior to their counterparts in Madrid, whom they view as distant, slightly less sophisticated relatives.

Such feelings are not discouraged by Jordi Pujol, the undisputed leader of Catalan regionalism today. "Regionalism is not something which is anachronistic or romantic or pure folklore," he declared to the press in January 1993. "It is a modern movement and a movement of progress."

Pujol has been the president of the Generalitat since 1980, and his popularity still runs high, even though his political organization, *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), has faced competition from other groups championing independence. (*Terra Lliure*, a terrorist group active in the 1970s and '80s, disbanded in 1991, but *Esquerra Republicana*, the *Partit Socialista Catalán*, and the *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* still push hard for independence.) To underscore Catalonia's semi-autonomous status, Pujol's Generalitat has set up quasi-diplomatic offices in many large cities outside Spain, and Pujol himself often travels in the manner of a head of state, giving lavish dinners to which the Spanish ambassador in the host country is pointedly not invited. When Pujol speaks of the federal government, he more frequently refers to it as the Spanish state rather than as Spain to underscore his convic-

tion that Spain is merely an administrative structure, a political entity, an invention.

But finally, these are minor provocations, skirmishes in a war of words, because neither Pujol nor his party really believes in Catalonia's full independence from Spain. *Convergència i Unió* is a minority party that controls only the Generalitat, not the Barcelona mayor's office. In fact, it does not even speak for the majority of Socialist-leaning residents of Catalonia, who vote for Pujol on local matters but for the representatives of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in national elections. "Catalanism does not necessarily mean separatism," Jordi Solé-Tura, a Catalan law professor who rose to become Spain's minister of culture in 1990, wrote in 1970. Pujol agrees in principle but plays what writer David Rosenthal once called "a perpetual game of chicken with Madrid."

Money and language are the two keys to Catalan politics. Catalonia is the strongest economic region on the Iberian Peninsula. While it occupies just six percent of the landmass, it produces 19 percent of the gross national product and ships 23 percent of Spain's exports. Twenty-three percent of Spanish banking is controlled by Catalan interests, and nearly one-quarter of foreign investments in Spain are made in Catalonia. Pujol himself rose to prominence by founding the *Banca Catalana* in the 1960s and enjoyed enormous success with it until the mid-1980s, when huge losses and suggestions of financial mismanagement forced it into restructuring. The *Banco de Sabadell*, Catalonia's oldest bank (founded in 1891), is one of Spain's more profitable financial institutions, and *La Caixa* savings bank is the second largest in Europe. Per capita income in Catalonia is 20 percent higher than the national average.

Catalans save more than their Spanish counterparts (not a difficult achievement, given that most Spaniards save nothing at all), which gives them a reputation as money-conscious and tight. According to one local joke, wire was invented by two Catalans pulling on

a penny. Despite such frugality, per capita consumption is higher in Catalonia than in any other region of Spain. Some people contend, not entirely unjustifiably, that the industrial area around Barcelona, which produces 25 percent of the peninsula's total industrial employment (in textiles, electronics, plastics, automotive products, and chemicals), has more in common with Germany's Ruhr Valley than it does with any other part of Spain.

Spain's loose federal arrangement, established in the post-Franco Constitution of 1978, gives Catalonia and other autonomous regions significant latitude in making laws and spending funds for culture, infrastructure, and government services. The central government collects all tax monies and redistributes them based not on who gave and how much, but according to other formulas that are more geographic than economic and more in keeping with the philosophy of the main national party, the Socialists. The result is that Catalonians feel that they receive less than their fair share and that their region subsidizes poorer areas (particularly Andalusia). Pujol's harping on this issue creates tension not only between his Generalitat and the central government of Felipe González but between the Generalitat and the mayor's office of Barcelona, which is held by a member of the Catalan Socialist Party, Pasqual Margall.

Language is at least as much an issue as the wallet, for Catalan, unlike Basque, has a long and distinguished literary history completely separate from Castilian language and literature. In fact, nothing was more irritating to Catalans than the Francoists' insistence that Catalan was a mere dialect of Castilian. The first book printed on the Iberian Peninsula, *Tirant lo Blanc*, a chivalric romance by Joanot Martorell, was published in Catalan in Valencia in 1490, but well before that great thinkers and writers from Catalonia had expressed themselves eloquently in their native language. In the early 13th century, the kings of Catalonia were ordering the production of

chronicles in Catalan. Ramon Llull (1235–1316), known as Doctor Illuminat throughout the medieval world, used Catalan brilliantly in his encyclopedic works of science, philosophy, religion, and literature. His *Blanquerna* has been called one of the first modern European novels. Other writers, including the pre-Renaissance humanist Bernat Metge (1343–1413), and the poets Anselm Turmeda (1352–1430), Jordi de Sant Jordi (1400–24), and Ausiàs March (1397–1459) created a tradition of contemplative lyric in the Catalan language which, however, seemed to fall into disfavor as Castilian language and politics grew to dominate the Iberian Peninsula. All were fully conscious of themselves as Catalans, not Spaniards.

Not until the mid-19th century, during what has become known as the *Renaixença* of Catalan letters, did the use of Catalan as a means of literary expression come back into favor. Bonaventura Carles Aribau (1798–1862) initiated a new wave of nationalist sentiment with his tendentious but stirring poem “Oda a la Pàtria” (1859), “To the Fatherland,” and poet and essayist Jacint Verdaguer i Santaló (1845–1902) led the rebirth of Catalan literature, behind which pulsed the recognition of Catalonia as a separate state. Other poets, philologists, dramatists, and novelists followed the lead of Verdaguer i Santaló and created an important flowering of Catalan letters that has lasted to this day. Among the most widely read Catalan authors today are J. V. Foix (1893–1987), Joan Salvat-Papasseit (1894–1924), Tomàs Garcés (1902–), Mercè Rodoreda (1909–83), and Salvador Espriu (1913–85).

However, while Catalonia dominates the publishing industry in both Spanish and Catalan, only 5,806 of the 51,000 titles edited on the peninsula last year were published in Catalan. Still, it must be recognized that many of the peninsula’s best-selling novelists (such as Eduardo Mendoza, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Juan Goytisolo, Juan Marsé, and Esther Tusquets), although born and raised in Catalonia, write in Spanish rather than in Catalan because the former was the language of their

education and also because Spanish is where the market is. (Some 600 million people speak Spanish throughout the world; six million speak Catalan.)

The language issue still provokes heated debate. Although the Law of Linguistic Normalization of 1983 stipulates that Catalan is the dominant language of instruction in the region, it also provides for Spanish to be used in the classroom. In the autumn of 1993, however, the department of education of the Generalitat decreed that Catalan would be used exclusively in all public schools for children ages three through eight. This touched off howls of protest from a small group of parents who insisted on their right to have their children educated in Spanish. The parents’ association adopted the unfortunate tactic of comparing Pujol’s “repression” of Spanish to Franco’s attempted extermination of Catalan. This comparison in turn roused *El País* to denounce the ultra-Right for ignoring the more than 10 years of civil peace and social consensus built up in the country.

The Generalitat’s move underscores the reality that Catalan has not yet reached equal status in Spain. The recently published *Dictionary of Spanish and Spanish-American Literature* (1993) never mentions Catalan language or literature, and last summer’s opening of Madrid’s first Catalan bookshop and cultural center—called *Blanquerna*, after Llull’s novel—was cause for widespread comment in the Spanish-language newspapers. The bookshop bills itself as a bridge of dialogue between the two cultures, underscoring just how different they are considered to be both by proponents of Castilian and by defenders of Catalan. (Anyone interested in seeing how these differences play out in fiction should read Juan Marsé’s riotous recent novel, *El amante bilingüe*.) In attendance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony was a who’s who of the cultural and political elite, including Pujol himself, Pere Gimferrer (who began his career in poetry writing in Spanish, but who now writes exclusively in

Catalan), the mayor of Madrid, the Catalan cultural attaché, a representative of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, and the president of the Spanish Royal Academy, who proclaimed that Blaquerna would "help us get to know Catalan cultural reality better."

Just why this creative tension between the center and the periphery seems to be working in contemporary Spain is difficult to establish. While Pujol's views on Catalonia as a separate "country" are immensely popular in his region, they are, when all is said and done, mere chin music. He does not want real independence for Catalonia. Nor does he attempt to maneuver the political structure toward that goal. In fact, he has recently agreed to collaborate informally with Felipe González's minority government in Madrid, guaranteeing not only stability in the central government but also the continuation of the Socialist lock on power. (González and the Socialists have ruled Spain since 1982.) Because of his long and intelligent leadership—no Spanish politician has ever served in elective office longer than Pujol—Catalonia has settled into a relaxed stand-off with the federal government.

It has been able to do so because many of its immediate objectives—the teaching of Catalan language and history in the schools, the use of the language in print, on TV, and in official government business (the Generalitat drafts its documents and makes requests in Catalan, and the central government answers in Spanish)—were achieved without the armed conflicts that have marked dealings between Madrid and some extreme separatist movements within Spain, notably that of the Basques. Observers credit this levelheadedness to what the Catalans call *seny*, that is, a sense of balance, perspective, and common wisdom which they claim has always ruled their lives. For all intents and purposes, cen-

trists and separatists alike have bought into the ideal of consensus and cooperation that was outlined by the king in his very first post-Franco speech in 1975 and subsequently written into law by the Constitution of 1978.

Juan Tomás de Salas, editor of *Cambio 16*, probably reflected the entire country's mood when he noted that at the Olympic Games "Catalan and Castilian fused together harmoniously as a symbol of the fact that both peoples have lived together for over 500 years. The great mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Margall, symbolized better than anyone the Catalan who is as Spanish as he is Catalan, or who is Spanish precisely because he is Catalan." He challenged his country's new generation to ensure that such harmony continue and that Spain not fragment itself into what he called a "bicephalic, cuatriligual Mediterranean and Atlantic" state.

Spain seems to have learned how to balance the obligations of a modern nation-state with the requirements of regional rights. The federal system of autonomous regions is working nicely in post-Franco, post-Constitution Spain, although each year brings new tensions to test the resolve of frequently disparate interest groups. But now at least those tensions can be expressed in Catalan as well as in Spanish. Amusingly, the Olympic Games as conceived by Pujol—that is, as a glorification of Catalan autonomy—became a worldwide celebration of Spain, with Spain winning an unexpected number of gold medals. By the time the closing ceremony was broadcast to millions of viewers around the world, more Spanish flags were in evidence than Catalan flags, and the real hero turned out to be none other than King Juan Carlos, king not of that country, Catalonia, but of all of Spain.

A LEGACY OF EMPIRE

BY G. M. TAMÁS

An idea very much afoot in Europe today—one that arouses political passions everywhere from Abkhazia to Scotland—is the notion of cultural and territorial autonomy. The idea is, in fact, a compromise between the old principle of state sovereignty and the new one of a separate ethnocultural identity of linguistic or racial groups. It was born in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire around the turn of this century, when people preoccupied with the decline of the supranational state (especially socialists) tried to save it by taking account of the emerging ethnic identities. These new and fractious identities were arrayed against the old baroque monarchy, whose legitimacy was upheld by the divine right of kings and by a notion of sovereignty heavily influenced by natural law: both theological convictions that seemed increasingly outmoded in an age of secularism and nationalism.

The wish to preserve a supranational state with no identifiable ethnic or class character, and at the same time the inclination to placate the awakening ethnic and regional consciousness, resulted in the idea of *autonomy*, an idea inherited by the post-Hapsburg successor states and, through the influence of socialist thought, by other European areas as well. But

this solution, while it worked in certain parts of Europe for a time, today proves to be a troubling inheritance. Not only is it ill-suited to nation-states (to those that have existed for centuries as well as to those that have emerged in the postcommunist era); it is a threat to their integrity and stability.

The great Viennese novelist Robert Musil once noted that there was only one nation in

Austria-Hungary, the Austrian nation, and it had no ethnic identity whatsoever. As an ethnic group, Austrians called themselves Germans and longed, when in a nationalistic mood, for the merger of Little Austria with Greater Germany: *Anschluss*. Nationalist movements are always filled with love for the mother country, but German-Austrian nationalism was filled as much with hatred for it. Still, the king-emperor Franz Josef I called himself *ein deutscher Fürst*, a German prince, because for a long time he hoped to restore

the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation finished off by Napoleon half a century earlier.

Musil, to my mind the greatest authority on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, writes in his masterpiece, *The Man Without Qualities*, that the Joint Empire was supported by a strange alliance, a motley crowd of



Galician-Polish aristocrats, Bohemian-German landowners, the German-speaking bourgeoisie in the east (and only in the east), the officer corps, the Catholic Church, the Jews, and socialists.

These elements had a vested interest in the continuance of universalistic imperial power because they were, or felt themselves to be, surrounded by hostile aliens. Equal subjecthood obscured the fact that Galician peasants spoke Ukrainian, that the Bohemian indentured laborers spoke Czech, that the German-speaking gentile burghers hated the Jews, that the simple fellows who served as privates in the imperial army had difficulty understanding German commands, that the Protestant churches sided with destructive nationalist sedition, and that the workers' movement was fractured by ethnic tensions.

The socialists of Eastern and Central Europe were the first to realize that their emancipatory utopia had a potent rival in ethnic nationalism. Fin-de-siècle socialists—the only heirs to the Enlightenment apart from the imperial court and the upper echelons of the imperial bureaucracy—understood that if they wanted citizenship *à la française* to succeed imperial-universalistic subjecthood, they had to deal somehow with the emerging consciousness of ethnicity.

Ethnic nationalists in countries that were ruled by a foreign aristocracy and dynasty and a rationalist-universalist central bureaucracy set two goals for themselves: a restoration of ethnic or national identity, and the creation of an independent state led by a home-bred elite. Citizenship was to be defined not only by impersonal law and abstract obedience to the sovereign but also by cultural tradition, language, and racial stock. "Our kind" was to be predominant within the state, and it was to

give the state a specific cultural and racial hue. This emphasis on ethnic attributes was as alien to socialists as it had been to officials of the Joint Empire.

Socialists in Austria-Hungary and in the Russian Empire tried to identify the different demands of ethnic nationalists. They stipulated the right of each and every ethnic and regional group to preserve its language, cultural tradition, historical identity, and racial pride. *Cultural autonomy*, the brainchild of the great Austrian socialist thinker Otto Bauer, was intended to provide every ethnocultural group within a given polity the right to decide everything pertaining to its identity (education, the arts, the cult of national past) while remaining loyal to the supranational state as subjects or citizens, taxpayers, and soldiers. Laws were to be uniform everywhere within the future federal republic (or, failing that, in a federal monarchy), but taught and learned in various idioms. The struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat was and remained a universal goal, but it was to be synchronized with the liberation of the subject nations from the dictates of cultural oppression, from the forced imposition of alien ethnocultural identities masquerading as abstract discourses of justice, science, religion, and philosophy.

Thus, in the view of the Austro-Marxists, liberation and emancipation meant also the emergence of hitherto concealed cultures. These in turn would contribute, by means of an open dialogue made possible by a noncoercive society, to the new and variegated texture of the mental life of the New Man. Political obligation, civic duty, and the like need not extend, held the Austro-Marxists, to conformity with a culturally alien discourse.

Both the imperial and the socialist solutions to the problem of ethnicity stem from the late-Enlightenment teaching on citizenship.

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According to this teaching, citizenship is determined by an equality of rights, by sovereignty residing in the people, and by a symmetrical relationship to the state. Both the universalistic monarchy and universalistic socialism fought the separateness of the estates and all forms of aristocratic, parochial, or regional privilege, which they viewed as potential excuses for resistance to benevolent central rule. By divorcing ethnicity from citizenship, Austrian socialists hoped, ethnic nationalism would be removed from the sphere of politics and nationality kept separate from citizenship. The body politic of the future was to be a loose federation of "nations"—i.e. ethnocultural groups. (And without the socialist vision, one should note, contemporary East European ethnic nationalism would never have become so apolitical, so oddly noncivic and anti-authoritarian, as it is now.)

Although World War I blew the Austro-Hungarian Empire to pieces, the legacy of the universalistic empire, along with the later Austro-Marxist emendations, was inherited by the Soviet Union. It is easy to forget that what appears today as a fossil of a societal and cultural monster was originally mapped out as a utopia designed to liberate mankind. The Soviet Union accomplished what had been thought to be the utopia of Hapsburg socialism. It created a uniform political order and a symmetric relationship of all subjects to central power, and it successfully separated ethnicity and politics. In all Soviet republics, autonomous territories, and other localities, one could everywhere find the same political discourse, the same system of symbols, the same activist, mobilizing, futuristic ideology—translated into hundreds of languages. Ethnic, even tribal, folklore was celebrated by myriads of choirs and dance troupes; naive odes to the Supreme Helmsman and Little Father of All His Peoples were sung in hundreds of languages; an official popular literature ("ethnic in form, socialist in content") was executed, under orders from above, by Artists of the People. In each federal or autonomous republic, ethnocultural uniformity was im-

posed—for a long while, even ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan had to learn Kazakh. Ethnic tradition was considered to be the outer garment of socialist man, as indeed it was. The Communist Party fostered the creation of local elites, composed, for the first time in many cases, of people drawn from a region's ethnic majority. The party thus provided a way of preferment and advancement to people who, under the tsars, had been considered rebellious and disloyal serfs. And precisely because the road to ethnocultural self-assertion led through the Communist Party and its auxiliaries, many ethnic demands being voiced today in the old communist bloc hearken back—albeit unconsciously—to the Stalinist system of privileges granted to ethnic elites. This fact alone poses a serious obstacle to those who are trying to promote the universalism of modern liberal citizenship in the states of the former communist bloc.

What we are witnessing today in Eastern and Central Europe is a repoliticization of ethnicity based on criteria that were instituted by the Soviet system. After all, if possession of a distinct language, folkloric tradition, and shared sense of identity is sufficient reason for cultural and territorial autonomy, then why not for independence? When the heady wine of socialist utopia evaporated from the poisoned chalice of Soviet "federalism," what was to hold the tribes together? When the belief in the divine right of kings vanished under the impact of the bitter experience of trench warfare in 1914–18, the old continental empires were shattered beyond all realistic hope of repair. (Hapsburg or Romanov nostalgia is a toy for the intelligentsia only.) When—to quote the idiotic formula of Soviet "social realism"—the "socialist content" (communist-futurist utopia) disappeared from the "ethnic form," the guardians of this "ethnic form," the political, ideological, cultural ruling strata of the federal and autonomous republics, people such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Georgia and the war criminal

Radovan Karadzic from Serb Bosnia (both poets, typically) wanted to fill that "form" with national content, that is, national independence, ethnic or racial purity, and a politics inspired by the great ethnic narrative culled from ancestral folk epics. It is interesting to note, however, that the new ethnic states claim to deny their ethnic-autonomist origins and to embrace an assimilationist view of citizenship. But the claim is a charade. The new ethnic statelets, born from older Soviet-style autonomous regions, are all trying to annihilate everything alien within their borders, exactly as the successor states of the Hapsburg Empire did with their minorities after World War I.

The legacy of the former empires, cultural autonomy combined with territorial autonomy, can also be found in countries that were not part of the communist bloc. In Spain, for example, the regionalist-autonomist movements, such as those of the Catalonians and Basques, are movements of the Left that were reinvigorated by the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent ferocious persecution by Franco. All, moreover, are indirect legatees of Hapsburg socialism.

Throughout Europe, we find yet another aspect of the emerging ethnic national politics, and it too is of socialist origin. I am speaking here of the regionalist movements, such as the Scottish Nationalist Party in Great Britain and the Northern League in Italy, that have been encouraged directly or indirectly by the European Community. The "federal" bureaucracy in Brussels and Strasbourg tries, quite naturally, to weaken the authority of national decision-making bodies, especially national parliaments and supreme courts, and it has found a precious ally in the form of regionalist movements. The Scottish Nationalist Party and the Northern (formerly Lombard) League both pretend that their scission from Great Britain or the Italian Republic will pose no problems and may even pass unnoticed within a united Europe. Other ethnic and religious minorities pin similar hopes on the improbable unifica-

tion of Europe. Even the European states themselves have postponed the granting of cultural rights to their minorities on the grounds that a future unified Europe will make "all this" of no importance.

The European Community is the creation of a special brand of French socialism, not that of the streets or of the factories but that lesser-known variety that reigns supreme in the hushed corridors of the Council of State or the old Ministry of Planning, a kind that is taught at the *École Nationale d'Administration* and in every *grande école* in Paris to Gaullists and leftists alike. It is basically the old Bourbon-Bonaparte idea of politics as administration, *gestion*. The administrator, or *gérant*, of public affairs is a member of the ruling, truly aristocratic *crème* of high bureaucracy, a worshiper of Reason, state intervention, and planning—thus a figure reminiscent of the old, Spanish-Austrian civil servant of the Hapsburgs, who typically received his education at the feet of learned monks.

The elevated, elusive, and secretive world of progressivist French civil servants retains the old imperial belief in the shape of the state as a fortuitous product of expediency and historical accident. The advantages of a larger market and the possibility of rational governance unencumbered by querulous parliaments are of such importance to their subtle minds that they will, when necessary, make concessions to the irrational rump of obsolete, ancient statehood. With similar condescension, they will also deign to protect national culture and tradition for the delectation of connoisseurs and the feigned admiration of domesticated philistines. Socialist utopians always wanted us to believe that, in a free society, government will be administration, since the question of the good life and of a good polity will be settled by a philosophy that understands human needs and can mold society accordingly. The EC version of socialist centralization and planning regards the plurality of cultures and ethnicities precisely as if

they were part of what Hegel called “the wrong infinite.” There is no necessity, hence no dignity, to cultural expression. The benign *gérant* of human affairs will provide funds for the upkeep of the ethnographic zoo, knowing full well that cultural diversity, as an expression of ethnicity, has nothing to do with serious politics, just as tradition has nothing to do with serious economic and social science.

Socialism, by its very nature, is incapable of delimiting or defining the body politic (for socialist liberation is deliverance *from* politics, and the end of all politics). So any peculiarity, anything specific expressed by one or another technique of human imagination, will be seen as contingent. At least while socialism still had a utopia, that belief presupposed a link between the community and something outside it (the Grand Project). The imperial faith linked the community to the divinely anointed monarch. But the contemporary state of affairs—which I shall call, for want of a better term, postsocialist socialism—affirms only the abstract, empty identity bordered by difference, difference bordered by identities, a human condition shown to be nothing but contingency contiguous to other contingencies. Politics and polities based upon such identities can multiply indefinitely and infinitely—and will, until a new idea of the state is found or discovered.

To recapitulate, then: The principle of cultural and territorial autonomy—a limited self-government in some areas of public life without pretensions to statehood, independence, or full sovereignty—was invented for the sake of reforming the crumbling supranational empires before and during World War I. The principle was implemented by means of revolutionary socialism in the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav federation and for quite a long

time worked surprisingly well. But the abandonment of the supranational socialist state after the democratic upheavals of 1989 left only the possibility of the creation of new nation-states.

The odds that these new nations will successfully reform themselves along the lines of the older nation-states of Western Europe are not great. The reason is almost paradoxical. For while the old nation-states were much more closely tied to ethnicity, folk traditions, racial pride, and other tribal affiliations than either the Hapsburg Empire or the Soviet Union was, they were also committed to a liberal politics of rights, equality, tolerance, and universalism. This commitment to liberal ideals, while far from perfect and often little more than a cover for domination by the majority culture, did at least provide a limit to raw tribalism and a check against centrifugal tendencies. In Central and Eastern Europe, however, in the lands of the former empires, the absence of such powerful, countervailing ideals has allowed, or at least encouraged, the disintegration of nation-states along strictly ethnocultural lines. The fatal combination of the contradictory principles of nation-states and of ethnocultural autonomy are quickly destroying the state as such. Combined in Eastern and Central Europe with a generalized contempt for institutions of any kind, a profound distrust of the law, and the collapse of all spiritual and secular authority—and inspired by a well-founded suspicion of the intentions of ethnic majorities and nationalist governments—ethnocultural autonomy, which seemed to have a conservative aspect in its commitment to tradition and custom, is today the mightiest weapon of nihilism.

CURRENT BOOKS

Consuming Visions

LAND OF DESIRE: Merchants, Money, and the Rise of a New American Culture. *By William Leach. Pantheon. 510 pp. \$30*

The American critique of consumer culture is embedded in an honorable but narrow tradition. From Thorstein Veblen to John Kenneth Galbraith, Vance Packard to Christopher Lasch, critics have assailed the captains of commerce for fostering an obsession with material goods and distracting the populace from public duty. Although they articulated the critique in various secular idioms, all of these observers had inherited Protestant commitments to plain speech, plain living, and the independence of the individual self. They were haunted by the vision of the future evoked in Dostoevsky's "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor": a docile mass society, preoccupied by reckless extravagance and sedated by packaged fun.

A little more than a decade ago, that critical tradition began to go out of style, among both popular and scholarly audiences. In the summer of 1979, cultural pessimism peaked. Soon after summoning Lasch to Camp David, Jimmy Carter denounced wasteful consumption habits and called for ecologically grounded sacrifice. Not much more than a year later, Carter was out of office, his warnings drowned out by Ronald Reagan's strategies of systematic denial. America was back, and weekly news magazines spoke of a "return to elegance"—which mostly meant stretch limousines and suspenders for stockbrokers. In academic circles, scholars re-examined the older critique of consumer culture and found it wanting. Some discovered the emancipatory potential in acts of consumption and the creative energies in commercial pageantry.

This was more than a shift in intellectual fashion. There were serious conceptual questions raised by social scientists such as Mary Douglas and Michael Schudson. The scolding Veblenesque attack on materialism over-

looked the nearly universal human tendency to make meaning from material objects. Goods have always served symbolic as well as utilitarian purposes, and advertisers' efforts to associate silverware with status or cars with sex were a recent and well-organized example of a widespread cultural practice. As Theodor Adorno once observed, Veblen's celebrated assault on "conspicuous consumption" in social, domestic, and religious life was really an "attack on culture," so much of which depended on apparently frivolous display.

Along with this antimaterialist bias, the existing critical tradition revealed other limitations as well—a distrust of fantasy and play, a productivist ethic that implicitly devalued leisure and aesthetic experience, a failure to catch the affinity between consumer desires and ancient religious longings. The consumer's dream world, Adorno wrote, bears some resemblance to the "land flowing with milk and honey." Only if we acknowledged that resemblance could we begin to understand how the promise of modern advertising could exert such broad appeal. During the 1980s, revisionist scholars took up the challenge, avowing the utopian dimensions of consumer culture even as they sought to maintain a critical perspective on it.

On one point, though, nearly everyone agreed: Consumer culture emerged during the half-century between the Civil War and America's entry into World War I. Only a few historians of the colonial period claimed to have traced its origins to an earlier time. For most scholars and critics, the period 1865–1917 marked the watershed between Victorianism and modernity; the rise of national corporations selling brand-name goods and the transformation of department stores into palaces of consumption coincided with a "revolution in manners and morals" that overturned the ethic of fixed character and replaced it with a new emphasis on fluid personality. Rooted in these changes, a "hedonistic"

consumer culture flowered in baseball parks, movie theaters, and dance halls—all sites of the new urban-based mass amusements. Victorian discipline dissolved. Some lamented its passing, others were jubilant.

Among the more influential of the celebrants was the historian William Leach, who insisted that consumer culture might well have been a liberation—especially for women—from the pinched, patriarchal world of rural republican virtue, and that the secular utopian faith was not entirely false. Leach was fascinated by the *joie de vivre* of the lavish department-store spectacles staged during the early 20th century, and entranced by the imaginative new uses of color, glass, and light in store design. Like the old confessor envisioning the amusement park lights in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Absolution," Leach became convinced that things had gone "a-glimmerin' " in the metropolitan commercial landscape of the early 20th century. And like the boy in the story, Leach came to believe that "there was something ineffably gorgeous that had nothing to do

with God." Leach appeared poised to make a major case for the emancipatory potential of consumer culture, based primarily on the carnivalesque qualities of the urban retail scene.

Now, Leach's *Land of Desire* has appeared. It is the fruit of a decade's worth of digging in archives, libraries, and private collections, of interviewing retired department-store buyers such as Dorothy Shaver (who became president of Lord & Taylor) and public relations counselors such as Edward Bernays (who staged media events

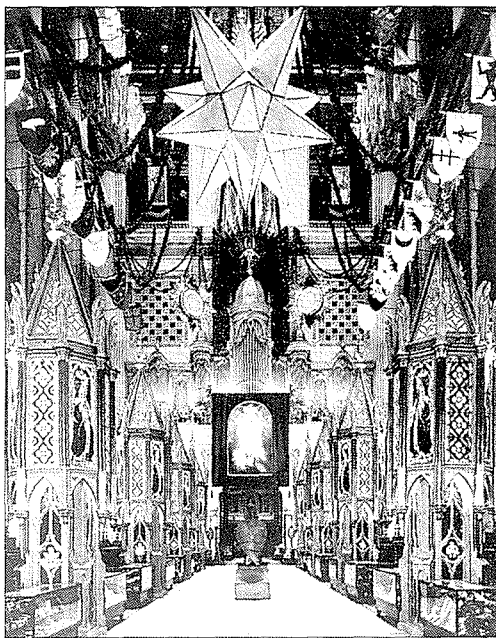
to dramatize the appeal of transparent velvet, featuring assorted models in alluring poses). The book is a remarkable achievement, an extraordinary synthesis of business and cultural history that casts new light on broad areas of American commercial life. Leach documents an efflorescence of theatricality and exoticism, especially during the years before America's entry into World War I. He describes spectacles designed to promote retail commerce, ranging from John Wanamaker's lush *tableau vivante* from *The Garden of Allah*, a steamy sentimental novel of 1904, to the opening of the

Coconut Grove nightclub in 1917. All the spectacular displays, all the color and light and glass, are here in abundance.

But they are accompanied by a detailed account of the "circuits of power" that lay behind and energized the spectacle—the network of moneyed men who set up the credit apparatus for entrepreneurs as well as consumers, who financed the expansion of retail chains, who fixed things with the

relevant government officials. Having uncovered this nest of investment bankers, real-estate brokers, and politicians, Leach is unable to sustain his enthusiasm for the emancipatory potential of consumer culture. On the contrary, he asserts that "the culture of consumer capitalism may have been among the most nonconsensual public cultures ever created," because it was produced by elites rather than the population as a whole, and because "it raised to the fore only one vision of the good life and pushed out all others."

That vision pervaded religion, literature,



and the arts as well as commercial life. It combined a commitment to ceaseless acquisition with a smiley-face view of human fate. It was no accident that L. Frank Baum was the author of both *The Art of Shop-Window Display* and *The Wizard of Oz*, Leach claims; the latter book embodied the sanitized religion of mind-cure and positive thinking that seemed to suit consumer culture. *Oz*, as Baum saw it, was "a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out." The same could be said for the world of pure wish that department-store magnates fashioned to entice adults as well as children. In the 1890s as in the 1980s, a strategy of cheery and systematic denial obscured the destructive underside of ever-expanding consumption—the sweated labor that produced the elegant lace, the neighborhoods cleared to create new "business opportunities."

Leach has abandoned any sympathy for consumer culture and returned to the critical tradition he once rejected. What he does from within that framework is often most impressive, as when he writes that the consumer capitalist "conception of the desiring self" requires rejection of the most desirable capacities of human beings: "their ability to commit themselves, to establish binding relationships, to sink permanent roots, to maintain continuity with previous generations, to remember, to make ethical judgments, to seek pleasure in work, to remain steadfast in behalf of principle and loyal to community or country (to the degree that community or country strives to be just and fair), to seek spiritual transcendence beyond the self, and to fight a cause through to the end." This is a moral critique that, however familiar, remains necessary and eloquent.

Nevertheless, Leach's framework could have been more capacious, both historically and conceptually. The main historical problem is that Leach clings to a dualistic scheme, juxtaposing 19th-century producer culture with 20th-century consumer culture, assuming that the latter marked a fundamental departure

from the former. Thus he scants the carnivalesque elements in 19th-century commerce—the exoticism and theatricality, the protuberant flesh and gaping orifices, just as he neglects the puritanical elements in 20th-century management—the preoccupation with personal efficiency, with systematic control of one's self and environment. Tensions between release and control persisted throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, but the idioms used to orchestrate harmony shifted from moral to managerial. The fundamental process, though, remained the same. One might call it the containment of carnival.

European carnival tradition celebrated the temporary upending of social authority amid an overflow of sausages, wine, sex, and aggression. By the 1600s the carnival was merging with the market fair, a congregation of peddlers, acrobats, musicians, and traveling scoundrels; in such a setting, hierarchies were not so much overturned as dissolved amid the centrifugal movements of the throng. Although in market fairs as well as carnivals the dissolution was temporary, both venues may have provided a *frisson*, a sense of fluid selfhood and awakened possibilities for personal transformation. Exotic goods—jewelry, silks, spices, fragrances, and elixirs—might seem to possess an almost magically regenerative power, to promise a transfiguration of everyday identity. As market exchange spilled over boundaries of time and place, the magic of goods was unmoored from traditional animistic frameworks and set afloat amid a society of mobile, shape-shifting selves.

In the United States, these developments took place later and faster than in Europe. The point men of capitalist modernization were the itinerant peddlers who swarmed across the countryside throughout the 19th century, selling exotic finery as well as utilitarian items, bringing the carnivalesque promise of magical self-transformation in a bit of silk, a pair of earrings, or a regenerative patent medicine. But in the United States, as in Europe, established elites sensed the need to stabilize the

sorcery of the marketplace, to control the centrifugal movements of commercial culture. Institutional remedies such as peddler licensing laws, the growth of credit reporting, and the enforcement of contractual obligations were supplemented by a morality of self-control and plain dealing; all of these measures were designed to counteract chaotic economic expansion and a flourishing subculture of sensuality—to contain the carnival of American commerce.

By 1900, new structures of containment had appeared. The reorganization of the economy under the dominance of major corporations brought bureaucratic rationality to commercial institutions; a new managerial culture recast the morality of self-control in a secular, pragmatic idiom. Rather than plod along a path of disciplined, steady work, ambitious young managers were urged to cultivate a more demanding regime of personal efficiency. The “chief end of man,” psychologist G. Stanley Hall announced in 1920, “is to keep ourselves, body and soul, always at the very tip-top of condition.” The emerging performance ethic evoked metaphors of electricity: the “live wire” provided the “vital spark” that kept the “whole system” humming. Such language captured the managerial emphasis on dynamic energy subordinated to a smoothly functioning, ever-growing corporate economy.

Yet economic growth could not be secured by managerial controls alone. As Simon Nelson Patten (whom Leach discusses) and other economists began to understand, the avoidance of periodic crises induced by overproduction required the maintenance of a mass-consumer market. Somehow even lumbering oligopolies had to sustain the aura of variety and unpredictability that had attracted people to the marketplace since the great 16th-century fairs of Leipzig and London.

The carnival atmosphere had to be evoked, but also sanitized and controlled. In national advertising the sanitizing pattern became clear by the 1920s. Not only were male

and female ideal body types remade on slimmer, more youthful, and more uniformly Anglo-Saxon models, but exotic settings faded in favor of the bland and the familiar—the soda fountain and the suburban neighborhood. Yet to preserve some semblance of vitality, advertisements had to seek out and incorporate vestiges of spontaneity and excitement in the popular arts. One example of this strategy was the use of comic-strip formats in the 1930s. The comics had been a boisterous product of urban commercial culture, bursting with burlesque humor and barely suppressed rage, sometimes rising to a vernacular surrealist art form—as in Winsor McCay’s “Little Nemo.” Advertisers appropriated comic forms and shackled them to leaden, didactic, and ultimately self-parodic narratives about lonely girls triumphing over b.o. and soiled underwear to win the hearts of their hypercritical husbands-to-be. This was the dominant pattern in managerial advertising—the containment of carnivalesque fantasy with literalist realism.

Yet the carnival was still in town, in the retail shopping districts. Leach demonstrates this with abundant descriptions of Orientalist fantasies enacted in restaurant murals and Turkish harems set up in shop windows. It was as if all the exoticism of 19th-century commercial culture, having been largely excluded from the official iconography of corporate capitalism (national advertising), had survived and flourished in retail stores, restaurants, and movie theaters. Perhaps this was partly because the managerial culture was overwhelmingly WASP, and the retail trade more heavily Jewish. Whatever the reason, the distinction underscores some of the fault lines between economic elites, and suggests that consumer culture was hardly monolithic.

Yet even on the retail side, the impulse toward rationalization was at work. As Leach perceptively observes, during the 1920s John Powers’ modeling agency (and others like it) promoted a “standardized conception of female beauty” and “freed . . . modeling from its



association with loose, off-color theatrical living . . . by connecting it with 'naturalness,' and 'the all-American way.' " This was the sort of shift that was also occurring in national advertising. An even clearer illustration was the transformation of Macy's Thanksgiving parade, which began as one of the "ragamuffin parades" that were "probably rooted in European traditions of carnival," Leach observes. Macy's replaced this undisciplined gathering of the people out of doors with a clean, well-managed spectacle of technological display—gargantuan, helium-filled Katzenjammer Kids, Santa Clauses arriving by airplane and zeppelin: a foreshadowing of the theme park fun of the late 20th century.

The fundamental pattern of 20th-century consumer culture, at least at the level of national advertisers and big-ticket retailers, has been the effort to conjure up the promise of unpredictability, excitement, and magic—while at the same time subordinating that promise to a broader agenda of control. Indeed, as Simon Patten realized, the successful maintenance of equilibrium in the "economy of abundance" required a balance between routinized work and consumption-dominated leisure. Far from undermining commitments

to work, Patten believed, the glittering world of goods would be the carrot that kept the worker showing up every day, seeking more money to buy more things. It was as if Patten foresaw the implicit bargain that would be struck between labor and management during the late 1930s, the bargain that formed the basis for the triumph of American consumer culture during the midcentury decades: steady work and a family wage in exchange for restricted union

demands and labor discipline.

Now business has abandoned that bargain and fled overseas in search of cheaper labor. The institutional base of consumer culture, a well-paid working population, has begun to crumble.

For the first time in decades, we have the opportunity to think about alternatives. The productivist tradition needs to be opened up and rendered more flexible. We need to realize that the problem with consumer culture is not materialism, but antimaterialism: a tendency, through the promotion of planned obsolescence and stylistic novelty, to disconnect human beings from sustained, sensuous connection with the natural or manmade world. And we need to revive an anthropological perspective on the cultural meanings of goods, a recognition that material artifacts can acquire symbolic, even sacramental meaning—not merely as status markers but as bonds between past and present, memory and desire.

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Paranoia Unbound

DEEP POLITICS AND THE DEATH OF JFK.

By Peter Dale Scott. Univ. of Calif. Press. 413 pp. \$25

CASE CLOSED: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK. By Gerald Posner. Random House. 607 pp. \$25

WHO SHOT JFK?: A Guide to the Major Conspiracy Theories. By Bob Callahan. Fireside. 159 pp. \$12

It is instructive to contrast the mythology surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy with the public and scholarly attitudes toward Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor—the other “flashbulb” event that seared America's collective memory. Like the assassination of Kennedy, the surprise attack was the subject of an executive branch investigation followed by congressional hearings. As with the assassination, explanations based on conspiracy have dogged the official story about Pearl Harbor. (The latest accusation surfaced only three years ago.)

But distortions of the record and questionable logic have always helped relegate Pearl Harbor conspiracy theories to the political fringes; the official story remains intact. The phenomena surrounding the JFK assassination could not present a starker contrast. Here the passage of time has only heightened public disbelief in the official account of the assassination, commonly known as the Warren Report. After the Warren Commission published its findings in September 1964, a Gallup poll indicated that 56 percent of Americans believed the report's main finding: that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, was President Kennedy's assassin. Today, however, approximately 90 percent of the public believes there was some kind of conspiracy to kill JFK.

This figure includes some who toil in the halls of academe. Among the plethora of new offerings on the 30th anniversary of the assassination is *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, by Peter Dale Scott, an English professor at the University of California at Berkeley. In one sense, there is nothing remarkable about this work. Indeed, its outstanding characteristics put it squarely in the tradition of most books about the assassination. *Deep Politics* is an unreadable compendium of “may haves” and “might haves,” non sequiturs, and McCarthy-style innuendo, with enough documentation to satisfy any paranoid. The assassination, Scott writes (in typically opaque prose), was “the product of ongoing relationships and processes within the deep American political process.” What is this deep process? A virtual political Disneyland: the CIA, drug dealers, Somoza, Fred Hampton, COINTELPRO, Oliver North. And that's just from two pages.

The manuscript apparently went unpublished for years, and one is mightily tempted to say that it should have remained so. Astoundingly, though, the book won the majority approval of the 20 professors, including four historians, who served on the University of California's editorial committee in 1991–92.

To understand the JFK phenomenon, it



helps to revisit the classic lecture "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," delivered at Oxford 30 years ago by Columbia University historian Richard Hofstadter (and published in a book of essays by the same title in 1965). The most prominent qualities of the paranoid style, according to Hofstadter, are "heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy." Propagators don't see conspiracies or plots here and there in history; they regard "a 'vast' or 'gigantic' conspiracy as *the motive force* in historical events." To be sure, as Hofstadter noted, the paranoid style isn't unique to America. Witness Germany under Hitler or the Soviet Union under Stalin, where it actually came to power. But it is an old and recurring mode of expression in American public life, as evinced by the anti-Masonic movement in the 1820s, the anti-Catholicism of the 1850s, Populists' claims about an international banking conspiracy in the 1900s, and Senator Joe McCarthy's "immense conspiracy" of the 1950s. Purveyors often feel threatened by sweeping change, whether it be waves of new immigrants or a revolution in the economic order. At other times, they articulate an acute sense of dispossession, such as that felt by the far Right from the 1930s into the early 1950s.

Although the Kennedy conspiracy choir has some voices on the Right, the great preponderance of books (450 since 1963) and articles (tens of thousands) have been written from the liberal/left perspective. Factual disputes have much less to do with this than one might think. "Catastrophe . . . is most likely to elicit the syndrome of paranoid rhetoric," Hofstadter wrote. And putting aside venal reasons, clearly the liberal/left outpouring is related to its sense of political dispossession since 1963. (Democrats were out of power for 20 of the next 30 years.) Indeed, every wrong in America is considered traceable to the presidency that was aborted and the future that died on November 22, 1963.

Still, what is markedly different about this phenomenon from previous manifestations of paranoia is that the distrust is so deep and pervasive. Glancing through *Who Shot JFK?*

one can find a conspiracy theory for practically every contingency and political belief: The Mafia did it; Robert Kennedy did; Jackie was upset because her husband had extramarital affairs, so she did it. The KGB, Cubans (both anti- and pro-Castro), the CIA and/or FBI, right-wing Texas oilmen, tsarist Russians, rocket scientist Wernher von Braun—and on the zany list goes. The "friendly fire" theory holds that a Secret Service agent riding in the limousine behind JFK fired the fatal shots, by accident. And apparently the latest trend among conspiracy theorists is to bash one another for believing in the wrong conspiracy.

Commentators usually ascribe the public's paranoia to the disturbing events that followed Kennedy's murder: Vietnam, other assassinations, Watergate, exposure of FBI and CIA abuses in the 1970s, and finally the Iran-contra scandal, all of which undermined Americans' trust in their elected government. But a more complicated argument can be made. The assassination and its aftermath have never been firmly integrated into their place and time, largely because of Cold War exigencies. Consequently, Americans have neither fully understood nor come to grips with the past.

But the assassination is very much a part of the Cold War, an unintended consequence of U.S. policies. And once bolted down, it ceases to be unfathomable and becomes another defining post-World War II event, as much as Vietnam or the Cuban missile crisis.

In a letter to the *New York Times* last year, William Manchester, author of *Death of a President*, identified the key source of the public's incomprehension:

To employ what may seem an odd metaphor, there is an esthetic principle here. If you put six million dead Jews on one side of a scale and on the other side put the Nazi regime—the greatest gang of criminals ever to seize control of a modern state—you have a rough balance: greatest crime, greatest criminals.

But if you put the murdered president of the United States on one side of a scale and that wretched waif Oswald on the other side, it doesn't balance. You want to add something weightier to Oswald. It would invest the president's death with meaning, endowing him with martyrdom. He would have died for *something*.

A conspiracy would, of course, do the job nicely.

Actually, though, Oswald carries more weight than Americans have dared admit to themselves. As the Warren Report showed and Gerald Posner, a former Wall Street lawyer, reiterates in *Case Closed*, Oswald was a highly politicized Marxist sociopath. Disappointed with Soviet-style communism, he returned to the United States in June 1962 and began to see Cuba as the purest embodiment of communist ideology, the only truly revolutionary state: In New Orleans, he started his own "Fair Play for Cuba" chapter and walked the streets with a "Viva Fidel" placard.

Oswald, who fervently read left-wing periodicals and monitored Radio Havana, was acutely aware of the depth and nature of U.S. hostility toward Cuba. In all likelihood, he believed the worst rumors of U.S. attempts to overthrow—even assassinate—Castro, information that was later kept from the Warren Commission. After leaving New Orleans, Oswald tried to obtain a visa to Cuba to enlist in the country's defense. But the Cuban embassy failed to see him as a "friend of Cuba," and he returned to Dallas, embittered.

A month later, Kennedy came to town. The opportunity to subject Kennedy to the same dangers plaguing Castro presented itself. As Posner writes, Oswald, who had failed at almost everything he tried, "was suddenly faced with the possibility of having a much greater impact on history." Jack Ruby was equally emotional, violent, and opportunistic, though not political.

Because of the Cold War, the CIA and FBI did not inform the Warren Commission about

the covert operations to remove Castro. Such information, the agencies reasoned, would not contradict the central conclusion and therefore could be, and was, kept secret. Consequently, the Warren Report depicted Oswald as acting upon inchoate feelings (compounded by marital troubles) but without acute political motives.

Twelve years later, however, Senator Frank Church's select committee on intelligence revealed the extent of anti-Castro plotting and the fact that the CIA and FBI had lied by omission to another arm of government. This shattered whatever trust remained in the official story and ripped the lid off a Pandora's box of conspiracy theories. A slightly amended version of the official story should have become the new dogma by the late 1970s: The Kennedys' fixation with Castro had inadvertently motivated a political sociopath. Instead, the disturbing truths were again obfuscated by Cold War exigencies, and by Kennedy partisans, who tried to disavow JFK and RFK's knowledge of the plots.

The 30th anniversary of the assassination, especially since it coincided with the end of the Cold War, should have been marked by attempts to integrate the assassination into history. Of all the offerings, Posner's *Case Closed* would seem the most suitable. But though Posner exhaustively debunks every canard proposed to date about the assassination, he largely ignores the contextual history of Oswald's act and provides little more insight than the Warren Commission did as to why Kennedy became Oswald's target. In addition, Posner's stamina fails him when he writes about events after 1964, and the aftermath is almost as important in understanding the assassination now as the act itself. (In his new biography, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, Richard Reeves doesn't shrink from depicting Kennedy as a Cold Warrior, intent on overthrowing Castro. Yet he fails to draw any connections to the assassination; indeed, Oswald is not even mentioned in the book.)

So long as it lacks historical coherence, the official story will probably never be believed, and Americans will continue to ask questions based on cunningly manufactured falsehoods. To be sure, every nation is sustained by its own myths, which occasionally collide with reality. But when myths are as divorced from reality as these are, they become dangerous. Americans are encouraged to feel nostalgia for a past that never was, wax dreamily about

what might have been, or indulge in elaborate paranoid fantasies about their own government. Such states of mind hardly conduce to a rational consideration of America's role in a new world.

—Max Holland, a contributing editor of the *WQ* and a former Wilson Center Fellow, is writing a biography of John McCloy, a member of the Warren Commission.

OTHER TITLES

History

A HISTORY OF GOD: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. By Karen Armstrong. Knopf. 460 pp. \$27.50

Armstrong's sweeping history of the idea of God is something of a hybrid. Parts of it read like philosophy and theology; parts might best be described as the history of human psychology. The book as a whole reflects the experiences of its author, who, she tells us, spent seven disappointing years as a Roman Catholic nun, lost her faith, left the order, and turned to the study of the history of religion. Today, she teaches at a rabbinical institute and is affiliated with the Association of Muslim Social Scientists.

Armstrong organizes her sprawling material

around the simple notion that seeking God, or seeking an overarching meaning to the universe under whatever name, is just one of those things that human beings do. As many times as the monotheistic idea disappoints them or fails to accord with events, humans come back with yet another variation to bring their God into conformity with what they've learned. This process has given rise to an endless oscillation between conceptions such as the serenely impersonal God of Aristotle—unmoved mover at the top of the hierarchy of forms, existing in the state of divine and unregarding *apatheia* toward the Creation—and the personalized deity in such forms as Jesus.

Much of this is familiar, though it becomes less so once Armstrong traces the same patterns into the rationalist and mystic movements that followed the emergence of Islam. "Just as there are



only a given number of themes in love poetry," she argues, "so too people have kept saying the same things about God over and over again."

The image is of a constant systole and diastole of belief: The monotheistic vision, while exercising what appears to be an irresistible draw on the imaginations of people born with a certain "spiritual talent," is just abstract enough to be exceedingly difficult to maintain. Slippage recurs in several directions: toward idolatry, the reduction of God or God's will to some person or small part of the ideal; toward the anthropomorphism that finally makes it difficult to see the divinity as a Being of a radically different order of existence from oneself; or, the opposite danger, toward the Platonic idealism that becomes so remote that people cease to apply human standards of decency or logic to what's seen as God-inspired. As for the future, Armstrong suggests, "The anthropomorphic idea of God as Lawgiver and Ruler is not adequate to the temper of postmodernity."

Though the tone veers occasionally, as here, toward the peremptory, the author surely is entitled to a few wobbles in the course of writing 400 pages on the (by definition) inexpressible. The compendium hangs together because of her unflinching warmth of appreciation for the human phenomena she records: the steady pull toward the "particularly difficult virtue" of compassion and the continual "shock of human surprise and wonder" that anything should exist at all.

THE AGE OF FEDERALISM: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800. By Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick. Oxford Univ. Press. 925 pp. \$39.95

In the annals of political catastrophe, it is hard to top the story of the Federalists. From the commanding heights of American politics after the ratification of the Constitution in 1788, the Federalists plunged to nearly complete oblivion 12 years later with the election of the Republicans' Thomas Jefferson to the presidency.

The Federalists' collapse undoubtedly owed much to their uncanny knack for the political boner. Even before the brilliant and irascible John Adams succeeded George Washington as president in 1797, the Federalists—never for-

mally constituted as a party—fell to brawling among themselves. By 1800 the nation's two leading Federalists were openly at odds, with Adams disdaining the very idea of party and Alexander Hamilton violently slandering Adams for "vanity without bounds," among other real and imagined defects. But Elkins and McKittrick, historians at Smith College and Columbia University, respectively, argue that deeper historical forces were undermining the Federalist cause. Seeking to extend into the post-Revolutionary era the historical interpretation of the American "mentality" begun by Bernard Bailyn in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967) and lately enlarged by Gordon Wood's *Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1992), they argue that changing "modes of thought and feeling" in America during these years rendered the Federalist idea unworkable.

That idea was a similar but more partisan version of the Founding Fathers' vision of a society ruled by men of "enlightened views and virtuous sentiments." It was a vision that could accommodate neither the rise of new wealth and the political interests it generated nor the arrival and integration of immigrants, especially the Irish. It left no room for the rise of political parties. It was a vision, in short, that was spectacularly unsuited to democratic politics, and especially to the clash of interests and parties in the commercial republic then aborning. (James Madison, the chief author and defender of the Constitution, thus shifted to the Republican camp.)

As the authors show, the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798, one of the Federalists' most dramatic blunders, amounted to little more than a desperate attempt to stamp out the practice of politics. Under these laws, the Federalists in 1799 had John Fries and other rather meek German tax protesters in Pennsylvania dragged from their homes in the middle of the night and tried on charges of treason before what was virtually a kangaroo court. Fries was saved from the gallows the next year only by John Adams's pardon, which the president granted over the angry protests of his own cabinet. But the Federalists lost the once-solid support of the Germans and with it the entire state of Pennsylvania. So it went for the Federalists in case after case—in seeking an active federal government and a standing army,

and in opposing the French Revolution, they proved to be hopelessly out of step with the times.

Unfortunately, this argument about the decline of the Federalists is really one of two books struggling to emerge from the roughly three and a half pounds of smallish print here. The other is a conventional survey of the period, and both books suffer from their cohabitation between the same covers. Oddly, something that would have greatly enhanced both, an extended discussion of the economic and demographic forces that reshaped the country during the Federalist years, is missing. A delightful chapter-long digression on the siting and construction of the new national capital, which itself contains digressions on matters such as the Egyptian hieroglyph for "city," is typical of the book's charms. Read as a kind of Federalist era omnibus, it succeeds.

AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURES. *By Richard Ellis. Oxford Univ. Press. 251 pp. \$45*

Whatever else may be said about it, revisionism is scholarship's one dependable growth industry. Ellis, a history-minded political scientist, here offers a new critique of Louis Hartz's decades-old "consensus theory." According to that much-attacked theory, political and social disagreements in America occur within the dominant and largely unchallenged framework of liberal capitalism.

Ellis urges historians to cast aside Hartz and consider the more capacious model of anthropologist Mary Douglas. While consensus scholars deem competitive individualism the defining aspect of the American social and political experience, Douglas finds it to be one of five "competing cultural biases." The other four are hierarchical collectivism, egalitarianism, fatalism, and "hermitude." (That's three more "isms" and one more "tude," for those keeping score.)

Ellis finds challenges to competitive individualism everywhere: in Puritan New England, with its strong group orientation and orthodox community rules that limited individual autonomy; in the socialist utopian communities of the mid-19th century; in Jane Addams's Hull House, which, as Addams said, provided "little islands of affection in the vast sea of impersonal forces."

Louis Hartz believed that the absence of feudal-

ism in America meant that it never developed hierarchical political and social cultures. But Ellis finds a great deal of hierarchy in American social life: among Virginia's Anglican gentry, among 19th-century New England Federalists, in the civil-service reform movement of the late 19th century, and, of course, in the system of slavery.

Armed with new data and theories on race and class, scholars have been attacking the consensus theory with some success since the 1960s. Ellis brings a new historical/anthropological dimension to this campaign. Unfortunately, the framework he proposes is somewhat strained. He occasionally ignores the complexity of historical figures and movements, and seems perplexed when they don't fit neatly into his pigeonholes. "Paine's credo was 'question authority' and Madison's was 'check authority,'" he writes, citing Madison's success at limiting executive authority in the Constitution. But look harder: Madison's original draft, known as the Virginia Plan, provided for a truly powerful national executive and a congress that could veto state legislation.

What Ellis inadvertently shows is that there *has* always been a consensus: a consensus of contradictory attitudes. Americans—the People of Paradox, as Michael Kammen put it 20 years ago—have agreed to disagree. Of course, *how* the country has been able to live with antithetical beliefs without ripping apart at the seams remains the unanswered question.

Arts & Letters

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling. *By Diana Trilling. Harcourt Brace. 442 pp. \$24.95*

Long before his death in 1975, Lionel Trilling—University Professor at Columbia and perhaps the most distinguished literary critic in America—was a distant figure. It was widely believed that he had refined himself out of existence. If Morningside Heights were England, one ex-student griped, he would have been known as "Professor Sir Lionel Trilling." When he spoke of human consciousness, he characteristically dropped the definite article and addressed himself directly to "mind," as if it were a downstairs neighbor.

Lionel Trilling did not want to be remembered this way, Diana Trilling claims, and, thanks to her memoir, he won't be any longer. The Lionel Trilling who appears here is a sympathetic, troubled, and complex man who was prone to bouts of depression and harbored a secret contempt for "seriousness and responsibility." Like her husband, Diana herself hid "private timidities" beneath a confident and magisterial public persona.

In this intimate, plainspoken memoir, Diana unflinchingly records the Trillings' illnesses and phobias, as well as their faithful drinking habits (they were "never wholly sober" in each other's company before their marriage), chronic indebtedness (which lasted until 1970), and interminable adventures in psychoanalysis (three of her seven analysts died while they were treating her). The book has much wit, and little mirth. "For more than a decade," she writes, "Lionel and I squandered life not in pleasure but in fearfulness."

Considering their low opinion of happiness, it appears their marriage was quite happy. Diana lent her husband confidence and improved his writing. Yet even as Lionel encouraged her to develop an independent public voice, she never doubted that her "first responsibility" was to the home. It was an unequal partnership, but a partnership all the same.

As a female writer starting out in the 1940s, Diana overcame many obstacles, not the least of them a Radcliffe education designed to teach diligent wives how to recite "favorite poems of Shelley or Keats" while "drying our dishes." When she began to contribute book reviews to *The Nation*, Lionel's friends insisted she write under her maiden name so as not to embarrass him in public. She refused, and her writing career quickly acquired a momentum of its own. Her first reviews skewered the "little man" heroes of left-wing novelists and challenged their faulty assumption that "capitalism was responsible for all the woes of mankind, from stuttering to sexual impotence." When Lionel Trilling wrote of the "dark and bloody crossroads" where literature and politics meet, he may have had his wife's work in mind. Prone to sudden panics and fears, though, she pursued a life of diffidence and caution: "I could more readily challenge Sidney Hook in political debate than defend my place in line at a supermarket."

Diana Trilling concludes her memoir in 1950, the year her husband established his reputation with the publication of *The Liberal Imagination*. In the preface to that book, he wrote that the "job of criticism" is to "recall liberalism to its essential imagination of variousness and possibility, which implies the awareness of complexity and difficulty." These words were Trilling's touchstones, his credo, and he did not choose them hastily.

Some of the exquisitely crafted ambivalences of *The Liberal Imagination* were experienced, his wife's memoir shows, as messy and intractable contradictions. The man who always said, "It's more complicated . . ." was quite complicated himself. Among other things, Diana Trilling's book will forever silence those critics who charge that her husband led a life of airy abstraction. She herself is proof to the contrary.

MARK MORRIS. *By Joan Acocella. Farrar, Straus. 287 pp. \$27.50*

By the early 1980s American modern dance had strayed far from its originators' intentions. Isadora Duncan's turn-of-the-century Grecian improvisations and Martha Graham's midcentury expressionistic dramas had given way during the '60s and '70s to conceptualist choreographers' theater pieces: concerts staged on spiral staircases; musicless pieces in which the dancers spoke; whole evenings in which "real" people—nondancers—stooped, sat, and ran. Although modern dance had always puzzled the uninitiated, it had become too self-absorbed to notice that the audience was losing interest.

But dance watchers stirred in 1984, when a 27-year-old choreographer named Mark Morris presented three new works at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Morris was not "in-your-face," not even avant-garde; he eschewed the use of theatrical tricks to create visual interest. As dance critic Joan Acocella writes in her new biography, "His work is not a Happening. . . . There is no effort to break down the fourth wall." Morris's goal, instead, is to communicate feeling, logic, and emotion through dance steps. As he puts it, "My philosophy of dance? I make it up, and you watch it. End of philosophy."

Now 36 and still actively choreographing—

indeed, perhaps just entering his artistic prime—Morris may seem not quite ready for the confining entombment of a biography. Yet given that Acocella credits Morris with rescuing American modern dance from minimalist torpor, an exploration of his methods may not be premature.

An exceptionally talented dancer himself—though tall and beefy, he achieves a simultaneous playfulness and seriousness, massiveness and grace—Morris soon became frustrated with the artifice of ballet (“[I] got tired of pretending to be a straight guy in love with a ballerina”) and the shortsightedness of modern dance. In 1980 he formed his own company and set to creating dances that unabashedly hearken back to the work of modern dance’s founders: the naturalism of Duncan, the exoticism of Ruth St. Denis, the lonely inner landscapes of Graham, the exaltation of Doris Humphrey, the heroism of José Limón.

Yet Morris’s choreography is distinguished from his predecessors’ by three traits that are strongly associated with ballet and usually considered anathema to modern. First, he is not afraid to make dances that tell stories. His inspirations range from pop novelist Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* to the essays of Roland Barthes. Second, Morris understands music as well as he understands dance. Although he favors baroque choral music, his tastes range from Vivaldi to the Violent Femmes. Third, Morris favors “classical” structure over ostensible (or real) randomness. He’s a sucker for symmetry and doesn’t worry, like the generation of choreographers before him, about coordinating his dance steps note by note with the music.

The source of Morris’s appeal—itself subject to wide debate in the dance world—lies in his synthesis of existing steps, and in his accessibility, whether that accessibility is provided by a tragic story line, a witty costume, or a gesture that means what it looks like.

Unfortunately, *Mark Morris* as book is less accessible than Mark Morris as choreographer. Sometimes simplistically descriptive, at others the book presumes the reader’s familiarity with ballet terminology. Still, the choreographer emerges as feverishly creative, exuberantly ambitious, and disarmingly vulnerable. It’s too soon to tell if Mark Morris is the savior of American modern dance, but Acocella’s biography offers an early glimpse of what may be a resuscitation in progress.

WILLIAM FAULKNER AND SOUTHERN HISTORY. By Joel Williamson. Oxford Univ. Press. 509 pp. \$35

“History,” says the young Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce’s epic *Ulysses*, “is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.” One can also imagine William Faulkner uttering such a lament about his troubled cultural and historical heritage. Unlike Dedalus, Faulkner was neither an escapist—he rarely left his native Mississippi—nor an idealist. Indeed, Faulkner’s love for and loyalty to the American South, the region he wrote about so obsessively, was tempered by a strong sense of its failings: its ignorance, poverty, and racism. Faulkner’s literature, writes Williamson, was “an exhaustive critique of Southern Society and . . . its failure to bring the human values inherent in man, evident in the natural setting, into the world.”

In his new biography, Williamson, a professor of history at the University of North Carolina, examines four generations of Faulkner’s predecessors in Mississippi—William himself does not appear until page 141—and through these lives constructs a detailed historical image of “the world which constructed William Faulkner . . . the universe of race, class, sex and violence, of family, clan and community.” Inquiring into whether Faulkner’s great-grandfather, Colonel William C. Falkner, maintained a “shadow family” (an unacknowledged marriage to and children with a female slave), Williamson provides an enlivening historical explanation of miscegenation in the South, a central theme in Faulkner’s literature.

Although Joseph Blotner’s two-volume, 2,000-page biography of Faulkner, published in 1974 and revised in 1984, remains the most comprehensive biographical source available, Williamson’s tenacious sleuthing yields an occasional nugget of fresh information for the serious Faulkner scholar. He debunks many commonly held myths about Colonel Falkner: for instance, that he was a great slaveholding planter and that his wife Lizzie saved his life when she was only nine years old. Yet Williamson indulges in a bit of mythmaking himself. One theory regarding grandfather Charlie Butler’s abrupt departure—that he ran off with an “octaroon” (someone one-

eighth black) and sired “perhaps three or four children who would have been William Faulkner’s cousins”—is so speculative that it is written under the qualifying section title “Maybe.”

Moreover, in his determination to find Faulkner’s one and only literary inspiration in the culture of the American South, Williamson does not leave open the possibility that Faulkner was greatly influenced by other sources, notably his artistic contemporaries—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Joyce. And Williamson’s interpretation of Faulkner’s literary texts often passes from the banal to the trite, with insights such as “buildings stood for artificial, man-made institutions and the ‘outdoors’ for the natural order.”

Nevertheless, the book is a valuable demonstration of what the cultural historian can contribute to literary interpretation. While William Faulkner never read books about Southern history, he once noted that “he was just saturated with it.” So too was his art.

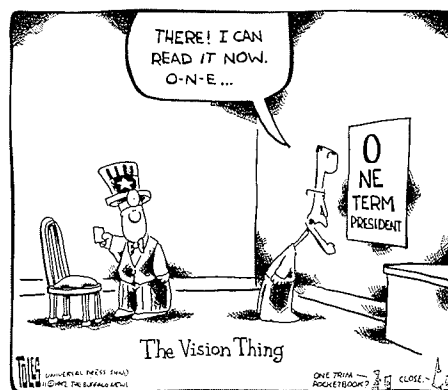
Contemporary Affairs

WHITE HOUSE DAZE: The Unmaking of Domestic Policy in the Bush Years. By Charles Kolb. Free Press. 387 pp. \$22.95

HELL OF A RIDE: Backstage at the White House Follies 1989–1993. By John Podhoretz. Simon & Schuster. 249 pp. \$21

As George Bush’s presidency recedes into political history, two young Reaganites who served under Bush have stepped forward to offer their spin on the rise and fall of an administration. Both books have a great deal in common: Each scolds Bush for not being more like Reagan, each praises the same heroes and fingers the same villains, and each falls under the category of political memoir that Peggy Noonan has called “If Only They’d Listened to Me, the Fools!”

In *White House Daze*, Charles Kolb, formerly a domestic policy adviser, engagingly describes a White House gripped by inactivity and arrogance. Since Bush himself never bothered to define a “vision thing” for domestic policy, his senior underlings emphasized process over ideology. Believing in little beyond themselves, they



fought hard for nothing of importance. “The agenda was a nonagenda,” writes Kolb.

Kolb lodges the standard Republican complaint against Bush: He wrecked his presidency because he broke his promise. The “no new taxes” pledge was just campaign rhetoric. Bush might have recovered from this blunder after the Persian Gulf War by launching an attack on domestic problems with innovative proposals such as school choice and tort reform. But he decided to coast along on saved-up political capital. The enormous egos of Chief of Staff John Sununu and Budget Director Richard Darman only made matters worse, Kolb claims. Both men unflinchingly blocked creative reform efforts.

The Bush administration’s paralysis is on full display in Kolb’s best chapter, which focuses on a single day, December 12, 1990. On that day, the administration had to confront three small crises: the poorly handled firing of Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos, former “drug czar” William Bennett’s surprise refusal to assume command of the Republican National Committee, and education official Michael Williams’s decision to ban funding for colleges and universities that administered or accepted race-based scholarships. To be sure, any administration would have had its hands full that Wednesday morning. But to a White House with no inner compass, the day’s frenetic activity achieved an almost comic quality as the nation’s leaders aimlessly mucked about with no sense of what they wanted to accomplish. As Kolb shows in great detail, almost every day was December 12.

John Podhoretz’s *Hell of a Ride* offers much the same diagnosis. But while Kolb pays close attention to actual policy, Podhoretz, who worked in

the drug czar's office for about half a year, focuses more on White House "culture": the social chasm separating the West Wing from the Old Executive Office Building, the catty in-fighting over press leaks, an obsession with perks verging on parody. A series of "Freeze Frames" between chapters offers brief glimpses into the lives of unnamed staffers. Narrated in the second person, they provide readers with a vicarious tour of the Bush administration. Podhoretz can turn a good phrase, but his metaphors need pruning—career government officials "attach themselves and their careers to the public trough with glue as strong as barnacles"—and he sometimes comes off as too clever by half.

Both books convey a strong sense of betrayal as they describe the Bush administration seducing, frustrating, and finally abandoning its many young and ideology-driven staffers. To them, Bush's failure—not as a Republican, but as Reagan's heir—was a personal affront.

THE FATE OF HONG KONG: The Coming of 1997 and What Lies Beyond. *By Gerald Segal.* St. Martin's. 234 pp. \$21.95

What exactly will happen at midnight on June 30, 1997, when the six million people living in the British colony of Hong Kong are handed over to the People's Republic of China? Journalists and businesspeople frequently envision nightmare scenarios. According to one, Hong Kong, accustomed to running itself as a near-perfect market economy, declares its *de facto* independence; the Chinese Communist rulers then forceably put down the "rebellion" and in the process reduce the island to an economic backwater. Even now, the flight of worried emigrants from Hong Kong—who by 1997 may number one million—is putting a damper on the economy.

Segal, editor of the *Pacific Review*, believes that such fears are exaggerated. What may happen, he argues, is in fact happening already. Determined that China avoid the Soviet Union's fate, Deng Xiaoping has put economic growth first and allowed China's regions to develop their own trade with other countries. For the past decade, China's southern Guangdong province has formed a trading alliance with Hong Kong,

the latter acting as the external engine for an unprecedented prosperity in a mainland Chinese region. This economic interdependence, Segal argues, will also reduce the risk of Beijing's intervention. Moreover, further successes in the Guangdong-Hong Kong region will accelerate the economic decentralization of the country, making it easier for the outside world to deal with China.

Such large-scale forecasts, Segal admits, are risky. At present growth rates, China could well be the world's largest economy after the year 2010. Then there's the fact of China's history: Healthy economic regionalism is quite different from a disunited China in chaos, for which there are precedents. But while Hong Kong's economy will surely suffer in the transfer, at this point the potential for overall benefit seems greater than that for overall disaster.

IN EUROPE'S NAME: Germany and the Divided Continent. *By Timothy Garton Ash.* Random House. 680 pp. \$27.50

Timothy Garton Ash is among the more distinguished contemporary journalists specializing in Central European affairs. He has written vivid accounts of the Solidarity movement in Poland and the 1989 revolutions in Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, and Berlin. Now he turns his attention to a question that is as big as any in the modern world: How will a reunited Germany exercise its power in the future? To find possible answers, Garton Ash painstakingly reconstructs the history of West Germany's foreign policy from the 1950s to the late 1980s, particularly its strategy of *Ostpolitik*.

The brainchild of Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, Willy Brandt, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Ostpolitik* was West Germany's strategy for dealing with its neighbors to the east, and was consistently implemented right up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Its central aim was "normalization": establishing full diplomatic and other relations with the communist countries. Most important, it sought to "stabilize" East Germany both by recognizing its legitimacy and by providing hard currency when its economy faltered. The ultimate goal was reunification.

Reunification was surely achieved, but, as Garton Ash shows, the path to this end was

"radically different from that intended or expected. It was hedged with ironies and paved with unconscious as well as conscious paradoxes." The greatest irony is that *Ostpolitik* achieved its goal inadvertently: By propping up East Germany with recognition and financial support, West Germany allowed the communist regime to skate along without ever attempting the political and economic reforms that other Soviet satellites had to institute. This made East Germany a particularly hollow state, and helps explain why the regime collapsed so completely when it was challenged.

To be sure, West German policy was "very patient, consistent, predictable . . . waiting for the big chance." But when its "consistency hardened into rigidity," it ended up putting West Germany's interests—"order"—above the interests and ideals of Europe, most notably freedom. Moreover, it failed to take note of the broader changes occurring in the communist world. Nevertheless, *Ostpolitik* did succeed in removing an unattractive image of Germany, and, in conjunction with the aggressive public diplomacy of the United States, did contribute to "the necessary mixture of incentive and deterrent, punishment and reward" that helped tear down the Iron Curtain throughout Eastern Europe.

Today, Germany is still "in the condition of becoming." Unlike most powers in history, as historian Fritz Stern has said, Germany is being given a second chance. But its dilemma is essentially the same as it was when the German state's first chance arose a century ago. Being of that "critical size," which Chancellor Kiesinger described in 1967 as "too big to play no role in the balance of forces, too small to keep the forces around it in balance by itself," Germany has to decide what kind of power it will be. Will it play the traditional great-power role or forge a new role based on the conscious habit of not exerting its power to the full?

Garton Ash is not overly optimistic that Germany will use its renewed power—both military and economic—wisely. The style of *Ostpolitik* will probably prevail, which could lead to a cynical exploitation of the ideal of a united Europe for largely German interests. Moreover, the distinctive characteristics of East German culture have to be considered: "It [is] possible that tol-

erance, pluralism, democracy and the virtues of ever closer cooperation [will] spread from west to east." But it is just as possible that "intolerance, tribalism and the forces of disintegration [will] spread from east to west." The re-emergence—however marginal—of a very old-fashioned feeble nationalism at street level in Germany can only reinforce the sober view that Garton Ash takes of the likely future.

Science & Technology

AT THE HAND OF MAN: Peril and Hope for Africa's Wildlife. By Raymond Bonner. Knopf. 322 pp. \$24

THE LAST PANDA. By George B. Schaller. Univ. of Chicago. 291 pp. \$24.95

Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi's 1989 decision to torch \$3 million worth of confiscated elephant ivory was not greeted with universal acclaim by conservationists. Many felt the stunt would serve only to blunt criticism of Kenya's inconsistent enforcement of poaching laws, not to curb such slaughter in the future. Proceeds from the ill-gotten ivory might better be used to fund prevention programs, or even to help feed Kenya's people.

The incident underscores many of the difficulties surrounding contemporary conservation efforts. Individuals and organizations devoted to saving endangered species often reside in Western countries far removed from the areas where such animals live. They have difficulty appreciating the indigenous perspective on conservation, and often fail to anticipate the potential consequences of their proposals.

Not surprisingly, the leaders of many African nations, carrying bitter memories of the colonial period, resent foreign intrusion into their affairs. Many nations, beset by civil strife and economic woes, also lack the resources or even the desire to preserve endangered animals. A curious dilemma exists concerning large-animal herds. While government officials recognize that the animals attract tourist dollars, maintaining large preserves inhibits efforts to convert land to agricultural use. And should an elephant wander out of a park and trample a farmer's crops, it is hard to convince the farmer not to kill it, espe-

cially since its meat can provide food and its ivory can be sold on the black market.

Bonner admires Zimbabwe's solution to the dilemma. There, tourist dollars generated by interest in wildlife "correlate as closely as possible with where the wildlife is." This provides local people with an incentive to protect animals; elsewhere, such funds go into national treasuries, from which they rarely filter down to the rural populations.



George Schaller, a noted naturalist, finds similar circumstances threatening the giant panda. The panda exists in the wild only in remote sections of China, but the combined pressures of poaching (a panda pelt fetches more than \$10,000 on the black market, while a live bear can bring more than 10 times that amount) and diminished habitat have reduced its numbers to fewer than 1,000.

In recent years, political and economic realities have all but ended panda research, and while provisional plans exist to set aside preserves, no real action has occurred. The declining numbers of wild pandas has forced Beijing to abandon the practice of sealing diplomatic relations with gifts of breeding pairs. (Hence the arrival in 1972 of Ling-Ling, since deceased, and Hsing-Hsing to Washington's National Zoo.) They have in fact come up with an alternative practice that Schaller finds more disturbing: lending out bears for limited-term zoo exhibition in return for cash. Conservation officials feel the practice puts undue stress on the remaining pandas and reduces the likelihood of their producing new cubs in captivity, and they have pressured the Chinese government to reconsider it.

How best to save the giant panda? Schaller's

conclusions are remarkably similar to Bonner's: The "effort must involve local people, based on their interests, skills, self-reliance, and traditions, and it must initiate programs that offer them spiritual and economic benefits." Conservation, he adds, "cannot be imposed from above."

NUCLEAR RENEWAL: Common Sense About Energy. By Richard Rhodes. *Whittle Books in association with Viking Publications.* 127 pp. \$17.50

Author of the prize-winning saga *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1986), Richard Rhodes here looks at the peacetime fallout from that endeavor: nuclear power's current problems and future promise. Today about 100 nuclear plants operate in the United States, more than in any other country, but far fewer than the thousands once predicted for an era of electricity that would be "too cheap to meter."

Rhodes blames nuclear power's "present impasse" on contentious political control by federal and state authorities and unrealistic economic decisions that priced atomic-generated electricity out of the market. "The truth," writes Rhodes, "is that nuclear power was killed, not by its enemies, but by its friends." These friends included greedy manufacturers and contractors who escalated plant size (and costs) for elusive "economies of scale," federal regulators who ignored the financial consequences of their rules, utility executives and rate commissioners who gladly passed rising expenses on to consumers, and members of Congress who pampered the infant nuclear industry with the 1957 Price-Anderson Act, which indemnified utilities from liability for their nuclear accidents.

But while Rhodes explains nuclear power's problems astutely, his account of its promise is misplaced. For example, he hopes to solve today's political and economic problems with a technical solution: the integral fast reactor (IFR). This sodium-cooled nuclear power plant is a beguiling "breeder" reactor of the 1950s, once touted for making extra plutonium fuel but now—in a still unproven metamorphosis—also expected to consume plutonium from other reactors. Rhodes says the IFR will dispel political opposition because it is safer than today's water-

cooled reactors and will ease economic pressures by burning some nuclear wastes. But besides being overly optimistic, Rhodes minimizes potential problems with high-level radioactive waste disposal and scants the dangers of the IFR's sodium coolant, which can burn in air or explode in water.

Rhodes is right to praise the Japanese and the French for centralizing and simplifying their nuclear-power programs. Their accomplishments stand in marked contrast to jurisdictional confusions that have hampered U.S. development. But such praise ignores how differently the French, Japanese, and American political and economic systems work. He also glides through some conjectural risk-benefit statistics for different energy sources and activities, concluding that coal burning, driving small cars, and taking birth control pills are all more dangerous than running nuclear plants—without conceding just how controversial such calculations still are.

In the end, this little book is persuasive but not convincing. Rhodes pleads for "leadership and public education" to beget safer reactor designs and to boost political support for nuclear power. But because the nuclear enterprise must be so tightly controlled, the real challenge still lies with reforming the United States's wobbly federal-state regulatory system. To duck the fundamental problem only invites new grief from nuclear power's next generation of "friends."

SCIENCE AND ANTI-SCIENCE. By Gerald Holton. Harvard. 203 pp. \$24.95

Václav Havel is not a creationist, but in *Disturbing the Peace* (1990) the Czech president-playwright voiced a sentiment shared by the creationists: that the decline of traditional religion has left a hole in the fabric of Western civilization that science cannot fill. It seems odd to speak of Havel and the creationists in the same breath. To Gerald Holton, a professor of physics and the history of science at Harvard University, it is both natural and important to do so. If modernity is defined by the culturally dominant posi-

tion of science, we should not be surprised if the premodern and nascent postmodern make common cause to bring science down. Yet Holton thinks scientists by and large *are* surprised, and inadequately alarmed.

The largely disconnected pieces in this volume are given some coherence by the last essay, "The Anti-Science Phenomenon," which explores the nature, sources, and motivations of the disparate forces in Western society opposed to a scientific worldview. Holton assigns the skeptics to four categories: philosophers who view science as a social myth and seek to "abolish the distinction between science and fiction," disaffected intellectuals who feel left behind by the dizzying rate of modern scientific discovery, "New Age" thinkers who believe that "one of the worst sins of modern thought is the concept of objectively reachable data," and a group that worries that modern science is "the projection of Oedipal obsessions."

Appropriately, Holton is most concerned with how easily antiscience forces can be manipulated by political concerns. The Nazis exploited Germany's alternative science movement for the horrific policy of "race purification." The Soviet Union imposed Lysenkoism—the notion that acquired characteristics can be inherited—on its scientific community. Scientists initially regarded Lysenkoism as a passing fad, but the theory reigned for several decades, with disastrous consequences for the practice of science in the Soviet Union. Today, right-wing activists such as Jimmy Swaggart and Pat Robertson espouse antievolutionism as "part of an attack on secular humanism," which they see as an element of a "Satanic ideology."

Holton reviews past and potential future strategies for defending science, but offers no panaceas beyond eternal vigilance. Nor does he argue explicitly that it *is* within science's power to influence what does ultimately fill the void left by religion. His broad erudition and synthetic intellect help define the problem, but solutions, as Havel would say, are beyond the scope of science.

POETRY

P E T E R H U C H E L

Selected and Introduced by Joseph Brodsky

In the 20th century, German history has done its best to obscure German poetry. Murder makes better copy, and when foreign troops march into your country you are not in a mood to read their bards and classics, unless of course you work for intelligence. Nor does your interest get much of a boost from those troops' defeat. Nearly 50 years after World War II's carnage, we are still more familiar with the names of the Third Reich's leaders than with those of Else Lasker-Schuler, Gottfried Benn, Gunter Eich, Karl Krolov, Ingeborg Bachmann, or Peter Huchel. Apparently, the dust hasn't settled yet.

Most likely, it never will, which alone turns dust into a form of existence. It turns out that, among its other properties, dust also possesses a voice:

*Gedenke meiner,
Flüstert der Staub.*

Remember me,
whispers the dust.

This is what the dust says according to one of the finest German poets of this century, Peter Huchel. Huchel was born in 1903 and died in 1981. He grew up on a farm in the eastern part of Germany, in Prussia, and studied in Berlin, Freiburg, and Vienna. Between wars, he traveled a fair bit in Hungary, Romania, Turkey, and France. That was a lean time for most Germans, and he'd often pay for his sojourns in these places with the only marketable skill he had acquired in his youth: farm work.

Huchel's poems were first published in various periodicals in the 1920s. In the '30s, he, like many a poet at the time, took up writing verse radio plays, which met with considerable success. In 1933, though, he withdrew his soon-to-be-published first collection of poems because he didn't want to be affiliated with a pro-Nazi group of poets. The war found him rather late, apparently after some looking, on his family farm near Potsdam, and he was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1941. By that time, he was 38 years old.

Those who served with him in the trenches recall the man scribbling in his notebook while occasionally glancing out the embrasure. In 1945, shortly before the war ended, he deserted to the Russians and was interned. But, partly because of his reputedly anti-Nazi cycle of poems, "Twelve Nights," written during the war, partly because of the socialist sympathies of his youth, he was soon released and started to work in East Berlin for the state radio. In 1949 he became the editor of a highly influential magazine called *Sinn und Form* (Sense and Form).

He stayed on at this job for the next 13 years, in the course of which he

also published several collections of his poetry and reaped various awards in the German Democratic Republic. In 1962, however, because of his independent editorial policies, he was dismissed and placed under house arrest. Presumably because of his prominence on the GDR cultural scene, nothing further was done, and in 1971, as a result of appeals from PEN International, Huchel was allowed to leave. He settled down in West Germany where, 10 years later, he died. He was married twice and had two children.

By the standards of the time and especially of the place, this poet's life was rather uneventful. What's more, his poetry carries very few references to his actual circumstances. One's mind is always more complex than one's reality, and the poet presumably thought it bad manners to draw on a biography so common. He simply was a complex man who ended up with a very primitive history on his lap, or to put it a bit more accurately, he ended up in that history's clutches. To capitalize on his experience in verse would amount to intelligence honoring instinct. This had nothing to do with escapism or even the spirit of privacy, paramount in German lyric poetry for most of this century. This had to do with the man's preservation of his dignity: by showing history where it belongs.

Peter Huchel is often billed as a nature poet. Definitions are always reductive, and in the case of Huchel this label is about as misleading as it is in the case of Robert Frost. They indeed have quite a bit in common, except that unlike Frost, for whom nature mirrors man's negative potential, Huchel, whose work is imbued with a very strong Christian ethos, sees nature as a holy sacrament. This attitude was so strong in Huchel that it led him temporarily to perceive the GDR program of agricultural collectivization as the long-overdue implementation of natural laws.

Huchel's poetry is indeed marked by an instinctive reliance on the natural environment, but the label won't stick. What his poems get from nature is a bit more than nature offers. The severest and most elegiac voice in the German poetry of his time, Huchel not so much describes a landscape as reads what's been wrought upon "terrestrial things" by a pen harder held and more dispassionate than his own. Nature for him, to put it simply, is a page covered dark with a fairly dark writ.

The poems you will find here belong, however, to a later, postwar Huchel. Men's last words are often of greater consequence than their first, and this goes for poets as well. As one perceptive critic of Huchel has remarked, he began with hymns and ended with psalms. This is a fair description of this poet's evolution. In his later poetry, nature plays a lesser role, since it is no longer for him home or solace. But it is the same implacable, immanent pen, scribbling here slowly upon a terrestrial thing that is, this time, the poet's own heart: a shrinking page increasingly conscious of its finality. History enters here, but not so much that of Germany as of his whole life and with it, of the civilization to which he belongs and which he is about to exit. That is what accounts for that life and that civilization overlapping, and for the poems' long view. As perspectives go, this one is fairly universal.

"How can one write poetry after Auschwitz?" asked Theodor Adorno. It is for a German poet, obviously, to provide the answer.

The Angels

A shadow stands,
crosses the room,
smoke,
where an old woman,
the goose-wing
in her feeble hand,
brushes the oven shelf.
A fire burns.
Remember me,
whispers the dust.

November fog and rain, rain
and the sleep of cats.
The sky black
and muddy above the river.
Time flows from gaping emptiness,
flows over the fins
and gills of the fish
and over the frozen stare
of the angels,
who drop down with blackened wings,
behind the gaunt twilight, to the daughters of Cain.

A shadow stands,
crosses the room,
smoke.
A fire burns.
Remember me,
whispers the dust.

The Ammonite

Sick of the gods and their fires
I lived without the law
in the deepest part of the valley of Hinnom.
Gone were my old companions,
the balance of heaven and earth;
only the ram was true,
his festering lameness dragged across the stars.
Under his horns of stone,
their smokeless glimmering, I slept at night,
fired urns each day
that I'd smash to pieces on the rocks
in the evening sun.
I never saw the twilight, a cat in the cedars,
or the birds take wing,
the water's splendor
as it ran across my arms,
while I mixed the vats of clay.
The smell of death made me blind.

Aristeas I

First light of dawn,
as the gold of the dead lay buried
in clouds. The wind slept there,
in branches
where the crow sat plumed in fog.

The branches flew,
its wingbeat hard against the gray light
of the alders,
the milky skin of the steppe.

I, Aristeas,
as crow has followed god,
I wend my way,
drawn onward by a dream,
through laurel groves of fog,
to search the morning on stiff wings.
I've spied
in snow-encrusted caves,
faces, one-eyed, lit by fires,
sunk deep in smoke.
And horses stood, manes frozen,
hitched to posts with reins of soot.

The crow brushed past
the wintry gate,
through starved undergrowth.
The frost stirred.
And a parched tongue spoke:
Here is a past without pain.

Aristeas II

The solitude
of piers in brackish water;
at the leaky planking of a boat
a dead rat scrapes.
Here I sit at noon,
in the shade of the customs house,
an old man
on a millstone.

Once a river pilot,
later I steered ships, poor cargoes,
through the tides up north.
The captains paid in contraband,
it was enough to live, with women enough
and sailcloth.

The names grow dim;
no one deciphers the text
that lingers behind my lids.
I, Aristeas, son of Caystrobios,
am missing, presumed dead,
exiled by the god
to this narrow dirty harbor,
not far from the Cimmerian boat,
where people trade in skins and amulets.

At night the fulling mill still pounds.
Sometimes I squat like a crow,
high up in the poplars by the river,
motionless in the setting sun,
awaiting the death
that dwells on ice-bound rafts.

The Grave of Odysseus

None shall find
the grave of Odysseus,
no thrust of the spade
the encrusted helmet
in the mist of petrified bones.

Don't look for the cave
beneath the earth,
where a draught of soot, a mere shadow,
injured by the torch's flaring pitch,
went to its dead companions,
its hands raised, weaponless,
smeared with the blood of slaughtered sheep.

All is mine, said the dust;
the sun's grave beyond the desert,
reefs filled with the water's deafening roar,
the endless noon, that still gives warning
to the sea-pirate's son from Ithaca,
the rudder, gnawed by salt,
the charts and manifests
of the ancient Homer.

(The Elder Tree)

The elder opens its moons,
all passes into silence;
the fluid lights in the stream,
the water-borne planetarium
of Archimedes,
astronomical signs,
Babylonian in their origins.

Son,
Enkidu, my little son,
you abandoned your mother, the gazelle,
your father, the wild donkey,
that you might go to Uruk with the whore.
The milk-bearing goats have fled.
The steppe is withered.

Behind the city gate
with its seven bolts of iron
Gilgamesh, who wanders both heaven and earth,
has shown you
how to cut the cords of death.

Noon burned darkly on the brickworks,
Gold lay darkly in the chamber of the king.
Turn back, Enkidu.
What has Gilgamesh bequeathed?
The graceful head of the gazelle downcast.
The dust rained on your bones.

Elegy

It is your hour,
man upon Chios,
it draws near to you over the rocks
and sets fire to your heart.
The evening breeze mows
the shadows of the pines.
Your eye is blind.
But in the gull's cry
you know the sea's metallic shimmer,
the sea with the dolphin's black skin,
the stiff oar-stroke of the wind
hard by the coast.

Down the path,
where tufts of goat-hair
wave upon the thistle,
the cithara, seven-stringed, holds forth
in the hum of telegraph wires.
A single wall has remained,
crowned with undulating tiles.
The clay pot shattered,
in which life's bill of sale,
sealed, has lain.

Rock-high spindrift,
rock-lapping breakers,
sea with the cat shark's skin.
At the cape of a cloud,
awash in the swell of sky,
white with the salt
of wave after receding wave,
is the moon's lightship.
It illumines the voyage to Ios,
where boys wait
on the shore
with empty nets
and lice in their hair.

Melpomene

Bitter, the forest, full of thorns,
no coastal breeze, no foothills,
the grass lay matted, our death to come
with the sound of horses' hooves, endless
across the low hills of the steppes, we returned
to search the sky for battlements
that would not give way.

Hostile the villages,
huts emptied in haste,
smoked skins in rafters,
snare nets and bone amulets.
Throughout the land only evil venerated,
animal heads in the mist, fortunes told
with cut wands of the willow.

Later, in the north,
stag-eyed men
rode by on horseback.
We buried our dead.
It was hard
to sink our axes in that earth,
we used fire to thaw the ground.

The blood of roosters killed in sacrifice
was not accepted.

Brandenburg

Behind cold pitch ovens
I walked in the burnt fragrance of pine bogs,
where a farmhand sat at his woodcutter's fire;
he didn't look up,
he set the teeth of his saw.

In the evening
the red Uhlan still dances
with farmers' daughters on the threshing floor of fog,
his tunic open
to the swarms from off the marshes.

Submerged
in the water hemlock
the Prussian calash.

View from a Winter Window

White willows, rounded by dancing snow,
brooms that sweep the mist.
Wood and misfortune
grow at night.
My gauge
the fever's curve.

Who goes there without light
and without mouth,
dragging a steel trap
across the ice?

Sages of the forest,
the foxes with bad teeth,
sit aloof in the darkness
and stare into the fire.

Under the Constellation of Hercules

A town,
no larger
than the circle
a buzzard traces
in the evening sky.

A wall,
rough-hewn, stained
with reddish lichen.
The sound of a bell, that carries
over shimmering water
the smoke
of olive.
Fire,
fed by straw
and damp foliage,
stirred by voices
you don't recognize.

Already straining forward in the night,
in freezing harness,
Hercules drags
the chained harrow of his stars
across the northern sky.

Winter Morning in Ireland

At night the devil sits
in the fog's confessional
and counsels desperate souls.
In the morning he's transformed himself
into a magpie,
flying mute above the narrow path.

In winter's dungeon
on branches of scrub oak,
the brittle gold of the dead.
Light roots out the cold.
Familiar faces of the rooftops
reappear.

Above the sea
the genuflection of the wind,
the first braying of a donkey.
The shadow of a bird drifts
across the cliff's rocky precipice.

The surf,
its gliding ramparts of water and light,
the Irish Sea
does not confide, if the rain
will bury the noon.

The Ninth Hour

Heat etches into stone
the word of the prophet.
A man labors
up the hill,
in his shepherd's bag
the ninth hour,
the nail and the hammer.

In the air the dry shimmer of the flock
is torn apart
and falls as tinder behind the horizon.

Peace

The 'birds' nomadic hour.
In the prickly awns
of threshed corn
the mild vacancy of summer lingers on.
In the gun embrasures of the water tower
the grass grows wild.

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LIFESTYLE

One measure of a word's currency is the frequency of its misuse. Now even historians talk about the "lifestyles" of Roman citizens and medieval peasants. Such anachronistic uses betray ignorance of the unique cultural conditions that gave birth to the word. Robert Erwin here recalls its proper provenance.

BY ROBERT ERWIN

Once the Americans had backed into independence by demanding their rights as Englishmen, what next? No one supposed they were immune to the universal passions distinguished by Kant: for possession, for power, and for honor. To fend off anarchy and sustain a workable society they would have to govern and ration those passions, in the process evolving cultural norms that even those who did not benefit immediately or equally would abide by.

Many foreigners and a fair number of ultrafederalists did not see how this could be done without the equivalent of nobility as a social principle. Long live King George (Washington)! Nobility, after all, had been the linchpin of social order in Europe for 1,000 years. It specified rules for membership in the ruling class, designated responsibility by custom and statute, and allocated control over weapons, resources, and symbols. Holiness rivaled nobility in cultural prestige, but the highborn had privileged access to the church. To justify its position, moreover, the aristocracy conscripted language, loading the word *noble* with positive moral connotations. Intermittently at least, Europeans of all classes acceded to a cultural strategy whereby the few lived well for the many.

By the time Tocqueville came to inspect America in 1831, it was obvious that the Founding Fathers who rejected hereditary titles and official churches had read American conditions and modern conditions astutely. The commercial value of property outweighed "domain," and commercial activity in general—commodities, transport, technology, industry—propelled the society. Titles of nobility would have brought civil war instead of order. Government needed functionaries and partisans, not retainers. Instead of dwelling on novelty as such or on the absence of old ways, Tocqueville was interested in how the social system actually functioned. Although American patterns might be peculiar by comparison with historical and world standards, they were, he thought, just as definite as any others. People learned norms while growing up or settling in as immigrants; they held values in common; they regulated social transactions accordingly.

One thing Tocqueville discovered was that Americans believed in the possibility and desirability of starting over. Move to a different part of the country, take up a new occupation, begin another family, break old habits and acquire new ones, become best friends with strangers. Besides the ups and downs of wealth and status intrinsic to a

commercially frenetic society, in addition to the whirl of fashion and elections, on top of the itch to build new towns and tear up old neighborhoods, they believed on principle that the past could be disregarded and that individuals had a right to redirect their lives.

Over the years, this faith in starting over from scratch has fascinated America-watchers. "The stuff of self-improvement manuals generation after generation," writes Frances FitzGerald in *Cities on a Hill*, "is a major theme in American literature." Attitudes toward this trait differ sharply among the reflective. Someone from a country chewed up by history—a hell of prisons and massacres or a decaying society that has carried certain values to exhaustion—might scorn American naiveté and self-indulgence. Yet someone else from the same kind of place might rejoice that at least one lucky nation had preserved its innocence so long. One school of social critics might associate starting over with the loneliness, superficiality, and incoherence of American life. Other social critics might point out in good humor that many so-called changes were simply more of the same, grounded as always in human nature. (The student who dominated the radical caucus continues as the lawyer hell-bent on becoming a partner in the firm.) The especially optimistic and tolerant might hail the latitude to start over as freedom not available in hidebound societies. Still other observers might be struck by paradoxes—a tradition of the new, unanimous individualism. Whatever the attitude, the fact is not in dispute. Americans, and to a lesser extent people in all highly industrialized societies, tend to

believe they can shuck off the past and make new lives.

During the 1970s, a word came into common use that perfectly encapsulates this cultural assumption and the social patterns related to it. *Lifestyle* is the word. It was a brave word at first, hinting at rich possibilities, a broad view of human development and the life course, an order that fulfilled rather than constricted. Unfortu-



"Haven't we met in a previous life style?"

nately, however, journalists, salesmen, and pop psychologists trivialized it even more rapidly than usual. Lifestyle already stands mostly for the section of the newspaper that runs recipes for pumpkin mousse and tips on buying a futon. It sets a pseudoclassy tone when movie actresses on talk shows reveal that they own a dog. Encouraged by an interviewer to think big, a doctor in Boston recently recommended "lifestyle changes such as . . . seatbelt use."

In the short interval before it was trivialized, lifestyle sounded more impressive

than older terms from the same cultural cluster—terms such as *moving on* and *self-help*. People who could barely count change from a five-dollar bill had fantasies of designing and redesigning their precious selves as Picasso would approach a blank canvas. Partly, the pretentiousness of the word resulted from rhetorical battles of the times in which it came into use. But partly it reflected the decline of a countervailing norm that had set limits to the idea of styling oneself.

In place of the hereditary rank they refused to tolerate, Americans at the outset installed respectability as a social anchor. It held in check notions of starting over and anything goes. Achievement and character across class, occupation, gender, and ethnic identity were measured by respectability for two centuries. It lasted as a norm through industrialization, depression, and war.

The generation that came of age about the same time as lifestyle probably cannot fathom the hold respectability once had on the whole society. The better-educated and more affluent members of that generation are used to a portfolio mode of culture. Sell migrant workers and buy the homeless. Keep an eye on the greenhouse effect for potential growth in the environmental sector. As safe investments with a steady yield, beer and exercise are dependable. College degrees are down slightly. The only widely shared conception of the common good now is sufficient order and support so that trading may continue. Poorer members of the same generation are necessarily more limited in their options, but they make numerous choices in a volatile market too. Should they dye their hair blue or orange? Should they go for a continuance or a plea bargain?

By the time Elliott Gould, smiling sweetly and wearing a ratty football jersey, was allowed to tell a national television audience that he was glad to host "Saturday Night Live" because the program, in his words, "has balls," a certain number of viewers were titillated, a large number could take it or leave it, and those who were offended had a subconscious suspicion they might be cranks. Just a few years earlier Richard Nixon, villainous and squirrely as they come, had stuck his neck out 10 times farther than Elliott Gould; but he was older, and he by god wore a suit, pressed and buttoned, even to board a private airplane. Millions upon millions of decent citizens, beside themselves with anger, fright, and shame, would have been ready to join a lynching party had Gould broken the taboo in 1860 or 1960.

To reinforce the point, against Gould's show biz effervescence can be set a humorless passage from the "Judgment Day" section of James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*, received as incendiary realism when it was published in the 1930s. In this scene a housewife with a baby is about to take on four strangers for \$2.50 each to recoup the grocery money she lost to a bookie. When Studs draws high card for first turn with her and one of the others says, "Leave a little for us," she becomes indignant. "This is my house," she snaps. "Get out if you're going to talk lewd." As the example suggests, respectability extended far beyond the bourgeoisie. Forty years after Studs's fictional lesson in etiquette, the historian Tamara Hareven interviewed former workers at the Amoskeag mill in New Hampshire, in its day the largest textile plant in the world under one roof. Virtually every one of them avoided "off-color" talk, though these men and women left school early and were poor all their lives.

Robert Erwin, a writer and former director of the University of Pennsylvania Press, is the author of The Current Language Panic and Other Essays in Cultural History. Copyright © 1990 by Robert Erwin.

Of course, youngsters did learn the underground language by hook or by crook. Taboos have to do with the forbidden, not necessarily with the unknown. Some of them, on the sly, managed a passable imitation of the toughest kid in town, destined to go directly from grammar school to prison. The boys often encountered an authority—a straw boss, a coach—who used rough language that impressed them. Later, facility in the other language might come in handy for coping with or surviving among troops, laborers, tenants. Going to bars, rooms, brothels, pool halls, and cooch shows meant having your cake and eating it too: upholding the norm by breaking taboos in a place prescribed for that purpose. Usually by a more subterranean route girls arrived at an equivalent “secret” knowledge, though in some ways a worse state of duplicity.

It would be a great mistake to shrug respectability off as antiquated taste, hypocrisy, and squeamishness. As industrialization proceeded, roles multiplied, population grew, and science put custom into question, something was needed to encourage compliance among segmented, atomized citizens. For stratified democracies and administered authoritarian states, respectability filled the bill. It suited conditions. It worked.

To spend one’s life laying trolley track or packing mothballs did not preclude wearing a starched collar on Sunday and subscribing nominally to “clean living, proper behavior.” Such behavior could be demanded by the eminently respectable from the barely respectable, or it could be rewarded with token esteem. (Address the washerwoman as “Mrs.” and share her disapproval of spitting.) According to current needs for cheap labor, dirty work, scapegoats, and disenfranchisement, the line could be redrawn expediently at the bottom, denial of respectability justifying discrimination

practiced against minorities, immigrants, and subjugated peoples.

In societies composed largely of peasants and artisans, any deliberate departure from pomp had been a manifestation of privilege by other means. This was obvious when ladies of the French court played at being milkmaids or when English peers paraded in public “drunk as lords.” As Sartre pointed out, when Saint Francis handed back his clothes to the well-to-do father who had paid for them, the gesture was a moral luxury. The majority around him had no choice but to go ragged and dirty. As per capita income rose and the number of “things” commonly owned increased in industrial societies, downward departures took on a different meaning. In their way—with pearl stickpins, donations to the church, and the like—even hustlers, gangsters, and fixers followed the code of respectability. Out-groups such as Gypsies and circus performers, as well as occupational groups remote from centers of respectability (such as cowboys, loggers, and sailors) were clearly exceptions, rare and exotic. By the same token, however, it was now easy to make dissident gestures against respectability.

Bohemians, on the whole sufficiently educated and sufficiently employable for respectability had they the inclination, in fact made an issue of rejecting it in the conviction that they knew better than respectables how to live. They ranked themselves as aristocrats of the spirit, the elite few with intellect, imagination, taste, and moral courage. Sometimes aestheticism swayed bohemia. The cultivated dandy appeared more debonair, witty, knowing, and, above all, interesting than any solid citizen. At other times, antimaterialism dominated bohemia. Dull respectables who cared about napkin rings and baths were ridiculed and despised. At still other times, a “wild” mode ruled bohemia—drugs, outlandish costumes and couplings, links with

the underclass, living on the edge.

For a long while a stand-off prevailed. On the one hand, enclaves opposed to or opposed by the respectable were often cordoned off—bohemian quarters, shantytowns, red-light districts, and the like. News from the forbidden zone reached ordinary people largely through stereotypes supplied by journalists, dramatists, politicians, and do-gooders—stereotypes of longhaired artists, bomb-throwing reds, Wild West outlaws, scarlet actresses, and rascally sporting men. Sustained, deliberate counter-respectability rarely presented itself in the barnyard, the mill, the shop, the school, or the social call. On the other hand, crossing the line for pleasure or profit was not too difficult. Novelists did it. The police did it. Real estate operators did it. Dance halls and casinos lay close to the border. A majority accepted respectability in principle and upheld it or cheated as circumstances dictated. With the cooperation of his sisters and servants, Emily Dickinson's brother, a prominent lawyer and treasurer of Amherst College, managed discreet trysts in the family dining room, which had a large fireplace and a stout door. From roughly World War I forward, furthermore, a resourceful speakeasy mentality helped preserve the stand-off. The cocktail party, the smart set, and café society accommodated "nice" people. Blues became "entertainment." The mass media upgraded notoriety to celebrity. True, psychoanalysis showed respectability in an ambiguous light. Revolutions, anticolonial movements, and totalitarianism shook the whole world, and economic depression and another cataclysmic war hit the United States directly. Nevertheless, a socially intelligible balance held through the 1940s and 1950s. Mom and Apple Pie, God and Property continued to receive their due. Cultural instructions remained clear: Get a haircut, be on time, carry proper identification. Yet room was left to

relax—to become temporarily a watered-down Rimbaud, make-believe hoodlum, or attenuated carnival dancer—without losing the thread. It was believed—indeed hoped—that movie stars had orgies galore, preferably on bearskin rugs. The few should live licentiously for the many. But the stars were expected to support the Code of Decency by day and pull the shades at night.

In short, respectability was a strong norm. It had stamina, manipulative power, coherence, and flexibility. And it is not dead yet. A "respectable" way to behave endures, fuzzy and precarious, residually enforceable at law, more or less adhered to by the executive class and the old blue-collar class, deeply ingrained in many families. Numerous "mature" men would still be mortified to appear sockless in public, and numerous women would feel disgraced by a loud belch. By the 1980s, however, respectability was simply a prominent norm in a boutique of norms. No explosion occurred if someone attended the symphony in jungle pants or showed up wearing a "gay" earring to sign a mortgage. People said *lifestyle* without a second thought.

Just as real wars frequently end with both sides worse off than they were before, so lifestyle is the uncomfortable and in the long run probably untenable outcome of the cultural wars of the 1960s and 1970s. Relatively disorganized, formerly unrecognized groups in that period learned to use nonconformity to wage politics. Countercultural presence was shaped to make demands: stop the war, jobs for blacks, power to sisterhood. Rather quickly, cultural politics became an issue in itself. For a brief time one could call the Beatles lower-class deformed (as Malcolm Muggeridge did) with only music in mind. Soon those became fighting words. Respectables were held responsible for induced poverty, racism and sexism, stifling routines and alienating work, for

police brutality, a vile war in Vietnam, and piling nuclear weapons on each other 50 times over, for shoddy goods, phony sentiments, and crooked deals, for miseducation and the destruction of the environment—in short, for the worst of human nature and an intrinsically defective way of life. As this message registered, a great many old believers felt equally hostile and betrayed. Respectability had been painfully drilled into them, they had mastered the whole complicated code and strained to live up to it, and suddenly a crowd of young nobodies, pointy-headed intellectuals, and “agitators” seized the cultural initiative. As they saw it, respectability was being sold out for nothing worth having—drugs, shoplifting, herpes simplex, a rising rate of youthful suicide, and weakness in the face of a Red Peril and a Yellow Peril. Aside from damage done in the famous campus “disruptions,” some serious force was used by both sides. The Weathermen, for example, broke windows and beat up professors, and urban rioters torched their own neighborhoods. National Guardsmen gunned down students at Kent State, and police in Berkeley blinded a painter with shotgun fire during the Battle of the People’s Park. Symbolism was the common weapon, though. On the one side, students with draft deferments and job prospects burned the flag. Movie actresses—of the type who previously sanctified the status quo by stepping out of limousines in sheath dresses under blue and rose spotlights—appeared with kinky hair, breasts dangling under worn T-shirts. Young ministers offered public prayers for Patty Hearst and her “associates” in the spirit of cheerleaders. On the other side, negotiating and conceding details of respectability so as to guard more important levers of power, the established order cranked out new merchandise: rolling papers, water beds, tape decks, mountaineer packs, socially significant overalls. Rules were dropped, and ways were found to loosen up at a safe distance from hippies, radicals, and

poor people. Off with the white shirts, you swinging dentists of Cherry Hill. On with the double knits and the psychedelic ties a yard wide (in what clothing manufacturers around 1970 called the Peacock Revolution). Hoist skirts and tighten jeans across the butt. Put on the gold chains of a good-doing pimp and his teenage whore. Pass for a hip comedian, a centerfold sexpot, a person who sings at Mafia hotels. In the end the result of the cultural battling and of the dispersion of the counterculture was a social type nobody liked: yuppies. Those who grew up under respectability but were critical of it and hoped attacks on it would lead to a freer, happier, more just society saw their movement trivialized and half-forgotten. Those who defended respectability and hoped for full restoration found themselves living in a cultural boutique among institutions of impaired legitimacy.

Defective institutions such as the multiversity persist. To them have been added greater national inequality and idiotic policies such as prosperity through debt. Non sequiturs are now the staff of life: commodities trading Monday through Friday and gathering wild foods on the weekend; gay liberation and campaigning to return to the mass in Latin; computer programming to produce astrological charts; save the whales and serve sashimi. With all the jogging and hopping and weightlifting, whole neighborhoods have been changed into giant track-and-field events, and yet at home the “athletes” use remote control buttons to change TV channels. Respectability has become an option, part of a jumbled social landscape through which individuals thread their way according to whim and circumstance. The Four-H club need never confront the meditation society, and neither need confront the single parents’ group. Roles coexist and succeed each other without adding up.

Among those old enough to view the

lifestyle era as a phase, attitudes differ. Some resist, holding on as tightly as possible to what they were comfortable with in the first place—respectability or principled opposition to respectability. They assume the storm will pass, and afterwards an equilibrium such as they remember between social stability and the urge to start over will re-emerge.

Doubtful. The adulteration of the counterculture is not to be taken lightly. Now the future is partly in the hands of someone to whom lifestyle is not just a catchword. Farrell's horse-playing housewife had a grandson. Barry, age 32, lives in Houston, where he works for a real-estate trust that manages shopping malls. To him lifestyle is the sea in which he swims, as it is for his sister, who stayed in Chicago and became one of the first women hired as a sales representative in the wholesale wine business. He considers himself to be a regular member of society, in that sense respectable. Yet his world tips in a different direction from that of his grandmother. He comes home at no particular hour, throws his jacket on the floor, says the day was a pisser, throws his mail on the floor, wonders whether or not to stay in, throws a towel on the floor. After a meal that may or may not be known as dinner and that could equally well include a fast-food gristleburger or fresh-made pesto, he listens inattentively to a tape by the Booger Eaters, skims an article on tax shelters, and during the late news on TV comes to a consensus with one or more people who live with him for the time being that the telephone company sucks, the weather sucks, and Somalia sucks.

History separates this man from his grandmother as evolution positions two species to receive light from different regions of the spectrum. *Don't talk lewd*. She clutched at that even while taking on the neighborhood. Respectability was the code her culture trained her to rely on, as it was the code whose infringement made her feel that the situation in which she found herself

was a crisis. Her grandson has no special talent for breaking taboos or expanding consciousness. He will not directly test the established order's capacity to deflect and absorb. He will probably wear shined shoes if he has to go to court. Yet he may be ultimately unreachable by both respectables and their traditional opponents. How much reality can he ascribe to a norm that for him has no interior?

The question of who he was in a previous existence currently interests Barry. Next year it may be kayaks. Instead of deploring and resisting this lifestyle mentality, part of the older population joins in and counts on it functioning indefinitely. It suits rejuvenation schemes and dreams. Yet their assumption, the opposite of those waiting for the storm to pass, is doubtful too.

Trivial productions do not necessarily have trivial results. Lifestyle clashes with certain deep-seated and more important Western ways that are still very much in force. The notion is in the air that out of countless personal preferences will somehow flow public good—pushed along by an invisible hand such as Adam Smith imagined. In a distorted way this continues a Western tradition of individualism: choice, conscience, assent, will as a faculty of self, values created rather than granted. But it is hard to think of a social configuration up to now that makes no provision for relating the individual to a cosmos and a community. How is it possible for humans to live in groups and not share values? When lives are styled in the same space, what keeps them from tangling? To say that at present we can't agree on a reason for human association in the public realm implies that explosive pressure for a new connection will build up.

For good or bad, Western culture has fostered linear thinking. It is embedded in concepts such as prime mover, cause and effect, means and ends, input and output,

critical mass, formative stages. It is embedded in proverbs and literature and commerce and science. As the twig is bent, so grows the tree. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. The child is father to the man. Must have successful track record. Rate of return on investment. Relative contribution of nature and nurture. It is bound to be unsettling to move daily between those assumptions and the idea that a life consists of styles that can be chosen, altered, discontinued at will, and replaced like fabrics.

Perhaps the greatest pressure for a cultural framework more settled than lifestyles arises from the strain of assembling the world from moment to moment, like walking a long distance by reinventing the step every two and a half feet. We endure and participate in a welter called experience. The categories into which we divide the welter—such as forces, conditions, stimuli, intervals, feelings, perplexities, and relationships—are not exhaustive and do not necessarily express fact or wisdom in an absolute sense.

They simply organize our experience, and thus they are largely worthless if used capriciously.

The advantage of organizing experience on the biological level is clear. Every organism has a genetic program, capabilities fitted to an environment, patterned relations with others of its species, and a boundary (such as skin) to regulate inflow and outflow. Perception automatically sorts experience: focusing attention, triggering response, and enabling skills to develop.

That culture continues in this direction is obvious—economizing effort, standardizing encounters, pooling experience. But existence under the dispensation of lifestyles becomes jittery. It is exhausting to hew selves and connections over and over. It is intolerable to have to make up rules each time for each set of social transactions. If nothing else, a culture ought to provide points of reference in a whirling world.

THE CRITIC AS NOVELIST

*In the new spirit of criticism as performance,
a number of literary critics have gone so far as to take up
novel-writing. Michael Levenson explores the creative works of four
of these enterprising intellectuals and finds that each overcomes
not only the constraints of his or her theoretical past
but the traditional division between
creation and analysis.*

BY MICHAEL LEVENSON

Misleading to call it a movement, and still worse to think of it as a program, but we now have seen enough minor literary eruptions to suspect that it is a cultural symptom that bears some reflection: this burst of novel-writing from people who have lived the conceptual life, the life of method and argument, who often carry leather cases, or who give public lectures and contribute essays to learned journals. In the past five years, some of the world's leading literary critics have turned novelists, and at the same time turned from the coterie audience gathered in the universities to the wider public made up of anyone who wants to read. Why do they do it? What do they want? Are they merely slumming in the bad streets of the imagination? Or are these just new cases of a few gifted people who always hoped to grow up to be novelists and decided to act before it was too late?

Literary critics are not alone in suddenly feeling the charm of novel-writing; it happens to historians and journalists, among others. But I intend to give reasons for taking the literary academic drift of the tide with special seriousness. I'll start by proposing a story of this century, inevitably a story with many chapters left out. It begins with the old provo-

cations of modernism, especially those forbidding experiments of the third decade—Joyce's *Ulysses*, Woolf's *The Waves*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pound's *Cantos*—works more than willing (in T. S. Eliot's phrase) to disturb and alarm the public. This they did.

One slowly building consequence of those literary agitations was the creation of criticism, criticism as we know it now—professional, sophisticated, ambitious. In significant respects, the modern professoriate within the humanities is one of the lasting (though inadvertent) achievements of the avant-garde. It is scarcely an accident that this century has seen the emergence of these rival siblings: a revolutionary avant-garde intent on speaking a new word, and an academic establishment that has perfected the skills of interpretation. Indeed, the academic standpoint must often be seen as a defense against the aggressions of modernism.

With the great postwar expansion of the university and with the exciting lure of interdisciplinary collaboration, the critical project took on ever more heady ambitions. Hopes of a grand synthesis—among, say, Marx and Freud and existentialism—led to the vision of a Total Theory, an exhaustive

method that would take into account all relevant details on the way to its definitive interpretations. Jean-Paul Sartre gave one version of this comprehensive system of explanation, Herbert Marcuse another, and Northrop Frye a rival third. Theirs was a great dream of the 1950s and early '60s, when it seemed possible that many disciplines would meet in a grand methodological union.

But the theory project has fallen into a crisis. The dream of a Total Theory is no longer able to soothe any deep academic sleep. It just hasn't worked out: There were too many fissures in the great globe of perfect understanding. Total Theory has itself become a primary target of theoretical attack; the very idea of a seamless explanation that would find a home for every detail of a life, a text, an epoch now seems charmingly quaint.

With the fading of the missionary goal there has emerged a conspicuous revival of individualism in academic life. Of course, academics have never been free from the taint of self-interest. But now that it's so hard to believe that particular essays and books are part of some unfolding collective structure, everywhere you look you see eye-catching individual display. The dazzling feat of interpretive ingenuity, the bravura reading of a well-worn text, the memorably witty lecture, even the rhetorically bold introduction to the witty lecture, now comprise the intellectual currency of academic life: the public working of the quick mind as high theater.

No longer convinced that their academic

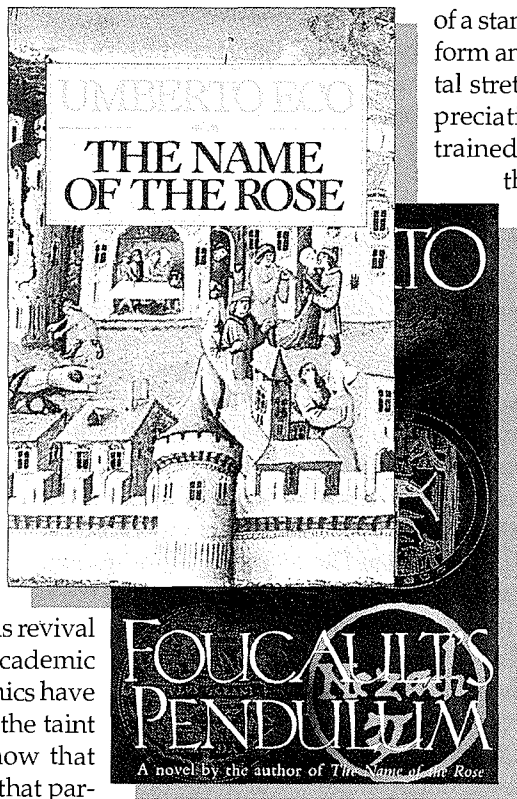
labor is leading anywhere in particular, scholars give themselves to self-contained gestures of critical power. So, with the consummate dexterity of a practiced performer, new historicist Stephen Greenblatt (University of California, Berkeley) takes his audiences from the trial of a hermaphrodite to the green woods of Shakespearean comedy. And with a keen sense for the intellectual funny bone, Sandra Gilbert (Princeton) and Susan Gubar (University of California, Davis) leaven their feminist historical revisionism with the hilarity

of a stand-up comedy duet. To perform an act of criticism at full mental stretch, to do so before the appreciative glances of one's well-trained colleagues, to provide through the course of an evening one full measure of conceptual edification—this now often seems sufficient, the best that can be hoped for. Indeed, there seems to be a general acceptance of the fact that as fast as it may be moving, literary criticism isn't headed anywhere in particular.

Tongues needn't cluck at this development; it's no worse than many others. Moreover, it has freed intellectuals for more daring swoops of thought, more adventurous tones of voice.

You hear in the popular press the horror stories of violent rumbles between strong and weak political correctness factions, and you cringe. We all cringe. But this is what happens when the cauldron bubbles—it spatters the walls.

With the vogue of criticism as performance, with the shattered confidence in Total Theory, with the admiration accorded to individual virtuosity at the expense of common enterprise, the idea of criticism as a science (vintage 1966) seems a picturesque relic of a



simpler time. Many now have unlearned the compulsions of Total Theory, and some have come to yearn for pleasure that *no* theory can give. Who can be surprised if the writing of novels suddenly seems an irresistible lure to these restless academics?

In the 1960s and '70s, Italian scholar Umberto Eco was one of the bright young things who set out to bring into literary criticism the bracing rigor of the harder sciences. *Semiotics*, the theory of the sign, was Eco's special subject at a time when the model of linguistics seemed to open the prospect for a newly systematic study of both literary texts and the wider text of culture. The great project, as he put it, was "to explore the theoretical possibility and the social function of a unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication" from film to food to fashion.

Eco couldn't have known that just as he was perfecting the house of semiotics, Jacques Derrida was gnawing through the foundations. Eco's work has always been a fountain of distinctions—distinctions between open and closed works, between the rights of the text and the responsibilities of the reader. He was never rigid in his schematism, but he had a strong penchant for an analytic precision captured in clipped, numbered paragraphs with boldface headings. When Derrida's deconstruction nibbled away at the clarity of the structure, Eco suddenly found himself marked as a stick-in-the-mud believer in determinate meanings, forced to argue that in the theoretical rush of the past three decades "the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed."

It had no doubt been exhausting labor to work slowly at the foundations of a general theory of the sign, but how much more fatiguing it must have been to be obliged to defend

at every step the legitimacy of the project, and how wide the sky must have seemed when Eco let himself out of the theory coop and wrote his first novel.

Once *The Name of the Rose* (1980) had become an international publishing sensation, nothing seemed more natural than that Eco the theorist should have found a home as a novelist. As a journalist for daily and weekly papers and as a distinguished professor, Eco wrote criticism that carried him into many disciplines across many centuries. He wrote about Thomas Aquinas and Superman; he studied the history of monsters and devised a theory of lists. When he began to put his novel together, he had the many resources of his large and eccentric knowledge. The history of the church, medieval philosophy, the Sherlock Holmes canon—all this, among much else, could come into romping play in the form of a historical/detective/Biblical/philosophical mystery plot, where each murder shimmers across the centuries, from the Apocalypse to Dr. Watson.

Having taken one whack at the novel, Eco did not stop. In *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988), an even more extravagant plot tempts the haunted minds of its principals—a great Plan stretching across many centuries, through many countries, into many sects and secrets. The Templars, the Rosicrucians, the Masons, the Jesuits, the Shiites, the Nazis—all get knitted into the interpretation of a secret history. Everything, or almost everything, seems to connect into an endless web that only one massive explanation can reveal. The book is a tour de force of encyclopedic learning, and at the same time an unmasking of the pathology of interpretation.

Eco says that when he writes his fiction, he leaves his critical self back in the closet; let others play at explanation. But at least one of Eco's critical preoccupations—or their very nemesis—is clear. In both of his big novels, the

Michael Levenson, professor of English at the University of Virginia, is the author of A Genealogy of Modernism (1984) and Modernism and the Fate of Individuality (1991). Copyright © 1994 by Michael Levenson.

signal event is the overreaching of interpretation. William of Baskerville—Eco's Holmes as philosophic Churchman—devises the most cunning explanation, based on his reading of the Apocalypse, to solve the murders of *The Name of the Rose*. But William fails. This, says Eco, is "a mystery in which very little is discovered and the detective is defeated." So too in *Foucault's Pendulum*, the "Plan" is laid bare as a fantasy imposed on the world—"wanting connections, we found connections"—an elaborate intellectual construction, which, once projected, takes on its own grotesque and murderous reality.

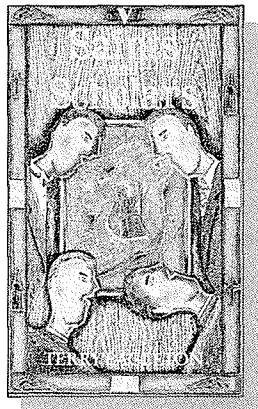
The laughing, lurching energy of these careening plots plainly comes in some significant part from Eco's flight from criticism, his flight from the excess and the failure of contemporary literary theory, what he calls its "interpretative frenzy." And when Eco's own invention flags, nothing seems to bring it back to life more quickly than the memory of his old critical opponents. They challenge his theory; he writes them into his novel.

In 1987 Terry Eagleton, well established as an internationally prominent Marxist critic, published a novel called *Saints and Scholars*. It takes the Irish uprising of 1916 as its pressing historical context and then imagines a set of improbable circumstances. What if the wounded revolutionary James Connolly, on the run from the British, hides in a cottage that had been rented by Ludwig Wittgenstein, still a young philosopher genius? What if Wittgenstein has been traveling with Nikolai Bakhtin, the boisterous brother of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin? And what if in the midst of this improbable encounter Leopold Bloom steps out of the pages of Joyce's *Ulysses* and stumbles into the panic?

In a prefatory note to the book, Eagleton points out that "this novel is not entirely fantasy." Wittgenstein and Nikolai Bakhtin were indeed friends; Wittgenstein did spend time in

a cottage on the west coast of Ireland, "although at a later time than suggested here." Eagleton ends his note by observing that "most of the rest is invented."

But "invented" is too weak. What gives the novel its comedy and its charm is not merely that it spins out new fancies but that it so cheerfully refuses claims of historical fact. In its opening pages, which describe James



Connolly on the point of execution by firing squad, *Saints and Scholars* looks to be a conventionally scrupulous historical fiction of the Irish revolt. But it is exactly scrupulous history that the book explodes. Faced with the awkwardness of "facts," it invents new ones.

At the center of the book is a debate between Connolly and Wittgenstein, the one upholding the imperative of revolution as the only response to crushing Irish misery, the other insisting that revolution is just another dangerous dream of purity. The dialogue between them is the best thing in the book. An exhausted Connolly, badly suffering from his wounds, holds on to revolutionary speech, even as his conviction weakens. The excitable Wittgenstein finds himself deeply moved by that speech and begins to try on Connolly's revolutionary truth: "What if he is right that crisis is common?" This is the Wittgenstein who had told Bakhtin earlier in the book that "out there in Europe the most dreadful war in history is now being waged. I came to this place because I couldn't stand it any longer. So I'm on the run—in hiding from history."

The Wittgenstein we know from the biographical record was scarcely on the run from history in 1916. On the contrary. He had left the security of Cambridge in order to join the Austrian army, in which he served at great personal peril; an artillery officer, he was taken

prisoner of war by the Italian army. This was anything but a flight from history. Better to call it a determined press into the midst of history's most dangerous confusion. For Eagleton's purposes, though, Wittgenstein must be cast as a philosophical purist who has fled the impure swamp of social life.

It must have been very shortly before he sat down to compose his novel that Eagleton wrote a rather traditional essay called "Wittgenstein's Friends." It usefully places Wittgenstein in relation to recent poststructuralist theory, showing, for instance, the common ground between Wittgenstein and Derrida. From Eagleton's standpoint, both the school of Wittgenstein and the school of Derrida make telling critiques of metaphysics, with its longing for impeccably secure foundations and systematic truth, but both schools fail to engage the reality of politics. At this moment of impasse, the essay invokes a third figure to split the difference, Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. For Eagleton, Bakhtin shows how it is possible to make a strong philosophical criticism of metaphysical abstraction from the standpoint of social engagement. The key thought is that the metaphysics of the philosophers and the tyranny of the politicians are in a fearful partnership that can be opposed only by a subversive energy. "Carnival" is Bakhtin's answer to oppression, where carnival implies a lusty release of the wild body, free to laugh, to mock, to enjoy.

In the fictional world of *Saints and Scholars*, Nikolai Bakhtin stands in for his brother's theory of carnival. Off in their Irish retreat, Wittgenstein becomes appalled by Nikolai's taste for food and wine; he calls Bakhtin a "disgusting walrus," at which point,

Bakhtin begins to croon a Russian folk song inaccurately to himself. Then he breaks off and remarks, "Somebody is slaughtering somebody else." He licks his lips contentedly. "I think it's you, Ludwig, who's killing us all with your ridiculous purity."

Wittgenstein leans swiftly across and grabs a half-empty bottle of wine from Bakhtin's cabinet. He says lightly: "I think you should drown in this." Bakhtin gives no response. "Do you hear me, Nikolai? I said I think you should drown in your own disgusting mess."

Bakhtin opens his eyes for a moment and twists his lips upward in the shape of a slobbery kiss.

So why does Eagleton do it? Why does he play out in fiction what he had soberly enacted in his criticism? And why does he extravagantly "reinvent" a history that he knows so well?

The beginning of an answer is that Eagleton, like many others, must feel the desire to break free of the usual academic constraints—historical exactitude, intellectual precision, sound evidence. This must always be a temptation in academic life: to be done with its cautions and respectabilities. What makes it more urgent in Eagleton's case is that his career as a critic has been devoted to a vision of history—a revolutionary vision of social liberation—that has come under such tremendous stress. He has not blinked in the face of the oppositions, internal and external, within the Marxist tradition he has sought to extend. Competing methodologies, as well as sharp turns in political history, have brought large and difficult changes in Eagleton's life as a political critic.

Of all these changes, perhaps the most interesting has been Eagleton's recognition that pleasure—immediate delight, as in the love of a single line of poetry—can no longer be neglected by even the most committed criticism. We live at a moment, he writes, when "the relation between the kind of pleasure people take in art, and the pleasure they derive from striving to realize their political needs, has become extremely obscure." Our age has "a political problem about pleasure."

Saints and Scholars is a fantasy of historical coherence, a fantasy of our century's forces and powers brought into consoling relation. What Eagleton struggles toward in his theory,

he brightly paints in his novel: a universe where pleasure and politics can meet and where the significance of our historical struggle has reassuringly distinct outlines. The comedy of Leopold Bloom set free from *Ulysses* to enter into drunken dialogue with Wittgenstein, Bakhtin, and Connolly is ticklishly sharp. But transcending the comedy of the image is its sheer romance, which reassuringly lets us feel that our modernity is not an ugly chaos but that it might have a tidy plot of its own. If we feel let down by history, implies Eagleton, then it's for us to reimagine the historical legacy, to revive ourselves with a daydream, a fully conscious daydream that admits its own need to find a refuge.

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Susan Sontag is no academic. Her ability to resist university confinement has been one of the strengths of her long career. Nor is she a recent first-time novelist; her fiction writing began in the 1960s. But she belongs in any consideration of this cultural current, first because she is by any sensible measure a common-law academic who lectures in that sprawling university called New York Culture, and second because if she has not recently been born as a novelist, she has been born again as one.

From the time of her first successful essays in the early 1960s, Sontag has refused the name Critic and fought hard to keep alive her claims to be called Novelist, and later Filmmaker. She stubbornly presented herself as a creative artist who also happened to write interesting essays. But it was a losing battle. Her experimental fiction was politely acknowledged; her films less politely received; her essays were triumphantly influential. Through the 1970s and '80s she was never the visionary artist but always the supremely lucid critic—writing of illness as metaphor, of AIDS, of photography.

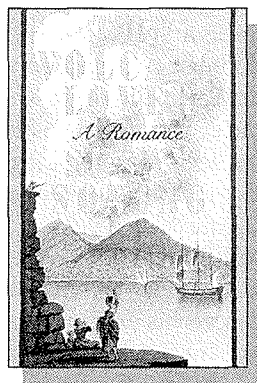
All of this is what makes *The Volcano Lover* (1992) such a revealing case: It is Sontag's late, large attempt to place her career under the

sign of art. Her novel's big sales and favorable reviews make it impossible to confine her within the prison marked Critic.

Her early fiction was bred in the late European modernism of Beckett, Robbe-Grillet, and Sarraute. Linguistically adventurous and formally severe, it came out of an admiration for others, admiration for the achievement of late high modernism—not just the experimental fiction, but the cinema of Godard, the theater of Artaud. Within the tradition of modernist experiment, few tastes extend more widely than Sontag's.

But that taste finds its limits in what Sontag sees as the debased forms of popular art—i.e. television. In a symposium on kitsch at Skidmore College a few years ago, Sontag growled at the thought of taking television seriously. She has always held to the necessary difficulty, the strenuousness, of authentic engagement with art. It's not that she has taken difficulty as an end in itself; rather she has clearly understood it as the precondition for the keenest satisfactions. The great danger in kitsch, she argues, is that it "unfits people from having certain kinds of attention spans and an appetite for complexity."

And yet it's hard to resist the thought that as a result of that awkward discussion at Skidmore (and others like it), Sontag reconsidered her views on pleasure, and that in relaxing some of her modernist sternness, she found a path back to the vocation of novelist. No one is likely to confuse *The Volcano Lover* with television: The novel continually employs distancing techniques (shifts in point of view, the intrusion of the narrator's voice, the insertion of mini-essays on such subjects as collecting and history and revolution). But these techniques, though sometimes interesting, are best seen as Sontag's attempt to keep faith with the mod-



ernist formalism that she is teaching herself to half-unlearn.

The real event in *The Volcano Lover* is not the play with perspective, and not the lucidity of intelligence; it is the unveiling of the theater of desire, romantic desire, sensuous desire, as performed in the famous ménage of Sir William Hamilton, his wife Emma (born Emily Lyon), and Lord Nelson. The circumstances are irresistible. You have Hamilton, the famous art collector and naturalist, the great rationalist connoisseur who, as ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples, grows obsessed with the eruptions of Vesuvius. You have Emma, his second wife, a legendary beauty whose face and whose wits carried her from poverty to courtly privilege. You have the one-armed Nelson with all his impure mystique, the tactical genius, the impetuous adventurer, who deserts his wife and neglects his duty in order to play the tirelessly eager lover.

Sontag has confronted many of the same disturbances that jarred Eagleton—for one, the disturbance in the claim of a pleasure that won't be purified but won't go away. At one point, the novel draws a sharp distinction between the Collector and the Lover.

The collector's world bespeaks the crushingly large existence of other worlds, energies, realms, eras than the one he lives in. The collection annihilates the collector's little slice of historic existence. The lover's relation to objects annihilates all but the world of the lovers. This world. My world. My beauty, my glory, my fame.

It's not too much to say that Sontag as a critic has been a Collector who has come only recently to feel the full urgings of the Artist as Lover. What she says of her Emma, we might now say of her: "She needs her fix of rapture." The other drama in the book, the drama beneath the plot, is the struggle between Sontag's old need to understand writing as a serious aesthetic gesture and the new thrill of writing what fancy whispers. This is a drama without conclusion. *The Volcano Lover* activates the

emotions inside old conventions, releases ancient energies of the love story, but then hastens to distance its voice and to stylize its forms. If the conflict remains unresolved, we can still learn to love the agitation at a moment of creative instability.

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More than any of the other figures discussed here, Julia Kristeva has entertained hopes of a transformation of the world through an art guided by a theory. Arriving in Paris from Bulgaria in 1966, she soon found herself moving among the French luminaries; she bathed in their glowing aura, and then quickly acquired an aura all her own. Within a very few years she had built a subtle picture of modernity, language, and literature that took its place as one strong, coherent view contending with the many others.

In Kristeva's influential sketch, we all come out of our mothers dripping with the needs of the body. The howling, weeping, laughing infant will come to submit to the father's law, and will learn the rules of grammar. But obedience can never be complete. Some, the psychotics, continue to howl; others, the poets, acknowledge the social codes and linguistic conventions but refuse to surrender the truth on the tongues of those called incompetent. Speech from the body, speech in chanting rhythms, the speech of nonsense, the hard speech of obscenity—these are the resources of a poetic language that is our revolutionary century's greatest gift.

For the young Kristeva, our epochal hope lay in the struggles of a literary avant-garde to overturn the oppressive word with the strong poetic word. The father's law, the social law, strangles poetry; poetry must reach into old, dark speech to defy the law. In the works of those such as Mallarmé, Céline, and Joyce, especially the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake*, Kristeva located the "positive subversion of the old universe." It is a vision of the avant-garde as lion rampant, snarling into the frightened

faces of the cool rationalists.

When her novel *The Samurai* appeared in 1990, the first excited reaction fastened onto the thin disguises worn by its lightly fictionalized characters. There they were, the glittering minds of the Parisian boulevards strutting their mentalities through her pages. It was fun (for an hour) to identify Fabien Edelman as Lucien Goldmann, or Maurice Lauzun as Jacques Lacan, or Saida as Derrida, or Olga as Kristeva herself. But now that the players are identified, it's possible to set the detective game aside and concentrate on what an odd book this is—odd because it is the perfectly conventional work of an adventurous thinker. Nothing, after all, could be easier to absorb, easier to digest, than a roman à clef that puts Parisian intellectual celebrities through their familiar paces.

Where is the poetic language? Where is the shock to "father's law"? How does a passage such as the following—prompted by a game of tennis—"positively subvert" the old universe?

These fine distinctions struck Olga as typically "structuralist." Talk about splitting hairs, even when it came to war! It was astounding how they tracked down meaning in the smallest fraction of time, space, or action. Admittedly it was an attractive theory. But its adepts seemed rather otherworldly and vague, as if they'd unlearned everything that had ever been known. So did they really need to learn anything anymore?

Kristeva, of course, isn't obliged to live up to her portentous views of the 1960s and '70s. She doesn't need to apologize for what she writes. But then we don't need to apologize for pointing to the contrast between this cozily diverting

novel and her audacious theoretical challenges.

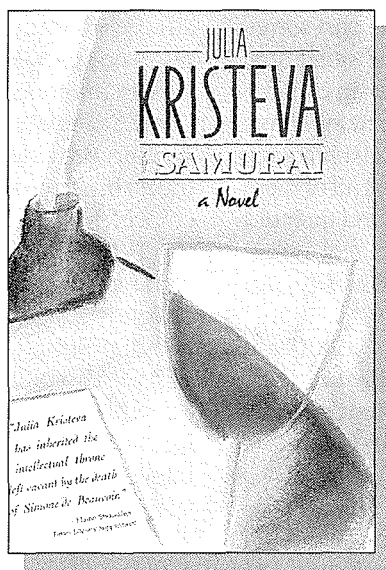
In *The Samurai*, Kristeva has not written a novel that her energetic theory taught her to write; rather she has written a novel about the theorists. This itself suggests a good deal. It suggests that, quite apart from any conceptual ambitions, the Theory Life stirs creative energies for those once connected to it. Ideas aside, the idea people claim an interest all their own. With their alliances and betrayals, their deepening intensities, their trips to China, their unusual minds and their usual bodies, they now often seem to Kristeva more interesting for the gestures they made than for the conclusions they reached.

The effect is not always pleasant. When Kristeva tells the grimy anecdote of Lauzun/Lacan betrayed by his lover and his faithful disciple—a story of knowing glances and public humiliation—

it's impossible not to feel the cruelty of her gaze. But *The Samurai* confronts the recognition that intellectual life is not the mind's pure labor. It is, rather, active, sensuous, dramatic, public, impure.

As her career in theory has developed, Kristeva has moved steadily from the visionary hopes of her daring early writings. Her political skepticism (born with her in Bulgaria) has spread: Trained as a psychoanalyst, she has increasingly made love the subject of her intellectual work. These turns of interest have exposed her to much challenge from disappointed theoreticians, but she has not stopped turning. Her novel, in its very conventionality, with its undemanding structure and its soft love plots, upbraids the purists of the avant-garde and marks her furthest reach from the sacred precincts of high theory.

Eco's semiotics, Eagleton's politics, Sontag's aesthetics, Kristeva's avant-garde—all under pressure, these once-confident projects



struggle in varying stages of retreat. What has been lost is the note of inspired intellectual self-assurance, the contagious sense of a large cultural project unfolding its prophecies. What has been found is the undead novel.

None of these figures denies or repudiates his or her theoretical past, but each uses the past sometimes in a mood of nostalgia, sometimes in mockery, sometimes in cool detachment—in ways that would certainly have surprised their former selves. Kristeva's roman à clef only makes explicit what all of them have done: They have passed beyond their old austerity and have learned the joys of bringing intellectual life down into the muddy, uproarious world.

The pleasures in Umberto Eco's work are the pleasures of deep release, a full-souled indifference to the proprieties of critical discourse. When *The Name of the Rose* (and less frequently *Foucault's Pendulum*) succeeds, it is because Eco has allowed himself to forget the obligations of the perspicuous axiom and the clinching argument. If, in *The Samurai*, the pleasure is rarer and weaker, this is largely because as a novelist Kristeva is all the time remembering her other, older incarnation as a glistening intellectual, and because as she writes of that time she tastes bitter ashes.

But it may be the mixed satisfactions of Sontag and Eagleton that are most revealing. In *The Volcano Lover* and *Saints and Scholars*

you find a giddy delight in sinuous plot, in its romance or its comedy, alongside a rueful, tacit awareness that such writing is not what was dreamed of one, two, and three decades ago. This double consciousness captures some of the unsettling complexity of the current cultural moment. A new sensibility (Sontag) and a new society (Eagleton) are what they pursued with daunting vigor, but nowadays it takes no special skeptical turn to see that sensibility and society are nothing so simple as "new." Their careers, their lives, and their writing provide sobering tokens of a milieu (ours) in which a (literary) opportunity seized coincides with a (critical) ideal abandoned.

What is likely to happen to this current of writing? Impossible to say. Still, it only takes a slightly generous view to see it as a sparkling tributary into the pool of culture. Whether it will yield work of lasting quality is unclear. But while we wait to find out, we can enjoy the fresh stirring of the old waters. That academic intellectuals should suddenly feel bouncy and vigorous at the thought of writing fiction—this may be a harbinger of the kind of hybrid we could sorely use, a hybrid that overcomes the division between those who imagine and those who ratiocinate, those who create and those who review their books. It's no ultimate synthesis, but it makes a colorful little picture within our larger gray: the sight of these self-reinventing theorists, these feeling intellectuals and pleasure-seeking rationalists, these academics laughing and weeping.

THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

Health-Care Reform: Where's the Pain?

A Survey of Recent Articles

This health-care system of ours is badly broken, and it is time to fix it." So declared President Bill Clinton to Congress last September. His perception is widely shared. Unfortunately, the specialists and the general public are at odds about just what needs to be fixed.

The specialists, their opinions amplified by the news media, look mainly at the "big picture." They worry that the nation's health-care expenditures in 1993 amounted to 14 percent of gross national product (GNP) and are projected by the Congressional Budget Office to grow to 18 percent by 2000. Most Americans agree that health-care costs must be controlled, but the costs they have in mind are their own. They do not want less care; they want to pay less, or at least not more. And that, many specialists believe, is a large part of the problem.

Many Americans seem to have the notion that they are (or should be) getting a "free lunch." Employers or insurance companies foot the bill, so let's have another helping of health care, please, and with all the advanced technological trimmings. In reality, of course, notes Princeton University economist Uwe Reinhardt in *Health Affairs* (Special Issue, 1993), higher insurance premiums for employers mean lower wages for employees—a fact also noted by contributors to a *National Review* (Dec. 13, 1993) supplement on health care.

Some employers, Rachel Wildavsky reports in *Reader's Digest* (Oct. 1993), have been trying to make workers aware of costs. For example, they have begun offering bonuses to those whose annual medical claims do not exceed a certain amount. At *Forbes* magazine, claims plummeted and reimbursements fell by more than one-fourth after employees were offered bonuses if they kept their 1992 claims below \$500. Wildavsky believes that such an approach, if widely used, "could help rescue American health care from possibly dangerous 'reforms.' In the process, it could save big money and help expand health coverage to those now without."

But a prescription that raises awareness of costs may fly in the face of public feeling: Americans are "satisfied with their current health-care arrangements—except for the price tag," as Robert J. Blendon and John M. Benson of the Harvard School of Public Health put it in the *Public Perspective* (March–April 1993). To the satisfied majority, adds *Newsweek* (Sept. 20, 1993), "change can only be threatening."

Clinton's health-care plan tries to be unthreatening. His complex proposal would define a standard package of benefits that all Americans would be entitled to receive (along with a "health security card"). States would establish regional "health alliances" that, on behalf of millions of consumers, would bargain with doctors, hospitals, and others. Most alliances would offer consumers a large selection of plans, but all would offer at least one traditional "fee-for-service" option, which would almost certainly cost more than the other choices, particularly health maintenance organizations (HMOs). Clinton's proposal thus aims to keep costs down by making consumers more aware of them and by encouraging competition among the provider networks. A National Health Board would

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| POLITICS & GOVERNMENT | 127 |
| FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE | 129 |
| ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS | 132 |
| SOCIETY | 134 |
| PRESS & MEDIA | 138 |
| RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY | 140 |
| SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY | 142 |
| & ENVIRONMENT | |
| ARTS & LETTERS | 145 |
| OTHER NATIONS | 148 |

monitor the system. If this "managed competition" does not work, the Clinton proposal has a backup approach ready: government price controls on insurance premiums. Costs are to be kept to 17 percent of GNP in 2000.

Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton insist that their reforms—including the extension of health insurance to the 37 million Americans now without it—can be accomplished "without enacting new broad-based taxes." Others are not so sure. Clinton's plan, the editors of the *New Republic* (Nov. 8, 1993) complain, "asks no sacrifice from anyone. Every American will be guaranteed a lifetime of health security; quality will be maintained; individuals, businesses, and the federal government will all pay less for care. Only drug and insurance companies have been slighted."

From a financial standpoint, asserts Rich Thomas in *Newsweek* (Sept. 20, 1993), Clinton's blueprint is an "exercise in wishful thinking." His plan assumes that the rate of growth in Medicare and Medicaid, now running at 13 percent a year, can be cut to under five percent, for a savings of \$238 billion between 1994 and 2000.

Princeton sociologist Paul Starr, one of the advisers on the Clinton plan, claims in the *New Republic* (Dec. 6, 1993) that the proposal "presumes neither a free lunch nor any fiscal fantasies. . . . As states carry out reform beginning in 1996, expanded coverage will raise spending by about eight percent, while other reforms aimed at stimulating cost-conscious choice, backed up by a regional cap on premium increases, will cut the rate of increase in per capita costs."

In the same magazine (Nov. 22, 1993), New York University economist William J. Baumol argues that concerns about the economic impact of rising costs is exaggerated—a view shared by a number of other economists. Baumol argues that the problem in health care is not, as the Clintons and others assume, an absence of competition. Competition has been rising, as the growth of HMOs suggests. The real problem is slow productivity growth: Medical care simply does not lend itself to labor-saving techniques because physicians still must see patients one-by-one. But if productivity is rising elsewhere in the economy, Baumol notes, consumers can af-

ford to pay more for health care. A jump in the cost of a certain medical treatment from, say, \$1 to \$10 does not matter much if a general rise in productivity also lifts *wages* so that it still takes only an hour of labor to pay for the treatment.

The Heritage Foundation's Stuart M. Butler, writing in the *New York Times* (Sept. 28, 1993), calls the Clinton plan a prescription for "permanent price controls by stealth." It is "folly," he says, to expect such a system to deliver quality health care at a lower price. "Price controls have never achieved such results in the past, and they won't work now."

Even if managed competition worked exactly as its proponents wish, says Harvard's Joseph P. Newhouse in the *Health Affairs* special issue, it would not slow the rate of increase in medical-care costs more than temporarily, so long as "it continues to be true that much of the cost increase reflects enhanced medical capabilities that society is mostly willing to pay for."

Willard Gaylin, president of the Hastings Center for bioethical research, contends in *Harper's* (Oct. 1993) that the Clinton administration has embraced the ideas of "efficiency experts" who assume "that the elimination of waste will obviate the need for 'rationing' health care." He argues, in contrast, that "the greatest part of the increase in health-care costs can best be understood as the result not of the failures of medicine but of its successes." Some advances, such as the polio vaccine, have reduced outlays over the long term, Newhouse notes, but most, such as invasive cardiology and renal dialysis, have increased outlays. The very concept of health has been expanded, Gaylin says. Infertility, for example, did not used to be considered a disease. In saving lives, effective medicine *increases* the number of ill people in the population.

Controlling waste will save money only for a while, Gaylin believes. The time thus bought, he says, should be used "to figure out a way to confront the deeper and more challenging reasons for escalating health costs: our unbridled appetite for health care and our continuing expansion of the definition of what constitutes health." That confrontation may necessitate a debate about much more than just "reform."

The President As Preacher

"Civil Religion and the Gilded Age Presidency: The Case of Benjamin Harrison" by Charles W. Calhoun, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Fall 1993), 208 E. 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Theodore Roosevelt was not the first president to see his office as a "bully pulpit." A dozen years before him, Benjamin Harrison, elected in 1888, grasped the opportunities the presidency offered to preach to the nation. Indeed, Harrison's "exercise of the 'priestly functions' of the presidency," argues Calhoun, a historian at East Carolina University, helped transform the office.

The grandson of an earlier president, William Henry Harrison, Benjamin Harrison (1833–1901) of Indiana served a single term in the U.S. Senate before running for the presidency in 1888. A contemporary said that Harrison had "a very cold, distant temperament," but "if he should address 10,000 men from a public platform, he would make every one his friend." That gift proved to be his greatest political asset, Calhoun says. Presidential candidates of the period were obliged to stay off the campaign trail and appear to be above politics. Candidate Harrison waged a brilliant "front-porch campaign," delivering brief "homiletic" remarks to throngs of visitors and reporters virtually every day. He defeated Democrat Grover Cleveland 233 to 168 in the Electoral College while narrowly losing the popular vote to the incumbent chief executive.

In the White House, Harrison continued to seek a direct rapport with the citizenry. During his single term (Cleveland won back the presidency in 1892), Harrison spoke publicly on 296 occasions, half as many as all of his predecessors combined. After Harrison, presidents would find it harder to view the office as strictly administrative; increasingly, they would feel obliged to exert leadership through direct appeals to the public.

"At a time when the disruption of modernization wrought profound disarray in personal and national values," Calhoun says, "Harrison effectively exploited the national pulpit, invoking the tenets of a civil religion that comprehended both spiritual and secular goals."

"I do not know how our institutions could endure," Harrison said on one occasion, "unless we so conduct our public affairs and society that every man who is sober and industrious shall be able to make a good, comfortable living and lay something aside for old age or evil days; to have hope in his heart and better prospects for his children. That is the strength of American institutions. Whatever promotes that I want to favor." What promoted that, he maintained, was the Republican economic program, particularly a stable currency



President Harrison, who sought a direct rapport with the people, receives a procession at the White House after his inauguration.

and the protective tariff.

Harrison has risen in the estimation of historians lately. With the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act and other measures, Calhoun writes, his administration laid the groundwork for later Progressive reforms. And by addressing the nation so vigorously from the "pulpit," Harrison helped change the presidency. TR and other presidents would build on what Harrison began, "echoing his civil religious concerns but pleading more boldly and forthrightly for government action for the public good."

An Unlimited Future?

"Term-Limitation Express" by Mark P. Petracca and Darci Jump, in *Society* (Nov.–Dec. 1993), Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The term-limitation movement, born in 1990, shows no sign of slowing down. With the addition of Maine last November, voters in 17 states have limited the terms of federal or state legislators, and in 14 of those they have limited the terms of both. Activists are working to get initiatives on the ballot in eight other states this year and are lobbying legislatures elsewhere. Not

since the Progressive era has there been so much grassroots activity aimed at redesigning representative government, observe Petracca, a political scientist at the University of California, Irvine, and Jump, a 1992 graduate. Polls indicate that 70 to 80 percent of the public backs term limits. The remaining obstacles to a nationwide triumph may soon fall.

One barrier is that 24 states do not permit citizen initiatives, the favored device of term-limitation activists. Few legislators, after all, are inclined to vote to put a definite end to their legislative careers. Nevertheless, activists in some states, such as Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, and New Jersey, have organized campaigns to pressure candidates for the legislature to pledge to support term limitation. In New Jersey and South Carolina, term-limit advocates are seeking to amend their state constitutions to allow initiatives; activists in Mississippi have already succeeded in doing so.

Legal challenges pose another big obstacle for the term-limitation movement, Petracca and

Jump note. Court or other legal rulings kept term-limit initiatives off the ballot in three states in 1992. Speaker of the House Thomas Foley (D.-Wash.), along with the League of Women Voters, has filed a suit to overturn the congressional term limits adopted in 1992 in his state. A 1992 study by the Congressional Research Service concluded that state-imposed limits on congressional terms are unconstitutional.

That objection would be moot, of course, if the Constitution were amended. How likely is that? Petracca and Jump contend that the movement's victories thus far—particularly the "overwhelming success" it enjoyed in November 1992, when 14 states opted for term limits—show that such an amendment is quite possible. They cite the precedent of the Progressive-era movement for direct election of U.S. senators (instead of selection by state legislatures). Reformers in Oregon managed to get a law enacted in 1901 that enabled voters to express their (non-binding) choice for senator. The reformers then demanded that candidates for the state legisla-

A Tale of Two Buzzwords

Veteran news commentator Daniel Schorr notes in the *New Leader* (Oct. 4-18, 1993) that candidate Bill Clinton, self-proclaimed agent of change, has turned into President Clinton, agent of security.

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on October 12, the president asserted that people would fear change less if they felt more secure. He went on to propound four kinds of security as an umbrella over diverse administration programs ranging from health care to crime control to the North American Free Trade Agreement. They are: health security, economic security, personal security, and community security—the last including shared responsibility for our children. . . .

"Security," the new buzzword, has over the years been put to many uses. . . . FDR called his pension plan "Social Security." Defense became "national security." An internationalist version of same was "collective security." The Red-hunt-

ers of the 1950s turned that inward with "internal security."

Although "security" appears in the dictionary as a warm, fuzzy noun, connoting shelter and protection, it has not been universally popular, particularly with those inclined toward rugged individualism. General Douglas MacArthur once said, "There is no security on this earth, there is only opportunity." And General Dwight D. Eisenhower, while president of Columbia University, said, "If security is what Americans want, they can go to prison." The closest that the Reagan administration came to the notion of security was the "social safety net."

That was before not only the poor but the middle class, in increasing numbers, began to feel insecure in the face of unemployment, family dislocation, and crime on the streets. The word "security" was test-marketed by the White House as it prepared to sell its health-reform program, and was found to resonate a lot better than "change."

ture sign pledges to vote for the winner of the primary. Progressives in other states followed suit. By 1910, 27 state legislatures had been pushed to petition Congress for a constitutional amendment. Two years later, the Senate finally gave in, and in 1913 the 17th Amendment became law after it was ratified by three-fourths of the states. A 28th Amendment, the authors say, could be only a few years away.

Court Costs

"Dwarfing the Political Capacity of the People? The Relationship Between Judicial Activism & Voter Turnout, 1840–1988" by Philip A. Klinkner, in *Polity* (Summer 1993), Thompson Hall, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. 01003.

Legal scholars have long debated whether or not Supreme Court activism discourages public participation in electoral politics. Klinkner, of Loyola Marymount University, sides with the critics of activism. Comparing voter turnout in congressional and presidential elections between 1840 and 1988 with the number of federal, state, and local laws overturned by the Supreme Court during the two years before each election, he finds a troubling pattern.

Until the 1890s, turnout relative to the aver-

ages for the entire 148-year period was very high and "judicial activism" very low. (Usually fewer than a dozen laws were overturned in each two-year period.) From the 1890s to the 1930s, his index of activism rose to an average of 30 and voter turnout dropped. From the 1930s until 1960, the opposite pattern prevailed; and between 1960 and 1988, the pattern reversed itself again.

Since most people have only a very limited knowledge of what the Supreme Court is doing, a question arises: *How* does judicial activism depress turnout? Klinkner suggests that activism by the Court has its most direct impact on labor unions and other organizations that get out the vote. The activist Warren and Burger courts of 1953–86, for example, often let liberal interest groups achieve their goals without having to win popular support; hence, such groups put their money and energy into litigation rather than voter mobilization.

The possibility that judicial activism may result in more voters staying home on Election Day does not mean, in Klinkner's view, that the high court should always sit on its hands. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 ruling outlawing school segregation, the requirements of justice were clear. The lesson, Klinkner asserts, is rather "that judicial activism may not be cost-free."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Filling a Vacuum

"The Emerging Structure of International Politics" by Kenneth N. Waltz, in *International Security* (Fall 1993), Center for Science and International Affairs, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States stands supreme, its power virtually unchecked. This will not last, promises Waltz, a prominent political scientist at the University of California at Berkeley. Within the next 10 to 20 years, he predicts, Germany (or perhaps a "United States of Europe"), Japan, and China may well become great powers—probably joined by Russia—all armed with nuclear weapons.

Waltz does not find the nuclear prospect trou-

bling. "China and other countries have become nuclear powers without making the world a more dangerous one," he argues. "Why should nuclear weapons in German and Japanese hands be especially worrisome? Nuclear weapons have encouraged cautious behavior by their possessors and deterred any of them from threatening others' vital interests."

Will Japan or Germany, already economic powerhouses, *want* to become great powers? Probably, Waltz believes. As memories of World War II fade, so will Japanese and German nuclear inhibitions. "Countries have always competed for wealth and security, and the competition has often led to conflict. Why should the future be different from the past? Given the ex-

The New Crusaders

In the *National Interest* (Winter 1993–94), Alan Tonelson, research director of the Economic Strategy Institute, discerns a new willingness to use force abroad on the part of certain liberals, such as *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis.

Although many of the new internationalists opposed fighting “a war for oil,” they have favored using military force—even unilaterally, if necessary—in areas such as Kurdistan, Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti. No significant U.S. interests are at stake in these regions, but liberals have portrayed intervention as necessary to advance internationalism’s key systemic goals: greater international prosperity and stability, as well as a kinder, gentler world. If successful, such peacekeeping, peace-making, and nation-building operations would also further the grander internationalist objective of a true world community governed by law rather than force—an objective they see as the ultimate guarantor of American security and prosperity, and which has been dear to liberal hearts since the Enlightenment. . . .

So striking has been the contrast between Gulf and post-Gulf stances of liberals, that some of their critics sardonically accuse them of favoring military actions only when no serious purely U.S. interests are at stake. But this jibe points to a central truth about liberal internationalism. Whether during the Cold War or after the Cold War, purely U.S. national interests were never its top priority. In fact, they were not even supposed to exist.

pectation of conflict, and the necessity of taking care of one’s interests, one may wonder how a state with the economic capability of a great power can refrain from arming itself with the weapons that have served so well as the great deterrent.”

Japan, for example, must worry about China (and vice versa). “China is rapidly becoming a great power in every dimension: internal economy, external trade, and military capability. . . . Unless Japan responds to the growing power of China, China will dominate its region and become increasingly influential beyond it.” China, India, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea, all have nuclear arms to deter threats against their vital interests. “Increasingly, Japan will be pressed to follow suit.”

What will the new world be like? “Germany, Japan, and Russia will have to relearn their old

great-power roles, and the United States will have to learn a role it has never played before,” Waltz says. No longer will Washington be able to make policies unilaterally. International politics, however, will remain basically anarchic, Waltz believes. Strategic nuclear weapons are useful only for deterrence. Since all the great powers will have such deterrents, the importance of conventional military forces will be reduced. That “will focus the minds of national leaders on their technological and economic successes and failures.”

Although there may be more democratic, and fewer authoritarian, states in the new world, that does not mean that “the Wilsonian vision of a peaceful, stable, and just international order” is on the verge of realization, Waltz cautions. Democratic states, too, have conflicts. The War of 1812 was fought by two democracies (Britain and the United States); so was the Civil War. “A relative harmony

can, and sometimes does, prevail among nations,” he says, “but always precariously so.”

The Few, the Proud, The Single

“Your Honey or Your Life” by Allan Carlson, in *Policy Review* (Fall 1993), The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002–4999.

When Marine Corps commandant Carl Mundy announced last August that the corps would cease accepting married recruits and discourage postenlistment weddings, he was swiftly overruled. Nevertheless, “the weight of American history and military tradition was firmly on General Mundy’s side,” writes Carlson, author of *Family Questions* (1988).

“A ‘bachelor’ military force was the Ameri-

can rule from 1776 to 1940—and, arguably, to 1947,” Carlson notes. “Military regulations uniformly forbade the peacetime enlistment of married men, and discouraged marriage thereafter.” In time of total war, of course, married men were called to arms. The bachelors-only policy stemmed partly from the traditional American aversion to standing armies. But it also was a time-honored way of reconciling “the military’s need for a soldier’s full obedience, immediate availability, frequent movement, and extended service with a man’s natural desire to settle down and procreate.” Only senior officers were exempt from the marriage stricture.

But the Cold War, Carlson notes, resulted in “a kind of permanent mobilization.” The armed services swelled to several million. By 1960, dependent wives and children for the first time outnumbered uniformed personnel in the active force. Today, about 60 percent of those on active duty have spouses or other dependents. A new twist was added with the integration of women into the services, beginning in the 1970s. The changes raise difficult sexual and child-care issues, not to mention costs. In fiscal year 1994, outlays for dependent health care, family housing, and other items may consume \$25 billion, or one-tenth of the nation’s military budget.

With the Cold War over, Carlson argues, America should get women and married men—and a lot of other people—out of the military. He favors a radically reduced army: An “expeditionary force” of only 250,000 to 300,000 professionals. For the possible “big war,” he proposes a Swiss-style citizen force, aided by up to 50,000

full-time professional officers and noncommissioned officers. Beginning at age 21, all males would be required to serve six years in the active militia, but they would be free to marry.

Giving Up the Bomb

“Why South Africa Gave Up the Bomb” by J. W. de Villiers, Roger Jardine, and Mitchell Reiss, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 1993), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Who could have guessed that the first nation ever to engage in unilateral nuclear disarmament would be South Africa, long one of the world’s “pariah states”? After confirming suspicions that South Africa possessed “a limited nuclear deterrent capability,” President F. W. de Klerk announced last March that his country had disarmed itself. De Villiers, chairman of the Atomic Energy Corporation of South Africa, Jardine, national coordinator of science and technology policy for the African National Congress (ANC), and Reiss, a Guest Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center, say that Pretoria had come to realize that its nuclear weapons “were not only superfluous but actually counterproductive.”

South Africa, which possesses abundant reserves of uranium, decided by the late 1950s to create a nuclear research and development program for peaceful purposes. By the late 1960s it had constructed a uranium-enrichment plant, which made the manufacture of material for nuclear weapons possible. In 1974 John Vorster, then prime minister, approved development of a nuclear-explosive capability limited, the authors say, to such purposes as mining excavation. During the next several years, Pretoria decided to build a nuclear deterrent. Ultimately, six bombs were fully assembled.

That decision, formalized in 1978, “is best understood in light of [South Africa’s] international standing at the time,” the authors say. Pretoria’s relations with the rest of the world were rapidly deteriorating; it feared, as de Klerk noted in March, “a Soviet expansionist threat to southern Africa,” and it was worried about the imminent independence of neighboring Zimbabwe under an actively antiapartheid regime. It was alarmed by its “relative international isolation and the fact that it could not rely on outside assistance should it be attacked.” Under the strat-



egy adopted in 1978, the government would neither confirm nor deny that it had a nuclear-weapons capability; but in the event of a military threat, it would reveal that capability covertly, or if necessary overtly.

"Toward the end of the 1980s—after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the independence of Namibia, the cessation of hostilities in Angola, and the withdrawal from that country of 50,000 Cuban troops—South Africa saw clearly that the nuclear deterrent was becoming superfluous," the authors write. Indeed, the deterrent was becoming a burden. Signing the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), for example, "would have distinct advantages for South Africa's international relations, especially those with other African countries." Soon after de

Klerk won the presidency in September 1989, the decision was made to dismantle the nuclear arsenal, close down the enrichment plant, and destroy technical drawings. This was accomplished by early July 1991.

South Africa signed the NPT on July 10, 1991, and two months later concluded a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. After next April's unprecedented non-racial elections, an ANC-led government is expected to take office. There remains the question of what the new government will do with the country's stockpile of enriched uranium. The authors are hopeful: "ANC President Nelson Mandela has declared that South Africa must never again allow its resources, scientists, and engineers to produce weapons of mass destruction."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Did Deregulation Work?

"Economic Deregulation: Days of Reckoning for Microeconomists" by Clifford Winston, in *Journal of Economic Literature* (Sept. 1993), American Economic Assoc., 2014 Broadway, Ste. 305, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

Soon after the Carter administration began deregulating airlines in 1978, airfares rose and airline profits dropped. Does that mean that deregulation failed? Not at all, argues Winston, of the Brookings Institution. The 1979 energy crisis drove fuel prices higher—and it was *that* increase that brought about the hike in fares and the drop in profits. Isolate the effects of the energy crisis, as some economists have, and it turns out that fares were *lower* and profits *higher* than they would have been without deregulation.

During the 1970s and early '80s, other industries—including railroads, trucking, cable TV, telecommunications, banking, natural gas, and petroleum—were also deregulated. The share of gross national product (GNP) produced by fully regulated industries fell from 17 percent in 1977 to less than seven percent in 1988. Economists, through their research, generally supported this movement. In trying to assess its impact, Win-

ston notes, many popular analysts simply compare the "before" and "after" snapshots, and if the latter seems worse, conclude that deregulation failed. Winston argues that the trouble with that approach, as the airline case illustrates, is that it fails to take into account the impact of the business cycle, technological developments, or other changes in the economy that may be taking place at the same time.

Studies in which economists try to account for such changes, Winston says, show that deregulation has indeed improved the economy's efficiency: "Society has gained at least \$36–46 billion (1990 dollars) annually from deregulation, primarily in the transportation industries. . . . This amounts to a seven–nine percent improvement in the part of GNP affected by regulatory reform." Consumers have been the main beneficiaries. For labor, the impact has been mixed, with some small wage losses but some modest employment gains. Producers, surprisingly, "have actually benefited, on net, from reform." Airlines have enjoyed a substantial increase in profits; the well-publicized financial difficulties they experienced at various times during the past decade resulted from rises in fuel prices, general economic downturns, or other factors,

but not from deregulation. Indeed, Winston says, the industry's periodic large losses would have been even greater had it not been for deregulation.

So far, however, the public seems unaware of the good economic news. "Despite the large actual and potential benefits from airline, telecommunications, and cable television deregulation," Winston notes, "only airline deregulation enjoys a substantial majority of support and even this support could be in jeopardy."

The Last Trustbuster

"The Antimonopoly Ideal and the Liberal State: The Case of Thurman Arnold" by Alan Brinkley, in *The Journal of American History* (Sept. 1993), 1125 E. Atwater Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47401-3701.

The antimonopoly movement was once one of the more potent forces in American politics. It seemed on its way to new heights when Thurman W. Arnold (1891-1969) took over the Justice Department's Antitrust Division in 1938, during the New Deal. Arnold had a radical new notion of trustbusting, and while his tenure was quite successful in some respects, he failed to win the public over to his approach. By leading the antimonopoly movement up a blind alley, contends Brinkley, a historian at Columbia University, Arnold and liberals who agreed with him helped forever to diminish its role in American public life.

Arnold "embraced a conception of the antitrust laws that was profoundly, if subtly, differ-

ent from that of earlier generations of reformers," Brinkley says. Agrarian dissidents, workers, small producers, local merchants, and consumers all had their own versions of the anti-trust idea, but all sought "to combat concentrated power and restore the authority of individuals and communities." Arnold did not share their conviction that "bigness" was a "curse." Big business, he believed, was here to stay. That made big government a necessity. In Arnold's view, government had to monitor and regulate business practices constantly in order to control monopoly power and ensure competition. It was a view that "implicitly rejected the concept of returning economic authority to 'the people,'" Brinkley notes.

In *The Folklore of Capitalism*, his acclaimed 1937 book, Arnold argued that "administrative government" deserved the same respect accorded the courts and private corporations. In his anti-trust job, he greatly enlarged the Antitrust Division. Its budget increased more than fivefold between 1938 and 1940, and the number of lawyers on staff went from 58 to more than 300. The number and scope of prosecutions likewise expanded during Arnold's tenure.

Big business was not Arnold's only target, Brinkley notes. "Whatever artificially inflated consumer prices . . . whether the anticompetitive practices of a great monopoly, the collusive activities of small producers, or the illegitimate demands of powerful labor organizations—was a proper target of antitrust prosecution."

Arnold was unable, however, to get the public to embrace his radical ideas. His sardonic way of talking in public did not help, and after Pearl Harbor, the war effort took priority over antitrust cases. "But most of all, perhaps," Brinkley writes, "Arnold was unable to make an effective case . . . that aggressive antitrust enforcement was essential for promoting mass purchasing power and protecting consumers." Keynesian economics seemed to offer less controversial ways to pursue those aims. In 1943, shortly after he was directed to abandon a case against the railroads for price fixing, Arnold resigned. Despite occasional flare-ups of interest in the decades since, the antimonopoly crusade became, in historian Richard Hofstadter's words, "one of the faded passions of American reform."



New Dealer Thurman Arnold stirred controversy by seeking to apply antitrust laws to labor unions.

Can't Buy Me Love

"Does Money Buy Happiness?" by Robert E. Lane, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1993), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Money can't buy happiness, they say, and they're right. Or at least mostly right, says Lane, a Yale University political scientist.

The fact is, surveys conducted during the past two decades show that people in rich countries are happier than those in poor ones. This reverses the findings of earlier polls. It's not so much that money buys happiness, writes Lane, as that it buys "relief from sorrow" by means of better health care, lower infant mortality, and the like. For much the same reason, money can buy a degree of happiness for poor people in affluent countries.

By and large, however, "there is no substantial relation between income and well-being"

in most developed countries, Lane writes. What does make people happy? Family comes first, followed in most surveys by friendship and then by satisfying work and leisure. Only middle-class intellectuals, Lane remarks parenthetically, are likely to be surprised by the discovery that work satisfaction is not closely related to income. Why, after all, should we expect the highly paid paper pusher to be happier in his work than the highly skilled wall-paper hanger?

Government, Lane says, can help people in their pursuit of happiness. Since family is the number-one source of well-being for most people and family troubles go hand in hand with poverty, policies that alleviate need would help. And since satisfying work is more essential to well-being than a fatter paycheck, economic policies should be designed to promote full employment rather than bigger incomes.

SOCIETY

Which Way Feminism?

A Survey of Recent Articles

Polls indicate that most American women strongly support the ideal of equality between the sexes, yet do not call themselves feminists. Do these women still just not get it? Or does modern feminism itself need to have its collective consciousness raised? Feminists of various hues have lately been pondering a number of such "state of the movement" questions.

"The widespread belief in equality . . . is a belief in equality up to a point—the point where women are drafted and men change diapers," attorney Wendy Kamner writes in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Oct. 1993). "After 30 years of the contemporary women's movement, equal-rights feminism is still considered essentially abnormal." To the extent that feminism questions women's traditional familial roles, Kamner says, it demands "profound individual change"—and naturally runs into resistance.

That much about feminism is quite familiar to veterans of the 1960s and '70s. But for many in the movement, the sort of equal-rights feminism that came to prominence then has become passé. For them, the *difference* between the sexes is fundamental. Central to this kind of feminism, writes Kamner, "is the belief, articulated by the psychologist Carol Gilligan [author of the influential *In a Different Voice* (1982)], that women share a different voice and different moral sensibilities. . . . In a modern-day version of Victorian True Womanhood, feminists . . . pay tribute to women's superior nurturing and relational skills and their general 'ethic of caring.'" Some "difference" feminists draw reformist conclusions from their beliefs about male-female differences; others push on to radical notions, arguing that "female" ways of doing things such as science, intuitive and antihierarchical, should be

given parity with (if not be allowed to replace) "male" ways.

That there may be basic differences between men and women is not, of course, a recent academic discovery. Nor, as Deborah Tannen, a Georgetown University linguist and author of the bestseller *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990), argues in *Utne Reader* (Sept.–Oct. 1993), does difference imply inequality. "Whether or not the genders are the same," she notes, "is irrelevant to whether they should be treated as equals."

Unfortunately, others have not found it so easy to reconcile the two ideas. Feminism "has always been plagued by bitter civil wars over conflicting ideas about sexuality and gender which lead to conflicting visions of law and social policy," Kaminer observes. "If men and women are naturally and consistently different in terms of character, temperament, and moral sensibility, then the law should treat them differently, as it has through most of our history, with labor legislation that protects women, for example, or with laws preferring women in custody disputes: special protection for women, not equal rights, becomes a feminist goal." On the other hand, she says, "if sex is not a reliable predictor of behavior, then justice requires a sex-neutral approach to law."

"Difference feminism" does not sit well with the *Nation's* (Dec. 28, 1992) Katha Pollitt. "Women embrace Gilligan and Tannen because they offer flattering accounts of traits for which they have historically been castigated," she maintains. "Men like them because, while they urge understanding and respect for 'female' values and behaviors, they also let men off the hook: Men have power, wealth, and control of social resources because women don't really want them." The "pernicious tendencies" of a feminism that accepts sex differences are illustrated, Pollitt says, by the 1985 Sears Roebuck and Company sex discrimination case, "in which Rosalind Rosenberg, a professor of women's history at Barnard College, testified for Sears that female employees held lower-paying salaried jobs while men worked selling big-ticket items on commission because women preferred low-risk, noncompetitive positions that did not

interfere with family responsibilities. Sears won its case." Irrelevant, in Pollitt's eyes, evidently, was the possible truth of Rosenberg's testimony.

A form of difference feminism predominates among academic feminists. Karen Lehrman, now literary editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*, toured the world of women's studies in academe last spring, visiting the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Iowa, Smith College, and Dartmouth College. She reports in *Mother Jones* (Sept.–Oct. 1993) that for the most part the professors were serving up an academically thin and heavily politicized gruel. "Most women's studies professors seem to adhere to the following principles in formulating classes: women were and are oppressed; oppression is endemic to our patriarchal social system; men, capitalism, and Western values are responsible for women's problems." That feminism itself, as Lehrman points out, is "a product of Western culture based on moral reasoning and the premise that some things are objectively wrong," is seldom noted. Nor, Lehrman found, is much classroom attention given to women with accomplishments in the public realm; instead, students pore over the writings of women who are cast as victims of the "patriarchy." Instead of elevating women who succeeded by male, capitalist standards to heroic status, some professors said, society needs to value women's distinctive roles and forms of expression.

That focus seems quite correct to Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991). Responding to Lehrman in *Mother Jones* (Nov.–Dec. 1993), Faludi writes: "The capacity to analyze the world in political terms is not a disease; it's a healthy and fundamental prerequisite for moral engagement in the world. . . . Feminism in the academy is about more than women getting the right to absorb the male-defined curriculum; it's about challenging the foundations of that curriculum."

For some feminists, radical change is at the very heart of the feminist movement. "To me," says bell hooks, a professor of women's studies at Oberlin College, in a roundtable discussion on the movement's direction in *Ms.* (Sept.–Oct. 1993), "the essence of feminism is opposition to patriarchy and to sexist oppres-

sion. A lot of women who go for the notion of equal rights cannot go for the notion of opposing patriarchy, because that means a fundamental opposition to the culture as a whole."

Disagreements among feminists remain deep. "Vying for power . . .," writes Wendy Kaminer, "are poststructural feminists (dominant in academia in recent years), political feminists (office-holders and lobbyists), different-voice feminists, separatist feminists (a small minority), pacifist feminists, lesbian feminists, careerist

feminists, liberal feminists (who tend also to be political feminists), anti-porn feminists, eco-feminists, and womanists." Not to mention New Age feminists and goddess worshipers.

That the feminist movement has not achieved the ideal of equality is no surprise to Kaminer. "We haven't even defined it," she notes. "Nearly 30 years after the onset of the modern feminist movement, we still have no consensus on what nature dictates to men and women and demands of law."

Colonial America: A View from Below

"A German Soldier in America, 1780-1783: The Journal of Georg Daniel Flohr" by Robert A. Selig, in *The William and Mary Quarterly* (July 1993), Box 8781, Williamsburg, Va. 23187-8781.

Many visiting foreigners recorded their impressions of 18th-century America, but few, if any, had quite the qualifications of Georg Daniel Flohr. "Relatively unburdened by book learning or preconceived ideas, he had fewer prejudices" than many well-born observers of American life, writes Selig, a visiting professor at Hope College, in Holland, Michigan.

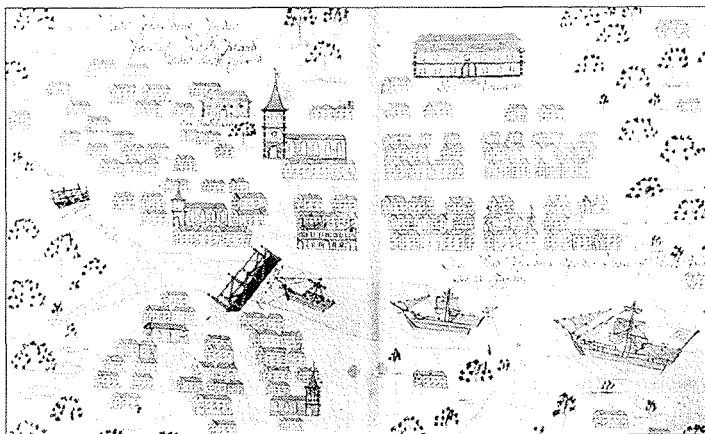
Born in 1756 in southwestern Germany, the son

of a butcher and small farmer, Flohr volunteered when he was nearly 20 for the Regiment Royal-Deux-Ponts, which the duke of Pfalz-Zweibrücken leased to the French crown. The regiment was part of the French force that King Louis XVI sent to America to aid the revolutionary cause. Unlike some of his fellow soldiers, Flohr went "joyfully" to the New World, arriving in Newport, Rhode Island, in July 1780 and serving until the Battle of Yorktown (1781) ended the war.

Like other visitors of higher birth, Flohr was impressed by the religious tolerance, prosperity, and egalitarian outlook that he found in America. The people, he wrote, "talk to everyone, whether he be rich or poor." While some of his officers complained of the "coldness" of the Rhode Island colonists, Flohr said that he "got

along very well with them." The soldiers encamped in Newport all tried to learn some English, mainly to be able to converse with the "beautiful American maidens" who lived nearby. The freedom the girls enjoyed surprised him. "Once they are 16 years old, their father and mother must not forbid them anything anymore . . . and if they have a lover he can freely go with them."

But the slavery that Flohr found in New England and the South shocked him. On wealthy plantations in the North, the slaves "are bought and sold . . .



Flohr's remarkable journal contains 30 detailed watercolor views of American and Caribbean towns, including this one of Providence, Rhode Island.

Escaping Into Adulthood

Writing about America in the 1950s in *Commentary* (Sept. 1993), essayist Joseph Epstein notes that young people then were eager to leave youth behind.

We of the '50s were not rebels, with or without a cause (a damn poor '50s movie, Rebel Without A Cause, by the way). To be a rebel, to be in revolt, implied being locked into youthfulness. Far from wishing to stay young, we who were young in the '50s were eager to grow up. Growing up meant growing into freedom, which was the name of our desire.

I am reminded here of the English poet Philip Larkin's saying that his religious sympathies first began to wane when he discovered that in the Christian version of heaven one would become as a little child again. Staying a child was not what Larkin, or my friends and I in the '50s, had in mind at all. Like Larkin, we wanted "money, keys, wal-

let, letters, books, long-playing records, drinks, the opposite sex, and other solaces of adulthood." Everything in the culture of the '50s provoked one to grow up. ("Oh, grow up," sisters would say to troublesome younger brothers.) The ideal, in the movies and in life, was adulthood.

In the '50s, one was encouraged to be adult and yet one believed in progress and hence in the future. Since the '60s, one has been encouraged to remain young for as long as possible, and yet not many people believe in progress and the future seems terrifying. This has all the makings of a paradox, until one realizes that the difference between the two cultural injunctions is that the first comports with biological reality and the second does not. Since one cannot really hope to stay young for long, the future brings with it nothing so inexorably as the prospect of growing old, which is to say, the prospect of certain defeat.

like cattle." In Williamsburg, Virginia, the black slaves had to do "their master's work, men and women, young and old," in the cotton fields "without any clothes on." White Virginians told Flohr that clothing the slaves "would cost too much . . . and the slaves were not worth that much." Unlike many of his military superiors, Flohr did not regard the harsh treatment as necessary, nor did he echo the usual claim that the slaves were lazy, ungrateful, and given to stealing. Slavery, he declared, was unchristian and "completely against human nature."

Flohr's view of the New World's "savages" was not so very different from the views of other Europeans. He wrote sympathetically of some Indian customs and practices but also reported, inaccurately, that the Iroquois sacrificed some of their own people to their gods.

Flohr's journal says nothing about the ideals of liberty or the pursuit of happiness, but he found enough to like in America that, after bouncing around a bit—and witnessing the execution of Louis XVI in 1793—he returned. He became a Lutheran minister in Virginia and lived there until his death in 1826.

A New Paternalism?

"In Loco Parentis: Helping Children When Families Fail Them" by James Q. Wilson, in *The Brookings Review* (Fall 1993), Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Policy wonks may debate what is behind the rise of America's urban underclass, but ordinary folks think they know. The criminals and chronically poor people who occupy society's lower depths, they say, lack vital attitudes and character traits. Wilson, a political scientist at the University of California at Los Angeles, tends to agree. The problem is that individuals acquire these traits—such as self-control and the ability to delay gratification—from their families, and even policy wonks do not know what to do if, as is increasingly the case, the family falls apart or falls down on the job of inculcating them.

Government efforts to compensate have not yielded encouraging results, Wilson observes. As part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, for example, the Pentagon in 1966 launched Project 100,000 to try to improve the lives of a group of "low aptitude" recruits. Al-

though most of these young men later said that the experience was good for them, researchers found that these veterans were worse off in terms of employment status, educational achievement, and income than nonveterans from similar backgrounds. Other troubled young men, admitted to the military between 1976 and 1980, were later found to be no better off than comparable nonveterans.

Results from early-childhood intervention programs are a little more encouraging but still inconclusive, Wilson says. Most optimism about Head Start, for example, derives from the modest success of a single model preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan. In another somewhat encouraging experiment, the federal Infant Health

and Development Program intervened in the lives of 1,000 prematurely born children, sponsoring home visits by counselors and special classes. After three years, the youngsters had higher IQs and fewer behavioral problems than others born prematurely.

The lesson of these scattered experiences seems to be that intervention works best when it is deep and long-lasting. Which leads Wilson to a radical proposal: Why not provide public subsidies to allow the poor to send their children to public or private boarding schools? The well-to-do have always had this option for the upbringing of their children, he argues, and it would be in society's interest to extend it to the poor as well.

PRESS & MEDIA

Are the Media Obsolete?

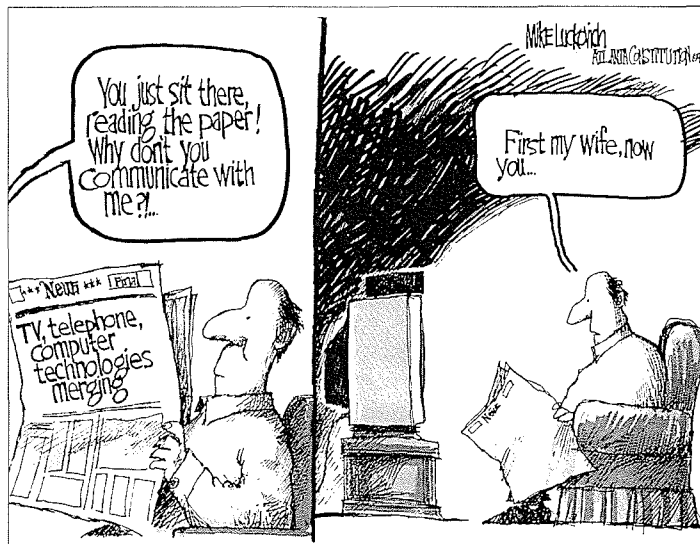
"The Mediasaurus" by Michael Crichton, in *Wired* (Sept.-Oct. 1993), 544 2nd St., San Francisco, Calif. 94107-1427.

Michael Crichton, author of *Jurassic Park* (1990) and other novels, should recognize a dinosaur when he sees one, and he thinks he has one in view. "To my mind, it is likely that what we now understand as the mass media will be gone within 10 years. Vanished, without a trace," he declares.

Since the American Revolution, the news media have enjoyed a monopoly over information, Crichton writes. "They have treated information the way John D. Rockefeller treated oil—as a commodity, in which the distribution network, rather than product quality, is of primary importance." A complacent industry has failed to recognize that technological advancement has forever altered the nature

of its product, information.

With technological tools such as C-SPAN, e-mail, and computer networks, today's consumer has direct access to high-quality information of personal or professional interest, and demand for such access is growing rap-



The coming world in which (if Crichton is right) newspapers and other mass media will be obsolete may be less than an information paradise.

idly. The front-page editor and news anchor, Crichton says, are like the old-fashioned telephone operator: "If you've ever had the experience of being somewhere where your call was placed for you, you know how exasperating that is. It's faster and easier to dial it yourself."

Attempting to maintain their audience, the news media use catch phrases and glitzy graphics, endlessly repackaging information as merely another form of entertainment (designed chiefly to get people to look at advertisements). But "news isn't entertainment—it's a necessity," Crichton writes. Information now has value, which is why consumers are willing to pay extra for things such as on-line computer services.

Crichton thinks this technological revolution will have a profound impact on the character of public debate in America. Today, the news media vastly oversimplify complex issues and polarize political debate. On the computer networks that already exist, according to Crichton, the level of debate is far more nuanced and sophisticated. The spread of these networks will end the news media's monopoly and gradually create a more informed public. "I will have artificial intelligence agents roaming the databases, downloading the stuff I am interested in, and assembling for me a front page, or a nightly news show, that addresses my interests," writes Crichton. "How will Peter Jennings or MacNeil-Lehrer or a newspaper compete with that?"

The Bad News Bias

"Bad News Bears" by Robert Lichter and Ted J. Smith, in *Media Critic* (1993), P.O. Box 762, Bedminster, N.J. 07921.

Watching almost any batch of network television newscasts in recent years, one would come away feeling that the nation's economy was poised on the brink of ruin.

In fact, contend Lichter, codirector of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, and Smith, associate professor of mass communications at Virginia Commonwealth University, the standard TV news portrait of the

economy is grossly distorted. Their case rests on two studies that examined more than 17,000 network news stories aired since 1982. Between 1982 and 1987, according to a study by the Washington-based Media Institute, more than 85 percent of the 5,300 economic news stories that had a discernible "spin" had a "negative tone," even though these were good—and at times spectacularly good—years for the U.S. economy. Indeed, the networks seemed to grow gloomier as economic conditions improved. The ratio of negative to positive stories on the economy increased from five to one in 1982 to seven to one in 1987.

The bad news bias continued into the 1990s. Analyzing 2,100 sound bites aired between October 1990 and May 1993, Lichter's organization found that 86 percent came from naysayers. The networks turned even good news into bad. When housing prices rose during the 1980s, they focused on people who were priced out of the market; when prices began to drop in the 1990s, the cameras turned to homeowners whose equity declined.

On television, the authors note, "the complexities of economic affairs are often reduced to simple and familiar stories about villains, victims, and heroes." Rather than report on, say, the complex economic realities of the computer industry—much less hard economic data—network news focuses on a single laid-off IBM worker.

The simplification and melodrama of economic reporting foster the illusion that the average citizen is somehow a victim of careless government policies. The networks' critical eye is nonpartisan. President George Bush may have lost the 1992 election in part because "many people thought [economic] conditions were worse than they were," as political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset observed, but the same overwhelming network negativism has afflicted his successor.

Lichter and Smith think that this relentless carping springs from journalists' assumption that never-ending prosperity is "a kind of birthright enjoyed by every American." Any departure from this norm produces charges of failure and malfeasance as well as "demands that someone set things right." Prosperity, as

journalists see it, "is only to be expected," and thus barely rates a mention.

The Hidden Congress

"Decline and Fall of Congressional News" by Stephen Hess, in *Society* (Jan.–Feb. 1994), Rutgers–The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Once a staple of front pages and nightly news shows, regular coverage of Congress is now scant, especially on TV. CNN is now the only TV news organization that has correspondents covering both the House and the Senate full-time, observes Hess, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

One reason for the change, he says, is a shift in power within many "mainstream" news organizations. Key decisions about what gets covered now are often made, not by a bureau chief in Washington, but by home-office editors, to whom the intricacies of the lawmaking process seem a good deal less fascinating.

The definition of "news" also has changed. In 1965, 84 percent of the front-page stories in the *New York Times* during one week were about government and politics; in 1992, only 55 percent

were. The trend has been much the same in TV news. Now, developments in business, health, and culture seem just as newsworthy as Washington doings.

Advances in technology also have had an impact. "When Washington had the only coaxial cable that fed directly into the TV networks' New York headquarters, often more than 60 percent of the items on the evening news programs originated in the capital," Hess points out. Satellites, tape, and portable equipment helped change that in the early 1980s.

At first, the use of satellites increased TV's focus on the nation's capital, as some local stations inaugurated their own Washington coverage. Membership in the Senate Radio and Television Gallery jumped from 750 in 1979 to 2,300 by 1987. Before long, however, many Washington bureaus were shut down. As one news director explained, "Government news is boring."

The problem with the decline of congressional coverage, Hess says, is that while the "boring" regular business of the nation's legislature gets less attention, any hints of official corruption draw throngs of reporters. The result: a distorted picture that suggests to the public that Capitol Hill is little more than the capital of scandal.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Crackup of Philosophy

"American Philosophy Today" by Nicholas Rescher, in *Review of Metaphysics* (June 1993), Catholic Univ. of America, Washington, D.C. 20064.

Early in the 20th century, American philosophy was dominated by a handful of giants—men such as William James, John Dewey, and George Santayana—and their writings affected the thinking of people in many walks of life. For better or worse, observes Rescher, of the University of Pittsburgh, American philosophy today has become "democratized"—and the influence outside the academy of its leading thinkers is virtually nil.

Books such as John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* (1971), Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror*

of Nature (1979), and W. V. Quine's *Word and Object* (1960) have produced "large ripples" in the pond of academic philosophy, Rescher acknowledges. But even the most influential philosopher is, these days, just "another—some-what larger—fish in a very populous sea." The odd fish without approved credentials is not even welcome to join in the swim. A Spinoza or a Nietzsche, he says, "would find it near to impossible to get a hearing in the North American philosophical world of today."

The number of academic philosophers (and, thanks partly to the "publish or perish" ethic, most professors of philosophy can claim to be not just teachers of philosophy but "philosophers") has grown enormously. Membership in the American Philosophical Association has in-

creased more than threefold since 1965; the *Directory of American Philosophers* for 1992–93 lists more than 10,000 academic philosophers in the United States and Canada.

What is most striking about American philosophy, Rescher maintains, is its fragmentation: "Every doctrine, every theory, every approach finds its devotees somewhere within the overall community. On most of the larger issues there are no significant majorities." Indeed, there is not even a consensus on what the urgent problems in philosophy are.

"Specialization and division of labor run rampant, and cottage industries are the order of the day," Rescher says. One cottage industry, for example, has to do with ethical questions in the professions; another, with the epistemology of information processing. Issues that once would have been considered merely bizarre (e.g., "Is Polygamy Good Feminism?") now are solemnly discussed at professional meetings and in the pages of journals. Entire professional societies are devoted to subjects that no one a generation ago would have deemed philosophical (e.g., the Society for the Study of Ethics and Animals).

While American philosophers were once inspired by religion, then took natural science as their guide early in the 20th century, today they draw from a wide variety of sources, ranging from French philosopher Jacques Derrida to mathematician John von Neumann.

"Philosophy—which ought by mission to be and is by tradition an integration of knowledge—has itself become increasingly disintegrated," Rescher laments. Yet American philosophy's "pluralistic character" is just "a realistic and effective accommodation" to the American environment. "One must," Rescher says, "accept the inevitable."

Bishops' Move

"The Politics of the American Catholic Hierarchy" by Timothy A. Byrnes, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Fall 1993), Academy of Political Science, 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115-1274.

The American hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church became very active in national politics during the 1970s and '80s, as the bishops

jumped into the right-to-life movement and published lengthy pastoral letters on U.S. defense and economic issues. As early as 1976, some got involved in national elections. Byrnes, a political scientist at Colgate University, contends that the bishops' new prominence in politics was not entirely their own doing.

Earlier in this century, when many Americans still looked upon "papists" with great suspicion, the bishops spoke out mainly in defense of the patriotism of American Catholics. In some cities, bishops came to have clout with local political leaders. By the 1960s, however, this "parochial" era was essentially over. Prosperous and well-educated, American Catholics no longer needed clerical apologists to provide political leadership. John F. Kennedy's election symbolized the movement of Catholics into the mainstream. But the bishops, encouraged by Pope John XXIII's Second Vatican Council (1962–65), strengthened the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and began to apply Catholic social teaching to national issues.

At the same time, Byrnes points out, the breakdown of the long-dominant Democratic New Deal coalition led some politicians in both parties to appeal to voters on religious grounds. Roman Catholics make up nearly a quarter of the U.S. population (57 million in 1990). The bishops do not control Catholic voters, Byrnes observes, but many politicians "believe, or perhaps fear, that the bishops can still exert a substantial influence" on them. Hence, many candidates have sought to play up their areas of agreement with the bishops and to minimize differences.

Thus, in 1976, three years after *Roe v. Wade*, Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist, met with the NCCB executive committee and tried, unsuccessfully, to paper over his differences with the bishops on abortion. Republican president Gerald Ford, meanwhile, proclaimed his support of an antiabortion constitutional amendment and had the NCCB executive committee to the White House.

By 1984, the bishops had expanded their public agenda to include opposition to nuclear arms and were divided over whether or not

abortion alone should serve, in effect, as a political litmus test. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago urged that the church's "pro-life position . . . be developed in terms of a comprehensive and consistent ethic of life." This, Byrnes observes, provided "a kind of moral cover" for "pro-choice" Catholic Democrats. The partisan implications of the bishops' conflicting positions, and the fact that a pro-choice Catholic,

Geraldine Ferraro, was the Democratic candidate for vice president, gave the bishops a larger role in the 1984 campaigns than they otherwise would have played. Four years later, with different candidates and different circumstances, the bishops had a much lower profile. How big a role they play in national politics in the future, Byrnes concludes, will be determined, in considerable part, by the parties and candidates themselves.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Computerized Q.E.D.'s

"The Death of Proof" by John Horgan, in *Scientific American* (Oct. 1993), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017-1111.

When Princeton's Andrew J. Wiles announced last June that he had solved Fermat's last theorem, his fellow mathematicians gasped in astonishment. More than 350 years ago, Pierre de Fermat claimed that he had found a proof of the proposition that for the equation $X^n + Y^n = Z^n$, there are no integral solutions for any value of N greater than two. Fermat did not disclose his proof, however. Now, Wiles claimed to have found one. And largely on the basis of his reputation, other mathematicians accepted his claim. But his proof ran to 200 pages (and could have been five times longer, if he had spelled everything out), and only one mathematician in 1,000 was qualified to evaluate it.

Unsettled situations such as this are not uncommon these days. Mathematical proofs often run hundreds of pages and can take years to be confirmed. In one case, a demonstration that was completed in the early 1980s consisted of some 500 articles totaling nearly 15,000 pages and written by more than 100 workers; only one person is said to have grasped the proof in its entirety, and he died in 1992.

The increasing complexity of mathematics, together with the rise of the computer, is bringing about profound changes in the ancient discipline, *Scientific American* senior writer Horgan reports. "For millennia, mathematicians have measured progress in terms of what they can

demonstrate through proofs—that is, a series of logical steps leading from a set of axioms to an irrefutable conclusion. Now the doubts riddling modern human thought have finally infected mathematics. Mathematicians may at last be forced to accept what many scientists and philosophers already have admitted: Their assertions are, at best, only provisionally true, true until proved false."

The computer, Horgan says, is forcing mathematicians "to reconsider the very nature of proof." Some proofs have required enormous calculations by computers, and cannot be verified by mere humans. Two years ago, Laszlo Babai of the University of Chicago and several colleagues developed a technique for "computer proofs" that offer the probability—but not the certainty—of truth. Still other investigators have been using computer graphics to produce "video proofs," which they hope will be more persuasive than traditional, formal proofs.

But computational experiments, whether involving graphics or numerical calculations, can be deceptive, Horgan notes. All the calculations that computers make are based on the manipulation of discrete, whole numbers (namely, ones and zeros). As a result, computers can only approximate numbers such as π or the square root of two, and that can result in errors. Even most of the mathematicians taking advantage of computer graphics and other experimental techniques agree that seeing by computer should not be believing. David A. Hoffman of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, one of those mathematicians, worries about the decreased

emphasis on traditional proofs. "Proofs are the only laboratory instrument mathematicians have," he says, "and they are in danger of being thrown out."

The "New" Tuberculosis

"A Plague Returns" by Mark Earnest and John A. Sbarbaro, in *The Sciences* (Sept.-Oct. 1993), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Along with the rise of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and human immunodeficiency virus, there has been an unexpected resurgence of tuberculosis (TB) in recent years. The newspapers report ominously that today's TB is drug resistant. Yet all but "a minuscule fraction" of the 27,000 active TB cases today are treatable, note Earnest and Sbarbaro, of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. The chief problem—and danger to uninfected Americans—is that a large proportion of patients almost certainly will fail to take their prescribed medicines.

When the two front-line TB drugs (isoniazid and rifampin) are combined with one or two back-up medications, most patients can be cured within six to nine months. The problem that physicians face in treating the disease is that mutation by the TB bacillus can result in organisms resistant to one or more of the drugs. "Luckily," the authors write, "mutations of *M. tuberculosis* are rare: Only one of every 100,000 organisms descended from one bacillus is resistant to the action of isoniazid and just one in a million can withstand the effects of rifampin or streptomycin."

But the treatable victims themselves often fail to cooperate, Earnest and Sbarbaro note. "Studies in the past 40 years have consistently shown that 35 percent of all people—tuberculosis patients and otherwise—do not take the medications prescribed for them." That puts others in danger, since tuberculosis needs only an exchange of air to spread. (Each contagious person, on average, infects five other people before the disease is discovered.)

A TB patient whose doctor has correctly

prescribed three effective drugs may suspect that the three medications are causing his upset stomach. Without consulting the physician, he decides to take only one of the drugs. The patient may feel fine for a while, because the lone drug still kills vast numbers of the organism. But all the bacilli resistant to that particular drug "continue to reproduce, ultimately reaching numbers sufficient to recreate the classic symptoms of tuberculosis: progressively severe fatigue, weight loss, night sweats, and coughing." At that point, the patient reaches for one of the drugs he had stopped taking, but it is too late: By the normal process of genetic mutation, a whole new generation of organisms resistant to the new drug *and* the old one has emerged. By taking just one drug at a time, instead of all of the prescribed medications together, the patient has allowed a monster of resistance to emerge.

How can TB patients be made to take their prescribed medications? The use of newly developed combination pills will help, but they are not a cure-all, the authors say. What needs to be done, they contend, is what the Denver Health Department did as early as 1965. It assigned staff members "to bring high doses of the medications to the patients (or the patients to the medication)." That approach is not cheap, of course, but it may be essential, the authors say, if the plague of TB is to be beaten back again.

Tempest In The Tropics

"The Deforestation Debate" by Richard Monastersky, in *Science News* (July 10, 1993), 1719 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; "Tropical Deforestation and Habitat Fragmentation in the Amazon: Satellite Data from 1978 to 1988" by David Skole and Compton Tucker, in *Science* (June 25, 1993), American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

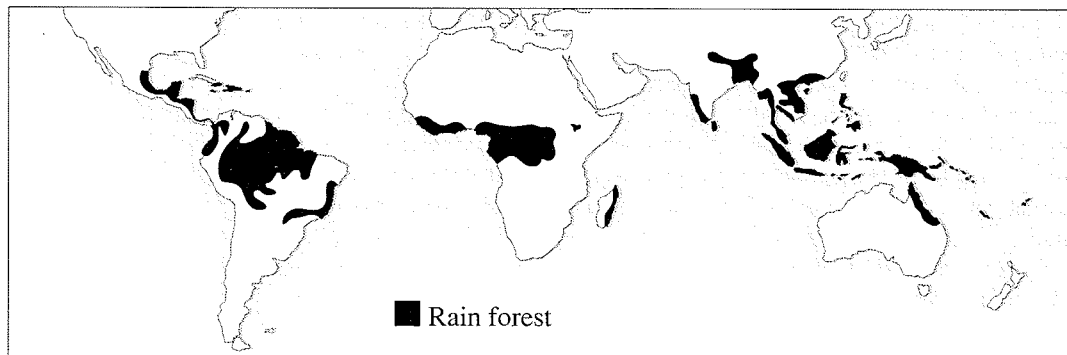
Deforestation became a household word during the late 1980s, when rock stars, movie actors, and other celebrities cranked up a crusade to save tropical woodlands, particularly in the Brazilian Amazon. Tropical forests are indeed important.

Although they occupy less than seven percent of the Earth's surface, they are home to at least half of all plant and animal species. Moreover, loss of forests increases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and thus might affect the planet's climate. But recent studies, reports Monastersky, a *Science News* writer, suggest that the extent of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon has been much exaggerated. Nevertheless, the threat to biodiversity still may be considerable.

In 1988, Alberto Setzer of Brazil's National Space Research Institute (INPE) calculated that a whopping eight million hectares (or 19.8 million acres) of forest had been cleared during 1987 within the legally defined Brazilian Amazon (which includes only part of the country's tropi-

and the National Institute for Research on Amazonia, based in Manaus, Brazil, have measured deforestation another way, by mapping cleared areas on images taken by Landsat satellites. Studies that relied partly on that technique indicated that forest losses in the Brazilian Amazon averaged 2.1 million hectares per year between 1978 and 1989—about one-quarter of Setzer's original estimate for 1987. In 1989 and '90, losses average 1.4 million hectares.

The latest estimate is even lower. Skole, of the University of New Hampshire, and Tucker, of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, compared 210 Landsat images covering the entire Brazilian Amazon in 1978 and 1988. They found that the deforested



The Brazilian Amazon, with more 3.5 million square kilometers of tropical forest, is the largest continuous region of such forest in world; next are Indonesia (1.1 million) and Zaire (1 million).

cal forests). Setzer and his team of researchers arrived at that alarming figure—which represented more than two percent of the forest—by using data collected by infrared sensors on a U.S. weather satellite to gauge the number and extent of fires in the region. They then assumed that 40 percent of the fires were on newly cleared forest. Their estimate, though challenged by other researchers, found its way into several well-publicized surveys of deforestation worldwide, including one by the Washington-based World Resources Institute. "Brazil emerged from the [World Resources Institute] study looking like the ultimate forest destroyer, responsible for roughly one-third to one-half of the global deforestation total," Monastersky notes.

In recent years, however, researchers at INPE

area grew from 7.8 million hectares in 1978 to 23 million a decade later, for an average annual loss of "only" 1.5 million hectares. Overall, they found, the "closed-canopy" forests of the Amazon shrank by six percent over the 10 years.

Unfortunately, there is bad news along with that relatively good news. Skole and Tucker found that the area of disturbed habitat *surrounding* cleared areas in the Amazon grew by more than four million hectares per year between 1978 and 1988. Vast areas of Amazon forest, although not being totally cleared, are being broken up or stripped of some of their trees. As a result, the threat to biological diversity is not all that much less than Alberto Setzer's faulty 1988 estimate of total deforestation led people to think.

Miles Ahead

"Out of Notes: Signification, Interpretation, and the Problem of Miles Davis" by Robert Walser, in *The Musical Quarterly* (Summer 1993), Oxford Univ. Press, Journals Dept., 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Trumpeter Miles Davis (1926–91) helped create the "cool" sound in jazz during the late 1940s, and later in his career he was a pioneer of jazz-rock "fusion" and other jazz idioms. Most critics acknowledge Davis's importance as a creative force in jazz, but in assessing him as a performer they are made uneasy by the "mistakes"—the cracked and missed notes—that he made. "Davis has long been infamous for missing more notes than any other major trumpet player," Walser, a professor of music at Dartmouth College, observes.

Some critics have apologized for, or tried to explain away, Davis's fluffs. Bill Cole, for instance, says the musician built a style out of his "mechanical problems" and turned "his mistakes into a positive result." Is this the best that can be said of Davis: that he was an important innovator but a bad trumpet player? Walser thinks not. From *The Birth of the Cool* (1949) to *Kind of Blue* (1959) and *Bitches Brew* (1970), Davis's performances had great power—and his mistakes were just the price he paid for that power.

Davis himself, Walser points out, did not kid himself about his errors. "He had absorbed a dislike of technical failings from many sources, including his first trumpet hero, Harry James, who was famous for his stylish phrasing and flawless technique." At the same time, however, Davis looked upon jazz, at least his sort of leading-edge jazz, as necessarily entailing high risks. "When they make records with all the mistakes in, as well as the rest, then they'll really make jazz records," he

once said. "If the mistakes aren't there, too, it ain't none of you."

Davis deliberately took risks in his playing. At one point in his 1964 recording of "My Funny Valentine," for example, he plays an A-flat in the normal way, with the first valve of the trumpet depressed, but then he slides down to a G without changing valves. "This is a technique that, on the trumpet, is difficult, risky, and relatively rare," Walser observes. "Acoustically, the trumpet should not be able to play any notes between A-flat and E-flat with only the first valve depressed; Davis must bend the note with his lips without letting it crack down to the next harmonic. The result is a fuzzy sound, not quite in tune." Such a sound would have no place in classical trumpet playing, yet in Davis's solo, "it is the audible sign of [his] effort and risk, articulating a moment of strain that contributes to the effect of his interpretation." In that instance, he managed to hold the note; elsewhere in the solo,

Those Who Can't . . . Can't

"When professors undertake to appraise and improve student writing, the blind are leading the blind," observes historian Patricia Nelson Limerick in the *New York Times Book Review* (Oct. 31, 1993).

Ten years ago, I heard a classics professor say the single most important thing—in my opinion—that anyone has said about professors: "We must remember," he declared, "that professors are the ones nobody wanted to dance with in high school."

What one sees in professors, repeatedly, is exactly the manner that anyone would adopt after a couple of sad evenings sidelined under the crepe-paper streamers in the gym, sitting on a folding chair while everyone else danced. Dignity, for professors, perches precariously on how well they can convey this message: "I am immersed in some very important thoughts, which unsophisticated people could not even begin to understand. Thus, I would not want to dance even if one of you unsophisticated people were to ask me."

Think of this, then, the next time you look at an unintelligible academic text. "I would not want the attention of a wide reading audience, even if a wide audience were to ask for me." Isn't that exactly what the pompous and pedantic tone of the classically academic writer conveys?

he loses some of his "wagers."

"Ideally," Walser writes, "he would always play on the edge and never miss; in practice, he played closer to the edge than anyone else and simply accepted the inevitable missteps, never retreating to a safer, more consistent performing style." His audiences were given not a polished "product," but something that was, in his case, more impressive: "a dramatic process of creation."

Retouching History

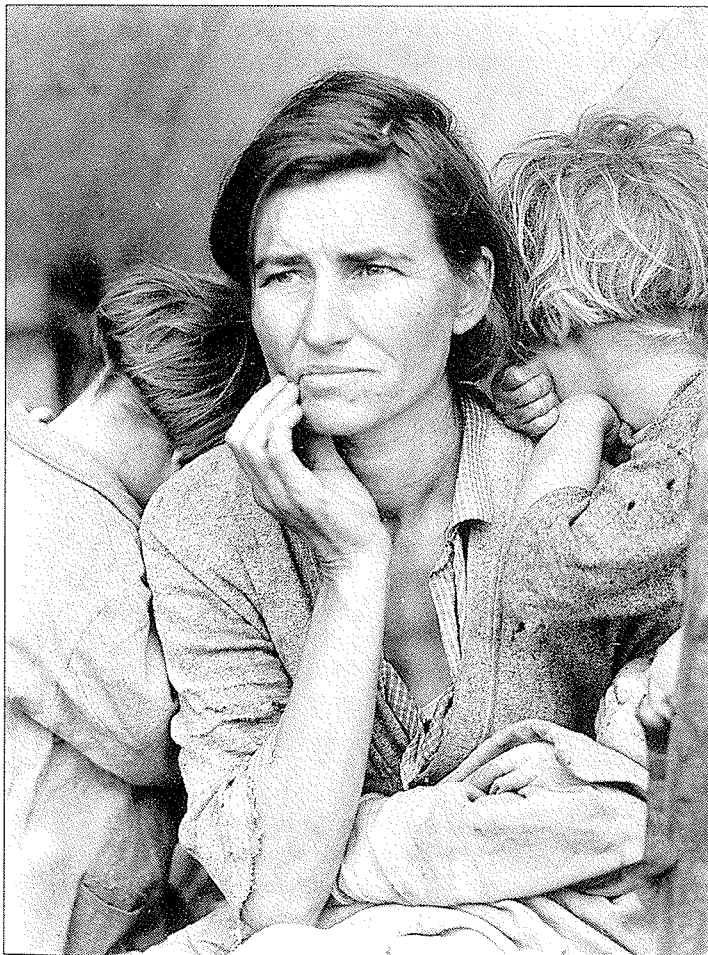
"The Farm Security Administration File: In and Out of Focus" by F. Jack Hurley, in *History of Photography* (Autumn 1993), Taylor & Francis Ltd., 4 John St., London WC1N 2ET, United Kingdom.

Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother" and Arthur Rothstein's "Dust Storm" are among

the most powerful images of American life during the Great Depression. Those photos were among more than 272,000 taken by the small photographic section of the U.S. government's Resettlement Administration, established in 1935, and its successor, the Farm Security Administration (FSA). In recent decades, contends Hurley, a historian at Memphis State University, revisionist scholars have produced grossly distorted accounts of this New Deal enterprise, portraying the photographers as victims and the project itself as little more than a propaganda machine for the federal government or other sinister forces.

In his much-praised *American Photography: A Critical History, 1945 to the Present* (1984), for example, Jonathan Green quotes a 1940 letter from Roy Stryker, director of the photography

section, to photographer Jack Delano. With war approaching, Stryker was getting calls for photos that emphasized the positive aspects of American life. He asked Delano to get some pretty pictures of New England in autumn: "I know your damned photographer's soul writhes but to hell with it. Do you think I give a damn about a photographer's soul with Hitler at our doorstep? You are nothing but camera fodder to me." Green, according to Hurley, solemnly viewed this



Revisionists level unfounded charges against the New Deal's famous photographers, says Hurley. They accuse Dorothea Lange of having directed her "Migrant Mother" (left) to bring her hand to her face and claim that Arthur Rothstein staged "Dust Storm." They also portray Rothstein's "Bleached Skull of a Steer" as a complete fake.



"Dust Storm, Cimarron County, Oklahoma," by Arthur Rothstein.

as a direct order to produce untruthful images for the government. He ignored, Hurley says, the context and the humor in Stryker's comment. Delano, moreover, was no oppressed pawn; he believed in the agency's mission of helping small farmers.

Sally Stein, in her introduction to *Marion Post Wolcott: F.S.A. Photographs* (1983), similarly distorts a 1940 telegram from photographer Marion Post Wolcott to Stryker, in order to portray her as having been victimized by him because of her gender. "You are a cruel and heartless master. I feel like a Finnish Boy Scout . . . am fingerless, toeless, earless. Wish you were here with the wind whistling through your britches too," she told Stryker, who had sent her to snap wintry scenes in New England. But she, too, was only kidding, as a long letter she sent to Stryker four days later makes abundantly clear—and indeed as Wolcott herself angrily made clear to Hurley after the Stein study appeared.

Two other recent works—Maren Stange's *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1950* and James Curtis's *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered*, both published in 1989—look at the FSA photographs through "neo-Marxian deconstructionist" lenses, Hurley says. Stange sees Stryker as a conspiratorial agent, "manipulating the poor photographers in the interests of capitalism." Curtis, without offering

any evidence whatsoever, accuses Lange of having intrusively directed the "Migrant Mother" in order to suppress the woman's individuality "so that she could become an archetypal representative of the values shared by Lange's middle-class audience."

The danger in all this slanted scholarship, Hurley says, is that the historical context in which the memorable FSA images were created will be lost. "If we allow that to happen we will have done damage to the images and to American history."



"Bleached Skull of a Steer, South Dakota Badlands," by Arthur Rothstein.

Arnold's Prescription

"Culture and Anarchy Today" by Steven Marcus, in *The Southern Review* (July 1993), 43 Allen Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. 70803–5005.

Relativism rules American culture today. The "isms" of the moment—multiculturalism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism, among oth-

ers—have made it virtually impossible to agree on objective standards for judgments about truth and quality. This perplexing situation, says Marcus, a professor of English at Columbia University, is not wholly unlike the one that Victorian poet and critic Matthew Arnold (1822–88) confronted in his famous *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

Witnessing reform agitation and the broadening of the franchise in England, as well as the rise of nonconformist Protestant sects, Arnold worried about increasing anarchy, both social and spiritual. In *Culture and Anarchy*, he addressed the question of how to reconcile progress or change with order and continuity. He offered two related remedies. The first, Marcus notes, was increased education for middle- and working-class children. “The second, which in some sense includes the first, is the inculcation by a variety of means of the ideas, attitudes, practices, and habits of temperament and sensibility that are implicit in his master term, ‘culture.’” Salvation, Arnold said, was “a harmonious perfection only to be won by cultivating many sides in us.”

These recommendations could be given “such a high spiritual priority,” Marcus points out, only on the presupposition that revealed religion, specifically Christianity, was no longer “the ultimate authority or standard of values and spiritual ordering, and that modern societies must, in this primary sense, make do without it.”

Yet the “credent certitude” carried by the truths of revealed religion could hardly be

matched. By supposing that they could, that “culture” could take the place of Christianity, Marcus says, Arnold built *Culture and Anarchy* on a foundation of sand. Paradoxically, however, this “logical vulnerability and impairment” of the work strengthen it, give it “historical relevance and life.” Just as the sacralization of art and the artist that was taking place during the same period in Europe led eventually to “destructive negation, subversion, and disintegration,” so Arnold’s sacralized culture led eventually to “aridity, triviality, and anomic despair.”

To the problem of finding “‘a source of authority,’ a ground upon which we can establish some ‘strict standard of excellence,’” Arnold gave an answer that is “pragmatic, anecdotal, and experientially, if not logically, convincing,” Marcus writes. “He asserts that there can be something like ‘a certain centre of correct information, taste and intelligence,’ and that we can be nearer to or farther away from such an ideal in our opinions.”

Culture was the province of those able to rise above the constrictions of social class, Arnold believed. Culture, he wrote, “does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere. . . . This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality.”

OTHER NATIONS

Mighty MITI?

A Survey of Recent Articles

For a long time after the Tokyo stock market crash of 1990, all the news out of Japan was about that nation’s unaccustomed economic aches and pains, and the scribes who once avidly debated the sources of Japan’s marvelous economic success were little heard from. Lately, however, with the advent of a new American administration seeking a more active

role in shaping industries and markets, the what-is-their-secret debate has been revived. It has sprawled over successive issues of several publications and consumed dozens of pages.

The debate, rife with blustery assertions and accusations, comes down to a single question: How much credit does Japan’s famed Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) de-

serve for the country's economic success? Next to none, says Karl Zinsmeister, an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, in the *Policy Review* article (Spring 1993, excerpted in the *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 1993) that kicked off the latest fracas.

"Many of Japan's strongest businesses—[including] consumer electronics, cameras, robotics, precision equipment, pianos, bicycles, watches and calculators, numerically controlled machine tools, and ceramics—developed mostly on their own, without much help from MITI or other agencies," Zinsmeister asserts in *Policy Review*. "And where government mandarins have intervened most actively—[for example, in] shipbuilding, agriculture, petrochemicals, and aerospace—they often have done little more than provide costly life support to fossils and failures."

During the 1950s, Zinsmeister says, MITI tried (unsuccessfully) to eliminate competition in Japan's auto industry by turning it into a single company. The ministry also initially refused a request from a small company named Sony for permission to buy transistor-manufacturing rights from Western Electric; Sony founder Akio Morita "eventually badgered the bureaucrats into giving Sony the go-ahead." A more recent failure of industrial policy involves high-definition television (HDTV). Twenty-five years ago, Tokyo began to set targets for a new HDTV broadcasting standard, and in 1991, after more than \$1 billion was spent, the state-owned NHK television network put the world's first working HDTV system into operation. U.S. industrial-policy advocates were envious, but they shouldn't have been, Zinsmeister says. "In their office-bound wisdom, the [Japanese] targeters picked the wrong—and now seriously obsolete—technology. American companies, following consumer and market signals, have developed a far more advanced digital HDTV standard, and are now poised to dominate video transmission and reception in the coming decades."

But press reports about Japan reeling from one economic disaster to another in recent years have been greatly exaggerated, Irish journalist Eamonn Fingleton asserts in the *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1993). Japan is in "robust economic health," he says. Yes, says Zinsmeister, but not

quite as robust as Fingleton imagines. The weaknesses of Japan's economy go unreported by him and others, while the true strengths are ignored.

The real credit for Japan's economic health, Zinsmeister contends, lies "with her strong, serious primary education system; with the extraordinarily high savings rates of her people and all the government policies that encourage that; with her low inflation and low tax policies; and with her powerfully cohesive families that allow youngsters to grow into productive citizens and workers."

Zinsmeister's springtime sally provoked an unusually strong response. James Fallows, author of *More Like Us* (1989), along with 32 others representing "a broad spectrum of views about Japan's policies—and about appropriate responses for the United States," wrote a lengthy rejoinder in *Policy Review* (Summer 1993) and the *American Prospect* (Summer 1993). In the latter forum (but not the former), Zinsmeister's "misinformation and bogus claims" were said to have come largely from editorials and op-ed pieces in the *Wall Street Journal* (which refused to print most of the rebuttal).

"Had Mr. Zinsmeister known more about MITI's history and its policies," Fallows and associates write in one of their numerous, point-by-point responses, "he would have realized that there were other and more probable explanations for its attitude toward Sony" in refusing permission to buy the transistor-manufacturing rights. "In those days, MITI routinely vetoed applications for imports of technology on the grounds that the price was 'too high.' Thus, MITI's role, among others, was to provide the Japanese buyer with a no-lose pretext to negotiate further concessions from foreign technology suppliers, who then were principally Americans."

The evidence, they insist, is "overwhelming" that MITI and the Japanese state were instrumental in Japan's postwar success in steel, autos, semiconductors, and supercomputers.

Zinsmeister, needless to say, disagrees, and does so at great length in the same summer issue of *Policy Review*. What is more interesting, perhaps, is that, according to him, the Japanese also disagree. He quotes Sony's Morita: "MITI has not been the great

benefactor of the Japanese electronics industry that some critics seem to think it has." And today, Zinsmeister asserts, the Japanese "are discarding industrial policy and government man-

agement of their economy—a widely underreported fact in the West." Fact or not, it does not seem to have ended the raucous debate over industrial policy in the United States.

Democracy in Africa

"Democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa" by Carol Lancaster and "The Failure of Democratic Reform in Angola and Zaire" by Keith Somerville, in *Survival* (Autumn 1993), International Inst. for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ.

Progress toward democracy in the 47 African nations south of the Sahara has been widespread, if uneven, in recent years. Fifteen African nations can now be regarded as democracies, notes Georgetown University's Lancaster, an adviser to the U.S. Agency for International Development, and at least some political liberalization

has taken place in 24 others. Only five countries—two of them, Somalia and Liberia, without any functioning governments whatsoever—have made no progress at all. In three other nations, however—Angola, Zaire, and Togo—democratization has been cut short by violence. Do similar fates await Africa's other nascent democracies?

Somerville, a BBC specialist in African affairs, is quite pessimistic. Hopes for Angola and Zaire, he notes, were high just a few years ago. People danced in the streets of the Angolan capital of Luanda on May 31, 1991, in celebration of a peace agreement ending a 16-year civil war. In Zaire, a new democratic constitution was to be drafted by a national conference, in accordance with the promise made in April 1990 by President Mobutu Sese Seko. Today, however, Angola's civil war has resumed and Zaire is in near-chaos.

Mobutu, who agreed only grudgingly to democratic reforms, has used his control of the security forces and the army to keep the government set up by the national conference, headed by Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, from functioning. With Zaire's economy in ruins, Mobutu has relied on the black market, including the diamond trade, to pay his military and other supporters.

Since the 1991 cease-fire in nearby Angola, Zaire has continued to play a role there, backing Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and, to their mutual profit, serving as a middleman for the sale of diamonds smuggled out of Angola by UNITA and private individuals.

During the Cold War, Savimbi's rebel UNITA had U.S. backing, while the Angolan government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) enjoyed



The successful Free Namibia Campaign used this optimistic print by Namibian artist John Ndevasia Muafangejo (1943-87).

Soviet and Cuban support. With the Cold War over, Portugal, the United States, and the Soviet Union were able to bring about the 1991 accord. Implementation got off to a good start, Somerville notes. The cease-fire held and the two main protagonists appeared to shift to verbal warfare. The September 1992 elections were held without major incident, but when UNITA lost, Savimbi tried to seize control of the airport in Luanda—and the civil war resumed. Thousands of Angolans have since died.

Western leaders, Somerville believes, overestimated the impact of the Cold War's end and set their hopes for African democracy too high. Lancaster, however, is less gloomy. Africa's "economic conditions, social diversity, and political history do not provide strong grounds for optimism," she acknowledges, but important political changes have taken place.

Growing numbers of individual Africans support democracy, she notes. Many of them have suffered under authoritarian regimes and do not want to repeat the experience. Also, human rights, civic, and other nongovernmental groups have sprung up. The collapse of Soviet-style communism has made it harder for aspiring autocrats to provide ideological justifications for their rule, and Western governments have put pressure on African governments to implement reforms. All this does not guarantee a bright future. But "as the experience[s] of Europe and Latin America have shown," Lancaster concludes, "political freedom can be addictive."

A Golden Parachute For Mr. Castro?

"Waiting for the Blowout—Hurricane Fidel" by Tad Szulc, in *The Washington Spectator* (Oct. 1, 1993), London Terrace Station, P.O. Box 20065, New York, N.Y. 10011.

After nearly 35 years in power and at age 66, Cuba's Fidel Castro is almost certainly nearing the end of his rule. The question is whether or not the transition from his "socialist" regime to whatever comes after it can be accomplished without civil war and massive bloodshed. Szulc, a former *New York Times* correspondent who has

known the Cuban leader for more than three decades and is the author of a 1986 biography, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait*, believes that Castro realizes that his revolution and regime have run their course. Anti-Castro incidents, most taking place under the cover of darkness, are on the rise. There have been attacks on police stations in the countryside, windows smashed at Communist Party offices in provincial towns, and anti-Castro graffiti scrawled on walls. "This has never happened before," Szulc says, "and there are more and more reasons to believe that despite his still-fiery rhetoric, Castro himself would be amenable to a negotiated settlement if he were allowed a face-saving exit."

The Cuban economy, no longer propped up by the Soviet Union, can scarcely get much worse. "Eleven million Cubans survive on the edge of disaster today with much of their labor force unemployed, with nagging food shortages, and amid deepening social decomposition," Szulc notes. Farmers, lacking fuel, have replaced their tractors with oxen. In the cities, cars, buses, and trucks have been replaced by bicycles and horse-drawn carts.

How long Cuba can continue in this condition is uncertain, but the danger of an explosion grows with each passing day, Szulc warns, "especially if Washington allows the Florida-based armed mercenaries of Castro's exiled opponents to appear to challenge him with threats of military incursions. The resulting civil war would inevitably bring a lethal wave of vengeance and a bloody settling of personal and political scores." Such bloodshed, taking place only "90 miles from home," could suck in the United States.

For now, Szulc notes, Castro's position is "reasonably secure." The Cuban leader retains the support of the military and the security forces. There is "no widely organized opposition to his rule, and no threatening rival waits in exile." Because he still is popular with many Cubans and has no known serious rival, Castro is in a good position to negotiate with the United States over his own departure from power. For its part, the United States—if it can set aside its long-standing animosity toward the Communist Maximum Leader—is now in a position to ease the transition to a post-Castro Cuba.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Guarding the Guardians: Civilian Control of Nuclear Weapons in the United States."

Cornell Univ. Press, 124 Roberts Pl., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. 261 pp. \$34.50

Author: *Peter Douglas Feaver*

"The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons."

Princeton Univ. Press, 41 William St., Princeton, N.J. 08540. 286 pp. \$29.95; paper, \$16.95

Author: *Scott D. Sagan*

"The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War."

The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 364 pp. \$36.95; paper, \$16.95

Author: *Bruce G. Blair*

The end of the Cold War has brought new information and new perspectives on the era's nuclear tensions. Specialists examining how both sides tried to avoid the accidental or unauthorized discharge of nuclear weapons have made some troubling discoveries. Their findings may hold important lessons for the post-Cold War world.

That U.S. nuclear weapons are under civilian control is widely taken for granted. In fact, says Feaver, a political scientist at Duke University, varying degrees of de facto control of nuclear weapons have been given to military commanders at various times since World War II.

Some delegation of control was unavoidable, Feaver says. "When the U.S. [nuclear] arsenal was small, civilians were able to use physical control to maintain absolute control over." The military had the bombers but the civilian Atomic Energy Commission kept the bombs in its possession. Only upon the president's order would the weapons be turned over. "As the arsenal grew, this procedure became more unwieldy and less reliable, particularly against a surprise attack, and so [during the 1950s] physical control gradually shifted to the military."

But "assertive" civilian control of the decision to use nuclear weap-

ons also eroded during the 1950s, Feaver says. President Dwight D. Eisenhower granted to the commander of the North American Air Defense Command the authority to use the nuclear weapons under his command, and Eisenhower may have delegated the same power to the commander of the Strategic Air Command and to the supreme allied commander in Europe. The picture is murky because much relevant material remains classified. However, the Kennedy administration may have reversed those Eisenhower decisions. All nuclear weapons based in Europe were at least ordered fitted with locks to prevent detonation without a code. No reliable information has emerged on delegation of authority since the 1960s, Feaver says.

Wherever the control has resided, Sagan, a political scientist at Stanford, makes it clear that over the decades there have been some "close calls" with nuclear weapons. During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, for example, a sentry patrolling the perimeter of a military base near Duluth, Minnesota, thought he saw someone climbing the base fence, fired some shots, and sounded the sabotage alarm. Armed guards rushed into the night, and similar alarms sounded at airfields throughout the region. At Volk Field in Wisconsin, however, the wrong alarm was set off:

It signaled that nuclear war had begun. Pilots rushed to their nuclear-armed F-106A interceptors and headed down the runway. Fortunately, the base commander contacted Duluth and learned that the suspected Soviet saboteur had turned out to be a bear. An officer sped his car, lights flashing, onto the runway and stopped the planes before they took off.

Most specialists, says Blair, a Brookings Institution researcher who once served as a U.S. missile-launch officer, have thought that it was only the United States that instituted nuclear alerts (as it did during the Cuban missile crisis, the Paris summit meeting in 1960, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1973). The researchers believed that there was "a deep-seated Soviet reluctance to increase the combat readiness of nuclear forces." In fact, Blair says, "the historical record is . . . replete with episodes of Soviet nuclear alerts."

The Soviets went "to extraordinary lengths to ensure tight central control [of] nuclear weapons," Blair points out. "Their safeguards were more stringent than those of any other nuclear power, including the United States." Those elaborate safeguards included dividing the military command-and-control structure in two, with a technical wing charged with keeping the nuclear forces up to snuff and an-

other responsible for combat operations; keeping nuclear warheads away from their delivery units; and using locking devices to impede unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear authority was confined to the top Soviet leaders; there is virtually no evidence that any of that authority was ever delegated to military commanders.

This "extreme centralization" strengthened the Soviet capacity to avoid the accidental or illicit firing of a nuclear weapon, Blair notes. However, it also increased the

command system's vulnerability. In a crisis, protection of the leadership had to be the top priority—and the means of achieving it had to be "launch on warning," with all its risk of inadvertent nuclear war.

That is the same strategic "posture," Blair contends, that the United States (despite official denials) was driven toward by the vulnerability of its command apparatus, even though it was less centralized. [The *New York Times* (December 6, 1993) reports that U.S. and Russian officials are discuss-

ing a plan to ease the "hair trigger" problem by "de-targeting" nuclear missiles, aiming them only at the open seas. Blair told the *Times* that he favors stronger measures, such as removing warheads from missiles.]

Awareness of command systems' vulnerability creates dangerous instability. That will be as true in the future as it was in the past, Blair says, which "lends further importance to the prevention of nuclear proliferation." The Cold War is over, but the dangers of the nuclear age are not.

"Baby Boomers in Retirement: An Early Perspective."

Congressional Budget Office, 2nd and D Sts. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20515. 70 pp. No charge.

Retirement looms in the minds of many "baby boomers"—those Americans born between 1946 and 1964—as a troubling prospect. Among their fears: the collapse of Social Security, inadequate personal savings, and slow income growth. While admitting that it is too early to say for sure, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) concludes from census and household survey data that the boomers should relax a bit. In terms of real income and wealth, it appears that most of them will be better off in retirement than their parents have been.

That is good news, because the older generation has been doing quite well, thanks to strong growth in real wages during their peak earning years; expanded Social Security benefits; higher rates of private-pension coverage; the increase in housing values during the 1970s and '80s; and Medicare benefits. Nowadays, relatively few of those over

65 need to work.

It may come as a surprise to the boomers, but they are currently doing better financially than their parents did as young adults, says the CBO. Median household income (in constant dollars) for those aged 25 to 34 jumped from \$22,300 in 1959 to \$30,000 three decades later. That is a 35 percent increase. Income rose 53 percent for those aged 35 to 44, from \$25,100 to \$38,400. Also up is the ratio of household wealth to income.

As long as real wages continue to grow at least modestly over the next 20 to 40 years, the CBO says, boomers will have higher earnings before retirement than their parents had. That will increase their Social Security benefits and their ability to save. Pension coverage will extend to more people, and benefits (which are likely to be an important source of retirement income, particularly for upper-income boomers) will also be higher. And today's legion of working women will be

eligible for their own Social Security and pension benefits.

For most boomers, income from private wealth—which provides one-fourth of the income of 65-and-older households today—will be crucial to a comfortable life in retirement. Boomers to date may be saving too little, but they still have working years left in which they can correct that. In addition, the boomers stand to inherit substantial wealth.

The prospect of retirement is not uniformly bright. The poorly educated, unmarried women with children, and boomers who do not own their own homes may have to struggle. (Nearly one-third of late boomers aged 30 to 34 in 1991 were not homeowners.) Moreover, all boomers face the possibility that, because of longer life expectancy, growing medical-care costs, and the increased costs of educating their children, they may need more money in retirement than their parents did.

COMMENTARY

We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.

Looking at the Tube

In your interesting survey, "Television and American Culture" [WQ, Autumn '93], there is a common theme that TV works on us as if we were all passive lumps of clay. Only Frank McConnell alludes (in passing) to the possibility that we bring something to our evening viewing.

I remember my first TV in the mid-1950s. My then-young children importuned us endlessly to buy the products they saw advertised. Often enough, we gave in. In particular, I recall a cereal named Maypo, which had as its slogan: "I want my Maypo!" The kids detested it. The insight I had then was that advertising, having been given this powerful petard, was hoisting itself upon it.

Sure enough, my children, like their fellow baby boomers, grew up with a degree of skepticism beyond anything seen in any earlier generations. They learned early—and powerfully—that television lied to them. To this day, I believe that this shaped their thinking and their behavior in profound ways. And it happened because they were not merely passive recipients of messages. They interacted, as people always do with all messages, electronic or otherwise. McLuhan was only partly right; the recipient is also the message. We are not potatoes. We are people, and even when sitting apparently mesmerized by the TV screen, our minds are not disengaged.

*Arnold Brown
Chairman, Weiner Edrich Brown
New York, N.Y.*

I agree with Todd Gitlin that "television's largest impact is probably as a school for manners." As far as civics lessons are concerned, the medium's most important classroom is the talk show.

Semicasual chat has become the primary mode for political discourse in American public life. Consider three historic confrontations: Kennedy-Nixon, 1960; Bush-Rather, 1988; and Gore-Perot, 1993. The losers "lost" because they violated norms of conduct insinuated through thousands of hours of televised talk, not just in the format that bears the name, but in situation comedies, soap operas, local news programs, and sports broadcasts as well. Nixon tried to best his opponent instead of impress his audience. (And in the first debate, of course, he looked awful.) Rather seemed rude to his "guest" on the nightly news. Perot was

nasty, brutish, and, um, short. Perhaps all three men forgot where they were. Television is not a place for genuine debates, interviews, or rallies. It is for sofa-to-sofa communication.

No one knows how many votes changed sides as a result of these talk showdowns. But whatever switching occurred did so because of the contrast in manners. That was what was striking, and memorable, about these broadcasts. They instructed Americans on the proper way to discuss national issues.

Television accommodates a range of acceptable civic behavior, from Moyers to McLaughlin. But the most favored style of argumentation is that of the bright, white, adolescent male: informed, but not studious; mischievous, but not mean; evasive of commitments, but honest about that if cornered. Thanks to television, the reigning model for future leaders of American public opinion is Jerry Seinfeld.

*Michael Cornfield
Charlottesville, Va.*

The articles on television do not examine the threat television poses to democracy. William J. Bennett (*Wall Street Journal*, 3/15/93) has presented data that indicate that in several vital areas our culture is rapidly declining. The past 30 years have seen SAT scores drop 75 points, the percent of illegitimate births increase 4.9-fold, the percent of children on welfare increase 3.4-fold, the teen suicide rate increase 3.1-fold, and the violent crime rate increase 4.7-fold. Liberals and conservatives generally agree that violence on TV contributes to violent crime. Conservatives believe that the attack on family and family morals on TV contributes to the change in all above indicators. Liberals curiously hold that this attack is innocuous.

*Stanford W. Briggs
Holland, Mich.*

Spain Through British Eyes

I was thrilled to see the cover of your Autumn issue depicting a masterpiece from the golden age of one of the great civilizations of our global history, from a country that during the Dark Ages served as repository of what was then left of Western culture in the only libraries standing at that time.

I started reading "Spain in Search of Itself" [WQ, Autumn 1993] without paying attention to the identity

of its author. But after the first few pages, I said to myself, "I bet this article has been written by a British subject." Sure enough.

It is not surprising that Mr. Hooper tries to paint the worst picture possible of Spain; the British have, after all, been doing that for centuries. What is surprising and disturbing is that the *WQ*, affiliated with an international center for scholars, would publish it. Worse still, why didn't the *WQ* find someone more inclined to put forth a balanced view? Shame on you.

I am absolutely sure that if you were to be presented with an article on present-day Britain concentrating on, among other things, the debauchery of the British royal family from time immemorial to the present day; the rapaciousness and brutality of Britain's ferocious pirates; the role of the British as the foremost opium, slave, and rum traders in recorded history; the fact that the British were the first Europeans to expel the Jewish people; and the brutality of the British colonizers in this century in India, Cyprus, Nigeria, and other places comparable to that perpetrated by the Spanish over 500 years ago. . . . you would not dare to publish it. Yet an article completely denigrating Spain seems to be another matter. Mr. Hooper does not write like a scholar, but rather like a member of the infamous British yellow press.

There is much discussion today about the role of America in the post-Cold War period. To me, the most important role for our great nation is to serve as a new beacon of light and hope to bring together humanity from all corners of the world, representing all religions, cultures, and subcultures, to live together in peace and mutual respect. One way to do this is to present articles about the best that every nation in the world can offer and not to try to perpetuate half-truths and innuendoes from the past. Every four years, at the Olympic Games, America is the only nation on the planet that presents a team made up of people whose backgrounds represent every corner of this earth. It behooves us to set the example at the scholarly level as well.

Felix Riesgo Fernandez
Berwyn, Pa.

Comparing Religions

The way in which scholars of comparative religion have continually found it necessary to revise their vocabulary, abandon their preconceptions, and recognize the inadequacy of their traditional categories in Diana L. Eck's account ["In the Name of Religions," *WQ*, Autumn '93] is uncannily reminiscent of the disciplines whereby philosophers and mystics of the past made themselves conscious of the inadequacy of words and concepts when applied to the ultimate.

The Christian *via negativa*, the Muslim *tawil*, and the Kabbalistic *dillug* all had their equivalents in the non-theistic traditions, enabling adepts to cultivate an ag-

nostic attitude, which laid aside the clamorous demands of the opinionated ego. It could be that the academic discipline of comparative religion offers a similar opportunity in our own day. Professor Eck was correct to see the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 as a symbol of a major change in religious consciousness worldwide. For the serious pluralist it has become blasphemous to assume that one tradition has the monopoly on truth.

This view, unfortunately, seems profoundly threatening to the fundamentalists who have erected new barriers against the "other." As Professor Eck points out, this fundamentalism is an essentially modern phenomenon, but it also has its precursors. There have always been people who have used religion not to overcome the ego but to affirm an imperiled identity, often in a violent manner.

This has been particularly true of Western Christianity, which, since the Crusades, has found it notoriously difficult to live side by side with other religions; it has also tended to lose sight of the agnostic approach and to seek an unrealistic certainty in religious matters. We in the West are fond of castigating others for their intolerance, but the conservative venture has a special urgency for us, if we are not to fail the test of our century and are to hand on a compassionate faith to the next generation.

Karen Armstrong
Author, A History of God
London, England

Diana Eck pairs a project with which I am involved and one of hers in her realistic and hopeful essay. Mine is the Fundamentalism Project at the University of Chicago for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and hers is the Pluralism Project at Harvard. I was especially interested in how she framed her topic, the fact that 1993 was the "Year of Interreligious Understanding and Cooperation," in a setting of the years of religious misunderstanding and conflict that mark so many of the hardline and extremist versions of fundamentalism that we study.

More blood than incense marks the story of religion around the world these years. Few intense religionists sit down at peace tables; more are behind fortifications, exploding bombs, or in happier republics like ours, plotting to get or get back what they regard as their fair share of power in culture, society, and nation. It was interesting to me that she used the centennial of the World's Parliament of Religions to do temporal framing to match this spatial framing. In 1893 the Parliamentarians were split between those who wanted to show the superiority of Christianity to the rest of the world and those who wanted to display what they thought was the reconciling power of religion because the religions, at heart, were one.

In 1993 the Parliamentarians were split between

those who wanted to display the wares of their many faiths and those who wanted to show that they aspired to produce concord in a world of revolutions, bombings, and subversions. The America of 1993, like that of 1893, still has a huge Christian majority. But the evangelical one-fourth of the population was virtually unrepresented at the 1993 Parliament, the mainstream Protestant one-fourth produced some leadership but it did not seem to have its heart or its numbers in it, the Orthodox minority walked out, and the Catholic fourth only paid a kind of courtesy call at the Chicago event. Christianity almost looked like an American minority among the Parliament people from around the world.

Everyone knows how lethal and how healing, how killing and consoling, religion can be. The bombing and assassinations make headlines and the parliaments and congresses, the consultations and the dialogues, do not. Professor Eck is a leader in helping Harvardians in particular and Americans in general to become aware of their pluralism. It will take more than her Pluralism Project, our Fundamentalism Project, and a World's Parliament of Religions to help the healing and consoling side rewin anything of the place given the 1893 Parliament in a more optimistic, progressive, and illusion-filled time. Diana Eck's Project and her prose are at least signals of a better way, invitations to other local, national, and international communities to begin the tasks we need to face if there is to be a Parliament, or a World, in 2093.

Martin E. Marty
Divinity School
Univ. of Chicago

The People Speak

The "At Issue" essay, "Vox Populi" (*WQ*, Autumn '93), was neatly done. Please publish more on this subject.

Fred M. Clampitt
St. Augustine, Fla.

Poetry's Power

Joseph Brodsky's explication and translation of Sextus Propertius's elegy ("Poetry," *WQ*, Autumn '93) is superb—a poignant addition to our—*my*—life. Thank you.

Myrtle Posmantur
Chicago, Ill.

In the Spring 1993 *WQ* are two contiguous pieces—the poetry of Weldon Kees, introduced by Joseph Brodsky, and "A Reading Lesson," by Robertson Davies. The latter explains why people who are well educated, affluent, world traveled, and supportive of the arts, practice "benign neglect" of modern poetry, which

Brodsky deplures. We can also apply Davies's insights and perspective to the emptiness of much modern painting, sculpture, architecture, and music.

"Incidentally," Davies maintains, "your reading may bring you information or enlightenment but unless it brings you pleasure first, you should think carefully about why you are doing it." Furthermore, "Poetry that has decided to do without music, to divorce itself from song, has thrown away much of its reason for being."

Perhaps appreciation of poetry declined when editors decided that rhyme and rhythm were "old-fashioned" and unnecessary.

At family gatherings, three generations often want to hear Kipling's "Ballad of the East and the West." Why? Because poetry should be recited and the "Ballad" slips easily off the tongue with its rhythm and rhyme and it has a universal message.

You can hear the drum beat of hooves in the rhythm, and the rhyming is music to the ear. Then listen to his "Seal's Lullaby," in which you can feel the slow, swinging seas. I cannot imagine three generations of people listening spellbound to Kees's morbid, atheistic, and depressing poetry from the examples given, which Brodsky tells us we should admire.

Or perhaps we should admire "A Poem about the Pancreas," which was deemed worthy of printing in the eminent *New England Journal of Medicine*:

"I'm sorry, but it's cancer
Of the sweetbreads. Yes,
And with proper medical management
Early surgery and
A very rigid diet
You can look forward
To at least
Another three months. When the pancreas goes
It goes."

(Excerpted by permission from the
New England Journal of Medicine)

There must be real poets now extant who are smothered by the gurus of poetry who dignify such as these by calling them poetry although there is no grace or music, rhyme or rhythm, and no deeper insight unfolded for us.

Maxwell Berry,
Panama City, Fla.

Questionable Calls

Summary or not, I expect accurate information from your publication, not uncritical acceptance of propaganda, as in "The Forest for the Trees" ["The Periodical Observer," *WQ*, Summer '93].

The article by J. H. Adler, which you summarized, is another variation on the timber industry's "party

line": "Don't worry about the national forests, there are plenty of trees left; more than ever." A barefaced lie! Seedlings and saplings hardly qualify as "timber" but they are counted as such in these statistics.

Adler's figures on current and past forestland area rely on this manipulation of fact. It is an attempt to cover up the wholesale destruction and overharvesting of our public timberlands. And, surely, writings by an associate of the Competitive Enterprise Institute ought to be suspect.

Dr. John B. Reubens
Livingston, Mont.

When conducting an archaeological dig of my bedside table yesterday I unearthed the Summer '92 issue of my favorite periodical. Thumbing through it I came across, on page 140, a review of an article on the Watergate news coverage and it surprised me by stating that the "deep throat" of Woodward/Bernstein is a "myth." That was news to me! I intended to write at the time, but the intent got buried along with the magazine. So why write now? The reason is that the veracity of the press is a very important issue at this time and perhaps worthy of more review and study. Seldom have I heard more criticism and rejection of the newspapers. This is a bad sign for our community, local and national. The availability and reliability of a free press is so important to our democracy that perhaps you will consider making this a feature topic in one of your issues.

Thomas L. Harmon, Jr.
Greensboro, N.C.

Feelin' Blue Again

I was looking forward to Martha Bayles's article about the blues [Hollow Rock & the Lost Blues Connection," *WQ*, Summer '93]. As a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology who has enjoyed the blues as well as several different varieties of "rock" for many years, and as a fairly faithful reader of the *WQ*, I thought that spending some time with this article would prove fruitful.

My hopes were quickly disappointed, however. I understand, of course, that the *WQ* is not a musicology journal, but with the "quarterly" as part of the title of the periodical, one expects the writing therein to exhibit moderate scholarship. What I found instead was an opinion piece more suited to the op-ed pages of a tabloid.

My complaints are, essentially, threefold: the writer's penchant for absolutes when discussing quantities, her almost complete refusal to supply examples to support points made about the types of rock and rap she dislikes, and her failure to define some of the important terminology.

The flip journalistic tone and Bayles's penchant for absolutes are evident in the first two sentences. We

learn that "people used to tap their feet and smile when they listened to American popular music. Now they sit open-mouthed." Who are these people who used to smile but now open their mouths? All people? Only older people? Perhaps white, middle-class people?

One of the most outrageous statements appears on page 18: "Afro-American music is sometimes erotic, but it is never obscene, because there is always a larger whole." Indeed? *Never* obscene? There is *always* a larger whole?

We learn other important tidbits that are tossed off as facts: that the *only* person to turn feedback into blues was Jimi Hendrix; that the *only* musical values displayed by Jeff Beck, Pete Townshend, Jimmy Page, Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, and Vernon Reid are "speed, dexterity, and athleticism" (I found myself wondering at this point if athleticism is, indeed, a musical value); that the crowd-pleasing manner is the stock in trade of *every* bluesman, and that it "takes a different form when removed from its original all-black setting."

How on earth does she know these things? What is the "original all-black setting" of which she speaks? The Mississippi Delta region? Certainly the original all-black settings have been gone for decades. Is she trying to say that the crowd-pleasing manner takes a different form for an audience of blacks than it does for whites? I wonder what "form" it takes when the setting isn't all black (i.e. what if there are one or two white people in the audience)? What if the audience and band are all black but the bassist is white? What happens then? Does this crowd-pleasing manner take a different form if the bluesman is white? Does this changeable crowd-pleasing ability extend to blueswomen?

These are not important questions, apparently, because the reader learns that the main point about this crowd-pleasing manner is that it "always" reflects a positive disposition to "whatever" audience the musician is playing for.

On page 24 we learn that the "'dinosaur beat' of rock is a travesty of the rich, tireless, complicated rhythms of the blues." First of all, there seems to be a "mixtery" of metaphors here, so to speak. "Beat" is not the same thing as "rhythm," and secondly, in what ways are blues rhythms tireless and complicated? I looked for examples to support this argument of tirelessness and complication, but was again stymied.

The musicology lesson includes information of which I was unaware: that country music and neoclassical jazz have very different aims and accomplishments, but that they belong to the same "family." No listing of these different "aims and accomplishments" was provided, nor did she explain what she meant by "family." The fact that not even a cursory mention of harmony, rhythm, form, instrumentation, or other elements was offered to illuminate what was meant by "family" leads again to a rather uncomfortable feeling that the author is full of opinions, but somewhat less

full of hard data.

At the end, Bayles states that "blues feeling has the power to transcend race, sex, generation, and most other human divisions." Certainly we've all had "the blues," but it seems clear that she's talking about blues music. If a statement is being made about the universality of blues music, however, the most successful music at crossing spans of ethnicity, nationality, gender, "and most other human divisions" are the kinds of popular product that appear on *Billboard's* various mainstream lists. I hasten to add that they are successful commercially, in terms of sales of recordings, but I don't think Bayles finds anything wrong with the marriage of commerce and music, because she writes on page 12 that the blues has also "always been commercialized entertainment."

The *WQ* generally does a good job when it comes to choosing manuscripts in the areas of political and economic theory and history proper, but if you continue to publish articles on the arts that are of the same caliber as this one, I fear the *WQ* may turn into another *Wall Street Journal*—a publication that juxtaposes often stimulating, and irritating, views on politics and economics with what in my opinion are the most banal and laughably provincial reviews of the arts to be found in any of the nation's major broadsheets.

Daniel N. Thompson
Columbia Univ.
New York, N.Y.

Free Trade or Free Sell?

Unlike many essays I've read concerning trade, your "At Issue" essay "The Real Trade Question" [*WQ*, Summer '93] comes close to understanding the theory behind free trade.

Free trade, as the essay indicated, is based on the theory of comparative advantage. The essay states that "the best way for all to prosper is for each region to produce the goods it can manufacture most cheaply and efficiently and to trade them with other regions for the goods that they produce most efficiently." This is correct but it fails to explain why following comparative advantage is "the best way for all to prosper."

The theory says that when a region specializes in producing those goods that it is most efficient in manufacturing, the workers who were forced to abandon the inefficient industries will go to work for the efficient industries. The reason it's "the best way for all to prosper" is that those thrown out of work by imports are rehired by our expanding comparatively advantaged industries that export.

All prosper for four reasons: more goods for all; possibly better quality goods for all; we lose some of our most inefficient jobs; and those workers who lost their jobs are rehired into our more efficient and pro-

ductive comparatively advantaged jobs. What a beautiful theory!

The problem is that often we don't practice "free trade," we practice "free sell." Free sell theory has our nation letting in someone else's comparatively advantaged exports—which put our workers out of jobs—while not demanding that they buy our comparatively advantaged exports. As a result, the American workers who lose their jobs to imports are not rehired. If we want to practice free trade, then those who sell here have to buy here.

Real free trade is impossible. But fair trade, in which workers who lose their jobs to imports are not made to pay all the costs of trade but have a chance to regain employment, has immensely beneficial possibilities.

Philip J. Le Bel
Clifton, Va.

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(signed) Kathy Read, Publisher

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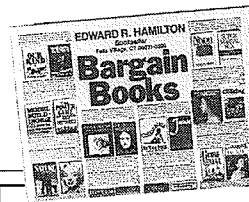
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FROM THE CENTER

When the Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson Center suggested a few years ago that this brief column be added to the already rich content of the *Wilson Quarterly*, their intention was explicitly not to turn the *WQ* into a house organ replete with news of our softball team's record (a respectable nine wins, 12 losses, and one tie last summer), of marriages and births (happily, a very considerable number), and of deaths (mercifully, none). Rather, the aim was to make more visible the happy and fruitful relationship between the *WQ* and the Center of which it is such an important part. This aim, indeed, is reflected in one of the double meanings of the column's title, as well as in the fact that my colleagues and I have deliberately avoided more than an occasional reference to the Center's activities in writing the column.

I mention these facts because on this occasion I am departing from my customary practice. This issue of the *WQ* appears midway between the 25th anniversaries of the creation of the Center by Congress and the first meeting of its Board of Trustees under the chairmanship of Hubert Humphrey. This seems to me a fitting occasion to report briefly to the Wilson Center Associates on the accomplishments of that quarter-century.

Much of the information can be conveyed by numbers. The Center has been host to more than 1,300 Fellows and Guest Scholars; 860 of these have come from the United States, representing 43 states; 485 have come from 65 other countries. For our 25th anniversary the Wilson Center Press has published a bibliography of 718 books written at the Center by Fellows and Guest Scholars, and an additional 145 Center publications. During my first two years at the Center, books written here won the National Book Award for nonfiction: Neil Sheehan's *Bright Shining Lie* (1988) and Thomas Friedman's *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (1989); this year, two books written here were among the five finalists in that competition. Our radio program, "Dialogue," is now heard on 155 stations through the American Public Radio Network. And the *WQ*, now beginning its 18th year, reaches more than 70,000 subscribers, a circulation unequaled by that of any comparable publication in the United States.

During these same years, the Center has spon-

sored meetings of every kind—from brown-bag luncheon discussions to large international conferences—that are literally too numerous to count. Their topics have ranged from health care and the environment and the law of the sea to early British historiography and Mozart and the Riddle of Creativity. They have been held not only at the Center, but also in such far-flung places as Potsdam, Prague, Moscow, Tokyo, and New Delhi.

The true character and quality of the Center cannot, of course, be conveyed by mere numbers. More than anything else, the Center's character and quality depend upon the extraordinary men and women who come here each year as Fellows and Guest Scholars, to work on individual projects of their own choosing while at the same time forming a genuine community of learning. It is the quite unpredictable interactions of these people, drawn from almost every discipline and from an astonishing number of countries, which in my view constitute the Center's greatest strength. Perhaps the most heartening words I have heard here were spoken by a

Fellow who had just come from the staff of the National Security Council to write a book on the reunification of Germany: His book, he predicted, would be both different and better because of the opportunity the Center had given him to spend time in a

totally unhierarchical setting with people so different from those with whom he had been professionally associated—with historians, sociologists, philosophers, and even literary critics and biographers, as well as political scientists and diplomats. It is the work of men and women like this—our 1,300 alumni and their successors, who contribute to the *WQ*, speak on "Dialogue," participate in our meetings, and write the books and articles published by our Press and others—upon which the Center's success in fulfilling its congressional mission of "strengthening the relations between the world of learning and the world of public affairs" will ultimately be judged.

I am confident that we are ahead of the schedule set by one of our founders, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who wrote 25 years ago that, "what we are proposing is an institution that the 22nd century will judge to have had a beneficial impact upon the 21st."

Charles Blitzer
Director



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