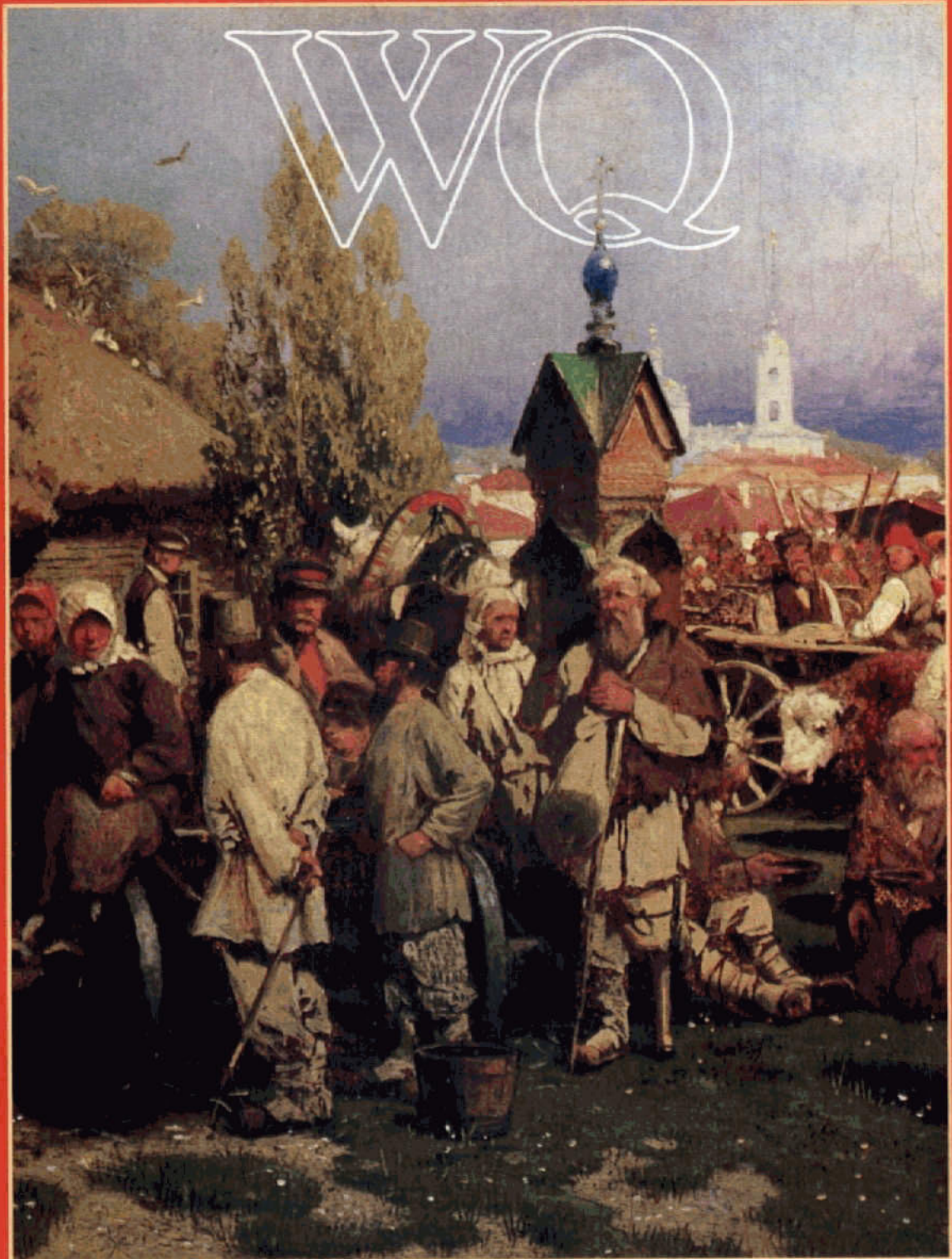


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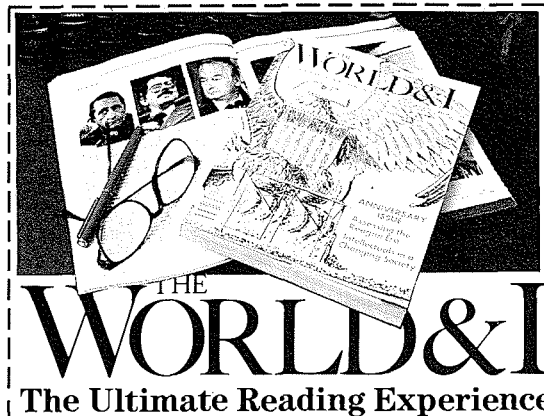
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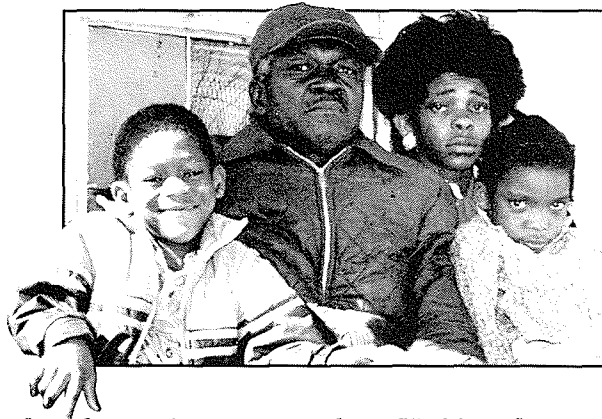
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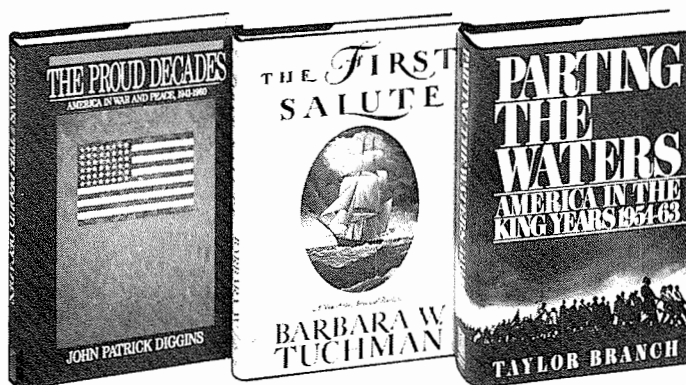
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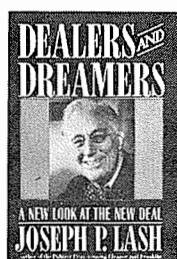
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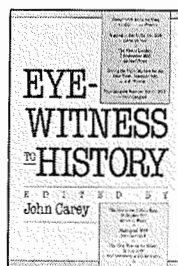
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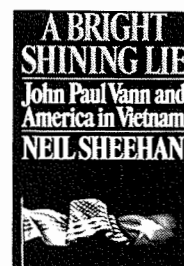
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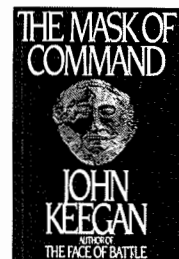
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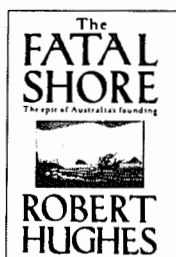
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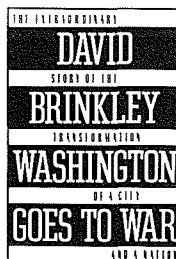
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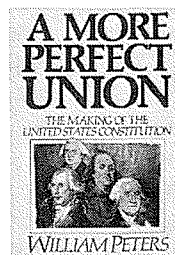
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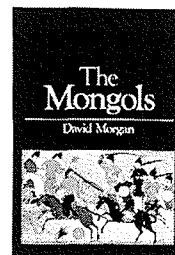
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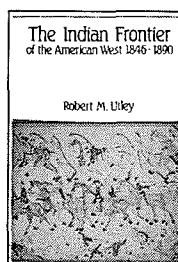
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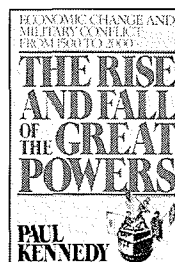
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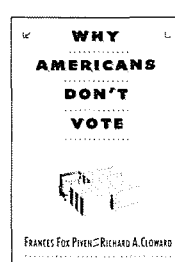
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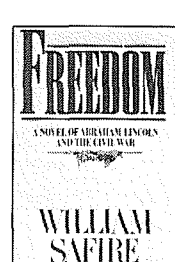
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Editor's Comment

Most visiting academics, journalists, and public officials at the Wilson Center do their research under the aegis of one of nine specialized sub-units—ranging from International Security to Latin America to Media Studies. The oldest, busiest, and biggest of these is the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, whose founding fathers in 1974 included sovietologist George F. Kennan. Now led by Blair Ruble, it is widely regarded as America's leading center for scholarly research on the other super-power; it has its own staff, library, conferences, and offices for some 35 visiting specialists each year to pursue in Washington, for varying periods of time, their investigations into Russian affairs, past and present. Since Mikhail Gorbachev took power, the institute has brought notable Soviet intellectuals to the Wilson Center, including physicist Andrei Sakharov, historian Yori Afanasev, and Vitaly Korotich, editor of *Ogonyek*. The institute's help to the *WQ* is particularly evident in this issue. See "Reform in Russia" (pp. 36).

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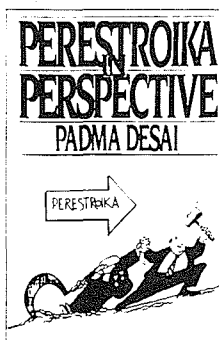
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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Vanishing Voters?

"Registration and Turnout" by Ruy A. Teixeira, in *Public Opinion* (Jan./Feb. 1989), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

After Election Day 1988, the Reverend Jesse Jackson declared that Governor Michael Dukakis could have triumphed by a "margin of enthusiasm" if only he had inspired poor and minority voters to go to the polls in greater numbers.

Similar sentiments were voiced by many Democrats after George Bush's 54-46 percent victory. And, at first glance, says Teixeira, a public opinion specialist at Abt Associates, they make a certain amount of sense. After all, voter turnout in 1988 dropped to 50 percent of the voting-age population, the lowest in any presidential election since Calvin Coolidge defeated Democrat John W. Davis in 1924. Last year, 52 percent of all voting-age whites cast ballots, while only 46 percent of blacks and 23 percent of Hispanics did. The affluent (incomes over \$50,000) "out-voted" the poor (under \$12,500), with a 57 percent turnout versus 31 percent.

Moreover, minorities and the poor went heavily Democratic. Blacks cast 85 percent of their ballots for Dukakis, Hispanics 69 percent. Sixty-two percent of the poor voted for the Massachusetts Democrat.

Yet, says Teixeira, a better turnout at the polls by these pro-Democratic groups still would not have added up to a Dukakis victory. If black and Hispanic turnout had been 10 percentage points *higher* than the white rate, Dukakis would have gained 4.3 million votes. But he lost the election by more than 6.9 million. If the turnout of poor people had exceeded that of the well-

to-do by 10 points, Dukakis would have won only an additional 3.5 million votes.

What about the Electoral College? According to Teixeira, even a 10 percentage point increase in black and Hispanic turnout would not have affected the outcome in California and other key states.

All of this assumes that the poor people (or blacks or Hispanics) who did not vote would have divided their ballots between Dukakis and Bush in the same proportion as those who did vote. But some critics believe that most nonvoters belong to an alienated liberal/Left "silent majority."

What if they gave an election and *everybody* came? According to a CBS News/*New York Times* opinion survey, Teixeira notes, "George Bush would still have won the election—except by a bigger margin!"

For Democrats, he concludes, the lesson is clear: "They lost the presidency because they didn't have enough support in the nation as a whole, not because [too many] of their people failed to show up." A change in the party's politics or candidates can improve its fortunes. For the nation, however, the shrinking electorate poses a more profound challenge. Not only has the turnout of the voting age population (now 180 million) been slipping; voter registration and the turnout of registered voters have also been dropping. The precise causes are a mystery, says Teixeira, but the fact that millions of Americans do not participate in their nation's political life seems to point to chronic civic maladies.

A Change for the Better

"Choosing the Vice President" by Michael Nelson, in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (Fall 1988), 1527 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Nineteenth-century Americans would have been astonished by last summer's uproar over Dan Quayle's nomination for vice president. Ironically, says Nelson, a Vanderbilt political scientist, the Quayle controversy highlights a dramatic improvement in the way vice presidential candidates are chosen.

Early in the nation's history, when, by law, the runner-up in every presidential election got the No. 2 spot, the office had two distinguished occupants, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. In 1804, the Twelfth Amendment created the present system; it was all downhill for the rest of the 19th century.

Party officials, not the presidential candidate, chose the running mate, and raw political expediency (e.g., healing intraparty divisions, "balancing" the ticket) reigned. Except for Martin Van Buren in 1836, no 19th-century vice president was nominated for the White House by a major political party convention. Indeed, none was even invited to run for a second term as vice president.

The office became a steppingstone to political oblivion, attracting only mediocre men. ("I do not propose to be buried until I am dead," said Daniel Webster when asked to be Zachary Taylor's running mate on the 1848 Whig ticket.) The four vice presidents who were brought to the White House by the death of a president—John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, and Chester A. Arthur—did not enjoy distinguished tenures.

Then, in 1904, the GOP broke precedent and nominated the popular Theodore Roosevelt, who had succeeded to the White House after the assassination of President William L. McKinley in 1901, for a full term. In 1912, the GOP chose James S. Sherman to run for a second vice-presidential term under President William Howard Taft, breaking another tradition. Finally, in 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt made the selection of his running mate the prerogative of the presidential nominee by

threatening to refuse the Democratic nomination if the party did not endorse Henry A. Wallace.

The realities of the nuclear age accelerated the shift away from political expediency. (Three vice presidents have been thrust into the White House prematurely since 1945.) As Jimmy Carter's top election strategist advised him in 1976: "The best politics is to select a person who is accurately perceived [as] qualified and able to serve as president." In fact, the office now attracts very able poli-

ticians. Historians, says Nelson, "rate the 20th century's five successor presidents higher on average than the 11 elected presidents."

Today, most presidential nominees conduct exhaustive searches for running mates. Mistakes are still made, writes Nelson. But they are the exception rather than the rule. Twentieth century vice presidential candidates, whatever their flaws, are nothing like the 19th century's "rogues' gallery of personal and political failures."



Since Vice President Martin Van Buren triumphed in the 1836 election, only one incumbent vice president (George Bush) has repeated his success. After the 1836 election, Van Buren's own vice president, Richard M. Johnson, moved back to Kentucky to open a tavern.

Rallying Around The President

"A Reconsideration of the Rally Phenomenon in Public Opinion" by Richard A. Brody and Catherine R. Shapiro, in *Political Behavior Annual* (Volume 2), Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, Colo. 80301.

Scholars and politicians have long cited the "rally around the flag" effect: thanks to patriotic sentiment, public approval of the president always goes up in times of international crisis.

Not so, say Brody and Shapiro, of Stanford University. Such grassroots support is "far from automatic." In some cases, the president suffers a loss of public approval. Surveying media coverage and polling data since 1947, the authors note that Harry Truman dropped six points after the Soviets announced that they had an atomic bomb (1949), and three points after the Chinese Communists entered the Korean War (1950). Lyndon Johnson lost five points after U.S. destroyers engaged North Vietnamese PT-boats in the Gulf of Tonkin (1964). Richard Nixon lost six points after the controversial "Christmas bombing" of Hanoi (1972).

What shapes public reaction to the president is less patriotism in crisis than the response of "opinion leadership," as reported in the press. If the president's political foes, notably in Congress, do not criticize his performance (flawed or not), the public "rallies." If the opposition is vocal but divided, the public may not rally, but will await the outcome of events.

Two recent cases:

- Ronald Reagan's 1983 Grenada inva-

sion. U.S. troops landed on the Caribbean island on October 25; the president's overall approval rating remained at 48 percent as leading congressional Democrats voiced dismay. No "rally." On October 27, Reagan addressed the nation. Polls showed no gain in his overall rating but registered the usual initial public support for U.S. action abroad. After Reagan's speech, and the U.S. military success, the Democrats muted their criticism. The Gallup Poll in early November showed a five-point gain in public approval of Reagan.

- Jimmy Carter's 1979-80 "Iran hostage crisis." When Iranians seized the U.S. Embassy and its staff in November 1979, Carter was already facing political trouble. Senator Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.) was ready to seek the 1980 presidential nomination, as were Ronald Reagan, George Bush, John Connally, and other Republicans. But few initially exploited the Iran crisis. (Kennedy in December 1979 spoke out against the Shah, without naming Carter; he was widely chastised for hurting Carter's efforts to free the hostages.) There was a "rally": Carter's overall approval rating in the polls went from around 33 percent to over 50 percent during the 90 days after the crisis began. Then, as the hostages' ordeal continued, he began to suffer a steady decline in the polls.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Pacific Vistas

"America in the Pacific Century" by Jerry W. Sanders, in *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1988-89), 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Looking west during the 1988 campaign, George Bush said that he hoped to "transform this amazing relationship [with Japan] into a new form of partnership, with the U.S. continuing to play the predominant military role and with the Japanese

becoming a major donor of aid to the Third World."

What is surprising, writes Sanders, a Berkeley political scientist, is that Bush actually seems to envision "more of the same" in Washington's links with Japan

and other U.S. allies in East Asia. Since the end of World War II, U.S. presidents have based their Pacific policy on the twin tenets of free trade—with the United States serving as “a guaranteed consumer market for [Asian] export-led economies”—and containment of the Soviet Union and its allies. Today, Sanders believes, that policy is dangerously outmoded.

Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore are no longer economic dwarfs. In 1987, the United States incurred a trade deficit of \$60 billion with Japan and \$38 billion with the other East Asian nations—together accounting for about two-thirds of the U.S. trade deficit. By the turn of the century, the “gross regional product” of these nations will equal that of North America.

Meanwhile, to “contain” the Soviets, the United States keeps 330,000 military personnel, nearly half its Navy ships, and several Air Force fighter wings in or near East Asia. The annual cost: some \$50 billion, or 18 percent of the Pentagon budget.

Trying to cope with altered economic realities of the U.S.-Asian relationship, Washington has pressed Japan and other Asian nations to open their markets to U.S.

goods. It has looked to Tokyo for increased military “burden sharing”; some Democrats in Congress want Japan to expand its defense spending from \$50 billion annually to \$100 or \$150 billion. But the Japanese have already accepted new defense burdens and are reluctant to add more. Throughout East Asia, trade disputes have fed anti-American sentiment. (One recent survey revealed that 66 percent of South Koreans favor a complete pullout of U.S. troops.) In the United States, “the mounting cost of [U.S.] political leadership and diminished economic strength is sowing seeds of resentment.” In short, Sanders argues, simply tinkering with the old formulas will not work.

With Mikhail Gorbachev in power in Moscow, he believes, there is less need for containment in Asia; the United States can safely reduce its military commitments in the Pacific and use the savings to cut the federal budget deficit. To ease trade tensions, Tokyo could use its economic power to help build up struggling Asian nations, such as the Philippines, which would become customers for the Japanese and other East Asian goods that now flood U.S. markets.

Moscow's Vote

“How Moscow Votes in U.S. Presidential Elections” by Jiri Valenta and John Cunningham, in *Orbis* (Winter 1989), 3615 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

Since World War II, Soviet leaders have taken more than a passing interest in U.S. presidential campaigns. During the weeks before the election, that interest becomes “an all consuming . . . fever,” according to one high-level defector.

Valenta and Cunningham, professor and student at the University of Miami, respectively, argue that, during a close race, Soviet leaders “appear to believe that they have sufficient leverage to influence the outcome” through words and acts.

The Kremlin has “a certain affection for non-ideological Republicans,” and it prefers men it knows to untested candidates. In 1948, however, the Kremlin openly

backed third party candidate Henry Wallace over President Harry S. Truman and the GOP's Thomas E. Dewey. Stalin's public support (along with that of the U.S. Communist Party) may have cost Wallace enough votes to help Truman eke out a narrow victory over Dewey.

The Kremlin apparently picked no sides in the two contests between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson (1952 and '56), seeming to believe that Stevenson's defeat was inevitable.

In 1960, the Soviets saw Vice President Richard M. Nixon as “reactionary,” and looked upon John F. Kennedy as weak and likely to be “vulnerable to pressure.” That

is why, Nikita Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs, he delayed the release of a captured U.S. spyplane pilot, Gary Powers, until after the election.

In 1968, during the Vietnam War, the Soviets hatched an "October surprise" to keep Nixon from defeating Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in a close race. On October 31, days before the election, Moscow's clients in Hanoi suddenly agreed to serious peace talks with the United States; LBJ suspended U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. Nixon later said that the "surprise" almost cost him the election.

The Kremlin remained offstage during the elections of 1976 and '80. But Ronald

Reagan's tough policies convinced them that he would not be another Nixon, whose détente policies had been a surprise. One reason for the Soviet walkout at the Geneva arms limitation talks in 1983, according to *Pravda's* Viktor Afanasiev, was an unwillingness to hand Reagan a foreign policy triumph. It did not work.

Over the years, the Soviets have gained a more sophisticated knowledge of presidential politics, the authors say. In 1988, Gorbachev subtly favored George Bush. Has the Soviets' intervention made a difference? Not likely. And they have been notable failures at predicting the behavior of U.S. presidents.

Terrorists And Dollars

"The Costs of Terrorism: A Cross-National Study of Six Countries" by Christopher Hewitt, in *Terrorism* (No. 3, 1988), Crane, Russak & Co., 3 E. 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Terrorists the world over hope to achieve their various political goals by disrupting societies, spreading fear, and provoking governments into repressive acts. What about their *economic* impact?

To find out, Hewitt, a University of Maryland sociologist, analyzed terrorists in six nations: Cyprus's anti-British EOKA (1955-59); Uruguay's revolutionary Tupamaros (1962-72); the Irish Republican Army and its Protestant rivals in Northern Ireland (1968-87); the Basque ETA separatists in Spain (1973-87); and various revolutionary (mostly left-wing) groups, such as the Red Brigades, in Italy (1969-81) and West Germany (1967-81).

First, surveying terrorist "self-financing," Hewitt found substantial country-to-country variations. In West Germany, for example, kidnappings for ransom by the leftist Baader-Meinhof gang and other fac-

tions were relatively numerous and costly (\$22.5 million); in Northern Ireland, there were none. The Basque ETA exacted a heavy toll in "revolutionary tax" extortions from local businessmen (\$65 million).



Terrorism in Spain: In October 1986, in San Sebastian, a Basque ETA militant on a motorbike attached a magnetic bomb to General Rafael Garrido Gil's car, killing him, his wife, and his son.

Damage from bombings and arson ran to over \$1 billion in Northern Ireland and Italy. Northern Ireland suffered the heaviest toll in murders and assassinations (2,558), followed by Spain (814), Cyprus (652), and Italy (386).

Almost everywhere, terrorist campaigns sparked increases in government outlays for police and other security forces. Oddly, however, these expenditures often bore little relation to the actual threat. Thus, West Germany, facing relatively minor terrorism, spent an additional \$2.7 billion over 11 years, while Italy's internal security

spending dropped.

Adding up the direct dollar costs of terrorism, Hewitt found that they are not trivial. Far and away the largest burdens have fallen on Northern Ireland, where the 17-year total comes to \$12 billion, followed by Spain (\$5.2 billion) and West Germany (\$2.8 billion). Still, these outlays are tiny fractions of national gross domestic product in these lands. "Where terrorism is significant," says Hewitt, "it is because of its power to disrupt people's lives and to change political attitudes, not because of its economic costs."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Buying America

"Japan's Investment in America: Is It a Threat?" by John H. Makin, in *Challenge* (Nov./Dec. 1988), 80 Business Park Dr., Armonk, N.Y. 10504.

Japanese investors seem to be gobbling up American companies like popcorn. New York investment banker Felix Rohatyn has warned that Americans are in danger of becoming "merely the day-to-day managers" of U.S. business, while Japanese owners become the brains.

It is true, says Makin, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute, that Japanese investment in the United States has surged during the 1980s. But Japanese holdings remain relatively small, and the special conditions that caused the surge have ended.

By the end of 1987, Japanese holdings in the United States had jumped to \$194 billion, up from \$35 billion in 1980. Yet, by contrast, Western European investors owned \$785 billion in U.S. assets in 1987. Overall, foreigners owned about 10 percent of all U.S. "reproducible" capital (i.e. excluding real estate); the Japanese stake was only 1.3 percent.

Where have the Japanese put their money? Most of it, \$117 billion, is in U.S. Treasury bonds and notes. (About four percent of all Treasury securities are in Japanese hands.) Some \$34 billion is in

highly visible "direct investments," such as auto factories and banks; the remainder is in corporate stocks and bonds.

There were two major reasons for the sharp increase in Japanese investment, says Makin. Beginning in 1980, Tokyo eased restrictions on overseas investment, releasing billions of dollars in pent-up capital. Japan's *total* foreign investment jumped from \$160 billion in 1980 to \$808 billion in 1987. Second, the 1980s brought an unusual combination of high U.S. interest rates, a strengthening dollar, and a growing economy. This made the United States very attractive to foreign investors.

For a variety of reasons—including a slight increase in U.S. savings, a small reduction in the federal budget deficit, and a cooling of the economy—Makin believes that foreign investment is beginning to taper off. Eventually, the cycle will be completed, and the United States will again be in a position to be an investor abroad. When that happens, Makin says, Americans had better hope that they have not already enacted controls on foreign investment that will serve as harsh models for other governments.

A New GNP?

"Extended Accounts for National Income and Product" by Robert Eisner, in *Journal of Economic Literature* (Dec. 1988), 1313 21st Ave. S., Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212-2786.

Most Americans regard the gross national product (GNP) as the basic gauge of the nation's economic progress. But Eisner, president of the American Economics Association, writes that many specialists believe that the official GNP figures are deeply flawed.

The GNP is calculated from the U.S. Commerce Department's National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA), a kind of national balance sheet. Eisner believes that it contains many anomalies that distort our picture of both the size of the U.S. economy and its overall strengths and weaknesses.

For example, the NIPA does not include the value of cooking, cleaning, child care, and other services provided by housewives. But, if a housewife takes a paid job and hires a cook, a maid, and a baby sitter, those services (and the woman's salary) are counted, and ultimately show up as increases in GNP.

The NIPA also treats many outlays in strange ways. If Hertz or Avis buys a car, notes Eisner, the purchase is counted as a

capital investment. But if the federal government buys a car, the outlay is classified under "government purchases of goods and services"; if a family purchases a car, the outlay is treated as "consumption." Similarly, in the NIPA, a student's tuition payments for college are counted as consumption, even though he is adding to the nation's "human capital."

Assessing these and other factors, Eisner draws a new picture of the nation's economic health. He believes that the GNP is actually much larger than the official data indicate (\$4.56 trillion in 1981, versus \$3.05 trillion). But it is growing more slowly (by 2.52 percent annually during 1966-81, rather than 2.91 percent), largely because the government and household "economies" have lagged behind business. Eisner's revisions also suggest that investment is growing faster, and consumption more slowly, than official data show.

Government statisticians already have altered the way they reckon inflation and unemployment. An overhaul of GNP computations, Eisner believes, is long overdue.

Predicting the (Last) Depression

"Forecasting the Depression: Harvard versus Yale" by Kathryn M. Dominguez, Ray C. Fair, and Matthew D. Shapiro, in *The American Economic Review* (Sept. 1988), 1313 21st Ave. S., Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212-2786.

In December 1929, two months after Wall Street's Black Tuesday, the Harvard Economic Service assured its clients: "1930, as a whole, should prove at least a fairly good year." In January 1930, the nation's other leading forecaster, Yale's Irving Fisher, wrote that "it would not be surprising if by next month the worst of the recession will have been felt and improvement looked for."

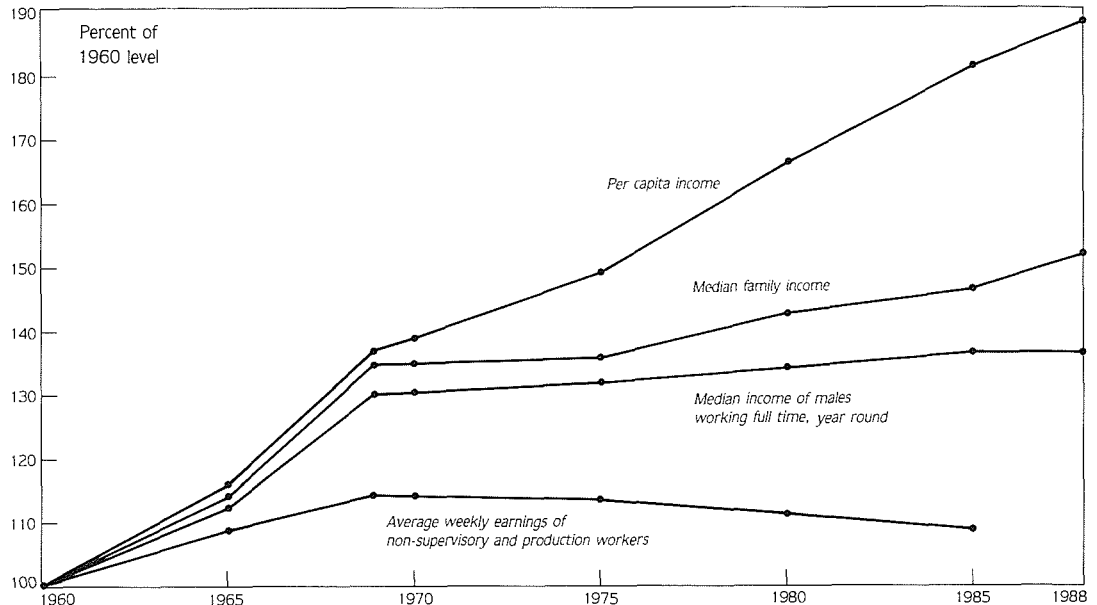
With the luxury of hindsight, such rosy predictions bring a smile to the lips. Indeed, it was not until late in 1931 that the Harvard team, headed by economist W. L. Crum, concluded that "adequate grounds for forecasting business revival have not yet appeared;" Fisher remained optimistic.

Dominguez, of Harvard, and Fair and Shapiro, both Yale researchers, examined the Depression-era forecasters' data and methods. They also used modern economic information and statistical techniques to see if these could have predicted the collapse. Their conclusion: "The Depression was not forecastable."

Most modern theories about the causes of the Depression suggest that it could not have been predicted. Milton Friedman blames mistakes made by the Federal Reserve Board during 1929-33; Charles Kindleberger attributes it to panic on Wall Street. Harvard and Yale, the authors conclude, managed only a 0-0 tie in the contest to forecast the Depression.

Measuring Income

"Income" by Karl Zinsmeister, in *Public Opinion* (Nov./Dec. 1988), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-9964.



"Statistics will prove anything, even the truth," goes an old saying. And as Zinsmeister, an American Enterprise Institute researcher, indicates in the chart above, the various statistics on Americans' personal income that are widely invoked in today's political debates can accommodate several different "truths."

- *Average weekly earnings of non-supervisory and production workers* is "beloved of candidates challenging political incumbents" because it suggests that Americans are earning less than they were in 1969. But this indicator is artificially low, because, among other factors, work weeks are somewhat shorter and part-time workers far more numerous than they were two decades ago.

- *Median income of males working full time, year-round* adjusts for some of these deficiencies, but has other shortcomings. For example, it misses the "significant jump" in female earnings in recent years.

- *Median family income* is another widely-cited measure. It is distorted by the radical changes in family characteristics over the years. More wives are working,

and they are bearing fewer children, pushing up median family income; but a downward adjustment must be made for the major growth in the number of families headed by women who are either divorced or never married.

- *Per capita income*, which shows the most significant growth, is calculated by dividing total personal income in the U.S. by the number of men, women, and children. It is biased upward, in part because there are proportionally fewer children (non-earners) in the population today than there were 27 years ago.

As if to complicate matters, the U.S. Labor Department has created two new indices (not shown here) in recent years. *Cash pay per hour* grew by seven percent between 1980 and 1988. *Compensation per hour*, which includes cash and benefits (e.g., health insurance) increased by 11 percent during the same period.

Which is the most accurate gauge? Take your pick, says Zinsmeister. Americans' personal income has increased in recent decades, but nobody can say with any certainty by how much.

SOCIETY

Schools and 'Social Capital'

"The Creation and Destruction of Social Capital: Implications for the Law" by James S. Coleman, in *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, & Public Policy* (No. 3, 1988), Notre Dame Law School, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.

Two years ago, in a controversial study comparing 1,015 public and private high schools, Coleman, a University of Chicago sociologist, found that private schools, particularly Catholic schools, frequently outperformed public schools.

Less widely noted at the time were differences among the private schools. The "independent" private schools Coleman studied had one thing in common with the public schools: high dropout rates (close to 15 percent). By contrast, Catholic high schools had only four percent dropout rates. (Likewise, other religious schools had very few dropouts.) The rates for Catholic schools were virtually the same whether the students themselves were Catholics or not.

Why should this be so?

Coleman believes that the explanation lies in something he calls "social capital." Financial and physical capital are familiar concepts. During the last 30 years, economists have recognized the importance of "human capital"—skills and education. Social capital, says Coleman, "exists in the relations between persons."

The chief source of social capital (e.g., trust, shared values and standards) is the family: the bonds among and between parents and children. But the "community surrounding the school" is also a source of social capital. Sometimes, it seems to pro-

vide enough to compensate for weak families: Catholic school students from one-parent families, unlike their public school counterparts, have the same (low) dropout rate as their classmates from two-parent families.

Until recently, Coleman believes, public schools were backed by enough community "social capital" to function well. But non-working mothers were the backbone of these communities; now that many have taken jobs, the communities (and families) have weakened. Indeed, says Coleman, the United States has been depleting its "social capital" for two centuries, ever since men began leaving their farms for jobs away from home.

Families and communities have no monopoly on the production of "social capital," according to Coleman, nor are the schools the only institutions where it matters. "Social capital" is vital to the functioning of business, for example, especially in Japan.

What can be done to replenish America's "social capital?" Schools can actively organize parent "communities"; corporations can grant parental leaves and take other measures to strengthen families. But it may be, Coleman says, that other institutions—perhaps the large corporation—will have to perform some of the functions that families once did.

Crime and Community

"Making Neighborhoods Safe" by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Feb. 1989), 8 Arlington St., Boston, Mass. 02166.

Most urban crime-fighting is "incident-oriented": a citizen reports a burglary; the police arrive as quickly as possible, record the relevant information, and try to track down the burglar.

Police chiefs in many cities now realize that this traditional strategy is insufficient, according to Wilson, a UCLA professor and noted specialist on crime, and Kelling, a Northeastern University criminologist.

Simply responding to "incidents" usually means that underlying neighborhood *problems* (drugs, gangs) go unaddressed and "incidents" continue and even multiply.

A new strategy, buttressed by much recent experience, is "community-oriented policing." At its best, it involves police working with other city agencies and the residents of a targeted neighborhood to establish public order and safety. Some proven remedies: cleaning up alleys, fixing broken windows, improving lighting, tearing down abandoned buildings (havens for drug users), repeatedly sweeping drug-infested areas, and deploying foot patrols. The results are more than cosmetic: "Law-abiding citizens who are afraid to go out onto streets filled with graffiti, winos, and loitering youths yield control of these

streets to people who are not afraid."

Focusing on one neighborhood does not simply push criminals into adjoining territory, say the authors. Most crime in most neighborhoods is local: offenders live near their victims, and many crimes are opportunistic. In parts of Houston, New York, Los Angeles, and other cities, the new police strategies have succeeded.

However, Wilson and Kelling note, much remains unknown. Neighborhood Watch programs, for example, still need assessment. So do the costs and benefits of having police officers help bring in help from other city agencies—not normal "police business." And, they add, "no way of [permanently] wresting control of a neighborhood from a street gang has yet been proved effective."

Civil Rights During the 1940s

"Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement" by Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, in *The Journal of American History* (Dec. 1988), 112 N. Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Most histories of the U.S. civil rights movement begin with the Supreme Court's historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. In fact, say Korstad and Lichtenstein, historians at the University of North Carolina and Catholic University, respectively, the effort began "dramatically and decisively" a decade earlier.

During the early 1940s, two million blacks left Southern farms to seek wartime jobs in the industrial centers of the Northeast and Midwest; another million moved to Southern cities. Fostered partly by Washington's egalitarian wartime rhetoric, black political awareness grew. Membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) soared from 50,000 in 1940 to 450,000 in 1946. Even in the Old South, black voter registration quadrupled.

But the chief source of the new black activism was the growing labor union movement. Half a million blacks joined industrial unions during the 1940s. Franklin Roosevelt's support and "the 'industrial citizenship' that union contracts offered

once-marginal elements of the working class" generated rising expectations and a new set of goals to aim for. At Ford's famous River Rouge plant, most of the 9,000 black workers became solid supporters of the United Auto Workers (UAW) after 1941. They began to demand equal treatment on the shop floor. Some black unionists moved into the UAW hierarchy; others swelled the ranks of the Michigan NAACP. The UAW's top leaders backed "mass rallies, picket lines, and big lobbying delegations to city hall, Lansing, and Washington" seeking protections against job discrimination. Even the staid NAACP joined demonstrations for fair housing.

By 1950, 10 states had created fair employment practice commissions; four major cities (e.g., Chicago, Philadelphia) had enacted tough laws against job bias; and the Americans for Democratic Action gained a strong civil rights plank in the 1948 Democratic Party platform.

Then the movement sputtered.

What happened? Automation and post-World War II cutbacks eliminated many

factory jobs for blacks, the authors say. And many of the most militant civil rights activists within the unions were Communists, who were forced out as anti-communist sentiment grew. And, finally, the unions themselves abandoned ideological

militance and simply tried to win for their members a greater share of the nation's postwar abundance. As a result, the authors observe, unions played only a small role in the "second" civil rights movement during the 1950s and '60s.

Checkerboard, U.S.A.

"Patterns on the American Land" by Vernon Carstensen, in *Publius* (Fall 1988), 1017 Gladfelter Hall, Temple University 025-25, Philadelphia, Pa. 19122.

In 1785, Congress passed a law, now obscure, that was to change the face of America during the next century.

The Land Ordinance of 1785 provided for the division of the nation's then-limited public lands west of the Appalachian Mountains into townships six miles square, subdivided into 36 one-mile-square (or 640-acre) "sections."

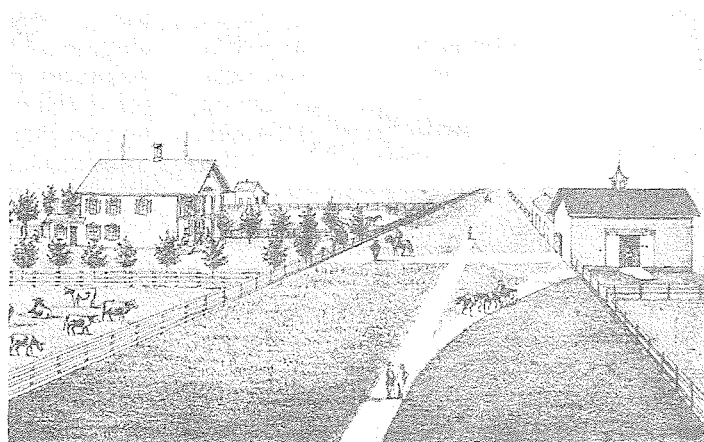
"Like bees or ants or other well organized societies, Americans, once they fixed upon the rectangular survey, were inflexible in their devotion to the idea," writes Vernon Carstensen, of the University of Washington. Gradually, Congress extended the rectangular grid westward, eventually encompassing 69 percent of the land area of the continental United States.

In the original 13 colonies, as in most places throughout history, land was divided more or less haphazardly, which "invited a host of misunderstandings about boundary lines between individual holdings." However, between 1800 and 1900, more than five million rectangular farms and ranches were marked out in the West under the section system, as were many towns and counties. Because, as poet Robert Frost put it, "good fences make good neighbors," much conflict was avoided.

In 1804, Congress allowed the sale of "quarter sections" of 160 acres, and that

came to be viewed as the ideal size for the family farm. (Today, many Western and Midwestern farmers and ranchers refer to their holdings simply as "half sections," "forties," or "eighties.") Rectangular fields "virtually decreed straight-line tillage," says Carstensen, until 20th century researchers discovered that it spurred soil erosion.

The 1785 Land Ordinance also set aside



The ruler-straight "section" roads of the West and Midwest, as in this view of 19th-century Minnesota, are a legacy of the 1785 grid survey. Curves would have chopped up farmers' square fields.

one section in each township for the common schools. Much of this land was sold "early and cheap," and the proceeds wasted by local officials. But the precedent later allowed educators and others to demand and win local government support for public schools. That, writes Carstensen, may be the chief legacy of the little-known law that left much of the American landscape a checkerboard.

PRESS & TELEVISION

The Media Lobby

"The Powers That Be *Lobbying*" by Sheila Kaplan, in *The Washington Monthly* (Dec. 1988), 1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

On Capitol Hill, the "media lobby"—representing TV broadcasters, cable TV, and newspaper and magazine publishers—is one of the most powerful. Do these guardians of the Fourth Estate spend their time crusading for First Amendment rights? "Occasionally," reports Kaplan, a freelance writer. "But the day-to-day work of a Washington media lobbyist focuses not so much on the front page as the bottom line."

And the odd thing is that the average American seldom sees news reports on the activities of these powerful lobbyists.

"The clout that the newspapers and broadcasters exert is the desire of every elected official to have favorable press attention," notes Lionel Van Deerlin, a former U.S. Representative. "When you hear from these guys, you listen." Campaign contributions are also a factor. Between 1985 and August 1988, Kaplan reports, the National Cable Television Association's political action committee (PAC) donated \$446,240 to candidates for federal office, and the National Association of Broadcasters' PAC gave \$307,986. Newspaper publishers, who have no PAC, made many individual donations.

In 1987, media lobbyists "pulled out the

stops" when two congressmen proposed to extend the ban on televised cigarette advertisements to newspapers and magazines. At stake: \$460 million in advertising revenues. The American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) took up arms, calling the measure a threat to free speech. The measure ultimately failed; Representative Mike Synar (D-Okla.) complained that "the ANPA are (sic) the water carriers for the tobacco industry." Few newspapers covered the controversy, says Kaplan; rarely was the ANPA's role cited by those that did.

Recently, the National Association of Broadcasters battled against a revival of the Fairness Doctrine and snuffed out an attempt on Capitol Hill to require free television air time for candidates for federal office (who spent an estimated \$400 million on TV ads during the 1986 campaign). Neither story got much play on evening TV news broadcasts; Gannett's *USA Today* called the Fairness Doctrine "stinkweed," neglecting to mention that its parent company owns 10 TV stations.

Quick to scrutinize other "special interests" and lobbyists, Kaplan concludes, journalists in Washington need to look at their own industry's role in politics.

Forget City Hall?

"Press Wars in Milwaukee" by Alan Ehrenhalt, in *Governing* (Jan. 1989), 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

In 1962, Mayor Henry Maier of Milwaukee boasted of his excellent relations with the city's news media. *Time* magazine lauded the *Milwaukee Journal* for its intensive local coverage: "While *Journal* stories may seem too long and stodgy to outsiders, Milwaukeeans like the *Journal*'s Germanic thoroughness."

However, after his recent retirement from office, Maier complained bitterly

about the *Journal*'s scant coverage of City Hall. Other local officials have joined in. Tom Donegan, president of Milwaukee's Common Council criticizes what he calls the "soap opera approach" of the local news media.

Such complaints "are all variations on a national theme," writes Ehrenhalt, an editor at *Governing*. Across America, metropolitan dailies are increasingly skimping

on coverage of city government.

One reason is the suburbanization of America. To keep advertisers' dollars, newspapers must pursue affluent readers in the suburbs. "Write more about suburban lifestyles," advised a 1988 report on the future of the press by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, "and less about government meetings."

Big city dailies also face increasing competition from suburban newspapers and, especially, local TV news. But TV journalists do not elevate the quality of reporting, observes Ehrenhalt. Kevin O'Connor, recently elected Milwaukee county trea-

surer, says of his experience during the campaign: "If you could stage something with color, you could get covered."

The *Journal*, Ehrenhalt notes, no longer seeks to be the local "newspaper of record"; it has cut its City Hall staff. Common Council meetings are reported, but there is no "clear picture of how the institutions are working, who forms alliances with whom, and which members are responsible for which policies."

In Milwaukee and other big cities, that leaves local politicians in good position to manipulate the news, and local residents in increasing ignorance.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Misunderstanding Wittgenstein

"The Philosophical Porcupine" by Roger Kimball, in *The New Criterion* (Dec. 1988), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. Ironically, says Kimball, a literary critic, this man who "detested the academy" unintentionally fathered today's school of highly abstract Anglo-American academic philosophy.

Wittgenstein was the youngest of eight children born to "the Carnegie of Austria," whose opulent Vienna household bubbled with talent and torments. Three of Wittgenstein's four brothers committed suicide; the fourth, Paul, who lost an arm in World War I, nevertheless enjoyed a successful career as a concert pianist.

In 1911, young Ludwig went to Cambridge to study philosophy with Bertrand Russell, who described him as "perhaps the most perfect example I have known of genius as traditionally conceived, passionate, profound, intense, and dominating." (And, Russell might have added, *angst*-ridden.) Before long, Russell was "dutifully taking down the reflections on logic that Wittgenstein [17 years his junior] dictated as he paced the room nervously." Wittgenstein's brilliant critiques of his work soon convinced Russell "that I could not hope

ever again to do fundamental work in philosophy."

After serving with distinction in the Austrian army during World War I, Wittgenstein renounced his inherited fortune and held a variety of non-academic jobs—schoolteacher, gardener, architect—before returning to Cambridge in 1929.

For all of his profound impact, Wittgenstein published only one slim volume, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), plus the posthumous *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), a children's textbook, an essay, and a book review. Too impatient to present detailed arguments, Wittgenstein wrote in a seemingly disjointed, epigrammatic style: "The world is the totality of facts, not things."

Wittgenstein hoped to construct "an ideal language in which all true propositions can be clearly expressed," thus uncovering the propositions still in need of investigation. As early as the *Tractatus*, Kimball argues, Wittgenstein came to see conventional philosophy (including his own) as a ladder that must be climbed and then discarded, as he put it, to "see the world aright." Wittgenstein sought to re-

turn philosophy to what he considered "the important questions of everyday life," says Kimball. Although he prized clarity of

language, he was somehow gravely misunderstood on this point by his academic successors.

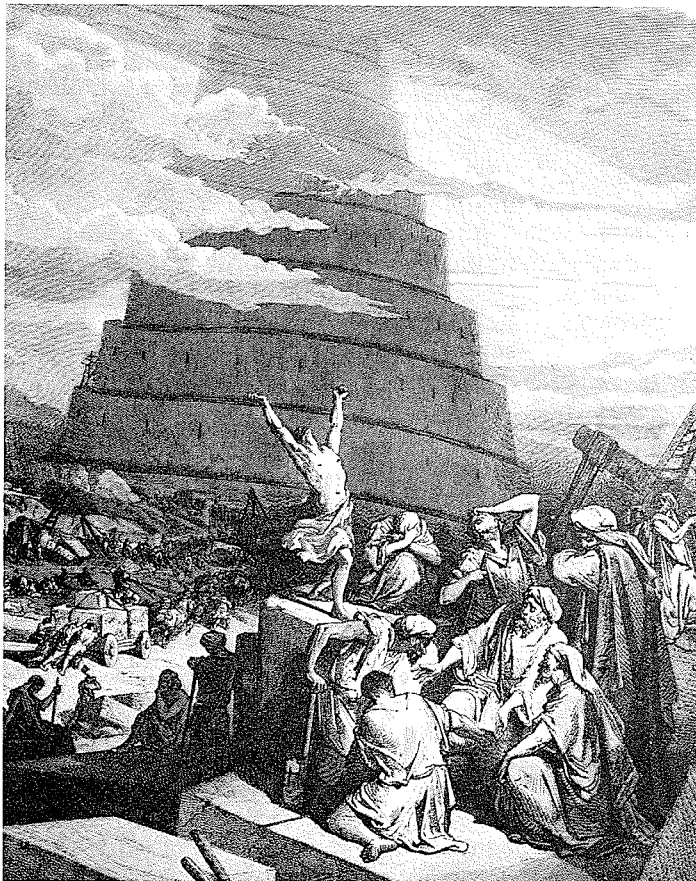
Babel

"What's Wrong With Babel?" by Leon R. Kass, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1989), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.'"

Thus did the biblical people of Babel plant the seeds of their own destruction, recalls Kass, who teaches at the University of Chicago. What was their sin?

The story of Babel, he notes, is one of a series of tales in Genesis—Eden, Cain and Abel, the Flood—in which man is told of human possibilities that have been tried and have proved impossible. The still-valid lesson from Babel, Kass believes, is that the "recurrent dream of universal human community living in peace and freedom" is a delusion.



Reaching towards heaven, the Tower of Babel, as depicted in 1866 by Gustave Doré, symbolized man's quest for omnipotence. In the Bible, God destroyed the tower before it was completed.

At the time of Babel's creation, the "whole earth was of one language and one speech," the Bible says, suggesting a shared human understanding of the world. The creation of the orderly city "proudly celebrates the powers of human reason" and the human quest for self-sufficiency. The tower "is a human effort to link up heaven and earth," and, in a sense, to control heaven and human destiny, says Kass. "In Babel, the universal city, with its own uniform language, beliefs, truths, customs, and laws, [men] neither know nor seek to know anything beyond."

God punished the people of Babel for their implied wish to be as gods by confounding their language and scattering them "upon the face of all the earth." The result, Kass observes, was "the emergence of separate nations, with separate tongues and separate ways, with the near-certain prospect of difference" and war.

Yet, this is the key to the lesson, Kass says. "God's dispersion of the nations is the political analog to the creation of woman: instituting otherness and opposition, it is the

necessary condition for national self-awareness and the possibility of a politics that will . . . hearken to the voice of what is eternal, true, and good."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Iron Planet

"Mercury's Heart of Iron" by Clark R. Chapman, in *Astronomy* (Nov. 1988), 1027 N. 7th St., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53233.

More than a decade after America's unmanned Mariner 10 flew near the planet Mercury during 1974-75, scientists have finally digested all of the data from the flight. And they are starting to ask some big questions, reports Chapman, of Tucson's Planetary Science Institute.

Located about midway between the Earth and the Sun, Mercury is a "truly bizarre" planet. Its rock crust is unusually thin; a "metallic iron core" accounts for 70 percent of the planet's weight.

The most surprising discovery made by Mariner 10 was that the tiny planet has a magnetic field, like Earth's but much weaker. Until then, scientists had believed that the core was solid and relatively cool, and thus lacked the moving currents of molten metal needed to generate a magnetic field. But the presence of a magnetic field suggests that the core must be at least partially molten. And that means that the core may contain chemical "impurities," such as sulfur, which serve as a kind of "planetary antifreeze."

Does this matter?

Mercury's make-up, Chapman explains,

plays a vital role in the two leading theories of the origins of the solar system. According to one theory, formulated by cosmochemist John Lewis during the 1970s, the solar system was created in a more or less orderly fashion. Lewis believes that the planets formed out of gases that cooled and condensed. At some point, billions of years ago, the sun flared up briefly, blasting away many gases. According to Lewis's theory, there should not be any sulfur, or anything like it, on Mercury.

A more recent theory, propounded by George Wetherill of the Carnegie Institution, is that the solar system emerged from "chaos." Mercury, in particular, bounced around the solar system like a billiard ball, colliding with large asteroids and other planets. According to Wetherill's scenario, sulfur and other materials should be randomly distributed around the solar system.

Until recently, Chapman says, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had ruled out a second Mercury probe. But now, partly because of Mercury's new importance, another visit to the "metal planet" may be planned.

Sex and Skin Color

"Human Skin Color: A Possible Relationship Between Its Sexual Dimorphism And Its Social Perception" by Peter Frost, in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* (Autumn 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

From medieval England to Aztec Mexico and contemporary Nigeria, men generally have found the lightest skinned women of their society the most desirable. To a lesser extent, women have preferred darker-colored men.

Why should this be so? asks Frost, an anthropologist at Quebec's Université Laval.

The male preference for light-skinned women is not a result of white racism or European colonialism. Modern spectrophotometry shows that women in every so-

ciety do indeed tend to have lighter skin than men do. Long before they ever laid eyes on Caucasians, the men of China, Japan, and ancient Sumer praised the fairest-skinned women among them in verse and song. Later, they did not admire all Caucasian traits. A Japanese diplomat visiting the United States in 1860 wrote home: "The women's skin was white and they were charming...but their hair was red and their eyes looked like dog eyes." Frost also

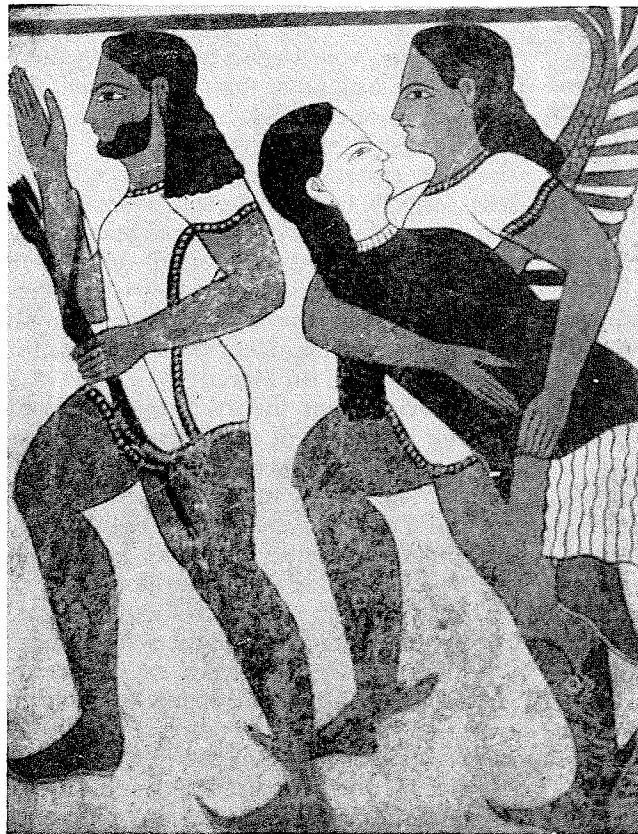
dismisses the possibility that paler skin is a badge of high status. The preference for lighter colored women persists even among hunter-gatherers, where status distinctions are few.

The best explanation, Frost suggests, may be "infantile mimicry."

Among humans and many species of apes and monkeys, the young of both sexes have abnormally light skin or fur, along with other distinctive traits such as "soft"

facial features. Anthropologists and others believe that these traits arouse protective instincts among male (and female) adults. Females of all primate species genetically "mimic" these traits to some extent (e.g., women have little facial hair). But gender differences in fur color are particularly linked to *monogamy*. Only 18 percent of all primate species are monogamous, but the proportion rises to 63 percent among "dichromatic" species. Apparently, lighter fur color among females diminishes the male instinct for aggression or abandonment—the greatest threats to monogamy. Although it has not been proved, Frost says, the same explanation probably holds true for the lighter skin color of human females.

Why, then, do 20th century whites favor suntanned skin? Not because darker skin is a sign of membership in the "leisure class," Frost says, but because it signals a freer approach to sexuality, "with less importance given to the formation of long-lasting relationships."



The artists of ancient civilizations often depicted women as fairer-skinned than men. In this Etruscan painting (circa 525 B.C.), the men were colored brick-red, the women white.

Neural Darwinism

"Survival of the Synapses" by Daniel S. Levine, in *The Sciences* (Nov./Dec. 1988), 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10131-0191.

Only 34 years have passed since a pathologist performing an autopsy on Albert Einstein removed his brain to search for the secret to the great scientist's genius.

Scientists have long since agreed that all human brains are virtually identical. Except in one crucial respect: the arrangement and number of connections between

neurons, or nerve cells, in the brain. The secrets of the brain lie in "the variable ways in which neurons form networks," writes Levine, a mathematician at the University of Texas, Arlington.

How are neurons organized? The latest theory to emerge, says Levine, is called "neural Darwinism." One of its leading advocates, Gerald M. Edelman, of Rockefeller University, sees a two-stage process. In the embryo, each brain develops its own distinct neural networks, guided by chemical agents called cell adhesion molecules (CAMs). Just as CAMs create thousands of feathers in chickens, making no two feathers identical, so they create a multitude of subtly different neural networks in the brain.

The second stage occurs after birth, when the strengths of the synapses (between the neurons) are modified by sights, sounds, and other outside stimuli.

Ultimately, the workings of the brain are

determined by "competition" among different neural networks to interpret external stimuli. The "winners" suppress the "losers." The "winners" are generally those that receive the most stimulation during early development. Thus, cats that are raised in a laboratory painted with horizontal stripes, and are then suddenly placed in a room painted only with vertical stripes, tend to bump into the walls. The neural pathways responsible for horizontal perception override those that govern vertical perception.

How, then, does one explain Einstein's genius? Presumably, he owed it both to his unique endowment of neural networks and to their early stimulation.

What is most important about neural Darwinism, Levine notes, is that it says "that the ways in which human beings perceive, learn, and remember are not fixed—not genetically determined or otherwise preordained."

RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

Greenhouse Effect?

"About That Drought . . ." by Richard R. Heim, Jr., in *Weatherwise* (Oct. 1988), Heldref Publications, 4000 Albemarle St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

As Americans sweltered through the summer of 1988, many climatologists warned that planet Earth could be experiencing the onset of the "greenhouse effect," caused by the buildup of man-made carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. [See *WQ*, "Climate," Winter 1988.]

Maybe not, says Heim, a meteorologist at the U.S. National Climatic Data Center. During the past two decades, he notes, the United States has endured five of the warmest years since recordkeeping began in 1895. But it has also experienced seven of the 20 coldest years. The link between last summer's heat wave and the greenhouse effect, Heim believes, remains ambiguous at best.

Likewise, the destructive drought of 1988 "was not as bad as the droughts of

the 1930s and 1950s—and probably other[s] that occurred before weather records were kept." In 1934, drought afflicted 61 percent of the country, from western New York state to the Pacific coast. On April 14, 1935, several people suffocated in a dust storm that struck Stratford, Texas. During 1953–54, drought covered 51 percent of the country. Last year's drought affected 45 percent; the year brought the *driest* growing season on record in only 12 percent of the nation's area.

Since the 1950s, Heim reports, despite scattered dry years, the nation actually has been experiencing a wet spell. Eight of the 20 wettest years on record have occurred during the 1970s and '80s. Last year, unnoticed by the news media, the desert Southwest was being "drenched by the wettest

weather in decades."

Viewed in historical perspective, Heim concludes, the hot, dry weather of 1988

was "simply the latest in a long series of similar fluctuations that characterize the climatic history of our country."

Reforming EPA

"Are Today's Institutional Tools Up to the Task?" by Michael Gruber, in *EPA Journal* (Nov./Dec. 1988), Superintendent of Documents, GPO, Washington, D.C. 20402.

On April 22, 1970, millions of Americans celebrated the nation's first Earth Day—and within three years Congress had created the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and passed sweeping new anti-pollution laws.

Today, writes Gruber, an EPA staffer, there is not only public disappointment with the results but a "widening gap" between what Americans expect and what "EPA can deliver." The federal agency (budget: \$1 billion) has been told by Congress to eliminate water pollution, eliminate *all* risk from air pollution, prevent hazardous waste from reaching the ground water, and register, and "re-register," all pesticides.

"None of these things," Gruber notes, "has been accomplished," nor could they be. To blame, he says, are the sheer uncertainty of scientific knowledge (notably about various pollutants' true effects on health), a patchwork of environmental laws, Congress's multiple mandates, and Americans' two-faced attitudes towards the environment. Opinion polls show

strong support for environmental clean-ups. Yet, Americans dislike government interference, prize their automobiles, enjoy cheap foodstuffs and plastics, resent land use controls, and like to throw things away.

Congress, says Gruber, must allow the EPA to concentrate on major hazards, to focus realistically on "reduction of risk" to public health and the environment rather than, as at present, on ineffective, generalized "pollution control." Instead of requiring the use of certain types of technology, the EPA should adopt marketplace incentives and penalties to curb pollution.

Of late, Gruber adds, the EPA has frittered away its efforts in response to public outcries over much-publicized but relatively minor threats, notably those involving pollutants which may expose the public to some risk of cancer. "This is a long way," he contends, "from the original ideal of the environmental movement, which was nothing less than to bring technological society into harmony with the natural world."

ARTS & LETTERS

The Peales

"Philadelphia Story" by Phoebe Lloyd, in *Art in America* (Nov. 1988), 542 Pacific Ave., Marion, Ohio 43306.

Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) is remembered as a Philadelphia impresario and portrait artist who painted Washington, Franklin, and other heroes of the Revolution. His eldest son, Raphaelle (1774-1825), a well-regarded still-life painter in his day, is now remembered, if at all, as a drunk and wastrel. For that, and

for his premature death, says biographer Lloyd, one can blame the twisted envy of Raphaelle's noted father.

Of the younger Peale's talent there can be no doubt, writes Lloyd. His pictures hung in Philadelphia's prestigious Pennsylvania Academy. But father and son clashed early and often. At 23, Raphaelle married

an Irish beauty, Martha McGlathery, much to the dismay of his stiffly Anglican parent. He persisted, against his father's advice, in painting still lifes rather than entering the lucrative portrait market.

The elder Peale rebuked his son in clever paintings; he offered to give him painting lessons that he did not need. ("I have a colorick [sic] disposition, and, therefore, I am obliged to keep a bridle constantly tight reined to stay my tongue and hands from mauling anyone that approaches me," Charles once told his daughter.)

But Charles' "surpassing perversity" came in 1799, when he appointed his son chief taxidermist of the Peale Museum (the first such institution in the United States). No man was in a better position than Peale to know that his son would be "fatally affected" by the arsenic and mercury then used in taxidermy, Lloyd notes—Charles had given up taxidermy to avoid what he suspected were the ill effects.

Raphaëlle took the job to please his father. But he began drinking, small quantities at first, to ease the pain and other ills caused by the toxic chemicals. His painting faltered. His father chastized him for "high living and drink," and even went so far as to publish a pamphlet containing thinly-veiled criticisms of his son.

Raphaëlle died, in agony, in 1825. In memoirs and books stretching into the mid-20th century, Charles' descendants upheld the father's explanation (alcoholism) of his son's demise. Raphaëlle's body lies in an anonymous Philadelphia grave, the "bright serenity" of his paintings his only memorial.



In 1795, Charles Willson Peale painted this trompe l'oeil showing his sons, Raphaëlle (foreground) and Titian. Framed in a door jamb, it was so lifelike, according to Peale family lore, that George Washington was fooled into doffing his cap to the boys. Later, in a typically perverse gesture, the father painted a second version, substituting himself for Raphaëlle.

A Decathalon

"The Short Happy Life of Robert Louis Stevenson" by Joseph Epstein, in *The New Criterion* (Nov. 1988), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

"It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94), "better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick room."

And that is how the tireless author of

Treasure Island lived his brief life. Enduring respiratory ailments and numerous other maladies, the novelist moved from his native Edinburgh, to California, back to Scotland, then to Switzerland, France, England, upstate New York, and finally to

Samoa. Along the way, he acquired (in 1880) a wife 10 years his senior and two stepchildren nearly old enough to be his siblings, an education in lighthouse engineering (the profession of his ancestors), a law degree, and a gigantic literary reputation. Tall and gaunt, an eccentric dresser and an endless talker, he seemed to Henry Adams "an insane stork."

Writing in bed, usually in poor health, Stevenson produced essays, novels, children's books, poetry, political journalism, plays, short stories, and mysteries. Not until *Treasure Island* (1883) did he earn enough to support himself and his family. Then came *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Kidnapped*, both bestsellers in 1886, and lucrative contracts in journalism, including \$10,000 annually for a weekly column in the *New York World*.

Always unsure of his own literary worth, Stevenson once described himself as the

"author of a vast quantity of little books." After his death, from a stroke, in Samoa, the accolades were unanimous. No less a light than Henry James acclaimed Stevenson "an exquisite literary talent." By the early 20th century, however, many critics had soured on him, dismissing him as a mere children's writer.

What is to be made of Stevenson's career? "Given all that he had to overcome to achieve what he did," says Epstein, who teaches at Northwestern, "there is simply no setting aside his life." And yet, he concludes, Stevenson "was the literary equivalent of the decathlon athlete: competing in 10 difficult events yet holding world records in none." Writing in various genres, he developed so many different styles that he "finally left no fingerprints of his own." What Stevenson might have accomplished if he had lived another 30 years, writes Epstein, is a question "too sad to pursue."

Making It

"American-Jewish Writers: On Edge Once More" by Ted Solotaroff, in *The New York Times Book Review* (Dec. 18, 1988), Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Twenty-five years ago, American-Jewish writers—novelist Saul Bellow, playwright Arthur Miller, poet Delmore Schwartz, essayist Alfred Kazin, and other luminaries—were often lumped together by critics as exemplifying "marginality."

That is, says Solotaroff, a New York book editor, they were outsiders in both the American and post-immigrant urban Jewish communities. Hence, they could see more keenly "what more accustomed eyes would miss at a faculty meeting in Oregon or on the screen of a Western or in Jewish dietary laws."

The result was some brilliant literature. But, according to Solotaroff, individual success and assimilation eroded the artists' Jewish distinctiveness: "The special angle of vision has blurred, and Jewish identity [in America] as a subject with a moral edge has tended generally to decline."

In America, being a Jew was soon "no longer a fate, as it had been so recently

and completely [in Hitler's Europe], but rather more like a fact, and not necessarily the central one, about oneself." The American-Jewish writer soon recognized that he was "less marginally American than marginally Jewish." What, then, did being Jewish mean?

In Solotaroff's view, a new focus for American-Jewish writers may be the relations between American Jews and the state of Israel. Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, he says, the survival of Israel has probably been the "paramount source of Jewish identity" in America—and a promising source of personal tension and literary inspiration.

Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* (1987) points the way, with its examination of Israel, a land of "saintly" weakness and "heroic" force, as "the very image of the confused desires of American Jews." In this confusion, says Solotaroff, "the seeds of a new fiction are waiting to sprout."

OTHER NATIONS

*Going Private
In Europe*

"The Politics of Industrial Privatization in Western Europe: An Overview" by John Vickers and Vincent Wright, in *West European Politics* (Oct. 1988), Gainsborough House, 11 Gainsborough Rd., London E11 1RS England.

From London to Lisbon and Rome, Western Europe's political leaders have been putting more and more government-owned enterprises on the auction block during the 1980s. "Privatization" has "swept the world," exults Britain's Conservative finance minister, Nigel Lawson.

Yet, Vickers and Wright, both British scholars, note that the extent of privatization and the motives behind it vary widely. Only in Margaret Thatcher's Britain and Jacques Chirac's France is there great enthusiasm for anti-statist, free market ideology. And they are the only nations where many large companies, such as British Oil, have been sold off in their entirety.

Elsewhere, the authors believe, more "pragmatic" considerations have ruled. In some cases, "privatization" has been based on business judgements by government executives. Calling Italy's large government holding company, IRI, "a gigantic group of dwarfs," company head Romano Prodi jettisoned several holdings to rationalize management. Often, governments have sold minority shares to the public to raise cash. Spain's socialist government sold SEAT to Volkswagen because it real-

ized that a small automaker could not compete in Western Europe's increasingly integrated economy. Several governments have divested themselves of money losers (e.g., Italy's Finsider) to ease demands on the public purse.

In Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, privatization has not gone very far because there are few government-owned companies to sell. In West Germany, most public enterprises are efficient and popular. Very few politicians anywhere are interested in ending government monopolies in telecommunications, utilities, and railroads.

Vickers and Wright doubt that privatization in Europe has been far-reaching enough to have much economic effect, except perhaps in Britain and France. And in France, many state-owned assets were sold to big corporations, increasing private ownership, but not necessarily competition. Everywhere in Western Europe, government still tightly regulates private industry. It "continues to be provider, regulator, entrepreneur, purchaser and umpire in industrial affairs, imposing a corset on some actors and providing a safety net for others."

Caribbean Stew

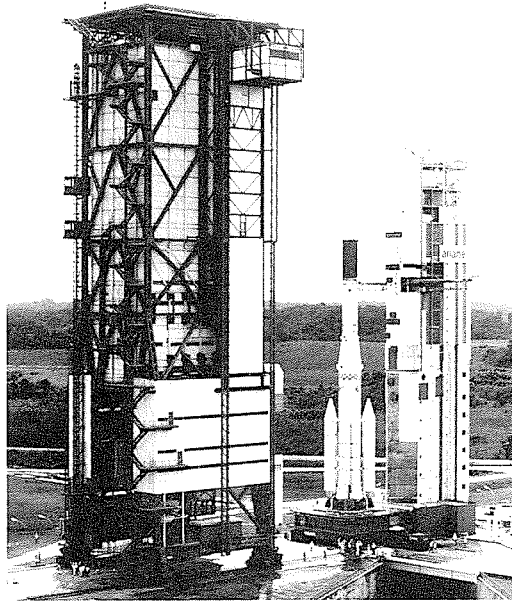
"Caribbean Complexities" by Aaron Segal, in *Current History* (Dec. 1988), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

Violence and voodoo in Haiti or refugees from Castro's Cuba dominate America's scanty TV news flashes from the Caribbean. But the region has become more complicated—and more interesting—than that, says Segal, a political scientist at the University of Texas, El Paso.

By Segal's definition, the Caribbean region embraces 26 heterogeneous "independent and dependent countries" ranging over 2,500 miles from the Bahamas to Puerto Rico to Trinidad to French Guiana. Its 30 million people variously speak English, French, Dutch, and Spanish, plus local Creole dialects; local trade, even be-

tween neighboring islands, is minimal; every Caribbean country looks to North America or to Europe.

Most remarkable, in Segal's view, is the persistence of democracy, despite widespread poverty. Eleven of 13 former British colonies (e.g., Jamaica, St. Kitts, Antigua) have stuck to parliamentary systems—a rarity among ex-colonies elsewhere in the Third World. Barbados is the biggest economic success (per capita income: \$5,150). Segal credits the island's lively two-party contests, its manufactured exports, and the "high civic identity" of its 254,000 citizens.



The French (and the Dutch) still have colonies in the Caribbean. Here, an Ariane rocket is readied for launching in Kourou, French Guiana.

The political health of all former British island colonies is not assured; Jamaica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and other democracies variously suffer from social inequality, joblessness, violence, and politicians' failure to satisfy popular expectations. And in the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic (pop: 6.6 million) similar difficulties face President Joaquin Balaguer's moderate regime, despite recent economic growth.

All in all, says Segal, emigration (legal and illegal) to America and to Europe has become the safety valve for most Caribbean societies. Although sugar is no longer the only export, nowhere have governments done much for small farmers. The drug traffic, originating in South America, has become a growth industry—in Haiti, the Bahamas, Belize—with accompanying thuggery and official corruption. Nevertheless, national cultural identities are emerging in those Afro-Caribbean societies. "Listen to their music," says Segal. "Calypso, reggae, salsa, and merengue."

Arab Democracy?

"Democratization and the Problem of Legitimacy in Middle East Politics" by Michael C. Hudson, *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* (Dec. 1988), Dept. of Oriental Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz. 85721.

Nothing suggests that the young Moslem nations of the Middle East are on the verge of becoming Western-style democracies. Since the mid-1950s, the *mukhabarat* (authoritarian) regime has remained the norm—notably in Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf monarchies.

However, says Hudson, a Georgetown Arabist, Americans should not ignore "the scattered signs of democratization."

The three largest Mideast countries—Egypt, Turkey, and (even) Iran—possess functioning electoral systems and parliaments. Morocco's political parties, parliament, and press are not simply mouthpieces for King Hassan II. Both Tunisia and Algeria seem to be easing up on one-party controls. King Hussein's Jordan maintains a partly-elected bicameral legislature. Civilians in the Sudan have twice toppled military regimes and set up multi-party systems.

According to Hudson, even the "Pal-

estinian political system, with all its peculiarities of non-stateness, displays important elements of democratization" through the Palestine National Council and various popular organizations.

More "democratization" is possible, the author says, thanks to three trends: 1) liberalization is "breaking out" elsewhere, notably in China and the Soviet bloc, influencing the Middle East; 2) "civil society"—each nation's modern-minded elements, including business—may be developing greater power vis-à-vis the government; 3) the authoritarian Arab state may be reaching the limits of its capabilities—technological, bureaucratic, moral—and "ruling elites" may be seeking popularity and support through slightly more democracy.

Will all this lead to a less repressive era in Mideast domestic politics? "Maybe," says Hudson. But a few years ago, he adds, "I would have answered 'No.'"

STALIN IN OCTOBER

The Man Who Missed the Revolution

Robert M. Slusser



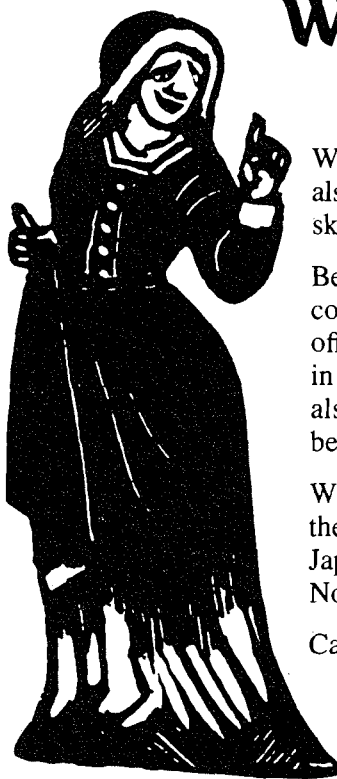
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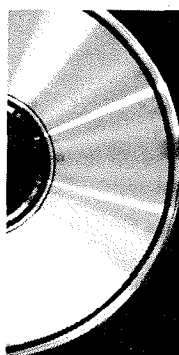
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RESEARCH REPORTS

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"Everybody Counts: A Report to the Nation on the Future of Mathematics Education"

National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. 114 pp. \$7.95.
A report by the National Research Council.

Of the familiar "three R's," reading and writing have aroused the most concern in today's debates over school reform. Yet "numeracy" is no less important than literacy, notes the U.S. National Research Council (NRC).

"No longer just the language of science, mathematics now contributes in direct and fundamental ways to business, finance, health, and defense."

Yet, from elementary schools to universities, today's dismal mathematics education acts as a "filter" rather than a "pump." On the path from

high school through college, the number of students taking courses in math drops by 50 percent each year. Outmoded curricula are partly to blame; so is the uniquely American attitude that success in math is more a matter of innate ability than hard work. Bad teaching hurts. Of the nation's 200,000 high school math teachers, more than half do not meet professional standards.

The trends are discouraging. During the 1970s, U.S. colleges graduated some 27,000 math majors annually; the number is now down to 16,000. The num-

ber of math Ph.D.'s awarded annually in the United States has dropped by nearly 50 percent since 1970, and more than half of today's recipients are foreigners.

Needed to reverse the trend, says the NRC, is reform in local schools. Mathematics teachers (not, as in the past, education theorists) have already created a new set of national curriculum standards. To make them work, however, public officials, teachers, and parents will have to demonstrate a new seriousness about mathematics education.

"The Ideology of Illiberalism in the Professions: Leftist and Rightist Radicalism among Hungarian Doctors, Lawyers, and Engineers, 1918-45."

A paper presented at the Wilson Center on December 12, 1988.
Author: *Mária M. Kovács*

During the early 20th century, the emerging professions of medicine, law, and engineering were widely regarded in the West as the bulwark of liberal, democratic values.

That notion was dealt a blow in Germany, where many professionals became early followers of Adolf Hitler. But the German experience was not unique, notes Kovács, of Hungary's Institute of History. In England and America, the 1920s and '30s saw physicians and technocrats incubating a variety of far-Right and far-Left schemes, from eugenics to a world of Soviet Engineers.

Such notions had their greatest impact in lands where the

political and economic disorder was most severe after World War I, such as Hungary.

Hungary's engineers moved Left during World War I, as a spurt of technological growth and wartime controls on business opened vistas of a planned economy. The engineers "came to look upon the forces of the market as irrational . . . preventing mechanization from yielding its full benefits," writes Kovács. By 1919, when Béla Kun's communist regime ruled briefly, about half of the nation's engineers belonged to the Socialist Union of Engineers.

Thereafter, Hungary was governed by a succession of

conservative and right-wing leaders. In 1920, radical rightist engineers formed an anti-Semitic group called the Hungaria; within a decade, 4,000 of the nation's 10,000 engineers were members.

Like their socialist predecessors, they decried capitalism and longed to be summoned into service as a technocratic elite to govern the nation. In 1933, one writer pleaded for a Hungarian "Mussolini who would lock up all the experts, not to allow them to leave until they present the modern concept of this country."

The engineers were active in parliament; under Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös (1932-36),

several held cabinet jobs.

After Gömbös died in 1936, the engineers increasingly concentrated on purging the profession of Jews. Yet, even as Hungary became a reluctant ally of Nazi Germany after 1939, the radical engineers

were relegated to the margins of power

Much the same pattern was followed by Hungary's doctors, says Kovács: the swing from far Left to far Right, the inability to compromise, ultimate political impotence. Only Hun-

gary's lawyers clung to their liberal ideals. After World War II, the legal profession was virtually abolished by the Communists; most physicians and engineers, however, were assimilated into the new order "with impressive ease."

"Where We Live"

Simon & Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020. 319 pp. \$18.95.

Author: *Irving Welfeld*

"Subsidized rental housing in the United States has come a long way," writes Welfeld, an official of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). "Starting as a solution to a problem, it became a problem."

Franklin D. Roosevelt's Housing Act of 1937, which inaugurated public housing in the United States, was perhaps "the most radical piece of legislation passed in American history," according to Welfeld. Unlike other aid to the poor, public housing "raises the prospect of leaving the recipient better off than the donor," since many taxpayers, sometimes little better off than the recipients, remain in older, less desirable dwellings. This contradiction, says Welfeld, has haunted the politics of public housing ever since.

In 1937, Congress partly sidestepped the problem by limiting public housing largely to the "deserving" poor; local administrators were told that "the families to be selected had to be reasonable rent risks." The formula was relatively successful. But in 1949, in part out of fears that government was competing with the private sector, Congress redirected the

program toward the very poor. No longer would local administrators be permitted to keep welfare recipients out of public housing.

As more and more "high risk" tenants were admitted to "the projects," subsidy costs soared; the apartments deteriorated. The 1949 program authorized construction of 810,000 apartments in six years; it took 20 years to meet the target.

During the 1960s, as part of the Great Society, Lyndon B. Johnson launched a variety of programs; now the subsidies were provided chiefly to private sector builders, in the form of mortgage subsidies to build houses and apartments for "low- and moderate-income" families. However, Congress, says Welfeld, understood neither the powerful leveraging effects of the mortgage subsidies nor the tax incentives of depreciation, which allowed developers to ignore high construction costs. By 1970, Washington found itself subsidizing nearly 25 percent of the nation's new housing construction. Ironically, most of the new dwellings were too expensive for the very poor.

In 1973, the Nixon adminis-

tration suspended most of the Great Society programs, plagued by developers' defaults and rising costs, and pegged all its hopes to HUD's so-called Section 8 program. Section 8 offered subsidized rents to encourage developers to build housing for the poor.

Again neglecting to do some simple arithmetic, Washington failed to realize that, because of peculiar subsidy formulas, inflation doomed HUD to rapidly growing outlays. By the time the Reagan administration killed the Section 8 program—and virtually all federal efforts to build new housing for the poor—the federal government was committed to paying hundreds of billions of dollars over 20 years for 800,000 units.

What next? Welfeld favors voucher-like subsidy "certificates" for poor families renting existing housing. He recommends limited incentives for developers of new housing for the poor. By providing rent subsidies for the first tenants to move into new subsidized housing but not for subsequent tenants, Washington could expand construction for the poor without committing itself to costly long-term financing.



A few weeks after taking office as general secretary of the Communist Party, Gorbachev was on the road, mingling with crowds, explaining perestroika. Here he talks with residents of Krylatskaya, a Moscow suburb, in May 1985.

Reform in Russia

"This society is ripe for a change," Mikhail Gorbachev wrote in 1987, adding that any delay in launching *perestroika*—the "restructuring" of the failing Soviet system, notably its economy—could have led to "serious social, economic, and political crises." Seven decades after the Bolshevik Revolution, Gorbachev is pushing his 286 million compatriots to speak out, to explore "new thinking," to support more autonomy in the workplace and more democracy in the Communist Party—all in Lenin's name. Some Western scholars believe that Gorbachev must overcome not just the legacy of Joseph Stalin, but also 1,000 years of Russian history. Here, S. Frederick Starr compares the current bewildering upheaval to past eras of Russian reform; he finds some strong similarities. Robert Rand reports on ordinary Muscovites' reactions to Gorbachev's promises of a better life.

A PECULIAR PATTERN

by S. Frederick Starr

A reforming crusade grips the USSR. Enthusiasts of change call for new laws, new economic mechanisms, even a new and more independent national psychology in place of the old conformism. What Gorbachev calls "rapid transformations in all spheres of our life" are exhilarating to some, threatening to others. For everyone—in the Soviet Union and abroad—they are confusing.

Where does one turn to make sense of it all? Many Western observers seek parallels to Gorbachev's *perestroika* elsewhere. Some scrutinize current "market-oriented" reforms in China or Hungary, or the troubled experiments in Communist Yugoslavia. Others seek hints about the Soviet future in Western Europe's past or even in Third World experiences.

Many Soviets have begun examining

previous waves of reform in their own country. Newly published memoirs of the Khrushchev "thaw" (1956–64) find avid readers in Moscow. Gorbachev himself often hails the era of Lenin's New Economic Policy (1921–28) as a pattern for the present—without reference to the era's darker side. Those with a longer view turn to episodes of reform under the tsars. Some think the way in which quasi-parliamentary government was established and then curtailed under Nicholas II in 1905–07 holds lessons for today. Others look to the first decade of Alexander II's reign (1856–66)—a period of legal reforms, decentralization in government, and military cutbacks—all, then as now, in a climate of openness. Further in the past, certain reforms under Catherine II in the 1760s and the *perestroika* under Peter I after 1700 stir debate

in Moscow. Western scholars, too, are re-examining the Russian past in hope of gaining insights into the Soviet present.

Implicit in all this is the question: Is there a peculiarly Russian way of reform?

It would appear so, and pessimists argue that past patterns do not augur well for the Soviet future. Indeed, sharp swings between eras of stagnation and spurts of dynamism followed by reaction or torpor have been a feature of Russia's history since at least the 17th century. The causes are not hard to find. The absence of both a vigorous private sector and an elected parliament has always given the centralized bureaucracy unfettered power to act—or not to act. Thus, instead of the constant shifts and tradeoffs that preoccupy peacetime politicians in democracies, Russia has experienced something else: a few bouts of massive change, each in response to a crisis.

Over the centuries, other elements have reinforced this tendency. Among them:

- Without orderly means of succession, most tsars and Communist party general secretaries have stayed in office until removed by death, palace coups, or rebellion. Even the most reformist among them have eventually settled for self-preservation.
- Russia's historic hunger for security or imperial prestige has thwarted steady economic and social evolution. With so much of the budget committed to the military, there has been little money left for new civilian needs or general uplift.
- Official controls on free expression and international contacts have suppressed the natural yeasts in Russian society, further blocking normal development.

Together, such factors give Russian history a certain "geological" character, with

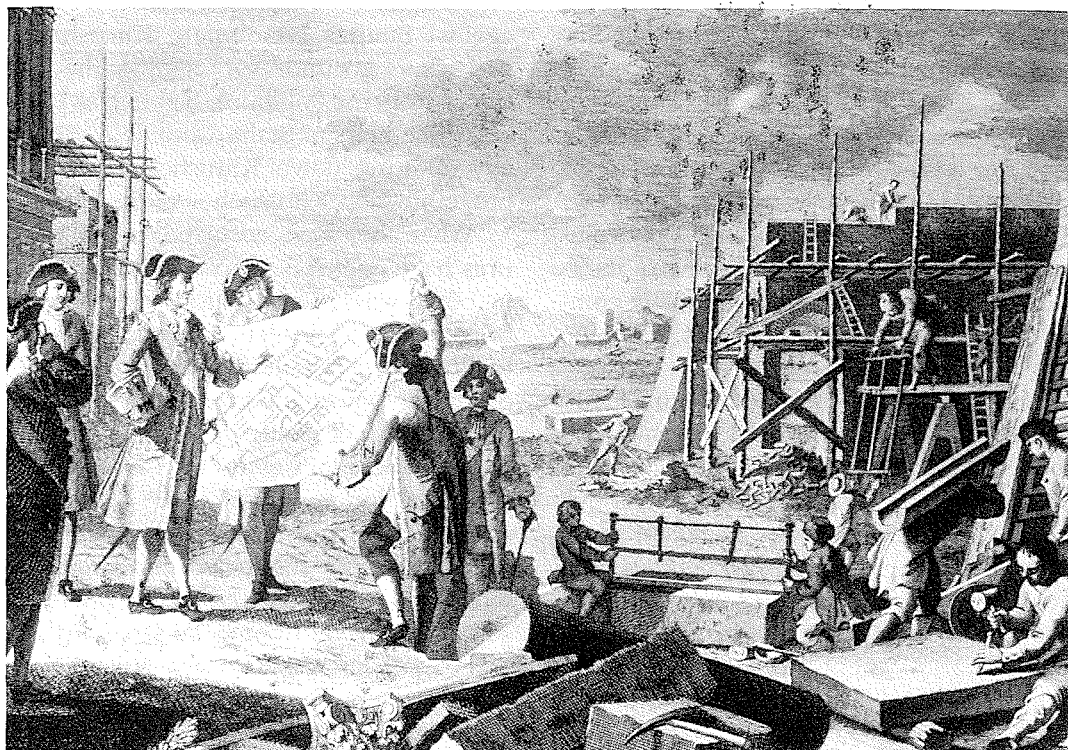
long eras when the tectonic plates are locked and short eras during which rapid, grinding shifts occur. Sometimes the plates clash with explosive force. Such was the case during the bloody upheavals and civil war of 1917–20 and the undeclared revolution and civil strife accompanying Stalin's rise in 1928–31. Occasionally, too, leadership of Russia has fallen to men committed to ceaseless innovations, regardless of cost or attendant suffering. Such was the case with Ivan IV ("The Terrible," 1533–84), and Peter I ("The Great," 1682–1725).

The few periods of genuine reform in Russia have not been the product of great upheavals or complete social breakdown. They were relatively unmarked by terror, and were something more than the creation of a restless or maniacal leader. To a surprising degree, Russia's reformist surges have conformed to a common scenario.

First, reform has generally been preceded by years of rigid rule at the top, which masked deep shifts in the society below. Thus, while Tsar Nicholas I (1825–55) was keeping the lid on change by dispatching suspected radicals to Siberia, innovative young men in the junior ranks of his own bureaucracy were plotting the limited reforms they later implemented. The legalization of political parties by Nicholas II in 1905 was preceded by several decades during which his government spared no effort to suppress them, even as they developed unofficially. Today, we are seeing the official adoption of ideas that were similarly suppressed by Leonid Brezhnev but which gained wide support among educated folk nonetheless.

This prior frustration and subsequent

S. Frederick Starr, 48, founding secretary of the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, is president of Oberlin College. Born in New York City, he received a B.A. from Yale (1962) and a Ph.D. from Princeton (1968). His books include Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society (1978) and Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union (1983). Copyright © 1989 by S. Frederick Starr.



Tsar Peter I ("the Great") overseeing the construction of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad). His chief domestic effort was "Westernization"—only a partial success.

commitment to change links all the reform eras. Long before Catherine II ousted her drill sergeant husband, Peter III, in 1762, she had become a magnet for all those educated Russians who were alienated by his crude behavior. Khrushchev's "thaw" after 1956 gave a first taste of liberalization to Gorbachev and encouragement to a generation of young officials and intellectuals who had been stymied (or terrorized) by their elders during the Stalin era.

Today, pro-Gorbachev activists like the journalist Feodor Burlatsky, who was fired twice under Gorbachev's predecessors, or economist Tatiana Zaslavskaya, whose calls for change under Brezhnev had circulated only among fellow specialists, represent the suppressed underside of the previous era.

What has triggered episodes of change in Russia?

Marxist historians long argued that reform was invariably a response to mounting unrest among peasants or workers. But this scarcely fits the pre-Gorbachev situation, nor the preludes to other major Russian reform eras—with the exception of 1905, when strikes paralyzed Nicholas II's capital and peasant uprisings rocked the countryside. More commonly, it has taken an external shock to shake up the regime and its supporters. Military defeat has often provided such a shock.

The upheavals launched by Peter I—focusing on Western-oriented economic and technological uplift—came in the wake of disastrous campaigns against the Tartars on the southern steppes and of defeat at the hands of Sweden's King Charles XII in 1700. The "Great Reforms"

of Alexander II followed the disastrous Crimean War against England and France (1853–56) and the 1905 reforms of Nicholas II were introduced immediately after Russia's defeat by imperial Japan. In the same vein, Gorbachev's call for change in 1985 came just as the country was beginning to face up to its failed military intervention in Afghanistan, and its costly commitments to Vietnam, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Angola, and Cuba.

Historians may counter by citing Catherine II's campaigns for reform, which followed not Russia's defeat but her victory in the Seven Years' War (1756–63). While this triumph marked Russia's successful entry into European politics, it had ruinous consequences nonetheless. As the Empress stated "In the treasury I found imperial *Ukaz*es for payments totaling 17 million roubles, which had not been met. The currency was valueless...."

Tsars Alexander II and Nicholas II faced similar postwar fiscal crises. Both sought to cushion the shock by taking out huge loans from Western European banks. After the Crimean fiasco, Alexander borrowed to prevent the collapse of Russia's state bank. After the loss to Japan, Nicholas II's loans from France were the largest international debts incurred anywhere at the time. Gorbachev's recent \$9 billion line of credit from Western and Japanese banks fits the same pattern. The size of these loans attests to the anxiety with which Gorbachev views the domestic strain caused by his predecessors' military spending policies.

Nikita Khrushchev (1956–64) is the obvious exception to the linkage between war and reform. In his famous "Secret Speech" to the 1956 Communist Party Congress, Khrushchev excoriated Stalin for his brutality. However, with no record of military failure or ensuing financial chaos to hurl

against Stalin's henchmen, Khrushchev had scant grounds for ousting the Old Guard from the Politburo. Fighting as insiders, these heirs of Stalin were able eventually to bring down Khrushchev's reform program—and Khrushchev himself.

When they have occurred, military failures have contributed to domestic reform in other ways. Defeat suspends, however briefly, Russian leaders' chronic tendency to stress foreign policy—that is, expansion of Russian power and imperial prestige—at the expense of domestic affairs. Scarcely was Gorbachev in office than he spoke of the need for *peredyska*, or "breathing space," from overseas commitments. In practice, he has conducted more vigorous diplomacy than his immediate predecessors, notably in wooing Western Europe and bargaining with America. Nonetheless, the stated purpose is not imperial expansion but creating the international stability necessary for reforms at home.

The immediate initiative for change in Russia always comes from the top. With the exception of the reforms extracted from Nicholas II after the revolution of 1905, every era of benevolent change in Russian history has coincided with the advent to power of a new ruler.

Yet the ability—and desire—of a would-be reformer to install key administrators committed to change may be the most accurate indicator of future success. Here, Gorbachev looks very strong, stronger than any of his reform-minded predecessors, having surrounded himself with the likes of his adviser Alexander Yakovlev, his foreign minister Edward Shevardnadze, and Moscow-party chief Lev Zaikov. By comparison, Khrushchev had few such backers and as a result was forced to work more as a soloist than as leader of a team.

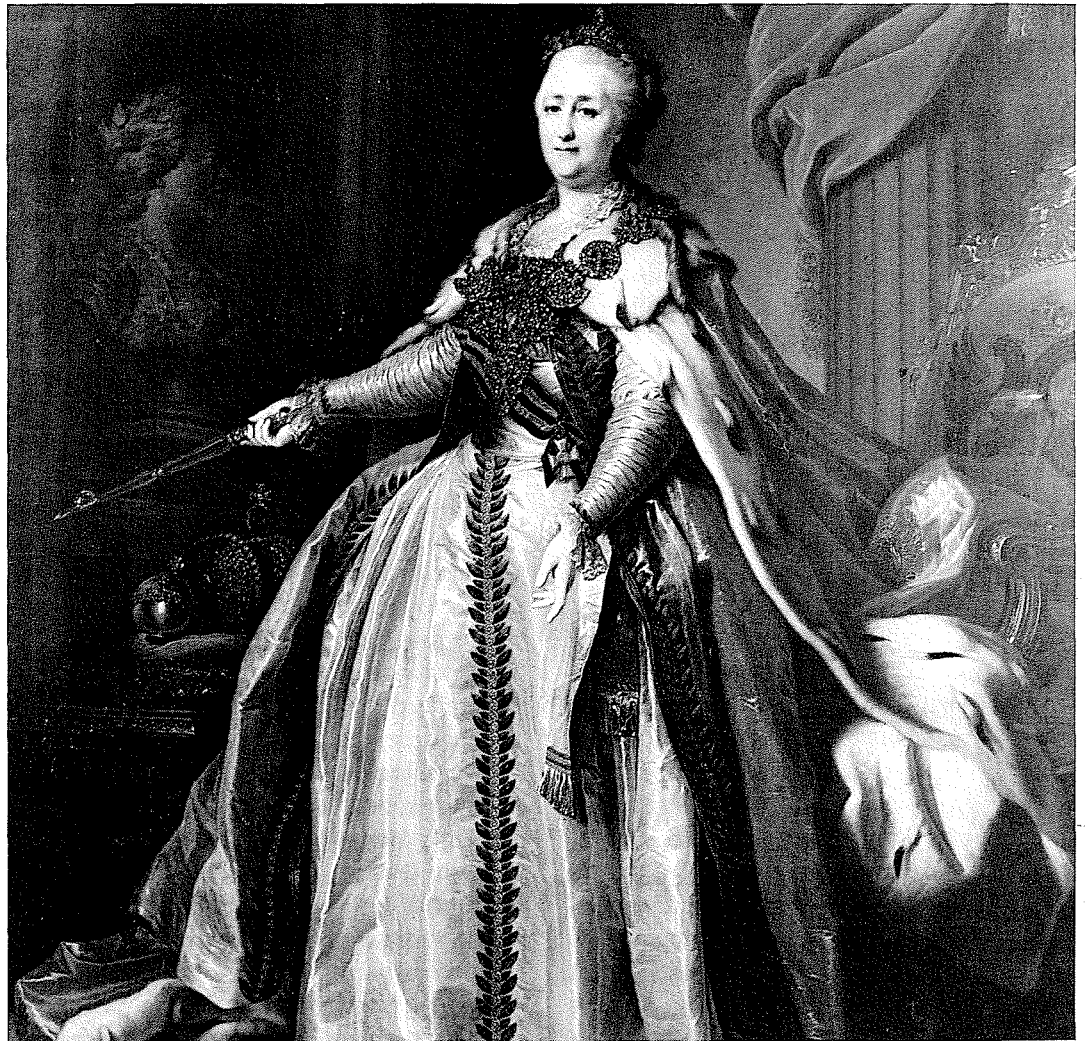
Glasnost (openness) has always been part of the scenario. It entered Russia's political vocabulary during the reformist

phase of Catherine II's reign. It became central to the policies of Alexander II, and has reemerged under Gorbachev as a necessary condition of reform. Under all three rulers (and during the reformist years of Alexander I and Khrushchev) people who only a few years earlier had been branded "dissidents" were given a public forum.

In every case, then as now, Russia's reformers have been acutely aware of the political benefits. With their predecessors in disgrace, reformers can advocate glasnost,

confident that, initially, most of the opinions emanating from the press will be critical of the old order. The real test comes later, when the new regime's foes exploit the same openness to discredit reform.

And without exception, Russia's reformist episodes have coincided with the most cosmopolitan periods in the nation's history; Russia, so often xenophobic and closed off, opens up at such times. The 17th-century reforming tsar Alexei (1645–76) was far more hospitable to Western



Catherine the Great. During her reign (1762–1796), the empire expanded, trade grew, and Russia became a major player in European politics, albeit without lasting internal reform.

ideas than any of his predecessors. Alexander I's reformism had been encouraged by his tutor, the Swiss philosopher Frédéric-César de La Harpe; Alexander II permitted the publication of works by British, French, and German political economists advocating policies that had been anathema under his predecessor. In the same spirit, the public inauguration of Khrushchev's brief reform era was the International Youth Festival held in Moscow in 1957. Nominally a gathering of communist youths from abroad, this became in fact an unprecedented exhibit of the latest in Western fashions, pop culture, and art.

Gorbachev's massive importation of Western books, films, concert artists and exhibits places him squarely in this tradition. In accepting President Reagan's 1986 invitation to send 1500 young Soviets to the United States and through similar exchanges of scientists, he emulates Peter I, Catherine II, Alexander I—and Khrushchev, who signed the Soviets' first cultural exchange agreement with the Americans in 1958. Gorbachev clearly is seeking to strengthen the zeal of those backing change by putting them in contact with advanced ideas and practices abroad.

Russia has long been remarkable for its ability to borrow, adapt, and assimilate innovations from overseas, especially during eras of reform. The pattern was well established even before Peter I's reign, when Russia absorbed Western ideas on everything from the Roman alphabet to shipbuilding and zoology. Catherine II's famous *Instruction*, given to the commission she established to rewrite Russia's laws, was based on Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. When Alexander II set about emancipating the serfs his officials reviewed all West European legislation on the subject. Virtually every reform of the "tsar liberator" drew heavily on foreign

models, whether German and French ideas on law or British notions of self-government. Later, during the drafting of the Constitution of 1905, Nicholas II's bureaucrats in St. Petersburg reviewed the experience of many Western nations, in preparing new laws on political parties and the press.

Fifty years later, however, the USSR's self-conscious role as Mother Church of the Communist world curbed Khrushchev's inclinations to draw on foreign models in planning his reforms. The Soviets had difficulty admitting that they were "backward" in any sphere. Nonetheless, his rule was marked by borrowing from abroad in matters as diverse as agriculture and education. That Khrushchev did not borrow more reflects the limited scale of his reform effort overall.

By contrast, Gorbachev seems to have reverted to the cultural and institutional borrowing of the tsar-reformers of old. Sympathetic intellectuals and bureaucrats have been encouraged to draw on the latest foreign experience. Thus, sociologist Tatiana Zaslavskaya has championed the development of public opinion polling along American lines, and journalist Feodor Burlatsky, head of the USSR's official Human Rights Commission, has been guided by standards elaborated by Western jurists and civil libertarians.

Most important, Gorbachev's critique of centralized planning and his espousal of partial deregulation and a degree of privatization of the economy reveal the influence, albeit carefully filtered, of the policies of Britain's Margaret Thatcher and America's Ronald Reagan. Not since the rise to power in 1917 of revolutionaries inspired by Karl Marx, a German, have the fundamentals of change in Russia been more directly influenced by Western ideas.

Not surprisingly, emulation being the most sincere form of flattery, Westerners have always taken Russian reformers to

TSAR ALEXANDER II

A British observer, Andrew D. White, visited Russia in 1854 and again in 1892, 31 years after Alexander's emancipation of the serfs. He later wrote:

"A change had indeed been brought by the emancipation of the serfs, but there was little outward sign of it. The muzhik [peasant] remained to all appearance, what he was before The peasants, with their sheepskin caftans, cropped hair, and stupid faces brought back the old impressions so vividly that I seemed not to have been absent a week."

From *Russia: A History* (Lippincott, 1964) by Sidney Harcave



their hearts. Until their eventual disillusionment, noted Western intellectuals outdid themselves in praising Catherine II, their disciple and financial patron. Voltaire effused that "France persecutes philosophers while the Scythians protect them." Friedrich Grimm, who served as Catherine's diplomatic representative in his native Hamburg, even penned a worshipful parody of the Lord's prayer, which began "Our Mother, who art in Russia . . ."

During the early years of the 19th century, Tsar Alexander I toyed with reform; several aides even advocated an American-style federal system for Russia. The tsar himself entered into correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, whose admiration for the young ruler was so great that he placed Alexander's bust in the entrance hall at Monticello, where it can still be seen. True, Jefferson was also grateful to the tsar for his diplomatic support of the United States in its differences with England. In the same

way, Lincoln's high regard for Alexander II may have been due at least as much to the latter's support for the Union during the Civil War as for his emancipation of the serfs. Preoccupied with his own secession crisis at home, Lincoln turned a blind eye to Alexander's brutal crushing of the Polish nationalist uprising of 1863.

Today, older Americans still remember Khrushchev at the United Nations pounding the rostrum with his shoe. Yet in late 1959 Khrushchev was welcomed across the land as President Eisenhower's guest. Americans appreciated this folksy and inquisitive visitor for his genuine enthusiasm for U.S. achievements, notably in Corn Belt agriculture. The fact that the Red Army's tanks had crushed the Hungarian revolt only three years earlier was not forgotten. Yet much was forgiven in the hope that a better day was dawning in Moscow.

The present "Gorbomania" in Europe and North America probably surpasses Western admiration for any previous Russian reformer. Europe's intellectuals enthused over Catherine II but its kings and prime ministers were far more circumspect. Other reforming tsars earned plaudits abroad but never to the point where their well-wishers lost sight of the autocratic nature of the Russian regime.

Gorbachev, by contrast, has persuaded many opinion-leaders abroad that Western governments are duty-bound not merely to maintain an even-handed policy toward the USSR but to become active collaborators in his domestic program. The fact that he, no less than Catherine II, relies on autocratic power to bring about change or that he, no less than Alexander II or Nicholas II, may be backing domestic reform as a necessary step toward rebuilding Russia's strength as a world power, seems temporarily to be overlooked. As Margaret Thatcher put it, "I like Mr. Gorbachev. I can do business with him." For the time being, West-



Tsar Nicholas II leaving Moscow's St. Basil's Cathedral during the 1890s. Ahead lay the 1905 revolution, reform and reaction, World War I, and the 1917 Bolshevik upheaval.

ern opinion-leaders seem more impressed by what Gorbachev seeks to change than by what he insists must be left in place, notably a one-party regime and an economy still dominated by the state.

At first glance, one is struck by the differences among the goals of Russia's various reformers. Catherine II had to decide what duties were owed to the state by Russia's land-owning gentry. Alexander I confronted the question of how to rule the non-Russian peoples of the empire. Alexander II faced the problem of ending serfdom. Nicholas II had to decide on whether to permit an elected legislature. Khrushchev contended with the relation-

ship between the Communist party and the government apparatus, while Gorbachev faces the heavy legacy of Stalinist planning in the economy.

Yet for all their diversity, Russia's episodes of uplift share a family resemblance. Reformers have invariably called for some sort of administrative decentralization and some transfer of control over certain governmental functions either to local citizens' bodies or to private groups.

The basic thrust in each case has been to enlist local and private energies in the solution of the nation's current problems. In effect, the "Russian way of reform" is to shift initiative from discredited central bureaucrats to local administrators, and from

ineffectual state officials to private forces. This is the underlying purpose behind Gorbachev's dismantling of the centralized State Planning Agency, his efforts to dismiss thousands of Moscow bureaucrats, his decentralization of certain remaining administrative functions, his willingness to tolerate mushrooming informal citizens' groups, and his support for the establishment of private ("cooperative") businesses. All this he characterizes as "fulfilling the people's socialist self-government."

Such efforts, the Russian leader knows, cannot succeed unless local managers and the citizenry have access to the information needed to make sound decisions. This accounts for the loosening of controls on the press and the overall glasnost in every reform era, and also the recurring emphasis on law, as opposed to autocratic commands, as a means of regulating society.

It is no surprise that Catherine, both Alexanders, and Gorbachev have all stressed the need for an independent judiciary, and placed legal matters at the center of their program. When Gorbachev speaks of his dream of a "state based on law" he is alluding to and translating the same German notion of a *Rechtsstaat* that inspired judicial reformers under Alexander II, 125 years earlier. Gorbachev had been exposed to this tradition at Moscow University's law department, where it was presented as an ideal superseded by Communism but nonetheless worthy of study.

The inner logic of all these efforts, then as now, is that they may ease the state apparatus out of a blind corner into which it has been wedged thanks to its own ineptitude. Disorganized, disdained by the public, and, above all, strapped financially, the government which every Russian reformer inherits is not able to act on its own to resolve the crisis. "Decentralization" and "citizen

participation" are not just philosophical ideals but stark necessities.

Who has the power to bring on reform in Russia? Under tsars and commissars alike the power has rested with the autocrat. To be sure, Catherine established her Legislative Commission to give the appearance of consultation, just as Alexander II set up provincial committees of gentry and Gorbachev has convened special conferences of the Communist Party to consider and adopt new proposals. But in the end, all of Russia's reforming rulers have relied on their personal power to impose change and have even increased centralized authority in the name of reform. Thus, Gorbachev's move, in June 1988, to buttress his personal power by creating a new presidency for himself stands squarely in the Russian tradition from Catherine to Khrushchev. All these rulers have acknowledged that, however much benefit reform might bring to the public at large or to the state, it invariably produces resistance from the stubborn phalanx of bureaucrats whose prerogatives it will diminish. Hence, the reformer must build "clout."

Reforming leaders in Russia all have claimed a new age is dawning. Catherine adorned her palaces with images of the sun. Alexander II at the time of the serfs' emancipation welcomed an editorial by the emigré publicist Alexander Herzen declaring "Galilean, thou hast conquered!" The title of Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw* came to stand for Khrushchev's era as a whole, while today Mikhail Gorbachev stresses "new thinking" and goes out of his way to meet with former dissidents like academician Andrei Sakharov to symbolize his break with the past.

Yet Soviet society is far too complex, dispersed, and diverse for all its elements to move forward at the same pace. As in tsarist days, reform eventually reaches a plateau. While some Russians conclude that

change has gone too far, many others want change to proceed farther and faster. Thus, the National Front organizations established recently in the three Baltic republics and Georgia have swept beyond Gorbachev in calling for a mixed economy and near-complete autonomy. Other radical activists have recently called for independent political parties and an immediate move toward parliamentary democracy. Such appeals particularly attract the young, who in each reform era take for granted the hard-won changes introduced by their elders, complaining instead about compromises made along the way. Without exception, Russia's past episodes of reform have given rise to radical movements and dissidents advocating further liberalization.

Such currents of protest may easily swell into violence. Under Catherine II, the peasant rebel Emelian Pugachev led armed insurrectionists against Moscow with the claim that Catherine was a usurper who had used reform to worsen the lot of most

peasants. Peasant resistance to Alexander II's less than total emancipation of the serfs was also strong. It gained the support of radical youths in Russian universities, who dismissed the tsar's entire program as hypocrisy. Industrial strikes and peasant unrest following Nicholas II's October Manifesto were so threatening that within a year his regime had canceled many of the civil rights included in the Manifesto.

Khrushchev, too, had to deal with popular upheavals. In 1962 he called out troops to quell a strike in the southern city of Novocherkassk, killing seventy people, and then used police and soldiers again to put down an outburst in the Ukrainian town of Krivoi Rog. It was in this environment that Khrushchev introduced harsh punishments for the dissemination of "anti-Soviet propaganda" and brought offenders to trial in Minsk, Omsk, and Leningrad.

Nominating Gorbachev for the general

CONTRADICTIONS

In September 1944, having returned to Moscow after a seven-year absence, George F. Kennan, then a U.S. Foreign Service officer, wrote a report to Washington. One excerpt:

"Russia remains today, more than ever, an enigma for the Western world. Simple American minds imagine that this is because 'we don't know the truth about it.' They are wrong. It is not our lack of knowledge which causes us to be puzzled by Russia. It is that we are incapable of understanding the truth about Russia when we see it.

"We are incapable, in the first place, of understanding the role of contradiction in Russian life. The Anglo-Saxon instinct is to attempt to smooth away contradictions, to reconcile opposing elements, to achieve something in the nature of an acceptable middle ground as a basis for life. The Russian tends to deal only in extremes, and he is not particularly concerned to reconcile them. To him, contradiction is a familiar thing. It is the essence of Russia. West and East, Pacific and Atlantic, Arctic and tropics, extreme cold and extreme heat, prolonged sloth and sudden feats of energy, exaggerated cruelty and exaggerated kindness, ostentatious wealth and dismal squalor, violent xenophobia and uncontrollable yearning for contact with the foreign world, vast power and the most abject slavery, simultaneous love and hate for the same objects: These are only some of the contradictions which dominate the lives of the Russian people.

"The Russian does not reject these contradictions. He has learned to live with them, and in them . . ."

From *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Little, Brown, 1967) by George F. Kennan

secretaryship, the veteran Soviet diplomat Andrei Gromyko warned that the new leader has "a broad smile but teeth of steel." Gorbachev has yet to bite down hard with these teeth, but if past patterns hold, he will eventually do so. Many, including both supporters and critics, see his decision to use the Red Army to quell Armenian unrest in early 1988 as evidence that he is already resorting to force to define the limits of reform. The Kremlin's stricter laws on political demonstrations (introduced last summer) support this view, but the evidence so far is not conclusive. Gorbachev's deputy, Alexander Yakovlev, has warned autonomists in the Baltic states against radicalism but the central government has so far refrained from overt intervention there. Similarly, Moscow officials have fulminated against the growing number of wildcat strikes, but have not used force against them. Negotiation holds the edge over confrontation—for the time being.

Most Russian and Soviet reformers have eventually alienated the country's intellectuals. Scarcely had Catherine II's reform drive gained momentum in the 1770s than a young writer, Denis Fonvizin, began using her glasnost to write pungent satires on the shallow worldliness he attributed to her reign. Over the next few years, others followed suit, including Alexander Radishchev, who affirmed that most Russians were worse off under her rule than before and that her innovations were a sham.

So bitter was the opposition to Alexander I by the end of his reign that it led to the so-called Decembrist Uprising of young intellectuals in the army in 1825. Within a decade of his coronation, Alexander II also lost the intellectuals, among them the novelist Leo Tolstoy, whose disillusionment with reform (and politics in general) is described in *Anna Karenina*.

In the fourth year of his rule, Gorbachev's standing with the intellectual com-

munity—especially those of its members in their forties and fifties—remains high. He has given them unprecedented freedom and public visibility. However, there are ripples of discontent. Andrei Sakharov's sharp criticism of Gorbachev's efforts to enhance his own power may be a harbinger of future moves by Moscow intellectuals to distance themselves from the gritty realities of reform.

Indeed, in Russia, as elsewhere, enthusiasm for innovation eventually runs its course. Leading partisans of change retire or are replaced. Those who remain—or survive—devote themselves more to preserving past reforms than to instituting new ones. No American should be surprised, in light of the eventual waning of public and Congressional support for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

In Russia, the reformers' central difficulty is that they must necessarily rely on the apparatus whose flaws created the need for an overhaul in the first place. Possibly in the same way that decentralization under Alexander II eventually died at the hands of the same provincial bureaucrats who had caused the old system to fail, Gorbachev's decentralization of ministries and industrial operations is confronting stubborn antipathy from the bureaucracy at the local level.

Meanwhile, if the past is any guide, the gradual recovery of national self-confidence will eventually lead the Kremlin back into the international arena where such pride typically is best indulged. Just as the passing of America's "post-Vietnam syndrome" caused both Republicans and Democrats to call for increased spending on defense by 1980, so the passing of a "post-Crimean syndrome" in the 1860s and of a "post-Japan syndrome" in the 1910s led the Russian impe-

rial leadership to seek ways to reassert national prestige abroad.

What this suggests is that Gorbachev's goals at home are more easily accomplished while the present "post-Afghanistan syndrome" endures. If and when it fades, a more interventionist foreign policy is likely to re-emerge. Andrei Sakharov has recently asserted that a mood supportive of such a policy is already setting in. If and when events confirm his judgment, one can be sure that the current wave of reform will have passed.

But is Gorbachev different? Russia's experience to date may lead Americans to pessimistic conclusions. Clearly, a chronic feature of Russian reform

efforts is their tendency to surge up, flourish, and then fade away within five or, at most, ten years. Far from being a chronicle of steady problem-solving and progress, Russian history suggests that the same difficulties recur—and that reformers seek to cure them with the same ultimately futile strategies. If the present era fits this pattern, Gorbachev's efforts are as doomed to failure as were those of Catherine II, the two Alexanders, Nicholas II, and Khrushchev.

The Soviet Union's present characteristics lend special reinforcement to this gloomy prognosis. Until the last three generations, a substantial percentage of the population worked in small-scale agriculture and were thus partially sheltered from the great economic winds blowing over the



Khrushchev in Iowa, 1959. During a quick American tour, the Soviet premier inspected (and envied) the corn crop at the farm of Roswell Garst (left) near Cedar Rapids.

land. Today, with the population far more urbanized and with most peasants working on large "industrial" farms, nearly all Soviet citizens feel directly any failures in the economy. The present government may be committed to reform but its commitment could change rapidly if economic hardships—shortages, inflation, and the like—are not soon relieved. Continued economic distress could stir up political trouble—and calls for a return to more familiar ways of doing things.

Yet in some important ways, Gorbachev and his team of collaborators differ from their predecessors. For example:

- The pro-reform faction within the Soviet government today is far larger than it was in Khrushchev's time, more conscious of its own role, and far better organized.

- Gorbachev himself is a pragmatic experimenter, far less narrowly committed to a specific path of change than were Catherine II or Alexander I, and less given to "hare-brained schemes" than Khrushchev.

- Gorbachev is not only older and stronger but more experienced than any of the reforming tsars. He has the immeasurable advantage of having spent twenty years learning from the failure of Khrushchev's prior efforts.

Yet if the Gorbachev era is not to go down in history as just another brief cycle of top-down reform, success may be due more to underlying social factors than to Gorbachev's psyche or skills. Throughout history, Russian reformers have been divided between those rulers who sought to force the people to conform to some ideal blueprint and those rulers who were themselves swept along by dynamic changes in society. There is something quixotic about Catherine II, Alexander I, and Khrushchev, all three of whom wanted to impose from above some new order that scarcely suited the actual circumstances of their countrymen. Alexander II and Nicholas II, by con-

SOVIET CONSERVATISM

In 1985, just before Gorbachev took power, Princeton's Stephen Cohen discussed the bureaucratic opposition to economic reform, and suggested that many ordinary Soviets were conservatives too:

"Underlying [everything] is the entire Soviet historical experience with its particular combination of majestic achievements and mountainous misfortunes. Man-made catastrophes have repeatedly victimized millions of ordinary citizens and officials alike—the first European war, revolution, civil war, two great famines, forcible collectivization, Stalin's terror, World War II, and more. Out of that experience . . . have come the joint pillars of today's Soviet conservatism: a towering pride in the nation's modernization, wartime, and great-power achievements, together with an abiding anxiety that another disaster forever looms and that any significant change is therefore 'some sinister Beethovean knock of fate on the door.' Such a conservatism is at once prideful and fearful and thus doubly powerful. It influences most segments of the Soviet populace, even many dissidents. It is a real bond between state and society—and thus the main obstacle to change."

From *Rethinking the Soviet Experience* (Oxford, 1985) by Stephen F. Cohen

trast, were more reactive, making changes at the governmental level to fit more closely the needs of the changing populace. However reluctant or indecisive, these two tsars were more successful as reformers and the changes they instituted were more substantial.

There is considerable evidence that the Gorbachev era fits more closely the latter pattern than the former. Soviet society is in flux. Gorbachev may decry the "stagnation" of Brezhnev's reign, but the shifts in those years were dramatic, and he knows it. Nine-tenths of all Soviet youths finish high school today, as compared with one-third in 1960. New technologies—notably radio, cassettes, and television—have opened vast worlds of

information to the average Soviet citizen. An expanding telephone system enables Soviet citizens to form links with each other and to "network" according to common interests and causes. Back when the Soviet economy mainly produced steel and other basic goods it could fairly easily be managed through commands from the top. No longer. To produce the more sophisticated products needed today, greater initiative must be granted to low-level managers and technicians.

Stated differently, Soviet society has outgrown the Kremlin's "command economy" system and modern technology makes that system obsolete under any circumstances. Low productivity, far from being evidence of Russians' innate passivity and sloth, attests to the unwillingness of independent-minded people to function merely as cogs in a bureaucratic machine, without civil rights and with limited access to information. In effect, they "vote" against the system by abstaining from work and by cutting deals on the side.

Together, these conditions create an environment dramatically different from those faced by previous reformers. While a few elites may have backed change under Catherine II or Alexander I, society at large, rural and uneducated, was indifferent. Similarly, the educated elite under Alexander II had outgrown the legal and governmental structures inherited from earlier tsars, but the peasantry's evolution was far slower, which may explain the limited character of

the peasant emancipation. The pace of fundamental industrial and social evolution prior to the reforms of Nicholas II was more brisk, pushing the government towards change. Khrushchev, by contrast, ruled a society still reeling from Stalin's upheavals, and he more easily got by with half-measures.

The outright dissidence that slowly welled up under all these reformers could be dealt with through force or the threat of force. Gorbachev, too, can use his "steel teeth" but he cannot do so in secret. News of his use of force would quickly spread at home and abroad, exacting a political price in the process. Hence, it is no surprise that he has grown steadily more willing to contemplate even the boldest reforms, and that a tone of mounting urgency can be detected in his calls for change.

Does Gorbachev sense that the current mood could evolve into a more revolutionary climate if he does not quickly institute measures that get at the root of the USSR's problems? Maybe. But should violence increase or terrorism erupt, the Kremlin leadership will come face-to-face with the dilemma that confronted such previous reformers as Alexander II and Nicholas II: whether to forge ahead and lead the country into unknown and possibly risky realms or to recoil and resort to force to create the semblance of order.

No prior reformer in Russian or Soviet history has been bold enough to follow the former course. At some point, Gorbachev will confront a momentous choice: whether to follow history or make it.

PERESTROIKA UP CLOSE

by Robert Rand

Eight months in the Soviet capital left me convinced that *perestroika*, Gorbachev's "restructuring" of the Soviet economy, remains a phantom. It has not yet touched the average Russian. If a political rival to Gorbachev were to look his countrymen square in the eye and ask, as Ronald Reagan once did in a somewhat different context, "Are you better off now than you were three years ago?", the answer would be a reverberating "No."

Perestroika is, as Soviet citizens themselves like to say, "*vsyo na bumage*"—all on paper. They can read about it in newspapers or follow its purported course on television (a show called "The Projector of Perestroika" is a popular evening's entertainment on Moscow's Channel One), but the plain truth is that they can't reach out and touch it. Its absence, in the presence of promises to the contrary, makes perestroika, in the view of many Muscovites, yet another in a long series of empty political slogans promulgated from on high. "It's a meatless bone tossed out to a hungry dog," said one acquaintance, whose Party membership card did not preclude editorial comments about perestroika's shortcomings.

The failure of perestroika jumps out and touches the Moscow resident day in and day out like a persistent itch that won't go away. The more *Moskvichi* scratch and claw in frustration at the bankruptcy of it all, the more irritated they become.

Take the Moscow telephone system. Perestroika hasn't affected that. My resentment toward the slogans of perestroika, in fact, first began to fester after an abortive

attempt to telephone an acquaintance from a public phone booth (called an *avtomat*, a contradiction in terms). Lifting a Soviet handset and dialing a number is no guarantee you'll actually be able to telecommunicate. Several factors must coalesce. The rotary dial—there are no push button phones—must be tightly screwed in to ensure smooth, bump-free dialing. The coin slot (a phone call costs two kopecks, or about three cents) must be in proper working order, ready to gulp down the inserted coin at the right moment: a premature gulp in mid-dialing means you've been had. And, if you pass these two hurdles without incident, the phone lines mustn't cross: in Moscow there is an even chance that a correctly dialed number nonetheless may rouse the wrong party. Finally, if you have managed to reach the intended recipient of your call, there is the question of audibility. Telecommunication often means shouting into the receiver in order to be heard or straining to catch the reply.

Do this exercise for a few months (or years, as Soviet telephone users must) and see if you don't develop an inclination to question perestroika. Arguably, a modern economic giant runs on its telephones. The Soviet Union is still crawling.

Take food shopping, that perennial bugaboo of Soviet life. Perestroika will not succeed unless the Soviet Union's grocery shelves can be kept well-stocked: Gorbachev himself would acknowledge that. But 70 years after the revolution, purchasing the nutritional necessities of life in the Soviet capital remains no easy task. Citizens routinely carry *pakety*, or plastic sacks, like

sidearms, always at hand to bag that prized item they may come upon unexpectedly during commutes through the city.

During my tenure in Moscow, state stores simply did not have reliable supplies of fruits, vegetables, meats, milk products, and other commodities. Sugar, for instance, vanished from the Soviet capital last spring; it was said to be hoarded by moonshiners who needed the stuff to make home-brewed vodka. Sales of officially sanctioned liquor were revived as part of Gorbachev's anti-alcoholism campaign. Cheese—real cheese, that is—was also among the items intermittently out of reach. "Cheese of Friendship," however, a processed product wrapped in silvery foil and resembling Cheezwhiz in taste and in texture, was always available at the local cheese store.

Salad makings were hard to come by. Cucumbers, for some reason, were always around town. Tomatoes were coquettish in their availability, and green peppers were downright flirtatious, unpredictably appearing in this store or that.

I was surprised to find that mushrooms, the stuff of Stroganoff sauce and other Slavic delights, were almost impossible to find. Their arrival one day last spring in my neighborhood food store immediately generated a line of buyers. I queued up, *paket* at the ready, only to be informed once I reached the head of the line after a ten-minute wait: "I'm sorry, comrade, it's time for our lunch break and we'll resume selling mushrooms in one hour's time."

The supply of fruit was equally unpredictable. Apples (from Hungary) and oranges (from Egypt) appeared from time to time, but never simultaneously. Citrus

juices (from Cuba) made a nice fresh fruit alternative, but you never knew when they would appear. Bananas (from where I do not know) were once reported to be on sale near Moscow State University, that towering monument-to-Stalin on the banks of the Moscow River that I called home. By the time I tracked that rumor down not even the peels remained.

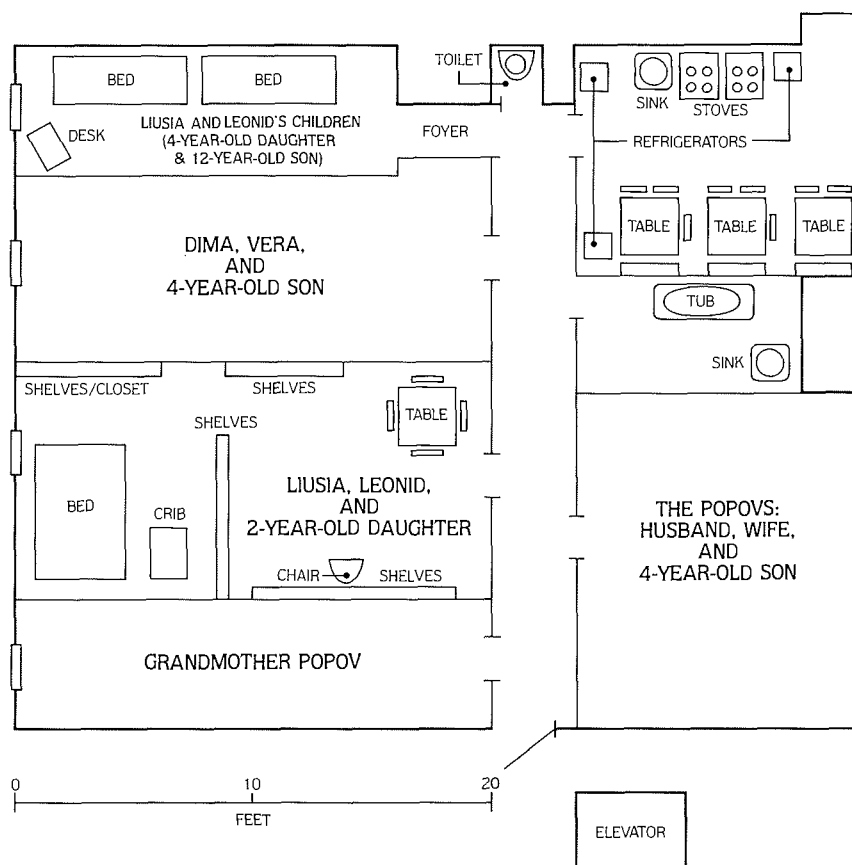
The Moscow resident develops a genuine appreciation for the fraternal socialist countries when it comes to food shopping. The smaller Warsaw Pact nations may be militarily dependent on the Kremlin, but in appeal to the palate, perestroika can't match what the East Europeans have to offer. Bulgarian ketchup (as good as Heinz—Soviets use it as spaghetti sauce) and Hungarian vegetables, compotes, and yams (all in jars with reuseable lids, a bit of modern technology that still eludes Soviet manufacturers) are snatched up as soon as they reach the markets. So are frozen brussels sprouts, carrots and peas from Poland, when available.

Frozen vegetables are sold, albeit intermittently, in plastic bags at selected ice cream stands. It took me three months to discover that.

Soviet consumers, by the way, *can* find a wide selection of fruits, vegetables and meats at the handful of farmer's markets located throughout Moscow. But the prices, which the merchants set themselves, are steep, beyond the range of most people. I spent eight rubles (over 12 dollars) one winter day for four apples.

Perestroika has not impressed Dima. Or Leonid. Or Vera or Liusia. Or of any of the twelve residents who live in the fifth floor apartment at the southern tip of Moscow's

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Baumansky region near the Kremlin.

Home for these middle-class folks is a *kommunalka*, or communal apartment, a cramped living space whose very existence—20 percent of the USSR's urban population lives in them—makes clear that housing ranks high on the long list of “deficit items” in the Soviet Union.

The Baumansky *kommunalka* is a five bedroom, one kitchen, one bathroom affair (no a/c, w/d). It houses three unrelated family units (or four, if you consider the family of mice in the kitchen.) The bedrooms, which double as living rooms, branch off from both sides of a long, partially lit hallway. The layout:

- Dima, a scientist, and his wife Vera, both around thirty, live in one bedroom with their four-year-old son. When I last saw them, they were expecting the birth of

a second child—but not the receipt of expanded living quarters.

- Leonid, a freelance journalist, and his wife Liusia, both in their mid-thirties, occupy two rooms: they sleep in one with their two-year-old daughter, while the other has beds for a second daughter, age 4, and a 12-year-old son.

- A third family, the Popovs—husband, wife, four-year-old son, and grandmother—occupies the remaining two bedrooms.

The rooms vary in size. Leonid and Liusia's bedroom is approximately 20' x 10'. A bookcase splits the room in half, with bed and crib on one side and dining room table on the other. Their daughter and son are in cramped quarters, large enough to hold two child-size single beds, but not much more.

All 12 people share the austere bathroom (one toilet, one sink, one bathtub) and kitchen facilities; three miniature refrigerators (called "Frosties") and two four-burner gas stoves provide a bit of flexibility.

Dima, Vera, Leonid, and Liusia spend most evenings holding court around the rickety wooden kitchen table, downing cup after cup of boiling hot tea, nibbling on sweets that Liusia, an accomplished cook, has prepared. They swat at cockroaches (not in short supply) and discuss the course of current Soviet life. The other adult residents of the *kommunalka*, the Popovs, do not join them, pointedly shunning communal activities as a result of a still unhealed quarrel that took place last year over who-was-supposed-to-pay-what-share of an electric bill. Estrangement between *kommunalka* cohabitants is not uncommon.

The kitchen gatherings, which are duplicated each evening in countless other Moscow households, have the air of a judicial hearing whose participants are simultaneously lawyer, judge, witness, and jury: presenting, probing, arguing, and evaluating evidence drawn from each day's experiences in an effort to sort out what Gorbachev's reform movement really means. The criteria are personal and straightforward: Gorbachev's policies are measured on the basis of whether one's living conditions have improved. At the Baumansky *kommunalka* they have not. Perestroika, the apartment residents say, has passed them by.

"I think things are as bad or actually worse than before," said Liusia. Her bill of particulars one day late last spring began with a report on Soviet plumbing.

"We haven't had hot water for a month," she said. She explained that each year, in late May or June, the pipes providing Moscow's nine million residents with hot running water are cleaned and repaired. To do the job, the plumbing authori-

ties simply turn off the tap, one city region at a time. "I haven't bathed in days" Liusia said; she lacked the courage to face, after four weeks, another tub full of cold water.

(My dormitory bathroom at Moscow University went without hot water for 22 days beginning June 1. My frustration intensified during that period, but I learned, while taking icy showers, to stifle my screams so as not to draw attention.)

"Food is harder to come by," Liusia continued. "The shops are as poorly stocked as ever." She said she fills her days under Gorbachev as she did in the days preceding perestroika: she forages, shuffling from one food store to another, all in search of the supplies she needs to prepare meals for her family of five.

As a mother of three, Liusia is the beneficiary of certain privileges available to "many-child mothers" in the Soviet Union. Women with three or more offspring are given the right to purchase certain commodities, notably meat, without waiting in line, and are entitled to preference in obtaining scarce durable goods, such as household appliances. Liusia complains that the chronic shortages make the privileges illusory, and that perestroika, for her, will exist only when this illusion becomes reality.

"We've been on a priority waiting list to buy a washing machine for over a year now," Liusia said. Meanwhile, her family's laundry is done by hand and hung out to dry on clotheslines that fill the kitchen's upper reaches.

A major recent event in Liusia's life centered on the receipt of another deficit item: a handheld electric mixmaster. The *mikser*, as it's called in Russian, was made in West Germany and purchased by a foreign visitor at one of the *beryozi*, or hard currency stores, that are off limits to the average Soviet citizen. "Vera, come look!" Liusia

squealed after receiving the item. "A *mikser*! What a gift! Now I won't have to break my arms any more, and think of all the time I'll save!" She cradled the blender like a new-born baby, and took turns with Vera punching its on-off button, gleefully watching the machine's attachments whiz and whir.

"Is she pleased with the gift?" Leonid was asked.

"More than pleased," he said. "She's enchanted."

Enchanted is not the word Dima would use to describe his view of life in the Baumansky *kommunalka*. With a new baby on the horizon, he and Vera are dissatisfied with their one room. Gorbachev's stated goal of providing every Soviet family with its own apartment by the end of the century means little to Dima; he and Vera need more space now.

They have thought about trying to move into larger quarters. But a rigid set of Soviet rules and practices restricts the number of people eligible for new housing. Eligibility hinges on the number of square meters of living space an individual occupies: if you live in Moscow and you enjoy more than approximately eleven square meters of living space (about 120 square feet: the size of a 10' x 12' room), the state will not assign you a larger apartment. Even if you meet the eligibility requirements, as Dima's family will once their new child is born, a wait of two, three, four years lies ahead before new accommodations become available. Other avenues exist to obtain better housing quicker, but these often require a layout of large sums of money for bribes and black market payments to circumvent the system. Such illegal "speculation" is widespread; Dima, due to scruples or lack of funds, chose not to dabble in it.

Dima was seemingly without recourse. Until, that is, he realized that the only way to see perestroika was to build it himself.

And that's exactly what he did. With hammer, nails, and a bundle of two-by-fours, Dima restructured his living quarters. What was once a plain, one-level *kommunalka* living space became a fashionable two-level flat with loft. High ceilings made the project, whose legality is open to question, possible. Thanks to Dima, but not to Gorbachev, perestroika now lives in the Baumansky communal flat.

Across town, ask Marina about the fruits of perestroika and you'll get a sigh. A shake of the head. A flash of anger. Marina is the 84-year-old matriarch of a family that has tried but failed to improve its quality of life through perestroika.

Marina and her husband have their own one-bedroom apartment in the southwest section of Moscow. Her daughter, Tanya, son-in-law Sergei, and two grandsons live on the other side of town in a one-bedroom place that Marina's mother once occupied. The family, like most that I encountered in Moscow, is tightly knit, almost interdependent. It's all for one and one for all in a common struggle to survive the vagaries of Soviet life.

Perestroika provided Marina's clan with an opportunity to get ahead. In 1986, at Gorbachev's direction, the Soviet legislature passed a law that allowed citizens to operate what are essentially private business enterprises, called "cooperatives," in their free time. The premise behind the law was simple: labor productivity and the output of high quality goods and services were likely to rise when workers ran their own shops and shared in the business's profits. Cooperatives, which would coexist with state-run enterprises, were meant to benefit the worker (called a *kooperator*) and consumer alike.

Some 48,000 cooperative enterprises now exist in Gorbachev's Russia. More than 3,000 of them are in Moscow. They include

restaurants, flower shops, clothing boutiques, bakeries, repair services, and other enterprises. They are managed without state interference: the cooperative directors determine the prices charged for the enterprise's product. The prices are higher than those in state-run businesses. But the item or service purchased is usually superior to that available in government shops.

Some Soviet consumers, those who can afford to pay, have benefited from this aspect of perestroika. A citizen willing to part with forty rubles (about \$64 at the official exchange rate) to buy dinner for two at "Kropotkinskaia 36," Mos-

cow's best known cooperative restaurant, will go home a satisfied customer, the recipient of attentive service and first-rate food, amenities not available at cheaper state-operated feeding places.

But most Muscovites I met stayed away from the cooperatives. They were simply too expensive. That 40-ruble dinner tab equals nearly one-quarter of the average worker's monthly wage. Forty-ruble T-shirts with Western-style logos on them, or blue jeans with 110 ruble (\$178) price tags, all on sale at one clothing cooperative I visited, are also inaccessible. A sizeable number of Soviets hold cooperatives in contempt and view *kooperatory* as bandits



Last September, Muscovites lined up with their sacks to buy melons on Kalinin Prospekt, one of the Soviet capital's major streets. It was the best month for fresh fruit.

intent on gouging the comrades for all they're worth. For the common man or woman who cannot afford the high prices, cooperatives, and perestroika, are for the privileged, not for the masses.

But almost everyone can afford 10 kopecks (\$0.16). That's what it costs to visit one of the cooperative public toilets that have sprung up in Moscow. In this service industry, Sergei, Marina's 33-year-old son-in-law, a man of ambition and business acumen, saw a limitless market and sensed an opportunity.

The pay-as-you-go concept is certainly alien to Soviet culture. Not, strictly speaking, the kind of revolutionary idea Lenin had in mind when he ushered in the Communist era. But the pedestrian heeding nature's call is treated to an uncommonly antiseptic experience, all for a nominal fee.

Out of curiosity one day last winter, I dropped by one of the facilities, located in the Paveletsky train station in central Moscow. The station, originally constructed under Tsar Nicholas II in 1900 and renovated in 1980, is a cavernous, rectangular building with a flowery, art nouveau facade; its trains connect Moscow with towns on the middle and lower regions of the Volga River. A 1920s movie scene: old, weary faces and stocky peasant bodies. Many travelers are loaded down with cheap suitcases and bulky burlap sacks. These folk are the villagers and farmers who, from hundreds of miles away, regularly visit the capital to purchase food, clothing and other goods that are not available elsewhere. Moscow may suffer shortages of consumer items, but it is a cornucopia for those who transit Paveletsky.

The travelers had their choice of two separate cooperative bathrooms in the station when I saw them. Both were tidy and well maintained. One had Soviet muzak piped in. Two bewildered men were seen exiting that facility with wide grins on their

faces. "Music! Can you believe it?" said one. "It's like being in Paris!"

The other bathroom, located nearby, was not audio equipped. But the walls were nicely tiled and there were automatic hand-dryers next to the sinks (the hand-dryers didn't work, but the thought was nice). The urinals in the place shone. "My god," said a wide-eyed elderly man as he entered the bathroom after depositing a 10-kopeck coin in a wooden box, "those things are as smooth and bright as eggshells!"

Sergei entered the cooperative public bathroom business at the invitation of a friend who operated the Paveletsky facility. Sergei cleaned toilets. It was unpleasant work that demanded virtually all of his free time. Marina and Tanya, while cheering Sergei on, were embarrassed by what he was doing and kept his activities secret from family acquaintances.

Sergei's toil soon began to pay off. Sharing in the proceeds, he was bringing in money, more money, he said, than he had ever earned as a teacher, his official profession. He had cashed in on perestroika.

Nevertheless, Sergei and his family weren't pleased. Perestroika gave them a burgeoning bank account. But one can't buy what doesn't exist. In effect, the chronic shortage of consumer goods left his new assets frozen. Financially, Sergei was all dressed up with no place to go.

What Sergei wanted most was a car. Wheels. Something to ease the burden of life a bit. Money wasn't at issue. He could afford the 10,000 rubles (\$16,000) it would cost to buy a new Soviet-made (the only option) model—a Moskvich or Zhiguli. No problem. But automobiles were not to be found. Adding his name to the official waiting list to purchase a car was out of the question, he said, because delivery would be ten or more years down the road.

Sergei was not a patient man. He decided to try the black market in autos, where private vendors sell vehicles with pricetags that exceed official levels. But, when I last saw him, he had come up empty-handed. Marina and Tanya got into the act by concocting a scheme: Marina's brother, who lives in Washington, would purchase a Soviet-built car in the United States and then have it shipped to Sergei in Moscow. They were disappointed to learn that Soviet-built cars haven't flooded the American market.

The whole episode angered Marina, who seemed to take personal offense at perestroika's inability to satisfy the family's consumer expectations. She was upset because her son-in-law's hard work could not be converted into something tangible. "We don't want for money," she said bitterly. They lacked a change in their daily lives, the kind of change that Gorbachev had yet to deliver.

Yet Gorbachev has delivered one thing that makes perestroika's shortcomings easier for the Soviet citizen to endure, and that's *glasnost*, popularly defined as "openness." Soviet newspaper readers and television viewers—the glasnost consumer—have been bombarded by tales of social ills, official corruption and economic maladministration. These revelations have shaken old notions of public information and debate. They have been bolts of electric shock therapy, leaving the public with blinking eyes, variously astounded, confused, pleased, and angered at the latest revelation, and always thirsting for more. Hardly a week went by during my stay in Moscow without the Soviet media exposing the scandalous behavior of some government bureaucrat or Party official. The goal of such publicity—"publicity" is in fact the

real meaning of glasnost—was, by force of example and threat of accountability, to stamp out mismanagement and arbitrariness as distinctive features of Soviet life. Glasnost is, in this sense, the cutting edge of perestroika; the "sharp weapon of restructuring," as a recent Communist Party decree declared, designed to soften up the thick barriers to Gorbachev's reforms.

Glasnost has energized those late night kitchen table discussions, giving Dima, Vera, Leonid, Liusia, and millions of others more grist for debate than they ever imagined possible. Soviets have always grumbled about the system's self-inflicted difficulties. But in the "epoch of non-glasnost," as one of the Baumansky apartment dwellers called the pre-Gorbachev era, they did so quietly, resignedly, without hope. Now, thanks to glasnost, it's not only permissible to criticize, but you can, within limits, do so publicly. There are even radio call-in shows that air citizen's complaints about the system's shortcomings.

Those grave shortcomings, of course, still exist. Glasnost alone will not restructure the Soviet Union. Openness has not put meat, fruits and vegetables on the grocery shelves. Life remains, under perestroika as before, a struggle beyond the ken of most Americans. Some Soviets claim that things are even worse. But at least the citizenry has the satisfaction of knowing that rose-colored glasses are less likely now than at any time since 1917 to shade the Kremlin's version of the truth. Optimism, not indifference, infuses those kitchen discussions; a country whose leaders are prepared to acknowledge that problems exist is a country that at least has a chance of solving some of them.

As Marina put it: "Life has become more difficult, but at least we can breathe easier."

BACKGROUND BOOKS

REFORM IN RUSSIA

The origins of the first Russian state remain a mystery. Scholars differ over whether the early *Rus'* people were descended from Nordic invaders or tribal Slavs from southern Russia, as Nicholas Riasanovsky notes in **A History of Russia** (Oxford, 1984). What is clear is that the *Rus'* were first united by the warrior-princes of Kiev during the ninth century. One of these princes, Vladimir (980–1015), converted the Kievan *Rus'* to Orthodox Christianity in 988, “thus opening the gates for the highly developed Byzantine culture to enter Russia.”

James H. Billington's **The Icon and the Axe** (Random, 1970) chronicles the disintegration of the Kievan state under Mongol occupation (1240–1380), and the emergence of Moscow as a center of national leadership. Although Russia's key institutions—the tsarist autocracy, landed gentry, and the rural serfs—took shape during the Muscovite period, the most important unifying force in Medieval Muscovy was the Russian Orthodox Church. Deeply influenced by “radical monasticism” and by a popular myth identifying Moscow as the Third Rome, Billington writes, “Muscovy at the time of its rise to greatness resembled an expectant revivalist camp.” Orthodox monasticism stimulated a rich culture, but it also largely isolated Muscovy from the West and from the effects of the social and economic transformations of modern Europe. Robert Crummey's **The Formation of Muscovy: 1304–1613** (Longman, 1987) is a detailed history of early Muscovite society.

Russia's imperial pe-

riod brought a new interest in modernization. Tsar Peter I (1682–1725) created a Governing Senate, a network of bureaucratic ministries, and a system of state-sponsored education. B. H. Sumner, in **Peter the Great and the Emergence of Russia** (Macmillan, 1962) argues that Peter, despite his fascination with Western Europe, was a patriot who hoped to transform Russia into an international power.

Catherine the Great (1762–96) prided herself on her affinity for the French Enlightenment and her friendship with Voltaire, but she presided over the consolidation of the gentry's privileges and suppression of the Pugachev peasant rebellion in 1773. Alexander Radishchev, an exiled intellectual, described the serfs' plight in **A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow** (Harvard, 1958), asking: “Can a country in which two-thirds of the citizens are deprived of their civil rights, and to some extent are dead to the law, be called happy?”

Except for the short-lived interest of Alexander I (1801–1825) in constitutional revision, autocracy reigned in Russia until 1861. Following the shock of defeat in the Crimean War, Alexander II (1855–1881) introduced an array of judicial and administrative reforms, notably the emancipation of the serfs. Daniel Field, in **The End of Serfdom** (Harvard, 1976), observes that Alexander II's “Great Reforms” paved the way for Russia's belated industrialization, but left the Russian peasant financially destitute.

By the turn of the century, the Russian empire reached to Po-



AN EMIGRÉ'S VIEW

Western analysts should not blame contradictions in current Soviet policy on some imagined "conservatives-versus-reformers" struggle, contended emigré author Vladimir Bukovsky in The Washington Quarterly (Winter '89). He wrote:

"The [domestic] problems that the Soviet leaders have to solve simply have no solutions. One can hardly expect significant improvements resulting from any within-the-system reforms because the very idea of this [Soviet] system has outlived itself. The only way to liberate the economy . . . is to introduce a full-fledged market economy The only way to reduce the role of the Communist Party is to allow a multi-party system But then there will be no Soviet Union as it is known, no Communist Party, no general secretary, and no need for *perestroika* and *glasnost* because they are superfluous"

land, the Black Sea, the Pacific, and Turkestan, encompassing scores of nationalities and religious groups. According to Sheila Fitzpatrick in **The Russian Revolution** (Oxford, 1984), although Russia remained largely rural, it was beginning to feel the effects of early industrialization: An influx of impoverished peasants swelled the ranks of a small but militant urban working class and labor unrest fueled the revolutionary ambitions of Russia's radical intelligentsia.

World War I brought Russia repeated military defeats. Combined with Nicholas II's disregard for the parliament he had established in 1906, they "threw the anachronistic traits of the Russian aristocracy into sharp relief, and made Nicholas seem less like an upholder of the autocratic tradition than an unwilling satirist of it," writes Fitzpatrick. The Tsar's life is chronicled by Robert Massie in **Nicholas and Alexandra** (Atheneum, 1967).

Finally, as Russia's armies collapsed under German attack, the old regime gave way in February 1917 to Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government, and eventually to Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Communist John Reed's **Ten Days that Shook the World** (International, 1967) is a vivid, admiring portrait of the

Bolshevik coup of October 1917. A scholarly account is Adam Ulam's **Bolsheviks** (Macmillan, 1968), while Richard Pipes, in **The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism** (Harvard, 1964), takes the drama from 1917 to the end of the bloody "Red" versus "White" civil war five years later.

The Bolsheviks quickly took over industry and finance, but persistent food shortages compelled Lenin to declare a "retreat" in 1921. Under his New Economic Policy, private traders could sell foodstuffs, small-scale private farming was encouraged, and some private industrial production was permitted. Stephen Cohen, in **Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution** (Oxford, 1980), argues that the NEP represented not merely a "retreat," but an alternative approach advocated by Bolshevik ideologist Nikolai Bukharin. The Soviet economy's evolution into a clumsy heavyweight from the NEP through the Brezhnev era is traced by Alec Nove in **An Economic History of the USSR** (Penguin, 1972).

Stalin's rise to power after Lenin's death in 1924 is chronicled by Roy Medvedev, a Soviet historian, in **Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism** (Knopf, 1971). "Stalin broke all records for political terror," writes Medvedev. "In 1936-39, on the most cautious estimates, four to five million people were subjected to repression for political reasons," while the peasantry was decimated during the forced collectivization of agriculture.

Medvedev argues that Stalinism was a "perversion" of the teachings of Marx and Lenin. But others, such as Merle Fainsod in **How Russia is Ruled** (Harvard, 1963) and Robert Conquest in **The Harvest of Sorrow** (Oxford, 1986), point out that Lenin, in fact, introduced key elements of Stalinism—the secret police, the use of terror, and party conformity. Robert Tucker supplies the classic profile of **Stalin as Revolutionary: 1879-1929. A Study in History and Personality** (Norton, 1973), while Arthur Koestler's novel, **Darkness at Noon** (Modern Library, 1956), and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's **The Gulag Archipelago: 1918-1956. An Experiment in Literary Investigation** (Harper & Row, 1974-75) chronicle the

terror from the victims' point of view.

"Not until 1956 could we rid ourselves of the psychological after-effects," says Nikita Khrushchev in **Khrushchev Remembers** (Little, Brown, 1974). The cathartic event was his own "secret speech," denouncing Stalin before the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow. Khrushchev introduced "destalinization"—the easing of police repression, a literary "thaw," and a revival of intra-Party debate—that lasted until Khrushchev's ouster in 1964.

Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982) inaugurated what Mikhail Gorbachev now describes as an "era of stagnation." Andrei Amalrik, a dissident imprisoned by Brezhnev, describes the regime's heavy hand in **Notes of a Revolutionary** (Knopf, 1982). Yet Amalrik's work also testifies to the survival of irrepressible networks of dissent in the Soviet Union.

Although the Soviets attained military superpower status during the 1960s, Brezhnev and Co. commanded a civilian economy beset by shortages, low productivity, and technological backwardness, according to Bruce Parrott's **Politics and Technology in the Soviet Union** (MIT, 1985). Blair Ruble and Arcadius Kahan's **Industrial Labor in the USSR** (Pergamon, 1979) shows that "the Soviet worker in the mid-

1970s enjoyed a standard of living not unlike that of the American worker in the 1920s."

Nevertheless, economist Ed Hewett in **The Politics of Reform: Equality versus Efficiency** (Brookings, 1988) contends that by the time Gorbachev came to power in 1985 "the Soviet system could boast many successes." In particular, he says, it guaranteed full employment and a fairly egalitarian wage structure. Reform, Hewett predicts, will necessarily erode the average worker's financial security. Gorbachev's success will depend on his ability to "[dilute] the egalitarian basis of the system . . . without jeopardizing the very foundations of the Party's legitimacy."

For his part, Jerry Hough, in **Russia and the West: Gorbachev and the Politics of Reform** (Simon and Schuster, 1988), argues that Gorbachev's *perestroika* is analogous to the American New Deal—it is meant to rescue the Soviet system without "replacing basic political and economic institutions." Gorbachev's greatest difficulty, according to Hough, will be resisting pressures for more radical change.

—Andrea Rutherford

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For related titles, see Background Books essays in "The Soviet Union" (WQ, Winter '77), "The Soviet Future" (Winter '81), "The Soviets" (Autumn '83), "Soviet Life" (Autumn '85), and "Soviets and Americans" (New Year's '89).

The most up-to-date discussion is in specialized journals. Prominent Soviet sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya's "Novosibirsk Document" (Survey, Spring, '84) accused Soviet workers of indifference and passivity, blaming central planners for being "tuned, not to stimulate but to thwart the population's useful activity." In 1987, Soviet economist Nikolai Shmelyov called for radical reforms—of prices and currency—in his influential article "New Worries" in *Novy Mir* (trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report Annex, April 22, 1988).

Western analyses include Soviet Economy's special issue on last summer's "Nineteenth Party Congress of the CPSU" (July-Sept., '88), Gertrude Schroeder's "Gorbachev: 'Radically' Implementing Brezhnev's Reforms" (Soviet Economy, Oct.-Dec., '86), and Peter Hauslohner's "Gorbachev's Social Contract" (Soviet Economy, Jan.-March, '87). "Gorbachev and Glasnost," a special issue of Survey (Oct., '88) features Peter Reddaway and Richard Pipes on political reform and its historical precedents.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: 'A LITTLE BALL OF FUR AND INK'

After World War II, Jean-Paul Sartre enjoyed a popular fame usually reserved for film stars, not philosophers. He was a best-selling author. He was a guru to intellectuals and the young the world over; his "existentialism" became a password in universities, theatres, cafes. What has been the legacy of all the stir that Sartre created? Paul Johnson offers some answers.

by Paul Johnson

Jean-Paul Sartre was a professional philosopher who also sought to preach to a mass audience. For a time at least it looked as though he had succeeded. Certainly no philosopher this century has had so direct an impact on the minds and attitudes of so many human beings, especially young people, all over the world. Existentialism was the popular philosophy of the late 1940s and 1950s. His plays were hits. His books sold in enormous quantities, some of them over two million copies in France alone. He offered a way of life. He presided over a secular church, if a nebulous one. Yet in the end, what did it all amount to?

Like most leading intellectuals, Sartre was a supreme egoist. He was the classic case of a spoiled only child. His family was of the provincial upper middle class, his father a naval officer, his mother a well-to-do Schweitzer from Alsace. The father was, by all accounts, an insignificant fellow who died when Sartre was only 15 months old.

The mother, Anne-Marie, married again to Joseph Mancy, boss of the Delaunay-Belleville plant in La Rochelle. Sartre, born June 21, 1905, inherited his father's height (5 feet, 2½ inches), brains and books. But in his autobiography, *Les Mots (The Words)*, Sartre went out of his way to dismiss his father from his life. "If he had lived," he wrote, "my father would have laid down on me and crushed me. Fortunately he died young."

The grandfather, who crushed his own sons, doted on Jean-Paul and gave him the run of his large library. The mother was a doormat, the little boy her most precious possession. She kept him in frocks and long hair until he was nearly eight, when the grandfather decreed a massacre of the curls. Sartre called his childhood "paradise"; his mother was "this virgin, who lived with us, watched and dominated by everyone, was there to wait on me." She called him Poulou. He was told he was

beautiful "and I believed it." He said "precocious things" and they were "remembered and repeated to me." So "I learned to make up others."

As Sartre had little respect for the truth it is difficult to say how much credence should be placed on his description of his youth. His mother, when she read *Les Mots*, was upset. "Poulou understood nothing about his childhood" was her comment. What shocked her were his heartless comments about members of the family.

There is no doubt that he was spoiled. But when he was four, a catastrophe occurred: Following a bout of influenza, a sty developed in his right eye, and he was never able to use it again. He invariably wore thick glasses, and in his 60s he went progressively blind. When Sartre finally got to school he found his mother had lied to him about his looks and that he was ugly. Though short, he was well-built: broad, barrel-chested, powerful. But his face was plain and the faulty eye almost made him grotesque. Being ugly, he was beaten up. He retaliated with wit, scorn, and jokes and became that bitter-sweet character, the school jester. Later he was to pursue women, as he put it, "to get rid of the burden of my ugliness."

Sartre had one of the best educations available to a man of his generation: a good lycée in La Rochelle, two years as a boarder in the Lycée Henri Quatre in Paris, at the time probably the best high school in France; then the École Normale Supérieure, where France's leading academics took their degrees. He had some very able contemporaries: Paul Nizan, Raymond Aron, Simone de Beauvoir. He boxed and wrestled. He played the piano, by no means badly, sang well in a powerful voice and contributed satirical sketches to the école's theater reviews. He wrote poems, novels, plays, songs, short stories, and philosophi-



cal essays. He was again the jester, but with a much wider range of tricks. He formed, and for many years maintained, the habit of reading about 300 books a year. The range was very wide; American novels were his passion. He also acquired his first mistress. Sartre failed his first degree exam, then passed it the next year, finishing at the top of his class; de Beauvoir, three years his junior, was second. It was now June 1929, and like most clever young men at that time, Sartre became a schoolmaster.

The thirties were a lost decade for Sartre. He spent most of it as a teacher in Le Havre, the epitome of provincial doddiness. There were trips to Berlin where, at Aron's suggestion, he studied Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology, then the most original philosophy in Central Europe. But mostly it was teaching drudgery. He hated the bourgeoisie. Indeed he was very class-conscious. But he was not a Marxist. In fact he never read Marx, except perhaps in extracts. He was certainly a rebel, but a rebel without a cause. He joined no party. He took no interest in the rise of Hitler. Spain left him unmoved. Whatever he later

claimed, the record suggests he held no strong political views before the war.

Normally he wore a sports jacket with an open-necked shirt, refusing to put on a tie. He let his pupils do more or less what they wanted. The boys could take off their jackets and smoke in class. They need not take notes or present essays. He never marked the roster or inflicted punishment or gave them marks. Away from the classroom, he wrote a lot but his early fiction could not find a publisher. In 1936 he at last brought out a book, on his German studies, *Récherches philosophiques*. It attracted little attention. But he was beginning to see what he wanted to do.

The idea of projecting a philosophical system through fiction and drama had become firm in his mind by the late 1930s. He argued that existing novelists—he was thinking of Dos Passos, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner, Joyce, Aldous Huxley, Gide, and Thomas Mann—reflected ancient ideas mostly derived, directly or indirectly, from Descartes and Hume. It would be much more interesting, he wrote to Jean Paulhan, “to make a novel of Heidegger’s time, which is what I want to do.” His problem was that during the 1930s he was working quite separately on fiction and on philosophy. But a philosophical novel of a kind was slowly emerging. He wanted to call it *Mélancholie*. His publishers changed it to *La Nausée* (*Nausea*), a more arresting title, and finally brought it out in 1938. Again, there was little response at first.

What made Sartre was World War II. For France it was a disaster. For others it brought danger and disgrace. But Sartre had a good war. He was conscripted into the meteorological section at Army Group Artillery headquarters, where he tossed balloons of hot air into the atmosphere to test which ways the wind was blowing. His comrades laughed at him. His corporal, a math professor, remarked: “From the start we knew he would be no use to us in a military sense.” Sartre was notorious for

never taking a bath and being disgustingly dirty. What he did was write. Every day he produced five pages of a novel, eventually to become *Les Chemins de la Liberté*, four pages of his *War Diary*, and innumerable letters, all to women.

When the Germans invaded, the front collapsed and Sartre was taken prisoner, still scribbling (June 21, 1940). In the POW camp near Trèves he was in effect politicized by the German guards who despised their French prisoners. As at school, he survived by jesting and writing camp entertainments. He also worked hard at his own novels and plays, until he was released, classified “partially blind,” in March 1941.

Sartre made a beeline for Paris. He got a job teaching philosophy at the famous Lycée Condorcet, where most of the staff were in exile, underground, or in the camps. Despite his methods, perhaps because of them, the school inspectors reported his teaching “excellent.” He found wartime Paris exhilarating. He later wrote: “Will people understand me if I say that the horror was intolerable but it suited us well We have never been as free as we were under the German occupation.” But that depended on who you were. Sartre was lucky. Having taken no part in pre-war politics, he did not appear on any Nazi records or lists. So far as they were concerned he was “clean.” He had no difficulty in getting his work published and his plays presented. As André Malraux put it, “I was facing the Gestapo while Sartre in Paris had his plays produced with the authorization of the German censors.”

In a vague way Sartre yearned to contribute to the Resistance. Fortunately for him his efforts came to nothing. There is a curious irony here. Sartre’s personal philosophy, what was soon to be called existentialism, was already shaping his mind. In essence it was a philosophy of action, arguing that man’s character and significance are determined by his actions, not his views, by his deeds, not words. The Nazi occupation aroused all Sartre’s anti-

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authoritarian instincts. He wanted to fight it. If he had followed his philosophical maxims, he would have done so by blowing up troop trains or shooting members of the SS.

But that is not in fact what he did. He talked. He wrote. He was Resistance-minded in theory, mind and spirit, but not in fact. He helped to form a clandestine group, Socialism and Freedom, which held meetings and debated. One member, Jean Pouillon, put it thus: "We were not an organized Resistance group, just a bunch of friends who had decided to be anti-Nazis together and to communicate our convictions to others." Others, non-members, were more critical. George Chazelas, who opted for the Communist Party, said: "They struck me from the very beginning as fairly childish: they were never aware, for instance, of the extent that their prattle jeopardized the work of others."

Sartre, then, did nothing of consequence for the Resistance. He did not lift a finger, or write a word, to save the Jews. He concentrated relentlessly on promoting his own career. He wrote furiously, plays, philosophy, and novels, mainly in cafés.

His association with St.-Germain-des-Prés, soon to become world-famous, was in origin quite fortuitous. His major philosophy text, *L'Être et le Néant* (*Being and Nothingness*), which sets out the principles of Sartrean activism most comprehensively, was composed mainly in the winter of 1942-43, which was very cold. Monsieur Boubal, proprietor of the Café Flore on the Boulevard St. Germain, was unusually resourceful at obtaining coal for heating and tobacco for smoking. So Sartre wrote there, every day, sitting in an ugly, ill-fitting but warm artificial fur coat, colored bright orange, which he had somehow obtained. He would drink down a glass of milky tea, set out his inkpot and pen, then scribble relentlessly for four hours, scarcely lifting his eyes from the paper, "a little ball of fur and ink." Simone de Beauvoir, who described him thus, noted that he was enlightening the tract, which was eventually 722 pages, with "spicy passages." One "concerns holes in general and the other focuses on the anus and love-making Italian style." It was published in June 1943. Its success was slow in coming but it was sure and cumulative.

It was through the theater, however, that Sartre established himself as a major figure. His play *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*) opened the same month *L'Être* came out and at first sold comparatively few tickets. But it attracted attention and consolidated Sartre's rising reputation. He was soon in demand for screenplays for Pathé, writing three of them (including *Les Jeux sont faits* [*The Chips Are Down*]) and making, for the first time, a good deal of money.

On May 27, 1944, just a few days before the Allied D-Day landing in Normandy, his play *Huis-clos* (*No Exit*) opened at the Vieux Colombier. This brilliant work, in which three people meet in a drawing room which turns out to be an ante-chamber to hell, operated at two levels. At one level it was a comment on character, with the message "Hell is other people." At another it was a popular presentation of *L'Être et le Néant*, given a flashy Gallic gloss and a contemporary relevance and presenting a message of activism and concealed defiance. It was the kind of thing at which the French have always been outstandingly gifted—taking a German idea and making it fashionable with superb timing. The play was a huge success both with the critics and the public, and has been well described as "the cultural event which inaugurated the golden age of St.-Germain-des-Prés."

Huis-clos made Sartre famous. But, oddly enough, it was through the old-fashioned form of the public lecture that Sartre became world-famous, indeed notorious, a *monstre sacré*. Within a year of the play's opening, France was at peace. Everyone, especially youth, was catching up greedily on the lost cultural years and searching for the post-war elixir of truth. The Communists and the new-born Catholic Social Democrats (MRP) were fighting a battle for supremacy on the campus. Sartre used his new philosophy to offer an alternative: not a church or a party but a challenging doctrine of individualism in which each human being is seen as absolute master of his soul if he chooses to follow the path of action and courage. It was a message of liberty after the totalitarian nightmare.

Sartre had already established his drawing power as a lecturer by a successful se-

ries on "The Social Techniques of the Novel" which he had given in the rue St. Jacques in Autumn 1944. Then he had merely hinted at some of his notions. A year later, with France free and agog with intellectual stimulation, he announced a public lecture in the Salle des Centraux for October 29, 1945. The word "existentialism" was not his. It seems to have been invented by the press. The previous August, when asked to define the term, Sartre had replied: "Existentialism? I don't know what it is. My philosophy is a philosophy of existence." Now he decided to embrace what the media had coined, and entitled his lecture: "Existentialism is a Humanism."

Nothing is so powerful, Victor Hugo had laid down, as an idea whose time has come. Sartre's time had come in two distinct ways. He was preaching freedom to people who were hungry and waiting for it. But it was not an easy freedom.

"Existentialism," said Sartre, "defines man by his actions.... It tells him that hope lies only in action, and that the only thing that allows man to live is action." So, "Man commits himself to his life, and thereby draws his image, beyond which there is nothing." The new European of 1945, Sartre said, was the new, existentialist individual—"alone, without excuses. This is what I mean when I say we are condemned to be free." So Sartre's new, existentialist freedom was immensely attractive to a disillusioned generation: lonely, austere, noble, slightly aggressive, not to say violent, and anti-elitist, popular—no one was excluded. Anyone, but especially the young, could be an existentialist.

Secondly, Sartre was presiding over one of those great, periodic revolutions in intellectual fashion. Between the wars, sickened by the doctrinaire excesses of the long battle over Dreyfus and the Flanders carnage, the French intelligentsia had cultivated the virtues of detachment. The tone had been set by Julien Benda, whose immensely successful book *La Trahison des clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*) (1927) had exhorted intellectuals to avoid "commitment" to creed and party and cause, to concentrate on abstract principles and keep out of the political arena. One of the many who had heeded Benda had been precisely Sartre himself. Up to 1941 nobody

could have been less committed. But now, just as he had tested the atmosphere with his hot air balloons, he sniffed a different breeze. He and his friends had put together a new review, *Les Temps modernes* (*Modern Times*), with Sartre as editor-in-chief. The first issue, containing his editorial manifesto, had appeared in September. It was an imperious demand that writers become committed again.

Even though the lecture had not been widely advertised, the word-of-mouth build-up was evidently tremendous. When Sartre arrived near the hall at 8:30 the mob in the street outside was so big he feared it was an organized CP demonstration. It was in fact people frantically trying to get in, and as the hall was already packed, only celebrities were allowed to pass through. His friends had to force an entrance for Sartre himself. Inside, women fainted, chairs were smashed. The proceedings began an hour late. What Sartre had to say was in all essentials a technical academic philosophy lecture. But in the circumstances it became the first great post-war media event.

Sartre's press coverage was astounding. Many newspapers produced thousands of words of Sartre's text, despite the paper shortage. Both what he had to say, and the way he said it, were passionately denounced. The Catholic daily *La Croix* called existentialism "a graver danger than 18th-century rationalism or 19th-century positivism," and joined hands with the Communist *L'Humanité* in calling Sartre an enemy of society. In due course Sartre's entire works were placed upon the Vatican Index of Prohibited Books, and Stalin's cultural commissar, Alexander Fadayev, called him "a jackal with a typewriter, a hyena with a fountain-pen." All these attacks merely accelerated Sartre's juggernaut. He was by now, like so many leading intellectuals before him, an expert in the art of self-promotion. What he would not do himself his followers did for him. *Samedi Soir* (*Saturday Evening*) commented sourly: "We have not seen such a promotional triumph since the days of Barnum."

Existentialism was not just a philosophy to be read, it was a craze to be enjoyed. An *Existentialist Catechism* insisted: "Existentialism, like faith, cannot be explained: it

can only be lived." Sartre was a convivial soul, fond of whiskey, jazz, girls, and cabaret. When not seen at the Flore or at the Deux Magots, a block away, or eating at the Brasserie Lipp across the road, he was in the new cellar nightclubs or *caves* which now abruptly opened in the bowels of the Quartier Latin. At 42 rue Bonaparte, Sartre lived in a flat which overlooked the church of St. Germain-des-Prés itself and the Deux Magots. (His mother lived there too and continued to do his laundry.) The movement even had its daily house organ, the newspaper *Combat*, edited by Albert Camus, whose best-selling novels were widely hailed as existentialist. Sartre worked all day, scribbling hard, but at night he played, and by the end of the evening he was usually drunk and often aggressive.

But if Sartre were king, who was queen? And if he was the young people's spiritual leader, where was he leading them?

These are two separate, though linked, questions, which need to be examined in turn. By the winter of 1945-46, when he became a European celebrity, he had been associated with Simone de Beauvoir for nearly two decades. De Beauvoir was a Montparnasse girl actually born in an apartment over the famous Café de la Rotonde. She had a difficult childhood, coming from a family ruined by a disgraceful bankruptcy. She took refuge in schoolwork, becoming a bluestocking, though a remarkably elegant one. At the University of Paris she was an outstanding philosophy student and was taken up by Sartre and his circle: "From now on," he told her, "I'm going to take you under my wing." That remained in a sense true, though for her their relationship was a mixed blessing. She was an inch taller than Sartre, three years younger and, in strictly academic matters, abler. She, like Sartre, was also a compulsive writer and in many respects a finer one. Her major novel, *Les Mandarins* (*The Mandarins*), which describes the French post-war literary world and won her the Prix Goncourt, is far better than any of Sartre's fiction. In addition, she had none of Sartre's personal weaknesses, except lying.

Yet this brilliant and strong-minded woman became Sartre's slave from almost their first meeting and remained such for all her adult life until he died. She served

him as mistress, surrogate wife, cook and manager, female bodyguard and nurse, without at any time acquiring legal or financial status in his life. In the annals of literature, there are few worse cases of a man exploiting a woman. This was all the more extraordinary because de Beauvoir was a lifelong feminist. In 1949 she produced the first modern manifesto of feminism, *La Deuxième sexe* (*The Second Sex*), which sold widely all over the world. Its opening words, "One is not born a woman, one becomes one," are a conscious echo of the opening of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. De Beauvoir, in fact, was the progenitor of the feminist movement and ought, by rights, to be its patron saint. But in her own life she betrayed everything it stood for.

How Sartre established and maintained such a dominance over de Beauvoir is not clear. She could not make herself write honestly about their relationship. He never troubled to write anything about it. When they first met he was much better read than she was and able to distill his reading into conversational monologues she found irresistible. His control over her was plainly of an intellectual kind. It cannot have been sexual. She was his mistress for much of the 1930s but at some stage ceased to be so; from the 1940s she was there for him when no one better was available.

Sartre was the archetype of what in the 1960s became known as a male chauvinist. His aim was to recreate for himself in adult life the "paradise" of his early childhood in which he was the center of a perfumed bower of adoring womanhood.

When Sartre first seduced de Beauvoir he outlined to her his sexual philosophy. He was frank about his desire to sleep with many women. He said his credo was "Travel, polygamy, transparency." At university, a friend had noted that de Beauvoir's name was like the English word "beaver," which in French is *castor*. To Sartre, she was always *Castor* or *vous*, never *tu*. There are times when one feels he saw her as a superior trained animal. Of his policy of "asserting" his "freedom against women," he wrote: "The Castor accepted this freedom and kept it." He told her there were two kinds of sexuality: "necessary love" and "contingent love." The latter was

not important. Those on whom it was bestowed were "peripherals," holding his regard on no more than "a two-year lease." The love he had for her was of the permanent, "necessary" kind; she was a "central," not a "peripheral." Of course she was entirely free to pursue the same policy. She could have her peripherals so long as Sartre remained her central, necessary love. But both must display "transparency," which was just another word for sexual "openness."

The policy of transparency, as might have been expected, merely led in the end to additional and more squalid layers of concealment. De Beauvoir tried to practice it but the indifference with which Sartre greeted news of her affairs, most of which seem to have been tentative or half-hearted, clearly gave her pain.

Sartre also practiced transparency, but only up to a point. In letters he kept her informed about his new girls. Thus: "This is the first time I've slept with a brunette . . . full of smells, oddly hairy, with some black fur in the small of her back and a white body A tongue like a kazoo, endlessly uncurling, reaching all the way down to my tonsils." No woman, however "central," can have wished to read such things about one of her rivals.

That the life they led went against the grain for her is clear. She was never able to bring herself to accept Sartre's mistresses with equanimity. She resented Marie Ville. She resented still more the next one, Olga Kosakiewicz. Olga was one of two sisters (the other, Wanda, also became a mistress of Sartre) and, to envenom matters, one of de Beauvoir's pupils. De Beauvoir disliked



Sartre in the offices of the banned Maoist newspaper La Cause du Peuple, with film director Jean-Luc Godard (left) and Simone de Beauvoir in June, 1970. Sartre and other celebrities protested the arrest of its editors, but failed to gain their release.

the affair with Olga so much that she put her into her novel, *L'Invitée* (*She Came to Stay*), and murdered her in it.

During the war de Beauvoir came closest to being Sartre's real wife: cooking, sewing, washing for him, looking after his money. But with the end of the war he suddenly found himself rich and surrounded by women, who were after his intellectual glamor as much as his money. The year 1946 was his best for sexual conquests and it marked the virtual end of his sexual relationship with de Beauvoir. "At a relatively early stage" as John Weightman has put it, "she tacitly accepted the role of senior, sexually-retired, pseudo-wife on the fringe of his fluctuating seraglio."

One reason de Beauvoir disliked Sartre's many young women was that she believed they encouraged him to lead a life of excess—not just sexual excesses but drink and drugs too. Between 1945 and 1955 Sartre got through a phenomenal amount of writing and other work, and to do this he steadily increased his intake of both alcohol and barbiturates. His biographer Annie Cohen-Solal says that he often drank a quart of wine over two-hour lunches at Lipp, the Coupole, Balzar or the other favorite haunts, and she calculates that his daily intake of stimulants at this time included two packets of cigarettes, several pipes of tobacco, a quart of alcohol (chiefly wine, vodka, whiskey, and beer), 200 milligrams of amphetamines, 15 grams of aspirin, several grams of barbiturates, plus coffee and tea. In fact de Beauvoir did not do the young mistresses justice. They all tried to reform Sartre, and Arlette, the youngest, tried hardest, even extracting a written promise from him that he would never again touch Corydrane, tobacco, or alcohol—a promise he promptly broke.

Thus surrounded by adoring, though often fractious, women, Sartre had little time for men in his life. He had a succession of male secretaries, some, like Jean Cau, of great ability. He was always surrounded by a crowd of young male intellectuals. But all these were dependent on him for wages, charity, or patronage. What he could never stomach for long were male intellectual equals, of his own age and seniority, who were liable at any moment to deflate his own often loose arguments. Nizan was

killed before a break could come, but he quarreled with all the rest: Raymond Aron (1947), Arthur Koestler (1948), Merleau-Ponty (1951), Camus (1952), to mention only the more prominent.

The quarrel with Camus was as bitter as Rousseau's rows with Diderot, or Tolstoy's with Turgenev—and, unlike the latter, there was no reconciliation. Sartre seems to have been jealous of Camus' good looks, which made him immensely attractive to women, and his sheer power and originality as a novelist: *La Peste* (*The Plague*), published in June 1947, had a mesmeric effect on the young and rapidly sold 350,000 copies. This was made the object of some ideological criticism in *Les Temps modernes* but the friendship continued in an uneasy fashion.

As Sartre moved towards the left, however, Camus became more of an independent. In a sense he occupied the same position as George Orwell in Britain: He set himself against all authoritarian systems and came to see Stalin as an evil man on the same plane as Hitler. Like Orwell and unlike Sartre, he consistently held that people were more important than ideas. De Beauvoir reports that in 1946 he confided to her: "What we have in common, you and I, is that individuals count most of all for us. We prefer the concrete to the abstract, people to doctrines. We place friendship above politics." In her heart of hearts de Beauvoir may have agreed with him, but when the final break came, over Camus' book *L'Homme révolté* (*The Rebel*) in 1951–52, she of course sided with Sartre's camp.

Sartre's inability to maintain a friendship with any man of his own intellectual stature helps to explain the inconsistency, incoherence, and, at times, sheer frivolity of his political views. The truth is he was not by nature a political animal. He really held no views of consequence before he was 40. Once he had parted with men like Koestler and Aron, both of whom had matured by the late 1940s into political heavyweights, he was capable of supporting anyone or anything. In 1946–47, very conscious of his immense prestige among the young, he dithered about which, if any, party to back. It seems to have been a belief of his that an intellectual had a kind of

moral duty to back "the workers." The trouble with Sartre is that he did not know, and made no effort to meet, any workers. Must one not, then, back the party most workers support? In France during the 1940s that meant the Communists. But Sartre was not a Marxist; indeed Marxism was almost the exact opposite of the individualistic philosophy he preached. All the same, even during the late 1940s he could not bring himself to condemn the Communist Party or Stalinism—one reason why he quarreled with Aron and Koestler.

Sartre's only positive move was to help organize an anti-Cold War movement of the non-conformist left, called the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire*, in February 1948. It aimed to recruit world intellectuals—he called it "The International of the Mind"—and its theme was continental unity. "European youth, unite!" proclaimed Sartre in a speech in June 1948. "Shape your own destiny! . . . By creating Europe, this new generation will create democracy." In fact, if Sartre had really wanted to play the European card and make history, he might have given support to Jean Monnet, who was then laying the foundations of the movement which would create the European Community ten years later. But that would have meant a great deal of attention to economic and administrative detail, something Sartre found impossible. François Mauriac, the great novelist and sardonic Catholic independent, gave Sartre some sensible public advice about this time, echoing the sneering words of Rousseau's dissatisfied girlfriend: "Our philosopher must listen to reason—give up politics, Zanetto, *e studia la mathematica*!"

Instead, Sartre took up the case of the homosexual thief Jean Genet, a cunning fraud who appealed strongly to the credulous side of Sartre's nature—the side which wanted some substitute for religious faith. He wrote an enormous and absurd book about Genet, nearly 700 pages long, which was really a celebration of antinomianism, anarchy, and sexual incoherence. This was the point, in the opinion of his more sensible friends, when Sartre ceased to be a serious, systematic thinker and became an intellectual sensationalist.

In 1952 Sartre resolved his dilemma

about the Communist Party and decided to back it. This was an emotional not a rational judgment, reached via involvement in two Communist Party agitprop campaigns: "L'affaire Henri Martin" (Martin was a naval rating who went to prison for refusing to participate in the Indo-China War), and the brutal suppression of riots organized by the Communist Party against the American NATO commander, General Matthew Ridgeway.

Some of the things Sartre did and said during the four years when he consistently backed the Communist Party line almost defy belief. In July 1954, after a visit to Russia, he gave a two-hour interview to a reporter from the fellow-travelling *Libération*. It ranks as the most grovelling account of the Soviet state by a major Western intellectual since the notorious expedition by George Bernard Shaw during the early 1930s. He said that Soviet citizens did not travel not because they were prevented but because they had no desire to leave their marvelous country. "The Soviet citizens," he insisted, "criticize their government much more and more effectively than we do." Indeed, he maintained, "There is total freedom of criticism in the USSR." Many years later he admitted his mendacity.

By the latter date Sartre's public reputation, both in France and in the wider world, was very low, and he could not avoid perceiving it. He fell upon the Soviet invasion of Hungary with relief as a reason, or at any rate an excuse, for breaking with Moscow and the Communist Party. Equally, he took up the burgeoning Algerian War—especially after de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 supplied a convenient hate-figure—as a reputable good cause to win back his prestige among the independent left and especially the young. To some extent this maneuver was genuine. To a limited degree it succeeded. Sartre had a "good" Algerian War, as he had had a "good" Second World War.

Much of Sartre's time in the 1960s was spent travelling in China and the Third World, a term invented by the geographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 but which Sartre popularized. He and de Beauvoir became familiar figures, photographed chatting with various Afro-Asian dictators—he in his First World suits and shirts, she in her school-

marm cardigans enlivened by "ethnic" skirts and scarves. What Sartre said about the regimes which invited him made not much more sense than his accolades for Stalin's Russia, but it was more acceptable. Of Castro: "The country which has emerged out of the Cuban revolution is a direct democracy." Of Tito's Yugoslavia: "It is the realization of my philosophy."

Nevertheless, there was a more sinister side to the advice Sartre proffered to his admirers in the Third World. Though not a man of action himself—it was one of Camus's more hurtful gibes that Sartre "tried to make history from his armchair"—he was always encouraging action in others, and action usually meant violence. He became a patron of Frantz Fanon, the African ideologue who might be called the founder of modern black African racism, and wrote a preface to his Bible of violence, *Les Damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*) (1961), which is even more blood-thirsty than the text itself. It was Sartre who invented the verbal technique (culled from German philosophy) of identifying the existing order as "violent" (e.g., "institutionalized violence"), thus justifying killing to overthrow it. Since Sartre's writings were very widely disseminated, especially among the young, he became the academic godfather to many terrorist movements which began to oppress society from the late 1960s onwards.

His influence on South-East Asia, where the Vietnam War was drawing to a close, was even more baneful. The hideous crimes committed in Cambodia from April 1975 onwards, which involved the deaths of between a fifth and a third of the population, were organized by Pol Pot's group of Francophone middle-class intellectuals known as the Angka Leu ("the Higher Organization"). Of its eight leaders, five were teachers, one a university professor, one a civil servant, and one an economist. All had studied in France during the 1950s, where they had not only belonged to the Communist Party but had absorbed Sartre's doctrines of philosophical activism and "necessary violence." These mass murderers were his ideological children.

Sartre's own actions, in the last 15 years of his life, did not add up to much. In 1968 he took the side of the students, as he had

done from his first days as a teacher. In an interview on Radio Luxembourg he saluted the student barricades: "Violence is the only thing remaining to the students who have not yet entered into their fathers' system.... For the moment the only anti-Establishment force in our flabby Western Countries is represented by the students... it is up to the students to decide what form their fight should assume. We can't even presume to advise them on this matter." This was an odd statement from a man who had spent 30 years advising young people what to do.

But Sartre's heart was not in these antics of 1968. It was his young courtiers who pushed him into taking an active role. When he appeared on 20 May in the amphitheater of the Sorbonne to address the students, he seemed an old man, confused by the bright lights and smoke and being called "Jean-Paul," something his acolytes had never dared to do. His remarks did not make much sense, ending: "I'm going to leave you now. I'm tired. If I don't go now, I'll end by saying a lot of idiotic things." At his last appearance before the students, February 10, 1969, he was disconcerted to be handed, just before he began to orate, a rude note from the student leadership which read: "Sartre, be clear, be brief. We have a lot of regulations we need to discuss and adopt." That was not advice he had ever been accustomed to receive, or was capable of following.

Sartre's interest in student revolution lasted less than a year. It was succeeded by an equally brief, but more bizarre attempt to identify himself with "the workers," those mysterious but idealized beings about whom he wrote so much but who had eluded him throughout his life.

For the man who failed in action, who had indeed never been an activist in any real sense, there were always "the words." It was appropriate that he called his slice of autobiography by this title. He gave as his motto *Nulla dies sine linea*, "Not a day without writing." That was one pledge he kept. He produced up to 10,000 words a day; a lot of it was of poor quality, high-sounding but lacking in muscular content. But as he admitted to de Beauvoir, "I have almost always considered quantity a virtue."

He also talked, at times interminably. This verbal diarrhea eventually destroyed his magic as a lecturer. When his disastrous book on dialectic appeared, Jean Wahl nonetheless invited him to give a lecture on it at the Collège de Philosophie. Sartre started at six P.M., reading from a manuscript taken from a huge folder, in a mechanical, hurried tone of voice. He never raised his eyes from the text. He appeared to be completely absorbed in his own writing. After an hour, the audience was restless. The hall was packed and some had to stand. After an hour and three quarters, the audience was exhausted and some were lying on the floor. Sartre appeared to have forgotten they were there. In the end Wahl had to signal to Sartre to stop. Sartre picked up his papers and walked out without a word.

But there was always the court to listen to him. Gradually, as Sartre got older, there were fewer courtiers. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he made prodigious sums of money. But he spent it just as quickly. He had always been careless about money. As a boy, whenever he wanted any, he simply took it from his mother's purse. As a schoolteacher he and de Beauvoir borrowed (and lent) freely: "We borrowed from everybody," she admitted. He said: "Money has a sort of perishability that I like. I love to see it slip through my fingers and vanish." This carelessness had its agreeable side. Unlike many intellectuals, and especially famous ones, Sartre was genuinely generous about money. As a result he ran up huge debts with his publishers and faced horrifying income-tax demands for back payments. His mother secretly paid his taxes but her resources were not limitless and by the end of the 1950s Sartre was in deep financial trouble, from which

he never really extricated himself.

In the 1970s Sartre was an increasingly pathetic figure, prematurely aged, virtually blind, often drunk, worried about money, uncertain about his views. His last years were described by de Beauvoir in her little book, *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*: his incontinence, his drunkenness, made possible by girls slipping him bottles of whiskey, the struggle for power over what was left of his mind. It must have been a relief to them all when he died, in Broussais Hospital, on April 15, 1980. In 1965 he had secretly adopted Arlette Elkaim, one of his last girlfriends, as his daughter. So she inherited everything, including his literary property, and presided over the posthumous publication of his manuscripts. For de Beauvoir it was the final betrayal: the "center" eclipsed by one of the "peripheries." She survived him five years, a Queen Mother of the French intellectual left. But there were no children, no heirs.

Indeed no body of doctrine survived Sartre. In the end he stood for nothing more than a vague desire to belong to the left and the camp of youth. The intellectual decline of Sartre, who after all at one time did seem to be identified with a striking, if confused, philosophy of life, was particularly spectacular. But there is always a large section of the educated public which demands intellectual leaders, however unsatisfactory. Fittingly, he was given a magnificent funeral by intellectual Paris. Over 50,000 people, most of them young, followed his body into Montparnasse Cemetery. To get a better view, some climbed into the trees. One of them came crashing down into the coffin itself. To what cause had they come to do honor? What faith, what luminous truth about humanity, were they asserting by their mass presence? We may well ask.

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"John Bull troubled with the Blue Devils." So read the caption on this 1799 cartoon. Britain, like other European nations, had enacted an income tax to pay for the war against Napoleon. It was a turning point: the "temporary" levy on income became permanent.

The Politics of Taxation

During the 1980s, taxes have been America's Number One domestic political issue. The decade began with Ronald Reagan slashing taxes. It ends with George Bush pledging "no new taxes" in the face of clamor over unprecedented U.S. peacetime budget deficits. More is involved than dollars and cents. Throughout history, debates over taxes have set off larger controversies not only over the *size* of government, but also over its purposes. In Europe, as Carolyn Webber notes below, new taxes imposed between the 13th and 18th centuries helped monarchs forge the modern nation and wage wars. U.S. and Western European taxes now finance the welfare state. Since early in this century, as W. Elliot Brownlee shows, Americans have opted for mild "soak the rich" levies to redistribute wealth. Today, as Congress ponders ways to close the budget gap, further "leveling" of incomes through taxation is out; pragmatic "revenue initiatives" are in. That shift may be the chief political legacy of the early 1980s.

PLUCKING THE GOOSE

by Carolyn Webber

The art of taxation, wrote Jean-Baptiste Colbert, an adviser to France's Louis XIV, "consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest possible amount of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing."

Over the centuries, each European government has found a different way to pluck the goose. Today, in Italy, where evading income taxes is practically a national pastime, the government relies heavily on automatic payroll deductions; in West Germany, bureaucrats calculate the amount of income tax each citizen owes at the end of the year, and the Germans dutifully pay up.

Until the 20th century, taxation had only two functions; to underwrite the day-to-day workings of government, and to finance

warfare and standing armies—by far the greatest expense of government until recent times. During this century, especially since World War II, tax burdens have grown dramatically, and taxation has acquired two new uses: "stabilizing" domestic economies and redistributing income through the welfare state.

Whether they have been extracted by brute force, as they frequently were until recent centuries, or with the acquiescence of taxpayers, taxes have long been a lightning rod for conflict over the nature of society—who will pay? for what purposes? The answers keep changing. As England's Edmund Burke observed in 1774, "To tax and to please, no more than to love and be wise, is not given to men."

The first taxpayers probably were the people of ancient Mesopotamia, who, some 5,000 years ago, began making gifts of grain and livestock to temple priests, hoping to win the favor of the gods. In time, as priests became priest-kings and the temple bureaucracies expanded, the "gifts" became compulsory. By the mid-2nd millennium B.C., royal bureaucrats in Egypt and Mesopotamia were collecting taxes at regular intervals. Those too poor to pay in grain or livestock paid with their labor, erecting the Pyramids and other great monuments of antiquity.

In Egypt, as in most lands throughout history, the poor paid the taxes; the privileged classes were exempt. In Athens during the Golden Age of Pericles (mid-5th century B.C.), free citizens, rich or poor, were not subjected to the indignity of paying "direct" head or property levies. While everybody paid indirect taxes (e.g., customs duties and sales taxes) only prostitutes, resident foreigners, and other lowly sorts paid direct taxes. But, in an ancient version of "privatization," each wealthy Greek was expected to take his turn providing governmental services: outfitting a ship for the navy, erecting a temple, or sponsoring a public festival. These liturgies (from *liturgos*, or public service), like philanthropy nowadays, conferred honor upon the donor.

Later, during the Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 B.C.), Athens adopted a progressive tax on wealth called the *eisphora*. ("Progressive" taxes impose rates that increase with income or wealth. "Proportional" taxes, levied at a flat rate, force the wealthy to pay more than others, but less than they would under progressive rates.)

Isocrates, an Athenian rhetorician, later complained that taxes on the rich "cause so much vexation that property owners lead a harder life than utter paupers."

When the Romans overthrew the Athenian empire in 197 B.C., they adopted the liturgies, which the Romans called *munera*. Along with the tributes paid by various conquered peoples, the *munera* allowed the Roman Senate to abolish land and personal taxes on Roman citizens in Italy in 167 B.C.

As Rome's bureaucracy and army grew, however, the emperors were compelled to reimpose taxes. Emperor Augustus assessed death duties and a sales tax in 6 A.D. (It was Augustus' comprehensive tax census of the Roman Empire, which required all subjects to return to their native cities, that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.) His successor, Tiberius, refused to raise taxes, declaring that "the subjects should be sheared but not shaved." Later emperors were not so restrained.

By the 4th century, the Roman Empire was disintegrating under the pressure of civil war, corruption, and barbarian invasions. Roman subjects were fleeing the cities of Gaul and Italy, seeking refuge as much from the desperate emperors' tax collectors as from the Goths and other barbarians. The refugees, along with impoverished farmers, offered their labor to powerful local landowners, surrendering their liberty for security. "These wretched people... seek exile... for the enemy is more lenient to them than the tax collector," alleged Salvian the Presbyter, an early Christian priest. The Romans "extort tribute from the poor... the weaker carry the load for the stronger." As the descendants of the Roman freeholders became tied to the land, medieval serfdom emerged.

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Collecting taxes the old-fashioned way. Hieroglyphics found on the tomb beneath this Egyptian carving (circa 2500 B.C.) read: "Seizing the town rulers for a reckoning."

By the late 8th century, when Viking invasions impelled landowners in parts of Western Europe to band together under the leadership of weak kings, regular taxes had long since vanished. Every king under the nascent feudal order was required to "live off his own"—the surplus produced by his scattered estates. According to historian Marc Bloch, medieval kings "positively killed themselves by travel." England's King Edward I logged 1,300 miles during one 14-month period during the late 13th century. As the king traveled from one estate to another, however, his vassals were obliged to extend hospitality, which, depending on the length of the royal visit, often amounted to a substantial *de facto* tax.

On special occasions—when his daughter married or his son was knighted—the king could also command a special *aid* from his vassals. They were also expected to supply troops for the king's army. But the king had no other taxing power and frequently lived hand to mouth.

When Europe's kings embarked on the Crusades during the 12th century, they suddenly needed cash to meet the expense of shipping their armies across the Mediterranean to the Holy Land. They asked their pious subjects to pay special *aids*; these were medieval Europe's first royal money taxes. Once their subjects had paid, the kings could ask again—and again.

Even at this early date, the emerging nations of Europe were embarking on different courses. In England, a council of noblemen, angered by the ever-increasing *aids*, forced King John I to sign a charter in 1215 limiting, among other things, his power to tax. "No . . . aid shall be imposed . . . except by the common council of our kingdom . . . and it shall be only a reasonable aid," declared the Magna Carta. In France, by contrast, kings were able to impose some money taxes (notably the *taille*, a head and property tax) while avoiding such permanent checks on their power: They simply exempted nobles (and the clergy) from most direct taxes, leaving peasants and merchants to bear the ever-increasing burden of supporting government. By the time of the Revolution, peasants and middle-class merchants in some areas of France were surrendering up to half of their income to Versailles.

An expanding economy, generating enough surplus for the state to skim, has always been essential to increasing revenues. Thus, it was the flourishing city-states of Renaissance Italy—Siena, Lucca, Prato, Florence, and several others—that ushered in modern taxation during the 13th and 14th centuries. Moreover, Siena and its sister cities were self-governing republics; with the notable ex-

ception of the United States, it generally has been easier to impose high taxes in lands where citizens give their consent. "In constitutional states," Montesquieu observed in 1748, "liberty is compensation for the heavy taxation; in despotic states the equivalent of liberty is light taxes."

Constantly at war with one another, and thus always in need of greater revenues, the city-states imposed sales and production taxes on "all but air and water"—clothing, salt, grain, bread, meat, wine, and all imports. In a few cases, the Italian communes invoked modern notions of fairness. Thus, the city fathers of 13th century Siena imposed a property tax on land and personal assets "so a greater equality will be maintained among the citizens." Anticipating the modern income tax, the Italian communes also tried, without much success, to tax the earnings of soldiers, city officials, and professional men.

"There is no art which one government sooner learns of another," Adam Smith noted five centuries later, "than that of draining money from the pockets of the people." Shrewdly assessing their subjects' tolerance, the kings of Europe imposed an increasing burden of new Italian-style taxes after the 15th century. The growing frequency and cost of war between the 15th and late 18th centuries kept up the pressure for more revenues. Money, observed Colbert, King Louis XIV's finance minister, "is the vital nerve of war."* Huge mercenary armies had replaced the tiny fighting forces of the Middle Ages: 100,000 to 200,000 men fought in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648); 450,000 to 500,000 in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–19).

*Colbert said "money," not "taxes," because monarchs had several other ways to raise cash: plundering conquered lands, debasing the national currency, or borrowing from private financiers. England's Bishop Berkeley remarked during the 18th century that the government's ability to borrow from the public at large (up to 40 percent of what it spent), rather than from financiers, was "the principal advantage that England hath over France."

When Oliver Cromwell governed England (1653–1658), he kept its navy at sea for months on end to prevent the unpaid sailors from jumping ship.

"The post-1450 waging of war," writes historian Paul Kennedy, "was intimately connected with 'the birth of the nation-state' Most European countries witnessed a centralization of political and military authority . . . accompanied by increased powers and methods of state taxation, and carried out by a much more elaborate bureaucratic machinery than had existed when kings were supposed to 'live off their own' and national armies were provided by a feudal levy."

Throughout Europe, tax was piled upon tax. When mercantilist writers such as Antoyne de Monchretien in France and Thomas Mun in England argued (as do policymakers in Japan and Third World countries today) that protectionist tariffs fostered internal economic development, revenue-hungry leaders from England to Russia seized on the idea to justify new customs duties. After all, it was thought, the burden would fall upon foreigners, not citizens.

From the 17th century on, Europe's rulers also imposed a proliferating variety of indirect taxes on goods and services traded in domestic markets. Rich and poor alike paid taxes on food (sugar, spices, grains, meat, malt, vinegar) and drink (cocoa, wine, cider, beer, ale, coffee, and tea)—virtually everything, in fact, from coal and soap to the whalebone used in corsets. When Cromwell and the Puritans governed England, they seized the estates of nobles and imposed excise taxes on wigs, playing cards, and other luxury goods.

Despite such luxury taxes, indirect imposts burdened the poor far more than the rich. Yet, at the time, they were considered equitable. Making the case for a duty on

salt before Parliament in 1732, Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole explained: "Every subject contributes something; if he be a poor man he contributes so small a trifle, it will hardly bear a name; if he be rich, he lives more luxuriously, and consequently contributes more." Moreover, the well-to-do, especially the nobility, could not escape the indirect levies.

By the late 18th century, many advisers to the crowned heads of Europe had begun to understand that the poor were greatly overburdened. Turgot, Louis XVI's finance minister during the 1770s, told his master: "The expenses of government, having for their object the interests of all, should be borne by every one, and the more a man enjoys the advantages of society, the more he ought to hold himself honoured in contributing to these expenses."

The French aristocracy disagreed; Turgot was sacked after only two years in office. Reform fared better elsewhere in Europe. In Catherine the Great's backward Russia, as in King Joseph II's Austria and Prussia under Frederick II, peasants were relieved of some feudal obligations and aristocrats were subjected to nominal taxation. Britain remained by far the most equity-minded state.

When the French Revolution broke out in the summer of 1789, an English country squire named Arthur Young was detained while traveling in rural France and accused of being a French nobleman in disguise. He saved his life by climbing the steps of a village inn and telling the peasants of England's fiscal equity:

Gentlemen, we have a great number of taxes in England which you know nothing of in France Every window in a man's house pays, but if he has no more than six windows, he pays nothing. [The window tax was originated by the Romans.] A Seign-

eur with a great estate pays taxes on land and personal property but the little proprietor of a garden pays nothing. The rich pay taxes for their carriages, and their servants, and even for the liberty to kill their own partridges, but the poor farmer pays nothing of all this. And what is more, we have in England a tax paid by the rich for the relief of the poor.

During the French Revolution, radicals imposed both a window tax (which remained in effect until 1925) and a progressive income tax on the wealthy. Under Napoleon (1799–1815), France derived about one-third of its revenues from levies on income and wealth.

Just as the wars of 15th century Europe transformed the experiments of Italy's city-states into common practice, so the Napoleonic Wars led to the extension of the income tax. The wars disrupted foreign trade and drastically reduced customs revenues; treasury officials throughout Europe realized that new taxes would be needed. There were few alternatives. The Dutch imposed an income tax in 1797; England in 1798, Austria in 1799, the Duchy of Baden in 1808, and Russia in 1812. All were flat-rate taxes, levied on the well-to-do.

They were universally hated. The income tax, said one critic, was "hostile to every sense of freedom, revolting to . . . Englishmen, and repugnant to the British constitution." After Napoleon was exiled to St. Helena in 1815, England and the continental powers (including France) abolished their income taxes.

Ironically, it would be the English, not the heirs of revolutionary France, who would pioneer the modern income tax.

Britain was the dominant power of the era, thanks in no small part to the tax revenues provided by its robust economy. Yet,

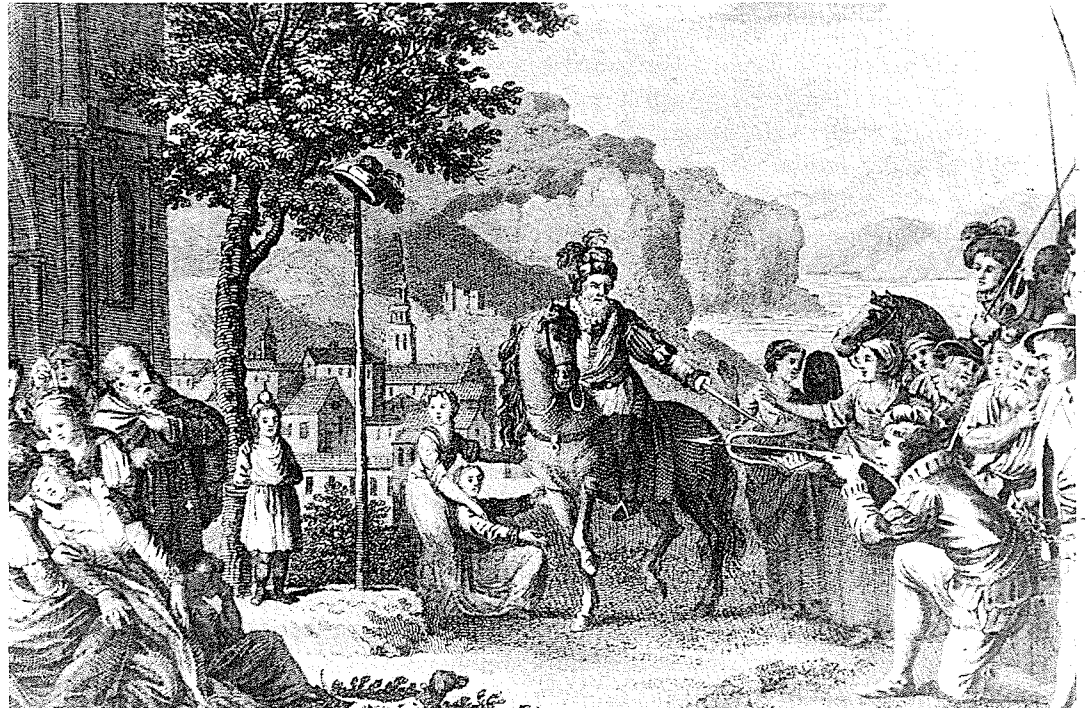
the depressions of the 1820s and '30s brought home the evils of the early Industrial Revolution and stirred unrest in the new industrial cities of Manchester and Liverpool. Excise taxes on food and other necessities, along with the Corn Laws, which imposed import duties on wheat to protect the estates of Britain's landed aristocracy, deprived "famishing thousands" of their daily bread.

Out of this dire situation arose one of the most unusual political coalitions in history. After 1820, wealthy merchants and manufacturers joined workingmen's advocates, such as William Cobbett, in demanding the abolition of the Corn Laws and reduction of domestic excises. The workers wanted cheap food; their employers wanted free trade and economic growth. As one group of business-

men from the Anti-Corn Law League put it: "The great bulk of the people, the customers of each other, and of all the other classes, are becoming too poor to purchase, and thus they cease to consume and profits are destroyed." It was, in essence, much like the argument of today's supply-side economists: Lower taxes can improve economic performance.

Popular opinion slowly turned against protectionism. "The real question at issue," stated a report by a parliamentary Committee on Import Duties in 1840, "is, do we propose to serve the nation or particular individuals [i.e. agricultural interests]?"

When free trade advocate Robert Peel was elected prime minister in 1841, he needed a new tax to replace the revenues lost through tariff reduction. His solution: a "temporary" restoration of the Napoleonic War flat-rate income tax. The new manu-



In 1307, according to Swiss legend, William Tell was forced to shoot an apple from his son's head as a penalty for resisting the authority and taxes of Austria. Tell succeeded; his act of defiance sparked a rebellion, which ultimately led to Swiss independence.

facturers of Manchester and Liverpool were among its most fervent backers.

By the end of the century, a new European arms race (e.g., building steel "dreadnought" battleships), along with growing demands for new roads, sewers, and schools in the cities, compelled the Continent to follow Britain's lead.* (Until that time, governments claimed only 3 to 5 percent of gross national product.) By 1900, six European nations had adopted an income tax; three more followed between 1900 and 1910. (The United States did so in 1913.) The rates were very low by today's standards, between 2 and 6 percent, and the poor were exempt. At first, no one thought that more could be collected without causing grave economic damage.

But government expenses kept rising. Progressive taxation, a radical idea once rejected out of hand by mainstream politicians, began to seem both just and feasible. While industrialization raised living standards, it also created a whole new class of super-wealthy industrialists. Growing inequality between owners and workers prompted the leaders of Europe's new labor parties to seek "soak the rich" measures. Their arguments were strengthened by developments in academe. Economist F. Y. Edgeworth and others, citing the new concept of "marginal utility," argued that a \$1 tax, for example, subtracted more from a poor man's "utility" than it did from a rich man's.

Britain's first graduated inheritance tax, adopted by a moderate Liberal government in 1894, made progressive taxation respectable. "Even without the pressure of immediate necessity," declared Home Secretary Sir William Harcourt, "it would be a mere act of financial justice to redress inequalities which have too long existed." France,

*Added pressure came from the relatively new notion of the balanced budget. Until the 19th century, Europe's governments possessed neither unified national budgets nor the ability to forecast reliably the next year's outlays.

Germany, and Italy adopted progressive income and inheritance taxes soon after the turn of the century. All did so to finance rearmament.

Britain also enacted, in 1908, the first progressive tax intended specifically to *redistribute* income. Needing a way to finance a new old age and sickness insurance scheme which would protect workers already too old to have made contributions to the plan, Prime Minister David Lloyd George, a Liberal, decided that the rich would pay. "I have got to rob somebody's hen roost," Lloyd George explained. "I am on the lookout which will be the easiest to get and where I shall be least punished, and where I shall get the most eggs."

By the beginning of World War I, most of the nations of Europe had adopted the same kinds of taxes, but chose to emphasize different ones. Britain relied heavily on the income tax. In France, direct taxes were still tainted by memories of the *ancien régime's* abuses; sales taxes and other indirect levies supplied 50 to 60 percent of revenues as late as the 1920s. The Italians relied on direct taxes and on profits from government monopolies in industry and banking. And Germany's government, hampered by restrictions on direct taxation in its 1871 constitution, borrowed heavily during and after World War I. The resulting "hyperinflation" under the Weimar Republic left a legacy of aversion to deficit spending that still guides economic thinking in West Germany.

Germany had been the first nation (in 1871) to create a social insurance program—funded by employee payroll "contributions"—for the elderly and sick. In theory, every worker would pay for the benefits he later collected. (Unemployment insurance was added in 1927.) Britain, France, and Sweden followed the German example. The

Great Depression of the 1930s began the transformation of these social *insurance* programs into social *welfare* programs. As the demand for benefits surpassed worker contributions (except the United States), the programs were increasingly paid for out of general tax revenues.

The Depression also spawned John Maynard Keynes' sweeping revision of economic thought, the *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1935).

The scale of unemployment during the 1930s convinced Keynes that the cause of the Depression was not, as mainstream economists then believed, excessive wages; it was deficient buying power throughout the economy. For Keynes, and for the economists and policymakers who built on his ideas after World War II, the solution was increased government intervention in the economy. The manipulation of taxes was one method (along with heavy spending on labor-intensive public works). By varying income tax rates and by using tax incentives to spur targeted industries, government would "fine tune" the economies of the West. Increasingly, raising revenue was only one tax goal among many.

Once again, however, each nation shaped its taxes in unique ways.

In Britain, as in the other nations of Western Europe, the very high tax rates imposed during World War II came down only slightly after the war, as political leaders rapidly expanded the welfare state. In Britain, Labor governments favored income redistribution; Conservative governments favored investment incentives. As the two parties alternated in power, each one modified, but did not eliminate its predecessor's changes, and the British tax code became a maze. "No one would design such a system on purpose," writes Anthony King, a British political scientist,

"and nobody did."

Britain long ago surrendered its dubious pride of place as the heaviest taxer to Sweden. In 1976, Britons enjoyed the spectacle of Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman fleeing to their country in search of a tax haven! In comparisons among nations, Sweden holds the world record, claiming half of its gross domestic product in taxes.

Surprisingly, corporate tax burdens are light in socialist Sweden—even by U.S. standards. (See charts, p. 84.) And many of the wealthy also escape heavy taxation. The reason: Sweden uses its tax code aggressively to encourage government-approved investments (e.g., in steelmaking or shipbuilding) that promote economic stability. Perhaps because it never experienced the sharp break with feudalism that most of Western Europe did, Sweden is the ultimate "nanny" state. Capital invested "properly" is taxed lightly; investments not deemed to be socially useful (e.g., yachts, private estates, jewelry) are taxed at confiscatory rates. Likewise, while Sweden claims much of its citizens' personal income, it gives much back. In the United States, many government benefits are means-tested; but 75 percent of all Swedes receive some sort of benefit—family allowances, tuition assistance, job training.

West Germany funds a large share of its social welfare outlays, as it did in Bismarck's time, through regressive payroll taxes. Like Sweden, it uses tax incentives to lower certain burdens on the wealthy. Capital gains on stocks and bonds, subject to a tax of up to 33 percent in the United States, are exempt in West Germany—as well as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Japan. (But the United States, virtually alone among Western nations, leaves gains from the sale of one's home, in most cases, untouched.)

In France, one of the most heavily taxed nations in Europe, successive governments after World War II clung to the tradition of

indirect taxation. France adopted a value added tax (VAT), a consumption tax on goods and services, in 1954, more than a decade before the rest of Europe. The French, like other people, have shaped the tax system to reflect their culture. Wine is taxed at a lower rate than mineral water or Coca Cola; a tax on yachts, horses, limousines, and other "signs of wealth" remains as a legacy of the Revolution. "The effect is that on the whole the rich in France are far more discreet than they are in most countries," notes historian Theodore Zeldin.

France has a steeply progressive income tax, but it is easy to evade—there is no compulsory withholding. To collect taxes, note Richard Rose and Guy Peters, officials in France (and Italy) "estimate what they think an individual earns, and wait for the person to accept the figure or bargain for a lower tax assessment. Like buyers and sellers in a used car transaction, tax collectors try to get as much as possible, and citizens to pay as little as possible."

Sweden, alone among European nations, purports to have almost no tax avoidance. The Finance Ministry audits each tax return. If discrepancies are discovered, the auditor consults a local tax board about the suspect's means. The state has a long reach: A small town of 20,000 souls may have 10 or 12 boards, so board members know taxpayers personally.

Long gone are the days when impoverished feudal monarchs traveled through their kingdoms importuning their subjects for revenue. Some economists today wonder whether Western Europe is approaching a ceiling on the taxes that can be extracted to support social welfare spending. Yet, with the exception of Denmark in 1973, no European nation has experienced a "tax revolt" since World War

II. Only opinion polls and the growth of Western Europe's "underground" economies testify to popular discontent.

Western Europe has kept a watchful eye on Ronald Reagan's tax reform experiments in the United States. Our massive budget deficits have convinced European leaders not to embrace the supply side arguments used to justify Reagan's 1981 tax cuts. On the other hand, Reagan's 1986 reforms—which reduced individual income tax rates but closed many loophole-creating investment incentives—have attracted much interest and several imitators, notably Britain's Margaret Thatcher. Virtually every Western European nation, along with Japan, has taken at least some modest steps to lower tax rates and broaden the tax base (without lightening the total tax burden) to increase economic efficiency. "The tax reform movement is universal," writes Brookings' Joseph Pechman. Even in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's proposal for a steep progressive income tax (peaking at 90 percent) on earnings in the infant private sector provoked such loud protests that it was dropped.

But taxes will remain high in Western Europe because Europeans want the security that generous government spending affords. Even in the United States, where the federal tax burden diminished slightly during the Reagan era (as a percentage of gross national product), federal *spending* rose slightly.

In most nations, at most times in history, the argument has been less over *how much* government should tax than *whom* it should tax. Over the millennia, tax burdens have shifted from the very poor to the middle class and the rich. Senator Russell B. Long (D-La.) once summed up the politics of taxation this way: "Don't tax you, don't tax me. Tax that fellow behind the tree."

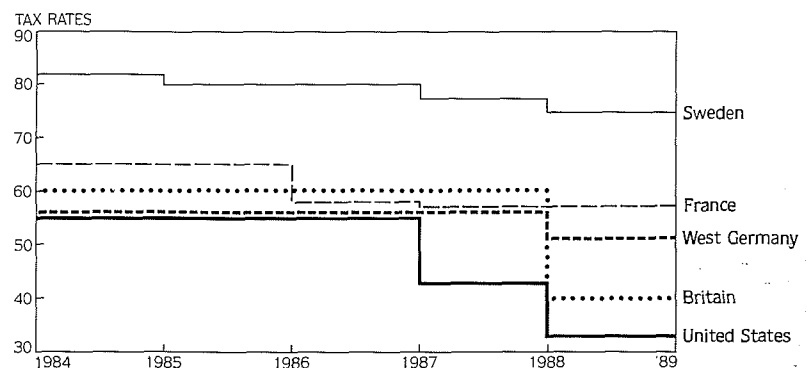
TAX BURDENS AND TAX SOURCES IN 10 NATIONS¹

	Taxes as a Percentage of GDP	Tax Sources as a Percentage of Total Government Revenues					
		Personal Income	Corporate Income	Payroll	Consumption ²	Property	Wealth ³
Sweden	50.5	38.5	3.5	29.1	27.3	0.9	0.7
France	45.6	12.8	4.3	45.7	33.8	2.5	0.8
Netherlands	44.9	19.5	7.0	43.9	26.8	1.8	0.9
Britain	38.1	26.0	12.9	17.5	32.4	10.5	0.6
West Germany	37.7	28.7	6.1	36.5	26.3	1.1	1.3
Italy	34.7	27.4	9.5	35.3	27.7	NA	0.2
Canada	33.2	36.0	8.4	13.3	32.8	8.6	0.9
Australia	30.4	45.1	9.2	5.5	35.5	4.6	NA
United States	29.2	35.7	7.1	29.4	17.9	9.1	0.8
Japan	28.0	24.8	21.0	30.2	17.1	5.7	1.2

¹ National, state, and local taxes, 1985. ² Includes sales, value-added, and excise taxes, tariffs, and miscellaneous levies. ³ Includes wealth taxes and estate, inheritance, and gift taxes.

The tax "mix" (above) varies even more from nation to nation than does the overall tax burden. The differences reflect cultural and political factors. For example, property taxes are heaviest in the United States, Britain, and Canada, where local government is strongest. Despite an international trend toward lower income tax rates (left), sharp differences remain: Sweden's top rate (75 percent) is almost twice Britain's. Tax rates on average factory workers (below) also vary greatly.

REDUCTIONS IN TOP PERSONAL INCOME TAX RATES, 1984-88



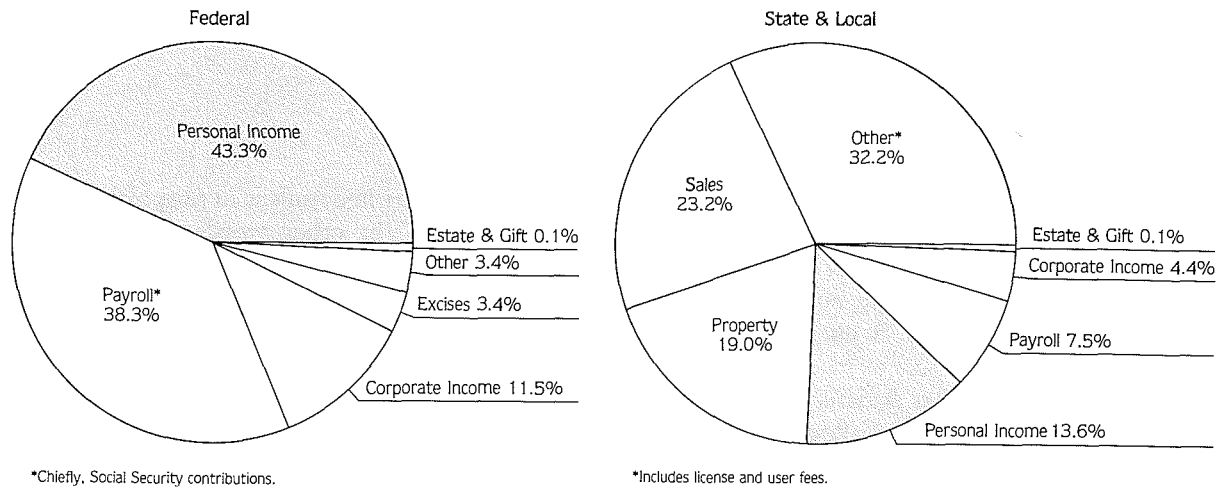
INCOME TAX RATES ON AVERAGE FACTORY WORKERS, 1986* (As a percentage of gross earnings)

1) Sweden	34.5%	6) Canada	11.0%
2) Australia	17.5%	7) Netherlands	8.5%
3) Britain	17.4%	8) West Germany	8.3%
4) Italy	13.7%	9) Japan	3.1%
5) United States	12.4%	10) France	0%

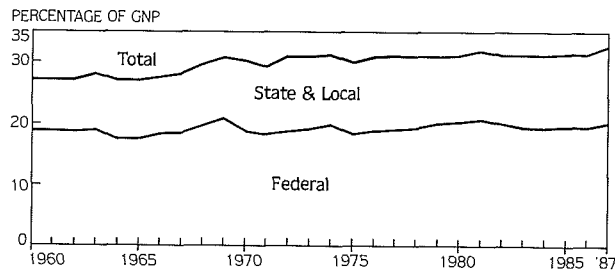
*Reflects the impact of standard deductions.

Sources: Joseph Pechman, *World Tax Reform and Federal Tax Policy*; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; District of Columbia, Department of Finance and Revenue.

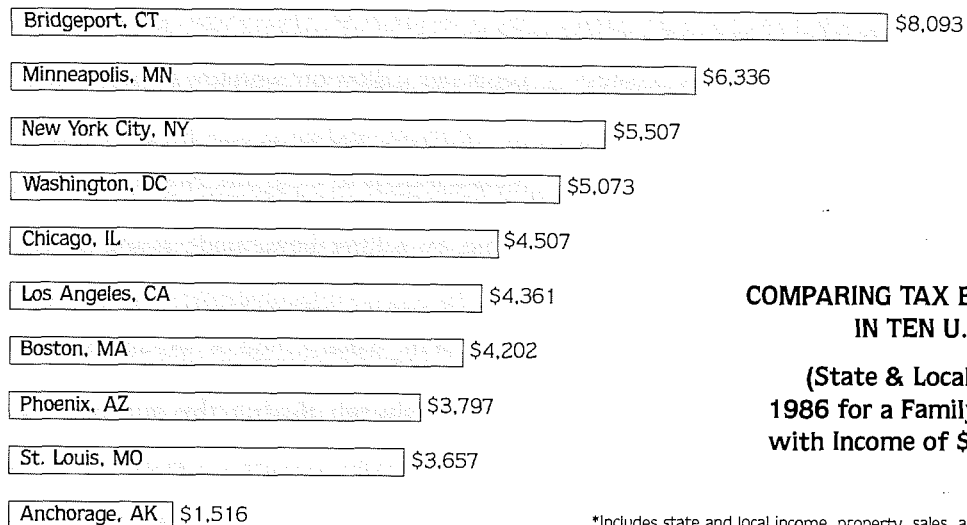
**WHERE THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S MONEY COMES FROM:
Federal, State & Local Tax Revenues, 1987**



**THE GROWING U.S. TAX BURDEN, 1960-87
(Taxes as a percentage of gross national product)**



A division of labor: Washington (above) relies mostly on income and payroll levies; the states and localities impose regressive sales taxes, property levies (in effect, wealth taxes), and various fees. Surprisingly, since 1960, the state and local tax bite has grown by 50 percent (to 12.2 percent of GNP), faster than has Washington's. As the chart below shows, large regional contrasts remain. In addition to the taxes shown, the family would pay about \$10,000 to the IRS and \$3,000 in Social Security contributions.



**COMPARING TAX BURDENS
IN TEN U.S. CITIES**

**(State & Local Taxes in
1986 for a Family of Four
with Income of \$50,000*)**

*Includes state and local income, property, sales, and auto taxes.

THE AMERICAN WAY

by W. Elliot Brownlee

This Destruction of the Tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important Consequences, and so lasting, that I can't but consider it as an Epocha in History."

So wrote John Adams in December 1773, on the morning after 150 men disguised as Indians tossed the cargo of three tea-laden British ships into Boston harbor. At times since then, the politics of taxation in America has seemed almost like a reprise of the Boston Tea Party.

More than the people of most nations, Americans generally have chosen to rely on the most painful forms of taxation (e.g., direct levies on property and income), keeping the tribute rendered "unto Caesar" at the forefront of public attention. Not only have Americans remained deeply unfriendly to the taxman, but our debates over taxation have been vehicles for defining larger conflicts—between regions and classes, and over the meaning of "equality," "fairness," and "justice."

The nation has, in effect, arrived at three successive sets of responses to these conflicts, fundamentally altering the federal tax system during two of the nation's greatest wars. Today, without a war but with a sizeable military budget, we may be on the verge of a fourth transformation.

The Republic's first tax "system" was the least controversial. The Framers of the Constitution, associating taxes with the abuses of monarchy, severely limited the taxing powers of the new national government. The Constitution specified (in Article 1, Section 9) that "No capitation or other

direct tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census." In other words, "direct" taxes were to be apportioned among the states, with the most populous states bearing the largest burden. Thus, because it was virtually impossible to devise a formula to satisfy the Constitution, the new national government was effectively denied the power to impose property taxes, then the most common and productive levy.

The remaining alternatives were "poll" (or head) taxes and "indirect" taxes, such as tariffs or excises. Poll taxes were out of the question: They had been intensely unpopular in colonial days. Excises were hated just as passionately. They discriminated against the producers whose commodities were taxed, and as Patrick Henry had argued in opposing the Constitution in 1787, they threatened liberty itself: "Suppose an excise man will demand leave to enter your cellar, or house, by virtue of his office; perhaps he may call on the militia to enable him to go."

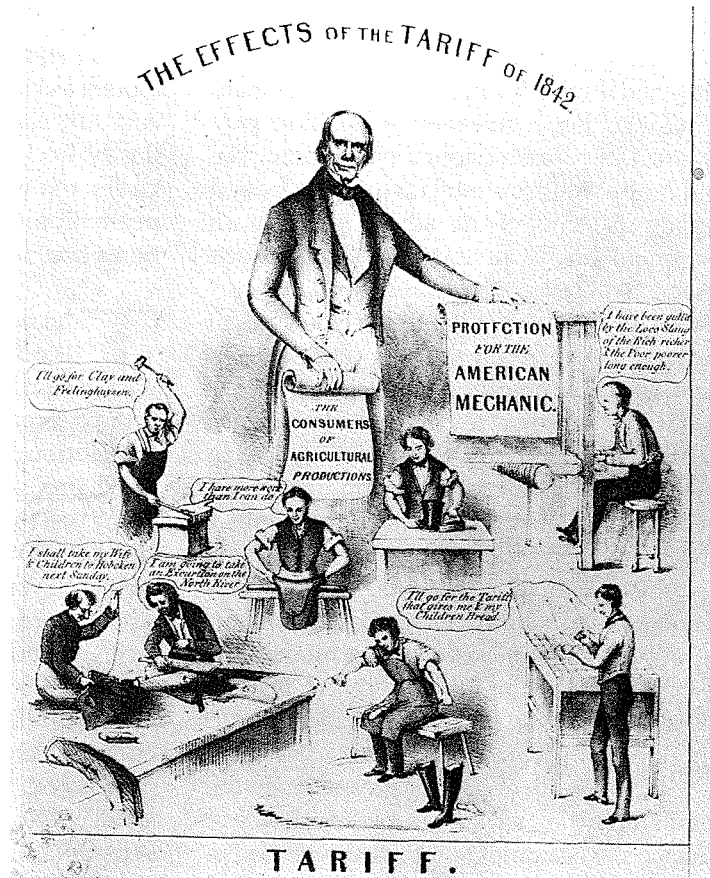
Nevertheless, at the insistence of George Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, Congress in 1791 imposed a stiff excise of seven to 18 cents per gallon on whiskey. It was a first-class political blunder. The tax fell chiefly on the frontier farmers, from western Massachusetts to Ohio and North Carolina, who derived much of their meager cash income by selling homemade grain liquor. The first scattered acts of frontier tax resistance began to snowball into a dangerous movement. When a mob of 500 disgruntled farmers sacked the home of a federal agent near Pittsburgh during the summer of

1794, President Washington was forced to strap on his saber once again and muster some 15,000 militiamen to put down the "insurrection." The Whiskey Rebels disappeared; so, too, before long, did the whiskey excise.

Without much debate, Congress thereafter agreed to rely almost exclusively on tariffs, the only major revenue source left to it. This was the first American tax system: Because the U.S. government's needs were modest, tariffs generally could be kept low.

Import levies on certain goods, however, crept upwards, especially after the War of 1812 swelled the new government's budget. They continued to grow for a different reason: The budding manufacturers of textiles, clothing, boots, and shoes in New England and the Middle Atlantic states, represented chiefly by the Whig party, favored high protectionist tariff walls against imported European goods—the tariffs were so high that imports were restricted and customs revenues reduced. Northern merchants and Southern planters correctly perceived that they would bear the chief burden. South Carolina's John C. Calhoun protested that protectionism was "an immense tax on one portion of the community to put money into the pockets of another." The nation, he warned, was fracturing into a "taxeating" North and a "taxpaying" South.

When Congress imposed the "tariff of abominations" in 1828, Calhoun responded with his famous Nullification Doctrine, ar-



High tariffs helped the workingman, according to a Whig cartoonist. At the time, Democrats rejected protectionism; today, the Democratic party is the center of protectionist sentiment.

guing that the states could void acts of Congress. And, in 1832, an angry South Carolina legislature finally barred federal customs agents from collecting duties within the state. As President Andrew Jackson dispatched reinforcements to the federal garrisons at Forts Sumter and Moultrie, the legislature summoned volunteers to protect the state from "invasion." A clash was averted only when the Whigs, led by Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, agreed to tariff reductions.

From that point until the Civil War, Jackson's Democratic party dominated the government and kept tariffs low, and even trimmed them during the 1840s and 1850s.

However, when the Civil War broke out, Northern manufacturers got the high tariffs they had always wanted, as part of Abraham Lincoln's huge emergency taxation program. U.S. Commissioner of Revenue David Ames Wells summed up the new federal policy in terms of the advice given to an Irishman on his first visit to Donnybrook Fair: "Wherever you see a head, hit it." Wells' version was: "Wherever you find an article, a product, a trade, a profession, a sale, or a source of income, tax it!"

The Civil War levies included excise taxes on virtually all consumer goods, license taxes on every profession except the ministry, stamp taxes on legal documents, a federal property tax, an inheritance tax, and special taxes on corporations. And with surprisingly little controversy, Congress even imposed its first income tax—a moderately progressive levy on the well-to-do.* The necessities of war swept away all objections to the Lincoln program.

Virtually all of these taxes, except the tariffs and the "sin" taxes on whiskey and tobacco, were quickly repealed after Appomattox. The income tax, popular in rural areas (where few citizens were wealthy enough to be subject to it), survived until 1872. But, because Southern Democrats were virtually powerless, tariffs remained high. Until 1913, the average duty on imports rarely dropped below 40 percent and frequently ran closer to 50 percent. Business lobbyists won even stiffer rates on a few selected goods: iron, steel, cotton tex-

tiles, and certain woolsens.

The stiff post-Civil War tariffs were not aimed, as earlier tariffs were, solely to raise revenue. Designed to shield American industry from foreign competition, the new tariffs represented a stunning victory for protectionism. They constituted the nation's first major tax overhaul.

The new tariffs were also a victory for the Republican party, which represented a powerful array of interest groups created by America's Industrial Revolution. Northern manufacturers enjoyed protection from European imports; many of their factory hands and other skilled workers believed protectionism kept U.S. wages high. Affluent Northerners who owned government bonds knew that tariff revenues supplied their interest payments. Governors and mayors throughout the North liked feeding from what became known as the "pork barrel"—Congress' annual Rivers and Harbors appropriation for local public works—which tariff revenues kept full. And the vast army of Civil War veterans received increasingly generous pensions from tariff collections.

But criticism of the protective tariffs mounted, particularly among farmers in the South and West and among middle-class consumers, who got little from protectionism except higher prices. By the 1880s, Washington had retired its Civil War debts, killed the income tax, and, in an era when peacetime federal outlays were low, was running embarrassing budget surpluses; it had no excuses left for high taxes. Still, the tariffs survived unscathed.

In 1887, President Grover Cleveland, the first Democrat elected to the White

*The nation's first income tax began in 1861 as a levy of 3 percent on incomes over \$800; it was increased in 1862 to a tax of 3 percent on incomes from \$600 to \$10,000 and 5 percent on those above \$10,000; and increased again in 1864 to rates of 5 and 10 percent. At the time, \$600 was roughly twice the average annual male income.

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House since James Buchanan (1857–61), stunned the nation when he broke with the protectionists and devoted his entire State of the Union speech to the tariff, blasting it as a “vicious, inequitable and illogical source of unnecessary taxation.”

Opposition to the tariff grew as Big Business emerged during the 1880s and 1890s, and as a major economic depression enveloped the nation during the mid-1890s, sharpening a widespread sense of grievance over the growing inequality of wealth and worries over what appeared to be diminishing prospects for small businessmen, professionals, and skilled workmen. “Trusts, combinations, and monopolies,” Cleveland and his allies charged, restricted economic opportunity and threatened republican political institutions, just as King George III had. And the protective tariff was the “mother of Trusts.”

The Cleveland Democrats, true to their Jacksonian heritage, merely favored a return to low taxes and minimal government. Other foes of the tariff had more ambitious notions.

Henry George, a crusading California newspaperman, had proposed the “single tax” in 1879 in *Progress and Poverty*, a book read by millions of Americans. “Poverty,” George wrote, “deepens as wealth increases, and wages are forced down while productive power grows, because land, which is the source of all wealth and the field of all labor, is monopolized.” His idea was simple. Government would raise all of its revenue from just one source: It would tax away all the value of land that resulted from its *location*, as opposed to its “use value.” In a single stroke, George believed that he could destroy monopolies, distribute wealth more evenly, make land speculation unprofitable and depressions impossible, and eliminate poverty.

The single tax, however, faced a Constitutional barrier: Article 1, Section 9.

George and his followers thus promoted his plan at the state and local levels, where property taxes loomed large. After moving to New York City, George mounted a third party bid for the mayoralty in 1886, and finished a surprisingly strong second to Democrat Abram S. Hewitt, outpolling the GOP’s Theodore Roosevelt.

Nevertheless, the single taxers never got very far. They faced overwhelming opposition from real estate interests and small property owners, including farmers, who feared that the reform would ruin their chances, however modest, to profit from their holdings.

Reviving the income tax held much greater promise. Farmers in the South and West backed it. So did many working- and middle-class Americans in the cities. Like the single taxers, advocates of income taxation argued that their tax would not touch the wages and salaries of ordinary people. Going beyond “ability to pay”—a long accepted idea—many of these advocates called for a *progressive* income tax that would recapture the “tribute of monopolists” and break up large concentrations of wealth.

During the depressed 1890s, rising farm protest increased the appeal of the income tax, and the Populist Party endorsed it in 1892. Senator William Jennings Bryan (D-Neb.), the charismatic orator, forced the inclusion of a modest income tax—a “flat” tax of 2 percent on incomes over \$4,000—in the Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1894. “The Democratic hen has hatched a Populist chicken at last,” cackled the *New York Tribune*.

But the Supreme Court, in *Pollock v. Farmers’ Loan and Trust Co.* (1895), ruled that the income tax violated Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution. Concurring with the majority, Justice Stephen J. Field issued a telling warning: “The present assault on



A dip in tariff revenues during the late 1870s sparked a brief drive for a progressive U.S. income tax. Opponents quickly stifled the "communistic" idea.

capital," he declared, would be "the stepping stone to others, larger and more sweeping, till our political contests will become a war of the poor against the rich; a war constantly growing in intensity and bitterness."

The Democrats did not give up. In Congress, Representative Cordell Hull of Tennessee (later Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of State) denounced the tariff as an "infamous system of class legislation" that forced the workingman to pay most of the cost of government while "virtually ex-

empting the Carnegies, the Vanderbilts, the Morgans and the Rockefellers with their aggregated billions of hoarded wealth."

In 1909, with the help of Western "progressive" Republicans, notably Senator Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin (and a surprise assist from President William Howard Taft, a conservative Republican), the Democrats finally won Congressional approval of the Sixteenth Amendment: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever sources derived, without apportionment among the several states and without regard to any census or enumeration."

Within months of Woodrow Wilson's victory in the presidential election of 1912, the states had ratified the amendment. Popular enthusiasm for federal attacks on monopoly power was at its peak—Wilson's chief competitor in the three-cornered contest had been an equally ardent foe of the trusts, Theodore Roosevelt, running as a "Bull Moose" Progressive. (President Taft had finished a distant third.) Wilson had described his campaign as "a second struggle for emancipation," explaining that "if America is not to

have free enterprise, then she can have freedom of no sort whatever."

The Progressive ferment produced such landmark reforms as the creation of the U.S. Department of Labor (1912), the Federal Reserve system (1913), the Federal Trade Commission (1914). By comparison, the first modern American income tax, contained in the Underwood Tariff of 1913, was something of an anti-climax. It set a "normal" rate of 1 percent on both individual and corporate incomes, and exempted married couples earning less than \$4,001—

about six times the average American male's income at the time.* A graduated surtax began at 1 percent on incomes over \$20,000, rising modestly to 6 percent on incomes over \$500,000. The income tax was high enough to pay for tariff reform, but it would do next to nothing to redistribute the nation's wealth.

That equation changed dramatically when Europe went to war in the summer of 1914, disrupting foreign trade and shrinking U.S. tariff receipts. Washington would have to look elsewhere for tax dollars. In Congress, many powerful "anti-preparedness" legislators from the South and West, such as Representative Claude Kitchin (D-N.C.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, also happened to be stout champions of tax reform. They would go along with a national defense buildup, for a price. "If the forces of big business are to plunge this country into a saturnalia of extravagance for war purposes in a time of peace," declared Representative Warren Worth Bailey in 1916, then "the forces of business should put up the money."

Republicans and conservative Democrats fought to spread the "preparedness" burden more broadly through such measures as a national sales tax. But, with the ratification of the Sixteenth Amendment, the people had spoken. As U.S. entry into World War I neared, the nation embraced its third major tax system: "soak-the-rich" income taxation.

The Revenue Act of 1916 boosted individual and corporate income tax rates (to a maximum of 10 percent), introduced federal estate taxation (at a progressive rate, rising to 5 percent on estates of more than \$50,000), and imposed special taxes on war industries. In 1917, when America finally

*This meant that a couple earning \$4,000 paid no taxes. Today, a family earning \$120,000 (six times the average male income) would pay about \$24,000 to the I.R.S. after taking various deductions.

entered the European war, Congress passed "the most gigantic fiscal enactment in history" up to that time, according to economist Edwin R. A. Seligman. The top rate on individual incomes soared to 83 percent. A radical new progressive tax on corporate "excess profits"—defined essentially as anything more than an 8 percent annual rate of return on invested capital—shifted the burden of financing the war effort to industrial America. By 1918, businesses large and small were paying some \$2.5 billion, more than 70 percent of all federal tax revenues.

To the dismay of Big Business, key Congressional Democrats, including Representative Kitchin of the Ways and Means Committee, clearly hoped to make permanent the wartime excess profits tax. Not until the next war would the battle between the corporations and liberal advocates of "soak-the-rich" taxation end.

At first, the nation retreated from "radical" taxation during the "return to normalcy" after World War I, just as it had after the Civil War. Under a succession of Republican presidents during the 1920s, Congress abolished the excess profits tax, lightened taxes on the rich, and created numerous tax "loopholes" for business, such as the oil depletion allowance.

The federal income tax, however, survived and became the chief source of federal revenues. Again, the tax found a surprising friend: Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury under Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover.

In many ways, the frail but determined Treasury boss of the 1920s, (the joke in Washington was that three presidents served under him) sounded like a Republican "supply side" economist of the 1980s. "When initiative is crippled by legislation or by a tax system which denies [the taxpayer] a right to receive a reasonable share

PUZZLING OVER TAX CUTS

George Bush's proposal to cut the maximum tax on capital gains from 33 percent to 15 percent has reopened an old and convoluted debate over the economic effects of tax cuts.

Few economists doubt that such a cut would stimulate investment. One question is: How much? The second question: Would a cut increase or reduce federal tax revenues?

Such questions, especially the second one, probably would not have been seriously considered today without the work during the 1970s of Arthur Laffer, the founder of modern "supply side" economics. Laffer said that certain tax cuts would ultimately boost economic activity and, hence, tax revenues.

The uncertainty over the Bush proposal exists, notes a 1988 study by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), in part "because taxpayers have considerable discretion over whether and when to pay capital gains taxes." If taxes are high, people may delay selling stocks, bonds, and other assets, or even keep them to pass along to their heirs.

After two reductions in capital gains taxes, in 1978 and 1981, revenues from the tax had more than doubled by 1985. The CBO suggests that this was largely the result of one-time "dumping" of long-held assets. But the Treasury Department believes that the cuts increased taxpayers' willingness to invest. As for revenues, the CBO estimates that the Bush proposal would cost the Internal Revenue Service \$4-\$8 billion annually (although "the possibility of a revenue gain cannot be entirely rejected"); a Treasury study predicts higher revenues.

Meanwhile, both sides await the results of the 1986 tax reforms, which increased the maximum capital gains tax (from 20 percent to 33 percent) to offset the reduction in top income tax rates. (Only the United States has raised capital gains taxes in recent years; in Japan and several Western European nations, capital gains are tax exempt.) Amid today's uncertain economic climate and large federal budget deficits, the results are not only matters of academic interest.

Still underway are assessments of President Reagan's 1981 income tax cuts. By 1986, contrary to the predictions of some "supply side"

economists, Washington's revenues from income taxes had not gained the levels projected earlier under the old rates. But one group of Americans was paying more: those earning over \$200,000. Moreover, the affluent were bearing a larger share of the income tax burden. The top one percent of taxpayers (with adjusted gross incomes of \$100,000 or more) contributed 26.1 percent of revenues in 1986 versus 18.1 percent in 1981. The poorer half of the population (earning less than \$25,000) paid 6.4 percent of the taxes, down from 7.5 percent in 1981.

"The rich are paying a larger share of income taxes because the rich are claiming a larger share of the income," argues the *New Republic's* Michael Kinsley, among others. Indeed, Americans in the top five percent of the income distribution claimed 17 percent of all income in 1986, up from 15.4 percent in 1981, a 10 percent increase.

But Harvard's Lawrence Lindsey believes that the rich did not really get much richer. In part, these business executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs chose, in response to the 1981 tax cuts, to take more of their compensation in cash rather than tax-free fringe benefits such as company cars. Lindsey says that the tax cuts, which were larger proportionally for upper income groups, have also en-

couraged the affluent to work harder and invest more than other groups. That, he believes, has increased upward social mobility.

Before the Johnson era's 1964 tax cuts, the wealthiest two percent of Americans got more than 50 percent of their income from "unearned" dividends and interest—suggesting the dominance of "old money" families at the top. By 1983, the proportion of "unearned" income had dropped to about 19 percent for the wealthy, suggesting that most of the rich were no longer from "old money" families.

Supply siders like Lindsey, replies Kinsley, should admit that the Reagan-era tax cuts were intended to provide "more general prosperity at the cost of more inequality." Only one thing is certain: a new round of debate as data on the effects of the 1986 tax reforms slowly become available.



Arthur Laffer

of his earnings," he warned in *Taxes: The People's Business* (1924), "then he will no longer exert himself and the country will be deprived of the energy on which its continued greatness depends." Yet, Mellon also persuaded corporations and the rich that they should not press for a national sales tax, which would shift much of the nation's tax burden back to the poor and middle class. By consenting to *some* progressive income taxation, he argued, they would prove their civic responsibility and defuse more radical attacks on capital.

The Mellon "recipe" remained popular during the flush years of the Jazz Age. But the Great Depression revived public resentments over private wealth and anxieties about the structure of opportunity in America.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, like Wilson before him, believed in "soak-the-rich" taxation. At first, he held back. Alarmed by federal budget deficits, eager to win business support for early New Deal recovery programs, he supported new taxes that were regressive but could produce revenues immediately (e.g., whiskey and tobacco excises). He agreed to finance his new Social Security system (1935) with regressive payroll contributions as a way of encouraging Americans' sense of individual entitlement to the benefits, and thus fending off future conservative tax-cutters.

As the Depression wore on, however, popular discontent forced FDR's hand. In June 1935, responding to the "thunder on the Left," particularly Senator Huey Long's Share the Wealth movement,* the president finally unveiled a "soak-the-rich" tax

program of his own. He called for a variety of corporate taxes, surtaxes that would raise the top income tax rate on individuals from 63 to 79 percent, and an inheritance tax. (A federal estate tax, levied on the estate itself, was already in effect. The inheritance tax was to be paid by *recipients* of bequests.) Echoing Woodrow Wilson, he explained that his purpose was "not to destroy wealth, but to create a broader range of opportunity, to restrain the growth of unwholesome and sterile accumulations and to lay the burdens of government where they can best be carried."

Congress promptly gave FDR much of what he wanted. The next year, he focused his attention on business, asking Congress to replace the existing corporate income taxes with an "undistributed profits" tax, which would tax all profits which corporations did not pass on as dividends to their stockholders. Again, the rationale was Wilsonian. Roosevelt intended to reform corporate behavior. He was convinced that Big Business deliberately amassed undistributed profits to avoid taxation and used the money unwisely or unfairly. After Congress enacted a watered-down version of his proposal, FDR advertised it during his 1936 reelection campaign as a tax that "made it harder for big corporations to retain the huge undistributed profits with which they gobble up small business."

Roosevelt wanted to go further. But his politically disastrous "Court-packing" fight in 1937 and the recession of 1937-38 gave his foes the opportunity to counterattack.

The Depression, which had helped FDR persuade his countrymen of the need for heavier "soak-the-rich" taxation, now worked the other way. Prominent Democratic businessmen such as Bernard Baruch and Joseph P. Kennedy joined Republicans in charging that Roosevelt's taxes on

*At the core of the Share the Wealth Program were tax proposals which Long had begun to develop as early as 1916. In 1935, Long called for taxing away all family fortunes over \$5 million and all family incomes above \$1 million. With the revenue, Long promised to provide a "homestead" allowance and a guaranteed annual income to each needy family. Yet, one contemporary study indicated that even stiffer taxes than Long proposed would provide only a bit more than \$400 per needy family.

business had triggered the recession by discouraging investment. Americans who had seen their hopes for a long overdue economic recovery suddenly dashed—especially professionals, small businessmen, prosperous farmers, and skilled workers—were ready to believe them. In 1938, a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats slashed the tax on undistributed profits. In 1939, Congress formally canceled New Deal tax reform by eliminating the tax—“one of the few New Deal innovations ever retracted by subsequent legislation,” as economist Herbert Stein notes.

FDR had another chance after Pearl Harbor, when Washington needed quick infusions of cash to finance the war effort. In Britain, John Maynard Keynes was calling for “a plan conceived in a spirit of social justice, a plan which uses a time of general sacrifice, not as an excuse for postponing desirable reforms, but as an opportunity for moving further . . . toward reducing inequalities.” Roosevelt agreed. In 1941, his Secretary of the Treasury, Henry M. Morgenthau, proposed taxing away all corporate profits above a 6 percent rate of return. Roosevelt went further. “In time of this grave national danger, when all excess income should go to win the war,” he told a joint session of Congress in 1942, “no American citizen ought to have a net income, after he has paid his taxes, of more than \$25,000.” (This is the equivalent of \$200,000 in 1988 dollars.)

Congress was having none of it. The American middle class accepted the verdict of *Time*, which warned that Morgenthau’s plan would put corporations in a “weakened financial position to feel the slump and unemployment that will come with the peace.”

Only once thereafter did Roosevelt challenge Congress. In 1943, he vetoed a revenue act which, because of the phasing in of

tax withholding, forgave an entire year’s tax liability. Noting that the lion’s share of the benefits of forgiveness went to the wealthy, Roosevelt called the bill “not a tax bill but a tax relief bill, providing relief not for the needy but for the greedy.” For the first time in history, Congress overrode a presidential veto of a revenue act, dealing FDR a humiliating defeat.

Beginning in 1940, Congress, acting largely on its own, gradually transformed the income tax during the war years from a “class tax” to a “mass tax.” It steadily lowered the personal exemption, “including in” more and more people. As time went on, clerks and salesmen and factory foremen joined wealthier Americans in the painful ritual of filling out 1040 forms every April. The number of taxpayers jumped from 3.9 million in 1939 to 42.6 million in 1945. Membership in the “community of taxpayers,” two economists noted, “spread from the country club district down to the railroad tracks and then over the other side of the tracks.”

Patriotic fervor eased popular acceptance of the “mass tax.” (Songwriter Irving Berlin, commissioned by the Treasury Department, penned an ode: “You see those bombers in the sky/Rockefeller helped to build them/So did I.”) Generous deductions (e.g., for interest on home mortgages) satisfied the middle class, while the steep progressivity of the tax attracted the support of lower-income taxpayers. And the introduction of payroll withholding in 1943 took much of the sting out of taxpaying. As former TV anchorman David Brinkley writes in his memoir of the war years, “Congress and the president learned, to their pleasure, what automobile salesmen had learned long before: that installment buyers could be induced to pay more because they looked not at the total debt but only at the monthly payments.”

Despite the heavy burden it imposed on

the middle class, the World War II tax structure had a longevity that the World War I changes lacked. It survived without radical alteration until the 1980s.

The Cold War (and the Great Society) helped keep taxes high. One reason that Woodrow Wilson's war taxes, like Lincoln's before them, were rolled back was simply that government outlays dropped sharply after the guns fell silent. Victory over the Axis powers, by contrast, brought no vast reductions. The need to maintain a large defense establishment to deter Soviet expansionism and, later, the growth of the welfare state, sustained Washington's appetite for revenue.

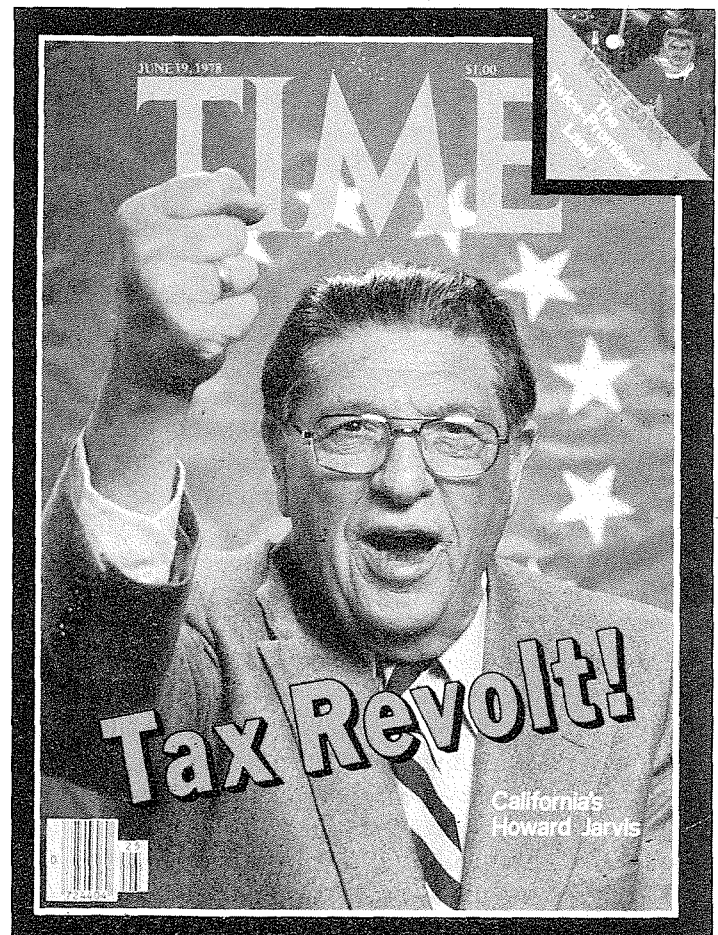
And the income tax was well suited to satisfying it. Not only did the progressive tax seem equitable to most Americans by the 1950s, but it was also a reliable money raiser.

Through the prosperous 1950s and 1960s, neither political party sought to alter the nation's basic tax formula. Instead, they busied themselves with refining and manipulating it. In theory steeply progressive, the tax code was filled with "loopholes." By the mid-1960s, Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Wa.) could observe: "The first nine pages of the Internal Revenue Code define income; the remaining 1,100 pages spin the web of exceptions and preferences." Gradually, the Democrats backed away from the Wilson-Roosevelt approach to soak-the-rich corporate taxation. Defend-

ing his 1964 tax cuts, President Lyndon Johnson sounded very much like Andrew Mellon, arguing that reductions in corporate and capital gains levies would boost investment and avert a recession.* Herbert Stein later called the 1964 measure "the great victory of conservative fiscal policy."

But the debate was not over. One of the advantages of the individual income tax, from Washington's point of view, was that

*The 1964 tax cuts, originally proposed by President John F. Kennedy, included a relatively small but symbolically significant \$1.3 billion cut in corporate taxes. The top rate on personal income dropped from 91 to 70 percent; the bottom rate went from 20 to 14 percent.



California voters stunned the nation in June 1978 by passing Proposition 13, which cut local property taxes by 50 percent. The "tax revolt" spread, helping Ronald Reagan win the 1980 election.

moderate inflation yielded politically painless "hidden" tax increases by slowly pushing workers into higher tax brackets. "Bracket creep" worked reasonably well until the mid-1960s. Then, Lyndon Johnson, reluctant to choose between the Great Society and the Vietnam war, and unwilling to ask for higher levies to pay for both, embraced the deadly combination of easy money and deficit financing. It was a fateful decision. As inflation surged, reaching a then-unbelievable five percent in 1969, bracket creep became bracket leap. When the economy also began to sour, taxpayers grew restless. A new debate over the nation's tax system began.

During the 1970s, liberal tax specialists, such as Harvard's Stanley Surrey, exposed the extraordinary individual and corporate loopholes (e.g., the oil depletion allowance) that Congress had written into the tax code over the years, and coined the catchphrase "tax expenditures" to describe them. Along with economist Joseph Pechman, Surrey called for elimination of the massive "horizontal" inequities thus introduced into the system: Individuals with roughly the same income might pay vastly different taxes, depending on what tax loopholes they (or their accountants) were able to exploit. The richer the taxpayers, the bigger the loopholes they seemed to find.

The momentum for tax reform grew. But what kind of reform?

In an ironic accident of history and geography, the leading spokesman for liberal reform emerged from the South, the conservative champion from the North. In 1976, presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, of Georgia, calling the income tax system a "disgrace to the human race" and a "welfare program for the rich," vowed to overhaul the whole system and make it more progressive. Representative Jack Kemp (R-

N.Y.) led a coterie of "supply side" conservatives who revived the arguments of Andrew Mellon, calling for tax cuts that would stimulate business investment and personal incentives to "work, save, and invest." In California and other states, meanwhile, "grassroots" conservatives led Proposition 13-style "tax revolts," seeking chiefly to reduce local property taxes.

Jimmy Carter got the first shot at reform, but found himself frustrated by Congress and ensnared in his own moralizing rhetoric over corporate deductions for "three martini lunches" and other petty matters. In 1978, the self-styled populist reluctantly put his signature to a federal revenue act that provided only minimal tax relief and simplification for the majority of Americans while it made generous cuts in capital gains and business taxes.

After Ronald Reagan embraced the supply side cause and vanquished Carter in the election of 1980, his new administration engineered passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, which contained the most dramatic tax cuts since the 1920s. The act sharply reduced income tax rates, accelerated corporate depreciation write-offs, lowered the tax rate on capital gains, and, significantly, ended "bracket creep" by indexing personal income tax rates to inflation. Summing up the liberal view of the "Reagan Revolution," Harvard's John Kenneth Galbraith wrote that the White House believed that "The poor need the incentive of lower benefits, while the rich require the incentive of lower taxes."

In 1984, newspaper headlines across the nation flashed the astonishing fact discovered by an obscure Washington tax analyst named Robert McIntyre: 128 large corporations had paid no income tax at all during some years after 1981. Among them were General Electric, Boeing, and Dow Chemical. That news, along with other flaws discovered in the 1981 law and the

THE NEW BALANCING ACT

"I am not going to raise taxes, period," said George Bush during the 1988 campaign. Nevertheless, politicians and academics have continued to debate new revenue proposals to cut the \$140 billion Federal budget deficit. The yardstick is the effect of any new tax on economic growth; apart from Jesse Jackson, no leading Democrat has called for revival of 1930s "soak-the-rich" taxation.

Congress has been reluctant to reopen the Pandora's box of the income tax. But several tempting big-ticket "loopholes" remain in the Internal Revenue code. For example, by taxing employer-financed fringe benefits (e.g., health insurance), Washington could raise some \$30 billion. Another possible target: Social Security payments, which are now already partly taxable when retired couples' annual income exceeds \$32,000. Or Congress could simply increase existing personal and corporate income taxes. A five percent surcharge would produce \$27 billion.

Increased "sin taxes" on alcohol and tobacco find much favor in Congress, in part because they would remain largely "invisible." Doubling excise taxes on alcohol would yield \$4 billion in 1989; tripling levies on cigarettes (now 16 cents per pack) would produce about \$6 billion. The many Democrats who advocate such increases, complains columnist Mark Shields, trample on "the revered Democratic tradition of basing taxes on progressivity." Excise taxes, he notes, take a bigger proportional bite out of the incomes of the poor than of the affluent.

Various taxes on energy—an oil import fee, increased gasoline taxes—would also be regressive. Yet, they would presumably encourage conservation, thereby lessening American reliance on imported oil. A 15-cent per gallon gasoline tax, favored in 1988 by Representative Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, would yield \$15 billion.

But many Democrats draw the line at comprehensive consumption taxes, especially the European-style value added tax (VAT) backed by a number of economists. By penalizing consumption, a VAT would "help raise the dangerously low U.S. savings rate," says business consultant Charls Walker. A one percent VAT imposed on all goods and services would produce \$20 billion. Its regressive impact could be partially offset by giving rebates to lower-income families. That is not enough for many Democrats. Governor Michael Dukakis, who blocked Jesse Jackson's attempt to insert a "soak-the-rich" tax plank in the 1988 party platform, said that a VAT would "soak the middle class." Dukakis may not have the last word. Nevertheless, while promoting U.S. economic health is now the paramount concern, "fairness" clearly remains an important political test for any new tax.



growing budget deficit, convinced Capitol Hill Republicans and Democrats alike that the system was in crisis. It was an opportunity for reform unlike any since the two world wars.

This time, however, the initiative lay with a conservative Republican administra-

tion seeking, in part, to further reduce taxes on the well-to-do. Yet, there were major differences between 1986 and the Mellon tax cuts of the 1920s.

The Reagan administration was more interested in improving economic incentives for entrepreneurs than in protecting

Big Business: It was willing to accept a shift of more than \$100 billion in taxes from individuals to corporations. Second, Democrats, notably House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, were needed as co-authors of any reform bill. And, following a strategy devised by Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.), leading Democrats abandoned their traditional insistence on "soaking the rich." In return, they won increases in the personal exemption and the standard deduction, which took millions of the nation's poorest families off the tax rolls; they also won the elimination of important loopholes and "tax expenditures" favoring middle- and upper-income groups.*

In return, the Democrats agreed to a compression of the rate structure, drastic cuts in the top individual income tax rates (from 50 to 33 percent), and a drop in the corporate rate (from 48 percent to 34 percent). In effect, Democrats compromised their traditional emphasis on "vertical" equity in order to create a more uniform, more "horizontally" equitable income tax.

Because of the still enormous federal budget deficits, however, the United States probably has not seen the last of major tax

reform during this century. In fact, we may be slowly approaching a fourth sea change in American tax policy.

If Democrats and Republicans in Washington stick to the bipartisan formula of 1986, they may choose to resolve the budget crisis by coupling tax increases with further changes designed to improve "horizontal" equity. Of any new levy, the most radical would be a national value added tax (VAT), on the Western European model. (Under a VAT, each business at every stage of production is liable for a tax on what it sells, but each receives a refund on the tax it paid to its suppliers.) Such taxes are "fair" in that they tax everyone with the same consumption levels at the same rate. And, by promoting saving and investment rather than consumption, they probably would spur economic growth.

A new VAT might please both conservatives (by averting increases in progressive income taxes) and liberals (by broadening the tax base for future expansion of domestic programs). The United States would have a new tax system based on a combination of a mildly progressive, relatively comprehensive income tax and the first major federal taxation of consumption since the demise of the tariff system. If this is the route Congress eventually takes, we may be on the verge of renouncing intermittent century-long efforts to use the federal tax system to pursue the Populist and Progressive vision of achieving "social justice" through redistributing the wealth.

*Removed were the consumer-interest and sales tax deductions, "passive-loss" tax shelters, preferential rates on long-term capital gains, and the investment tax credit for corporations. Some fears over the effects of such changes proved to be exaggerated. For example, taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions lost the ability to "write off" charitable contributions, arousing concern among charitable organizations. Yet donations by individuals rose substantially (though not as much as they might have without the tax change), climbing from \$66 billion in 1985 to \$77 billion in 1987.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE POLITICS OF TAXATION

Looking back on the growth of Britain's national debt through the 18th and 19th centuries, Thomas B. Macaulay wrote in his grand *History of England* (1861) that "at every stage in the growth of that debt the nation has set up the same cry of anguish and despair.

"Like Addison's valetudinarian, who contrived to whimper that he was dying of consumption till he became so fat that he was shamed into silence, [Britain] went on complaining that she was sunk in poverty till her wealth . . . made her complaints ridiculous."

Macaulay is quoted by Jude Wanniski in **The Way the World Works** (Simon & Schuster, rev. ed., 1983), an ambitious "supply side" reinterpretation of history in terms of taxation and economic principles.

"What made the Industrial Revolution and the Pax Britannica possible," Wanniski argues, with an eye on contemporary American politics, "was the audacity of the British Parliament," which ignored the experts' dire warnings about the growing national debt in 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon, and proceeded to reduce tariffs and eliminate the war-time income tax.

Such bold judgments are rare in today's scholarly histories of taxation, which tend to focus on relatively narrow sub-topics. But much of this literature is summarized in **The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers** (Random, 1987), by Yale's Paul Kennedy. He contends that the fate of nations, from Ming China to the United States today, has depended in part on their ability to marshal resources through taxation, borrowing, and other means. But he suggests that how money is raised is less important than how it is spent: Britain became a great power after 1815, Kennedy believes, partly because it devoted only two to three percent of its gross national product to the military (versus seven percent in the United States today).

Taxes frequently involve a tradeoff between promoting social equity and fostering economic efficiency. Wanniski and Kennedy represent, in different ways, a resurgence of aca-

demic concern over the economic effects of taxation. During most of the 20th century, according to Sidney Ratner's highly readable chronicle of **American Taxation** (Norton, 1942), Americans have been most interested in equity—finding ways to use the tax code to shift burdens to the rich and redistribute income. In Ratner's view, the politics of taxation in the United States can be summarized as a constant struggle between "vested interests" and the forces of "democracy."

Taking the story through the early Reagan years, John F. Witte contends in **The Politics and Development of the Federal Income Tax** (Univ. of Wisc., 1985) that efforts to redistribute income through the tax code during this century have largely failed. Because Congress has tried to "satisfy the demands of diverse groups, to meet the political needs of decision-makers, and . . . to correct, adjust, and fine-tune the system, the income tax as a fundamental and ostensibly equitable means of raising revenue has been slowly but continuously eroded." Writing in 1985, he saw "absolutely nothing" in U.S. history to suggest that any kind of major overhaul of the tax system was possible.

As journalists Jeffrey H. Birnbaum and Alan S. Murray observe in **Showdown at Gucci Gulch** (Random, 1987), a lively account of the on-again, off-again course of 1986 federal tax reform, Witte was almost right.

Since then, U.S. tax cuts and rising discontent abroad over heavy tax burdens have sparked changes in Britain and other countries. Joseph Pechman's **World Tax Reform** (Brookings, 1988) and **Comparative Tax Systems** (Tax Analysts, 1987) are useful but already partly outdated overviews. The World Bank's **World Development Report 1988** (Oxford, 1988) examines tax trends in the poorer nations of the world.

Looking ahead in **Tax Policy in the 21st Century** (Wiley, 1988), Herbert Stein, paraphrasing Benjamin Franklin, notes that his fellow economists around the world see only two sure prospects: death and (higher) taxes.

CURRENT BOOKS

SCHOLARS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows and staff of the Wilson Center

Centuries of Childrearing

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance. By John Boswell. Pantheon, 1989. 473 pp. \$24.95

Two hundred years ago, at the peak of the European Enlightenment and on the eve of the French Revolution, at least a quarter of all children born in Toulouse, France, were abandoned by their parents, given up to foundling hospitals, the forerunners of the Victorian orphanage. The reason for this astonishing number was not parental cruelty but a combination of high adult mortality and endemic poverty.

Today, both the foundling hospital and the orphanage have all but vanished, and in the United States only 1.5 percent of all children born are available for adoption. Adult mortality is now minimal, but poverty, while much reduced, is still with us; in America, four of 10 children are born into impoverished circumstances.

But what has changed the most is the understanding of parentage. Today's society, so horrified by notions of abandonment that it actively represses all memory of earlier practices, rules out all alternatives to the natal family, thus condemning a sizable proportion of its children to a life of class and race discrimination.

Given the current situation, this book by Yale historian John Boswell could not have come at a better time. His combination of exacting scholarship and lucid style gives us a look at alternatives, historically sanctioned and perfectly consistent with Judeo-Christian tradition, which could well serve as inspiration for new departures in family policies. Taking us through the long history of abandonment (which might better be called "placement"), he reveals practices which, however much they may be at odds with modern sentiment, were perfectly consistent with con-

cern for children.

According to Boswell's cautious calculations, abandonment in the West probably increased from the time Rome was Christianized during the fourth century, A.D., up to the High Middle Ages of the 12th and 13th centuries. It then declined slightly, only to begin to rise again after 1300. While Boswell does not project this trend beyond 1800, one may safely say that abandonment, in the way he uses the term, did not really cease until as recently as the 1950s, when the doors of the modern orphanage were finally shut.

While Boswell wisely refuses to quantify—the evidence is too shaky—he does make it clear that the meaning and mechanisms of abandonment shifted radically over time. In the ancient Roman world, the system was informal and voluntary, with infants left at well-known sites to be picked up by strangers in need of heirs or laborers. While free-born children were not supposed to be enslaved, many were. On the other hand, many assumed the relationship of *alumni* to the strangers who picked them up. *Alumni* were not the same as natural children, but neither were they slaves. Instead, the term designated a spiritual relationship, one that still resonates in our academic usage of the term, but would seem alien to our family life in which even the adopted child acquires the status of the natural child.

The church fathers of early Christianity had no objections to abandonment. In fact, the church moved to formalize procedures in the practice of *oblation*, the giving of a child to a monastic order. This proved popular with both the rich and the poor during the early Middle Ages, and it provided surplus offspring a better future than they might have had with their natural families. The threat posed by divisible in-

heritances was one reason the rich gave up their own children; for the poor, the rationale was survival, of the parent as well as the child.

Later, during the High Middle Ages, the institution of primogeniture (by which all family wealth was passed on to the oldest son) and rising standards of living made it possible for both groups to keep more of their offspring. But ironically the regularization of marriage and family during this brief age of affluence brought sharper distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children—"children of virtue" and "children of sin"—thus creating new reasons for abandonment.

When times turned bad again after 1300, a new institution, the foundling hospital, took over from the monasteries. Originating in Italy, such hospitals existed throughout Europe by the 18th century. They were largely secular institutions run by professionals. But despite the best intentions of those who ran them, they became known for their high mortality rates. Children, Boswell notes, "disappeared quietly and efficiently through the revolving doors of state-run foundling homes, out of sight and mind, into social oblivion, or, more likely, death by disease."

Orphanages remained lethal places until the late 19th century, but the diminishing mortality of parents, not of children, brought an end to the era that began in the 13th century. By 1950, there were simply too few orphans to justify the old institutions. So the age of the foster home was ushered in.

Yet demography alone does not explain why the memory and practice of abandonment has been repressed in recent times. More important is the changing definition of parental obligations. Unfortunately, Boswell gives insufficient attention to its social and cultural history. To refute the notion that Romans were indifferent, unfeeling parents, he argues that they did not hold views "fundamentally different from their modern counterparts." Boswell rehabilitates medieval and early modern parents in the same way, producing, in all cases, sympathetic but fundamentally anach-



ronistic accounts of their actions.

Boswell's treatment of parents ignores gender differences, thus obscuring the very distinct histories of motherhood and fatherhood. And finally, Boswell makes no allowances for the difference between childbearing and childrearing, which is crucial to understanding why, until very recently, mothers have been willing to give up their newborns to the care of strangers. As long as motherhood meant only childbearing, there was no scandal involved in having others rear their children. But when, during the late 18th century, European and American educated classes redefined motherhood as childrearing, ancient practices suddenly came to be regarded as unnatural and immoral.

Among the working classes it remained perfectly respectable until the mid-20th century to be a good mother and give up one's child. However, today's child-care debate takes for granted the idea that the mother-child relationship is indispensable. And this exclusive feminization (or even "motherization") of childrearing has been a decisive factor in the feminization of poverty. The fact that 98.5 percent of children are condemned to their natal fate, and thus a substantial proportion to deprivation and discrimination, is the product of a

historical dead-end in which all alternatives to the biological family are seen as both immoral and unworkable.

By reminding us that the tradition of the spiritual family and nonnatal parenthood is perfectly consistent with Judeo-

Christian tradition, Boswell helps us to revise our unnecessarily rigid notions of good parents, making a place once again for the kindness of strangers.

—John R. Gillis, '88

A New War on Poverty?

POOR SUPPORT: Poverty in the American Family. By David T. Ellwood. Basic. 1988. 271 pp. \$19.95

STARTING EVEN: An Equal Opportunity Program to Combat the Nation's New Poverty. By Robert Haveman. Simon and Schuster. 1988. 287 pp. \$19.95

If persistent poverty at the end of the 1980s and its implications for U.S. social policy are not sufficiently interesting to attract a wide readership, the spectacle of liberals revising their thinking may be. Haveman, an economist at the University of Wisconsin, and Ellwood, a professor of public policy at Harvard, are both specialists on social welfare policy. They are also liberals who, it seems, are changing their minds.

Writing in the wake of neoconservative indictments of Great Society welfare programs by authors like Charles Murray, Lawrence Mead, and George Gilder, Haveman and Ellwood also identify themselves as critics of the status quo. Both reject the argument of Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984) that welfare, as enlarged during the 1960s and 1970s, deserves greatest blame for a growing poor population and for a disturbing pattern of long-term dependency. But if the current welfare system does not, in their view, cause poverty, it does a bad job of lifting the able-bodied out of it. Treating symptoms rather than causes, it allows dependency and leads to the result that, in Ellwood's words, "everybody hates welfare."

By welfare, Ellwood means not support for the aged and disabled but aid to the

"healthy non-elderly"—costing four percent of the federal budget, 1.5 percent of GNP. No gigantic sum, compared to outlays for defense or agriculture, it is still hated because it supports programs in conflict with "our values," defined by Ellwood as individual autonomy, work, family, and community. Ellwood thinks the government should promote individual responsibility and not be in conflict with work-oriented beliefs. He argues that long-term, cash-based support for the healthy young should be replaced with a system that "expects more."

Ellwood, it should be noted, limits his proposals to the problem of families with children. Single males require another yardstick, he believes. This confession reveals a refreshing candor in face of plain facts. Social and economic changes during the past three decades have tended to "increase the independence and economic position of women and decrease the economic status of men," and to make "marriage look less essential" to women. But this female (and, in a strange way, male) "liberation" has ended up plunging millions of children and young mothers into poverty. These poor, moreover, are disproportionately black, since "marriage declined massively in the black community."

Ellwood's policy proposals seek, among other things, to make marriage "look better." They include virtual elimination of income taxation among the poor, raising the minimum wage so that "work pays," expanding child-care subsidies and medical insurance.

But where enters responsibility? Ellwood proposes that fathers of illegitimate

children—the kids who are the prime victims of poverty, along with their young mothers—must be made to support their children. (Haveman agrees. Liberals apparently are ready for a national tax-based system for finding and dunning fathers who are delinquent on child support.) For the healthy non-elderly, Ellwood suggests that government limit public assistance to 18–36 months. After that, it should “provide minimum-wage jobs.” The cost? “Over \$20 billion or even \$30 billion to do everything right.”

While Ellwood offers a cogent summary of the changing demographic and gender characteristics of the poor, Haveman is interested in the general picture of income distribution. His analysis of trends during the Reagan years, though not news, is sobering. “The economic tide turned against youth in general,” he summarizes, and other big losers have been single mothers. Income and wealth shifted steadily toward the elderly, who make no more economic contribution, and away from the young who are the nation’s economic future.

Haveman’s program resembles Ellwood’s: refundable tax credits to take the poor entirely out of the tax system; child-care subsidies; the withholding of wages from fathers delinquent in child care; the creation of a “capital account for youths,” a grant of \$20,000 to all needy 18-year-olds, to be used for education and medical

services, according to the recipient’s choice. The cost? Roughly \$20 billion, the same figure Ellwood uses.

These are all wise suggestions for welfare reform. Words like “responsibility” and “self-sufficiency” register a healthy change in the liberal vocabulary, once limited to such ideals as “justice” and “security.” But welfare policy supporters have only begun the necessary rethinking. Both books avoid volatile ethnic questions, particularly the challenge posed by new Asian and Hispanic populations. Both authors confront the issue of socially and parentally unwanted births but ignore the controversy over birth control.

Most fatal to their hopes for effective reform, however, is their parochial view of American society. They ignore international economic and demographic factors. Immigration, for instance, not only shapes the U.S. labor market but can produce unintended consequences. Imagine the impact in the Caribbean or Mexico of news of the adoption of Haveman’s \$20,000 “universal personal account for youths.” (And surely, the courts would rule illegal aliens eligible for such grants.) A major influx of immigrants would overwhelm America’s puny barriers, teaching a costly lesson that welfare reforms must be connected to other elements, including secure borders. Such tough trade-offs remain the ultimate liberal conundrum.

—Otis Graham, '83

Empire in Decay

RETURN TO DIVERSITY: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II. By Joseph Rothschild. Oxford, 1989. 257 pp. \$24.95

As Soviet troops advanced into Europe during World War II, the Hungarian historian Gyula Szeku calmly observed: “We are to wait half a century before any real change occurs in Eastern Europe.”

Ahead of schedule by a few years, that change is already the subject of a numerous articles (including those by Timothy Garton-Ash in *The New York Review of Books* and William Pfaff in the *New Yorker*) and now a book-length study. In this, the first comprehensive political history of the Soviet empire in decay, Rothschild, a professor of political science at Columbia, tells a story of disintegration

and chaos.

The Soviet empire in Eastern Europe is indeed crumbling, but few of the causes are new. Economic failure, social unrest, and police brutality have all been part of life in Eastern Europe since Stalin's death in 1953. Similarly, ideological deviation of individual countries from the Soviet model is almost as old as the communist regimes themselves.

What is new in Eastern Europe belongs not so much to the sphere of economic or social reform as to the domain of psychology—the psychology of politics. The novelty in this era is the responses of the individual countries to Moscow's moral and ideological crisis. Never before have Eastern Europe's ruling elites admitted so openly to their loss of legitimacy as members of an imperial communist elite. Never before have Eastern Europe's leaders, from Czechoslovakia's Gustáv Husák to Romania's Nicolae Ceaușescu, made such desperate, ad hoc attempts to justify their positions by dredging up pre-communist and nonrevolutionary traditions and notions. Faced with these new developments, we need new concepts. And that is what Rothschild provides: a framework for understanding change in Eastern Europe.

Despite outward appearances, Stalin's effort to homogenize the Eastern European nation-states failed in one crucial aspect: It did not lead to the creation of a region-wide political culture. If Soviet domination was initially enforced through uniformity (notably, by way of police terror and single-party rule), the current return to national diversity represents a "revenge of the repressed." The loosening of Moscow's control during the 1980s has so far led not to reform but to disintegration. As a result, life in individual countries of the Soviet bloc could now hardly be more varied. In Romania, police arrest would-be entrepreneurs for selling potatoes to neighboring municipalities, while in Hungary increasing amounts of government and private capital is raised on the Budapest stock exchange. While Czechoslovakia's few political dissenters spend more time in prison than on the streets, in Po-

land millions participate in organized anti-government activities.

But, as Rothschild shows, diversity in Eastern Europe is not merely a reaction to Soviet imperial uniformity. It is also an assertion of age-old differences, rivalry, and even open hostility among the individual countries of the region. By conquering Eastern Europe, the Soviets inherited a region of small, vulnerable nations, some of which (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) looked back on no more than three decades of modern statehood. The Treaty of Versailles (1919), creating new boundaries and recreating many small states, helped to exacerbate ethnic and economic tensions. Furthermore, as Rothschild demonstrated in his earlier *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (1974), "nationalization" in Eastern Europe tended to produce authoritarian regimes rather than parliamentary democracies. And this region-wide political culture changed very little under Pax Sovietica after World War II; it was simply forced to exist beneath the surface.

Whether the current changes represent nothing more than a resurfacing of the repressed past remains to be seen. But Rothschild's account of four decades of communism makes one thing clear: The release of local communist regimes from Soviet domination does not necessarily lead to democracy. Consider Yugoslavia, the only communist country with decades of effective independence from Moscow. Despite many liberal features of this regime, the barriers to full democracy (i.e. single-party rule, press restrictions) have long been internally rather than externally imposed. And in another part of the region, Romania's claim to its own "national road" to communism sustains the most repressive and enduring dictatorship in the region.

The oppressed peoples of the eroding Soviet empire now invoke the interwar decades as the last "period of independence, sovereignty, and dignity." But doing so, they also invoke the troubling and even ugly features of that time. One ironic con-

sequence of this appeal to the past is that it brings out continuities between the dictatorial regimes of the present and the authoritarian regimes of the interwar period. Thus it appears that history may provide a new source of legitimacy for illiberal, antidemocratic leaders—and, as Rothschild argues, it is already doing so.

Of course, there is no way of knowing whether this perverse use of the past will finally prevail. And events in Poland provide a hopeful counter-model. There, millions of citizens have repeatedly demonstrated in support not only of national sovereignty but also of freedom from repression, arbitrary one-party rule, and unchecked government power.

Such popular movements lead me to resist Rothschild's gloomiest forecasts. If

politics were restricted to official goings-on, then I would be convinced that current developments in most of Eastern Europe signal a return to the severely limited political life of the 1930s, with ritualistic mass plebiscites and elections ("whose outcomes are known in advance") as window-dressing for autocratic regimes. But the maturity of peaceful mass politics exhibited by millions of Poles is something new under the Eastern European sun. Only if movements like Solidarity fail to survive and spread, will we have cause to fear, along with Rothschild, that a repressive Soviet empire will someday be replaced only by a half-dozen smaller repressive states.

—Mária M. Kovács, '88

NEW TITLES

History

THE UNMASTERABLE PAST: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity by Charles S. Maier. Harvard, 1988. 227 pp. \$22.50

Last autumn, the speaker of the West German parliament, Phillip Jenninger, was forced to resign after failing to condemn the Holocaust in a speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Nazi's "Krystallnacht" attack on German Jews. The incident received worldwide press attention, but it was only the latest in a national controversy over German responsibility for the horrors of Hitler's Third Reich. German scholars, as Harvard historian Maier shows, have long been at the forefront of the debate. Conservative historians, among them Ernst Nolte, argue that, while the Holocaust was terrible, it was no worse than Stalin's mass-murder cam-

paigns in the Soviet Union or Pol Pot's genocide in Cambodia. Others even suggest that it was a precautionary measure: Hitler, alarmed by Stalinist purges and Jewish support for Great Britain, created Auschwitz and Treblinka in self-defense. Among leftist scholars outraged by such assertions is sociologist Jürgen Habermas. He sees in the conservative revision of German history a not-so-veiled effort to revive German nationalism (a perception acknowledged by some conservatives, including Michael Stürmer, who say that West Germany cannot be an effective member of NATO without a guilt-free national identity). The debate is not merely academic, Maier says. Waged on the editorial pages of leading German newspapers, it is bound up with domestic politics, which have grown increasingly unstable during the era of détente and declining prosperity. Maier fears that the issue, if unresolved, could even endanger the Western alliance.

PARTING THE WATERS: America in the King Years 1954-63 by Taylor Branch. Simon & Schuster. 1988. 1064 pp. \$24.95.

FREEDOM SUMMER by Doug McAdam. Oxford, 1988. 333 pp. \$24.95

Although an artfully shaped biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., would in itself be a signal accomplishment—and enough to distinguish it from David Garrow's earlier, prize-winning chronicle of King's career (*Bearing the Cross*, 1986)—Branch has done much more: He has given us the first history of the American civil rights movement worthy of its subject. Right from the opening chapter, a survey of black church politics in Reconstruction Montgomery and a brief account of the life of the great black Baptist leader, Vernon Johns (1892-1965), Branch pulls back history's veil, revealing the thousands of individuals whose actions, sometimes heroic, sometimes selfish, sometimes inadvertently helpful, make up what seem to be the inevitable march of events. What the Whig historians called Progress is arrested in specific places and moments of time—a bus-station melee in Birmingham, Alabama, an explosive con-



frontation on the campus of Ole Miss, a phone conversation between President John Kennedy and one of his federal agents in the field—in which outcomes were anything but certain. King emerges as no saint; we see, instead, a man who made himself strong and galvanized a movement despite his weaknesses. The brothers Kennedy come across as ambivalent allies of the civil rights struggle, and J. Edgar Hoover

plays what was surely his worst hour on the American political stage.

If the first volume of Branch's history takes on the big story, McAdam focusses on one small but significant chapter. "It was the longest nightmare I ever had: three months—June, July, and August of 1964," recalls one of the thousand volunteers (mostly white college students from the North) who headed to Mississippi that "Freedom Summer." Registering black voters and working in "Freedom Schools," these idealistic men and women encountered the same discrimination and violence that Mississippi blacks had long endured. The experience profoundly disturbed their faith in freedom, opportunity, and protection under American law. More important, notes McAdam, a University of Arizona sociologist, their involvement that summer determined many of the volunteers' lifelong commitment to reform. In the late 1960s, as militant blacks took over the civil rights movement, white volunteers found themselves without standing in the struggle that had changed their lives; but most found the idea of reentering mainstream society unpalatable. Many shifted their zeal to new causes—peace, feminism, and the environment. In doing so, McAdam concludes, "they remained faithful to the political vision that drew them to Mississippi nearly a quarter of a century ago."

A HISTORY OF ISLAMIC SOCIETIES by Ira M. Lapidus. Cambridge, 1988. 1002 pp. \$42.50

If *A History of Islamic Societies* were to appear in, say, Cairo, lumping together Christ's Middle East, Loyola's Spain, Russia of the Old Believers, and Jimmy Swaggart's fundamentalist South, it would be described as superficial. It would also mirror the way Islam is routinely treated in the West. No one should know this better than Lapidus, a University of California historian and author of *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (1967). Yet he himself has taken on the whole of Islamic history, carving it up, like Caesar's Gaul, into three parts: the origins from the seventh to 13th centuries; the spread of the Islamic order from the 10th to 19th centuries; the 19th- and 20th-century

transformation of the Muslim peoples under the influence of nationalism, secularism, the industrial revolution, and European imperialism. Hubristic as it is, Lapidus's approach illuminates continuities. One learns how Islamic societies redefined "pre-Islamic institutional forms in Muslim cultural terms" and how religious and state institutions cooperated right up until the European intervention. Errors in a book of this scope are inevitable: The Crimean War broke out in 1853, not 1854. Ottoman rule did not "perpetuate" the social structures of the Balkan population; it radically altered them. Such flaws apart, this is a sound introduction—particularly to the Islamic society Lapidus knows best, the Arab Middle East.

Contemporary Affairs

REASON, IDEOLOGY, AND POLITICS by Shawn Rosenberg. Princeton, 1988. 255 pp. \$37.50

Traditional liberal political theory since Francis Bacon's day (1561–1626) rests upon a clear distinction between ideology and reason. The former is shaped by the individual's beliefs, irrational commitments which themselves are products of cultural conditioning or internal drives ("passions," the Enlightenment philosophers called them). Arrayed against ideology is reason—a neutral process of logical deduction based on clear, unbiased observation. The mature political thinker, according to this tradition, is one who subjects his beliefs to the cool light of reason. Rosenberg, a political scientist at the University of California, Irvine, is not the first to challenge the simplistic dichotomy of reason and ideology. But he has cleverly enlisted the ideas of psychologist Jean Piaget to show that ideology is "not a set of attitudes" but itself "a way of thinking," indeed of reasoning. Rosenberg, although a graceless writer, sets forth a useful typology. He defines three sorts of political reasoners—the sequential, the linear, the systematic—and explains how each constructs his understanding of the political arena. Then, in three different studies, he shows the various types in action. The reader is not surprised to find that Rosenberg judges systematic reasoners (who resemble political scientists in

their ability to think abstractly about political matters) the most evolved. But he leaves one wondering how well a nation comprised only of such individuals would fare.

THE OTHER PATH: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World by Hernando de Soto. Harper & Row, 1989. 256 pp. \$22.95

In 1985, 69 percent of the new houses in Lima, Peru, were built in defiance of strict regulations and codes. The strategies involved in this underground entrepreneurial effort are, according to economist de Soto, typical of a large "informal" movement underway in Peru and other parts of the Third World. De Soto not only describes the practices of the "informals" but also argues that they offer the most hopeful alternative to over-regulated, state-directed economies that exist throughout the underdeveloped world. Such regimes benefit only the powerful few who can influence the system. In the aggregate, however, the economies of such nations stagnate, as abundant evidence shows. But while lauding the successes of "informals" (in 1984, 91 percent of the buses in Lima were run by this renegade sector), de Soto finds that tremendous energy and money is wasted in their struggle against officialdom. Thus de Soto makes an eloquent plea for jettisoning bad laws and red tape, and making sure that laws are promulgated democratically and serve the interests of the majority. His proposals will almost certainly be an issue in Peru's 1990 presidential election: Novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, a likely presidential candidate, is one of their more vigorous proponents.

HEARTS AND MINDS: A Personal Chronicle of Race in America by Harry S. Ashmore. Seven Locks Press, 1988. 513pp. \$14.95.

White liberals were rare birds, especially on newspaper staffs, in the racially-segregated South during the 1950s. Notable among them was the *Arkansas Gazette's* Ashmore, born in Greenville, S.C. Ashmore won the Pulitzer Prize for his editorials on the stormy integration (by U.S. paratroopers) of Little Rock's Central High in 1957. Revised since its first appearance in

1982, his rich, readable "personal chronicle" ranges widely, reflecting his experience as newsman and activist. His sketches of important but now almost forgotten figures, both white and black (remember Malcolm X?), in the early battles for racial equality would supplement any analysis of Southern society and politics at mid-century. He remembers Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society for both its successes and follies. Reflecting on present trends, he emphasizes the growing importance of education and family stability in the destinies of individual black Americans, North and South. He views the Reagan Administration as blind to the true costs of ignoring the black urban underclass. He finds less hope for social progress in Jesse Jackson's activism than in the potential, as yet untested, of the emerging black middle-class and its ability to form political coalitions with middle-class whites. "The record of my time," he concludes, "demonstrates that it is possible to change hearts and minds—not by exhortation, or coercion, but through governance that recognizes the possibilities, as well as limitations, of our pluralistic heritage."

Arts & Letters

THE SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE OF KENNETH BURKE AND MALCOLM COWLEY, 1915-1981 edited by Paul Jay. Viking, 1988. 448 pp. \$29.95

Friends at Pittsburgh's Peabody High School, Burke and Cowley went on to become two of America's foremost literary critics. And at least one virtue of this sampler of their 66-year correspondence is its demonstration of how varied the critical enterprise can be. From the beginning, Burke (who dropped out of Columbia to become "Flaubert" in Greenwich Village) was the more theoretical. By contrast, Cowley (Harvard, '20, after a wartime stint in the American Ambulance Service) was drawn to the flesh and blood of literary history. Burke became known for such cerebral studies as *A Grammar of Motives*; Cowley made his name with histories of American writers, including that of the "lost generation," *Exile's Return*. Candor is the hallmark of their correspondence, Burke at one point insisting that "a friend is none other than

that person whom one treats with all the shabbiness and dilatoriness that he scrupulously rules out of his business relationships." True to his principles, he told Cowley that his work was too much "journalism and diarism, and not enough criticism." Such carping seemed only to strengthen their underlying loyalty to each other, and to sharpen their thinking as well as their prose. Nor did they ever cease to share their common obsession. As Burke wrote late in life, "Ailments, ailments, ailments. But what to do, when one considers literature even at its best, an ailment, surpassed only by that much severer ailment, the lack of literature?"

LAW AND LITERATURE: A Misunderstood Relation by Richard A. Posner. Harvard, 1988. 371. pp. \$25

A literary work and a legal document must both stand the same test of greatness—survival over time. Posner, a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, casts a solonic eye on the many illuminating, if problematic, connections between the two ancient disciplines. In addition to analyzing a range of writers who have dealt with legal themes, from Shakespeare to Kafka to Twain, he also subjects legal texts to the methods of literary criticism. Posner provides a fresh approach to established literary works, and, along the way, refines our notions about the proper province of law: "The idea that law, despite or maybe because of its commitment to reason, misunderstands life is one that *The Brothers Karamazov* shares with [Camus's] *The Stranger*, but in the earlier and greater novel it is seen to reflect the inherent limitations of human reason and to argue for religious values, while in the later one it is equated with the persecution of nonconformists by a nasty bourgeoisie." Elsewhere, he admires Chief Justice Holmes's use of rhetoric (rather than strict logic) to support his brilliant dissenting opinion on *Lochner v. New York* (1905), which overturned a statute limiting work hours in bakeries. "The reason why rhetoric or style is important in law," Posner notes, "is that many questions cannot be resolved by logical or empirical demonstration." Posner resists making overly large claims for the interdisciplinary study of law and literature; in fact, he

finds that the "interpretative problems" of both kinds of texts are "fundamentally different." But an understanding of this difference is in itself sufficient reason, Posner concludes, for giving the study of law and literature "a place in legal teaching and research."

NIETZSCHE'S ZARATHUSTRA: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1934-1939 by C. G. Jung. Princeton, 1988. 2 volumes. 1578 pages. \$130.00

The 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche claimed (or raved) that he was the only real psychologist who had ever lived. Freud half believed Nietzsche's claim and refused to read him, fearing his influence. Carl Jung however paid Nietzsche a very different



kind of tribute: from 1934 to 1939, he conducted a seminar on his ideas. For 50 years the notes on this seminar were considered too controversial to be published. Certainly in these 1500 pages Jung speaks freely about almost every subject under the sun, but he concentrates upon a close reading of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche thought of it as his masterpiece but Jung recognized that "Nietzsche is as much the victim as the author." Jung sympa-

thizes with Nietzsche's determination in *Zarathustra* to judge morality psychologically—not by its logic or supposed truth—but by how it either enriched or impoverished an individual's life. But in *Zarathustra* Nietzsche passed from the realm of psychology and became an anti-religious messiah, pronouncing God dead and denying all morality in favor of the strong individual. Jung perceived how Nietzsche in denying religion was also denying certain basic instincts for a purely intellectual heroism which was dangerously unstable. Nietzsche's work has always seemed mocked by the actual life he lived; as Jung succinctly put it, "He talked of yea-saying and lived the nay." Freud believed that a person is more creative because of his neurosis; Nietzsche's case, Jung shows, was exactly the opposite. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is, as discussed by Jung, the record of an artistic temperament warring against a neurosis which would soon leave Nietzsche an invalid incapable even of conversation.

MERLIN by Norma Lorre Goodrich. Harper & Row, 1988. 386 pp. \$10.95

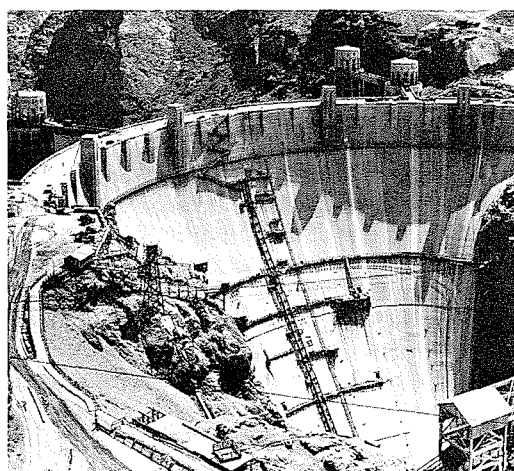
Although Camelot has spawned a goodly number of spin-off romances and scholarly works, this study of one of the Arthurian legend's central figures stands out. Goodrich, a professor emeritus of French at Scripps College, portrays the magician Merlin as a crucial, transitional figure in the Christianization of the British Isles. It is Merlin, she argues, who had the vision of a new civilization and who, around 500 A.D., dragged the peripheral Arthur onto the center stage of British political development. Her account abounds with new insights. Merlin emerges not only as the familiar necromancer and political tutor but also as a cunning military strategist and ferocious warrior-priest who led Arthur to victory in battle. No murder victim, he died, Goodrich believes, in a love tryst with the "Lady of the Lake." And his views are more accurately summed up in *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius than in *Prophecy*, the book he supposedly penned. Goodrich's chief revelation comes, however, in her geographical findings. Using traditional sources and three previously untapped manuscripts (two of French and one of Scottish prove-

nance), she sites the Arthurian realm in present-day southwestern Scotland and northern Wales rather than in the southern England or Normandy of conventional lore. Throughout her investigation, Goodrich finds a reality behind the legend that is downright unsettling.

Science & Technology

HOOVER DAM: An American Adventure by Joseph E. Stevens. Univ. of Oklahoma. 1988. 326 pp. \$24.95

"In a sense, the Hoover Dam project is not only a construction job but also a sociological venture," wrote an American magazine writer in the early 1930s. Taking five years (1931-36) and involving up to five thousand laborers working around the clock, the construction of the huge concrete barrier on the Colorado



River between Arizona and Nevada provides grist for many another tale as well. It is a Depression story complete with quickly assembled shanty towns and desperately poor men willing to slave in temperatures up to 119 degrees in order to bring home a paycheck. It is a labor story featuring the Wobblies in one of their last great campaigns, a failed effort to unionize the dam workers. It is a political story involving Arizona's futile attempt to defeat a project its residents were sure would divert much-needed water to California. But above

all, it is a saga of remarkable individuals, including risk-taking contractors such as the Mormon brothers, W. H. and E. O. Wattis, construction chief Frank T. Crowe (a rugged, on-the-site engineer whose motto was "Never My Belly to a Desk"), and tunnel superintendent Red McCabe, who would "fire a man for even looking like he was going to slow down." Against all odds of meeting deadlines, the men dug diversion tunnels, threw up temporary barriers, built four intake towers, and slowly brought the great concrete dam up to its full height of 726.4 feet. "Like some forbidding futuristic metropolis, the asymmetrical concrete columns of the dam reared up from the canyon bottoms," writes Stevens. Lyrical yet precise, his narrative style is well suited to his subject: the poetry of making, the poetry at which Americans have often excelled.

THE WORLD THROUGH BLUNTED

SIGHT by Patrick Trevor-Roper. Viking Penguin. 1989. 207 pp. \$24.95

"Man is a visual animal," writes English ophthalmologist Trevor-Roper. And the various optical afflictions suffered by talented men and women have profoundly influenced the sum of artifacts that we call culture. Proceeding by large categories of visual disorder (unfocused image, color irregularities, encroachments on the field of vision, blindness itself), Trevor-Roper documents such phenomena as the effects of myopia on James Joyce's fiction and the influence of double cataracts on Monet's colors. His book is packed with incidental observations, ranging from the therapeutic use of color to the connection between personality and visual impairments to the question of eye dominance in different societies. In Western countries, where people are trained to read from left to right, "our right eye is the master." Thus in paintings, Trevor-Roper explains, "to convey a feeling of tension or movement, we place our principal subject to the left-hand side of the canvas; but if we place it to the right, the picture becomes calmer and more static." This is a revised and updated edition of the book that Trevor-Roper first published 18 years ago to wide acclaim.

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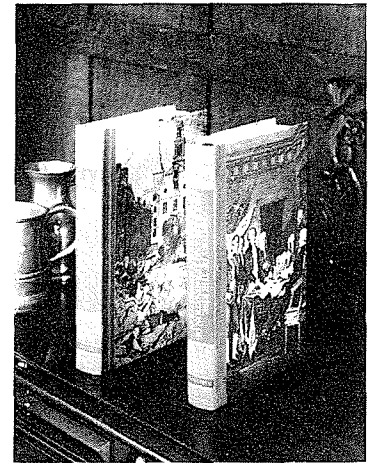
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Ambivalent Victorian: H. L. Mencken

During the 1920s, H. L. Mencken was the voice of the educated and sophisticated throughout America. His criticism of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, his characterization of Main Street Americans as the "booboisie" and of Puritans as people haunted by the "fear that someone, somewhere may be happy"—all this made Mencken a hero to a generation that included Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Walter Lippmann. But during the 1930s, when he directed his anti-establishment ferocity at Franklin D. Roosevelt, social welfare, and the New Deal ("a milk cow with 25 million teats"), Mencken found himself rejected as a literary anachronism. Yet a half-century later a "Mencken revival" indicates that many Americans, starting early in the Reagan years, have found a new sympathy with the man. Here, T. J. Jackson Lears explores the contradictions that made Mencken (1880–1956) first the most influential, then, for a time, the most forgotten critic in America.

by T. J. Jackson Lears

One gray autumn day in the early 1950s, James T. Farrell stopped off in Baltimore, took a cab to H. L. Mencken's house on Hollins Street, and spent a depressing afternoon with the critic who had befriended him years before. Though Mencken seemed physically healthy, he had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in 1948, and its effects were painfully apparent. His talk wandered; he could neither read nor write. While Mencken maintained a wry good humor, Farrell recalled a persistent refrain in their conversation. "I'm finished," Mencken repeatedly told the novelist. "I'm out of it." Mencken's predicament was a poignant coda to a vigorous career. The impresario of words, for whom language had been life, was sur-

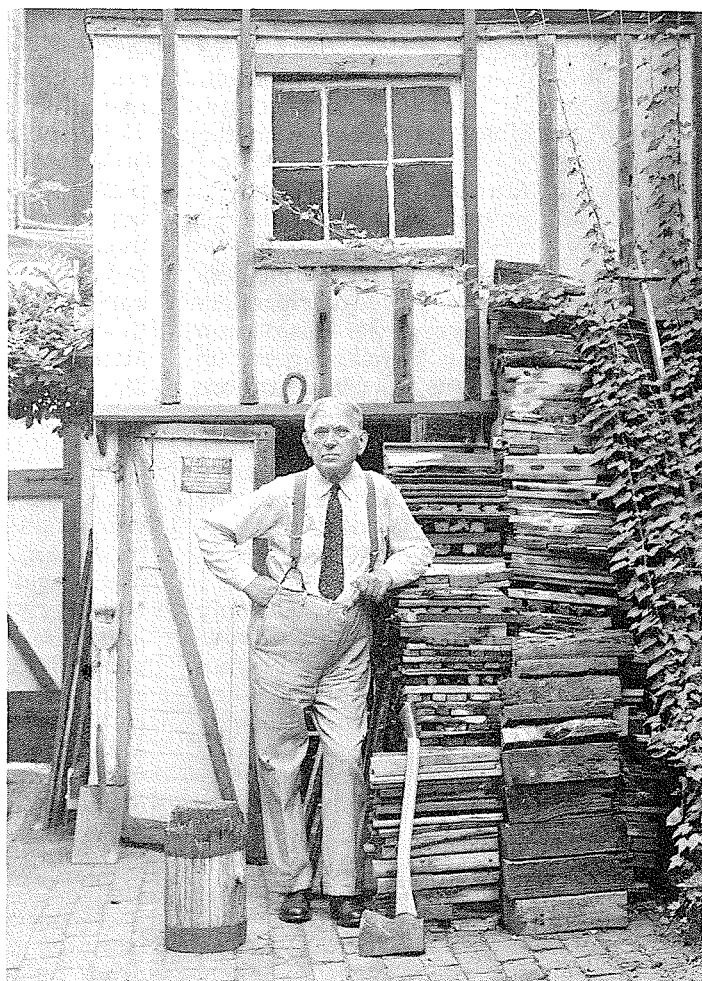
rounded by letters he could not read and books he could not understand.

There was a sense, though, in which Mencken had been "out of it" for many years before his stroke. During the earnestly nationalistic 1930s and 1940s, Mencken's levity seemed an echo of the frivolous Jazz Age. Even during the years of his greatest influence, the 1920s, his ideas betrayed a curiously anachronistic quality. Mencken assaulted Prohibitionists, Rotarians, and genteel custodians of culture, but the attack was launched with the well-worn weapons of positivist science and classical liberalism. He clung to the same late Victorian brand of iconoclasm for fifty years, while American culture passed him by.

To understand what Mencken meant to people when he stood at the height of his power, let us follow a black teenager as he made his way to the public library in Memphis in 1926. As a black, Richard Wright was not allowed to check out books, but he was determined somehow to smuggle out one by Mencken, for Mencken was the only white man more vilified in Southern newspaper editorials than any black ever was, and Wright wanted to find out why.

The book that Wright finally secured was full of the discoveries Mencken was then championing—T. S. Eliot, Dostoyevsky, Gide—names which Wright had never heard of. Yet Mencken's book itself was the most liberating book Wright said he ever read. It filled him with a sense that there was another, a better world elsewhere.

Mencken intoxicated many others. His critique of middle-American smugness stirred writers as diverse as Ernest Hemingway and Walter Lippmann. In 1926, Lippmann called him "the most powerful influence on this whole generation of educated people." Sinclair Lewis said Mencken should be made "Pope of America" for spreading the gospel of sophistication. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway noted that "so many young men got their likes and dislikes from Mencken." To the young talents of this new generation, for whom American culture with its Prohibition and Babbitt-like boosterism was stiflingly provincial, Mencken's gibes at American complacency went down like invigorating tonic. They delighted in piss-and-vinegar attacks like this one: "The normal American of the 'pure-blooded' majority goes to rest every night with the uneasy feeling



H. L. Mencken in the backyard of his house on Hollins Street (1947). Mencken criticized American culture as provincial, but spent his entire life in Baltimore, addicted to the comforts of home.

that there is a burglar under the bed, and he gets up every morning with a sickening fear that his underwear has been stolen."

Especially appealing was the way Mencken could offend both sides—say, Communists and 100% Americans—simultaneously. He argued that the Reds should be allowed to "spew out their garbage" on every street corner, because it wouldn't do any good: The American mind didn't work that way, Mencken said; it would choose a Ford over the Constitution every time.

The great irony of Mencken's career, however, is that although he attacked

American complacency with an unprecedented fierceness, in many ways he was himself complacently at home in it. Mencken, in short, was a bundle of contradictions, an ambivalent Victorian in the modern world.

Mencken admitted he was born "a larva of the comfortable and complacent bourgeoisie" in Baltimore in 1880. His father, August Mencken, was a second-generation German who owned a cigar factory and a part interest in the Washington baseball club. Young Mencken grew up amid the amusements of the Baltimore Germans—a beery atmosphere, heavy with cigar smoke and Biedermeier sentimentality. Not a bad atmosphere to grow up in, Mencken thought, as years later he recalled being "encapsulated in affection, and kept fat, saucy, and contented."

In Mencken's recollection, the Baltimore of the Eighties was a city of tidy row-house neighborhoods, pestilential plagues of mosquitoes, vile sewer stench—*and* gastronomic delights, given its proximity to the truck-garden of Anne Arundel County and "the immense protein factory of the Chesapeake Bay." After enormous mid-day meals, the male population transacted the rest of the day's business in bars, where no-account Virginia "colonels," down on their luck after "The War," hoisted bumpers of rye with the local business community; and August Mencken, with young Henry beside him, checked the blackboard for the ball scores. Out in the streets, black or Italian hucksters (always called Ay-rabs by the Baltimoreans) clattered carts along the cobblestones, hawking strawberries or oysters "with loud, raucous unintelligible cries, much worn down by phonetic decay." The city mixed Northern and Southern, provincial and cosmopolitan styles, and the mix marked Mencken's own cast of mind throughout his life.

After emerging from "the caves of learning" at Knapp's Institute and the Bal-

timore Polytechnic, young Mencken reluctantly entered the family business. His miserable career as a cigar salesman was cut mercifully short by his father's death in 1899. The day after the funeral, Mencken presented himself at the offices of the Baltimore *Herald*, a paper with less prestige but more dash than the rival *Sun* (even then a bastion of maiden-aunt respectability). Night after night, he kept coming back, until finally the editor sent him out to cover the theft of a horse and buggy. Mencken broke into print the next morning, and so began a decade's apprenticeship as a reporter.

The experience reinforced his preference for "life itself" over things academic. "At a time when the respectable bourgeois youngsters of my generation were college freshmen, oppressed by simian sophomores and affronted by balderdash daily and hourly by chalky pedagogues, I was at large in a wicked seaport of half a million people, with a front seat at every public show, as free of the night as of the day, and getting eyefuls and earfuls of instruction in a hundred giddy arcana, none of them taught in schools." Small wonder that Mencken, like so many other writers of his generation, disdained the anemic idealism of polite literature in the name of "real life."

Mencken rose rapidly. After six years of haunting police stations and waterfront dives, he was made managing editor—a reward for his hard work and talent. Mencken's lifelong belief in the mythology of self-made manhood was a projection of his own experience as a newsman in an individualistic era—a proud and manly age, he believed, when newsmen would no more think of calling themselves "wage slaves" and joining a union than they would imagine tying up a studhorse's mane in pink bowknots. Yet for Mencken there was a value in the newspaper experience that went beyond masculine posturing. On the docks and in the back streets, he had abundant opportunity to acquire a

T. J. Jackson Lears, 41, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is professor of history at Rutgers University. Born in Annapolis, Md., he received a B.A. from the University of Virginia (1969), an M.A. from the University of North Carolina (1973), and a Ph.D. from Yale University (1978). He is the author of No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (1981). Copyright © 1989 by T. J. Jackson Lears.

taste for "raw reality"—but he never followed Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser into a self-parodic *nostalgie de la boue*. He developed a fascination with vernacular language: the pungent Baltimorese of the local whites, the patois of the Afro-Americans, the Polish or Yiddish or Italian variations of the more recent immigrants. The many voices of the city inspired the research that led to his monumental *The American Language*; they also enriched his own prose style.

In 1906 the Baltimore *Herald* collapsed, but Mencken stayed in Baltimore, as he would throughout his career. He joined the staff of the *Sun*—first as editor of the Sunday edition, later as editor of the *Evening Sun*, and in 1911 as author of a daily, signed editorial column he called the "Free Lance." The column gave Mencken a chance to air his idiosyncratic political views: a compound of ambivalent enthusiasm for the "progressive" civic reforms then raging through the city, tempered by a Nietzschean faith in the need for an iconoclastic elite. His contempt for Anti-Saloon Leaguers and other militant moralists provoked a vitriolic response from his readers, whose letters he printed alongside his columns. The role of pamphleteer/*provocateur* was one Mencken would relish all his life.

But it was in the realm of arts and letters that Mencken first began to acquire a national reputation during these years. In 1908, he began writing book reviews for the New York-based magazine *The Smart Set*; in 1914 he took over the editorship with George Jean Nathan. Like Van Wyck Brooks, Mencken assaulted "Puritanism as a Literary Force" and busily set about toppling such icons of gentility as William Allen White (*A Certain Rich Man*) and Marjorie Benton Cooke (*Bambi*). Thus began the epochal struggle, now enshrined in all literary histories: the Rebellion of the Angry Young Men Against the Genteel Tradition. According to conventional wisdom, World War I broke the back of Old Gentility, after the Young Men had pummeled it into stupefaction. In actuality, the psychic foundations of respectable bourgeois culture had been crumbling for decades, as WASP elites succumbed to a sense of "over-

civilized" languor towards the end of the nineteenth century. The harshest critics of the Genteel Tradition spoke from within that tradition, ranging in subtlety from Theodore Roosevelt to Henry Adams. The war merely made the weakness of the old ideals more obvious, less avoidable.

Nevertheless, there is no question that the ethnic tensions aroused by the war intensified the cultural conflicts. Mencken, Brooks, Randolph Bourne and other dissenters mounted a major attack on the Genteel Tradition in the name of cosmopolitan ideals *versus* 100% Americanism. For Mencken the issue was more personal. He had never been a professional German in his youth. His father and grandfather were detached from their homeland and annoyed by self-conscious ethnic posturing. There was little or no German spoken in August Mencken's household. But as a young man Mencken found himself inexorably drawn to German culture. He cut his intellectual teeth on Nietzsche, and when he visited Germany in 1913, he found, he believed, a land of beauty, tradition, and order—a sharp contrast to the "muddled mass of individuals" on this side of the Atlantic. The outbreak of hostilities in 1914 confirmed Mencken's Germanophilia. He felt surrounded by Anglophile cant and paranoid suspicion of things German—as indeed he was, especially after 1917 when the United States entered the conflict. In Mencken's mind, the war merged the cause of civil liberties with the rights of the German-American minority. It intensified his sense of isolation, and his embittered rage at Anglo-Saxon hegemony in letters as in politics.

After the war, there were growing divisions in the tattered army of Angry Young Men. Bourne was dead; Brooks was shuffling from one sanatorium to another; Mencken was alive and kicking, but increasingly impatient with the aestheticism of the *Smart Set*. He wanted to shift his gaze from literature to society, and in 1924 he founded *The American Mercury* in order to set up shop as a social critic. For several years he won a national following by aiming accurate barbs at the pretensions and pomposities of a business civilization. But after 1927 circulation began

to slip, and the Depression accelerated the decline, as Mencken remained stuck in his rigid iconoclast's pose. In 1933 he resigned from the *Mercury*, returned to the *Sun*, *The American Language*, and comparative obscurity. He had married Sara Haardt of Alabama in 1930, but she died five years later, leaving him utterly bereft. In 1939 he began to write his memoirs—it was as if he sensed he would be forever associated in the popular mind with a historical moment that had passed. Perhaps his obsolescence stemmed from his inability to adapt, chameleon-like, to changing cultural fashion. (One thinks of Van Wyck Brooks's reincarnation, in the 1930s, as a celebrant of mainstream American culture.) Throughout his career, Mencken's ideas remained remarkably consistent. In some ways that consistency was a weakness; in others it was his greatest strength.

From his freethinking father and grandfather, Mencken inherited the mental furniture of the "enlightened" 19th century bourgeoisie. A positivist belief in progress through empirical science; a literalist disdain for fantasy, myth, and metaphysics; a fear of anarchists, socialists, and labor unions—August Mencken's prejudices shaped his son's outlook from an early age. As his biographer, Charles Fecher, has observed, even as a child Mencken was "repelled by the improbable fantasy" of Grimm's fairy tales. His discovery of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Thomas Henry Huxley reinforced his distaste for religion and his reverence for "fact."

By the late 19th century, such attitudes were anything but rebellious. During Mencken's boyhood, Calvinism was dead, except in rural backwaters. The official creed was not "puritanism" but a liberalized, nondenominational Christianity which was hardly at odds with Mencken's own positivism. But there were fissures in the liberal-positivist consensus. The 1890s were hardly an era of complacent mediocrity, as Mencken's memoirs suggest; they were marked by social, intellectual, and moral ferment. Nationwide labor unrest threatened the bourgeois social order. A rediscovery of the nonlogical and unreasonable elements in the psyche undercut

the intellectual order. From Nietzsche to Henri Bergson, from William James to Freud, serious thinkers showed an unprecedented fascination with primal irrationality. And lesser men popularized that fascination on both sides of the Atlantic.

Despite his engagement with broad cultural issues, Mencken remained immune to much of the intellectual ferment surrounding him. He clung to the ponderous schemes of evolutionary progress mapped out by Huxley and Spencer. He dismissed James and Bergson, railed against "the Freudian rumble-bumble," and transformed Nietzsche from a Dionysian mystic into a Spencerian progressive in his youthful treatise *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908). Mencken and Nietzsche shared a common contempt for "the masses," but there was a profound philosophical gulf between the two men. Mencken's *Treatise on the Gods* (1930) was a restatement of 19th century notions that religion was an immature stage in human development, gradually being outgrown as "the race" progressed; Nietzsche's life work was an effort to discredit positivism and restore an ecstatic dimension to religious life.

Mencken's literary tastes also revealed his inflexible literalism. Impatient with psychological subtleties, he dismissed "the flabby, kittenish realism of Howells," and declared Henry James to be "of less interest than Richard Harding Davis." He had a tin ear for poetry, which seemed to him "very deficient as an agent of progress." He admired Dreiser as "a really implacable reporter of facts"; he also praised Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, and Joseph Conrad—novelists he could fit within his naturalistic frame of reference. But he rejected many 20th-century writers in baffled irritation. He admitted that "the Thomas Mann stuff simply eludes me"; he believed that Hemingway wrote novels simply to prove he was a "naughty fellow" and that there was no more sense in Faulkner than in "the wop boob, Dante." During the 1920s, Mencken's *Smart Set* was the magazine where most major new talents (Fitzgerald, Edmund Wilson) first broke into print. But as he aged, the prophet of modernity, who had once championed Ezra Pound, became anesthetized to much

of serious modern literature.

Mencken's political thinking remained less philistine. His classical liberalism never wavered; he remained devoted to free speech during periods when more "pragmatic" liberals abandoned it. He defended novelists against censors, publishers against smuthounds, socialists and anarchists (whose views he abhorred) against superpatriots. In 1925, Mencken focused attention on Carlo Tresca, the proprietor of a small, radical anti-Fascist paper in New York, whose views offended Mussolini's ambassador to the United States. Under pressure from the ambassador, the United States government shut down the paper and offered Tresca the non-choice of being deported to Italy or going to jail. Tresca shrewdly chose the latter option. In the *Sun*, Mencken fumed: "What becomes of the old idea that the United States is a free country, that it is a refuge for the oppressed of other lands? . . ."

In the *Mercury*, he published articles by Emma Goldman, an anarchist writer who had been deported during the Red Scare of 1919; he urged the Justice Department to return the papers it had seized from her office and the Bureau of Immigration to allow her to return to America to visit her relatives. While his own thinking was shaped by German ethnocentrism, he nevertheless rose above the racial mythologies of his time. He publicly denounced lynching in a town where race-baiting was a way of life, and the last thing he ever wrote was a stinging assault in the *Sun* on segregation in Baltimore parks. His libertarian principles led him to perceive national prohibition as an emblem of the moral hysteria pervading small town America in the 1920s. One can only imagine how he would skewer the "Just Say No" panicmongers of the 1980s.

It is tempting to see Mencken as the last liberal, the last genuine devotee of individual freedom who refused to make that "pragmatic" genuflection to bureaucratic authority—who refused to elevate technique over ultimate principle. He never twisted his libertarianism to sanction corporate or military power, as today's pseudo-libertarians have so often done. And, though his critiques of the New

Deal became formulaic, Mencken had spotted weaknesses in pragmatic liberal thought long before the accession of Roosevelt. Mencken remained committed to a classical republican vision of politics—the 18th-century vision of Jefferson, Madison, and Adams.

To be sure, Mencken does not always deserve to be grouped in such august company. Though he trained a sharp eye on the meanspirited moralism of prohibitionists and 100% Americans, Mencken displayed a meanspiritedness of his own. His was the narrow smugness of the urban bourgeois, addicted to his creature comforts and convinced that he has earned them through his superior ability. With the significant exception of his concern for civil liberties, Mencken's "Jeffersonianism" could be heard in any barber shop full of Right-Thinking Citizens. His father had divided all mankind into "those who paid their bills and those who didn't," and Mencken shared the old man's tightfisted morality. The New Deal, Mencken charged, was a "political racket" based on the proposition that "Whatever A earns really belongs to B. A is any honest or industrious man or woman; B is any drone or jackass." Mencken's obsession with the tyranny of the "inferior man" blinded him to mass suffering. "Even in a great depression few if any starve," he wrote. He was as much a defender of Victorian complacency as a rebel against it.

Despite his concern for culture, Mencken never considered its relationship to social and economic circumstances. True to the classical republican tradition, he tended to trace the shortcomings of American political life to the ignorance or venality of individual politicians. He seemed unable to conceive of power relations in systemic or structural terms, and so he missed the significance of the organizational revolution that was insulating the political process from popular control during the early 20th century. He all but ignored the steady concentration of power in bureaucratic and economic elites, and attributed the vapidness of American culture to an (undemonstrated) excess of democracy. An even more serious problem was the tendency of Mencken's cul-

tural criticism to slip into self-indulgence and superficiality: He often remained preoccupied with surfaces. He arraigned fundamentalists because they were ridiculous and businessmen because they were boring. In one sense his legitimate heir is that contemporary merchant of *chic*, Tom Wolfe.

But there was more than Wolfe's snobbery in H. L. Mencken. His talents were various; in many ways they resembled Mark Twain's. Both men were artists of language rather than ideas; both reached wide middle class audiences through outrageous humor and vigorous colloquial style. (Mencken said that Warren Harding's prose reminded him "of stale, bean soup, of college yells, of dogs barking idiotically through endless nights." It was a characteristic simile.) Without that style, neither man's reputation would have survived a generation. Both men sustained ambivalent relationships with majority culture: they mocked it, exploited it, made literary capital out of it, but they never dismissed it. To do so would have been to reject their own birthright as American provincials. Restive and rebellious as they were, they nonetheless remained committed to most values of the respectable bourgeoisie (including its sentimental ideal of domestic life).

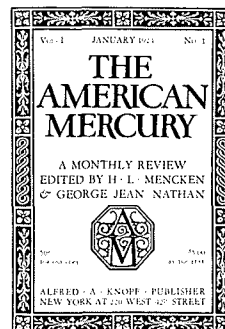
Yet Mencken sought to be more than a National Funny Man. He used humor for serious purposes. Mencken's writing at its best was like that of Alexis de Tocqueville and other critics of American society: He lamented the homogenizing effects of democratic culture on public discourse, and he sought to promote a genuine "battle of ideas" for its own sake. He kept alive a tradition of personal journalism during decades when newspapers and magazines were passing increasingly under corporate control. His voice rose above the rumble of "responsible opinion," and for a time his disdain for official pieties leav-

ened the intellectual life of the nation.

Unlike many of us, Mencken was ultimately forced to test the courage of his intellectual convictions. As he grew older, more concerned about his health and prone to thoughts of death, Mencken increasingly followed his materialist premises to their logical conclusion.

For him, as for his late Victorian predecessors, the only alternative to religious or secular humanism was a mechanistic materialism that was nearly as arrogant in its human-centeredness, in its assumption that human science had already cracked the code of the cosmos. He was willing, Mencken said, "to stand up single-handed against the eternal and intolerable mysteries." The assertion sounds sophomorically Faustian, until one recalls the pain of his later life. When he married Sara Haardt, he knew she was dying of tuberculosis; when her death finally came it was still hard to accept. "What a cruel and idiotic world we live in!" he cried in a letter to *Atlantic* editor Ellery Sedgwick.

Mencken's own stroke was the final demonstration of that cruelty and idiocy. It was one of the "harsh and meaningless fits of destiny" he found in Conrad's stories, a destiny undreamt of in positivist optimism. Mencken the maestro of language was destined to end his days groping for words and forgetting the names of his closest friends. ("How are my friends?" was one of his refrains to Farrell.) He was sad, his voice was thick, sometimes the right word would not come; yet he still could sometimes summon his playful old persona. "When I see God," he would tell visitors, "I'm going to speak sharply to him." Nothing in his life became him like the close of it. We may permit ourselves to imagine that the old man on Hollins Street was not merely an anachronism, that he was "out of it" in a more honorable sense as well, providing a kind of stoical witness against the self-congratulatory certainties of America's national creed.



Socrates, Corinthians, and Democracy

by Matthew Shirts

Before I am charged with unfair labeling, let me make clear that I am talking not about ancient Greece but 20th-century Brazil. The Corinthians under discussion rarely, if ever, travel by boat, and this particular Sócrates, while given to philosophizing, is a popular soccer player.

"Corinthian Democracy," to come directly to the point, refers to a political movement conceived by team administrators and soccer players in an attempt to alter the management/labor relations of the "Corinthians," a club in São Paulo, Brazil's great southern industrial city. The movement seized headlines for the first time in 1982, on the eve of elections for the club presidency. It did so because of the soccer stars involved and also because of certain resemblances between the club's internal politics and the larger Brazilian political arena.

Two tickets, "Order and Truth" and "Corinthian Democracy," competed for the presidency of the Corinthians, an office that one of its former holders described as the "third most important position in the country, after the governorship of São Paulo and the presidency of the Republic."

The significance of the contest was clear from the start. "Corinthian Democracy," the incumbent faction, was in harmony with the movement of political liberalization—*abertura*—that had recently begun to assert itself in Brazil. It stood for new forms of team administration involving players, administrators, and even fans. "Order and Truth" stood for the old sys-

tem of oligarchical control, with power concentrated in the hands of a few entrenched administrators. Its candidate was the soccer *caudillo* and former club president, Vicente Matheus. The soccer magazine *Placar* aptly described the contest as a battle between "liberalization and heavy handedness, efficiency and paternalism, new times and old methods . . ."

Corinthians was in principle governed by club members: They elected a body of counselors, who in turn selected the administrators. But the resulting regime was less democratic than it sounds. The positions were usually given to wealthy businessmen who had made hefty contributions to the club. Once in power, these *cartolas*, or "top hats," tended to stay in power—and not for altruistic reasons. The *cartolas* used their positions of influence to forge alliances with leaders in the military, the judicial system, and the government. Laudo Natel, to cite one example, skillfully made his way from the presidency of the São Paulo Futebol Club to the governorship of São Paulo.

It is clear, then, that much was at stake in the 1982 club elections, and the opposing sides knew it. Paying for television and radio ads, T-shirts, caps, and musical groups, they together ran up a campaign bill of about (U.S.) \$500,000. Several team players openly announced their support for the Democracy ticket. They backed Waldemar Pires for president and sociologist Adílson Monteiro Avles (one of the theoreticians of the movement) for director.

Sócrates, a lanky, bearded medical doctor, captain of Brazil's 1982 World Cup team, and the Corinthians's star player, issued a stern ultimatum: He would retire from soccer if "Order and Truth" won.

Corinthian fans could soon breathe easily. Democracy won. And the victory had consequences well beyond the soccer stadium. Corinthians suddenly appeared in the forefront of national politics alongside unions, opposition parties, and other independent organizations that, since the late 1970s, had been working for political liberalization. Even two years after the club election, the *corintianos* were actively participating in the campaign for free national elections.

How did a club election come to mean so much to the political life of a big, sprawling, heterogeneous society?

The answer, of course, lies in the significance of soccer to the Brazilian people. As numerous scholars have observed, the game is not only the premier sport in Brazil; it is, unlike other sports (with the possible exception of *capoeira*, a mixture of fight and dance), a vital part of the pervasive popular culture that emerged in Brazilian cities around the turn of the century. Indeed, *futebol* is as important an element as carnival, Afro-Brazilian religions, popular music, and Catholicism.

A statement made by Sócrates in February 1983 gives some idea of what Corinthian Democracy was all about: "I'm struggling for freedom, for respect, for ample and unrestricted discussions, for a professional democratization . . . and all of this as a soccer player, preserving the lucid and pleasurable nature of this activity."

Sócrates's vision of the nature and possibilities of Brazilian soccer may sound like a student slogan from Paris, 1968. But it is less an intellectual's manifesto than the expression of a popular attitude—playful, spontaneous, free-wheeling, and democratic. Originating among Brazilian

workers, this attitude also includes a healthy dose of contempt for coercive labor—and for those who profit from it.

"The sphere of labor," writes Gilberto Vasconcellos, "projects itself over Brazilian popular music as a powerful *inverted image*; the systematic and radical negation of values elevated into a positive light by work became the preferred poetic theme of our popular composers in the twenties and thirties—one of the richest and most notable periods in Brazilian popular music." Popular composers celebrated the figure of the *malandro*, a bohemian rascal of folklore who, with *savoir faire*, moves between the spheres of "order" and "disorder" in Brazilian society, taking advantage of the breaches in both: "Mommy I don't want/Mommy I don't want/ to work from sun up to sun down./I want to be a singer on the radio/a soccer player . . ."

To the dark poverty of lower-class life, the urban underclasses brought the joy and sensuality of dance, the irreverence of carnival, and the ambivalent, sometimes tragic life of the *malandro*. And soccer, although a game of the urban elite in turn-of-the-century Brazil, quickly became incorporated in this opposition culture. By 1933, the year the game was professionalized in Brazil, everything about it, from style of play to deportment of fans, had changed. The overall aesthetic had gone from gentlemanly and controlled to spontaneous and carnivalesque.

On the field, for instance, the change gave rise to a new sort of player—acrobatic, elastic, full of unexpected moves, elegant, and individualistic. Players such as Leonidas in the thirties and forties, Garrincha in the fifties and sixties, and Pelé in the fifties, sixties, and seventies exemplified the acrobatic "happy" style. Such players made the game into a celebration of fun and irreverence. Pelé lightly kicking the ball over a defender's head and running past him to receive it himself; Garrincha, his team ahead 3-0, dribbling

Matthew Shirts, 30, a former associate of the Wilson Center's Latin America Program, is currently a writer and editor for the Brazilian newspaper, Folha de São Paulo. Born in Columbus, Ga., he received his A.B. from the University of California, Berkeley (1981). This essay is adapted from an article in Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of Mass Culture, Joseph L. Arbena, editor. Published by Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn. Copyright © 1988 by Joseph L. Arbena. Used with permission.

past three opponents, obliging the goalie to make a leap and fall flat on his face, then waiting for the enemy fullback to arrive in order to dribble around him and only then tapping the ball into the goal—this was the popular Brazilian style. Covering the World Cup in 1982 for *The New Yorker*, Alastair Reid observed that “Brazil’s whole play seemed more instinct than design, and it was clear the Brazilians relished playing the game—an impression that came all too rarely in the Mundial.”

The Corinthian Democracy movement heartily embraced the style of the popular Brazilian soccer tradition, emphasizing the playful aspect of the game as well as the players’ right to control their own lives. It did away with the pre-game “confinement,” brought beer into the locker room, and made it a matter of policy that what players did on their own time was their own and not the club’s business. Rejecting the moralism of earlier generations of soccer stars, Sócrates and Casagrande, for example, gave interviews in bars, revealed their taste for a *cervejinha* or two, and ex-

plained that they really enjoyed smoking cigarettes.

Apart from its own inherent interest, however, the novelty of Corinthian Democracy reanimates an old scholarly controversy about the place of soccer in Brazilian society. On one side are those scholars who attack the soccer mania as an opiate of the people. The intense interest generated by the game, and the equally intense popular identification with the various clubs, only succeed, they say, in keeping the attention of the masses turned from more serious matters, above all their economic and political plight. On the other side are the scholars who exalt the game: They say that it strengthens the cultural bonds that hold the nation together.

Corinthian Democracy, on the surface at least, challenges both points of view. It does so because even though it unified people (fans, players, and administrators), it unified them in a democratic movement defiant of the authoritarian, even dictatorial, order of the Brazilian



Sócrates (left), shown here in a 1986 practice scrimmage, displays the exuberant Brazilian style that has brought his country three World Cup soccer championships.

state. But was Corinthian Democracy merely the exception that proves the rule? History provides some clues to the answer.

The government's response to Brazil's World Cup championship in 1970 shows that soccer can indeed be used as a form of social manipulation. General Emilio Médici's government (1969-74), the most repressive in the history of the dictatorship that was installed in 1964, went to great lengths to reap the political benefits of the national team's victory. Médici declared a national holiday, received the team in Brasília, and rewarded each player with the equivalent of (U.S.) \$18,500, tax free. Shortly after the victory, he announced, "I identify this victory, achieved in the fraternity of sport, with ascension of faith in our struggle for national development."

The regime used the victory for more than propaganda purposes, however. After 1970, it began to remake the national team in its own image. Captain Claudio Coutinho was given the task of "modernizing" the Brazilian style of play, an effort that bore many similarities with the military efforts to "modernize" the Brazilian economy. Modernization of soccer translated into an emphasis on discipline and obedience at the expense of improvisation, on teamwork rather than individual expression, physical force instead of art, imported technological jargon instead of popular wisdom. Coutinho made a point of turning away players who resisted this dull and authoritarian style, players such as Paulo César Caju, Marinho, Serginho, and others. Coutinho, observed one Brazilian writer, went so far as to define the dribble "our specialty, as 'a waste of time and proof of our weakness.'"

Given the success of Brazilian soccer in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, the government's program seems particularly perverse. After all, by 1970, Brazil had won three of the four previous World Cup crowns and Pelé was internationally recognized as the best player in the history of the game. But the government, clearly uncomfortable with "samba soccer" and its emphasis on improvisation, individual effort, and irreverence, did its level best to reform the game.

For their part, leftist intellectuals de-

nounced the nationalistic propaganda that surrounded the 1970 World Cup, some even going so far as to root against the Brazilian squad. As one of my Brazilian friends said at the time: "The cheers of the fans drown out the screams of the torture victims." Even from a more moderate perspective, the sociologist Janet Lever observed that soccer during the Médici period facilitated national integration and buttressed the dictatorships.

Finally, however, neither the criticism from the Left nor the reform efforts of the military could kill the game—or, for that matter, alter its underlying popular ethos. And at least one thing that this failure suggests is that popular identification with soccer is a more complex matter than either the "opium of the people" thesis or the "national integration" theory suggest. True, an opinion poll taken in 1970 showed that 90 percent of Brazil's lower classes identified soccer with the nation. But the question remains: What nation?

The creation of national identity in Brazil is, as many scholars have pointed out, a very different business from what national identity means in North American and European nations. The Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Da Matta has argued that the most powerful sources of social identity are not "institutions central to the social order, such as laws, the constitution, the university, the financial order, etc.," but rather the various manifestations of popular culture, including carnival, soccer, and popular religiosity. There is, of course, as Da Matta says, a continual effort by Brazilian officialdom to create a social identity that incorporates notions of the civic order, and to some extent it has succeeded. Nevertheless, there remain in Brazil many social identities; and those created by popular culture seldom converge with those created by official institutions.

Seen in this light, then, the Médici government's keen interest in overhauling soccer during the early 1970s was an attempt to merge the separate identities—a moderately successful attempt at best. Seen by the same light, Corinthian Democracy was an effort to keep them as far apart as possible. Indeed, Corinthian Democracy drew on the unofficial, supposedly less serious side of Brazilian culture to for-

mulate a critique of the country's authoritarian regime: the all-too-serious side.

Corinthian Democracy was, to be sure, the offspring of the political liberalization that began in the late 1970s. *Abertura* was in turn the product of a crisis of legitimacy brought on by the collapse of the Brazilian "economic miracle," financial scandal, growing foreign debt, and inflation. Without prosperity, Brazil's military regime had, quite simply, little legitimate claim to leadership. And labor unions, professional organizations, church communities, and other associations were quick to voice their discontent.

In addition to calling for increased political participation, the opposition parties of *abertura* posed a question as yet unresolved: the basis and character of national citizenship. "Who are we?" books and articles by Brazilian authors repeatedly asked.

Corinthian Democracy offered an implicit answer: A country of soccer fans and players. To an extent, of course, this was nothing new. For decades, large segments of Brazilian society had found a collective identity in soccer and the way it was played in the country. The specific contribution of Corinthian Democracy, however, was to legitimate what had been unofficial, taking advantage of the carnivalesque atmosphere of club elections to do so.

Corinthian Democracy reached its peak at the April 1984 free-election rally in São Paulo. The rally was held just a few days before the scheduled Congressional vote on the constitutional amendment to re-establish free elections in the nation. Sócrates, speaking before some 500,000 people, pledged that, if the amendment passed, he would refuse a million-dollar offer to play in Italy and stay in Brazil to participate in the rebuilding of democracy. His gesture was criticized as demagogic, but it was absolutely consistent with the spirit of Corinthian Democracy.

As things turned out, the free-election

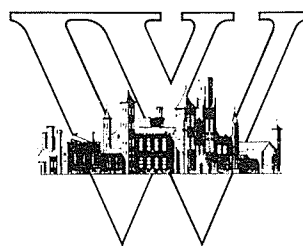
amendment did not pass. Sócrates went on to play in Florence, where he spent part of his time auditing political science classes. Casagrande, another symbol of Corinthian Democracy, was lent to the São Paulo Futebol Club. He watched the Corinthians lose to Santos in the final game of the São Paulo championship in 1984; the television cameras picked him out in the stands, crying amidst the crowd.

Corinthian Democracy seemed to fade into the background after the defeat of the free-elections campaign, but in fact it had a lasting effect on sports and politics in São Paulo and in Brazil. The example of the Corinthians inspired other teams throughout the country to participate in the free-election campaign. And even though their combined efforts failed to win the day, they did help to alter the political climate in Brazil. This change would lead, in 1985, to the end of the military regime and the restoration of civilian government.

As a byproduct, Corinthian Democracy forced intellectuals who had been skeptical of the game's influence to look at it in a different way. Far from functioning as a mere opiate, *futebol* had invaded politics, the traditional terrain of elites. Doing so, it revealed an autonomy in relation to political life that had been denied or overlooked by scholars. If Corinthian Democracy helped unify people around the game of soccer, it did so in ways contrary to the desires of the top hats and generals.

Social analysts who ignore the specific content of popular culture by reducing it to a mere prop of economic and political arrangements make a serious mistake. Corinthian Democracy was able to use the subversive, populist spirit of Brazilian soccer to criticize the dominant political order precisely because its adherents did not make the same error.

And also because Sócrates, Casagrande, Wladimir & Co. played great soccer.



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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.

The Failure Of Urban Renewal

Steven J. Diner's brief mention of "urban renewal's" displacement of black families in Southwest Washington ["From Jim Crow To Home Rule," *WQ*, New Year's 1989] does less than full justice to the havoc inflicted by that ill-named Federal policy.

Urban renewal during the 1960s destroyed much decent housing in Washington along with the slum shanties. Worst of all, it forced thousands of black Washingtonians to compete for housing in an increasingly tighter market. Change came so suddenly that the housing market could not respond. Rent control and rising land values discouraged developers from building more low- and middle-income apartments elsewhere in the city.

Washington was not the only victim of urban renewal's disruptive effects—the replacement of vibrant working-class neighborhoods by either expensive condominiums or warehouses for the unruly underclass. But there is special irony in the thought that well-meaning but misguided policymakers in Congress and the Federal housing agencies have been compelled every day to contemplate the visible results of their inept handiwork.

Peter Clark
Washington, D.C.

The Missing Factor

What I really miss in the articles ["The Other Washington," *WQ*, New Year's '89]... is the connection between federal Washington and the local black community. At several key points national interests intruded on black need, even as Federal officials voiced the best of intentions. The first was the end of the territorial regime (in 1874), when *The Star*, which had staunchly backed Alexander Shepherd and the territorial government, suddenly backed off as it became clear that Congress would compensate the city for losing its independence with an annual payment. In this instance, the advances of black empowerment were sacrificed to the promises of physical improvements. The other key experiences were the McMillan Commission, which was responsible during the early years of this century for building up a federal monumental core in open defiance of critical urban needs, particularly housing; and, later, urban redevelopment,

notably when [the federal government], backed by *The Washington Post*, rammed slum clearance and urban renewal projects down the throats of the black community, despite its open protest.

... I don't think the drive for statehood is any more accidental than the emotional defence of Mayor Marion Barry by the city's blacks. Both are rooted in the long history of exploitation of blacks by the federally-oriented interests in the city. That is what makes Washington different from Miami or Chicago, and that difference is what is missing in your collection of articles....

Prof. Howard Gillette, Jr.
American Studies Program
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

Looking East

It is a pity that in your excellent cluster of essays ["Soviets and Americans," *WQ*, New Year's '89] there is virtually no mention of Eastern Europe. The reader would have been well served by an analysis of reactions to the Gorbachev initiatives in a part of the world where reforms were attempted long before the Soviets believed that they were desirable or indeed acceptable.

One should be able to tell whether Moscow will apply trust and long-sightedness to its relations with the rest of the world by its treatment of its East European empire. And whether the Cold War really is over.

In the years of Brezhnevite ossification, all attempts at diversity in Eastern Europe were repressed, or at least scorned—think of Solidarity, the Hungarian economic experiments, not to mention the Prague Spring. Now the Gorbachevites are looking at Eastern Europe to see what economic and political lessons they can draw for themselves.

It is also interesting to assess the different reactions of the Eastern European regimes and peoples to Moscow's attempts at *perestroika*: Poland's and Hungary's enthusiasm and some mistrust, Czechoslovakia's and East Germany's resistance and disapproval. What role will Moscow play in the impending fate of Ceaușescu's Romanian kingdom?

Maya Latynski
Washington, D.C.

The Greenhouse Effect

A recent string of extreme weather patterns have caused the attention of politicians and the general public to focus on the relationship between climate and society ["Climate," *WQ*, Winter '88]. Although there is no proof that the past year's unusual weather events are the consequence of the greenhouse effect, they dramatically demonstrate the sensitivity of both developing and industrialized societies to relatively small changes in weather and climate. The articles by Diana Morgan and Steven Lagerfeld provide valuable background information on this complex relationship.

However, in their analysis both Ms. Morgan and Mr. Lagerfeld ignore one key issue: the *rate* of future climate change. The timing of future global warming may have as much to do with the economic costs and the biological consequences as does the magnitude of the change. If the change occurs slowly, societies and ecosystems are likely to adapt smoothly to the new conditions. The troublesome prospect is that future climate change may occur too quickly for exposed geographic regions and vulnerable sectors of society to adjust.

The good news is that policy choices and investment decisions made today and implemented over the next several decades will determine the rate of future greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting rate of climate change. The bad news is that if we ignore the opportunity to slow the rate of emissions growth now, achieving the same amount of risk reduction in the future will require much more drastic measures.

Lagerfeld points out that if current trends continue, the world will warm by 3–9° F by the year 2030. Furthermore, if the United States, the Soviet Union, India, Indonesia, and other countries follow the Chinese example of rapidly increasing coal use, the timing of this warming may be substantially accelerated. In such a scenario the planet could be committed to an average global warming of 10–30° F by 2075.

Research at the World Resources Institute suggests, however, that if industrialized and developing countries cooperate to implement policies that increase the efficiency of energy use and shift the fuel mix from carbon-intensive fuels like coal to hydrogen-intensive fuels like natural gas (and, eventually, to smokeless fuels), the timing of a 3–9° F warming could be postponed beyond 2075. This sixty-year delay in the global warming might just provide enough time for societies to develop adaptive responses to those climate changes which can no longer be avoided.

We face a choice of historic proportions. We can choose to sustain the prospects for economic

growth while minimizing the long-term environmental consequences of energy supply and use. Or we can muddle through the next several years and hope that Divine Providence or some undiscovered technology saves us from the consequences of our mistakes. The stakes in a rapid global warming are high—ultimately threatening the very survival of our civilization. Fortunately, the game of risk reduction is simple and the choice is ours: Act now or pay later.

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The Plight Of Music

S. Frederick Starr's article on the plight of America's orchestras ["Saving America's Symphonies," *WQ*, Winter '88] contains some excellent recommendations. I witnessed the demise of three symphonies, and Mr. Starr's narrative brought back some painful memories. The Johannesburg City Orchestra (for which Vaughn Williams composed his *Festival Overture*) in 1951 played as its final piece the Haydn Farewell Symphony before a sobbing audience; the orchestra had fallen victim to politics. In 1960 the Orquestra de Concert in (then) Lourenzo Marques, Mozambique, in which I played and of which my father was conductor, collapsed in the chaos of decolonization. And in the 1970s the Greater Miami Philharmonic, not mentioned by Mr. Starr as a casualty, disintegrated in South Florida's maelstrom of demographic and cultural change.

Clearly the problem should be viewed geographically as well as structurally. The root causes of the problems our symphonies face are, in my experience, regionally different. It is likely that none of Mr. Starr's proposals could have saved the Miami orchestra; its old audience moved away. That was not the problem in Kansas City or Nashville.

A related dilemma, also geographic, involves the changing urban environment encircling many a concert hall. An orchestra, no matter how "regional" and hinterland-conscious, needs a base, a hall that embodies its particular sound. How many millions of music lovers, in recent years, have forgone their opportunities to hear their favorite orchestras because of fear of downtown crime?

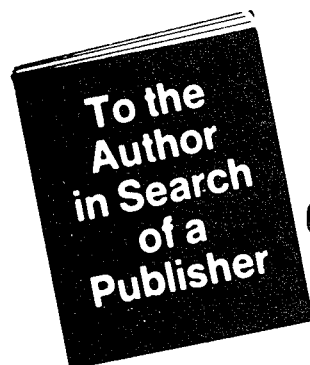
Some of the most serious problems afflicting America's symphonies do not originate, and cannot be confronted, in the concert hall.

H. J. de Blij
Professor of Geography
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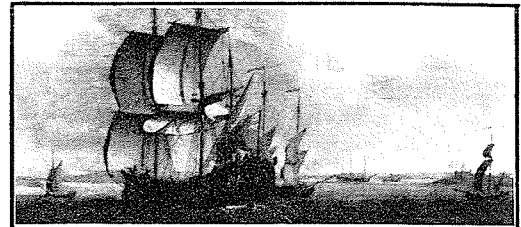
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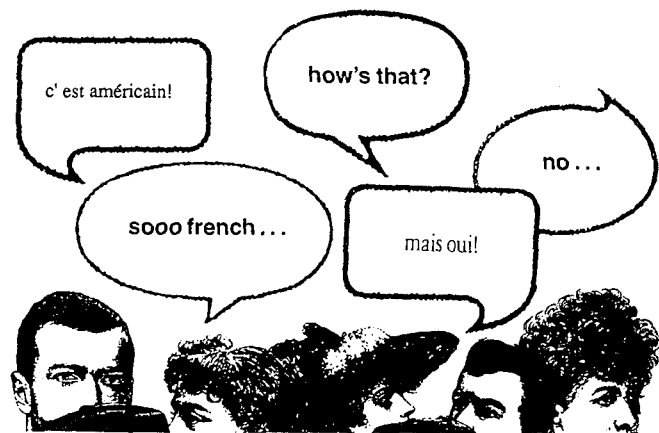
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