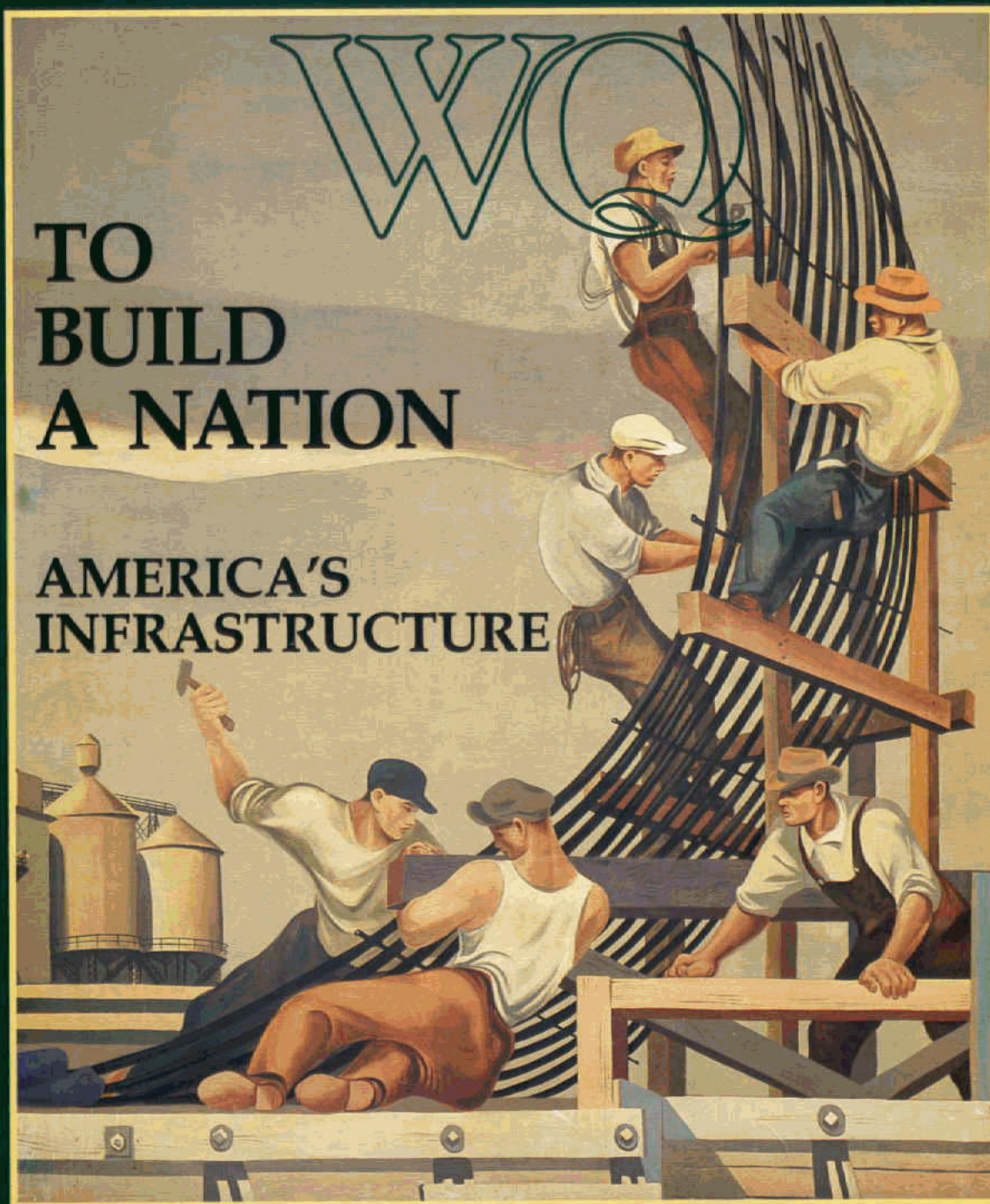


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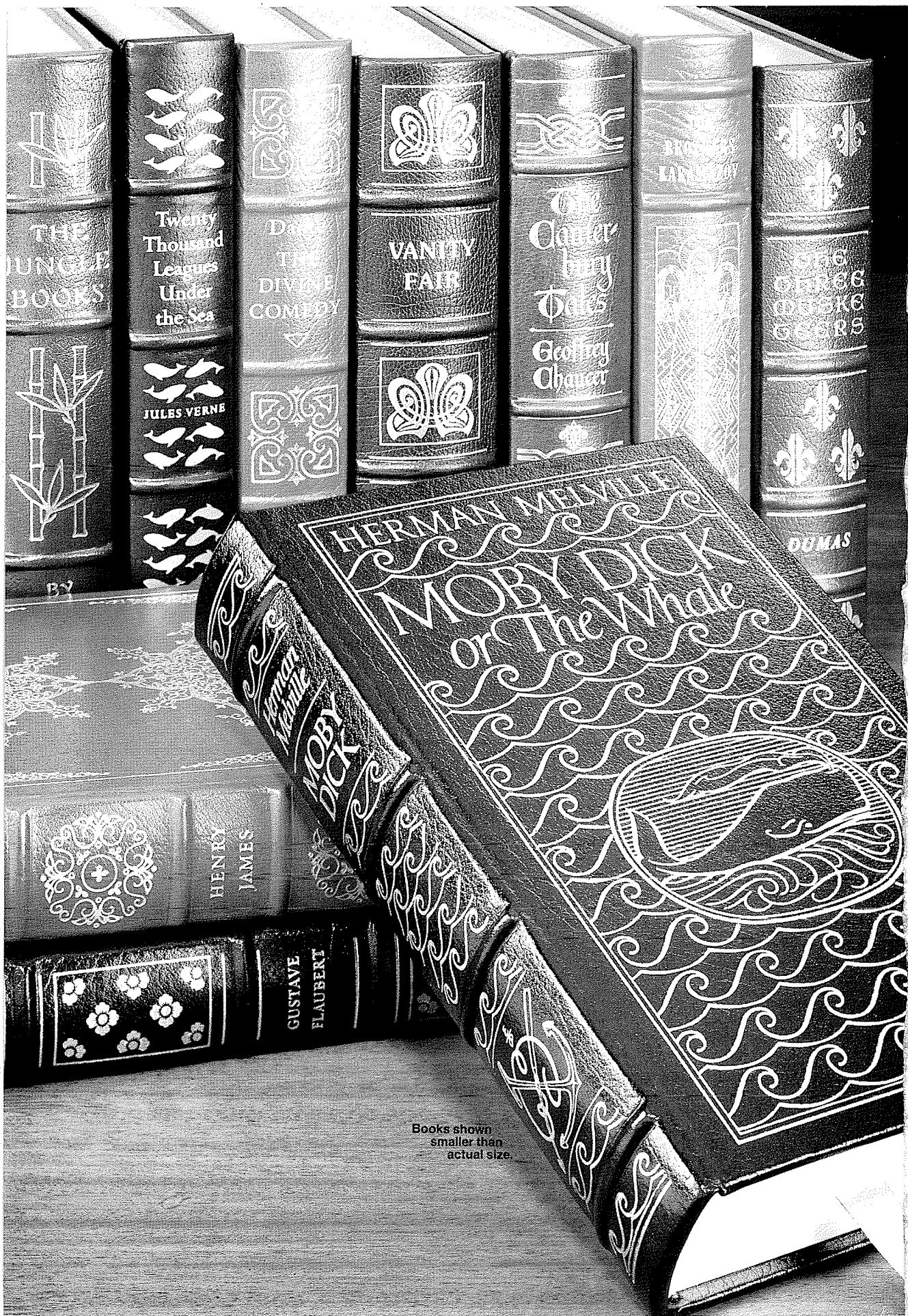
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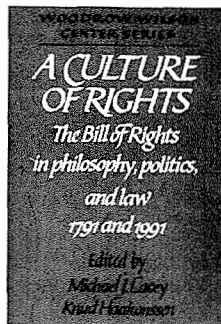
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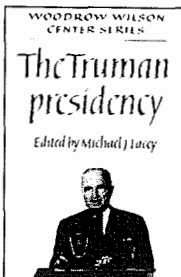
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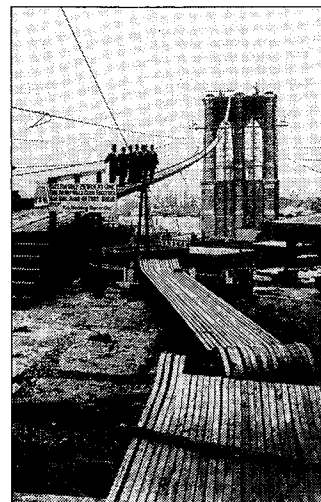
President Bill Clinton's pledge to boost investment in infrastructure has reignited a debate that runs back to the struggle over "internal improvements" in the early days of the Republic. **Bruce Seely** reflects upon this long history; **Jonathan Gifford** surveys the challenge of the next century.

50 Millar or Marx?

Communism may be all but dead, but Karl Marx's ideas endure, among them his notion of the class-based character of human societies. **George Watson** introduces a little-known 18th-century thinker who might have had a more accurate idea of social hierarchy.

58 The Military and Society

A world without war is an old dream given new force by the passing of the Cold War, but the destinies of Western states have long been bound up with matters military. **Paul Rahe** evokes the essentially military character of the ancient Greek *polis*. **Charles Townshend** describes the tenacious hold of militarism on the modern liberal nation-state. And **Charles Moskos** argues that today's struggles over the status of women and gays in the armed forces are part of a difficult redefinition of the military's role in American society.



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American literary expatriates who roosted in Paris and London before World War II helped to explain America to the world, and the world to America, **Alex Zwerdling** shows.

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Cover: Detail of William Gropper's mural, *Construction of a Dam* (1939), at the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C.

USPS 346-670

WPA

VOL. XVII NO. 1

The Wilson Quarterly (ISSN-0363-3276) is published in January (Winter), April (Spring), July (Summer), and October (Autumn) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at 901 D Street S.W., Suite 704, Washington, D.C. 20024. Indexed biennially. Subscriptions: one year, \$24; two years, \$43. Air mail outside U.S.: one year, \$39; two years, \$73. Single copies mailed upon request: \$7; outside U.S. and possessions, \$8; selected back issues: \$7, including postage and handling; outside U.S., \$8. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. All unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Members: Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence with Wilson Quarterly mailing label to Subscriber Service, The Wilson Quarterly, P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0406. (Subscriber hot line: 1-800-829-5108.) Postmaster: Send all address changes to The Wilson Quarterly, P.O. Box 420406, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0406. Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 (for information, call 1-800-221-3148).



Editor's Comment

Ever since becoming editor of the *WQ*, I have been bothered by the absence of poetry from our pages. However much we have forgotten so, poetry lies at the heart of an intelligent understanding of the world. A journal of ideas without poetry, therefore, seemed to me critically incomplete. At the same time, I was reluctant to go the more usual route, scattering a few poems here and there like attractive verbal bouquets (which too often end up being sniffed rather than read). I wanted to set up a more prolonged engagement with a particular poet, and also to emphasize that in many parts of the world poetry is still recognized as a necessary form of argument—political, philosophical, even religious—as well as a supreme expression of sensibility. Whether we succeed in achieving this ambition, we are honored that Joseph Brodsky has agreed to be our first poetry editor. The former Poet Laureate of the United States, winner of the Nobel Prize, among many other awards, Brodsky is known to the literary world not only for the luminous verse that fills such volumes as *A Part of Speech* and *To Urania* but also for his provocative essays, many of which are collected in his book *Less Than One*. In this and subsequent issues Brodsky will introduce a poet of his choosing and then offer a sampling of his or her work. Seeing how one of our finer poets encounters his fellows in the art will, I hope, encourage readers to pursue similar encounters on their own.

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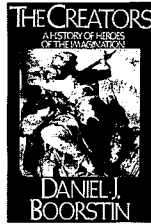
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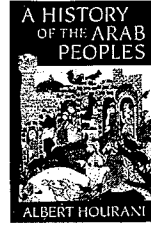
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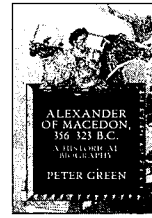
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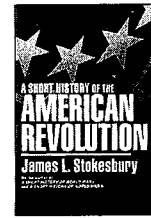
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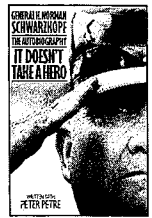
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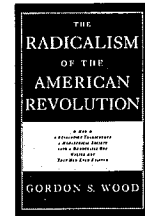
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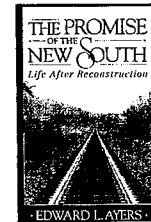
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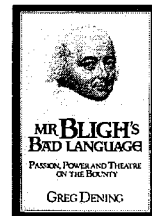
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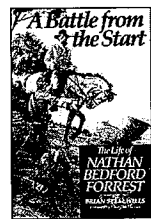
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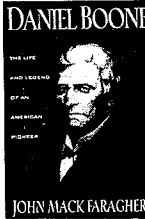
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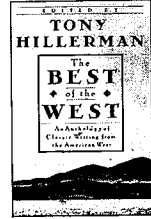
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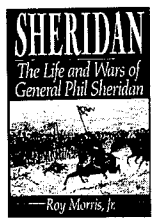
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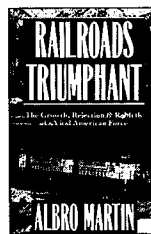
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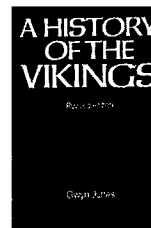
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FROM THE CENTER

Writing early in the period of the Bush-Clinton transition, I am reminded once again of the extraordinary atmosphere that pervades Washington at such times, particularly when the change is not simply from one president to his successor but also from one party to the other. I have lived through six transitions in this city, and what continues to strike me is the way in which these periods combine what one might have supposed were two incompatible elements: tranquility and excitement.

Part of the tranquility, I suppose, is simply the result of all passion having been spent by the outgoing administration. But clearly more is involved. The departing president and those who will be leaving with him confront the fact that there is no further need for them to formulate policies and legislative initiatives for future years. In a welcome departure from what I have always viewed as an empty and absurd practice, President Bush has just announced that he will not submit to the Congress a budget for the fiscal year that will begin more than eight months after the inauguration of President-elect Clinton. Despite the fact that President Bush will remain our only president until January 20, and must be prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise before then, one is not surprised to read in the newspapers poignant accounts of the silence at the White House switchboard and the paucity of important visitors.

Adding to the sense of tranquility is the fact that Congress is not in session, giving us perhaps some feeling of what life was like in the not-too-distant past when our legislators completed their work in time to escape Washington before the onset of our tropical summer, returning again only the following winter. Indeed, I have been told on good authority that the origin of the now famous "100 days" was the need or desire of Franklin Roosevelt to complete his initial legislative agenda between Inauguration Day (then still in March) and the departure of the Congress for cooler climes. Although the leadership and many members of both houses of Congress on both sides of the aisle are surely busy planning for the session that begins on January 3, legislation is not being introduced or debated, hearings are not being held (with a very few exceptions), and the great majority of members are either house hunting or otherwise engaged.

Still, at the very same time an atmosphere of excitement and expectancy pervades the city.

Its most tangible symbol is the great inaugural platform being constructed on the terrace outside the West Front of the Capitol—a location chosen despite all precedent by President Reagan and continued, to my regret, by President-elect Clinton. (Perhaps because I live on Capitol Hill, I deplore the move from what is clearly both the front of the building and its most impressive facade.) But the reality that generates the excitement, particularly, as we say, "inside the Beltway," is fed by incessant speculation and rumors about who will fill what position in the new administration, about what its agenda and priorities will be, and even about its mode of operation and its style.

Pundits of all persuasions seem particularly fond of pontificating about whether our new president won a "mandate" in the November election. From one side we hear that he won only 43 percent of the vote; the other side points out that 62 percent of the voters voted for change. Both statements are correct, but I suspect that neither tells us what we will begin to find out only after January 20. For obvious reasons, the parallel that comes immediately to



mind is the election of 1912, in which Woodrow Wilson won only 42 percent of the popular vote against the incumbent William Howard Taft, the Progressive Theodore Roosevelt, and the Socialist Eugene V. Debs. Wilson's achievements during his first term, most notably the establishment of the Federal Reserve System and the passage of sweeping antitrust legislation, demonstrate that a president elected with only a plurality of votes (and a smaller one than Clinton's to boot) can indeed be effective through a combination of clear priorities, extraordinary eloquence, political skill, and—perhaps most important of all—a sense of where the country is willing to be led, and how far. With pre-election polls this year showing that less than a quarter of Americans felt the country was headed in the right direction, and that more than half believed their children would be less well off than they are, one senses that our 42nd president will enjoy a great opportunity if he is able to grasp it. In the extraordinarily gracious words of Vice President Dan Quayle, if Bill Clinton runs the country as well as he ran his campaign, we'll be all right.

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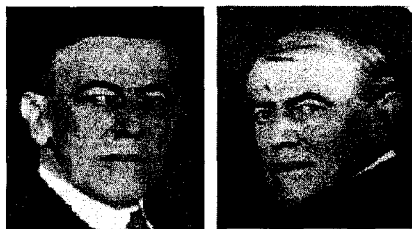
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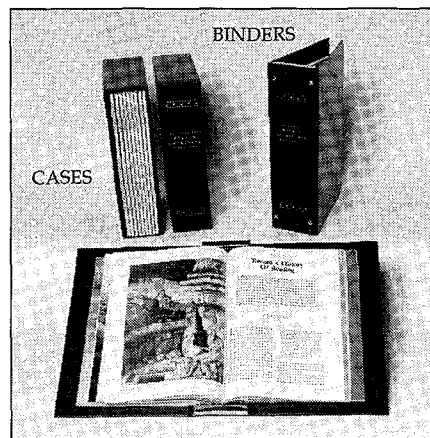
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THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

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The Perpetual Reform of American Education

A Survey of Recent Articles

There are two remarkable things about the movement to reform U.S. schooling that began in the early 1980s. The first is how long the campaign has lasted. "I think it's caught everybody by surprise," Gary Sykes, a professor of education at Michigan State University, remarked after the movement's first decade. A key reason for the effort's staying power has been the support of American business. Many CEOs are convinced that they will not get the educated work force they need without a major overhaul of the nation's schools.

The second remarkable thing about the reform drive is how little real difference it has made in educational performance. Despite a host of modest changes and much talk about—and some action on—more radical structural reforms, from "professionalizing" teachers to "empowering" parents, the tide of mediocrity decried a decade ago in a government report has not receded. The suspicion grows that the fault for this may lie not just with the schools but with the culture itself.

Evidence of educational failure continues to accumulate. American students are still outperformed by their counterparts abroad, as University of Michigan psychologist Harold W. Stevenson reports in *Scientific American* (December 1992). That conclusion is by now familiar, but other findings from studies by Stevenson and his colleagues at schools in Minneapolis, Chicago, Beijing, Taipei, and Sendai, Japan, are more surprising. They include the following:

- While Chicago children spent nearly twice as much time as Beijing children watching TV, Japanese students spent even *more* time. The difference, Stevenson says, is that Japanese children are more likely to watch TV *after* they finish their homework. "American children were reported to spend significantly less time than Asian children doing homework and reading for pleasure—two pursuits that are likely to contribute to academic achievement."

- The longer school day in Asia is mainly a result of frequent recesses, long lunch periods, and after-school activities. These take up about two hours of the eight-hour school day. "Play, social interaction and extracurricular activity

may not contribute directly to academic success, but they make school an enjoyable place," Stevenson writes. "The enjoyment likely creates cooperative attitudes."

- Asian teachers spend much less time than their U.S. counterparts in front of classes. "Beijing teachers were incredulous after we described a typical day in American schools," Stevenson reports. "When, they asked, did the teachers prepare their lessons, consult with one another about teaching techniques, grade the students' papers, and work with individual students who were having difficulties?" Beijing teachers are responsible for classes for no more than three hours a day. The situation is similar in Japan and Taiwan.

The *Economist* (November 21, 1992) adds in an interesting international survey of education that East Asian schools are inching away from rote learning. "Hence a current Asian fashion for such things as creative writing."

Despite all the criticism of America's public schools they are not doing any worse than they used to, according to Deborah W. Meier, principal of Central Park East Secondary School, a public high school in New York City. Writing in the *Nation* (September 21, 1992), she cites a recent study that found "virtually no change" over the past 50 years in how accurately 17-year-old students answered questions concerning the names of presidents and other basic in-

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formation. Yet the 17-year-olds tested in earlier years were "a far more elite group." Our problem today is not so much that the schools have declined, she contends, as that they now are being asked to educate all students equally for an economy that expects a higher level of education.

During the 1980s, reformers first sought simply to raise standards in schools. Many states increased testing, raised course requirements for high-school graduation, and strengthened curricular guidelines. A "second wave" of educational reform was launched with the publication in 1986 of reports by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy and by the Holmes Group of about 100 education-school deans. The goal was to transform teaching into a full-fledged profession. Teachers who mastered the specialized knowledge about teaching touted by advocates of professionalization would be entitled to much more say over how they do their work, but they would have to submit to more rigorous preparation, certification, and selection. The oft-derided undergraduate major of education would be eliminated. Prospective teachers instead would get a broad liberal education and then acquire their professional training as graduate students.

Not everyone thinks this is a good idea. Writing in *Harvard Educational Review* (Summer 1992), David F. Labaree, a professor of teacher education at Michigan State University, fears that such reforms would increase the power of the professoriate and lead to the bureaucratization of classroom instruction, reducing education to a "technical matter that must be left in the hands of certified experts."

Reform of a diametrically opposite sort is under way in Chicago, whose schools then-Secretary of Education William Bennett called the "worst" in the country in 1988. His appraisal was far from unfounded, notes Katherine Boo in the *Washington Monthly* (October 1992). Half the students dropped out before graduation and high-school achievement scores put the schools in the bottom one percent in the nation. After a 1987 teachers' strike, writes journalist David Moberg in the *American Prospect* (Winter 1992), an unusual coalition of reformers, business leaders, and community representatives pushed through a new state law that "radically decentralized power to the local school level, giving parents and community representatives primary responsibility to hire and fire principals, set budgets, and approve school plans." In effect only since the fall of 1989, the law has not yet yielded any obvious

gains for Chicago's young.

The stakes, University of Pennsylvania historian Michael B. Katz asserts in *Teachers College Record* (Fall 1992), are high. The Chicago reform stands as "the major alternative" to the "school choice" idea long favored by conservatives. "If [the Chicago reform] fails," Katz declares, "the advocates of 'choice' across public and private schools will inherit the field."

A limited school-choice plan proposed by the Bush administration did not fare well in Congress, but public support for choice appears to be growing. A 1991 Gallup Poll found 50 percent in favor of vouchers (up from 38 percent two decades earlier) and 39 percent opposed (down from 44 percent). A voucher system, entitling parents to choose any public or (in some versions) private school for their children, would introduce competition into the system, forcing schools to improve, according to proponents such as Ernest van den Haag in *National Review* (August 3, 1992).

A voucher system may be crucial to the success of entrepreneur Chris Whittle's \$3-billion Edison Project, the private sector's most highly publicized contribution to reform. Whittle—who has recruited former Yale president Benno Schmidt to be the project's CEO—envisioned a huge network of private, for-profit schools, and hopes to raise \$1.2 billion for the first 200 of them by 1996. Even if he can hold tuition to \$5,000–\$6,000, observes Denis P. Doyle, a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, in the *American Enterprise* (July–August 1992), that "is a lot of money for most families." To make the project work, Doyle figures, "Whittle will need either vouchers or school districts that will sign contracts with him to run their schools." Where others have failed, Whittle and his high-powered investors may be able to persuade states to go for voucher legislation.

It is not clear that parental "choice" would necessarily mean better education. More than 80 percent of the American mothers interviewed by Harold Stevenson and his colleagues expressed "a high level of satisfaction" with their children's current schools. And American parents, the researchers found, are much more likely than Asian ones to believe that success in school depends largely on innate ability, not on effort. When asked to name the most important characteristics of a good instructor, the most common response from Chicago teachers was "sensitivity to the needs of individuals." Improving American education, it appears, may require more than school reform; it may take a radical change in American culture.

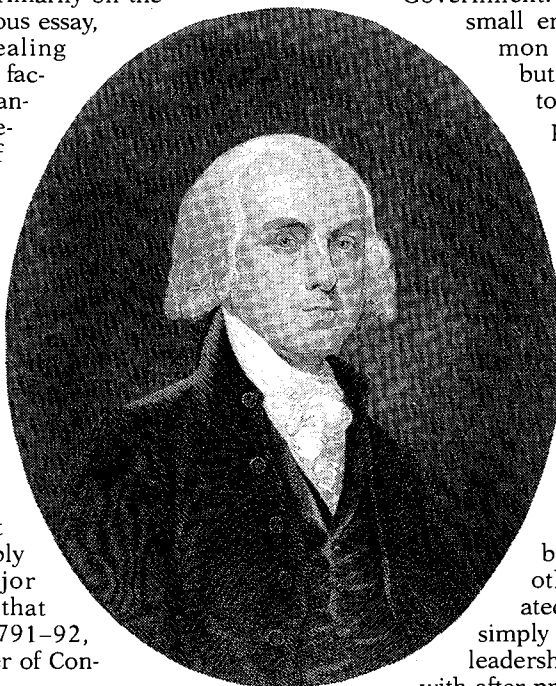
POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

***Madison, Mischiefs,
And Virtue***

"The Politics of Public Opinion: James Madison's 'Notes on Government'" by Colleen A. Sheehan, in *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Oct. 1992), Box 8781, Williamsburg, Va. 23187-8781.

Scholars in recent years have been vigorously debating the intellectual origins of the Founding Fathers' ideas. Did they derive mainly from the liberal philosophy of John Locke, the classical republicanism of Plato and his heirs, the modern republicanism of Machiavelli, or other intellectual sources? The conventional view of James Madison (1751-1836), the "father" of the Constitution, has been that he was most influenced by Lockean liberalism. Scholars who take this view argue, primarily on the basis of Madison's famous essay, *Federalist* No. 10, dealing with "the mischiefs of faction," that Madison abandoned the classical republican ideal of educating and elevating the opinion of the citizenry and instead set out to devise a Lockean system of institutional arrangements to channel largely immutable passions and interests and to prevent injustice. Villanova political scientist Sheehan says that a rarely studied set of notes—quite possibly an outline for a major treatise on politics—that Madison wrote in 1791-92, when he was a member of Congress, shows otherwise.

As presented in the notes, Sheehan says, Madison's practical science of politics does include the arrangement of institutions and the regulation of competing interests, but it also gives "an important role to statesmanship and civic education." Madisonian means are directed toward the classical republican end of "improving the opinions and souls of citizens and developing among them a common republican character."



A government cannot rightly be considered free, in Madison's view, unless it is ruled by public opinion. "Public opinion sets bounds to every Government, and is the real sovereign in every free one," he wrote in the notes. Yet those who govern may seek to shape public opinion. "As there are cases where the public opinion must be obeyed by the Government," Madison observed, "so there are cases, where, not being fixed, it may be influenced by the Government."

The nation must be small enough to allow a common opinion to be formed but large enough to allow it to be refined. In the republic that Madison envisioned, public opinion rules, but only in due course, after there has been a general exchange of ideas among the people and political leaders have provided guidance.

The elected representatives thus are responsible for influencing and directing public opinion. "Madison did not believe that he and the other founders had created a machine that would simply go of itself, that active leadership could be dispensed with after proper institutions of government were set in place," Sheehan observes. The structural arrangements of government are important, Madison believed, but public opinion is more important. His notes, Sheehan writes, "decisively show Madison's concern with the formation of a common ethical character among republican citizens and his advocacy of political tutelage to achieve republican virtue." In a free society, he thought, the character of the people is what counts.

Pro-Life Liberals

When it comes to the issue of abortion, left-wing advocates of "choice" refuse to allow any dissent, writer Nat Hentoff charges in the *New Republic* (November 30, 1992).

Nearly 10 years ago I declared myself a pro-lifer. A Jewish, atheist, civil libertarian, left-wing pro-lifer. Immediately, three women editors at the Village Voice, my New York base, stopped speaking to me. . . . [But] men, women, and teenagers wrote from all over the country that they had thought themselves to be solitary pro-lifers in the office, at school, even at home. They were surprised to find that there was someone else who was against capital punishment, against Reagan and Bush, and dismayed at the annual killing of 1.6 million developing human beings. . . . I felt less alone myself. In time, I found other heretics. For instance, the bold, witty, crisply intelligent members of Feminists for Life of America. There are some in every

state, and chapters in 35. Many of them came out of the civil-rights and anti-war movements, and now they also focus on blocking attempts to enact death penalty laws. . . . You won't see much about Feminists for Life in the press. . . .

[The] disdain on the Left for anything or anyone pro-life has clearly taken a toll on the political process. Liberal/Left politicians who remain true to their philosophy and oppose abortion are virtually impossible to find. Like [Jesse] Jackson, most simply cave in to abortion-rights pressure, fearing that no matter how left-leaning they are on other issues, if they come out against abortion they will be branded as right-wing fanatics. Governor Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, a liberal pro-life Democrat, was forbidden from speaking at [the 1992] Democratic convention. And when the Village Voice later offered him a forum in New York. . . he (and I, the putative moderator) was shouted down by pro-choicers.

The Origins of Term Limits

"Undemocratic Vistas" by Garry Wills, in *The New York Review of Books* (Nov. 19, 1992), 250 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10107.

Imposing term limits on members of Congress—as 14 states, following the example of Colorado, decided to do last November—represents a return to the values of the Founding Fathers, columnist George Will solemnly maintained in his 1992 book, *Restoration: Congress, Term Limits and the Recovery of Deliberative Democracy*. Term limits were included in James Madison's "Virginia Plan," which was submitted to the Constitutional Convention, but the subject of "rotation" (periodic removal from office) was then set aside, according to Will, so that the delegates could attend to more urgent matters. Imposing term limits today, Will contended, would simply complete the task that the Framers began but were too distracted to complete.

This picture, journalist-historian Garry Wills asserts, "is false through and through. Rotation was not a peripheral concern but a central one. It was a fighting matter raised constantly by opponents of the Constitution and resolutely fought off by the draft's defenders (including Madison)."

It is true, Wills acknowledges, that Madison put rotation in his first draft of the Constitution—but only as part of his initial effort to cut

state legislatures completely out of the federal election system. Madison had been frustrated in the Continental Congress by the way in which the state legislatures tied the hands of the delegates they sent. His Virginia Plan proposed that the people elect one branch of the federal Congress, whose members would then elect the Senate. Term limits were to be imposed on delegates elected to the popular branch. When it became clear that the Framers would not go along with efforts to eliminate the state legislatures' role—they were allowed to choose senators in the completed draft—Madison abandoned term limits. Other delegates at the convention, however, favored rotation, especially for the president. The subject, contrary to Will, was not simply dropped by the Framers as a "detail" of no consequence. Although all rotation was excluded from the Constitution finally adopted by the federal convention, the Anti-Federalists continued their fight for term limits in the ratifying conventions of the states. The term limits that Will now advocates, Wills observes, represent a return to the values, not of the Founders but of the Anti-Federalists—the enemies of the Constitution.

"Restoration" was not the sole merit of term

limits in George Will's eyes. He also argued that they would deal a blow to the "careerism" of today's Congress. But, asks Garry Wills, is professionalism such a bad thing? One commentator wrote in a 1983 book that Washington politics is "a complex profession—a vocation,

not an avocation The day of the 'citizen legislator'—the day when a legislator's primary job was something other than government—is gone. A great state cannot be run by 'citizen legislators' and amateur administrators." That commentator's name? George Will.

Court Politics

"The Supreme Court and Political Eras: A Perspective on Judicial Power in a Democratic Polity" by John B. Taylor, in *The Review of Politics* (Summer 1992), Univ. of Notre Dame, P.O. Box B, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.

Does the Supreme Court, as Mr. Dooley said, follow "th' iliction returns," or does it, as Justice Robert H. Jackson complained in 1941, the very year he assumed his seat, serve as "the check of a preceding generation on the present one"? Neither, argues Taylor, a political scientist at Washington College, Maryland.

If the Court did tend to lay the dead hand of the past on the pressing work of a new era, then one would expect that after "critical" elections in which basic electoral realignments occurred—the elections of 1828, 1860, 1896, and 1932—there would have been a high level of conflict between the "old" Court and the "new" president and Congress. Instead, Taylor finds, of the 92 instances in which the Court voided acts of Congress through 1968, only 25 took place during such "lag" periods—and only 19 involved legislation enacted by the new regime. Moreover, 12 of those 19 cases occurred during the New Deal era. That unusual experience was undoubtedly fresh in Jackson's mind when he leveled his charge against the Court in 1941. But 19 cases in 178 years, notes Taylor, "is not an impressively high number."

If humorist Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley was correct, one would expect, conversely, that once the Court had gained a sufficient complement of new justices, it would begin revising legislation from the earlier era. Not so, Taylor finds. Of the 92 instances of judicial review, 67 occurred after a new majority had established itself on the Court, but only two altered laws from the previous era. Surprisingly, the Court was much more likely to overturn legislation enacted during its own era.

"The Supreme Court is not normally a generation behind, nor is it a slavish adherent to the latest electoral trend," Taylor concludes. Politics, for the justices, is less a matter of political parties and transient elections than of constitutional issues and judicial philosophy. The Court's power tempers, and is tempered by, the political power of the two elected branches of government. Interacting with them in complex ways, the Supreme Court is "a major participant in an ongoing process, and it is in the mundane vibrations of power in that process, day in and day out, that the genius and the explanation of the system lie."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

China's Rising Power

"Awakening Dragon" by Ross H. Munro, in *Policy Review* (Fall 1992), 214 Mass. Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4999; "China on the Rise" by Charles Horner, in *Commentary* (Dec. 1992), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022; "China: the Coming Power" by Barber B. Conable, Jr., and David M. Lampton, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1992-93), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, Washington policymakers have been debating how best to promote democracy and human rights in China. But some analysts say that that

debate is now largely beside the main point. An economically vigorous China is suddenly presenting the United States with new opportunities—and perhaps new dangers. Today, warns

Munro, of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, China appears "firmly embarked on a course of explosive economic growth and military assertiveness."

Thanks to Deng Xiaoping's Leninist capitalism, China's economy may soon be "as dynamic as Taiwan's, yet 60 times larger," Munro observes. China enjoys Most Favored Nation trade status with the United States, despite efforts by liberals in Congress to make it conditional on human-rights progress. The U.S. trade deficit with China, only \$2.8 billion in 1987,

was nearly \$13 billion in 1991 and an estimated \$15 billion or more in 1992, second only to the U.S. deficit with Japan.

Munro finds this alarming. Other analysts are more sanguine. Conable, former president of the World Bank and now chairman of the National Committee on United States-China Relations, and Lampton, president of the committee, point out that the U.S. trade deficit with "Greater China" (China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) declined slightly during 1987-91 because Taiwan and Hong Kong shifted much of

Punching Tickets in Vietnam

In *Sewanee Review* (Summer 1992), West Point graduate (Class of 1961) Pat C. Hoy II ponders what happened in the American military during the Vietnam War when "management" took the place of leadership.

One morning about halfway into my tour in Vietnam, my battalion commander overheard a conversation between me and my friend Charlie Catlett, who was the executive officer. I was the S-3, the operations officer. Our battalion had an odd mission for light artillery. Instead of providing direct support for a particular infantry unit, we provided general support for the corps, moving and shooting like heavy artillery. When a general found a gap in the artillery coverage, we moved a battery of artillery (six howitzers) to fill it. We were always employed piecemeal.

When our battalion CO [commanding officer] eavesdropped that morning, he heard excitement. Charlie and I had gotten word from Group Artillery Headquarters that we might get a direct support mission. The whole battalion would join an operation near the Cambodian border. We would be together, providing fire direction as well as fire support. We would, finally, do what we had been trained to do.

Lost in our own enthusiasm, Charlie and I failed to hear our fearless leader come up into the washroom from the underground bunker where the three of us slept. We were talking about using the battalion's command-and-control helicopter to go out for a recon over the sugar plantation where we would move our own headquarters. . . . When our CO walked into the room, he was already furious about what he had heard. There, in our common area, he admonished us for even thinking about taking his helicopter anywhere.

"Besides," he said, "I'm not so goddamn sure we want the mission. My [expletive] helicopter's not going anywhere without me, and before I go anywhere, I'm going to Group Headquarters."

I had never heard him swear before, had never heard him express an interest in any of our operations beyond knowing when and where our units would move. He had not been our commander. He had been a mere observer of war. Having come directly from the Department of the Army staff, he needed to punch the next ticket—battalion commander. A man couldn't get to his destination without those tickets. Getting them punched—each of them that the Pentagon managers considered important for advancement—was paramount; the mission and the men were not. . . .

The problem was the mission and the risk—the risk to the CO's reputation. Charlie and I had gotten excited about a mission that our CO didn't want. He was perfectly happy to leave the business of fire control to someone else, even if it meant—and until then had always meant—that our three firing batteries would be split and employed separately, even if it meant that our men would be subjected to the whims of other commanders who would always consider them second to their own men (no matter what), even if it meant that our men, time after time, had to join units in the heat of conflict and fall into the rhythm of someone else's way of doing business. The risks to our soldiers, under such circumstances, were always greater. . . .

Our battalion did not get the mission. My boss and his boss, the group commander, had other priorities in Vietnam, including the construction of a cement tennis court in our battalion area and a handball court in the Group chapel. . . . Winning the war was not on their agenda.

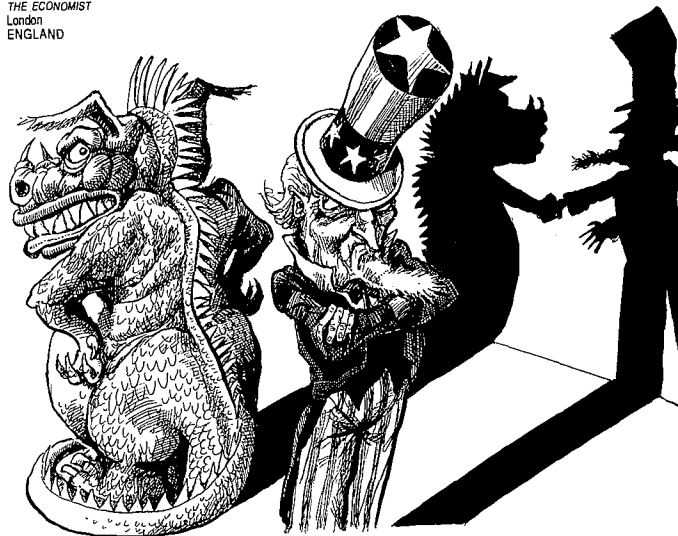
their manufacturing and assembly operations aimed at the U.S. market to the Chinese mainland. In the eyes of Conable and Lampton, China's economic boom not only presents tremendous opportunities for American investment and trade but "will soon put serious political reform back on the agenda."

Horner, president of the Madison Center in Washington, also views China's economic rise as benign, and he thinks it possible that communism in China "really is withering away, to be superseded by some softer, albeit authoritarian, regime—like that, precisely, of Singapore."

Unlike Japan, China seems inclined to translate its economic gains into international influence. Despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat, Beijing has increased its official military budget by 52 percent since 1989. It has exported nuclear technology to Iran and Pakistan, and last spring conducted its largest-ever nuclear test.

In recent years, Munro notes, China has become increasingly assertive in territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea, where it claims islands hundreds of miles offshore now held by Vietnam, Malaysia, and the

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Human rights remains a hot issue dividing the United States and China, but both nations want to avoid any disruption of relations.

Philippines. Although China may not be "wildly ambitious or dangerously bellicose," Horner notes, it does seem to be "of an imperial mind, prepared to reoccupy the space in Asia vacated by a defunct Soviet Union, a withdrawing United States, and a reticent Japan." Chinese domination of the South China Sea is virtually certain, Munro says. "The United States can live with this historical shift if it succeeds in convincing China not to overplay its hand."

Democracy, Yes; Realpolitik, No

Should U.S. foreign policy emphasize the promotion of democracy abroad? Not according to a number of "realist" and "neorealist" pundits from both ends of the political spectrum. The liberal neorealists often seem to be more isolationist than their conservative counterparts, such as Irving Kristol, but all agree that in foreign policy, morality must give way to "the national interest," that international politics is mainly about power, not the quest for justice. Kaufman, a University of Vermont political scientist, says, however, that the issue is not whether to pursue the national interest, but how to define it. He contends that promoting and maintaining democracy abroad—especially in geopolitically important states such as

"Democracy, Morality and the National Interest" by Robert G. Kaufman, in *Strategic Review* (Spring 1992), United States Strategic Inst., 2020 Penn. Ave. NW, Ste. 610, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Germany, Japan, and Russia—remain "vital national interests" of the United States.

Conceptions of *realpolitik* that are "overly narrow" should be rejected on practical as well as moral grounds, Kaufman argues. "Those realists who attempt to sever foreign policy from morality are paradoxically more unrealistic than many so-called idealists." Americans, he observes, must be convinced that U.S. foreign policy is morally right, as well as in the U.S. self-interest. *Realpolitik* alone will not suffice to win the domestic support needed to sustain an effective foreign policy.

That is not to say that the United States should take enormous risks to establish democracy everywhere on the globe. "Sometimes,"

Kaufman points out, "the prospects for democratic forces succeeding are too remote and America's stake in a favorable outcome too limited to justify active U.S. involvement on democracy's behalf." President Harry S. Truman's decision not to intervene in the Chinese civil war of 1946-49, for example, appears wise in retrospect, "not because Chinese communism was not odious, but because the United States could not ensure the victory of the Nationalists at tolerable costs and risks."

The realists and neorealists *do* have a point, Kaufman acknowledges. "Many American idealists have indeed slighted the importance of

power and rivalry in international politics." And many champions of democracy have failed to take into account the difficulty of promoting and sustaining democracy in hostile regions of the world.

The end of the Cold War may make the task of spreading democracy to remote areas less urgent. But the best feasible approach for post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy, Kaufman concludes, is one in which geopolitics, the promotion of democracy, and a Judeo-Christian conception of man and morality play major parts. This calls, he says, for "a vigilant and prudent internationalism."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

**Smith's Poverty
Of Notions**

"The Trouble with Adam Smith" by Thomas K. McCraw, in *The American Scholar* (Summer 1992), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Communism has failed, capitalism has won, and Adam Smith (1723-90) is the hero of the

hour. Yet McCraw, a Harvard historian, doubts that Smith's laissez-faire version of capitalism is the wave of the future.

Now We Understand

Ever wonder why economics is often incomprehensible? In *Economic Inquiry* (Oct. 1992), economists David N. Laband and Christopher N. Taylor, of Salisbury State University and Auburn University, respectively, explain why most economists are wretched writers.

There are numerous margins upon which the professional acceptance and acclaim of an author's research findings may hinge. Writing style is but one of those margins. Other margins include, but are not limited to: the timing of the contribution, caliber of data, innovativeness of statistical technique, theoretical insight, and importance of contribution to the work of other scientists. By definition, a scholar cannot possess a comparative advantage with respect to operating on all of these margins simultaneously. It seems doubtful, if not extremely unlikely, that any scholar routinely maximizes on all margins simultaneously, without regard to the costs of doing so. The scholar who wishes to maximize his expected return per unit of work effort balances off the expected net marginal benefits of devoting resources to one aspect of his work against the expected net marginal benefits of devoting resources to any of the other aspects of his work. The efficient scholar operates at the point where expected net returns to incremental effort are equalized across all relevant margins of productivity.

Smith had a profound aversion to any form of collective action, McCraw notes. For him, individuals and markets were "natural," but institutions and organizational hierarchies were not. Whether the organizations were guilds, universities, political groups, or even business corporations made no difference. "In Smith's world, something rotten is likely afoot wherever two or more individuals are gathered together, except as family members or in the unambiguous roles of buyer and seller."

Only agriculture, in Smith's view, was fully "natural." The Industrial Revolution, then just getting under way, was, he thought, nothing more than the division of labor. Smith failed to recognize, according to McCraw, the key roles of "machine production, fuel and water power, human entrepreneurship, state promotion of manufacturing, and, most important of all, technology."

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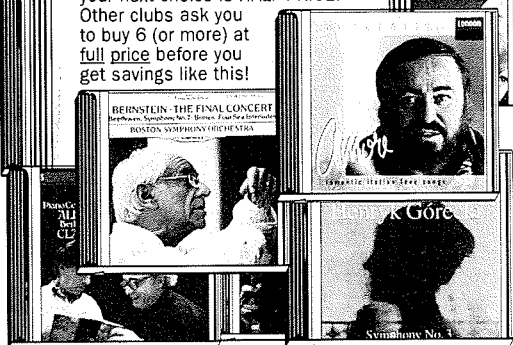
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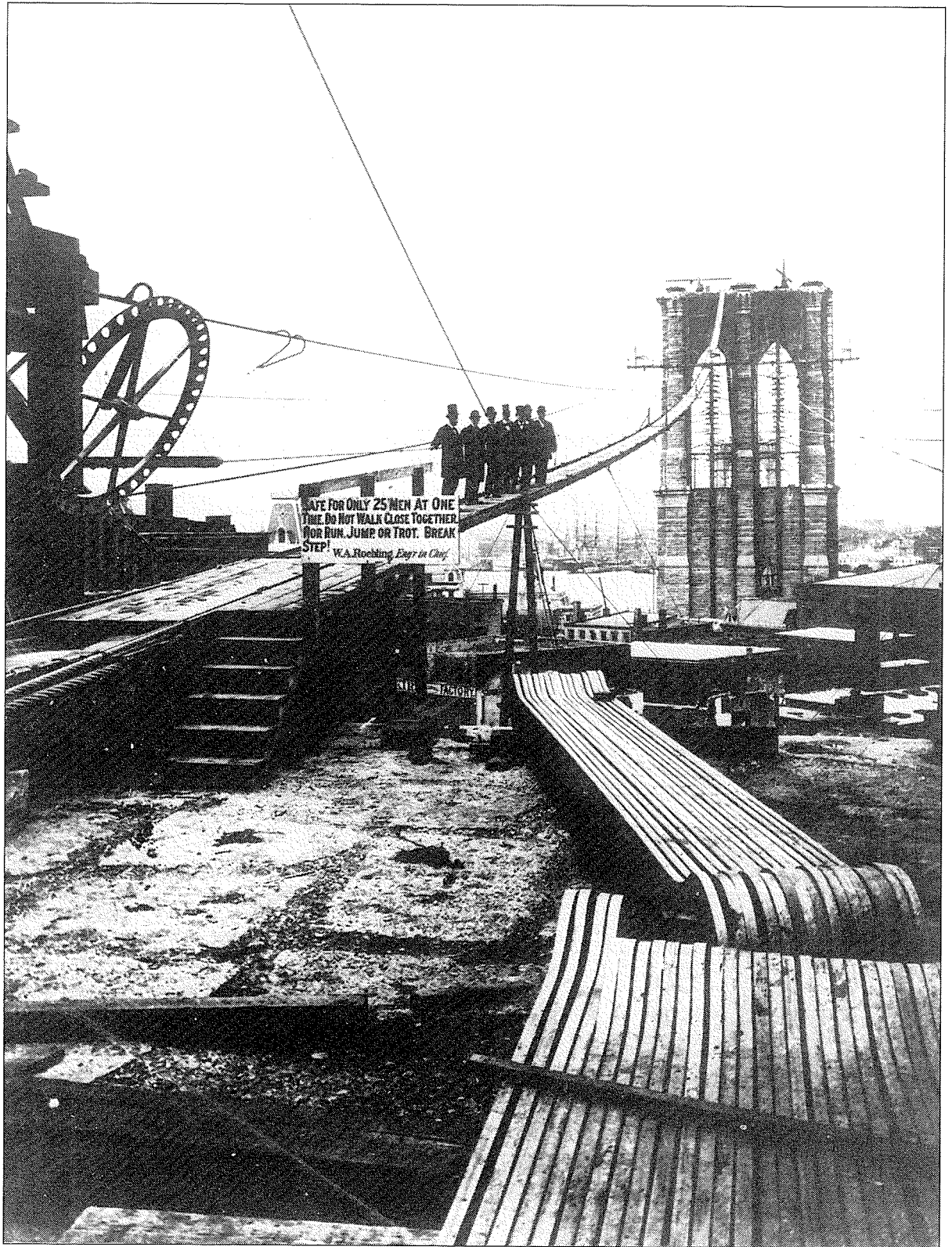
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The Brooklyn Bridge was compared to the Acropolis and hailed as the crowning achievement of its age when it opened in 1883—acclaim of a sort that few 20th-century structures win.

The Saga Of American Infrastructure

President Bill Clinton's campaign pledge to "rebuild America" has lifted "infrastructure"—that most unlovely term for roads, sewage-treatment plants, and other essentials—near the top of the national agenda. Clinton's \$80-billion shopping list includes not only the usual public works but "information superhighways," "bullet trains," and other exotica. In the past, the debate over how to build America has occasioned some of the great shifts in American political history, and, as Bruce Seely writes here, some very ingenious solutions. Assessing the nation's future needs, Jonathan Gifford suggests what some of those solutions may be.

A REPUBLIC BOUND TOGETHER

by Bruce Seely

What a shock it has been to Americans to discover that steel and concrete are not forever, that the proud bridges built during the New Deal and the interstates laid out in the comfortable 1950s are as mortal as their makers and that the built environment is nearly as fragile as the natural one we have come to cherish.

As early as 1981, in a now-famous report entitled "America in Ruins: Beyond the Public Works Pork Barrel," writers Pat Choate and Susan Walter warned that "America's public facilities are wearing out faster than they are being replaced. . . . In hundreds of communities, deteriorated

public facilities threaten the continuation of basic community services such as fire protection, public transportation, water supplies, secure prisons, and flood protection." But it took a series of surprises and disasters to drive home the point. In 1984, a bridge collapse on Interstate 95 in Connecticut killed several motorists and captured national headlines. In Pittsburgh around the same time, local authorities declared that it would cost \$100 million just to begin repairs on 120 bridges that were too unsound to use or could only carry reduced loads. And less than a year ago, the nation witnessed the unlikely spectacle of a massive flood in downtown Chicago caused when construction workers accidentally punched a hole in a decaying tunnel built

in 1909. For days, much of Chicago's central business district was shut down. Today, the water-main breaks and sewage-plant breakdowns that once attracted only local notice seem to be symptoms of a disturbing national trend.

In the age of the microchip and genetic engineering, we have become accustomed to thinking of technology as something rarified, almost immaterial, and certainly not something so thoroughly concrete as asphalt or steel or, for that matter, concrete itself. Infrastructure is technology. And more specifically it helps to think of infrastructure as *technological systems*, with each road, bridge, and drainpipe closely linked to an intricate—and as we have been reminded, delicate—network of supporting elements. And the more complex systems are often the most fragile.

Originally, the term *infrastructure* referred to the permanent facilities required by the military—bases, airstrips, dry docks. Economists most likely extended the word to public works. What W. W. Rostow labeled “social overhead capital” in his famous book *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960) sounds today very much like infrastructure. Since the term gained recognition in the early 1980s, its meaning has steadily expanded. It is now applied to almost every support system in modern industrial society, public or private. Infrastructure is said to include not only roads and sewers, but national transportation grids, communication systems, media, housing, education, and, perhaps in the 1990s, computer networks and fiber-optic “information superhighways.” For the purposes of this essay, however, I will con-

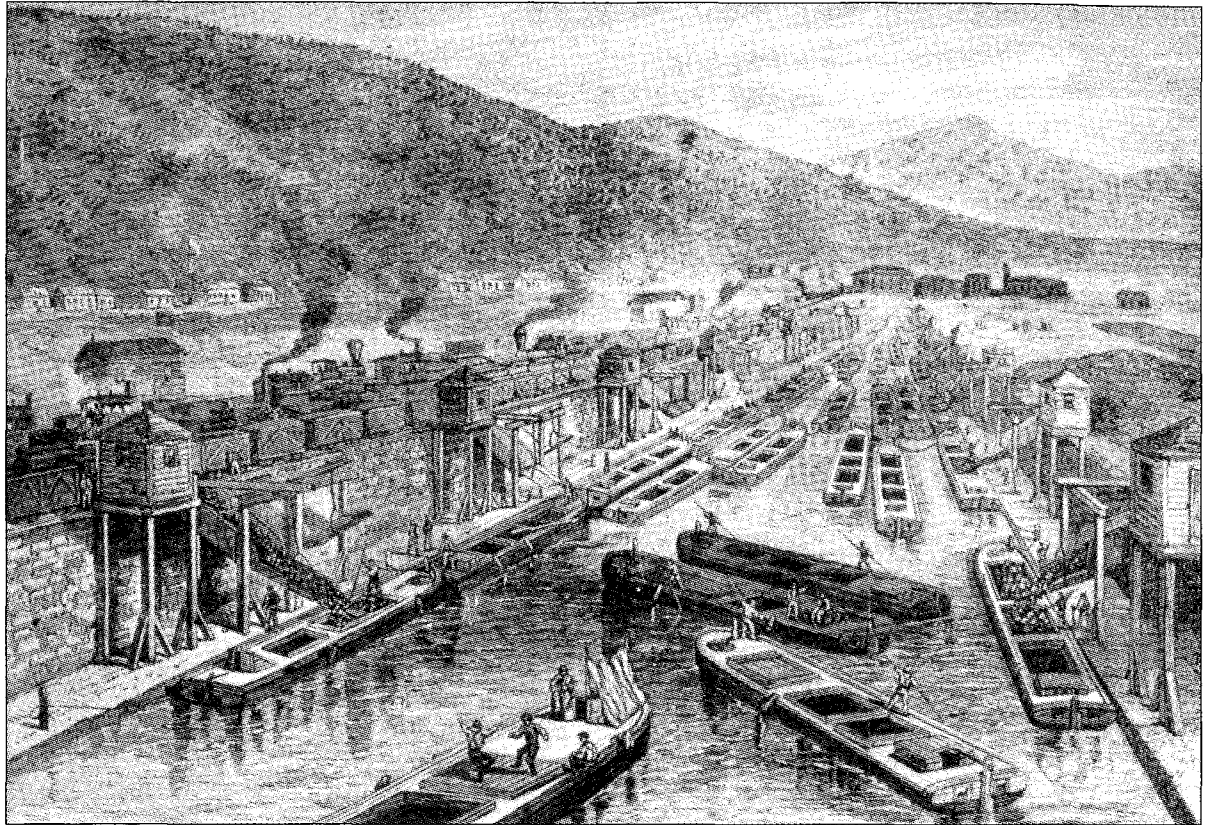
centrate on those things that provide crucial physical services: transportation, water and sewage, and power—the systems that historians Joel Tarr and Gabriel Dupuy call “technological sinews.”

For almost two centuries, there has been broad public support in America for infrastructure development. The issue has been how, not whether, to build, and, more to the point, how to pay. Americans, rarely fettered by ideological dictates on the proper role of government, have shown great ingenuity in solving the latter problem. The political process, however, has never produced a coherent infrastructure policy. Our infrastructure has been cobbled together with little understanding of how one system affects and is affected by others—a failing that has at times brought disastrous consequences, including the decline of the railroads. For nearly a century, from the late 19th century to the 1970s, the nation dealt with the question of what to build and how to build it by vesting much control in engineers and other technical experts. Today our unquestioning faith in such expertise is gone, but infrastructure systems have increased in complexity, size, and expense. The 200-year ebb and flow of infrastructure debate, it appears, is approaching yet another high water mark.

Internal Improvements: The First Infrastructure Debate

It was infrastructure by another name that occasioned one of the great debates of the early Republic, and the outcome has continued to shape American attitudes. President George Washington and

Bruce Seely is associate professor of history at Michigan Technological University and secretary of the Society for the History of Technology. His book Building the American Highway System: Engineers As Policy Makers (1987) won the Abel Wolman Award, given by the American Public Works Association and the Public Works Historical Society. Copyright © 1993 by Bruce Seely.



Canals such as the Schuylkill, opened in 1822, were a boon to industry, but were soon made obsolete by railroads. Here, barges are loaded with coal in Port Carbon, Pennsylvania.

his treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, were early supporters of a federal role in what were called internal improvements, chiefly roads and canals, but it was left to their successors, Thomas Jefferson and his treasury secretary, Albert Gallatin, to take the first tentative steps. By 1800, many Americans recognized that links between the coast and the interior were essential for both economic and political reasons. "Good roads and canals," the Swiss-born Gallatin declared in 1808, "will shorten the distances, facilitate commercial and personal intercourse, and unite, by a still more intimate community of interests, the most remote quarters of the United States. No other single operation, within the power of the Government, can more effectually tend to strengthen and perpetuate that Union

which secures external independence, domestic peace, and internal liberty."

The federal government struggled long and inconclusively with the issue of internal improvements. Gallatin's comment came against the backdrop of the rancorous debates surrounding the congressional decision to build the National Road from Cumberland, Maryland (on the Potomac River) to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia) on the Ohio River. Opponents claimed that the federal government had no constitutional authority to construct the road. Supporters replied that the constitutional injunction to "promote the general welfare" was sufficient. Throughout its life, historian Phillip Jordan wrote in *The National Road* (1948), "the

project swung... on a swaying constitutional rope." But lofty constitutional scruples often seemed little more than a veneer over deep regional jealousies. Pennsylvania's representatives in Congress blocked construction for four years until a portion of the road was routed through the Keystone State. In 1820, Congress agreed to extend the road—then heavily used by farmers driving huge herds of cows and pigs to market—to the Mississippi River, but it only appropriated the necessary \$4 million in 1825. Shortly thereafter, retreating from a direct national role in transportation, Congress decided to return the eastern sections to the states. (The road, long since paved, is now known as U.S. Route 40.) The westernmost sections in Indiana and Illinois were unfinished when Congress refused to provide more money in 1838.

Hesitation and ambivalence characterized most federal efforts to play a direct role in internal improvements programs. In 1808, Gallatin had presented his famous Report on Roads and Canals outlining a plan of extensive federal improvements. It included a coastal waterway and a turnpike from Maine to Georgia; connections between the four main rivers on the Atlantic seaboard and western rivers via water routes and heavy-duty turnpikes; roads to New Orleans, Detroit, and St. Louis; and connections between the Hudson River and the Great Lakes as well as a canal around Niagara Falls. Gallatin argued that only the federal government could marshal the necessary resources: \$20 million over 10 years, or one-seventh of the government's annual revenues. But, growing tensions with England and the prospect of a costly war rendered the Gallatin plan moot, as even the treasury secretary agreed. A House committee noted that "the inauspicious situation" rendered the idea "inexpedient."

But Britain's success in blocking trade along the East Coast during the War of 1812 underlined the desirability of the kinds of internal improvements Gallatin had proposed. In 1817, Representative John Calhoun of South Carolina and Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed their "American System" of higher tariffs to protect domestic manufacturers and underwrite a modest national transportation network. Noting hopefully that in the wake of the war "party and sectional feelings immersed [sic] in a liberal and enlightened regard to the general concerns of the nation," Calhoun declared, "Let us bind the Republic together with a perfect system of roads and canals." The plan occasioned more bitter wrangling, and when it finally passed Congress, President James Madison vetoed it as unconstitutional. Nor was his the only veto of internal-improvements legislation. President James Monroe vetoed another bill in 1822. President Andrew Jackson's veto in 1830 of the Maysville Turnpike Bill, which would have allowed the federal government to purchase stock in a 60-mile Kentucky turnpike, brought most discussion of a direct federal role in internal improvements to a close. Jackson later boasted in his farewell address that he had "finally overthrown... this plan of unconstitutional expenditure for the purpose of corrupt influence."

The Constitution was not the only obstacle to federal participation in internal improvements. Especially after 1820, sectional politics made any kind of consensus difficult. The most obvious example was the fierce struggle in the 1850s between North and South over the location of the eastern terminus of a transcontinental railroad, a conflict that prevented construction of the rail line before the Civil War. But the attitude was evident much earlier. Clay and Calhoun notwithstanding, many southerners opposed any federal involvement in in-

ternal improvements, fearing that such programs would strengthen the central government and create a precedent for federal intervention in other state matters, meaning, of course, slavery. And there were those in the South who, satisfied with things as they were, simply saw no need for internal improvements.

The United States was virtually unique in its approach to—and difficulties with—internal improvements. France provided the model for most of Europe. In 19th-cen-

as historian Carter Goodrich shows in *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads, 1800–1890* (1960), the state governments actively supported road and canal construction, often through mixed public/private enterprises. Even many opponents of a direct federal role in internal improvements, including President Jackson, had no objection to state involvement. As Senator William H. Seward of New York explained, “a great and extensive country like this has need of roads and ca-

Internal improvements were a major issue in the election of 1828, but President Andrew Jackson's veto of a bill two years later spelled the end of a direct federal role in public works for decades to come.

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Internal Improvement by Rail Roads, Canals, &c.

FOR THE ASSEMBLY
JOHN V. L. McMAHON,
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ture France the state was the main actor, developing an elaborate bureaucratic structure that included schools to train engineers and agencies to plan and construct public works; French roads were probably the best in the world. In Germany and Russia, the state sponsored railroads and other transportation systems.

It was not, however, laissez-faire beliefs that constrained the federal government. Only England relied on private initiative to build its transportation system. In America,

nals earlier than there is an accumulation of private capital within the state to construct them.” Pennsylvania began the first comprehensive state road program in 1791, but a year later it also chartered the private Pennsylvania and Lancaster Turnpike Company. The company completed its 62-mile road in three years and began to earn a profit, sparking a turnpike boom in other states. New York chartered 67 turnpike companies by 1807; Connecticut authorized more than 50. By 1850, hundreds of

turnpikes had been built, many with tax exemptions or other forms of state subsidy.

The pattern was repeated in canal development. New York's Governor DeWitt Clinton took the lead by beginning construction of the 365-mile Erie Canal in 1817. "Clinton's Ditch," as detractors called it, was such a success that a canal craze swept the states. Built by the state in eight years at a cost of \$7 million, the canal paid for itself in less than nine years. It cut shipping time from Buffalo to New York City from 20 days to eight and opened vast new markets in the developing Midwest, stealing trade from New Orleans and helping New York leapfrog Boston and Philadelphia to become the nation's premier city in the span of a few decades.

Canals were soon being built everywhere, from New England to the Midwest. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, the state owned and built the systems, including Pennsylvania's hybrid "Main Line," which combined a railroad, two canals, and an inclined plane over the Allegheny Mountains to connect Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Other states simply subsidized private ventures. By 1840, 3,200 miles of canal were open across the nation, representing an investment of \$125 million—70 percent from government sources.

State governments played a more limited but still significant role in the development of railroads. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, chartered in 1827 and the first line in operation with 13 miles of track in 1830, started with a \$500,000 investment by the state of Maryland. Local funds were even more important, as hometown boosters pinned their hopes for prosperity on the coming of the iron horse. The railroads quickly grew to 3,328 miles of track in 1840 and 8,879 miles in 1850. Initially, most rail lines did not connect with those of other companies, but by 1860 the

30,636 miles of track had begun to form a network.

Indeed, while federal construction of such improvements was out of the question after 1830, federal involvement in mixed public/private enterprises seemed far easier to accept. Even strict constructionists were willing to support such projects, as long as their states benefited. "Congress debated year after year . . . the subject of federal aid to internal improvements . . .," historian George Rogers Taylor observes. "But from the vantage point of the 20th century the prolonged constitutional debates seem forced and unreal Despite a parade of constitutional scruples, successive chief executives and congresses actually approved grants in aid in building specific roads, canals, and railroads." Washington gave land grants for roads in Ohio and Indiana in 1823 and 1827; four million acres were given for midwestern canals; and the government purchased \$3 million in canal stock. In 1850 Congress gave 3.7 million acres of public land to the Illinois Central Railroad, and other land grants to 45 railroads in 10 states followed during the next seven years.

It was also during this period that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, founded in 1775, began to provide important technical services to public and private developers of infrastructure. The General Survey Act of 1824 authorized the corps to survey roads, canals, and later railroads—including, in 1853, transcontinental rail routes. The army engineers also played a critical role in river improvement after Congress provided \$75,000 in 1824 for work on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. By 1860, Congress had appropriated \$6 million to remove snags and obstructions on western rivers and for harbor improvements. Eventually, the corps would go on to remake the Mississippi River valley with levees, dams, and channels. Its engineers would serve as an

important pool of expertise in other endeavors as well.

Government played a central role in internal improvements because it had to. Especially before 1850, private interests could not command enough capital to do all the work that needed to be done. Government officials made this investment believing that internal improvements brought economic prosperity. Then, as now, the state and local governments played the dominant role: Carter Goodrich estimated that they spent \$425 million on internal improvements before the Civil War. No coherent plan guided their efforts—a lack that would be an enduring feature of American infrastructure efforts. Road and canal construction followed the rough outlines of the Gallatin plan, but no similar document guided railroad-building. Even discussion of a national plan was rendered virtually impossible by the intensity of the commercial and political rivalries. Company fought company; state fought state; region fought region.

Rapid technological change also made national planning difficult. The era of turnpike-building was quickly followed by a surge of canal construction, and before long the canals were threatened by railroads. Indeed, the wild success of the railroads emptied many canals of commercial traffic within a few years of their opening. Pity the poor official trying to choose among these competing modes of transportation.

The triumph of the privately run railroads seemed to show that governments were not good at picking winners. By 1850, Americans had lost much of their faith in public sponsorship. After the economic crises of 1837 and 1839, several states defaulted on canal bonds and a string of state constitutional amendments prohibiting direct state investment in internal improve-

ments followed. When Ohio “privatized” its canal system in 1860, a newspaper editor wrote that “every one who observes must have learned that private enterprise will execute a work with profit, when a government would sink dollars by the thousands.” This “homely maxim,” historian Harry Scheiber noted, “would have been irrelevant in 1825, when only the state could command capital in sums sufficient to support canal construction.”

In fact, the public continued to support certain types of infrastructure development. New York rebuilt the Erie Canal at a cost of \$44 million during the 1840s. The railroads continued to receive generous federal and state assistance, even though it was accompanied by outrageous corruption. The first transcontinental rail line, whose completion was marked by the celebrated connection of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869, was subsidized with 20-foot right-of-ways and generous federal land grants for each mile of track laid. All told, railroad companies received about 130 million acres of public land, an astonishing 9.5 percent of all the land in the country. By the time federal support for railroads slowed in 1872 amid scandal in the administration of President Ulysses S. Grant, the nation in its disorderly and often haphazard way had finally constructed the kind of national transportation network Albert Gallatin had envisioned in 1808.

Urban Infrastructure 1840–1920

In America’s cities, bulging with new immigrants and new industry, their foreign trade and commerce with the hinterlands nourished by the spread of roads, canals, and railroads, a different set of infrastructure challenges arose. Growing popu-

lation strained the ability of corner pumps to provide enough drinking water, while outbreaks of cholera and typhoid were frequent. Philadelphia's municipal government was the first to support improvements, after outbreaks of yellow fever took more than 4,000 lives in 1793 and another 3,500 in 1798. Between 1799 and 1801, two steam engines were built to pump water from the Schuylkill River to a reservoir for distribution through wooden mains. When the system opened, on January 27, 1801, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* hailed it as "a joyful circumstance to the citizens at large." The city's celebration was premature. The primitive steam engines consumed huge quantities of coal, replacement engines blew up in 1818 and again in 1821, and the log mains leaked. Not until 1822, when the Schuylkill River was dammed and water wheels replaced the steam engines, was the city adequately supplied with water.

Most other cities in this period let private companies build and operate water systems. But the quantity and quality of water was often limited, frustrating municipal efforts to clean streets and fight fires. The biggest cities soon followed Philadelphia's example of municipal ownership. Manhattan acted after a cholera epidemic in 1832 and a devastating fire in the business district three years later. In 1837, the city hired John B. Jervis—who received his engineering training on the Erie Canal—to design and construct a dam on the Croton River some 30 miles north of the city, a covered aqueduct to carry water to the city, a stone bridge across the East River, a 35-acre, 180-million-gallon reservoir in what was to become Central Park, and a 20-million-gallon distribution reservoir at Murray Hill. Jervis completed the project in 1842 at a cost of \$13 million. This system, subsequently improved, was unusual by the standards of the day in that it represented an attempt to

build for the future.

Beginning in the late 1850s, larger cities began to think in terms of networks such as the Croton system. Water-pumping systems grew more widespread, extensive, and complete, and other municipal systems emerged. Some of these were private, providing gas for heat and light, telegraphs, outdoor arc lights, and early electrical networks. Bridge-building and landfilling were undertaken in a few cities, as exemplified by the Brooklyn Bridge in New York (1869–83) and a land-reclamation effort that created the Back Bay area in Boston.

Historian Joel Tarr cites 1857 as the year marking the first efforts to move beyond fragmentary infrastructure development into more sophisticated systematic efforts. A case in point is the rise of the horsecar. Urban transportation at midcentury was dominated by the privately operated omnibus, a long, horse-drawn coach seating about 12 passengers. The cars were cramped, and service was expensive and slow. An alternative, introduced in New York City in 1832 but not elsewhere until much later, was the horsecar. Here the value of thinking in terms of systems was clear. By running larger cars on rails laid in the streets, it was possible for these street railway systems to carry twice as many people. But because they ran on fixed tracks they demanded coordination and planning. They also made economic sense only in larger cities, and a second horsecar system was not started until 1856, in Boston. A third opened in Philadelphia in 1858, and others in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Baltimore in 1859. In short order, cities controlled the development of horse-drawn mass transit by granting franchises to private operators for specified routes. By the mid-1880s, 100,000 horses and mules were pulling 18,000 horsecars over 3,500 miles



Construction on Manhattan's Wall Street in 1917 revealed a tangle of pipes and conduits—an apt metaphor for cities' efforts to grapple with the infrastructure crisis of the day.

of track in American cities.

It was sewage, however, that really forced city officials to begin thinking comprehensively. Disposal of human waste was originally a private responsibility, and most city residences had privy vaults or cesspools. But the growing volume of sewage in the burgeoning cities contaminated groundwater and many street-corner pumps. Cities resorted to stopgaps: In 1844, Boston even forbade its residents to take baths without a doctor's order. Sewers, pioneered by European cities in the 1850s, were the only long-term solution. Brooklyn (1857) and Chicago (1858) were the first American cities to borrow the idea. The enormous cost and complexity of the systems left municipalities with no alternative: They would have to plan and build them themselves. And once again they were forced to plan systematically.

The largest cities were driven to such steps by 1870, while most smaller municipalities made the transition between 1890 and 1920. Water and sewer systems spread, and the first efforts at water

filtration and sewage treatment began. Parks, beautification, and streets came under systematic control. After initial developments proceeded haphazardly, municipal officials monitored the many private activities, such as the wiring of cities for electricity, to ensure that systems were linked into networks to serve the general public. But as in the age of internal improvements, officials still failed to grapple with the interrelationships among systems. Every new solution showed an unnerving tendency to cause new and unexpected problems. The advent of running water exacerbated the health problems of inadequate sewage disposal, and the coming of horsecars created an enormous sanitation problem—each horse daily generated gallons of urine and about 20 pounds of what we euphemistically call solid waste.

As systems grew larger, it became more important to understand linkages. Not surprisingly, the first efforts at urban planning date from this era. By the last third of the century, Frederick Law Olmsted and Daniel Burnham, among others, were attempting to conceive whole cities, combining atten-

tion to parks, roads, water supply, and other services. Yet one cannot claim too much for planning before 1920. Most cities continued to tackle problems only when they could no longer be avoided. Most cities came up with solutions that had unanticipated consequences. To replace horsecars, for example, New York built steam-powered trains running on elevated tracks, only to find that the trestles blocked out the light, the trains showered cinders on pedestrians, and the noise was a constant annoyance to those below. Perhaps no one could have predicted the consequences of new technologies, but in the 19th century, few even thought about these issues. Most people simply embraced new technologies with enthusiasm.

Large, complex urban systems re-created the circumstances that led state government into the internal improvement arena in the 1820s—the need for capital. Within a single decade, the 1860s, municipal debt per capita more than doubled as cities scrambled to put infrastructure in place. With the economic depression of the early 1870s, many state governments imposed ceilings on municipal debt that sharply limited the ability of cities to pay for costly capital projects. But demand could not be restrained. In New York City, where congestion was terrible despite trolleys and elevated trains, subsurface trains seemed the only solution. Finding no private company with the resources to tackle the job, the city built 150 miles of subway lines between 1900 and 1940.

The one great exception to the private sector's limitations was the railroads, which embarked on an amazing round of track and terminal improvements at the turn of the century. The wealthiest lines in the country, in particular the Pennsylvania and the New York Central, completely reconstructed their

main lines, built breathtaking new stations, and eliminated grade crossings. The Pennsylvania experimented with electric locomotives and completed a massive terminal improvement project in New York City that included tunnels under the Hudson and East rivers and a new Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan. No other entity, public or private, could afford to lavish so much money on infrastructure.

The cities' rapid growth and their flexible responses made the United States the leader in the development of urban infrastructure. A number of the technologies used in cities before 1880 had originated in Europe, including underground sewers, water-pumping systems, and paved streets. Thereafter, American systems were often bigger and more comprehensive and, sometimes, more innovative. It was the United States, for example, that pioneered electric power and electric streetcars.

The experience of Chicago, the fastest-growing city in the country in the mid-19th century, shows how rapid growth encouraged innovation. A water-supply problem bedeviled the city, despite the proximity of Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, because both had become quickly polluted. When the private water company failed to meet the challenge, the state legislature chartered a municipal water company in 1851. Its first step was to draw water from intakes far from shore, through tunnels and steam pumps built in the mid-1850s and expanded in the late '60s and '70s, and again in the '90s, when an intake crib was built four miles from shore. After 1861, engineer Ellis Chesbrough guided these efforts. Especially concerned with keeping sewage from getting into Lake Michigan, he proposed reversing the flow of the Chicago River in order to carry sewage down the Mississippi River basin. After some partial efforts proved inadequate, the city in 1892 began the 28-mile Ship and Sanitary Canal to re-

verse the Chicago River completely, excavating mountains of earth and rock. When the canal opened in 1900, typhoid deaths fell to 20, down from 2,000 in 1891.

Chicago was not alone in developing systems on such a breathtaking scale. By the 1880s, New York had found the Croton Aqueduct inadequate, and ultimately water was brought from the Catskills via another reservoir and a 92-mile aqueduct. During these same years, Los Angeles developed its Owens Valley project, the first in a series of public works that brought water to the arid city from the mountains many miles away. The political controversies and corruption these projects ignited are the stuff of legend. Somehow, each city's central business district and wealthy neighborhoods always seemed to get service first. High stakes and huge construction contracts bred corruption to match. Vast sums were squandered as Tammany Hall and other big-city political machines handed out construction contracts and franchises to political favorites. In Washington, D.C., during the 1870s, Boss Shepard's machine oversaw the construction of a \$5-million sewer system that featured mains running uphill! The Owens Valley project in Los Angeles was rife with intrigue, some of which figures in the plot of Roman Polanski's film, *Chinatown* (1974).

In 1888, the British observer James Bryce labeled municipal government "the one conspicuous failure" of American society. Even as Bryce wrote, however, a reaction was setting in that would have profound consequences for American politics, helping to spawn the progressive movement and, fatefully, a longer-lived enthusiasm for the expert in public works.

Engineers had, of course, helped develop both internal improvements and early city infrastructure. But after 1870,

technical experts began to play a much larger role in cities because they seemed to offer an alternative to corrupt politicians. Engineers argued that technical systems could be built and operated efficiently only if divorced from politics and put under the control of technical experts. The proof of the engineers' competence could be seen in the systems they designed and built. Each success strengthened their reputation as problem-solvers and soon they were hailed as managers as well as designers of technical systems. The engineers liked to think of themselves as something akin to family physicians. James Olmstead, a municipal engineer, wrote in 1894:

He does know the character, constitution, particular needs and idiosyncrasies of the city, as the family physician knows the constitution of the family.... The city engineer... is responsible for holding the successive political officials to a consistent, progressive policy in all the branches of work under his charge. To him, even more than to the successive mayors, falls the duty of serving as the intelligence and brains of the municipal government in all physical matters.

As the municipal reform efforts of the 1880s and '90s blossomed into the national progressive movement, many Americans acquired what historian Robert Wiebe called a "childlike faith" in the efforts of engineers, viewing public-spirited experts, immune to graft and corruption and perfectly objective, as the answer to all types of problems. Wiebe added that it was widely assumed that university training, "immersing oneself in the scientific method, eradicated petty passions and narrow ambitions just as it removed faults in reasoning." This faith was evident, for example, in the rise of the "nonpolitical" city-manager form of local government, a system first installed in Galveston, Texas, after political leaders failed to cope with the aftermath of the hurricane that destroyed the city in 1900. The

preference for technical experts over politicians was reflected in such developments as the crusade for municipal ownership of utilities, strongly advocated by Mayor Tom Johnson in Cleveland, and the creation of "special districts" for sewage treatment, such as the Chicago Sanitary District (1889). It would take the better part of a century for Americans to learn the joltingly painful lesson that experts did, after all, have their own dangerous limitations.

*The Reemergence of the
Federal Government, 1920-70*

Not even the most outspoken 19th-century supporter of federally sponsored internal improvements would have dreamed of a federal role in urban infrastructure. City problems were local by definition, requiring local solutions. Today, however, hardly a subway or sewage-treatment plant is built, indeed hardly a municipal bus rolls out of its garage, without Washington having been in some way involved. The change began in the early 20th century, thanks in large part to the broad public embrace of the progressive belief in apolitical expertise. This faith helped pave the way for increased federal regulation of the economy, beginning with the railroads, and the inauguration of a massive infrastructure program that to some extent competed with the railroads—the construction of highways.

Since the 1840s, responsibility for road-building had been left largely in the hands of local governments. But beginning in the 1890s, a "Good Roads" movement launched by bicyclists nudged the states into road construction, and by 1910 every eastern state had created a state highway department. In 1893, an office was formed in the U.S. Department of Agriculture to gather information about roads. The fed-

eral role remained strictly advisory, but that began to change after the agency was renamed the Office, later the Bureau, of Public Roads (BPR) in 1905, during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. This agency ultimately propelled the federal government into its leadership in highway affairs.

The bureau was a model progressive agency, headed during its first 13 years by Logan Page, a no-nonsense engineer determined to eliminate waste and corruption in road construction through efficient administration by engineers. Page's experts helped local and state officials develop better construction techniques and drafted model legislation for creating state highway agencies; they also helped build public support for good roads. Page, all the while insisting even to himself that he was nothing but a neutral technical expert, worked behind the scenes during Woodrow Wilson's presidency (1913-21) to orchestrate the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. This legislation modestly subsidized some state construction costs (the first continuing federal appropriation for roads) and, more consequentially, made state construction and maintenance subject to federal inspection.

The highway program was a significant departure. The federal government had not been the leading supporter of transportation of any kind since it began limiting active promotion of railroads in the 1870s. It was not money that made Washington the leader—the highway bill provided only \$75 million over five years—but the recognized expertise of Page and other federal engineers. Newspaper magnate E. W. Scripps wrote to Page in 1909, "In all this great nation there are perhaps no other two men who have better opportunities to serve their country and who are making better use of them than are you and [conservationist Gifford] Pinchot. Despite the fact that neither of you have any

high sounding titles or official positions which in themselves would give you great distinction—perhaps just because of that fact, you are epochmakers.” Page’s successor, Thomas H. MacDonald, who headed the bureau from 1919 to 1953, gained such an extraordinary reputation as the sage of highway construction that car manufacturers, motorists, and other powerful interest groups took their lead from him in matters relating to roads, not the other way around. The basic policy that federal engineers advocated remained clear. They always sought to exclude partisan politics and the overt involvement of politicians from highway decisions. Funds were allocated to the states through a formula devised to prevent political tampering, and the states were required to create highway departments that met bureau guidelines. Moreover, federal engineers had to approve all locations, construction plans, specifications, and estimates. One of those guidelines, significantly, required that engineers run the state agencies.

By 1921 the highway policy MacDonald and his allies had developed was calling for a limited system of intercity roads, what would become the U.S. numbered-route system, the first national transportation system of any type in America. True, the railroads formed a nationwide network but without any overall plan directing the efforts of individual companies. For the first time since the Gallatin plan, federal officials were involved in designing systems.

Roads were not the only technology whose development was assisted by the federal government during the 1920s. Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover—who made his early reputation as an engineer and was popularly known as the Great Engineer—took a special interest in aviation, and in 1926 the Air Commerce Act authorized his department to designate

and establish airports, operate and maintain air-navigation aids, and in other ways help stabilize the aviation industry through what became the Civil Aeronautics Board (forerunner of the Federal Aviation Agency). Federal subsidies for mail delivery, meanwhile, provided the foundation of commercial air service. Hoover’s interests did not stop there. The Federal Radio Act of 1927, for example, allowed him to aid the nascent radio broadcasting industry. All of these efforts fit into the “associative ideal” advocated by Hoover as a means of developing cooperative business-government relations through trade associations.

Highways and Hoover’s cooperative capitalism marked a shift in the federal role, but the Great Depression transformed infrastructure development in this country. As president from 1929 to 1933, Hoover, like Franklin Roosevelt after him, viewed big public-works projects as an important tool in combating massive unemployment. It was Hoover who launched the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and such ambitious federal projects as the Boulder (later Hoover) Dam on the Colorado River. But unable to rid himself of qualms over government “handouts,” Hoover restricted the government to roads and “self-liquidating” projects that generated revenue. Roosevelt freely experimented with a wider array of programs, designed, as he explained, “to relieve the unemployment [and] to develop great regions of our country . . . for the benefit of future Americans.”

Yet spending on public works did not increase as dramatically as one might think during the 1930s. Historian Roger Daniels notes that total public-works spending between 1933 and 1940 rose by 24 percent over the previous nine years. What changed momentarily (but temporarily) was the federal share, which soared while local expenditures plummeted. State and local gov-

ernments spent \$2.4 billion in 1930, but only \$700 million in 1933. Federal spending, however, jumped from \$250 million annually during the late 1920s to an average of \$1.6 billion per year (1932-38), accounting for two-thirds of the total outlay.

Existing programs, especially highway construction, saw their budgets swell during the New Deal, but they were overshadowed by New Deal programs created specifically to tackle the economic crisis. The most important were the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Other "alphabet soup" agencies, as FDR's creations were called, included the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Harry Hopkins, who headed the FERA and CWA before taking over the WPA, was most committed to putting the unemployed to work, while the PWA's Harold Ickes was more interested in building projects that would have a long-term effect on the economy. But both were activists committed to an increased federal role in public works in order to combat the Depression.

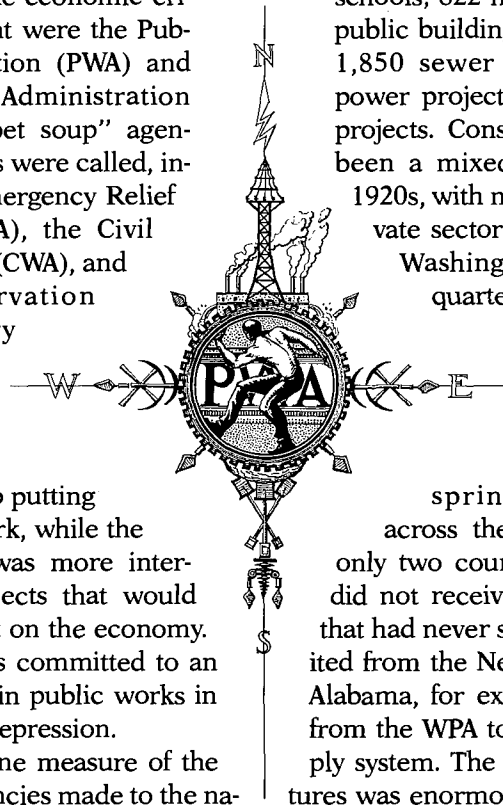
Statistics provide one measure of the contribution these agencies made to the nation's infrastructure. Roads were among the most important projects; between 35 and 45 percent of all workers on federal relief worked on highway projects of various types. The CWA, in its brief existence during 1933-34, repaired 255,000 miles of roads. Through 1938, the PWA provided more than \$1 billion for more than 11,000 individual highway projects. The WPA spent \$3.69 billion on roads during its existence (1935-43), building 572,000 miles of roads,

67,000 miles of city streets, and 78,000 bridges. But much more important, 20 percent of PWA funds and at least a third of WPA funds went for wages; that is, directly into the pockets of the unemployed.

Driven by the need to put people to work, the federal government now found itself engaged in fields where it had never before been involved. A listing of PWA projects includes many buildings (7,488 schools, 822 hospitals, and 4,287 other public buildings); 2,582 water systems; 1,850 sewer systems; 375 electric-power projects, and 470 flood-control projects. Construction of airports had been a mixed enterprise during the 1920s, with municipalities and the private sector splitting costs. By 1938, Washington was footing three-quarters of the bill.

New Deal public works reached into every nook and cranny of the country. The PWA alone sprinkled 35,000 projects across the landscape; there were only two counties in the country that did not receive a PWA project. Towns that had never seen a federal dollar profited from the New Deal largesse. Wilton, Alabama, for example, received \$30,909 from the WPA to build its first water-supply system. The impact of these expenditures was enormous.

The public's imagination, however, was captured by the large projects underwritten by the PWA. These ranged from the Tennessee Valley Authority to the huge Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams on the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest, to Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri. In the cities, there were New York's LaGuardia Airport (built largely with WPA funds), Chicago's massive water filtration plant (PWA); flood control in the Los Angeles area; and the Pennsylva-



nia Turnpike. In New York City, federal funds helped build parks, highways, the Lincoln Tunnel, and several bridges (including the Triborough Bridge).

The master builder of the era was undoubtedly New York's Robert Moses, "the power broker," as he was styled in Robert Caro's scathing 1974 biography. During the 1920s Moses had pioneered the development of a dozen state-chartered authorities—at first state park authorities, and later the Triborough Bridge, Henry Hudson Bridge, and Marine Parkway authorities. Moses capitalized on the progressive faith in expertise, managing to insulate his authorities from politics in the name of the efficient pursuit of technical goals. According to Caro, Moses was a ruthless "emperor" who went so far as to keep dossiers of embarrassing information on his political enemies, but he had the public image of a public servant who could get things done even if toes got stepped on in the process. In retrospect, he might be seen as the J. Edgar Hoover of public works.

Vastly extending the reach of his authorities through the mechanism of bond financing supported by toll revenues, Moses monopolized public-works projects in the metropolitan region, thrilling the public with his ability to ram through roads, bridges, and parks against all opposition. Moses was fully prepared when FDR began pouring money into such projects. Although the power broker and the former New York governor loathed each other, Moses snared a big share of New Deal money because his engineers at the Triborough Bridge Authority and other outposts had plans and drawings ready when the New Deal agencies had money to spend. Between 1933 and '36, Moses garnered one-seventh of all WPA funds; by 1938, New York had collected \$1.15 billion

in federal relief funds.* With that money, Moses transformed the face of New York City. "In the 20th century," wrote the rueful critic of megalopolis, Lewis Mumford, "the influence of Robert Moses on the cities of America was greater than that of any other person."

During World War II, government officials continued to plan big public-works programs, fearing the return of depression in peacetime. Infrastructure and employment programs had become firmly linked. The 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act provided a huge increase in federal aid, \$1.5 billion over three years, for an expanded system of primary, urban, and secondary roads. The bill also authorized but did not fund a new network of interstate roads between cities. As it turned out, however, inflation was the major worry after the war, and President Harry S. Truman sought to restrain federal spending. Yet the growing number of cars on the roads made it seem obvious to all that a massive new highway system was essential. Feeling financially pinched, many states resorted to the old mechanism of toll financing, much to the disgust of MacDonald and his engineers at the Bureau of Public Roads, who regarded tolls as a double tax on motorists (who already paid fuel taxes to underwrite roads). But the Pennsylvania Turnpike, built with New Deal aid in 1939–40, had shown that the public would pay for the use of high-speed limited-access highways. Now several states followed Pennsylvania's example. By October 1953, 762 miles of toll road were open with 1,077 more miles under construction; by 1963 the total stood at 3,557 miles. Once again, the builders of infrastructure showed that

*Government officials have learned a lesson from Moses—be prepared! A recent survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors of 506 cities found 7,252 public works projects "ready to go" but lacking funding. At a cost of \$26.7 billion, these projects would provide jobs for 418,000 people.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO WHAT END?

Neoclassical economists so dominate the discussion of industrial policy these days that we often forget that what we are discussing is the shape of the material world, not simply how we will pay for its construction. Whether we charge or pay cash, we will have to live in the world that we build. We profess to worry about the burdens that the federal debt and our pollution of the natural environment will impose upon our children, yet we show precious little concern for the quality of the material culture—the built systems—in which they will have to live.

Shaping the material world through architecture and the construction of what we now call infrastructure is a timeless expression of human character. Karl Wittfogel, the scholar who originated the “hydraulic society” thesis, showed how massive irrigation projects provided the material basis of early societies. Lewis Mumford reminded us that the early Egyptians performed great feats of human organization to create the mammoth construction projects that built the pyramids. Later civilizations, including modern ones, became accustomed to creating what Mumford labeled “megamachines,” orchestrating a variety of human and economic resources in the pursuit of certain goals.

Yet system building in the modern era has taken on a new cast. We can assume that the pyramid builders used mostly available “off the shelf” technology. This was true, too, of the creators of canals and rail-

roads in the 19th century. Since World War II, however, large-scale construction efforts have taken on the character of research-and-development projects. Scientists were so central to the creation of the wartime Manhattan Project that many commentators have mistakenly seen it as a scientific program rather than as what it was: a science-based construction project designed to create a system for manufacturing explosives.

After the war, the Manhattan and Radiation Laboratory projects in the United States and the Peenemünde rocket project in Germany became paradigms, or exemplars, for science-based, military-funded development of weapons systems. In the United States, these efforts achieved an enormous scale. Measured by the investment of human and material resources in a brief period of time, they were the most massive construction projects in history; they were high tech and science-based; and they included new managerial techniques and forms.

The civilian infrastructure efforts of the future will need to draw upon these new forms of management but use them to pursue different values. New techniques such as operations research and systems engineering require the creation of interdisciplinary committees of scientists, engineers, academics, and government experts to identify problems and the strategies for solving them. New organizational forms—interdisciplinary teams of engineers and sci-

they could respond creatively to financial limitations.

Sentiment for a more ambitious program kept building. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, influenced by public demands for more roads and by the emergence of a congressional consensus about such a program in the 1954 federal highway bill, called for a “grand plan for a properly articulated highway system.” Two years later, the legislation authorizing the 42,500-mile National System of Defense and Interstate Highways arrived on his desk. In fact, the bill owed almost nothing to defense concerns and passed Congress only because it also provided more money for every other federal-aid road system, rural, urban, and primary. Not quite pork-barrel, the bill still provided something for all

elements of the highway community. For the interstate network alone, it authorized outlays of \$25 billion over 12 years, to be provided by highway-user taxes (gasoline taxes and excise taxes on tires) deposited in a highway trust fund. The work was to be carried out by the states. The funding base (Washington picked up 90 percent of the tab) and the allocation of funds by formula for construction of a predefined system were reflections of the continuing belief that roads should be kept out of the reach of politicians.

The trend toward more federal involvement showed up in other areas as well. The new Atomic Energy Commission, for example, encouraged the nation’s electric utilities to become involved in efforts to develop civilian nuclear power reactors. By

entists aided by skilled craftspeople—are also needed to preside over the design and development of the systems. These techniques and forms have already been transferred to the civilian sector, where, for example, system builders (which can mean individuals, groups, or institutions) now design and construct large health-care systems that incorporate hospitals, health-insurance agencies, and pools of medical practitioners. Large engineering and construction firms use operations research and systems engineering techniques, as well as collective research and development, when they preside over massive regional energy developments.

The military programs of the past were shaped by military, political, and economic values, and their products reflected a preoccupation with control and power. Environmental impact, for instance, did not rank high on the scale of design priorities during the Cold War. Nor did the designers and developers of the military systems incorporate aesthetic values into their designs. We now have the opportunity to embed different values into our infrastructure. The next generation's systems should articulate aesthetic and socially benign values, as well as economic ones. But we also face the melancholy prospect that the national-defense emphasis of the past will be replaced only by a fixation on raw economic values. If so, our built environment will express cost effectiveness; it will not project a concern for community, individual fulfillment, or beauty.

In part because of the return of free-enterprise

ideology, the federal government has in recent decades only hesitantly involved itself in the construction of the civilian built world. But other industrial nations, including France, Germany, Sweden, and Japan, have established industrial and technological policies that involve substantial government influence without bringing on the ill effects that free-enterprise ideologists have predicted. Government involvement abroad is usually justified on the basis of promoting rational economic development, but policy makers and the public also have called for government funding, regulation, and management in order to create systems expressing values other than economic rationality. A case in point is the German government's approach to the rehabilitation of eastern Germany, where in order to fulfill the ideal of a united Germany the government is investing heavily in telecommunications and electric power. Americans should now ask how well their government's new industrial policy will express the values of the people and how effective our values will prove in shaping the construction of a physical environment that will nurture, not only materially but spiritually, our own generation and those to come.

—Thomas P. Hughes

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1960, the first generation of commercial reactors was in operation, including the Dresden plant southwest of Chicago and the Yankee plant in Massachusetts. Washington anted up \$1.3 billion for the program, the utilities \$500 million.

The golden age of infrastructure development in the United States came during the 1960s and '70s. During the 1950s, unemployment relief ceased to be the only justification for federal infrastructure spending. Now the New Frontier and the Great Society brought a surge of activism and with it new federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation (1968) and the Environmental Protection Agency (1969) that were given major responsibilities in infrastructure. Ma-

major legislation such as the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965 and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1970 (\$3.1 billion over five years) drew Washington into areas it had paid little or no attention to before. The 1972 Water Pollution Control Act greatly expanded what had already become a large program in the 1950s by providing massive funding for treatment plants—\$5 billion for 1973 and \$6 billion for 1974. The question of how to pay had found a new answer—Uncle Sam. The answer ushered in a new era.

As always, pork-barrel politics helped make these programs popular. Yet it is difficult to recall today the high optimism that propelled them: the belief that all problems, from poverty to

traffic jams to pollution, could be solved. Nothing was more important to this new spirit than the continuing progressive-era faith in "nonpolitical" experts, epitomized by the new National Aeronautics and Space Administration. As historian Walter McDougall writes in his study of the space program, *The Heavens and the Earth* (1986): "To [President Lyndon B.] Johnson, the space program was a model of the role government should play in society, and the role technology should play in government. . . . Whether in decaying cities, or Third World jungles, American technology would overwhelm the enemies of dignity."

Yet even with all the prestige accorded the experts, the nation after World War II seemed to be no more able to coordinate infrastructure projects than before. Even experts such as Thomas MacDonald made little effort to establish detailed priorities, preferring instead to use formulas to distribute funds for designated networks in such a way as to minimize discord among both politicians and members of the road-building fraternity. But this approach did not guarantee that the most important routes got built first.

Similarly, intermittent efforts to create a centralized federal department of public works came to nothing. During the New Deal, Roosevelt could have gathered all public-works efforts under one roof, but instead he chose to create many agencies and seems deliberately to have encouraged competition between the PWA and WPA. Other agencies had even longer histories of rivalry, most notably the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers, which vied for supremacy as dam-builders. Worse than the waste that resulted from this kind of competition, however, was the way federal programs often worked (and still work) at cross purposes.

Part of the problem is inherent in the nature of public works as they have evolved

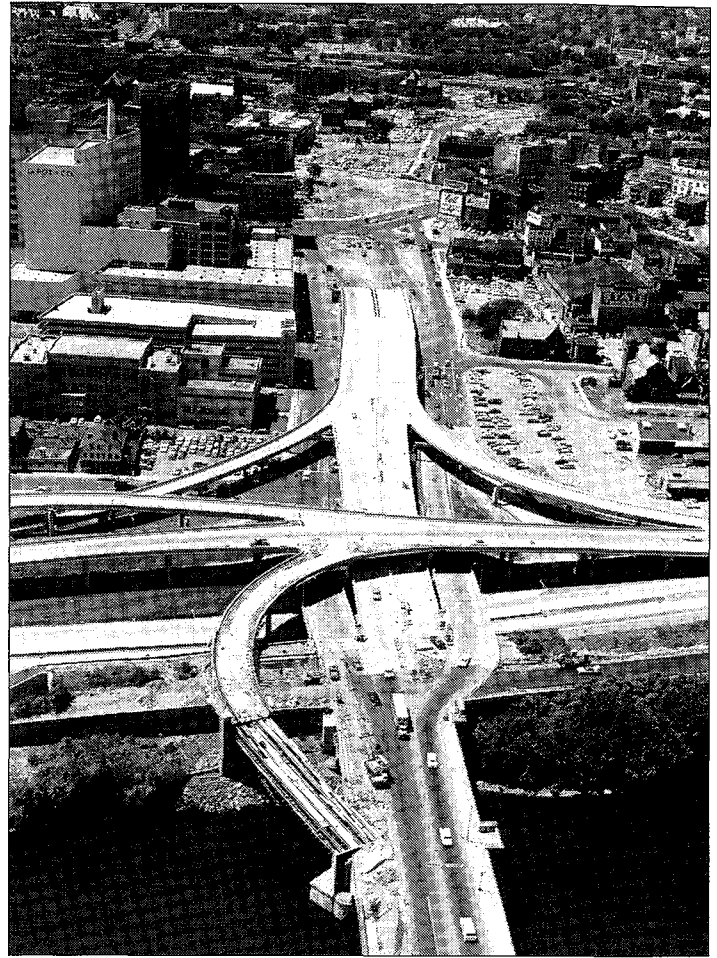
during the 20th century, dominated as they have been by federal patronage. Highways and dams are built not only to provide transportation and irrigation but to create jobs in bad economic times, to return political favors, and to serve a variety of other purposes. It is difficult to build "technically correct" projects when that is not the sole aim of public works. Federal planning has expanded enormously since the New Deal—when it was sometimes possible to get federal grants without so much as a blueprint as long as an engineer was on the site—but the problem remains. Today, every aspect of the federal highway program requires careful planning: estimates of future traffic demands, environmental impact, costs of construction, and so on. But this kind of planning does not take account of overarching transportation needs. Highway planners look only at roads, airport planners only at airline traffic.

The near demise of the nation's railroads is the classic case of narrow planning gone awry. After the turn of the century, Washington subjected the railroad companies to increasingly onerous and sometimes ill-advised regulation, preventing them, for example, from abandoning unprofitable rail lines without approval and from operating their own bus lines. It also began pouring money into the road system and aiding civil aviation with barely a thought to the consequences for railroads. Nor was the federal government alone in its shortsightedness. Beginning in the 1920s, most state and local governments made costly efforts to accommodate the automobile even as they piled new restrictions on existing street rail companies. The automobile, according to historian Paul Barrett, was accepted as a panacea for urban problems, while the debt-ridden streetcar companies, long a source of municipal corruption, were seen simply as problems. Now we are paying the cost for these un-

wise decisions. In 1956 only seven cities operated transit systems; by 1975, a total of 91 percent of the nation's transit riders rode municipally owned systems, virtually all of them chronically debt-ridden. Ironically, cities are now using federal mass-transit aid to build light-rail commuter systems—a fancy name for the streetcar systems destroyed during the past half-century. The federal government itself, meanwhile, was forced to step into the interstate passenger and freight railroad business during the 1970s.

These failures no doubt contributed to the sea change that transformed infrastructure development beginning in the 1960s and helped bring the brief golden age to a close: Americans lost faith in experts. Until the 1960s, for example, road-building was one of the most popular government programs ever. More roads meant more

jobs, more business, more convenience, an easier drive to work. But when the interstate program began to push multilane highways through city neighborhoods, uprooting thousands of individuals and destroying entire communities, support began to crumble. As early as 1963, even the mighty Robert Moses began to appear in a lesser light, and his admirers on the editorial board of the *New York Times* confessed that “we must admit to a growing disenchantment with great urban highway and expressway schemes.” Within a few years,



Thrusting through Hartford, Connecticut in July 1961, Interstate 84 was a symbol of “progress.” Within a few years, however, the Freeway Revolt brought work on many urban expressways to a halt.

endless controversies finally revealed to the public “all his egotism, arrogance, and ruthlessness,” Robert Caro wrote. “His name had become a symbol for things the public hated.” In 1968 the man who had transformed his city and much of his state, who had once held 14 public positions at the same time, was forced into ignominious retirement. The high-handedness of highway agencies everywhere spawned resentment and opposition, and critics found support in the emerging environmental movement. The “Freeway Revolt” was

marked by a string of polemical books, such as Helen Leavitt's *Superhighway—Superhoax* (1970), a slashing account of American roadbuilding that hammered at the almost complete exclusion of the public from the planning process. In San Francisco, New Orleans, Boston, Philadelphia, San Antonio, and other cities, the freeway rebels took their case to court, slowing and finally stopping much urban expressway construction.

As the environmental movement gained strength, almost all large engineering projects ran into public resistance. The critics got a helping hand from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which mandated environmental-impact statements and public hearings for all federally funded projects. Costs soared as construction timetables lengthened into the indefinite future. Many blueprints were simply filed away. Nuclear power, stopped nearly dead in its tracks even before the accident at Three Mile Island in 1979, is only the most extreme example. Even projects intended to clean up the environment proved difficult to build, encountering resistance of a sort so widespread that it has acquired its own acronym—NIMBY, for Not In My Back Yard. In New York City local activists halted plans for a huge sewage-treatment plant near West Harlem designed to serve more than a million people. Residents opposed the 30-acre plant because it blocked access to the Hudson River; others saw racism lurking behind the site selection. The plant, greatly altered by long negotiations—it even includes a park and playground on the roof—did not open until the early 1980s, two decades after it was proposed.

The assumption that politics and technology should not mix had been a touchstone of American infrastructure efforts since the progressive era. Engineers and politicians had deliberately insulated deci-

sions about infrastructure from political control. By the late 1960s, that seemed to be the basic problem. Experts had come to view public hearings as stages where they would unveil their magnificent plans to an eager public, not as forums for the discussion of alternatives. As opposition appeared, engineers tried to keep projects moving through the pipeline using the same language of efficiency that had always worked before. They rejected criticism as irrational and condemned environmental concerns as simply outlandish. Above all, they blamed the media for their problems.

This arrogance communicated itself to the public, and it ultimately caused the engineers' downfall. In state after state, political control was re-established over highway agencies. Engineers were replaced as the top operating officials by accountants, or even worse, by lawyers. In Massachusetts, the first person appointed to head the new Massachusetts Department of Transportation in the early 1970s was a prominent critic of freeway construction in Boston. Engineers continued to implement policy, but governors and legislators now set the boundaries within which they operated. The progressive faith in apolitical experts as the best servants of the public was gone.

If the golden age of infrastructure had any chance of surviving this loss, that chance perished with the economic crisis of the 1970s. Rising inflation, compounded by the energy price jumps after the Arab oil embargo of 1973–74, cut sharply into government's purchasing power. Rising interest rates discouraged state and local borrowing. And as consumers cut energy consumption, revenues from gasoline taxes dropped. Statistics on infrastructure are often contradictory, but on one thing they agree: The mid-1970s mark a postwar turning point. The growth of federal infrastruc-

ture spending stopped.

The Reagan administration's budget ax and its deficits knocked public works back yet another step. By 1988 even the normally combative Congressional Budget Office seemed resigned, concluding that the nation's infrastructure was largely built and urging that the federal government focus on maintenance rather than additional construction. The United States now invests less in infrastructure, measured as a percentage of gross domestic product, than any other industrialized country.

All of these developments—financial constraints, waning public support, the loss of faith in experts, and the return of politics—have transformed the way America builds infrastructure. With fewer federal subsidies available, state and local officials have shown a renewed willingness to experiment. "Privatization" became the new mantra during the 1980s, yielding a variety of highly publicized efforts, both in America and abroad. In Europe, the century-old dream of linking Great Britain to the Continent is being realized by a private "Chunnel" consortium, and nationally owned railroads in Germany and elsewhere may well go on the auction block. The California Department of Transportation has proposed a series of privately funded toll-road and bridge schemes as a way of building needed arteries. The \$2.5-billion high-speed rail link now being planned between Orlando and Tampa is a private venture, as is a proposed 14-mile toll road from Leesburg, Virginia, to Dulles Airport in the congested outer suburbs of Washington, D.C.

Yet for all the apparent upheaval of the past 15 years, many apparent reforms and calls for new thinking are less revolution-

ary than they seem. We have in large part only reinvented the wheel. The "privatization" efforts of the 1980s, virtually all of them receiving some kind of public subsidy or support, represent a return to what Carter Goodrich called "mixed enterprises" in infrastructure. They may serve the nation well. Yet we have been rediscovering old problems as well as old answers. Today, public officials and others who concern themselves with infrastructure are demanding the elimination of the pork-barrel decision making process. They believe that a more centralized effort is needed in order to establish priorities and to ensure that technical, not political, criteria govern the distribution of funds. Pat Choate and Susan Walter, for example, call for a national capital budget to permit a comprehensive examination of public-works spending.

No doubt we need a broader vision than we have had in what has passed for infrastructure planning in the past. Roads and other infrastructure powerfully influence the patterns of physical and spatial development on the national landscape, literally setting choices in concrete and restricting the options of later generations. Choices should be made carefully. Calls for national planning and more centralized control of infrastructure seek in some ways to return to the traditional progressive approach—the elimination of inefficiency, waste, and pork-barrel thinking, in short, the bypassing of politics. But any such effort would require finding a way to restore some of the public's lost faith in experts, who would, after all, have to do the planning and the coordinating. And if there is one lesson to be drawn from an historical perspective on American infrastructure development, it is that politics can be denied in the short run, even papered over, but never escaped.

TOWARD THE 21ST CENTURY

by Jonathan Gifford

Years before President Bill Clinton came to Washington with his campaign pledge to spend an additional \$20 billion annually on America's infrastructure "to develop the world's best communication, transportation, and environmental systems," economists and others were talking about the need to spend more on public works. Their debate has been almost entirely about one question: How much more? Usually overlooked in these discussions is the real infrastructure dilemma of the 21st century—not how much to spend but how to decide what to build and where to build it.

For several reasons, our old ways of deciding these matters simply do not work anymore. Americans today are far more skeptical about the value of new roads, bridges, and sewage-treatment plants—especially when they are located in their own backyard. Their faith that decisions about public works can be safely left in the hands of public officials, engineers, and other technical experts is gone. Reflecting in 1985 upon the final demise of Westway, the proposed interstate along Manhattan's West Side that had been held up for 30 years, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D.-N.Y.) wrote, "There is a kind of stasis that is beginning to settle into our public life. We cannot reach decisions. Central Park could not conceivably be built today as it was

when there was enough power in Tammany Hall to make the decision.... We don't have that capacity."

The persistence of the public-works pork barrel has also contributed to public skepticism. In the same year that Moynihan decried the death of Westway, his Senate colleague, John Stennis (D.-Miss.), celebrated the opening of the \$1.8 billion Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, recently described by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as "a 234-mile broken promise." A classic pork-barrel project, the waterway carries only one-tenth the commercial barge traffic that had been projected.

In an important sense, however, the loss of faith and direction in the way we have built infrastructure in the past is for the better. The methods of the master planner and master builder, the techniques of New York's Robert Moses and his New Deal counterparts, are poorly suited to a dynamic economy whose demand for new infrastructure is unpredictable and constantly changing. In the new economy, the neat but rigid prescriptions of technical experts and planners are as likely to yield expensive and underused projects as improvements in national productivity. There are solutions. Privatization and user fees, touted by many analysts chiefly as ways to raise capital for infrastructure and to streamline operations, have much broader implications than have yet been appreciated. They offer the best guide to creating

infrastructure that can meet the nation's rapidly changing social, economic, and environmental demands.

A growing awareness of the human and environmental costs of roads, dams, and other infrastructure projects brought the public's faith in experts to an end during the 1960s and '70s. Increasingly, Americans came to believe that efficiency, the totem of the experts, is *not* the sole value. People and communities matter; the environment matters. In fact, under close scrutiny the technically objective criteria that engineers and other experts employed turned out to have some rather arbitrary foundations. In some cases they amounted to little more than engineering aesthetics. Why did a new highway have to cut directly through a certain poor neighborhood? Perhaps only because some engineer wanted an extra five miles per hour of speed on a curve. Judging whether that extra margin of speed justified displacing dozens or perhaps hundreds of poor families is not a purely technical question. It is a question of values—and of money and political power.

Because of these concerns, decisions have been opened up to the public, notably with a 1969 federal law requiring an environmental-impact statement and extensive public hearings for any project receiving federal support. This reform and others like it have stopped the worst abuses. It would be unthinkable today to embark on a major infrastructure project without careful consideration of its social, economic, and environmental costs.

An excellent example of how the reformed process works is the Glenwood Canyon project on Interstate 70 west of Denver, one of the only major highway routes west from Denver over the Rockies. The canyon it passes through is a popular recreational spot which has long drawn

large crowds of hikers and picnickers during the summer months. Legions of day-trippers once parked along both sides of the old two-lane road, which regularly choked up with heavy truck and recreational traffic, becoming both an annoyance and a hazard. For many years, efforts to improve the road were frustrated by a deadlock between engineers and environmentalists. The highway engineers, led by state highway director Charles "Blacktop Charlie" Shumate, favored a traditional "least cost" engineering design that would have virtually filled the bottom of the canyon with embankments and destroyed much of its scenic beauty. Environmentalists favored a more advanced—and much more expensive—design that would be less destructive. In 1975, after Blacktop Charlie retired, the two sides finally arrived at a compromise. Today, a four-lane divided highway runs through the canyon, much of it in tunnels or elevated. The designers spared no effort. Rock surfaces that had to be blasted were sculpted and then stained to match the surrounding terrain.

The new road is a thing of beauty, a wonderful example of what can be accomplished with genuine cooperation between environmentalists and engineers. But was it worth building? In the end, this 12-mile stretch of highway cost \$490 million, or \$41 million per mile. (Average costs for rural interstates today are \$8–\$10 million per mile.) Did the half-billion dollars spent on Glenwood Canyon create a half-billion dollars in benefits to the U.S. economy? That is the kind of question that must be faced in deciding what to build and where to build it.

Unfortunately, the planners and technical experts cannot provide the answers. Cost-benefit analysis, the favorite technique of economists, would seem to offer an obvious solution, but it is a highly uncertain art

even under the best of circumstances, and it is easily manipulated by opponents and advocates of particular projects. Simply estimating how much traffic a new road or rail line will attract, for example, is highly speculative. Some of the worst estimates have been made in mass transit. Miami, for example, began construction of a federally subsidized subway system in 1979 on the basis of an estimate that it would attract enough passengers to drive the cost per passenger trip down to \$1.72. But the riders never came. In the end, even after accounting for inflation, it costs Miami (and federal taxpayers) an astounding \$16.77 to carry every passenger, an error of almost 1,000 percent. What went wrong? Engineers and planners remain bitterly divided over whether the mistakes in Miami and other cities were the result of honest forecasting errors or efforts to bend statistics to win federal subsidies.

Infrastructure's productivity benefits are likewise very uncertain. Consider a simple example. Each of two towns separated by a river has a concrete-mixing plant and a grocery warehouse. With a bridge, the two towns together might need only one of each. The enlarged facilities would be more efficient than the old ones combined, so grocery and concrete prices could drop accordingly, benefiting the residents of both towns. But estimates of how much they will benefit—how much grocery and concrete prices will drop, for example—are very hard to make and are very easy for interested parties to manipulate and misrepresent. And of course they are subject to endless challenges in today's lengthy process of hearings, court proceed-

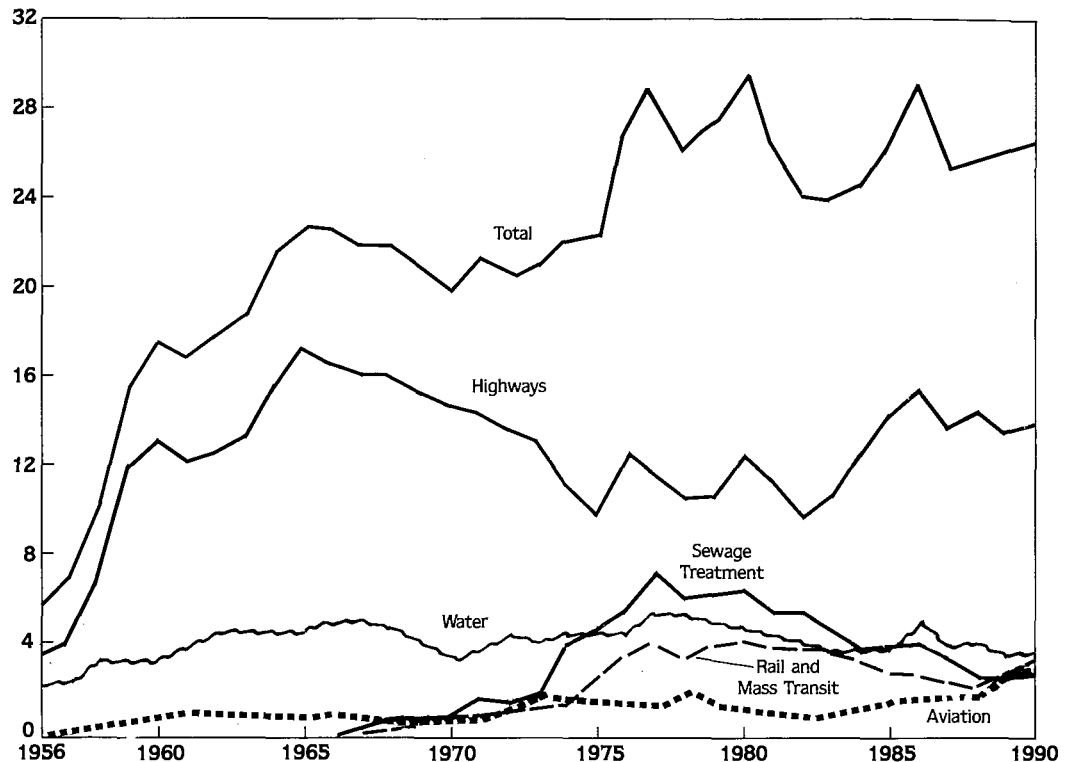
ings, and public debate.

The inexactness of cost-benefit analysis creates terrible dilemmas for public officials. How are they to make rational decisions if not on the basis of benefits and costs? Private investors face similar dilemmas when considering an investment. Will it pay a reasonable return? Will a new product or service attract enough customers? Will the costs of producing a service end up exceeding the price it will command in the marketplace? But markets resolve such uncertainties quite differently, by using a tool that is extremely unpopular in the public sector: failure. Markets quickly recognize failure. A subway company that loses its shirt building and operating a system in Miami will not likely repeat its mistakes elsewhere. In the public sector, failure is harder to define, and public officials have every opportunity to delay the embarrassing recognition of costly mistakes by obscuring them in mountains of paper or explaining them away.

Most people are surprised to learn that market approaches have played an important role in the development of American infrastructure. The construction of the railroad system in the 19th century, for example, was largely carried out by private firms. America's \$260-billion telecommunications infrastructure of copper and fiber-optic cables, switching systems, and satellites was also built largely through private investment, and in recent years private industry has wired 50 million American households with cable TV. Every year, electric utilities invest \$10–\$15 billion in new plants and equipment. In each case, government has played a significant supporting role of some kind. Generous land grants

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FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN 'CORE' INFRASTRUCTURE*
(In billions of 1990 dollars)



*Capital outlays in categories such as energy, NASA, and veterans' hospitals are not included. These totaled some \$10 billion in 1990.

Source: Congressional Budget Office

Creating jobs is the perennial justification for spending more on public works, but today's debate has been fueled by a new and more sophisticated argument. As the chart shows, federal investment in infrastructure has been stuck at roughly the same level since the mid-1970s. Measured as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), total spending (including state and local outlays, which dwarf those of Washington) has actually dropped, averaging only 2.4 percent of GDP. David Aschauer, an economist at Bates College, has seized on this decline to help explain the sluggish productivity growth that has afflicted the nation for the past two decades. His "Aschauer Curve" suggests that every \$1 spent on public works yields up to \$2 of additional GDP—an astounding number that led columnist Michael Kinsley derisively to compare the Aschauer Curve to the Laffer Curve.

Indeed, some of Aschauer's most vocal critics have been centrist and liberal economists. Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institution, for example, reluctantly dismisses Aschauer's findings as "just too good to be true." Aaron and others raise a host of technical objections to Aschauer's work. And they point out that even if his correlation between public works and productivity is correct, his conclusion is probably wrong. Public-works spending likely dropped *because* productivity growth (and thus economic growth) slowed, not the other way around. Moreover, while there was a momentary infrastructure "crisis" during the early 1980s, there is scant evidence today that many needs are going unmet, except in a few locales such as New York City. George Peterson of the Urban Institute, for example, notes that voters now approve nearly 75 percent of all state and local public-works bond referenda. While *certain* public-works projects can yield great benefits, the critics seem to agree, a massive program that raised the federal deficit and thus squeezed out private investment would do more harm than good.

aided the railroads, for example, and telecommunications giant AT&T was shielded by a federally sanctioned monopoly until 1984. The private sector provided the funds and did the construction, and the government set the framework for investment and return—and retained the right to alter the framework, as it did last fall when it re-regulated the cable-TV industry after numerous complaints about price-gouging. These are the models that should guide us in the 21st century. In such hybrid public-private efforts, government establishes the rules of the game, such as requiring that all environmental costs be factored into a project's price, and the private sector figures out what can be done within them. We must use market principles and information both to select projects to be built and to discipline infrastructure use. That means relying upon market prices.

Highways offer some of the most exciting opportunities for the application of these principles. For centuries, tolls have provided a practical means of paying for roads, bridges, and tunnels, but in the automotive age their use has been restricted because toll booths are expensive to staff and operate and because they create intolerable traffic bottlenecks. New technology is beginning to overcome these disadvantages. Thanks to innovations in communication and computer technology during the past five years, tolls can now be collected without requiring cars to stop or even slow down. The vehicles are equipped with identification devices the size of a credit card, and sensors overhead or embedded in the road register the information and charge the toll electronically to the owner's account, just as if he or she had made a purchase with a credit or debit card. Such electronic toll-collection is now being used on the Oklahoma Turnpike and in several other locations in the United

States and Europe. (Some old-fashioned toll booths are left in place to handle cars that lack the new technology.) In the New York metropolitan region, the major bridges and tunnels are being outfitted with similar equipment, as are four new highways in California.

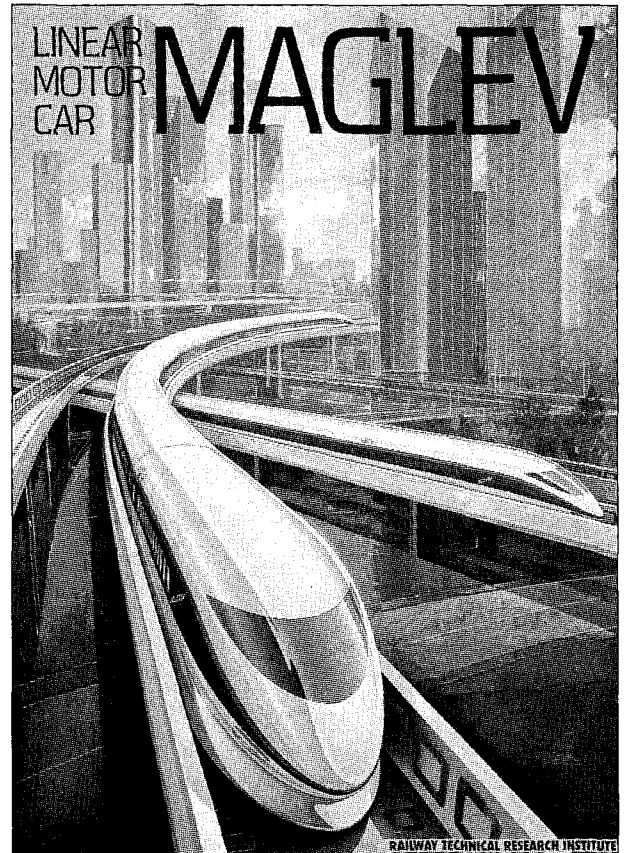
These innovations may sound unexceptional, but the implications are enormous. Not least, the extinction of the congestion-inducing toll booth removes a major objection to more privately financed roads, tunnels, and bridges. And the ability to collect user fees efficiently opens up major new opportunities to address environmental and other problems. One of the four projects now being planned in California, for example, is a four-lane expressway to be built in the median of the Riverside Freeway with an intriguing state-mandated feature designed to increase carpooling and thus reduce the number of polluting vehicles on the road. The new road will be free to three- and four-person carpools, but cars carrying only one or two people will have to pay a toll. A variation on this scheme allows tolls to be based on tailpipe emissions, so that economic incentives can be focused on the small number of older cars that contribute disproportionately to auto air pollution.

Toll financing offers a number of other opportunities. One of the major expenses in almost all infrastructure systems is the provision of enough capacity to meet peak demand. Highways, for example, must be built with enough capacity to serve the morning and evening rush hours, even though they are usually underused the rest of the day and on weekends. Electric utilities, similarly, are forced to build enough power plants to meet the surge of demand that occurs on summer weekday afternoons when the use of air conditioners surges. This peak-hour capacity is the most

expensive to provide because it is used only at the peak. The rest of the time it must be serviced and maintained but lies idle. The improved control and fee-collection technologies now emerging from the laboratories will allow prices to adjust accordingly, making peak-time users bear their fair share of the costs and holding demand in check. For example, motorists who use urban expressways during rush hour will pay higher tolls. Some motorists will be deterred, thus lowering the demand for new roads. Those who still insist on driving during rush hour will wind up paying tolls that more accurately reflect their fair share of the road's true costs.

The peak-pricing principle has already been put into operation by some electric utilities and water companies here and abroad. The Potomac Electric Power company (PEPCO), which serves Washington, D.C., and its Maryland suburbs, has started a program called Kilo-watchers that permits residential customers to save \$7-\$9 per month during the summer. PEPCO installs a radio-activated device that allows it to turn off the customer's air-conditioner compressors for 13 minutes out of each half hour on up to 15 summer afternoons. The program has been extremely popular; some 125,000 of PEPCO's 585,000 customers have signed up. PEPCO says that the ability to control peak demand has spared it the need to build a small \$100-million generating plant.

The flip side of using pricing and user fees to regulate demand for infrastructure services is that the revenues they yield can be used to increase the supply of infrastructure—and to indicate where new infrastructure is not justified. During the eco-



A Japanese company's futuristic pitch for "bullet trains." Such trains, magnetically suspended above their tracks, now operate in Japan but are heavily subsidized.

nomic boom of the 1980s, for example, the state of Virginia authorized a private corporation to build a \$300-million toll road from the congested outer suburbs of Washington, D.C., near Dulles Airport to the growing town of Leesburg, 14 miles to the west. If built, the road would be the longest privately owned highway in America. The developers painstakingly assembled the needed right of way from private property owners, but in the interim, of course, boom has turned to bust, and the project has not yet attracted the needed financing. Would the toll road's failure show that private roads are not viable? On the contrary, it would illustrate one of their virtues. If it ap-

pears that there will not be enough future traffic to pay for the road, then the market will show that it should not be built. Capital is best invested elsewhere.

A host of other privately financed infrastructure projects are currently on the drawing boards or underway. In Orlando, Florida, a corporation has been granted a state franchise to build a magnetic levitation (maglev) "bullet" train line running from the city's airport to Disneyworld. Maglev trains, suspended above their tracks on a magnetically maintained cushion of air and capable of speeds approaching 300 miles per hour, may prove feasible in the United States for passenger transportation between cities up to 500 miles apart.

Bullet trains, along with fiber-optic "information superhighways" to link every computer in the nation, are a pet project of Vice President Albert Gore, Jr. His statements leave his intentions unclear. Gore says that he is "sensitive to avoiding any distortion of the marketplace," but he has also declared that Washington should intervene "when the marketplace seems to be ignoring essential facets of the infrastructure." To promote information superhighways, he has spoken of using federal money to start demonstration projects. "Once we find a technologically superior alternative, we have confidence that the market is quite capable of recognizing the opportunity and moving in that direction."

Relying on private capital in these and other areas would not magically resolve all of our conflicts over infrastructure projects. But a market approach allows a relatively quick and direct test of whether a project is financially feasible. In the Glenwood Canyon case, a market approach would have told us if the \$490 million necessary to build an environ-

mentally acceptable project was worth it. Maybe it was. Or perhaps it would have made more sense to ban trucks from the old road and ship container trucks over the Rockies by rail.

Among the people who make and analyze public policy, however, the virtues of market-based infrastructure development are not widely appreciated. Even those who accept the idea of user fees find it hard to resist the tempting notion of diverting the revenues to other projects—using toll receipts, for example, to underwrite mass transit. Experience shows, however, that users tend to regard such diversions as a new form of taxation, a perception that undermines the popular support needed to put user fees into practice.

The emphasis in the public sector is still mostly on expanding public control, and the latest trend is toward "demand management"—new regulations restricting the demand for infrastructure. This approach is seen in measures requiring utility companies to promote conservation among their customers, laws that make new housing construction contingent upon the availability of new roads and sewage-treatment plants, or outright bans (especially in the West) on using water to wash cars or water lawns. Advocates of this approach argue that there is too much gratuitous use of infrastructure, and they are right to a degree. Accurate pricing would provide the best solutions to such problems, but government agencies still often prefer to resort to traditional command-and-control techniques. The illusion is that these methods yield benefits without costs. In Los Angeles, for example, employers are now being encouraged to regulate the commuting habits of their employees by new laws that impose financial penalties on those that have "too many" employees driving solo to work. Employers are expected to organize carpools and take other steps to discourage

individual commuting. This idea may have a superficial appeal, but the hidden costs are considerable. The employer must divert resources from other productive uses to organize the car pools—perhaps hiring a coordinator—while workers must sacrifice either leisure time or work time to fit into the inflexible pool schedules. A pricing strategy that charged employees or their employers the full cost of transport would let people sort out these trade-offs for themselves, arriving at solutions that are more efficient—and freely chosen.

What market approaches have in common is flexibility. Whether the challenge is building new infrastructure or controlling demand for existing infrastructure, the market not only recognizes and adapts to changing needs but lets individuals and businesses find the best way to use what we already have. The reign of the expert has ended in public infrastructure, but our thinking remains firmly rooted in Enlightenment concepts of prediction and order, reflected in master plans and 20-year forecasts. Even the best laid plans have miscarried. The New Deal's Tennessee Valley Authority has done many things, but it has failed to transform the Tennessee Valley into a prosperous region. The interstate highway system, rightly celebrated for its contribution to national productivity, also did much harm. Many critics have blamed it for speeding the decline of American cities, but few have recognized that generous federal subsidies for interstates also stifled the building of the smaller urban highways that could have eased the gridlock that afflicts cities today.

It is not that government has no role to play. America has a long history of successful hybrid efforts. The public sector has been most effective when it has established

a framework in which suppliers and users can figure out how a particular technology can be used productively. This may require creating a market, regulating rates, or some other effort to set the context for the private-sector response. Alice Rivlin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, suggests a useful rule of thumb: If government must be the builder, responsibility should be left whenever possible in the hands of state and local governments. Not only can they muster the local political support needed to get projects underway, but with their own money at stake they are less likely to choose projects that do not make economic sense.

Building flexibility into our infrastructure will be one of the key challenges of the next century. The age calls for adaptability rather than adherence to rigid standards, a yielding of immutable hard rules to a recognition that in order to prosper one must quickly adapt to circumstance. The hierarchical corporation has evolved into the decentralized business; mass production is giving way to flexible manufacturing of customized products; one-industry cities such as Pittsburgh have been transformed into diversified regions. The character of the entire national economy is shifting, as manufacturing yields to the rising service sector, and as computers and advanced communication technologies revolutionize the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. It is difficult to predict exactly what kinds of infrastructure will be needed to provide the "technological sinews" of the future. But to be guided by nostalgic ideas about reconstructing the infrastructure of the past would be a terrible error, just as trying to employ the methods of the past would be. Only a flexible system that responds to changing market signals can effectively provide for this new era.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE SAGA OF AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Until fairly recently, few historians paid serious attention to such seemingly humble matters as sewerage, solid waste, and stormwater management. Today a growing body of public-works history sheds valuable light not only on our contemporary infrastructure problems but on some of the basic forces that have shaped American life.

Much of this new scholarship followed the publication of **History of Public Works in the United States, 1776-1976** (Am. Pub. Works Assoc., 1976), by Ellis Armstrong, Michael C. Robinson, and Suellen Hoy—a comprehensive overview that is still the field's defining text—and the formation in 1975 of the Public Works Historical Society, which provided scholarly focus. Another essential work is **Technology and the Rise of the Networked City in Europe and America** (Temple, 1988), whose editors, Joel A. Tarr and Gabriel Dupuy, argue that infrastructure not only facilitates but guides life in the industrial "networked city."

Those who despair over the institutional "gridlock" that hampers the building of infrastructure today will find some comfort in Christine Meisner Rosen's **Limits of Power: Great Fires and the Process of City Growth in America** (Cambridge, 1986). Building infrastructure has always been "a slow, difficult upward struggle," the Berkeley historian concludes. Even in the wake of catastrophic fires in Chicago (1871), Boston (1872), and Baltimore (1904), American cities made only limited progress. The Baltimore blaze, for example, "gutted 86 city blocks containing 1,526 buildings, burning out more than 2,400 businesses." The reformers who controlled the city government saw the fire as a "golden opportunity" to fix longstanding problems: traffic-snarled streets, inadequate water and sewer systems, hazardous electric wires overhead, and the decay of the Inner Harbor. But as the various costs of the city's ambitious redevelopment plan became clear, support fragmented. Businessmen, property owners, workers, and others who would be hurt by street widening, for example, turned against the idea. In the end,

Rosen writes, the city was able to accomplish a great deal but some major problems, such as the decline of the waterfront district, continued to fester.

Taking a longer view in **The Urban Millennium: The City-Building Process from the Early Middle Ages to the Present** (Southern Illinois, 1985), Michigan State University historian Josef W. Konvitz argues that infrastructure before the 1880s was shaped chiefly by economic considerations and produced "environments ill-prepared to adjust to many of the changes accompanying urban development." Since then, decisions in the modern industrial city have been controlled largely by bureaucratic organizations, special authorities, and regulatory bodies; but thanks to uncoordinated planning, results have been little better than those before the 1880s.

The birth of modern city planning is usually traced to the First National Conference on City Planning and the Problems of Congestion in 1909. But Stanley K. Schultz, a historian at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, argues in **Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920** (Temple, 1989), that its roots lie in the 19th century, when Americans haltingly began to think of themselves as an urban people and civil engineers and others began to ponder ways of coping with growing urban ills. Planning streets, sewers, and the like was not merely a matter of efficiency and economy to these reformers, Schultz stresses. As a New York City alderman put it, "A proper city plan has a powerful influence upon the mental and moral development of the people." After the Baltimore fire of 1904, for example, an engineer arguing for construction of a new sewage system pointed to Paris, "the center of all that is best in art, literature, science, and architecture," claiming that "in the evolution of this ideal attainment, its sewers took at least a leading part."

The engineer may have exaggerated the benefits of a good sewage system, but there is no question that new forms of infrastructure can have a transforming effect. **The Electric**

City: Energy and the Growth of the Chicago Area, 1880-1930 (Chicago), by Harold L. Platt of Loyola University, tells the story of one such transformation. The human drama of construction on a massive scale is captured in Joseph E. Stevens's **Hoover Dam: An American Adventure** (Okla., 1988), a lyrical account of the five-year, around-the-clock labor by some 5,000 men working under grueling conditions that produced this futuristic edifice on the Colorado River during the 1930s.

The rise of the suburb also owes much, for better or worse, to developments in infrastructure. In rapidly growing Chicago, new suburbs during most of the 19th century sought to be annexed by the city in order to gain city water service, sewer lines, and other amenities, observes Ann Durkin Keating, a historian at North Central College, in **Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis** (Ohio State, 1988). But toward the end of the century, when suburban land developers began offering "urban conveniences," as the promoters of Riverside, Illinois, promised, along with "the special charms... of rural conditions of life," there was a shift toward suburban autonomy from the older city.

The interstate highway system likewise contributed to the rise of suburbs, and it has been scrutinized by a number of scholars. Bruce E. Seely's **Building the American Highway System: Engineers and Policy Makers** (Temple, 1987), shows how an alliance of state and federal highway engineers was able to foster a belief in "apolitical expertise" that allowed them to shape, if not control, highway policy. **Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989** (Tennessee, 1990), by Mark Rose examines the origins of the interstate system. Yet historian Paul Barrett of the Illinois Institute of Technology argues in **The Automobile and Urban Transit: The Formation of Public Policy in Chicago, 1900-1930** (Temple, 1983) that, in Chicago at least, the mass-transit systems that were the lifeblood of the big city were doomed in part by local decisions made without much

thought long before the interstates were built. In Chicago, it was assumed by the 1920s that the privately owned streetcar system should pay for itself but that planning for the auto was "a duty of local government."

Other scholars have begun to turn their attention to the connection between public works and the environment. **Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform and the Environment, 1880-1980** (Wadsworth, 1988), by Martin V. Melosi of the University of Houston, for example, places the problem of solid-waste disposal at the center of early environmentalism. The industrialization of the ecology of the Great West is the subject of William Cronon's **Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West** (Norton, 1992). Cronon, a Yale historian, argues that the penetration of the natural landscape by the railroads that fanned out from Chicago beginning in the 1850s literally remade the face of nature. Chicago, he writes, became "the link that bound the different worlds of east and west into a single system." Rail links to Chicago encouraged farmers to plow under the prairies to grow wheat and corn for sale in Chicago and eastern markets. They likewise spurred the growth of the cattle industry in Texas and of logging in the north. Chicago and its infrastructure, Cronon writes, were responsible for nothing less than the creation of a "second nature" in the American West.

In these and other works, scholars have made a great deal of progress toward understanding the lessons of the past. History suggests that those who plan and build public works should shift their thinking from a crisis-to-crisis approach to a longer-term view. The studies also underscore the importance of creating flexible plans that can be adjusted to changing circumstances. Casual assumptions must be questioned. And there is a need for greater sensitivity to local economic, political, and cultural conditions. But the most urgent need is to deliver the knowledge we now have to the people who are planning and building tomorrow's infrastructure.

—Howard Rosen

*Howard Rosen is Director of the Public Works Historical Society. He has written and edited many books, including **Water and the City: The Next Century** (1991) and **The States and the Interstates** (1991). Readers who want more information on the history of public works may write the PWHIS, c/o the American Public Works Association, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington D.C. 20004.*

IDEAS

MILLAR OR MARX?

Communism may be dead in all but a few precincts of the world, but many of its founder's ideas live on. One of the more noxious, George Watson thinks, is the theory that classes are the fundamental units of a society. Here, he makes the case for another idea advanced by an unjustly neglected pre-Marxian thinker.

by George Watson

There was once a professor of law named John Millar. Born in Scotland in 1735, he went to Adam Smith's lectures on moral philosophy and then, finding his own religious convictions too weak for a clerical career even by the tolerant standards of the Enlightenment, took to the law. In 1761 he became a professor at the University of Glasgow, where he is said to have been among the first to lecture in English rather than Latin, acquiring a reputation as an orator in his university and beyond. His private life was as uneventful as academic lives often are, but in the 1770s, as a militant Whig, he openly supported the American Revolution, and a dozen years later the French, and he opposed the slave trade.

He also wrote a treatise on social differences, which appeared in 1771 as *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* and in later editions came to be known as *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*. A work by a professor still in his thirties, it plainly owed something to the French *philosophe* Montesquieu and to David Hume, who, though a Tory, was a close friend. The book is not now famous and has

not been reprinted since 1806. In 1923 the noted German economist, Werner Sombart, called it astonishing and one of the best and most complete of sociologies, and wondered why it had dropped from view. In fact, it was not widely celebrated even in its own century. Neither Boswell nor Johnson discussed it. Yet it was probably the first book in Europe to be devoted entirely to the theory of social difference, and almost the only one in the Western world before the present century.

Millar's invisibility since his death in 1801 is faintly surprising. He belonged, as a Scot, to a modest nation but not, as a lawyer, to a modest profession. His book went into several editions in his lifetime, with improvements, and was translated into German a year after it first appeared, and a year later into French. There was a Basel edition in the original English in 1793. But 19th-century Continental theorists such as Karl Marx seldom if ever mentioned it, though David Ricardo owned a copy and John Stuart Mill and his father James are known to have admired it. Yet it can teach us something today, since it seems to be widely assumed, even by anti-Marxists, that modern theorizing about social difference,

and even social history itself, began in the 1840s with Marx and Friedrich Engels.

"We are all Marxists now," a professor of classics remarked recently at an international conference, meaning no more than that ancient historians nowadays are interested above all in social history. The misapprehension is widespread. Soon after the fall of communism in 1989, for example, an article entitled "Premature Obsequies?" in *History Today* (April 1991) by Christopher Hill, the octogenarian British historian, argued that Marxism is immortal even if the Soviet system was not, being conceptually indis-

pensable to historians. The argument has become a convenient bolthole for ex-party members and can be unthinkingly accepted, at times, even by the nonpolitical. A myth is being born, and it has two aspects: that social difference is always and necessarily the same as social class, and that theories of class began with Marx. These are enormous assumptions. I want to argue here that one can be interested in the theory of social difference without being interested in class at all—by rejecting, indeed, theories of class—and that the theoretical issue was at least a century old in modern Europe when Marx began to write about it in the 1840s. Marx was a latecomer to the debate about social difference and knew he was, and the debate was not improved by his intervention.

In 1748, exactly a century before the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Law* appeared, a comparative study of human society that drew excited attention to the ways social institutions differ according to period, custom, and climate. Montesquieu was not a moral relativist, though this did not save his book from the papal index. In fact his first chapter insisted that the laws of life are God-given: "He acts according to the laws of the universe because He knows them; knows them because He made them,



An idea whose time is past? The Marxian vision of social reality, little more nuanced than this 19th-century cartoon, still reigns.

made them because they relate to wisdom and power." Every human and physical variation, Montesquieu argued, represents an ultimate uniformity, every change an ultimate consistency in human nature. Anthropology, here in its infancy, did not entail the view that morality is a human invention or that it exists only relative to time and place. Moral laws are given, like physical laws, in the Enlightenment view, and individual beings and communities can get them right or wrong. Millar believed that too. Though his book is a study of the diversity of human customs, occasionally invoking Arabs, American Indians, and even Congolese, its preface boldly restates the foundation doctrine of humanism: Human nature is "everywhere the same." He is a disciple of Montesquieu's doctrine that diversities of sex, wealth, government, and the arts only illustrate the deeper unity of the human condition. From the perspective of a post-Marxist age like our own, however, his argument has a wider significance.

Millar believed in *rank* rather than in class, in "subordination," as he and his master Adam Smith often called it, rather than in vast and potentially hostile conglomerations like bourgeoisie and proletariat. Such polysyllables do not figure in his book. Five years after Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* appeared, Adam Smith introduced a chapter on the subordination

of ranks into his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). The debate about the theory of social differences had already opened in Scotland with Adam Ferguson, a professor of philosophy at the University of Edinburgh and another Whig, who published his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* in 1767. Like Millar's after it, Ferguson's book was promptly translated into German and, rather more tardily, into French. In the 18th century Scotland led Europe in the study of society: anthropology and sociology together. These three books are about the ancient, medieval, and modern all in one, at once comparative and analytical, factual and theoretical, and they do not recognize any separation between anthropology and its unborn rival.

Nor do they engage in the modern debate about social class, for the simple and easily forgivable reason that their authors had not heard of it. The sociology of the Scottish Enlightenment was about social inequality or the subordination of ranks—the factors that cause such subordination and, in turn, cause it to change. That establishes the point that it was (and is) possible to take an intelligent and even theoretical interest in social difference without being interested in class at all, as Marx was one day to understand the term.

The theory of rank represents as large a gap as any there is between the world of assumption familiar to our own times and the world of the Enlightenment. Rank differs from class in more ways than one. It is various—perhaps infinitely various—representing society as something like a pyramid with many steps, each subordinate to another; class implies, or came to imply, no more than two or three vast groups condemned, in its extreme Marxian version, to class struggle or civil war. There are other divergences. Rank was and is a popular and originally nontheoretical view of social difference, in the sense that the uneducated can readily believe in it or take it for granted, as the scenes before Agincourt in William Shakespeare's *Henry V* vividly illustrate. By contrast, class was first and last a doctrine for intellectuals. Rank,

again, is more subtle than class in the sense that it admits of more than one defining factor—birth and property, and above all status—whereas class tends to divide into rich and poor, with the poor as agents of change. The contrast is highly paradoxical. One expects intellectuals to hold complex views, on the whole, the uneducated to hold simple ones; and no doubt class theories can be made to look complicated, especially if they are dignified with the jargon of the Hegelian dialectic and fitted out with polysyllabic talk about consciousness and reification. But the real effect of class when it began to replace rank during and after the Napoleonic wars, in the writings of Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and Marx, was not to subtilize but to simplify. An ignorant idler silently identifying a stranger's probable rank by his dress, gestures, and accent, for example, is performing an act of identification far subtler than the historian who concludes that the Spanish Civil War was ultimately a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The real charm of class to the intellectual mind of the 19th and early 20th centuries, one sometimes feels, was that it was easy and portable. Intellectuals may sometimes like things to look complicated, but they also like them to be simple. The most seductive combination, one suspects, would be to look complicated and be simple at the same time.

The interest of Millar's argument of 1771 has been largely obscured in our times, not because it is obscure in itself but because Millar could not know, or be expected to know, that a counter-theory was about to be launched. That leaves the writings of the Enlightenment looking a trifle bland; nor would the views of Millar and his peers on prehistory, untouched as they are by recent archaeological discoveries, excite the respect of any living scholar. Millar was not an original thinker and did not claim to be one. Oddly enough, something similar, in a mildly qualified form, could be said of Marx and his theory of class. It is strange that this should have been overlooked, because he was a pedantic German and conscientious in giving his sources. His theory of class was never ex-

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pounded in its final form, and belongs to those portions of *Das Kapital* left incomplete at his death in 1883. But enough has survived to make his position clear, and it is confirmed by a letter of March 1852, in which he denied having discovered either the theory of class or the class war—his contribution having been rather to show how classes are linked to phases of productive development, and how the coming class war must inevitably lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat.*

Since there have been no such class wars in industrial states, the second proposition has not exactly worn well, and the first is persuasive only in part and by means of elaborate interpretation. Like others that come to mind, Marx was mostly unoriginal when he was right and original when he was wrong. He was right in acknowledging his intellectual debts, however, and what matters is that he should have been wholly aware that the theory of class was not his invention.

The Enlightenment view of social difference had this in common, at least, with such 19th-century views as Saint-Simon's and Marx's, that it was fundamentally a theory of history. Millar's book, for example, treats pre-history and the first creation of settled societies. But history for the two camps points in opposite directions. For Montesquieu and his followers it illustrated the

constancy-in-flux of human nature; for Saint-Simon and Marx, its profound inconstancy. Consciousness itself, Marx believed, had been profoundly changed both by feudalism and by the Industrial Revolution, and socialism would change it again. Man is not now what he was, and is about to become another thing again. That argument between the humanism of the Enlightenment and the relativism of its successors will not easily be settled, but the collapse of communism might be said to have left the game

drawn, for the moment, in the humanist's favor, insofar as the return of the free market in Eastern Europe may imply that consciousness was not, after all, profoundly and permanently altered by socialism, and that a human instinct for individual self-advancement can survive even three-quarters of a century of deep freeze. The question is plainly too vast to be settled by a single instance, or even a set of instances. The revival of humanism in recent years is nonetheless notable after a century and more of dogmatic relativism in the fashion of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. In *Beast and Man* (1978), for example, Mary

Midgley, a British philosopher, persuasively argued that anthropologists and sociologists in our time have tended to see only differences because differences were all they were looking for. The humanistic doctrine of the unchanging human heart may, in the end, be less absurd than we have been lately encouraged to suppose.

There are other contrasts here. Though Millar had read travel books and even fleetingly mentions the Congo, neither he nor



John Millar

*"No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me the bourgeois historians had described the historical development of the class struggle, and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes," Marx wrote to Georg Weydemeyer.

Montesquieu, in an age before archaeology and anthropological field work were born, shows much acquaintance with any evidence beyond the textual or with worlds beyond the classical ages of Greece and Rome and the intervening epoch of European feudalism. As seen from the present, their evidence is thin. Marx, too, was a classicist by education, but his range was wider, especially in his later years when, as his notebooks show, he took a passionate interest in a variety of Third World topics (as they would now be called) such as American Indians, and a keener interest in theories of race than his modern admirers have cared to acknowledge. These speculations, and those of Engels concerning primitive communism, are not now much respected by anthropologists, being based on fanciful and largely discredited sources, but for good or ill they make the Marxist mix richer, historically and geographically, than the Enlightenment view.

The most provocative contrast between the two traditions, however, lies in the simple fact that the luminaries of the Enlightenment saw wealth rather than poverty as an agent of change, and change for the better. They wrote like Whig magnates. Since the world, with the death of socialism, is now returning by leaps and bounds to that opinion, the Enlightenment view now possesses an interest beyond the merely curious. Four years before Millar, Adam Ferguson in his *Essay* had considered the subordination of ranks required of any settled and peaceful society as necessarily based on an earlier and existing accumulation of private wealth. Such wealth, he believed, was utterly essential to the civilizing task of turning brutal warlords into the rulers of settled and prosperous states, and must precede it: "Before this important change is admitted, we must be accustomed to the distinction of ranks; and before they are sensible that subordination is requisite, they must have arrived at unequal conditions by chance."

In other words, the highly desirable goal of a settled society can be based only on an existing ownership of property, where some have more and others have less or none. Thus political power in peaceful states, as under England's Whig constitution of 1689, is likely to be an effect rather than a cause

of unequal ownership. The doctrine of the economic base is already apparent. (Montesquieu had already hinted at it, though not as a universal law.) Ferguson was quite clear, like Millar after him, that social and economic institutions commonly underlie political change. His chief emphasis lay on the institutions of justice—statutes, the judiciary, courts of law, and the like—which, as in Adam Smith, presuppose private property and largely exist to guarantee property. Property comes first, and only societies in which there are rich as well as poor, in that view, can sustain forms of justice, civil liberties, and the civilized arts. Inequality of condition is in no sense a matter for regret. In fact it is out of property, and the laws that protect it, that liberty is finally born. "Liberty . . . appears to be the portion of polished nations alone," Ferguson wrote—a nonreversible proposition, one may be sure, since Ferguson was aware that France in 1767 was polished but not free.

This is an interesting argument to our generation, now emerging from the assumption that private wealth is socially conservative in its effects. Ferguson and Millar believed the reverse; so did Adam Smith. Liberty, in their view, and the very search for liberty, need rich men, and not a few of them. And since not everybody can be rich, one may say that liberty needs inequality of condition in order to seek and achieve equality before the law. The less there is of one equality, they might have agreed, the more there is likely to be of the other. All political advances arise out of inequality, they believed, and George Orwell's contention in *Animal Farm* (1945) that equality of condition, or rather the search for it, naturally leads to despotism is one they would no doubt have been happy to endorse.

Like the ancient historians he read, Millar was aware that wealth can corrupt. Nonetheless it can lead naturally to demands for civil rights by the rich against their rulers, whether Stuart or Bourbon, and sometimes, as after 1689, to liberty itself. Echoing Ferguson's point about polished nations, Millar wrote:

The farther a nation advances in opulence and refinement, it has occasion to

employ a greater number of merchants, of tradesmen and artificers; and as the lower people, in general, become thereby more independent in their circumstances, they begin to exert those sentiments of liberty which are natural to the mind of man, and which necessity alone is able to subdue.

Necessity here means dire poverty. So the most natural effect of private wealth, though not an inevitable effect, is political radicalism: a limited monarchy, for example, as opposed to tyranny, perhaps even a republic, and extensions of suffrage. Just as poverty tends to acquiesce in despotism, as in slave states, so private wealth tends to be radical, obliterating memories of a "former state of servitude," enfeebling traditional authority by creating a sense of independence and weakening hereditary influences. Wealth is a necessary, though not a sufficient, cause of progress. "Money becomes more and more the only means of procuring honors and dignities," Millar remarked without regret, as if the prospect of California were nothing to worry about.

The worry about new wealth began later. Some 30 years after Millar, William Wordsworth, by then an ex-revolutionary, complained in his sonnet "O Friend!" (1802) that "The wealthiest man among us is the best," as if this were a shocking infringement on the status of old families; and Jane Austen's novels can be deprecating about the vulgarity of new riches that conveniently ignore their origins. It is easy to forget that conservative interests were once critical of competitive wealth-creation and the commercial spirit, and for good reason. Charles Dickens, a radical, profoundly admired the active commercial spirit—Daniel Doyce, the lively engineer-inventor in *Little Dorrit* (1857), illustrates the point—and indeed no one has ever shown what, in its social effects, is likely to be conservative about competition. By the early years of the 19th century, as a Tory, Wordsworth found the commercial spirit vulgar, which perhaps at times it is. Ferguson, Millar, and Adam Smith saw it as the engine of civilization as well as of social change, and it is an argument worth reviving. As Yeltsin's Russia may yet show, no economic system is more likely to allow the poor and the unconnected to rise and

threaten a hereditary caste or privileged *nomenklatura* than a competitive system.

It is now time to return to Christopher Hill, that Marxist survivor in an age of disillusion. He left the British Communist Party in 1957 in protest against the Soviet invasion of Hungary the previous year, and his independent credentials have been unassailed for more than 30 years. But independent Marxism, too, may now be under threat, or deserve to be. What 1989 demonstrated, Hill argues in *History Today*, was not the death of Marxism but of the Communist parties. I believe and hope that it signaled both, though the death of an abstraction is admittedly harder to certify than that of a person or party. It will evidently take more than an Enlightenment thinker like Millar, or even Montesquieu, to overturn Hill's case. But that is less because the case is strong than because, in certain important respects, it is nebulous. Consider this passage from Hill:

During the past century many Marxist ideas have been incorporated into the thinking of historians, including those who regard themselves as anti-Marxists. That society must be seen as a whole; that politics, the constitution, religion, and literature are . . . related to the economic structure and development of that society; that there are ruling classes: all these are now commonplace.

They were also commonplace before Marx was born. They were known to anyone who had read Montesquieu, Ferguson, Millar, and Adam Smith, and not all of them were wholly unfamiliar to Aristotle, Hobbes, and Locke before them. Professor Hill simply has not read enough if he imagines that Marx was the first to see society as a whole—Thomas Macaulay did that in the famous third chapter of his *History of England*, which appeared in 1849, the very year Marx settled in England—or that Marx invented the concept of a ruling class, or that he was the first to link political and artistic advances to the economy. Marx neither invented the doctrine of the economic base nor claimed to have done so.

A lack of reading may seem an impertinent charge to make against scholars. But that is to misunderstand the direction in

which lives are lived. Even eminent scholars, after all, often form their dogmatic opinions, sometimes for life, before they have read a word of the matter, and later reading can be partial and ommissive. The late Moses Finley, a historian of antiquity, once explained that his lifelong dedication to Marxism began when, as a freshman at a New York college, he heard Marx expounded in what proved to be for him an irreversible revelation. At the time he had not so much as heard of Marx. It is possible for highly intelligent beings to be converted, and permanently converted, by authors of whom they have read nothing. In one of his last books, *Politics and the Ancient World* (1983) Finley deplored the vulgar habit of calling all class analysis Marxist, since (as he said) it was as old as Aristotle. Not everyone is so scrupulous. A German professor of similar sympathies once told me it would be wrong to imply he was unacquainted with the writings of Marx and Engels, since he had read *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) more than once. The *Manifesto* is a pamphlet, not a book, and Marx and Engels were prolific authors, but he plainly thought that a sufficient answer. Marxists are not just ignorant of the world. They are often ignorant of Marx.

It may seem strange that so many modern historians are content to talk as if social theory were an innovation of the 1840s. But there may be an explanation. Aristotle, when he spoke of the struggle between rich and poor, was making the richly antidemocratic point that the poor only want democracy in order to expropriate the wealth of the rich; the Scottish Enlightenment, for its own high-minded reasons, was also actively in favor of inequality and private wealth. These are arguments that have not usually recommended themselves to historians in a democratic and even egalitarian age. Victorian socialism did not deny its intellectual origins, and Marx's debt to Aristotle was one he often acknowl-

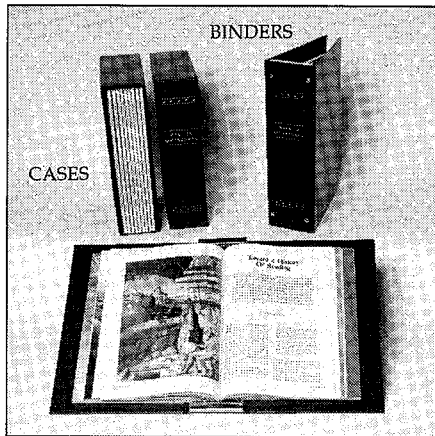
edged. In fact he was proud of it. The 20th century has usually preferred to ignore his sources, ancient and modern. Although Marx was idolized for decades behind a wall of barbed wire and venerated for even longer by earnest spirits outside the wall, his footnotes were neglected and his sources unread. Those sources were often explicitly antipopular, openly favorable to the rich, and unavoidably ignorant of the new conditions created by the Industrial Revolution. No wonder, then, if the Enlightenment, which candidly believed in private wealth as an agent of progress, was written out of the script after Marx's death.

There is a danger of perpetuating a large myth of intellectual history. The academia of the English-speaking world may soon come to look like a sort of Masada of impenitent Marxism. Christopher Hill, for example, writes that "Jack Hexter is the doyen of anti-Marxists, but when he tells us that Shakespeare's *Richard II* is about property . . . his approach is manifestly Marxist." But is it? There is a river in Macedon, as a Welshman says in another of Shakespeare's plays, and a river in Monmouth. In his *Politics* Aristotle called it a merely accidental feature of oligarchies to be ruled by a few, of democracies to be ruled by the many. His base too was economic: "The real point of difference is poverty and wealth." So perhaps J. H. Hexter is an Aristotelean, though I suspect he is better left to speak for himself.

Or perhaps both Hill and Hexter are Millarists, and should be invited to read his book and tell us. More than two centuries ago Millar believed that property defined power and directed where it would go, and rank has worn far better as a theory than class. If we could make the invisible Scot visible again, along with his sources among the *philosophes* and his Scottish contemporaries, we might liberate ourselves from something more than the tyranny of communism that Hill, like others, discovered 40 years too late. We might liberate ourselves from an obsession with class.



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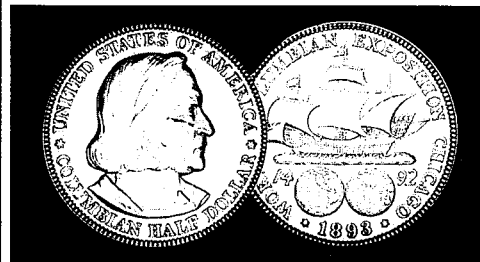
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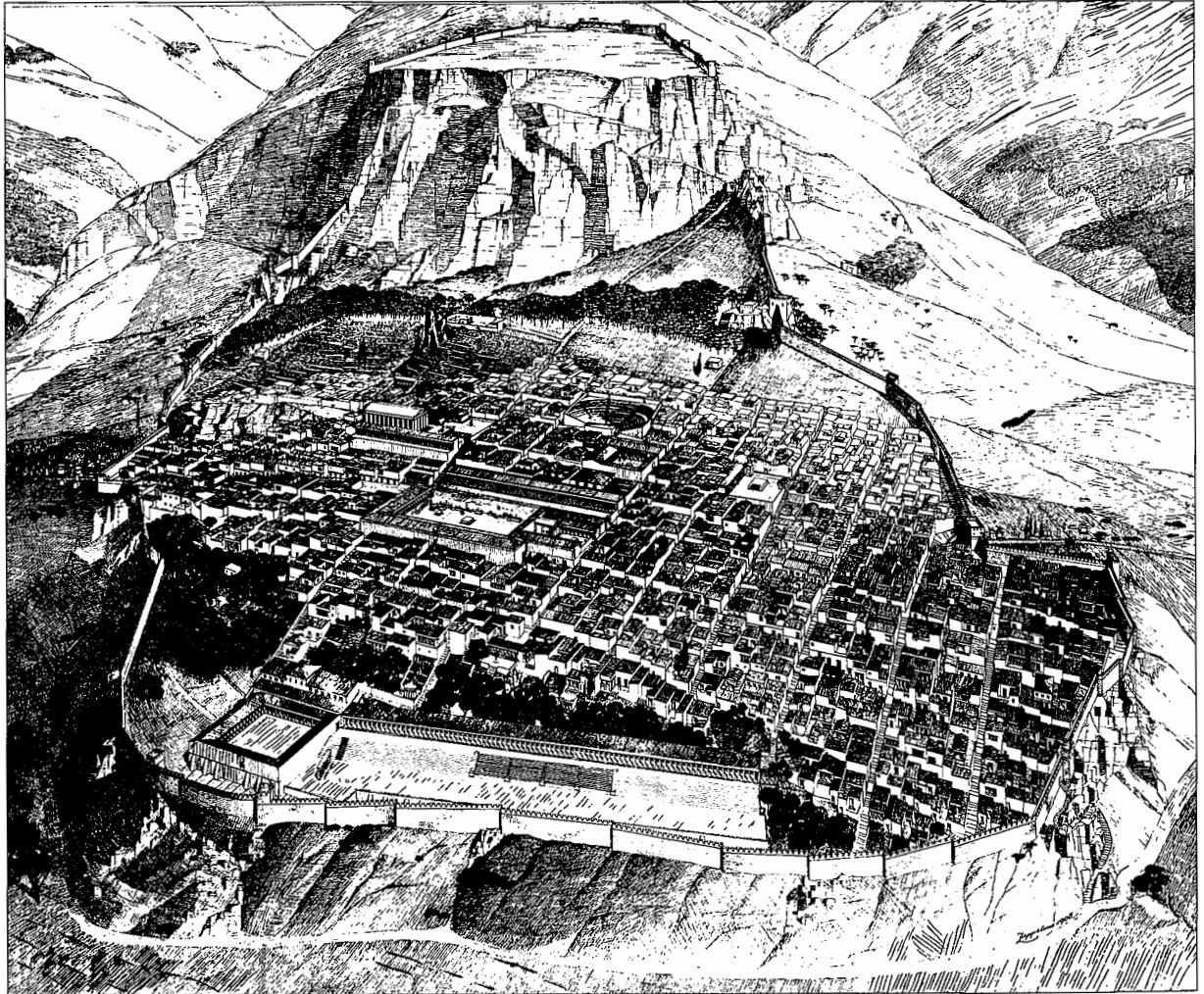
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THE MILITARY

“The war to end all wars.” “Peace in our time.” Such hopeful pronouncements have become ironic epitaphs to the 20th century’s longing for concord among nations. Two global conflagrations followed by a 45-year stand-off between lethally armed superpowers cannot help but temper the optimism that came with the ending of the Cold War. As the superpowers turn swords into plowshares, we turn our attention to a matter that looms constant behind the drama of war and peace: the intimate—and some would say fateful—connections between the state and the military. From



An artist's conception of the ancient Greek polis of Priene. In addition to the walls, prominent features include the stadium, the marketplace, the temple, and the theater.

AND SOCIETY

the Greek *polis* up through the modern nation-state, martial imperatives have provided nations not only with an urgent reason for being and a basis for civic loyalty but also with a model for political and social organization. Paul Rahe and Charles Townsend provide background to William James's question: Can nations find a moral equivalent of war? And Charles Moskos ponders the fate of America's military, now being transformed from a citizens' army into a social laboratory where debates over gender roles and the acceptance of open homosexuality are expected to be resolved.

THE MARTIAL REPUBLICS OF CLASSICAL GREECE

by Paul A. Rahe

At the turn of this century, the Irish-American journalist Finley Peter Dunne wrote a column of political and social satire for a Chicago newspaper. On one occasion, he touched on the ancient world, attributing the following observation to his character, the sage of Halsted Street, Mr. Dooley:

I know histhry isn't thru, Hinnessy, because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Sthreet. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' marrid, owin' th' grocery man an' bein' without hard-coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befure. Historyans is like doctors. They are always lookin' Pr symptoms. Thos iv them that writes about their own times examines th' tongue an' feels th' pulse 'an makes a wrong dygnosis. Th' other kind iv histhry is a postmortem examination. It tells ye what a counthry died iv. But I'd like to know what it lived iv.

Mr. Dooley's complaint deserves mention because it reflects with great precision the difficulty faced by modern historians of antiquity and by their readers as well. Like Mr. Dooley, we are eager to know more about ancient domestic life—and not only about family quarrels, drinking bouts, love, marriage, and the never-ending struggle to make ends meet. But on these and related matters, we have very little reliable information. Indeed, what Mr. Dooley could see every day on Halsted Street in Chicago are the very things the ancients took great care to hide from one another—and ultimately from us.

The dearth of evidence regarding the private sphere does nothing to assuage our curiosity, but it may in itself be revealing. We may not be able to say what the Greek cities that flourished in the epoch stretching roughly from the eighth to the fourth centuries B.C. died of, but the relative silence of our informants regarding domestic affairs suggests that the citizens of the fully

autonomous *polis* lived for something outside civilian life, a condition that Mr. Dooley and the residents of Halsted Street would have had trouble comprehending.

In their fundamental principles, modern liberal democracy and the ancient Greek *polis* stand radically opposed. The ancient city gave primacy not to the household and its attendant economic concerns but to politics and war. It was a republic oriented less toward the protection of rights than toward the promotion of virtue—first, by its very nature and, second, by its need to survive. Its cohesion was not and could not be a mere function of incessant negotiation and calculated compromise; it was and had to be bound together by a profound sense of moral purpose and common struggle.

One of America's Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton, captured the difference between the two regimes succinctly when he wrote in *The Federalist*, "The industrious habits of the people of the present day, absorbed in the pursuits of gain, and devoted to the improvements of agriculture and commerce are incompatible with the condition of a nation of soldiers, which was the true condition of the people of those [ancient Greek] republics." Hamilton's point is a simple one: The modern citizen is a civilian—a bourgeois family man or woman whose ancient counterpart was a warrior. Commerce defines the terms on which life is lived in modern, liberal polities. The ordinary citizen may not be a merchant himself, but the concerns of trade and industry regulate his labor with respect to time and govern the relations that unite him with his

compatriots. By contrast, commerce was peripheral to the ancient economy. The ordinary Greek was a more or less self-sufficient peasant proprietor, and he needed his fellow citizens as unpaid bodyguards against the city's slaves and for the defense of his family and land against foreigners far more than he needed them for any exchange of services and goods.

In antiquity, the model for political relations was not the contract but kinship. The ancient city was, like the household, a ritual community of human beings sharing in the flesh of animals sacrificed, then cooked at a common hearth. The citizens were bound together by the myth of common ancestry and linked by a veneration of the gods and the heroes of the land. The *polis* was not and could not be the household writ large, but as Plato makes clear in *The Republic*, this is what it tried to be. The city was not a circle of friends, but as both Plato and Aristotle imply, this is what it strove to become. The citizens were not tied to one another by a web of compromise. They were, as Augustine puts it, "united by concord regarding loved things held in common."

This fundamental like-mindedness was itself sustained by that steadfast adherence to tradition (*mos maiorum*) and that pious veneration of the ancestral (*ta patria*) which the common civic rituals and legends were intended to foster. "The *polis* teaches the man." So wrote Simonides, the well-traveled poet from Iulis on Ceos. And when the Cyclops of Euripides' satyr play wants to know the identity of Odysseus and his companions, he asks whence they have sailed, where they were born, and what *polis* was responsible for their education

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(*paideia*). As long as the citizens were relatively isolated from outside influence, it mattered little, if at all, that the religious beliefs and rites of a particular city were irrational and incoherent. What mattered most was that the beliefs and rites peculiar to that city inspired in the citizens the unshakable conviction that they belonged to one another. And where it was difficult if not impossible to engender so profound a sense of fellow-feeling, as in colonies that drew their citizens from more than one metropolis, civil strife (*stasis*) was all too often the consequence. Put simply, the political community in antiquity was animated by a passion for the particular. The patriotism that gave it life was not a patriotism of universal principles, such as those enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, but a religion of blood and of soil.

Of course, the *polis* came into being in the first place because of the need for common defense. The word itself appears to be derived from an Indo-European term employed to designate the high place or citadel to which the residents of a district ordinarily retreated when subject to attack. But that high place was more than just a refuge. Even in the narrow, pristine sense of the word, the *polis* was also an enclosure sacred to the gods who lived within the city's walls. Thus, when a city pondered the establishment of a colony, it was customary for the founder (*oikistes*) to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphi regarding the site. The failure to seek or a decision to ignore the advice of the god was thought likely to be fatal to the entire enterprise. In fact, the act of establishing a new community was itself an elaborate religious rite specified in detail by the laws. And in keeping with the divine origin and character of the new *polis*, the citizen designated as *oikistes* could expect to be buried with all solemnity in the central

marketplace (*agora*), to be worshipped as a demigod and divine protector of the *polis* from the moment of his decease, and to be honored thereafter in an annual festival complete with public sacrifices and athletic games.

The political community's sense of common endeavor was grounded in its particular *patrioi nomoi*—its ancestral customs, rites, and laws. These practices and institutions distinguished a city from similar communities and defined it even more effectively than the boundaries of the civic territory (*chora*) itself. If forced to abandon its *chora*, a *polis* could nonetheless retain its identity. The sage Heraclitus took this for granted when he wrote that "the people must fight for the *nomos* as if for the walls of the *polis*." When a Greek city went to war, the citizens battled not just to expand their dominion and to protect their wives, children, and land; they fought also to defend their *patrioi nomoi* and the entire way of life which these embodied.

This spirit carried over into the conduct of foreign affairs. Even where military cooperation was the only end sought, the Greeks tended to invest any confederacy they joined with moral and even religious foundations. This is why cities that formed such a connection often adopted each other's gods, founded a common festival, or sent delegations to share in each other's principal rites. In 428 B.C., when the Mytilenians were intent on securing aid from Sparta and its allies, they couched their request in terms that would find favor. "We recognize," they remarked, "that no friendship between private individuals will ever be firm and no community among cities will ever come to anything unless the parties involved are persuaded of each other's virtue and are otherwise similar in their ways: For disparate deeds arise from

discrepancies in judgment.”

Fifty-one years before, in a time of like trouble, the Spartans' Athenian rivals resorted to similar rhetoric. On the eve of the Battle of Plataea, the Spartans expressed fear that the citizens of Athens, their allies of the moment, would come to terms with the Persians. In response, the Athenians mentioned two reasons why they could not conceive of abandoning the struggle against the Medes. First, they explained, it was their duty to avenge the burning of their temples and the destruction of the images of their gods. “Then,” they added, “there is that which makes us Hellenes—the blood and the tongue that we share, the shrines of the gods and the sacrifices we hold in common, and the likeness in manners and in ways. It would not be proper for the Athenians to be traitors to these.” In neither case was the presence of a shared enemy deemed adequate. Though separated by half a century, the two speeches were in accord: The only secure foundation for alliance was a common way of life.

The conviction so firmly stated by the Mytilenians and the Athenians contributed in a variety of ways to the actual making of policy. Cities with a common origin and extremely similar *nomoi* rarely went to war. The ordinary Greek colony, for example, generally had customs, rites, and laws closely akin to those of the mother city. Even when the two were fully autonomous, they usually maintained close ties, and the colony was expected to defer in most matters to the metropolis and to send a delegation with gifts of symbolic import to join in celebrating the principal festival of that community. The failure of a colony to perform what were seen as its moral obligations was deemed shocking in the extreme, and it could give rise to a bitterness that might easily overshadow the cold calcula-

tion of interests. As the historian Thucydides makes abundantly clear, one cannot make sense of the origins of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) without paying close attention to the deep-seated anger that shaped the Corinthians' policy towards their renegade colonists the Corcyraeans.

The forceful response that the Spartan expression of distrust elicited from the Athenians in 479 B.C. deserves a second glance. The great struggle against Persia did in fact bring home to the Hellenes all that they held in common—the blood and the tongue that they shared, the shrines of the gods and the public sacrifices, and their similarity in manners and ways. It was natural in the aftermath of that war, particularly when the Great King of Persia started once again to meddle in Hellenic affairs, for some Greeks to begin to argue that wars within Hellas were not properly wars at all but examples of civil strife and, as such, reprehensible. But though such arguments were made, they had very little effect.

If the Greeks were nonetheless inclined to make war on each other, it was at least in part because the disparate communities were never sufficiently similar in manners and in morals. What brought the citizens of a particular *polis* together set them apart from others; what united them as a people set them in opposition to outsiders. They held their land at the expense of slaves and foreigners, and they pursued the way of life peculiar to them in defiance of notions elsewhere accepted. When in Plato's *Republic* Polemarchus (“war-leader”) defines justice as “doing good to friends and harm to enemies,” he is merely reasserting on the personal level the grim civic ethic suggested by his name. In ancient Greece, patriotism went hand in hand with xenophobia. If “civil strife is not to thunder in the city,” Aeschylus's divine chorus warns the Athenians, the citizens “must return joy for joy in a spirit of common love—and they

must hate with a single heart.”

The implications of all of this were not lost on the American Founding Fathers. Perhaps because of his own experience as a soldier, Alexander Hamilton recognized the warlike demeanor of the ancient agricultural republics more clearly than many who have come after, and this recognition played no small role in determining his adherence to James Madison's bold project of refashioning the disparate American states into an extended commercial republic. When confronted by the arguments of those who believed that no viable republic could be constructed on so vast a territory, Hamilton retorted that the American states were themselves already too large. Those who took such arguments seriously would have to choose between embracing monarchy and dividing the states “into an infinity of little, jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths, the wretched nurseries of unceasing discord, and the miserable objects of universal pity or contempt.”

On more than one occasion, the Greeks were forced to choose between the alternatives posed by Hamilton, and in all but the most difficult of circumstances most, if not all, preferred the jealousy, the tumult, the unceasing discord, and the excitement of life in the fully autonomous *polis* to the relative tranquillity promised in exchange for their absorption into a great empire. In considering the character of the *polis*, we must never lose sight of the permanence of conflict that afflicted Greek life. The ordinary Hellene would have nodded his approval of the opinion attributed by Plato to the lawgiver of Crete: “What most men call peace, he held to be only a name; in truth, for everyone, there exists by nature at all times an undeclared war among all the cities.” Such was the human condition in Greece, where political freedom took pre-

cedence over commodious living.

Because the ancient city was a brotherhood of warriors and not an association of merchants, the principal task of legislation was the promotion of public-spiritedness and not the regulation of competing economic interests. It is revealing that, in Plato's *Republic*, a discussion of the best regime rapidly turns into a dialogue on character formation. Unfortunately, even under the best of circumstances, the nurturing of civic virtue was a difficult undertaking—one that called for the deliberate shaping of the citizens' passions and opinions. Even when everything has been done to ensure that the citizens have the same interests, there remains a tension between private inclination and public duty, between individual self-interest and the common good that is impossible fully to resolve. Death and pain are the greatest obstacles: They bring a man back upon himself, reminding him that when he suffers, he suffers alone. As a consequence, the quality which Plato and Aristotle called civic or political courage is rare: It is not by instinct that a man is willing to lay down his life for his fellow citizens. He must be made to forget the ineradicable loneliness of death. The fostering of courage, self-sacrifice, and devotion to the common good requires artifice, and this is why Plato's discussion of character formation rapidly turns into a dialogue on poetry and its chief subject: man's relations with the gods.

Even the most skeptical of the Greeks acknowledged the religious roots of that “reverence and justice” that served as the “regulators of cities” and the “bonds uniting” the citizens “in friendship.” In Critias's satyr play *The Sisyphus*, the protagonist has occasion to discuss the origins of that cooperative capacity that makes political life possible. “There was a time,” he notes, “when the life of human

beings was without order and like that of a hunted animal: the servant of force. At that time, there was neither prize for the noble nor punishment for the wicked. And then human beings, so it seems to me, established laws in order that justice might be a tyrant and hold arrogance as a slave, exacting punishment if anyone stepped out of line." This stratagem worked well in most regards, but it was of limited effectiveness in one decisive respect—for "though the laws prevented human beings from committing acts of violence in the full light of day, men did so in secret." It required "a real man, sharp and clever in judgment," to find a remedy for this deficiency; when he finally appeared, he "invented for mortals dread of the gods, so that there would be something to terrify the wicked even when they acted, spoke, or thought entirely in secret." Critias's Sisyphus was by no means alone in making this assertion. In one fashion or another, Aristotle, Isocrates, Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, Quintus Mucius Scaevola, Marcus Terentius Varro, and Marcus Tullius Cicero all echo his claim.

The skepticism voiced by these luminaries was foreign to the ordinary Greek, but the political importance that these men ascribed to religion was not. The *polis* had a civic religion, and that religion was one of the chief sources of its unity and morale. For the Greeks, the gods were a constant presence. The Olympians might be thought to stand above the fray, but the gods and heroes of the land were taken to be the city's protectors, sharing in its glory and suffering its reverses. In Greece as well as in Rome, it was commonly believed that no town could be captured prior to the departure of its patron deities. For this reason, some cities chained their gods down, and it was an event of profound political importance when a citizen managed to discover abroad and remove to

a final resting place within the territory of his own *polis* the bones of a hero. Securing and maintaining divine favor was vital. As a consequence, propitiation of the gods could never be simply a private matter; piety was a public duty.

Just as the piety of the citizens was thought to protect the city, so also their misdeeds could threaten its survival. Indeed, the whole community might be made to suffer for the sins of a single man. Pindar compares divine vengeance to "a fire on a mountainside: though begotten of a single seed, it removes a great forest entirely from sight." As a consequence, men were unwilling to take ship with an individual deemed guilty of offending the gods, and cities found it necessary to expel or even execute the impious and those who had polluted the community by murder, manslaughter, or some other infraction.

Just as patriotism required piety, so piety demanded patriotism. Treason was more than a political act, at least as politics is narrowly defined in modern times. The man who turned coat or simply abandoned his city in time of crisis betrayed not just his fellow citizens; he betrayed the gods as well. This explains why one peripatetic writer chose to list "offenses against the fatherland" under the category of "impiety." It also explains why the law of Athens equated treason with the robbing of temples. The Athenians dealt with the two crimes in a single statute that called not just for the guilty party's execution but also for the confiscation of his property and a denial to him of burial in his native soil.

To reinforce the conviction that the gods required of citizens a total devotion to the common good, the ancient cities resorted to the administering of oaths. Fortunately for us, an Athenian orator took the trouble to explain in detail the logic of this practice to the members of a jury. "The oath is the force holding the democracy to-

gether," he observed. "Our regime is composed of three elements: the magistrate, the juryman, and the private individual. Each of these is required to give his pledge, and quite rightly so. For many have deceived human beings and escaped notice, not only by eluding immediate dangers but also by remaining unpunished for their crimes through the rest of the time allotted to them. But no oath-breaker escapes divine notice; no man of this sort can avoid the vengeance that the gods exact. Even if a perjurer manages to escape retribution himself, his children and his entire family will fall upon great misfortunes." This religious understanding guided civic policy throughout all of Hellas.

Except during an emergency, it was probably not the norm for a community to exact from all of its citizens at once a pledge of their loyalty. It was common within the Greek cities to make provision for the military training of the young. Ordinarily, it seems to have been deemed sufficient that these youths be called upon to swear once and for all at the time of their initiation into manhood that they would stake their lives to protect the community, their fellow citizens, and the institutions they held in common.

The demands placed on the ordinary Greek soldier, or hoplite, and the moral support afforded him in his moment of trial went far beyond anything imagined by the average soldier today. As Aristotle emphasizes, mutual acquaintanceship was one of the features that distinguished the Greek *polis* from a nation. If the *polis* was to function properly, he suggests, it had to be "easily surveyed" so that the citizens might know each other's characters. Most of the cities were small towns, and in only a few did the citizen body exceed a few thousand. There was little, if any privacy, and the citizen's entire existence was bound up with

his participation in the religious and political affairs of the community. The Greek soldier was well-known to the men around him. He had spent the better part of his leisure time in their company: When not in the fields, he would leave the household to his wife and loiter about the blacksmith's shop, the palaestra, the gymnasium, or the marketplace, discussing politics and personalities, testing his strength and his wit against the qualities of his contemporaries, and watching the boys as they grew up. He lived for those hours when, freed from the necessity of labor, he could exercise the faculties—both moral and intellectual—that distinguished him from a beast of burden and defined him as a man. When deprived of reputation, he was deprived of nearly everything that really mattered. In classical Greece, the absence of a distinction between state and society was as much a practical as a theoretical matter: It meant that the citizen lived most of his life in the public eye, subject to the scrutiny of his compatriots and dependent on their regard. To be identified as a draft evader, accused of breaking ranks, or branded a coward and, in consequence, to be shunned or deprived of one's political rights could easily be a fate worse than death.

In time of war, the Greek citizen could not escape combat. No allowance was made for conscientious objection, there were no desk jobs, and slaves and metics performed whatever support functions the hoplite could not perform for himself. More often than not, he was fighting near his home in defense of his children and his land. And even when he was posted abroad, he was acutely aware that the city's safety and his family's welfare depended on the outcome of the struggle.

On the field of battle, this foot soldier would be posted alongside his fellow citizens as they advanced, shoulder to shoul-



der, marching in step—in some communities, to the tune of a flute. The phalanx was generally eight men deep, and it extended as far as the numbers and the terrain permitted. There was no place to hide. Ancient battles took place on open terrain, and this infantryman's behavior under stress would be visible to many, if not to all. For success, the modern army depends on the courage of the minority of men who actually fire their guns. The Greek phalanx depended on the effort of every man. The strength of this chain of men was no greater than that of its weakest link, for it took a breach at only one point for the formation to collapse. As a result, the behavior of a single hoplite could sometimes spell the difference between victory and rout. The man who betrayed his fellows, leaving them to die by breaking ranks, would not soon be forgiven and could never be forgotten. In a sense, he had spent his entire life preparing for this one moment of truth.

The process of preparation for that moment of truth required a great deal of time and effort. Toil undertaken for the sake of profit might be regarded as shameful, but toil undertaken for the sake of good order and victory in battle was honorable, and its avoidance was a source of unending shame. This fact explains the centrality of athletics in ancient Greek life. If the wealthy young men of the town spent their idle hours at the palaestra and the gymnasium, it was not simply or even chiefly because they were driven by narcissism. Indeed, their primary concerns

were public, not private. In a tyranny such as the one established by Aristodemus at Cumae on the northern marches of Italy's Magna Graecia, there was to be no public sphere, and it might therefore seem prudent and even appropriate for the despot to do what he could to suppress the noble and manly disposition of the young by closing the gymnasiums and banning the practice of arms, by draping the young boys of the town in finery and keeping them out of the hot sun, and finally by sending them off, their long hair curled, adorned with flowers, and doused with perfume, to study with the dance masters and the players of flutes. But where the public sphere survived, this would never do. Republics needed real men, and citizens with the leisure in which to ready themselves for the ordeal of battle were expected to do so. "It is necessary," as Montesquieu observes, "to look on the Greeks as a society of athletes and warriors."

The historian Herodotus hammers away at the need for toil with particular vehemence. The manner in which he turns his description of the Battle of Lade into a parable is a case in point. In 499 B.C., the Greeks who inhabited the coastal communities of Asia Minor and the islands of the eastern Aegean had joined together in rebellion against their royal master, the Great King of Persia. A few years later, they sent naval contingents to the island of Lade, which lay off Miletus, the largest and most prosperous of the coastal towns. There, the rebels intended to make a concerted effort to prevent the Phoenician fleet of the Mede



from regaining control of the sea and putting an end to their revolt. Upon the arrival of the various contingents, Dionysius of Phocaea reportedly addressed them in the following fashion: "Men of Ionia, our affairs—whether we are to be free men or slaves (and fugitive slaves at that)—stand balanced on a razor's edge. If, for the time being, you are willing to subject yourselves to hard work, you will have to submit to toil on the spot, but you shall be able to overcome those opposed to you and so go free. If, however, you prefer softness and disorder, I have no hope that you can avoid paying to the king the penalty for your revolt."

The Ionians initially took Dionysius's advice. According to Herodotus, they toiled for seven days from dawn to dusk, rowing their ships and practicing maneuvers under the Phocaeen's direction. But because the men of the islands and coast were soft and unaccustomed to toil, many among them soon became ill, and in due course the rowers wearied of hardship and rebelled. Then they labored no more but instead erected tents on the island and took shelter there from the harsh rays of the sun. The Ionians paid dearly for their weakness. The Persian generals had promised to pardon any among the rebels who turned coat, and as a consequence of the rowers' indolence and insubordination the Samian generals became persuaded that the cause was hopeless and elected to accept the king's offer. Thus, just as the battle began, the contingent from Samos—followed quickly by the triremes from Lesbos—sailed off, leaving the remaining Ionians to certain defeat. He-

rodotus might have added that these men got precisely what they deserved, but he had no need to spell out his point.

Needless to say, toil, endurance, and good order were no less necessary for those destined to engage in combat on land. When Xenophon singles out farming as a profession likely to prepare men for war, he has more in mind than the fact that those who cultivate the soil have an interest in its defense. "The earth," his Socrates remarks, "supplies good things in abundance, but she does not allow them to be taken by the soft but accustomed men to endure the wintry cold and summer's heat. In exercising those who work with their own hands, she adds to their strength, and she makes men of those who, in farming, take pains, getting them up early and forcing them to march about with great vigor. For in the country as in the town, the tasks most fitting to the time must be done in season." Xenophon's Ischomachus even asserts that agriculture teaches generalship, noting that victory generally depends less on cleverness than on the thoroughness, diligence, and care exhibited by the sort of men who have learned from long experience the necessity of taking precautions.

Courage, strength, endurance, and diligence were vital, but they were not the only virtues demanded of the citizen-warrior in classical times. In certain crucial respects, the hoplite was quite unlike the heroes of *The Iliad*. He and his opponents fought not on their own but in formation. Therefore,

he could not afford to be a berserker, driven by rage to run amok among the enemy host, for he could not break ranks to charge the enemy line without doing himself and his own side great harm. To achieve victory, the hoplite and his comrades had to display what the Greeks called *sophrosune*—the moderation and self-restraint expected of a man required to cooperate with others in both peace and war. Consequently, in considering the education to which young Greeks were customarily subjected, one would err in dwelling on athletic contests and military maneuvers to the exclusion of all else, for Greek boys were expected to toil at music as well. In fact, to judge by the remarks made by the greatest of the ancient philosophers, the study of music played a vital role in giving a young man the psychological preparation he needed for the assumption of his duties as a citizen and soldier. In Plato's *Republic*, the interlocutors of Socrates take it for granted that education consists of gymnastic exercise and musical training. Initially, Socrates treats exercise at the gymnasium as a hardening of the body. But as the argument unfolds, he introduces another, more important consideration—the effect of that hardening on the soul, and the danger that guardians subjected to gymnastic training alone will be savage toward one another and toward their fellow citizens as well. Poetry set to music he presents as an instrument capable of moderating and harmonizing—in short, of civilizing—the all-important quality of spiritedness.

In *The Laws*, Plato's Athenian Stranger takes a similar tack, arguing at length and with considerable psychological insight that participation in choral singing and dancing can habituate the young and the not so young to take pleasure in that which is good and to feel loathing and disgust when presented with that which is not.

Even Aristotle thought such pursuits an antidote to the savagery bred of the ancient city's obsessive preoccupation with war. In fact, like his mentor, he was persuaded that a *polis* devoted to music and the arts would be a far healthier and saner polity than a community dedicated to conquest and imperial rule and consequently riven by political ambition and strife.

One of the more telling indications of the degree to which the warrior ethos permeated every aspect of Greek life is the prevalence of pederasty throughout Hellas. No ancient author gives us a full and detailed report of the conventions that guided Greek behavior in the various cities, and the surviving plays, courtroom harangues, philosophical dialogues, and vase representations that throw light on the elaborate code of homosexual courtship pertain chiefly to Athens. But though the evidence is fragmentary, the general pattern is clear: The Greeks seem to have practiced pederasty as a rite of passage marking a boy's transition to manhood and his initiation into the band of citizen-soldiers. And even where wooing adolescent boys was the fashion only among men of leisure, pederasty was conceived of by its many proponents as a reinforcement of those ties of mutual acquaintanceship that were universally recognized as the foundation of civil courage.

The pattern is evident in Ephorus's description of prevailing practice in the region of Greece where the *polis* as a religious and military community governed by constitutional forms seems first to have emerged. In Crete, the younger boys attended the men's mess with their fathers. Under the direction of the warden associated with that mess, those slightly older learned their letters, memorized the songs prescribed by the laws, and tested their strength against one another and against

those associated with other messes. When the boys turned 17, the most distinguished among them gathered their less well-born contemporaries into herds, each collecting as large a personal following as possible. Fed at public expense and subject to their recruiter's father, they practiced hunting, participated in footraces, and—at appointed times—joined in battle against rival herds, marching in formation to the cadence of the flute and the lyre. This period of apprenticeship reached completion when a man of distinguished family took as

land that the custom spread to the remainder of Greece. Concerning the other Hellenic cities we are less well informed, but all that we do know suggests that pederasty elsewhere served precisely the same function. Hunting, which was everywhere considered a form of training for war, and homosexual courtship appear to have been as closely connected in Athens as they were on Crete. On Thera, sodomy seems to have been linked with rituals honoring Apollo Delphinios and marking the boy's transition to manhood. At Thebes, when the be-

A vase painting dating from the 5th century B.C. depicts Greek soldiers, or hoplites, running forward in the close phalanx formation.



his beloved the boy who had gathered the herd in the first place.

This ritual abduction marked the first stage in the process by which an aristocratic boy and his followers were prepared for initiation into manhood. Together, they were forcibly withdrawn from the community of ephebes, and for a transitional period they slipped off to the wilds. When they came back, they immediately took wives and joined the community of men.

Pederasty was evidently one of the central institutions of the martial communities of Crete, and it was probably from this is-

loved one was enrolled as a man, his lover conferred on him the hoplite panoply; in fourth-century Elis, as well as in Thebes, the couple would fight as a pair in the ranks. "It is the part of a prudent general," Onasander would later remark, to encourage his heavy infantrymen to take risks on behalf of those alongside them in the battle line by stationing "brothers next to brothers, friends next to friends, and lovers next to the boys they love."

Classical Hellas encompassed an array of independent communities stretching from the east coast of the Black Sea to the

far reaches of the western Mediterranean. Language, literature, religion, culture, republican institutions, proximity to the sea, and diminutive size—these common characteristics made the ancient *poleis* much alike and very different at the same time. The last on this list of characteristics may well be the most important. Smallness in size gives rise to familiarity, and familiarity breeds contempt in more than one way. The defense of familiarity requires xenophobia, since all outside contact is a threat to the integrity of the community. The *polis* was akin to a party of zealots, and Alexander Hamilton was right when, in *The Federalist*, he described Hellas as “an infinity of little, jealous, clashing, tumultuous commonwealths.” There was variety enough in the local circumstances and traditions of these apparently similar communities to set them incessantly at odds. And, strange to tell, the unity of the Greek world owed much to this very variety and to the conflicts it engendered. Radical particularity makes for a certain uniformity. Athenaeus, a Greek who wrote in the third century A.D., rightly made no distinction among *poleis* when he wrote that “the men of olden times thought courage the greatest of the political virtues,” and what he had to say was as true for Rome as it was for the republics of Greece. Even where the institutions of the various cities were structurally different, the constant threat of war made them functionally similar.

As a type of community, the *polis* rested on its citizen militia and fell only when that militia was overwhelmed. The modern distinction between soldier and civilian did not pertain in the classical republics, and when that distinction emerged and the professional soldier became a figure of genuine importance—initially in Greece in the age of Philip of Macedon (359–36 B.C.) and

Alexander the Great (336–23 B.C.), and again later at Rome in the time of Marius, Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar—freedom’s existence became quite tenuous. Even where the city survived and retained a modicum of local autonomy, it did so on the sufferance of monarchs.

Something of the sort also could be said regarding the quasi-autonomous urban republics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As Machiavelli makes clear in his *Art of War*, their failure to establish a militia capable of securing their defense rendered their retention of liberty largely a matter of chance. Indeed, it was only with the rise of popular armies at the time of the French Revolution that modern republicanism gained more than a foothold on the European continent. The degree to which the modern, democratic nation-state owes its solidarity, its sense of identity, and even its existence to the threat and experience of war cannot be overestimated. To date, at least, no lawgiver or state-builder has discovered what William James once termed a “moral equivalent of war.”

Modern republicanism may be at odds with its ancient prototype in many particulars. But until such a moral equivalent has been discovered and deployed in practical, political form, Mr. Dooley’s preoccupation with what could be seen every day on Halsted Street will render him and those similarly focused on domestic affairs as incapable of making a correct diagnosis of the modern condition as they are of understanding the history of ancient Greece and Rome. In the absence of a pacific equivalent of war, the breach between modernity and antiquity will remain incomplete and the martial republicanism of the classical Greeks will still be with us in one, crucial regard.

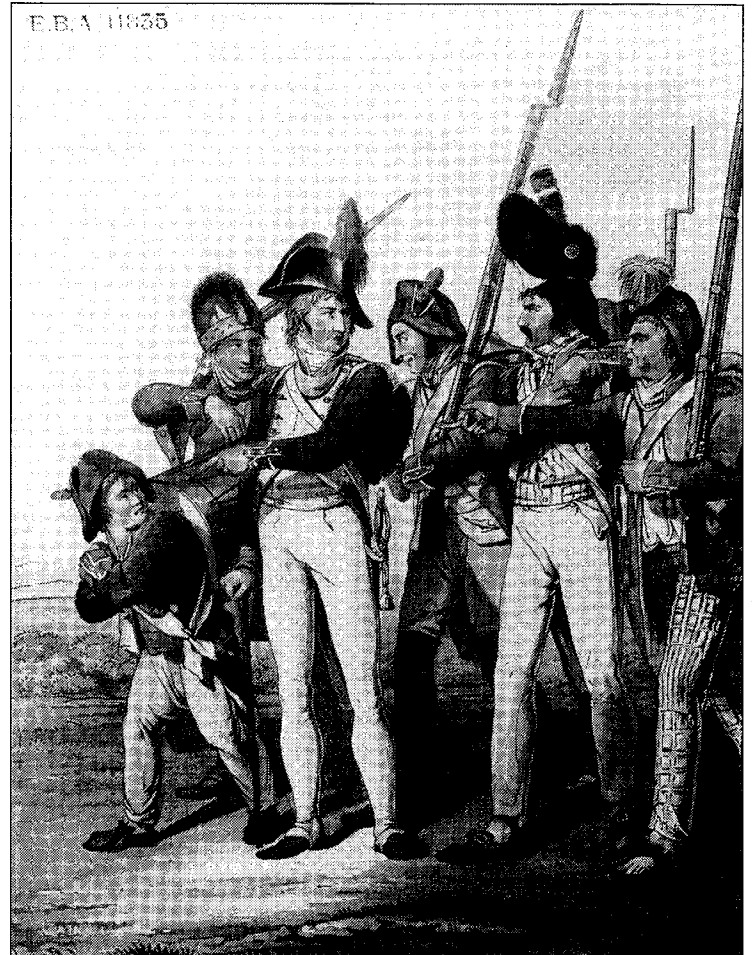
MILITARISM AND MODERN SOCIETY

by Charles Townshend

*Un soldat de la liberté
Quand il est par elle exalté
Vaut mieux à lui seul que cent esclaves*
—Theodore Rousseau, 1793

[A soldier of liberty, exalted by her, is worth more than a hundred slaves]

In 1793, Year I of the French Republic, the town of St. Quentin in Picardy changed the name of one of its streets from rue Ste. Catherine to rue Grenadier Malfuson. Malfuson was a “soldier of liberty,” one of the volunteers of 1792, who had died in battle around Lille. To name a street after one of the *menu peuple*, the people of no importance, was in 18th-century France a truly astonishing, revolutionary gesture. Critics of the Revolution might contend that it was an empty one, but its symbolic force cannot be easily set aside. Alongside thousands of parallel happenings, local, national, and international, it gave form to a general sense of decisive transition. The mobilization of the people for war seemed to lie at the heart of this epochal change. It promised a wholly new relationship between armed



Infantrymen of the French republican army around 1793, when the order for mass conscription, the *levée en masse*, was issued.

forces and societies: "democracy in arms" in the shape of huge "citizen armies" raised by universal military service.

The link between modern society and large-scale armed forces has, since the French Revolution, seemed plain, but it has never been straightforward. Indeed, to many it has always seemed paradoxical, if not actually perverse. Modernization has been thought of as a comprehensive, final shift, driven by industrialization and signaled by the triumph of secularization, literacy, and democracy—in short, the civic culture. Amidst this progress, war was seen by most 19th-century liberals as a barbaric survival, doomed to eventual extinction. According to this view, democratizing the institutions of war, above all, armies, should have been a prelude to their fairly rapid disappearance. William Gladstone, who served as his nation's prime minister four times between 1868 and 1894, voiced the dominant English view tersely when he insisted that "a standing army can never be turned into a moral institution." His countryman, Richard Cobden, leading spirit of the 19th-century "Manchester School" of free-market economists, held that unless universal disarmament was achieved, military establishments would cripple the economy. There could be "no necessary or logical end to their increase, for the progress of scientific knowledge will lead to constant increase of expenditure. There is no limit but the limit of taxation."

In more optimistic moods, progressives hoped that the liberalization of political institutions would lay to rest the ancient specter of militarism. But Cobden's most pessimistic prediction was borne out. Armies simply grew larger and more expensive (and taxation went beyond any

limit Cobden could have imagined), while war became more comprehensive and destructive. And the phenomenon of Napoleon Bonaparte—"la révolution, c'est moi"—seemed to drive the stake of militarism into the heart of the liberal transformation. Napoleon's adventurism added a modern twist, "Bonapartism," to the ancient threat of military domination under classical labels such as praetorianism and Caesarism. Its impact—melodramatically etched by Beethoven furiously eliminating his dedication to Napoleon from the *Eroica* symphony—was all the greater because of the aesthetic power of the pristine myth of popular mobilization that preceded it. The sense of liberation generated by the early victories of the French revolutionary armies reached beyond France itself. The psychological turning point was the militarily indecisive engagement (often called a cannonade rather than a battle) at Valmy in September 1792, when the Austrian and Prussian armies, confronted by the massed French forces, abandoned their march on Paris and their attempt to restore the French monarchy. One of the civilian spectators, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—not only the outstanding German writer of modern times but also the administrator of a small city-state—told his countrymen: "From this place and this time forth commences a new era in the history of the world."

Valmy was proof that ordinary people could make up in commitment what they lacked in experience. It was followed in 1793 by the transcendent emblem of the revolutionary struggle, the decree of the *levée en masse* (mass rising):

From this moment until the enemy is driven from the territory of the Republic, all French people are permanently

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requisitioned for the service of the armies. The young men will go to battle; married men will forge arms and transport provisions; women will make tents and clothing, and serve in the hospitals; children will shred old linen for bandages; old men will be carried to public places to arouse the courage of the fighters [*guerriers*], and preach hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.

Modern scholarship has established that this manifesto was rhetorical rather than programmatic. It did not bring in universal or compulsory military service, and it proved erratic in operation. But whether or not its actual result was to raise half a million troops—the figures have been long disputed—its moral effect was profound. It gave French generals, and their opponents, an awesome sense of the Revolution's strength and purpose. With the immense resources thus conjured up, war was prosecuted with frightening energy. It was not that the French armies won all their battles—they did not—but that they did not slow down between them. They harried their enemies with alarming relentlessness.

This energy was sensed at every level, from the skirmish line upward. Soldiers of liberty were not merely more numerous but could fight in free, fluid formations more dynamic than the drill-book patterns of the old despotism. Self-discipline and high morale did away with the need for brutal punishments and tight control. Indeed, the salient characteristic of the revolutionary troops was their self-respect, mirrored by the respect accorded to them by their communities and commemorated in countless popular festivals and songs. This luminous myth was further highlighted by the contrast between the natural forces unleashed by the *levée* and the artificial forces of the dynastic states. It was brought most sharply into focus in Prussia, where the disastrous military defeats of 1806 at Jena and Auerstädt by Napoleon's forces was

blamed on the failure of the rigid system perfected by Frederick the Great, the paragon of enlightened despots. Control of the Prussian army passed—temporarily at least—into the hands of reformers like General Gerhard von Scharnhorst and his assistant Karl von Clausewitz, a uniquely thoughtful writer on war, who insisted that however small a state might be, it must defend itself to the last ditch, "or one would conclude that its soul is dead."

What was thought to be happening in the revolutionary epoch was not quite a "military revolution" in the sense proposed by the historian Michael Roberts, who argued that military changes in 17th-century Europe catalyzed the emergence of the modern state. Other historians have suggested that while the general trend of professionalization was unmistakable, the changes identified by Roberts were too diffuse to be properly called a revolution. The growth in the size of armies, for instance, though impressive, was erratic; weapons remained simple and unchanged for generations through the time of Napoleon; even the formations adopted by the revolutionary armies have been shown to be less novel than was once thought. The truly revolutionary technical changes were to come later, in the 19th century. Ultimately, the creation of railways and the invention of smokeless explosives accompanied by quick-firing rifled guns transformed the entire face—and the cost—of war. But the depersonalization of combat, which gradually became a salient feature of modern war, undoubtedly began with the changes Roberts identified.

The ultimate transformation of war was accelerated by the deeper shift that the French Revolution triggered: a shift on the social, rather than the administrative, plane; a revolution of attitudes and expectations. European armies of the old regime,



Workers at a munitions factory. The widespread mobilization of industry and society to support the military effort marked the American Civil War as one of the first truly modern and "total" wars.

however big they became, had operated on the margins of society. Their officer class drew its self-image directly from the role of the feudal nobility as the sole bearers of arms. Its code of honor derived from a notion of service to the crown under universal Christian laws of war. It was remarkably cosmopolitan. Perhaps the most vivid image of 18th-century war was the invitation issued by the commander of a French regi-

ment at the Battle of Fontenoy, "que Messieurs les ennemis tirent les premiers"—that his respected opponents should fire first. The soldiers whose bodies he gallantly offered as targets were drawn from the opposite end of society, coerced into enlistment either directly, or more often indirectly, by hardship, and kept in the ranks by iron discipline. For all the splendor of their clothing, war was not decorous for battle casualties and, far outnumbering these, victims of disease. It was grim enough, too, for those civilians who found themselves in the path of the armies. But those paths were restricted. In a crucial sense war remained limited in scope and aspiration. Rulers tried to avoid bankrupting themselves, and did not aim to overthrow one another or to liberate the subjects of their foes.

The Revolution removed these limits. It removed the aristocracy with tremendous public drama, and though the peasantry remained the backbone of the

rank and file, the belief that armies should (and in some sense did) represent the whole of society became dominant. The Prussian reformers aimed above all to incorporate the middle class into the army, and did this through the creation of a short-service reserve, the *Landwehr*. In the expedient of the local-defense *Landsturm* they even—briefly—armed the people. The mass mobilization announced by the *levée*

en masse brought forth a radical notion of war, identified by Clausewitz as "absolute war." The sheer scale of the new armies, and the participation that produced it, were both underpinned by ideology—the commitment to the complete overthrow of the enemy, without compromise, whatever the cost. As Lazare Carnot, the "organizer of victory" on the Committee of Public Safety in 1793, stridently insisted, "War is a violent condition. One should make it à l'outrance or go home We must exterminate, exterminate to the bitter end!" This was the mental armament for total war.

Such intensity was too strenuous to be sustained for very long. Writing his masterpiece *On War* in the 1820s, Clausewitz recognized that not all future wars would be so close to the absolute as those of his time, though he shrewdly pointed out that "once barriers—which in a sense consist only in man's ignorance of the possible—are torn down, they are not easily set up again." The myth of the risen people retained its electrifying potential. During the 19th century, population growth, urbanization, and industrialization ensured that the people bulked ever larger. But this evolution could prove conservative. Armies in particular showed a tendency to revert to type: The French volunteers of 1792–93 stayed on to become hardened professionals, the kind commemorated by Alfred de Vigny in his autobiographical tales *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires* (*The Military Condition*, 1835), whose elegiac tone resembles that of the most popular German soldier's song, "Ich hatt' ein Kamerad" ("I Had a Comrade").

In the end, the Napoleonic wars were won by professional armies, notwithstanding the efforts of Spanish guerrillas, Russian partisans, and the Prussian *Landwehr*. The soldiers who fought those wars were no longer called "warriors," except by rhet-

oricians or satirists; their modern title (*soldat*, literally "one who is paid") better expressed their relation to the state. At the same time the cosmic horizons of the first citizen armies shrank to the bounds of the "nation in arms." Once French soldiers had sung without hypocrisy, "Du salut de notre patrie/Depend celui de l'Univers" (upon the safety of our country depends that of the universe), and the German nationalists who mobilized against them did so in the cosmopolitan spirit of Herder and Goethe. But the xenophobic propensity of nationalism was to give a new shape and lease on life to militarism.

Was it possible, in fact, to have a great conscript army that was free of militarism? The answer depended on what militarism was taken to mean. A variety of formal meanings has been assigned to this protean concept since it was coined sometime in the early 19th century as a characterization of the Napoleonic system. It was given wide currency by the anarchist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in the 1860s to describe the outlook which saw war as the most exalted human activity, and its impact was amplified by the sociologist Herbert Spencer in the 1880s under his more cumbersome label "the militant type of society." Such militancy involved the "close binding of society into a whole" and fostered a special kind of people, who "must have patriotism which regards the triumph of their society as the supreme end of action; they must possess the loyalty whence flows obedience to authority; and that they may be obedient they must have abundant faith." Though this looked like a vision of ancient Sparta—with a sideswipe at contemporary Prussia—it would come to seem all too relevant to the modern "Western" democracies in the century of total war. For though Spencer held that the "industrial" type of society would prove stronger than the "militant," he failed to foresee how

deeply industrial change would enlarge and entrench the military machine.

Seventy years later, in his striking work *Military Organization and Society*, the sociologist Stanislaw Andreski listed six distinct usages of the word *militarism*. In a bid for analytical precision, he proposed several terms, such as *militancy*, *militarization*, *militocracy*, and *militolatry*, as separate components of militarism. But he had limited success, thanks in part to the ingrained public resistance to scholarly neologism. In this case, it may be that the special resonance of the term *militarism* depends on its imprecision. It represents a vague dread, the possibility that the violent side of human nature might at any time gain the ascendant. On this plane, militarism is not a structural arrangement, not even military intervention, or the "preponderance of the military in the state," to use Andreski's general formulation, but the spillage of military values into society at large. From the liberal point of view, such enlargement of influence is instinctively regarded as contamination, and the greatest danger arises when, as in Germany during World War I, it comes to be seen as healthy. ("Militarism implies that we do not just cherish and uphold our Army because we are impelled by rational calculations," declared the eminent German theologian Ernst Troeltsch in November 1914, "but also because we feel an irresistible compulsion within our hearts to love it.")

Ultimately, therefore, militarism remained a negative concept implying a sharp difference between military and civilian values. The great conscript armies of the 19th-century nation-states might accordingly be forces for good or evil, depending on whether they were animated by a civil or a military spirit. America was believed to have preserved itself from the dangers of militarism inherent in the vast mo-

bilization of a war of national survival, but its situation was unique and transient. Germany, by contrast, felt itself to be under permanent siege, actual or potential: exactly the situation pinpointed in the Victorian political theorem that the level of liberty in any country is inversely proportional to the level of external threat. German liberals were only too aware of the way in which the history of Prussian militarism impinged on the present, and the constitutional crisis in Prussia after 1859, which brought Bismarck to power, was in essence a struggle for the soul of the state.

Although liberals accepted that Prussia needed a great army and an effective system of conscription, they resisted the royal demand that the period of service be increased from two to three years, believing that this extra year would bring a shift from liberalism to militarism, and turn Prussia into a "barracks state" even more rigid than that of Frederick the Great. The liberals lost that struggle, and the army went on to win Bismarck's wars, to increase its prestige and autonomy as a "state within the state," and eventually, in the latter part of World War I, to furnish the textbook example of full-blown militarism.

But even had the liberals succeeded in retaining the two-year service period, it is not clear that they could have kept militarism in check. In his study *Militarism* (1898), Guglielmo Ferrero noted that soldiers occupied the most important positions in the German official world: Civil ministries were directed by generals, even though officers on active service had no vote. "Bismarck was originally a doctor of law, who had only fulfilled the ordinary period of military service, and yet, when it was wished to consecrate his high position in the State, he had to be made a general; and in a general's uniform he was wont to make his appearances in the *Reichstag*."

The constitutional historian Otto Hintze remarked in 1906 that "militarism pervades our political system and public life today, generally in a very decisive way." He added the telling observation that "even Social Democracy, which in principle is against everything connected with militarism, not only owes to it the discipline on which its party organization largely rests, but also in its ideal for the future it has unconsciously adopted a good measure of the coercion of the individual by the community, which comes from the Prussian military state." The underlying reason, as the outbreak of war in 1914 would finally show, was the power of nationalism. Modern conscript armies were symbiotically linked with nationalism, whether as product or producer. Nationalism itself was a liberal cause in the early 19th century; its champions expected that free nations would live in peace (since all wars were, they believed, caused by the dynastic rivalries of oppressive monarchs). But even at the "springtide of nations," the failed revolutions of 1848, nationalism's authoritarian face was becoming visible. Germany, for instance, could only ensure its own security by denying self-determination to the Poles of the strategically vital Posen region. By the end of the century the paranoid nature of nationalism was increasingly marked; nations feared rather than loved. The liberal dream of international harmony was giving way to "social Darwinism," the belief that nations, like species, were involved in a struggle for survival—not against a hostile nature but against hostile neighbors. The nation-in-arms was thus an oppressive agenda. Historian Peter Paret has posed the question whether "a policy as coercive as conscription can express the enthusiasm of those to whom it is applied." As Paret insists, from the *levée en masse* onward, all systems of universal military service were managerial devices. Popular enthusiasm and spontane-

ity were outweighed by "the coercive and didactic features of conscription."

For this reason there was always something dubious in the rhetoric, heard most commonly in France but also in Italy and other countries, of the conscript army as "the school of the nation." This phrase first appeared in Paris in the summer of 1793, where its ideological meaning was very clear. It became a political agenda in many parts of Europe during the next century: The Hungarian *Honved*, for instance, was deliberately revived on an old model after the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 to promote Magyar supremacy in the "crownlands of St. Stephen"; the newly unified Italian army of 1861 had the conscious mission of creating the sense of national unity (*Italianità*) that had proved so distressingly weak among the people at large. In the 1890s the idea became the vehicle by which France's most public military thinker, Marshal Louis-Hubert-Gonzalve Lyautey, established his intellectual reputation. In two articles in the leading French quarterly review, Lyautey asserted the capacity of the army to reconcile the political, social, and religious divisions of the nation. He argued that in the colonies, the army was actually the principal agent of civilization, and that it could play the same constructive part in domestic life—but for the manifest inadequacy of the military service system.

What appeared to Lyautey as inadequacy in fact represented the outcome of a long public debate about the nature of military obligation and reflected a persistent French reluctance to embrace the supposedly democratic principle of universality. The institution of the first-line reserve, the *Garde Mobile*, under the military service law of 1868 was emblematic of this: The spiritual descendant of the revolutionary National Guard was to provide 15 days'



A British recruitment poster from World War I.

training per year to all those Frenchmen—the great majority—who avoided service with the line army, but their training was guaranteed to be strictly segregated, to protect them from contact with the regular troops. For the army to have become a true school of the nation required the kind of superheated patriotism that emerged only in the tense years before the outbreak of war in 1914. This patriotism may have been democratic in its way, but what the army then recreated was far removed from its liberal origins, and it had a much narrower purpose. The real “school of the nation” that followed was the Battle of Verdun, that debilitating victory from which Marshal Pétain drew those deeply conservative conclusions about the French nation that were later to shape the Vichy regime.

The two world wars brought home the prodigious implications of the “nation in arms.” The stupefying scale and protraction of the first sprang from the combina-

tion of almost limitless “manpower”—a distinctive modern coinage—with the technical advances of the late 19th century. Battles became unrecognizable, and unwinnable, as such. (At the 1914 version of Valmy, there were no civilian spectators, aside from involuntary victims; Goethe would by then have been a *Landwehr* officer.) Maneuver was replaced by attrition. The only possible adaptive response was “total war,” in which formal military organizations melted into the cauldron of a society fighting for its life. Even states protected by traditions of deep-seated and deliberate resistance to military control—such as Britain—could not fully uphold the principle of civilian supremacy in such an emergency. Others, Germany above all, succumbed to a virtual military dictatorship that cast a shadow far beyond the formal cessation of international hostilities.

It was not so much the visible structures of military control, formidable though

these were in the wartime practice and postwar writings of Field-Marshal Erich von Ludendorff, as the invisible sense of community and purpose that animated the paramilitary movements that burgeoned in Germany after the war. While hundreds of thousands enlisted in militias (*Wehrverbände*) of all political hues, the profoundly influential writings of Ernst Junger insisted that uniforms and marches were not the point; the real need was not for "warriors who sleep in bourgeois bedrooms," but to preserve and extend the *Schutzengrabengemeinschaft* (community of the trenches) in peacetime. The result was a paramilitarism that, in the words of the modern German historian Volker Berghahn, "pervaded virtually all aspects of German political life." And though Germany was plainly an extreme case, the phenomenon has spread throughout the 20th-century world.

In the Western states too, the impact of total war went beyond the constitutional sphere of civil-military relations and the classical liberal problem of resisting military power. It largely dissolved the distinction between military and civilian values on which that resistance had been grounded. In a sense, the maintenance of civilian supremacy became an empty formula, even in a state with such a long-nurtured liberal self-image as Britain. Under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, the government took powers of a kind that had never been exercised except under martial law. From the classical liberal standpoint, the fact that these powers were wielded by civilians was immaterial—the powers were derived from military logic. The contours of that logic could be read in the barely concealed contempt of many military officers for party politics and the "frocks" who managed them, and even more startlingly on the Left, as in the assertion of the Fabian socialist R. H. Tawney that

The soldier at the front expects from the civilian and from the government a sense of obedience to duty and an enforcement of discipline as severe and as exacting as that to which he is himself accustomed. The call of duty should be imposed on all alike.

A parallel shift took place in America, where the Sedition Act of 1918 conferred a dizzying power of control over public utterance. (One conservative critic, Robert Nisbet, later charged that "the West's first real experience with totalitarianism—political absolutism extended into every possi-



"Through work to victory! Through victory to peace!" announces a German poster of 1917.

ble area of culture and society... with a kind of terror always waiting in the wings—came with the American war state under Woodrow Wilson.") The corrosive potential of such emergency powers was

quite obvious, and some traditionalists were puzzled by the absence of protest against them. While the leading academic study of the liberal states' adaptation to total war, Clinton Rossiter's *Constitutional Dictatorship* (1947), came to the conclusion that essential democratic values had come through unscathed, it is possible to doubt this. The overwhelming public enthusiasm for the "war effort" may rather have shifted the very standards by which constitutional propriety was judged. In British political culture, for instance, "liberty of the subject" lost its prominence in the vocabulary of self-definition.

The realization that modern militarism may be generically more complex than its simpler predecessors, and thus harder to identify or to control, was vividly brought forth by Alfred Vagts in his *History of Militarism: Civilian and Military* (1937). His most brilliant insight challenged the standard idea that militarism was simply an expression of war-mindedness (a view propounded in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* in 1930, and perpetuated, it must be noted, in the second edition 40 years later). For Vagts, the distinctive modern development was the relative autonomy of armies, which he labeled "narcissism." Modern mass armies, whose function bulks as large in peace as in war, "dream that they exist for themselves alone." They create a militarism which has no strict military purpose. Vagts distinguished armies "maintained in a military way," which is functionally straightforward and "scientific in its essential qualities," from those maintained in a "militaristic way." The latter generate "a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions and thought . . . transcending the true military purposes." Societies connived in this "militarism of moods and opinions" by coming to admire soldiers not merely in

wartime, which is reasonable enough, but in peacetime as well. Though his principal targets were Germany and Japan, Vagts thought that the Western democracies were no longer immune to such militarism.

He found its origins in the "resurgent emotionalism" of the Romantic period, which in his view smothered the old rational distaste for the soldier as a drilled murderer. Romanticization met the need to disguise the drabness of modernization of both war and society. Vagts added the fruitful perception that the attitude of the "modern masses" toward militarism was contradictory: As individuals they might dislike military service, but as a collectivity they came to love the sense of power that great armies generated. Though his masses were sociologically a rather crude aggregation, his qualitative judgment was echoed in Andreski's blunt linkage of "military participation ratio" (MPR) with "ferocity of warfare." Addressing the question whether conscription had, or could have, promoted democracy, Andreski also tried to establish a distinction between "bellicosity" and "ferocity," arguing that the extension of military service in itself neither blunted nor sharpened bellicosity—that is, the propensity toward war—but that it was definitely "conducive to greater ferocity in war" once begun.

Andreski's use of the word "ferocity" seems to contain both statistical scale and moral enormity, both of which have been all too much in evidence in this century. His implicit equation of the "cannibalistic feasts" of "tribes in arms" with, say, the strategic bombing campaign of World War II, may look rather extravagant; yet his view that "where war is the prerogative of nobles, we find it usually regulated by a code of honour" provides an important perspective. If we substitute a more neutral word like "intensity" for "ferocity," the ar-

gument about the consequences of the professionalization of armies comes into clearer focus. It was most sharply drawn by the Yale political scientist Harold Lasswell in 1941. Lasswell argued that "the military men who dominate a modern technical society will be very different from the officers of history and tradition." Their domination would follow precisely from the fact that total war compelled "those who direct the violence operations . . . to consider the entire gamut of problems that arise in living together under modern conditions." Thus modern military officers were developing "skills that we have traditionally accepted as part of civilian management." These would enable them to create what he called the "garrison state," of which the pioneering model was, of course, Germany. Writing at the time of the German invasion of Russia, Lasswell's outlook was pessimistic: He saw no necessary reason why militarism should succumb to civilianism, "the multi-valued orientation of a society in which violent coercion is deglamorized as an end in itself, and is perceived as a regrettable concession to the persistence of variables whose magnitudes we have not yet been able to control without paying what appears to be an excessive cost in terms of such autonomy as is possible under the cloud of chronic peril."

This analysis rested, evidently, on the idea that there was something new about the nature of modern peril—"the socialization of danger." It was in his view, universal and chronic. Lasswell went so far as to suggest that the military elite would manufacture such peril if need be, though when he reconsidered his 1941 essay 20 years later he did not take the view that the Cold War was such an artifact. He was able to transfer the threat of the garrison state easily enough from Nazi Germany to the USSR. Robert Nisbet, in *The Twilight*

of Authority (1975), also took the "military socialism" of the Soviet Union and China to be one of the principal reasons for what he feared to be "the likelihood of militarization of Western countries" in the near future. The other was terrorism. It was, he warned, "impossible to conceive of liberal, representative democracy continuing," with its crippling endowment of due process, if terror increased in the next decade at the rate of the last.

Terrorism, certainly, represents a "socialization of danger" as absolute as total war, and though the urgency of these warnings may seem to have been blunted by the dissolution of military socialism and the apparent containment of terrorism, Nisbet's assault on militarism, from a classical conservative standpoint, provides a remarkable index of the change that had occurred during the century. He saw "the lure of military society" as a primary corrosive agent in the "twilight of authority." This was critical for the West, where "more sheer thought has been given to war and its values than anywhere else in world history." For "there is nothing so constrictive of freedom, of creativeness, and of genuine individuality as the military in its relation to culture As soon as the special character of military power begins to envelop a population, its functions, roles, and traditional authorities, a kind of suffocation of mind in the cultural sphere begins." The depth of Nisbet's pessimism was a result of his conviction that the root of modern societies' vulnerability to militarism lay in Roman law itself. The intensity of 20th-century total war was a comparatively superficial problem, though he bitterly indicted the American intelligentsia for succumbing so eagerly to what an English philosopher in 1915 called "the spiritual peace that war brings." For Nisbet, this psychic mobilization of the "home front" was worse than the simple longings of the soldiery—"I felt

more of a martial atmosphere, more pressure of war-values, while on the faculty at Berkeley from 1939 to 1942 than I was to feel during the next three years out in the Pacific as an enlisted soldier."

Such perceptions are still unorthodox in liberal democratic societies, whose military systems are normally perceived, as they were treated in Samuel Huntington's famous study of civil-military relations *The Soldier and the State* (1957), as professional organizations akin to medicine and the law. Indeed, one important school of thought concerning military organizations in the Third World regarded them as primary agents of progress. (Huntington argued arrestingly that "the middle class makes its debut on the political scene not in the frock of the merchant but in the epaulettes of the colonel.") Has the benign scenario in fact displaced the malign vision of modern militarism? The dramatic incidence of military intervention in politics charted in S. E. Finer's *The Man on Horseback*—an incidence that looked to be mounting between the first edition of that book in 1961 and its updating in 1975, just after the coup in Portugal—seems now to be falling. The public prestige of armed forces in the developed world, though transiently enhanced by spectacular enterprises like the wars against Argentina and Iraq, has been more routinely eroded by guerrilla quagmires, which have forced armies into quasi-policing roles in which they reap the maximum public odium for the minimum recognizable military achievement. Yet it is just here that the liberal states remain vulnerable to the blurring of civil and military functions. Nisbet's warning about the long-term effect of counterterrorist measures remains a forceful one because states have few options in responding to vi-

olence. Terrorist strategy is founded on the fact that terrorist violence can neither be ignored nor effectively countered by normal processes of law. It is a deliberate attempt to provoke a military response that will itself undermine the legitimacy of the state. The greatest danger is not that this strategy will work—in the sense intended by the revolutionaries—but that it will ultimately erode the traditional defenses against the establishment of a security state, producing the kind of vast enlargement of Kafka's *Castle* suggested in Heinrich Boll's novel of contemporary Germany, *The Safety Net* (1982).

We may, however, justifiably hope that the deep entrenchment in the plural democracies of the principles of civilianism, and of civilian control of the military, will ward off any threat of open military government. The potential of mass armies to act as beneficial social institutions remains important, even if it is likely to be viewed less optimistically than in the headier days of liberal enthusiasm. Rhetoric aside, the function of universal military service as an integrative experience is important; the problem has always been that only small neutral states, such as Switzerland, have ever been able to apply it consistently. The need for big field forces, rather than a local defense militia, is what makes most armies—in peacetime—burdensome and divisive. If there is to be a "peace dividend," it should perhaps be sought in civilianizing the principle of universal service. To do that, some end would need to be found to replace the "spiritual peace" of war and the glamor of combat, which, alas, has always guaranteed the ultimate prestige of the military life, however stultifying its daily routines. A different struggle for survival, perhaps that to save the planet, might just become such an end.

FROM CITIZENS' ARMY TO SOCIAL LABORATORY

by Charles Moskos

These are uncertain times for the armed forces of the United States. How could they not be? With the Cold War over, the very foundations of our thinking about national security have undergone profound changes. Short of a terrible accident, the likelihood of a nuclear war between major powers is slim. Indeed, wars among any major powers appear unlikely, though terrorism and internal wars triggered by ethnic and religious animosities will be with us for some time, if not forever. More to the point, nonmilitary threats—economic competitiveness, environmental pollution, and crime—have now moved to the fore of our national-security preoccupations.

Of course, no serious observer sees the imminent end of warfare. Clausewitz's dictum about war being the extension of politics by other means remains in the back of any thinking person's mind. Nevertheless, we are witnessing the dawn of an era in which war between major powers is rejected as the principal, much less inevitable, means of resolving conflict. At the same time, the citizens of the United States, like those of other advanced industrial nations, are increasingly reluctant to become engaged in uncertain, protracted wars in parts of the world where no vital interests appear to be at stake. In the absence of traditional threats, political support for military spending has slowly given way to

expectations of a "peace dividend" for domestic social expenditures—a phenomenon that is as pronounced in Moscow as it is in Washington.

In this most unprecedented of historical epochs, we are also seeing important changes in the relations between the military and American society, changes that have been under way for at least two decades but that are now being accelerated by the end of the Cold War. Among these, perhaps the most consequential is the demise of military service as a widely shared coming-of-age experience for American males. Another change, more diffuse in shape and possible consequences, is a redefinition of the military's role in society. Once thought of as the institution through which citizens—at least male citizens—discharged their basic civic obligation, the military is now coming to be seen as a large and potent laboratory for social experimentation. Such changes and others are part of a larger movement, a trend toward what I call the postmodern military.

Postmodernism is not one of those words that tend to win friends or influence people, at least outside the academy. Indeed, its overuse by the tenured classes makes it seem, variously, pretentious, empty, or imprecise. That said, the concept has its uses. From its humble origins as the name of an architectural style blending whimsy, pastiche, and playful historical allusion, it has been generalized into an all-

embracing theory of society. Simply put, this theory posits a world in which the old verities are thrown into question, social institutions become weak or permeable, and uncertainty everywhere reigns.

In matters military as well as cultural, the adjective postmodern implies a modern precursor. In America, as in most of the Western world, the military acquired its distinctively modern form with the rise of the nation-state in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, reaching a kind of zenith during the two world wars of this century. The modern military was distinguished by two conditions. The first was sharp, clear distinctions between military and civilian structures. The second was universal male conscription. Both conditions allowed military leaders to stress the more traditional martial virtues, the virtues of combat. Some fraying of the modern military occurred during the last decades of the Cold War with the rise of a military establishment driven as much by technical and information imperatives as by those of the trenches. Still, the modern military remained recognizable, in form and mission, right up to collapse of the Soviet Union.

Since then—and particularly since the end of the Persian Gulf War in March 1991—American armed forces have been deployed in more than 20 different operations, few of which had traditional military objectives. The list includes two operations related to the Gulf War: the multinational Operation Provide Comfort in Kurdistan and Operation Southern Watch in southern Iraq. The American military has taken part in Operation Sea Angel for flood relief in Bangladesh, in the rescue of civilians following the volcano eruptions of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines and of Mount

Etna in Italy, in drug interdiction along U.S. borders as well as in Latin America, in a domestic mission to restore order after the Los Angeles riot, and in disaster relief following hurricanes in Florida and Hawaii. The United States has also joined other nations in rescuing foreign nationals in Zaire and it is now spearheading relief efforts in Somalia. To the success of most of these operations, administrative and logistical skills, not to mention health-care and social-work skills, were far more important than tactical insight, marksmanship, or courage under fire.

To be sure, Western militaries have performed nonmilitary roles in times past, but what is different about these post-Cold War missions is their frequency and multinational character. Although it may be hard to imagine a U.S. soldier becoming misty-eyed about duty served under the aegis of the United Nations or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the move toward multinational forces will gain momentum. The next step may well be the formation of a genuine international army with its own recruitment and promotion systems, as outlined in the 1991 "Agenda for Peace" written by United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

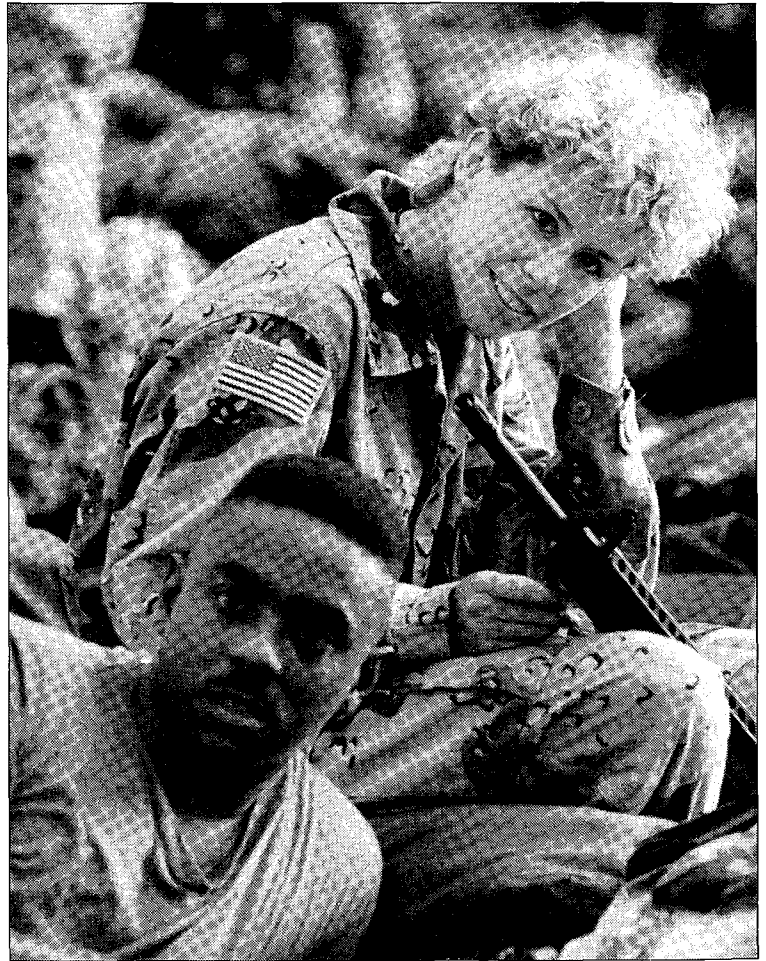
In the postmodern setting, the legitimacy of conscription has progressively weakened. The draft has either been abolished—as it was in the United States in 1973 and 10 years earlier in the United Kingdom—or severely cut back, as in various European countries during the last 15 years. The political forces pushing for an end to conscription, though unlikely bedfellows, constitute a formidable bloc. They in-

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clude traditional peace organizations, assorted religious groups, political radicals who dislike the military establishment, libertarian conservatives, policy specialists who seek to transfer military spending to social programs, young people imbued with individualism and materialism, and

conflict, and they prepared for it. Each colony formed its own militia on the principle that fundamental liberties entailed individual responsibilities. The militia, it must be stressed, was not a voluntary force. Every able-bodied man was obliged to possess arms and to train periodically. And every

The new army: Troops of the 24th Infantry await orders after arriving in Saudi Arabia in August 1990 as part of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.



even some military leaders.

In America specifically, the abandonment of conscription jeopardizes the nation's dual-military tradition, one-half of which—and truly its heart—is the citizen soldiery. This institution antedates the Revolutionary War. The first colonists came to the shores of the New World anticipating

such man was subject to call-up when military needs dictated.

The military requirements of the Revolutionary War led to the creation of America's first professional army. This force remained small because of Americans' deep distrust of a standing army, but it marked the beginning of America's dual-military

tradition. Henceforth, a citizen soldiery of varying sizes was balanced by a permanent and professional force. Large forces consisting of short-term volunteers, draftees, or draft-induced volunteers came into being during the Civil War and World War I. But it was World War II that shaped our most recent understanding of military service.

In 1939, 340,000 men were serving in the U.S. military. By June 1941—six months before Pearl Harbor—American mobilization was well under way. America's first peacetime draft raised U.S. military strength to 1.8 million men. Shortly after it entered the war, the United States raised the largest military force in the nation's history. At war's end, more than 12 million people were in uniform.

By 1946, the number of servicemen had shrunk to three million. The draft was suspended in 1947, and the number of active-duty military personnel fell to 1.5 million. The draft was resumed in 1948, as the Cold War heated up, and though the Korean War never resulted in total mobilization, there were some 3.7 million Americans in uniform in 1952. During the ensuing decade, America's military posture was based on "nuclear deterrence" and large troop deployments abroad, notably in Europe and Korea. Between 1955 and 1965, the number of people in uniform hovered around 2.5 million, more than during any other peacetime period in American history.

A clear conception of the place of military service in American society survived from early in World War II right up to the beginning of the Vietnam War. According to this view, service in the military, and particularly the army, was almost a rite of passage for most American males. Eight out of 10 age-eligible men served during World War II, the highest ratio in U.S. history. From the Korean War through the early 1960s, about half of all men coming of age

served in the armed forces. But the proportion began to fall—to roughly four out of 10—during the Vietnam War, as the children of privilege found ways to avoid service in an unpopular and ill-defined military quagmire. Since the suspension of the draft in 1973, only about one in five eligible males has been entering the military. And when the post-Cold War "drawdown" to the projected base force of 1.6 million is reached in 1995 (though it will likely be smaller), the proportion of young men serving will be down to one in 10, if that.

The changing social composition of the military—evident first in the Vietnam War—became even more obvious during the first decade of the all-volunteer force, when the military began to draw disproportionately from among racial minorities, particularly blacks and Hispanics, and from lower socioeconomic groups. By 1979, 40 percent of army recruits were members of minorities, and half of the white entrants were high-school dropouts. This shift in social makeup corresponded with a tendency on the part of Defense Department policymakers to redefine military service as an attractive career option rather than the fulfillment of a citizen's obligation.

Perhaps the best example of the loosening hold of the military experience in the United States is seen in the changing background of America's political leaders. For at least the first three decades after World War II, military service (or at least a very good reason for having missed it) was practically a requirement for elective office. The unpopularity of the Vietnam War and the termination of the draft both chipped away at this attitude. In 1982 the proportion of veterans fell below half in Congress for the first time since before Pearl Harbor. And as the Vietnam War generation replaced the World War II cohort, it brought with it a highly ambivalent view of military service.

Not surprisingly, this view reflected the electorate's changed attitude toward the importance of military experience to service in elective office. In 1988, the nomination of Senator Dan Quayle as a candidate for vice president created a stir because of his avoidance of active duty in the Vietnam War. In 1992, Governor Bill Clinton, who not only avoided all forms of duty but protested against the war, was elected to the nation's highest office.

The changed composition of the military and new attitudes toward military service raise the inevitable question: What has been lost? The answer is simple. Universal military service was the one way in which a significant number of Americans discharged a civic obligation to their nation. If this fact is obvious, its significance has been obscured by a political culture that ignores the importance of individual obligations while virtually enshrining individual rights—possibly to the detriment of our civic health. Universal military service did something else: It brought together millions of Americans who otherwise would have lived their lives in relative social and geographic isolation. No other institution has accomplished such an intermingling of diverse classes, races, and ethnic groups.

The racial dimension of this social intermingling—the integration of the armed forces and the impressive record of African-Americans in the services—is often cited as the great success story of the American military. Unfortunately, many people forget that this success came only at the end of what is in fact a rather ugly story, one that too faithfully reflects the larger national tragedy of racism. Until relatively recent years, African-Americans were a group resolutely excluded from equal participation in the armed forces. Even though they have taken part in all of America's wars, from colonial times to the present, they have usually done so under unfavorable and of-

ten humiliating circumstances, typically serving in all-black units with white commanders. And though they have served bravely, they often received less than glowing reviews from condescending, unsympathetic white officers. (By contrast, black units that served directly under the French in World War I received high praise from their commanders.)

The plight of blacks in uniform did not even begin to change until World War II. On the eve of that global struggle, there were only five black officers in the entire American military, and three of them were chaplains. Black soldiers during the war continued to serve in segregated units, performing mainly menial labor. Strife between black and white soldiers was common. Despite these conditions, blacks proved themselves when given the chance—none more so than the all-black 99th Fighter Squadron, whose performance in combat over Italy won the highest plaudits of the previously skeptical commander of U.S. tactical air forces.

In December 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, African-American soldiers were finally given the chance to prove that segregation was not only unjust but militarily inefficient. Desperately short of combat troops, Lt. General John C. H. Lee, General Eisenhower's deputy for logistics, asked for black volunteers to fill the thinned-out ranks of white combat units. The soldiers who stepped forward performed exceptionally well in battle, gaining the respect of the white soldiers they fought next to and the high regard of the white officers under whom they served. Notably, there was none of the hostility that usually existed between white officers and black soldiers in the all-black units and none of the fighting that often broke out between whites and blacks in segregated units.

The unqualified success of this small ex-



A segregated unit of African-American troops in World War I constructing a railway line from Brest to the front.

periment in racial integration was cited after the war to support arguments for integrating the military. Those arguments prevailed in 1948, when President Harry S. Truman abolished segregation in the military. Little happened at first, but when the Korean War erupted manpower requirements in the field led to many instances of ad hoc integration. By 1955, two years after the end of the Korean War, the last remnants of military Jim Crow were gone.

Integration alone did not bring an end to the problem of race in the military. Between the wars in Korea and Vietnam, African-Americans made up about 11 percent of the enlisted ranks but less than three percent of the officer grades. Racial tensions mounted dangerously during the Vietnam War, the outcome of both real and perceived discrimination in the military and of spillover from the racial and political turmoil in society at large. Even after the war

and the termination of the draft, there were frequent outbursts of hostility between blacks and whites in the all-volunteer force.

Thanks to decisions made by the military leadership in that "time of troubles," things have changed markedly for the better. Today, in terms of black achievement and a general level of interracial harmony, few civilian institutions approach the army. In 1992, blacks made up 30 percent of the enlisted force, over a third of the senior noncommissioned officers, 12 percent of the officer corps, and six percent of the generals. General Colin L. Powell became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1989, the first African-American to head the American military. The army is still no racial utopia. Beneath the cross-race bantering, an edge of tension often lurks. Still, the races do get along remarkably well. Under the grueling conditions of the Gulf War, for example, not one racial incident was brought to the attention of the military police. Certainly the racial climate is more positive than that found on most college campuses today.

What has made the military in so many ways the vanguard of racial progress? I suggest three factors. The first is a level playing field, dramatized most starkly by basic training. For many black youths from impoverished backgrounds, basic training is the first test at which they can outshine Americans coming from more advantaged backgrounds.

The second factor is the absolute commitment of the military leadership to non-discrimination, regardless of race. One sign of this commitment is the use of an "equal-opportunity box" in officer evaluation reports. While such a box may not eradicate

deep prejudices, it alters outward behavior, for any noted display of racism will prevent an officer's promotion. Just as effective have been guidelines for promotion boards—"goals" that are supposed to approximate the minority representation in the eligible pool. If this looks like a quota by another name, one should note that the number of blacks promoted from captain to major, a virtual prerequisite for a full military career, is usually below goal. (The most plausible explanation for this is that about half of all black officers are products of historically black colleges, where a disproportionate number of more recent graduates fail to acquire the writing or communication skills necessary for promotion to staff jobs.) By contrast, promotions through colonel and general ranks come far closer to meeting goals. Significantly, the military has avoided the adoption of two promotion lists, one for blacks and one for whites.

While the army's system satisfies neither the pro- nor anti-quota viewpoints, it works.

Third, the armed forces developed an equal-opportunity educational program of unparalleled excellence. Courses with specially trained instructors were established throughout the training system during the time of racial troubles in the 1970s, and these courses stressed not who was at fault but what could be done. Mandatory race-relations courses sent a strong signal to black soldiers that the military was serious about equal opportunity.

The attractions of the military to African-Americans are worth pondering. To begin with, blacks find that there are enough other African-Americans in the military to provide a sense of social comfort and professional support. Just as important, though, they know that they are not in a "black-only" institution. They ap-



Blacks and whites served together in this U.S. Marine unit during the Korean War.

precipitate the fact that the military provides uplift in the form of discipline, direction, and fairly meted-out rewards—and does so without the stigma of a social uplift program. The justification of the military remains—at least to date—national defense, not welfare or social engineering.

One cannot exaggerate the importance of this last point in evaluating the lessons of recent black success in the military. For the driving force behind formal and actual integration of the armed forces was *not* social improvement or racial benevolence but necessity (notably manpower shortages in World War II and the Korean War) and the belated recognition of the military superiority of an integrated force to a segregated one. Put another way, it was the imperative of military effectiveness that led to equal opportunity, not the imperative of equal opportunity that led to greater military effectiveness. Overlooking this fact, political leaders and scholars have come to think of the military as a social laboratory, in which charged debates over gender roles and homosexuality and national service can not only be addressed but possibly resolved. This lack of clarity about the military's primary function is indeed a cardinal characteristic of the postmodern military. It is also potentially harmful to the long-term security interests of the nation.

The issue of women in the military—and particularly in fighting roles—is important. Recent history sets the stage of the current controversy.

When World War II broke out, the only women in the armed services were nurses. By the end of World War II, some 350,000 women had served in the various female auxiliary corps of the armed forces, performing duties that ranged from shuttling aircraft across the Atlantic to breaking enemy secret codes. Following the war, a two-percent ceiling on the number of women

in the military was set, and most women served in administrative, clerical, and health-care jobs. This situation remained basically unchanged until the advent of the all-volunteer force in 1973. Finding it difficult to recruit more than a few good men, the military allowed good women to fill the ranks. Today, women make up about 12 percent of the total armed forces.

Both before and after the draft was abolished, a number of important gender barriers within the military began to fall. Women entered the Reserve Officer Training Corps on civilian college campuses in 1972. Female cadets were accepted by the service academies in 1976. (Today, about one in seven academy entrants is a woman.) Congress abolished the separate women's auxiliary corps in 1978, and women were given virtually all assignments except direct combat roles. This meant that they were excluded from infantry, armored, and artillery units on land, from warships at sea, and from bombers and fighter planes in the air.

The combat exclusion rule, already opposed by feminist leaders and many women officers, came under renewed attack in the wake of the Gulf War. The performance of the some 35,000 women who served in that conflict received high praise from both the media and Pentagon officials. But surveys of soldiers who served in the Persian Gulf yield a murkier picture. Forty-five percent of those who were in mixed-gender units reported that "sexual activity had a negative impact" on unit morale. Over half rated women's performance as fair or poor, while only three percent gave such ratings to men. Nevertheless, almost as a direct result of the Gulf War, Congress lifted the ban on women in combat planes, even though service regulations effectively kept the ban in place.

The usual response to a thorny social impasse is a presidential commission, and,

true to form, one was established late in 1991: the President's Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Military. The 15-member panel (on which I served) took up three areas of consideration. The first was primarily factual. What, for example, were women's physical capabilities, and what would be the cost of modifying equipment or quarters to accommodate a woman's size or need for privacy?

A trickier area concerned questions of how mixed-gender groups would perform in combat. Here definitive answers are harder to come by, because apart from the defense of the homeland, no military force has ever used women in combat roles. Just as difficult to determine were matters related to the last area of concern: culture and values.

In addition to hearing opposing arguments, the commission sponsored a poll to determine whether the American public was willing to accept women in combat roles for the sake of equal opportunity. The answer that the Roper Organization came up with was a qualified yes. Three findings deserve mention. First, the public was split pretty much down the middle on the question of whether the combat-exclusion rule should be lifted. A large majority favored giving women the option to volunteer for combat arms, as long as no woman was ever compelled to assume a combat role. Second, most people believed that women already served in combat roles. Third, most respondents were more concerned with family status than with gender limitations. Three-quarters opposed mothers serving in combat; 43 percent felt the same way about fathers doing so.

By contrast with the general public, army women are much more wary about women in combat roles. One 1992 survey found that only four percent of enlisted women and 11 percent of female officers said they would volunteer for combat. But

like the larger population, most military women favored a voluntary option.

The same survey disclosed that almost all army women—by a margin of 15 to one—opposed the adoption of uniform physical standards for men and women. Ironically, it was in support of such standards that two opposed groups within the policy community were rapidly coming to a consensus. Feminists supported it because of its egalitarian purity. Conservatives liked it because they believed it would reduce the number of women in the military across the board. Focusing on a strength definition of capability, both groups scanted the social and psychological problems that would likely arise with men and women fighting together in life-or-death situations.

Feminists and female senior officers do come together on the question of the *categorical* exclusion of women from direct combat roles. They believe that such exclusion is a limit on full citizenship. More recently, opponents of the exclusion rule, notably Representative Patricia Schroeder (D.-Colo.) of the House Armed Services Committee, have argued that if women were included in combat roles, sexual harassment would decline. But according to the 1992 survey of army women cited above, most respondents think the opposite is true—that sexual harassment would increase if women served in combat units. And in fact sexual harassment is far more common in the Coast Guard, the only service with no gender restrictions, than in any of the other services, at least as measured by reported incidents at the respective service academies.

Less dogmatic opponents of the exclusion rule favor trial programs, which on the surface sounds reasonable. Trial programs are not the same as combat, but they would tell us more than we now know. Yet even the most carefully prepared trials would

not address the biggest question: Should every woman soldier be made to take on the same combat liability that every male soldier does?

If the need arises, any male soldier, whether clerk-typist or mechanic, may be assigned to combat. True equality should mean that women soldiers incur the same liability. To allow women, but not men, the option of entering or not entering combat is not a realistic policy. As well as causing resentment among men, it would be hard to defend in a court of law. To allow both sexes to choose whether or not to go into combat would be the end of an effective military. Honesty requires that anti-ban advocates state openly that they want to put all female soldiers at the same combat risk—or that they do not.

By a one-vote margin last November, the presidential commission arrived at a surprisingly conservative recommendation: While approving of women's service on most warships (except submarines and amphibious vessels), it advised keeping women out of combat planes and ground combat units. President Bill Clinton has said that he will take the recommendation under consideration, but debate will surely continue before the matter is settled.

The vexed issue of homosexuals in the armed forces draws the post-modern military into another heated social controversy. And some of the solutions proposed would present just as great a problem to the military's combat effectiveness as do those proposed in the gender arena.

Again, some historical background. Up to World War II, the military treated homosexuality as a criminal act, punishable by imprisonment. During the war, however, service leaders came to adopt a psychiatric explanation of homosexuality: Discovered gays were either "treated" in hospitals or

given discharges "without honor." From the 1950s through the 1970s, gays—defined almost always as people who had engaged in homosexual activity—were discharged under less than honorable circumstances. In 1982, in an effort to bring about a more uniform policy, the Department of Defense issued new guidelines that for all practical purposes made stated sexual orientation, rather than behavior (unless it was overt), the defining quality of homosexuality. The policy stipulated that a service member who declared that he or she was gay would receive an honorable discharge if his or her record was otherwise unsullied. However, if a gay service member was caught in a compromising situation, he or she might receive a less than honorable discharge.

The exclusion of homosexuals from the military has come under intense criticism not only from gay-rights groups but from civil libertarians and champions of equal opportunity. The 1992 Democratic platform pledged to remove the gay ban. And a threshold was crossed when the 102nd Congress introduced House Resolution 271, which called for the Department of Defense to rescind the ban. Editorials in the national press and sympathetic television accounts of gays in the military have added pressure to abolish the restriction.

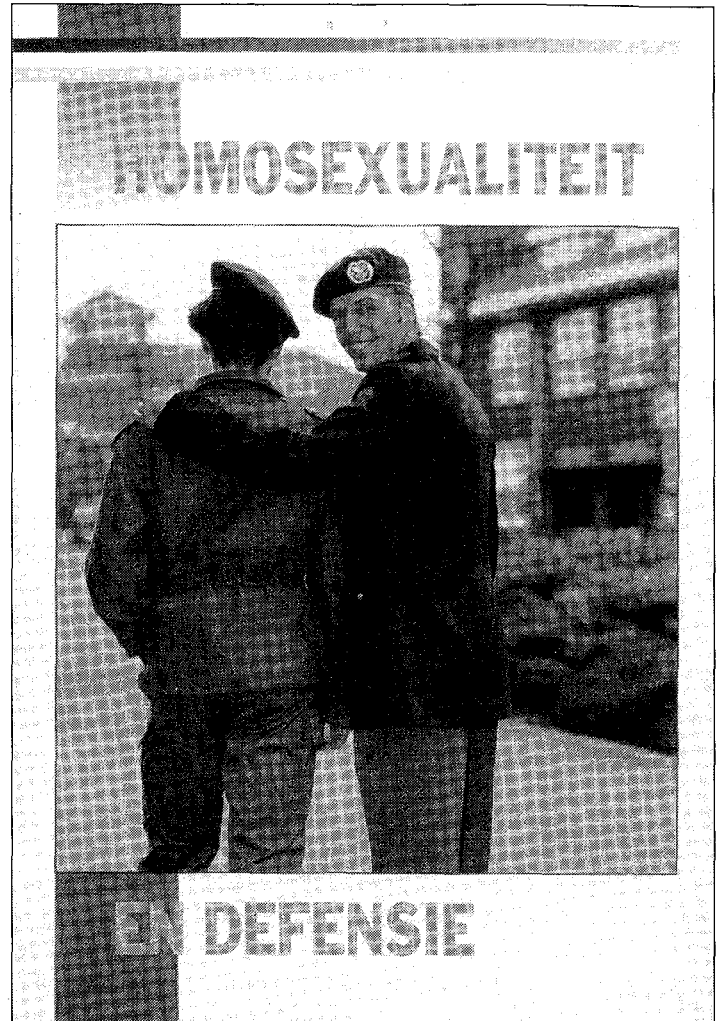
Public-opinion polls show that the number of Americans favoring the admission of gays into the armed forces has been creeping upward. By 1992, about two-thirds of those surveyed favored abolishing the ban. Support for repeal is strongest among women and whites, and weakest among males and minorities. Without question, the growing support for ending the ban reflects a generally more tolerant attitude among the general public, but it may also be a sign of how distant most of the citizenry has become from the realities of military service.

Certainly, some of the reasons for ex-

cluding gays do not stand up to scrutiny. The argument that homosexuals are susceptible to blackmail is illogical. (If there were no ban, a gay service member could not be manipulated by the threat of exposure.) No evidence exists that homosexuals, under present rules; have been greater security risks than anyone else. Furthermore, no one can prove that homosexuals are any less effective than heterosexuals as soldiers, sailors, airmen, or marines.

What is at issue today, however, is whether or not *declared* gays should be allowed to serve in the military. This is different from the question of tolerating the service of discreet homosexuals in uniform (though with some 1,000 gays being discharged each year, it is clear that not all are discreet). To condone discreet homosexuality in the services while opposing the official acceptance of declared homosexuals is to set oneself up for the charge of hypocrisy. And it probably does no good to say that a little hypocrisy may be the only thing that allows imperfect institutions to function in an imperfect world.

Whatever is done, policymakers should think twice before they invoke a misleading analogy between the dynamics of racial integration in the military and the proposed acceptance of overt homosexuality. Racial integration increased military efficiency;



This photograph appears on the cover of a brochure issued by the Dutch military to promote tolerance of homosexuality in the ranks. According to studies, one out of 10 Dutch service members is gay.

the acceptance of declared homosexuals will likely have the opposite effect, at least for a time. In a letter to General Powell last year, Representative Schroeder invoked the race analogy. His response was direct:

Skin color is a benign, non-behavioral characteristic. Sexual orientation is perhaps the most profound of human behavioral characteristics. Comparison of the two is a convenient but invalid argument. I believe the privacy rights of all Americans in uniform have to be considered,

especially since those rights are often infringed upon by conditions of military service.

At the very least, the lifting of the ban will create a controversy over the issue of privacy, which in turn could make recruitment (particularly among minorities) even more difficult than it is today. Just as most men and women dislike being stripped of all privacy before the opposite sex, so most heterosexual men and women dislike being exposed to homosexuals of their own sex. The solution of creating separate living quarters would be not only impractical but an invitation to derision, abuse, and deep division within the ranks.

There is also the problem of morale and group cohesion. Voicing the conservative position, David Hackworth, a highly decorated veteran who writes on military affairs for *Newsweek*, acknowledges that equal-rights arguments are eloquent and theoretically persuasive. The only problem, he insists, is that the military is like no other institution. "One doesn't need to be a field marshal to understand that sex between service members undermines those critical factors that produce discipline, military orders, spirit, and combat effectiveness."

Foes of the ban point to the acceptance of homosexuals in the armed forces of such countries as the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Israel. In the Netherlands, an alleged 10 percent of the military is gay (though nine out of 10, studies say, remain undeclared), and a four-day seminar stressing sensitivity toward minorities, including gays, is mandatory in all Dutch services. Harmony is said to reign throughout the tolerant ranks of the Dutch army.

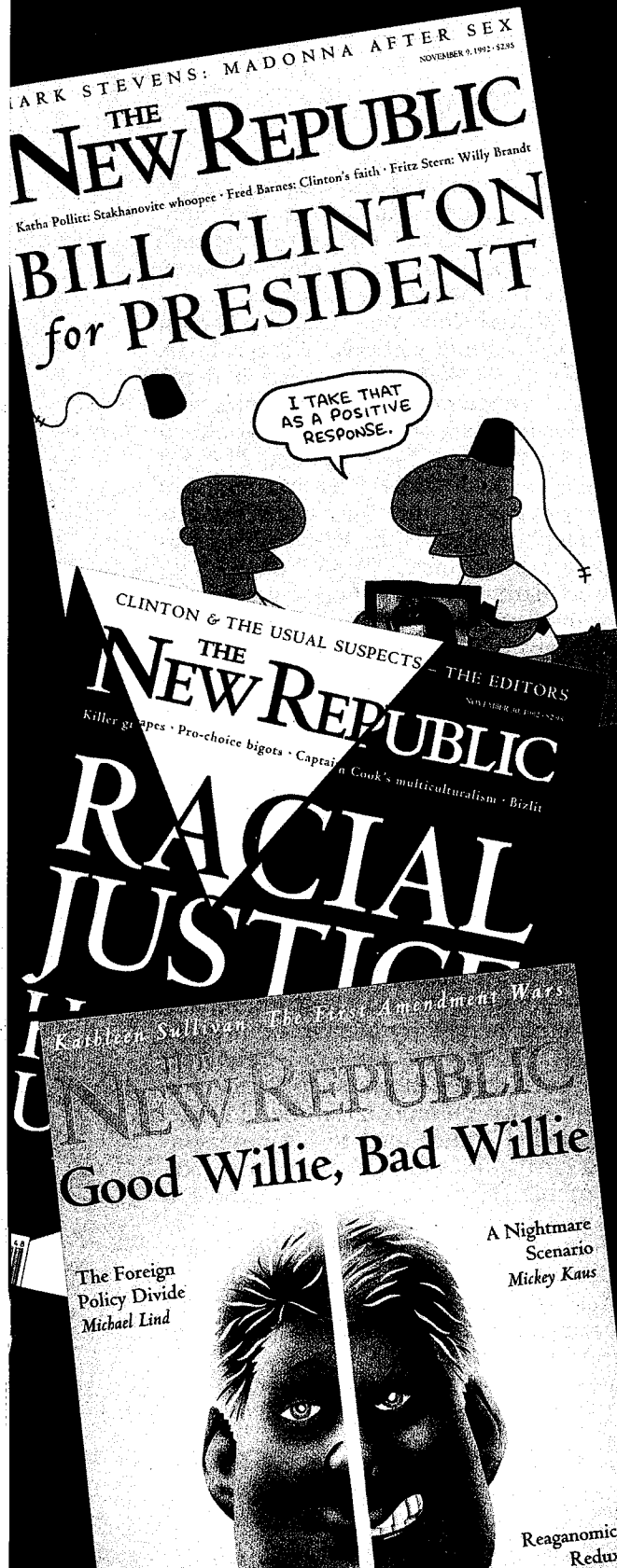
Those who object to the validity of national comparisons charge that the Dutch and Scandinavian cultures are far more progressive and tolerant than is main-

stream American culture. Furthermore, they say, neither the Dutch nor Scandinavian armies have been in the thick of combat in recent decades. These objections are partially invalidated by the example of Israel's military, which inducts declared homosexuals. Israel is a conservative society, and its troops are among the most combat-seasoned in the world. Yet while it is true that gays in Israel are expected to fulfill their military obligation, it is also true that they receive de facto special treatment. For example, gays are excluded from elite combat units, and most sleep at their own homes rather than in barracks.

It is likely that the United States will soon follow the example of these and other nations and rescind the gay ban, despite widespread resistance within the U.S. military. One can of course argue that the United States now has such a decisive strategic advantage over any potential enemy that it can well afford to advance the cause of equal opportunity at possible cost to military effectiveness. Still, such a risk must be acknowledged.

Because we live at a time when the combat mission of the armed forces appears to be of secondary importance, it is easy for citizens and their leaders to assume that the military can function like any other private or public organization. But we must face certain realities if we accept this assumption. We must decide, for one, whether we will be willing to restore compulsory national service if dropping the gay ban makes recruitment even more difficult than it now is. (Most nations without such a ban do have obligatory national service, the military being an option in many cases.) Unless such realities are faced, we can only hope that our postmodern military never has to face the uncivil reality of war.

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CURRENT BOOKS

Savior of Modern France

DE GAULLE. Vol. I: The Rebel, 1899–1944. Vol II: The Ruler, 1945–1970. By Jean Lacouture. Norton. 614 pp.; 640 pp. \$29.95 each

As a subject, Charles de Gaulle meets all the Aristotelian requirements for the tragic hero: the man who reaches high estate, then falls from it, generally through some inbuilt flaw. The brave soul attempting the definitive biography of such a man faces many problems. First, millions of words have already been written about de Gaulle (even while considerable archival material remains locked up in the family vaults). Second, there were at least four separate de Gaulles: the professional soldier; the military thinker and visionary; the Man of June 1940, rallying point of Free France; and the politician and national leader of the postwar era. To make matters harder, each one of these de Gaulles wore masks of great complexity.

De Gaulle was born on November 22, 1890, the son of a Parisian schoolmaster, and though he missed being of the sign of Scorpio by one day, he displayed throughout his life many of the supposed traits of that astrological sign—brilliance, passion, arrogance, and a terrible tendency to self-destruction. It was this last trait, sadly, that marked the end of de Gaulle's extraordinary career.

He always had, in his own widely circulated words, "a certain idea of France." It was one of lofty, scornful, and virtually unattainable sublimity. His idealism almost inevitably brought on disillusion: The French were not quite good enough for France (a view that is occasionally shared by exasperated tourists). To a more paranoid degree, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin had similar doubts about their own countrymen; Stalin even did something about his misgivings, to the grave misfortune of

10 million Soviet citizens. This, however, is where any such invidious parallel ends. Whatever Franklin D. Roosevelt may have thought about him, de Gaulle was never, and never wished to be, a dictator.

De Gaulle stood out from the earliest days of his military career. A major at St. Cyr, France's West Point, described the graduating cadet as already "calm and forceful in command." The young officer had one supreme hero, Colonel Philippe Pétain, the commander who preached that "firepower kills." At a time when the prevailing philosophy of the French army was to attack "regardless of cost," this was an almost heretically unorthodox doctrine—that lives could be saved by massive artillery preparation. Pétain's strategy was to save (almost too late) the lives of many hundreds of thousands of French soldiers in World War I. It was to Pétain's 33rd Regiment that de Gaulle specifically asked to be sent and in which he was wounded and captured during the terrible battle of Verdun, in March 1916. As a POW, de Gaulle spent the rest of the war in Germany, ruminating on military theory as well as on that "certain idea."

Jean Lacouture, formerly the foreign editor of *Le Monde*, honed his biographical skills with books on two French premiers, Léon Blum and Pierre Mendès-France. He handles skillfully the long and ultimately tragic relationship between de Gaulle and Pétain, which culminated in the old marshal's being condemned to life imprisonment for the treason of 1940 under the aegis of his former pupil, now become France's leader. Lacouture disproves the "persistent legend" (which I had always believed) that Pétain was made godfather to his namesake, Philippe de Gaulle. But he also suggests that the initial break between the two men in the 1920s and '30s came not so much over a matter of doc-

trine as over a dispute about the authorship of a book they had co-authored. De Gaulle is also shown to be more of an adherent to the Pétainesque school of fixed defense than the dedicated prophet of the war of movement that he has been held to be.

I have long felt that the Gaullist *mythomanes* of post-1945 have done history a disservice by inflating the second de Gaulle, the military thinker of the interwar period, into a greater figure than he really was. There is, for instance, in de Gaulle's much-quoted *The Army of the Future*, the small but important matter of the "fudged" paragraph on the significance of close-support airpower. This is not to be found in the original 1935 edition but was inserted in the post-1945 edition. In May 1940, however, de Gaulle was in full agreement with General Maurice Gamelin's mistaken strategy of pushing deep into Belgium, thereby doing precisely what Hitler wanted. In the two famous tank attacks (short and sharp) on which de Gaulle's reputation as a military commander largely rests, Lacouture shows him courageous to a fault, but fumbling. Lacouture acidly dismisses the romantic-minded General Edward Spears's account of de Gaulle's being hauled into the London-bound plane that June as "more like an after-dinner conversation at the Reform Club, scented with cigar smoke, than a piece of history."

The third de Gaulle, the Man of Free France, stands intact in Lacouture's pages—magnificent, indomitable, and impossible. Concerning de Gaulle and Churchill's relationship during this period, Lacouture sees Winston Churchill as "one of those Englishmen . . . who have a consuming, and at the same time slightly condescending, passion for France." (Lacouture is himself a trifle condescending toward the British, but not unfair.) The British were amazed by the ill will of de Gaulle's outfit and, once in a while, by its anti-Semitism, though de Gaulle himself



was always blameless here.

Of particular interest to American readers is Lacouture's view of de Gaulle's relationship with President Roosevelt. Churchill and de Gaulle were, he reckons "two dominant pugnacious characters expressing two different histories." But with FDR it was more than just "a clash of dominant personalities." Roosevelt convinced himself that de Gaulle intended to set himself up as a new Bonaparte. Of de Gaulle, Roosevelt said, "There is no man in whom I have less confidence." The feeling was mutual. Lacouture reproves Roosevelt not only for his resolute refusal to accept France's continuance as a great power but for the tasteless joke he made at de Gaulle's expense in Casablanca in 1943. Roosevelt had insisted that de Gaulle and his arch-rival for leadership of the Free French, General Henri-Honoré Giraud, be made to shake hands in front of the press cameras. Then, on repeated occasions, Roosevelt referred with manifest glee to the unwilling "Bride" and "Groom" and the "shotgun wedding." De Gaulle never forgot or forgave FDR's crassness. It was a

cancer that gnawed away at him, resulting in his constant distrust of *les Anglo-saxons* and leading to his withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the 1960s. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan was tarred with the same brush, and 20 years after Casablanca, almost to the day, de Gaulle vetoed British entry into the European Economic Community. (I may be prejudiced as the biographer of Macmillan, but I feel Lacouture has done Macmillan insufficient justice for having repeatedly saved his subject from the wrath of Churchill and Roosevelt during the war years.)

In Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lacouture tells us, de Gaulle found a much more sympathetic ally. "You are a man," de Gaulle declared with unwonted warmth after Eisenhower had made special, tactful dispensations for French troops to lead the way into Paris in August 1944. The old elephant remembered this too; after de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, the remaining years of Eisenhower's presidency were the most cordial of the Franco-American "special relationship."

As published in France, Lacouture's monumental biography ran to three thick volumes; skillful editing has reduced it to two for the "Anglo-Saxon" market. Volume II opens with de Gaulle celebrating the liberation of Paris in Notre Dame. Shots ring out; de Gaulle, unflinching, refuses to "yield to the panic of the crowd." The episode was symbolic of much that was to follow.

Gratitude, that least common of French public virtues, swiftly gave way to indignation as the Allies, not the Free French, liberated Brussels, and then even Strasbourg. This gave way to outrage, as FDR invited de Gaulle to meet him in Algiers (on France's *own* national territory!) and refused to have him invited to Yalta.

After little more than a year as president, trying to pull his shattered nation out of the morass of defeat and occupation, sickened by the wrangling of Third Republic politicians, de Gaulle abruptly turned on his heels and returned to

Colombey les Deux Églises. It was not a resignation, he explained; he had merely "handed back his mandate." Then, with a note of characteristic mysticism, he added that he owed it to France "to leave as a man morally intact." It was an act reminiscent of the scorpion stinging itself to death, Samson pulling down the temple upon his own head, and it was as great a miscalculation as that final act of self-destruction with which he rang down the curtain on the Gaullist era 23 years later, in 1969. "If only Napoleon had been able to take a year off, his whole fate would have been different," said de Gaulle in June 1946. That was about the limit of time, he reckoned, that *La Patrie* could do without him. He miscalculated. It would in fact be another 12 years, when France was on the verge of civil war over Algeria, before he would be called back.

Essentially the picture of the public man, Lacouture's biography is curiously (but also refreshingly) out of step with the current tell-all preoccupation with the subject's private life. We are given hints only that de Gaulle as a young man might have shared mistresses with his idol, Pétain (whose sexual appetites were legendary). About the only reference to family life comes during those agonizing years in the political wilderness, with the death in 1948 of his beloved daughter, Anne. De Gaulle adored this child, born a severely handicapped victim of Down's syndrome, and when she died he said to his wife, with touching simplicity: "Come, now she is like everybody else." Lacouture deals movingly with this display of gentleness on the part of an otherwise stern figure and shows de Gaulle admitting that, without the disabled little girl, "Perhaps I should not have done all that I have done. She made me understand so many things."

It was the Algerian War that returned him to power in a bitterly divided France in May 1958. Three times over the next three years de Gaulle brought France back from the edge of the abyss, but Algeria (to which Lacouture rightly devotes more than 100 pages) was not his finest hour. At

the zenith of his popularity, he lost vital months wavering over a policy. The savage, unwinnable war went on for another four years. A chapter well-titled "Zig-zagging to Peace" depicts de Gaulle infuriating friend and foe alike with his ambiguities, finally to pull out of Algeria on the worst terms. He was defeated by the persistent National Liberation Front as Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were to be later by the North Vietnamese—who learned valuable lessons on hard bargaining from the Algerians.

When de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, that wise old Washington owl Joseph Alsop declared that "old relations between France and her Allies are at an end." Haunted by the ghost of FDR, de Gaulle conducted his policy of French national interest convinced that America would sooner or later retreat behind its own frontiers. He slammed the door to Europe in the face of Macmillan, his friend and wartime savior. His relations with John Kennedy were bad, and with Lyndon Johnson terrible. There was a brief reconciliation with Nixon, but events overtook it.

By spring 1968, in the words of Lacouture's own newspaper, *Le Monde*, France was "bored"—a condition that in previous French history has often been followed by dramatic events. The "Events of May"—the riots in which workers joined with students—all but swept de Gaulle out of power. As he admitted to Premier Georges Pompidou, "For the first time in my life, my nerve failed me. I am not very proud of myself." In baffling circumstances, he flew off to Germany to throw himself on the mercy of General Jacques Massu, the army commander. What remains unclear is de Gaulle's real intentions behind this precipitous visit to Massu. Lacouture seems to think that he was seriously contemplating flight to his ancestral Ireland. But the granite-like Massu turned him around, and in Paris the day was won by an unexpected rallying to the Gaullist flag.

There have been few more dramatic moments in all of France's exciting his-

tory. Nevertheless, the old titan was discredited. The following year he undertook his fatal referendum on a minor issue (reform of the Senate). On it was staked his political survival. Predictably, he lost. His old colleague, André Malraux saw it as "suicide." Once again it was the desperate, terminal act of the scorpion, of Samson Agonistes.

Rather self-pityingly he regarded himself as being like "the character of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*; all I have brought back is a skeleton." The following November he died, two weeks before his 80th birthday. In his disdain for the men of the Fifth Republic (which he himself had created), he insisted on a private funeral, rather than have them trampling through the churchyard of his beloved Colombey.

Macmillan once said of de Gaulle, "He talks of Europe and means France." To him, France meant everything. In a world where patriotism had become almost a dirty word, he was a supreme patriot. Almost single-handedly, with his "certain idea of France," he brought the country up again from the nadir of 1940. Infuriating as he was, and sometimes surprising in his pettiness, he remains a man of rare grandeur. That no one can take from him.

To his great credit, Lacouture, though he criticizes and occasionally challenges, never detracts from that essential quality. If there is a major fault to be found with this biography, it is a notably French one—that special insularity that predisposes French historians to ignore what is written by foreigners and that often results in a serious impoverishment of native endeavor. But it has to be said, in sum, that this is a major work that rises admirably to the almost impossible challenge of its great subject. *Faute de mieux*, and that is likely to be the case for a long time, it will remain essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the tortuous history of France during the three-quarters of a century from 1914 to the present day.

What are we finally to make of de Gaulle's place in history nearly 25 years since his passing from the scene? In his

time, he caused great damage to the unity of the West. But, undeniably, the fact that France is once again a great power is largely due to de Gaulle and his influence. His stature probably saved the country from civil war in the aftermath of the 1944 liberation and almost certainly again in 1958 and 1961 during the Algerian War. He extricated France from the Algerian morass, albeit untidily and at enormous cost. His last legacy was to provide France with a strong, workable constitution to replace the anarchy of the Third and Fourth

Republics. It is an irony of fate that the principal beneficiary of this constitution should have been a leader of the Socialists he so despised, President François Mitterrand—while his own heirs stand divided over the legacy he left them.

—Alistair Horne, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is a historian and honorary Fellow of St. Anthony's College, Oxford. He is the author of the two-volume biography of Harold Macmillan (1988–89).

A Woman's Place Was in the Temple

A HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE WEST. Vol. I: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints. Edited by Pauline Schmitt Pantel. Trans. by Arthur Goldhammer. Harvard. 572 pp. \$29.95

HER SHARE OF THE BLESSINGS: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World. By Ross Shepard Kraemer. Oxford. 275 pp. \$24.95

If until the present century no one wrote a history of women in Greco-Roman antiquity, perhaps it was because there seemed so little to say. Women spent their lives then, and for centuries after, bearing, nursing, and raising children. Poor women performed other strenuous chores, as time and strength allowed. Richer women enjoyed their leisure; a few even read and wrote. But virtually all were excluded from civic life, unless they were closely related to men in power. The advent of Christianity brought little change, except in one respect: Women were excluded from the leading role they had formerly played in religion.

The notion that monotheism is superior to polytheism has kept us from seeing paganism as the social and moral equal of our own religions. Because pagan rites and myths were classified as mere superstition, the role that women played in an-

cient religion was largely overlooked. Recently, scholars have returned to ancient women some of the credit they deserve. But the diffuse nature of the ancient evidence has not made the task easy. Because most women did not write, there are no eyewitness narratives of what they thought and felt when they enacted their characteristic rituals.

We will probably never know what it was like to be a priestess in the Athens of the fourth century B.C. officiating at the sacrifices on behalf of the city or enacting the role of the bride of the god Dionysus. Nor are we likely to find out why (some 500 years later) a woman gave up her own name to become priestess of the goddess Demeter, charged with initiating the Roman Emperor Hadrian into the Eleusinian mysteries. Did women who bound ivy in their hair and carried ritual wands in honor of Dionysus experience the destructive ecstasy that makes Euripides' drama *The Bacchae* (406–05 B.C.) so terrifying? Or did they simply regard these and similar orgiastic rituals as holiday outings? Such evidence as we now have makes it impossible to provide authoritative answers.

Yet because the gods and goddesses, with few exceptions, required priests or priestesses of the same sex as themselves, we do know that women had a central role in the sacred life of many polytheistic com-

munities. Being a priestess was usually a part-time job, limited to duties such as putting new wreaths on sacred images, lighting torches, or washing cult statues. (In Athens "laundress" was an honorific title.) For Athens's annual festival, the Panathenaea, girls from the best families were elected by the assembly to weave a new robe for the goddess Athena and to carry the sacred objects in the long procession from the marketplace to her temple on the Acropolis. It was an honor for a young woman to bear the basket of barley in which the sacrificial knife was concealed. Even though women did not actually slaughter the animals, their ritual presence at sacrifices was required, and priestesses were often given a particularly choice portion of the sacrificial meal. In the city of Argos, the calendar year was measured by the tenure of the priestess of Hera, the most important goddess in the city. In Rome the six vestal virgins received civic honors and ritual privileges virtually equal to those of men; they even assisted in the butchering ritual and thus helped to secure the gods' favor for the Roman state. In the early Empire, priestly titles, including "father of fathers," were awarded to the wealthy women who underwrote the costs of civic cults and public works.

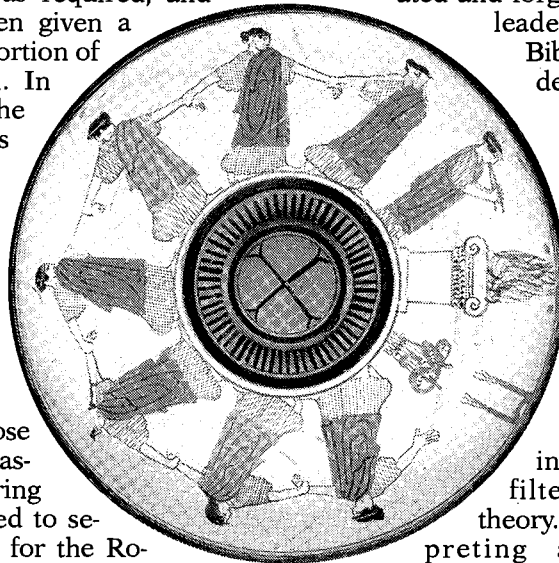
By contrast, the role allotted to women by the early Christian church was circumscribed and marginal. Only men could officiate in rituals or hold high ecclesiastical office. Women in full-time service to the church had to be as celibate as the six Roman vestals, but they enjoyed none of the vestals' special privileges.

A History of Women: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints—the first in a five-volume history of Western women

from antiquity to modernity—employs various perspectives to understand the place of women in ancient religion. Anthropologist Louise Bruit Zaidman discusses the contrast that ran through the whole Greco-Roman world between the important role played by women in ritual and their exclusion from politics. She shows how marriage and other rituals helped to "tame" young women for their mature roles as wife and mother. Monique Alexandre, a historian of ancient religions, describes how those roles played by women in the early church became increasingly subordinated to the male priesthood as the pagan tradition was repudiated and forgotten. Male Christian leaders used the Hebrew Bible as authority in order to forbid women to teach and to administer the sacraments.

If other essays here are less successful in conveying a sense of what women's lives were like, it may be because their authors look at the evidence from a distance and interpret it through the filter of contemporary theory. The dangers of interpreting ancient evidence

through a grid of modern construction are also apparent in *Her Share of the Blessings*, Ross Shepard Kraemer's survey of "women's religions among pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Christian world." Kraemer, a professor of religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania, approaches the ancient sources from both a feminist and an anthropological perspective. Her vantage point often keeps her from seeing that practices that seem negative to us may even have had a positive value (or vice versa) in the ancient world. Kraemer ponders, for example, the significance of St. Paul's insistence that women wear veils in the "assembly" of the



faithful (1 Corinthians 11:5-10). Following anthropologist Mary Douglas's "insight that the human body is par excellence the symbol of the social body," she argues that St. Paul would have required women to wear veils as a sign of subordination. Yet as historian Aline Rousselle points out in "Body Politics in Ancient Rome" (in *A History of Women*), veils and head coverings in fact served as a protection, warning men that these women were untouchable under Roman law.

Kraemer's avowedly feminist perspective tends to make the women she studies more independent or self-assertive than they may ever have wanted to be. In particular, Kraemer seems determined to present Jewish and Christian women as equal in power to their pagan counterparts, and she argues that certain anomalies in certain Jewish rituals preserve aspects of lost "goddess" cults. She tries hard to believe that anonymous texts that pay some attention to women were written by women, though of course no one can prove that they were (or were not).

I wish she had listened more closely to one voice of a religious woman that has come down to us, that of St. Perpetua of Carthage (martyred A.D. 203). Perpetua is

in fact allowed to speak the final words in *A History of Women*. Like her pagan predecessors, she derived honor and glory from her religious service without ever defying the men in her religious community or the dominant values of her society. In the text of her martyrology, which preserves part of her diary, Perpetua describes her imprisonment and trial by the Romans and her rejection of her family. But for all her independence and determination, Perpetua obeys and respects her male deacons. Although she dreams that her faith can transform her into a man who is capable of defeating the devil in single combat, she never questions the monotheistic male-dominated faith that caused her to abandon her baby and die a horrible death in the arena. Ultimately, neither feminist theory nor abstract behavioral grids can explain her decision to die. Like the men who died in the arena with her, she was a convert, a religious fanatic who believed that her faith could lead her away from her present troubles to a new and more glorious life.

—*Mary Lefkowitz is an Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College and the author of Women in Greek Myth (1986).*

OTHER TITLES

History

DIDEROT: A Critical Biography. By P. N. Furbank. Knopf. 524 pp. \$30

Aufklärung, lumières, the Enlightenment—so the various European languages name the rational and secular development of 18th-century thought that made the modern world literally

"thinkable." But only in English is the definite article affixed to imply a uniform historical movement. Nothing can refute the monolithic image of *the* Enlightenment better than the example of Denis Diderot (1713–84). Voltaire was crusadingly and invariably right; Montesquieu, admirably logical and a bit dull; Rousseau, dependably contrary. But Diderot's mind, as biographer Furbank shows, was like fireworks go-

ing off in all directions at once.

The son of a master cutler in Langres, Diderot was destined for the Church or the law. Both fates he eluded by escaping into the literary bohemia of Paris, where until his early thirties he barely managed to support his disorderly existence. (Though an atheist, he wrote sermons for missionaries for 50 *écus* each; a pornographic novel dashed off in two weeks earned him temporary lodgings in prison.) In 1746, a publisher commissioned him to oversee the translation of Ephraim Chamber's *Cyclopaedia*. The simple work of translation be-



came a labor of 15 years and eventually resulted in 60,000 articles either written or commissioned by Diderot on an unprecedented variety of subjects. As Voltaire observed, they passed "from the heights of metaphysics to the weaver's loom, and from thence to the theatre." Of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Thomas Carlyle said that "only the Siege of Troy may offer some faint parallel."

Furbank makes rather short work of Diderot's fascinating life—including his comic quarrel with his royal patron, Catherine of Russia—condensing it all into a few chapters. Furbank also makes the *Encyclopédie* seem almost a

waste of his hero's time. What interests Furbank is "not so much what he [Diderot] 'represented' as what he achieved," that is, "the works he will live by, *has* lived by." After all, few readers today seek out the *Encyclopédie*. Furbank concentrates on those works by Diderot that were little-known or unpublished while he was alive: novels such as *Rameau's Nephew*, philosophical speculations such as *D'Alembert's Dream*, plays, paradoxical dialogues, polemical tracts, and scientific research. In such works, Diderot seems at times to have anticipated nearly the entire future world—Darwin's theory of evolution, the *nouveau roman* of the 20th century, the Braille system of writing, and the cinematic montage of Sergei Eisenstein. He was the first art critic, the first modern thinker to suggest the molecular structure of matter, and his theory of dreams would later influence Freud. In his *Supplement to Bougainville's "Voyage,"* Diderot registered an early protest against colonialism, on the then-odd grounds that civilization should not be imposed on those who are free of repression. His last words were, supposedly, "The first step toward philosophy is incredulity." For all the originality that Furbank reveals in them, however, Diderot's works still seem united by the common Enlightenment faith that, if men could be made to think more clearly, they might then live more peaceably.

THE SUBVERSIVE FAMILY: An Alternative History of Love and Marriage. By Ferdinand Mount. Free Press. 282 pp. \$24.95

Ferdinand Mount's alternative history of the family may not quite live up to the publisher's claim that it is one of "the most influential works of social history in recent times." But since its publication in England (1982), it has seriously challenged the progressive view that the nuclear family is a distinctively modern development. Mount, the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, provides not so much a history as a set of essays elaborating a central proposition: A conspiracy of "family-haters"—among them he numbers Jesus, Plato, Marx, Hitler, and radical feminists—has attempted to replace the family's key role in society with various ideologically motivated organizations. But

the family, with its selfish internal loyalties, Mount asserts, "is the enduring permanent enemy of all hierarchies, churches, and ideologies."

Mount is not a professional historian, but he has joined one of the most hotly contested battles of contemporary historiography. According to the now-conventional wisdom, spouses in the premodern world were chosen for economic rather than emotional reasons, and children were relatively unloved. Mount ransacks the letters of previous centuries as well as diaries, court papers, bawdy tales, and urn inscriptions to refute this view. Along the way he discards as myths such notions that arranged marriages were the norm until this century, that child care is a modern invention, and that romantic love never existed before the troubadour poets glorified adultery. He marshals persuasive evidence that, despite readily available divorce, the family stays together longer now than in earlier periods—when death efficiently did the work of divorce.

Mount brings to his controversial subject all the virtues and vices of the old-style *literateur's* impressionistic approach. And in the end, his interpretation is elusive: Mount is plainly a partisan of "family values," yet not a conventional conservative. His tone is resolutely skeptical of all social engineering. He attacks the Christian churches and Edmund Burke as fiercely as he does encounter-group therapy. And he is apparently happy with spiralling divorce rates, as long as the family is left alone, while it lasts. The contemporary "fallible marriage, in which equality, privacy and independence are sought, with . . . little or no attention to social expectation," he writes, "derives from that most modern, most protestant of reasons, the dignity of the individual." If there is such a thing as a romantic realist, Mount seems to be one.

FRONTIERS: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People. By Noël Mostert. Knopf. 1,355 pp. \$35

As a country suffering from far too much history, South Africa has not been served particularly well by its chroniclers. The exhaustive but plodding analyses of historians do not attract a broad public, while journalists who convey the

sheer drama of the country's politics lack historical feel and method. Into the exclusive club of books that transcend these limitations—such as C. W. de Kiewiet's *History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (1941) and Rian Malan's, *My Traitor's Heart* (1990)—now comes Noël Mostert's *Frontiers*. A South African emigré and author of *Supership* (1974), Mostert breaks free of parochialism to study the Eastern Cape's history from the perspective of those larger forces that have shaped the African hemisphere and, indeed, the modern world.

Unlike the American frontiersmen, the European colonists expanding eastward from the tip of the African continent wanted the labor of indigenous peoples as well as their land. The Xhosa were, like the Zulu, one of Africa's most numerous and sophisticated black nations. Living in densely populated fixed settlements, they possessed far greater capacity to resist encroachment than did the native Americans. Between the 1770s and 1870s, nine frontier wars flared, as first Dutch colonists and then the British army struggled to subjugate the Xhosa people. The cataclysmic event in this Hundred Years' War took place during the 1850s when Xhosa prophets urged their own people to destroy all their cattle and foodstocks. They believed the Xhosa's remorseless dispossession would be overturned by supernatural agency: Everything lost would be returned many-fold and the white man expelled from the lands he had stolen. The prophecies proved false. Thousands of Xhosas starved, and many survivors had no choice but to work as menial laborers.

By 1880 Xhosa resistance was completely broken. Their society and culture largely destroyed, they became the first major Bantu-speaking people to be drawn into serving in the diamond and gold mines and on white farms. In the cities the Xhosa were among the earliest to become fully "proletarianized"; in their rump homeland in the Eastern Cape, missionaries and teachers made rapid headway in spreading Western values and consumer needs. As South Africa's first black nation to become "modernized," the Xhosa have formed the mainspring of African nationalist movements from the 1880s to the present African National Congress. According to some, the word *Xhosa* means "angry men"—which seems an apt name for the people whose militancy and resil-

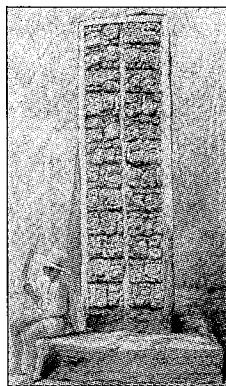
ience is perhaps unparalleled on the entire African continent. And without their angry history, one of the world's most admired men, Nelson Mandela, might be an unknown Xhosa shepherd tending his flocks today.

BREAKING THE MAYA CODE. By Michael D. Coe. Thames and Hudson. 304 pp. \$24.95

The story begins in 1519 with Hernan Cortéz looting treasures from the New World. Among the least prized items he sent back to Spain were codices with Mayan hieroglyphics, which simply lay for centuries in dusty vaults and libraries, unreadable and meaningless. In 1859, however, in Madrid, a lost 16th-century manuscript was uncovered in which a Jesuit priest had done the seemingly inconceivable, deciphering the hieroglyphs into an alphabet. Now comes the oddest part of the story: Nobody, for another century, used this "Rosetta stone" to decode the Mayas' ancient language

The reason for the long delay lies with the nascent "science" of anthropology, which, already by 1860 and for long after, was dominated by Darwinist assumptions. Expressing a nearly universal bias, Ignace Gelb wrote in *A Study of Writing* (1952) that the Maya were "suspended from the lowest branches of the evolutionary tree." New World peoples were considered too culturally underdeveloped to have created a writing system based on phonetics. The premier Maya scholar, Eric Thompson—Sir Eric, after being knighted by Queen Elizabeth—used the power of his position at the Carnegie Institution in Washington and the force of his personality to discredit anyone who dared suggest that Mayan hieroglyphics represented phonetic speech and not universal ideas and calendrical signs.

Yet during the 1950s a young Russian scholar who had never seen a Mayan ruin challenged the accepted view. Cut off from Thompson's influence by the enforced insular-



ity of Soviet society, Yuri Knorosov treated the hieroglyphs as an alphabet and began to decipher the language. (The glyphs, Knorosov showed, actually correspond more to syllables than to alphabetical letters.) It was not until Thompson's death in 1975, however, that Knorosov's work became generally accepted. Then the deciphering and translations began in earnest, and newspapers trumpeted the breakthrough. Today, we know the Mayas had a rich written history. Indeed, the same Jesuit priest in Mexico who originally deciphered the Mayan alphabet also staged an *auto da fé* in 1562, burning as native idolatry an entire library of Mayan books. We now know the names of Mayan cities and their kings. (Before 1960, the figures on Mayan stelae were assumed to be gods, not people.) We also know that theirs was far from the peaceful society that every Maya scholar (inferring from a lack of visible military structures) had once assumed.

Coe, a Yale anthropologist, personally knew most of the recent players in the saga of the code, both the old mandarins and the young turks. His recounting of an extremely technical story is both accessible and dramatic—an accomplishment almost as impressive as the breaking of the code itself.

Arts & Letters

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood. By Maria Tatar. Princeton. 295 pp. \$24.95

FORBIDDEN JOURNEYS: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers. Ed. by Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepfelmacher. Univ. of Chicago. 373 pp. \$27.50

Why do we tell fairy tales to our children? Once upon a time, that question had a simple answer: to lull the little dears to sweet sleep and innocent dreams. But for the past 16 years, since Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), fairy tales have seemed a darker, more ambiguous literature.

Bettelheim would take a traditional favorite, say "Hansel and Gretel," and reveal that it was quite *uninnocent*—that, in this case, it was a frightening tale of child abandonment. Bettelheim skipped over the misdeeds of Han-



sel and Gretel's parents and focused on the "destructive desires" and "uncontrolled cravings" of the children. Bettelheim insisted that such an accusatory meaning satisfies the child's psychological needs. "We want our children to believe that, inherently, all men are good. But children know that *they* are not always good and often, even when they are, they would prefer not to be." Stories such as "Hansel and Gretel" "enlighten him [the child] about himself, and foster his personality development."

Tatar, a professor of German literature at Harvard, rejects Bettelheim's treatment of fairy tales as "Freudian Oedipal plots." Her own interpretation of fairy tales is more sociological. Adults, not children, write the fairy tales, and they intend them to be used, she argues, for "productive socialization." But to understand how such socialization works—and why it often does not—it is necessary to return the stories to the cultures and contexts from which they emerged. Many children's classics narrate ambiguous, even frightening situations because they began as bawdy tavern entertainments and only later (and only half-successfully) were transformed into moral instruction and entertainments for children. "Hansel and Gretel" came into being during a time when childbirth was a leading cause of death for biological mothers, and stories with stepmothers, Tatar points out, were familiar to listeners. In fact, the evil stepmother may have helped children deal with the tensions in the mixed early modern families.

For specific examples of fairy tales harnessed to an agenda, one can turn to *Forbidden Journeys*. During the 19th century, while men wrote the "real literature," it was left to women to

compose stories for children. (Oddly, however, the most acclaimed Victorian children's fantasies—Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*, and James Barrie's *Peter Pan*—were composed by three quite eccentric gentlemen.) Auerbach and Knoepfmacher, English professors at the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton, respectively, have garnered selections from eight Victorian women writers who used the fairy-tale form to launch attacks on contemporary society. In her reworking of the familiar "Beauty and the Beast," Anne Thackeray Ritchie (the daughter of William Thackeray) depicted Belle's penurious family in a way that poked fun at English class consciousness. Christina Rossetti (poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti's sister) in "Nick" departed from Charles Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, in which Scrooge repents after seeing the evil of his ways. Rossetti's hero, in a satire on middle-class materialism, repents only because his evil ways do not gain him the ends that he desires.

Bettelheim interpreted fairy tales as a kind of psychotherapy by which children come to terms with their fantasies of desire and revenge. Both *Off With Their Heads!* and *Forbidden Journeys*—one by analysis, the other by example—challenge Bettelheim's ahistorical assumptions and replace them with actual examples of how parents of each age worked the children's literature into a form they found acceptable. On this matter, children themselves—in Ritchie's and Rossetti's view, latent rebels; in Tatar's, docile citizens-in-the-making—have yet to be heard from.

A LOT TO ASK: A Life of Barbara Pym. By Hazel Holt. Dutton. 308 pp. \$19.95

BARBARA PYM: A Critical Biography. By Anne M. Wyatt-Brown. Univ. of Mo. 209 pp. \$29.95

Mildred Lathbury is one of those cheerful, helpful women whom people invariably take for granted. An unmarried London churchwoman, she volunteers at a charitable agency that assists impoverished gentlewomen and otherwise comforts herself with a round of teas and church gatherings. At night, she reads herself to sleep with cookbooks. And while she hasn't

quite surrendered every hope of marriage, one male friend suggests, unhelpfully, "But my dear Mildred, *you* mustn't marry . . . I always think of you as being so very balanced and sensible, such an excellent woman."

Miss Lathbury sounds like a character who would inhabit a very dull novel. In fact, she is the humorous heroine of Barbara Pym's *Excellent Women* (1952), which, with its ironic observations, deep feeling, high spirits, and compassion for the unfulfilled wish, is both lively and comforting. "Good books for a bad day," Pym called her novels, and her 12 books—bounded by church jumble sales, cozy neighborhood or office intrigues, and that vanishing breed of excellent women—have won Pym a wide, devoted readership. "As we cryptically say 'Proustian' or 'Jamesian,'" the novelist Shirley Hazzard has written, "we may now say 'Barbara Pym' and be understood instantly."

Most critics, like her close friend Hazel Holt, have made Barbara Pym (1913–80) resemble one of her own heroines, who, though she might joke about being an "old brown spinster," enjoyed a full and resourceful life in London and later near Oxford. All of her resourcefulness would be required, for in 1963, already the author of six praised novels, she was deemed too old-fashioned for England's new "mod" and swinging mood. Publishers would not even accept her work. Yet she reacted neither with sadness nor bitterness, Holt notes. "That is not my way," Pym said and heroically kept on writing. Finally, in a 1977 *Times Literary Supplement* survey, both Lord David Cecil and Philip Larkin named her the most underrated English writer of the century. Suddenly her books were back in demand, enjoying an acclaim that has steadily increased.

Wyatt-Brown, the coordinator of Scholarly Writing at the University of Florida, objects to critics such as Holt who dress Pym up as one of her own contented heroines. "Genteel, sanitized studies," Wyatt-Brown says, ignore the depression and dissatisfactions that gave Pym the insight and the necessity to create characters such as Mildred Lathbury. Pym wrestled throughout her life with intractable problems—loneliness, dependency upon (often unavailable) men, headaches, writer's block—and she worked hard to develop "her comic vision. Her humor was based on an acceptance of suf-

fering and did not come easily to her." Wyatt-Brown's sharper, more nuanced interpretation shows how an artist's transformations of difficult experience may not necessarily bring relief from life's often painful toll.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY JAMES AND HENRY ADAMS, 1877–1914.

Ed. by George Monteiro. LSU Press. 107 pp. \$20

Never has letter-writing sparkled with more brilliance than when Henry wrote Henry. From a distance, the lives of the two correspondents, the historian Henry Adams (1838–1918) and the novelist Henry James (1843–1916), seem almost interchangeable. Both men grew up amid wealth and New England's intellectual aristocracy; both spent long years in Europe; both produced massive bodies of writing; both were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters on the same day (January 15, 1905). Their 37-year correspondence recreates a lost world of charmed lives and ample leisure (for those of a certain class), where everyone knew everyone (of a certain class), and correspondence was like an elegant salon where the talk was always witty. With his notes and introduction, Monteiro, a professor of English at Brown, has shaped this correspondence into a story of a unique and curious friendship.

Ultimately, the Henrys' correspondence is fascinating because it furnishes a test case of whether, as James's brother William put it, "all intellectual work is the same"—that is, whether the critical and creative acts are basically akin. (William James believed they were, observing that "Kant's *Kritik* is just like a Strauss waltz.") About Henry James's work, Adams's wife Clover observed, "It's not that he [James] 'bites off more than he can chew' . . . but he chaws more than he bites off." This viewpoint—which her husband shared—was, for all its cleverness, practically a denial of James's creative act, of the transforming manipulations accomplished by his imagination and hyperconscious style. What James bit off is by now dated, musty—in *The Awkward Age*, for example, the question of whether a teenage girl should listen to adult conversation—but James's dramatic and moral elaborations have kept the book alive, even in

this era when sex and violence are a child's daily TV fare. In contrast to James, Adams, the first American historian to call himself a scientist, prided himself on having added nothing imaginative to the facts. This difference not only characterizes their major works but runs throughout the correspondence. While Adams's letters are forcefully direct, James's are hedged, circuitous, playful, metaphorical—the high Jamesian style of the novels transferred to daily life.

For both men, "the facts" of their world had become increasingly distasteful by their middle age, as their genteel, aristocratic world crumbled and the rowdy industrial democracy of the 20th century emerged. But their responses to the new age differed radically. Adams, as revealed in these letters, settled into a "monotonous disappointed pessimism" (James's phrase), while James was avid to observe and find the right metaphors and precise descriptions for the vulgar new little world. Returning to America on a visit in 1904, he rushed off to inspect the president—"Theodore I" he called him and found him "verily, a wonderful little machine... quite exciting to see"—while Adams declined Roosevelt's invitation and stayed at home. As the curtain comes down and this volume closes, the contrast between the two men is so stark that no dramatist could have heightened it. Adams's vision had become unmitigatedly bleak: After reading James's memoir, he sighed, "Why did we live? Was that all?" James could sympathize with Adams, and he almost apologized for still finding his consciousness in the presence of life so interesting. "It's, I suppose," he said, "because I am that queer monster the artist... an inexhaustible sensibility."

Henry Adams was the finest American historian of the 19th century and, quite possibly, the most farseeing intellectual in American history. But in reviewing the autobiographical *Education of Henry Adams* (1918), T. S. Eliot said that it was not Adams but James—inadequately educated as he was—who was "the most intelligent man of his generation." Eliot argued that it was "the sensuous contributor to the intelligence [in James] that made the difference," and then added that unforgettable phrase: James "had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it."

Contemporary Affairs

THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY. By Adam Seligman. Free Press. 241 pp. \$24.95

NEW WORLD DISORDER: The Leninist Extinction. By Ken Jowitt. Univ. of Calif. 342 pp. \$30

Remember when history ended? It was in 1989, when the collapse of communism led Francis Fukuyama, in a now-famous essay, to proclaim that history—or the ideological war that was its motor—was over. Henceforth, Fukuyama predicted, liberal democratic capitalism would reign everywhere, in vindication of the Western idea of civil society. In 1992, however, "history" resumed with a vengeance in Yugoslavia and other regions of the former Soviet empire. Eastern Europe today, writes Jowitt, a Berkeley political scientist, resembles less the end of history than the beginning of the book of Genesis, a world "without form and void."

For Seligman, an Israeli sociologist, as well as for Jowitt, the once-bright hopes of reformers like Vaclav Havel for a new birth of "civil society" in their countries now appear deflated. Seligman observes that civil society is not a universal ideal but one that grew out of unique historical circumstances. Elaborated by John Locke and the two Adams of the 18th-century Scottish Enlightenment (Ferguson and Smith), it depended on values derived from Christian individualism. According to its various theorists, civil society was a social order based on morally autonomous individuals—each one the bearer of universal human capacities—who would come together in churches, clubs, political parties, and other organizations.

In Western Europe, civil society was realized over the course of centuries through the creation of a national unity that liberated individuals from ethnic and religious identities. In Eastern Europe, however, under the empires of the Hapsburgs, Romanovs, Hohenzollerns, and finally the communists, modern nations—and modern individualism—never fully emerged. Ethnic and religious loyalties remained paramount, as the strife in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia makes painfully clear. Similar-sounding institutions can mean quite different things in Western and Eastern Europe. The Catholic Church in Eastern Europe for example,

Seligman writes, represents "an alternative moral universe of values or norms, an image of the public good with claims to overall legitimacy that the Church in [the] West has more or less renounced."

For such reasons, Jowitt is scornful of "the facile pacific notion of 'transiting to democracy' (where having entered at the 'Lenin station' one gets off at the 'liberal station')." In Eastern Europe, he observes, nearly half a century of a party elite overseeing "ideologically unreconstructed" masses has widened the gap between the public and private realms. He quotes Alexis de Tocqueville on how despotism "depriv[es] the governed of any sense of solidarity and interdependence; of good-neighboring feeling and a desire to further the welfare of the community at large."

Arnold Toynbee described history in terms of the rise and fall of "world civilizations." Jowitt believes that Leninist society was one such civilization, and that its collapse may have repercussions as significant as those resulting from the fall of the Roman Empire. Jowitt likens Eastern Europe today (except for, perhaps, Poland) to the Third World in the wake of decolonialization, predicting that "demagogues, priests, and colonels" will now shape that region. Although less pessimistic than Jowitt, Seligman has little hope for the triumph of such Western ideas as civil society and Enlightenment humanism in the former Soviet empire, especially when these ideas seem in trouble in the very lands of their invention. "There are serious problems," he dryly concludes, "with the vision of Eastern Europe as the Scottish Enlightenment *revivudus*."

SEX AND REASON. By Richard A. Posner.
Harvard. 458 pp. \$29.95

Today a voyeur in a porno shop confronts less sexual material than do many judges in U.S. courts. Abortion, homosexual rights, surrogate motherhood, AIDS matters, funding of erotic arts, sexual harassment in the workplace, pornography—all are overloading America's already strained court system. Yet most judges, writes Posner, who sits on the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, "know next to nothing about the subject [of sex] beyond their own per-

sonal experience, which is limited." Here Posner tells them everything they needed to know but never bothered to ask.

In the last election some politicians sought to turn the "family values" debate into a crusade for traditional sexual arrangements. Such a campaign, Posner implies, is folly because there are no "natural" sexual arrangements or norms. Conducting a grand tour of the practices of other cultures and eras, Posner discovers that what is condemned as deviant in one place is accepted as normal in another. As an example of "sexual relativism" closer to home, Posner cites heterosexual prisoners who, when no women are available, will engage in homosexual acts. "If the price of vanilla skyrockets," he comments, "you may decide to substitute chocolate even though you have a strong preference for vanilla . . ."

Posner never says whether his own tastes run toward chocolate or vanilla. In this 450-page catalogue of fleshly desires and cultural responses, only once does he endorse something as "exciting": not nude dancing, sadomasochism, or pornography, but economics. To bring sex into the court system rationally, Posner treats it not as an instinctual matter but as a deliberate, conscious choice (see heterosexual prisoners), one that can be logically adjudicated. And the logic that explains and rationalizes sexual behavior, for Posner, is the economist's concept of rational self-interest. Using this economic gauge of rational self-interest, Posner, a conservative judge appointed by Ronald Reagan, ends up defending almost everything Reaganites find abhorrent. He would not forbid abortion in early pregnancy or criminalize homosexual acts or stamp out prostitution or ban pornography by recognized artists: In these cases, he says, the individual is only acting in his or her self-interest, without doing provable harm to the rest of society.

How persuasive has the judge made his case? Freud might have howled at Posner's thesis that "emotionality" attaches to the sexual act itself but does not significantly affect the thinking that precedes or follows it. Lesser mortals may get a few chuckles, too, when Posner explains the rationality of women wearing high heels: It restricts their movements, and that restriction suggests they are more likely to be contained within a marriage arrangement. Ironically,

Posner may fail to convince his readers that eroticism involves so many rational, "economically" calculable acts, even while he provides a model of how a jurist can dispense with personal prejudice and reason dispassionately about sex.

SPEAKING OF DIVERSITY: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America. By Philip Gleason. Johns Hopkins. 314 pp. \$40

There is no coming to terms with a social issue without a terminology to discuss it. Gleason, a historian at Notre Dame, has an exceptionally good ear for the language in which political and cultural understandings (and misunderstandings) have been expressed. Here he explores the various vocabularies that American scholars have used to write about ethnicity.

As the social sciences became professionalized after World War I, scholars settled on the concept of "culture" to discuss matters of race and ethnicity. Popularized by anthropologists like Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, culture meant the norms, institutions, and beliefs that group members shared with one another. While obviously useful in describing life *within* a group, the term offered little help in understanding America's cultural pluralism. Although Benedict and Mead wished to promote tolerance and cosmopolitanism, Gleason finds that a true tolerance of diversity was all but contradicted by their view of culture as a patchwork of groups, each sufficient in its own traditions and self-contained within its own values.

During the 1930s, American social scientists turned away from "culture" to the idea of the "minority group," a term formerly associated

with the nationalities problem in European states. Academics thus hoped to break free of a vocabulary "shot through with invidious assumptions." Yet European ethnic minority groups wanted autonomy, separatism, states of their own; American racial minority groups sought improved status within the larger society. In America, certain groups (African-Americans, Hispanics) eventually came to be thought of, usually on racial grounds, as "official" minorities, while the very "Euro-ethnic" peoples to whom "minority group" had first been applied were hardly considered minorities at all. (Gleason leaves it to readers to connect these semantic confusions to the actual public policies, from affirmative action to ethnic preservation, that they helped to shape.)

During the 1950s, the buzzword again changed, from "minority group" to "identity." Psychologists influenced by Erik Erikson conceived of identity as something primordial—"deep, internal, and permanent"—a "given" that could not be changed. Sociologists, however, interpreted identity as an "option," a choice regarding "a dimension of individual and group existence that could be consciously emphasized or deemphasized as the situation requires." Primordialists and optionalists might use the same terminology while differing profoundly on whether ethnic identity was something to be lived with or transcended.

Gleason likewise examines a half-dozen other concepts—"assimilation," "Americanization," "national character," "oppressed groups," "people of color," and "cultural pluralism"—as each in its turn became the term of the debate. Although he himself proposes no answers, the clarity Gleason pleads for may be a prelude to real solutions. "Government by discussion is



hopeless if it is impossible to determine what is being discussed," he writes, "and the resolution of disputes is frustrated if people cannot tell what is really at issue."

Science & Technology

ANIMAL TALK: Science and the Voices of Nature. By Eugene S. Morton and Jake Page. Random House. 275 pp. \$22

ANIMAL MINDS. By Donald R. Griffin. Univ. of Chicago. 310 pp. \$24.95

One of the more debated questions in ethology—the study of animal behavior—is whether animals “think” and “talk.” In *Animal Talk*, Morton, a research zoologist at the Smithsonian, and Page, the former editor of *Natural History*, describe the state of the science today. All those feathery or furry creatures that appear to reason or act deliberately, they show, are in reality performing unconscious adaptations learned via natural selection. Like machines following their programs, animals follow a program that evolution has coded in their genes. Consider, for example, that clever bird, the African honey guide, one of the few wild animals that communicate with human beings. Honey guides attract and lead men to bee hives where, after the men plunder the honey, they obtain the beeswax essential to their diet. Surely, if not conscious, this is at least learned behavior? Not at all, Page and Morton assert; it is “utterly instinctive,” “written in the bird’s genes.” After all, honey guides lay their eggs in alien nests, and their young are raised by other bird species. For Morton and Page, animal talk itself—for all its coded information—consists only of instinctual signals.

No one has more ingeniously applied the mechanistic stimulus-response model to animal cognition than Griffin, a research scientist at Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology. Griffin discovered that bats use echoes of their own high-frequency sound pulses to determine the location of objects in space. A machine could be built that duplicates what Griffin’s bats do. But in *Animal Minds*, Griffin reverses

himself, arguing that animals do indeed think and that consciousness is the best explanation for some animal behavior.

Griffin describes as thinking all those signals by which animals test alternative possibilities rather “than trying them out in the real world, where mistakes are often fatal.” Consciousness is the ability to describe mental experiences using language, and Griffin gives examples of animals referring to things that are removed in space and time. When honeybees, for example, scout for a new hive site, they will return and dance the information they have found. “Bees that have visited a cavity of mediocre quality,” Griffin reports, often “change their allegiance” after witnessing the more enthusiastic dancers returning from a better cavity. Griffin describes this “dance language” as a kind of rudimentary thinking and “simple dialogue.” He points to many such clever animals, including parrots who use words correctly and chimpanzees taught to express simple needs in American Sign Language.

The more Griffin has argued for animal consciousness, the more his reputation has slipped among his colleagues. What Griffin sees as the ceaseless inventiveness of animal minds, they argue, only proves the ceaseless inventiveness of natural selection. The philosopher and zoologist Helena Cronin points out that what stirs Griffin’s wonder—unpredictability, complex rules, conditional strategies—are standard issue in genetic programs. Privately many zoologists, including Cronin herself, believe that since an evolutionary adaptation such as consciousness does not happen overnight (and since a mere half-million generations separate us from the monkeys), chimpanzees probably do possess some consciousness. Yet because there is no way to prove this argument scientifically—just as there is no scientific way to ascertain if or when awareness accompanies an animal’s information-processing—most ethologists never pose the consciousness question. Ethology today slightly resembles the comic strip “Calvin and Hobbes.” When by himself, Calvin has a living tiger for a playmate; when others are around, however, the animal reverts to being a stuffed object.

POETRY

Z B I G N I E W H E R B E R T

Selected and Introduced by Joseph Brodsky

Modern poetry has a reputation for being difficult. It's hard to follow, harder still to scan, and there's almost no way to memorize it. The last job is so hard it gives you the impression that modern poetry doesn't want to be remembered, doesn't want to be poetry in the traditional sense. To know a modern poem by heart is unthinkable; to quote one at length in a drawing room, impossible. There is a universal outcry that poetry is losing its readers, a rumor that poets these days write not for the public but for one another, or, worse still, for themselves. On top of that, it looks as though this is thought to be true of poetry not only in our country but all over the world, in Europe especially.

Let's check to see whether this is true, starting first with Europe. Let's unfold the map and randomly poke our finger at it. Most likely our finger will find itself in Poland, since it lies on the latitude of Massachusetts. With our finger still stretched, let's buttonhole an average Pole and ask him to name the greatest modern Polish poet. "Czeslaw Milosz," the Pole will say, "although he's lived for the last 40 years in Berkeley, California." And in Poland proper, we may persevere? "It's Zbigniew Herbert, although for 10 years he's been mostly in Paris." So you've got two great poets, we might press on. Which is greater? "On these heights," the Pole may retort, "there is no hierarchy."

Herbert is less well known in the West than Milosz, who, although he won the Nobel Prize in 1980, is not a household name here either. If Herbert is known outside Poland at all, it is because Milosz translated his poems into English. Greatness, you may say, like poverty, looks after its own. And you may be right: Every society designates just one great poet per century, since having two or more dooms the society to greater ethical subtlety, to a greater degree of spiritual intelligence than it thinks it can endure.

But Nature sometimes confounds what society wants, and Nature is inconsistent, if not cruel. Within a 10-year span, it saddled Poland not only with Milosz but with Zbigniew Herbert as well.

What kind of poet is Zbigniew Herbert? Is he difficult? Is he hard to follow, hard to scan, impossible to remember? Look at "Pebble," the first

poem of this selection, and decide for yourself.

What kind of poem is this, and what is it all about? About nature, perhaps? Perhaps. I, for one, though, think that if it is about nature, then it is about human nature. About its autonomy, about its resistance, about, if you will, its survival. In this sense it is a very Polish poem, considering that nation's recent, more exactly, modern, history. And it is a very modern poem, because Polish history, one may say, is modern history in miniature—well, more exactly, in a pebble. Because whether you are a Pole or not, what history wants is to destroy you. The only way to survive, to endure its almost geological pressure, is to acquire the features of a pebble, including the false warmth once you find yourself in somebody's hands.

No, this is not a difficult poem. It is easy to follow. It is a parable: very reticent, very stark. Starkness, in fact, is very much Herbert's signature. My impression of his poems has always been that of a geometrical figure pressed into the marshmallow of my brain. One does not so much remember his lines as find one's mind being branded by their ice-cold lucidity. One does not chant them: The cadences of one's own speech simply yield to his level, almost neutral timber, to the tonality of his reserve.

Though Polish, Herbert is no Romantic. In his poems, he argues not by raising the temperature but by lowering it, to the point where his lines begin to burn the reader's grasping faculties, like an iron fence in winter. He is a modern poet not because he uses *vers libre* but because the reasons for which he uses it are very modern. Born in 1924, Herbert belongs to the generation of Europeans that saw the native realm reduced to rubble—and, as was his particular case, to rubble. Somewhat naively perhaps, people of this generation came to associate strict meters with the social order that brought their nations to catastrophe. They sought a new, unadorned, direct, plain form of speech. In other words, unlike its Western counterpart, East European modernism appears to have been historically motivated.

Herbert's modernism is, indeed, as one very perceptive critic put it, a modernism without experimental hoopla. His idiom is forged by necessity, not by the oversaturated aestheticism of his predecessors. When he was young, Herbert fought in the underground resistance against the Nazis; as a grown-up he had to deal with the monolith of the communist totalitarian state. While the former were murderous, the latter was both murderous and ethically corrosive. In order to survive and to temper the reader's heart, a poet's statement had to be at once self-contained and opaque: like a pebble.

Yet it would be myopic to reduce this poet to the role of resistance fighter against those two formidable systems of political oppression our century has known. His real enemy is the vulgarity of the human heart,

which always produces a simplified version of human reality. This inevitably results in social injustice at best, in utopia-turned-nightmare at worst, and more often. Herbert is a poet of tremendous ethical consequence because his verse zeroes in on the cause, not just the effects, which he treats as something incidental. Which they always are. Symptoms are not the malaise.

In this sense, he is a historical poet. His pen often summons history, which is after all the mother of culture, in order to enable his reader to endure and, with luck, to overcome the vulgarity of the present. His poems show that most of our beliefs, convictions, and social concepts are in bad taste, if only because they are entertained at someone else's expense. He is a supreme ironist, of course; to me, though, his irony is but the safety valve of his compassion, since human tragedy is repetitive.

For the last 40 years, to say the least, the Poles would have fared worse without his poems than they did. I daresay what was good for them could be good for us, because our diet is better. Zbigniew Herbert, 68 years old, in poor health and extremely narrow circumstances somewhere in Paris, is a poet for this place; above all, for this time.

Pebble

The pebble
is a perfect creature

equal to itself
mindful of its limits

filled exactly
with a pebbly meaning

with a scent which does not remind one of anything
does not frighten anything away does not arouse desire

its ardour and coldness
are just and full of dignity

I feel a heavy remorse
when I hold it in my hand
and its noble body
is permeated by false warmth

—Pebbles cannot be tamed
to the end they will look at us
with a calm and very clear eye

*Elegy of Fortinbras**for C.M.*

Now that we're alone we can talk prince man to man
 though you lie on the stairs and see no more than a dead ant
 nothing but black sun with broken rays
 I could never think of your hands without smiling
 and now that they lie on the stone like fallen nests
 they are as defenseless as before The end is exactly this
 The hands lie apart The sword lies apart The head apart
 and the knight's feet in soft slippers

You will have a soldier's funeral without having been a soldier
 the only ritual I am acquainted with a little
 There will be no candles no singing only cannon-fuses and bursts
 crepe dragged on the pavement helmets boots artillery horses drums drums
 I know nothing exquisite
 those will be my maneuvers before I start to rule
 one has to take the city by the neck and shake it a bit

Anyhow you had to perish Hamlet you were not for life
 you believed in crystal notions not in human clay
 always twitching as if asleep you hunted chimeras
 wolfishly you crunched the air only to vomit
 you knew no human thing you did not know even how to breath

Now you have peace Hamlet you accomplished what you had to
 and you have peace The rest is not silence but belongs to me
 you chose the easier part an elegant thrust
 but what is heroic death compared with eternal watching
 with a cold apple in one's hand on a narrow chair
 with a view of the ant-hill and the clock's dial

Adieu prince I have tasks a sewer project
 and a decree on prostitutes and beggars
 I must also elaborate a better system of prisons
 since as you justly said Denmark is a prison
 I go to my affairs This night is born
 a star named Hamlet We shall never meet
 what I shall leave will not be worth a tragedy

It is not for us to greet each other or bid farewell we live
 on archipelagos
 and that water these words what can they do what can they
 do prince

From Mythology

First there was a god of night and tempest, a black idol without eyes, before whom they leaped, naked and smeared with blood. Later on, in the times of the republic, there were many gods with wives, children, creaking beds, and harmlessly exploding thunderbolts. At the end only superstitious neurotics carried in their pockets little statues of salt, representing the god of irony. There was no greater god at that time.

Then came the barbarians. They too valued highly the little god of irony. They would crush it under their heels and add it to their dishes.

Why the Classics

1

in the fourth book of the Peloponnesian War
Thucydides tells among other things
the story of his unsuccessful expedition

among long speeches of chiefs
battles sieges plague
dense net of intrigues of diplomatic endeavors
the episode is like a pin
in a forest

the Greek colony Amphipolis
fell into the hands of Brasidos
because Thucydides was late with relief

for this he paid his native city
with lifelong exile

exiles of all times
know what price that is

2

generals of the most recent wars
if a similar affair happens to them
whine on their knees before posterity
praise their heroism and innocence

they accuse their subordinates
envious colleagues
unfavorable winds

Thucydides says only
that he had seven ships
it was winter
and he sailed quickly

3

if art for its subject
will have a broken jar
a small broken soul
with a great self-pity

what will remain after us
will be like lovers' weeping
in a small dirty hotel
when wall-paper dawns

The Return of the Proconsul

I've decided to return to the emperor's court
 once more I shall see if it's possible to live there
 I could stay here in this remote province
 under the full sweet leaves of the sycamore
 and the gentle rule of sickly nepotists

when I return I don't intend to commend myself
 I shall applaud in measured portions
 smile in ounces frown discreetly
 for that they will not give me a golden chain
 this iron one will suffice

I've decided to return tomorrow or the day after
 I cannot live among vineyards nothing here is mine
 trees have no roots house no foundations the rain is
 glassy flowers smell of wax
 a dry cloud rattles against the empty sky
 so I shall return tomorrow or the day after in any case I shall
 return

I must come to terms with my face again
 with my lower lip so it knows how to curb its scorn
 with my eyes so they remain ideally empty
 and with that miserable chin the hare of my face
 which trembles when the chief of guards walks in

of one thing I am sure I will not drink wine with him
 when he brings his goblet nearer I will lower my eyes
 and pretend I'm picking bits of food from between my teeth
 besides the emperor likes courage of convictions
 to a certain extent to a certain reasonable extent
 he is after all a man like everyone else

and already tired by all those tricks with poison
 he cannot drink his fill incessant chess
 this left cup is for Drusus from the right one pretend to sip
 then drink only water never lose sight of Tacitus
 go out into the garden and come back when they've taken
 away the corpse

I've decided to return to the emperor's court
 yes I hope that things will work out somehow

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REFLECTIONS

Yugoslavia Mon Amour

Abuse of cultural memory rules the day in the war-torn remnants of Yugoslavia. Thomas Butler here tells how the manipulation of ancient and often invalid grievances by groups aiming to obtain present-day advantage is threatening the future in the Balkans.

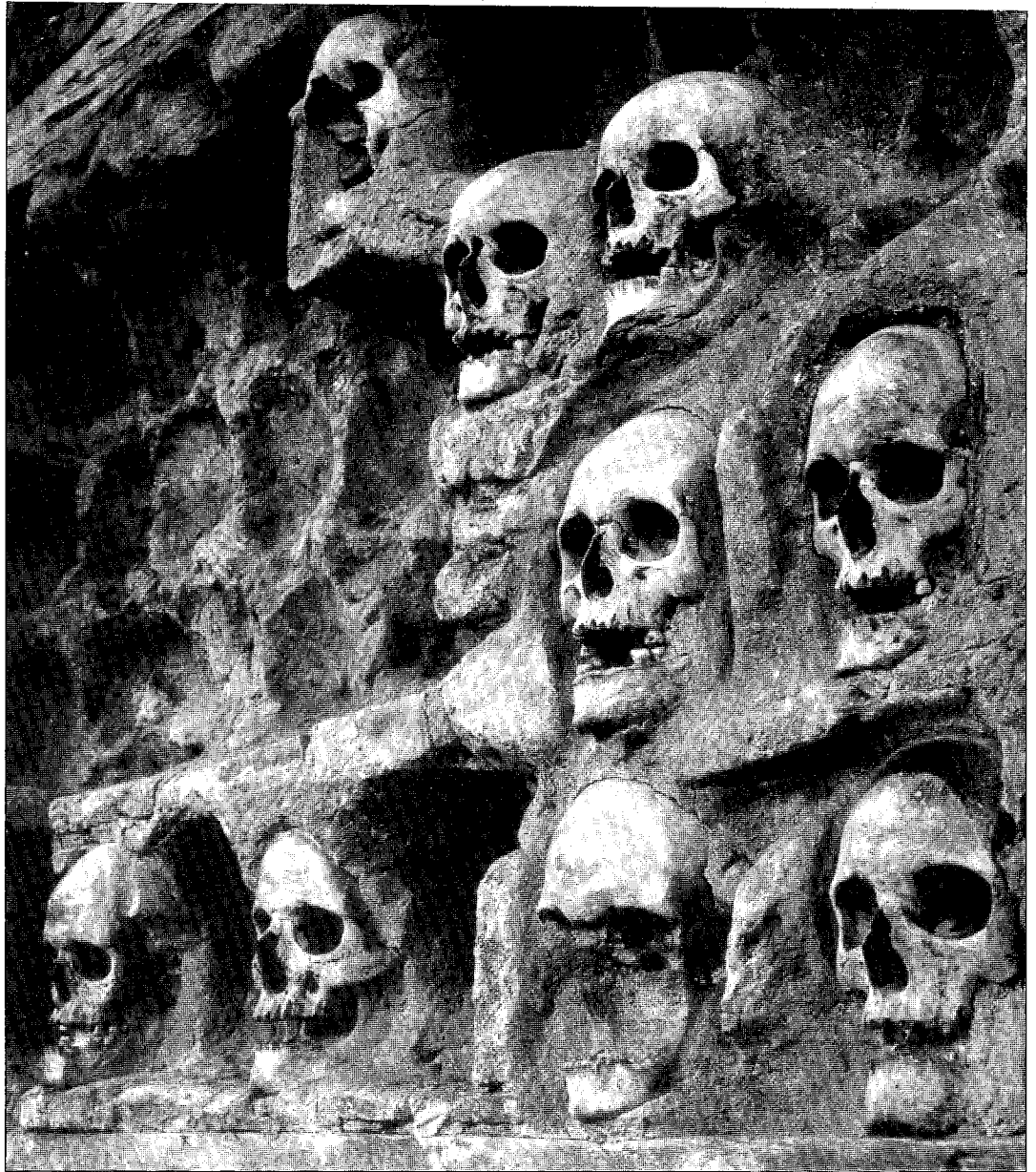
by Thomas Butler

Some years ago, I received an article from Belgrade, Yugoslavia, entitled "Banja Luka Mon Amour." It was written on the occasion of an earthquake that destroyed much of that mixed Serb, Croat, and Muslim town on the Vrbas River in northern Bosnia. Its author, Nada Curcija-Prodanovic, was a well-known translator of Serbo-Croatian folklore into English. Her article consisted mainly of childhood reminiscences, but what I remember most was its title. It seemed to me at the time that there was a touch of megalomania in the implicit comparison of Banja Luka to Hiroshima (whose suffering was memorialized in the movie *Hiroshima Mon Amour*), as well as something bizarre in its juxtaposition of Serbo-Croatian and French. It was as though my ear were telling me that these fraternal Indo-European languages did not belong on the same line.

I relate my reaction to this title because it illustrates the prejudice and impatience that Westerners bring to the Balkans, a region they tend to view simultaneously as the end of Europe and the beginning of the East. The confusion caused by this conjunction of so-called Western ("civilized") and Eastern ("fanatical, devious") elements

may help explain the slowness of the European Community and the United States to take the extraordinary measures necessary to stop the bloodshed in that unhappy region. A Dutch diplomat closely involved in the Community's attempts to effect a ceasefire in Croatia last year voiced his sense of futility: "When they run out of ammunition they will use their knives, and when their knives are gone they will use their teeth." The implication was that Serbs and Croats have a savage blood lust and that there will be no end to the fighting until both sides have had their fill. Or as the 19th-century Montenegrin poet, Prince Bishop Petar Petrovic Njegos, once wrote concerning his Muslim Slav enemies: "Human blood is an awful food./It has begun to spurt out of their noses."

As a specialist in the field of Serbo-Croatian language and literature, I have followed the tragic events in the former Yugoslavia with the same pain that moved Nada Curcija-Prodanovic to write about her native Banja Luka. I could pen a nostalgic "Dubrovnik Mon Amour" to commemorate that walled medieval town, heavily bombarded by Serbian field guns and warships. I cringe when I picture the damage to its 13th-century Franciscan monastery,



The Tower of Skulls in the Serbian city of Niš. The memorial to the 952 Serbians who died fighting the Turks in 1809 attests to one of the fiercer Balkan rivalries.

which I visited in 1987, guided by its aged abbot. We had met in Belgrade at a conference to honor the bicentennial of Vuk Karadzic (1787–1864), the great Serbian language reformer and collector of folklore. The Croatian abbot, whose monastery has a long tradition in the field of pharmacy, had come to the conference to present his analysis of Vuk's physical afflictions, which the abbot had deduced from apothecary notations in the Serb's diary.

I remember that the Serbian scholars were respectful but cool toward the Fran-

ciscan. I'm sure that today, if I were to remind them of his visit, one of them would toss off a wry joke or a pun on the manner in which they have repayed the abbot's courtesy. (Last year, during the various shellings of Dubrovnik, according to the *New York Times*, the monastery took 37 direct hits.)

Although the damage to Dubrovnik may distress many of my Serbian friends—who are neither Catholic nor Muslim but Orthodox—I suspect that deep down some of them derive quiet satisfaction from it. To

them Dubrovnik is a symbol of what they see as a revived fascist movement (*Ustasha*) in Croatia, as well as of the eternally corrupt West and the papacy. But such a view fails to take into account that "the Jewel of the Adriatic" was also once a haven for Serbian nobility fleeing the Turks after the fall of Serbia in the 15th century. Those who would applaud the damage to the Franciscan monastery are likewise ignorant of the role the Franciscan order played in keeping Christianity alive in Bosnia during the four centuries of Turkish rule.

The destruction and loss of life in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo is even more tragic. In bombarding the city, it would seem, the Serbian army in the hills is trying to obliterate the memory of a composite civilization that arose over five centuries. For these Serbs, Sarajevo—founded by a Turkish advance party in the 15th century (*saraj* originally meant "palace of the local ruler")—symbolizes more than 400 years of harsh Ottoman control, a rule which in the opinion of Ivo Andric, the Nobel Prize novelist, "destroyed the fiber of Bosnian society and fatally wounded its spirit." Andric's fundamentally negative portrayal of Ottoman rule has led Bosnian Islamic cultural leaders (who are also Slavs) to decry his works. Last year, one local Muslim leader blew up the monument to Andric in Visegrad, his boyhood town and the setting for his best-known novel, *Bridge on the Drina* (1945).

Despite tensions between Serbs and Muslims, which have their roots in cultural memory, one doubts that many of the Serbs who have been bombarding Sarajevo are from the Bosnian capital itself. For over a century, since at least the time of Austrian rule (1878–1914), the city has been known for its rich cultural life, shared by Muslim Slavs, Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs, and Sephardic Jews. While for centuries the Ottoman policy had been to discourage and suppress education among the non-Muslims, thereby keeping them illiterate and

passive, the Austrian approach had been just the opposite. The Hapsburg rulers chose to educate their new Slavic subjects so that they might become productive contributors to the empire. (One ironic result was that the Austrians educated the generation of revolutionaries that plotted the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.)

Another Austrian policy was to encourage a separate Bosnian cultural identity, tied neither to Serbia nor Croatia. The interwar monarchy (1918–1941) managed the separatist impulses of the Bosnians, particularly Muslim Bosnians, with a policy of benign neglect and cooptation. After World War II, the Communist regime of Marshall Tito (born Josip Broz, of a Croat-Slovene marriage) created the separate republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and established a broad network of Bosnian cultural institutions, including a university, publishing houses, theaters, and an opera.

Until the recent outbreak of hostilities, Sarajevo offered the world a model of the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups. Perhaps this is another reason why Serbian extremists are trying desperately to destroy it—it presented a creative alternative to the ethnically pure environment they are planning. Thus the cellist who came out each day at noon, for 22 straight days, to play in a Sarajevo square, played not only for the 22 civilians who died in a single shelling but for the city's lost cultural life as well.

My own memories of Sarajevo are tinged by retrospective irony. During my first visit to the city, in 1952, I saw the pair of brass footprints in the sidewalk near the Milacka River marking the spot where the Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip stood while firing his pistol at Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. At the time I found it difficult to imagine that from such a peaceful backwater the horror of World War I had been unleashed. Nor was there any reason for me to suspect that violence would ever again

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rule that city. The Yugoslavia of Marshall Tito was a quiet place in the 1950s, governed by tough, experienced political operatives who knew well the history of past ethnic disputes and were not about to allow them to be rekindled.

Tito's goal was a new Yugoslavia, a nation whose citizens would regard themselves as Yugoslavs, not as Serbs or Croats or Muslims. He was willing, however, to allow the country to pass through an intermediate federal stage, with six republics and the two autonomous provinces of the Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija, with their large Hungarian and Albanian minorities. The Slovenes, Macedonians, Hungarians, and Albanians were permitted to have their own media, including newspapers and journals in their own languages. It was assumed that Croats and Serbs spoke the same language (Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian), and so no distinction was made between them in official publications, except in the choice of alphabet—Cyrillic for the Serbs, and *latinica* for the Croats.

The Belgrade government encouraged ethnic mixing among the young. Army draftees were forced to serve outside their native republics, and major summer work projects, in which students receiving stipends were required to participate, brought together youths from all over Yugoslavia. (I remember how the departure of young Serbian girls to work in Macedonia occasioned much anxiety among their parents, who worried that their daughters would lose their virginity to hot-blooded Balkan lads.)

During that first stay in Yugoslavia, as a student at Belgrade University, I recall being puzzled by the official sponsorship of the national folkloric groups and by the variety of publications in various languages. Local cultural groups that featured native dancing and singing were encouraged to travel to other republics and even abroad. "How," I asked myself, "do they expect to create a Yugoslav nationality when they emphasize differences in this way?"

When I returned to Yugoslavia as a Fulbright scholar in 1967–68, I was reminded of my earlier skepticism. Worsening economic conditions had led to an inevitable search for culprits. The Slovenes and Croats were claiming, justifiably, that too much of the foreign currency earned in

their coastal resorts and businesses was being diverted to projects in the less-developed parts of Serbia and Macedonia. Of course, their impatience with the economic situation could not be expressed safely in the media or in a public forum—those who did protest received stiff jail sentences—but it manifested itself in the realm of culture. Croat intellectuals began to insist publicly that their language was different from Serbian. Serbs, on the other hand, maintained that "Croatian" and "Serbian" were only variants of the same language.

On this point I was in agreement with the Serbs. No matter where I traveled in inner Croatia or on the Dalmatian coast, I never had trouble being understood by Croats, even though I had learned my language in Serbia. The basic difference between the two dialects involved the pronunciation of one syllable, the Croats pronouncing it as *je* or *ije* and the Serbs in Serbia as *e*. (For example, Croats say *mlijeko* for milk and Serbs say *mleko*, although the Serbian minority in Croatia may also pronounce it *mlijeko*.)

I remember talking with a young woman at a ski lodge in Bohinj, Slovenia, in the winter of 1967–68. A Croat, she lectured me on the superiority of Croatian speech to Serbian, fixing on the *ijekavian/ekavian* distinction and declaring that the former was more musical than the latter, which it is. Trivial as her argument at first sounded, it reminded me that the language question carried a heavy political-cultural load.

Around this time, a dictionary project aimed at the publication of a joint Croatian-Serbian dictionary came sputtering to a halt after the publication of the first two volumes. Everyday Croatian usage had been excluded from the tomes, or termed "dialect," while Serbian usage had been presented as standard. As a result the Croats discontinued their collaboration and began work on a new Croatian orthography and dictionary, which were to be purified of Serbian influence. Two leading Yugoslav linguists, Dalibor Brozovic of Croatia and Pavle Ivic of Serbia, took part in the increasingly acrimonious discussion.

In a very real sense, the ideological roots of much of the violence in Yugoslavia

over the past two years can be traced to the linguistic quarrel of 25 years ago. What the Croats were really saying at the time—although they did not dare say it directly—was that they wanted to separate; the Serbs, replying equally indirectly, were saying that they could not. Indeed, in August 1971, with the publication of the *Croatian Orthography*, the Belgrade magazine *Nin* warned that the new Croatian orthography would only aggravate divisiveness between Serbs and Croats. The growing linguistic dispute heralded the collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia.

Two years ago at an international conference on cultural memory organized by social anthropologists in Boston, I argued with an American scholar about the causes of the then-unfolding Yugoslav crisis. She felt that everything was traceable to 1941 and the *Ustasha* killing of thousands of Serbs at the concentration camp of Jasenovac. (Many of these Serbs were from the Krajina area of Croatia, which is trying to merge with Serbia.) I, on the other hand, felt that the roots of the current conflict between Serbs and Croats ran much deeper, at least as far back as the schism between the Catholic and Orthodox churches in 1054, and perhaps even beyond that to the ninth century.

It appears we were both right. She, in that the immediate cause of the fighting between Serbs and Croats in Croatia was Serbian fear of another Jasenovac. When Franjo Tudjman, author of a book which stated that Serbian losses were only one-tenth what the Serbs claimed, became president of Croatia in 1990, Serbs in Croatia (some 14 percent of the population) concluded that they were not likely to receive fair and unbiased treatment in the new state. Nor did Tudjman at the time offer concrete guarantees that would have allayed their worries. (He has since done so.)

Although it was the Serbs in Krajina who provoked the outbreak of hostilities, the fighting between Serbs and Croats in Croatia has been fueled over the long run by animosities between Orthodox and Catholic Christians. Orthodox-Catholic prejudices are powerful. A few years ago, I vis-

ited the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos, Greece. While I was attending the early morning liturgy, a monk approached and asked whether I was Orthodox or Catholic. When I replied "Catholic," he told me to "go outside and pray."

The Greek Orthodox Church, like the Roman Catholic Church, has a long memory. In the young monk's mind, I was excommunicated. The Schism in 1054 and the plundering of Constantinople in 1204 by the Fourth Crusade are alive in the Orthodox mind and continue to affect Orthodox-Catholic relations, including those between Serbs and Croats. Some of the doctrinal differences between the two churches seem ludicrous today. Take for example the *filioque* controversy: According to the Roman Catholic Creed, the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son" ("*ex patris et filioque procedit*"), whereas the Orthodox Church claims that according to the original Nicæan Creed (A.D. 325), the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. This difference had threatened to split Christianity as early as the ninth century, with pope and patriarch hurling anathemas at each other. This is not to say that Serbs felt justified in shelling Dubrovnik because they believed its inhabitants were schismatics, but the residue of ancient disputes made the action more acceptable. The sense of "otherness" is further exacerbated by the fact that the two peoples were ruled by different and opposing empires: the Croats by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Serbs by the Ottoman.

As for Croatian and Serbian relations with the Muslim population in Bosnia, no one will deny that until recently the Croats had the more harmonious dealings with their Islamic brethren. This may be because they see the Muslims merely as heretics, who can be saved if they will only be baptized. In fact, Franjo Tudjman was photographed more than a year ago smiling benignly at the baptism of a group of Muslim children, a picture that drove Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic into such a frenzy that he actually made a very short-lived treaty with archenemy Serbia. The Serbs, by contrast, have a different view of Muslims. They see them as traitors as well as heretics. Scratch a Muslim, they believe, and you will find a Serb whose ancestor



Bogomil tombstones. Many Bosnian Muslims are descendants of the heretical Christian sect.

went over to the Ottoman side 500 years ago, in order to keep his land.

In his autobiographical *Memories* the late novelist Mesa Selimovic, who was born and raised a Muslim but considered himself a Serbian writer, referred to himself and other Yugoslav Muslims as "renegades." In a later edition he mentions that the lexicographer Abdulah Skaljic, a representative of the *Reis-ul Ulema*, the highest Islamic religious authority in Bosnia, objected to his use of the term "renegade" for those who had "taken the right road and the right faith."

In the Bosnian case the situation is further complicated by the fact that great numbers of those who converted to Islam were members of a heretical Manichean Christian sect called "Bogomils" ("pleasing to God"). Threatened by the Inquisition, they are said to have invited the Ottomans to conquer their land in 1463, rather than face invasion by a Hungarian army blessed by the pope. From all this came the saying:

"Bosnia fell with a whisper."

The Bogomils and other Slavic converts to Islam formed their own ruling class in Bosnia, sending their sons to Adrianople (Jedren) and later to Istanbul to be trained for military or civil service. Nine Bosnians rose to be grand viziers between 1544 and 1612, including the famed Mehmed Pasha Sokolovic (d. 1579), who served Suleiman the Magnificent and paid for the building of the bridge at Visegrad. A folk ballad about Mehmed's building of the bridge begins with these lines:

Mehmed Pasha served three sultans,
 And he earned three castles full of
 treasure.
 Then he sat down and began to ponder
 What he could do with all that treasure:
 Either he could give the treasure to
 the poor,
 Or he could pour the treasure into
 the Drina,
 Or he could build charitable works
 throughout Bosnia.
 The more he thought, the more he came



Sarajevo in quieter days, when Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and Jews lived in neighborly harmony. Today, many of the city's old buildings have been reduced to rubble by indiscriminate artillery fire.

to the same idea:
 "I shall build charitable works
 throughout Bosnia,
 And first of all a bridge over
 the Drina . . ."

Ivo Andric, who grew up in Visegrad in the home of an Austrian civil servant, used elements from this ballad in his novel *Bridge on the Drina*. Nor was he the only Christian writer to use Muslim themes in his works. One thinks right off of Branko Copic's stories about the Islamic wise fool, Nasradin Hodja. For the most part such cultural blending occurred largely in the oral tradition, since those Bosnian Muslims who became deeply involved in Islamic intellectual life wrote mainly in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Some of their works—histories as well as theological and philosophical tracts of a speculative tendency—were known throughout the Muslim world. Some Bosnians became skilled poets in Persian and Arabic, the favored languages for *belles lettres*. Their accomplishments

are listed—almost too humbly—by Dr. Smail Balic in *The Culture of the Bosnians: The Muslim Component* (Vienna, 1973). Balic's book contains hundreds of Muslim names—not only those of writers, but also those of calligraphers and miniaturist painters.

This Bosnian Muslim accomplishment was largely ignored in Yugoslavia until after Tito came to power. The Yugoslav Communists came to see that the Muslim cultural "component" provided them with a convenient bridge to the Middle East, Indonesia, and Africa. In a very real sense Tito's Muslim ambassadors, with names that combined Turkish and Slavic elements—Dizdarevic, for example (*dizdar* is the Turkish word for a fortress commander)—brought Yugoslavia prestige and economic benefit among nonaligned

nations. (Of course, that good will is gone today, as the struggle in Bosnia has taken on the aspect of a religious war or crusade, with Turks and Iranians offering to fight on the side of their Bosnian Muslim brothers.)

The Serbian "purification" of Bosnian villages of their Muslim inhabitants calls to mind a similar action, described by the poet Njegos in his "Mountain Wreath." The Montenegrin sings of the events leading up to a late 17th-century extermination of Muslims in Montenegro, motivated by fear of contamination from within. Such fears have persisted. More than 20 years ago, my Belgrade landlady told me that the Albanians (*Shiptars*), who are mainly Muslim, were lighting bonfires at night on the hills around the city, signaling to each other. She spoke nervously about their high birthrate, warning that they would inundate the Serbs, as they had already done in Kosovo, the "holy ground" of the Serbian medieval empire.

In more recent years I heard worried talk about how Islamic fundamentalism

was sweeping Bosnia and about Saudi Arabian money being used to rebuild mosques and Muslim schools. I used to smile at such stories, dismissing them as the usual Serbian anxiety about Muslims. But I was wrong to have underestimated the Serbian alarm.

The oppressive Serbian preoccupation with Muslims—Albanians in particular—is vividly illustrated in the war diary of a Serbian reservist from Valjevo, named Aleksandar Jasovic, published in a Belgrade journal in 1992. Jasovic, who in civilian life is an emergency medical technician, served as a medic in the Serbian ranks in the fighting for Vukovar in Croatia in 1991. While his battery was shelling the Croats (whom he calls *Ustasha*) in the northeast, he recounts in his diary, he was in fact preoccupied with fears about Kosovo far to the south—the cradle of the Serbian medieval kingdom and the scene of the Serbs' fatal loss to the Turks in 1389.

Jasovic writes of the Albanian Muslims, who because of a high birthrate and immigration from neighboring Albania now are a huge majority in Kosovo, "Their Sarajevo mother supports them!" Westerners may find the phrase obscure, but it illuminates what in the medic's mind seems the powerful, irrefutable, and threatening connection between the Muslims of Bosnia and those of Kosovo.

Is there any way out of the ever-widening gyre of death and destruction in the Balkans? There may be, but the failure of diplomatic efforts up to now has shown that without more active U.S. participation, nothing will happen. Western Europe's leaders seem incapable of seeing that they should act forcefully—with military power, if needed—to force a cease-fire. When and if the fighting is ever stopped, negotiators may look at Yugoslavia as the victim of a disaster no less devastating than the earthquake that destroyed Banja Luka or the bombing that leveled Hiroshima. Attention will have to be given to healing, to prevent a repetition of the present calamity. The United Nations should sponsor an ongoing

conference of Serbian, Croatian, Muslim, and other historians, to derive a core of mutually agreed-upon statements regarding each group's history. Ideally, this multicultural convocation would confront shibboleths concerning "enemy" ethnic groups, examine national memories for their accuracy and rationality, and separate truth from prejudice. The mediation of outside specialists would be vital, because Balkan scholars always seem biased in favor of their own group.

In examining the more documented history of the 20th century, the peoples of the Balkans will have to accept responsibility for the crimes they committed against one another. Serbs will have to admit their nation's guilt for the dictatorship of King Alexander during the late 1920s and '30s, which undermined the prewar Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Likewise, Croats will have to acknowledge the holocaust of Serbs at Jasenovac and elsewhere. Only the admission of guilt and the granting of forgiveness can start the healing process.

The same is true for the Christian relationship with the Muslims (the "Turks"). The Muslims need to admit that their ancestors abused and lorded it over the Christians for centuries. The Serbs especially, while granting Muslims forgiveness, must ask in turn for their pardon for recent savagery. We have precedents for such national confessions of guilt, including the West German acceptance of responsibility for Nazi crimes against Jews and the French intellectuals' fairly recent call (June 21, 1992) for their government to condemn, in the name of "the French collective memory," the Vichy government's persecution of Jews.

If such a healing process is to take place in the Balkans, it will be best to keep it out of the hands of religious leaders and politicians. The liturgy of reconciliation should be written by the poet, aided by others of good will. Thus the Yugoslavia that many of us in the West truly loved for its diversity may pass peacefully into history.

The European Capitals of American Literature

"The American who becomes a second-rate Englishman, or Frenchman," wrote Theodore Roosevelt, "is a silly and undesirable citizen." Roosevelt (and many others) were incensed that so many American writers chose to live in Europe and, it was assumed, reject their native land. But far from turning their backs on their own country, authors like Henry James and Edith Wharton and later T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway used that transatlantic distance—as Alex Zwerdling shows—to create a new kind of American literature, one strangely in keeping with America's emerging role as an international power.

by Alex Zwerdling

America has no literary capital. Its great writers have come from every region and often spent their adult lives in locales hardly known as cultural meccas—Oxford, Mississippi, or Amherst, Massachusetts, or Milledgeville, Georgia—rather than in centers such as Boston and New York. For some, this is a cause for rejoicing. The richness of American literature can be traced in part to its diverse regional roots and to the meticulous observation and loving attention of writers who have put such unlikely places on the map. Today when words like *diversity* and *multiculturalism* have become positive slogans, there is no reason to regret the absence of a metropolitan center, a city that attracts (but also pro-

cesses) every ambitious talent.

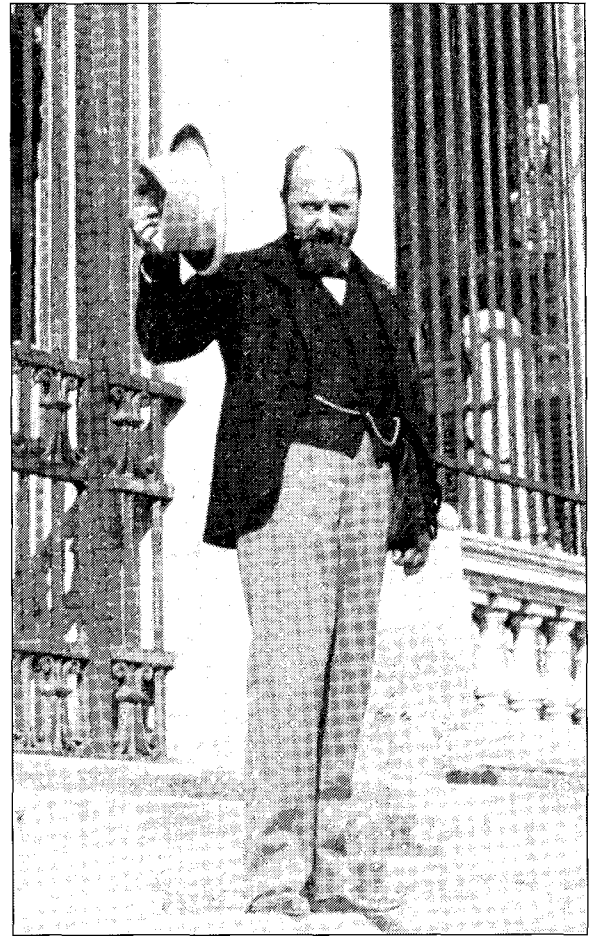
It was not ever thus. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, some of America's greatest writers fled their own country, in part at least to get away from what they saw as its provincialism. For the literary expatriates of that time—Henry James, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and dozens of lesser lights—the escape route led to London or Paris, two cities that were clearly the cultural capitals of their civilizations.

Pound insisted that a country only becomes a nation when "it has achieved within itself a city to which all roads lead, and from which there goes out an authority"—by which he meant a standard of judgment that was not merely local or pa-

rochial. The United States around 1900 was only a "province that has sent one or two notable artists to the Eastern capital." And that "Eastern capital" was, for Pound, not New York but "the double city of London and Paris." Only there could the new American voices be tested against the standard of the Western literary tradition from Homer to the present day, only there could the genuinely innovative artist be distinguished from the many imitators. For Pound and other expatriates, the literary Olympics were held in the two great European cultural capitals, and it was in those cities alone that ambitious American writers might find their real peers and would have to compete.

They came in great numbers, beginning with Henry James in 1875 and continuing through the middle of the next century. Probably as much of the great American fiction and poetry of that era was written abroad as on native soil. Many of the country's best writers felt that their own country was hostile or indifferent to their work, particularly if it was critical of American institutions and values. Tocqueville had warned in *Democracy in America* that "the theory of equality applied to brains" would force the American thinker "to sprinkle incense over his fellow citizens." Americans were thin-skinned and defensive about their country and did not take kindly to internal criticism. William Dean Howells had encouraged his fellow writers to concentrate on the "more smiling aspects" of American life or suffer the consequences. And as late as 1930, Sinclair Lewis, the first American to win the Nobel Prize in literature, confessed to his Stockholm audience that a serious writer in his country was oppressed "by the feeling that what he creates does not matter," and that "he has no institution, no group, to which he can turn for inspiration, whose criticism he can accept and whose praise will be precious to him."

The alternative was to get out, to find a nation less dominated by materialism, Puritanism, and the pressure to conform. A large, ancient, sophisticated metropolis like Paris or London not only offered the double stimulus of a great artistic tradition and



Henry James, age 56 in Rome, doffs his hat as though sending salutations from Europe.

a vital, complex contemporary life but also a precious lack of censoriousness. As the novelist Edith Wharton put it, the hypocrisy produced by her country's Puritan heritage "has done more than anything else to retard real civilization in America."

Of the two cities, Paris was clearly the less censorious. Puritanism, after all, had been an English export. The Paris of the American literary expatriates who spent years of their lives there—Wharton, Stein, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Djuna Barnes, Henry Miller, Richard Wright, James Baldwin—was attractive largely because of its live-and-let-live attitude toward what a more judgmental culture would not tolerate. In the years when America was busily enacting a constitutional amendment prohibiting the consumption of alcohol,

Paris became synonymous with personal liberation.

There a lesbian like Stein or Barnes or Natalie Barney or Sylvia Beach could live her life without interference or disapproval. Those determined to "commit fornication and adultery," as one amused American in Paris put it, were delighted by "the perfect nonchalance with which the *patron* of a hotel would register a couple as Monsieur and Mademoiselle So-and-So." Gertrude Stein thought it a mark of civilization that the French government routinely sent allowances for soldiers in the trenches to their wives or, if they were not married, to their mistresses. And the large number of black literary expatriates could breathe freely in a city that, in the words of the *New Yorker's* Paris correspondent Janet Flanner, "has never drawn a color line."

The sense of liberation this atmosphere produced was personal, but it also powerfully affected what these writers felt they might write. They could ignore the sense of moral outrage that dominated the American response to sexually explicit work. Paris was the city in which Joyce's *Ulysses* was finally published in 1922—the novel that for more than a decade thereafter had to be smuggled through U.S. customs by American tourists or in batches across the Canadian border (in an arrangement planned by Hemingway). The first chapters of that work, brought out in the United States by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap in their *Little Review*, were seized by the U.S. Post Office; further attempts led to the editors' trial for publishing obscene material and nearly broke them financially. In 1924 they moved the magazine to Paris.

Two years later Hemingway published his novel *The Sun Also Rises*, and his mother wrote him from America that she considered it "one of the filthiest books of the year." He replied in anger that he was sure the promiscuous behavior of his characters was "no more unpleasant than the real inner lives of some of our best Oak Park families." In Paris he might forget the hypocrisy that dominated

the culture of his native land. And it was during his expatriate years that the more cautious Scott Fitzgerald could conceive of writing a book—*Tender Is the Night* (1934)—whose heroine had been seduced by her father.

Djuna Barnes's first novel, *Ryder* (1928)—which she thought of as the female *Tom Jones*—could only be published in New York after she reluctantly agreed to delete passages and pictures that offended her American editor. Barnes responded by writing a scathing preface informing her readers that the text had been mutilated and indicating the deletions with asterisks. Better to move to Paris, where publication was not subject to such surveillance. Her next book, *Ladies' Almanack* (1929), was published there and included recognizable portraits of Natalie Barney's lesbian salon. There were no serious repercussions.

After World War I, Paris became, as one literary memoirist put it, "above all, the good address . . . the one grand display window for international talent." Hundreds of aspiring writers booked their passage, convinced that their unrecognized talent might blaze up in the City of Light. And even if nothing better came of it, you could sit on the terrace of the Dôme, the Select, the Dingo, the Closerie de Lilas, and catch a glimpse of one of the gods—Picasso, or Joyce, or Hemingway, or Pound (who had moved to Paris from London in 1920). You could pass the time at Shakespeare and Company, the English-language bookshop founded by Sylvia Beach, and try to look like a published author. You could hope that one of the prestigious little magazines—*Broom*, *This Quarter*, *transition*, *Secession*, the *Transatlantic Review*—would accept a poem, or a story and so make you a player. Wasn't Hemingway's first book, the volume of stories called *in our time*, published in a tiny edition of 300 copies by an obscure expatriate press before he was "discovered" by Scribner's and made famous by *The Sun Also Rises*?

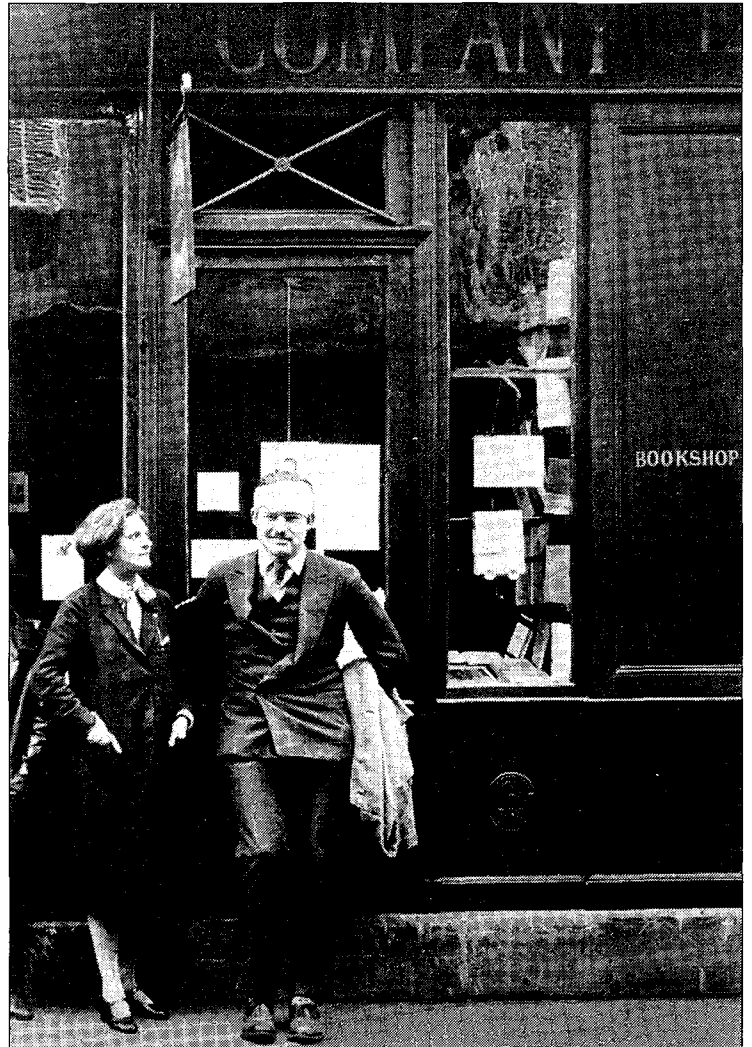
Such fragile hopes sustained many a bo-

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hemian-in-training out of love with his or her country. And it was possible to carry on the fiction of being a writer much longer there than one could at home, encouraged by the presence of so many co-conspirators in the community of the disaffected. Almost as significantly, for Americans during the

1924. A three-course meal including wine and coffee might come to 30 cents. In addition, Parisians were as uncensorious toward an artist's poverty as they were toward other American "sins." "Poverty here is decent and honorable," Pound wrote. "In America it lays one open to insults on

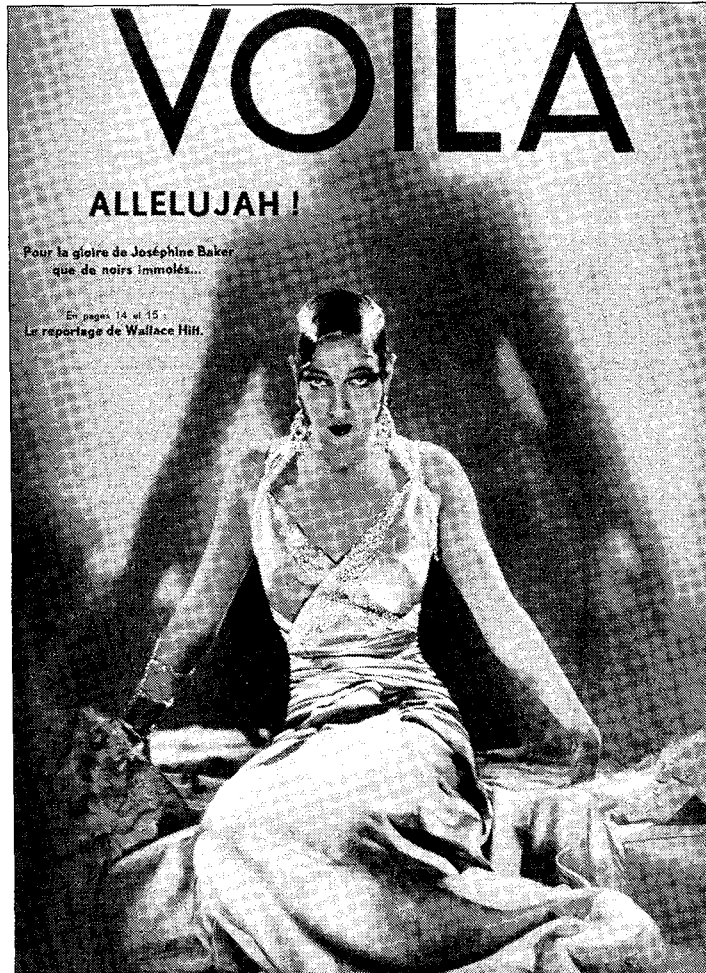
The American colony in Paris had its capital—Sylvia Beach's bookshop, Shakespeare and Company. Beach is shown here in 1928, outside her bookstore with favorite customer and author Ernest Hemingway.



1920s living in Paris was extraordinarily cheap. The exchange rate was so favorable that money would go twice as far as in the United States. Pound wrote to one correspondent who was thinking of coming that the studio apartment he had rented in 1921 for \$30 a month was down to \$15 by

all sides."

The party could not last. The Depression ended it. By the 1930s, as Malcolm Cowley recalls in *Exile's Return*, "the whole tide of middle-class migration turned backward over the Atlantic." Hemingway and Fitzgerald came home to the United States, the



VOILA

ALLELUJAH!

Pour la gloire de Joséphine Baker
que de noirs immolés...

En pages 14 et 15
Le reportage de Wallace Hill.

The American entertainer Josephine Baker became a phenomenon in Paris, which to many suggested that France was a more tolerant society, both racially and morally. Ernest Hemingway described his first meeting with "the most exciting woman I ever met":

Tall, coffee skin, ebony eyes, legs of paradise, a smile to end all smiles. Very hot night but she was wearing a coat of black fur, her breasts handling the fur like it was silk. She turned her eyes on me . . . I introduced myself and asked her name. "Josephine Baker," she said. We danced nonstop for the rest of the night. She never took off her coat. Wasn't until the joint closed she told me she had nothing on underneath.

restless Pound moved on to Italy, and the camp followers pulled up stakes. Although Stein never dreamed of leaving France and Henry Miller had just arrived, the vogue of the Paris expatriates was over.

Their roots had been shallowly sunk in French soil in any case. When a friend

warned Hemingway that "if we are going to stay here it means really we have to become Frenchmen," he replied with a shrug, "Who would want to stay?" The bohemian life was nomadic. "I hate a room without an open suitcase in it," Zelda Fitzgerald said, "it seems so permanent." Most of the expatriates in Paris never secured entry into French literary culture. The American colony was large enough to be self-sufficient and self-contained. And despite their change of residence, the Americans remained recognizable representatives of their country, even patriotic in their way. Sylvia Beach boasted that she had the largest American flag in Paris, which she draped over the bookcases during parties at her shop both to protect and advertise her merchandise.

Stein made a point of reading virtually nothing in French. She subscribed to Mudie's Library for English books and to Shakespeare and Company, and she used her French expatriation to be "all alone with English and myself," to refashion the language in a kind of linguistic solitude, and to write what she called that "essentially American book," *The Making of Americans* (1925). Even Wharton, who had closer ties to the French literary world, had used her distance from America to follow James's trenchant ad-

vice—"Do New York!"—in novels such as *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), in which she inspected the mores of her native land with the cool detachment of an anthropologist.

This indifference to or exclusion from French literary life, however, struck other

American expatriate writers as the essential problem in choosing Paris. Henry James had spent his first year abroad in the French capital, and though he came to know some of the leading writers resident there—Turgenev, Flaubert, Zola, and Daudet among them—he soon understood that he had made a mistake: “I remember how Paris had, in a hundred ways, come to weary and displease me; I couldn’t get out of the detestable *American Paris*,” he wrote in his journals. “I saw, moreover, that I should be an eternal outsider.” What was the point of leaving your country behind only to reconstitute it on a foreign shore? And how could a writer eager to think of himself as contributing to (and subtly revising) the venerable tradition of European culture be content to remain outside? After a year James impulsively packed his bags and moved to London, of which he was to write: “It is not a pleasant place; it is not agreeable, or cheerful, or easy, or exempt from reproach. It is only magnificent.”

Nearly four decades later, T. S. Eliot tried the same experiment, with similar results. Though he mastered the French language well enough to write some poems in it, and though poets like Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Laforgue had a profound influence on his work, he too finally felt excluded from the culture’s vital center. And the hectic atmosphere of Paris life seemed to him to conspire against his vocation. “The chief danger about Paris,” he wrote to an American who was thinking of settling there, “is that it is such a strong stimulus, and like most stimulants incites to rushing about and produces a pleasant illusion of mental activity rather than the solid results of hard work.”

Paris was the place American writers went to *escape from* something—chiefly the confining atmosphere of their own country. London was the city they chose when their motive was to *find* something not readily available in the United States: a reliable if small group of serious readers and noncommercial publishers grouped together in one place, a cosmopolitan culture open to exceptional outsiders no matter what their country, a densely populated setting in which every neighborhood and nearly every street sum-

moned up something from the great literary heritage they wanted to call their own. The cities appealed to two different kinds of expatriate temperament. Those who were attracted to Paris were much more restless, anarchic spirits. What they wanted above all was to be left alone, not to be interfered with, and Paris’s essential indifference to them was a blessing. They were not joiners, not minding how distinguished the club was that excluded them. This is why they did not mind having so little contact with the indigenous literary life of the metropolis. Even when they settled in for the duration, they seemed permanently adrift. And we have seen how easily they could pack up and move on. The characters in their novels reflect this tendency: There is no telling where the human atoms that come together in *The Sun Also Rises* or *Tender Is the Night* or Barnes’s *Nightwood* or Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* will turn up next. Nor do they greatly care. The important thing is not to be bound.

By contrast, the Anglophiles treasured the settled nature and institutional life of London. James and Eliot (and Pound in his London years) were much more interested in order and boundaries. As reverent literary pilgrims, they were attracted to Europe as a cultural shrine. They were deeply interested in the past and eager to link their own lives (and work) to the most venerable traditions. James deliberately suppressed most of his early, pre-expatriate short stories and called his first published book *A Passionate Pilgrim, and Other Tales* (1875). And in Eliot’s most famous essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1917), he insisted that we stop using the adjective “traditional” as “a phrase of censure” and argued that a serious writer must think of the collective “mind of Europe [as] much more important than his private mind.”

James did not really feel comfortable in London until he had been elected to one of its oldest and most exclusive clubs, the Reform, at which point he made up his mind to stay: “*J’y suis, j’y reste*—for ever and a day.” To his brother William he wrote, “I have submitted myself without reserve to that Londonizing process.” James treated entry into existing institutions not as a

threat to autonomy but as a precious opportunity for growth. He was delighted that everyone he met “represents something—has, in some degree or other, an historical identity.” He had no fear of being defined by something outside himself.

Similarly, Eliot was eager to merge his individual life with the ancient institutions that still dominated Britain during his young manhood. His decision to become a British subject and his announcement that

his views were “classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion” startled his American readers, not only because of the apparent rejection of his national roots but because of the atavism they revealed. A phrase like “the dead hand of the past” would have made no sense to him. London attracted him precisely because there the past seemed as alive as—perhaps more alive than—the present.

It is easy to see why such ambitious Americans with the right credentials—highly educated, traveled, upper-class, and preferably with Anglo-Saxon roots—had no trouble gaining entry into London’s highest social and intellectual circles. Henry Adams had managed it in the 1860s, when his father had served as Lincoln’s minister to the Court of St. James. And five years after his 1876 arrival, James wrote, “I came to London as a complete stranger, and today I know much too many people.” The social calendars of both Adams and James, with their packed record of luncheons and teas and dinners and country weekends, is exhausting merely to contemplate, but it supplied an alert intelligence such as James’s with the rich raw material of his art. His aim was to write about both Europeans and Americans from a cosmopolitan perspective that would free him (and the reader) from the constricting provincial attitudes of each. In this he succeeded better than any writer before or since.

Eliot seemed to have mastered the same art. To a later generation of American writers, like Malcolm Cowley’s, his achievement was to have produced “poems in which we could not find a line that betrayed immaturity, awkwardness, provincialism or platitude. Might a Midwestern boy become a flawless poet?—this was a question with which we could not fail to be preoccupied.” “Provincial” was indeed one of the most damning words in Eliot’s and Pound’s vocabulary. “The metropolis,” Pound wrote, “is that



T. S. Eliot, standing here outside Faber and Gwyer publishing company, became plus anglais que les anglais—a fact which exasperated some Englishmen. The society hostess Lady Ottoline Morrell noted of Eliot: “He never moves his lips but speaks in an even and monotonous voice . . . He is obviously very ignorant of England and imagines that it is essential to be highly polite and conventional and decorous, and meticulous.”

which accepts all gifts and all heights of excellence, usually the excellence that is *tabu* in its own village."

Eliot's and Pound's attitudes implied that expatriates must enter the cultural mainstream rather than form little villages abroad of their own kind. And here London proved to be vastly more welcoming than Paris. Like Paris, it had its literary meeting grounds—Harold Monroe's Poetry Bookstore, Elkin Mathews' shop on Vigo Street—and its coterie journals such as the *English Review*, *The New Age*, and the *Egoist*, the last edited by Pound, who boasted that a number of periodicals in London were "largely in the control of writers." The literary community these institutions fostered was genuinely transnational, not exclusively expatriate. Americans in London profited from the fact of the common language and the assumption by educated Englishmen like Matthew Arnold and his successors that American literature, whatever its flaws, was inevitably a branch of English literature. Though the British could be avuncular, the relationship was familial.

The turn of the century was a particularly fortuitous time for an American to transplant himself to British soil. Never before in the troubled history of the two nations—which had fought two wars and narrowly avoided a third—had diplomatic relations been more cordial. As Britain's imperial power declined and its European rivals, Germany and Russia, became more powerful threats to its security, the country's leaders realized that they would need a reliable ally. What more plausible candidate than their "American cousins" across the water, now well on the way to becoming the richest and most productive nation on Earth? And as the United States moved rapidly toward the role of world power, the model of the British Empire seemed the most plausible one to imitate. The quarrels of the past were largely forgotten or forgiven on both sides, and a new chapter in Anglo-American relations began. Two incidents illustrate this new accord. In 1898, as a tribute to America's victory over Spain in Cuba and the Philippines and its emergence as a world power, Independence Day was officially celebrated throughout Britain, and there were serious

proposals that the Fourth of July should henceforth become an Anglo-American rather than merely American holiday. And in 1901, the White House flag flew at half-staff on the occasion of Queen Victoria's death, an unprecedented tribute to a foreign sovereign.

The American literary expatriates who settled in London benefited from these changes even if these writers were essentially apolitical. Though they felt deeply alienated from their country, they could hardly help embodying the new national mood of self-confidence. For all their feeling of displacement at home, James, Eliot, and Pound (and Henry Adams before them) reflected America's ascendancy and Britain's decline. Their interpretive authority is striking: Adams's *de haut en bas* tone, James's assured use of national stereotypes, the magisterial dogmatism of Eliot's literary essays, Pound's ABCs for the benighted. Manifest Destiny could claim high culture as well as territory and could cross the Atlantic. So Howells in 1902 proposed that American expatriate writers "may be the vanguard of the great army of adventurers destined to overrun the earth from these shores, and exploit all foreign countries to our advantage." Americans were the true cosmopolites who could, as James put it, "pick and choose and assimilate and . . . claim our property wherever we find it."

The aggressive thrust of such pronouncements was masked by the pervasive Anglo-Saxon loyalty of the American literary expatriates who chose London. For these writers, the fact of a shared Anglo-Saxon identity was crucial. They wrote at a moment when a flood of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, nearly a million a year, was transforming the traditionally "Nordic" United States into a polyglot country which the old colonial stock found alien and threatening. This crisis produced an Anglo-Saxon backlash, given extremist voice in alarmist works like Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) and Lothrop Stoddart's *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920). It generated the successful movement to restrict European immigration by country of origin, led to the founding of nativist societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution, and

encouraged the fastidious withdrawal of many of the northeastern patriciate to Europe or to its own secure borders.

In *The American Scene* (1907), James's account of his first visit to America in two decades, he describes the foreigners taking over Boston Common as "gross aliens to a man . . . in serene and triumphant possession." The swarming Jewish settlement on the Lower East Side made him "gasp with a sense of isolation." The links between such sentiments and Eliot's and Pound's well-known anti-Semitic passages are not accidental. Pound felt himself "racially alien to the mass of the population." Eliot—for whom America until about 1830 "was a family extension" and whose mother presided over the St. Louis chapter of the Colonial Dames—saw no place for himself in this *new* New World.

To such displaced colonists monocultural Britain, whose population remained over 99 percent native-born, seemed more like the America of 1830 than modern America did. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in 1887 that a New Englander would "feel more as if he were among his own people in London than in one of our seaboard cities." James saw England and America "as a big Anglo-Saxon total, destined to such an amount of melting together" that their separate identities would fuse—a very different melting pot from the one that was bubbling away at home.

Is it any wonder that such racial loyalties made these renegade Americans welcome in London? The English success of the American expatriates who settled there was prodigious and may have helped shift the cultural balance between the two countries. Far from remaining outsiders ghettoized in an American enclave, they rapidly entered the mainstream of British literary culture and helped reshape it. England awarded James its highest honor, the Order of Merit. The influential British critic F. R. Leavis called James's *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Bostonians* "the two most brilliant novels in the language." Eliot wrote his mother when he was only 30 that "I have more *influence* on English letters than any other American has ever had, unless it be Henry James." And Pound declared that

"all developments in English verse since 1910 are due almost wholly to Americans." It is striking that the volume surveying the early modern period in the Pelican Guide to English Literature should be called *From James to Eliot*.

London was ripe for such a takeover at the turn of the century by the small band of expatriates who settled there. Its native tradition was showing signs of age, and the new voices that came to dominate its cultural life were almost all from elsewhere—Joseph Conrad from Poland; Joyce, Yeats, and Shaw from Ireland; Katherine Mansfield from New Zealand; James, Pound, and Eliot from America. Pound wrote to his stay-at-home friend William Carlos Williams that "London, deah old Lundon, is the place for poesy," and advised him, "If you have saved any pennies during your stay in Nueva York, you'd better come across and broaden your mind."

Pound's meteoric rise to literary prominence between his arrival in 1908 at the age of 23 and his departure for Paris 12 years later illustrates the impact a brash, energetic, intellectually adventurous foreigner could have on the receptive world of the London literary establishment. Within a year he was praised and welcomed by "the greatest living poet," William Butler Yeats. A short while later he was acting as Yeats's secretary and collaborator, and Yeats credited Pound with moving his own poetry out of the 19th century and into the 20th. Pound became the impresario of the modernist movement, helping other great writers of his own generation—Joyce, Eliot, Robert Frost, D. H. Lawrence, and others—achieve recognition. In 1909, when they were both only 24, Lawrence was excitedly describing Pound in a letter as "a well-known American poet" who "knows W B Yeats and all the Swells."

What made "The Siege of London," as James titled one of his stories, possible? Why did a venerable culture allow these upstarts from the former colonies to colonize them? The answer lies in the Americans' peculiar combination of reverence and brashness and in their implicit promise to revitalize a culture that was beginning to fear its own moribund tendencies. *Make It New*, the slogan-title of one of Pound's

many manifestos, is not as radical as it sounds, since the "It" referred to is the European literary tradition. He was a resurrection artist, promising "to resuscitate the dead art/Of poetry." In his poem "Sestina: Altaforte" he makes the 12th-century Troubadour poet Bertran de Born speak in a racy modern idiom, and asks the reader, "Judge ye! Have I dug him up again?"

James and Eliot offered a similar promise to fuse old and new, tradition and the fresh current of energy coming from abroad. James's early works were welcomed in England because they seemed to offer a guide to the perplexed reader seeking to understand these new young masters of the world. Some English reviewers treated him as though he were either a native informant or an ethnographer bringing vital information to the baffled Briton.

Eliot's literary revolution, for all its disruptive tendencies, offered similar reassurance once his strange idiom had been mastered. *The Waste Land* (1922) is one of the most innovative poems in the language, and it made very little sense to its first audience. But as its bewildering range of reference became familiar, the European reader came to see that this American was paying the older world a tremendous compliment. Here was an artfully woven tapestry of allusions to the whole gamut of European culture. In the section called "The Fire Sermon," for instance, there are references to the Old Testament, Sappho, Sophocles, Ovid, St. Augustine, the medieval Grail legends, Dante, Spenser, Marvell, Shakespeare, Goldsmith, and Wagner, as well as to Buddha and Australian popular song. What is conspicuous by its absence is any reference at all to American literature, both here and in the rest of the poem. Perhaps the torch had not after all passed to a new continent. Perhaps the expatriates had come to be of service rather than to displace the British from cultural primacy.

Eliot worked hard to create such reassurance, and in the long run he was much more successful in doing so than his original sponsor, Ezra Pound. He was suave and patient where Pound was noisy and self-advertising. He mastered the subtle balancing act of deference and assertion that governed London's literary life. In

playing possum he managed to accomplish a great deal without calling attention to himself. While he was still in his thirties he became the founding editor of the most prestigious literary review in the country, *The Criterion*, funded by an aristocratic patron, Lady Rothermere, with whom he knew he had to deal "tactfully not truculently." In the next decade he took over as poetry editor of Faber's publishing house and rapidly made the imprint of that firm the guarantor of quality in verse. To become a "Faber poet" was an entrance ticket to Parnassus. And in these decades, his own critical essays, never written in the heated style of Pound's manifestos but in the circumspect, authoritative language of a highly compressed reasoned discourse, sank deep into the consciousness of serious readers and were virtually treated as holy writ. He had become the arbiter of literary London.

Such triumphs did not come without a price. To become a permanent expatriate, whether in Paris or in London, inevitably meant losing touch with one's own people, and all the consequences this entailed: personal isolation, an increasingly uncertain sense of audience, ignorance of the ways in which the America of one's distant memories was being transformed by the forces of contemporary life, the loss of the vital, ever-changing colloquial language as it diverged from standard English.

The careers of the lifelong expatriates, successful as they were, all show evidence of loss as well as gain. Gertrude Stein's major works remained unpublished or else circulated in minuscule editions until her deliberately commercial *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933), published when she was nearly 60, finally made her famous. Before that she could only say, ruefully, "I write for myself and strangers," and there were precious few of the latter. James steadily lost his hold on the audience of his early fiction, so that by the time the monumental New York Edition of his works was published in the first decade of the 20th century, the number of purchasers was pitifully small. The great novels of his last years baffled most of his previously loyal readers. They seemed to be written in a language that had lost its links to living speech, whether English or American. And James

suffered from the sense that in leaving his country behind on the eve of great changes, he had perhaps made a catastrophic mistake. "Profit, be warned, by my awful example of exile and ignorance," he exhorted Wharton in 1902, begging her to focus on the "*American Subject* . . . the immediate, the real, the ours, the yours, the novelist's that it waits for."

For Eliot and James, however, expatriation really meant attempted repatriation. Both gave up their American citizenship and became British subjects, thus proving that a genuinely cosmopolitan identity was more elusive than they had originally anticipated. One had to choose, and the choice always involved some strain. To a birthright Englishman, their impersonation of a Briton often seemed comic. "Eliot is coming to lunch, in his four-piece suit," Virginia Woolf quipped on one occasion. And of James's novels with an English setting, she asked, "Could anyone believe that [they] were written by a man who had grown up in the society which he describes?" For all their dazzling success in their adopted country, both writers remained irredeemably alien.

But the saddest story was Pound's. His restless pilgrimage took him from London to Paris to Italy, where his estrangement from his native country led him to broadcast anti-American propaganda for Mussolini during World War II and, after the war, brought him to trial for treason. The magnum opus on which he spent the last decades of his life, *The Cantos*, was written in the face of his despair of finding any audience at all, and it was only the unquestionable brilliance of some of its sections that made a few individual readers train themselves to follow Pound's quirky, essentially private imagination into whatever terrain it chose to explore—European, American, Asian. He became the sole citizen of his invented country, increasingly unwanted, isolated, marginal, railing against America and the benighted everywhere and, finally, against himself, "As a

lone ant from a broken ant-hill/from the wreckage of Europe."

To leave the security of the known and familiar was a perilous undertaking, increasing the serious writer's inescapable solitude. But despite the misgivings voiced by each of the expatriates at some point in their careers, what they gained outweighed what they lost. Whether they chose Paris or London, whether they stayed or moved on or moved back, the experience of uprooting themselves from the world that had fashioned them gave them an invaluable interpretive distance, which they used to challenge the provincialism of a young country and make it see itself in relation to the larger world in which it had become a dominant power. In the long run, their problems in finding sympathetic readers have evaporated because the global reach of their imaginations has come to seem indispensable. And here Pound's final tribute to James can serve as a justification for other American expatriate writers. James's "great labour, this labour of translation, of making America intelligible, of making it possible for individuals to meet across national borders," Pound wrote, meant a lifetime devoted to "trying to make two continents understand each other . . . [James] has put America on the map."

The America Pound was describing is not only a particular place but a condition of mind—sophisticated, confident, experienced rather than innocent, global rather than narrowly national. The expatriate consciousness made the American writer a plausible representative of the country as it became an international power, more than a century after its founding. The literary expatriates have been attacked as betrayers of their native land by outraged patriots from Theodore Roosevelt to William Carlos Williams. And it was certainly essential for the health of American literature that not every writer of distinction made their choice. But for all their alienation, the artists who settled in Europe were stretching the minds of their countrymen. They were helping turn Americans into citizens of the world.

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Continued from page 16

In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith declared that consumption is the sole purpose of production, and he criticized the mercantile system of deliberate national economic development because it sacrificed the consumer's interest to that of the producer. "Historically, Smith's logic held up so long as the individual remained both the consuming and the producing unit," McCraw writes. In the modern world, most production is done not by individuals but by complex organizations. Unlike individual producers who act in their own short-term interest, corporations now make investment decisions five to 10 years in ad-

vance. Such planning, McCraw says, is best done with the help of "wise public policy."

Today, McCraw contends, consumer-oriented Smithian capitalism as practiced in the United States "is being consistently outperformed" by a more nationalistic, producer-oriented variety. "The German and Japanese economic systems today are just as market-oriented, just as 'capitalistic,' as is the American. But they are far less centered on the individual. Their architects, less fearful of deliberate applications of national economic strategies, less convinced that 'human institutions' inevitably produce 'absurd' results," draw on

Apples, Oranges, and Inequality

Sometimes it seems that the gulf between economists arguing over the extent of income inequality in the United States is wider than any gulf between rich and poor could possibly be. The partisan vapors of the recent presidential campaign seemed to provoke economists into fighting like cats and dogs, creating, if readers will pardon some mixed metaphors, a blinding hail of statistical apples and oranges.

However, even the warring economists seem able to agree on a few essentials. For nearly three decades after World War II, U.S. labor productivity soared and the wages of American workers grew apace. By 1973, the median income of young (ages 25-34) men with high-school degrees reached a postwar high of more than \$24,500 (in 1988 dollars), while the official poverty rate reached a postwar low of 11.1 percent. The rich were getting richer, but so were the poor—and everybody in between. And when there is more for everybody, persistent inequality seems not to matter much.

There also seems to be general agreement that inequality has since grown worse. How much, since when, and why, however, are the questions that set the apples and oranges flying. There is no denying that a "massive increase in inequality" has taken place, asserts MIT economist Paul R. Krugman in a recent review of the debate in the *American Prospect* (Fall 1992). Based on Congressional Budget Office figures, he calculates that 70 percent of the rise in average family income between 1977 and 1989 went to the top one percent of U.S. families, which now enjoy an average income of \$300,000. "[T]he typical American family has seen little gain in spite of rising productivity," he maintains—although in a typical apples-and-

oranges maneuver he fails to report what exactly that "typical" family did gain.

When the liberal Krugman's calculation was made public last March, conservatives counter-attacked. The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* (May 11 and May 21, 1992) admitted that there has been "a trend toward somewhat greater income disparity" but called Krugman's estimate of its magnitude "preposterous." The *Journal* editors approvingly cited an estimate by economists at the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) that only 25 percent of the total increase in family income went to the top one percent of families.

The CEA was right, Krugman says, but it chose to look at a misleading statistic. *Total* family income did rise sharply, but that was because the total number of families jumped. Naturally, the rich captured a smaller share of this increase. But the *average* income of all families rose by only 10 percent between 1977 and 1989.

As Marvin H. Kosters, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), warns in the *American Enterprise* (Dec. 1992), such "snapshots" of the distribution of income can be misleading. Thanks to upward mobility, many poor and middle-class families better their conditions even at times when income inequality is growing. How many families? This question sets the economists off on a new debate: Is the glass half full or half empty?

Comparing data from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s in the Urban Institute's *Policy Bites* (June 1992) Isabel V. Sawhill and Mark Condon note that upward mobility is "substantial" and did not diminish over the 20-year period. Roughly half the people who find themselves in

the intellectual legacies of Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804) and the German nationalist Friedrich List (1789–1846). Their strategies, McCraw says, are well-suited to a modern

world economy that is “dominated by . . . nationalism, technology, organization, and power,” the very things Adam Smith ignored or abhorred.

Capital Problem

“Capital Disadvantage: America’s Failing Capital Investment System” by Michael E. Porter, in *Harvard Business Review* (Sept.–Oct. 1992), Boston, Mass. 02163.

Critics of America’s economic performance have been saying for years that U.S. business is too oriented toward the short term. Harvard’s

Porter, who directed an extensive research project sponsored by the Council on Competitiveness and the Harvard Business School,

the bottom income “quintile” at the beginning of a decade are likely to climb into a higher quintile by decade’s end. Following the fortunes of *individuals* in this way rather than *groups*, the authors say, shows that “on average, the rich got a little richer and the poor got much richer.” So how can the glass be half empty? Because, Sawhill and Condon say, mobility has stayed the same while real wages have declined. Those who do not move up are stuck in jobs that pay less than they did before.

Sparing the reader the various oranges that have been hurled at the Sawhill-Condon apple, what about the next obvious question? Why has income inequality been growing, with all due respect to the contenders, a lot or somewhat worse?

Here, a few rare hybrid “aporanges” of agreement begin to appear. There now seems to be some agreement that the Reagan tax cuts of the 1980s had little direct impact on inequality. Joel Slemrod, a University of Michigan business school professor who organized a recent conference of middle-of-the-road economists, told the *New York Times* (October 1, 1992) that “the consensus is that growth in inequality was not due to changes in tax rates.” (Bear in mind, however, that consensus is an unnatural state among economists.)

In a long review article in the *Journal of Economic Literature* (September 1992), economists Frank Levy of the University of Maryland and Richard J. Murnane of Harvard deliver one of the generally agreed-upon versions of what has gone wrong (though it does not touch upon such contentious issues as the rise of female-headed families). The Great Depression, they write, ushered in two decades of declining earnings inequality. An associate professor in 1930 made four times as much as an unskilled

worker, but in 1950 only 2.3 times as much. Beginning in the early ‘50s, the trend reversed and inequality rose slightly. Then, during the 1980s, according to Levy and Murnane, came a dramatic rise. One big reason: There were fewer “middle class” jobs available for young men with only a high-school education. A growing number of young men in their prime could not earn enough to buy a single-family home. Whereas 57 percent of male high school graduates earned more than \$20,000 in 1979, only 46 percent did in 1987.

The economy’s shift away from manufacturing, the traditional source of high-wage jobs for less-educated males, hit young men hard. Between 1979 and 1987 the percentage of them employed in manufacturing declined from 38 to 29, while the percentage working in wholesale and retail trade—where wages are lower, in part because of competition from women—increased from 18 to 23. Education now counted for more. Young male college graduates working in manufacturing in 1979 had median earnings 21 percent above those of high-school graduates; by 1987, they enjoyed a 50-percent edge.

“The relative importance of learning has increased significantly,” concludes AEI’s Marvin Kosters. “Investments that workers make in themselves—through formal schooling, skill training, and work experience on the job—pay higher rewards than at any time in our recent experience.” This new importance of education is the “serious point” to be found in the trend toward greater inequality in income, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* (May 28, 1992) argue. “It is around this reality that one would expect liberals and conservatives to be able to have a serious, productive debate.”

Oranges, anyone?

agrees and thinks he can explain the myopia.

The problem stems partly from the fact that publicly traded U.S. firms increasingly rely on funds from transient owners—mutual funds, pension funds, and other institutional investors. Whereas such owners accounted for only eight percent of total stock-market equity in 1950, they held 60 percent in 1990. Their portfolios are highly diversified, with small stakes in many companies. Mutual funds and actively managed pension funds hold shares, on average, for under two years. In Japan, by contrast, roughly 70 percent of stock is held for many years. The U.S. fund managers want stocks to appreciate quickly and dump them if they do not.

That threat focuses the minds of corporate managers on the next quarter's financial results. It does not help that executives themselves often receive compensation in the form of stock options or tied to current profits.

Boards of directors, which are supposed to tend to corporations' long-term interests, have limited influence. The recent board revolt at General Motors is an encouraging sign, but it is

still only that. "The presence of knowledgeable major owners, bankers, customers, and suppliers on corporate boards has diminished," Porter notes. Nearly three-fourths of the directors of the largest U.S. corporations are outsiders, with little knowledge about or stake in the companies they oversee.

Lack of information about their businesses also hinders top corporate managers. Many U.S. firms in recent decades have opted for a decentralized organizational structure involving highly autonomous business units. Top managers, as a result, are less familiar than in the past with the details of the business.

Systemic reform is badly needed. For one thing, Porter says, ownership should be greatly expanded. "Outside owners should be encouraged to hold larger stakes and to take a more active and constructive role in companies. Directors, managers, employees, and even customers and suppliers should all hold positions as important corporate owners." These are the parties that can best safeguard America's long-term interest in the future of the corporation.

SOCIETY

P. T. Barnum Lives!

"Reinventing the Museum" by Michael Lind, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1992), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

On an August day in 1793, one year after the abolition of the monarchy in France, the Louvre was thrown open to the public and what is now thought of as the traditional art museum was born. "Along with the public school and the public library, the public museum is one of the characteristic institutions of bourgeois republicanism," notes Lind, executive editor of the *National Interest*. Communities in the United States point with pride to their museums, as they once did to their churches. Today, however, the traditional notion of the museum as a dignified place for the display of artistic masterpieces is under attack.

From the Left, it is assaulted by some who want to create "alternative" institutions free of the bourgeois taint (such as the Anonymous Museum, which opened in a Chicago warehouse in 1991), and by others who wish to turn the bourgeois institution against the bourgeoisie by mounting exhibitions that aggressively subvert the supposed ideology of the state or the corporate elite.

A more subtle—and perhaps more serious—threat, Lind says, comes from "the market-driven substitution of entertainment for enlightenment." The museum, critic Hilton Kramer observes, has become "an appropriate place in which to order lunch or dinner, buy something to wear, do our Christmas shopping, see a movie, listen to a concert, attend a lecture on anything under the sun, possibly even art." To draw crowds, museums mount "the blockbuster show, the middlebrow extravaganza," such as the King Tut exhibit or the Andrew Wyeth Helga show. "This profit-driven boosterism," in Lind's view, "tends to vulgarize the museum incidentally, at the very time that left-minded curators celebrate vulgarity deliberately."

"Avant-garde hype and shrewd commercialism" come together in shows like the "Helter Skelter" exhibit at the industrial annex of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. The displays there included a mechanical man-ikin copulating with a tree, and a 30-foot sculp-

ture of two enormous infants joined at the groin. P. T. Barnum, who filled his American Museum in 19th-century New York with jugglers, bearded women, and the Feejee Mermaid, would have approved.

What else can the museum be if it is no longer a noble temple of art? Lind looks to the "contextualist" ideal advanced by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), an English-educated Indian intellectual who spent the last half

of his life in the United States. "The Coomaraswamian museum would showcase objects not as exemplars of eternal aesthetic values but as manifestations of a particular civilization's particular philosophical worldview or religious sensibility. It would, in short, resemble a museum of anthropology or comparative religion." Truth, not sensation, is the proper goal of art, after all, and it is hardly likely to be obtained by shoppers at a cultural bazaar.

Keeping 'Em Down On the Farm

"From Better Babies to 4-H: A Look at Rural America, 1900–1930" by Marilyn Irvin Holt, in *Prologue* (Fall 1992), National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

The U.S. census of 1920 showed that, for the first time in the nation's history, country folk were outnumbered by their urban cousins. The exodus from the farm had already prompted fears for the future of American agriculture, as the popular World War I song, "How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Paree)?," jokingly suggested.

Even before the war, notes Holt, a free-lance writer, the federal government, along with the

agricultural colleges created by the Morrill Act of 1862, had begun making efforts to improve farm life and make it more attractive. President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 set up a commission to study the matter. In 1917, the first of many national conferences was held to bring together all those interested in "rural progress." Education was the U.S. Agriculture Department's favored means of uplift. Farmers were shown how to get higher crop yields and



Hard labor: An entire Texas farm family, circa 1900, was forced to pick cotton.

Malcolm's Rage

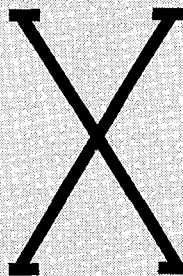
Spike Lee's film biography is only the latest manifestation of the Malcolm X revival in black America. But the Malcolm who has reappeared, journalist Marshall Frady observes in the *New Yorker* (October 12, 1992), is not the Malcolm who was slain.

From the turbulent black awakening of the 1960s, two lines of descent—two temperaments, two potentials—have contended for the spirit of black Americans: a tension between the children of Martin [Luther King, Jr.] and the children of Malcolm [X]. . . . [I]f it could be said that King's vision expected too much of the species, Malcolm's seemed a vision of humankind's nature reduced to the basest, most minimal terms of anger and retribution for abuse. . . . If, all these years later, the tensions between the visions of Martin and Malcolm have endured in the black community, it can sometimes appear that Malcolm's flat, blank anger has carried the day—and not merely in a certain style of attitude, as evidenced by the swagger and bluster of many rap artists. How Malcolm's presence far more deeply lingers among us was illuminated by the recent upheavals in Los Angeles. . . . But if the lasting racial alienations in America would seem to put King's high moral proposition in doubt, the irony is that at the time Malcolm was slain he had begun to move away from the fierce, implacable persona to which his mystique and his children have now fastened.

He had broken with the Black Muslims, and in the last year of his life he had been venturing, however tentatively and unevenly, beyond the insular racial delirium of their doctrine and was approaching a more open and conciliatory vision—a vision closer, if still only in certain nuances, to King's own. . . .

Malcolm's mood [in 1965] had become one of cornered frenzy. He told [Alex] Haley that when he concluded that Elijah Muhammad had sanctioned his extermination "my head felt like it was bleeding inside." . . . His protégé Louis Farrakhan had announced in a Muslim newspaper, with the scorpion vigor for which he later became more widely noted, "The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape. . . . Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death." . . . It was as if he were ambushed from the past by his own hand. In the end, for all Malcolm's aposileship of wrath over the years, the only violence his message ever demonstrably precipitated was upon himself. . . .

He is still hailed by many as the most authentic voice of America's vast black underclass. . . . But it has been his earlier incarnation to which his posterity has somehow clung: to Malcolm's own slayer, in effect. On book covers, and on posters that have proliferated throughout the black community—in university black-student unions and inner-city bookstores—it is the image of Malcolm during his [Black] Muslim days that glares out.



better produce. Through federally funded extension services sponsored by agricultural colleges, farm women were taught how to do their work more efficiently. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided federal money to the colleges to hire extension agents to organize 4-H Clubs for boys and girls. By 1919, more than 465,000 young people were enrolled in the clubs.

Teachers in rural schools gave lessons in the "elements of agriculture," Holt says, to "show boys the value of the farm in the national scheme of things." Home economics teachers, meanwhile, attempted to persuade girls "that housework was not drudgery but an art." Whatever it was called, farm women had to work extremely hard—on average, according to a 1928 study, more than 63 hours per week. "If

one wanted reasons to explain migrations off the farm or ranch," Holt observes, "the battle to maintain good health amid the hard work of just finding ways to preserve and keep food" is a very good one. "Another . . . was the hard outdoor work that women performed during pregnancy and soon after delivery," including such chores as hauling water, cutting firewood, and digging potatoes.

For most farm families to survive, every member had to contribute—including the children. The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor "met steady resistance from rural communities and farm organizations" in its efforts to regulate agricultural child labor, and finally decided "that no matter what abuses existed, the need to maintain the family farm was

more important in the broader picture."

If the sole aim of all the rural uplift was to halt the migration from farm to city, then the efforts have to be judged an utter failure. But,

Holt notes, America's farm families did enjoy improved health and education, a reduction in backbreaking work, and more opportunities for organized activities such as 4-H.

PRESS & MEDIA

The News, With Feeling

"The New Writers' Bloc" by Katherine Boo, in *The Washington Monthly* (Nov. 1992), 1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, and "Mo Knows" by Leslie Kaufman, in *Washington Journalism Review* (Oct. 1992), 4716 Pontiac St., Ste. 310, College Park, Md. 20740-2493.

Washington correspondent Maureen Dowd is a talented and amusing wordsmith. During the Democratic primaries last year, Senator Robert Kerrey (D.-Neb.) emerged from her word processor with "large blue eyes and a light-bulb shaped head that give him the look of a bemused extraterrestrial." Another erstwhile presidential contender, Paul Tsongas, was turned into a turtle, "look[ing] around him with a slow, blinking bemusement at the vagaries of fate." Dowd did not invent impressionistic "New Journalism," but the fact that she practices it on the front page of what used to be called the "good, gray" *New York Times* is highly significant. According to Boo, a *Washington Post* editor, and Kaufman, an assistant editor of *Government Executive* magazine, Dowd and a host of imitators are transforming political journalism. The change, say critics, is not entirely for the better.

When the New Journalism emerged in the late 1960s, newspapers usually relegated it to the opinion and style pages. No longer. "Faced on the one hand with engaging a generation raised on MTV, and on the other with stiff competition from faxed newsletters, on-line news services, and CNN," Kaufman writes, "newspapers are being forced to reinvent themselves."

Dowd herself, who likes "to do stories that tweak and amuse," compares politics to Shakespearean drama. "It's one of the few arenas where you can watch character development." But is "character" all in politics? Showing, as Dowd did, how President Bush, while campaigning in Texas, marred "his pork-rind image with a prep-school tendency to say 'whoopsie daisy' and 'by golly,'" Boo notes, may well provide "a better feel for [the] geeky commander-in-chief than a dozen lesser profiles." Franklin Roosevelt was "another patrician who used cornball props . . . in an attempt to come off as a regular guy." Yet the policies of Roosevelt and Bush were worlds apart.

"I don't care about character reporting," syndicated columnist and former *Times* reporter Richard Reeves told Kaufman. "What politicians do or say in private is irrelevant. It is what they do and say in public that's important. We need less focus on character and more on ideas and issues." In its novelistic focus on the personal, that is what the New Journalism often fails to provide. In Dowd's preprimary profile of Kerrey (the "bemused extraterrestrial"), for example, the health-care issue—which was the centerpiece of his presidential campaign—somehow never came up.

Enquiring Minds?

"Reading the Supermarket Tabloids" by Christopher Clausen, in *The New Leader* (Sept. 7, 1992), 275 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

Editors at respectable newspapers like to look down their journalistic noses at the *National Enquirer* and other supermarket tabloids. After a close examination, however, Pennsylvania State English professor Clausen concludes that the "tabs" are not so far removed from the mainstream press as the latter would like peo-

ple to believe.

"The tabloids merely cater, albeit at the extreme, to American culture's obsession with personality and generally weak interest in abstract ideas, political or otherwise," Clausen contends. In capitalizing on that obsession, he points out, they are no different than the main-



To read is not necessarily to believe. Many tabloid readers may just enjoy tall tales.

stream media.

The six major tabloids, all published in Florida by two rival corporations, are a mixed lot. That very diversity, Clausen argues, suggests that the stereotype of the tabloid reader—"a gullible, semiliterate gum-chewer of lower-class origins and pathological tastes"—is just "a figment of the educated imagination, encouraged by the mainstream press to emphasize its superiority." If tabloid readers were *that* dumb, they would not be reading at all.

What do the 3.8 million mostly female readers of the *National Enquirer* get for their 95 cents? Of course, there are the inevitable Elvis stories ("Elvis & His Mom Were Lovers"). But readers also get a great many other celebrity features, often salacious in nature. Clausen judges that "many, possibly a majority, of the pieces inside [the] *Enquirer*—concerning greedy officials, the freak accidents of ordinary people, physical-fitness techniques, and the love lives of minor Hollywood stars—would not look out of place on the pages of the average daily newspaper."

The *Enquirer's* 3.4-million circulation sister, *Star*, ordinarily resembles *Parade* or *People*, Clausen reports. In January 1992, *Star* moved out of its usual orbit to break the Gennifer Flowers—Bill Clinton story. The mainstream press then picked it up. A *New York Times* analysis uneasily acknowledged that a "sympiotic relationship has arisen between the two extremes of American journalism."

Some tabloid fare is indeed quite extreme. The *Globe* (circulation: 1.2 million), in particular, tends to feature sadistic sex-killings and the like. The *Globe's* sister publications are less gamy. The *National Examiner* (805,000) is "a less slick version of *Star*, with a pronounced secondary affinity for the occult." And *Sun* (350,000) deals largely in "ordinary people who have . . . bizarre adventures." The *Weekly World News* (816,000), an *Enquirer* sister publication, Clausen says, takes "the sense of arch fun far beyond *Sun*."

Do tabloid readers believe everything they read? Not necessarily, says Clausen. But then, according to some surveys, neither do many readers of the mainstream press.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Puritan Founders

Thomas Jefferson and the Framers of the Constitution are usually considered America's founders. In his classic *Democracy in America* (1835–40), however, Alexis de Tocqueville put forward a different candidate: the Puritans. As the astute French visitor saw it, says North Carolina State political scientist Kessler, a people's character is more important than even the best-written constitution, and it was the Puritans

"Tocqueville's Puritans: Christianity and the American Founding" by Sanford Kessler, in *The Journal of Politics* (Aug. 1992), Journals Dept., Univ. of Texas Press, 2100 Comal, Austin, Texas 78722.

who first brought the "spirit of freedom" to America and who decisively shaped the national character. The Constitution worked, in Tocqueville's view, "largely because the Puritans made a critical mass of Americans self-governing, public-spirited citizens before the document was written," Kessler writes.

Christianity was the primary source of American principles, Tocqueville thought. The Puri-

tans who migrated to America in large numbers during the 1630s took the "spirit of religion" and their passion for orthodoxy from the Old Testament and the "spirit of freedom" from the New Testament. Christ, according to Tocqueville, was the first figure in history to teach that all human beings had an "equal right . . . at birth to liberty," a teaching that initiated the gradual spread of democracy throughout the world. Martin Luther's (1483-1546) forceful introduction of the "spirit of freedom" into the ecclesiastical realm fragmented Christianity and ultimately led to the exodus of the Puritans from England to America. It also led, as Tocqueville perceived in the 1830s, to the eventual secularization of American life.

The New England Puritans extended the "spirit of freedom" into the political realm, Tocqueville said, and this enabled them to put the "boldest speculations of humanity" into practice. "According to Tocqueville," Kessler writes, "Puritan political innovations formed the basis for American constitutionalism The Mayflower Compact and other like covenants established the right of free and equal individuals under God to form a 'civil body poli-

tic' and made consent the *de facto* basis for political authority." Local independence was widely established by 1650 and Puritan governments were highly democratic. "As the doctrine of popular sovereignty gradually spread to most of the English colonies, it shaped American mores, embedding the 'spirit of liberty' deep within the American character."

By the 1830s, Tocqueville observed, that spirit of freedom had overcome the "spirit of religion" within Christianity itself. Orthodoxy became far less important, zealotry gave way to toleration, and the miraculous and otherworldly aspects of Christianity were de-emphasized. Piety became more centered on the self than on God. Tocqueville feared that the new individualism could lead to a "passionate and exaggerated love of self," threatening all forms of virtue. Certain elements of the "spirit of religion," he thought, remained vitally important. Still, he found most Americans of his day "orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens." He considered them, Kessler says, "far more able than their Puritan ancestors to protect the Christian legacy of equal freedom."

The End Of Toleration

"The Virtues of Toleration" by John Gray, in *National Review* (Oct. 5, 1992), 150 E. 35th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Ours is a society that prides itself on its openness and acceptance of differences. It is our misfortune that we have made the older idea of toleration, as defended by Milton and Locke, unfashionable, laments Gray, a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford.

Toleration was an expression of confidence that the good and the bad could be distinguished—in contrast, Gray notes, to today's conventional wisdom that standards of belief and conduct are entirely subjective. The whole logic of toleration was that it was being practiced with regard to *evils*. "When we tolerate a practice, a belief, or a character trait, we let something be that we judge to be undesirable, false, or at least inferior." The rationale was that human beings are imperfect and that virtue must be acquired by hard effort. It cannot be imposed. "We were enjoined to tolerate the shortcomings of others, even as we struggled with our own."

That venerable outlook goes against the modern grain, Gray observes. The thought that humans are "flawed creatures whose lives will always contain evils" is at odds with the post-

Christian view that "only stupidity and ill will stand between us and universal happiness." And the inherently judgmental nature of toleration makes it offensive to revisionist liberal thinkers such as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. They think justice requires "that government . . . practice *neutrality*, not toleration, in regard to rival conceptions of the good life." That, Gray points out, mandates "nothing less than *the legal disestablishment of morality*." Morality is viewed as "a private habit of behavior rather than a common way of life."

But in reality the state must still decide "what is to count as a *bona-fide* way of life" deserving neutral treatment. In practice, Gray says, favored groups such as blacks and women are granted legal privileges, while unfashionable groups, such as smokers and heavy drinkers, are subjected to moralistic intrusions into their personal lives.

Policies that create group rights, Gray maintains, are inevitably arbitrary and unfair. The departures from the old-fashioned ideal of toleration, he warns, "are all too likely to breed more old-fashioned intolerance."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

One-Way Plagues

"The Arrow of Disease" by Jared Diamond, in *Discover* (Oct. 1992), 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, Calif. 91521.

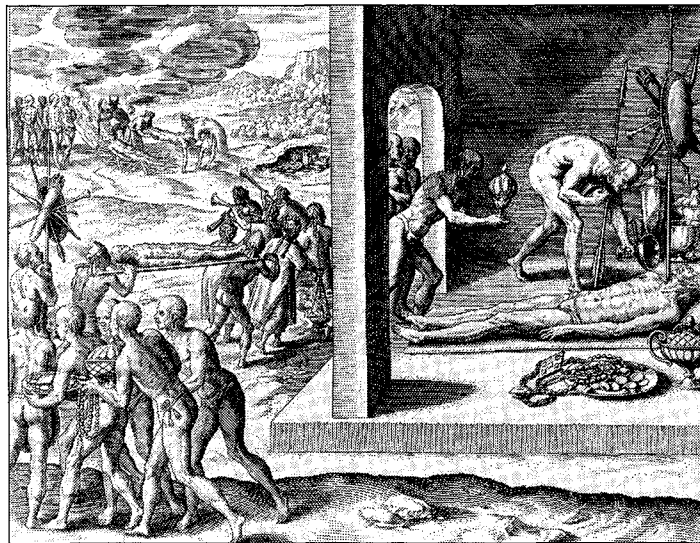
Less than 200 years after Christopher Columbus set foot in the New World, the native American population of some 20 million had declined by perhaps 95 percent. The main killers were not swords or firearms but microbes carrying smallpox, measles, influenza, typhus, plague, malaria, and other diseases. But why, inquires Diamond, a UCLA physiologist, was the exchange of lethal germs so one-way? Why is it that, with the possible exception of syphilis (whose origin is still debated), no native American diseases spread back to Europe?

The answer, according to Diamond, has to do with the way in which acute infectious diseases evolved. To survive and spread, such diseases require large, dense human populations. The

rise of agriculture and then of cities, in both the Old World and the New, provided the "crowd diseases" with a welcome mat. The rise of farming and cities also put humans in close contact with the apparent source of the disease-bearing microbes: domesticated animals. Among animals, as among people, infectious crowd diseases need large populations to survive, and this, Diamond writes, indirectly explains why the New World exported no deadly diseases to the Old.

In Eurasia, humans domesticated many herd animals, such as cows and pigs, that were rich sources of crowd diseases. In the New World, however, most large wild mammals became extinct at the end of the last ice age, and only a handful of animals came to be domesticated. Besides the dog throughout the Americas, these included the turkey in parts of North America, the llama/alpaca in the Andes, and the Muscovy duck in tropical South America. None of these animals was a likely source of crowd diseases. Muscovy ducks and turkeys do not live in enormous flocks or come into very close contact with humans; llamas never spread beyond the Andes.

Fortunately for the post-Columbian Europeans, the extinctions about 11,000 years ago had removed "most of the basis for Native American animal domestication—and for crowd diseases" that might have made their way back to the Old World.



Native Americans lacked immunity to Old World epidemic diseases as well as an understanding of how the maladies spread.

Sexing the Brain

"Sex Differences in the Brain" by Doreen Kimura, in *Scientific American* (Sept. 1992), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Are men and women virtually alike, aside from the obvious physical attributes? In the latest chapter of the nature/nurture debate, many feminists insist that most differences between the sexes result from sexism. Kimura, a psy-

chologist at the University of Western Ontario, finds otherwise: The bulk of the evidence suggests that "from the start the environment is acting on differently wired brains in girls and boys."

It is not that males are more intelligent than females, or vice versa, but rather that the sexes tend to have different patterns of ability, Kimura says. Men, on average, outperform women in mathematical reasoning tests and in following a route on a map, whereas women tend to do better in arithmetic calculation and in using landmarks to navigate a route. Women also tend to have greater verbal fluency and to have better perceptual skills (e.g., rapidly identifying matching items), while men have an advantage when called upon to manipulate imaginary objects. Males also have an edge when it comes to "guiding or intercepting projectiles," as in throwing darts or catching balls. Three-year-old boys outperform girls of the same age in tests of such "target-directed motor skills." In tests of young adults, experience playing sports did not account for the difference.

The most likely explanation for such sex differences, Kimura says, is the impact of sex hormones on developing brains in fetuses and very young children.

Especially compelling evidence of the sex hormones' influence comes from studies of girls who, as a result of a genetic defect or other condition, were exposed before birth, or just after it, to unusual amounts of male hormones, or androgens. Studies by Anke A.

Ehrhardt of Columbia and June M. Reinisch of the Kinsey Institute, Kimura says, have found that these girls "grow up to be more tomboyish and aggressive than their unaffected sisters." Sheri A. Berenbaum of the University of Chicago and Melissa Hines of UCLA found that when such girls are given a choice of toys, they opt for cars and trucks, "the more typically masculine toys."

Kimura believes that the apparent sex differences "arose because they proved evolutionarily advantageous." In the distant past, when humans lived in relatively small groups of hunter-gatherers, men and women needed different skills.

Since the sexes do differ in the way in which they solve intellectual problems, Kimura notes, men and women may well have "different occupational interests and capabilities, independent of societal influences." Any particular individual might be able to do very well in an atypical field, of course. But one would probably not find as many women as men in professions that emphasize spatial or math skills, such as engineering or physics. On the other hand, Kimura says, "I might expect more women in medical diagnostic fields where perceptual skills are important." Inequality? Blame it on Mother (or Father) Nature.

Saving Tropical Forests

"The Tropical Timber Trade and Sustainable Development" by Jeffrey R. Vincent, in *Science* (June 19, 1992), American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Sustained management of the world's tropical forests is an ideal of many environmentalists. The boom-and-bust export pattern of the tropical timber trade stands in the way, however, and the United States and other developed countries are often blamed for those destructive ups and downs.

There is no question that the pattern exists, acknowledges Vincent, an associate at the Harvard Institute for International Development. In one tropical country after another, soaring timber exports have depleted old-growth forests. Development of second-growth forests was not managed, and domestic timber-processing industries collapsed. The pattern emerged in West Africa during the 1950s and '60s, and is being repeated in Southeast Asia. Thailand and the Philippines have already gone bust. But the fault does not lie with the developed countries, Vincent maintains.

Behind the pattern is rising global demand

for wood products. But developing countries themselves account for much of the increase, Vincent points out. In 1989, only about one-third of the logs and pulpwood (used in making paper) harvested in developing countries was exported, and much of it went to *other* developing countries. In fact, developing countries (excluding China) *imported* almost as much in wood products that year (\$11.5 billion) as they exported (\$12.7 billion)—and took in a good deal of that from the developed countries.

Critics also argue that high tariffs in the developed countries have stunted the Third World wood-processing industries that would encourage good forest management. But the tariffs have been cut in recent years under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Today, in many cases, developing countries' *export* taxes are higher than the tariffs.

The developed countries are also accused of manipulating world prices. Prices for many

tropical wood products are relatively low, Vincent says, but the reason is that most tropical timber exports, such as plywood and sawed wood, must compete with wood products from the temperate regions. That keeps prices down.

The policies of tropical nations themselves have exacerbated the boom-and-bust pattern, Vincent asserts. The forests in most tropical countries are government-owned; harvesting concessions are typically short-lived, doled out

as a form of political patronage. The concessionaires have little incentive to conserve forests. There are two ways to change this, Vincent argues. Governments can increase their fees to finance public-forest management, or they can grant concessionaires contracts that are longer, renewable, and transferable. That would give them a stake in the forests' future and ample reason to regard forests as what they really are: valuable natural assets.

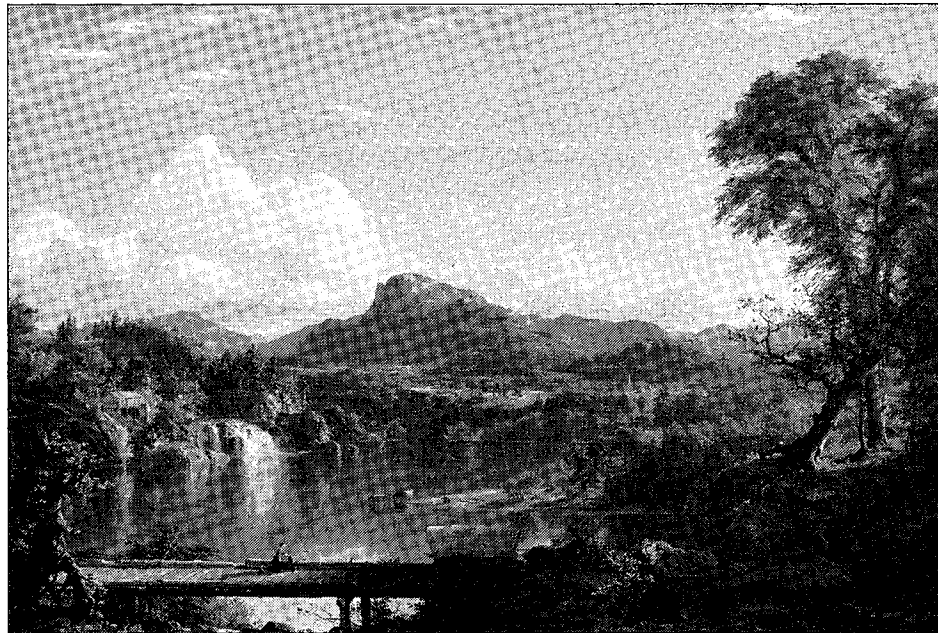
ARTS & LETTERS

Paradise Regained

"Retreat to Arcadia: American Landscape and The American Art-Union" by Carol Troyen, in *The American Art Journal* (Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 1991), 40 W. 57th St., 5th fl., New York, N.Y. 10019.

In 1851, the New York-based American Art-Union held one of its most influential exhibitions. Three of the show's paintings were so powerful and accomplished that they became much-imitated models of a pastoral form of landscape painting, according to Troyen, an associate curator at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. In a nation beset by growing sectional and economic tensions, these archetypes, she says, shored up the "foundering ideal" of America as an arcadian paradise.

The inspiring works were done by three young painters just starting to make their mark in the New York art world. John F. Kensett's (1816-72) *Mount Washington from the Valley of Conway* was especially innovative. It depicts snow capped Mount Washington in New Hampshire as a majestic and gracious setting for farming and civilization, and bathes the whole vista in a golden light. Guidebooks of the 1820s and '30s had described the sparsely populated area as dangerous and forbidding, and



Man is in harmony with nature in Frederic Church's New England Scenery.

earlier paintings, such as Thomas Cole's *Storm near Mount Washington* (circa 1825–1830), had shown it that way.

The Art-Union show's two other breathtaking paintings—*American Harvesting* by Jasper F. Cropsey (1823–1900) and *New England Scenery* by Frederic E. Church (1826–1900)—were composite images, but were very much like Kensett's in scale, composition, and theme. The three scenes, Troyen says, had a "Jeffersonian harmony and idyllic quality," and offered "the sense of America as the new Eden." It was a reassuring vision then, for outside the Art-Union's walls, Troyen writes, "the nation was in turmoil, scarcely recovered from the crises precipitating . . . the Compromise of 1850."

The artistic uplift was no accident. The Art-Union, managed by a committee composed of

21 prominent New Yorkers, envisioned itself (in the words of an annual report) as "one of those great institutions which influence the character and manners of the whole nation." Engravings of Kensett's and Cropsey's works were sent to the Art-Union's 13,578 members, and each member also could hope to win an original painting in the lottery the organization held each year.

But the lottery proved the Art-Union's undoing. The New York Supreme Court declared it illegal and ordered the Art-Union to sell all its holdings and cease operations. Church, Kensett, Cropsey, and many other artists painted inspiring landscapes through the 1850s, Troyen notes, until the Civil War "made such detailed representations of Eden in America impossible to believe."

Biography's Perils

"To Edit a Life" by Peter Davison, in *The Atlantic* (Oct. 1992), 745 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

As biography has grown increasingly popular and lucrative in recent decades, more and more writers have tried to put the lives of the great, or at least the well-known, between hard covers. Often the results come under the heading of what Joyce Carol Oates has called "pathography"—works that emphasize the subject's shortcomings and sins. Robert Caro's multivolume treatment of Lyndon Johnson, according to some critics, falls into that category. So, needless to say, do a host of less seriously intended works, such as Kitty Kelley's venomous blockbusters on Nancy Reagan et al.

People in the public eye now have little protection under libel law, thanks to *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) and other Supreme Court rulings—and the proliferation of sensational biographies owes something to this change. Yet while the door has thus been opened wide for unadmiring Boswells, Davison, an editor at Houghton Mifflin, says that *serious* biographers still face a host of imposing obstacles.

A serious biography, Davison notes, demands "the author's time, attention, scholarship, and fidelity to the truth or what can be discovered of the truth." If the subject is not long dead, the biographer must obtain evidence from "the still living, who tend to have a particular interest in seeing that the life of the beloved (or detested) is written 'accurately.'" The author who takes a different view of the subject may find himself out in the cold.

Further hurdles appear when the subject is a

literary artist. If he or she is not long dead, the biographer must obtain permission to quote from the published works. Since 1963, when poet Sylvia Plath committed suicide at age 30, at least nine would-be biographers, according to Davison, have had either to submit their books for scrutiny by the Plath estate "or to refrain from quoting the very poetry that made Plath famous." Four of the proposed biographies never made it into print.

Literary biographers now face yet another hurdle, thanks to a federal court's ruling in *Random House v. Salinger* (1987). The court prevented Ian Hamilton, after he had finished his book about the reclusive novelist J. D. Salinger, from even paraphrasing, let alone quoting, Salinger's *unpublished* letters without the author's permission—which he did not grant.

Writing the book sometimes seems the least of a biographer's trials. Anne Stevenson's *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath* (1989) is, in Davison's judgment, "the most penetrating and eloquent life" of the poet yet to appear. It fell to him to modify Stevenson's text so that both estate and author were relatively satisfied. But Stevenson's book came out after Plath "had been elevated posthumously into an illusory martyrdom of the feminist movement." Despite Stevenson's fidelity to the known facts and because of the Plath estate's obvious influence on her book, *Bitter Fame* "was attacked, misinterpreted, and harangued . . . by ideologues or self-interested critics" in England and "relatively ignored" by the U.S. public.

Historical Fiction and The Facts

The historical novel is supposed to be faithful to the known facts of the period in which it is set. But can it be too faithful? Indeed, is too much historical knowledge a disadvantage to the novelist? Thomas Mallon, author of *Aurora 7*, and William Styron, author of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, offer reflections.

Though Aurora 7 is set against the background of a very public event—the nearly disastrous space flight of astronaut Scott Carpenter—it was usually what I found in the back pages of newspapers and in advertisements that gave me ideas. I had forgotten, for instance, that the New York Times used to publish “Incoming Passenger and Mail Ships,” and when I noticed that the Leonardo da Vinci docked at 9 A.M. at West 44th Street on the day my novel was to be set, I stumbled toward the scene it would take to put one of my minor characters in motion.

John Updike has written . . . that in fiction “reality is—chemically, atomically, biologically—a fabric of microscopic accuracies.” Only through these tiny, literal accuracies can the historical novelist achieve . . . an overall feeling of authenticity . . .

*Is there, though, a point at which the letter begins to kill the spirit? Mary McCarthy once spoke of how, while writing her novel *Birds of America*, she was told by someone that the Sistine Chapel, in which she'd set a chapter taking place around New Year's Day in 1965, might have been closed at that time for a Vatican Council. She was aghast. After making inquiries, she was relieved to learn that the chapel had indeed been open when she had her characters in it . . .*

*Every historical novelist will decide these things differently, will calibrate his fidelity to the real past along a different scale. In writing *Aurora 7*, I realized early on that I had to move my main character's entire childhood from Nassau County, where I'd grown up, to Westchester, a place I hardly knew, because Grand Central Terminal was crucial to the plot I had in mind. The commuter trains from Nassau County ran then, as they do now, into Penn Station, not Grand Central. So that was that: I could hardly tamper with the underground infrastructure of the city. I did, however, take certain liberties that I'm sure Mary McCarthy would not have. I have President Kennedy making his remark that 'life is unfair' a year earlier than he actually made it. But it was useful to have him say it [then], so I went ahead.*

—Thomas Mallon
The American Scholar (Autumn 1992)

Although it didn't dawn on me at the time, I later realized that one of the benefits for me in Nat Turner's story was not an abundance of historical material but, if anything, a scantiness. This was a drama that took place in a faraway backwater when information gathering was primitive. While it may be satisfying and advantageous for historians to feast on rich archival material, the writer of historical fiction is better off when past events have left him with short rations. A good example might be the abolitionist John Brown, who made his prodigious mark on history only 30 years after Nat Turner but whose every word and move were recorded by enterprising journalists, producing documents enough to fill a boxcar.

The novelist attempting John Brown's story is in conflict with the myriad known details of the chronicle, and his imagination cannot simply run off in a certain direction—which is what fiction writers need their imaginations to do—because he is fettered by already established circumstances. He is in danger of being overwhelmed by an avalanche of data . . .

*The single meaningful document having to do with the Turner revolt was a short . . . transcript that gave the title to my own work . . . Aside from Nat's own *Confessions* and a number of contemporary newspaper articles . . . there was virtually no material of that period that was useful in shedding further light on Nat Turner as a person or on the uprising. Such a near-vacuum [seemed to place] me in the ideal position of knowing neither too much nor too little. A bad historical novel often leaves the impression of a hopelessly overfurnished house, cluttered with facts the author wishes to show off as fruits of his diligent research. Georg Lukács, the Hungarian Marxist critic whose monumental *The Historical Novel* should be read by all who attempt the genre, views the disregard of facts as a state of grace; the creator of historical fiction, he argues convincingly, should have a thorough—perhaps even magisterial—command of the period with which he is dealing, but he should not permit his work to be governed by particular historical facts.*

—William Styron
American Heritage (October 1992)

The Best Art Is Out of Sight

"The Art Nobody Knows" by Jed Perl, in *The New Republic* (Oct. 19, 1992), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Serious American artists today are in despair—though not over Senator Jesse Helms's (R.-N.C.) attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts. Rather, asserts Perl, author of *Gallery Going: Four Seasons in the Art World* (1991), their desperation results from the "near total collapse" of the "support system of galleries and grants and collectors and curators and publications that makes it possible for artists to have slow-developing, serious careers."

During the 1950s, and, to a lesser extent, through the 1970s, Perl says, the public face of the art world was "an imperfect but still pretty reliable mirror of the artists' art world." Aesthetic values reigned. With the explosion of pop art during the mid-1960s, however, the public art world became increasingly "tied to market values rather than aesthetic values. Pop art's subject matter dramatized the change: It was subject matter that had no private meaning for artists." Andy Warhol, a child of advertising, led the way. Today, the public art world lavishes attention on Cindy Sherman's huge Cibachrome self-portraits and Julian Schnabel's plate-smashings, but almost entirely neglects the important sculptures of Barbara Goodstein and the significant landscape paintings of Stanley Lewis. Goodstein, who works in plaster on plywood boards, is, in Perl's view, "the most original sculptor of her generation," yet she "has never had a dealer committed to her work, has never been the subject of a feature article in an art magazine, has never even had a work in a museum show."

Goodstein and Lewis are not alone, Perl says. There are many accomplished artists whose work rarely gets serious attention. He points to the figure sculpture of Natalie Charkow; the abstract paintings of Spencer Gregory, Bill

Barrell, Pat Adams, Shirley Jaffe, and Trevor Winkfield; "the geometricized realities that we encounter in the work of Jacqueline Lima, Richard Chiriani, and Alfred Russell, and . . . the various kinds of painterly painting that are done by Rita Baragona, Richard La Presti, Carl Plansky, Louisa Matthiasdottir, and Ned Small."

The now hype-ridden public art world, Perl contends, no longer has time for such artists, no longer nourishes "the incremental developments that are what art is all about . . . Fewer and fewer shows get reviewed; fewer and fewer galleries are willing to make the commitment to an artist's gradual development."

Museums have become the red-hot centers of art hype, Perl asserts. They now expect to draw huge audiences and feel the need to give them "a carefully shaped and predigested view of contemporary art." To do this, they "willfully deny the variety of the contemporary scene. Even as the number of artists at work has expanded geometrically, the number of artists included in major surveys has plummeted." Whereas important museum overviews of the art scene a generation ago included 100 or more artists, today's surveys often have only a half, or even a quarter, of that number.

Art magazines have further limited artists' opportunities to reach the public. During the past 20 years, Perl says, the magazines have "largely abandoned their old job of reporting on what goes on in the galleries and instead have become publicity machines for the art stars and the art star wannabees."

"The real artists are still working," Perl maintains. "The tragedy is that they have no way of making contact with the audience that really cares."

OTHER NATIONS

The New Middle East

"Rethinking the Middle East" by Bernard Lewis, in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1992), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

With the failure of the New World Order to materialize following the Persian Gulf War, many observers concluded that the Middle East re-

mains essentially the same as before. On the contrary, says Princeton's Bernard Lewis, the Middle East is now at the end of an era nearly

two centuries old.

The Gulf War made several significant changes in the region manifest. First of all, Lewis points out, it marked the abandonment of the long-cherished dream of pan-Arabism. It was, after all, "a war between Arab rulers, in which America [only] reluctantly became involved" and in which Israel was only a brief distraction.

The war also revealed that oil is no longer an effective weapon in the hands of the producer countries. "At a time when the oil supplies from two major producers were cut off—Kuwait's by the Iraqis, Iraq's by the coalition . . .," Lewis observes, "the price of oil actually fell." The power of the oil weapon is not likely to be restored, in his view. Not only are other sources of oil being found and developed, notably in the former Soviet republics, but oil's environmental and political drawbacks have spurred the search for other fuels. Oil producers realize that using their black gold as a weapon will only hasten the day when it will be superseded as an energy source.

Even more profound changes have come to the Middle East, Lewis points out, with the end of the Cold War. The most obvious is in the very definition of the Middle East. Its long-time northern limit—the Soviet frontier—no longer exists, and Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the other countries north of that line "are closely related to the countries south of it, speaking the

same or similar languages, professing the same religion, and sharing the same historical memories." The newly independent republics are being assiduously courted by the Saudis, Iranians, and Turks. A new, enlarged Middle East is sure to emerge.

An even greater change—although not yet fully grasped by many—is the end of the era of foreign domination that began in 1798, when Napoleon Bonaparte landed in Egypt, then an Ottoman province, and occupied it with relative ease. The United States is now the world's sole superpower, with no serious challenge to its influence in the Middle East (or anywhere else), but it is not an imperial power. The countries of the Middle East now face "a challenging and, for some, frightening prospect: [that] of having to take responsibility for their own affairs."

In the past, *freedom* in Arab discourse has meant simply national independence and *democracy* has referred only to the sham parliamentary regimes that the British and French set up. Now, Lewis says, many Arab thinkers and writers are showing "a new awareness of the deeper meaning of freedom and a truer sense of democracy," and many of them argue that liberal democracy is the answer to the Arab world's problems. Whatever the outcome of this debate, Lewis concludes, the nations and peoples of the Middle East now hold their destinies in their own hands.

How to Stimulate Russia's Economy

"Yeltsin's Reforms: Gorbachev II" by Marshall I. Goldman, in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1992), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1153.

The Russian economy, twisted by seven decades of Soviet central planning, is the Gordian knot of reformers. Closing down unproductive factories is not sufficient, contends Goldman, associate director of Harvard's Russian Research Center. Successful reform means putting the products consumers want and need in their hands. Mikhail Gorbachev apparently did not appreciate that, and Goldman worries that Russia's President Boris Yeltsin may not, either.

Of the 12 economic reform proposals that Gorbachev considered (without ever fully implementing any of them), none "focused on that basic consideration, at least not in the short term," Goldman points out. Gorbachev began in 1985 by trying to stimulate production of machine tools. No visible improvement in

daily life resulted, and the public, initially in favor of change, soon grew disillusioned. When Gorbachev resigned at the end of 1991, inflation was rampant and government monopolies remained intact. Racketeers had moved in on many of the few private enterprises that did emerge.

Yeltsin brought in a new team of economic advisers, many of whom were advocates of radical, Western-style reform. Although the Russian president endorsed privatization, he emphasized the need for a "one-shot" shift to a system of market prices—"shock therapy," as some called it. His comprehensive reform plan, unveiled on January 2, 1992, freed all prices from Moscow's control, with exceptions for bread, milk, and other basics. The Russian president hoped that higher prices would curb de-

Caribbean Conversion

Michael Manley, who was Jamaica's prime minister from 1972 to 1980, and again from 1989 to March 1992, used to preach state control of the economy and to say that Jamaican millionaires could "go to Miami." As he makes clear in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Summer 1992), he has changed his mind.

I want the same thing now as I always wanted: I want poor people to stop being poor; I want the powerless to have new avenues to power. Is it so difficult to see that an honest man could look at reality and say, "I was wrong! Things don't work that way"? . . .

Like many leaders of the developing world just emerging from the long colonial experience, I believed strongly in the use of state power to promote social justice through the law. In this I haven't changed one iota . . .

But I also believed, like so many others, that the state had a central role to play not only in promoting economic development but in directing the economy away from the colonial patterns of dependence . . . What we [leaders in the Third World] all wanted to do, through the strongest state intervention, was build a kinder economic structure that was internally separate from the world economy dominated by the former colonial powers. Then, we thought, we could better grapple with our poverty and underdevelopment.

The fact is we all seriously miscalculated the capacity of the state to intervene effectively. Despite the enormous sincerity we brought to the task, our nationalist and statist approach didn't work. And it didn't work for several reasons.

First, when one tries to use the state as a major instrument of production, one quickly exhausts the managerial talent that can be mobi-

lized in the name of patriotism. Absent the profit motive, it was truly amazing how few managers one could find that were motivated solely by love of their country, and how quickly those noble souls burned out . . .

Second, the minute the state begins to intervene in the private sector a terrifying backlash sets in . . . We thought an interventionist state and a strong market could exist in tandem, each complementing the other. But we rapidly discovered the truth. As soon as the state comes near, the private sector contracts, loses its confidence and moves its money out . . .

It is now clear to me that an unfettered market, not the imposition of political control, can be the most effective instrument of opportunity for the poor—but only if the state compensates for the market's tendency to concentrate power . . .

The state's remaining role, then, [is] to ensure fair competition and block monopoly without impeding the market incentive. If the state stimulates the inclusive, entrepreneurial process of wealth creation while checking the market's tendency to exclude through monopolization, it can remain an instrument of empowerment.

It is in this respect that I so admire the United States. The way the United States ensures the integrity of the competitive mechanism in the private sector is a model for the rest of the world.

mand and eventually stimulate production of more consumer goods.

The Russian economy since then has shown some signs of improvement, Goldman acknowledges. Indeed, by the next month, "goods began to reappear in some of the country's markets as existing hoards opened up and high prices drove many consumers out of the market." However, he adds, "production did not increase, and new producers did not suddenly appear." Why not? Privatization in Russia "is moving very slowly, especially in the agricultural sector," Goldman says. "There is still no clear sign that the private ownership of land will be allowed, and the state farm bureaucrats

continue to undermine efforts to reduce their control."

Yeltsin should take a leaf from China's book, Goldman suggests. Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms are succeeding, he says, because they "allowed Chinese peasants to withdraw their land from the communes at the same time that the government began to encourage private manufacturing and trading. Taking advantage of the new economic opportunities, the peasants joined with a new breed of merchants and manufacturers in quickly expanding output." To cut the Gordian knot in Russia, Goldman says, Yeltsin must find a way to expand private property.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Emerging Infections: Microbial Threats to Health in the United States."

Inst. of Medicine, National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. 294 pp. \$34.95.

Editors: *Joshua Lederberg, Robert E. Shope, and Stanley C. Oaks, Jr.*

During the 1950s, American physicians and public-health officials concluded that progress in medicine and public health was making the conquest of infectious illnesses such as tuberculosis (TB) inevitable. Today, however, such maladies again pose a serious health threat, notes a U.S. Institute of Medicine panel. Along with the AIDS epidemic, there has been an alarming resurgence of TB, and "new" illnesses such as Lyme disease have emerged.

The incidence of TB in the United States fell for three decades until 1985. Between 1986 and 1991, however, there were 28,000 more cases than specialists had expected. The rise of AIDS and HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) has been "perhaps the most significant factor" behind the increase in TB. The incidence

rate among the HIV-infected is nearly 500 times the rate for the general population.

Especially alarming, according to the committee, is the appearance of TB bacteria resistant to drugs. Outbreaks have occurred in hospitals in Miami and New York City, as well as in the New York State prison system. Not only patients and inmates but health-care workers, social workers, corrections officials, and others are "at risk of contracting a disease that is difficult or essentially impossible to treat. Multidrug-resistant TB now represents a major threat to health in the United States."

Lyme disease, first recognized in Old Lyme, Connecticut, in 1975, has been found in all 50 states, and the number of cases has grown from a handful in 1980 to 9,344 in 1991. The illness, which can become

debilitating, is caused by a microbe transmitted to humans by ticks on mice and deer. As is often the case with disease outbreaks, the recent Lyme upsurge does not have its origins in mysterious biological processes but in human behavioral and environmental changes. Humans and disease-bearing animals have been brought into closer contact by suburbanization and the explosion of the deer population resulting from the decline of farming and the absence of natural predators.

Indeed, while it favors more medical research and monitoring, the committee notes: "[It] is often only by changing patterns of human activity—from travel, personal hygiene, and food handling to sexual behavior and drug abuse—that the spread of disease can be halted."

"Global Standards: Building Blocks for the Future."

Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325. 114 pp. \$5.50 (GPO Order No. 052-003-01277-4).

When a huge fire broke out in Baltimore in 1904, outside fire companies could not help. Because there were no standards the threads on their hoses did not match those on Baltimore hydrants. Today, says Congress' Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), the issue is *international* technical standards for the design, manufacture, and functioning of products ranging from machine tools to high-resolution TV. If the

United States fails to influence development of these standards, OTA warns, U.S. competitiveness will suffer. U.S. industries that must completely readjust to foreign specifications—often designed precisely to hinder competitors—lose precious ground to overseas rivals.

Most governments in industrialized nations play a very active role in setting standards and even help underdeveloped

countries set theirs. The harmonization of technical standards within the European Community is now under way.

Washington, by contrast, leaves many of these matters to the private sector. The nonprofit American National Standards Institute represents U.S. interests in international organizations, but dissension at home over ASNI's role limits its effectiveness in international negotiations.

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.

Finding the New Morgan

J. Bradford De Long's article ["What Morgan Wrought," *WQ*, Autumn '92] points the way toward an optimal system for the governance of large corporations: an informed, independent, and credible monitor of management within the governance structure.

De Long wants "large-scale financial institutions to take an interest in corporate management by establishing and holding major long-term positions in individual companies." The owners De Long is seeking are already here. As much as \$1 trillion already may be invested in just this way. Then why hasn't the informed involvement of these owners become the standard?

The problem is that many, indeed most, institutions have crippling conflicts of interest. How can insurance companies, banks, and money managers monitor the same people who purchase insurance, make deposits, and hire pension managers? In addition, the "free rider problem" interferes. Action by any one entity inevitably costs more than its share of any gains. This obstacle is particularly large for institutional investors, which are subject to strict fiduciary standards. How can a trustee justify to his beneficiaries (to say nothing of regulatory agencies and courts) the expense of the initiatives required for monitoring when the initiatives could fail, or chiefly benefit others—the "free riders"—if it succeeds?

The public and private pension funds, as the owners of 30 percent of the total outstanding equity capital in the country, provide us with the critical ingredient. Pension funds have little need for liquidity and are long-term holders. Now that the nation's savings have been moved by 30 years of federal tax policy from banks to pension funds, it seems appropriate to create a new financial infrastructure of institutions limited solely to the management of pension funds. This would eliminate conflicts of interest. It would also assure that the new "merchant bankers" envisioned by Lester Thurow cannot take advantage of pension beneficiaries. But these institutions can become the New Morgans only if required to act exclusively for the beneficiaries, and that will require monitoring.

Robert A. G. Monks
Lens, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

The Latin Dilemma

Tina Rosenberg ["Latin America's Magical Liberalism," *WQ*, Autumn '92] has it just about right: Latin America is based historically on authoritarian, organicist, elitist, Rousseauian, and mercantilist principles and institutions that have been only partially attenuated by the recent openings to democracy and free markets.

Her main mistake is to think that *at any time*, even in the early throes of independence, Latin America thought in U.S.-style Lockean, Madisonian, and liberal terms. In fact, the vested power of the Church, the army, the landed elites, and the executive in the early laws and constitutions indicate that liberalism was always at best a future aspiration.

The chief omission in Ms. Rosenberg's otherwise excellent article is the failure to draw out the policy implications of her themes. If Latin America is really based on organicist, centralist, and Rousseauian traditions, then that has important implications for human-rights policy (group rights often take precedence over individual rights), for efforts to reform the military (not a "mere" interest group but part of the backbone of the regime), the economy (these are still essentially mercantilist economies despite some moves toward free markets), and the polity (these essentially remain top-down political systems with limited pluralism or separation of powers).

Many Latin American scholars have been trying for years to help U.S. policymakers understand these differences. But the United States has always assumed that it knows best for Latin America, that it will teach it lessons and bring it the benefits of our more successful institutions, and that it is "too complicated" to educate the Congress and the rest of Washington, to say nothing of the public, about Latin America's uniqueness. With such pervasive ethnocentrism, it is small wonder that U.S. policy in Latin America has often produced, to put it charitably, so many unintended consequences. Tina Rosenberg's article, which should be read by all policymakers dealing with Latin America, helps us break through the veil of miscomprehension.

Howard J. Wiarda
University of Massachusetts,
Amherst, and
National Defense University

Tina Rosenberg's article is a welcome antidote to the widespread notion that Latin America has found the right path and can relax. The region's democratic elections and corrective economic steps are necessary but insufficient. To underline the urgency of her message I offer these observations based on my own reporting experience.

1. The United States has a greater stake than ever in the region, which is destined to be a major trade and investment partner in coming years as the global economy divides into regional trade blocs. Even businessmen otherwise unconcerned with political culture are directly affected when they try to do business in countries where the rule of law is lacking. Furthermore, desperately poor workers cannot buy U.S. (or any other) products.

2. Instability will return to Latin America if governments there continue to ignore the need for public-sector investments in health, education, and infrastructure. The region's citizenry includes a vast, far poorer poor than the United States. These citizens have paid a higher price for "austerity" programs than Ross Perot ever dreamed of demanding from Americans, and yet their living standards still have not improved.

3. Jorge Gonzalez Schmall, who recently gave up a leadership position and quit Mexico's small-business-oriented National Action Party because it blindly supported the government, is just one of many Latin Americans warning that the massive privatizations of state firms are simply making government monopolies into private-sector monopolies. Unlike the Chilean model II Rosenberg cites, many current sell-offs are increasing the wealth and power of the old guard instead of creating a larger and more dynamic entrepreneurial class.

4. Corruption has exploded as an issue in Latin America. The court systems are still not functioning. But the budding public crusade for accountability suggests that Latin America's political culture is evolving beyond its Spanish colonial roots toward a Tocquevillian concept of citizenship. The Latin American press has begun publicizing the misdeeds of the elite. And the public is responding with justified outrage. The result in Brazil, at least so far, has been to hold politicians' feet to the fire, to apply the norms set down in their own laws. Justice just might become the touchstone of a new era in Latin America.

Linda Robinson
Latin American correspondent,
U.S. News & World Report

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

As a practicing architect and part-time teacher, I

find it difficult to contradict Witold Rybczynski's description of the present state of architecture ["The Art of Building Or the Building of Art?" *WQ*, Autumn '92]. Most contemporary architecture falls far short of Vitruvius's ancient standard of "commodity, firmness, and delight." But good architecture comes from the combination of good architects and good clients, and common canons require communication between the two. Such communication seems worse than ever. Why?

According to Robert Gutman's book *Architectural Practice, A Critical View*, by 1985 there were some 90,000 practicing architects in the United States, jumping from 56,000 in 1970. Architecture was the fastest growing of all major professions. But as only a small percentage of buildings are actually designed by architects, one must wonder what they are all doing. Gutman points out that many are taking nontraditional jobs as governmental officials, corporate-facilities managers, etc. But many are teaching and, all too often, not building. I would propose that there is an ever-increasing, self-sustaining portion of architects who are concerned with Vitruvius's *delight* only, untested as they are by the reality of building. Indeed, at a recent round table discussion between faculty and students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, it was the students who wondered aloud why there was such a gulf between teaching and practice.

But why aren't more buildings designed by architects? The answer could be that while there are more architects available, there are also fewer good clients. And it is here that I would disagree with Mr. Rybczynski. For in spite of TV and electronic communication, we are not visually sophisticated. True, images dominate our culture, but they are not true art that is taught as a basic form of thinking and communication. Our images are instantaneous; the images of art are enduring and sometimes slow to be understood. And without a real understanding of art, in its fullest sense, by client and architect, good architecture of *utilitas*, *firmitas*, and *venustas* is not possible. To Witold's cry for better architects, better buildings and better cities, I would also add a cry for better clients.

Jeremiah Eck
Jeremiah Eck Architects, Inc.
Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Design

I agree with Witold Rybczynski that agreement on what constitutes good architecture is difficult to reach these days, but suggest that the same questions were asked 30 or 90 years ago, albeit not as widely as in our time. The debate in the British press over the question of whether the Crystal Palace of the 1851 World Exhibition should be consid-

ered as architecture or merely an extension of the "mechanical arts" comes to mind, as does the outraged letter of the foremost poets, painters, and sculptors of France protesting the building of the Eiffel Tower in a full page newspaper advertisement. In fact, the debate was probably opened by Leonardo da Vinci, who represents in one person the very essence of the dichotomy between mechanics and artisanship.

Be that as it may, the destruction of a permanent and genuine sense of time and place, begun with the building of railroads and canals in the 19th century, has accelerated in recent times. Marshall McLuhan was the first to analyze the effect of the homogenization of the new "global village." The electronic media have not only destroyed our sense of time in the traditional historical sense, but blurred all distinctions of place and neutralized all distinctions of value judgment on beauty.

Whether it is possible to return to "ancient blessings" is a moot question. But as a native of one of the most beautiful cities in Europe—Prague—I am pessimistic. I watch with horror the transformation of this sad, mysterious, serene, and stunningly beautiful place into a potential "profit center" for international corporate investment—or, just as bad, a Disney-like stage set for mass tourism.

Eric Dluhosch
Boston, Mass.

Witold Rybczynski is too gentle and forbearing. That would explain the discreet and sad footnote, the heart of his article in many ways, in which he tells us that the staff and students of McGill's architecture department, where he teaches, found that "our new home [built in 1896] is vastly superior to our old one [built in 1958]..." Their response was an instinctive preference for a structure built according to "an accepted canon of architectural principles."

Rybczynski would have us return to Vitruvius, Alberti, Palladio, and Sir Henry Wotton. I would suggest Geoffrey Scott's *Architecture of Humanism* (1914) as our first guide. Wotton noted that "the academic influence rescued the architecture of England and France. It provided a canon of forms by which even the uninspired architect could secure at least a measure of distinction; and genius... would be trusted to use this scholastic learning as a means and not an end." Note that his canon was to be found in *forms* not principles.

Better still, I would have Rybczynski look to Thomas Ustick Walter, architect of the extensions and the dome of the United States Capitol. Wotton's three conditions he stated as "utility, durability and beauty." The first two "being entirely of a

practical or mechanical nature," he tells us, "we shall pass them over and limit ourselves to the consideration of architectural composition, with reference alone to the production of beauty." This was to be found in the basic elements, namely surface, moldings, light and shade, symmetry, variety, and intricacy when "seen in a combination of harmonious form as to present a unity of design."

So, going beyond principles, let us turn to Scott's forms as explored by Walter before he started work on the Capitol, and we will arrive at the *visual* canons to fill the vacuum left by the nihilists.

Henry Hope Reed
New York, N.Y.

The Loss of Self

The big problem with Daniel Bell's view in "The Cultural Wars: American Intellectual Life, 1965–1992," [*WQ*, Summer '92] is that it doesn't build on his own *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. The basic rift in our culture is not between Left and Right, though that's the rift that is most seized upon by the press and pundits. The basic rift is between self and community. The old assumption that there was a fit between our personal and social aspirations (an assumption basic to the liberal Protestant tradition, the tradition that gave us the "center" of our intellectual life into the mid-20th century) no longer seems plausible. As Christopher Lasch has pointed out, when community erodes, so does self. Narcissism is not just the self-concern that takes the form of consumption or self-aggrandizement, but the desperate feeling that self is being lost. Reality itself seems to decompose. Hence poststructuralism is an apt sign of the times not because it claims there is no reality but because it builds on and tries to make sense of the evanescence of reality.

We are blocked culturally and politically not because the Left (or the Right) has a stranglehold on our culture, but because our oldest and fondest assumptions about self and community no longer persuade. The fall of Eastern European and Soviet communism is a good double-edged sign of our dilemma. We get to celebrate the new freedom of life in the eastern part of the West, but we know we've lost our former conviction that society was marching forward in historically progressive fashion. The demise of Marxist progress calls liberal progress into question too. Hence we get Lasch's *True and Only Heaven*, in which he renounces the progressive historical vision he earlier embraced. We get historians turning away from their earlier collective assumption that enlightened progress was in principle possible, however benighted our

culture might be at any given time. Historians turn to evoking the past to illuminate our future upward movement. The tragic sense of life becomes once again, as in the 1950s, a dominant sensibility.

Reinhold Niebuhr can serve as a good antidote here: No one was more committed to the tragic sense of life, but he was also open to change and "progress" of an indeterminate sort. That's the kind of intellectual openness we need today—even if old models of leaping into a higher stage of historical freedom cannot persuade, we can still cultivate a democratic sensibility in which all voices deserve to be heard. "Cultural diversity" is the concrete path forward for those who venerate freedom.

Richard Fox
Wilson Center Fellow

De-Russifying Turkestan

Your "Land of the Great Silk Road" [WQ, Summer '92] was enticing. If there was an easy way to reach Samarkand, I would hop on the next plane.

I hope your readers will not conclude, however, that the easiest way to communicate with Central Asians is in Turkish, as Mr. Henze seems to suggest. While it's true that Central Asian languages are Turkic (except for the Farsi spoken by Tajiks), Turkish travelers generally agree that they need to live in the region for several months before they begin to converse with the natives on any but the most primitive level. Some Turkish intellectuals contend that the Turkic of Central Asia is so "polluted" by Russian as to be unintelligible, and that one needs to master *four* distinct languages, one for each Turkic-speaking republic. This, of course, refers to the *spoken* languages, for everybody still writes in the Cyrillic alphabet.

With independence thrust upon them more than a year ago (Kazakhstan didn't even bother to declare its exit from the Soviet Union), Central Asian states have begun to search for new identities. Taking a stab at affirmative action, they have declared "state" languages mandatory in key radio and TV programs, in school instruction, and in certain government jobs. They soon discovered that relegation of Russian to a secondary role was easier to legislate than to implement, especially in such areas as northern Kazakhstan where the Kazakhs constitute a very small minority.

The task of de-Russification is staggering. Given an acute shortage of teachers in indigenous languages, simply reducing the number of Russian schools achieves little. Turkey and Iran have extended scholarships to perhaps 1,500 students, but this is a drop in the bucket. To go back to the Latin, or even to the Arabic, is a declared goal of national-

ists, but to reach it after three generations have been brought up reading the Cyrillic is not easy. And who will underwrite the cost of transliterating and republishing books, of producing new textbooks, of teaching teachers how to read them? Because of the very high literacy rate in Central Asia, it would be politically dangerous to reduce the availability of education. If one is to consider the need to augment the vocabularies with the concepts and terminology of the 20th century, it would be obvious that the process of de-Russification will take at least a generation and require sympathy and generosity of Islamic nations far beyond what they have shown so far.

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An Innocent Abroad

Dervla Murphy, in "Footnotes: Reflections on Travel Writing" [WQ, Summer '92], espouses the common view of travel writers, that one cannot truly travel without devoting much time to transportation, and that mere tourists are despoiling the world's dwindling cultural and natural resources. In my opinion, this attitude is similar to the wine writers' view that one has not lived until one has drunk a vertical section of Petrus, Mouton Rothschild, and Haut-Brion of the pre-*phylloxera* era. Simply put, while many travelers would love to spend six months cruising the South Pacific with Paul Theroux, they are not able to.

To blame these travelers for the "Westernization" of values and the decline of tribal, communal, or rural values throughout the developing world is silly. Travelers have been bringing (and imposing) their values to (on) foreign lands since man first traveled from one camp to another. In all cases basic Ricardian economics prevailed: Items of value were exchanged, and grounds for competitive advantage were established.

In nearly every case, however, reinforcement of the trade relationship resulted from "reverse tourism," travel from the poorer nation to the richer one. When travel was by ship and information moved slowly, the pace of "Westernization" was slow, but not imperceptible. Even as Ms. Murphy pedaled through India, values were shifting. Today, with television and radio reaching the jungles of South America and Africa, Western values are showcased and Western goods are coveted.

These changes have not been wrought by the traveler or tourist. I am writing this from Ndola, Zambia, a copper mining area on the Zaire border.

I've been able to watch two hours of American TV a day, plus snippets of CNN interjected around local advertisements for scouring powder and detergent. I listen to Western music on the only radio station in the country. I'm drinking Carling Black Label Beer (imported from South Africa), which gives me the "same lusty, lively taste that's enjoyed by men around the world."

Tourists do not visit Ndola. They do not bring their values here. Western values are reinforced by governments who wish to emulate those of the most powerful nations on this earth. Those governments promise their citizens Western goods, values, and culture. We can not be cultural Luddites, we can not stop this "march of progress."

Instead, we should fight to preserve the environment and the cultural heritage while bringing technological, medical, and social advancement. Whitewater rafting in the Zambezi Gorge does not destroy the heritage that is Zimbabwe. Building a second hydroelectric project in that same gorge may destroy both the heritage and one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Already, Victoria Falls is dry on the Zambian side owing to diversion

for hydroelectric power. Who knows how much habitat has been destroyed?

Most of us have a feel for our place in this world. Whether we travel among the Hmong in a four-wheel-drive vehicle or in Ethiopia by mule, we are brethren, linked by a wanderlust that transcends economic and cultural barriers. Yes Ms. Murphy, we can change the world... for the better.

David M. Einolf
Hotel Mukuba
Ndola, Zambia

Correction

On page 140 of the Autumn '92 WQ, an editing error changed the intended meaning of a letter concerning Daniel J. Boorstin's "Afterlives of the Great Period." The affected section should have read "...in fact, if another important number, such as $e=2.71828+$, the base of natural logarithms, did appear, then I might wonder." We regret the error.

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(signed) Kathy Read, *Publisher*

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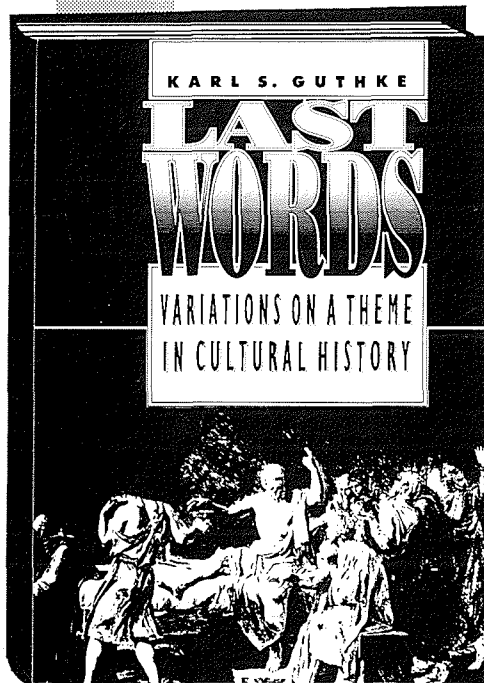
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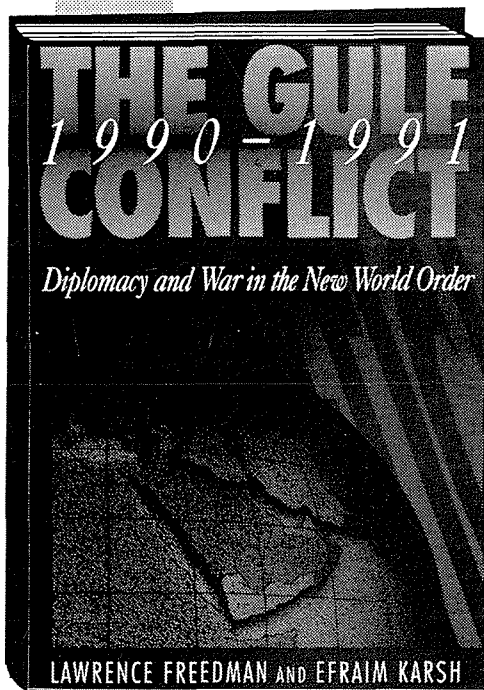
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Variations on a Theme in Cultural History

Karl S. Guthke

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