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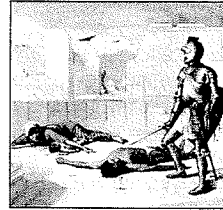
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## COVER STORY

### LATIN AMERICA'S INDIAN QUESTION

22

Guerrilla war and terrorism in Peru. Environmental debates over Brazil's rain forests. In these and other issues vexing nations throughout Latin America, the Indian question figures crucially. Yet few specialists have addressed it directly. **Peter F. Klarén, David Maybury-Lewis, and Richard N. Adams** demonstrate its importance to affairs of state in Peru, Brazil, and Central America. **Ambrose Evans-Pritchard** points to a hopeful development in Guatemala.



### THE WINNING OF THE WEST RECONSIDERED

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Cover: Detail from *Battle of the Aztecs and Spaniards* by Diego Rivera (1930), from the Granger Collection, New York. The original painting is part of a mural at the former Palacio de Cortés, now the Museo Quauanahuac, in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

ISSN-0363-3276 USPS 346-670

WPA

VOL. XIV NO. 3

Published in January (Winter), April (Spring), July (Summer), and October (Autumn) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Indexed biennially. Subscriptions: one year, \$20; two years, \$36. Outside U.S.: one year, \$26.50; two years, \$49. Air mail outside U.S.: one year, \$35; two years, \$66. Single copies mailed upon request: \$6; selected back issues: \$6, including postage and handling; outside U.S. and possessions, \$7. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 370 L'Enfant Promenade S.W., Suite 704, Washington, D.C. 20024. All unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Members: Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence with Wilson Quarterly mailing label to Subscriber Service, The Wilson Quarterly, P.O. Box 56161, Boulder, Colo. 80322-6161. (Subscriber hot line: 1-800-876-8828.) Postmaster: Send all address changes to The Wilson Quarterly, P.O. Box 56161, Boulder, Colo. 80301. Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870.

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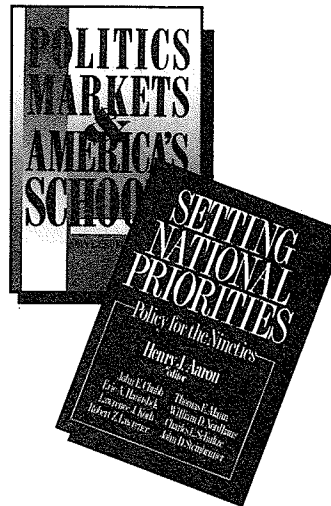
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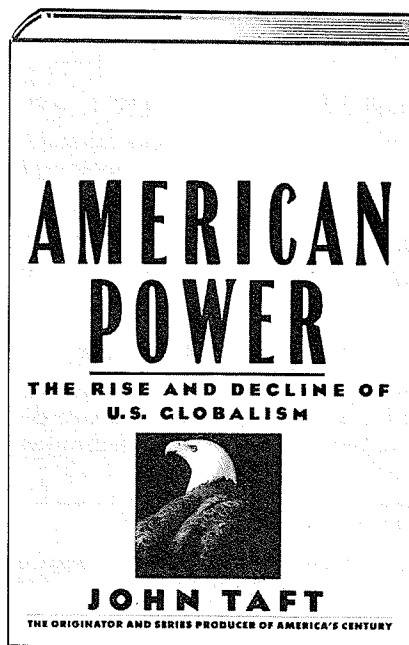
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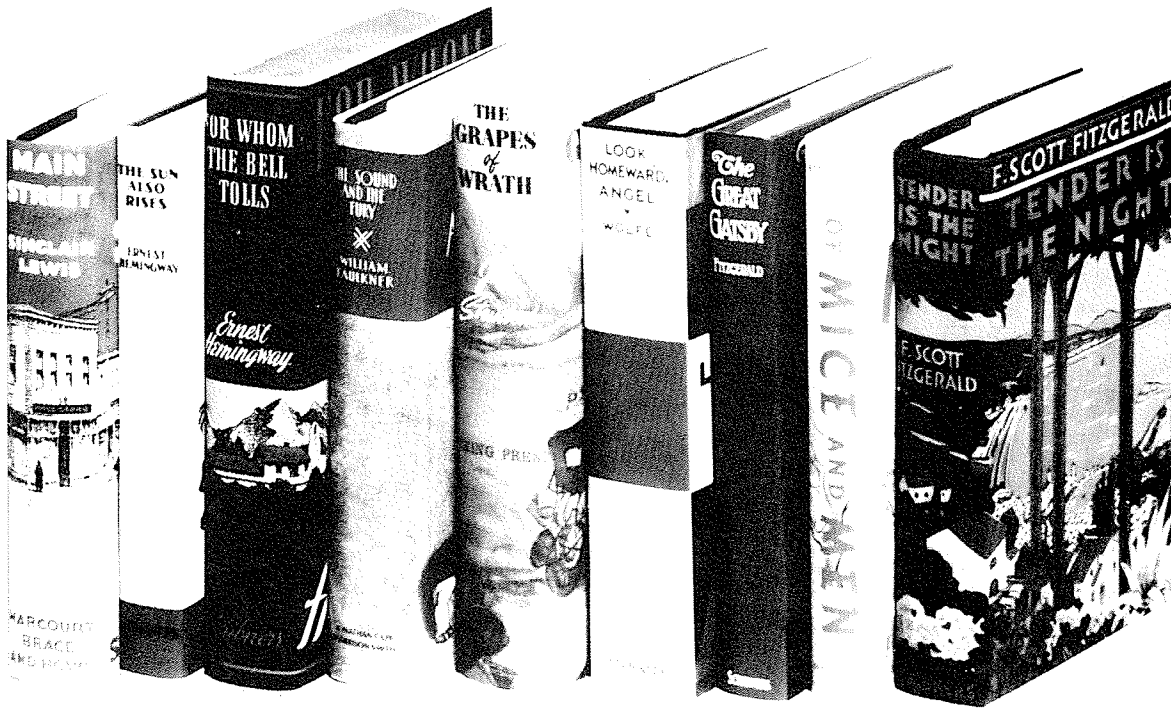
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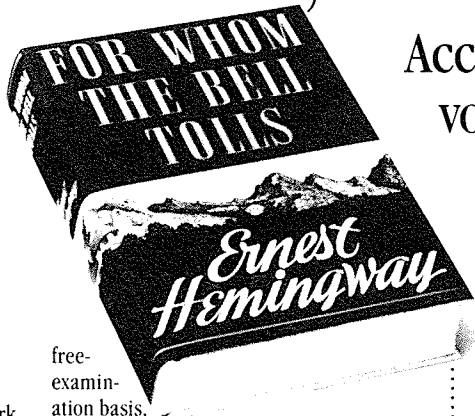
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## Editor's Comment

The modern nation-state has fallen on hard times. Challenged from above by supranational bodies such as the European Community, it also finds itself fending off the demands of ethnic groups and minorities from within. Will the nation-state remain a functioning political unit in the decades to come? Past issues of the *WQ* have tried to answer that question by looking at the supranational challenges—not only economically driven alternatives [see “Europe 1992,” *WQ*, Winter '90] but also the culturally inspired transnational alternatives [see “The Islamic World,” *WQ*, Autumn '89]. In this issue, we turn to the challenges within. For close to 500 years, Indians throughout Latin America have been exploited and ignored; now, however, everywhere from Guatemala and El Salvador to Peru and Brazil, they are asserting their rights and claiming at least a part of their stolen patrimony. The nations of Latin America, our contributors show, will ignore the Indian question only at their peril. On the other side of the globe, several nationalities within the Soviet Union are clamoring for greater independence. Nicolai Petro explains how renascent Russian nationalism may paradoxically lead the way to a truly multinational (and democratic) federation. The fate of nations—and of other groups competing for people's loyalties—remains a major concern of the *WQ* and the Wilson Center.

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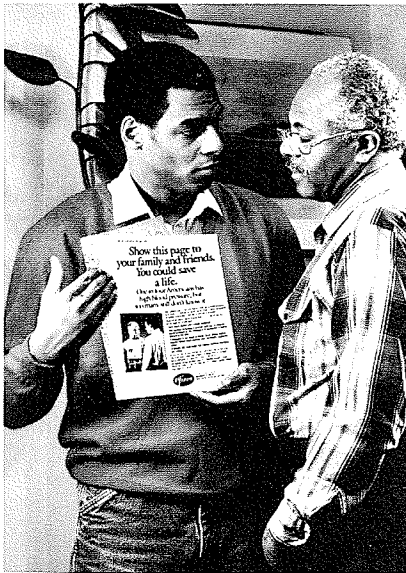
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## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

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### *The Next Crusade?*

"For A New Equality" by Mickey Kaus, in *The New Republic* (May 7, 1990), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

More and more Democrats these days seem to be resuming an old war cry: Soak the rich! Soak the rich!

Kaus, an editor of the *New Republic*, says that the chant sends shivers down his spine. Not because he is a Republican, not (presumably) because he is rich, but because a revival of the politics of redistribution, which he calls Money Liberalism, "would condemn the Democrats to a futile and often incoherent struggle against the basic forces of our economy."

There is no doubt, he says, that income inequality is rising. One study shows that between 1973 and 1987, the share of national income claimed by Americans in the bottom fifth of the population dropped from 5.6 percent to 4.3 percent; the share claimed by those in the top "quintile" rose from 41.4 to 43.9 percent. But it is a delusion, Kaus maintains, to think that these changes were caused by the Reagan tax cuts of the 1980s, or that they can be reversed by heavier levies on the rich. The richest 10 percent of American families enjoyed a \$16,000 increase in after-tax income between 1980 and 1988, but only about \$1,200 came from tax cuts.

Moreover, Kaus says, Democrats can no longer even count on the political logic of Money Liberalism—that the poorest 51 percent of the population will vote against the richest 49 percent.

The forces that have increased economic inequality, he continues, have also undercut a variety of Democratic nostrums: job training programs, trade union-

ism, protectionism, "flexible" production, profit-sharing. One of the major causes of increasing inequality, he says, is the growing link between pay, on the one hand, and job skills and knowledge: The workers in yesterday's factory were all paid roughly the same wage, because it didn't matter much if one could, for example, tighten a bolt better than another. In the computer age, however, differences matter, and they are reflected in wages.

Instead of engaging in futile efforts to eliminate inequality, Kaus argues, Democrats should "try to restrict the sphere in which money matters, to prevent the income inequality inevitably generated by capitalism from translating into invidious social distinctions." Civic Liberalism, as he calls it, tries to replace the principle of the marketplace (i.e., rich beats poor) with the principle of equal citizenship.

How is that to be done? By aiding or expanding components of the public sphere in order to "induce rich and poor actually to rub shoulders as equals": public schools, mandatory national service, parks and playgrounds, communal day-care centers, national health insurance, and the like. The revival of the public sphere, he says, cannot be complete until the underclass problem is solved. And because adherence to the work ethic is the *sine qua non* of equal citizenship, he favors mandatory jobs for welfare recipients.

The great liberal task of the 1990s, Kaus believes, is "not to equalize money, but to put money in its place."

## The Odd Origins Of Polling

"The First Straw: A Study of the Origins of Election Polls" by Tom W. Smith, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Spring 1990), Univ. of Chicago Press, 5801 S. Ellis, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

The origins of American political opinion polls are generally traced to 1936, when Alf Landon faced Franklin Roosevelt in one of the most lopsided "contests" in American history. Three pollsters (George Gallup, Elmo Roper, and Archibald Crossley) rose to the not-very-difficult task of predicting the winner. In fact, says Smith, a University of Chicago polling specialist, the real origins of the survey go back to the election of 1824, one of the closest in American history.

It was a time of great turmoil in American politics. The demise of the Federalist Party as a national force by 1820 had caused the collapse of the first American "party system." The reigning Democratic-Republican Party's "Virginia Dynasty" (Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe) was about to come to an end; Monroe would not run for a third term. In 1824, therefore, the nation faced its first seriously contested election to be decided largely by popular vote. (In 1800, only five of 16 states chose their delegates

to the Electoral College by popular vote; by 1824, 18 of 24 did so.) Finally, the old "undemocratic" system of nominating candidates for the White House by congressional caucus had fallen into disrepute. Yet no alternative had emerged.

Like their late 20th-century counterparts, the candidates of the 1820s began campaigning for the next election almost as soon as the last one was over. By 1824, the pack included such notables as General Andrew Jackson, Speaker of the House Henry Clay, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, and Secretary of the Treasury William Harris Crawford.

Under such chaotic conditions, old methods of gauging political sentiment—chiefly, consulting political "insiders"—no longer seemed adequate. Straw polls emerged as the best substitute. Apparently, Smith says, they grew out of the hybrid rally-conventions that political activists launched as substitutes for the old nominating caucuses. Before long, any public



"A Foot Race" was the title of this 1824 cartoon. Each figure in the crowd has a symbolic meaning: The man on the left with the stovepipe hat, for example, stands for the West.

gathering became fair game for a poll. In Pennsylvania, one political aficionado kept a record of how many toasts were made to each candidate at a Fourth of July celebration. Newspapers began reporting such results. By early October of 1824, the *Star and North Carolina Gazette* had collected poll results from 155 different meetings. Surprisingly, Smith says, the straw polls

rather accurately foretold local results.

The ultimate irony is that popular opinion finally counted for little in 1824. Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, won a plurality of the popular vote but fell short of a majority in the Electoral College. The election was decided by the House of Representatives, which chose John Quincy Adams to be the sixth U.S. president.

### *Budget Magic?*

"Line-Item Veto: Where Is Thy Sting?" by John R. Carter and David Schap, in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Spring 1990), 1313 21st Ave. So., Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

In politics, old panaceas don't die or fade away. They just keep hanging on.

Such is the case of the line-item veto. First employed by the Confederacy, the presidential line-item veto has been proposed in more than 150 bills introduced in Congress since 1876. President George Bush, like his predecessor, frequently proclaims it the nation's fiscal elixir.

The remarkable thing, as Carter and Schap, both economists at College of the Holy Cross, peevishly note, is that governors in 33 states already possess the line-item veto, and although scholars have sliced and diced the data from these states every which way, no signs of budget magic have been detected. As long ago as 1950, Frank W. Prescott reported that governors armed with line-item veto power rarely even used it, and during the early 1980s,

the average was two item-vetoes annually.

Perhaps in exasperation, Carter and Schap take the hunt for the elusive line-item-veto effect further afield. If it is worth anything, they speculate, the veto should enhance the authority of governors. And that would be reflected in other ways, such as better chances of reelection or elevation to the U.S. Senate. But statistical tests of these and four other indicators reveal no impact.

Theoretically, the authors say, the line-item veto may keep state expenditures down by forcing legislators to tailor proposals to avoid rejection. However, there is very little evidence that this happens. The line-item veto, they write, "need not cause, and apparently has not caused, the kind of sweeping changes either feared or favored by so many policy analysts."

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## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

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### *Soviet Gaullism?*

"Inventing the Soviet National Interest" by Stephen Sestanovich, in *The National Interest* (Summer 1990), 1112 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Meeting with his staff in July 1988, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced a revolutionary change in policy. Mikhail Gorbachev had just revealed his plan to create a new legislature and thus to begin the redistribution of power within the Soviet Union. Now, Shevardnadze said, Soviet foreign policy would be reoriented as well. Henceforth, it would be guided by a new concept, the "national interest."

What sounds mundane to Western ears was revolutionary in Moscow, says Sestanovich, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. For decades, Soviet leaders had used the "national interest" as a term of contempt; Soviet foreign policy was guided by the need to advance the international class struggle.

After he came to power in 1985, Gorbachev spoke of a new foreign policy

based on "common human values." But no thorough reassessment of policy was required. Sestanovich writes: "The language of 'interest,' by contrast, provided a framework in which unilateral Soviet actions—even unilateral concessions—might make sense." Such concessions came quickly, beginning with Gorbachev's December 1988 announcement of troop cutbacks in Europe.

That is only one sign of the astonishing "minimalism" that Sestanovich sees sweeping Soviet foreign-policy thinking. Thus, Andrei Kozyrev, a top Foreign Ministry official, wrote recently: "Our country has no interests justifying the use of military resources outside the borders of the socialist community." Politburo member

Aleksandr Yakovlev told *Der Spiegel* last year: "It is beyond my comprehension why one power should want to be more important than another."

A second result of the debate over the national interest is a new pluralism in policymaking. As disenchantment with the past deepens, the military is losing its dominant role.

Finally, the Soviets are more willing to defer to international opinion. As Shevardnadze said in 1988: "We cannot simply pretend that the norms and ideas of . . . civilized conduct in the world community do not concern us. If you want to be accepted in it, you have to observe them."

But Moscow is not going to withdraw into an isolationist shell. The question, Sestanovich says, is how will it define the national interest to make "a better fit with the needs of a post-imperial medium power." The challenge, he says, is parallel to the one France confronted after World War II, and perhaps the answer will be similar to the one provided by Charles de Gaulle. What would Soviet Gaullism mean? Maintenance of a limited nuclear deterrent; establishment of "special relationships" with other European nations (especially Germany); and a "residual role" in the Third World.

### *Still Crazy After All These Years*

Noted in *National Review* (June 11, 1990):

UNESCO . . . has named Ho Chi Minh Man of the Century, "the symbol of the common struggles of people for peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress."

### *The German Shadow*

"One-and-a-half Cheers for German Unification" by Josef Joffe, in *Commentary* (June 1990), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Just as every silver lining has its dark cloud, so the end of the Cold War has its ominous aspect: the reunification of Germany. One German-Jewish journalist worried recently that the new Germany "may become a strange and eerie place—perhaps even the source of a new wave of darkness spreading over the earth."

Joffe, the foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper in Munich, offers partial reassurance. "Anybody reasoning forward from past disaster will be hard put to make the indictment stick," he writes. The West German legislators who were reported to have burst into *Deutsch-*

*land über alles* when the Berlin Wall was breached last November 9, he notes, were actually singing *Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit* (Unity, Justice, Freedom).

Joffe's larger point is that in Germany, as in the rest of the industrialized world, old-fashioned nationalism, the "murderous energy" that drove European history between 1789 and 1945, "isn't what it used to be." No longer do these nations go to war on the strength of a cry like "*Gott strafe England*" (May God Punish England). That energy has been extinguished by the memory of two world wars that left 70 million dead and by the knowledge that national

hubris in the nuclear age can be tantamount to national suicide.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Joffe continues, nationalism took an especially violent course in Germany, because economic modernization was not accompanied by democratization. A natural substitute for democracy was nationalism, "that wondrous 'political good' which is never scarce and which bestows psychic equality on rich and poor, on masters and servants alike." Furthermore, historical circumstances encouraged extreme nationalism. The Second Reich (1871-1919) was a latecomer to the Great Powers and often excluded; the Third Reich (1933-45) was the product of national humiliation and economic disaster. None of these historical parallels apply, Joffe maintains. And West Germany today is in some ways more democratic than France and Britain, which are, among other things, far more centralized than the Federal Republic.

But Joffe's optimism is qualified. One of the historical conditions that no longer applies to Germany, after all, is the stable postwar order that shaped today's benign



A U.S. cartoonist found the reunification of Germany a laughing matter. Few Europeans take the prospective marriage so lightly.

West Germany. American dominance within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization provided "a power greater than all of [the Western European powers] that could ensure each against the perils of cooperation." All of this is now dissolving, and European rivalries are bound to revive. Joffe suggests that competition will be peaceful: "The battle lines are drawn in the balance-of-payments ledgers, and the accounts are settled with ECU's (the European Community internal currency), not with blood and iron." Still, he gives only "even odds, no more" that Germany will not become "a strange and eerie place."

## The Dirty Wars of The Enlightenment

"War and Culture, a Case Study: The Enlightenment and the Conduct of the British Army in America, 1755-1871" by Armstrong Starkey, in *War and Society* (May 1990), Univ. of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Campbell, ACT 2600, Australia.

"Gentlemen of the French Guards, fire first!" This famous invitation was issued by Captain Lord Charles Hay as British troops advanced on the French at the battle of Fontenoy in 1745. Not to be outdone, the French declined. "One wonders," remarks Starkey, a historian at Adelphi University, "how the killing began."

Such instances of battlefield gallantry have helped create a picture of an 18th-

century interlude of "civilized" warfare sandwiched between the bitter religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries and the devastating nationalist crusades that began with Napoleon. These images of genteel Enlightenment warfare, Starkey contends, are vastly exaggerated. Even Hay's invitation at Fontenoy was in all likelihood only a ploy: The army that received fire first then faced an enemy whose weap-

ons were unloaded.

During the American Revolution, contrary to popular myth, Americans seldom engaged in guerrilla warfare; Congress even adopted the British Articles of War. The combatants (including the French) signed agreements on rules of conduct. But violations were frequent. In 1778, a British officer went so far as to suggest that "Philadelphia should be burned and New Jersey and New England laid waste"; the British did plunder towns along the coasts of Connecticut and Virginia to deprive the Americans of supplies. Banastre Tarleton's infamous British Legion slaughtered [more than 100] Americans who tried to surrender at Waxhaw, North Carolina. "Major General Charles Grey's savage nighttime surprise attacks against American forces demonstrated that the British army could be resourceful and ruthless,"

Starkey writes.

The conduct of European armies was much worse elsewhere. The French responded to the mid-18th century war for Corsican independence with a scorched earth policy. In 1745, the British brutally suppressed the Scottish Highland rebels, whom they considered savages.

Restraint, when it was exercised, owed little to the Enlightenment, Starkey says. Many of the 3,000–4,000 British officers who served in the colonies were young aristocrats who had purchased their commissions. They had no formal military education; at best, their schooling in Enlightenment principles of warfare might be readings from Stephen Payne Adye. And even if these young officers read Adye, Starkey adds, they found appeals not to reason and rationality but to ancient notions of honor and chivalry.

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## ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

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### *Globaloney?*

"The Competitive Advantage of Nations" by Michael E. Porter, in *Harvard Business Review* (March–April 1990), Boston, Mass. 02163.

"In a world of increasingly global competition, nations have become more, not less important."

That's right, insists Porter, a professor at the Harvard Business School, *more* important. Prevailing wisdom in corporate America tends toward the opposite conclusion: Moving factories to countries with the lowest wages and interest rates, as well as strategic mergers and alliances in pursuit of lower costs, are much in vogue. Meanwhile, Washington is foolishly trying to enhance U.S. "competitiveness" abroad by easing competition at home (through such policies as the relaxation of antitrust laws), trying to manage exchange rates, and tinkering with trade policy.

Ultimately, Porter maintains, these mistaken efforts spring from an outdated view of how the world economy works. That conception is based on the theory of com-

parative advantage developed two centuries ago by classical economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo. This theory holds that the cost and distribution of the factors of production—such as labor, land, natural resources, and capital—are the key determinants of international trade. Each kind of product is exported from the nations that are best endowed with the factors needed to produce it. Thus, steel might come from the nations with the best sources of coal and iron.

Porter believes that this theory no longer applies: "In the sophisticated industries that form the backbone of any advanced economy, a nation does not inherit but instead creates the most important factors of production—such as skilled human resources or a scientific base." He calls this the theory of competitive advantage.

In Porter's view, the nation is a "home



## *Disorganizing Labor*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

The perplexing decline of American organized labor continues unabated. From a peak of 34.7 percent of the nonfarm workforce in 1954, union membership plummeted to 27.4 percent in 1970 and to 12.9 percent in 1988. Scholars now take seriously the possibility that American labor unions could ultimately go the way of the Model T.

Predictably, research into the causes of this astonishing decline has tended to become polarized along political lines. Two distinct theories have emerged.

One school of thought, led by Harvard economist Richard B. Freeman, holds that the experience of American labor is unique: All of the Western industrialized nations have suffered severe economic dislocations, such as large job losses in the heavily unionized manufacturing sector, but only American unions have declined. In a series of books, monographs, and essays, and most recently in an article in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (April 1990), co-authored with the University of Minnesota's Morris M. Kleiner, Freeman has argued that the plight of American unions is largely the result of vastly increased employer opposition to union organizing drives—and, implicitly, of faulty government policies that abet it.

Evidence of stiff, even bitter, corporate resistance to unions, a marked contrast to the general labor-management truce of the 1950s and '60s, is plentiful: Nearly half the firms in one business group in 1983 declared that being nonunion was their major labor-relations goal; 41 percent of those facing union organizing drives in a 1986 survey said they had hired union-busting consultants; official complaints of unfair labor practices in union elections before the National Labor Relations Board have soared; in about one-third of the firms that were unionized during the early 1980s, management refused to sign a collective contract, "effectively reversing the election results."

Freeman and Kleiner find that firms with the lowest wages and worst working conditions are most likely to dig in against a union organizing drive. The most effective anti-union tactic, they say, is hard-nosed opposition by foremen and mid-level supervisors. Top executives keep the heat on their subor-

dinates; eight percent of the managers who let an organizing drive begin were fired by their superiors, and 10 percent of the managers who let the union win an election were fired.

Members of the second school say that all of this is essentially irrelevant. Broadly categorized as conservatives, these scholars insist that structural changes in the economy have undermined the unions. Off the record, they might even suggest that organized labor in the postindustrial world is archaic.

Why has the decline of American unions been so severe? "Structural changes in labor markets began sooner, proceeded more rapidly, and their scope was more extensive in the U.S. than in Canada and Western Europe," Rutgers economist Leo Troy argues in *Journal of Labor Research* (Spring 1990). By the mid-1950s, half of all jobs in the United States were in the service sector, but as late as 1985, 53 percent of West Germany's workers and 50 percent of Italy's were still employed in the heavily unionized goods-producing sector.

Moreover, Troy contends, the apparent good health of unions in Canada and Western Europe is partly a mirage. Eliminate the union members from their much larger, highly unionized public sectors, and the same fundamental economic forces can be seen at work undercutting unions. Between 1975 and 1985, union membership dropped from 46 percent of the "market sector" in Italy to 39 percent; from 30 percent in West Germany to 28 percent; from 26 percent in Canada to 21 percent. In the United States during those years, membership dropped from 26 percent to 15 percent. As the United States goes, Troy says, so will its Atlantic partners.

If that is true, museum status cannot be far away. As Gary N. Chaison and Dileep G. Dhavale, both of Clark University, write in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (April 1990), in part because corporate resistance has been so strong (unions are defeated in more than half of all organizing drives), labor has reduced its organizing efforts by half since the late 1970s. That and other negative trends suggest that organized labor's slide will not end until it claims only two percent of American workers as members.

base" where "the essential competitive advantages of the enterprise are created and sustained. It is where a company's strategy is set, where the core product and process technology is created and maintained, and where the most productive jobs and most advanced skills are located." He believes that there are four determinants of competitiveness, which he calls the "diamond of national advantage": factor conditions; domestic demand for the company's product; the presence of supporting industries; and "firm strategy, structure, and rivalry."

Porter's emphasis on national qualities

seems to provide a natural rationale for massive government intervention in the economy, but he favors a restrained, though not laissez-faire, role for government. He suggests that Washington could usefully help launch industrial research and otherwise create specialized resources that yield competitive advantages, but overall he wants government to encourage U.S. business to compete more at home so that it can become more competitive overseas. Governments, he writes, "cannot create competitive industries; only companies can do that."

### *Does Humane Management Matter?*

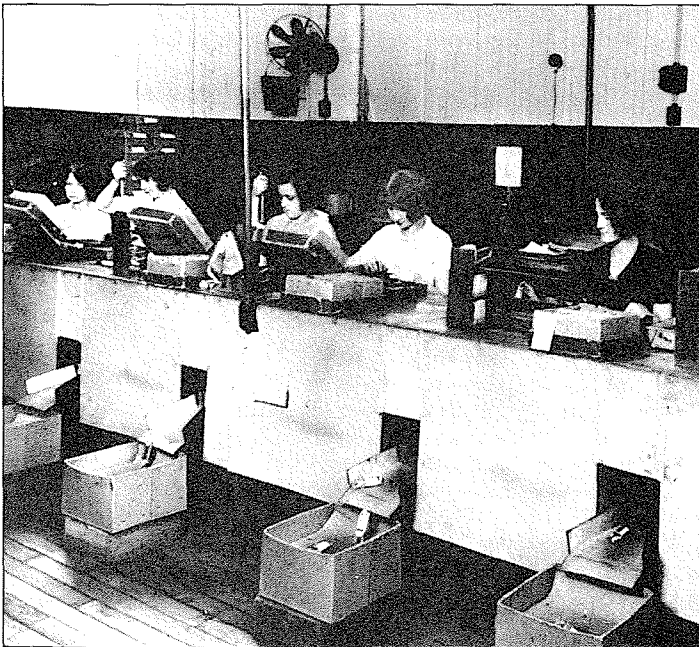
Almost any undergraduate who has taken an introductory social science course during the last 50 years has heard of the famous Hawthorne Effect: The very knowledge that researchers are studying them causes people to change the way they behave.

"Worker Interdependence and Output: The Hawthorne Studies Reevaluated" by Stephen R. G. Jones, in *American Sociological Review* (April 1990), 1722 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

That is just one of the more curious findings that came out of the landmark study of worker productivity in Western Electric's Hawthorne telephone equipment manufacturing plant in Chicago during the late 1920s and early '30s. The Hawthorne researchers began with the simple notion

that varying the intensity of the lighting in the Hawthorne plant might alter the workers' productivity. By the 1930s, however, they were convinced that they had made a revolutionary discovery: The quality of human relationships—among workers, and between workers and their supervisors—is the most important factor influencing performance on the job.

As Jones, an economist at Canada's McMaster University, observes, that was no small matter. The Hawthorne results "changed many ways of thinking about the labor process" in and out of the academic world; it also provided the foundation for new subspecialties in the developing "science" of manage-



*The Hawthorne plant's relay assembly test room during the late 1920s. For five years, measuring devices in the chutes tracked the women's output, while researchers analyzed their relationships.*

### *To the Victors Goes the Sleep*

Darkness reigns in the executive suites of major Japanese corporations after 6 P.M., while subordinates' lights burn late into the night. Just the opposite is true in U.S. corporations, three Japanese researchers were astonished to discover. Their findings are summarized by Wallace H. Offutt, Jr., in *Across the Board* (April 1990).

*Do Japanese CEOs work harder than American CEOs? You might expect them to, based on the enormous success of Japanese corporations and the many stories we hear about how hard everyone in Japan works. But . . . the typical Japanese CEO, in spite of considerably longer commuting time, sleeps on average one hour and 15 minutes longer and has nearly an hour more private time*

*each day than does his American counterpart. Moreover, the American CEO spends almost as much of his day in meetings as does the CEO in Japan—the country where so many decisions are made through nemawashi, the time-consuming process of consensus-building. Perhaps most surprising, U.S. and Japanese CEOs spend about the same amount of time entertaining guests after work . . . In both Japan and the United States, executives spend an average of 6.3 hours per day in meetings . . . The Japanese CEOs found that [meetings with subordinates] produced information most useful for work-scheduling and new product development, while Americans gained knowledge that was most useful for personnel management and evaluation.*

ment: human relations, organizational development, and organizational design.

The subject seemed closed until 1978, when Richard Franke and James Kaul took another look at the Hawthorne data. They argued that the original researchers, lacking sophisticated statistical techniques, had blundered: When they could not find reasons for changes in worker output in their reams of data, they had simply attributed changes to "soft" human-relations factors. In fact, Franke and Kaul said, a new analysis of the numbers showed that virtually all of the changes in output could be explained by external factors, such as workers' fear of losing their jobs as the Depression deepened after 1929, and by plain old-fashioned discipline imposed by management. They even suggested that the famed Hawthorne Effect

was a mirage.

Jones's essay is the latest installment in a running battle that has been going on since 1978. Jones argues that his own complex statistical manipulations of the data from the Hawthorne plant's relay assembly test room between 1927 and 1932, where five women worked, show that "interdependence" was crucial after all. "The human relations approach to industrial sociology," he maintains, "is not controverted by the original Hawthorne data from which it began."

Still, embarrassing questions remain. Why must the original findings be "proved" half a century after they were incorporated into the foundation of social science? Why did social scientists accept for so long conclusions that were actually based on the *absence* of evidence?

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## SOCIETY

### *The Old-Age Crisis*

"The Aging of America: Impact on Health Care Costs" by Edward L. Schneider and Jack M. Guralnik, in *Journal of the American Medical Association* (May 2, 1990), 535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60610.

Somewhere in America on January 1, 2031, the first baby boomer will celebrate

his or her 85th birthday. Quite possibly in a nursing home.

Those two facts ought to sound an alarm in a nation already bearing monumental health-care costs, write Schneider and Guralnik, researchers at the University of Southern California and the National Institute on Aging, respectively. These costs grew nearly twice as fast as inflation between 1976 and 1987, reaching \$500 billion, or 11 percent of the gross national product.

Much of the increase is the result of the "aging of the aged": The over-85 age group is already the fastest-growing segment of the population. The U.S. Census Bureau's highest (but most credible) estimate is that the over-85 group will grow from 3 million today to 8.6 million by the year 2020 and to 17.8 million by 2040. By then, there will be more than a million Americans aged 100 or older.

Simple demographic projections show with stark clarity what may be in store for the United States. In 1985, for example, the budget for Medicare (federal health insurance for the aged) was \$72 billion. But Medicare outlays increase "substantially" with age, from \$2,017 annually for those aged 65 to 74 to \$3,215 for those aged 85 and above. By 2040, therefore, Medicare could rise to between \$147 and \$212 billion, depending on the demographic assumptions used.

That provides only a partial snapshot of

the future, since Washington picks up only part of the tab for the care of the elderly. For example, it pays only 40 percent of the cost of nursing-home care. In 1986, 1.8 million people over age 65 were living in nursing homes, at a total cost of \$31 billion. (Those over 85 accounted for 45 percent of the nursing-home patients but more than half the costs.) By 2040, the number of elderly nursing-home patients could grow to between 3.6 and 5.9 million, more than half of them over 85. The bill: \$84 to \$189 billion.

Many remedies have been proposed for the rising costs. Some specialists favor cost-containment measures; others, such as former Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado, have even proposed limiting medical care to the relief of suffering after an individual has lived out a "natural" life span of perhaps 80 years. But Schneider and Guralnik argue that medical research, which has done so much to lengthen lives, can now be redirected to improve their quality. Today, for every dollar spent on the care of victims of Alzheimer's disease, less than a penny is spent on research into its causes. By attacking Alzheimer's and other debilitating maladies of the elderly, such as arthritis and Parkinson's disease; we could reduce future health-care costs and make many lives already sure to be longer happier as well.

## *The Charmed Life Of Head Start*

"Head Start Enters Adulthood" by Constance Hold, in *Science* (March 23, 1990), 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

It may be one of the great success stories of modern American politics: A liberal social program launched 25 years ago as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society gains such popularity that a conservative Republican, President George Bush, asks Congress to increase its \$1.4 billion budget by 28 percent. And to top it all off, writes Hold, a *Science* reporter, there is hardly a shred of proof that Head Start does what most people think it does.

The original idea behind Head Start was that a brief intervention very early in the

lives of poor children could raise their IQs and "inoculate" them against the depredations of their environment. But that hope began to crumble as early as 1969, when a study showed that children's preschool gains evaporated by the time they reached the third or fourth grade—a finding since confirmed by other studies.

Today, Head Start's advocates maintain that the program serves as a bridge to the world of the school, giving poor children a valuable introduction to middle-class culture: "Many have never seen a book, give

one-word answers to questions, and have limited vocabularies." Other advocates claim that Head Start children gain motivation and self-esteem that carries through their school years. The first claim is backed by most social-science researchers, Hold reports; evidence for the second comes chiefly from a dubious 1984 study.

Much of the confusion over Head Start's effects stems from bad research; "early-intervention" studies are relatively new and are highly politicized. Hold says that researchers are finally beginning to overcome some of these handicaps. Some are even beginning to wonder whether early

intervention itself is vital. In the future, she says, the top priority will be to figure out what causes the "fadeout" that erases the gains of Head Start graduates.

In the meantime, however, there are plenty of reasons why unlikely people like George Bush support Head Start. It provides health care for poor children; it also puts some of their parents to work and gets them involved in their children's education. And more than most federal social programs, Head Start is run by poor people themselves. These are no small virtues; they are also a far cry from the utopian hopes of the Great Society.

## *Two Black Elites*

"Prosperous Blacks in the South, 1790-1880" by Loren Schwening, in *The American Historical Review* (Feb. 1990), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Hard as it may be to believe, the South before the Civil War was home to more than a few well-to-do free blacks. In fact, writes Schwening, a historian at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, the antebellum South gave rise to two fairly distinct black elites.

To compound the irony, the wealthiest blacks lived in the Deep South. There, especially in southern Louisiana, where French and Spanish customs prevailed, a number of white men left substantial inheritances to the black women who had been their sexual partners or to their mulatto children, creating several hundred landowning black families by the early 19th century.

In many respects, these prosperous blacks were not very different from their white neighbors. One out of four free black families owned slaves, Schwening reports, and the freedmen were not known as especially humane masters. Whites did not feel threatened by the black elite. In 1822, Edwin C. Holland, a leading South Carolina editor, wrote: "So far as we are acquainted with their temper and disposition of their feelings [they] abhor the idea of association with blacks in any enterprise that may have for its object the revolution of their condition." Indeed,

prosperous blacks held themselves aloof from their less fortunate counterparts, Schwening adds, forming "small, tightly knit social and cultural clans, linking their families through intermarriage."

The story was much different in Virginia, Kentucky, and the other states of the Upper South, where four out five of the South's free blacks lived. Few were planters. Only one family in 14 owned slaves. Fewer black families prospered: One out of 73 families had accumulated real estate worth \$2,000 or more by 1860 compared to one out of 10 in the Deep South. Women, who constituted more than a third of the black aristocracy in the Deep South, were a much smaller part of the Upper South elite. Finally, free blacks in the Upper South were neither clannish nor acceptable to whites, who scorned them as "indolent" and "depraved."

Apparently, these qualities served them well, because during the decade before the Civil War the wealth of well-to-do blacks in the Upper South began to increase faster than that of their Deep South counterparts. Their numbers tripled, from 213 to 619, their average real-estate holdings grew to \$4,099, and a few truly wealthy free blacks emerged in the cities, such as Baltimore caterer Henry Jakes, North Carolina mer-

chant-farmer Hardy Bell, and St. Louis tobaccoist William Deaderick.

The Civil War ruined many of the Deep South's prosperous blacks, just as it did many white plantation owners. The Upper South's black elite prospered. "More self-confident, able to mix more easily with

former slaves, and viewing the formerly dominant class with suspicion and skepticism," Schweningen writes, "they could more easily build on their past experiences during the postwar era to advance not only their own cause but the cause of freedmen as well."

**PRESS & TELEVISION**

*The Atom Bomb  
And the Press*

"The Office of Censorship's Attempt to Control Press Coverage of the Atomic Bomb During World War II" by Patrick S. Washburn, in *Journalism Monographs* (April 1990), 1621 College St., Univ. of S.C., Columbia, S.C. 29208-0251.

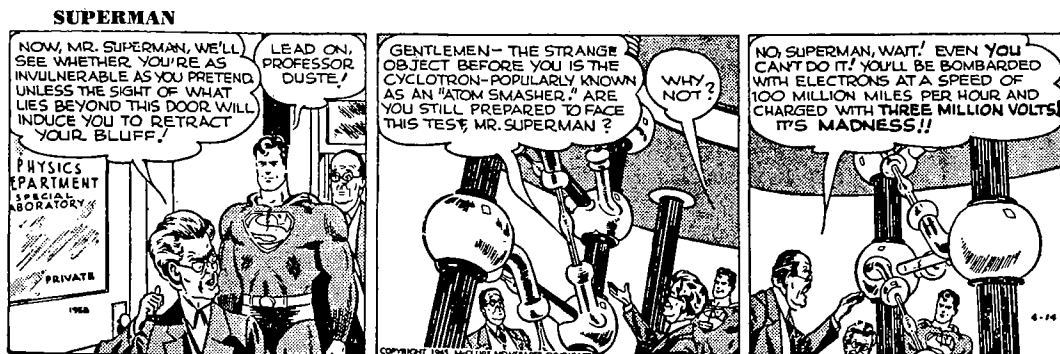
A month after the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, Gen. H. H. Arnold of the Army Air Force wrote a glowing letter to the head of the U.S. Office of Censorship thanking him for suppressing "any mention" of the new weapon in the press until it was used. Arnold wrote that it "shall go down in history as the best-kept secret of any war."

What is interesting, notes Washburn, a professor of journalism at Ohio University, is not the fact that Arnold was wrong but why he was wrong. Despite the patriotic cooperation of newspaper, magazine, and radio editors, there were dozens of references to atomic energy and weaponry in the press during World War II.

Until 1943, even the Office of Censorship was kept in the dark about atomic research. In June, it asked editors (volun-

tarily) to avoid all mention even of the element uranium. Almost immediately, problems appeared. On Halloween Day, for example, the *Washington Post* ran a lighthearted feature story which began: "A young fellow who has been studying much of his life on the matter of blowing up nations with an atom would like to get a wage increase from the War Labor Board." In December, the *Cleveland Press* published a vague story about the "Forbidden City" at Los Alamos, New Mexico.

In some cases, Washburn says, editors simply were not aware of the guidelines; in others, they did not think that the rules applied to their story. Other leaks slipped through because of carelessness, often the result of wartime labor shortages. On more than one occasion, public officials themselves were responsible for unintention-



*This 1945 "Superman" comic strip was the most bizarre breach of wartime secrecy. Censors complained, but it took seven more strips to extricate Superman from the atomic theme.*

tional "busts" of the secrecy code. During a Pentagon press briefing in 1944, Brig. Gen. Frederick H. Smith, Jr., told reporters that the Germans were probably working on an "atomic explosive," and remarked that he was "not long-haired enough to know exactly where we stand in working on atomic explosive force, but I believe there are many technical difficulties to overcome." By the time Smith's blunder was discovered, the story had already gone out over the news wires.

Despite leaks like this, Washburn con-

cludes, the story of the atom bomb remained "reasonably quiet." He believes that much of the credit belongs to Byron Price, the ex-newsman who directed the Office of Censorship. Price resisted the army's call to impose a total news blackout on atomic (and other) news, opting instead for a voluntary approach. Total censorship, he insisted, would have pushed the press into open revolt. The success of his policies, Washburn concludes, proved that government and a free press can cooperate in times of grave national peril.

## *Missing the Freedom Beat*

"The Media's One and Only Freedom Story" by Lawrence Weschler, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (March-April 1990), 700 Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027, and "Eastern Europe: The Story the Media Missed" by Vladimir Tismaneanu in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (March 1990), 6042 S. Kimbark, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

"A remarkable upwelling of democratic spirit occurred simultaneously on two continents. Can you name the second one?"

If you can't, writes Weschler, a staff reporter for the *New Yorker*, it is because the U.S. news media virtually ignored the re-emergence of democracy in Latin America last year. During a two-week period in December 1989, Chile and Brazil held their first free presidential elections in 16 and 25 years, respectively, but you might not have known about these landmark events if you relied on Dan Rather for your news. He never mentioned the election in Brazil, the world's sixth most populous nation, and he briefly mentioned Chile once, in a reference that was dropped from the West Coast edition of the *CBS Evening News*. Meanwhile, CBS managed to find time for three reports from Bulgaria.

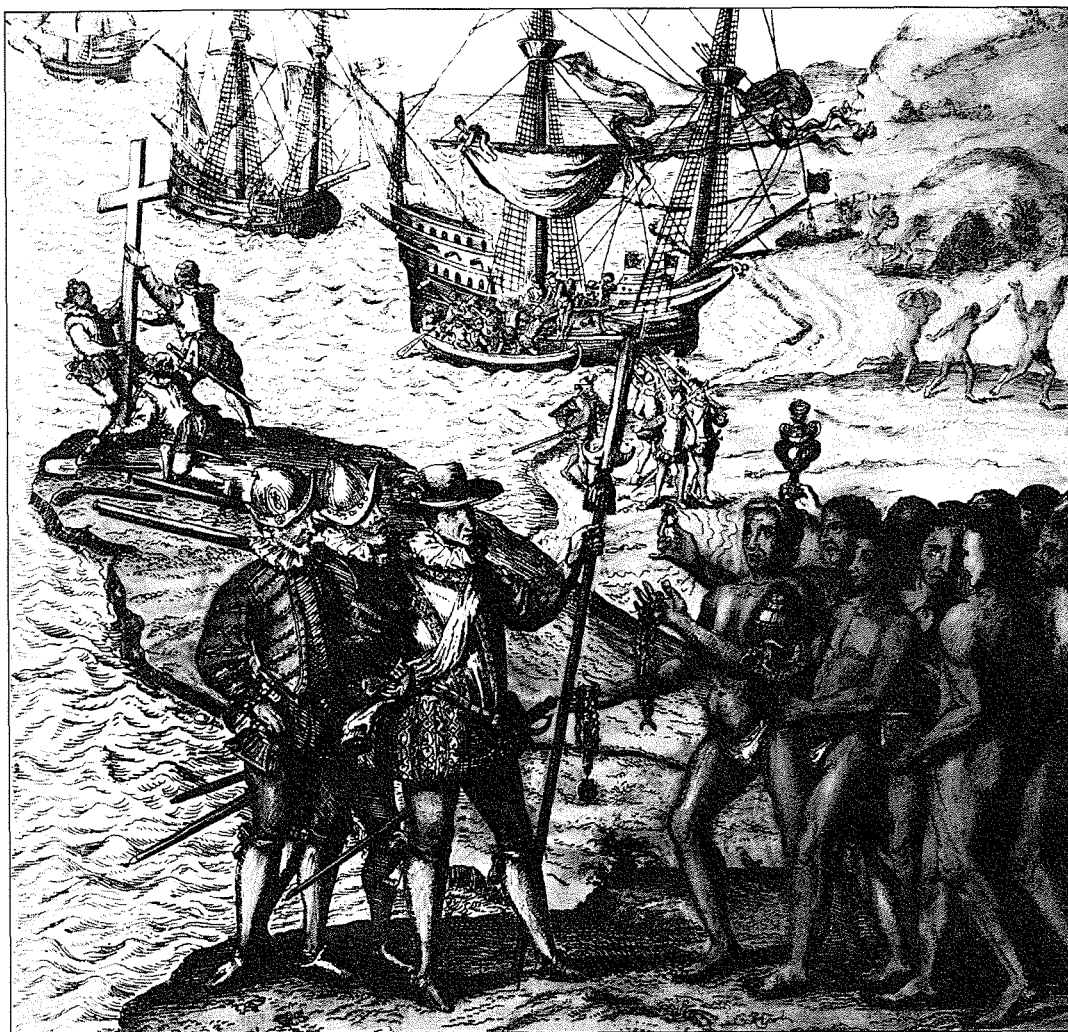
This is only the most extreme case of neglect that Weschler discovered in his survey of the nation's major news media. But even the best performer, *Time*, did poorly: It had only 6.65 pages of Latin American coverage between November 6, 1989 and January 1, 1990, versus 98 pages devoted to Eastern Europe.

The news executives Weschler interviewed pleaded lack of time, space, and

money, explanations he dismisses. Latin America deserves coverage not only on its own merits, he argues, but because "the sorts of economic dilemmas Eastern Europeans seem likely to face in the decades ahead as they attempt the transition to a wide-open free market . . . are precisely the sort that Latin Americans have been struggling with."

And, apparently, editors and TV news producers deserve no congratulations for their coverage of Eastern Europe, either. Tismaneanu, a resident scholar at Philadelphia's Foreign Policy Research Institute, contends that they even got that story wrong. During the last four years, he observes, "Eastern Europe has been dominated by these two processes: the dramatic loss of authority and credibility of the ruling elites . . . and the rise of a parallel civil society in which patterns of conduct are different from, and even opposed to, the official sanctioned code of social success. The Western mass media reported the story incompletely. They observed and even analyzed the rise of civil society without naming it or identifying it as the single most important challenge to the communist status quo. It is one thing to report on the trial of the Jazz Section in Prague and another to present it as part of the authori-

*Periodicals continues on page 125*



## The Indian Question in Latin America

Throughout Latin America today, Indians find themselves embroiled in a wide range of national controversies, from radical politics in Peru to environmental disputes in Brazil. Yet, as *New York Times* journalist Alan Riding once noted, Latin American scholarship has offered little systematic study of these Indians—of their place in post-Columbian history or of their condition in the present. The Indians, for their part, have become increasingly assertive. Last year, on Ecuador's Columbus Day, representatives of nine Indian nations gathered in Quito to demand a native version of New-World history. Here, our contributors provide just that. Through their perspectives, the approaching Columbus quincentennial takes on a different meaning: the 500th year of Indian resistance.



# PERU'S GREAT DIVIDE

by Peter F. Klarén

**T**he *Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* (1986), Mario Vargas Llosa's fictional portrait of a Peruvian revolutionary, captures in its opening pages the desperate poverty that has become commonplace throughout the South American nation. The narrator of the novel, a writer himself, is out for an early morning jog through his neighborhood when he comes across "stray kids, stray men, and stray women along with the stray dogs, all painstakingly digging through the trash looking for something to eat, something to sell, something to wear. The spectacle of misery was once limited exclusively to the slums, then it spread downtown, and now it is the common property of the whole city, even the exclusive residential neighborhoods—Miraflores, Barranco, San Isidro. If you live in Lima, you can get used to misery and grime, you can go crazy, or you can blow your brains out."

Or, if you happen to be Vargas Llosa, you can make a bid for your country's presidency—an unsuccessful bid, as it turned out. The disappointed novelist will doubtless find it small consolation that the winner of the June election, Alberto Fujimori, faces an all-but-impossible task.

Even by Latin American standards, Peru today is a deeply troubled country. For a quarter of a century, its economy has stagnated as a result of chronic government mismanagement and corruption, and declining world demand for its top exports—copper, oil, industrial metals, and fishmeal. Its rapid population growth (2.5 percent

annually) puts it in the same unenviable league with Bangladesh and Burkina Faso.

Since 1987, when President Alan García Pérez's two-year-old economic recovery program ended in a disastrous nationalization of the banks and other financial institutions, the economy has tumbled into a virtual free fall. National output has dropped by more than 25 percent (per capita), while inflation has reached the proportions of a fiscal disaster—by one recent reckoning, the annual rate exceeds 3,000 percent. The Peruvian worker lucky enough to hold a job now earns less in real terms than he did in 1965.

The economic disaster has jeopardized Peru's fragile 10-year-old democracy—the longest spell of uninterrupted civilian rule since 1895–1914. But it has also been, in an ironic way, its salvation. According to the *New York Times*, the army was deterred from staging a coup against García's paralyzed government in part because the generals were "intimidated by the prospect of taking over" the chaotic country.

A greater threat to Peru's future is the growth of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrilla movement. Since Sendero launched its "People's War" a decade ago, 18,000 Peruvians have died, most of them innocent civilians killed by the guerrillas or the army. Last year alone the death toll was 3,198.

Ultraradical is the only word to describe Sendero's ideological pedigree. Its doctrines, as propounded by its founder, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, are Maoist. Guzmán, in the words of journalist Gustavo Gorriti, "considers Mao's Cultural Revolu-

tion to be humankind's most splendid moment, except that it wasn't radical enough." In its murderous fanaticism, Sendero bears a frightening resemblance to Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. But in many ways, Sendero is a familiar Peruvian phenomenon. Like other political groups throughout Peruvian history, it has cynically exploited what might be called the Indian question.

Sendero was born in the remote department of Ayacucho in the southern Andean highlands—an area *Limeños* disdainfully refer to as "*la mancha india*," or the "Indian stain." Ayacucho is a place of incredible isolation and poverty. Its residents are mostly monolingual Quechua speakers; illiteracy is 68.5 percent. The infant mortality rate (12.8 percent) is the highest in the world, and life expectancy, at only 51 years, among the lowest. Arriving at the local university during the early 1960s, Guzmán gradually developed his unique brand of agrarian communism and attracted a devoted coterie of students, many of them members of the first generation of Indians to attend the university. These followers became the nucleus of Sendero, spreading the theories of the man who proclaimed himself—after Marx, Lenin, and Mao—the Fourth Sword of Marxism.

In recent years the movement has spread to some of Peru's more important regions, including Lima itself. There it has found converts among the poverty-stricken Indian and *mestizo* inhabitants of the wretched *pueblos jóvenes* (young towns) that have sprung up around the city. But in many ways more threatening to the Peruvian state is the dominant presence that

Sendero has established in the Andes' Upper Huallaga Valley, some 250 miles northeast of Lima. From this subtropical region on the eastern slope of the Andes comes half of the world's supply of coca paste, the thick greenish compound of mashed coca leaves and kerosene that is the basis of cocaine. Sendero has entrenched itself in the valley by providing protection against the authorities—including U.S.-sponsored drug eradication programs—to the roughly 70,000 peasant farmers who grow coca. The guerrillas collect perhaps \$30 million annually in "taxes" from the Colombian drug traffickers who control Peru's coca trade. That frees Sendero of the need for foreign support and makes it probably the wealthiest guerrilla movement in modern history—so wealthy that it reportedly is able to pay its 5,000–7,000 fighters a regular salary.

But Sendero probably would not exist were it not for events that took place four centuries ago (and Guzmán's shrewd ability to exploit them). The enormous gulf that the brutal 16th-century Spanish conquest opened between victors and vanquished remains a dominant fact of life in contemporary Peru. The Spanish created a society in which a tiny ruling class, the *conquistadores*, and later their creole descendants, came utterly to dominate Peru's Indian, *mestizo*, and black majority.

**F**rancisco Pizarro arrived in northern Peru late in 1531 with only 150 men, excited by tales of the Inca's great wealth and bent on repeating the pattern of conquest and plunder that was becoming practically routine in the New World. The

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Inca never seemed to appreciate the threat they faced. And their empire, stretching some 3,000 miles from present-day Chile to Ecuador, was embroiled in a civil war between the two sons of the late emperor. The Inca Empire was in fact little more than 100 years old at the time; the Inca were only the most recent unifiers of the centuries-old Andean civilizations.

When Pizarro insisted on an audience with Atahualpa, the prince who had gained the upper hand in the civil war, the Inca leader arrived amid thousands of his subjects, borne on a golden throne. To the Inca, of course, the Spanish seemed the exotics. "To our Indian eyes," wrote Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, the author of a later chronicle, "the Spaniards looked as if they were shrouded like corpses. Their faces were covered with wool, leaving only the eyes visible, and the caps which they wore resembled little red pots on top of their heads."

Guamán Poma says the Spaniards demanded that Atahualpa renounce his gods and accept a treaty with Spain. He refused. "The Spaniards began to fire their muskets and charged upon the Indians, killing them like ants. At the sound of the explosions and the jingle of bells on the horses' harnesses, the shock of arms and the whole amazing novelty of their attackers' appearance, the Indians were terror-stricken. They were desperate to escape from being trampled by the horses and in their headlong flight a lot of them were crushed to death." Guamán Poma goes on to say that countless Indians died, compared to only five of the Spaniards, "and these few casualties



*The great Inca uprising that began in Cuzco in 1536 was the most serious challenge to the authority of the Spanish colonizers. The drawing comes from Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala's Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (c. 1600).*

were not caused by the Indians, who had at no time dared to attack the formidable strangers."

Pizarro captured Atahualpa and held him for a tremendous ransom, then executed him after it was paid. In November 1533, with an army of 5,000 Indian allies, the Spaniards marched on the Incas' mountain capital at Cuzco and easily prevailed. After an epic battle three years later, in which the Indians rebelled and almost retook Cuzco, the Spanish consolidated their hold over the former Inca Empire. Within 70 years, the Indian population had suffered a complete demographic collapse, dropping from nine million to only one million. Famine, culture shock, and systematic exploitation made the Indians particularly vulnerable to the lethal epidemics of smallpox, measles, and other new diseases the Spaniards brought to the New World.

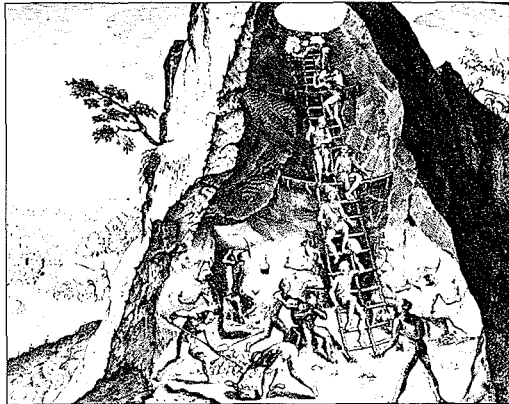
That was not the end of the Andean peoples' demoralization. The Spaniards plundered their cities and temples and then, especially after the discovery in 1545 of the great silver mines at Potosí (in what is now Bolivia), virtually enslaved them. Peru, as

historian Fredrick B. Pike writes, became "Spain's great treasure house in South America."

Like the Spaniards who conquered the Maya and Aztecs to the north, Pizarro and his successors installed themselves as the new overlords of the existing society—a society they altered in many ways to suit their own needs. The result was the development of what scholars call a "dualistic" society. This "dualism" continues to manifest itself in virtually every aspect of Peruvian life. It begins geographically, with the dramatic contrast between the coast and the sierra. The desert coastal strip, which is only 11 miles wide in places but stretches some 1,400 miles along the Pacific, is the historic center of Hispanic power. The Andes, which rise in three parallel ranges to the east, culminating in jagged, snow-covered volcanic peaks more than 15,000 feet tall, are the domain of the Indians who resisted Hispanization and bore the brunt of the colonial order.

The arid coast, with Lima at its center, is the site of Peru's modern, capitalist sector. Here are the export-oriented sugar and cotton haciendas, strung along three dozen lush river valleys that lie like green ribbons across the coastal desert. (Peru's coast receives less annual rainfall than does the Sahara.) Here too are most of Peru's auto and textile plants, fishmeal factories, and oil refineries: Seventy percent of Peru's manufacturing capacity can be found in and around Lima.

When Pizarro founded Lima in 1535 as the seat of Spain's most important viceroyalty in the New World, he aimed to reorient trade, commerce, and power away from the Andes and toward imperial Spain and Europe. Lima became the jewel of Spanish South America, with a tradition of looking toward Madrid. Even when Latin America was swept by independence movements during the early 19th century, Lima's cre-



*Indians from Peru and other Spanish colonies were forced to work the silver mines of Potosí.*

ole elite remained loyal to the crown. It took Latin America's Venezuelan-born liberator, Simón Bolívar, to drive the Spanish from Peru in 1824. But long after Peruvian independence, Lima retained its Spanish and pseudocosmopolitan flavor. During the 1960s, one observer wrote of Lima's privileged class that "scores could boast of being at home in London, Paris, Rome, New York, Washington, or San Francisco, and at the same time admit to being total strangers to that part of their native country which lay appreciably beyond the immediate confines of the capital and a handful of other coastal cities." Not for nothing has Lima been called "a city searching for a country."

Since World War II, however, Lima has been transformed by Peru's second demographic revolution. Long a city whose pride greatly exceeded its population, it has been bloated during the past few decades by an influx of Indians and *mestizos* from the interior. By 1961 it had grown to 1.5 million; today it is an unmanageable metropolis of almost seven million. About the size of Chicago, it now claims nearly a third of Peru's population. Overall, the coast is now home to about 60 percent

of the population, reversing the proportions that had prevailed for centuries.

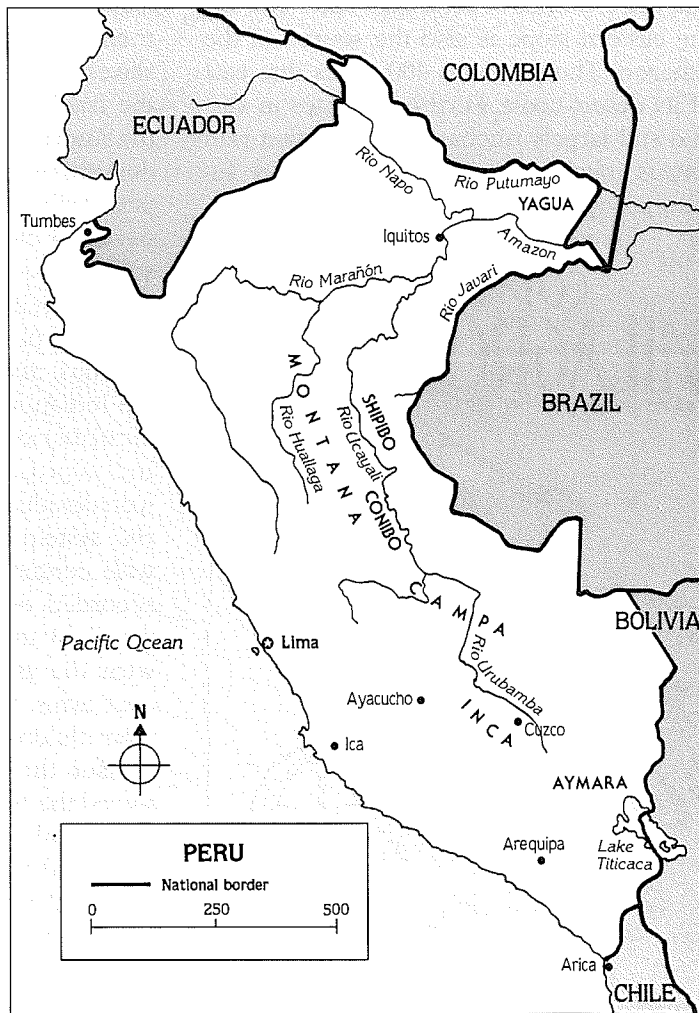
Beyond Lima and the coastal strip lies another, largely Indian, world. One could almost say several other worlds, so great is the variation in climate and terrain as the land rises away from the coast. It is here in the Andean highlands that the bulk of the country's rural people, the 8.2 million Quechua-speaking and 250,000 Aymara-speaking Indians and *mestizos*, eke out a marginal living.

Inevitably, the long dominance of the coast has contributed greatly to the underdevelopment of the interior. Only about five percent of the sierra is arable, while about a quarter is marginal pastureland where cows, sheep, llamas, and vicunas can be grazed. As a result of the conquest, these lands that once fed the Inca Empire were long ago beset by chronic low productivity. Peru today suffers periodic food shortages, forcing it to spend precious foreign exchange to import food, even the indigenous potato, in order to feed its swollen coastal cities.

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Inca and their predecessors laced the mountainsides with intricate terraces and irrigation systems that still awe visitors today. Through a sophisticated system of agricultural production and exchange that scholars call "vertical archipelagos," each Inca community, or *ayllu*, worked land at different alti-

tudes in order to cultivate crops that could only be grown in certain climatic niches. As anthropologist John Murra has shown, the Indians thus managed to overcome the obstacles thrown up by nature and to provide themselves with a rich and varied diet.

Directly above the coastal strip, in the foothills of the Andes, is a sparsely inhabited terrain that climbs to perhaps 7,500 feet. Above that is a pleasant temperate



*The Indians of Peru today make up about 45 percent of the nation's population. Once concentrated in the highland regions, they have been moving to the coastal cities in large numbers since 1945. Major tribes and their locations appear above.*

band, where maize, vegetables, and fruits can be grown. Here the Inca built Cuzco, Cajamarca, and their other principle cities. Above this relatively populated strip are several others, all increasingly inhospitable, ranging from the *Suni*, where the Inca cultivated potatoes and other tubers unique to the Andes, to the vast wind-blasted *Altiplano*, a frigid world of grassy tablelands where shepherds still herd llama, alpaca, and vicuna. The eastern slope of the Andes and the lowlands beyond host other worlds; the eastern slope is also the source of the Amazon. Thus, a mere 400 miles due east of its desert coast, Peru culminates in vast and still largely uncharted Amazonian rain forests inhabited by scores of smaller Indian groups.



A conquistador on horse triumphs over his Indian adversary. (from *Guamán Poma*)

The Spaniards were greatly impressed by the Incas' accomplishments. "Few nations had a better government," wrote Pedro Cieza de León, one of the earliest European chroniclers. "One of the things most to be envied . . . is how well they knew how to conquer such vast lands . . . and bring them to the flourishing state in which the Spaniards found them." But the Spaniards wasted little time on admiration. Their goal from the beginning was to harness the Indian population to mine silver, gold, and mercury and to work, along with African slaves, the haciendas and plantations. For the traditional tubers, maize, and fruits of the Andean farm system, the Spanish were determined to substitute their own products: wine, grains, and meat. They used whatever elements of the Andean political, social, and economic superstructure that served their purposes, and unhesitatingly modified or discarded those that did not.

Thus, the Spaniards retained some of the Indian nobility (*kuracas*) to serve as intermediaries between themselves and the Indian peasantry. These Hispanized Indians were gradually assimilated into the imperial system and rewarded by the crown with certain rights and privileges usually accorded only to the Iberian aristocracy: the right to own large landed estates, to wear the garb of a Spanish gentleman, to bear arms, to own horses, and to educate their children at elite schools.

But the Spaniards completely redesigned the Inca *mita* system, transforming a rotational labor tax for the building of roads and other public works into a form of virtual slave labor in the Andean mines. They substituted a new monetary economy for one that was based on the Incaic concept of reciprocity and redistribution. (Goods and services paid as taxes to the Inca state were returned to the communities in the form of gifts and other payments.) And they seized many of the best

lands for themselves, leaving Peru with a legacy of one of the most unequal land-holding arrangements in Latin America. Before General Juan Velasco Alvarado's radical agrarian reform of the early 1970s, 69 percent of Peru's privately held land was made up of parcels of 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) or more. Velasco's land redistribution program reduced the figure to a still considerable 42 percent.

The Spaniards' exploitation of Peru's rich highland mineral deposits left quite a different legacy. During the 20th century, as world demand for Peru's silver and copper grew, the old mining towns expanded. The conversion of Indian peasants into miners and city dwellers also introduced Hispanic customs and practices. And this, combined with racial mixing, created an ever-growing *mestizo* population that would have vast social and political implications for Peru. Today, only 45 percent of Peru's population is Indian; 37 percent is *mestizo*; 12 percent is white; and 6 percent is black.

Some scholars have argued that the Indians remained passive in the face of their brutal subjugation. But as historian Steve Stern has shown, this is an exaggerated view. To survive, the Indians did have to adapt to Spanish domination, and to postcolonial rule after Peru became independent in 1824. As often as not, however, they found ways of asserting their interests. During the colonial period, for example, Madrid built limited protections for Indians into the legal system, recognizing that collapsing Indian demographics posed a threat to its new empire. But many Indian leaders then shrewdly used the legal system to establish their historic rights to the land.

Litigation did not always suffice, of course, and Andean history is full of desperate Indian peasant uprisings. The first revolt occurred in 1536, only a few years after

Pizarro's takeover. Manco Capac, the puppet emperor whom Pizarro installed on the Inca throne, turned against the Spaniards and laid siege to Cuzco and other cities. The Spaniards and their Indian allies held out, and Manco Capac retreated into the remote mountains northwest of Cuzco, where he established a new Inca state at Vilcabamba. It was not until 1572 that the Spanish finally captured and beheaded his successor, Túpac Amaru, ostensibly the last Inca emperor. Yet the myth of Inkarrí, a leader who would rise to avenge the conquest, soon took root throughout the old empire, inspiring many peasant rebellions over the centuries.\*

Almost from the earliest colonial times, Indian rebellions have been tangled up with power struggles among the rulers. This was the case, for example, during the great outbreak of Indian rebellions in the Andes throughout the 18th century. The rebel leaders were, in the main, Hispanized Indian *kuracas*, most notably José Gabriel Condorcanqui, a direct descendent of the Inca royal family. In 1780, angered by the Spaniards' endless brutality, he took the name Túpac Amaru II and raised an army of more than 100,000 peasants to fight the colonial authorities. Before his defeat in 1781—he was publicly drawn and quartered in the main square of Cuzco as a warning to other rebels—his movement had attracted dissident *mestizos* and even creoles. The dream of Inca revival corresponded with their desire for independence from the despised Spanish overlords.

A century later, a similar Indian uprising

\*One version of the story was recorded by a Peruvian anthropologist in Ayacucho in 1981: "Inkarrí was born to a savage woman but begotten by the Sun. Having grown up, he shut up the wind and tied his father the Sun. He did so to make the time and the day last longer so that he could do what he wanted. He then founded the city of Cuzco. But the Spanish 'Inca' seized the Inkarrí, his equal, and nobody knows where he put him. People say that only his cut-off head is left but that it is growing from inside, growing towards his feet. Once his body has become complete, Inkarrí will return."



A School for Terrorism. Members of the Shining Path lecture recruits at a training camp in the coca-growing highland jungle.

occurred in the northern Peruvian highlands, led by a respected Indian *kuraca* named Atusparia. In 1885, he allied himself with the popular *caudillo* (military leader) Andres Cáceres. A creole and a hero of the popular resistance to the Chilean occupation during the War of the Pacific (1879–84), Cáceres hoped that the Indians who had helped fight the Chileans would now help him overthrow Peru's government. But Atusparia's rebellion was brutally crushed that year. Cáceres, on the other hand, was elected to Peru's presidency in 1886.

Seeking support of the Indian masses, Sendero leaders today are not so very different from those creole rebels of the past. They are mainly university-educated *mestizos* of the urban middle and lower-middle class, with relatively recent ties to the countryside and an Indian past. They seek to harness the grievances of the Indian proletariat and dispossessed peasants to their own political agenda. Yet their appeal is especially strong on university campuses throughout the country, particularly among students of similar background who see little hope of economic security in the future.

Sendero founder Guzmán obtained a

doctorate in philosophy in 1960 from the University of San Agustín in his native Arequipa, Peru's second largest city. After graduation, he joined the Education Program at the venerable National University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Ayacucho. In 1988, in his only published interview, Guzmán declared that these years in Ayacucho "served to open my eyes to the [plight] of the [Andean] peasantry." The young, charismatic Guzmán preached a mixture of Marxist-Lenin-

ism, Maoism, and the ideas of José Carlos Mariátegui, an ardent early nationalist and Indianist who founded the highly influential journal *Amauta* and the Peruvian Communist Party. (It is from Mariátegui's writings that Guzmán took the name Shining Path for his party.) Guzmán saw Peru, as Mao had seen China, as a semi-feudal country ruled solely for the benefit of a tiny elite.

In 1980, emulating Mao's successful strategy, Guzmán launched the revolution's second stage: armed struggle. Ultimately, his goal is to take over the countryside, then encircle and invade the cities.

It has been said that Guzmán's emphasis on Peru's semi-feudal character and his comparisons with pre-revolutionary China are obsolete. Peru, critics point out, is no longer an agrarian peasant society but a predominantly urban and industrializing one. They are right, of course, except in failing to point out that Peru is also now fast becoming a *mestizo* country. And the *mestizos*, who once denied their Indian past in order to fit a more Hispanized notion of Peruvian identity, are increasingly disposed to embrace it. Historian Jorge Basadre calls



this "the most fundamental event in 20th-century Peruvian life: the growth and enrichment of the image of the Indian."

This change took political shape during General Juan Velasco Alvarado's populist military regime of 1968-75. Velasco, himself a *mestizo*, made Túpac Amaru II, the 18th-century rebel Indian nobleman, a symbol of national identity. Inaugurating his land reform program in 1969, Velasco quoted the rebel's vow, "Peasant, the landlord will eat no more from your poverty!" (More recently, the name has been appropriated by a small Cuban-oriented guerrilla movement in Peru, which calls itself Túpac Amaru.) He elevated Quechua, the tongue of a third of Peru's people, to the status of an official language, equal to Spanish. By pushing through agrarian and other reforms, he sought to bridge the old Andean dualism. "For the first time," recalls Peruvian sociologist José Alvarado, "nonwhites began to feel Peruvian."

In practice, however, Velasco's reforms did much more for the coast than for the impoverished highlands. And all hope for improvement seemed gone after Velasco was overthrown in 1975 by more conservative officers. Ayacucho proved to be fertile ground for Guzmán's efforts.

But while Sendero has capitalized on the Indian question, its larger message is aimed at the increasingly impoverished

### THE OTHER PERU

*In 1983, eight Lima journalists were killed by Andean Indians who mistook them for Sendero guerrillas. Mario Vargas Llosa, investigating the massacre, learned about a very different Peru from the one he knew.*

When our commission's hearing in Uchuraccay was over, and, overwhelmed by what we had seen and heard—the graves of the reporters were still open—we were getting ready to return to Ayacucho, a tiny woman from the community suddenly began to dance. She was quietly singing a song whose words we could not understand. She was an Indian as tiny as a child, but she had the wrinkled face of a very old woman, and the scarred cheeks and swollen lips of those who live exposed to the cold of the uplands. She was barefoot, and wore several brightly colored skirts and a hat with ribbons, and as she sang and danced she tapped us gently on the legs with brambles. Was she saying goodbye to us in an ancient ritual? Was she cursing us because we belonged to the strangers—Senderistas, "reporters," *sinchis*—who had brought new reasons for anguish and fear to their lives? Was she exorcising us?

For several weeks, I had been living in a state of extraordinary tension as I interviewed soldiers, politicians, policemen, peasants, and reporters and reviewed dispatches, evidence and legal testimony, trying to establish what had happened. At night, I would often stay awake, attempting to determine the truth of the testimony and the hypotheses, or I had nightmares in which the certainties of the day became enigmas again. And as the story of the eight journalists unfolded—I had known two of them, and had been with Amador García just two days before his trip to Ayacucho—it seemed that another, even more terrible story about my own country was being revealed. But at no time had I felt as much sorrow as in Uchuraccay on that late afternoon, with its threatening clouds, watching the tiny woman who danced and tapped us with brambles, and who seemed to come from a Peru different from the one I live in, an ancient, archaic Peru that has survived in these sacred mountains despite centuries of isolation and adversity.

*mestizo* underclass of Lima and the other cities. During the past two decades the great *desborde popular* (overflowing of the masses), as the anthropologist José Matos Mar calls it, has radically redrawn the ethnic and social map of the country. Even as the Indian majority gradually gives way to a new *mestizo* one, Peru's towns and cities, particularly Lima, are becoming increasingly "Indianized" as more and more migrants arrive from the Andes.

In this sense, there is no longer any real Indian question. The great divide between creoles and Indians, reinforced for centuries by the distinctions between town and country and between coast and highland, is disappearing. Out of this social upheaval, Peru is forging a new identity. Some of its outlines can perhaps be discerned in the enormous growth in recent years of the so-called "informal" or illegal sector of the economy. As economist Hernando de Soto wrote in 1986 in *El Otro Sendero (The Other Path)*, a best seller in Latin America, the explosion of the informal sector is a response to creole efforts to keep the peasants from the cities. "Quite simply," he writes, "Peru's legal institutions had been developed over the years to meet the needs and bolster the privileges of certain dominant groups in the cities and to isolate the peasants geographically in rural areas."

The creole elite made it next to impossible for newcomers legally to build a home, get a job, or start a business. There was even a proposal in the national legislature during the 1940s to require visitors from the countryside to obtain a passport before entering Lima. As a result, de Soto estimates, half of Lima's citizens live in informal housing and half of the country's population is employed in the informal sector. Informal organizations now build roads, sewage systems, and marketplaces; they provide 80 percent of the mass transit service in the capital city. "The real remedy for violence and poverty," de Soto argues, "is to recognize the property and labor of those whom formality today excludes."

Both the informal sector and the issue of race played an important role in the presidential elections of 1990. The New Right, led by Vargas Llosa, used de Soto's ideas as the basis for an alliance with small-scale "underground" entrepreneurs. He

hoped to win support with his plan to deregulate the economy and move Peru closer to true free-market capitalism.

But most of the "*informales*" were also part of the economically disenfranchised Indian and *mestizo* populations who had earlier benefited from Velasco's reforms (including consumer subsidies and import restrictions) and from his effort to forge a more inclusive national identity. In a country so historically polarized by the Indian question, it was soon widely perceived that Vargas Llosa—with his privileged background, his international success, and his ties to the old families—represented the same "white" creole elites that had dominated the country in the past.

Hence the stunning rise of Alberto Fujimori, the second-generation Japanese-Peruvian "rocket" who came from nowhere to challenge Vargas Llosa in the closing weeks of the first-round election. Like Vargas Llosa, Fujimori played to the *informales*. But his vague, center-left program emphasized gradualness, a safer path to economic reform, he argued, than Vargas Llosa's "shock" therapy. Further distinguishing himself from Vargas Llosa, Fujimori made sure that middle-class *mestizos* were prominent members of his entourage: When he announced his candidacy on television, his two *mestizo* vice presidential running mates stood conspicuously at his side. Voters did not miss the message.

The presidential race thus revived the oldest conflicts of Peruvian history. But the victory of Fujimori in the June 10 run-off could become a minor historical footnote if he does nothing to address the legacies of the conquest. It would be a bitter irony indeed if the ultimate winner of Peru's most recent election turned out to be Sendero Luminoso.

# BRAZIL'S SIGNIFICANT MINORITY

*by David Maybury-Lewis*

The Indians of Brazil have been much in the news lately. In the summer of 1988, Kayapo from the northern state of Pará sat for several weeks in the antechambers of parliament while delegates drafted the new constitution of Brazil. They were there, in tribal paint and feathers, to urge the delegates to guarantee Indian rights. In March 1989, the same Kayapo Indians played host to a week-long Indian summit meeting at Altamira in the heart of the Amazon to protest the building of dams that would flood their lands. The meeting was packed with other Indians, their supporters, and the international press. Partly because of the Kayapo's efforts, the World Bank and several foreign commercial banks withdrew their support for the dam-building project.

More recent subjects of media attention have been the Yanomamo, an indigenous people who live along Brazil's border with Venezuela. Thanks to the new roads and airstrips that have been built in the area as part of Brazil's extensive Northern Headwaters project, launched in 1985, more than 45,000 gold miners have poured into Yanomamo territory, driving some Indians out of their villages

and destroying their homes. The miners have polluted the rivers, driven away game, and brought disease and starvation to the Yanomamo. The rising death toll—about 10 percent of the 10,000 Yanomamo have perished during the last two years—has stirred angry protests both in Brazil and abroad. In October 1989, a federal court in Brasília confirmed the rights of the Yanomamo to all of their traditional territory, and it called on the federal government to remove the miners from Yanomamo land. The government dragged its feet, pleading that it had no power to enforce the ruling. Recently, Brazil's new president, Fernando Collor de Mello, ordered the destruction of 100 dirt airstrips to restrict access to the region, but the order has not yet been carried out. At the same time, he pledged to balance the Indians' needs with those of non-Indians. It remains to be seen how this balancing act will be accomplished.



*Assembled outside the Brazilian Congress last September, Indians from 76 tribes protested unregulated mining on Yanomamo territory.*

It is surprising in some ways that the Indian question has become such a sensitive political issue in Brazil—indeed, one that authorities now treat as a matter of national security. Brazil's estimated 250,000 Indians make up less than one percent of the nation's population. They are scattered throughout the more

remote regions of a country that is larger than the United States (minus Alaska) and noted for its impenetrable jungles and vast wilderness. The sensitivity is all the more puzzling in light of the marginal role that Indians have played throughout Brazilian history. Even when the first Portuguese explorers arrived in 1500, they found none of the large settled populations that their Spanish counterparts came across—and quickly subjugated—in Central America and the Andes.

The Portuguese were in fact relatively slow to colonize their South American territory. Portugal, unlike Britain, had no large surplus population to send to the New World. (During the 16th century, it had only one million inhabitants.) Moreover, Vasco da Gama had recently discovered the sea route to the East Indies around the Cape of Good Hope, and the Portuguese were intent on exploiting their empire in Africa and Asia, where they dominated the trade in low-volume, luxury commodities such as silks, ivory, and spices. Brazil's sparsely populated jungles offered no similar prizes, no obvious opportunities for rapid enrichment. Indeed, it was only by accident that, in 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral landed in Brazil and claimed it for Portugal; he had been bound for the Orient when a storm blew him off course.

In addition to seeming a relatively unattractive colony, Brazil was difficult for the Portuguese to hold onto, even though the Indians received the settlers peaceably enough at first. In return for metal tools, the natives cut and supplied the hardwood logs of reddish brazilwood from which the colony took its name. But Indian wars soon erupted, and by the middle of the 16th century, the Portuguese were fighting to de-

fend their settlements not only against the Indians but also against rival Europeans, particularly the French and the Dutch. (The French and the Portuguese struggled for close to 150 years for control of Guanabara Bay, across whose waters the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Niterói now stand.)

In Brazil, as elsewhere in the New World, the Europeans enlisted Indians as allies, enslaving them when their help was no longer needed. The Indians, of course, fought hard to avoid slavery, and when they were defeated, as they invariably were, they tried to withdraw into the wilderness. But not even their remoteness could fully protect them. By the 17th century, as the demand for labor on the coastal sugar plantations grew, the Portuguese had become accomplished slavers. Their expeditions, called *bandeiras* (from the word meaning flag, or a detachment of armed men), penetrated the most inhospitable regions in search of Indians. The poorer colonists, especially those from São Paulo in the south, became notorious *bandeirantes*, who embarked on grueling slaving expeditions that lasted as long as four years. "These Portuguese do and suffer incomparably more to win the bodies of the Indians for their service than I do to win their souls for heaven," a Spanish Jesuit remarked.

The Portuguese kings of the 17th century displayed considerable ambivalence about the enslavement of Indians. At times, they were persuaded that it would be wiser to educate them into being loyal subjects of the crown. Such a policy, they believed, would help solve the problem of holding and peopling the vast territories. And as the Jesuits constantly reminded the kings, it would also be the Christian thing to do.

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Father Antônio Vieira was the most vigorous 17th-century champion of the Jesuit strategy. His role was similar to that of the more famous Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Spanish priest who had become Bishop of the Indies a century earlier. Vieira could also be as inconsistent as Las Casas, who campaigned against the enslavement of Indians while condoning that of blacks. Vieira, for his part, fulminated against Indian slavery, even as he dispatched missionaries to accompany official slaving expeditions. And he continued to lure Indians into mission villages long after he knew that doing so made them easy prey for slave-hunters. Both Las Casas and Vieira were caught in the same dilemma, one that neither the Spanish nor the Portuguese monarchs could solve: Christian concern for the rights of the Indians ran counter to the interests of the colonists. No one, not even the kings of Spain or Portugal, was powerful enough to force his far-flung subjects to abandon slavery.

Thus, even the Marquis of Pombal, Portugal's virtual dictator for many years under King José I (1750–77), was unable to prevail when he appointed his own step-brother governor of Maranhão in northern Brazil in 1751. The new governor arrived with orders to enforce a 1748 ban on slavery, but before long he was making the same arguments that the colonists had always made. The Jesuits, he said, were abusing their power over the Indians. "They started with general virtue and religious zeal," he wrote, "but have ended in the abominable vice of avarice." Pombal, who had his own quarrel with the Church at home, finally found it more convenient to



*Portuguese bandeirantes (expeditionaries) of the 17th century went into the jungles of Brazil to enslave Indians. Here, a group of bandeirantes meets stiff resistance from Botocudo warriors.*

expel the Jesuits from Portugal and its colonies in 1759 than to persist in the effort to abolish slavery. By then a system of forced labor had replaced outright slavery, leaving the Indians no better off.

At the end of the 18th century, Indians were, in any case, increasingly irrelevant to the life of the colony. For one thing, very few survived. Compared with roughly two-and-a-half million Indians at the beginning of the colonial period,\* there remained only about 100,000 at the time Brazil gained its independence from Portugal in 1822—a small proportion of the country's two million population. In addition to their decimation by disease, maltreatment, and warfare, Indians had been replaced by blacks as the major source of labor. Hundreds of thousands of African slaves toiled variously on the sugar plantations of northeastern Brazil (supporting an economy that resembled that of the antebellum Deep South in the United States), in the gold mines of central Brazil, and, later, on the

\*Precise calculations are impossible, but estimates range from four or five million at the time of the Portuguese arrival to less than one million. John Hemming's figure of two-and-a-half million, cited in *Red Gold* (1978), seems a reasonable, middle-range estimate.



*Cândido M. Rondon (1865–1958),  
first head of Brazil's Indian Service.*

coffee plantations farther south.

By this time, those Indians who remained could be found only in remote regions or on the frontiers of settlement. Fortunately for these survivors, there was no expansionary push westward, such as took place during the 19th century in the United States. In Brazil, the non-Indian population clung mainly to the coastal regions, communicating by sea or by means of a few great rivers: the Amazon, the São Francisco, or the Paraná. All of the capitals of the major states, save one (Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais), were port cities. Most 19th-century explorations into the heart of the country were undertaken by European scientists, including Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace. Brazilians turned their backs on the interior, leaving the Indians in relative peace.

But not for long. The Indian question became a national issue once again in the early 20th century, when German immigrants who were beginning to open up new farmland in the southern states of Paraná and Santa Catarina came into conflict with Indians who claimed the land as their own.

These skirmishes attracted international attention when Czech anthropologist Vojtěch Frič, who had collected artifacts in the area for the Berlin and Hamburg museums, addressed the 1908 meeting of the International Congress of Americanists in Vienna. He reported that colonists in Brazil were hiring *bugreiros* (Indian killers) to rid the land of natives. Frič described these *bugreiros* as "human hyenas" who attacked Indian villages by night and slaughtered their inhabitants. His revelations were extremely embarrassing to the government of President Afonso Pena, which was trying to recruit immigrants and didn't want prospective settlers from Germany to think they might be moving to a savage frontier.

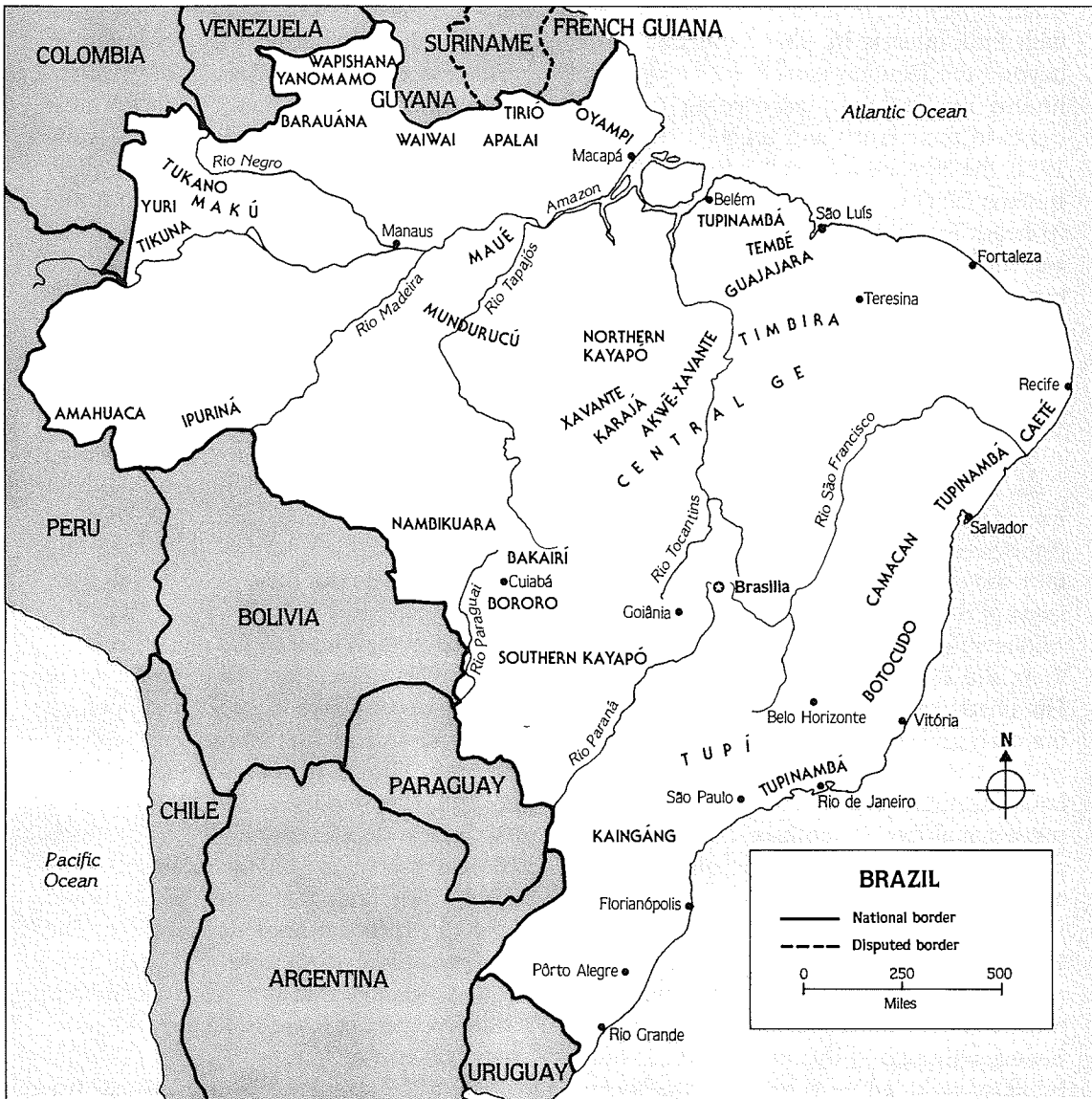
The issue quickly became a matter of national debate. Professor Hermann von Ihering, a German-Brazilian scientist who headed the prestigious Paulista Museum in the city of São Paulo, defended the settlers. They were the vanguard of civilization, he argued, and the Indians would have to give way before them. The Indian cause was taken up by a young army officer and engineer named Cândido Mariano Rondon.

Of partly Indian descent, Rondon was a religious positivist who followed the scientific creed of Auguste Comte and believed in the brotherhood of man. During the 1890s, while laying telegraph lines in the central states of Goiás and Mato Grosso, Rondon had gone out of his way to befriend the Indians. Because of the success of his missions and of his efforts to make peace with the redoubtable Bororo Indians, Colonel Rondon was given command of a major project in 1906. He and his men were to lay a telegraph line across Mato Grosso and a huge, unexplored area of Amazonian jungle (now called Rondonia) to the frontiers of Peru and Bolivia. One night, after having been shot at several times by Nambikuara Indians who re-

mained invisible in the forest—the colonel's carbine and saddle, hit by several arrows, are now museum pieces—Rondon gave his nervous men a famous order that later became the motto of Brazil's Indian Service: "Die, if need be, but never kill." Fortunately, Rondon and his men did not

die; nor did they kill. Their expedition was a success, and Rondon returned to Rio de Janeiro a hero.

Rondon's triumph lent credence to his view that Indians, if treated fairly, could be made into useful citizens. His arguments were taken up by intellectuals in Rio, then



*The approximately 250,000 Indians of Brazil make up less than one percent of the nation's total population. There are about 180 indigenous tribes, some of which are located above.*

the nation's capital, as well as by scientists at the National Museum. The racist severity of the policy advocated by von Ihering and the Europeans stood in marked contrast to what Brazilians proudly considered their own more characteristic kindness and willingness to compromise. Educated opinion rallied to Rondon's side. In 1910, the Brazilian legislature, dominated by landowners with little interest in what happened at or beyond the frontier, passed extraordinarily liberal legislation guaranteeing Indians rights to their lands and their customs. In 1911, the Service for the Protection of the Indians (SPI) was created, with Rondon as its head. Predictably underfunded, the SPI was unable to protect all of Brazil's Indians, but this was not a great problem at first: The Indians' remoteness was still their best protection.

The creation of the SPI seemed to be a popular vindication of Rondon's principles—that Indians were not irremediably savage, that they had certain rights which should be protected, and that they should be helped to become useful citizens of the republic. But in fact, most Brazilians still thought like von Ihering. Why, then, did Rondon's views prevail in 1910? His charisma was not the only reason. In the early 20th century, many educated Brazilians were embarrassed by their nation's backwardness and by the central government's inability to control the rural oligarchs. They were eager for modernization and a stronger, more united nation. Rondon's notion of nation-building was both modern and Brazilian. The SPI, a federal agency, would help bring even the most remote inhabitants of Brazil into the nation, although at this early stage, nation-building included no expansionist schemes for the settlement and development of the western regions.

That changed. Getúlio Vargas, an oli-

garch from the cattle-ranching plains in Brazil's far south, seized control of the government in 1930 and set about creating a more powerful central government, enacting a wide range of social legislation, and encouraging new industries and agricultural diversity. One part of Vargas's modernization program was the opening up of the west, but he did not pursue it very energetically. It didn't matter. A spontaneous westward movement was already underway, building momentum during the next 30 years. This movement received a strong boost in 1960, when the nation's capital was transferred from Rio de Janeiro to the new city of Brasília, in the sparsely populated highlands of central Brazil. The controversial new capital was established by President Juscelino Kubitschek, himself a native of Minas Gerais, Brazil's only major inland state. Kubitschek hoped that the capital would help open up the interior, and it did. Brasília was soon connected by good roads to the coast and also to Belém at the mouth of the Amazon. For the first time in the nation's history, the north, the center, and the southeast were linked by easy overland routes.

When the military seized power in 1964, it stepped up road construction, intending to move beyond central Brazil and open up the far west and the Amazonian regions. The uninhibited development programs pushed by the generals during their 20-year rule had a disastrous effect on the Indians—so disastrous that Brazil suddenly found itself facing charges of genocide from the international community. The Brazilian authorities were shocked. How could a country that protected its Indians in the tradition of Rondon be thought guilty of such a crime?

The SPI found itself in a dilemma. If it tried to defend the rights of the Indians, it would be accused of impeding development in the form of cattle ranching, log-



ging, agribusiness, and mining. The views of the military government were made quite clear. Rangel Reis, the minister of the interior, went so far as to say that cattle were the *bandeirantes* of the 1970s. Meanwhile, the government's development strategies stimulated a growing hunger for land throughout Brazil. The landless poor started to flock to the frontiers, and Indians soon found themselves facing outsiders who wanted either to uproot them or to exterminate them.

The government was certainly never in favor of killing Indians, but it took no steps to protect them from the predictable effects of unbridled frontier expansion. The SPI, caught in the middle, was at best ineffectual. At worst, it was complicitous. Increasingly, it tried to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in its posts, using Indian labor or the natural resources on Indian lands to make a profit for the Service (or for individual members of it). Some of its officials accepted bribes or were persuaded to conspire with the invading frontiersmen.

When these scandals were revealed in 1967, the government dissolved the service that Rondon had created and replaced it with the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). None of the guilty agents of the old service served time in jail, however, and FUNAI soon faced the same dilemma that its predecessor had.

In 1975, Interior Minister Reis launched a campaign for the "emancipation" of the Indians, presenting it as the equivalent of black emancipation. But the emancipation of the blacks came about with the abolition



*A Franciscan missionary supervising the work of Indians. The engraving is by João Maurício Rugendas, who travelled throughout Brazil during the early 19th century.*

of slavery in 1888. The Indians, nearly a century later, were not slaves. So what, Indians began to wonder, were they being emancipated from?

It was soon clear that the government intended to free them from the tutelage of FUNAI and indeed from their very identity as Indians. FUNAI was urged to "civilize" the Indians as quickly as possible so that they would no longer have any reason to claim special protection (and so that FUNAI itself could go out of business). But the Indians were not interested in this kind of rapid assimilation. They were fighting for their lives in some parts of Brazil (along the route of Rondon's first expedition to the northwest, for example, as well as in the Amazonian regions); and everywhere they were struggling for their land and customs. They pointed out that their rights were guaranteed under Brazilian law and that FUNAI was supposed to protect them. In December 1978, Indian representatives from 13 tribes in seven states wrote to President (and General) Ernesto Geisel:

We are not impressed by the pronouncements made in the press by the minister of the interior or the president of FUNAI in defense of emancipation. Only we, as victims of that policy, can make an honest appraisal of what this emancipation means. If fine speech could solve our problems, we would not be in a situation today so distant from what the Indian Statute was to have protected. We say the emancipation sought by the minister of the interior will cause the detribalization of indigenous communities, and consequently will destroy them individually and collectively. For the Indian must live in his own communities, with full liberty of cultural tradition and freedom to possess the land.

The government's policies also aroused opposition among non-Indians. The Indians, scattered as they were, started to organize in their own defense; deputations of chiefs were frequently seen in Brasília, coming to put their case directly to the authorities. They were supported by the Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI), an arm of the Catholic Church, by pro-Indian organizations largely started by anthropologists, and by the National Association for the Support of the Indians, whose chapters started springing up in major cities, including Pôrto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. The plight of the Indians soon attracted international attention. In 1979, a World Bank report noted the Indians' "increasingly precarious position"; its observation that "diseases transmitted by the new settlers have decimated whole tribes" was not the only one that seemed to echo back over four centuries of history.

The pro-Indian movement gathered momentum during the period known as the *abertura* (opening), which began in 1977 when Geisel announced his intention to return the country gradually to civilian rule. In the Brazilian press, discussion of the pressure on Indians became a kind of pretext, or cover, for discussing the military's development program, which had placed

such a severe burden on the poor, especially those in rural areas.

In 1985, when the civilian administration of President José Sarney took over from the military, the need to veil debates disappeared, but the Indian question did not. To the contrary, it became the subject of even stormier debate, largely because the Indians and their demands highlight many of the unresolved issues in modern Brazilian politics.

This was made abundantly clear in an unusual series of articles carried for a full week in 1987 on the front page of Brazil's major newspaper, the *Estado de São Paulo*. The articles appeared while delegates were meeting in Brasília to draft a new constitution. Collectively titled "The Conspiracy against Brazil," they were intended to discourage delegates from heeding the demands of pro-Indian groups. These groups wanted the constitution to declare Brazil a multi-ethnic nation, with Indian lands and customs guaranteed. Their opponents argued that Brazil was a melting pot, a society that welcomed people from other cultures, *provided that they were willing to assimilate into the mainstream*.

The articles in the *Estado* alleged that the pro-Indian advocates were conspiring against Brazil while pretending to defend the rights of indigenous peoples. They were guilty on three counts: First, by calling for a multi-ethnic Brazil, the pro-Indian groups were dividing the nation. Second, they were in league with foreign churches in an effort to internationalize the Amazon. And third, they were working covertly with foreign mining companies, for if they succeeded in preventing Brazilian mining companies from exploiting minerals on Indian lands, Brazil would be forced to buy minerals from abroad. Outraged, the Catholic Church took legal action against the *Estado* and showed that its allegations were

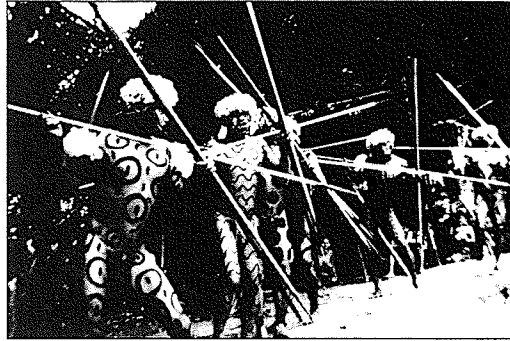
based on reports that were partially or misleadingly quoted, and in some cases actually forged. Nonetheless, the campaign of vilification put the proponents of Indian rights on the defensive.

In May 1988, the constitutional convention voted not to declare Brazil a multi-ethnic society. It also refused to provide Indian lands with protection against mining interests, although it did limit the circumstances under which these lands could be mined. At the same time, somewhat contradictorily, the rights of Indians to their lands and customs were written into the constitution, and FUNAI's "emancipation" policy was excluded.

As a result of these decisions, Brazil's Indians find themselves in a curious state of constitutional limbo. Their right to their customs is guaranteed, but it is unclear how they are to maintain their way of life in a nation which officially insists that it is a melting pot. Moreover, the partial constitutional victories for the Indian cause have done little to mitigate the violence that continues to be done to them.

Brazilian schoolbooks glorify the *bandeirantes* who built the nation, glossing over their slaving activities by asserting that the work of Indians (and later of blacks) was necessary for the economy of the colony. Similarly, elimination of the Indians in more recent times is justified in the name of civilization. The official policy of successive administrations, both military and civilian, is that assimilation is the Brazilian way. Furthermore, so this official rationalization goes, Indians who cling to their own way of life "stand in the way of development."

To be sure, the last justification depends on a very narrow definition of development. Protected Indian lands do get in the way of land grabbers and speculators, of rapacious mining interests, and of ranchers who wish to turn vast tracts of territory into



*Yanomamo Indians, a Stone Age people, parade with their spears during a tribal feast.*

grazing lands. These are precisely the people who have been assisted in Brazil by government subsidies and by the government's willingness to look the other way when they do violence to Indians and to the rural poor. But this is neither the only nor the best way to pursue development. Other possible strategies would encourage or at least accommodate people such as rubber-tappers, smallholders, and indigenous producers. Indians throughout the Americas have shown that they can adapt to market forces and still maintain their own cultures, as, for example, the Hopi have done in the United States and the Xavante and the Kayapo are doing in Brazil. The latter are now beginning to market fruits and other forest products that they have grown on their own lands. The Indians' way of doing things may even suggest better local strategies for economic development than those that have been so disastrously followed in recent decades. Scientists have only recently begun to discover the true value of agricultural and forestry techniques that the Amazonian Indians have used for centuries. Darrell Posey, an anthropologist who worked among the Kayapo, found that these practices offer "thousands of ways of making the living forest more valuable than the destroyed forest."

The supposed requirements of that "development" in whose name Indians and

others are threatened with impoverishment are, then, merely a fiction. But the powers that be continue to exploit this fiction.

Even though the grandiose development policies pursued for so many years by the military have thrown the nation into an economic and social crisis, Brazil's leaders continue to point to the Amazon and other regions of the far west as the solution. According to their vision, Brazil taps the resources of its hinterland and colonizes the frontier with people drawn from the poverty-stricken masses.

But the reality so far has failed to live up to the dream. The resources have not been as abundant as was hoped, and the process of extracting them has involved continuing violence against the inhabitants and the environment itself. The damage to the Amazonian ecosystem has provoked a worldwide outcry, which in turn has aroused Brazilian nationalism. Brazilians resent being told that the Amazon is a global resource—President Sarney even called this kind of insistence a form of "colonialism." The Brazilian military sees such international concern as a thinly veiled attack on Brazilian sovereignty. It pushed through the Northern Headwaters program in 1985 in order to secure the Amazonian frontiers for Brazil and to encourage settlement.

The military, which retains considerable influence even within the present administration, is not about to let considerations of Indian rights interfere with its grand de-

sign. As a result, important decisions concerning Indian affairs have been taken out of the hands of FUNAI and are now routinely made by the nation's security council. This is justified on the grounds that Indian questions are frontier questions, but that is not the main reason.

**B**razil today is engaged in intense national introspection. Its citizens are reflecting on the bitter experiences of the recent past, on the dire present situation, and on the prospects for the future. They are aware that the people have paid a high price for the development that was imposed on them. They resent the fact that they are now being dunned by rich countries to repay huge debts (now totalling \$114.6 billion) that were incurred by dictators over whom they had no control, for money spent on they know not what.

But Brazilians are not just arguing about their economic future. They are rethinking their constitution and their political institutions. Most of all, they are reflecting on what it means to be Brazilian and on what kind of a nation they want theirs to be. At the moment, social justice is high on the list of popular concerns, and while the Indians are not the only ones who suffer, their plight is the most dramatic reminder of how the weak are mistreated. That is why the military and the other powerful supporters of the development policies of the past 25 years consider the Indian question a matter of national security.

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# THE CONQUEST TRADITION OF CENTRAL AMERICA

by Richard N. Adams

**B**etween 1979 and 1984, the government of Guatemala added a particularly tragic chapter to this century's chronicle of "civilized" brutality. In the name of quelling a leftist insurgency movement in the northern departments of the nation, the successive military regimes of General Lucas García and General Ríos Montt directed a campaign of mass terror against the nation's Indian population—a campaign so bloody that it recalled the worst atrocities of the 16th-century Spanish *conquistadores*. Paramilitary death squads targeted dissenters, real or imagined, while the army destroyed more than 400 villages, in some cases killing all of their inhabitants. Amnesty International described this holocaust as a "government policy of political murder." The death toll ran into the tens of thousands—by some estimates as high as 80,000—while two to four times that number of Indians fled to neighboring Mexico.

At roughly the same time, in nearby Nicaragua, another conflict between a national government and a large Indian population erupted—but with a far different outcome. Shortly after taking power in 1979, the Sandinista *comandantes*

began to cast their eyes upon the coastal lands of eastern Nicaragua as a frontier for development; they regarded the some 80,000 Miskito Indians who inhabited this sweltering lowland as a vast proletariat, long exploited by rapacious foreign "capitalists," beginning with English buccaneers and loggers in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Sandinistas assumed that these Indians—a mixed-race people, in fact, thanks to their intermingling with black slaves whom a shipwreck had deposited on the coast in the 1640s—would go along with their plans for land reform and even tolerate relocation when necessary.

The Miskito, however, had other ideas.



Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first Spaniard to cross the Panamanian isthmus (in 1513), is shown here unleashing his hounds upon a group of hapless Indians.

Prizing their semi-isolation from the rest of the country, they cherished a tradition of relative independence from Managua. Far from embracing the Sandinista cause, the Indians felt threatened by it. Distrust and misunderstanding only intensified as the Miskito question became an issue in the Nicaraguan civil war. During the early and mid-1980s, as many as 20,000 Miskito fled to Honduras. Some joined the anti-Sandinista "contras." But the Sandinistas, rather than launching a bloody crusade, began negotiations with the Miskito and other coastal Indians. By 1989, Managua had granted the Miskito a measure of local autonomy and agreed to guarantee their rights in the national constitution.

To a large extent, of course, these two episodes are bound up with contemporary national politics. One reason Guatemala's generals pursued their anti-guerrilla campaign so aggressively was to rid the northern departments of Indians who might make claims on the oil reserves recently discovered there. The Miskito controversy was aggravated by power struggles within the ruling Sandinista party, specifically by the increasing domination of the junta by the Marxist Daniel Ortega.

But these episodes—and particularly their resolutions—are also rooted in Central American history, in a long tradition of government-Indian relations that first took shape during the 16th century, when the Spanish conquered this narrow strip of the New World. This history alone explains why the conquest tradition survived in one part of Central America while it largely disappeared in the other. It is a story shaped not only by differences among the conquerors and their successors but also by differ-

ences between the northern and southeastern Indian cultures.

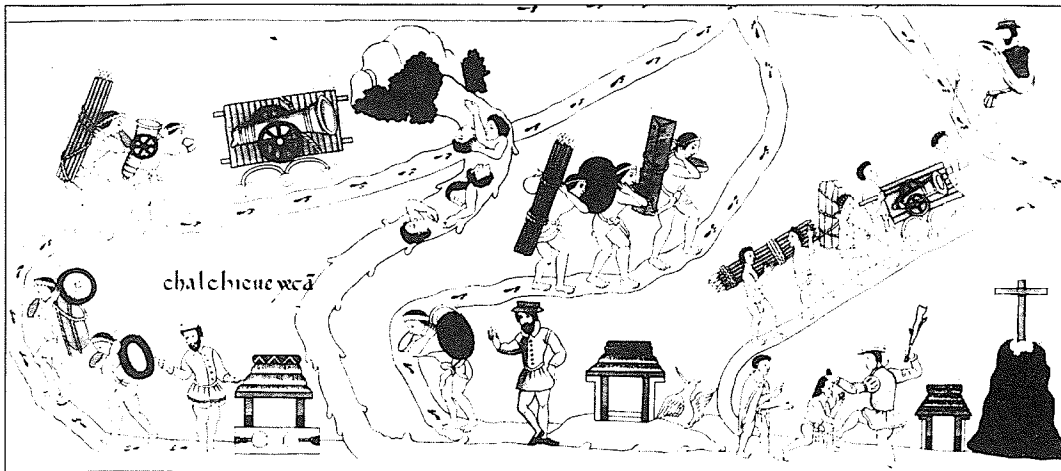
In the north, the Spanish conquerors who marched down from Mexico encountered a complex assortment of "high cultures," principally the Indian kingdoms of, or related to, the Maya. The land of the "high cultures," called Mesoamerica by archaeologists, extended from central Mexico and the Yucatán Peninsula into that part of the upper Central American isthmus that today includes Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, and western portions of Nicaragua and Honduras.

The societies that flourished here tended to be large, concentrated, and highly organized. Most had clearly delineated social classes—nobles, artisans, merchants, plebes, and slaves—and were run by strong central governments. In addition to creating markets and extensive trade networks, the Maya-related peoples possessed a hieroglyphic form of writing and were highly accomplished in art, astronomy, mathematics, and architecture. Bishop Diego de Landa, an early Spanish missionary, remarked on the "grandeur and the beauty" of Mayan buildings, "for they are so many in number and so are the parts of the country where they are found, and so well built in their fashion that it fills one with astonishment."

**B**ut Mesoamerica is only one part of Central America. To the southeast, below an imaginary line that begins at the Península de Nicoya on Costa Rica's uppermost coast and runs northward on a somewhat irregular course to the Atlantic Ocean at Puerto Cortés in Honduras, lie three-fourths of Nicaragua, half of Hondu-

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*Indians were forced to serve as human "mules" throughout Spanish-dominated Central America, often transporting goods from ships on one coast to those waiting on the other.*

ras, all of Panama, and all but a tiny wedge of northwestern Costa Rica. In this southeastern portion of the isthmus, the Spanish came upon very different kinds of Indian societies—an assortment of tribes, chiefdoms, and confederations.

The societies of the southeastern Indians—including the Cuna, the Guaymí, and the Sumo—were not only smaller\* but far less socially evolved than those of the north. Their cultural accomplishments—weaving, basketry, and simple forms of home construction—could not begin to match the achievements of the “high cultures.” Unlike the more sophisticated maize farmers of Mesoamerica, the southeastern Indians subsisted on simple slash-and-burn farming or by hunting, gathering, and fishing. Their diversity and scattered living patterns could not have stood in bolder contrast to the concentrated and highly organized societies of the north.

Of course, the Spanish knew nothing about such differences when they arrived on the threshold of the region in 1501. Settling mainly on the Panamanian coast

around the Gulf of Darién, they had little contact with the people who inhabited the volcano-dotted highlands or the steamier plains and forests of the lowlands. The first serious expedition into the interior was not mounted until 1513, when Vasco Núñez de Balboa made his way across the Panamanian isthmus to the Pacific Ocean and claimed all of its waters, and the shores they lapped, for the Spanish crown.

Six years later, in 1519, Balboa was beheaded for treason and replaced as Spanish commander in Panama by his rival, Pedro Arias de Ávila, known in the New World as Pedrarias Dávila. He led or directed expeditions north into what is now Honduras and Nicaragua, finding gold in the latter and killing all Indians he could not press into service as slaves. His brutality—exceptional even by the standards of his day—is one major reason the Indian populations came close to extinction in the south.

But well before Pedrarias’s death in 1531, Hernán Cortés in Mexico heard tales about gold and silver in Honduras. Although still consolidating his conquest of Mexico (1519–21), he sent two expeditions south, one led by Pedro de Alvarado in 1523. A cunning and ruthless commander,

\*Scholars estimate that there were up to 13 million Indians in Central America at the beginning of the 16th century, with the greatest populations concentrated in Mesoamerica.

Alvarado came to be as closely identified with the subjugation of Mesoamerica as Pedrarias was with that of the southeast. In 1523, taking advantage of a tribal war in the Guatemalan highlands to enlist Indian allies, he conquered the Maya-related Quiché Indians and shortly thereafter founded the city of Santiago de los Caballeros (now known as Antigua) as his administrative center. He then defeated the Pipiles of El Salvador and marched into Honduras, encountering fierce Indian resistance and, on occasion, Pedrarias's men.

In the north as in the south, the Spanish conquest represented the triumph of the few over the many. Pedro de Alvarado's 420 *conquistadores*, even with Indian allies, were greatly outnumbered in most battles; on one occasion, reputedly, they faced an Indian force of 200,000 men. But for Alvarado, as for other Spaniards, the advantages of muskets, armor, horses, and divide-and-conquer diplomacy proved decisive. "There were so many Indians that they killed," ran a Quiché account of a major battle with Alvarado, "that they made a river of blood; that is why it was given the name of Quiquel [blood], because all the water became blood and also the day became red on account of the great bloodshed that day."

More devastating even than gunpowder, scholars believe, were the white man's diseases. Smallpox, measles, yellow fever, typhus, and a variety of new viruses in some cases marched ahead of the conquering armies, laying waste to native villages before a shot was fired. But muskets and viruses were not the only killers. Forced labor—both physically taxing and psychologically demoralizing—also took its toll. Slavery was particularly hard on the southeastern Indians, who were completely unaccustomed to the rigors of "disciplined" labor. The shock of enslavement—including literal branding under Pedrarias—was se-

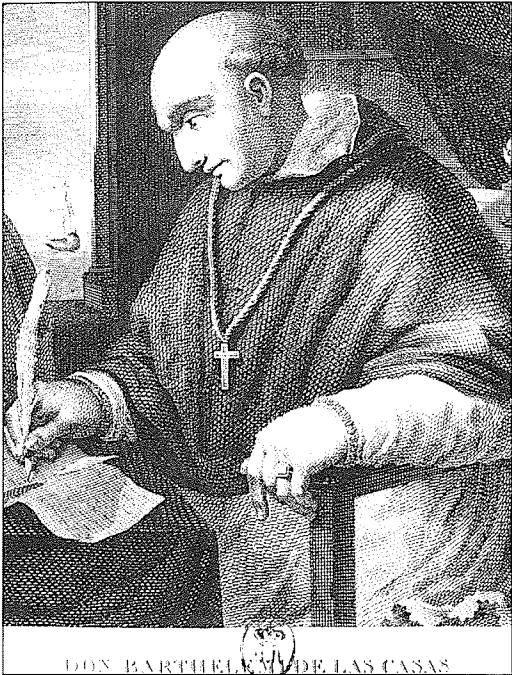
vere. Many Indians were uprooted from their villages and sent as far off as Peru to work the Spanish mines. Many succumbed to the alien climates or harsh working conditions. Others met their deaths in Panama transporting Spanish cargo across the isthmus, the overland stage in the shipment of plunder from Peru to Spain. Between 1500 and 1700, the Indian populations of the southeast, smaller than those of Mesoamerica to begin with, fell sharply: by about 93 percent in Panama, 98 percent in Costa Rica, and 95 percent in conquered Nicaragua (compared with about 80 percent in Guatemala).

In Mesoamerica, by contrast, many Indians were already familiar with the conditions of enforced servitude. Slaves and plebes had for centuries served their kings, tilling the fields and building such ceremonial centers as Utatlán and Zaculeu in the Guatemala highlands. (Archaeologists have identified at least 116 such centers, which once boasted great pyramids, palaces, and observatories.) The Spanish, taking advantage of the existing system, simply stepped in as the new lords.

The conquerors of Mesoamerica—models of gentleness none—at least in principle observed certain restrictions that the crown and Cortés had put on slavery: They enslaved only Indian combatants or former Indian slaves. And shortly after Cortés became governor and captain-general of New Spain (Mexico and most of Central America) in 1522, most of his subalterns adopted the medieval Spanish system of labor called the *encomienda* and abandoned outright enslavement.

Under the *encomienda*, a colonist was awarded land and Indian labor in return for his pledge to protect and Christianize his charges. The converted Indians, in turn, were obliged to pay a tribute, part of which went to the crown and part to their *enco-*





DON BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

*menderos*. The Indians were also expected to provide a certain amount of labor to the colonial leaders. Some worked on the haciendas or on public projects in colonial towns like Santiago de Guatemala or Gracias in Honduras, while others, despite royal ordinances, were forced to labor in mines or serve as human pack-horses. A goodly number of Christianized Indians ended up being resettled in villages, or *pueblos*, where they enjoyed limited self-government. Their leaders, or *caciques*, formed native councils, responsible for internal order, the allocation of work and services, and the collection of tribute. But Spanish civil authorities retained ultimate authority over the tribute system, and all activities remained under the watchful eyes of the missionary priests.

In fact, from the earliest days of the conquest, secular and religious authority were virtually indistinguishable throughout the Spanish empire. When news of Columbus's discovery reached the Spanish court in 1493, Pope Alexander VI gave the Spanish

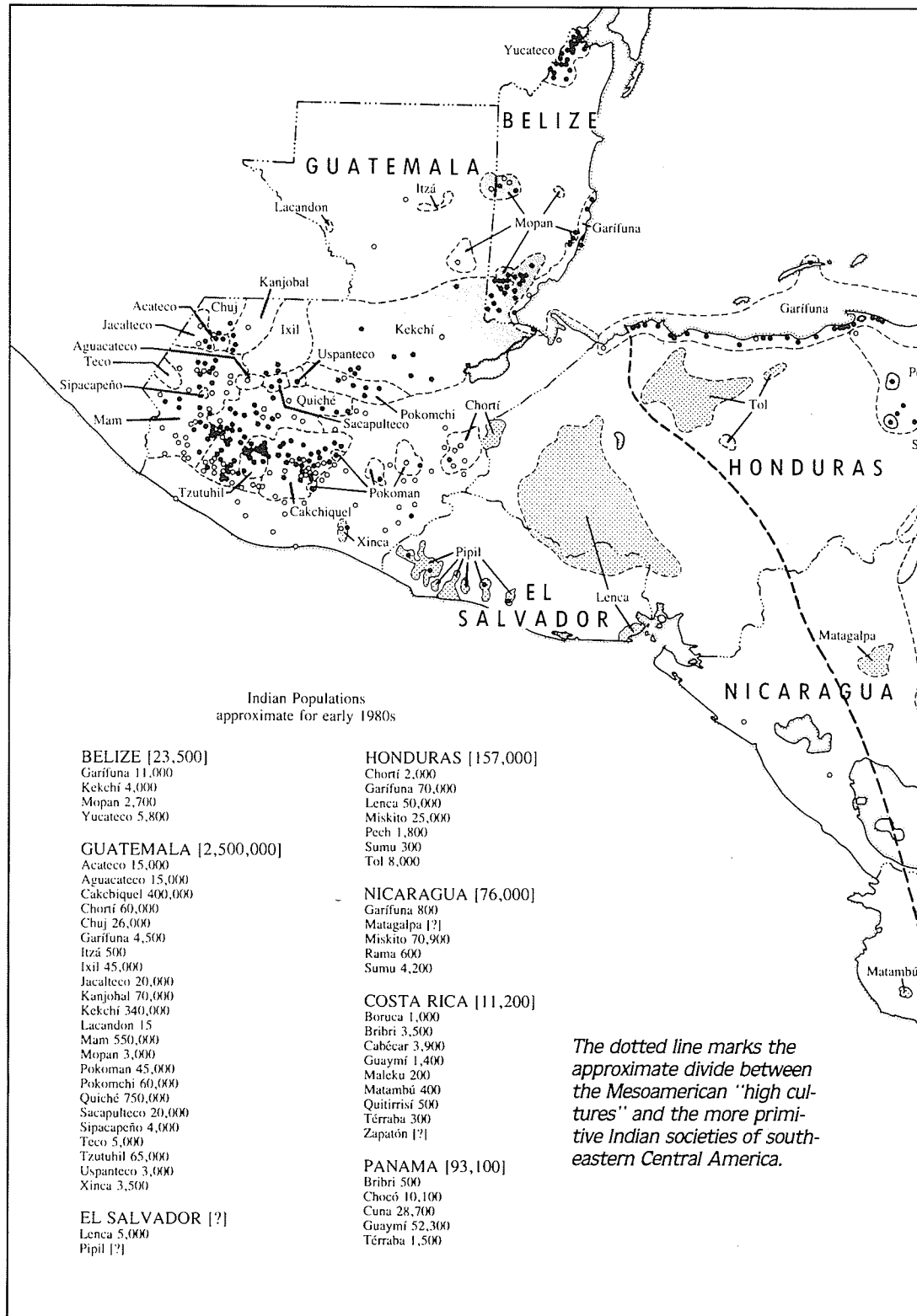
monarchs title to most of the new land\*—and, with it, the duty to convert the pagans. But despite the closeness of church and government, the two often disagreed over the treatment of Indians. Dominican and Jesuit missionaries were generally protective of the Indians, viewing them as no different from any other of God's creatures. The Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas traveled throughout Central America, denouncing the Spanish for their mistreatment of the Indians. Local civil authorities, however, and many regular clergy, argued that Indians had no inherent rights, much less civilization; coercive labor, they held, was the best means of Christianizing these less-than-human creatures.

The conflict was partially resolved in 1542, when Charles I (1519–56) issued the New Laws and sent a forceful administrator, Alonso López de Cerrato, to Santiago to enforce them. Intended to protect Indians from the worst abuses of coercive labor, the laws forbade outright slavery, eliminated many of the *encomiendas*, and placed Indians under the direct jurisdiction of the crown. But the crown did not abolish the tribute obligations of the Christianized Indians, which remained a mainstay of the colonial economy until 1811.

Even as their treatment was regularized, the Indians continued to decline in numbers. Throughout Central America, but particularly in the southeast, miscegenation hastened the disappearance of pure-blooded Indians. Out of this other "conquest" came mixed-blood *mestizos*, or *ladinos*, who by the 17th century formed a distinct class of wage laborers, small farmers, artisans, merchants, and peddlers. With time, of course, *ladinos* came to disdain the poor, pure-blooded Indians as much as the pure-blooded creoles disdained the *ladinos*.

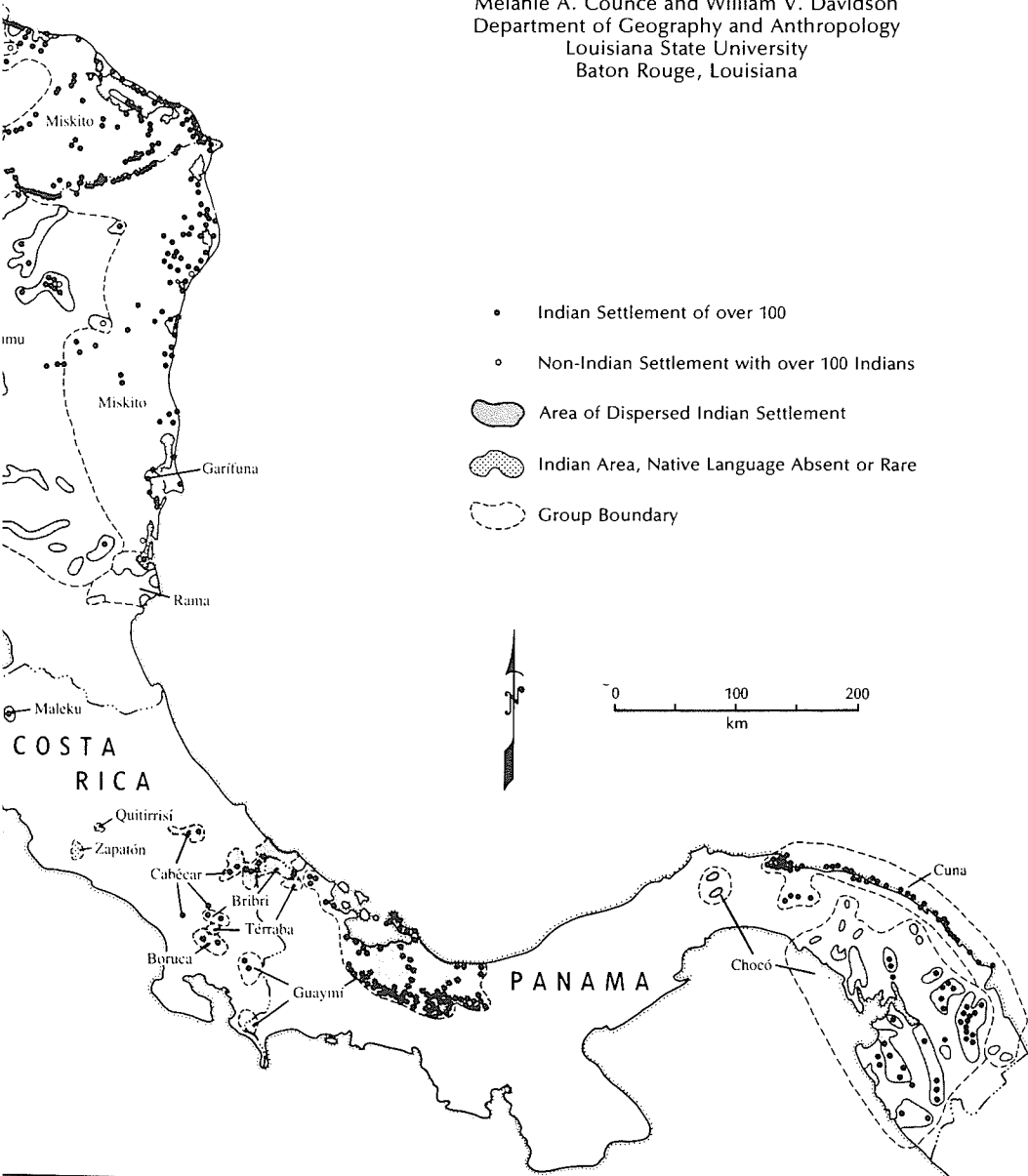
\*The same papal edict of 1493 gave Portugal a part of the New World—what amounted to the eastern portion of present-day Brazil.

THE INDIAN QUESTION



INDIANS OF CENTRAL AMERICA 1980s

Compiled by  
Melanie A. Counce and William V. Davidson  
Department of Geography and Anthropology  
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But in the southeast, because there were few Indians, and because those who survived lived far from Spanish settlements, there was relatively less fear of the Indians—and less imagined need to keep the “savages” down. Not unrelated to this low level of conflict was the declining importance of Indians to the regional economy. By the end of the 16th century, in much of Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica, labor was provided mostly by the growing *mestizo* population.

Things were different in most of Mesoamerica. There the Indians remained vital to the colonial (and post-colonial) economy. *Repartimientos* (forced labor drafts), debt peonage, and sharecropping kept Indians captive on the haciendas long after the *encomiendas* were curtailed. Life was not much better in the *pueblos*. “The demands for [Indian] produce and labor were constant,” observed the historian Murdo MacLeod—so constant, in fact, that many Indians chose peonage on the haciendas over the supposed freedom of the *pueblos*.

Largely because the Indians were so vital to the Mesoamerican economy, the creoles and *ladinos* believed that they needed periodic reminders of their low status: Such treatment understandably reinforced the fears of the Indians, who kept alive their hope of eventual liberation in rituals such as the “Dance of the Conquest” or even in outright rebellion. One notable uprising was staged by Indians in the Chiapas and Guatemalan highlands in 1712. Colonial authorities retaliated with wholesale executions and forced resettlements, meeting terror with counter-terror in what was becoming clearly defined as the conquest tradition of Mesoamerica.

Indian labor, whether scarce (as in most of the southeast) or abundant (as in most of Mesoamerica), failed to bring great pros-

perity to the Spanish colonies in Central America. Gold and silver mining in Honduras produced disappointing yields, and Spain’s tight control of the colonial trade kept down the prices of the colony’s cocoa and indigo exports. The Kingdom of Guatemala, which had acquired de facto autonomy from New Spain in the mid-16th century (and which encompassed all of Central America except Panama), remained a particularly impoverished backwater of the Spanish empire. Spain’s new Bourbon monarchs, starting with Philip V in 1700, tried to open up trade within the empire, but their efforts did little good for the Central American colony.

The Bourbons’ attempt to assert stronger royal control did, however, have one lasting effect on the Kingdom of Guatemala. It reduced the autonomy that locally born landlords—the creole elite—had acquired through their domination of town councils. Seeing their power stripped by representatives of the imperial court in Santiago de Guatemala, discontented creoles became receptive to the independence movement that began to stir throughout the empire in the late 18th century.

In 1821, Central America allowed itself to be annexed to Mexico in order to win independence from Spain; two years later the union with Mexico dissolved. But before Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica declared themselves independent republics, they tried briefly to live together as the United Provinces of Central America. (Panama, part of Colombia, became independent only in 1903, and Belize remained a British colony until 1981.) The federation was effectively dead by 1838, but one ironic consequence of the liberal experiment was that the Indians were left worse off than they had been before independence: The crown’s protection—slight though it had been—was no longer available to them. As the historian

Héctor Pérez-Brignoli has shown, the new ruling classes of Central America, whether bourgeois, oligarchical, or aristocratic, failed to forge "a new collaboration and consensus to replace the crumbling colonial paternalism. Control rested therefore exclusively on exploitation, violence, and terror."

In the specific case of state-Indian relations, however, Pérez-Brignoli's description holds far more for the Mesoamerican region than for the southeast. One finds many examples of a more benign state of government-Indian affairs in the southeast well before the resolution of the Sandinista-Miskito conflict during the 1980s.

Shortly after Panama gained independence from Colombia in 1903, for instance, the new government ran into trouble with its largest Indian tribe, the Cuna. These proud Indians lived mainly on, or just off, the northeast coast of the country, but some lived along the sensitive border with Colombia—and many retained a fondness for their former rulers. The Panamanian government naturally wanted to win over these Indians; its strategy was assimilation. But when the Cuna resisted, the government committed a costly error: It sent policemen to the Cuna's islands, charging them with the impossible task of eradicating the Indians' folkways and customs. That proved to be too much for the Cuna traditionalists, many of whom had won the friendship and support of American ethnologists and missionaries. During the festival of Carnival in 1925, the Cuna rebelled, killing some 30 policemen, Panamanians, and acculturated Indians.

But the government response was remarkably tempered. Partly in response to the urgings of U.S. officials, the government decided to negotiate. The two sides worked out an agreement that allowed the Cuna control over a portion of their traditional homeland, including the offshore islands

and a ribbon of mainland territory. The Indian reserve, or *comarca*, of San Blas has been respected by all subsequent Panamanian governments. Today, some 35,000 Cuna enjoy great autonomy, even as they participate in national politics.

But if the *comarca* typified the Indian policies of the southeastern states—and even influenced the arrangement that the Sandinistas later worked out with the Miskito—the conquest tradition remains very much alive in Guatemala and El Salvador. The Indian populations there are still very large; in Guatemala not only large (maybe even half of the eight million population) but also recognizable. Clearly, though, the price of retaining a distinct Indian identity has been high. It has often provoked the government campaigns of terror, and it has made it easy for the government to identify the "enemy" once those campaigns were under way.

The situation in El Salvador is quite different. According to a 1989 estimate, there may be around 500,000 Indians in that country of 5.4 million. But they are close to being an invisible people, most of them having abandoned their distinctive native dress and customs under pressure from the dominant creole culture. Their assimilation, however, is only a different response to the conquest tradition.

The plight of El Salvador's Indians had been terrible ever since the conquest, but it reached a low point during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the country's coffee-based economy collapsed. In January 1932, shortly after the military overthrow of a progressive president, Arturo Araujo, a band of Indians armed with machetes swooped down on a cluster of landlords and storekeepers in southwestern El Salvador, hacking about 35 of them to death and looting their homes and stores. Among the leaders of the uprising was



*An early 20th-century photograph of group of Cuna Indians on the island of El Tigri. The nose ring was but one of the native customs the Panamanian government tried to eradicate.*

Augustin Farabundo Martí, a communist whose renown lives on in the name of El Salvador's contemporary revolutionary organization, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). General Maximiliano Hernandez, the usurper, responded to the Indian revolt with an organized reign of terror. According to eyewitnesses, soldiers rounded up anyone who looked or dressed like an Indian, women and children included, and conducted mass executions. The death toll reached 30,000 according to some estimates. For years after, in radio broadcasts and newspaper articles, *ladino* commentators spoke of the need to exterminate all of the country's Indians so that insurrections such as that of 1932 would not be repeated.

The Indians took the hint. No further massacres were needed. Instead, the Indians have become an indistinguishable part of El Salvador's vast laboring population. To be sure, the country has experienced repeated bouts of terrorism and civil strife since 1979, including street fighting in the capital between the army and FMLN guerrillas in late 1989. But the government no longer responds by singling out the Indians. Can one safely conclude that the mentality of the conquest tradition has run its course in El Salvador? Not at all. The forces of reaction now direct terror at all of the laboring poor. The indiscriminate shelling of the poorer neighborhoods of San Salvador in the most recent uprising shows that the conquest mentality lives on, despite the

relative invisibility of the much dreaded *Indios*.

The situation of the Indians in Guatemala, meanwhile, has become increasingly complicated. Twenty years ago, anthropologists claimed that the Indians were being rapidly assimilated into the dominant *ladino* culture. In some important ways, they were wrong. Government policies, for one thing, reinforced Indian separateness. As recently as 1984, the Guatemalan army brought thousands of displaced Indians into newly formed communities—"model towns." Replicating the system used by colonial Spain, the army found these settlements easier to keep under surveillance than the scattered hamlets the Indians formerly inhabited. As in the past, Indians were expected to serve for no compensation. They were forced into unarmed militias to patrol the countryside and to monitor guerrilla activities. When not on patrol, the Indian men and boys would join their families in scratching out a meager existence, farming in nearby fields or performing menial labor for *ladinos* in neighboring communities.

**T**hat is part of the story of Guatemala's Indians—many still oppressed, some even terrorized. Another part, equally valid, also disproves the prediction

of assimilation, but in a way that holds out some hope for the future of the Indians. Indeed, according to this story, Indian fortunes are already on the rise in some of Guatemala's rural departments—those, in particular, that the earlier insurgency bypassed. In village after village, Indians are starting small agribusinesses, accumulating capital, even buying back land that they had earlier sold to the *ladinos*. They are effectively creating a new Indian economy—one that harnesses Indian labor and resources rather than leaving them open to *ladino* exploitation.

It is, of course, all to the good that the Indians of Guatemala are beginning to show confidence and pride in their own native identity. Further economic strength and independence will only bolster these. But self-respect is not enough to bring an end to the dismal record of state-Indian relations in the Mesoamerican states of Central America. That will require the governments of Guatemala and El Salvador—with the encouragement of their biggest backer, the United States—to follow the example of their neighbors in the southeast and take steps to reduce the inequalities, the threat of violence, and the perpetuation of fear. It will require, in other words, that the elites of these nations finally abandon the time-worn ways of the conquest tradition.

# THE RECONQUEST

by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard

Guatemala is the only country in Central America with a large Indian population. The Indians, mostly of Mayan ancestry, are probably a majority, although it is hard to know for sure since there is much debate over who is, and who is not, an *indigena*. Once a family of Indians moves to the city, they can turn themselves into *ladinos* (as *mestizos* are called in much of Central America) after a couple of generations if they learn to think and behave like *ladinos*—that is, if they speak only Spanish and abandon their Indian culture. I recall meeting a Guatemalan army lieutenant with unmistakable Mayan features who spoke in a detached way about the Indian conscripts in his platoon, as if they were of a different species. He considered himself a *ladino*, and so, therefore, did everybody else.

By 1960 the rate of assimilation was so high that anthropologists began to despair, fearing that Mayan culture would gradually disappear during the next 30 years or so. In certain parts of Guatemala, this has happened. But the great surprise is that the Indians have generally held their ground, and in the well-documented case of San Antonio Aguascalientes, the *ladinos* themselves are finding it useful to become bilingual, learning Cakchiquel so as not to be marginalized in a *pueblo* where the Indians increasingly play a dominant civic and economic role. It is no longer far-fetched to imagine the Maya doing what the Japanese have done: mastering the machinery of a modern economy without giving up their

distinctive character and customs.

The extent of this Indian renaissance was brought home to me on a recent visit to Aguacatan, a remote farming community whose inhabitants are about 80 percent Aguacatec Indian and 20 percent *ladinos*. The first shock was the number of television aerials on the adobe cottages dotted all over the rich green valley. The second was the sight of young Indians racing past on ten-speed mountain bicycles, imports from Taiwan that sell for about \$175 each. The central plaza of the *pueblo* was alive with commerce and movement. Aguacatec women walked along busily, dressed in blue and green headdresses with baubles falling down behind their ears. Beneath their outlandish Indian costume, or *traje* as it is known, many were wearing stout leather shoes—a concession to convenience. Among the crowd there were a number of *ladinos*. A few were chatting politely to the Indians; most were just minding their own business.

Until recently, Aguacatecos were terrified of *ladinos*. "It was awful," said Dimitrio Rodriguez, a soft-spoken, bespectacled Indian, as we sat drinking Pepsi on his verandah. "My father can remember being seized by *ladinos* as he was walking down the road. They whipped him and sent him off as a beast of burden to fetch goods from Huehuetenango [a day's walk away]."

Forced labor was abolished after the revolution of 1944, but the *ladinos* continued to control the power structure of Aguacatan, and a form of apartheid persisted. Indians were not allowed to use the sidewalks, for instance, and they had to step

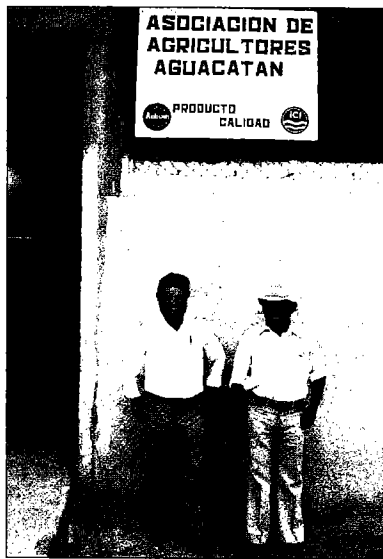


aside in shops if a *ladino* were waiting to be served. The first time *ladinos* ever met socially with Aguacatecos in a private home was in 1972, when an American anthropologist, Douglas Brintnall, invited both to the birthday party of his young son.

Today Aguacatan is a different world. Dimitrio's brother is the top administrative officer in the local government and is considering a run for mayor. His cousin is a Catholic priest, the first Aguacateco ever to be ordained. And last year Dimitrio himself finished his medical training at the University of San Carlos and returned home to become Aguacatan's first Indian physician.

Dimitrio's family lives in an imposing farmhouse perched above terraces of elaborately irrigated garlic. It was this unlikely crop that lifted his parents out of poverty during the 1950s and '60s, and which has since transformed the whole economy of Aguacatan. The difference in yield between garlic and the Mayan staple of maize is staggering. An acre of land currently yields about \$140 worth of maize, or \$2,600 of garlic. Overwhelmingly, the Indians have been the quickest to seize the opportunity, and many have accumulated enough capital to buy back land lost to *ladino* creditors during the last century. The five largest garlic growers are all Indian.

The *ladinos* have stuck to their tradi-



*The garlic industry allowed the Indians of Aguacatan, and of other parts of Guatemala, to stage their own economic "miracle." Two leaders of the Aguacatan Agricultural Association (left), one Indian and one ladino, stand in front of their cooperative building. An Indian woman (below) removes garlic stalks with pruning scissors.*



tional role as traders. For a while they made fat profits buying garlic from the Indians and selling it in Guatemala City. But during the 1980s, the Indians not only caught up but leapt ahead in the sophistication of their marketing. When I visited Humberto Herrera, president of an association of 500 Aguacateco smallholders, he seemed interested that I was English and began chatting about London. To my aston-

ishment, he said he had just returned from a trip promoting garlic in Covent Garden. His association has built its own packing plant on the outskirts of Aguacatan, from which it exports directly to the United States, England, and Panama, without any dealings through *ladino* middlemen.

The influence of *ladinos* in most of Guatemala's Indian towns depends, to a great extent, on a monopoly of access to the outside world. In Aguacatan they have clearly lost this, in every sense. The most sophisticated man I met in the *pueblo* was Pedro Castro, an Indian who runs the local branch of Habitat For Humanity. He has been to the United States six times, giving talks on behalf of the organization. On one visit, he had had a private meeting with Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, who are closely involved with Habitat's mission of building houses for the poor throughout the world. "They seemed like very nice people," he said nonchalantly. Castro is an Indian nationalist, and although fluently bilingual, he insists on speaking to his fellow Indians in a pure form of Aguacateco, without Spanish adulteration.

In *The Revolt Against the Dead*, a brilliant study of Aguacatan based on fieldwork done in the early 1970s, Douglas Brintnall writes that it was an American Maryknoll priest with *indigenista* sympathies who got Indian education off the ground. Seeing that the municipal school was dominated by *ladinos*, this priest started a bilingual parish school for the Aguacatecos. Although it charges higher fees, it has been a huge success. Indeed, the standard is so much higher that some ambitious *ladinos* have enrolled their children in the parish school.

It was not inevitable that the Indians would respond to the new opportunities with such impressive energy. First they had

to escape from one of the paralyzing deformities of their own culture, notably the *cofradía*, a religious fraternity imported from Spain. Deformity is perhaps too harsh a word, for many historians would argue that this exotic institution kept Mayan traditions alive after the great wrecking attempt of the Spanish conquest. Certainly, the Indians transformed the *cofradía* into something uniquely Mayan, a sort of theocratic council of elders that ran village life. Although Catholic on the outside, it was strongly pre-Columbian on the inside.

The beauty of the *cofradía* was its leveling effect. A rich Indian would usually rise to a senior post in the hierarchy, and the higher he rose, the more he was expected to spend on lavish Christian religious festivals. A sort of wealth tax prevented the emergence of an hereditary Indian aristocracy. But it was an unproductive tax. Almost the entire savings of the *pueblo* were spent on ceremony, and much of it went to ritual drinking. There was no capital accumulation for investment, ensuring a primitive static economy. Moreover, the *cofradías* tended to be reactionary. In 1962 the elders of a neighboring community sent out a machete gang to destroy the new school. According to Ricardo Falla, a Jesuit priest working in the area, the *cofradía* said that the school only taught the children "to rob, become lazy, learn bad prayers and bad language, and to lose respect for their fathers and mothers."

The *ladinos* did not participate in the *cofradía*, but they have long understood how it kept the Indians down, and have often been the most vigilant guardians of Indian *costumbre* (custom). In Aguacatan, for instance, they even used their judicial power, illegally, to enforce obedience to the traditionalist hierarchy. By the 1950s, some

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Indians were waking up to the subtle oppression of the *cofradía*. In 1955 Dimitrio's uncle became the first Aguacateco from a respected family to abandon *costumbre* and convert to Catholicism (without considering himself any less Indian). He set off an avalanche. Over the next generation the flower of Aguacatec youth, those destined for leadership of the *cofradía*, rebelled against the religion of their fathers.

The *cofradía* has withered. At last, the Aguacatecos are investing in their future, saving money and educating their children. To what degree these changes have occurred in the rest of Guatemala is an open and highly debated question. The Marxist guerrilla uprising of the early 1980s has left a political mosaic in the Indian highlands. In some villages the Catholics, or catechists as they are called, became identified with the guerrillas. This identification tended to occur wherever radical priests and nuns had been active. (It is believed that three liberation theology priests joined the Guerrilla Army of the Poor.) Army repression

made Catholicism dangerous in these communities, allowing the *cofradía* to enjoy a small revival. Most of the refugees, however, sought safety in one of the Pentecostal churches that have sprung up all over Guatemala. These *evangélicos* have the same ethic of thrift and hard work as their fellow converts in the Catholic Church, and they seem to be transforming their villages in a similar way.

It is tempting to think that the Maya are at last emancipating themselves. They are such long-suffering people, so elegant, dignified, and loyal. Foreigners are forever romanticizing them, projecting their own ideologies onto the inscrutable Indian culture. The Left likes to imagine the Maya as proto-socialists, and the Right (I confess my bias), as budding entrepreneurs. On the whole they have both been disappointed. But the social revolution has run so deep over the last generation that I predict, with caution, that nothing can hold back the Maya any longer.

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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### LATIN AMERICA'S INDIAN QUESTION

Christopher Columbus's famous confusion led the European invaders of the Americas to refer to the inhabitants of the New World indiscriminately as Indians. Similar uncertainty has bedeviled all discussions of the Indians ever since. We can only guess how many Indians there were in the Americas when the Europeans arrived—between 35 and 40 million is one reasonable estimate. Nor can we establish how many Indians there are living in the Americas today. This is largely because of the centuries' old debate over how to define an Indian, and who does the defining.

In colonial times, relations with and policies concerning the Indians were important items on the agendas of the colonizing powers. In the 19th century, however, the Indians became either physically or socially marginal to the newly independent nations of the western hemisphere. Indians at the frontiers were considered savages to be exterminated or, at best, rounded up and confined in remote places, where they would not interfere with "progress." Meanwhile, in Central America and the Andean countries, where the new republics depended on a large Indian labor force, systematic attempts were made to compel the Indians to give up their identity and become assimilated into the national mainstream. At various times and places, the very category of "Indian" was formally abolished. Even in the absence of such formal prohibitions, the matter of who should be considered Indian remains undecided in many countries. Over the years, Indians have been defined, variously, as people of a certain racial stock, as people who can speak only an Indian language, as people who live in Indian communities, as people who maintain Indian customs in mixed communities, or as people who combine a number of these characteristics and sometimes others as well. Since the criteria are applied differently in different places and even differently by different people writing about the same place, both the definition and total numbers of "Indians" in the Americas today are uncertain.

One thing is clear: The European invasion of the Americas was a demographic disaster for

the Indians. They perished from warfare and harsh treatment but in much larger numbers from disease and famine. The biological, social, and cultural consequences of the European invasion are well described in Alfred Crosby's **The Columbian Exchange** (Greenwood Press, 1972). He points out that the conquest proved a shock to Indian society "... such as only H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* can suggest to us." Crosby, who teaches American studies at the University of Texas, documents the tremendous biological and demographic transformations that took place when the two worlds met; he tells how the diseases of the Old World cut a swathe through the populations of the New, causing the Indians to experience a "spectacular period of mortality."

Those that survived the ravages of disease, famine, warfare, and maltreatment found themselves in a different world, one organized to meet the demands of their European overlords. A whole array of institutions was introduced to enable the colonists and their sovereigns to control the human and natural resources of the Americas. These differed from one region to another, according to the traditions of the invading nations and the nature of the Indian societies they encountered. The latter varied from the large Aztec and Inca polities to unstratified societies that lived by hunting and gathering. Eric Wolf, professor of anthropology at Herbert Lehman College, presents a broad historical overview of the impact of colonialism on native peoples in **Europe and the People without History** (Univ. of Calif., 1982). His book gives an excellent account of the nature of pre-conquest societies in the Americas and of their transformation during colonial times.

Meanwhile, the encounter with the Indians forced Europeans to rethink their views of the world and its inhabitants. The famous debates between the Dominican Las Casas and 16th-century Spanish theologian Sepúlveda are carefully analyzed in historian Lewis Hanke's **Aristotle and the American Indians** (Ind. Univ., 1959). The rights of the Indians were at issue, and these depended partly on how Indians

were defined. Were they human? If so, what kind of humans were they? Were they savages, cannibals, heretics, or in other ways beyond the pale? If not, what were they, and how should they be treated?

Much has been written about the impact of the Indians on European thought. Anthony Pagden, an English scholar, treats the subject at length in **The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology** (Cambridge Univ., 1982). In **The Conquest of America:**

**The Question of the Other** (English trans., Harper & Row, 1984), Tzvetan Todorov, a French literary theorist, offers a strongly philosophical reading of the change in Europeans' views of themselves as a result of their encounter with the Indians. Todorov's discussion of both Indian and European attitudes contrasts dramatically with that of Eduardo Galeano, a Uruguayan writer who set out to retell the history of the New World since the conquest in his epic trilogy, **Memory of Fire**. In **Genesis** (1985), **Faces and Masks** (1987), and **Century of the Wind** (1988; all English trans., Pantheon), he constructs out of excerpts and vignettes a vivid collage that makes the reader feel the horror as well as the grandiose drama of the history of the Americas.

Horror is a recurrent theme in the Indians' view of the conquest, and it is eloquently recorded in the Mayan chronicles of **Chilam Balam**, written soon after the Spaniards had seized control of Mexico. Nathan Wachtel caught this sense of shock and horror in his pioneering book, **The Vision of the Vanquished** (English trans., Barnes & Noble, 1977). "The Indians," he wrote, "seem to have been struck numb, unable to make sense of events, as if their mental universe had been suddenly shattered." Wachtel does not stop there, however, but takes his story up to the present in order to show how the Indians, particularly those in the Andes, succeeded in defending and perpetuating their own values in the face of powerful and determined efforts to eradicate them.



This remarkable tenacity, after the initial shock and through the continuing horror, is the subject of other recent studies, including Nancy Farriss's **Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival** (Princeton Univ., 1984) and Karen Spalding's **Huaro-chiri: An Andean Society under Inca and Spanish Rule** (Stanford Univ., 1984). Nor was Indian resistance merely ideological. During the three centuries of colonial rule, periodic rebellions broke out, and in some parts of the Americas the Indians were never conquered. The rebellions often achieved temporary or local success, but precisely because they were local or at most regional affairs, they were always suppressed as soon as the power of the state could be concentrated and brought to bear against them. Two excellent studies of such rebellions, in the Andes and Central America, respectively, have recently appeared: **Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries**, edited by historian Steve Stern (Univ. of Wisc., 1987) and **Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico**, edited by historian Friedrich Katz (Princeton Univ., 1988). These volumes are unusual because they deal with the 19th and 20th centuries, and with the Indian-peasant continuum. They emphasize, as Stern puts it, that an "ethnic component is built into the oppressions, patterns of adaptation and resistance, sense of grievance, and aspirations that will loom large in the explanation and analysis of revolt."

There is a striking contrast between the

wealth of materials referring to Indians in colonial times and the dearth of similar treatments for the 19th century. As the newly independent countries of Latin America turned their attention to modernization and nation-building, they saw no place for Indians in either agenda. The Indian question thus came to be seen as an anachronism, and it was assumed that the Indians of the past would soon become the *campesinos* of the future.

In the 20th century, scholars tended to deal with national questions (which did not include the Indians) or to publish studies of Indian peoples or communities (in which the subjects were only tenuously related to national affairs). The most important exceptions came from Peru and Mexico, where traditions of *indigenismo*, or concern for the nations' Indian heritage, became part of the national discourse. Peruvian writers such as José Carlos Mariategui, Haya de la Torre, and Hildebrando Castro Pozo incorporated a somewhat romantic view of the Indian into their political analyses, while in Mexico Manuel Gamio, Moises Saenz, and others dealt with the Indian question from a Mexican perspective. It was in Mexico, after the revolution of 1910–20, that the most serious attempt was made to put *indigenismo* into practice. But the traditional theses of Mexican *indigenismo*, namely that anthropology in the service of the revolutionary state should assist Indians to blend into the national melting pot, are now much criticized.

As the 20th century draws to a close, first-rate books dealing with the Indians' place in their own countries are relatively rare. Even the problems of Peru, rent as it is with violent conflicts, are regularly written with only passing mention of the peculiar circumstances of its large Indian population. The same could be said of most of the countries of the Americas, with the exception of Guatemala and Brazil.

The slaughter of Indians by the Guatemalan authorities in recent years has been described

and analyzed in **Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis**, edited by Robert Carmack (Univ. of Okla., 1988). The contributors to this volume show that the problems of Guatemala, often represented to North Americans as resulting from the conflict between communism and capitalism, are in fact rooted in the relations between Indians and the non-Indian elites.

Meanwhile the mistreatment of Indians in the Amazonian regions of Brazil, carried out in the name of development, is getting some attention in the world press. Yet international concern seems to focus more on the destruction of the rain forest than on the rights of the Indians, and there is no good general study showing why the Indian question has become such a sensitive political issue.

Until recently the Indians of Central and South America were treated as if they were invisible, except by specialists whose works were regarded as having little national significance. That is changing now that the Indians themselves are asserting their right to maintain their own cultures. However, the Indian demand for cultural pluralism is rarely taken seriously. Throughout the Americas, indigenous peoples continue to be caught in the crossfires of national politics. This has led to a growing realization among scholars that the situation of the Indians cannot be studied except in relation to each nation's larger political agenda. At the same time, it is also becoming clear that the nations of the Americas cannot be fully understood without taking their treatment of the Indians into account. Fresh studies informed by these ideas are now in progress. They give us hope that the quincentennial of Columbus's first landfall in the New World may be celebrated by the emergence of a more balanced vision of the shaping of the Americas.

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## THINKING BEYOND RACE

There is no question that blacks have had a harder struggle than most other groups in America. But is race still the greatest obstacle to their progress? The question itself is a sensitive one. Ten years ago, sociologist William Julius Wilson created a furor when he claimed that economics was a greater problem for blacks than race. Received wisdom dies hard. Shelby Steele here argues that the reluctance to think beyond accepted formulas is not only lazy thinking; it is a formidable obstacle to black advancement.

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*by Shelby Steele*

I am a fortyish, middle-class, black American male, with a teaching position at a large state university in California. I have owned my own home for more than ten years, as well as the two cars that are the minimal requirement for life in California. And I will confess to a moderate strain of yuppie hedonism. Year after year my two children are the sole representatives of their race in their classrooms, a fact they sometimes have difficulty remembering. We are the only black family in our suburban neighborhood, and even this claim to specialness is diminished by the fact that my wife is white. I think we are called an "integrated" family, though no one has ever used the term with me. For me to be among large numbers of blacks requires conscientiousness and a long car ride, and, in truth, I have not been very conscientious lately. Though I was raised in an all-black community just south of Chicago, I only occasionally feel nostalgia for such places. Trips to the barbershop now and then usu-

ally satisfy this need, though recently, in the interest of convenience, I've taken to letting my wife cut my hair.

I see in people's eyes from time to time, and hear often in the media, what amounts to a judgment of people like me: You have moved into the great amorphous middle class and lost your connection to your people and your cultural roots. You have become a genuine invisible man. This is a judgment with many obvious dimensions, many arrows of guilt. But, in essence, it charges me with selfishness and inauthenticity.

At one point in my life I romanticized my situation, thought of myself as a marginal man. The seductive imagery of alienation supported me in this. But in America today, racial marginality is hard to sell as the stuff of tragedy. The position brings with it an ugly note of self-insistence that annoys people in a society that is, at least officially, desegregated.

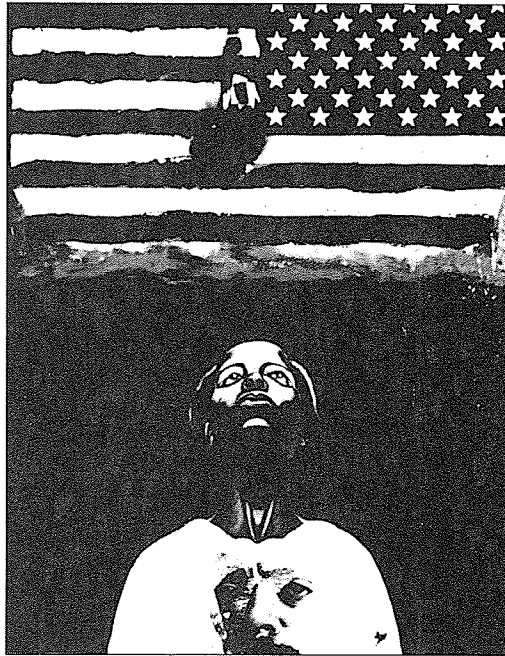
For better or worse, I'm not very marginal. In my middle-American world I see



people like myself everywhere. We nod coolly at each other when we're stopped at traffic lights, our eyes connect for an awkward instant in shopping malls, we hear about one another from our white friends. "Have you met the new doctor at the hospital... the engineer at IBM... the new professor in history?" The black middle class is growing in size. We are often said to be sneaking or slipping or creeping unnoticed into the middle class, as though images of stealth best characterized our movement. I picture a kind of underground railroad, delivering us in the dead of night from the inner city to the suburbs.

But even if we aren't very marginal, we are very shy with one another, at least until we've had a chance to meet privately and take our readings. When we first meet one another, we experience a trapped feeling; it is as though we had been confronted by a set of expectations that could rob us of our individuality by reducing us to an exclusively racial dimension. We are a threat, at first, to one another's uniqueness. I have seen the same well-dressed black woman in the supermarket for more than a year now. We do not speak, and we usually pretend not to see each other. But when we turn a corner suddenly and find ourselves staring squarely into each other's eyes, her face freezes and she moves on. I believe she is insisting that both of us be more than black—that we interact only when we have a reason other than the mere fact of our race. Her chilliness enforces a priority that I agree with—individuality over group identity.

But I believe I see something else in this woman, which I also see in myself and in many other middle-class blacks. It is a kind of race fatigue, a deep weariness with things racial, resulting from the fact that our lives are more integrated than they have ever been before. Race does not determine our fates as powerfully as it once did, which means it is not the vital personal concern it once was. Before the sixties, race set the boundaries of black life. Now, especially for middle-class blacks, it is far less a factor, even though we don't always like to admit it. Because blacks still suffer from racism, we must be alert to the problem, but the imperative to be concerned with what is not personally urgent ultimately



Yes, Leroi, by David P. Bradford (1968).

mately makes for race fatigue.

I have a friend who did poorly in the insurance business for years. "People won't buy insurance from a black man," he always said. Two years ago another black man and a black woman joined his office. Almost immediately both did twice the business my friend was doing, with the same largely white clientele.

Integration shock is essentially the shock of being suddenly accountable on strictly personal terms. It occurs in situations that disallow race as an excuse for personal shortcomings, and it therefore exposes vulnerabilities that previously were hidden. One response to such shock is to face up to the self-doubts that it occasions and then to act on the basis of what we learn about ourselves. After some struggle, my friend was able to do this. He completely revised his sales technique, asked himself some hard questions about his motivation, and resolved to work more diligently.

But when one lacks the courage to face oneself fully, a fear of hidden vulnerabilities triggers a fright-flight response to integration shock. Instead of admitting that racism

has declined, we argue all the harder that it is still alive and more insidious than ever. We hold race up to shield us from what we do not want to see in ourselves. My friend did this at first, saying that the two blacks in his office were doing better than he was because they knew how to "kiss white ass." Here he was race-holding, using race to keep from looking at himself.

Recently I read an article in the local paper that explored the question of whether blacks could feel comfortable living in the largely white Silicon Valley. The article focused on a black family that had been living for more than a decade in Saratoga, a very well-to-do white community. The neighborhood, the children's schools, the parents' places of employment, the shopping areas and parks—the entire physical environment—were populated by affluent whites. Yet during the interview, the wife said they had made two firm rules for their children: that they go to all-black colleges back East and that they do "no dating outside the race, period."

I have pushed enough black history and culture on my own children to be able to identify with the impulse behind the first of these rules. Black children in largely white situations must understand and appreciate their cultural background. But the rigidity of these rules, not to mention the rules themselves, points to more than a concern with transmitting heritage or gaining experience with other blacks. Rigidity arises from fear and self-doubt. These people, I believed, were afraid of something.

What was striking to me about their rules, especially the one prohibiting interracial dating, was their tone of rejection. The black parents seemed as determined to reject the white world as to embrace the black one. Why? I would say because of integration shock. Their integrated lives have opened up vulnerabilities that they do not wish to face. But what vulnerabilities? In this case I think a particularly embarrassing one. On some level, I suspect, they doubt whether they are as good as the

white people who live around them. You cannot be raised in a culture that was for centuries committed to the notion of your inferiority and not have some doubt in this regard—doubt that is likely to be aggravated most in integrated situations. So the rejecting tone of their rules is self-protective. "I will reject you before you have a chance to reject me." But all of this is covered over by race. The Saratoga family invokes racial pride to shield themselves from a doubt they are afraid to acknowledge. Unacknowledged, this doubt gains a negative power inside the personality that expresses itself in the rigidity and absolutism of their rules. Repressed fears tend always to escalate their campaign for our attention by pushing us further and further into irrationality and rigidity.

The refusal to see something unflattering in ourselves always triggers the snap from race fatigue to race-holding. And once that happens, we are caught, like this family, in a jumble of racial ironies. The parents in Saratoga, who have chosen to live integrated lives, impose a kind of segregation on their children. Rules that would be racist in the mouth of any white person are created and enforced with pride. Their unexamined self-doubt also leaves them unable to exploit the freedom they and their ancestors worked hard to attain. Race fatigue makes them run to a place like Saratoga, but integration shock makes them hold race protectively. They end up clinging to what they've sought to escape.

Once race-holding is triggered by fear, it ensnares us in a web of self-defeating attitudes that prevents us from taking advantage of the new freedoms we've won over the past several decades. I have seen its corrosive effects in my own life and in the lives of virtually every black person I've known. Some are only mildly touched by it, while others seem incapacitated by it. But race-holding is as unavoidable as defensiveness itself, and I am convinced that it is one of the most debilitating, yet unrecognized, forces in black life today.

I define a holding as any self-description

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*Shelby Steele is professor of English at San Jose State University. Born in Chicago, Illinois, he received a B.A. (1968) from Coe College, an M.A. (1971) from Southern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. (1974) from the University of Utah. This essay will appear in his forthcoming book, The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America. Copyright © 1990 by Shelby Steele.*

that serves to justify or camouflage a person's fears, weaknesses, and inadequacies. Holdings are the little and big exaggerations, distortions, and lies about ourselves that prop us up and let us move along the compromised paths we follow. We develop them to defend ourselves against threats to our self-esteem, threats that make us feel vulnerable and that plant a seed of fear. This fear can work like wind on a brush fire, spreading self-doubt far beyond what the initial threat would warrant. As a result, we become even weaker and thus more needy of holdings. Since holdings justify our reticence and cowardice, they are usually expressed in the form of high belief or earthy wisdom. A man whose business fails from his own indifference holds an image of himself as a man too honest to be a good businessman—a self-description that draws a veil over his weakness.

For some years I have noticed that I can walk into any of my classes on the first day of the semester, identify the black students, and be sadly confident that on the last day of the semester a disproportionate number of them will be at the bottom of the class, far behind any number of white students of equal or even lesser native ability. More to the point, they will have performed far beneath their own native ability. Self-fulfilling-prophecy theory says that their schools have always expected them to do poorly, and that they have simply internalized this message. But this deterministic theory sees blacks only as victims, without any margin of choice. It cannot fully explain the poor performances of these black students, because it identifies only the forces that pressure them to do poorly. By overlooking the margin of choice open to them, this theory fails to recognize the degree to which they are responsible for their own poor showing. (The irony of this oversight is that it takes the power for positive change away from the students and puts it in the hands of the very institutions that failed them in the first place.)

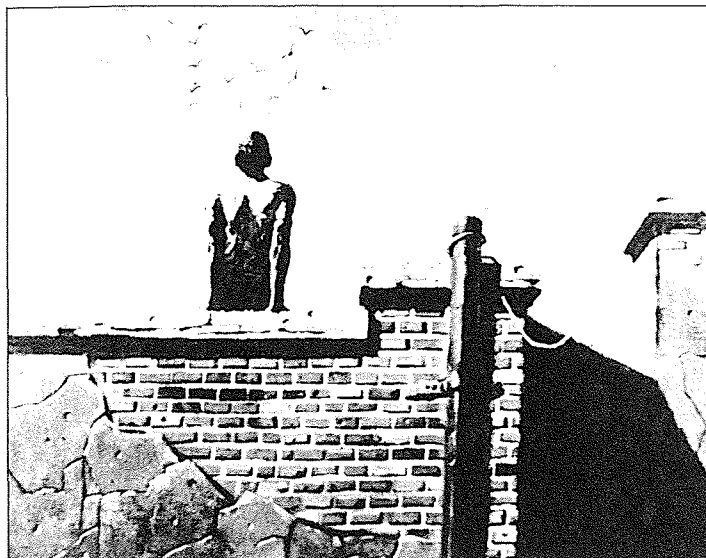
The theory of race-holding is based on the assumption that a margin of choice is always open to blacks (even to slaves, who had some choice). And it tries to make clear the mechanisms by which we relinquish that choice in the name of race. With the decline in racism, the margin of black

choice has greatly expanded, which is probably why race-holding is so much more visible today than ever before. But anything that prevents us from exploiting our new freedom to the fullest is now as serious a barrier to us as racism once was.

Self-fulfilling-prophecy theory is no doubt correct that black students, like the ones I regularly see in my classes, internalize a message of inferiority that they receive from school and the larger society around them. But the relevant question in the 1990s is why they choose to internalize this view of themselves. Why do they voluntarily perceive themselves as inferior? We can talk about the weakened black family and countless other scars of oppression and poverty. And certainly these things have much to do with the image these students have of themselves. But they do not fully explain this self-image, because none of them entirely eliminates the margin of choice that remains open. Choice lives in the most blighted circumstances, and it certainly lives in the lives of these black college students.

I think they choose to believe in their inferiority not to fulfill society's prophesy about them but to evade individual responsibility. Their margin of choice scares them, as it does all people. They are naturally intimidated by that eternal tussle between the freedom to act and the responsibility we must take for our actions. To some extent, all of us balk in the face of this. The difference is that these students use their race to conceal the fact that they are balking. Their "inferiority" shields them from having to see that they are afraid of all-out competition with white students. And it isn't even an honest inferiority. I don't think they really believe it. It is a false inferiority, chosen over an honest and productive confrontation with their real fears—a strategy that allows them to stay comfortably on the sidelines in a university environment that all but showers them with opportunity.

"I'm doing okay for a black student," a student once told me. "I'm doing well considering where I came from," I have told myself on many occasions. Race allows us both to hide from the real question, which is, "Am I doing what I can, considering my



Boy on Roof, by Hughie Lee-Smith (1967).

talents and energies?"

I see all of this as pretty much a subconscious process, fear working on a subterranean level to let us reduce our margin of choice in the name of race. Consciously, we tell ourselves that we are only identifying with our race, but fear bloats our racial identity to an unnatural size and then uses it as cover for its subversive work. The more severe the integration shock, the more cover is needed.

Doesn't race enhance individuality? I think it does, but only when individuality is nurtured and developed apart from race. The race-holder, inside the bubble of his separate self, feels inadequate or insecure; so he seeks reassurance through race. When, instead, a sense of self arises from individual achievement and self-realization, when self-esteem is established apart from race, then racial identity can only enhance, because it is no longer needed for any other purpose.

The word individualism began to connote selfishness and even betrayal to many blacks during the 1960s. Individualism was seen as a threat to the solidarity that blacks needed during those years of confrontation. Despite the decline in racism, these connotations have lingered. Race-holding keeps them alive, because they serve the race-holder's need to exaggerate the impor-

tance of race as well as to justify a fear of individual responsibility. Race-holding makes fluid the boundary between race and self, group and individual identity, allowing race to swing over at a moment's notice and fill in where fears leave a vacuum.

This is a worse problem than it at first seems, because the individual is the seat of all energy, creativity, motivation, and power. We are most strongly motivated when we want something for ourselves. When our personal wants are best achieved through group action, as in the civil-rights movement, we lend our energy to the group, and it be-

comes as strong as the sum of our energies. When the need for group action recedes, more energy is available to us as individuals. But race-holding intercedes here by affixing the race-holder too tightly to this racial identity and causing him to see the locus of power in race rather than in himself. In this way race-holding corrupts the greatest source of power and strength available to blacks—the energy latent in our personal desires.

One of my favorite passages in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* is his description of the problem of blacks as

not actually one of creating the uncreated conscience of [our] race, but of creating the *uncreated features of [our] face*. Our task is that of making ourselves individuals. . . . We create the race by creating ourselves and then to our great astonishment we will have created something far more important: We will have created a culture.

These lines hold up well close to 40 years after they were written. They seem to suggest a kind of Adam Smith vision of culture: When the individual makes himself, he makes culture. An "invisible hand" uses individual effort to define and broaden culture. In the 1990s we blacks are more than ever in a position in which our common

good will best be served by the determined pursuit of our most personal aspirations.

I think the key to this pursuit, and the answer to race-holding generally, is personal responsibility, a source of great power that race-holding does its best to conceal.

Some years ago I made a mistake at a neighbor's cocktail party that taught me something about personal responsibility. I went to the party for the thinnest of reasons, mere politeness, though the afternoon was hot and I was already in a peevish mood. The event would have been problematic even if I weren't the only black at the party. But I was, and on this afternoon I chose to make note of the fact, though it was hardly a new experience for me. As I strolled around the sun-baked patio, avoiding people more than engaging them, I held this fact more and more tightly until I came to believe it had a profound meaning I needed to understand. After a while I decided that others needed to understand it too.

During the 1960s, blacks and white liberals often engaged in something that might be called the harangue-flagellation ritual. Blacks felt anger, white liberals felt guilt, and when they came together, blacks would vent their anger by haranguing the whites, who often allowed themselves to be scourged as a kind of penance. The "official" black purpose of this rite was to "educate" whites on the issue of race, and during the '60s this purpose may sometimes have been served. But by the 1980s, after a marked decline in racism and two decades of consciousness-raising, the rite had become both anachronistic and, I think, irresponsible. Nevertheless, it suited my mood on this hot afternoon; so I retrieved it from its dusty bin and tried to make it fashionable again.

A woman at the party said how much she liked Jesse Jackson's rhetorical style. Was "style" the only thing she liked? I asked, with an edge to my voice. The woman gave me a curious and exasperated look, but I pushed on anyway. Soon I was lecturing the six or seven people around me: I told them that racism had been driven underground in the 1960s and '70s, where more insidious strategies for foiling

the possibilities of black people had evolved. I pointed to the black unemployment rate, the continued segregation of many schools, housing discrimination, and many other problems. Soon I saw that the old harangue-flagellation ritual was firmly back in place. I was shaming these people, and they nodded at what I said in a way that gratified me.

But at home that night I felt a stinging shame, and even weeks later the thought of that afternoon made me cringe. Eventually I saw why. For one thing, I was trading on my race with those people, using the very thing I claimed to be so concerned with to buy my way out of certain anxieties. Like the Saratoga family, I was race-holding in response to the integration shock I felt in this integrated situation. I had begun to feel vulnerable, and I hit those people with race before they could hit me with it. My vulnerabilities, of course, were essentially the same as the Saratoga family's. On some level I doubted myself in relation to these whites, and my insecurities drove me into an offense that was really a defense. The shame I began to feel, though I could not identify it at the time, was essentially the shame of cowardice. I felt as though I'd run away from something and used race to cover my tracks.

This shame had another dimension that was even more humiliating than the cowardice I had felt. On that patio I was complaining to white people, beseeching them to see how badly blacks were still treated, and I was gratified to see their heads nod as though they understood. My voice contained no audible whine, but at least some of what I said amounted to a whine. And this is what put the sting in my shame. Cowardice was a common enough fault, but whining was quite another thing.

The race-holder whines or complains indiscriminately not because he seeks redress but because he seeks the status of victim, a status that excuses him from what he fears. A victim is not responsible for his condition, and by claiming a victim's status the race-holder gives up the sense of personal responsibility he needs to better his condition. His unseen purpose is to hide rather than fight; so the anger and, more important, the energy that real racism breeds in him are squandered in self-serv-

ing complaint. The price he pays for the false comfort of his victim's status is a kind of impotence.

The difference between the race-holder who merely complains and the honest protester is that the latter keeps the responsibility for his condition in his own hands. The honest protester may be victimized, but he is not solely a victim. He thinks of himself as fully human and asks only that the rules of the game be made fair. Fairness, rather than entitlement, is his goal. By limiting his demands to fairness, he retains his personal responsibility and the power that grows out of it. But he also understands that he must keep this responsibility, whether or not society is fair. His purpose is to realize himself, to live the fullest possible life, and he is responsible for this, like all men, regardless of how society treats him.

Personal responsibility is the brick and mortar of power. The responsible person knows that the quality of his life is something that he will have to make inside the limits of his fate. Some of these limits he can push back, some he cannot, but in any case the quality of his life will pretty much reflect the quality of his efforts. When this link between well-being and action is truly accepted, the result is power. With this understanding and the knowledge that he is responsible, a person can see his margin of choice. He can choose and act, choose and act again, without illusion. He can create himself and make himself felt in the world. Such a person has power.

I was neither responsible nor powerful when I stood on my neighbor's patio complaining about racism to people who had only the most removed interest in my racial well-being. In effect I was asking them to

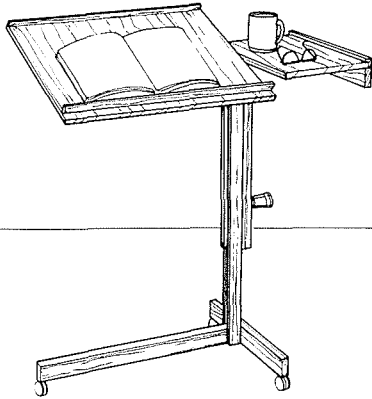
be responsible for something that only I and other blacks can be responsible for. Of course, whites must be fair. But they cannot be fully responsible for the well-being of blacks; they cannot actualize our lives. If I had said this to the people at the party, they might have gone away with a clearer sense of their own responsibilities. But I never considered doing so. The real goal of my complaining was to disguise a fear that I didn't want to acknowledge.

The barriers to black progress in America today are clearly as much psychological as they are social or economic. We have suffered as much as any group in human history, and if this suffering has ennobled us, it has also wounded us and pushed us into defensive strategies that are often self-defeating. But we haven't fully admitted this to ourselves. The psychological realm is murky, frightening, and just plain embarrassing. And a risk is involved in exploring it: the risk of discovering the ways in which we contribute to, if not create, the reality in which we live. Denial, avoidance, and repression intervene to save us from this risk. But, of course, they only energize what is repressed with more and more negative power, so that we are victimized as much by our own buried fears as by racism.

In the deepest sense, the long struggle of blacks in America has always been a struggle to retrieve our full humanity. But now the reactive stance we have adopted to defend ourselves against oppression binds us to the same racial views that oppressed us in the first place. Snakelike, our defense has turned on us. I think it is now the last barrier to the kind of self-possession that will give us our full humanity, and we must overcome it ourselves.

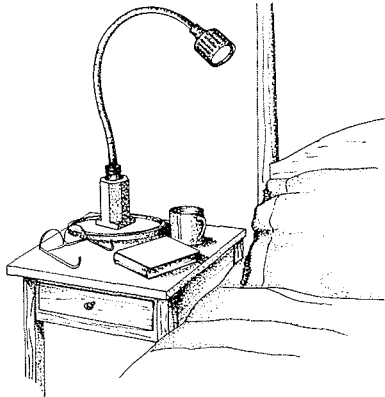
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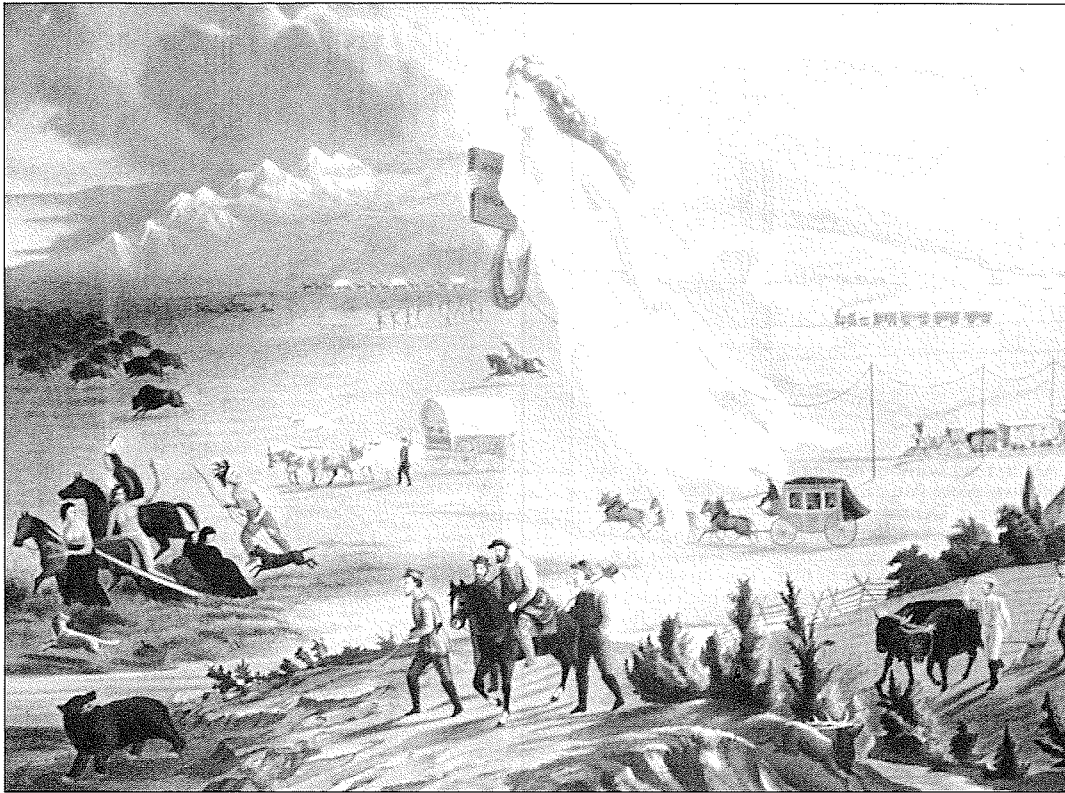
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The Wild West looms nowhere nearly so large in the American imagination today as it did only a generation ago. Children whose parents were reared on Bat Masterson during the 1950s now dream of Masters of the Universe. On those rare occasions when Hollywood still deigns to put on spurs and six-shooters, it is more likely to deliver comic send-ups like *Blazing Saddles* and *Silverado* than heroic sagas like *High Noon* and *The Magnificent Seven*. The western myth was popularized by moviemakers, novelists, and painters. But one reason Americans were prepared to believe that the frontier determined the national character was that an eminent turn-of-the-century historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, told them so. Since the 1950s, however, Turner's successors have been hard at work rewriting the history of the West, reversing, or at least strongly qualifying, his judgement. Hollywood is only beginning to catch up. As Brian Dippie shows in this exploration of the new western history, scholars now consider the myths—of independence, of rugged individualism, even of frontier violence—so cold in their graves that the study of myth-making itself has become a major preoccupation.



# THE WINNING OF THE WEST RECONSIDERED

by Brian W. Dippie

**W**e are now within easy striking distance of 100 years since Frederick Jackson Turner, following the lead of the Superintendent of the Census, proclaimed the end of the frontier and, with it, "the closing of a great historic moment": "The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life."

Then, in 1890, it was all over.

Turner, a young historian at the University of Wisconsin, delivered his paper on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" at the 1893 meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago. The setting gave point to his observations. Chicago was then playing host to a gargantuan fair, the World's Columbian Exposition, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the New World. The session at which Turner spoke met on the Exposition grounds, where buildings coated in plaster of Paris formed a White City, symbolizing civilization's dominion over what not long before had been a wilderness on the shore of Lake Michigan. Chi-

cago's magical growth was, in microcosm, the story of America. Four centuries after Columbus's landfall, a century since white settlers began occupying the interior of the continent, there was no frontier left, no vast reserve of "free land" to the west.

Turner's timing was acute, the psychological moment perfect to find symbolic meaning in recent events. The rise of the Ghost Dance movement, with its vision of a rejuvenated Indian America, the arrest and killing of Sioux leader Sitting Bull on December 15, 1890, the culminating tragedy at Wounded Knee two weeks later—all attested that the "winning of the West" was no longer a process but a *fait accompli*. Indian wars, a fact of American life since the first English colony was planted at Jamestown, were finished. There was no longer an Indian domain to contest; it had disappeared, along with the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian democracy resting on an abundance of cheap land.

Whatever else farmer discontent represented in the 1890s, it manifested an awareness of the new urban-industrial order. America's 20th-century future was reaffirmed in Chicago the year after the Exposition, when labor unrest erupted into violence and troops that had served on distant frontiers "taming" Indians were shipped in to tame Chicago's unemployed instead.

When Turner read his paper, then, portents were everywhere. Near the Exposition grounds, Buffalo Bill's Wild West show was

offering the public its immensely popular version of the frontier experience. Sitting Bull's horse and the cabin from which the chief was led to his death were both on display. Frederic Remington, the artist most responsible for the public's perceptions of life in the West, was on hand to tour the Exposition's midway and to take in Buffalo Bill's show; a year later he was back in Chicago to cheer George Armstrong Custer's old unit, the "gallant Seventh," against, as he put it, "the malodorous crowd of anarchistic foreign trash."

It did not take a prophet to discern a pattern in all this, but Turner reached beyond the obvious. Frontiering, he argued, was not merely a colorful phase of American history. It had actually shaped the American character. On the frontier, environment prevailed over inherited culture. The frontier promoted individualism, self-reliance, practicality, optimism, and a democratic spirit that rejected hereditary constraints. In Turner's reading of U.S. history, the significance of the frontier was simply enormous. To understand American history, one had to understand western history. Whatever distinguished Americans as a people, Turner believed, could be attributed to the cumulative experience of westering: "What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that, and more, the ever retreating frontier has been to the United States."

Turner's audience in Chicago received these ideas with polite indifference. In time, however, the frontier thesis gained influential adherents. For almost half a cen-

tury, it served as the master explanation of American development. Problems of fact and interpretation were acknowledged. But Turner's essay offered a coherent, self-flattering vision of the American past, and it seemed prophetic in anticipating American involvement abroad. It would be "rash," Turner wrote, to "assert that the expansive character of American life has now entirely ceased. . . . [T]he American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise." Cuba and the Philippines soon proved him right. Like any good historical explanation, the frontier thesis seemed to account for past *and* future. Finally, its sweeping imagery and elegiac tone nicely matched the nostalgic mood, which, during the 20th century, would make the mythic Wild West a global phenomenon.

The inadequacy of the frontier thesis did not become plain until the 1940s, after the complex industrial civilization it sought to explain had suffered through the Great Depression and risen to become a world power. But if American history was only temporarily under Turner's shadow, western history has never quite emerged.

**B**egin with the basics: time and place. Turner's West was a fluid concept, an advancing frontier line and a retreating area of free land. If one instead defined the West as a geographical entity—that old standby "the trans-Mississippi West," for example—then over half of western American history proper has transpired since Turner's 1890 cutoff date. What the Louisiana Purchase inaugurated in 1803 is an ongoing story of growth and change. The boundaries of this geographic West are

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*Frederic Remington, one of the creators of the frontier myth, painted The Fall of the Cowboy (above) in 1895 as a lament for a way of life that seemed to be vanishing as cattle ranchers enclosed the open range with barbed wire. It was not only the cowboy's supposed freedom that Remington and others admired; it was his status as a kind of Anglo-Saxon ideal at a time when "foreign swarms" were taking over the eastern cities. Nearly a century later, in the San Jose Mercury-News (April 15, 1990), reporter Michael Zielenziger added a new twist to the cowboy's saga:*

Wyoming, the Cowboy State, is facing a shortage of cowboys.

One would not think so. On every state license plate, cowboys ride broncos. The university football team is the Cowboys. Likenesses of cowboys gallop through restaurants and saunter across billboards throughout this large, lonesome state.

But to ranch owners like Georgie LeBarr, those symbols represent the romance of the Old West, not the reality of the new. Truth is, no one wants the job these days.

"Nobody wants to work that hard," said LeBarr, who grew up on a ranch and never intends to leave her rolling spread.

As a result, LeBarr is among the first U.S. ranchers to legally import Mexican cowboys to work on her 400,000-acre ranch properties straddling two states. She can do that because the federal government has for the first time certified that no qualified American citizens are interested in the work.

"Nobody wants to be a cowboy," said Oralia Mercado, executive director of the Mountain Plains Agricultural Service, which helps ranchers like LeBarr find suitable workers. "It's hard work, it's dirty work, it's round-the-clock work. It's not something a U.S. worker wants to do."

This month, for the first time, Mercado's organization imported Mexican *vaqueros*, or cowboys, to work with cattle on the open range of Wyoming and the Dakotas. It is a formal acknowledgment that efforts to hire qualified cow hands have met with failure.

It is also a reminder to the families still working the range in this sparsely populated state that their traditional, even romantic, way of life is quickly disappearing.

"We advertised in the newspapers and on radio, but we got zero results," Mercado said, displaying a classified ad that appeared in a Denver newspaper. "I can't see that there's anyone in the U.S. that wants this job. The status of being a cowboy just doesn't exist anymore."

usually set at the 49th parallel to the north, the Mexican border to the south, the Mississippi to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west, though historians have found each of these too arbitrary. Some see these boundaries as too inclusive to be meaningful, others as too restrictive. Historians of the fur trade might want to embrace all of North America, historians of the borderlands all of Mexico, students of outlawry the Old Southwest, and students of the Indian wars the Old Northwest.

Then there is the matter of time. Turner's frontier West ended with the 19th century. To effect a revolution in western history one need simply move forward into the 20th. Immediately, most of the familiar signposts are missing: fur trade and exploration, Indian wars and Manifest Destiny (overland migration, war with Mexico, Mormonism, the slavery expansion controversy), gold rushes and railroad building, vigilantism and six-gun violence, trail drives and the open-range cattle industry, the farmers' frontier and the Populist revolt. Beyond 1900, a different West emerges, a hard-scrabble land rich in scenery and resources, perhaps, but thinly populated for the most part, chronically short of capital and reliant on government aid (such as cheap water and access to federal lands), a cultural backwater whose primary appeal nationally is as the setting for a romantic historical myth. Writing in a bitter-sweet key about the creation of these myths in *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America* (1986), historian Robert G. Athearn began by recalling his own boyhood sojourn at his grandfather's Montana ranch: "To me, the wilderness just couldn't hold a candle to indoor plumbing. Of course, I was just a kid, an unformed man whose regard for the freedom of the untouched country was yet nascent. I had not yet developed a sense of romance or the appreciation of idealized landscapes. I

never before had felt suppressed or imprisoned. Not until I was locked into the Missouri River breaks and banished from the world, so to speak."

A romantic myth that is untrue for the present is probably untrue for the past as well. By redefining western history's subject-matter, a 20th-century perspective encourages a reassessment of the 19th century. That process began in 1955, when Earl Pomeroy of the University of Oregon published a breakthrough essay, "Toward a Reorientation of Western History: Continuity and Environment."<sup>\*</sup> Not only did it pull together many scholars' dissatisfactions with the frontier thesis; it offered a persuasive alternative.

The crux of Pomeroy's revision was in the word "continuity." "America was Europe's 'West' before it was America," a pair of literary critics once observed. Frontiering was a global phenomenon, as old as the idea of the West, which was freighted with significance even for the ancient Greeks. More than a direction or a place, the West was a cultural ideal signifying quest and the prospect of fulfillment in some elusive Elysium. To the west, then, myths ran their course, and America was simply a new stage for an old dream.

Charging the Turnerians with a "radical environmental bias," Pomeroy argued that inherited culture had strongly persisted in the West. Indeed, cultural continuity, imitation in everything from state constitutions to architectural styles, a deep conservatism only intensified by the process of moving away from established centers, and a constant search for respectability and acceptance—these, not individualism, inventiveness, and an untrammelled democratic spirit, were the real characteristics of the West. "Conservatism, inheritance, and con-

<sup>\*</sup>Pomeroy's essay appeared in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (March 1955).

tinuity bulked at least as large in the history of the West as radicalism and environment," Pomeroy wrote. "The westerner has been fundamentally [an] imitator rather than [an] innovator . . . He was often the most ardent of conformists."

For the popular image of the West as pathbreaker for the nation, Pomeroy substituted the West as a kind of colonial dependency, an area dominated by eastern values, eastern capital, eastern technology, eastern politics. To understand American development, one need no longer look west; but to understand western development, one *had* to look east. That was the essence of Earl Pomeroy's reorientation.

To historians born during the 20th century, Pomeroy's version of the western past seems much nearer the mark than Turner's. Moreover, Pomeroy reinvigorated western history by suggesting subjects outside the frontier thesis that merited investigation—frontier justice, constitution-making, and politics and parties. His call was answered, most notably, by Yale's Howard Lamar, who sought to rectify the historical neglect of the later territorial period with *Dakota Territory, 1861–1889* (1956) and *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History* (1966). In the latter, Lamar showed that the various cultures imported into the Southwest remained remarkably impervious to what Turner had regarded as the homogenizing influence of the frontier environment. "Throughout the territorial period New Mexico remained stubbornly and overwhelmingly Spanish-American in culture, tradition-directed in habits, and Roman Catholic in religion.

Indeed, Anglo-American citizens remained the minority ethnic group in New Mexico until 1928. Colorado, on the other hand, was essentially an American frontier mining society, which retained close business and social connections with the American East. The settlers of Utah, though partly native American in origin, felt so persecuted because of their firm belief in the Mormon religion—and the accompanying doctrine of polygamous marriage—that they deliberately developed their own unique social and political systems . . . The diverse pioneer settlers of Arizona Territory, hailing from Mexican Sonora, the Confederate South, the American Northeast, and Mormon Utah, formed a conglomerate American frontier society not quite like any of the other three."

Another staple of revisionist western history is economic studies emphasizing the West's dependence on eastern investment capital. In his 1955 essay, Pomeroy wrote that the economic history even of "the pre-agricultural frontiers" would come to rest "on the cold facts of invest-



*One would not know it from watching John Wayne movies, but after the Civil War up to 25 percent of all cowhands were black. Here, black cowboys gather at a fair in Bonham, Texas, in 1910.*

## SHOWDOWN IN DODGE CITY

*Was it really a wild, wild West before settlers tamed the frontier? More like a mild, mild West, concluded historian Robert Dykstra. The Cattle Towns (1968), his relentlessly factual study of Dodge City and four other fabled Kansas towns during the supposedly wild years between 1870 and 1885, suggests that neither outlaws nor lawmen spent much on ammunition.*

Many legendary desperadoes and gunfighters sojourned in the cattle towns at one time or another, but few participated in slayings. Among those with clean records were such famed killers as Clay Allison, Doc Holliday, and Ben Thompson. The teen-aged gunman John Wesley Hardin was responsible for only one verifiable cattle-town homicide, apparently having fired through the wall of his hotel room one drunken night to silence a man snoring too loudly in the adjoining cubicle. Nor did famous gunfighters serving as officers add much to the fatality statistics. As city marshal of Abilene in 1871, his only term as a cattle-town lawman, the formidable Wild Bill Hickok killed just two men—one, a “special” policeman, by mistake. Wyatt Earp, who served as an officer (but never actually as marshal) at both Wichita and Dodge City, may have mortally wounded one law violator, though he shared credit with another policeman for this single cattle-town homicide. The now equally renowned lawman William B. (“Bat”) Masterson, at least according to contemporary sources, killed no one in or around Dodge, where he lived for several years.

With these celebrated personalities contributing far less than their supposed share, it is hardly surprising that the overall homicide statistics are not particularly high . . . .

The number of homicides never topped five in any one cattle-season year between 1870 and 1885, and reached this figure only at Ellsworth in 1873 and at Dodge City five years later. In both instances, homicides may have been said to have manifested “wave” dimensions, and were in fact thus considered by local residents. In at least six years no fatalities occurred at all . . . . The zeros recorded for two busy [cattle trade] years at Dodge City seem particularly meaningful. The average number of homicides per cattle-town trading season amounted to only 1.5 per year.

In the case of at least six of these killings—or well over 10 percent—it is hard to identify any connection whatever with the existence of the cattle trade. Besides a Wichita insurance murder, and the murder of an Abilene tailor and the lynching of *his* murderer, already noted, these included the shootings of a Wichita hotel keeper resisting arrest on a federal warrant, that of one Wichita Negro by another, and that of a Caldwell housewife by her drunken husband.

The majority of those involved in homicides, however, were indeed law officers, cowboys and drovers, or gamblers—the last a somewhat elastic category to accommodate four ex-lawmen without obvious means of support. Of homicide victims, nine were

ment capital.” However, he said, “we still know the homesteader better than the landlord, the railroad builder better than the railroad operator. The trapper, the prospector, and the cowboy, moving picturesquely over a background of clean air and great distances, hold us more than the tycoons and corporations that dominated them.”

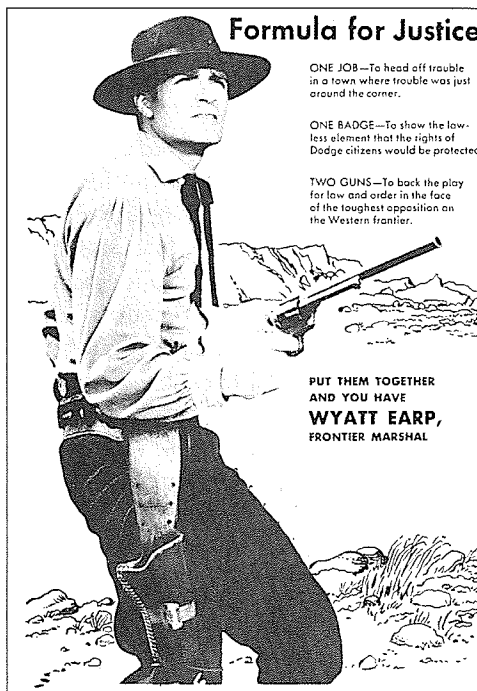
The revisionists had their work cut out. They showed, in William H. Goetzmann’s memorable phrase, that even the trappers, those legendary embodiments of wander-

lust, were Jacksonian men, expectant capitalists out to make their fortune. In *Bill Sublette, Mountain Man* (1959), John E. Sunder detailed the career of one of the most famous beaver trappers of the early 19th century. Sublette frequently relied on eastern capital or credit to keep his dreams alive, and was almost as familiar with the business hotels of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington as he was with the backwoods.

According to legend, cowboys were sec-

cowboys or drovers and nine were gamblers. Six were officers of the law. Aside from the non-cattle-trade killings mentioned above, victims included five townsmen with conventional occupations, three local rural settlers, two dance house proprietors, two miscellaneous visitors (one lawyer and a Pawnee Indian), and one female theatrical entertainer. The status of the remaining two victims is obscure. Analyzed in terms of perpetrators, 16 cattle-town homicides can be attributed to law officers, or citizens legitimately acting as such, 12 to cowboys or drovers, and eight to gamblers. The other nine homicides are distributed evenly among some of the categories already mentioned. These included two lynchings evidently carried out by cattle-town residents rather than transients. Besides the episode at Abilene, a Caldwell gambler and bootlegger was hanged in somewhat mysterious circumstances.

With the exception of killings by law officers and lynchings, the homicidal situations varied considerably. Seventeen apparently resulted from private quarrels, four were accidental or without discernible motive, two were committed by resisters of arrest, two avenged prior homicides, and two consisted of murders for profit. Homicidal disputes involving women, incidentally, exceed by eight to one those mainly resulting from gambling disagreements. Of the six lawmen killed, interestingly enough, half met death in circumstances that must be termed accidental, although two of them—Ellsworth's Sheriff Whitney and the Abilene policeman killed by Marshal Hickok—were attempting to help quell trouble when shot. Only two



officers died attempting to make arrests; the other fell in a private quarrel.

Lest tradition be completely overthrown, let it be noted that gunshots were far and away the principal medium of death. But tradition would also have it that the cattle-town homicide typically involved an exchange of shots—the so-called gunfight. Actually, though 39 of the 45 victims suffered fatal bullet or buckshot wounds, less than a third of them returned the fire. A good share of them were apparently not even armed.

ond-generation mountain men, fiddle-footed wanderers with guns on their hips. Their status as what we now refer to as seasonal agrarian workers might be obscured by romance, but, Lewis Atherton noted in *The Cattle Kings* (1961), cowboys were simply hired hands who lived with the environment while their employers, the ranchers, were businessmen out to dominate it. "The cowboy's life involved so much drudgery and loneliness and so little in the way of satisfaction that he drank and caroused to

excess on his infrequent visits to the shoddy little cowtowns that dotted the West.... Most of his physical dangers scarcely bordered on the heroic, necessary as they were in caring for other men's cattle, and they served primarily to retire him from cowpunching." Atherton shared the disparaging view of Bruce Sibert, a rancher in the Dakotas during the 1890s: "Only the few good ones got into the cow business and made good." For those who did become ranchers in "the cow business," Gene M.

Gressley observed in *Bankers and Cattle-men* (1966), profit was the motive, capitalization a major problem. Again, eastern money figured prominently.

Nowhere was eastern domination more evident than on the mining frontier. Gold rushes thoroughly disrupted the stately progression of Turner's frontier line, making a shambles of his East-West advance and the stages of social evolution preceding urban civilization. As Richard Wade asserted in *The Urban Frontier* (1959), his history of early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis, "The towns were the spearheads of the frontier."

Mining was a case in point. "On the mining frontier the camp—the germ of the city—appeared almost simultaneously with the opening of the region," Duane A. Smith wrote in *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (1967). In California, the flood of gold-hungry Forty-Niners created an overnight urban civilization with eastern values. In his history of the Far West, *The Pacific Slope* (1965), Pomeroy noted that in 1860 California had a population three times that of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada combined, and an economy thoroughly integrated into that of the Atlantic Seaboard. A network of eastern merchants and investors supplied the California miners through West Coast middlemen. As miners dug deeper into the ground, overhead soared, and the need for capital with it. Thus, the network even stretched across the Atlantic. British investors contributed so heavily that they made the Far West part of Britain's "invisible empire," and provided the leadership to draw out more cautious American investors as well, Clark C. Spence explained in *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860–1901* (1958). It was not long before the fabled individual prospector and his trusty mule were eclipsed.

In advocating a reorientation of western

history, Pomeroy had suggested various paths historians might follow to discover East-West continuities. The study of frontier justice would open into an examination of western legal history. Inquiry into frontier religion, literacy, education, and architecture would establish the westerners' cultural conservatism. Likewise, scrutiny of the U.S. Army in the West would show it to be only intermittently a fighting force but continuously a visible manifestation of the federal government and its role in promoting western development. Forest G. Hill's *Roads, Rails, and Waterways: The Army Engineers and Early Transportation* (1957) and Goetzmann's *Army Explorations in the American West, 1803–1863* (1959) responded to the challenge. Goetzmann went on to redirect the history of western exploration from the exploits of hardy individuals to a collective, nationalistic enterprise in which the federal government played a decisive part, the theme of his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (1966). Other histories showed that western communities routinely exaggerated the Indian threat in order to enjoy the benefits—payrolls, improved transportation and communication facilities, even a livelier social life—that an army presence brought. The link between East and West, metropolis and hinterland, federal government and frontier citizen, was everywhere a fact of western life. Even today, the federal government owns vast areas of the West.

By submerging regional in national concerns, "colonial" histories make western history, as such, of limited significance. Regional history is based on the assumption that there are meaningful differences between local and national developments. The South's claim to distinctiveness, historian C. Vann Woodward has argued, arose from its unique past, marked by the un-



## WOMEN ON THE ROAD WEST

*The five-month ordeal of traveling to California or Oregon offered pioneer women many opportunities to shed traditional feminine roles. Most, wrote Julie Roy Jeffrey in Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880 (1979), declined to take them.*

As they catalogued each sign of the passing of civilization, women coped with their sense of desolation by reproducing aspects of the world they had left behind. Thus, women arranged their wagons, writing in their journals of the little conveniences they had fixed, the pockets in the wagon's green cloth lining which held "looking-glasses, combs, brushes, and so on," the rag carpet to keep the floor of the tent snug at night, the bedding, sleeping, and dressing arrangements. As one woman explained, she was busy making "our home" comfortable so that there would be little time "for that dreaded disease, 'home-sickness.'" Another hoped to maintain some continuity by dressing as neatly on the trip as she might at home, in a blue traveling dress with white collar and cuffs rather than homespun, linsey-woolsey, or calico.

These attempts to reproduce the rudiments of a home setting and to perpetuate a sense of the familiar, though they might appear trivial, were not. Publicists of domesticity had encouraged women to believe that the physical arrangements of their homes exerted a powerful influence over their families. The makeshifts of the journey were an unconscious way of asserting female power and reassuring women of their sexual identity. And, of course, the objects symbolized an entire way of life temporarily in abeyance. When her husband grumbled about the quantity of her baggage, Lucy Cooke revealed how vital her knickknacks were. Fearing that she would have to discard some . . . , she confessed, "I had a cry about it . . . as I seemed to have parted with near everything I valued."

Although Cooke's husband promised to stop complaining about belongings which provided so much comfort for her, other

women would find it difficult to maintain symbolic ties with home life and the female world. The woman who started out in a traveling dress with clean collar and cuffs soon found she had to abandon it for clothes she originally had refused to wear. Indeed, changes in clothing hinted at the social disruption the frontier could cause women. By 1852, some women on the trail were wearing the bloomer costume, finding the "short skirt and pantlets" a "very appropriate dress for a trip like this." Although bloomers were practical, the costume, espoused by feminists as dress for liberated women, carried a radical sexual and political message



*Women's work? Collecting buffalo chips for the campfire on the Great Plains, about 1880.*

and was, in the words of one magazine, "ridiculous and indecent." So one woman who had brought bloomers with her found she lacked the "courage" to wear them and vowed, "I would never wear them as long as my other two dresses last." Women bickered over the pros and cons of the costume. Supporters accused women in dresses of being vain and preoccupied with appearance, while they, in turn, replied that bloomers led to male gossip. Said one opponent, "She had never found her dress to be the least inconvenient . . . [S]he could walk as much in her long dress as she wanted to, or was proper for a woman among so many men."

American experience of guilt arising from slavery, military defeat, and occupation. History, more than any other factor, accounted for southern uniqueness. But Pomeroy's argument robbed the West of its distinctiveness, making it simply an appendage of the East that was neither exceptional nor especially consequential in the history of the nation.

Opposition to that point of view was not long in coming, and it has usually worked some variation on the exceptionalist premise. Gerald D. Nash, the first historian to attempt a synthesis of 20th-century Western history, rejects Turner's 1890 cutoff date and agrees with Pomeroy that colonialism remained a fact of western life well into the 20th century. But Nash argues that World War II liberated the West from its political, economic, and cultural dependency on the East. The year 1945 becomes a new dividing line in western history, signifying the moment not when the frontier passed into oblivion but when the West passed out of colonialism to become "a pace-setter for the nation."

Yet only by focusing on the Sun Belt, and especially on Southern California, is Nash able to make much of a case for the West as a 20th-century pace-setter. One must be cautious in making parts of the West synonymous with the whole and, out of regional pride, discarding too readily the unflattering fact of western dependency.

Such caution characterizes Patricia Nelson Limerick's provocative new synthesis, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987). Limerick is skeptical about talk of the New West, arguing instead for a continuity in western history uninterrupted by any turning points. In her mind, it is this continuity—not links to the East, but the defining western experience "of a place undergoing conquest and never fully escaping its consequences"—that validates a regional approach.

A legacy of conquest, of course, is consonant with Pomeroy's colonial thesis. But Limerick in effect views the East-West relationship from a western perspective rather than a national one. "With its continuity restored," she writes, "western American history carries considerable significance for American history as a whole. Conquest forms the historical bedrock of the whole nation, and the American West is a preeminent case study in conquest and its consequences."

"Celebrating one's past, one's tradition, one's heritage," she concludes, "is a bit like hosting a party: one wants to control the guest list tightly . . . . To celebrate the western past with an open invitation is a considerable risk: The brutal massacres come back along with the cheerful barn raisings, the shysters come back with the saints, contracts broken come back with contracts fulfilled."

Limerick calls her introduction "Closing the Frontier and Opening Western History," as if summoning her fellow historians to put away the toys of childhood and get on with the sterner duties of adulthood. Western historians today regularly berate themselves for failing to keep up with trends in the discipline, for glorying in narrative at the expense of analysis, for favoring the colorful and peripheral to the neglect of the ordinary and substantial. Hard riding makes for easy reading. The very qualities that explained the public's love affair with the West also explained western history's decline in academic circles.

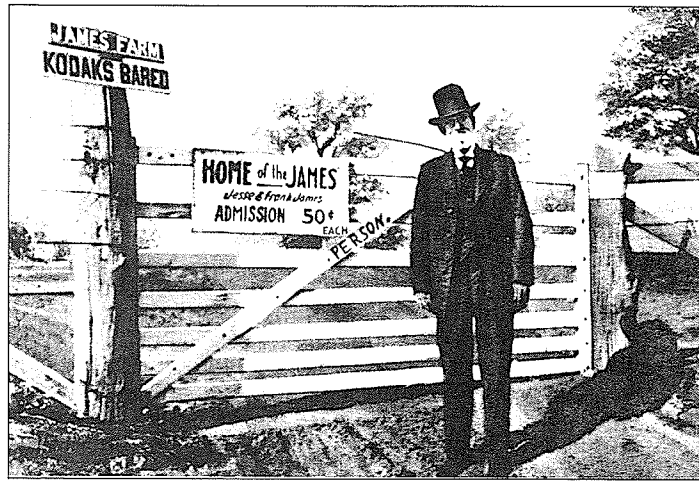
Over the years, suggestions for revitalizing western history have been pretty conventional: Find out where everyone else is going and follow. Learn to quantify. Adopt social-science methodologies. Alter the very nature of historical inquiry and expression or fade into academic oblivion, west-

ern historians were warned. But the most extravagant claims for the new social history, for example, have been recanted, and dire predictions about the early demise of "old-fashioned" history have failed to come true. It is apparent now that the advocates of new history too often adopted the strategy of Melville's lightning-rod salesman and sold fear rather than necessity. To date, the net effect of the new history revolution has been new topics rather than a consistent new direction for western history, fragmentation rather than synthesis.

Turner's thesis is now notorious for excluding women and everyone whose skin was dark or whose language was not English. Indians were obstacles handy for demarcating the frontier line and eliciting pioneer traits in the white men who would overcome them; women apparently stayed in the East until the land was tidied up and made presentable; Mexicans and other ethnics never existed.

Women have been a favorite topic of the new history. Studies of army wives and daughters, women teachers, women on the overland trails, farm women, prostitutes, divorcees, widows, and urban women have forever altered the sentimental stereotypes of sunbonneted pioneer mothers and soiled doves with hearts of gold.

Pomeroy's argument for cultural continuity has been echoed in discussions of one key issue: Did the move West liberate women from conventional sex roles or not? John Mack Faragher concludes *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979) with a flat negative: "The move West called upon people not to change but to transfer



Among the many westerners who found it profitable to promote the Western mystique was Jesse James's brother Frank, shown here about 1914 at the family farm in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

old sexual roles to a new but altogether familiar environment." While confessing that she had hoped to find otherwise, Julie Roy Jeffrey, in *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880* (1979), is forced to agree with Faragher: "The frontier experience served to reinforce many conventional familial and cultural ideas.... The concept of woman as lady, the heart of domestic ideology, survived."

Jeffrey did detect some changes in women's roles. Prostitutes, for instance, were treated as individuals in the West rather than simply as a pariah class. Polly Welts Kaufman in *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (1984) also strains against the limitations implied by the colonial interpretation, noting that the 250 women who went west to teach for the National Board of Popular Education before the Civil War decided to do so largely out of a desire for independence and control over their lives. Kaufman concedes, however, that teaching was among the few occupations that met "society's expectations for women." Liberation plays an even larger part in Paula Petrik's *No Step Backward: Woman and Family on the Rocky Mountain Mining Fron-*

## THE FINAL FRONTIER?

*"Our nation's quest for the unknown," President George Bush declared when he announced plans to put an American on Mars by the year 2039, "took American pioneers from the bluffs of the Mississippi to the mountains of the Moon. But today . . . it's time to open up the final frontier." Such equations of outer space with the American West are very familiar—and very much in need of reconsideration, says Patricia Nelson Limerick, a historian at the University of Colorado at Boulder. In a paper presented at the Second Colorado Space Policy Workshop in Boulder on September 8, 1989, she argued that the real value of the frontier metaphor is hidden.*

Consider President Ronald Reagan's speech, delivered on the Fourth of July, 1982, at the landing of the shuttle Columbia: "In the future, as in the past, our freedom, independence, and national well-being will be tied to new achievements, new discoveries, and pushing back frontiers. The fourth landing of the Columbia is the historical equivalent to the driving of the golden spike which completed the first transcontinental railroad."

In making this comparison, neither Reagan nor his speech writers had to *think*; by 1982, this way of speaking and thinking was so well set that no one would say, "Does that

comparison make any sense? Does the landing of the space shuttle really have anything to do with the building of the transcontinental railroad?"

Now the first thing that strikes the western historian is that President Reagan and his speech writers thought that this frontier business was a *happy* comparison, the right comparison for an occasion of congratulations. But add a few facts to, say, the picture of the golden spike, and things look a bit different. What the president thought was just a light "Have-a-Nice-Day" reference to history *could* have been a pretty useful warning, if anyone had taken it seriously.

When they connected the railroad lines at Promontory Point in 1869, the representative from the Central Pacific, Leland Stanford, proved unfamiliar with a sledgehammer and could not hit the golden spike. The inability of a railroad executive to perform the most elemental act of railroad construction might—if anyone wanted to take these analogies seriously—say something about the gap between executive planning and hands-on implementation that transportation industries are vulnerable to, and it would deepen that point to recognize that much of the railroad trackage theoretically "completed" in 1869 actually had been laid in such a rush that much of it had to be laid

*tier, Helena, Montana, 1865–1900* (1987). The move west, Petrik maintained, did change things for some women, at least during the frontier period.

Another prominent strain of western historical scholarship takes the western myth itself as its subject. Americans have loved the Wild West myth with an abiding, though some say waning, passion. It has circled the globe in its appeal. To its critics, however, the myth is an invitation to the wrong set of values. It embodies an essentially conservative ethos—rugged individualism, stern justice, indifference or hostility to women and ethnics, exploitation of the environment, development at any cost. But it also embodies the American dream,

and has served as the polestar for generations of immigrants who sought a greater measure of human happiness in a land of unrivaled wealth and opportunity.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the popular image of the Wild West is largely the work of outsiders meeting outside needs. There seems no escaping eastern domination. Pomeroy himself traced an aspect of this cultural imperialism in his imaginative *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (1957). The West, he found, became whatever the eastern tourist wanted it to be: "[F]or 60 or 70 years . . . tourists had to be reassured, and westerners felt that they had to assure them, that the West was no longer wild and

again almost immediately. In other words, a reference to the golden spike, to anyone who is serious about history, is also a reference to enterprises done with too much haste and grandstanding, and with too little care for detail.

Ronald Reagan also did not know, or care, that one half of the first transcontinental, the Union Pacific Railroad, went bankrupt 25 years later in the depression of the 1890s, or that the other half, the Central Pacific, even though it became more prosperous, did so by keeping a stranglehold on Pacific coast traffic, charging all that the traffic would bear, through its affiliate, the Southern Pacific, the company known as the Octopus, the company whose chief attorney was widely understood to hold much greater power in the state of California than the so-called governor did. With all that prosperity, the Central Pacific still played out a prolonged drama in trying to avoid paying back its government loans and in trying to get out of the interest payments.



Add to this the far-reaching corruption in Congress that came out of federal aid to railroads, and add the rough and even brutal working conditions on the railroad, especially for the Chinese working on the Central Pacific in the Sierras in winter; add it all together—executive misbehavior, large-scale corruption, shoddy construction, brutal labor exploitation,

financial inefficiency—and it's a wonder that when the president compared the shuttle landing to the golden spike, someone from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration didn't hit him for insulting the organization's honor. It's a wonder no one—no shuttle

pilot, mission coordinator, mechanic, or technician—said, "Now cut that out—we may have our problems, but it's nowhere near that bad."

That's the joy of the present status of the frontier metaphor—you can use it to say things that are really quite insulting to the integrity of the space program, and the people thus insulted will smile and say, "Thank you."

woolly—until fashions changed and it was time to convince them that it was as wild as it ever had been."

How wild was it to begin with? There is an established tradition in western history of separating fiction from fact to get at the truth behind the frontier's most storied individuals and episodes. Don Russell's *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (1960), Joseph G. Rosa's *They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok* (1964, rev. 1974), William A. Settle, Jr.'s *Jesse James Was His Name; or, Fact and Fiction Concerning the Careers of the Notorious James Brothers of Missouri* (1966), Robert K. De Arment's *Bat Masterson: The Man and the Legend* (1979), and Jack

Burrows's *John Ringo: The Gunfighter Who Never Was* (1987) are good examples of this approach to biography.

Cultural historians find the legends more arresting—and revealing—than the facts. Strip Billy the Kid of his myth and little of historical consequence remains. Even the number of his victims does not hold up under scrutiny. But the mythic Billy the Kid is full of interest, as Stephen Tatum explains in *Inventing Billy the Kid: Visions of the Outlaw in America* (1982). During the first 40 years after his death at the hands of Pat Garrett in 1881, writers (including Garrett himself in his *The Authentic Life of Billy, the Kid*) portrayed the Kid as the villain in "a romance story

dramatizing civilization's triumph over a stubborn, resistant, and savage wilderness."

For roughly the next 30 years, however, Billy was portrayed in a more positive light. Disillusioned by the power of gangsters and the weakness and corruption of government, the Kid's "creators"—including the composer Aaron Copland, who wrote the score for the 1938 ballet, *Billy the Kid*—conjured up a new image. Because society is "unable to defend itself or recognize the evil within its own ranks," Tatum writes, "the outsider like the Kid enters the scene to save the day and restore a society of common people being threatened by evil bankers and their henchmen. Yet no matter how noble his actions, in this era the Kid is not integrated into society at story's end."

But after 1955, Tatum continues, inventions of the Kid "typically omit the romance framework of civilization's progress or foundation, and instead present a dehumanizing society at odds with an authentic individual's personal code." No longer is there much hope that the hero can transform the world; the Kid "appears in works that dramatize the individual at odds with society, a civil law unrelated to moral law, and violence hardly legitimated or regenerative." This culminated in the purely meaningless cinematic violence of Sam Peckinpah's famous *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1973). Today, the Kid awaits new myth-makers.

Since cultural values shift over time, myths, in order to remain relevant, shift their meanings as well. If the major challenge facing western history is to relate past to present in a meaningful way, the mythic approach has much to offer. It accounts for continuity *and* change. George Armstrong Custer is dead, his Last Stand long over. Why then do so many people continue to refight it? Why can they still see it in their minds? Why are passions still aroused by the man? We may dismiss Custer as a mi-

nor figure historically, but he was once a national hero, a martyr to cause and country, held up as a model for America's youth. His defenders still think him a paragon, if not a saint, and he has been compared to Jesus. His detractors regard him as a racist villain, fit symbol for America's mistreatment of its native peoples. In 1988, a Sioux activist likened him to Adolf Hitler and argued that the Custer Battlefield National Monument was as welcome in Indian country as a Hitler monument would be in Israel.

Myths have consequences, and Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (1973) and *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (1985) are the most ambitious attempts yet to trace patterns of frontier mythology, from Cotton Mather through Walt Whitman and Theodore Roosevelt. So deeply has the language of the frontier myth been woven into our popular culture, he writes, "that it still colors the way we count our wealth and estimate our prospects, the way we deal with nature and with the nations so that the Myths can still tell us what to look for when we look at the stars."

Works like Slotkin's assume something Turner labored to prove: American exceptionalism. On the other hand, they encourage a reexamination of the qualities supposedly fostered by frontiering and which, according to Turner, combined to form the American character.

The character-forming western myth is marked by some notable omissions. "Where are the women in this tradition?" asked Helen Winter Stauffer and Susan J. Rosowski in *Women and Western American Literature* (1982). It is a question that cuts to the heart of a male myth steeped in escapist fantasies. The myth does include In-

dians, but simply as part of the savage Nature that the white pioneer was expected to subdue, a test of the sort that meets any quester after Elysium. The native *fact* offers its own rebuttal: The white man's occupation of America was an armed invasion, nothing more, nothing less.

When one moves from individuals and events and omissions to the qualities or traits revered in western myth, it is apparent that the myth generates its own critiques, its own counter-images.

Rugged individualists taming a raw wilderness? Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967, rev. 1982) and Lee Clark Mitchell's *Witnesses to a Vanishing America: The Nineteenth-Century Response* (1981) show that frontiering and its apotheosis of axe and plow created a contrary reaction, a conservationist outlook that deplored the wastefulness inherent in pioneering and opened the way to resource management and federal controls.

Buoyant optimism and the mastery of material things? The lunacy of such hopeful frontier slogans as "Rain follows the plow" was revealed during the 1930s, when the interior of the continent turned into a dust bowl, spurring a massive internal migration that exposed the hollow promise of western opportunity. The California Dream? Ask the Okies.

Cowboy freedom in a spacious land where all were equal? Ask the multitude of western wage-earners who found the pay

low, conditions hard, strife endemic, upward mobility limited, and independence illusory. Or ask any racial minority struggling to get ahead in the West.

Six-gun justice and self-reliance? The horrifying rate of contemporary violence would seem rebuttal enough to such a cherished tradition, but in *The Cattle Towns* (1968), Robert Dykstra shoots down the Hollywood version of Dodge City and its ilk. [See box, p. 76.]

Abundant natural resources ensuring all a chance to prosper? The antimyth points to the depletion and spoliation of a rich heritage, a destructive "Myth of Superabundance," and the rise of resource monopolization and agribusiness, the creation of a boom-and-bust economy, and a continuing reliance on the federal government. More colonialism, and precious little individual opportunity. Myth, after all, is myth.

For the historian, the western myth offers a skewed but revealing national portrait, a study not in what was but in what once seemed desirable. To the extent that it was always false, we have a measure of the distance between expectation and reality in western and American history. To the extent that it now seems unbecoming, we have a measure of the distance between the values of yesterday and today. The myth and the antimyth are keys to the western past and the western present that can also unlock the American past and the American present.

# CURRENT BOOKS

## SCHOLARS' CHOICE

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

### *Is America in Decline?*

**BOUND TO LEAD:** The Changing Nature of American Power. By Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Basic. 307 pp. \$19.95

**AMERICAN POWER:** The Rise and Decline of U.S. Globalism. By John Taft. Harper & Row. 321 pp. \$22.50

**THE SUICIDE OF AN ELITE:** American Internationalists and Vietnam. By Patrick Lloyd Hatcher. Stanford. 429 pp. \$35

The first I heard of American decline was when, some seven years ago, a bright American graduate student came to me in Oxford and proposed writing a thesis on "American decline from a European perspective." I had to tell him that it was not evident to me that America was in decline at all. Europe and Japan might be catching up with it economically, the Third World was as recalcitrant as ever, and American foreign policy was, as usual, in a mess. But if anyone were patently in decline it was the Soviet Union, and the United States remained what it had effectively been ever since 1945: the only superpower combining military, economic, and cultural strength in a fashion no other nation could rival. The young man prudently chose another thesis topic.

A few years later the historian Paul Kennedy was to point out that this happy state of affairs would not necessarily last forever and that the United States should remedy certain weaknesses if it were not one day, like earlier empires, to be one with Nineveh and Tyre. But that day, he said, was not yet, nor was its coming inevitable, so long as the United States recognized its limitations, addressed its latent weaknesses, and learned to manage its strengths.

This all seemed fairly obvious to the sympathetic outsider, but the furor set off

by Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987) showed that it was far from obvious within the United States. Angry debate raged between the pessimists, who believed decline to be inevitable, and the indignant optimists, who regarded it as inconceivable. Historians inclined to the first school, political scientists to the second. Both showed their professional biases. As historians saw it, what had happened before was likely to happen again. Political scientists examined indices with little consideration as to how these could be affected by chance and will. All participants, however, whether by their defense of the thesis or the ferocity with which they attacked it, revealed the self-doubt that has tormented American thinkers ever since the Vietnam War.

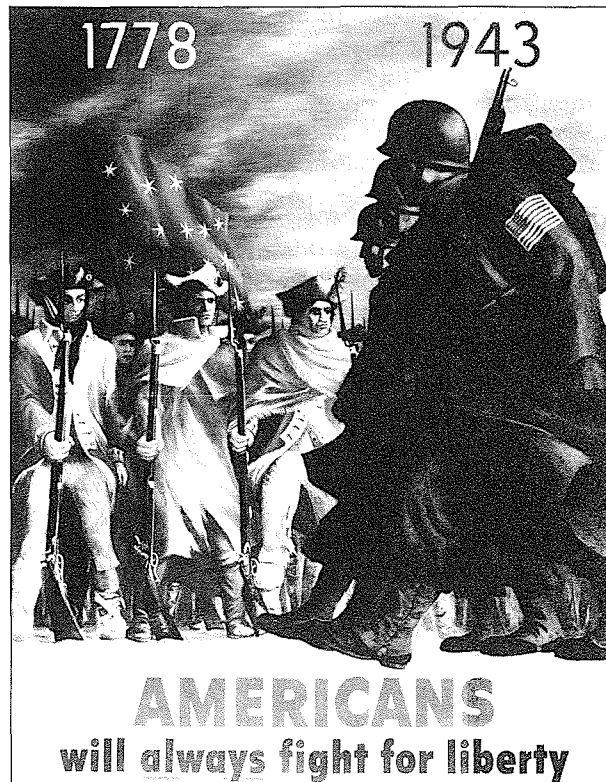
To this controversy Joseph Nye, a professor of international security at Harvard University, brings a refreshingly brisk approach. He properly distinguishes between "decadence" and "decline," quoting the incomparable Raymond Aron: "Decadence implies value-judgements. . . . Decline simply describes a power relationship." The power relationship between the United States and the rest of the world, Nye admits, has certainly changed since the 1940s, as Europe and the Pacific states have recovered from the effects of World War II. But no one else has overtaken America in general power indices or seems likely to do so. Japan's power is too one-dimensional, that of Europe divided among nation-states unlikely to federate, while the Soviet Union has virtually dropped out of the race and China has not yet entered it. But even when American power was at its peak, Nye reminds us, it did not attain hegemony. The United States could and did constrain the Soviet Union; but it could not shape Europe to American wishes, nor prevent the "loss of China,"



nor inhibit the emergence of a plethora of Third-World states "non-aligned" against the West. Long before the emergence of anything like a rival power, the United States had lost control of the United Nations and found itself isolated in fighting a losing war in Vietnam.

Part of the trouble was that the United States converted so much of its wealth into military resources which bought it little military influence. Not only were nuclear weapons inherently almost unusable, but, as Nye rightly points out, the rise in national self-consciousness throughout the world gradually narrowed the possibilities of successful military intervention to such marginal cases as Grenada and Panama. More effective than nuclear military might is what Nye calls "soft" or "co-optive" power: the ability "to structure a situation so that other nations develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with one's own nation." Economic strength helps here, and even more does cultural compatibility. With the gradual diversifica-

tion of power throughout the world, the declining effectiveness of military force, and the waning of "the Soviet threat," the success of the United States policy, says Nye, will now depend on its capacity for "power conversion," abandoning military pressure for economic and cultural influence. The success of this will in turn depend on internal factors—such as the disjointed American system of government and the introverted attitude of the American people themselves—factors which a long line of observers from Alexis de Tocqueville to John Kennedy has seen as the fundamental weaknesses of the American giant. Nye concludes that the problem is one of "domestic political leadership on power conversion rather than long-term economic decline." Although Nye criticizes *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, his conclusion is much the same as Paul Kennedy's: "Decline is not inevitable, but



A 1943 poster equates power with military strength. In the nuclear age, "soft coercion" is often more effective.

the wrong choices could bring it on."

Nye thus accepts that power is a matter not just of potential but of judgment and will. The other works under review deal with these factors as displayed by the American elite which dominated the conduct of foreign policy from the end of World War II through the catastrophe of Vietnam. The two books complement each other well. John Taft, a writer on U.S. foreign policy, has produced a lively, somewhat sardonic survey focusing on the personalities and backgrounds of the WASP Wilsonian liberals whose ideology, self-confidence, and sense of "obligation as gentlemen to elevate the masses of the world" drove the United States out of isolation into global intervention. Patrick Lloyd Hatcher, a political scientist at the University of California, Berkeley, provides a more sophisticated analysis of their ideas as well as a detailed account of how and

why they finally came to grief in Vietnam. The lesson of both is clear: Good intentions and command of huge economic and military resources are of little use unless directed by an understanding of the complexities of a multi-cultural world.

In Taft's opinion, the first of these Wilsonian epigones with a mission to reform the world was also America's first ambassador to the Soviet Union, William Bullitt, an erratic figure who was followed by staid creatures such as Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, columnist Walter Lippmann, Ambassador Averell Harriman, diplomat David Bruce, Congressman Chester Bowles, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and Secretaries of State Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles. (Paul Nitze, curiously enough, is not mentioned.) They were high-minded, energetic, financially secure, and as determined to make the world safe for democracy as Woodrow Wilson had been. Their ideals were those of classical 19th-century liberalism: free trade, anti-colonialism, and self-government. Unfortunately, they found themselves confronted by the opposing ideology of communism—Lockeans, as Hatcher puts it, against Leninists. In their creed, anti-communism took the place of anti-colonialism, and, for some of them, of virtually everything else. They reinterpreted the concept of "collective security" to mean allied cohesion behind American leadership. They adopted diplomat George Kennan's concept of "containment" and shared his enthusiasm for covert operations. They embraced with some alacrity concepts of deterrence and limited war.

Vietnam was for them the supreme test. They failed it, and they never recovered their self-confidence. "Having been foolish in their pride," as Taft puts it rather well, "they became foolish in their humility." It was indeed foolish, for on the whole they had done remarkably well. "Surprisingly," as Hatcher remarks rather patronizingly, "given the complex nature of global politics, they were generally successful, especially in managing national security tasks."

Taft hints at a sociological dimension of the problem that is missing from most analyses, even Nye's. These internationalist liberals, he points out, "were the closest thing to an American ruling class since the early 19th century. They did not, however, rule on their home territory. Lacking their own political base, they had the consent of a large Middle American majority that no longer exists." If this is so, there is an interesting analogy with the British case. The ruling classes of Britain began attempting to spread their beliefs and influence throughout the world during the latter part of the 19th century, just as they were beginning to lose their power base at home. They also fell victim to destructive self-doubt and scuttled an empire which they had, on the whole, administered fairly well. Can a nation, whatever its indices of power, pursue a firm and positive foreign policy if it lacks a self-confident elite comparatively independent of domestic pressures? And, in the United States, where is such an elite now to be found?

—Michael Howard, '84, is the Robert Lovett Professor of Military and Naval History at Yale University.

## *Inside Casino Capitalism*

**BARBARIANS AT THE GATE:** The Fall of RJR Nabisco. By Bryan Burrough and John Helyar. Harper & Row. 528 pp. \$22.95

In 1898, Adolphus Green, chairman of the National Biscuit Company, found himself faced with the task of choosing a

trademark for his newly formed baking concern. Green was a progressive businessman. He refused to employ child labor, even though it was then a common practice, and he offered his bakery employees the option to buy stock at a discount. Green therefore thought that his

trademark should symbolize Nabisco's fundamental business values, "not merely to make dividends for the stockholders of his company, but to enhance the general prosperity and the moral sentiment of the United States." Eventually he decided that a cross with two bars and an oval—a medieval symbol representing the triumph of the moral and spiritual over the base and material—should grace the package of every Nabisco product.

If they had wracked their brains for months, Bryan Burrough and John Helyar could not have come up with a more ironic metaphor for their book. The fall of Nabisco, and its corporate partner R. J. Reynolds, is nothing less than the exact opposite of Green's business credo, a compelling tale of corporate and Wall Street greed featuring RJR Nabisco officers who first steal shareholders blind and then justify their epic displays of avarice by claiming to maximize shareholder value.

The event which made the RJR Nabisco story worth telling was the 1988 leveraged buyout (LBO) of the mammoth tobacco and food conglomerate, then the 19th-largest industrial corporation in America. Battles for corporate control were common during the loosely regulated 1980s, and the LBO was just one method for capturing the equity of a corporation. (In a typical LBO, a small group of top management and investment bankers put 10 percent down and finance the rest of their purchase through high-interest loans or bonds. If the leveraged, privately owned corporation survives, the investors, when they can re-sell public shares, reach the so-called "pot of gold;" but if the corporation cannot service its debt, everything is at risk, because the collateral is the corporation itself.)

The sheer size of RJR Nabisco and the furious bidding war that erupted guaranteed unusual public scrutiny of this particular piece of financial engineering. F. Ross Johnson, the conglomerate's flamboyant, free-spending CEO (RJR had its own corporate airline), put his own company into play with a \$75-a-share bid in October. Experienced buyout artists on

Wall Street, however, immediately realized that Johnson was trying to play two incompatible games. LBOs typically put corporations such as RJR Nabisco through a ringer in order to pay the mammoth debt incurred after a buyout. But Johnson, desiring a conservative debt structure in order to keep corporate perquisites intact, "low-balled" his offer. Other buyout investors stepped forward with competing bids, and after a six-week-long auction the buyout boutique of Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts & Co. (KKR) emerged on top with a \$109-a-share bid. The \$25-billion buyout took its place as one of the defining business events of the 1980s.

Burrough and Helyar, who covered the story for the *Wall Street Journal*, supply a breezy, colorful, blow-by-blow account of the "deal from hell" (as one businessman characterized a leveraged buyout). The language of Wall Street, full of incongruous "Rambo" jargon from the Vietnam War, is itself arresting. Buyout artists, who presumably never came within 10,000 miles of wartime Saigon, talk about "napalming" corporate perquisites or liken their strategy to "charging through the rice paddies, not stopping for anything and taking no prisoners."

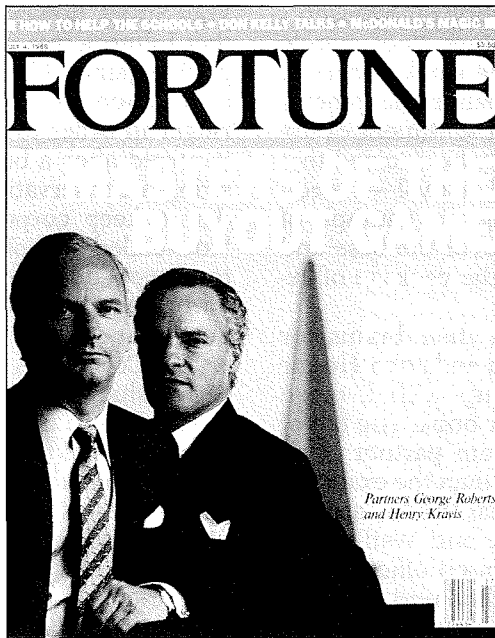
At the time, F. Ross Johnson was widely pilloried in the press as the embodiment of excess; his conflict of interest was obvious. Yet Burrough and Helyar show that Johnson, for all his free-spending ways, was way over his head in the major leagues of greed, otherwise known as Wall Street in the 1980s. What, after all, is more rapacious: the roughly \$100 million Johnson stood to gain if his deal worked out over five years, or the \$45 million in expenses KKR demanded for waiting 60 minutes while Ross Johnson prepared a final competing bid?

**B**arbarians is, in the parlance of the publishing world, a good read. At the same time, unfortunately, a disclaimer issued by the authors proves only too true. Anyone looking for a definitive judgment of LBOs will be disappointed. Burrough and Helyar do at least ask the pertinent

question: What does all this activity have to do with building and sustaining a business? But authors should not only pose questions; they should answer them, or at least try.

Admittedly, the single most important answer to the RJR puzzle could not be provided by Burrough and Helyar because it is not yet known. The major test of any financial engineering is its effect on the long-term vitality of the leveraged corporation, as measured by such key indicators as market share (and not just whether the corporation survives its debt, as the authors imply). However, a highly leveraged RJR Nabisco is already selling off numerous profitable parts of its business because they are no longer a "strategic fit": Wall Street code signifying a need for cash in order to service debts and avoid bankruptcy.

If the authors were unable to predict the ultimate outcome, they still had a rare opportunity to explain how and why an LBO is engineered. Unfortunately, their fixation on re-creating events and dialogue—which admittedly produces a fast-moving book—forced them to accept the issues as defined by the participants themselves. There is no other way to explain the book's uncritical stance. When, for example, the RJR Nabisco board of directors tried to decide which bid to accept, Burrough and Helyar report that several directors sided with KKR's offer because the LBO boutique "knew the value of keeping [employees] happy." It is impossible to tell from the book whether the directors knew this to be true or took KKR's word. Even a cursory investigation would have revealed that KKR is notorious for



showing no concern for employees below senior management after a leveraged buyout.

The triumph of gossip over substance is manifest in many other ways. Wall Street's deft manipulation of the business press is barely touched upon, and the laissez-faire environment procured by buyout artists via their political contributions is scarcely mentioned, crucial though it is. Nowhere are the authors' priorities more obvious than in the

number of words devoted to Henry Kravis's conspicuous consumption compared to those devoted to the details of the RJR deal. In testimony before Congress last year, no less an authority than Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady—himself an old Wall Street hand—noted that the substitution of tax-deductible debt for taxable income is "the mill in which the grist of takeover premiums is ground." In the case of RJR Nabisco, 81 percent of the \$9.9 billion premium paid to shareholders was derived from tax breaks achievable after the buyout. This singularly important fact cannot be found in the book, however; nor will a reader learn that after the buyout the U.S. Treasury was obligated to refund RJR as much as \$1 billion because of its post-buyout debt burden. In *Barbarians*, more time is spent describing Kravis's ostentatious gifts to his fashion-designer wife than to the tax considerations that make or break these deals.

Fulminations about the socially corrosive effects of greed aside, the buyout phenomenon may represent one of the biggest changes in the way American business is conducted since the rise of the public corporation, nothing less than a transforma-

tion of managerial into financial capitalism. The ferocious market for corporate control that emerged during the 1980s has few parallels in business history, but there are two: the trusts that formed early in this century and the conglomerate mania that swept corporate America during the 1960s. Both waves resulted in large social and economic costs, and there is little assurance that the corporate infatuation with debt will not exact a similarly heavy toll.

As the economist Henry Kaufman has written, the high levels of debt associated with buyouts and other forms of corporate restructuring create fragility in business structures and vulnerability to economic cycles. Inexorably, the shift away from equity invites the close, even intrusive involvement of institutional investors (banks, pension funds, and insurance companies) that provide the financing. Superficially, this moves America closer to the system that prevails in Germany and Japan, where historically the relationship between the suppliers and users of capital is close. But Germany and Japan incur higher levels of debt for expansion and investment, whereas equivalent American indebtedness is linked to the recent mar-

ket for corporate control. That creates a brittle structure, one that threatens to turn the U.S. government into something of an ultimate guarantor if and when things do fall apart. It is too easy to construct a scenario in which corporate indebtedness forces the federal government into the business of business. The savings-and-loan bailout is a painfully obvious harbinger of such a development.

The many ramifications of the buyout mania deserve thoughtful treatment. Basic issues of corporate governance and accountability ought to be openly debated and resolved if the American economy is to deliver the maximum benefit to society and not just unconscionable rewards to a handful of bankers, all out of proportion to their social productivity. It is disappointing, but a sign of the times, that the best book about the deal of deals fails to educate as well as it entertains.

—Max Holland, a current Wilson Center Fellow, is writing a biography of John McCloy and is the author of *When the Machine Stopped: A Cautionary Tale from Industrial America* (1989).

## *The English Scrutinized*

**THE PLEASURES OF THE PAST.** By David Cannadine. Norton. 338 pp. \$19.95

The oxygenated quality of these essays reflects more than the fact that many of them were (we are told) conceived and drafted mid-air. David Cannadine, now at Columbia University, was one of the more eminent British historical brains to be drained across the Atlantic in the 1980s academic diaspora. Like the 19th-century Whig historian Lord Macaulay, Cannadine has made a parallel reputation as a reviewer of dazzling panache. The principle of collecting book reviews as essays, rarely defensible, is here vindicated by their common theme: an exasperated, mocking, often profound interrogation of Englishness

and its interpretations.

Cannadine is a social historian with an acute political sense, a combination that strongly informed *Lords and Landlords* (1981), his major work on the aristocracy's role in creating modern English towns. That juxtaposition of grandee culture and gritty urbanization is typical. He has an eye for the flamboyant, a high style, an interest in royalty, architecture, food, and sex. But his essays on Prince Albert, the Duke of Windsor, the Mayfair estate, and English stately homes are hardly celebrations of England's aristocratic past; they are related to Cannadine's tireless deconstructions of urban history, economic decline, and socialist historiography. The inanity of King George V obsessively hunting birds,

or of Queen Victoria martyring her ladies-in-waiting through her finicky rituals—all the high premium put on social niceties—is, from Cannadine's perspective, an objective correlative of an England entering into decline. While many Englishmen view Earl Mountbatten—the World War II naval commander and last viceroy of India—as the last heroic symbol of Greater Britain, Cannadine shows him to be, through both his virtues and his failings, the “imperial undertaker” and architect of Little England. “Most members of the royal family are employed to open things,” he writes, “to lay foundation stones or launch ships. But Mountbatten was quite brilliant at the much more difficult and important job of *closing things down*: not just . . . the Japanese Empire; but more crucially, the independent deterrent, the autonomous armed services, the Royal Navy, and the Raj.”

Cannadine's real strength—and rarity—as a reviewer is this ability to scale the particular up to the general, and it is as a commentary on the large generalization of Englishness that this collection may become required reading. Here are no complacent reassurances about the elastic strengths of the British social system or the tolerance of its traditions. British traditions today—having survived “the bleakness of the 1980s, the ‘Thatcherite contempt for consensus,’ the cuts in public spending, the growth in unemployment”—Cannadine finds in the same shambling, uninviting condition as many of the country's museums: “their funds inadequate, their lighting unsatisfactory, their galleries only intermittently open.”

In another thoughtful piece Cannadine effectively buries what he calls “Welfare State history,” whose most noted practitioner was Asa Briggs: “The broad nexus of left-of-center goodness, of low-tech decency, of middle-class improvement, which flourished from the steam-engine to the steam-radio and beyond, and which has informed Briggs's life as an academic statesman and his work as an academic historian, is no longer the conventional

wisdom, but has itself become a thing of the past. The Welfare State is not a way of seeing history anymore: It *is* history.”

Unlike the previous generation of British historians whose perspective was shaped by the Welfare State, Cannadine's framework comes out of Thatcher's Britain; in his view, Thatcherite Britain, through its lack of funding for education and a contemptuous ignorance of humanist values, has failed in its social duties. Nor is a nostalgic return to England's great traditions any answer, for Cannadine shows they are not what once they seemed. The received ideas of Englishness—as represented musically in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, architecturally in Lutyens' viceregal New Delhi, and socially in the cult of the English country house—are for Cannadine only too emblematic of England's inability to adapt to the dislocations of 20th-century post-industrialism.

Associated with this is Cannadine's preoccupation with ritual in modern times; he has edited a collection of essays, *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (1987), on the theme, and he helped to popularize the ringing phrase “the invention of tradition.” The gewgaws and trappings of the English aristocracy, and the arcana of the hereditary political class, become for Cannadine clues that explain the length of time the Establishment has been able “to get away with it.” In one essay, he dissects, in tongue-in-cheek style, the construction of reputations that earn one a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. “Those men were quiet, careful, cautious, pragmatic, orderly, logical, and unemotional . . . They took work home at night and at weekends; they had time for few hobbies or recreations; they jealously guarded their private lives; but in the select company of those who knew them well, they were warm-hearted, charming, kindly and generous. Indefatigable, relentless, remorseless, formidable, indomitable: They sound like the Grand Fleet at anchor at Spithead.”

For Cannadine, English “genius, flamboyance, audacity, intuition, romanticism, high color [are all] slightly suspect.” Here

and elsewhere, one can hear an echo of the last public lecture Cannadine gave before departing for America, in which he assailed Britain, its governing establishment, and its treatment of history and historians. Many of these essays lead to implicitly politicized and prescriptive conclusions—never very acceptable, nor considered quite correct taste, in traditional British academe. This will hardly trouble a man who can cheerfully write, about historian Peter Gay's *The Education of the Senses*

(1984), that "Clio and the clitoris have never been so close." It would be a mistake simply to relish these essays as so many canapés before the publication next November of Cannadine's magnum opus, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*; they also represent a uniquely subversive style of high entertainment.

—Roy Foster is professor of history at Birkbeck College, University of London.

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## NEW TITLES

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### *Contemporary Affairs*

**SOVIET WOMEN:** *Walking the Tightrope.* By Francine du Plessix Gray. Doubleday. 213 pp. \$19.95

Francine du Plessix Gray, an American novelist of partly Russian descent, investigates a side of Soviet reality little known to most Western readers—the world of the "second sex." Much of what she reports will come as revelation. How many Americans know, for example, that only five percent of Soviet women have access to birth-control pills or IUDs, or that the main form of birth control in the Soviet Union is abortion, or that the national average is 14 abortions per woman? In terms of sex education, one of Leningrad's few sexologists observed, "the Soviet Union is among the most backward countries in the world, somewhere on the level of Bhutan [or] Afghanistan."

The quotidian complaints of Soviet women will come as less of a surprise to their Western sisters. Working hard all day, queuing in long lines at the stores, and coming home to husbands who won't share in the housekeeping or child-rearing constitute the fate of many Soviet women. But if their plight sounds familiar, their response to it is not. The Soviets du Plessix Gray interviewed scorned Western feminism, often dismissing it as unnatural.

Reluctant to question traditional gender

roles, Soviet women instead tend to ignore their indolent men and forge bonds with other females: friends, mothers, and grandmothers. The old Russian matriarchy survives in a society where strong, self-sacrificing, self-sufficient women dominate passive, emasculated husbands. None of du Plessix Gray's subjects felt the need to compete with men. Indeed, the author began to wonder which sex was more in need of support: "After dozens of evenings spent with distraught, henpecked men and with a dismaying abundance of superwomen, I reached the conclusion the Soviet Union might be . . . in need of a men's movement."

All the same, Soviet superwomen are fed up with being superwomen on the job. "American women are still struggling for the freedom *to*," du Plessix Gray notes, "whereas Soviet women are struggling for the freedom *from*." The Revolution gave women the right (actually the responsibility) to work outside of the house and to receive equal wages. But practice has lagged behind theory: For the majority, women's "liberation" has become an overworked, underpaid nightmare. Nearly half of Soviet women



*A Soviet poster: the working woman as hero.*

work at unskilled, often backbreaking jobs; most warehouse workers and highway construction crews, for example, are female. "We are like [American] blacks!" complained one woman. The social services, health care, and child-support that enabled an earlier generation to bear the double burden of work and family deteriorated during the Brezhnev era. The heroism and outright despair of today's Soviet women are expressed in the aphorism, "Women do everything, and men do the rest." The strongest desire of most women du Plessix Gray interviewed was to raise their children themselves and not to work outside of the home.

*Soviet Women* may be slanted—almost no peasant women or women living outside major cities are interviewed—but overall it has the ring of recognizable truth. Soviet women, trapped between traditional values and contemporary expectations, are living simultaneously in the 19th and 20th centuries. Du Plessix Gray's account of a society fragmented not only among nationalities but even between different eras hints at the difficulties facing reformers in the age of Gorbachev.

**WARPATHS:** *The Politics of Partition.* By Robert Schaeffer. Hill and Wang. 306 pp. \$22.95

In 1921, the war-weary British hoped to bring an end to the Irish problem by dividing the island between Catholics and Protestants. Instead of solving the conflict, partition brought 70 more years of bloodshed, with no end in sight. It was hardly an auspicious precedent for a practice that would soon be applied to conflict-ridden nations throughout the world.

Schaeffer, a journalist who specializes in security issues, surveys the results of partitioning in, among other countries, Palestine, India, Germany, Korea, and Vietnam. He comes up with a staggering body-count: Since World War II, "wars in the divided states have claimed nearly 13 million lives." Partition has also "uprooted millions from their homeland . . . [and] led to internecine war within and between divided states and [drawn] superpower states into intractable regional wars."

"Partition is the expedient of tired states-

men," Conor Cruise O'Brien once observed. Schaeffer musters little sympathy for the cause of their fatigue—the fact that they had tried other solutions and repeatedly failed. What then does Schaeffer suggest? That we heed the examples of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. Lincoln saved the United States from partition by rejecting the South's right to secede; later, King rejected the goal of Black Power separatists by invoking Lincoln's logic: that true democracy lies not in partition but in guaranteeing a minority's rights. Schaeffer passes lightly over the fact that, between Lincoln's decision and King's activism, a non-partitioned United States underwent a bloody civil war and then a century during which minority rights were mostly denied.

Indeed, Schaeffer skirts over any facts that support the case for partition. Europe with a partitioned Germany enjoyed its longest period of prosperity and peace in modern times. And in some areas like Korea, partition enabled the superpowers to limit their disagreement and avoid another world war.

When Schaeffer quotes Lincoln on secession, however, he hints at a problem even more basic than partition: self-determination. If a minority secedes, Lincoln warned, it forges a dangerous precedent, "for a minority of their own will secede from them." It sounds as if Lincoln were describing the Soviet Union today, where Abkhazians are threatening to secede from Georgia if Georgians secede.

*Warpaths* is thus timely in its underscoring of a paradox of contemporary politics. Many problems today—of nuclear weapons, of economies, of ecology, of terrorism—can no longer



*A South Korean guards the 151-mile demilitarized zone dividing North and South Korea.*



be confined within national borders. Yet minorities in Israel, Lebanon, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union are demanding self-determination. The two trends, nationalism and internationalism, run counter to each other and can produce situations fraught with risk. Although Schaeffer does not offer an answer, he asks an important question: Should national or ethnic self-determination, once championed so ardently by Woodrow Wilson, be a governing principle of world politics?

### Arts & Letters

**MOZART IN VIENNA, 1781-1791.** By Volkmar Braunbehrens. Weidenfeld. 481 pp. \$25.95

**MOZART: The Golden Years.** By H. C. Robbins Landon. Schirmer. 272 pp. \$29.95

"Looking at Mozart's daily life serves only to emphasize how little we really know about him," says musical historian Braunbehrens, who succeeds nonetheless in revealing "what was happening outside Mozart's house while he was composing inside." Braunbehrens' investigations lead him to dispute the popular notion that "Viennese society and, above all, Joseph II [the Habsburg emperor] were to blame for Mozart's lack of recognition, slow demise, and interment in a pauper's grave." Indeed, a different portrait emerges. It depicts a willful young man rebelling against the restrictions put upon his music by his employer, Archbishop Colloredo, and boldly setting out in 1781 to seek artistic freedom and renown in imperial Vienna. Despite financial difficulties during his decade in Vienna, Mozart composed a body of music—including six operas, some 20 symphonies, a host of works for piano, strings, clarinet, flute, horn, oboe, and voice, as well as the great Requiem mass he was working on when he died—that would stand as a remarkable catalogue for any composer, but particularly for one who lived only to the age of 35.

Mozart had been to Vienna before. His father, Leopold, had nurtured his musical talent from childhood and taken him, the child prodigy, to perform before princes, kings, and popes throughout Europe. But earning a living as a free-lance musician was another matter. Jo-

seph II's stinginess was proverbial. While encouraging Mozart with praise, he was reluctant to guarantee him a permanent salary. So Mozart gave lessons, sold copies of his music, and performed concerts to support himself, his wife Constanze, and their children, all the while maneuvering



for imperial appointments that never came. A war with Turkey in 1788 emptied Vienna of the aristocrats who supported him, forcing Mozart to borrow heavily from friends. Still, Braunbehrens shows that his prospects were improving in 1791, the year he died of a recurrence of rheumatic fever; indeed, in that year he made more money (almost 4,000 florins) than he had in any previous year.

Readers will find fewer details of Mozart's life in musicologist Robbins Landon's study of the same period. But while Braunbehrens shuns discussion of Mozart's music ("Music must be heard," he says), Robbins Landon lavishes attention upon the origins and legacies of Mozart's works. We learn, for example, that the Stein pianos used by Mozart were well suited to the "delicate and rather staccato technique" he favored—as opposed to later pianos whose sustaining qualities allowed for the "beautiful and silvery effect" associated with Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Robbins Landon shows how Mozart revolutionized orchestration with unusual pairings of instruments, and how he broke with established forms of concerti and quartets to create a sound never before heard—so unique that a quartet dedicated to his friend Joseph Haydn in 1785 was dubbed the "Dissonance" quartet. The weakness of *The Golden Years* is its attempt to psychoanalyze a man known to us only through his letters. (The author, for example, diagnoses Mozart as a manic-depressive in order to account for the large number of works he composed in a minor key.) What stands out in both volumes, however, is the fact that Mozart—despite human failings and personal misfortune—achieved what most others can only marvel at. We are still marveling 200 years later.

**WILLA CATHER:** *Double Lives*. By *Hermione Lee*. Pantheon. 410 pp. \$29.95

Willa Cather's novels of Midwestern prairie life made her one of America's most popular novelists. Indeed, many of her fans came to associate the qualities of such novels as *O Pioneers!* (1913) and *My Ántonia* (1918) with Cather (1873–1947) herself: provincial simplicity, innocence, integrity, endurance. But Lee, a British critic who has written about Virginia Woolf and Elizabeth Bowen, finds that Cather was “no laureate of rural America.” As Lee's subtitle, *Double Lives*, suggests, things were not as simple as they once seemed.

Cather's childhood was already half over when, in 1883, her family moved from Virginia to Red Cloud, Nebraska, a bleak land that the nine-year-old girl viewed with an outsider's eye. After college, she left the Midwest for Pittsburgh and later New York, seeking to lead the life of the “new woman” and supporting herself as a schoolteacher and journalist. The Maine writer Sarah Orne Jewett, whom she met in 1909, convinced Cather that the region she had once almost despised, and its “everyday people who grow out of the soil,” could be material for the fiction she soon began writing.

Feminist and lesbian critics have claimed Cather as one of their own, even though Cather never openly expressed her sexual orientation. Lee describes the youthful Cather wearing mannish attire and signing herself “William Cather.” But she warns readers “not to collapse Cather's imaginative life into a simple matter of repression.” (Lee herself treats Cather's 44-year “Boston marriage” to Edith Lewis in a mere four pages.) What makes the gender question interesting, however, is that it seems to influence the genre question.

The struggle for the frontier was long considered an essentially male story. Lee praises Cather for “being the only woman of her time to have appropriated a ‘great tradition’ of male American writing.” Male authors like Hamlin Garland and Ole Rølvaag propounded a kind of liter-



ary Manifest Destiny, a romantic self-identification with the conquest of the continent. Cather was more interested in *Obscure Destinies* (as she titled her 1932 short-story collection). Her aim was to reveal the emotional lives of settlers rooted to one spot on the prairie. In that prairie existence, according to Cather, it was women who displayed the traditional masculine strengths and the men who were weak.

In 1923, Cather wrote that “we must face the fact that the splendid story of the pioneers is finished . . .” Her own pioneer experience having lasted barely a decade, she began to cast about for other subjects. Her travels to the Southwest inspired *Death Comes to the Archbishop* (1927). And in *The Professor's House* (1925), her own difficult transition inspired the story of a Midwestern boy who leaves the prairie, enjoys initial success, but finds himself increasingly at odds with the modern world. Much of her own experience Cather considered too private to write about. (She began dodging reporters, building a mountain retreat, and even burning letters and manuscripts.) In her writing, she abandoned the contemporary world for 17th-century Quebec (*Shadows on the Rock*, 1931), Old Virginia (*Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, 1940), and even a story of 14th-century France. Little wonder that the New Critics of the 1930s and '40s dismissed her as provincial and escapist.

Lee joins those who would revive Cather's reputation. But she does so not because of Cather's feminism but because of her art, her creation of a language uniquely suitable for American experiences and landscapes. Lee weakens her case somewhat by overstating it, by indiscriminately approving all of Cather's stories, and by characterizing this author who finally fled the modern world as a modernist “in the company of Proust, Lawrence, Eliot, and Virginia Woolf.”

### History

**LET THEM CALL ME REBEL:** Saul Alinsky—*His Life and Legacy*. By *Sanford D. Horwitt*. Knopf. 595 pp. \$29.95

Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1835 that the genius of American politics expressed itself at



the local level. A century later, Saul Alinsky appeared the living embodiment of Tocqueville's observation. In his native Chicago, he organized and prodded

into action thousands of immigrants, minorities, slum-dwellers, and juvenile delinquents. A cross between Machiavelli and P. T. Barnum, he perfected the tactics of confrontation: When one Chicago alderman proved indifferent to adequate garbage pickup, Alinsky had mounds of trash dumped in front of his tavern.

Born in 1909, the child of Russian-Jewish immigrants, Alinsky received his earliest education in the streets of the Windy City. Later, as a student in the University of Chicago's sociology department, he imbibed the new social-environmental understanding of urban problems. Doing field work with Italian street gangs, Alinsky respected their behavior as plausible responses to social *disorganization*.

In 1939, Alinsky organized the first "neighborhood council" in the Back of the Yards, as the largely Polish slaughterhouse area was called. The council helped bring John L. Lewis's Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) into the packing houses, and eventually it opened day-care and recreational centers. The New York *Herald Tribune* declared that democracy had arrived in Upton Sinclair's "jungle."

Alinsky modeled his tactics on those of union organizers and especially of Lewis, who disdained ideology and fought ruthlessly for power. Alinsky's "method" involved three stages: first, employing professional organizers to lay the groundwork; second, organizing a community around an immediate, winnable issue; and, third, turning power over to local people. "Don't do for people what they can do for themselves" was his ironclad rule.

By 1945 Alinsky was a national celebrity. When his *Reveille for Radicals* became a best seller that year, he hardly suspected that his finest days were behind him. During the McCarthyite 1950s, he lost many of his supporters and much of his funding. He again made headlines in 1963, when his Temporary Woodlawn Organization (TWO) blocked the University of Chicago from buying up adjacent black neighborhoods. TWO was an early civil-

rights organization, but Alinsky found himself being edged out of the movement by black leaders. Even though he remained as feisty as ever, lecturing and staging rallies, he died in 1972 a largely forgotten man.

Horwitt, a policy adviser for public interest organizations, provides a superb account of Alinsky's colorful life. But he struggles vainly to persuade his readers that Alinsky is not forgotten, that his legacy is alive and well. To be sure, the Catholic clergy of Chicago's slum neighborhoods always supported Alinsky, the Jewish agitator, and certainly Alinsky influenced the Catholic Church in its populist social activism. Later, when he organized Hispanic migrant workers in California, he put on the payroll a promising young man—Cesar Chavez. Nevertheless, the limitations of Alinsky's confrontational approach decrease the likelihood of his having a lasting influence.

Successful mass movements seem to require not only strategies and tactics but also ideological underpinnings. Alinsky, however, shunned ideology. His successes, the Back of the Yards Council and TWO, had piggybacked on two of the great ideological movements of the 20th century: the labor-unionism of the 1930s and the civil-rights struggle of the 1950s and '60s. Without an ideological stance, Alinsky was left organizing communities and fighting City Hall when real power—in commerce, in industry, in the media, and in politics—was shifting away from localities to a limited number of urban centers. Alinsky may have been Tocqueville's American genius, but Alinsky's America was no longer the one Tocqueville had visited.

**COSMOPOLIS: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity.** By Stephen Toulmin. Free Press. 228 pp. \$22.95

After two world wars, dramatic economic fluctuations, and environmental catastrophes—or, for that matter, just after the morning traffic commute—"modernity" may no longer seem the unquestionable wonder earlier generations thought it to be. In *Cosmopolis*, physicist and philosopher Toulmin attempts to understand how a world men set out confidently to control got so out of hand. His explanation—which focuses on the passion for the scientific, rational

ordering of society ("the hidden agenda of modernity")—is hardly new. Toulmin is more original in locating that rationalist philosophy in its time and in demonstrating, through the limitations of his own book, how difficult it is to free oneself of its hold.

Modernity, in Toulmin's view, began when 17th-century thinkers began to substitute for heavenly truths secular certainty: To overcome the ideological warring in a perpetually crisis-ridden Europe, philosophers such as Descartes, Newton, and Hobbes renounced all human ambiguities and envisioned a human society that would be rationally ordered. Descartes and Hobbes are usually discussed without reference to the preceding Renaissance philosophy, but Toulmin shows just whom they were writing *against*. Descartes's epistemology, with its clear, uniform distinctions between subject and object, was written specifically to refute the revival of classical skepticism in such writers as Montaigne.

If *Cosmopolis* has a hero, it is clearly Montaigne. Montaigne (1533–92) talks about himself, recounts his moods and his sexual experiences, admits his ignorance, and abjures all systems. Descartes (1596–1650), by contrast, demands absolute certainty, assumes the model for all knowledge is mathematics, and separates the controlling mind from controllable nature. The Cartesian quest for certainty has, over three centuries, invariably favored the written over the oral, the universal over the particular, the general over the local, and the timeless over the time-bound. In trying to realize the Cartesian agenda, modernity got on the wrong track by not taking into account the infinite variety of human experience. Toulmin's prescription for our overreaching rational control, and the one-sided modernity it has created, is a return to that humane, cautious, tolerant skepticism that he finds in Montaigne and generalizes to all the Renaissance humanists.

Toulmin's essay reflects so much of the recent critique of Western culture that it is a bit of a surprise to realize at the end how completely he remains within the intellectual framework he condemns. His argument lacks humility, omits all thinkers (e.g., Spinoza, Hume) who would force him to qualify; Toulmin is himself systematic and generalizing, too often dispensing with the taste for particu-

lars he admires in the earlier humanists. He thus discusses modernity without a single reference to race, class, gender, and he is as free as Descartes was of any allusion to a world beyond the West. Physician, one is tempted to say to Toulmin, heal thyself.

**RACE AND HISTORY:** Selected Essays, 1938–1988. By John Hope Franklin. LSU. 450 pp. \$29.95

John Hope Franklin, born in 1915 in an all-black town in Oklahoma, is now completing his remarkable academic career as James B. Duke Professor of History Emeritus at Duke University. Along the way, he not only wrote such works as *From Slavery to Freedom* (1947), *Reconstruction After the Civil War* (1962), and *Racial Equality in America* (1976) but also served as president of America's four most prestigious historical associations. In 1915, it would have



*An integrated jury during Reconstruction. By 1880, juries in the South were all white again.*

been impossible to imagine such a career for a black teacher or scholar. But if what we have here is proof of the American Dream, it is a dream sullied by many slights and rebuffs, several of which are angrily recalled in this tough-minded collection.

All together, these 27 essays—which range from the racial perceptions of the Founding Fathers to 20th-century efforts to achieve racial equality—embody Franklin's lifetime program to revise American history "in order to place the Negro in his proper relationship and perspective." Consider, for example, the two essays on Reconstruction written by Franklin 30 years apart. In 1948, when Franklin surveyed

the relatively unresearched topic, Reconstruction was considered a tragic era during which white southerners suffered at the hands of rapacious Yankee carpetbaggers and their ignorant Negro minions. But by 1980, when Franklin published "Mirror for Americans," Reconstruction was understood as a serious attempt to establish some measure of racial equality.

Franklin's other major theme—the scholar's social responsibility—is dealt with in a selection titled plainly "The Historian and Public Policy." Much of Franklin's career coincided with the civil-rights upheaval, and he attempted to tread a course between both white and black extremists. Franklin believed that the black historian should remain calm and objective, refusing "the temptation to pollute his scholarship with polemics, diatribes, arguments." Dispassionate scholarship at times forced Franklin to repress his feelings in a way that "would not be satisfying to some, and . . . may even be lacking in courage. I do not commend it; I merely confess it." Yet Franklin's scholarship led him to his own variety of social activism. He provided expert witness in the courts and Congress; and he wrote the background studies for the NAACP's desegregation cases. Perhaps no scholar of his generation may more rightfully claim that "the historian is the conscience of his nation, if honesty and consistency are factors that nurture the conscience."

### *Science & Technology*

**MIND CHILDREN:** The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence. By *Hans Moravec*. Harvard. 214 pp. \$18.95

**THE EMPEROR'S NEW MIND:** Concerning Computers, Minds, and the Laws of Physics. By *Roger Penrose*. Oxford. 466 pp. \$24.95

Last year a new computer program, playfully named Deep Thought, defeated several grand chessmasters at their own game. Such triumphs are seized upon by the people, especially popular-science writers, who argue that we are moving into a new reality, a 21st century shaped by computers that will take over almost all the tasks once done by people. Advocates of this argument for artificial intelligence—called, for short, "strong AI"—reason

that all human thinking is the process of complicated calculations that computers theoretically can, and one day will, do. (According to strong AI, our brain is only, as Marvin Minsky put it, a "computer made of meat.")

Strong AI has one of its most forceful spokesmen in Hans Moravec, director of the Mobile Robot Laboratory of Carnegie Mellon University. Narrating the history of the AI community, Moravec provides some comparisons to show where we now stand: The computers of the 1950s he likens in intelligence to a bacteria, while today's computers, he says, are on the intellectual level of a spider. Moravec makes some calculations of his own. The computing action of the human retina can be performed today by computer simulations; by calculating what fraction the retina's function represents of the brain's operation as a whole, Moravec extrapolates how long it will be, given the phenomenal rate of advances in computer technology, before computers can simulate all of the brain's operations. In 40 years, Moravec estimates, computers will have "human equivalence." From there, Moravec goes on to imagine a "postbiological" world in which computerized robots not only perform, for example, brain surgery on humans but even improve and reproduce themselves. Moravec's technological future resembles Stanley Kubrick's film *2001*, in which the computers end up seeming more human than the people.

Proponents of strong AI like to label their opponents "mystics," but Roger Penrose has impeccable scientific credentials. The Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford, he has contributed to the physics of the "Big Bang" origins of the universe, and his research with Stephen Hawking helped establish the plausibility of black holes. Penrose's refutation of thinking as programmed computation is straightforward: Computers can deal only with computable numbers, but there exists an entire branch of advanced mathematics that works with noncomputable numbers. Indeed, he cites numerous mathematical laws underlying the operations of both the brain and the physical world which have this noncomputational character. As he differentiates thought from mere computation—in an argument that brings in complexity theory, quantum mechanics, Einstein's relativity, Gödel's undecidability,

Mandelbrot's set, and physiology—Penrose proposes a new model of the mind that conjoins 20th-century biology, which is largely mechanistic, with contemporary physics, which is paradoxical (e.g., matter turning into energy or a particle passing simultaneously through two slits). Penrose's description of the mind's operation includes intuition, taste, and judgment, attributes which proponents of strong AI like to disregard.

Penrose has acknowledged that Moravec's *Mind Children* is stimulating and suggestive—as science fiction. However, when theoretical physicists and mathematicians speculate about a masterful set of equations that will unite subatomic quantum physics and large-scale relativity into a “theory of everything” (or T.O.E.), laymen are finding it increasingly difficult to tell the science fiction from the science. That may explain why the strong AI argument is enjoying such a vogue.

**THE FIFTH ESSENCE:** The Search for Dark Matter in the Universe. By Lawrence M. Krauss. Basic. 342 pp. \$21.95

Sir Isaac Newton found that the amount of force that planets exert on one another depends on their mass and their distance from each other. This “pull,” in turn, determines the speed and course of planets. The same principle applies to galaxies—or did. In 1933, the astronomer Fritz Zwicky established that galaxies move at speeds that should tear them apart, based on what we can observe.

Krauss, a professor of physics and astronomy at Yale University, demonstrates that for galaxies to hold together as they do, there must be a lot more mass to them than meets the eye. From the available evidence, he argues that

“more than 90 percent of the entire mass within the visible universe is made of material that is invisible to telescopes.” The new Hubble space telescope, by possibly determining at what rate the universe is expanding, may be able to suggest where and how much invisible or missing mass there is. But even without this evidence, Newton's universal theory of gravitation, Einstein's theory of relativity, and the “Big Bang” theory all support the idea of the existence of “dark matter.” If dark matter doesn't exist, then these established theories will also have to be reconsidered.

What, then, is dark matter? And why not, Krauss asks, assume “that this dark matter is made of the same stuff we are”—that is, of familiar neutrons and protons? Because if it were composed only of these “normal” subatomic particles, galaxies would be much larger than they actually are. So the search is on for the other constituents. One candidate that meets theoretical muster is weakly interacting massive particles (WIMPs). But how do you test something like a WIMP, which is so elusive that it could pass through the molecules of a “solid” rock 100,000 times the size of the Earth and still not interact once with anything? Krauss proposes that one could build a 10-cm cube detector, and in one hour  $10^{12}$  of them will have passed through, statistically enough for one to interact with the detector. He predicts that “there is a real possibility that this darkness will reveal its identity within our lifetimes.”

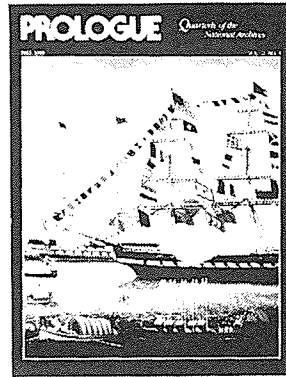
Krauss cautions that the “discovery” of dark matter is “not necessarily as ‘deep’ as those associated with the development of relativity or quantum mechanics.” Yet, he adds, it is “mind-boggling that within less than a quarter-century we have come within striking distance of the answer” to the question man has been asking for millennia: What is the universe made of?

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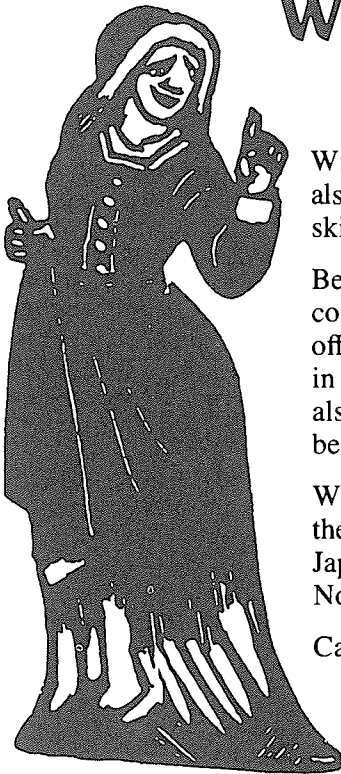
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## High-Tech Tantalus

The arrival in the American workplace of the computer and other high-tech marvels was supposed to give a strong boost to the U.S. economy. So far, it hasn't. The cause of frustration is a band of obstinate gremlins—what Edward Tenner here describes as “revenge effects.” Unless we confront them with better organization, Tenner argues, we will continue to be tantalized.

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*by Edward Tenner*

**T**he tragic god of the industrial West was once Prometheus, who still holds the place of honor at the Rockefeller Center skating rink. If a statue for the year 2000 is needed, it perhaps should be of King Tantalus, son of Zeus, who according to one account brought secrets—information rather than fire—from the gods to humanity. For this theft he was cruelly punished in the netherworld: The water in which he was condemned eternally to stand would recede whenever he leaned over to drink, and a bough of fruit that dangled above him would be blown beyond his grasp whenever he reached for it.

The 1980s was a tantalizing decade. Computers seemed to transform the workplace. They did not, as feared, throw millions out of work. But neither did they, as hoped, make many workers feel less harassed or more creative. They increased

productivity least in services, the sector of the economy that was growing fastest.

There are success stories to the contrary. Thanks to computer-based exploration geophysics, America's estimated recoverable reserves of oil have declined little during a decade of three-billion-barrel annual production. Authors' electronic files and conversion software have helped some book publishers reduce production costs and hold down prices. But will these be typical experiences? Many people, still tantalized, are wondering.

In 1987 the Labor Department reported that the rate of productivity growth outside manufacturing had fallen significantly since the beginning of office automation in the early 1970s. The pre-computer postwar average of 2.3 percent declined to 0.5 percent annually between 1973 and 1981 and was still only 0.7 percent by the mid-1980s. In the professions, the record has been even worse: two-



tenths of one percent annually. Government fared no better. The U.S. Postal Service has spent \$526 million on automated equipment in the last year yet still runs a \$1.6 billion deficit and has actually increased its mail-processing work force to handle all those bar codes and nine-digit zips.

In 1988 Robert H. Flast, vice president for technology strategy at American Express, told a meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences that the costs of making computer systems work have "more than offset the savings from work transferred to the machines." Stephen Roach, a Morgan Stanley & Co. economist, declared to the *Wall Street Journal*: "Fifteen years into the 'high-teching' of America, the U.S. is still trapped in a quagmire of low-productivity growth." Since the great majority of new jobs in the 1990s will be in the service sector, the recent record is an enigma.

What we have discovered the hard way, and will continue to find, are revenge effects: unintended and ironic consequences that apparently neutralize the benefits of technology. Everyone has his own favorite revenge effect. Parkinson's Law, that work expands to fill the time available for its completion, is a cautious executive's revenge effect. The unmanageable growth of traffic on new highways that were built to lower the old level of congestion is an environmentalist's. A recent book on long-term accident rates in developed countries by John Adams of the University of London argues that total casualties changed remarkably little from 1900 to 1975; Heinz Wolff, another British academic, has used Adams's data to suggest that people are "buying back danger," taking new risks that cancel the benefits of safety measures. Automatic teller ma-



*Tantalus tantalized.*

chines, originally an alternative to long banking lines, now have queues of their own: revenge again. At home, as the historian Ruth Schwartz Cowan has shown, "labor-saving" appliances have redirected rather than reduced time spent on housework. And all that oil recovered by new techniques may lead only to more sprawl and longer commutes.

A revenge effect is not necessarily bad. It may simply reflect a consumer priority. To some people, rural life or a better job may be worth a fatiguing drive to work. Access to cash at all hours may matter more than shorter waiting times. Clean underwear daily may be worth a sacrifice of leisure time, especially if it's that of another family member. Speed may be val-

ued above safety. If we were consistently conscious about our preferences, we might not perceive revenge effects as problems. But forecasters and marketers influence our expectations. When they are not met, we are tantalized.

We expect, for example, that technology will give us an advantage over competitors; but of course the competition has or gets technology of its own. Martin Neil Baily, an economist at the Brookings Institution in Washington, has pointed out that "much of information processing is used as a tool in the effort to move customers from one company to another." If slick laser printing influences even tough-minded biomedical researchers to rank some scientific materials higher than others, as a recent study suggests, no wonder so much computer power goes into persuasion rather than production. But these advantages seldom last. The first users, whether of hot-air balloons, carrier pigeons, real-time stock quotations, or cellular telephones, have a temporary advantage that disappears as rapidly as the technology spreads. In the long run, arms races help mainly the armorers.

Even where we appear to gain real productivity, we are tantalized because we can't estimate the price we will have to pay in learning time. Digital Equipment Corporation estimated in 1987 that it presented more classroom hours each year than Harvard, Yale, and Princeton combined. The technical manuals for a single car can cost a repair shop \$1,600 a year, and mechanics may need two days to study one new electronic transmission. Computers themselves will continue to be simpler to use; yet as their capabilities grow, there will be more to study. There seem to be between one and two pages of documentation per dollar of retail price for most popular applications software, not to mention entire bookstore sections devoted to the information and techniques the producers left out. Organizations in the

1990s will have to look much harder at learning costs—theirs, their customers', and third parties'.

In principle, this learning time is an investment that should lead to higher pay for the employee as well as more profit for the firm. In fact, the benefits aren't necessarily appearing. A recent survey of desktop publishing managers suggests that impressive gains in the productivity of their systems often haven't affected their salaries. And technology is also shifting work within organizations without necessarily increasing output. While some workers are eliminated or downgraded, others have the double burden of learning new systems and making up for the work of the displaced. In one recent study of a small midwestern manufacturing company, the "protected" employees chosen to operate the new systems frequently cited job stress and 60-hour workweeks. In offices, skilled employees may take hours from their real jobs to guide coworkers with new equipment. No wonder a current cynical definition of productivity is "fewer people working longer."

Even where staffing isn't changed, speed doesn't necessarily bring more productivity. Spreadsheet software should be able to free managers' time for more creative work. But some managers armed with financial and statistical software may demand and produce more data more often, with no net saving of time. As the computer consultant Paul Strassmann has pointed out: "If a secretary types 300 lines of mostly useless texts per day it does not follow that replacing the typewriter with a word processor capable of generating 3,000 mostly useless lines" will make a firm more productive.

With texts as with data, revenge effects don't stop at the first draft. The ease of correction can relax the incentive to get things right the first time; writing may take as much time as it did conventionally. It's all too easy to fiddle with perfectly good work, making neutral or even harmful re-

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*Edward Tenner, an executive editor at Princeton University Press and a visiting lecturer in the Council of Humanities, recently gave a course on the history of information at Princeton. He received an A.B. (1965) from Princeton and a Ph.D. (1972) from the University of Chicago. The author of *Tech Speak* (1986), he has written for many publications, including *Money*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Magazine*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Copyright © 1990 by Edward Tenner.*

visions. And data of all kinds do seem to expand to fill ever cheaper storage technology. According to the market analysis firm Dataquest Inc., American users bought nearly four times the IBM disk storage in 1987 alone that they had in the seven years between 1975 and 1982.

A decade ago, the experts imagined that this abundant storage and electronic networking would reduce the need for hard copy. Instead, the most surprising and striking revenge effect of all has been a paradoxical proliferation of paper. The paperless office has already gone the way of the fiberglass bungalow and the robot butler. From 1975 to 1987, total sales of printing and writing paper (excluding newsprint) increased from 10.9 to 23.4 million short tons. The techno-pundits ignored how much easier and cheaper it was becoming to print out a new document. They imagined that the computer was central and the printer "peripheral." They didn't see how soon the speed, quality, and economy of printers would improve. They didn't understand that most people hate long hours at a terminal and fear losing data. And they didn't realize the electronic-driven potential of paper, from high-volume, self-diagnosing copier-duplicators to faxes to satellite-transmitted national newspapers. No wonder experts once predicted that 5,000 plain-paper copiers would satisfy the entire demand of the United States. (There are approximately 5,224,000 in circulation today.)

Image processing is beginning to reduce the need for long-term paper storage. Its revenge will probably be even more frequent paper retrieval. No more rummaging through filing cabinets, walking down the hall, and waiting in line; instant photocopies will follow a few keystrokes. Cheaper and faster laser printers will encourage making more copies of longer documents. Inexpensive plain-paper faxes will transmit these from office to office, while postal volume will continue to grow as people continue to mail confirmation copies.

Because there will be more documents

but no more hours in a day, the proliferation of paper will make it even harder to attract attention and to pay attention. Top managers will cope with information overload only at a price: Assistants will screen and organize data. Professor William Melody of the British Program on Information and Communications Technology (PICT) even foresees "corporate electronic monks" giving context and meaning to data and raw information. On the front lines, some blue- and white-collar workers will have more and more information pre-organized electronically. Already, American Express credit card authorizers use an expert system summarizing account information that once took as many as 16 screens from six data bases. Middle managers will have less help.

Will the next decade and beyond be as tantalizing as the 1980s? Not necessarily. We are starting to learn from experience about technology in organizations, and there are encouraging lessons. Automation doesn't solve the problems of organizations. The hierarchies borrowed from the military and old-style manufacturing are poorly matched with the ability of new technology to share information and to upgrade work. Some companies already give more authority to smaller numbers of better-educated and highly-trained production employees—"gold-collar" workers, as Robert Kelly at Carnegie-Mellon University has called them. The same is possible in the service sector. New corporate structures can give initiative to larger numbers of employees. The real challenges are no longer electronic but human.

Once we realize how commonplace revenge effects are, we can do something about them. (Sometimes there's nothing wrong with them: Isn't it better to recycle paper than to force people to stare all day at terminals?) We can plan for them, take advantage of them, or train ourselves to avoid them. Blind optimism makes it more likely that they will dominate us. The age of Tantalus need not extend indefinitely. But we must resolve to end it.

## Portrait of the Critic as a Young Man

The artist telling how he or she came to be an artist is a well-established genre, crowded with both fictional and nonfictional examples. But what about the story of the making of a critic? One version emerges in these scenes of a Northern Irish childhood, recalled by one of our foremost literary scholars.

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*by Denis Donoghue*

I think of Warrenpoint as a town, not as a village. In my private dictionary a village is a community surrounded by fields: The people are farmers, or they serve farmers and their families as shopkeepers, nurses, doctors, teachers, priests. At Sunday Mass the men wear caps, not hats, and after Mass they stand around the church to chat, gossip, or stare at the hills. A town, small or large, is not dependent on the land that surrounds it; it opens on a different world. Tullow, in County Carlow, where I was born on December 1, 1928, still seems to me a village.

Warrenpoint is a town because one side of it opens upon the sea. If you look at a map of Ireland, find Belfast, come around the Ards Peninsula and Strangford Lough, and mark Ardglass, Newcastle, Kilkeel, and Rostrevor, you'll find the next town is Warrenpoint, where Carlingford Lough narrows till it ceases being a lough at Narrow Water and becomes the Newry Canal; not much of a canal these days. Warrenpoint looks across the lough to Omeath, a meagre town, though it has Newry on one side and Carlingford on the other and the Cooley Mountains behind it,

and one of the mountains is called the Long Woman's Grave. Warrenpoint is in Northern Ireland; Omeath is in the South.

As a seaside resort, Warrenpoint relied not upon laughing girls or golden weather but upon three more reliable considerations. One: You could get to the place easily from any part of the North by train, since it was the terminus of the Great Northern Railway's branch line from Newry. No longer; the train is gone. Two: Warrenpoint has the largest square in Ireland, a great place for amusements, circuses, swings and roundabouts, ice-cream carts, parades, celebrations. The square was promiscuous in the wiles of display. Three: The licensing laws for the sale of alcohol are stricter in the North than in the South, mainly because Presbyterians keep the Sabbath more severely than Catholics do. If you came to Warrenpoint for a Sunday trip, you would find the public houses shut, but you could go by ferryboat across to Omeath, an open town on the Sabbath, for drink and noise.

I remember nothing before Warrenpoint.

Tullow comes into reckoning because my father, a policeman in the Royal Irish

Constabulary, was stationed there when he met my mother, a girl named Johanna O'Neill. Her father, too, was in the RIC, stationed in Clonmel. My father was promoted to the rank of sergeant in Tullow when the reigning sergeant, named Morris, went mad and ran from the barracks, for reasons known only to himself. My father was the man in the gap and he got the job, the only preferment he ever enjoyed. When the Government of Ireland Act (1920) divided Ireland into two parts, with a Parliament in Belfast to govern the six northern counties, it was ordained that any member of the RIC would have the right to go North and take up the same rank in the newly formed Royal Ulster Constabulary. My father, having seen enough of Ireland and of police work in a violent time, spent three months trying to find an alternative job. He and my mother went to Chester, where he tried to establish himself as an insurance agent, till someone started a rumor that he had murdered a man in Ireland and was "on the run." My father gave up and went to Northern Ireland to take up his rank in the RUC. He always maintained that the lapse of three months in his official career, taken in association with his Catholicism, made any further promotion in the RUC impossible. I believe him. During his years in the RUC it was not yet necessary for the authorities to show goodwill toward Catholics or to promote them above the rank of sergeant. If my father had been 20 or 30 years younger and in the same profession, he would probably have been selected as a token Catholic and raised perhaps to the rank of Head Constable or even District Inspector to placate the natives. In the event, he retired on pension before such a concession became necessary. "Too late, too



*The future critic, Denis Donoghue, at about age 10 (above). The critic's father (right), Sergeant Donoghue, in the uniform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.*



late," he cried in vain.

In Warrenpoint we lived in the police barracks, or rather in half of it, the other half being given over to the business of the police, centered on what was called the Day Room. There was a concrete wall about six feet from the building, protecting it against an attack or a riot. By locking two small gates and one large one, you could close off the barracks and hold out against a siege. The barracks had two cells, or lockups, as they were called, one for men, one for women. I remember my father lifting me up to look through a metal slit at a man he had arrested.

Our half of the barracks, the "married quarters," had a parlor, a kitchen and scullery, three bedrooms, a bathroom, and an outhouse. The parlor had a black upright

piano, a circular mahogany table, and a trolley for the wireless. The married quarters were different in certain respects from the ordinary working-class home. The kitchen and the parlor were in the front, equally in view if they could have been seen behind the barrier of the wall. The common life was conducted in the kitchen, and the parlor was reserved for special occasions. But many activities constituted a special occasion. Listening to the radio was special; so was the formal occasion of schoolwork. I did my lessons on the parlor table, which gleamed in preparation for the social life we rarely had.

Do I remember accurately that our kitchen had brownish-red stone tiles, a gas cooker, an old cast-iron range, a wooden box for holding odds and ends, a sofa with the horsehair stuffing falling out of it and the springs sagged, a Singer sewing machine, four wooden chairs, and a linoleum-covered table with one corner of it broken or hacked off? Is that likely? What would make me certain of these things, as certain as I am that in the scullery my father always kept a bottle of cod-liver oil and drank from it twice a day? And when I refused to drink the stuff, he compromised by buying a bottle of Kepler's malt, which contained enough cod-liver oil to appease him and enough malt to remove the vile taste. I'm not sure about the table, and yet I feel that I'm merely introducing a doubt as if miming a scruple I'd like to be seen showing. The corner of the table was broken or hacked. Which, I can't say.

About the linoleum, I'm sure enough. There is a curious passage in Nabokov's *Transparent Things* where he says that "when we concentrate on a material object, whatever its situation, the very act of attention may lead to our involuntary sinking into the history of that object":

Novices must learn to skim over matter if they want it to stay at the exact level of the moment. Transparent things, through which the past shines.

I am not sure that I understand him. What is that past which shines through transparent things if it is not a sense or a recollection of those things? And if it is, how can it be other than their history? I can't distinguish between the past and my sense of those objects which detain my mind. The difficulty is that the more I concentrate my mind on a particular object, the more opaque it seems to become, as if it developed its own personality by virtue of being noticed. This is what Hopkins means when he says, in one of the journals, that what you look hard at seems to look hard at you. If I believed Walter Pater, I would expect to find that when I think of the kitchen table, I see it dissolving before my eyes into flickering impressions, gone as soon as they come, till nothing remains but my sense of myself, my mind. But I don't find this at all. The table becomes opaque, almost sullen under my attention, as if it wanted nothing of my mind or interest. It's like taking a word, any word, and speaking it aloud, and repeating the word 15 or 20 times, and then you find it recoiling from you as if your voice were a blow, and the meaning of it goes dead on you. Thinking of the table, I recall the linoleum, and the wetness of it when my mother cleaned it after a meal, and the stickiness of my hands on it, and my thumb as it traced the line of the broken part. Is that what Nabokov means by sinking into the history of an object? All I know is that the table doesn't dissolve into my impressions of it but seems to return my stare, without welcoming my attention.

I have tried to recall my father's conversation, but little of it survives, and I conclude that there was never much of it. Speech was not his medium. His silence was not gruff or nasty: It did not betoken a scene. Indeed, I surmise that most of his expressiveness was physical; it took the form of his dress, the precision of his shave, the way he walked. My father gave me an impression of concentration; I

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never saw him loose or wayward, but he implied that whatever had to be said was already said, already embodied in its entirely sufficient forms: law, custom, the daily routine. He lived as if speech were rationed and you had to save up coupons for it: There was no place for extravagance. If a new situation arose, requiring comment, one was free to speak, but sparingly. As wartime posters noted, careless talk costs lives.

We were a Catholic family, and thus we bought our groceries at Catholic shops—Curran's, mostly, and the butcher Fitzpatrick—and were on speaking terms only with Catholics. My mother was an exception: She was friends with Mrs. Harper, wife of one of the policemen, a Protestant. They lived in Slieve Foy Place.

The population of Warrenpoint was about two thousand in my time: a thousand Catholics, a thousand Protestants. There was no enmity between them; it was necessary only to keep your distance. My father, not given to phrasemaking, told me once that my dealings with other people should be "civil, but strange." Power, such as it was, was in the hands of the Protestants: That was all a Catholic needed to know. My father, a splendid policeman, could not be promoted: He was not a Protestant, therefore he was not a Unionist, therefore he was not a member of the Loyal Order of Orangemen, therefore . . .

The ability to tell a Protestant from a Catholic, in Warrenpoint, is not a skill I'm proud of, but it was a social necessity in those years. Necessary more than ever now. It was prudent to look at a man or woman, boy or girl, before leaping to the notion that you could speak. Names were a help but were not decisive. Dr. O'Tierney was a Catholic, Dr. Glenny a Protestant. Newell and Chew were Protestant names, O'Neill—the family owned the Crown Ho-

tel, now long gone, bombed—a Catholic name. But the telling detail was the first, or Christian, name. Isabel, as I knew to my cost and pain, was a Protestant name. Denis, Timothy, Kathleen, and Mary couldn't be anything but Catholic. Patrick was an awkward case, because at a certain level of social standing and grandeur, it was a common name among Protestants. At a lower level, it was standard Catholic.

Sometimes, and especially now, it is necessary to hear the full name before deciding where you stand. Murphy is generally a Catholic surname, but not always. The leader of the infamous Shankill Butch-



Warrenpoint had "the largest square in Ireland," Donoghue writes. "A great place for amusements, circuses, swings and roundabouts . . . [it] was promiscuous in the wiles of display."

ers was a man called Murphy, and he spent his time kidnapping and torturing Catholics. His inventiveness in that occupation was extraordinary; it is fully documented in Martin Dillon's *The Shankill Butchers: A Case Study of Mass Murder* (1989). His full name was Lennie Murphy, and anyone in Belfast could tell you that Leonard is a Protestant name. You have to learn such things, watch for signals, in Seamus Heaney's "land of password, hand grip, wink and nod."

The Penny Catechism disposed of every ethical issue in questions and answers. Question: Who is my neighbor? Answer:

My neighbor is all mankind and without any exceptions of persons, even those who injure us or differ from us in religion.

Where, I neglected to ask, did that put Protestants?

In winter, when the tide was high and the waves broke over the road between Warrenpoint and Rostrevor at Sea View Terrace, it was possible to catch fish by shooting them. Possible and illegal. You stood on the wall and waited for the precise moment when a mullet swam up to the surface between two waves, and with a "point 22" rifle you shot it. If his body turned over and you saw the white of its belly, you waded out to retrieve it. Gerard Heatley owned the rifle and let me use it now and again. Why did I want to shoot a mullet or anything else?

A strange phrase: to kill a fish. I assumed that one caught a fish or, as in this case, shot it. But many years later, when I was in Sligo to give a lecture at the Yeats Summer School, I was silently corrected in a matter of usage by T. R. Henn, an Anglo-Irish Protestant scholar who spent his childhood in a manor house called Paradise. Henn mentioned that, after the school was over, he was going fishing. "Will you catch salmon or what?" I asked him. "I hope to kill salmon," the author of *The Lonely Tower: Studies of the Poetry of W.B. Yeats* answered. A Catholic wouldn't be expected to know the right word. Henn was a decent man, a good scholar, and a hospitable Fellow of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. He was responsible for inviting me to Cambridge to give the Judith E. Wilson Lecture in Poetry and Drama, and then to take a permanent job, a university lectureship, in the English Faculty. He evidently approved of me and didn't hold my origin or my upbringing against my record. But when it came to the propriety of a verb, as a sign of one's social bearing among words, he was implacable.

I had no difficulty with the doctrine of Original Sin. My body was sufficient evidence for it. I saw no discrepancy between the ungainliness of my body and the supposition that the human body as such came already corrupted into a world dis-

figured by its presence. That there were beautiful bodies in the same world seemed to me not to incapacitate the doctrine but to intimate the presence of divine grace. Isabel Bridges was the visible sign of one, as I of the other. That a certain few people were saints or geniuses held out the possibility of salvation, but it didn't remove my conviction that to be a body was to be constitutionally and categorically polluted. The question was: How to act in the light or the shadow of that fate? My father's way of being in the world seemed to me to offer the best hope of salvation.

I had a good boy-soprano voice. I sang solo in the choir at Mass. *O salutaris hostia. Pange lingua. Ave Maria*. Before my voice broke, my father decided to have it recorded in some form. We cycled to Dublin, where we sought out Walton's Musical Store, 90 Lower Camden Street. We had no accompanist, but it happened that a man called Chris Sylvester, who played piano and accordion in his brother Ralph's dance band, was in Walton's when we presented our case. A wax recording was made of my performance of "Silent Night" on one side and "Panis Angelicus" on the other. I broke down on the first attempt at "Silent Night," but the second attempt was deemed satisfactory. And it was. I was not the finest boy soprano of my time or later—that Welsh boy Jones or Evans or whatever he is called is of a different order of sweetness and range—but I was good.

There were no books in our house, apart from schoolbooks and the few morally inspiring tracts and novels I got from my uncle. The only book I recall my father owning was *Guide to Careers*, a book that told you how to apply for a job, what the qualifications for the job were, and the address to which to write for an application form. My father had confidence in this work and regularly consulted it to see the jobs for which his children might be qualified. He was not otherwise a reader, having left school when his father died.

I worked hard at school without thinking of it as work. I was not conscious of being ambitious, or of wanting to do well, or even of imitating my father's zeal in the



knowledge that he would be pleased. Whatever the motive was, it had already settled itself in my daily life; a habit, it didn't need to be interrogated or kept up to a mark. I was content to let my life have its definition as work, so that intervals between bouts of study came to appear as lived in the service of work.

There were several subjects at school for which I had little capacity: the mathematical subjects, mostly. But I worked at these, too, and recognized only that my habit had to take a grim turn or enter upon an especially dogged mood before I could take out the textbook in, say, algebra or trigonometry. It didn't occur to me to ask why I should be studying these subjects for which I had no natural talent. One day a boy asked what was the use of studying geometry if you didn't intend being an engineer. The teacher answered: to develop that part of your brain. I found the reason sufficient.

I was a good reader, or at worst an energetic one. But I see now that my reading was opportunistic: not in the sense of reading one book in preference to another, but in my way of reading. I can't recall a time when I read disinterestedly; I always had a pen and a notebook at hand. If I found something interesting, I'd want to make a note of it. But "interesting" isn't the truth. I went through books looking for whatever I needed. I was never free of purpose. A phrase or a sentence might come in handy for an essay I was writing, some clinching quotation which I could almost fancy, while quoting it, that I had written. If I was not imaginative, I was notionally in the company of those who were: writers, poets especially.

Even now, detective stories are the only fictions I can read without pen and notebook. I am always on the lookout for phrases, as if I lived for the opportunity of using them. "The ministry of carnal perception": It is unlikely that I will have occasion to use that one. On the other hand, Frank Kermode made a distinction, in *The Genesis of Se-*

*crecy*, between carnal readings of a text, which are all the same, and spiritual readings, where differences enter. If I could find an occasion for "ministry," I could slip the whole phrase into an otherwise pedestrian sentence. I always suspected, even at school, that this was a pretentious way of reading and that reading was raiding. But nonchalance was hard to acquire.

At the Christian Brothers' School in Newry, I sensed that I differed from my colleagues, but I did not feel that the difference amounted to much in my favor. I knew that my intelligence was not of a creative kind. I did not even try to write a poem or a story. My mind was usually engaged in considering the work or bearing of someone else; my father in the first instance, certain writers thereafter. My stance was retrospective. If I formulated an idea, it seemed merely to name feelings that hardly went in need of naming. The best fortune they aspired to was adequacy: They were good enough if they were justly responsive to something someone else had done. They did not compel into existence any feelings otherwise silent or repressed. Many years later, I recognized this limitation so frequently that I believed it decisive; it is a limitation in discursiveness itself, that it comments on everything and has nothing better to do. There is a passage in Paul Klee's diary where he talks about the empty spaces left to chance:

It is necessary never to work toward a conception of the picture completely



*The harbor in Warrenpoint. A British naval ship now patrols the waters off Warrenpoint to prevent the Irish Republican Army from bringing weapons from Ireland into Ulster.*

thought out in advance. Instead, one must give oneself completely to the developing portion of the area to be painted. The total impression is then rooted in the principle of economy; to derive the effect of the whole from a few steps.

A few steps, a hunch, a swift stroke, not the whole canvas filled with forethought. It is the distinction between *conchetto* and *immagine*: *conchetto* is a free act of creation, full of confidence in possibilities at any moment undefined, a notion, an idea for a poem, trusting to the future; *immagine* is the idea which identifies something already complete except for the formulation; it merely annotates something that sustains the annotation without needing it. I would like to have lived with *sprezzatura*, cutting a dash: My talents are such as to express themselves in circumspection.

I transcribed fine sentences and stanzas so that I might the more thoroughly remember them, but also for the satisfaction of embodying a privileged relation to their merit. I had not composed any of those splendid pieces, but at least I could claim the distinction of having appreciated them. They were, in that limited but not disgraceful sense, my property. I had a better claim to them than anyone else had, apart from the author in each case. I could even fancy that everyone in the world had read them and failed to see their magnificence. So I labored over the transcriptions as if I were a scribe bent over his vellum, tracing the characters and adorning them. Besides, penmanship was a skill in high repute during those years, presumably for the last time.

I have never been able to tell a story or even to recall one. Jokes fall out of my

mind almost as soon as I have heard them. Plots of the novels I have read, studied, and written about are the first parts I forget. Chapters stay in my mind, fragments of conversation, a descriptive passage here and there, but I would be hard put to recite the plot of even the standard masterpieces. Don't ask me to recall the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. Do parents still tell their children bedtime stories? I doubt it. I never told any of my children a story or read to them a chapter of a novel. To think of all the things I haven't done. I wonder have I lived a life without air, not enough oxygen or light or ease or fantasy. Isn't it silly that opera means nothing to me; that oratorios seem alien to me because most of them are Protestant; that I have only once, and recently, seen *The Wizard of Oz*? What am I preserving my *gravitas* for?

It did not grieve me that I lacked inventiveness, could not make up a story or imagine a sequence of thoughts requiring rhyme. All I wanted was to observe a relation between myself and structures I had not invented. Tolstoy says somewhere that freedom consisted "in my not having made the laws." Presumably he was free to obey them or, at his risk, to reject them. When I think of my early years, I find myself always in relation to something I revered precisely because its existence and force were independent of my will. I sang and played music, observed the score, attentive to the composer's will as the form of the music embodied it. I liked poems more than novels because their formal character was more completely in evidence. I admired the dogmas and doctrines of the Church all the more because they did not consult my interests. I revered the law because my father administered it and bore witness to its integrity. Mine was the intelligence that comes after.

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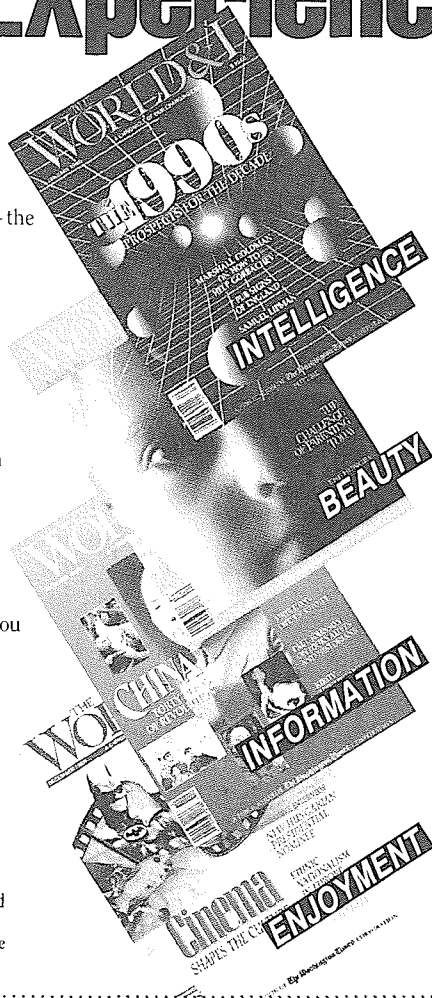
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## Toward a New Russian Federation

Recent changes in the Soviet Union have been nothing short of revolutionary. Almost as startling was how little scholars or journalists were prepared for them. Partly to blame was their "Copernican" approach to Soviet politics, a tendency, says Nicolai Petro, to look only at the top leadership. To understand the Soviet Union today, he argues, it is necessary to consider popular politics and the nation's emerging civil society. A new national consensus, based on traditional Russian values, may well provide the foundation for a future non-Soviet federation.

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*by Nicolai N. Petro*

**I**n just five years, much to the astonishment of professional Sovietologists, the Soviet Union has gone from being the world's most menacing superpower to a weak agglomeration of states uncertain of its very future. Why were most Moscow-watchers so ill-prepared for this dramatic transformation? The fault lies partly in what may be called their "Copernican" view of the Soviet Union, a view which has dominated the field since the 1960s. According to Copernican Sovietology, all political life revolves around the sun, and the sun most recently has been Mikhail Gorbachev. Copernican analysts tend to view the rest of society—at least everybody below the top Party leadership—as bit players, seemingly content to play out secondary roles in a well-worn script.

Such a perspective, as Moshe Lewin noted in *The Gorbachev Phenomenon* (1988), led to rather bizarre ideas about Soviet political reality: "A political system without a social one, a state floating over

everything else, over history itself. Such a state submitted only to its own laws, was explainable in its own terms. . . . [W]hile change was posited as possible, it was conceived of as small variations within the unalterable framework: that such a state could undergo serious reform seemed unthinkable."

Most Copernicans also believed in a fundamental continuity between Russian and Soviet political culture. Scholars like Adam Ulam, Stephen Cohen, Robert V. Daniels, and the late Cyril Black argued that specifically Russian values lent support and stability to the regime. Identifying the ruled with the rulers, they saw little possibility of change coming from below. Harvard's Timothy Colton, in *The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union* (1986), predicted that there would be no serious challenges to the regime's legitimacy for at least another decade because it was so firmly "moored in familiarity, past successes, and Russian nationalism."

It is not easy to escape Copernican

thinking. Even today, the fate of reform in the Soviet Union is tied almost exclusively to the fate of Gorbachev. There are good reasons for this. Gorbachev is the prime instigator of perestroika and, as such, deserves enormous credit for initiating change at the top of the political pyramid. But after giving Gorbachev his due, we must look beyond him. After all, Gorbachev's initial vision of perestroika was limited to a program of economic restructuring; glasnost was merely a convenient tool for breaking the resistance of recalcitrant factory managers. Public pressure forced him repeatedly to revise and expand his agenda.

During the past five years, in fact, Gorbachev found himself presiding over an expanding civil society with its own ideas about reform and openness, and with its own ideas about what the greater Russian federation should be. More than 60,000 informal social and political groups have sprung up around the country; at the same time, assorted non-political groups concerned with ecological or historical preservation have increasingly been adopting their own political platforms and asserting themselves in areas where the Party is losing influence. This embryonic civil society has its own independent information outlets—more than 700 non-official publications in the Russian language alone. These groups, these movements, and these publications are now the driving force behind perestroika.

To understand what is going on in the Soviet Union, we need to develop a more "Newtonian" approach that takes into consideration not only the constituent parts of Soviet society but also culture, particularly literature, folk traditions, and religion. Only by looking at society and culture can we begin to comprehend the frustrations and aspirations of Soviet citi-



*Drawing 200,000 marchers, a Moscow demonstration organized by the Democratic Russia coalition last February included scores of nationalist organizations, from monarchists to social democrats.*

zens who are rejecting communism and turning ever more insistently to traditional Russian values as a desirable foundation for a future Russian federation.

To be sure, ethnic Russians make up only half the population of the Soviet Union—a vast federation consisting of about 50 political units (including peoples with republic status, peoples with autonomous republic status, and peoples with autonomous region status). Nevertheless, Russian language and culture, or at least what historian Hugh Seton-Watson called a "mutilated" version of the latter, form the core of the Soviet federation. It is no coincidence that leaders of reform are often figures of cultural authority—writers, artists, editors—or, more to the point, that many of the more popular USSR People's Deputies, including actor Mark Zakharov and Academicians Dmitry Likhachev and Sergei Averintsev, have made traditional Russian values the centerpiece of their political proposals.

The questions of Russian cultural identity and Russian nationalism are matters of importance not only to Russians. If there is to be a nonviolent evolution toward greater autonomy for the Baltic, Central Asian, and other peoples, then the core of

the Soviet Union—the “vast Slavic territory of Russia, Byelorussia, the eastern Ukraine, and northern Kazakhstan,” as political scientist Martha Brill Olcott defined that core—must be confident of its cultural and national identity. Even Baltic independence leaders such as Virgilius Chepaitis and Lagle Park say that a healthy Russian nationalism should be encouraged.

To understand what Russians are striving to restore, one must first understand what they have lost. They have lost their history. Vladlen Sirotkin, a professor at the foreign ministry’s diplomatic academy, is not alone in deploring the “nihilistic attitude toward the country’s past” that has prevailed since the 1920s. At the end of that violently transformative decade, the doyen of Marxist historians, Mikhail Pokrovsky, declared that the very concept of “Russian history” was anti-revolutionary. Russia’s religious heritage has been nearly destroyed: As many as 95 percent of the country’s churches may have been demolished. Perhaps most devastating of all, Russia’s national patrimony—a rich and vibrant peasant culture with all its traditions, crafts, legends, songs, and proverbs—was nearly extinguished by the forced collectivization that took the lives of millions during the 1930s. Historian Ksenia Mialo aptly compared Stalin’s rural collectivization drive to the extermination of Inca civilization by the conquistadors.

The first openly to lament the destruction of peasant life, and thus to restore these events to the national memory, were the so-called “village prose writers.” Novels such as Valentin Ovechkin’s *A Difficult Spring* (1956), Efim Dorosh’s *Village Diaries* (1958), and later Vasily Belov’s *That’s How Things Are* (1966) and Valentin Rasputin’s *Mark You This* (1974) depicted the costs of precipitous industrialization and the uprooting of an entire way of life. The tremendous popularity of the village prose writers during the Brezhnev era (1964–82)

owed largely to their championing authentic Russian values. Maurice Friedberg identified the best of these values as “hatred of war; an affirmation of Russian ethnic identity, nostalgia for a pastoral Russian past, a desire for a measure of privacy protected from state interference, a need for personal ethics, and a sense of compassion . . . .” As social critics appealing to Russian traditions and eternal human values, the village prose writers saw themselves, often correctly, as working in the tradition of the great 19th-century Russian writers such as Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol, and Goncharov.

Their main concerns centered on the preservation of villages, religion, historical monuments, and the environment. Although they organized no political parties, their work aligned them with other individuals opposed to the policies of the regime. A notable example was the decade-long campaign waged by writers, scientists, historians, artists, and journalists to reverse the government’s decision to divert major northern rivers into the country’s arid south. Arguing that such an undertaking would destroy much of the northern Russian heartland, this spontaneous coalition eventually forced the government to shelve the project in 1987.

Such informal associations to preserve Russia’s environment and its historical and religious monuments grew more common during the 1980s. Yet it was not until Gorbachev and glasnost that cautious supplication yielded to an active search for alternative Russian values and for more open ways of expressing them.

Many in the West view the re-emergence of Russian national self-awareness with justifiable concern. While sympathetic to the anguish caused by the Soviet destruction of Russian national heritage, foreign observers worry about the revival of anti-Semitism, imperialism, and anti-Western sentiment. The village writers

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themselves, notably Rasputin and Viktor Astafyev, have frequently been criticized for their anti-Semitism and for their insensitivity to other non-Russian nationalities. The crucial question, however, is whether such sentiments are shared by most Russian nationalists. If so, any future reforms based on Russian national values would clearly be odious to liberals both within the Soviet Union and abroad.

Discussion of anti-Semitism has certainly increased under glasnost. In such prominent literary journals as *Molodaya Gvardiya* (*The Young Guard*) and *Nash Sovremennik* (*Our Contemporary*), the issue of Jewish participation in the Russian Revolution and in the subsequent Party leadership has become virtually an editorial obsession. When *Nash Sovremennik* published an essay on "Russophobia" by dissident mathematician Igor Shafarevich, it brought the issue to a head.

Shafarevich, a friend of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, based much of his provocative essay on the ideas of Augustin Cochin, a 19th-century French historian who had argued that revolutions were caused by alienated "little nations" within the "larger nation." Just as Cochin blamed the French revolution on anti-national, self-contained groups like the Masons, so Shafarevich attributed the distinctive character of the Russian Revolution to the "Jewish element." Little matter that relatively few of the revolutionary leaders, and even fewer of the later Soviet leaders, were Jewish—or that the most famous, Trotsky, was exiled from Russia. Shafarevich got around such empirical deficiencies by claiming that the "Jewish element" meant not so much individual Jews as an iconoclastic Jewish spirit which had infected traditional Russia. Anticipating his critics, moreover, Shafarevich denounced as "Russophobes" all those who tarnish Russian nationalism by equating it with a resurgence of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, it is hard to read his article and think that those who see such an equation are completely wrong.

What about the resurgence of imperialist chauvinism? Here again, one finds several nationalist groups, including the Association of Russian Artisans and Fatherland, that want the empire held together at any

cost. In general, though, most nationalist groups believe that such unity is to be achieved not by force of arms but by establishing a new common bond—resting on vague, rather romanticized notions of common historical ties—among the various ethnic groups in the country. While all Russian nationalists pay lip-service to the principle of self-determination, some seem noticeably hesitant about implementing it. As more Soviet nationalities opt for secession, the distinction between those who support freedom over empire and those who do not will emerge.

A third concern is that Russian nation-



*Many nationalists romanticize the village life and ideals of Old Russia. They consider greater local autonomy the only road to democracy.*

alism is anti-democratic and anti-liberal and thus poses a threat to the ascendancy of Western values. As it turns out, there are some Russian nationalists who oppose the introduction of free markets and a multi-party system on the grounds that they are not Russian. Many others fear more simply that at present such moves would produce greater anarchy and turmoil. While the former are anti-Western, the latter are looking for reassurance that a realistic alternative to anarchy exists, that political forces outside the Party can prevent chaos and even bloodshed.

Acknowledging the dark side of the

Russian national revival, one must at the same time avoid blurring some important distinctions, a mistake that would be as serious as confusing the conservatism of a William Buckley or a George Will with the reactionary racism of the Ku Klux Klan. Indeed, the failure to distinguish between chauvinism and patriotism feeds the counter-accusation of "Russophobia." Russophobes, Shafarevich charges, fear a strong and nationally healthy Russia; they would rather see the country destroyed by communist rule or dismembered by national tensions before they would countenance any Russian national revival.

The debate over Russia's national revival is sensitive precisely because it touches so directly on the character and historical prospects of the Russian people. The polemic in the Soviet press over the recent publication of excerpts of Vasily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate* (published abroad in 1980) goes to the heart of the quarrel: Who should be blamed for the dismal failure of the Soviet Union? Socialist ideology, say the Russian nationalists. The backward economic and political traditions of Russia, say the radical reformers. The reformers read *Life and Fate* as an exposé of the crimes of Stalinist collectivization and the corruption of Lenin's idealism. But conservative nationalists are offended by the novel's depiction of Lenin as a well-intentioned liberal intellectual whose progressive impulses were thwarted by "Russia's thousand-year tradition of slavery." They were incensed that Soviet historian G. Vodolazov, in his preface to the novel, absolved Lenin of any blame for the events leading to Stalin's dictatorship. Wrote Vodolazov: "I believe that people who wish to assist humanity's progress should not be thinking about how to 'replay' October and Leninism, but about how to 'replay' the years 1929 and 1937, relying on the values of October and Leninism."

People like Grossman and Vodolazov follow in the footsteps of 19th-century Westernizers such as Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Chernychevsky. Although they reject the current political system, they are attracted to Western-style socialism. In the Soviet Union today they are known as "radical Westernizers," or "radical reform-

ers," or "left radicals."

Many others charge that socialism—by which they mean communism—is itself largely to blame for the country's current crisis. Socialism, they claim, infected the Russian intelligentsia with disdain for all that was traditionally Russian. What is needed today, they argue, is to cast aside the present value system and to pick up what Ksenia Mialo calls "the broken thread to the past." Sharing many philosophical assumptions of the early 19th-century Slavophiles such as Ivan Aksakov and Yuri Samarin, these people today are variously referred to as "Russites," *vozhzdentsy* (revivalists), "Russophiles," or "the Russian Party."

The philosophical differences between radicals and restorationists lead, as might be expected, to significant practical differences. Radicals tend to want a rapid introduction of free markets, while restorationists usually stress social guarantees. Radicals view the secession of republics as a step toward a healthy decentralization, while restorationists are fearful of the costs of fragmenting the empire. Radicals at times seem almost eager to dismantle the Soviet military; restorationists are concerned about security and foreign policy.

But these differences should not obscure the fact that both groups have learned to compromise and work together on key Soviet reform legislation. In the Supreme Soviet last year, they came together to repeal the electoral provisions that guaranteed a certain percentage of seats to the Communist Party; together, they are pushing for a new law on the freedom of the press that goes far beyond Gorbachev's proposed version of the law. On at least seven other occasions, radicals and conservatives working together have rejected Gorbachev-proposed legislation as too restrictive.

Both sides acknowledge that they need each other to promote changes in the system. The progressive deputy-mayor of Moscow, Sergei Stankevich, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet last fall, commented on how essential conservatism was to providing a balance of ideas in the new parliament. Likewise, Anatoly Salutsky, the arch-conservative commentator for *Literatur-*



*naya Rossiya (Literary Russia)*, has argued that today's Slavophiles and Westernizers are not opposing forces but complementary wings of a movement that is shaping a new Russian national consensus.

There is much about this new consensus that should be appealing to the West. Both radicals and restorationists share a belief in the rule of law, in a national revival based on Russian patriotic sentiment, and in an educational system resting not on ideological slogans but on a critical understanding of Russian and foreign history. Supporters of the consensus are likely to be wary of any foreign adventures that would further bleed the country. They are already skeptical of the value to Russia of many non-Slavic areas of the Soviet Union. In a remarkable public letter published this year, three prominent nationalist organizations warned that if tranquility did not return soon to the Caucasus, they would launch a campaign to remove Russian servicemen from the region. The reluctance of conservatives to use troops echoes earlier appeals by liberals not to use force to keep regions like Lithuania in the Soviet Union.

The new Russian consensus is not without historical precedent. A strand of turn-of-the-century Russian thought—represented by the religious philosophers Nikolai Berdyaev and Semyon Frank and the political economist Peter Struve—combined many of the same disparate elements. Although the earlier thinkers were, as the late Leonard Schapiro pointed out, “first and foremost nationalists and patriots,” they “stood midway between Slavophiles and Westernizers. They accepted the Slavophile veneration of Russian national tradition, while rejecting their romantic idealization of innate Russian virtues as a substitute for the more usual civic virtues.” For these people Schapiro employed the oxymoron “liberal conservative”—an epithet first used to describe Russia's most famous poet, Aleksander Pushkin. It applies equally well to many of the radicals and nationalists of today.

The liberal conservative consensus has found organizational expression in the more than 40 political groups active throughout the Russian federation. This

broad spectrum of political opinion should not be confused with the factions that have developed within the Party itself, even though certain ideas are shared across the non-Party-Party divide. Party factionalists, whether reformers like the historian Roy Medvedev or conservatives like Egor Ligachev, still insist that the Communist Party remain the guiding force in Soviet society.

The Party, however, is rapidly losing its credibility. Over 10 million young people have abandoned the Communist Youth League since 1985. After local elections this past March, Party members were, for the first time in Soviet history, a minority among people's deputies elected to Russia's supreme legislative body. In large Russian cities like Moscow and Leningrad, Communists have relinquished power to the democratic opposition.

The establishment of pluralistic politics in rural Russian areas has been much slower. Nevertheless, Russia's political evolution seems clearly foreshadowed in the experiences of Eastern Europe and the Baltic States. And as in Eastern Europe, the new political parties, rather than the discredited remnants of the Communist Party, are likely to guide the country's future. Most of these parties fall into political categories analogous to those on the rest of the European continent.

- *The Social Democrats.* During the first days of perestroika, reformist intellectuals organized discussion clubs. A number of their political leaders—Yuri Afanasyev, Gavril Popov, Sergei Stankevich, the late Andrei Sakharov—eventually “graduated” to the influential Moscow Rostrum and the leadership of the Interregional Deputies Group in the USSR Supreme Soviet. The social-democratic groups see themselves as standing for a humanistic renewal of socialist values. They support the introduction of Western constitutional guarantees as well as radical economic reform, but they are rightly concerned about the extent of popular support for radical change. Even so, the social-democrat orientation appears to be the most active in Russian politics today, both within the Communist Party and as a separate party itself, the Social-Democratic Association. In recent local elections, social-demo-

cratic candidates won a majority of seats in over 20 large Russian cities, including Moscow, Leningrad, Gorky, and Sverdlovsk.

- *The Conservatives.* Last fall a number of the conservative groups moved beyond their strictly cultural preoccupations to form a political organization—the Bloc of Russian Public-Patriotic Movements—in order to counter the growing popularity of the social democrats. Before that, conservatives had been as reluctant to enter politics as social democrats had been to appeal to Russian patriotic sentiment. Both have abandoned their reluctance.

Most conservatives, rejecting Marxism-Leninism, see Russian patriotism and religion as the only alternative to decay. They are united by five common assumptions: the need for a moral and religious revival; skepticism about Western intellectual imports such as capitalism, pop culture, and especially Marxism; fear of unconstrained market competition and “windfall profits” (some, like Mikhail Antonov, propose a Japanese model, with the economy more closely attuned to native cultural traditions); the need to return land to the peasantry; and belief in the nobility of military service. But conservatives differ widely on how to resolve Russia’s current problems. Some recommend radical decentralization and even Russia’s secession from the Soviet Union; others see a strong centralized authority as the only thing preventing the country’s collapse.

The conservatives have not done well at the polls. In direct confrontations with social democrats in last March’s local elections, they were easily defeated. (Only 16 out of 65 conservative candidates in Moscow even made it to the run-off elections.) Their prospects are hampered by a lack of clarity about how to achieve a Russian revival, by a contradictory economic and political platform, and by ambivalent attitudes toward the Party’s monopoly on power. In the not-too-distant future, conservatives are likely to split over the central political issue of the day: whether the Party is still a viable political force or simply a burden to the country. Those who support the Communist Party are likely to join forces with reactionaries within the Party such as Nina Andreyev and Egor

Ligachev. Those who abandon the Party are likely to edge closer to the views of the Christian democrats.

- *The Christian Democrats.* Christian democrats are found in the middle of the political spectrum. Like the conservatives, they reject Marxism-Leninism and believe that Russian patriotism can contribute to promoting reform. But like the social democrats, their program includes an insistence upon the rule of law, a clear separation of church and state, and privatization of markets. Christian democrats, however, stress that all politics needs a firm moral foundation. Many of the Russian religious philosophers that they turn to, including Semyon Frank, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Father Sergei Bulgakov, had themselves been Marxists in their youth but later abandoned Marxism in favor of democracy and religion.

Christian democracy has no political precedent in pre-revolutionary Russia, but it is quickly finding a following. Three members of the newly elected Russian Supreme Soviet—among them noted human-rights activist Father Gleb Yakunin—recently joined the Russian Christian Democratic Movement. As André Louis, secretary-general of the Christian Democratic International, recently observed, “In the long run, I think Christian Democracy has its best opportunity in the Soviet Union. Christian Democrats there have come to political life out of religious conviction. In searching for a more fraternal and useful religion, they come to recognize the need for political activity.” The movement’s uncompromising rejection of communist ideology may be the best guarantee of its future success.

- *Extremist groups.* A number of small but vocal chauvinistic groups—Pamyat (Memory), Vityazi (Heroes), and Patrioty (Patriots)—go far beyond professing concern for Russia’s revival and openly accuse “dark forces” and “foreign elements” of engaging in a conspiracy to destroy Russia. They typically identify these forces as people of Jewish origin and those who do their bidding.

Extremists of both the left and the right often form strange and paradoxical alliances. In Leningrad, Pamyat groups have received open help from two district Party

organizations. In a recent interview, Elena Bonner, wife of the late Andrei Sakharov, noted that the Leningrad KGB was protecting and promoting Pamyat.

Western concern about these groups stems from the fear that they may eventually have a decisive influence on national policy. Many of these organizations are actively seeking allies among disgruntled soldiers, workers, and Russian minorities in the outlying republics. In the event of a weakened and demoralized Soviet state—a “Weimar Russia”—such groups might seize power, unleashing a campaign against minorities (particularly Jews) and threatening military aggression abroad.

Such a turn of events is possible but highly unlikely. First of all, in the aftermath of the Afghan war, foreign military adventures have no popular constituency. We are witnessing in the Soviet Union today perhaps the most widespread peacetime rejection of military service in the 20th century. Not only are individuals in many parts of the country refusing to serve; a number of the country’s leading universities are no longer offering the required courses in military indoctrination. Furthermore, given the country’s dire economic straits, it would be almost impossible to mobilize support for a war—absent the immediate threat of foreign invasion.

For all the attention it receives in the Western and Soviet media, Pamyat has never attracted more than a few hundred people to its rallies (compared to nearly 200,000 for Democratic Russia rallies in Moscow this past February). It has failed to elect a single candidate to public office, ei-

ther in national or local elections. In Moscow, the Pamyat candidate, Tamara Ponamareva, received five percent of the votes for, and 86.5 percent of the votes against, her candidacy.

Moreover, public opinion surveys report that the overwhelming majority of the population favors continued glasnost, despite doubts about the economic success of perestroika. And there is still reported to be strong support for expanding friendly contacts with the West. In one recent survey, for example, the only ministry

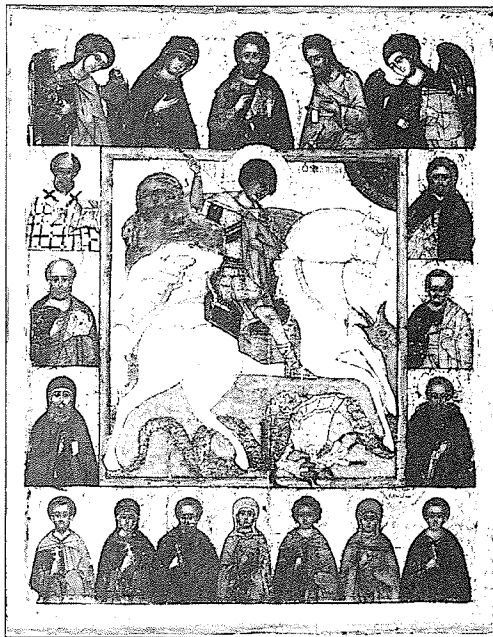
to get a favorable rating was the ministry of foreign affairs, presumably because of its role in fostering better relations with the West.

Thus while there are dangers associated with the emerging Russian national consensus, notably authoritarianism and intolerance, there are good reasons for thinking that the Soviet Union has what S. Frederick Starr calls “a usable past.” Starr and other scholars—including James Billington, John Dunlop, Geoffrey Hosking, and Helen Carrere D’Encausse—have all pointed to the resurgence of interest in

Russia’s pre-revolutionary classical liberal heritage. It is a fragile flower in Russian history, they all acknowledge, but it exists.

The question is how to cultivate it in the present. The weakness of the Russian liberals in the past, according to émigré historian Nicholas Zernov, was their indifference to the more conservative traditions of the populace. This led first to their isolation, then to disillusion with liberalism, and finally to a fatal attraction to radicalism.

Today, however, particularly in the po-



*An early 16th-century icon of St. George, surrounded by various other saints. Images of St. George, the patron saint of Russia, are popular among contemporary nationalists.*

litical arena, radicals and restorationists are consciously striving to build bridges, to wed the best elements of Western universalism and Russian particularism, rule of law and healthy patriotism. Their efforts embody Dostoyevsky's insistence that to "become a true Russian" means "to become a brother of all men, a *universal* man." The Democratic Russia coalition of People's Deputies is the most promising fruit of their labors. With over one-third of People's Deputies in the next Russian Supreme Soviet under its banner, the Democratic Russia coalition is likely to play a key role in the passage of legislation in the republic's supreme governing body.

The recent election of coalition leader Boris Yeltsin to the chairmanship of the Russian Supreme Soviet will only increase that likelihood. Yeltsin himself exemplifies the spirit of liberal conservatism: He champions the social-democratic agenda and greater independence for the republics while calling for the restoration of religious and other traditional Russian values. The Russian national consensus is also beginning to build momentum at the local level. There we are witnessing efforts to restore land tenure to peasants, to bring back pre-revolutionary symbols and place names, and to promote a more prominent role for religious organizations. With the election of local governments oriented toward radical economic reforms, the search for political alternatives is likely to proceed even more rapidly than before.

The thorniest issue facing supporters of the new national consensus is the question of other Soviet nationalities. Apart from the Slavic majority of Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians, there are 19 other major nationalities and scores of smaller national and ethnic groups. How will the minorities abide an explicitly Russian federation? History provides a possible answer. During the 19th century, the word *rossiiskoe* (which suggests the broad multi-ethnic Russian national state) was as commonly used as the narrower term *russkoe*

(meaning only ethnic Russians), a distinction roughly analogous to the difference between British and English. Today, a number of Russian political organizations are using *rossiiskoe* to broaden their appeal. But they will succeed only if their inclusiveness is backed up with real assurances: of mutually beneficial economic ties between the center and periphery; of full cultural and religious freedoms for all nationalities; and of the right of any people to independence. Treated fairly, non-Russian peoples will have good reasons for remaining within the federation, including a shared defense burden and a huge, established outlet for manufactured goods. It is worth remembering that Russians made up only half of the population of the empire during the 19th century; yet for most of that century—until restrictive nationalities policies were imposed by Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II—ethnic frictions were minimal.

At its best, then, the emerging Russian consensus is one that both Western liberals and conservatives can be comfortable with. It promotes decentralization, political accountability, domestic tranquility, and international retrenchment. It is also an ideal that Russians themselves find increasingly attractive, preferring it to either the restoration of communism or the vagaries of Gorbachev's perestroika. Surveys by the Center for Public Opinion Study show that while three-quarters of ethnic Russians believe that "relying on their national roots" is an important consideration for Russia's salvation, a mere 14 percent now expect government to solve their problems. Nearly a third feel that they "must at last become free people and make the state serve [their] interests."

The combination of economic necessity and national revival is a powerful prod to the development of a healthy national self-conception. The best traditions of Russia's pre-revolutionary past may hold the key to Russia's post-revolutionary future.

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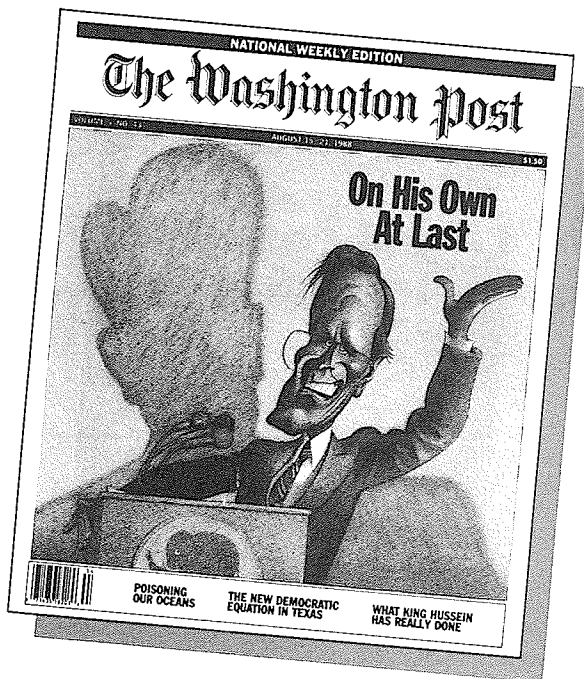
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*Continued from page 21*

ties' effort to curb the rise of civil society."

It may be too much to expect Western reporters to have anticipated developments that also caught Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. intelligence experts by surprise, as Tismaneanu does. But he warns that they still do not understand that it is the strength of the groups that constitute civil society that will ultimately determine the success or failure of freedom in the nations of Eastern Europe.

### *A Second is a Terrible Thing To Waste*

How can the degradation of American political debate be explained? Fresh evidence is offered in the *New Republic* (May 28, 1990) by Kiku Adatto, who compared television's coverage of the presidential elections of 1968 and 1988.

*By 1988 television's tolerance for the languid pace of political discourse, never great, had all but vanished. An analysis of all weekday evening network newscasts (over 280) from Labor Day to Election Day in 1968 and 1988 reveals that the [two candidates'] average "sound bite" fell from 42.3 seconds in 1968 to only 9.8 seconds in 1988. Meanwhile the time the networks devoted to visuals of the candidates, unaccompanied by their words, increased by more than 300 percent.*

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## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

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### *Mind and Manners*

"I Think; Therefore I Thank" by Judith Martin and Gunther S. Stent, in *The American Scholar* (Spring 1990), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Modern philosophers rarely have anything to say about etiquette, and when they do they seem to make a terrible hash of things. In 1972, for example, Philippa Foot wrote a controversial essay called "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives." In attacking Immanuel Kant's argument that morality is a categorical imperative, she compared morality to the "silly rules" of etiquette. A long debate followed, but not one of Foot's fellow philosophers took issue with her callow comparison.

"Extremely distressed" might be the most polite term for the reaction of Martin, better known as the newspaper columnist Miss Manners, and Stent, a Berkeley biologist. "As heirs of the Greek founders of their discipline," they scold, philosophers should "be expected to remain concerned with the quest for the virtuous life, where 'virtuous' refers to proper behavior in general."

Just as the commands of morality are categorical imperatives for anyone who desires to be moral, so the rules of eti-

quette flow from the subscription to manners—the belief in communal harmony, individual dignity, and so on. And the evidence from man's earliest history suggests that the embrace of morality and manners is fundamental to human nature. Even today, criminals cling to a belief in manners. During the summer of 1986, the 30 motorists who were arrested for shooting fellow drivers on the freeways of Los Angeles defended themselves by arguing that they were provoked by gross violations of traffic etiquette.

Etiquette has three chief functions, the authors say. First, it is "a system for the codification of ritual in the service of the sacred." By that they mean that it tells one how to behave at weddings and (less and less these days, they lament) funerals. It also has a "symbolic" function: An individual's compliance with the etiquette of, say, diplomacy or professional sports, signifies his adherence to the values of these professions. Finally, etiquette has a "regulative" function; it exists on a continuum with law. Etiquette seeks to avert conflict; law

addresses serious violations of morality. Etiquette restricts freedom of expression; law restricts freedom of action. But they are mutually dependent: Law cannot be administered justly without the order provided by courtroom etiquette.

As for Mrs. Foot, as the authors are care-

ful to call her, her fundamental error was in assuming that morality and etiquette are two different things. Both are part of a single, highly complex system of rules for the governance of social conduct, the authors insist. Without both of them, civilization would disappear.

## *Inventing The Yarmulke*

"Holy Headgear" by Harry Steinhauer, in *The Antioch Review* (Winter 1990), P.O. Box 148, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387.

Harry Steinhauer was troubled when he received a fund-raising appeal from Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) in 1988. Lautenberg told the story of Captain Simha Goldman, an orthodox rabbi in the U.S. Air Force who had been barred by his superiors from wearing a yarmulke while on duty. The rabbi's case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the Air Force, and then to Senator Lauten-

berg, who helped win congressional approval of a 1987 bill allowing servicemen to wear religious apparel. Lautenberg enclosed a yarmulke with his letter, along with the warning that we "can never take our freedom for granted." Nor, the letter suggested, could the Senator's reelection be taken for granted without a generous contribution.

What bothered Steinhauer, a professor

## *The Language of Hope*

The Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein said that only those who have mastered a language can know how to hope. The inability to express hope, writes Leon Botstein in *Daedalus* (Spring 1990), not simply incompetence in reading instruction manuals or newspapers, explains why mass illiteracy—or pseudoliteracy—is a threat to American democracy.

*If indeed the categories of freedom, justice, truth, and humanity are to flourish, a language must be mastered. . . . We need to retard the evolution of thoughtless language use exemplified, ironically, by the way we use the word hope. It is now accepted (and has been since the 1950s) to use the adverb hopefully as a replacement for the phrase I hope. . . .*

*A shift in thinking is perceptible in the linguistic change. In the shift one can perceive a distancing from the idea of personal responsibility and a weakening of faith in personal efficacy. "I hope," the older formulation, makes clear the presence of the speaker as actor. Indirectly, one knows that the speaker not only holds the view but is in a position to*

*say the next logical point. "I hope," if used, can and ought to be followed by "since I hope, I will . . .," or "I think . . .," or "I urge . . .," and so forth. The older formulation carries with it the assumption of personal responsibility to act on hope and expressed the potential of utility in hoping, speaking, and acting.*

*The abuse of hopefully, in contrast, signals the idea that what happens is the result of neither one's beliefs nor one's actions, that one is powerless and subject to amorphous circumstances and impersonal forces apart from one's existence. . . .*

*In the shift in our usage there is camouflaged a pessimism and an exhaustion—a sense of the superfluity of individual belief and influence. This cuts against Wittgenstein's suggestion and (perhaps) admonition that we command a language sufficient for authentic hope. Since hope is contingent on language, real hope derives from a confidence in human knowledge and action. In this sense, it is the dissemination of language and its consequent capacity to spread hope—the essential meaning of literacy—on which the future depends.*



emeritus of German at the University of California at Santa Barbara, was the assumption (which even the Supreme Court made) that the yarmulke is an old and sacred part of the Jewish faith.

In the Torah, he notes, nothing is even said about covering the head, much less with a yarmulke. "Neither in the 248 positive, nor in the 365 negative, precepts listed in the Torah (the dos and don'ts), is there any mention of this rite." Throughout the Old Testament, "covering the head was a mark of sorrow and shame," as when King David fled his son, Absalom, with covered head and bare feet.

The Talmud (completed about A.D. 500) makes contradictory statements about covering the head, which is not surprising since it is basically a record of debates about Jewish religious law. In several Talmudic parables, a *bared* head is considered a sign of deference to God.

Yet, Steinhauer concedes, although learned Jews throughout history have tended to favor the bared head, "it seems to be an incontrovertible fact that in the course of the centuries—some say as early as the third or fourth century of the com-

mon era—the custom of covering the head spread and became more and more firmly entrenched in Jewish life." The real turning point came with the birth during the 19th century of liberal Reform Judaism, which "goaded the orthodox into endowing the rite with a significance it had not enjoyed until then."

Even so, Steinhauer continues, the custom was far from uniformly observed. When Pope Paul VI visited Israel in 1964, an Israeli newspaper printed a photo of the nation's president greeting him, with the caption, "The one with the yarmulke is the Pope." Even among those who preferred covering the head, the yarmulke did not prevail until after World War II. It is Steinhauer's guess that young Jews, like their Gentile counterparts of the era, simply found the plain hat too old-fashioned. And only in recent years has the yarmulke become *the* overt symbol of being Jewish.

The point of all this, Steinhauer says, is that even if Captain Goldman felt obliged to keep his head covered on religious grounds, his service cap would have sufficed. Jews, he concludes, should save their ammunition for more worthy causes.

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## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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### *The Search for Babel*

"The Mother Tongue" by Vitaly Shevoroshkin, in *The Sciences* (May-June 1990), 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Hopscotching from the words *nigi* and *gini* (predecessors of the English nag and gnaw), to the Sino-Caucasian word *gin*, to Austro-Asiatic *gini*, and to Congo-Saharan *nigi*, linguists may have arrived recently at a monumental destination: the mother tongue of all mankind.

All of these words are cognates for the word *tooth*, says Shevoroshkin, a linguist at the University of Michigan, and they suggest that the original terms, uttered perhaps 100,000 years ago, were *nigi* and *gini*. So far, he and other researchers have reconstructed between 150 and 200 words of the language they call proto-World.

The search for proto-World began, in effect, more than two centuries ago when William Jones, an English judge stationed in Calcutta, India, noticed strange affinities between Indian Sanskrit and the languages of Europe. The cognates for *brother*, for example, are *bhratar* in Sanskrit, *phrater* in Greek, and *frater* in Latin. In 1786, after intense study, Jones announced his startling conclusion: Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin had all "sprung from some common source which, perhaps, no longer exists."

Other researchers soon added Germanic, Persian, Baltic, and Slavic to the

original three. All were grouped together under the rubric Indo-European, and their family tree traced back to an ancient tongue spoken perhaps 8,000 years ago. It took another century for scholars—including the brothers Grimm of fairy tale fame—to painstakingly reconstruct that lost language.

That was hardly the end of the matter. As early as 1903, a Danish linguist named Holger Pedersen noted vague similarities between Indo-European and other proto-languages, including Semitic (precursor of Arabic and Hebrew) and Altaic (ancestor of Japanese and Korean). But it was not until 1964 that two Soviet scholars, Vladislav Illich-Svitych and Aaron Dolgopolsky, were able to reconstruct (separately) a single ancestral tongue called Nostratic, a tribal language that they believe was spoken some 14,000 years ago.

Nostratic, in turn, may be only one of several language "phyla": The others are Sino-Caucasian, Australian, Khoisan, Indo-Pacific, Austric, and Amerind.

During the last 10 years, Sheveroshkin and others, now aided by computers, have compared the different proto-languages to reconstruct proto-World. Actually, he says, dating proto-World has been harder than reconstructing it. Based on recent studies by geneticists, research on

ancient migratory patterns, and archaeological evidence, backers of the proto-World theory concluded that the language is close to 100,000 years old.

What does their language tell us about our ancestors? They were truly people of few words and spared none for description of the emotions. Unsurprisingly, the most common word was *ngai* ("I"). And, apparently, they were bothered by many of the same things that bother us, for they took the trouble to invent words for fleas, lice, and in-laws.

### *The Importance of Genes*

"We cannot continue to think about disease as an outside enemy," geneticist P. A. Baird argues in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* (Winter 1990). The enemy is now us. Baird favors a "paradigm shift" in medicine, replacing the "war" against disease with efforts to detect and prevent genetic maladies.

*The relative contribution of genetic causes to all causes of disease in our population has likely increased markedly in this century for many disorders. For example, in the early years of the century the infant mortality rate in the United States was about 150 per 1,000 live births. It is estimated that about five of these 150 deaths, or three percent, were due to a wholly or partly genetic cause. Nowadays the infant mortality rate is closer to 15 per 1,000 live births. However, the five are still there in the genetic category; but, instead of constituting three percent, they constitute over one third of all infant deaths. . . . In the 1920s the role of vitamin D [in rickets] was elucidated, and food supplementation by vitamin D on a population basis was initiated. The incidence of rickets declined dramatically, but cases continue to appear. However, instead of being environmentally caused, rickets [sufferers] now have inherited genes giving a disorder of mineral metabolism—rickets—even when normal amounts of vitamin D are present. The heritability of rickets is now very high, and these cases need lifelong care.*

### *Killer Chlorophyll*

If you were asked to name the most dangerous substances known to man, chlorophyll probably would not come immediately to mind.

One reason we are not aware of its po-

tential hazards, writes Hendry, a researcher at the University of Sheffield, is that nature has devised elaborate means to contain them. The autumnal glories of a Vermont sugar maple are partly the result

"Making, Breaking, and Remaking Chlorophyll" by George Hendry, in *Natural History* (May 1990), Central Park West at 79th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

of chlorophyll's programmed suicide. In the world's oceans, nature condemns chlorophyll in single-celled marine phytoplankton to a half-life as short as 48 hours. (A half-life is the time it takes for half of the substance to be transformed or degraded.) Overall, the world stock of chlorophyll is close to 250 million tons, and it is turned over 3.7 times each year.

There are several reasons why nature allows this seemingly senseless slaughter. But an important reason has to do with the process of photosynthesis.

As Hendry explains, the chlorophyll molecule can be thought of chiefly as a provider of electrons. Each molecule is surrounded by a cloud of orbiting electrons; when struck by sunlight, the molecule resonates and one of the electrons is flipped out of orbit "along an electrical circuit to drive the production of storable chemical power." Occasionally, however, there is a malfunction, and the electron escapes and attaches itself to an oxygen molecule. The result is an "oxygen radical," one of which, the hydroxyl radical (HO), is a kind of terrorist of the natural world. It "almost instantly abstracts hydrogen from

any convenient neighboring molecule, thereby destroying the structure of many organic molecules."

Even animals can be affected. In a rare disorder among sheep called geldikkop, partly digested chlorophyll passes into the bloodstream; sunlight striking the skin causes the chlorophyll to produce oxygen radicals, and the animal to suffer lesions.

Normal malfunctions of photosynthesis are policed by the plant's antioxidants—such as ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and tocopherols (vitamin E)—which also happen to be beneficial to humans. But drought or cold weather triggers malfunctions on a huge scale. As autumn nears in New England, then, nature orchestrates the mass suicide of chlorophyll to prevent an invasion of oxygen radicals, which would disrupt the all-important process of salvaging carbohydrates, proteins, and other useful compounds from the plants' leaves.

This elaborate fail-safe device, Hendry says, allows nature's leafy "solar panels" to operate "with an efficiency and safety record unmatched by anything humans have yet devised."

## *Big Business, Big Science*

"The Scientific Tradition in American Industrial Research" by John Kenly Smith, Jr., in *Technology and Culture* (Jan. 1990), National Museum of American History, Room 5030, Smithsonian Inst., Washington, D.C. 20560.

The brash young pioneers of California's Silicon Valley have revived the dream of the swashbuckling American inventor, freed at last from the shackles of big business. There is indeed something new happening in the relationship between science and business, writes Smith, a historian at Lehigh University, but Silicon Valley exemplifies the past, not the future.

That relationship began during the 1870s and blossomed into marriage because of new competitive pressures on big business generated by the expiration of many old patents and by the federal government's vigorous antitrust efforts. By World War I, the pioneers of U.S. industrial research—General Electric, DuPont, AT&T, and Kodak—had all established

their own laboratories to help them maintain market share.

At first, Smith says, "American industries cast a wide net for new technologies but in general did not expect to invent them. Rather, they made use of the work of independent inventors." That strategy was a success, producing such technological and marketplace triumphs as cellophane (DuPont), refrigerators (GE), and color film (Kodak).

By the 1930s, however, several corporate laboratories were beginning to change: "Instead of just applying science, industrial researchers would 'do' science," Smith notes. This kind of basic research led to the creation of nylon at DuPont in 1934 and of the transistor at AT&T in

1947. After World War II, presidential science adviser Vannevar Bush and other leaders persuaded corporate executives that "basic science led directly and rather quickly to new technology," inaugurating a new era of basic research. Corporate laboratories completed the change toward academic-style research; the laboratories themselves were frequently relocated in suburban office parks, literally and symbolically far from the plant and corporate headquarters.

As early as the 1950s, however, corporate managers began to sour on the "ivory tower" approach. Where was the new nylon or the new transistor?

Today, says Smith, the search is on for a

new model. He doubts that a return to the days of the heroic individual inventor is possible. The upstart Silicon Valley firms that have revived these hopes relied on two big institutions: from the Pentagon came research money and from AT&T's once-famed Bell Labs came technology and personnel. But American corporate laboratories no longer seem to have the knack for good applied science, either. So what will the next phase of the business-science marriage be? Perhaps the partners may try living apart, Smith suggests. A portent may be GE's sale last year of the RCA research laboratory to the RAND Corporation, thus creating a huge independent research establishment.

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## RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

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### *Pedal Power*

"Reinventing the Wheels" by Marcia D. Lowe, in *Technology Review* (May-June 1990), Building W59, MIT, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

Maybe all those cab-dodging downtown bicycle couriers know something. Traffic jams and air pollution, not to mention the shortage of decent radio stations, make driving a car in the city a hellish experi-

ence. Buses and subways are often crowded and slow. So the urban messengers—along with some gridlocked policemen in London and Los Angeles—have turned to the bicycle.

The humble bicycle, insists Lowe, a Worldwatch Institute researcher, is a kinder, gentler form of transportation that ought to figure prominently in the nation's transportation plans. "All you have to do," one California town official told her, "is make it easier to ride a bike than drive a car. People will take it from there."

Over hill and dale? Through rain, sleet, and snow? Lowe does not say. But a few pro-cycle societies have taken some bold steps: Bicycle parking towers dot the cities of Japan; Swiss buses are



America's first bicycle craze began in 1876. In 1884, a California man even set off to cycle around the world; it took nearly three years. Here, cyclists take a break near Tallahassee, Florida.

equipped with bike racks to encourage "bike and ride" travelers; one Canadian aid group is even redesigning the bicycle rickshaw to better accommodate Asia's shorter drivers. In China, of course, the bicycle is king of the road. In the Netherlands, the most "bicycle friendly" of the industrial nations (and one of the flattest) the government spent \$230 million to expand bicycle parking and build special "cycleways." Today, 20 to 50 percent of all Dutch trips are made on two wheels.

At least one American municipality, the

college town of Palo Alto, California, has given the bicycle a chance to show its stuff. The city has spent \$1 million since 1980 on bike lockers, racks, paths, and a two-mile "bicycle boulevard" downtown. All road patching must meet smoothness standards, and bike-detecting sensors change traffic signals for bikers.

Lowe believes that America should go the way of Palo Alto. Yet, she laments, the bicycle was barely mentioned in the U.S. Department of Transportation's recently announced national transportation policy.

## *Fad Farming?*

"Alternative Agriculture" by Bette Hileman, in *Chemical & Engineering News* (Mar. 5, 1990), 1155 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

"Alternative agriculture" has been much in the news since the U.S. National Research Council (NRC) published a controversial report last fall hailing its promise. By and large, says Hileman, a *Chemical & Engineering News* editor, it is not what its critics or its supporters claim.

Even the term "alternative" is a little misleading, since it conjures up images of peasant dresses and pony tails. Most of the farmers who are experimenting with new agricultural techniques (and they are a tiny minority) are more concerned about paying their feed and fertilizer bills than about singlehandedly saving Planet Earth. From the Left or the Right, ancients or moderns, they will borrow any technique that works. So many are trying ridge tillage, a system developed in China 3,000 years ago that minimizes cultivation and thus can sometimes reduce soil erosion and weeds. From the contemporary chemistry lab there is now a new soil test that allows farmers to determine the minimum amount of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer needed to obtain maximum yields.

That may not sound revolutionary, but research shows that farmers steeped in modern "high-chem" agriculture habitually overapply synthetic fertilizers. One specialist estimates that a good test could cut fertilizer use by one-third and outlays by \$100 million annually in the state of

Iowa alone. To paraphrase an old saying about politics, however, all farming is local. So different soil tests must be devised for different areas of the country. Likewise, the results of alternative agriculture vary from place to place. Pest control methods that work in arid California can't often be used in Florida's hot, humid climate. And because alternative agriculture is new and only spottily employed, its advocates lack the large-scale statistical studies needed to prove their claims.

What does seem clear to Hileman is that "high-chem" farming has its limits. For example, David Pimentel, a Cornell entomologist, estimates that while the use of synthetic pesticides has grown 33-fold since 1945, annual crop losses from insects, weeds, and diseases have grown from 31 percent to 37 percent. Twenty years ago, shortly after they were introduced, herbicides virtually eliminated the need to cultivate fields. Today, cultivation is back. With surprising speed, about 80 out of some 500 weed species have developed resistance to herbicides.

Since the NRC's report, there has been a lot of debate about alternative agriculture. The best thing anybody can do, says Hileman, is to get out of the way—by restructuring federal farm subsidy policies that discourage alternative methods—and leave the choice to the farmers.

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS

*The Virtues  
Of Exile*

"The Writer in Exile: The Good Years" by Ewa M. Thompson, in *Slavic and East European Journal* (Winter 1989), Dept. of Russian and East European Studies, Univ. of Minn., Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.

We live in an age that adores victims, and in popular mythology there are few greater victims than the exiled Russian or Eastern European writer.

Save your tears for Ovid, says Thompson, a professor of Slavic studies at Rice University. In 8 A.D., the Roman poet was exiled to a Black Sea backwater whose inhabitants could not read Latin—or any other language. Most of them were illiterate. Exile today is different. Thompson believes that it "has given some writers an audience for which they could not have hoped in the countries of their birth. In some cases, it has converted their national readership into a worldwide one. It made their ideas matter in a way in which they could not have."

A case in point is Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Best known as the chronicler of the Gulag, he is also the chief purveyor in the West of the image of gentle Mother Russia as an innocent victim of history. "Instead of trying to change the self-perception of his countrymen," she writes, "he has reinforced abroad an old and paradoxical image of Russia as a society of rural Ivan Denisoviches and Matrénas who somehow have produced the largest military-industrial complex in the world."

Quite the opposite is true of the eminent Eastern European exiles, such as Milan Kundera, Czesław Miłosz, Josef Škvorecký,

*Who Speaks for Whom?*

Do exiled Eastern European writers truly speak for (or to) their countrymen? In an interview with Philip Roth in the *New York Review of Books* (April 12, 1990), Czech novelist and playwright Ivan Klíma suggests that one of the most prominent exiles, Milan Kundera, may not.

*The reproach that he is writing for foreigners rather than for Czechs is only one of the many reproaches addressed to Kundera and only a part of the more substantial rebuke—that he has lost his ties to his native country . . .*

*In my opinion the allergy [to Kundera] is caused, in part, by what people take to be the simplified and spectacular way in which Kundera presents his Czech experience. What's more, the experience he presents is, they would say, at odds with the fact that he himself had been an indulged and rewarded child of the Communist regime until 1968.*

*The totalitarian system is terribly hard on people, as Kundera recognizes, but the hardness of life has a much more complicated shape than we find in his presentation of it. Kundera's picture, his critics would tell you, is the sort of picture which you would see from a very capable foreign newspaperman who'd spent a few days in our country. Such a picture is acceptable to the Western reader because it confirms his expectations; it reinforces the fairy tale about good and evil, which a good boy likes to hear again and again. But for the Czech readers our reality is no fairy tale . . .*

*Last, but not least, is an extraliterary reason, which may, however, be at the very core of the charge against him. At the time when Kundera was achieving his greatest world popularity, Czech culture was in a bitter struggle with the totalitarian system. Intellectuals at home as well as those in exile shared in this struggle . . . Kundera seems to many people to have stood apart from this kind of effort.*

and Janusz Glowacki. They "have begun to forge a definition of that part of the world that has become comprehensible to the home audience *and* to the audiences of the host countries. They have helped to create an understanding of the unity of 'the other Europe' which had not existed in the West before." From books such as *Native Realm*, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, and *The Engineer of Human*

*Souls*, there has emerged “a new type of East European literary hero: skeptical, yet not unprincipled; aware of the absurdity of the situation in which ‘the other Europe’ has been forcibly placed, but remarkably

free of self-pity; conscious of his nationality but alert to the needs of other ‘political losers.’” Thus Eastern Europeans have distanced themselves from both their Russian and Western European counterparts.

## Art and the Decline of Nations

“Counterfeiting Nature: Artistic Innovation and Cultural Crisis in Renaissance Venice” by Arthur Steinberg and Jonathan Wylie, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Jan. 1990), 102 Rackham Bldg., Univ. of Mich., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48109-1070.

How many times has the story been repeated? A society slowly rises to greatness and then, just as it passes its peak, experiences a spectacular flowering of the arts.

Venice during the early 16th century was such a place. Exhausted by decades of war with the Ottoman Empire, it then confronted the League of Cambrai—including Florence, Spain, and France. The League handed the Venetians a disastrous defeat at Agnadello in 1509.

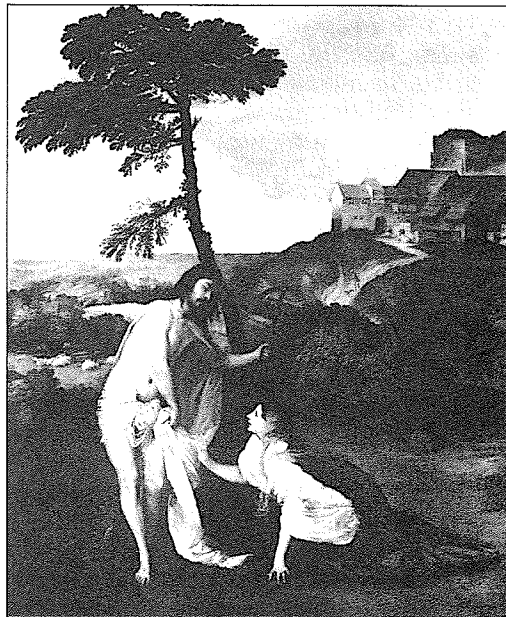
Out of this turmoil grew one of the great flowers of Venetian art: the “natural painting” of Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430–1516), Giorgione (c. 1478–1510), and Titian (c. 1480–1576). Steinberg and Wylie, both historians at MIT, argue that this flowering was no accident.

The patriarchs of Venice proudly thought of themselves as having a special link to God. Venice was known as *la sancta città* (the holy city), and legend had it that it was founded on Annunciation Day, the same day on which Adam was created, Mary impregnated, and Christ crucified. The city’s misfortunes thus cast doubt not only on her favored status but on “the very souls of her political and economic elite.”

To continue the illusion of Venetian greatness, the city fathers went on a civic spending spree, creating a huge market for art. Venetian artists soon discovered that the newly developed oil paints allowed the painter to work more quickly and produce more pictures than traditional egg-based tempera paints did. And oil allowed artists to achieve much more vivid colors and life-like effects. Almost too life-like, in fact. The main subjects of Venetian art were sa-

cred figures such as the Virgin Mary, and if they could be depicted as part of profane reality, the authors observe, their “sacredness became ambiguous or even risked disappearing entirely.”

Bellini tried to solve the problem by surrounding his sacred figures with cherubs and halos, and by placing them on an entirely different plane. Invariably, the result was really two (or more) pictures: a Madonna in the foreground, for example, and a completely detached landscape in the background. It was left to Giorgione and especially Titian to create the new style of



In Titian’s *Noli Me Tangere* (*Do Not Touch Me*) of 1511, the sacred foreground is set apart by Christ’s motion away from Mary Magdalene and by the bush, the tree, and other pictorial markers.

“natural painting.” Titian found several ways to blend the planes in his pictures far more naturally. His greatest innovation was to emphasize the natural qualities of the sacred figures in the foreground, often by painting them in motion. The effect, paradoxically, was to set them apart.

Natural painting was a critical and commercial success, say the authors, because it “opened a fresh avenue of mediation between God and men” in a city whose citi-

zens feared that God had turned His back on them. One writer of the day said that Titian’s pictures “have a touch of divinity in them . . . his colors are infused as though God has put the paradise of our bodies in them, not painted, but made holy and glorified by his hands.”

Alas, the Venetians had to content themselves with fine art. For while Venice regained some of its lost empire, it never recaptured its status as a world power.

## What Makes A Masterpiece?

“Masterpieces and the Museum” by Arthur C. Danto, in *Grand Street* (Winter 1990), 50 Riverside Dr., New York, N.Y. 10024.

When philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto attended a recent symposium on the concept of the masterpiece, he was astonished to find that all of the invited scholars and museum curators were reluctant to talk about the subject. One gave a clever lecture on “monsterpieces,” another lamented the fact that advertisers had co-opted and degraded the term “masterpiece,” but nobody wanted to discuss how one might define a masterpiece.

The reason, Danto suspects, is that the museum, like the university, has become an arena of intense political and cultural conflict, and the museum’s role in certifying masterpieces by deciding which art is of “museum quality” has become highly controversial. The museum world is experiencing “a moment of upheaval and indeed of revolution.”

The revolutionaries are of two kinds. Some are radical critics who believe that the very idea of the masterpiece “is hopelessly intertwined with white male oppression” and ought to be done away with entirely. Such a step, they believe, would throw open the doors of museums to women and minority artists engaged in creating “socially useful” art.

The second kind of critic seeks not to overthrow the concept of the masterpiece (and thus the artistic authority of the museum) but to win representation for previously excluded artists by revising the definition of a masterpiece.

Politics! scream outraged conservatives.

Precisely, answers Danto. In his view, much of the work of museums has always been political. The first modern museum, the Musée Napoléon, was created to house the spoils of Napoleon’s conquests. Thus, says Danto, the “museum entered modern consciousness as an emblem of power,” including the power to dictate which art should be displayed, and why. When Napoleon’s power waned and curators had to decide which works to transfer from the Musée Napoléon to the Louvre, they chose to keep art that would advance the “moral education of the citizenry.” This was just one of the many different moral visions that have informed curators’ decisions in different times and places.

But Danto insists that this does not mean, as some of the more radical critics argue, that the whole concept of the masterpiece is arbitrary.

Danto believes there are two kinds of masterpieces. Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, for example, is a work of pure genius, which touches “our essential universal humanity.” Even the tongue-tied curators at Danto’s symposium would admit that such works are masterpieces. A second kind of masterpiece is created by the master, who labors within the rules and conventions of his art to produce, after much effort, his own masterpiece. Unlike the Sistine Chapel, with its timeless appeal, this kind of masterpiece tells us about the values of a particular time and place.

This is the door through which Danto



seems to think that works advocated by the second variety of critic can be admitted to the museum. For many years, curators

have unthinkingly applied politicized definitions of the masterpiece, he suggests. Now it is time to apply them thoughtfully.

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## OTHER NATIONS

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### *Debt and Democracy*

"Democracy and Economic Crisis: The Latin American Experience" by Karen L. Remmer, in *World Politics* (April 1990), 17 Ivy Lane, Princeton, N.J. 08544.

Nobody ever seems to say anything about Latin America's new democracies without attaching warning words like "fragile," "fledgling," or "struggling." The assumption among academics and journalists appears to be that the newly elected leaders of Brazil, Chile, and other nations will find it much harder to deal with economic adversity, especially the debt crisis, than did their authoritarian predecessors. Ultimately, the theory goes, the need to placate various constituencies will handicap elected leaders to such an extent that democracy itself may fail.

All of this strikes Remmer, a political scientist at the University of New Mexico, as very curious. Since the debt crisis began in 1982, she notes, not a single South American democracy has fallen, but six authoritarian regimes (notably, in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) have. The story is much the same in Central America and the Caribbean. "It might be more appropriate to emphasize the fragility of 'old' authoritarianism rather than the weakness of 'new' democracy," Remmer says.

Going one step farther, she set out to compare the economic performance of 10 Latin nations between 1982 and 1988. Two (Colombia and Venezuela) were "old" de-

mocracies; Chile and Paraguay were authoritarian during the whole period; six others underwent a transition to democracy. Using such gauges as unemployment, real wages, and inflation, she found no statistically significant differences between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Overall, however, the two "old" democracies were the best performers. They did not get as deeply into debt in the first place as did their authoritarian counterparts.

People who are surprised by the success of the Latin democracies, Remmer says, forget several things. Since 1982, democrats and dictators alike have been forced to rely on aid from organizations like the World Bank, which has limited their freedom of choice. But there are also many varieties of democracy, from Peruvian populism to Ecuadorian conservatism, which produce different approaches to economics—and different results. And finally, few popularly-elected leaders in Latin America feel free—or obliged—to buy popularity. Remmer says that they "are aware that the rise and fall of democracy in Latin America have corresponded less to the whims of the voting majority than to the concerted opposition of business and military elites."

### *A Beur's-Eye View of France*

"The 'Beurs,' Children of North-African Immigrants in France: The Issue of Integration" by Azouz Begag, in *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Spring 1990), Western Wash. Univ., Bellingham, Wash. 98225.

Two centuries after the Revolution, France is facing a challenge that the partisans of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* could hardly have imagined: the integration of some three million people of North Afri-

can extraction into French society.

Until the 1980s, France was able to maintain the fiction that the Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian immigrants who began arriving during the 1950s were only

temporary visitors. Then, writes Begag, a researcher at the University of Lyon and himself an example of the phenomenon he describes, a second generation, largely born in France, appeared on the scene. These young "Beurs"—the word *rebeu* (Arab) rendered in a slang called *verlan*—obviously are not going to return to North Africa. (Youngsters born of Algerian parents after 1963 even hold French citizenship.) Nor are they well prepared to make a place for themselves in France's highly stratified society. Many are poorly educated; unemployment is high, as is the incidence of crime and poverty.

Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front is only the ugliest manifestation of racial politics in France. After the National Front recently won a parliamentary election in the city of Dreux with 62 percent of the vote, a chastened President François Mitterrand seemed to adapt the racist code-words of the Right when he spoke of such matters as the "too-heavy geographical concentration of immigrants." His performance has not been a profile in courage. Immigrants constitute 30 percent of Dreux's population, but they cannot vote because Mitterrand has not delivered on his 1981 promise to grant them the right to do so in municipal contests. "French public opinion is not ready to accept it," he ex-

plains.

The Beurs themselves are uncertain about their political and cultural identity. Many even reject the term Beur. In Lyon, Begag reports, they refer to themselves as "Khokhos" and speak ironically of the "Beur . . . geoisie Parisienne." Many Beurs cling to Islam yet reject their parents' norms. On the other hand, many young men seem to favor stricter supervision of their sisters than their fathers do. "Controlling the mobility of females appears to be, in the males' minds, a means of preserving identity." As a result, Begag says, French-Arab girls, or Beurettes, are excelling in school to escape family control.

The question for the Beurs is whether to pursue integration as individuals—symbolized by the likes of actress Isabelle Adjani and tennis star Yannick Noah—or as a political group. In March 1989, the limited efforts of a group called France-Plus helped 390 of the 572 Beurs running for municipal offices under various party flags win election. More promising, in Begag's view, was the victory of two Beurettes in the June 1989 elections to the European Parliament. Ultimately, he says, the Beurs will have to look to the European Community and a vision of a "multi-cultural European space," not to France, for answers to their grievances.

## O, Africa!

"But What About Africa?" by Richard J. Barnet, in *Harper's* (May 1990), 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

Gloom hangs over Western Africa specialists. "Feeling the burden of the Hippocratic oath—First, do no harm!"—writes Barnet, of Washington's Institute for Policy Studies, "these disillusioned aid givers wonder whether it is not time to cut back, scale down, go home."

The reasons for their loss of heart are painfully obvious. Of the continent's 650 million people, at least 280 million are poor, and most of the most wretchedly poor live in sub-Saharan Africa. "Corruption, mismanagement, and the persistence of tribal politics all conspire to direct well-meant subsidies into the wrong pockets,"

Barnet says. The region has the fastest growing population in the world, but a total gross domestic product only about the size of Belgium's! The entire continent accounts for only three percent of world trade. "Marginalization," not exploitation, is now its chief peril, Barnet says, especially now that erstwhile Cold Warriors can ignore the Marxist regimes in Ethiopia and Mozambique and "doctors of development" are turning their attention to the economies of Eastern Europe.

In Africa, these "doctors"—from the World Bank and other institutions—have learned from past mistakes. Instead of

funding government megaprojects, they are supporting “grassroots” development by non-governmental organizations. But in Kenya, which Barnet visited, people were pessimistic. Outsiders, they say, “do not, really cannot, comprehend the centrality of tribal politics, which affects almost every intervention into the economy.”

Now, says Barnet, many people on both the Right and the Left (of which he is a prominent member) pin their hopes on

what the conservative Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto calls the “informal sector”—the poor mechanics, furniture-makers, and others who elude government regulation, corruption, and harassment. Ultimately, the hope is that they will become politicized, creating a wellspring of “democratic energy,” as in Eastern Europe. Barnet concedes this is very uncertain, but none of it will come to pass if the West turns its back on Africa.

### At the Mao Museum

A less-than-reverent visit to Mao Zedong's birthplace is described by journalist Murray Sayle in the Australian magazine, *Quadrant* (Jan–Feb. 1990).

*[The house] stands on the side of a small valley running up into pine-clad mountains from the main square of Shaoshan village, a walk of no more than 20 minutes. There is a car and a bus-park nearby, empty when we were there, and the last hundred meters is a foot-path lined with what the French call bondieuserie: stalls selling Mao medallions, Mao tiepins, Mao thermometers (in glass cases with a picture of the Great Helmsman pasted inside), Mao singlets, Mao rulers in inches and centimeters, Mao pencils, and—clearly diversification to save floundering business—postcards of Chinese pop stars and movie actresses . . .*

*When [photographer René] Burri and I asked for the Little Red Book we were met only with embarrassed smiles and giggles, and offered, instead, a rare collector's item, a set of Mao Zedong cuff-links. René, a snappy dresser, snapped them up.*

*The Birthplace is well worth a visit for what it tells us about the future Chairman and his family. The present farmhouse is a replica, the origi-*

*nal having been burned down by the Japanese . . . during their first attempt to build a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, but the replacement, we are told, repeats the original plan.*

*It stands opposite the tranquil duck pond in which, we are told, the infant Mao learnt to swim, acquiring the form with which he later dazzled the world while allegedly crossing the Yangtze at Wuhan. The house is by far the biggest in the neighborhood in which no less than 17 other families, all named Mao and distant relatives, continue to live, manure their exquisite rice-paddies, and flourish. None of them, however, has the colonnaded courtyard with lily pool, the summer and winter kitchens, the separate bedrooms and grain store of the Mao residence. Young Mao was, in short, the richest kid in the village. When we further learnt that his father was exactly the kind of hard, tight-fisted, clever-with-money and upwardly mobile type*

*of capitalist entrepreneur so admired by Margaret Thatcher and Robert Hawke, and we hear that this boorish domestic tyrant abused Mao's sensitive mother and her studiously-inclined eldest son, we do not need the help of Austrian doctors to explain to us the psycho-dynamics of much recent Chinese history.*



# RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions*

## **"Employers Large and Small."**

Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 109 pp. \$19.95.

Authors: *Charles Brown, James Hamilton, and James Medoff*

## **"The Growth Experiment: How the New Tax Policy is Transforming the U.S. Economy."**

Basic Books, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 260 pp. \$21.95.

Author: *Lawrence B. Lindsey*

## **"The Age of Diminished Expectations: U.S. Economic Policy in the 1990s."**

The Washington Post Co., 1150 15th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20071. 110 pp. \$195.

Author: *Paul Krugman*

Economists are often uncharitably compared to the ancient priests and soothsayers who looked to the inscrutable heavens and somehow discerned portents of the human future. But there is also a modern metaphor that applies to the dismal profession. Economists have become psychoanalysts, experts who try to tell us, or lead us to discover, who or what we are. So it is that dry debates over numbers are transformed into struggles to define America's identity.

One such struggle concerns the role of small business in America. This long-running debate was reopened in 1981, when MIT economist David Birch published a major study showing that small business is responsible for the creation of a whopping 80 percent of the U.S. economy's new jobs. It was the perfect send-off for a decade (and a presidency) that celebrated Silicon Valley pioneers and other entrepreneurs.

The new decade begins with a counteroffensive by Brown, of the University of Michigan, and Hamilton and Medoff, both of Harvard. In *Employers Large and Small*, they argue that small business (firms with fewer than 100 workers) is overrated. According to a 1983 study by the U.S. Small Business Administration, it creates 56 percent of all new jobs—respectable, but hardly over-

whelming. Moreover, they contend, small business provides inferior jobs. Workers in large firms earn 35 percent more than employees of small firms. Virtually all large firms provide life, health, and accident insurance while only two-thirds of smaller ones do; 83 percent of large nonunion firms offer pensions, but only 33 percent of small firms do.

What seems to irk the authors most is the image of the entrepreneur as underdog. Small businessmen are wealthier than the average American and very influential in Washington. The evidence can be seen in the exemption of small firms from equal employment opportunity laws, lax enforcement of job safety and health regulations, and other advantages. These are advantages, the authors maintain, that small business does not deserve.

Small business was popular during the 1980s, but taxes were the big issue. *The Growth Experiment*, by Lawrence Lindsey, a Harvard economist now on leave and working at the White House, is a resounding vindication of what Lindsey's current employer once called "voodoo economics."

Lindsey argues that the Reagan tax cut of 1981 did what it was supposed to: By 1985, his economic model shows, the gross national product was two

to three percent higher than it otherwise would have been.

Lindsey concedes that the tax cut was not self-financing, as some supply-side extremists had predicted. But the tax cut for people earning over \$200,000 did in fact pay for itself; these people paid a larger share of the nation's income taxes after the top rate was cut. Americans who earned between \$75,000 and \$200,000 paid about 92 percent of what they would have paid without a tax cut. Workers earning less than \$20,000 received the biggest windfall, paying only about 82 percent as much as they would have.

Lindsey denies that the Reagan tax cuts are chiefly to blame for subsequent federal budget deficits. Those who make this argument, he says, wrongly assume that the economy would have been just as healthy without tax cuts as it was with them.

Between 1980 and 1987, he estimates, the national debt rose by \$529 billion more than it would have if the fiscal policies of 1980 had remained in effect. But 79 percent of the increase resulted from higher federal spending. Only 21 percent of the increase was the result of tax reductions. It should come as no surprise that Lindsey is not disturbed by today's budget deficits. We will soon grow our way out of them, he

confidently predicts, and by the late 1990s the time should be ripe for another round of growth-enhancing tax cuts.

If Lindsey sees the 1980s as a decade of triumph, Krugman, an MIT economist, sees the decade as part of a complacent "age of diminished expectations." Imagine, he says, confronting Americans of the 1960s "with a nation where productivity crept up by little more than one percent a year, where real hourly wages fell through the 1970s and '80s, where poverty grew in absolute terms, and where the economy was by some measures slipping toward third-

rank status in the world." What they would have seen as a failure, we view as a success.

Particularly symptomatic, in Krugman's view, is the nation's chronic trade deficit (\$130 billion in 1989). The solution to the problem, he writes, "is both clear and unacceptable": Domestic demand must be curtailed, and, to that end, the federal budget deficit must be cut. But so far the nation has lacked the political will to trim the deficit.

Krugman makes some interesting incidental points. A full-fledged international trade war, he calculates, would not be nearly so costly as free-trad-

ers suggest. A trade war that cut international trade in half would reduce world income by only 2.5 percent. However, a trade war would hardly solve America's problems.

Krugman sees continued American drift as the most likely path for the 1990s. Growing protectionism around the world, along with increasing foreign ownership of U.S. business would be one result. American living standards would improve somewhat, but the nation would decline to Number Three status. Clearly, Krugman, like so many of his colleagues, hopes to stir the patient to action.

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### "Preferential Policies: An International Perspective."

William Morrow and Co., 105 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 221 pp. \$17.95.

Author: *Thomas Sowell*

What do India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and the United States have in common? All have created "preferential policies" for certain racial, ethnic, or religious groups. And all have seen their policies fail.

"The rhetoric of 'disadvantage' is invoked politically to cover radically different situations," observes Sowell, the noted black economist at the Hoover Institution. It is used to justify preferences for the majority Malays, or *Bumiputeras* (sons of the soil), of Malaysia, and for the minority untouchables of India. Everywhere, says Sowell, the results are the same.

Preferences always begin as "temporary" and become permanent. The world's first minority preferences (for India's untouchables) began 50 years ago and are still in place.

The preferences always help

those members of the favored group who are already better off. Dr. Mahatir bin Mohamad admitted as much in 1970 before he became prime minister of Malaysia: "These few Malays . . . have waxed rich not because of themselves but because of the policy of a government . . . . The poor Malays themselves have not gained one iota . . . . With the existence of the few rich Malays at least the poor can say their fate is not entirely to serve rich non-Malays." A 1984 study shows that the share of Malay income claimed by the top 10 percent of all Malays climbed from 42 percent to 53 percent as a result of the nation's preferential treatment policies.

Moreover, the gains of the few usually are purchased at very high cost. In India, as in the United States, institutions of higher education struggle to

meet quotas. Drastic reductions in admissions standards have occurred. Six highly selective engineering schools agreed to accept untouchables with examination scores as low as 10 percent. "Even so," says Sowell, "the quota of 54 was never filled." Most of those admitted flunked out. Throughout India, 85 percent of all untouchables admitted to undergraduate institutions under preference schemes leave without a degree.

Finally, Sowell says, preferential programs almost always lead to political polarization and bloodshed. In Nigeria and Sri Lanka, they helped fuel civil wars.

What is to be done? Sowell's answer is rigorous early schooling for the disadvantaged. Even then, the road will be long, and group differences are likely to remain.



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## COMMENTARY

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*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.*

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### ***Czech Identity***

I should like to add a footnote to Ivan Sanders' piece ["The Quest for Central Europe," *WQ*, Spring '90]. I think that Western observers sometimes underestimate the differences that separate Czechs from Poles, or Hungarians, on the meaning of the protean label, Central Europe. Milan Kundera is not alone among his countrymen in approaching this topic from a melancholic, disabused perspective, although he may be an extreme case.

Hungary and Poland are what used to be called "historical" nations, with longstanding linguistic, literary, and geographical identities. Their writers and political thinkers have little difficulty in grounding their work and their identity in a secure and confident (sometimes self-confident) culture. Czechs, on the other hand, display a contrasting diffidence: Many of them have expressed doubts about the viability of their state, or even the very wisdom of bringing it into existence (hesitations shared by Tomáš Masaryk only a few years before his election to the presidency of the new nation).

The Czech interest in a European identity, in the importance of a European culture of which they are a part, in distinguishing their experience from that of Russia and in treating it as a paradigm and a warning for all Europeans, should be seen not just as an echo of the "European" yearnings of Milosz or Konrád but as a peculiarly Czech way of having an identity of their own. Whether this form of self-identification (some Czechs see it rather as self-laceration) will fade as the country re-enters a more clearly defined European community remains to be seen. But its historical significance and particularity should not be underestimated, nor too readily combined with the different histories and concerns of its neighbors.

*Tony Judt  
Palo Alto, Calif.*

### ***Return to Habsburg***

I agree with Ivan Sanders that the East Central Europeans' best hope lies in a collective reconsideration of their shared experience under many centuries of Habsburg rule. Only in that monarchy were the peoples of the region able to strike a delicate balance between independence and integration.

Today, after several decades of mass emigration, expulsions, deportations, and genocide, ethnic boundaries have become much more clearly defined. As a result, there are fewer immediate reasons for regional integration. Confined within their own "nation states," with far fewer minority groups in their midst, and reduced to cultivating their own specific national cultures, the peoples of the region no longer benefit from the marvelous cosmopolitan culture that characterized the Habsburg monarchy. True, they have been able recently to coordinate their actions in ridding themselves of the hated Soviet tutelage; but once the Soviet problem is gone, there will be little incentive for regional cooperation. Rather than deciding to share their collective misery, these East Central European economic "basket cases" will attempt, and are already attempting, to strike individual agreements with the European Economic Community.

Why then do I say that hope lies in the collective memory of the Habsburg experience? Because I am convinced that a truly successful European Economic Community cannot be based on the cooperation of today's nation states, each jealously guarding its "eternal national values"; each deriving its legitimacy from some historic war for national independence and from the successful elimination of its ethnic minorities. Hope for European unification lies in the reconstitution of the historic provinces of East Central Europe and of Europe as a whole—provinces that reflected the outcome not of 19th century wars of "national liberation," but of an organic development and of a shared cultural heritage.

Today it may sound naive to conjure the image of a sovereign Moravia, Transylvania, Saxony, Bavaria, and other provinces united under an all-European government. But then consider that a year or two ago it would have been utterly utopian to predict that Czechoslovakia would soon be led by one of its dissident writers, or that the people of the East Germany would vote, in peaceful and fair elections, to dismantle their own state.

*István Deák  
Columbia Univ.*

### ***Race and Poverty***

One may question Howard Husock's ["Fighting

Poverty the Old Fashioned Way," *WQ*, Spring '90] use of history. Are poor African-Americans or Hispanic-Americans today very similar to the immigrant of 1890 or 1920? Some, like Irving Kristol, have argued that they are. But the differences—especially with regard to unemployment and family break-up—seem more striking. Thoughtful scholars today are both perplexed and alarmed at how unyielding the problem of poverty seems to be. David Ellwood and Lawrence Summers, puzzling over our high rates of black joblessness, have entertained, only to reject, structural arguments that focus on social isolation in the ghetto or on technological disruption. They concluded in 1986, "there are just not any good answers at the current time." Christopher Jencks reminds us that African-American children of the same socio-economic background as white children enter schools knowing less. Family breakups, he adds, stem in part from "growing individualism and commitment to personal freedom." In short, subcultural traditions (such as the relative importance assigned to education), as well as changes in national values compound the economic-structural problems faced by many of our contemporary poor.

*Prof. James T. Patterson  
Brown Univ.*

### *Upward and Out?*

Howard Husock correctly argues that the settlement houses and their residents promoted social and economic justice—and made numerous contributions to American social welfare from which we can benefit today.

It is certainly correct to point out that the settlement-house residents emphasized upward mobility, with success. It is doubtful, however, whether a "renewed emphasis on the active promotion of upward mobility offers a way out of" today's poverty problem, as Husock maintains. More than a belief in upward mobility, the poor need steady, well-paying jobs with full benefits, especially health insurance. When these are available, the belief in success, or upward mobility, will return with meaning and effectiveness.

*Walter I. Trattner  
Univ. of Wis., Milwaukee*

### *Happy with Ike*

Alan Brinkley, in his article ["A President for Certain Seasons," *WQ*, Spring '90], concludes that nothing in "Dwight D. Eisenhower's uneventful presidency ensures him an important place in po-

litical history."

Yet the Eisenhower years were those of peak American power and prestige in the world, comparable to the years of the Roman Empire under Caesar Augustus. And those were years, as Brinkley writes, "of remarkable growth and abundance, when the American gross national product nearly doubled, when poverty declined by almost half" and when "many Americans bathed in a warm glow of triumph and contentment . . ."

Isn't this what has been known for a long time, that the happy years in history are the uneventful years, those without history?

*Francesco S. Tolone  
Paradise Valley, Arizona*

### *Defending Deconstruction*

Frank McConnell's essay ["Will Deconstruction Be the Death of Literature?," *WQ*, Winter '90] is very bad, full of errors and falsifications. He repeats all the old erroneous journalistic clichés about so-called "deconstruction," errors long since patiently refuted by Derrida, by me, and by many others. It would be a long business to correct these errors—I have marked eleven on pages 99–102, and there are eight errors in the second column of page 106 alone.

Rather than being only a decade old, "deconstruction" has been around for almost 25 years and has by now been thoroughly absorbed in American intellectual life in a large variety of forms. Far from contributing to some "momentous crisis" in the study of literature, it has contributed to the manifold admirably productive and socially useful transformations that are going on now in literary study.

It is impossible in a brief letter to try once more to set the record straight, but three points may be stressed here: 1) The dissemination of "deconstructionisms" to theology, philosophy, anthropology, architecture, law, and even to the creative arts has led to much diversity and downright heterogeneity. Sentences that take the form of "Deconstruction is so and so" are bound to be aberrant. 2) One major value of deconstructionisms, for me at least, has not been their theoretical formulations but exactly the same feature that drew me originally to the work of Georges Poulet: the penetrating, original, socially and pedagogically useful readings of specific works. 3) Deconstructionisms have performed their liberating critique of "logocentrism" not to dismantle and undo, but as an affirmative solicitation gesturing toward new institutional and cultural forms. These prospective affirmations are oriented toward precisely that "real world" of history McConnell says "deconstruction"



ignores. They involve new disciplinary studies whose outlines are only beginning to emerge, as well as new forms of democracy, new forms of responsibility.

McConnell is throughout tilting at a phantom windmill of his own concoction. The battle with shadows that he fights seems outmoded, outside the "mainstream," to use his word against him—no longer where the action is. The spectacle would have its comic side if it did not become deadly serious when a supposedly responsible journal like the *Wilson Quarterly* prints the essay as an apparently accurate and authoritative account of its topic that will be read by many people outside the field of literary studies.

J. Hillis Miller  
Univ. of Calif., Irvine

**Frank McConnell Replies**

*Miller's comments perfectly incarnate what I find most objectionable in the deconstructionist stance but was too conciliatory to mention. What he heralds as my "errors and falsifications" are, it turns out, divergences of opinion and interpretation. But*

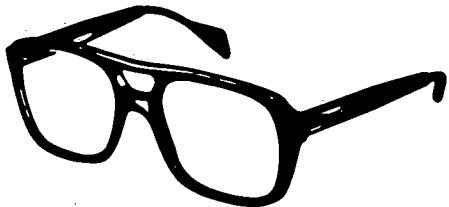
*deconstructionists, like true believers everywhere, have a problem distinguishing fact from opinion. The gravamen of his (to be generous) critique is in fact in his last paragraph: What's wrong with me is that I am "no longer where the action is." In other words, humanism is out, deconstruction is in, and so there. This sort of argument from fashion will not surprise those who have followed Professor Miller's career. A kind of intellectual top-40 deejay, he has from book to book altered his approach—his programming?—in a heroic quest of the au courant.*

*And when he describes me as "tilting at a phantom windmill of [my] own concoction," he gets his source wrong. Don Quixote tilted at real windmills that he thought were giants. But then again, since a windmill is a creaky mechanism producing circular motion through the agency of warm air, whose only function is to grind living kernels into mush, as an image of deconstructionism at its worst, it will serve.*

**Corrections**

A periodical review on p. 13 of the Spring '90 *WQ*, stated that Turkey shares no border with the Soviet Union. It does. The *WQ* regrets the error.

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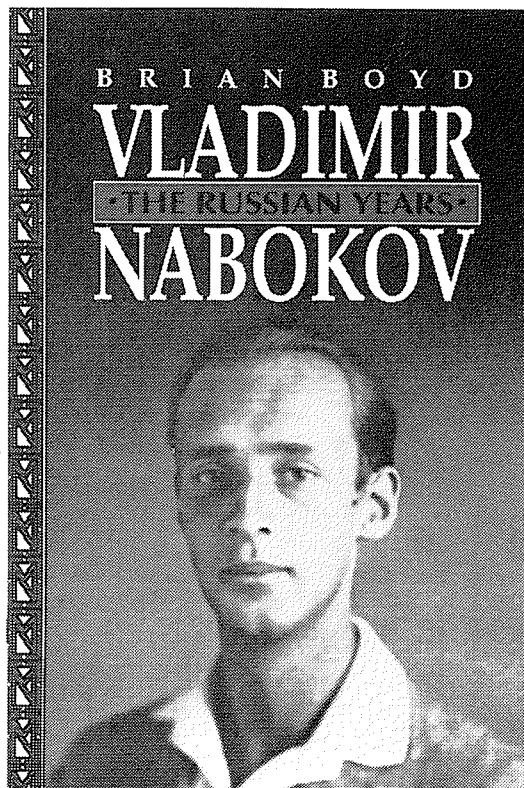
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