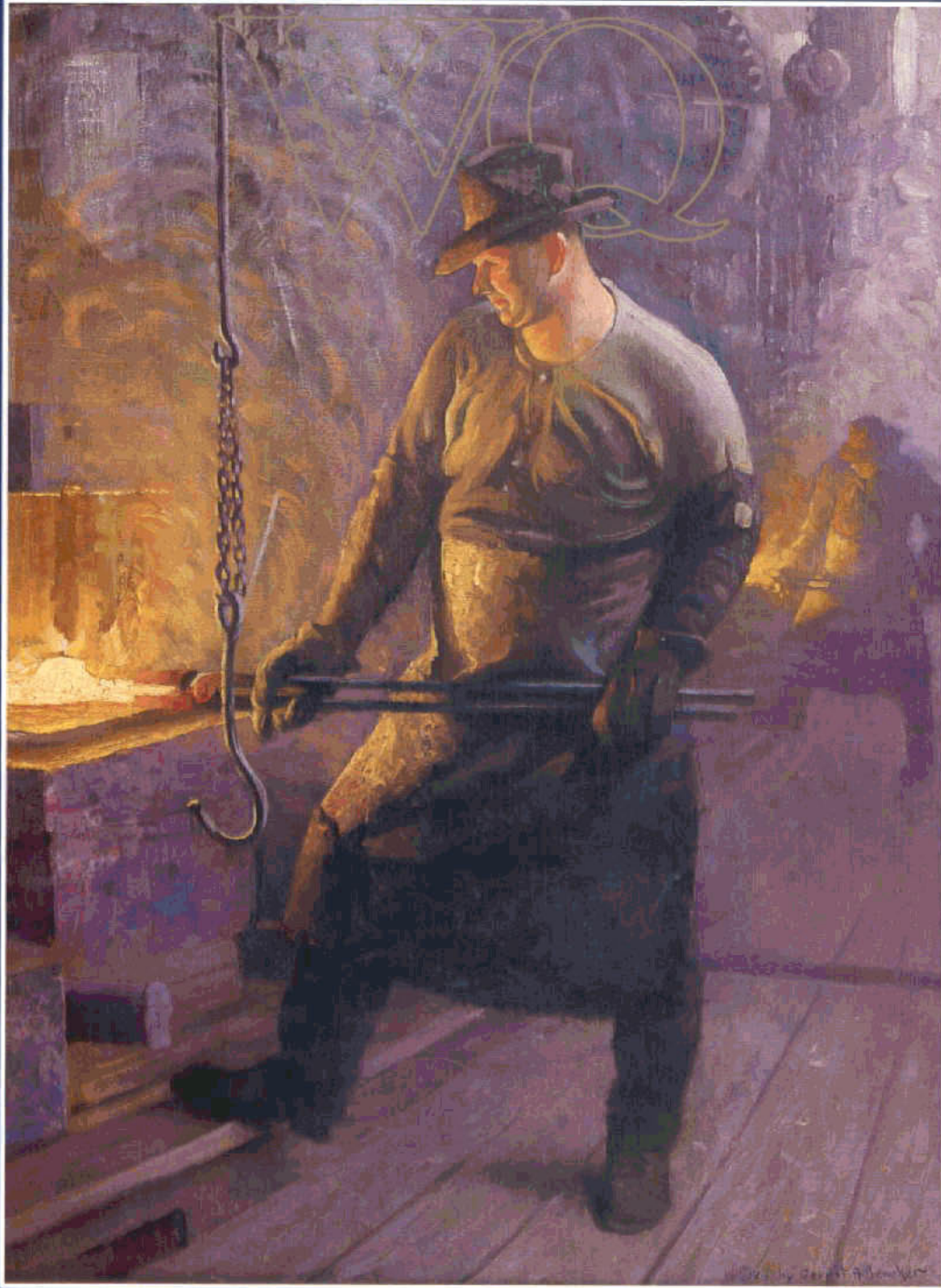


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Something's fishy offshore

Turnabout, the adage has it, is fair play. But sometimes turnabout produces a delicious irony, if not a red face or two.

Take, as a case in point, the question of offshore drilling rigs. For decades now, their deployment has followed a ritualistic pattern, like the mating dance of the whooping crane.

The dance begins at some point after an oil company proposes to begin developing an oil lease it has paid good money for at a government auction. The company has prepared and submitted a detailed environmental impact statement and other assorted documents of impressive heft and bulk. That's usually when some group complains that drilling rigs are unsightly, messy, and will undoubtedly foul the seas and destroy the fish that dwell therein. There usually follows a period of legal skirmishing and, for the oil company, costly delay.

Now, according to a recent story in a major newspaper, some environmental groups are doing a turnabout. They are actually opposing the removal of rigs from their perches above played out oil fields. The reason: Over the length of their working lives, the rigs have been found to provide habitats for fish and other marine life. Removing them leaves these denizens homeless and hungry, and leaves fishermen with empty creels.

The article points out that oil companies are caught in a dilemma. International law requires some rigs to be removed after they cease production. In the U.S., all federal leases mandate removal within one year. Furthermore, the U.S. Navy warns that such

rigs can offer hiding places not only for finny friendlies, but also for less-amiable submarines. Besides, says the Navy, an abandoned rig is a navigational hazard.

On the other hand (dilemmas have at least two) officials in both the Interior and Commerce departments would like to see at least some of the rigs left in place. Failing that, they'd like the rigs transported to any of the artificial reefs that already dot the ocean precisely to encourage underwater critters to set up housekeeping. Economics also colors industry thinking; it's obviously cheaper to leave a rig in place than to demolish it, or even tow it to an underwater housing development.

As for the delicious irony, try this morsel from the same news story: The very rig responsible for the fabled Santa Barbara oil leak in 1969, thereby giving rise to the no-rig-is-a-good-rig movement, is today a source of delight for finicky palates.

The rig is still producing—oil and also mussels and other creatures that grow on its very legs. One entrepreneur has for some time been harvesting the mussels, along with others from nearby rigs, and selling them at premium price to the poshest places because they contain none of the grime found in their brethren from less desirable neighborhoods.

Seriously, folks, here are the questions we'd like to pose. If rigs are the bane of the environmental movement, by what logic can environmentalists mourn their demise? Or could it be that rigs—and offshore drilling—aren't so bad after all?

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AUTUMN 1988

THE WILSON QUARTERLY

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Foreword by Roger Mudd

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Editor's Comment

Ever since this magazine was launched in 1976 as a "national review of ideas and information," Fellows at the Wilson Center have contributed in many ways to each issue. They have alerted the editors to major topics worthy of investigation. They have suggested new books and research reports for review. And Fellows, past and present, have written some of the more provocative articles published in the pages of the *WQ*.

Here, two former Fellows, Mark Reutter and Carlos Fuentes, illustrate the range of interests upon which the *WQ* can draw. Mr. Reutter provides a vivid picture of the rise and decline of the steel industry in America (p. 46), one drama that looms behind the current election-year debate over the nation's economic future. As the accompanying Background Books essay indicates, such chronicles are uncommon: Economists, not historians, write most of the books on American industry.

Mr. Fuentes, the noted Mexican novelist, supplies a lively memoir (p. 148), starting with his childhood as a diplomat's son in Panama, Washington, D.C., Chile, and Argentina. With humor and an eye for detail, Mr. Fuentes describes his quest for a sense of his own nationality and, eventually, of his own literary aspirations.

Last but not least, we note that John R. Gillis, a current Fellow, and Edith Wyschogrod, a former Fellow, assess two interesting books for us in "Scholar's Choice" (p. 134): Alan Macfarlane's *The Culture of Capitalism* and Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*

In short, the Wilson Center's diverse, constantly changing company of scholars has helped the *WQ*'s editors and its readers keep abreast of new research and new insights for more than a decade.

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ISSN-0363-3276

Published in January (New Year's), March (Spring), May (Summer), September (Autumn), and November (Winter) by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D.C. 20560. Indexed biennially. Subscriptions: one year, \$19; two years, \$32; three years, \$43. Foreign subscriptions: one year, \$25.50; two years, \$45; three years, \$62.50. Foreign subscriptions air mail: one year, \$34; two years, \$62; three years, \$88. Lifetime subscription (domestic only): \$250. Single copies mailed upon request: \$5; selected back issues: \$5, including postage and handling; outside U.S. and possessions, \$7. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 600 Maryland Ave. S.W., Suite 430, 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: 303-449-9609 or 212-687-0770.) Postmaster: Send all address changes to The Wilson Quarterly, P.O. Box 56161, Boulder, Colo. 80301.

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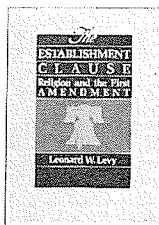
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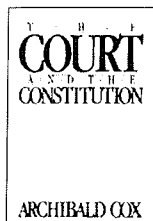
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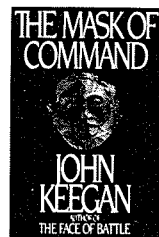
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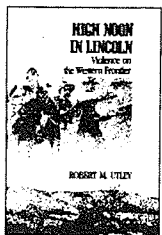
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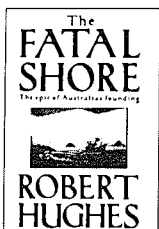
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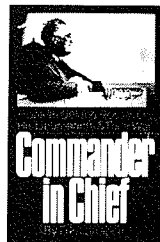
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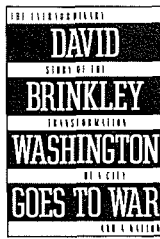
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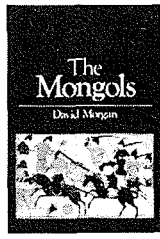
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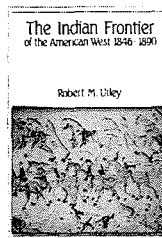
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Chosen in open annual worldwide competitions, some 50 Fellows at the Center carry out advanced research, write books, and join in discussions with other scholars, public officials, journalists, business and labor leaders. The Wilson Center Associates program is designed to provide greater access to their scholarly output.

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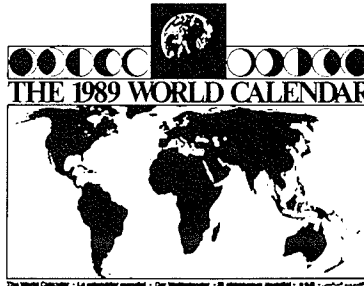
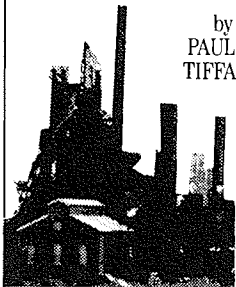
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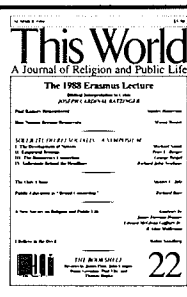
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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

A Tolerant People

“Trends in Political Tolerance” by John Mueller, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Spring 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

As the 1988 campaign progresses, one trend seems clear: Americans are far more tolerant of the opinions of others than they were in the past.

Mueller, a political scientist at the University of Rochester, believes that Americans have become more willing to listen to extreme left-wing groups, and have not increased their distaste for any political group or opinion. Since the 1950s, he argues, there has been “a solid increase in political tolerance” by Americans.

A 1954 survey found that only 27 percent of Americans would allow a communist to speak; 89 percent thought that a communist college teacher should be fired. By 1985, 57 percent of Americans would allow a communist lecturer and only 51 percent would fire a communist teacher. The percentage of Americans surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center between 1972 and 1985 who would let atheists, “antidemocratic militarists,” and homosexuals speak or teach, or would allow books by such people in public libraries either remained constant or rose. However, Americans became less willing to allow racists to give public talks.

Rising tolerance among Americans, Mueller maintains, is largely due to domestic communism becoming “one of the great nonissues of American politics.” In 1954, *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* listed 203 items under “Communism—U.S.” or “Communist Party—U.S.”; in 1984, only three articles were published in these two categories. As anxiety over communist subversion faded, tolerance for communists and other left-wing groups (such as socialists) rose. No new domestic threats (real or perceived) have arisen since the U.S. Communist Party's decline; thus communism's wane has meant an increase in tolerance overall. Changes in attitudes regarding political tolerance, however, do not mirror changes in Americans' views toward civil rights and criminal justice.

Pockets of intolerance remain. Polls in the 1970s and '80s have shown that around 20 percent of Americans believe that *all* unorthodox groups (e.g., homosexuals, advocates of nationalizing industry) should be barred from lecturing. Moreover, subtle changes in poll questions can substan-

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

tively alter results: Sixty-nine percent of Americans surveyed in the spring of 1976 said that the United States should “not forbid” antidemocratic speeches, while only 46 percent said the U.S. should “allow” them. The uncertainty of polling data, in Mueller’s opinion, implies that specific questions about tolerance cannot be extrapolated to determine general attitudes toward free speech and other civil liberties.

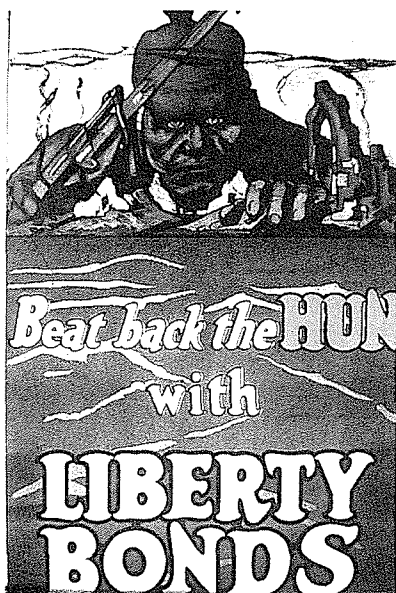
*The Quest for
Community*

“The Present Age and the State of Community”
by Robert Nisbet, in *Chronicles* (June 1988),
Rockford Institute, 934 North Main St., Rock-
ford, Ill. 61103.

When did the federal government begin to be the center of American life? The answer, says Nisbet, an emeritus professor at Columbia University: World War I. While the *economic* effects of the war were small in the United States, the resulting *intellectual* changes were vast.

Before 1917, the United States had the “most decentralized” government in the West. But upon America’s entry into the conflict, President Woodrow Wilson swiftly transformed the nation into “a highly centralized, collectivized war state.” Railroads, shipping lines, and munitions factories were nationalized; other corporations were severely regulated. Government propaganda was far more intense than in World War II: Seventy-five thousand “Four-Minute Men” were authorized to interrupt any gathering to speak for four minutes on the government’s war aims, and “Neighborhood Watchers” scoured the streets searching for German subversives.

Congress dismantled much of the “war state” in 1919. But American



*During World War I, gov-
ernment posters and slogans
urged Americans to make
the “War to End All Wars”
the focus of their activities.
Thrift was encouraged;
homemakers, for example,
saved the tinfoil from chew-
ing-gum wrappers to aid the
U.S. war effort.*

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

intellectuals, stirred by the Wilsonian moral crusade to "make the world safe for democracy," sought new domestic campaigns. Led by philosopher John Dewey, *New Republic* editor Herbert Croly, and *The Nation's* Oswald Garrison Villard, these thinkers each began what Dewey called a "search for the Great Community." If America could unite in war, they argued, why could it not become a *national* community in an era of peace?

The efforts of 1920s intellectuals and novelists dovetailed. While intellectuals invoked the vision of national unity, novelists (e.g., John Dos Passos and Sinclair Lewis) produced works depicting small towns as suffocating and large cities as soul-destroying. But if Americans were, like Lewis's George Babbitt, doomed by their families or neighborhoods to a meaningless life, intellectuals saw hope in "the Great Community" headed by the national government.

The ideas of 1920s pundits became the philosophy of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Depression. Roosevelt revived Wilson's regulatory agencies, and also echoed his crusading spirit, as New Deal parades and posters repeatedly promised that victory in the war against want was imminent. He also called on the people to look beyond archaic local concerns: "We have been extending to our national life," he once noted, "the old principles of the local community."

Although many New Deal concepts have fallen into disfavor, the idea of national community remains potent: Nisbet suggests that New York governor Mario Cuomo's call at the 1984 Democratic National Convention for America to be a "national family" swiftly resulted in his becoming "a presidential candidate in all but declaration."

Myths About Campaigns

"Misunderstandings: Too Much, Too Little, Too Long" by James A. Barnes and Karlyn H. Keene, in *Public Opinion* (May-June 1988), American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Every four years, columnists and academics revive familiar complaints about U.S. presidential campaigns. Barnes, political correspondent for the *National Journal*, and Keene, a *Public Opinion* editor, suggest that much of the "conventional wisdom" about campaign flaws is misleading.

Some examples:

- *Presidential campaigns last too long.* In fact, the current presidential race has been shorter than those in the past. During the 1984 contest, four Democrats had announced their candidacy for president by February 1983; in the current contest, only Republican Pierre S. Du Pont and Democrat Richard Gephardt had declared their intentions by February 1987. Surveys show that long campaigns *do* hold Americans' interest.

- *The U.S. should hold "snap" elections similar to those held by Britain and France.* The authors observe that the European nations are smaller and more homogeneous than America; the United States' size and diversity "make a long and arduous campaign a necessity."

- *Presidential races are too expensive.* In 1988 each candidate could spend up to \$23 million in primaries and caucuses. Corporate marketing experts spend much more; General Foods, for example, spent \$32 million

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in 1987 just advertising Jell-O. Compared to such outlays, the amount spent on political advertising "seems like a bargain."

- *Voting in presidential elections is declining.* True, voter participation did fall steadily between 1960 and 1980. In 1960, 62.8 percent of eligible Americans voted for president; by 1980, only 52.6 percent did. But the 1980 rate was not precedent-setting; only 52 percent of eligible Americans voted in the Roosevelt-Hoover election of 1932, and 51 percent voted in the Truman-Dewey battle of 1948.

In 1984, 53.1 percent of Americans voted for president, a slight rise over 1980. The authors predict that because the U.S. electorate is aging, and older Americans tend to vote more often than younger ones, the percentage will increase this November. But nonvoting Americans probably avoid the polls more out of laziness than alienation; 41 percent of those questioned in a 1983 ABC News/Harvard survey said they had not registered to vote because they "just hadn't gotten around to it."

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The Guard's Role

"The National Guard: Whose Guard Anyway?"
by Maj. Samuel J. Newland, in *Parameters*
(June 1988), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle
Barracks, Pa. 17013.

In recent years, several governors, objecting to Reagan foreign policy, have barred National Guard units in their states (including Minnesota and Maine) from joining U.S. training exercises held in Latin America. In an August 1987 decision, a U.S. District Court ruled that the governors had no power to block these units from holding or joining maneuvers overseas.

But the debate over the National Guard, notes Maj. Newland, an analyst at the Army's Strategic Studies Institute, is not new. In fact, the discussion is almost as old as the United States.

The Constitution's framers could not decide whether the new nation should have a unified army or if each state should have its own defense force. The Militia Act of 1792 required that all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 perform military service—in units controlled by the states. During the War of 1812, the governors of Connecticut and Massachusetts barred their militias from entering combat.

After the war, state militia units withered; they were largely replaced by volunteer forces. By the 1880s, the militias had become known as the "National Guard" and were recognized as the U.S. Army's reserve forces.

The passage of the Dick Act in 1903 allowed the federal government to subsidize National Guard units and give them regular Army advisers. Further reforms enabled the president to draft National Guard regiments into the Army in time of war and send them overseas; 17 divisions in World War I were composed of these soldiers.

Since the 1970s, overseas training for National Guardsmen has be-

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come routine; in Fiscal Year 1987, for example, 31,059 Guardsmen trained in 35 nations, including West Germany, England, and South Korea. Moreover, each of four regular divisions in the Army currently is allotted a "round-out brigade" from the National Guard that would bring the division to full combat strength in time of war; Newland predicts that more such arrangements will follow as congressional budget cuts further reduce the Army's personnel.

Gubernatorial efforts to inhibit the training of National Guard units, Newland contends, are unwise, because of the vital role such units could play in any overseas conflict. Governors, he suggests, should "find other avenues to air their foreign policy differences with the president."

A Pacific Century?

"The Myth or Reality of the Pacific Century" by Christopher Coker, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1988), MIT Press, 55 Hayward St., Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

In 1898, during the U.S. conquest of the Philippines in the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt noted that America's future as a world power lay not with Europe, but with East Asia: "The Pacific era, destined to be the greatest of all, is just at its dawn."

During the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev each alerted their respective countrymen to the need for increased national presence in the Pacific. But such sentiments, argues Coker, a lecturer at the London School of Economics, do not mean that the locus of military and economic power will shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The idea of a "Pacific century," he contends, is "a peculiarly American obsession" and it is not shared by Asian nations.

If these nations (including Japan and China) fused their economies, they would constitute the world's largest trading bloc; in 1984, these countries accounted for 40 percent (\$700 billion) of the world's exports, compared to 33 percent (\$277 billion) from the European Community. But Asia's nations compete fiercely against one another; there is little chance that they will join against the West or the Soviet Union. Even the region's strongest powers, China and Japan, show little sign of moving toward economic cooperation.

Moreover, the odds that the Asians will forge a *military* bloc as powerful as NATO are even lower. Unlike Europe, where the West unites against the threat of Soviet aggression, there is "no common adversary" in Asia. Non-Communist Southeast Asian nations, for example, fear Vietnam's large and experienced army; Vietnam fears China's. Although the Kremlin's Pacific Fleet is now the largest single Soviet naval force, Coker believes that the Japanese would rather act as negotiators between the superpowers than rearm for self-protection.

Coker predicts that the 21st century will be one in which global power will be shared among the United States, Western Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union. In various ways, these four will compete as fiercely in the Atlantic as in the Pacific. The vision of Asia as *the* future arena of international rivalry, he observes, is a vision held "by many in the United States but surprisingly few on the western rim of the Pacific Ocean."

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Afghan guerrillas standing atop a captured Soviet-built armored vehicle. Half of the reported \$3 billion in military aid to the Afghan rebels between 1979 and 1986 was provided by Saudi Arabia.

Influencing Arms Sales

“Arms, Aid, and the Superpowers” by Stephanie G. Neuman, in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1988), Council on Foreign Relations, 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Can the superpowers continue to dominate the international arms trade? Some specialists contend that the pre-eminence of the United States and the Soviet Union in weapons sales has ended.

Neuman, director of the Comparative Defense Studies Program at Columbia University, points out that the superpowers' share of the arms trade *has* dropped from a peak of 85 percent during the 1960s to 68 percent today; there are more competing vendors (e.g., France, Sweden, Israel) and more Third World arms buyers looking for new suppliers. But this decline, she writes, does not mean an ebbing of influence. In some ways, she believes, Third World dependence on the United States and the Soviet Union for weaponry “appears to be on the rise.”

Of late, both superpowers are reluctant to provide arms to belligerents once combat begins. The United States' share of total military assistance to eight allies (e.g., Israel, Honduras) involved in wars fell from 32 percent, on average, before the war started, to three percent once fighting began. Similarly, Soviet arms sales to eight clients involved in the same conflicts (such as Syria and Nicaragua) dropped from 45 percent to 35 percent.

Once the shooting starts, the superpowers' control increases; only they have enough surplus modern weapons to restock armies quickly. The

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Americans and Soviets also own most of the planes that can carry heavy equipment; France, for example, has reportedly used U.S. transports to resupply clients in Chad and Zaire and Soviet An-22 aircraft to deliver arms to Iraq.

Superpowers can also veto sales by other nations of weapons that use their components. The United States has blocked sales of Sweden's Viggen fighter and Israel's Kfir fighter bomber because these aircraft use American-built parts. The Soviet Union is even more restrictive; only India can produce modern Soviet weapons under license.

These curbs guarantee continued superpower dominance of the arms trade. In the Iran-Iraq war, for example, both superpowers have, since 1983, thwarted sales to Iran of tanks, air-defense systems, or jet fighters, thus ensuring that technology does not "tilt the war in Iran's favor." The continuing stalemate in that conflict suggests that the superpowers *can* use their influence over the arms market to "regulate the level of armed hostilities in various regions of the world."

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Battle of the Belts

"The Rise and Fall of Sun, Rust, and Frost Belts" by Bernard L. Weinstein and Harold T. Gross, in *Economic Development Quarterly* (Feb. 1988), Sage Publications, 2111 West Hillcrest Dr., Newbury Park, Calif. 91320.

During the 1970s, spectacular increases in population and income per capita in the South and West convinced many pundits that the loss of jobs in the Northeast and Midwest signaled irreversible economic decline.

Today, however, the "Frostbelt" is regaining strength while much of the "Sunbelt" stagnates into a few "sunspots": Ten of the sunny region's 16 states now have above average unemployment, and only Virginia enjoys a per capita income above the national average.

Most explanations of regional growth and decline have focused on a corporate shift from old Northern industrial cities to less developed areas in the Sunbelt offering lower labor costs and expanding markets. Frostbelt economies did not collapse, however, and the region's revival in the 1980s mocked the earlier conventional wisdom.

What, then, accounts for such painful regional fluctuations? According to Weinstein and Gross, of the Center for Enterprising, Southern Methodist University, the causes lie outside the United States.

The economic resurgence of Western Europe and Japan decreased America's share of world exports of manufactured goods from 25.3 percent to 17 percent between 1959 and 1978. Tougher foreign competition led to worker layoffs and plant closings. The impact came first in older industries such as shoes and steel during the 1970s, then in high-technology sectors such as semiconductors during the 1980s. The impact was greatest in the Frostbelt, where most of America's manufacturing is lo-

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cated. Meanwhile, the global inflation of the 1970s led to higher commodity prices, creating a boom in the agricultural and oil-producing Sunbelt. The Sunbelt, however, did not attract enough new industry from the North; as inflated commodity prices faded, so did the Sunbelt's prosperity. The North, benefiting from falling prices and streamlined industry, experienced renewed growth.

The shifting fortunes of the Frost- and Sunbelts are part of an untidy evolutionary process that has improved the American economy's "overall efficiency and productivity." The transition in American industry has been accompanied by tax cuts and deregulation of interstate commerce by the Reagan administration; states that followed suit, such as Florida and Illinois, have enjoyed robust economic gains. The 1980s experience indicates that Washington should not try to block change through an "industrial policy"; it should pursue market-oriented trade and monetary policies, allowing *all* areas of the nation to attain "long-run economic success."

Private vs. Public Unions: The Differences

"Contraction and Expansion: The Divergence of Private Sector and Public Sector Unionism in the United States" by Richard B. Freeman, and "The Rise and Fall of Unions: The Public Sector and the Private" by Melvin W. Reder, in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Spring 1988), American Economic Association, 1313 21st Ave. South, Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212-2786.

As is well known, the percentage of working Americans who are union members has fallen steadily for the past 35 years. In 1953, 26.8 percent of all U.S. workers belonged to unions; in 1984, the figure was 16.1 percent. But while *private-sector* union membership steadily fell, public-sector membership *rose* until 1976, when 40.2 percent of government workers belonged to unions. Despite a subsequent decline (to 33.1 percent in 1984), civil servants still tend to join unions at twice the rate of private sector employees.

Why? Freeman, a Harvard economist, and Reder, an emeritus professor at the University of Chicago, cite changes in labor law, business composition, and employer attitudes.

The Taft-Hartley Act (1947) gave the states the authority to decide if joining a union was a requirement for obtaining a job. Twenty states (largely in the South and Midwest) have since enacted "right-to-work laws" allowing employers to hire nonunion employees; firms who move plants to these states can easily bar unions from operating. In addition, deregulation (particularly in the trucking industry), by allowing freer entry into the marketplace, has diminished the clout of such once-powerful unions as the Teamsters. Lastly, government protections have superseded many union benefits; the growth of such entitlements as workmen's compensation and unemployment insurance, as well as federal curbs on arbitrary firing of women and minorities, have further reduced the incentives to join unions.

In the public sector, President Kennedy issued an executive order in

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1962 recognizing federal employee unions and allowing limited collective bargaining. State and local governments adopted similar regulations, although the powers given to their employee unions differed. During the 1960s and '70s, some state governments gave employee unions more clout (e.g., by requiring binding arbitration to solve disputes) making membership more attractive.

Why are government unions losing members more slowly than their counterparts in business? Freeman sees U.S. corporations as more fervently "antiunion" than during past decades. Executives in industry who oppose unions and union wage demands can increase profits; mayors or governors who try to thwart employee unions may find themselves losing the next election.

Tool for Success

"The Difficult Birth of the Typewriter" by Cynthia Monaco, in *American Heritage of Invention & Technology* (Spring/Summer 1988), 60 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

The modern typewriter, invented by Christopher Sholes, first appeared in the United States in 1874. But his invention, the "Remington," was not an immediate success, though it was popular at expositions like the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876, where fairgoers could buy typewritten letters for 25 cents. In addition, a few celebrities, notably Mark Twain, were en-



Clerks typing in a large American mail-order house around 1912. At least 112 writing machines preceded the Remington. The first English typewriter patent was in 1714; the first American patent dates to 1829.

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tranced by the machine, but only 4,000 were sold in four years.

Why did the typewriter take so long to become a success? Monaco, a free-lance writer, cites economic, commercial, and social reasons. First, the country experienced a major recession in 1873, making the typewriter's \$125 price too expensive for most people when per capita personal income was less than \$200 a year. Second, Sholes mismarketed his machine, targeting the government and individuals (e.g., men of letters) as potential buyers rather than selling it to business managers as a record-keeping tool. (The first 16 typewriters to leave the Remington plant were shipped to court reporters, in the hope that they would provide favorable testimonials.) Third, typewritten correspondence was deemed insulting. A typewritten letter, observes Monaco, "suggested either that the sender thought the receiver was incapable of deciphering handwriting or that the letter was really an advertising circular." Lastly, there was a fear of forgery; the signatures of early typewritten letters were typed. It did not seem to occur to anyone to do otherwise.

In 1878, the "Remington No. 2" appeared on the market. It was a more practical machine, offering such needed improvements as a shift key, which allowed upper and lower case letters on the same keyboard. These innovations came at a time when businesses were starting to expand from sole proprietorships into large organizations with specialized units; the typewriter satisfied the demand for more complex record keeping and efficient communication between departments. Even a mediocre typist, Monaco notes, was more productive than a pen-wielding clerk.

By 1886, "almost every sizable office" employed a typist. By 1888, demand for Remingtons far exceeded the 18,000 produced each year, and by 1891 the Remington had dozens of competitors. Yet resistance to the typewriter persisted; Sears, Roebuck and Company still sent handwritten letters to its rural customers for years after the typewriter was widely accepted. And only in 1899 did the U.S. Treasury Department begin keeping its records in typewritten form.

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Day-Care Debate

"Brave New World" by Karl Zinsmeister, in *Policy Review* (Spring 1988), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

A rising number of children in the United States are being raised by hired workers, rather than by parents or family. A 1984 Census Bureau study reported that eight percent of working mothers rear their children themselves, 40 percent give them to relatives during the day, and 52 percent hire others to tend their offspring.

However, according to Zinsmeister, a free-lance writer and demographer, evidence is growing indicating that, overall, no form of day care by outsiders can match the care mothers (and fathers) give to young children.

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Zinsmeister argues that during the 1980s, demand for day care has already exceeded the supply of people, qualified or not, willing to look after the children of others. As a result, a typical caretaker is responsible for more youngsters (up to 15) than he or she can really handle. A teacher may tire; in New York state, 40 percent of the teachers in day care, on average, quit each year. Like schools, day-care centers are places of contagion; U.S. public health officials warn that these centers are partially responsible for a rise in childhood diarrhea, dysentery, and jaundice.

Some child psychologists (notably Jay Belsky of Pennsylvania State University) warn that placing children in day care before age one results in "weak and insecure bonds" between children and parents. "Babies," says Burton White, director of the Harvard Preschool Project, "form their first human attachment only once." A 1985 study from the University of North Carolina found that five- to six-year-olds who spent time in day care were more likely to hit and argue than were their parent-raised counterparts.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 55 percent of mothers with children under three do *not* work, and an additional 20 percent work part time or seasonally. To encourage more mothers to work at home, Zinsmeister calls on employers to provide more part-time and "takeout" work for their employees. Also, the federal tax code could be revised by 1) doubling the existing tax exemptions (\$1,950 per person) for children only and 2) converting the child-care tax credit into a deduction for all parents, whether they pay others for care or provide it themselves. Such changes, he believes, would result in "more secure children, happier parents, a healthier society."

Native Americans

"American Indian Household Structure and Income" by Gary D. Sandefur and Arthur Sakamoto, in *Demography* (Feb. 1988), Population Association of America, 1429 Duke St., Alexandria, Va. 22314-3402.

American Indians, as a group, are among the nation's least affluent people. Sandefur and Sakamoto, sociologists at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, find a surprising source of Indians' economic survival: the dominance of the traditional family.

Forty-three percent of Indians lived in traditional two-parent households with children in 1980, compared to only 30 percent of whites and 24 percent of blacks. Eleven percent of Indians lived in single-parent families, more than whites (six percent) but less than blacks (20 percent).

Indians also tended to have larger families than either whites or blacks; 3.3 people live in an average Indian family, compared to 2.6 for whites and 3.0 for blacks. Thanks to family patterns, per capita income in *all* Indian households averaged \$5,998 in 1980, less than whites' (\$8,810) but slightly more than blacks' (\$5,570). However, people in households headed by single mothers did less well; per capita income in such families was \$2,595 for Indians, \$2,536 for blacks.

Nationally, the poverty rate for Indians (22 percent) is slightly lower than that of blacks (29 percent), but double that of whites (11 percent). The dominance of the Indian two-parent household helps; because single-

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mother families are twice as prevalent among blacks as among Indians, these households do not depress average Indian incomes as much as they do those of blacks.

Yet, the authors also warn that *national* Indian statistics may be misleading for two special reasons. First, many Indians change their minds about their "Native American" identity. One quarter (357,655 people) of those who called themselves Indians in 1980 did not in 1970. Moreover, the Census Bureau counts only households *headed* by an Indian as "Indian families"; non-Indian men who marry Indians are defined as heading non-Indian households. Since more than half of married Indian women have non-Indian husbands, this definition is "especially significant" in determining which Indian families, rich or poor, are counted by the government.

Decongesting Suburbs

"The Real Problem with Suburban Antigrowth Policies" by Anthony Downs in *The Brookings Review* (Spring 1988), 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

America's suburbs are becoming more congested each year. According to Downs, a Brookings senior fellow, as more businesses flee from downtown high-rent districts and middle-class families seek uncrowded, crime-free suburbs, the nation's traffic problems will only get worse.

Between 1970 and 1986, the number of cars and trucks in use in the



Cars clog an Atlanta freeway on a hot June day. Ninety percent of all U.S. households own at least one car or truck; over 50 percent own two. Rising car ownership ensures that restrictions on auto use are politically unpopular.

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United States increased by 65 percent (64 million), while the U.S. population rose by only 18 percent (37 million). Between 1984 and 1986, auto vehicle usage rose twice as fast as the U.S. population. This "automobile vehicle population explosion" is the chief villain, along with the sprawl of suburban office buildings and such massive shopping centers as Tysons Corner in Virginia and the Oakbrook Shopping Center near Chicago.

The most popular suburban antigrowth strategy is to make new buildings very expensive. One town in California charges \$16,000 for each building permit. In other places, developers are forced to assume the costs of roads, sewers, schools, and parks once financed by local governments. Yet, Downs notes, such extra costs are passed from the developer to the homebuyer. By forcing up the price of housing, antigrowth advocates inadvertently bar "households with low or moderate incomes" from the suburbs, and lengthen the distance low-wage workers must travel to reach suburban jobs.

Suburban traffic congestion, Downs contends, will ultimately lessen over time, as employees move closer to their work sites and more new jobs are created in expanding exurbs. Staggering work hours, as well as increasing work done at home, will also help reduce rush-hour congestion. Meanwhile, simple restrictions on development will continue to be ineffective as a traffic control measure; for as long as the *total* number of jobs in a metropolitan area increases and employees continue to prefer driving to work, the amount of suburban traffic will continue to increase.

America Takes a Bath

"The Early History of Cleanliness in America"
by Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman,
in *The Journal of American History* (Mar.
1988), Organization of American Historians, 112
North Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

In 1799, Elizabeth Drinker, wife of a Philadelphia merchant, stepped into the family's new "shower box" for the first time. "I bore it better than I expected," she wrote in her diary, "not having been wett all over att once, for 28 years past."

Mrs. Drinker's abstinence from bathing or showering was not uncommon. According to Richard Bushman, a historian at the University of Delaware, and Claudia Bushman, executive director of the Delaware Heritage Commission, before the 19th century, bathing in the United States was at best an irregular practice. Even rich city-dwellers typically washed themselves using only a towel and a basin of cold water.

Like the Drinkers, other wealthy people had begun to install private showers or tubs in their homes during the 1790s to supplement infrequent trips to the public baths. But their bathing techniques did not meet present-day standards of cleanliness: Several people shared the same water and soap played no part.

During the first half of the 19th century, cleanliness gradually became an indicator of breeding and morality. Etiquette manuals advising regular full-body washing proliferated among the American well-to-do. These books reflected the influence of British standards of civility established by such dandies as England's George Bryan "Beau" Brummell. Then middle-

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class Americans began to acquire the habit, believing that cleanliness would help them climb the social ladder. Their views were reflected in Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick* (1868), which depicted the relative ease with which Dick, a street urchin, marched into respectability with a good scrub and a change of clothes.

Washing became the norm in most middle-class households by mid-century. But while washstands became common, bathtubs were still a novelty; in 1860, Boston had only 3,910 of them for a population of 177,840. Full-body bathing provided an adventure to those who tested it out. As New York socialite George Templeton Strong commented after building himself a bathroom in 1843, "I've led rather an amphibious life for the last week—paddling in the bathing tub every night and constantly making new discoveries in the art and mystery of ablutions."

By the late 1850s, hand soap had come into common use. American manufacturers satisfied the growing popular demand for soap by increasing production of French-style toilet soap in addition to the coarser grades used for washing laundry and cleaning floors. During the 1880s, the Cincinnati-based firm of Procter and Gamble became one of the first U.S. companies to successfully mass-produce hand soap, beginning with the introduction of the Ivory bar in 1882. But even as the "culture of cleanliness" spread among all social classes, as late as 1906, only 20 percent of the houses in Pittsburgh had bathtubs.

Thinking About Guns

"Second Thoughts About Gun Control" by James D. Wright, in *The Public Interest* (Spring 1988), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

At least 20,000 laws now exist in the United States that regulate or restrict the ownership or use of firearms. But do these "gun-control" laws actually reduce crime? Wright, a sociologist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, no longer believes they do.

About 20,000 murders occur in the United States each year; 60 percent are committed with firearms. In addition, firearms are involved in half of all U.S. suicides, and approximately 2,000 accidental deaths. The *total* number of gun-related deaths is 30,000, only one to two percent of the total annual number of U.S. deaths.

Most estimates of the number of guns owned by Americans are "produced by advocates" favoring or opposing control, and are therefore not reliable. What is known is that about 250 million guns (excluding military weapons) were legally imported or manufactured in the United States during this century. Wright estimates that 150 million of these weapons remain in private hands, and that half of U.S. households have at least one firearm. Thus, even if guns were completely outlawed, the existing stock would be sufficient to supply criminals "for at least the next century." If these weapons were confiscated, police would have to seize several hundred guns to get *one* gun used in a crime.

For a criminal, a firearm is a tool that produces extra income at little cost. Duke economist Phillip Cook reports that robberies committed with

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guns yielded an average of more than \$150 (in 1976 dollars), three times more than in robberies committed with other weapons. Thus, even if the street price for a handgun tripled, robbers could recoup their expenses after two or three crimes. Moreover, if handguns were *completely* prohibited, criminals could easily create high-powered homemade weapons. Afghan tribesmen, Wright notes, make rifles capable of handling Soviet AK-47 cartridges using technology far less sophisticated than that available to the Mafia.

Social science research indicates that "gun control" laws do not reduce crime. But Wright maintains that this does not necessarily mean that such laws should be abolished; an equally plausible case can be made from social-science evidence that stricter, nationally standardized gun controls might be the solution. In short, Wright says, researchers can show that existing policies do *not* work, but they can rarely demonstrate that a new policy will be *more* effective. The gun-control debate, like most other similar controversies, centers not on "facts," but on "values, ideologies, and world views" impossible to quantify.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Copyright Confusion

"Copyright Cracks Up" by David Bollier, in *Channels* (Mar. 1988), 19 West 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

"Only one thing is impossible for God," Mark Twain once remarked. It is "to find any sense in any copyright law on the planet."

Twain's quip, notes Bollier, a *Channels* contributing editor, aptly describes the current imbroglio over the ownership of TV programs. Television copyright law, he argues, has become a "baroque monstrosity."

Even using photocopiers, reproducing printed material is relatively expensive. Television shows, however, can be broadcast to millions of homes at an extremely low cost. New technologies such as videocassette recorders and cable television further reduce the expense of duplicating a TV program, increasing the odds that a show will be broadcast without a copyright-holder being compensated.

Copyright owners say they should be paid every time their work is broadcast on television or duplicated for home use. But the courts and Congress have ruled that ownership of *intellectual* property is not the legal equivalent of owning personal property; a copyright represents a share of an "intangible creation" whose use must be carefully defined.

Since 1976, Congress has introduced 420 amendments to U.S. copyright law, proposing such custom-crafted fixes as royalty taxes in attempts to provide fair compensation for copyright-holders affected by new technologies. But Congress has blocked more stringent proposals, such as taxing blank videotapes or requiring installation of anticopying chips in videocassette recorders. In 1984, the Supreme Court further thwarted copyright owners by ruling that private, noncommercial copying of televi-

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sion programs does not violate copyright law.

Technology will continue to complicate the copyright question. Computers, for example, can now artificially produce lifelike images. Such synthetic systems, in effect, "could allow stars to stage comebacks after death," creating knotty legal problems. How would W. C. Fields's estate, for example, be compensated for a "new" Fields comedy?

Bollier predicts that copyright disputes will continue to rise in frequency and complexity. Yet as copyright expert Robert Kost observes, these discussions, however arcane, represent "the foundation of capitalism in the information age."

Misreporting Economics

"Business News: The Terrible Truth" by John F. Lawrence, in *Fortune* (Apr. 25, 1988), Time and Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020-1393.

"ECONOMY WEAKENING, EXPERTS SAY," was the headline of the lead front-page story in the February 2, 1988 *Miami Herald*. "For once, economists are in agreement," the story began. "The big chill everyone feared is here."

A month later, the *Herald* changed its mind. In a story buried on the business page, the *Herald* reported that America's gross national product and the Commerce Department's "leading indicators" of economic trends were *rising*, not falling. The "chill" had vanished.

Lawrence, a fellow at the Gannett Center for Media Studies, notes that such tacit retractions of "hyperbolic" economic news are commonplace. The press creates "news where none exists."

Consider the monthly index of "leading indicators" issued by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. This index, combining 11 statistics, such as new orders for consumer goods and changes in costs of materials used for manufacturing, is first issued in incomplete form, then revised later when more accurate information is available. Journalists frequently produce gloomy stories based on *preliminary* estimates, even though *revised* figures show different patterns. For example, the *Washington Post* reported on May 30, 1987 that "LEADING INDICATORS PLUMMET 0.6 PERCENT IN APRIL"; a month later, revised Commerce Department figures showed the "plummet" had not taken place.

Trade statistics create similar problems. Some years ago, Congress began requiring the Commerce Department to issue trade statistics twice; first, with freight and insurance charges on imports added, then, two days later, with these charges removed. The second figure is significantly smaller than the first. In December 1987, for instance, the U.S. trade deficit was \$12.2 billion *with* freight and insurance and \$10.6 billion when these charges were removed. Journalists frequently report the higher figure, thus making trade deficits appear worse than they actually are.

Instead of playing up *monthly* economic statistics, Lawrence suggests that journalists focus on less volatile *quarterly* "moving" averages, based on revised numbers, which more accurately chart economic trends. He also calls on business editors to curb the use of "Second Coming headlines" that may create unjustified alarm among readers.

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Archmandrite Ioromin conducting a service in the Zagorsky Monastery northwest of Moscow. Some Soviet leaders have been Christians, most notably Georgi Malenkov, prime minister from 1953 to 1955.

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The Soviets and the Church

"Holy Russia's Millennium" in *The Economist* (April 2, 1988), 25 St. James's St., London SW1 1HG, United Kingdom; and "988-1988: Uses and Abuses of the Millennium" by Simon Franklin, in *The World Today* (April 1988), Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St. James's Square, London, SW1Y 4LE, United Kingdom.

Last June, the Soviets celebrated the millennium of Christianity in Russia, commemorating Prince Vladimir of Kiev's mass conversion of his subjects, who were baptized in the Dnieper River in 988.

As both *The Economist's* editors and Franklin, a fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, point out, most Soviet Christians have had little reason to celebrate their heritage.

During the tsarist era, the Russian Orthodox Church was backed by the state. But the Communists, after Lenin led them to power in 1917, declared a "war on God," killing or banishing thousands of priests and bishops and closing scores of monasteries. After Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Josef Stalin allowed some religious freedom, permitting the Orthodox Church to elect a patriarch and re-open some

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seminaries. But one of Stalin's successors, Nikita Khrushchev, revived the antireligious campaign in 1959, closing 10,000 Orthodox churches and jailing large numbers of religious leaders.

The revised 1977 Soviet Constitution declared that citizens had "the right to profess any religion." But many restrictions remain; holding services in private homes or in the open air, for example, is still forbidden. The Council for Religious Affairs, a state agency, controls admission to seminaries, and can block ordinations of priests or bishops. Atheist propaganda is distributed by *Znanie* ("Knowledge"), a nominally private, but state-sponsored organization.

Church attendance has become more popular since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Today, the Russian Orthodox Church has 6,800 churches, 6,000 priests, and an estimated 50 million members. (The second largest Christian denomination in the Soviet Union is the Roman Catholic, with 4.5 million members.)

Gorbachev's *glasnost* policies promise more open discussion of religious issues. Some figures from the past, such as icon painter Andrei Rublev, or military hero Prince Dmitri Donskoi, have been canonized. But substantive reforms, such as allowing priests to teach religion to children or letting churches engage in charitable work, are not yet being considered. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, suppressed by Stalin in 1946, is still banned. Soviet leaders apparently fear that truly free churches might prove formidable challengers to Communist rule. As Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev put it in 1987, "We must decisively repudiate any attempt to portray Christianity as the 'mother' of Russian culture."

The First Scientist?

"Science as Handmaiden: Roger Bacon and the Patristic Tradition" by David C. Lindberg, in *Isis* (Dec. 1987), Univ. of Pa., 215 South 34th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-6310.

Of late, Franciscan monk Roger Bacon (c. 1220–1292) has been widely regarded as the first man to separate science from religion. Lindberg, a science historian at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, disagrees. Far from being a "harbinger of things to come," Bacon's views were clearly in tune with his time.

Early church fathers believed that facts or theories not contained in the Bible were useful only if they improved analysis of the Bible's meaning. In his *De doctrina Christiana* ("Christian Instruction"), St. Augustine (354–430), for instance, taught that of all pagan knowledge, the Christian need only know rhetoric, mathematics, "mechanical arts," and history. All other subjects, including biology, astronomy, and physics, were not useful since they diverted a Christian from Biblical understanding.

Medieval monasteries followed St. Augustine's example. The standard course of study for monks (the *lectio divina*) centered around the Bible. Non-Biblical sources were only considered as supplements to Biblical teaching. By Bacon's day, however, "an enormous body" of Greek and Islamic texts had been translated, many of which contradicted Biblical teachings. How could a Christian, for example, agree with Aristotle's denial of personal immortality?

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Bacon's goal was to ensure that scholarship remained firmly rooted in service of Christian principles. In his *Opus maius* ("Greater Work"), Bacon argued that Christians should embrace, not shun, new knowledge. Consider *perspectiva*—the science of vision. Not only are light, colors, and mirrors frequently mentioned in the Bible, Bacon argues, but optical instruments can make large things seem small and small objects seem large—wonders that can impress heathens or terrorize those who resist the faith. Experimental science (which, in Bacon's eyes, included fireworks, magnets, and astrology) creates practical inventions that the Church can use to defend itself against infidels and the Antichrist.

Bacon himself performed many experiments. In 1242, he was the first Western researcher to give the exact formula for gunpowder. But his chief purpose was to *extend*, not abandon, Christian faith. His work did not look forward to Godless modern science, but *backward* to the theology of the church fathers. "There is only one perfect wisdom," Bacon wrote in his *Opus maius*, "which is totally contained in sacred Scripture."

 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

*Worlds Under
the Lens*

"Visual Surface and Visual Symbol: The Microscope and the Occult in Early Modern Science" by Catherine Wilson, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Jan.-Mar. 1988), Temple Univ., Philadelphia, Pa. 19122.

In 1691, English physicist Robert Hooke wrote that few scientists were using microscopes in their research. Hooke complained that his colleagues thought nothing more could be discovered with the microscope. Only amateurs were using the instrument, Hooke claimed, and then merely "for Diversion and Pastime."

Wilson, a philosopher at the University of Oregon, notes that many philosophers, doctors, and even playwrights of the time thought that gazing through microscopes was largely "a trivial, time-wasting, or intrinsically comical pursuit." While telescopes were used to explore such mighty objects as planets and stars, microscopes, in the minds of late-17th-century intellectuals, only explored things that were "small, dirty, and troublesome." Satirists loved poking fun at microscope users; in Thomas Shadwell's comedy *The Virtuoso* (1676), for example, the protagonist, Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, has "spent £2,000 in microscopes to find out the Nature of eels in vinegar, mites in a cheese, and the blue of plums."

Technical problems compounded the microscopist's difficulties. The lenses were imperfect, tending to distort color and scale. As a result, biologists had a hard time explaining precisely what they saw. "It is exceedingly difficult . . ." Hooke wrote in *Micrographia* (1665), "to distinguish between a *prominency* and a *depression*, between a *shadow* and a *black stain*."

Philosophers were divided. In his *Essay Concerning Human Under-*

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standing (1690), England's John Locke (1632–1704) contended that microscopists' discoveries were of little importance to practical men in guiding them "to the market and the exchange." Germany's Gottfried Leibnitz (1646–1716) disagreed. By providing evidence of life unseeable by the naked eye, microscopes, in Leibnitz's view, provided evidence of the existence of "monads," the invisible particles that he believed were the basic building blocks of life.

Not until the 19th century were achromatic lenses perfected that could convey images without distortion. By then, however, the instrument's importance was beyond dispute.

Sex and Destiny

"Daughters or Sons" by Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, in *Natural History* (Apr. 1988), Central Park West at 79th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

Since ancient times, people have resorted to spells, chants, philtres, and prayers to try to fix the sex of a human fetus. In India, for example, people chant mantras after a woman conceives, in the hope that a female fetus will be magically transformed into a male. "A daughter's birth makes even a philosophic man gloomy," says one ethnographer in India, "whereas a son's birth is like sunrise in the abode of gods."

Hrdy, an anthropologist at the University of California, Davis, notes that, in fact, sex ratios between males and females are not always identical. Abortion, infanticide, neglect, and ostracism are methods that animals (and humans) use to ensure that one gender is favored over the other.

Consider the coypu, a guinea pig-like animal native to South America. English zoologist Morris Gosling dissected 5,853 female coypu and discovered that when healthy, pregnant coypu had small litters, the embryos were mostly male. He concluded that these coypu were, in some way, selectively aborting small litters that were mostly female. Gosling's explanation: Healthy male offspring would be able to impregnate many females, thus offering a greater chance for the species' survival.

In some species, social mores tend to discourage female offspring. Among macaque monkeys, high-ranking females "haze and abuse" daughters produced by low-ranking females; hence, such mothers tend to raise sons, who quickly emigrate. However, high-ranking monkeys tend to prefer daughters of their own. Anthropologists studying baboons at Amboseli National Park in Kenya report that daughters of *high-ranking* baboon mothers tend to live longer than do sons, and are better cared for. By staying at home and placing themselves under their mothers' protection, they are more likely to stay healthy than their migratory brothers, thus increasing the odds of bearing offspring and continuing their parents' line.

Among humans, female infanticide has been practiced in some cultures; other societies use persuasion as a means of favoring male offspring. Anthropologist James Boone examined 200 years of medieval Portuguese marriage records; he found that upper-class men were more likely to marry and have children than were their sisters, 10–40 percent of whom were sent to convents. Humans "consciously calculate" the advantages of producing boys, while animals who favor one sex over another do so because of natural selection.

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Genius at Work

"Setting the Stage for Discovery" by Robert S. Root-Bernstein, in *The Sciences* (May-June 1988), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

A common truism about science is that many great discoveries occur as a result of fortunate accidents. Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955), for example, is said to have discovered the bacteria-killing enzyme lysozyme (present in tears, mucus, and saliva) after drippings from his nose killed germs in a Petri dish Fleming was examining.

Such "accidents" have led several philosophers of science, notably Austria's Karl Popper, to insist that while *proof* of a new scientific hypothesis requires reason and logic, the *method* of discovery itself cannot be rationally explained.

Root-Bernstein, a Michigan State physiologist, disagrees. To suggest that new scientific advances happen accidentally leads to the false notion that rigorous disciplines (such as mathematics) are founded on "illogical processes." Moreover, implicit in the idea of "accidental discovery" is the dubious thesis that *anyone* who witnesses the chain of events leading to a scientific advance can reach the same conclusions that a great scientist can. Did Fleming's laboratory assistant see the lysozyme-laden Petri dish as the first clue to a new type of enzyme or simply as a spoiled experiment? The answer is obvious.

Great scientists, Root-Bernstein suggests, think of their work as fun.



Sir Alexander Fleming examining cultures in the laboratory. Fleming enjoyed "painting" with microorganisms; by arranging different-colored germs in a Petri dish, he could portray a house or a mother nursing a baby. "Life was essentially a game to him," Root-Bernstein writes, "and so was research."

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They thrive on chaos. Fleming let experiments pile up in his laboratory for three weeks at a time, in the hope of collecting interesting types of bacteria. A scientist must also be capable of leaping to grand conclusions from trivial premises. Biochemist Albert Szent-Györgyi based his discovery of how organisms use oxygen on the fact that, when bruised, lemons stay yellow and bananas turn brown. The reason: Lemons have ascorbic acid (vitamin C), which reacts with oxygen to prevent decay. From this premise, he extended his research to a formulation of how respiration works. "Discovery," Szent-Györgyi wrote, "consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

The best scientists learn how to "surprise themselves purposely." Hence, Root-Bernstein deplores the fact that today most U.S. science courses test students' abilities to reach *predictable* conclusions. How can the next generation of scientists make discoveries, he asks, when all they are taught is how to verify what is already known?

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Back to Nature?

"From Promenade to Park: The Gregarious Origins of Brooklyn's Park Movement" by Daniel M. Bluestone, in *American Quarterly* (Winter 1987), Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 701 West 40th St., Ste. 275, Baltimore, Md. 21211.

Most scholars have assumed that urban parks were established to satisfy city-dwellers eager to create pastoral oases in the middle of the bustling metropolis. For example, Lewis Mumford, in *Sticks and Stones* (1924), argued that such parks were designed as a "means of escape" from "the soiled, bedraggled works of man's creation."

Bluestone, a historian at Columbia University, disagrees. Urban parks, he contends, were established to help city-dwellers enjoy crowds, not avoid them. Witness the genesis of parks in 19th-century Brooklyn, New York.

There, during the early 1820s, the preferred Sunday recreation was the "promenade," a stroll along the shore of the East River in semirural Brooklyn Heights. As Brooklyn Heights became built up, however, new landowners put up fences, denying promenaders access to the once-communal waterfront. Led by the *Long Island Star*, citizens began to call for a *public* promenade. Otherwise, warned an 1830 *Star* editorial, Brooklynites would have "nothing to give us a unity of feeling."

The promenade was never built; but 11 public squares were created, and, in 1847, after a campaign led by poet Walt Whitman (then editor of the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*), a park was established at Fort Greene. When it proved too small for Brooklyn (America's third largest city in 1855), officials hired architect Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) to design a larger communal site.

Olmsted, the noted planner of Manhattan's Central Park, envisioned Brooklyn's 526-acre Prospect Park, which opened in 1866, as a *mixture*

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of urban and rural settings. Promenades, arcades, refectories, and bandstands alternated with areas inaccessible by carriage to produce what Olmsted described as a "concourse of animated life." The goal was not Arcadia, but an attractive and diverting "spectacle."

Nor did the people who flocked to Prospect Park for concerts and ice cream seek unspoiled nature, according to Bluestone. He agrees with architect Horace Cleveland, who wrote in 1889 that "to the great mass of the so-called cultivated people, nature has no attraction except when aided by the merest clap traps of fashionable entertainment."

Feeding the Third World

"Feeding the Earth: An Agroecological Solution" by Michael J. Dover and Lee M. Talbot, in *Technology Review* (Feb.-Mar. 1988), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The high-tech Green Revolution of the 1960s and '70s enabled some Third World nations (India, the Philippines) to increase food production. But the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that, despite these successes, 64 countries—29 in Africa—will be unable to feed their people by the year 2000 using present farming techniques.

For most such countries, say consulting ecologists Talbot and Dover, traditional farming methods, carefully modified, remain the best hope. Misapplied "industrial methods" not only damage fragile ecologies, but are also too costly.

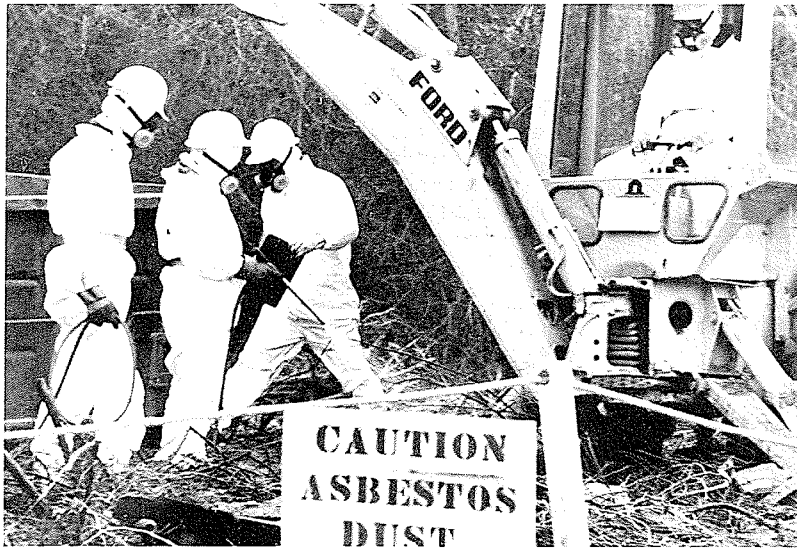
In Sri Lanka, for example, "modernization" saw the tractor replace the water buffalo as the farmer's main power source. An annual saving of eight to nine "worker-days" per acre resulted. But cash expenses climbed: Fuel prices skyrocketed; the milk and curd once produced by the buffalo had to be purchased; inorganic fertilizers were needed to replace animal dung and urine. Buffalo wallows that once yielded 350 to 400 pounds of edible fish per acre were removed; some of the fish had helped control malaria by eating disease-carrying mosquitoes. The wallows had also been home to snakes and lizards that fed on the rats and freshwater crabs that destroy crops and levees.

The authors suggest that Third World farmers be taught to refine, not eliminate, time-honored practices. For instance, "polyculture"—the combining of crops—increases yields. In Mexico, it was found that 4.33 acres of maize must be planted to equal the amount of food grown on 2.5 acres of maize, beans, and squash.

In Africa, Sudanese farmers who leave their *Acacia albida* trees in place raise crops of millet for 15 to 20 years; without the trees, whose leaves fertilize the soil and provide fodder and shade for cattle, fields are exhausted in three to five years. In Rwanda, West German researchers have developed a "mixed crop-tree system" combining eucalyptus trees, coffee, maize, and other species; it provides firewood, plus 54 percent more calories, 31 percent more protein, and 62 percent more carbohydrates than do one-crop fields.

In most of the Third World, the authors believe, aid programs should "substitute indigenous resources for imported industrial ones."

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Workers removing asbestos dust illegally dumped in Savage, Maryland. Asbestos-removal firms are expected to earn \$2.5 billion in 1988.

Asbestos and \$\$\$

"Why Throw Money at Asbestos?" by Louis S. Richman, in *Fortune* (June 6, 1988), Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020.

For most of the 20th century, asbestos was known as a "wonder fiber." It could insulate and fireproof buildings and ships' hulls at low cost. But then, during the early 1970s, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found asbestos to be carcinogenic.

Faced with some 90,000 lawsuits from workers exposed to the material, nearly a half-dozen asbestos manufacturers, most notably Manville Corp., declared bankruptcy. Between now and 2013, government and the private sector may spend up to \$100 billion removing asbestos from schools, offices, and stores.

A waste of money, contends Richman, a *Fortune* associate editor. The risk to a clerical worker of contracting cancer from asbestos in his office building, for example, is "barely detectable."

Asbestos was found to be cancer-causing on the basis of examinations of World War II workers in shipyards and asbestos plants: They had inhaled the tiny fibers—half a micron long, or 1/160th the diameter of a human hair—at levels 10,000 times higher than in normal indoor areas. Subsequent research established that workers exposed to *low* levels of asbestos face minute risks. Last February, the EPA concluded that by the year 2118, only 25 Americans will die annually from inhaling the fibers (out of the 23 million currently working in asbestos-lined office buildings).

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Says Richman: "Driving a car to work is over 150 times more dangerous."

But because Congress and the EPA act on the zero-risk principle that *all* carcinogens should be eliminated from the workplace, the government is requiring actions that will force taxpayers to pay large sums to save relatively few lives. For example, this October the EPA will require the nation's 31,000 school districts to draw up asbestos abatement plans. The cleanup cost: perhaps \$3.1 billion over three years.

Large insurance firms and pension funds are refusing to finance asbestos-laden buildings. Removal can cost up to \$1 million a floor, and "rip and skip" cleaners can, by leaving behind dangerous dust, make buildings *less* safe than they were before the "cleanup" began.

Richman believes that laws making building owners liable for "dubious health risks they had no part in creating" ensure one thing only: that the economic damage caused by asbestos will vastly outweigh any health problems it may cause.

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The Birth of the Novel

"'News, and New Things': Contemporaneity and the Early English Novel" by J. Paul Hunter, in *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

"We are all tainted with the *Athenian* Itch," English poet Robert Wilde wrote in 1683. "News, and new Things do the whole World bewitch."

This "itch," suggests Hunter, a professor of English at the University of Chicago, turned out to be important. The ephemeral pamphlets produced to satisfy the thirst for novelty among late-17th-century English readers inadvertently resulted in the birth of the modern novel.

England was a land with few newspapers; not until 1702 did the first London daily journal begin publication. Much information was transmitted orally; coffeehouses were an important source of news *and* gossip. But the literate of the population hungered for more; they provided a ready market for publishers of pamphlets.

Although most authors promised true stories (typically, such phrases as "Exact Relation" and "Faithful Account" were part of the title), the pamphlets were a mixture of fact and fiction. Some pamphlets, describing hurricanes, wars, or murders, were mostly true. Others, describing cases of witchcraft, miraculous cures, or demonic possession, were not. Readers devoured both genres with equal gusto.

Around 1700, however, tastes began to change. Fact-based accounts began to lengthen; Daniel Defoe's *Storm* (1704) was 285 pages long. Sketches of contemporary life, the precursors of short stories, started to appear. These sketches typically commented on the relations between men and women; *An Almanack-Husband: or, a Wife a Month* (1708), for example, was a comic examination of polygamy. Other pamphlets pre-

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sented stories as "true" collections of letters, or fragments from diaries.

Early English novelists, notably Defoe (1660?-1731), learned to write by producing scores of journalistic pamphlets. Later writers, such as Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), presented their works of fiction, following the old pamphleteering tradition, as if they were "real." Thus Richardson's novel *Pamela* (1740) is presented as a collection of long-lost letters. Novelists also continued, in various ways, to practice journalism. Defoe and Henry Fielding (1707-1754) edited their own journals; Richardson headed the Stationers' Company, a London guild of newspaper, book, and magazine publishers.

Thucydides

"The First Revisionist Historian" by Donald Kagan, in *Commentary* (May 1988), 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

"My work is not an essay in a contest meant to win the applause of the moment," Thucydides (c. 460-404 B.C.) wrote in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, "but a possession forever."

Kagan, a professor of history and classics at Yale, argues that Thucydides's account of the struggle between Athens and Sparta for control of Greece was the first—and greatest—revisionist history.

Thucydides "all but obliterated [conflicting] arguments" of the period. For example, the "fact" that the Peloponnesian War was fought continuously from 431 to 404 B.C. seems to be purely Thucydides's invention. Some contemporaries considered the war to be *two* wars, separated by a six-year truce beginning with the Peace of Nicias (421 B.C.). Without elaboration, Thucydides dismisses as "quite wrong" anyone who believed that this "insecure truce" between the two Greek powers was peace.

As for the origins of the war, Thucydides scarcely mentions the Megarian decree (issued by Athens' leader, Pericles, in 432 B.C.), which barred Megara, an ally of Sparta, from trading in the Athens marketplace and all harbors of the Athenian empire. Many Greeks, from Aristophanes in Thucydides's time to Plutarch 500 years later, saw this decree as the cause of the war. Thucydides, however, simply claims that the rise in Athenian power brought "fear to the Spartans," thus leading to conflict.

Why was Thucydides so vague about the war's origins? Kagan notes that Thucydides rarely criticizes Pericles. While Aristotle described Pericles as a demagogue who engendered corruption, and Plato saw him as "the first who . . . made [the people] idle and cowardly," Thucydides's portrait of Pericles is spotless, even though Pericles' war strategy brought on bankruptcy, a rebellion, and a plague that killed a third of the Athenian population. In 430 B.C. Pericles was removed from office by popular consensus. But Thucydides says "that Pericles was right in every respect."

Why? Consider Thucydides's biography. Seven years into the war, he became an Athenian army general. (Pericles had died five years earlier.) But during his term of office, Thucydides lost an important Athenian colony to Sparta. Like Pericles, he was removed from office. Kagan contends that the *History*, written during his 20-year exile, was Thucydides's *apologia pro vita sua*. By upholding Pericles' judgment against that of the masses, Thucydides indirectly absolved himself.

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Critics and Ethics

"Why Ethical Criticism Fell on Hard Times" by Wayne C. Booth, in *Ethics* (Jan. 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

A popular notion among academics is that it is not possible to determine the true worth of anything. In literary criticism, this dogma leads to the contention that *any* statement—e.g., "Dickens and Dostoyevsky were great writers"—is simply an expression of personal preference.

"Nowadays almost no one believes in the possibility of objective or 'correct' literary judgments," Oxford's John Carey wrote recently.

Booth, a professor of English at the University of Chicago, says the chief argument that skeptics use to attack any absolute literary verdict is this: Judgments change over time. A teen-ager may be enthralled by Alexandre Dumas's *Count of Monte Cristo*; an adult re-reading the novel may find it tedious. One reader may have "wept buckets" over *Love Story*; another may have been bored. Writers such as George Steiner believe that the best way to judge the value of a work is to tally all opinions about it and decide which one has the most votes. "Consensus over the ages is statistical," Steiner asserts.

But not all opinions, Booth replies, are equal. The critic who has seen *King Lear* performed 10 times and knows the history of tragedies will be more likely to produce a measured judgment than the critic who has read the play once.

Moreover, the modernist insistence that ethical principles cannot be used to judge art results in artistic creations (e.g., abstract paintings) with no moral, emotional, or spiritual content. It is "no accident" that many American novelists abandoned traditional forms just as literary critics jettisoned (as irrelevant) time-honored ethical standards.

Ethics should not be discarded, Booth says. Unlike most contemporary talk, debate about the moral yardsticks used in measuring literature leads to useful "ultimate questions" about the nature and purpose of life. Deciding that doctors should treat bleeding patients does not depend on determining life's meaning. However, analyzing the behavior of Shakespeare's protagonists cannot be done "in isolation" from discussions of what life should be or how characters should be portrayed.

Victorian Follies

"The Victorians, the Historians, and the Idea of Modernism" by James A. Schmiechen, in *The American Historical Review* (Apr. 1988), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Most contemporary scholars have dismissed Victorian buildings as eclectic "fruit salad," whose frilly revivals of past architectural styles are out of place in the 20th century.

Schmiechen, a Central Michigan University historian, disagrees with modernist critiques. Far from being frivolous escapist, Victorian architects were the sober-minded re-designers of aging industrial centers.

By the 1830s, British cities were filled with ugly buildings based on "cash-box" utilitarianism. Social critics, most notably novelist Charles

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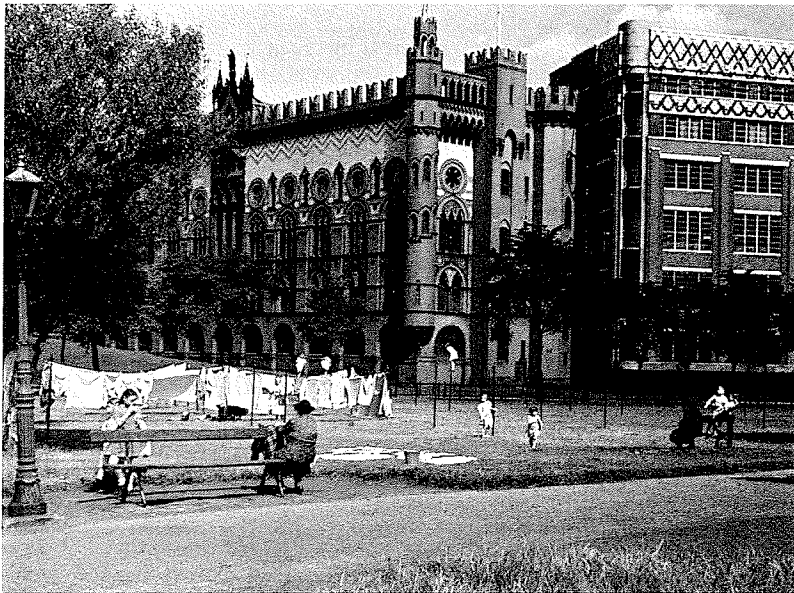
Dickens, called for improvements.

The Victorian reformers looked to the past for models. Buildings, they believed, could influence citizens' behavior by providing inspiring imagery. In 1836, for example, architect A. W. N. Pugin produced a series of engravings that compared British industrial cities with their predecessors 400 years earlier. Medieval towns, in Pugin's opinion, were moral and beautiful; towns of his time were grim and nasty.

Inspiration depended largely on an architect's politics. Whigs tended to favor buildings based on classical models, in the hope that British citizens seeing structures inspired by the Roman Republic or ancient Greece would practice ancient democratic virtues. Tories preferred Gothic buildings that evoked memories of a chivalrous Christian past. As the Tory politician and novelist Benjamin Disraeli noted, "the ancient feudal feeling" produced by medieval architecture "is an instrument which, when skillfully wielded, may be productive of vast social benefit."

Classicists and Gothicists frequently fought over which symbolic meanings for buildings were most important. Their dispute climaxed in the 1856–1859 competition over the new Foreign Office in Whitehall. The winner—a building with classical detail and a Renaissance façade—was a compromise to suit Whig Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, an anti-Gothicist. Thereafter, classical and Gothic buildings were often built side by side as both schools continued to look to the past for inspiration.

Around 1910, architecture began to change. A new generation rebelled against the past; Victorian styles rapidly waned in popularity.



Templeton's Carpet Factory in Glasgow, Scotland, built in 1889. Architect William Leiper used the Doges' Palace in Venice as his model.

OTHER NATIONS

Sweden's Difficulties

"Sweden: Failure of the Welfare State" by Peter Stein, in *Journal of Economic Growth* (Vol. 2, #4), 1615 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20062.

During the 1930s, Sweden's social democracy—offering a broad range of benefits financed by the income of export-oriented manufacturers—became a model of the welfare state. But during the past 15 years, argues Stein, an economist at the Swedish Free Enterprise Foundation, the nation of eight million may have become a model for decline.

Sweden did not become industrialized until the 1870s. But the wealth created by such firms as Electrolux (vacuum cleaners), Volvo (cars), and L. M. Ericsson (telephones), as well as the profits from such Swedish inventions as ball bearings and steam turbines, transformed the nation from a supplier of raw materials to an exporter of sophisticated manufacturing products. Between the 1870s and the 1970s, Sweden's economic growth rate per capita was second only to Japan's.

After the Social Democratic Party (SAP) came to power in Stockholm in 1932, its leaders were careful to impose few restraints on industry. Nationalizations were rare. Farmers were protected from imports by high tariffs, but SAP politicians otherwise preferred free trade to enhance Swedish manufacturers' ability to compete internationally. Neutrality during World War II, cooperative labor unions, and low corporate tax rates all helped to spur growth; between 1950 and 1970, the economy expanded at an average annual rate of 3.3 percent per capita—*higher* than the 1913 to 1950 average. Such growth enabled the Social Democrats to pay for the extensive welfare subsidies and social services that helped to keep them in favor with the voters.

But economic stagnation set in during the late 1960s. The stagnation began after the SAP enacted legislation that, in effect, allowed workers to retain jobs for life. Wages rose far faster than productivity, and the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) energy "crunch" of 1973, combined with an expansionary fiscal policy, increased Sweden's manufacturing costs to a level 30 percent higher than those of her competitors. As corporate profits fell, Social Democratic politicians tried to maintain full employment through nationalizing failing firms, resulting in huge deficits that led to the SAP's loss of the 1976 election. The nonsocialist coalition led by Thorbjörn Fälldin, however, made matters worse by nationalizing more industries in three years than the SAP had swept up in their 44-year rule. By 1982, government spending accounted for 70 percent of Sweden's gross national product (the U.S. figure: 20 percent).

In 1982, the Social Democrats, having returned to power, devalued the krona by 16 percent. They thus gave a boost to Swedish exporters that resulted in the creation of 150,000 new jobs between 1982 and 1987, reducing unemployment to 1.9 percent. Deficit-reducing tax increases raised taxes to 55 percent of the gross national product. But only privatization and deregulation, Stein believes, will ensure that a "prosperous private sector" will once again enable the Swedish welfare state to thrive.

OTHER NATIONS

After Chiang

"Taiwan After Chiang Ching-kuo" by Selig S. Harrison, in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1988), Council on Foreign Relations, 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The death of Taiwan's President Chiang Ching-kuo last January at age 77 could mark a turning point for that prospering island.

Chiang's chosen successor, former vice president Lee Teng-hui, 64, a Cornell-trained economist, inherits a healthy regime from Chiang: An annual growth rate of 13 percent, foreign exchange reserves of \$76 billion, and a \$19 billion trade surplus with the U.S. in 1987. Lee, the first native Taiwanese to be president, must, however, decide if Taiwan should become an independent nation, or continue the pretense of being the seat-in-exile of China's legitimate government.

As Harrison, a Carnegie Endowment scholar, notes, most of Taiwan's 19.4 million people fall into two categories: the "mainlanders" and the "Taiwanese." The 2.9 million "mainlanders" are immigrants and their children who arrived after Mao Zedong's Communists defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists in China's civil war in 1949; they dominate the island's politics through the Kuomintang (KMT) or Nationalist party. Because the Taipei regime regards itself as the "Republic of China," 239 out of 312 seats in the Legislative Yuan represent mainland constituencies, and there has been no general election for these seats since 1948. Half of the mainland members are over age 80.

Like the mainlanders, the 13.3 million "Taiwanese" are Han Chinese. The Taiwanese, however, descend from families who quit the mainland *before* 1945, and they resent the "bunker mentality" of the KMT, whose goal, observes Harrison, is not independence but majority rule. Although the opposition party, the Democratic Progressives, was allowed to contest some Legislative Yuan seats in the 1986 elections, and 38 years of martial law ended in 1987, the establishment of new opposition radio and television stations is still banned, and the KMT remains firmly in control.

Chinese premier Deng Xiaoping has continued efforts to unite Taiwan with the Communist mainland. In 1982, he proposed a "one nation, two systems" policy that would make Taiwan a "special administrative region," allowing the islanders to maintain their own army, collect their own taxes, and operate their own budget. Although indirect trade between the two countries increased to \$1.9 billion last year, Taiwan continues to reject any such "unity" proposals. (Taiwan's income per capita in 1987 was \$4,600; China's, \$300.)

The United States ended formal diplomatic relations in 1979, but maintains close ties. U.S. arms sales to Taiwan have amounted to \$6 billion since 1979 (\$800 million in Fiscal Year 1988). In a 1982 communiqué, the United States pledged that it would gradually reduce arms sales to Taiwan over time. In 1985, China protested that the U.S. had sold Taiwan tools and blueprints used to produce such military items as tanks, fighter aircraft, and six different kinds of missiles. Taipei, however, worries about the U.S. sale of torpedoes and other naval weaponry to China. If U.S. arms sales to Beijing continue to rise while U.S. sales to Taipei fall, Taiwanese officials threaten to increase arms purchases from the Soviet Union.

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Last July, members of Northern Ireland's Orange Order gathered to celebrate the decisive victory of Britain's Protestant king, William III, over his Catholic predecessor, James II, at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

Northern Ire

"Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition" by Martha Abele MacIver, in *Political Studies* (Sept. 1987), Butterworths, 80 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, Mass. 02180.

For two decades, Northern Ireland's Rev. Ian Paisley, renowned head of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), has led the Protestant foes of increased local political power for minority Catholics. Whence does Paisley derive his opinions? MacIver, a political scientist at Occidental College, argues that Paisley's fierce ideology has its roots in the 16th century.

Paisley identifies closely with John Knox (1514?-1572), a leader of the Reformation in Scotland. Like Knox, Paisley maintains that he and his followers have a "covenant," a divine commission to war against the forces of Satan, which he believes to be the Roman Catholic Church. God, in his eyes, opposes not only the "diabolical principles of popery" (which result in the terrorism of the Irish Republican Army) but also such sinful notions as "infidelity, scepticism, [and] no-Godism."

The United Kingdom, Paisley contends, was established as a Protestant nation after the Catholic King James II was overthrown during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Because of this, he declares, *any* Catholic presence undermines England's Protestant principles. He thus claims that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican makes her a modern counterpart to the Catholic Stuart kings of the 17th century. During the 1982 Falklands War, Paisley argued that "it is no coincidence" that the Catholic Argentines chose to conduct their invasion during Pope John Paul II's visit to Britain. "Every

OTHER NATIONS

time our nation has gone a-whoring after Rome," Paisley says, "its greatness has decayed."

MacIver notes that Paisley refuses to admit that the meaning of English constitutional documents changes over time. To him, the intent of the Bill of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701) has not changed over three centuries. Paisley's fundamentalism, she concludes, ensures that he will continue "to generate controversy" for years to come.

Romania's Dynasty

"Romania in the 1980s: The Legacy of Dynastic Socialism" by Vlad Georgescu, in *Eastern European Politics and Societies* (Winter 1988), Univ. of Calif. Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

Four years ago, Vice President George Bush praised Romania's President Nicolae Ceaușescu as one of Eastern Europe's "good communists" striving for independence in foreign policy and economic reform. Today most outsiders consider his regime a black comedy: Romania produces cars but limits driving, restricts television programming to two hours per day, and pulps old Bibles to produce toilet paper.

Why did Romania fail so badly? The blame, according to Georgescu, a Radio Free Europe executive, lies mainly with Ceaușescu, who became president in 1974. Displaying a "touch of royalty," Ceaușescu family members claim grandiose academic titles; the president himself is exalted in the government-run press as a "saint" and "a miracle" whose native village has become a national shrine.

Living in a "fantasy world," Ceaușescu has created the most rigid command economy in Eastern Europe. During the 1970s, his regime, with the help of Western credit and technology, devoted roughly one-third of the gross national product to classic Stalinist policies of investment in steel, machine-building, and chemicals, but found few markets abroad for the low-quality goods produced by the new plants. Romania, which once conducted much of its foreign trade with the West Europeans, now finds its best customers among Third World nations who often pay in barter goods.

Potentially one of the richest countries in Eastern Europe, Romania is now one of the poorest. The economy is plagued by high inflation and rising foreign debt. Wildly optimistic five-year plans repeatedly succumb to what Bucharest tersely calls "serious shortcomings." Spending for housing fell by 37 percent between 1980 and 1985. Despite huge investment in the oil industry, private electricity use has been cut by 80 percent between 1973 and 1985. Food rationing, abolished in 1954, was reintroduced in 1981; staples rationed include bread, meat, and eggs. Further savings occur as the Ceaușescu regime pursues a policy of "demodernization"—which favors horse-drawn carts over tractors and tricycles over trucks, and discourages the use of refrigerators and washing machines.

With few friends in the West, Romania, which proclaimed an "autonomous" foreign policy in 1964, recently returned to the Soviet orbit. But even the Kremlin has become increasingly critical of Ceaușescu's erratic policies. Ironically, the Soviet Union could, by easing Ceaușescu out, provide the impetus for needed domestic reform.



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RESEARCH REPORTS

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“Perspectives on the Reagan Years.”

Urban Institute Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Md. 20706. 215 pp. \$24.95.
Editor: John L. Palmer

What will be the lasting effects of the Reagan administration's domestic initiatives? The authors of this collection of essays critique the policies that have characterized the “Reagan Revolution.”

Few of the efforts Ronald Reagan has made to abolish or establish federal programs have, in fact, borne fruit. Consider the religious Right's “social agenda”—a push for tuition tax credits, a ban on busing, abortion, and affirmative action.

This “agenda,” observes Harvard's Nathan Glazer, is not costly; even the most expensive social-issue program, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, costs the taxpayer \$179.8 million per year—1/40 of one percent of the total federal budget. But the battle is important politically; the lower-class Southern fundamentalists who focus on these issues help broaden the Republican coalition beyond its customarily affluent supporters.

President Reagan's strategy has been to advocate the “social agenda” while not actively campaigning for it. As a result, few of the goals of the religious Right have been achieved, and in many cases, there have been setbacks; civil rights law is more stringent now than in 1981, and the Supreme Court denied Bob Jones University a tax-exemption granted by the Reagan administration. But once-favored liberal advances have been checked; the Reagan administration has opposed court-ordered busing whenever possible. “Little support exists,” Glazer believes, “for resuscitating or expanding the liberal agenda.”

Spending on welfare and on “entitlements” such as Social Security and Medicare has produced a similar stalemate. Jack Meyer, president of New Directions for Policy, a research organization, argues that both the White House and congressional

liberals have been thwarted in implementing major changes.

The Reagan administration's efforts to restructure welfare programs, including a 1981 proposal to reduce Social Security benefits and a 1982 effort to transfer control of the Food Stamp and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programs to the states, were blocked by Congress. Later welfare reform efforts then concentrated on attempts to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. While these efforts met with some success (the percentage of food stamps that were sold to people ineligible for them fell from 9.9 percent in 1981 to 8.6 percent in 1984), the actual amounts saved were small. Meyer calculates that funds spent erroneously in all welfare programs account for only \$5 billion—less than one-half of one percent of the budget.

Meyer predicts that the Reagan legacy of massive budget deficits will ultimately force further reductions, particularly in Social Security and Medicare programs that are partially “open-ended government subsidies” for the middle and upper classes. Between 1970 and 1984, AFDC benefits, in constant dollars, were reduced by 34 percent; Social Security spending rose by 54 percent; and Medicare budgets increased by 116 percent.

John Palmer, co-director of the Urban Institute's Changing Domestic Priorities project, contends that the need for deficit reduction means that the next president will find it difficult to advance new solutions to the nation's ills with the free-wheeling abandon of a Franklin D. Roosevelt or a Lyndon B. Johnson. “Advocates of social spending,” he predicts, will “face a much greater burden of proof” among both Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill.

“The Growth of American, British, and Japanese Direct Investment in the 1980s.”

Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE, United Kingdom. 40 pp. \$3.60.

Author: Stephen E. Thomsen

The rise in Japanese “direct investment” in the U.S. economy, due to increased spending by Japanese firms on their American operations, has been well publicized. But Thomsen, a Royal Institute of International Affairs research associate, notes that foreign direct investment (FDI) by U.S. corporations overseas is still far larger than that of their Japanese rivals. Even if Japanese FDI increased at a rate twice that of America's, by 1990 U.S. firms would spend \$37 billion on overseas branches, while Japan would spend only \$30 billion—roughly equal to Britain's overseas corporate spending, which Thomsen predicts will reach \$29 billion in 1990.

Privatization and deregulation have been major causes of increased FDI. The 1979 abolition of exchange controls in Britain, for example, removed restrictions on transfers of capital and spurred overseas investment. Newly privatized firms (British Gas, Nippon Telephone and Telegraph) are more export-oriented than were their na-

tionalized predecessors. The gradual lowering of tariff barriers in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations has also been an incentive to foreign investment.

U.S. firms prefer to invest in Europe and Canada; 47 percent (\$123 billion) of American FDI is in Europe, mostly in Britain, West Germany, and Switzerland, with an additional 18 percent (\$50 billion) in Canada. America is the first choice of British and Japanese investors: Thirty-five percent (\$38 billion) of Britain's FDI is in America, while 30 percent (\$24 billion) of Japan's FDI is in the United States.

While U.S. overseas affiliates tend to import as much from the United States as they export to it, American subsidiaries of foreign companies tend to import more. In 1985, U.S. branches of foreign firms exported \$56 billion from America, but imported \$112 billion from their parent companies—thus accounting for \$55 billion or 41 percent of the U.S. trade deficit.

“The World We Created at Hamilton High.”

Harvard Univ. Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 285 pp. \$24.95.

Author: Gerald Grant

What makes a good school?

Grant, a professor of education and sociology at Syracuse, believes the answer can be found by a careful examination of *one* American high school. The school he chose, which he named “Hamilton High,” in the city of “Median,” is not a typical high school, but the sort of school widely seen as the American ideal—racially integrated, its student body a mixture of rich and poor, normal and handicapped stu-

dents. As Grant sees it, Hamilton High's story illuminates “all the overlapping social revolutions” that have beset public schools for the past three decades—with impact on both education and society.

Hamilton High opened in 1953. During its first 12 years, the school was orderly and homogeneous; most students were middle-class whites. Then, beginning in 1965, court-ordered desegregation policies changed things. The black population of

Hamilton High rose from 90 (out of 1,100 students) in 1966 to nearly 500 during the mid-1970s; white enrollment fell by 350. Teachers were demoralized by classroom disorder; 72 percent of the teachers on duty at Hamilton High in 1966 had resigned by 1971.

By the early 1970s, racial tensions had eased. More long-term damage to Hamilton High came through the school board's misguided emphasis on "student rights." This policy, reflecting Supreme Court decisions and federal laws against child abuse, restricted the use of teachers' authority in Hamilton High to "what would stand up in court." Students, sometimes encouraged by their parents, felt free to cheat on exams or talk back to teachers. Skipping classes became commonplace; in the 1971-72 school year, 78 percent of Hamilton High students surveyed missed classes at least once a week, and 46 percent cut classes frequently.

Hamilton High's staff expanded by one-third during the 1970s. Few of these newcomers were teachers; most were social workers. Hamilton High established drug counseling programs, teen-age pregnancy-prevention programs, and a nursery (with after-school day care) for students' children. The social workers, whose salaries were largely paid by the state or federal government, were more responsive to their funding sources than to the school. Younger guidance counselors, for example, saw themselves not as academic advisers, but as would-be psychotherapists eager to aid their student "patients."

The 1980s brought some improvements at Hamilton High. The school's average SAT score, which had fallen from 934 in 1967 to 874 in 1978, rose to 911 in 1985. (SAT scores for white students averaged

27 points above the 1965 average.) Tougher graduation requirements forced students to take more demanding courses; the average Hamilton High student now took 3.3 years of math and 3.1 years of science, compared to 2.2 years of math and 2.3 years of science in 1967. But in 1985 teachers still could not exercise authority; student truancy and cheating were common, and school assemblies "often degenerated into catcalls and semiobscene behavior." Rather than exalting public virtues, most school festivals (Skip Day, Pajama Day, Beach Day) "celebrated individuality and freedom." Common courtesy disappeared; in the cafeteria, students did not assist handicapped peers with their lunch trays, refused to explain to newly arrived immigrants how to buy a meal, and littered the floor with trash.

The changes at Hamilton High reflected unhappy national trends. Average U.S. SAT scores, for example, fell from 975 during the mid-1960s to 890 in 1980, then rose to 906 during the mid-1980s. Student absenteeism also remained a national problem; 47 percent of high school sophomores surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center in 1981 reported that "their peers frequently cut classes."

Grant claims that America's schools cannot be restored simply by requiring that students pass certain examinations. He suggests shifting more authority from school board bureaucrats to teachers and principals. High school teachers, Grant contends, should have as much autonomy as professors enjoy in colleges—with some power over hiring, budget, and course content. Then teachers, instead of merely being "specialists who interpret rules," could once again be leaders capable of inspiring students to learn.

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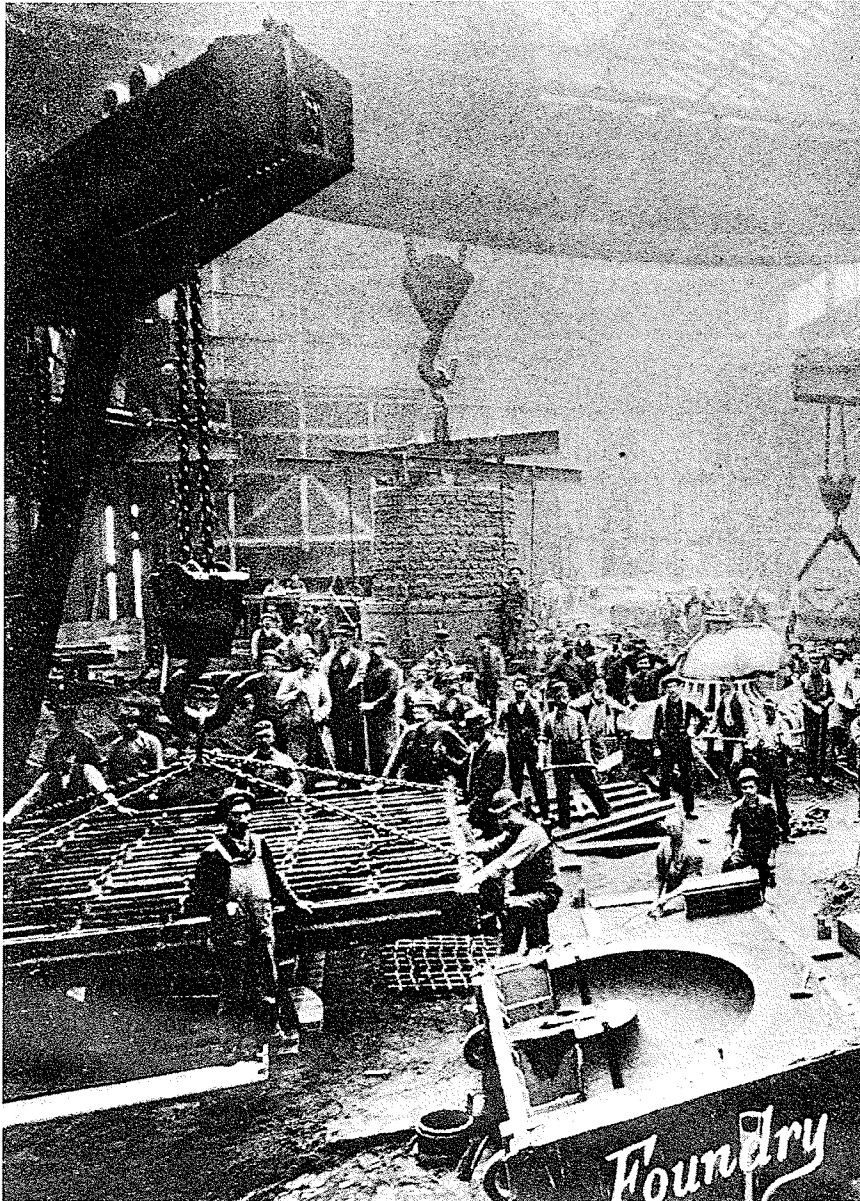
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The early days: In 1895, five years after the Sparrows Point plant opened, foundry workers posed for a Baltimore photographer. In the foundry, molten metal was cast into parts for plant machinery. The Point's various steelmaking facilities were then spread over 400 acres; more acreage was created by landfill.

The Rise and Decline of Big Steel

“What is steel?” author John Gunther asked people in Pittsburgh during the late 1940s. “America!” was often the proud answer he got back. Steel output was still regarded as the prime measure of a nation’s economic strength. And, after World War II, the United States was the world’s biggest steelmaker. In Pittsburgh, in Chicago, in Gary, in Seattle, in Birmingham, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, it seemed as though the industry and its workers would prosper forever just by producing more. But by the late 1970s, as demand shrank and imports increased, the huge mills began shutting down. What now seemed to matter to the world was supremacy in computers, semi-conductors, and other high technology. Here, Mark Reutter traces the rise and decline of Big Steel; he focuses on the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and its Sparrows Point plant, near Baltimore, which was, for a time, the largest steel mill in the world.

by Mark Reutter

I. MISTER SCHWAB

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am here for a very brief and simple duty, a very delightful duty, that of welcoming Mr. Schwab to Baltimore.”

In the audience before James H. Preston, mayor of Baltimore, were scores of politicians, businessmen, and other notables who had gathered at the Belvedere Hotel for a “Dinner of Welcome Tendered to Mr. Schwab by the City of Baltimore.” The date was November 21, 1916, 10 months after Charles M. Schwab’s Bethlehem Steel Corporation bought the Pennsylvania Steel Corporation and its plant on Sparrows Point, a dozen miles southeast of Baltimore, on the Chesapeake Bay.

As his listeners quieted, the mayor launched into a grandiloquent

tribute. Finally, he presented Schwab with a gold humidor, a “minor token of the esteem, of the gratitude, and, may I say, of the affection that Baltimore feels for you.” He continued: “You are making a contribution not only to Maryland and Baltimore, but also to the greatness of our country, to American manhood, to American citizenship, to the broad humanitarianism of mankind, in which you exemplify in yourself the highest ideals.”

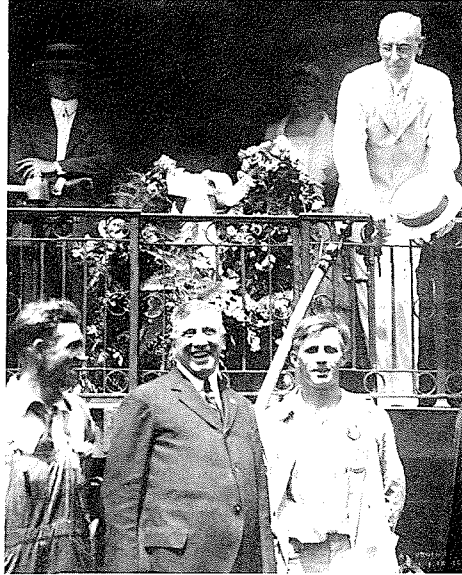
At 54, Schwab, chairman of Bethlehem Steel, was accustomed to accolades. For years, the popular press had been repeating the phenomenal story of the rise of this Pennsylvania country boy from a \$1-a-day laborer in a Pittsburgh steel mill to the presidency of Carnegie Steel at age 35 and then, a few years later, the presidency of U.S. Steel, the biggest corporation in the world. Now, he was molding Bethlehem into U.S. Steel’s chief competitor. But when he took the podium, Charlie Schwab, true to his reputation as a master actor, tossed aside his prepared speech to tell his listeners “what is in my heart tonight.”

A ‘Marvelous Midas’

“When I first entered the steel business 35 years ago, the whole country consumed scarcely one million tons of steel. When the [U.S.] Steel Corporation was formed in 1901, the whole country only consumed 12 million. We then felt that we had reached the zenith of production. You will not be surprised, I am sure, when I tell you that this year the United States will produce about 40 million tons of steel. Now I don’t think that is the zenith, or anywhere near the zenith. I think we are going onward and upward, and that this country is destined to be the greatest manufacturer in the world of iron and steel, as great as all the other countries put together in the years to come.”

Schwab raised his hands to hush the audience. “People will say, ‘Where is it going? What is going to be done with it?’” Of course, he said, the railroads, long the industry’s chief customer, would always need rails, railroad cars, and other steel products. But Schwab foresaw a growing world appetite for other commercial steels—plate steel for shipbuilding and construction, tin plate for canners and meat processors, bar and sheet steel for the young auto industry, and rod steel for bedsprings, nails, and spikes. Just a few years earlier, he had virtually staked his company on the so-called Bethlehem beam. Unlike old-fashioned steel

Mark Reutter, 37, a former Wilson Center Fellow, is a writer in Chicago who specializes in business and social history. Born in New York City, he received a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University (1972) and an M.A. from Columbia University’s School of Journalism (1973). He was a reporter at the Baltimore Sun from 1973 to 1978. Copyright © 1988 by Mark Reutter. This essay is drawn from his forthcoming book, Sparrows Point: Making Steel—The Rise and Ruin of American Industrial Might, to be published by Summit Books. Printed by permission.



In August 1918, President Woodrow Wilson looks on as Charles Schwab, his wartime "shipbuilding czar," congratulates two champion riveters at the Hog Island shipyard, near Philadelphia.

beams, which were riveted together, the lighter, stronger Bethlehem beam was cast in one piece. Thanks to Schwab's salesmanship, it was catching on among architects and builders.

To capture the markets of the future, Schwab cautioned, Bethlehem had to achieve the lowest production costs in the industry. This was where Sparrows Point fit in. At landlocked Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where the company's main plant was located, iron ore had to be delivered by rail. At Sparrows Point, on the Chesapeake, the rail charge was eliminated. Ore could be shipped directly from company-owned mines in Cuba to the Point's piers. Overall, the tidewater location of Sparrows Point could save the company \$2 in manufacturing costs per ton of finished steel. As U.S. Steel and other Midwestern competitors gradually exhausted domestic supplies of iron ore, Sparrows Point would increasingly tip the balance in favor of Bethlehem.

For these reasons, Schwab said, he had decided to build Sparrows Point into Bethlehem's principal plant. "Now, boys," he told the audience, "I am going to tell you something about what we contemplate here in Baltimore—WE CONTEMPLATE HERE THE LARGEST STEEL PLANT IN THE UNITED STATES!"

All of Baltimore was excited. "A MARVELOUS MIDAS," proclaimed a headline in the *Baltimore American*. Baltimoreans did not dwell upon the sources of Bethlehem's largesse. In fact, during 1916, while President Woodrow Wilson was trying to keep America out of World War I, Schwab's company had become the world's largest manufacturer of steel armaments. The "American Krupp" was inundated with

orders from Britain, France, and Russia—for field artillery and naval guns, shells, armor plate, even submarines.* Its net earnings soared by 149 percent, from some \$25 million in 1915 to \$62 million. At Sparrows Point, the open-hearth furnaces supplied billets of special nickel-chrome steel for the busy munitions shops in Bethlehem, which turned out 25,000 artillery shells every day.

In 1917, the year America entered the war, Sparrows Point underwent the greatest transformation in its history. Bulkheads were rammed into the ground 2,367 feet beyond the south and west shores of the Point, and immense loads of earth, stone, slag, and gravel were dumped in the space between. When the fill had settled out, Sparrows Point was 100 acres larger. Work promptly began on new docking facilities to accommodate the company's growing fleet of ore steamers.

Working the 'Swing Shift'

While the Point was expanded, tremendous activity was going on within. On the cattail-fringed flatlands, gangs of construction workers could be seen putting massive concrete footings in place and piecing together the skeletons of new buildings.

In July 1917, a sheet and tin plate mill—the only one of its kind east of Pittsburgh—opened to supply tin plate for the canning of Army rations and other supplies. In September, a new 110-inch heavy plate mill went into operation, its output absorbed by orders for merchant ships—many of them built at the adjacent Sparrows Point shipyards.

Sparrows Point ran around the clock. Until 1923, the standard work schedule was a week of 11-hour day shifts followed by a week of 13-hour night shifts.† During the changeover every Sunday, the night shift worked through the following day. Thus, most of the Sparrows Point hands worked a grueling 24-hour "swing shift" once every other week. There were no paid vacations and only two (unpaid) holidays: Christmas Day and the Fourth of July.

Most of Sparrows Points' skilled and semiskilled workers had migrated East from the traditional steel citadels around Pittsburgh and eastern Ohio. Because jobs in steel were highly specialized and widely dispersed, a machinist was more likely to be found in the hinterland than in Baltimore. Bethlehem did not hesitate to hire immigrants for skilled jobs—one Finnish rolling crew worked under an Italian foreman named

*Schwab's 1914 deal with Great Britain to build 20 submarines probably violated U.S. neutrality laws. When word of the contract leaked out, Schwab agreed, under pressure from the Wilson administration, to cancel it. But Bethlehem covertly fabricated the submarines' parts in various U.S. plants and assembled them in Canada—a secret that Schwab carried to his grave.

†Under pressure from President Warren G. Harding, Schwab and other steel barons grudgingly agreed in 1923 to an eight-hour day and a six-day workweek "as soon as the labor supply permitted." By the end of the 1920s, while the "swing shift" was gone, one-fourth of the Sparrows Point labor force still worked seven days a week.

Louie—but native-born whites tended to predominate at the Point. Sparrows Point also had the largest contingent of black steelworkers in the nation next to U.S. Steel's Birmingham, Alabama, plant. Most of the plant's blacks worked as common laborers. A few held semiskilled jobs as "riggers," "skull knockers," or "track spikers."

As the U.S. war effort grew, so did the reputation of Charlie Schwab. He was a highly sought after speaker at Liberty Bond rallies; the World Conference of Salesmen named him Salesman of the Year. In April 1918, President Wilson summoned him to serve as director-general of the U.S. Emergency Fleet Corporation and revive the nation's faltering endeavor to "build a bridge to France."

Schwab rapidly won national acclaim as the "shipbuilding czar." He quickly increased the nation's output of troop transports and cargo ships, but it was his barnstorming stump style that delighted journalists, shipworkers, and the general public.

Up and down the Atlantic Seaboard, along the Gulf Coast, and in the Pacific yards, Schwab delivered his rousing beat-the-Kaiser talk to all and sundry. In one celebrated incident, he addressed a gathering of workers at a Seattle shipyard known to be a stronghold of the radical Industrial Workers of the World (the "Wobblies"). Expecting a chilly reception, Schwab readied an opening line to disarm his audience. "Now, boys," he began, "I'm a very rich man . . ."

The startled men laughed and applauded, and Schwab went on to make his speech. When he finished, they offered to make him an honorary Wobbly. He accepted.

Moving Up

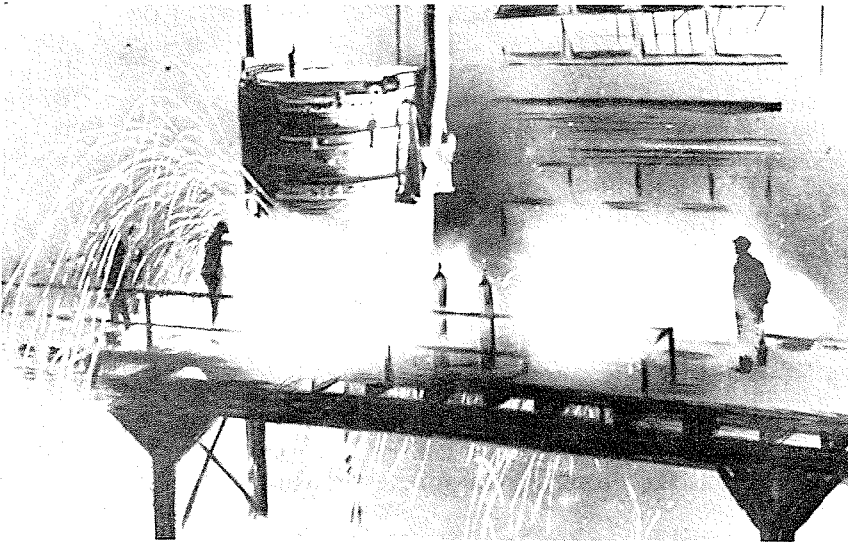
The tour reached its climax on July 4, 1918, when Schwab presided from San Francisco over a gala launching of 95 ships nationwide. There were speeches and prayers and brass bands playing Sousa marches. Workers cheered the shipbuilding czar as if he were a combat hero. The *New York Times* proclaimed Schwab the "Field Marshal of Industry," saying, "No vocabulary could do justice to the zeal, energy, driving power, magnetism, and inevitable success of this remarkable man."

The war was a boon to Schwab's company and the American steel industry; in 1914, when the first shots were fired, the industry produced some 24 million tons of steel. By 1918, when the armistice was signed, output had been nearly doubled. Bethlehem's balance sheets showed enormous profits; the company's hoard of cash and securities had grown eightfold, to \$47.8 million.

With these riches in hand, Charlie Schwab was ready to embark on an ambitious new campaign of postwar expansion. One of his first moves was to secure the basic supplies needed to keep Bethlehem growing. Five hundred pounds of limestone, one-and-a-half tons of coal, and two tons of iron ore were needed to make a ton of steel. Schwab acquired the

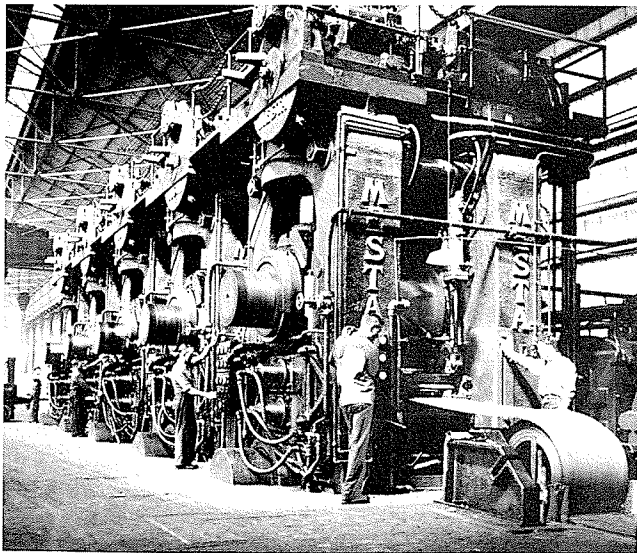
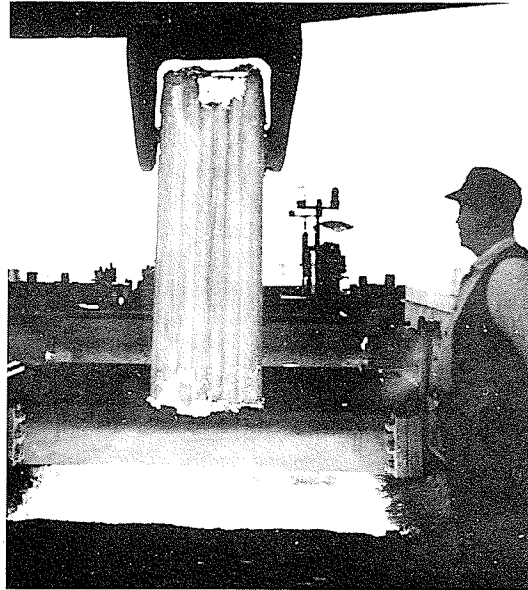


Workmen on the "casting floor" scrape excess hardened metal from the blast furnace.



A giant ladle carries molten steel from an open-hearth furnace to the ingot molds.

In the "soaking pits" (actually furnaces), steel ingots are reheated to 2200 degrees F for rolling.



A "cold-reducing" mill (built in 1936) turns out strip metal at 1,200 feet per minute. After being coated with tin, the steel will be shipped out to can makers.

Hanover limestone quarries in southeastern Pennsylvania (65 miles from Sparrows Point), as well as 46,000 acres of West Virginia coal country. Because U.S. Steel controlled the richest domestic supplies of iron ore (the Mesabi Range, near Duluth, Minnesota), Schwab stuck to his strategy of supplying Sparrows Point from Latin America. Now, he added the massive El Tofo open-pit mine, on a mountaintop in Chile, to Bethlehem's existing ore assets in Cuba.

By all statistical measures, Bethlehem was moving up the ladder while giant U.S. Steel was slowly descending. Once claiming 68 percent of the nation's steel capacity, U.S. Steel was down to 45 percent by the early 1920s. Still the world's largest corporation, with mills concentrated around Pittsburgh and Chicago, it had been weakened by its slowness to exploit new technology. Moreover, Chairman Elbert H. Gary had decided against buying up other steelmakers, for fear of provoking Washington antitrust prosecutors.

Schwab operated under no such inhibitions. In 1922, Bethlehem acquired two large steelmakers: Lackawanna Steel (based in Buffalo, New York) and Midvale Steel & Ordnance (based in Johnstown, Pennsylvania). Bethlehem now owned every major steel plant east of Pittsburgh, and claimed 15 percent of the nation's steel capacity. In terms of assets, this once-modest manufacturer had become the nation's third largest corporation, behind U.S. Steel and Standard Oil of New Jersey.

As Bethlehem grew, so did the wealth of its chairman and chief stockholder. During the war years, Schwab's personal holdings of Bethlehem stock had yielded some \$20 million in dividends, and he still measured his income in seven figures during the 1920s.

Building a Monument

Ever since making his first millions at Carnegie, Schwab had pursued the trappings of wealth with a passion. His first extravagance had been a 75-room mansion on Riverside Drive in Manhattan. Occupying a full city block, with a price tag of \$3.5 million (\$44 million in today's dollars), "On the Hudson" was even more magnificent than the *palazzos* the Astors and other wealthy families had built on Fifth Avenue a generation earlier. Its amenities included an art gallery filled with Old Masters, a full-size gymnasium, and a basement swimming pool set among columns of Tuscan marble. "Ostentation, it was generally admitted, was part of the Schwab scheme of things," remarked Lucius Beebe in his 1966 chronicle of *The Big Spenders*.

But the Riverside Drive mansion paled in comparison to the country estate Schwab completed (after the war) on the hills that surrounded his boyhood home in Loretto, Pennsylvania. It was here that his immigrant German grandparents had settled 80 years before, and where his father had worked as a mailman and proprietor of the local stable.

Schwab's estate, "Immergrun" ("Evergreen" in German), was a

monument to the success of Bethlehem Steel. The centerpiece of the 1,000-acre retreat was a three-story Renaissance castle, with 44 ornately decorated rooms. On a whim, Schwab ordered up a life-size replica of a French farming village spread over 66 acres. There was a private golf course; a large artificial waterfall; an open-air theater; and acres upon acres of formal gardens. A staff of 70 maintained the house and grounds.

Schwab and his wife, Rana, lived at Immergrun only during the summer months; the rest of the year they spent on Riverside Drive. Or rather Rana did, for Schwab was perpetually on the move. They had married years before his unexpected success, and Rana, daughter of a boarding-house keeper, was never comfortable with her husband's zest for high living. She was childless, and lived in virtual seclusion. Rana looked the other way during Schwab's affairs with other women. She seldom joined him on his annual trips to Europe.

Insiders and Outsiders

There, he indulged another personal vice. Whether he was at the casino in Monte Carlo or at the New York Whist Club, Schwab could seldom resist a bet. "I shall go broke for I love to gamble," he once confided to a friend.

Although he was generous to friends and relatives, Schwab rejected the Gospel of Wealth propounded by his business mentor, Andrew Carnegie, who held that the rich had an obligation to devote much of their wealth to philanthropy. "I disagreed with Carnegie's ideas on how best to distribute his wealth," Schwab told a journalist. "I spent mine! Spending creates more wealth for everybody. . . . I believe that let alone, wealth will distribute itself."

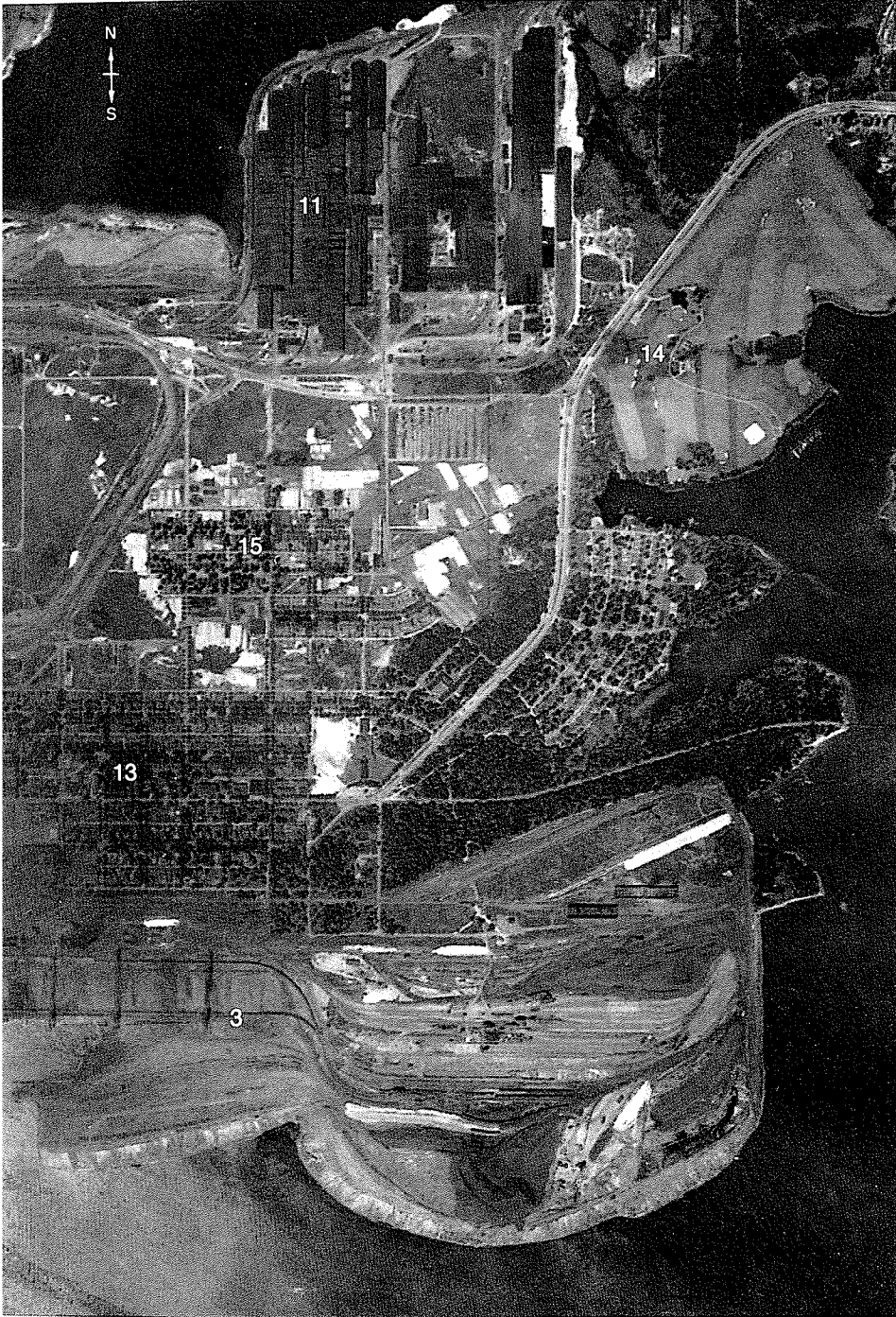
Americans enjoyed the Steel King's excesses. "Smiling Charlie" always had something pithy to say to reporters, and he was often quoted, along with Walter Chrysler and Henry Ford, as a spokesman for American business. In *Colliers* and *National Magazine*, readers were treated to admiring portraits of "The World's Greatest Salesman and Business Personality." Even the normally iconoclastic *American Mercury*, edited by Baltimore's own H. L. Mencken, joined the chorus. "True enough," the *Mercury* noted, Schwab and his company had profited greatly from the war, but the chairman had only been seeing to the interests of his stockholders: Since the war, "he has left no doubt as to his real attitude toward these lamentable proceedings." The *Mercury* continued: "Parents with tears of hopefulness in their eyes have been known to recite the Schwab saga to their children, and awed biographers have written about it a thousand times in newspapers and magazines."

Schwab was not the only one to benefit from Bethlehem's good fortune. At company headquarters in Bethlehem, the chairman created a supreme command of 16 men. Long before, he had made a number of

HOW SPARROWS POINT WORKED

The Sparrows Point plant, shown here in the 1940s, worked like a huge assembly line, connected by rail lines. Arriving by barge, coal went from the Coal-Handling Plant (1) to the Coke Ovens (2). The coke was combined with iron ore from the massive Storage Yards (3) and limestone (delivered by rail) in the Blast Furnaces (4) to make pig iron. In the Open-Hearth Furnaces (5), the pig iron was melted and combined with alloys and other materials to make steel ingots. Delivered to the Primary Rolling Mills (6), the ingots were reheated and rolled into blooms, bars, and billets. These semifinished forms were shipped to various finishing mills: the Rail Mill (7); the Plate Mill (8); the Wire, Rod, and Nail Mill (9); the Pipe Mill (10); and the Strip, Sheet, and Tin Plate Mills (11). Some of the finished products were returned to the piers for shipment to the West Coast and overseas; most traveled by railroad (12) to various customers in the East. The "company town" (13) was home to as many as 5,500 people—employees and their families. It contained a company store, schools, seven churches, and a country club (14). The east-west streets were lettered, with A through C Streets constituting white-collar "Bosses Row." D Street was the main commercial street. Foremen and workers lived in modest row houses on E and F Streets; blacks were segregated in a separate enclave (15).





decisions with far-reaching consequences. He made promotion from within a cornerstone of company policy; few men from other companies joined Bethlehem's top ranks. He disdained college-educated managers. "Most talk about 'super-genius' in business is nonsense," he said in his advice book, *Succeeding With What You Have* (1917). "I have found that when 'stars' drop out, their departments seldom suffer."

Other Schwab tenets reinforced management's insularity. Top Bethlehem executives were expected to live in Bethlehem, even though their chairman did not. They were forbidden to engage in any outside business or political activities unless directed to do so for the greater good of Bethlehem Steel. Schwab even discouraged theater-going, which he scorned for taking men away from "study that will add to their business knowledge."

The Bonus System

Significantly, most of the 16 top executives also served on the company's board of directors. Most companies as large as Schwab's reserved seats for major stockholders and other "outside" directors to help review executive decisions and set general strategy. Not at Bethlehem. There, management reviewed management decisions.

"Always More Production" was the company's slogan, and Schwab prized executives who could make a little bit more out of a little bit less. He believed in becoming Number One not through technological innovation but through incremental improvements in costs and output.

The moment of truth for the "boys," as he called his top executives, was on the third of each month. On that day, Chairman Schwab found on his desk a report from each of them that itemized the monthly production, costs, and profits for the units under their jurisdiction. After thoroughly scrutinizing the numbers, Schwab performed his most sacred duty—the calculation of the monthly bonuses.

The salaries of the top men at Bethlehem seldom exceeded \$100 a week. But their bonus envelopes bulged. Although nobody—including Bethlehem's shareholders—knew at the time how much Schwab's "boys" received in bonuses, they were the best-paid executives in America. In 1925, Schwab divided \$1.7 million (about \$11 million in today's dollars) among them. Schwab himself received no bonuses, deriving most of his income from dividends on his Bethlehem stock.

The 1920s proved to be the perfect era for the organization that Schwab built. Bethlehem had better raw material resources than its competitors; it could deliver steel at the lowest prices in the Northeast; it was better financed than its rivals; and it was constantly searching for new acquisitions. Thanks to rapidly expanding markets for autos, tinned foods, and other consumer goods that created a growing demand for steel, Schwab's "bigger is better" philosophy worked well. The massive tin plate mill built during World War I now turned out enough product—

shipped to canners as far away as Hawaii, Japan, and Argentina—to make two billion cans a year. Closer to home, a new Chevrolet assembly plant in East Baltimore consumed sheet metal and other products, while construction of the Camden-Philadelphia Bridge and other structures boosted sales of steel plate and girders.

But it was in the realm of factory productivity that Schwab again demonstrated his Midas touch. Schwab's faith in the common man's urge to make money (and to work harder to make more) led him to pay his workers in much the same fashion as he paid his executives—under a complicated bonus system. The system was unique in the steel trade.

How unique may be observed by comparing Schwab's plan with the policies of Frederick Wood, the founder of Sparrows Point. To Wood, wages were simply one of the costs of production, not a spur to lower those costs. A New England-born Yankee, he also worried that workmen with too much money in their pockets would become slackers or drunkards. Once widespread, such views lost favor among businessmen during the early 20th century: The Yankee ethic of saving and self-denial no longer appealed to executives who hoped that increasingly affluent workers would become buyers of industrial America's products.

In Schwab's view, moreover, money did not weaken, but rather reinforced the famous American work ethic. At Sparrows Point, *average* real wages increased by a modest seven percent during the first decade under Schwab, but, because of the bonus system, extremely hard-working employees were able to make much greater gains.

Fire, Smoke, and Men

Schwab had little use for the vastly influential concept of "scientific management" advanced by Frederick W. Taylor. A former Bethlehem employee, Taylor advocated "time and motion" studies in order to determine optimal ways for workmen to do their jobs. He might, for example, prescribe the exact sequence of body movements for shoveling coal into a furnace. When Schwab assumed control of Bethlehem in 1901, he threw out Taylor's procedures. He said there was no need for slide-rule and stop-watch men—"supernumeraries," he called them. Schwab's policy was simple: He did not care how a job was done, only that it was completed at the lowest possible cost.

Heading to Europe in February 1923 for his yearly restorative at the roulette tables of Monte Carlo, Chairman Schwab had a long chat with Clarence Barron. As diarist of the American Dream (he owned the *Wall Street Journal*), Barron sought the answer to a question that was then on the minds of many of his newspaper's readers: What accounted for Bethlehem's great success?

The steelman gave several answers, but at last he came to unions. Recalling that he had been summoned by Andrew Carnegie to help break the famous 1892 strike by the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel,

and Tin Workers at Carnegie's Homestead, Pennsylvania, plant, he said: "Since that day I have never had labor unions in any of my concerns. We make our own labor unions."

The Bethlehem Plan, as Schwab's scheme was called, was a creature of World War I. In 1918, the U.S. War Labor Board had ordered the company to allow its employees to organize unions. Instead, Bethlehem created a company union. Discussions of wages, hours, working conditions, and all other aspects of plant life were channeled through 13 worker-management advisory committees. They passed their "advice" on to top management; they were not negotiating bodies and they could not call strikes.

During the 1920s, however, the skilled hands at Sparrows Point (and other Bethlehem plants) crossed the threshold of the middle class. They could afford that Easy Electric washing machine that sold for only \$189.99 at the company store. As they saw it, they were "making money," and therefore had little incentive to buck the system.

Only at Sparrows Point could one appreciate the great expansion in capacity that Chairman Schwab and his associates had achieved as the decade drew to a close.

Seen from the Chesapeake, the works were shrouded by their own effluvia of smoke, visible for miles around. The port of entry was a mighty agglomeration of materials and equipment: cranes that scooped the iron ore out of block-long steamers from Cuba and Chile; a row of six blast furnaces capable of reducing the mountainous heaps of ore (plus piles of coke and limestone) to 3,500 tons of pig iron every day; 17 open-hearth furnaces and three aging Bessemer converters that refined the pig iron into thousands of tons of liquid steel; and acres of barn-red sheds where the metal was rolled into sheets, rods, and other forms.

Black Friday

Twelve years after Bethlehem's takeover of Sparrows Point, the basic steelmaking facilities had been totally rebuilt and finishing capacity pushed to record levels. No other major U.S. mill had expanded so fast.

Amid all the physical manifestations of the Industrial Age—fire, heat, smoke, steam, noise—a horde of humanity tramped three times every day through the clockhouse. At shift changes, one encountered muscular laborers and pencil-thin millwrights, blacks and whites, young and old, all coated with grimy reddish specks of ore dust. By the end of the 1920s, daily employment had reached 18,000, or 6,000 more than at the peak of World War I. If one counted wives, children, and other dependents, the lives of no less than 80,000 people in the Baltimore area were tied to Sparrows Point.

It seemed inconceivable that such prosperity could end, so when the stock market collapsed in October 1929, Schwab, like many other businessmen (and not a few politicians), dismissed it as only a "temporary"

adjustment. Sparrows Point and other company mills continued to run at near-capacity. "We have established such concentrated industrial strength in this country that we can all proceed with a high degree of rational self-confidence during 1930," he assured the Illinois Manufacturers' Association on December 10, 1929. "Never before has business been as firmly entrenched for prosperity as it is today."

Indeed, Charlie Schwab was again on the prowl, ready to clinch the title of Master Builder. His target: the Number Three steelmaker, Youngstown Sheet & Tube. The planned merger would push Schwab's company over the \$1 billion mark in assets. It never happened.

Praying at the Cathedral

The impact of the Depression could no longer be ignored. By June 1931, Schwab had ordered the complete shutdown of the Sparrows Point rail mill. Orders for structural steel, sheet metal, tin plate, and other products virtually ceased. America's economy was gravely ill.

By August 1931, Bethlehem's mills were limping along at only 32 percent of capacity. The company's president, Eugene G. Grace, admitted to newspapermen in New York that he had no idea how to reverse the losses. "Let us adjourn this meeting and go uptown to the Cathedral and pray," he said.

At Sparrows Point, thousands of workers were laid off, and the 12,000 who remained on the payroll took a 10 percent pay cut (to 45 cents an hour). Hours were vastly reduced. Charlie Parrish, a black steelworker, remembers his hours dropping from 70 to 15 per week in 1931—only enough to pay him \$13.50 every other week. "The men here would go to the other factories thinkin' that somebody may be hiring again," he later recalled, "but there was nothing in it." He and his wife, Alice, were happy to receive handouts of flour from local churches.

With dismal speed, the advances of the 1920s were being reversed. Since January 1, 1930, the company had spent \$47 million of its cash hoard on additions to capacity, mostly at Sparrows Point and Lackawanna. These expenditures came to haunt management. Because Schwab and his lieutenants had based their plans on an assumption of ever-expanding markets, the new facilities did not incorporate any major cost-saving devices. In fact, the jumbo No. 3 open-hearth shop that had been built at Sparrows Point in 1930 proved too expensive to operate. It remained idle throughout most of the Depression.

Like most of their counterparts in other companies, Bethlehem executives had obsessively sought incremental reductions in costs, brushing aside new technologies that could have improved efficiency. (Indeed, Bethlehem waited until 1936 to invest in a revolutionary mechanized "hot-strip" mill, a decade *after* some of its competitors had done so.) As *Fortune* pointed out, steel traveled as much as two miles in the making at the big plants: "This enormous mechanism must go into pro-

duction no matter how small a daily total of orders. It is like picking up a sledge hammer to drive home a tack."

In short, the strategy of "bigger is better," seemingly invincible in boom times, was now sapping Schwab's company of its ability to adjust to shrinking markets.

In October 1931, Bethlehem announced that, due to "changed conditions," it was dropping its pursuit of Youngstown Sheet & Tube. The legal battles had badly tarnished Bethlehem's image. Court proceedings had revealed for the first time how generous Schwab was to his "boys." Grace, for example, had been awarded a \$1.6 million bonus in 1929. "Mr. Grace, it develops, receives as much as Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin," observed the editors of the *New York Times*.

Broken Promises

After nine consecutive quarters of red ink, the company finally turned a modest profit again during the last quarter of 1933, thanks to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Under the president's National Recovery Administration (NRA), the steelmakers were allowed to divide up regional markets among themselves and fix prices; in return, they were expected to recognize their employees' right to form their own unions. (When the Supreme Court struck down the NRA in the *Schechter* decision of 1935, Congress passed the Wagner Act, which guaranteed the right to collective bargaining.)

On July 6, 1936, John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers and the new Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), went on national radio to "call upon the workers in the iron and steel industry who are listening to me tonight to throw off their shackles of servitude and join the union of their industry." The CIO's new Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (SWOC), muscling aside the old and ineffective Amalgamated union leadership, demanded a 62½-cent hourly wage, a 40-hour workweek, and time-and-a-half for overtime.

The Steelworkers waged a long and bitter struggle for recognition. In March 1937, they won an unexpected victory when U.S. Steel capitulated. Bethlehem and the other big steelmakers matched the terms of the U.S. Steel contract, but refused to recognize the union. During a strike against Republic, Inland, and Youngstown in May, police shot and killed 10 striking Republic workers in a South Chicago clash. The strike spread to Bethlehem's Johnstown works in June, when 8,000 workers walked out. Returning from a vacation in Germany, Schwab dismissed the Johnstown strike as "a phase," and said it was hurting the nation's prospects for economic recovery.

But inside Sparrows Point and other mills, support for the union grew. Meanwhile, the Steelworkers shifted the battlefield to the government hearing room. In dozens of filings with the new National Labor Relations Board, labor lawyers accused Bethlehem and its allies of firing

union members, employing Pinkerton "goons," and a host of other illegal acts. The Board ultimately ruled against Bethlehem and, in September 1941, representation elections were held at Sparrows Point. The new union won by a margin of better than two-to-one.

Charlie Schwab never seemed to regret either his bigger-is-better corporate strategy or his opposition to unions. He did not live to see the Steelworkers triumph. At the age of 77, in August 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II, he was stricken by a nearly fatal heart attack while staying at the Savoy in London. Returning to New York aboard the S.S. *Washington*, he was carried ashore on a stretcher. A second heart attack killed him on September 19. His wife, Rana, had died in January.

Over his lifetime Schwab had accumulated a fortune estimated at \$50 million to \$200 million; in an obituary, the *New York Times* lauded his life as "a romance" that epitomized the age of "American opportunity." It was only after his death that stunned estate accountants discovered Schwab's biggest secret. He was bankrupt. Listed debts amounted to \$2,262,280. Against these debts were assets of \$353,810.

Where had all the money gone? It proved impossible for the accountants to figure out, owing to the scrambled nature of Schwab's finances and his penchant for secrecy. But it was clear that the millions he had reaped since his days at Carnegie had been squandered, mostly through obsessive gambling on Wall Street and elsewhere. By one account, Schwab had lost \$40 million in the 1929 stock market crash. He had again speculated heavily in stocks during the market revival of 1936; this money vanished when Wall Street collapsed in 1937.

Left behind with the worthless stock and gaudy properties were broken promises. In 1935, Schwab had quietly borrowed \$25,000 from the priests who ran St. Francis Academy, the high school he had left 56 years before, promising to bequeath \$2 million to the academy upon his death. It was not mentioned in his will. To protect Schwab's reputation, Eugene Grace arranged for the company to pay the original debt.

Schwab's Loretto estate was divided into several parcels and auctioned off. The grand mansion fetched \$32,500. Today, it is a Franciscan monastery. No buyers were found for Schwab's mansion on Riverside Drive until 1948, when the Chase Bank sold it to developers, who tore it down and built an apartment complex on the site. *Loretto II*, the steelman's sumptuous private railroad car, sold for \$5,000 in 1940. It became, for a time, the traveling home of ex-prizefighter Jack Dempsey as he barnstormed across America with the Cole Brothers Circus.

III. THE GOOD YEARS

When Eugene Grace appeared before a New York press conference in January 1956, the rumor on Wall Street was that something big was about to happen in steel. And Charles Schwab's former lieutenant and successor was happy to say that it was true. Bethlehem, he declared, was planning an enormous construction program at Sparrows Point. Charlie Schwab's promise of 40 years earlier was about to be fulfilled: The Point was going to be the largest steel mill not only in America, but in the world.

What was more, the chairman told the assembled reporters and financial analysts, the company would not have to borrow a penny of the \$300 million needed for the expansion at Sparrows Point and other plants. "The money will come out of our bank accounts," Grace said.

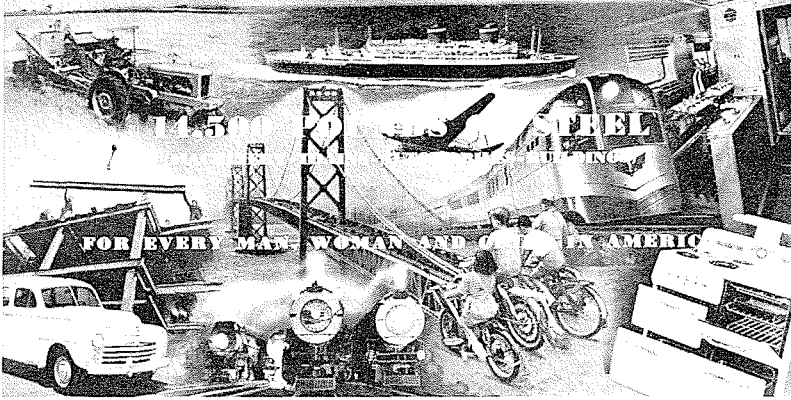
As that impressive feat of financial weightlifting suggested, the years since World War II had been good ones for Sparrows Point, and for American steel in general.

Yet, there were hidden costs in the industry's fat recovery from the Depression. The buoyant postwar economy allowed senior executives at Bethlehem and other steel companies to cling to the belief that demand for traditional steel products would always grow. Thus, they would not have to create new mills that could operate efficiently at *low* levels of output, if need be. They would not have to seek out new technology or new markets, or find ways to improve their products. Fatefully, Bethlehem stuck to the old slogan: Always More Production.

That formula certainly had suited the war years. One month after Pearl Harbor, Bethlehem became the nation's top war contractor. Orders poured in from Washington for Liberty ships, bomb casings, 16-inch armor-piercing shells, gun forgings, ammunition cases, artillery pieces, and a variety of other items. The total came to \$1.3 billion. "Bethlehem is in effect the steel skeleton of Mr. Roosevelt's famous arsenal of democracy," *Life* declared in 1942.

Bethlehem and other steelmakers met unprecedented production challenges. They turned out a remarkable 427 million tons of raw steel, besting their output of 1914-18 by a factor of 2.5, and easily outproducing Germany and Japan. It was the Point's finest hour, a triumph of conventional steelmaking—nothing fancy, just the disciplined application of long-standing practices by experienced workers and managers.

In the open-hearth shops, where "hot metal" (pig iron) from the blast furnaces was combined with alloys and other ingredients to make steel, the men turned out an average of seven tons of liquid steel per minute for nearly four years straight. Some of the unfinished ingots produced after the steel cooled were loaded onto cargo ships bound for America's wartime allies, Britain and the Soviet Union. The rest went to



In 1949, during Big Steel's heyday, an industry advertisement proclaimed that the amount of steel a nation used was a good index to its "degree of civilization." The industry then produced 50 percent of the world's steel.

various finishing mills at the Point. The pipe mill rolled the steel into gun barrels; the wire mill made barbed wire; the hot-strip mills turned out steel plate for shipbuilders. Much of Sparrows Point's sheet metal was shipped to the Glenn L. Martin aircraft plant in Middle River, Maryland, which made B-26 bombers and PBM Flying Boats.

The importance of the Martin plant underscored a subtle but significant difference in battlefield technology between World Wars I and II. In the trenches and at sea, World War I had brought on a revolution in armaments, chiefly the big naval guns, artillery, and other heavy equipment that Bethlehem specialized in. After 1939, however, the new tactics increasingly involved air warfare and electronic sophistication. In the Pacific, for example, the Battle of Midway and most other major naval engagements did not involve battleships and cruisers exchanging fire at relatively close range, but radar-equipped aircraft carriers launching fighter planes and dive-bombers against distant foes.

As a result, while steel remained the foundation *material* of war, Bethlehem Steel in 1941-45 was no longer at the forefront of war technology. A new generation of manufacturers arose: companies such as Boeing, Douglas, and Grumman in aviation; General Electric, RCA, and Westinghouse in the \$1-billion-a-year radar industry.

But none of that loomed large in the steel mills, as managers and workmen focused on the serious business before them. Every day, posters on the walls of the Point's offices and locker rooms reminded them of the importance of the job: "Steel for Victory."

Most labor-management disputes were put on hold for the duration of the war, but a few minor issues were resolved. Mike Howard, then a union shop-floor representative in the Sparrows Point open-hearth

shops, later recalled that the men had never in the past been told how their pay was calculated under Bethlehem's complicated system of bonuses and premiums. "If your furnace was down for a scheduled repair, you got a 'down rate,' but if the furnace roof caved in, that was 'an act of God' and the company wouldn't pay you."

After much effort, Howard convinced the company to give him a breakdown of his own paycheck, which he posted on a bulletin board. "As it turned out, the company's pay system was accurate and pretty fair. The problem was their attitude. The thinking was, 'the less you know about it, the better.'"

Shop Morale

Part of the difficulty was that the superintendents were dealing with a very conservative main office in Bethlehem, according to Howard. "It was funny, but what I found out was that there were some superb managers in the mill, smart and in some cases cultured men, but, boy, did they do their best to hide it! The war opened up communications a bit, but it was still difficult. It really never got through to the top guys that if you leveled with the men, that would carry a lot of weight . . . So if you want to know what did make the men work hard during the war, it was, first off, patriotism, but it was also little reforms like the pay rate disclosure that made a difference in shop morale."

Peace abroad ended the uneasy labor-management truce at home. Shortly after Hiroshima, Eugene Grace announced that, because of the reduction of government orders, all overtime work and premium pay (e.g., for working on Sundays) was to end. During the war, hourly wages had remained virtually frozen, while inflation had jumped by 22 percent. Without overtime, the men at Sparrows Point, who had been averaging \$56.32 a week early in 1945, now found their pay dropping to \$43.38.

In September 1945, Philip Murray, head of the United Steelworkers of America (as the Steel Workers Organizing Committee was renamed during the war), announced that the union would seek a \$2-a-day (25 cents per hour) wage increase in upcoming contract talks. Impossible, retorted Eugene Grace and other top steelmen. The statistics on Grace's desk showed that Bethlehem's profits had been larger in wartime 1916 than they were in wartime 1944, when the company produced six times more steel. To Grace, 1945 and '46 were not shaping up any better. He blamed high labor costs and government price controls, still in effect during the months after the war. Bethlehem, he declared, would not negotiate with the union so long as the latter stuck to its \$2-a-day pay-hike proposal.

In vain, President Harry S. Truman sought to bring the two sides together. He offered to allow a \$4-per-ton increase in steel prices if the industry would agree to an 18½-cents-per-hour pay raise. After some discussion, Murray accepted the offer, but U.S. Steel's Benjamin

Fairless, speaking for the industry, said "No."

Vowing to stay out "til Fairless freezes over," some 750,000 Steelworkers across the nation went out on strike on January 20, 1946. At the time, members of the United Auto Workers and other unions were also walking picket lines, seeking similar wage increases to compensate for the wartime erosion of real wages. The steel industry's hard-line stance, widely interpreted as an effort to defy the White House, did not find much public favor. Even the conservative *New York Daily News* warned that U.S. Steel "can't buck the president of the United States."

When the strike ended on February 15, 1946, the Steelworkers had won an 18½-cents-per-hour increase; Washington allowed the industry to raise steel prices by \$5 a ton, or roughly eight percent.

From the White House to the rolling mills at Sparrows Point, there was a great sense of relief when the men finally went back to work. Then as later, strikes in the industry were seen as a national calamity. Few worried that the simultaneous price and wage increases that ended the 1946 strike might reduce the incentive of both management and labor to seek improved productivity.

A second dynamic was also at work that winter. The wartime years of rationing and forced savings had created an enormous reservoir of consumer demand. The higher postwar wages won by unionized employees in many industries further increased consumer purchasing power. In June 1946, *Fortune* said the obvious—America was experiencing a surprising boom. "There is no measuring it; the old yardsticks won't do," the magazine said. "There is a powerful, a consuming demand for everything that one can eat, wear, enjoy, burn, read, patch, dye, repair, paint, drink, see, ride, taste, smell, and rest in."

45 Million Cans a Day

The steel trade found itself a major beneficiary of the good times. From canning to construction, steel was the building block of industry. In Detroit, auto output climbed, and so did the steel content of the new heavyweight cars rolling off the assembly lines.

As Detroit stepped up its orders for flat-rolled steel, sales of structural shapes, pilings, and reinforcing rods for construction also soared. By August 1946, Bethlehem was rolling such big-ticket items as 22,000 tons of structural shapes for an aluminum plant in Davenport, Iowa, and 11,350 tons of plate girders earmarked for the reconstruction of 154 railroad bridges in war-torn China.

Sparrows Point was running at near capacity. Tin plate, an important product of the Point, was in particularly high demand by canners. New canned foods were appearing, one of the most successful being pet food. By 1946, American consumers were opening and discarding some 45 million cans a day. "Verily," wrote economist Charles H. Hession, "the can-opener has become a *sine qua non* of modern urban living."

Fears of another depression were swept aside. Despite strikes in 1949 and '52 (when Truman briefly seized the steel mills to prevent a walkout that might disrupt Korean War production), steel prospered.

"The sun used to come up over the blast furnaces and sink over the 40-inch plate mill," remembered Ed Gorman. Going to work at the Point, he said, was "going into the middle class."

"That was it," he recalled. "That was the lifestyle. All the people wanted to work at the steel mill. It was the best damn paying job around here." Near the Point, used-car lots, taverns, trailer parks, and restaurants had sprouted everywhere to attract the dollars of the well-paid men. "Ships, Steel, Tin is all you hear/Above the din of the glass/At the bar of Hillegas," said the advertisement of one popular tavern.

'Pioneering Don't Pay'

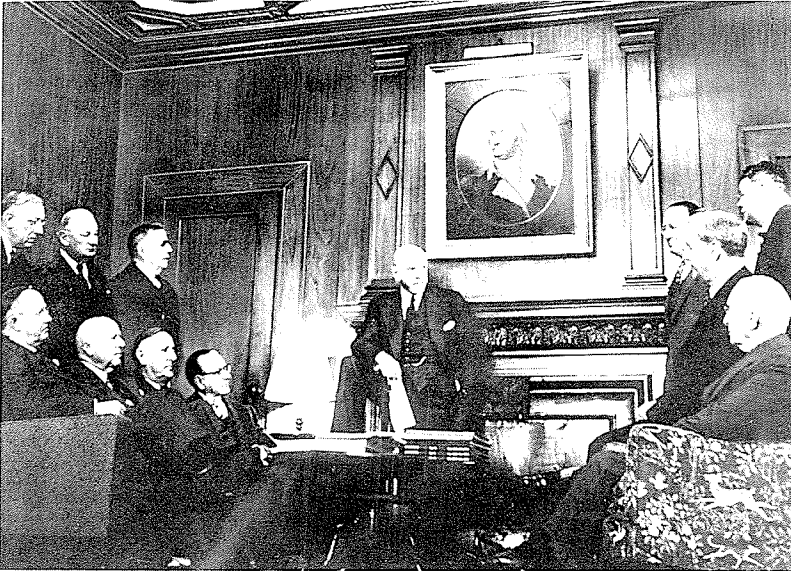
From Main Street to Wall Street, it seemed like the best of times. Steel was the symbol of American brawn. The industry employed 650,000 wage and salary employees in 1953—an all-time high. (Employment would bottom out at 163,000 in 1987.) Bethlehem alone could make as much steel as the whole of Germany's rebuilt industry in 1953, and produced twice as much as Japan's. What made this country strong was simply that it could turn out 110 million tons of steel per year, exceeding the production of the rest of the free world combined and overwhelming Communist Russia by a two-and-a-half-to-one margin.

Steel executives tartly dismissed their few critics. Why, asked economist Walter Adams and others, had Bethlehem or U.S. Steel not built research and development (R&D) laboratories remotely on a par with those of A.T.&T., DuPont, or General Electric?

Already, new jet engines, nuclear reactors, and gas turbines were taxing the limits of standard steel products. Physicists reported that the theoretical strength of iron crystals was 1,000 to 10,000 times greater than their actual developed strength. The problem was getting rid of the chemical impurities in commercial grades of steel. But Bethlehem's few researchers were devoting their attention to incremental improvements, such as finding ways to make the supply of lubricating oil in the mills go twice as far. Andrew Carnegie had supplied the industry's maxim more than half a century earlier: "Pioneering don't pay."

On a more mundane level, as engineers in the steel-purchasing industries noted, there was the possibility of improving the relationship of strength to weight in steel. If standard steel could be made twice as strong as it was, the weight of steel in car bodies, skyscrapers, and tin cans could be cut in half, bringing great economies and, eventually, increased sales.

Moreover, even steelmen were aware that traditional steel production was inefficient in many ways. The energy required to heat, cool, and re-heat the metal as it went through the various steps from open hearth



At Bethlehem Steel's headquarters in 1953, Chairman Eugene G. Grace and other company directors gather beneath a portrait of George Washington.

to finished product was expensive. Already, during the early 1930s, a renowned metallurgist, A. J. Townsend, had experimented with "rotary casting," a process of rolling liquid steel that would eliminate several of these steps. But when the inventor died in 1935, so did American interest in his idea. Townsend was deemed an eccentric. "He'd be alive today," one steel engineer remarked at the time, "if he'd followed my advice and taken it easy [just living] on his royalties."

By far the harshest criticism of the industry focused on its regular lock-step price increases. Ever since Harry Truman acquiesced in the \$5-a-ton price hike in 1946, the large producers had announced regular price increases far above the rising costs of materials and wages. Between 1945 and 1950, for example, Washington's Price Index of Steel Mill Products had jumped by a remarkable 66 percent. At the same time, wages for steel employees had risen by 42 percent and the Consumer Price Index by 34 percent. Between 1950 and 1954, steel price increases continued to outpace labor costs. Senator Estes Kefauver (D.-Tenn.) warned that the price hikes, along with lavish executive pay, merely encouraged union members "to seek and receive all they can."

Every summer, U.S. Steel would announce new "published prices." Then, another major producer, often Bethlehem, would raise its rates by the same amount. The other companies then matched the increase.

Because there were few substitutes for steel, and steel imports were minuscule, customers had little choice but to pay the new prices.

Critics of the industry's oligopolistic practices and technological backwardness spoke up as early as 1950, during congressional hearings held by Representative Emanuel Celler's (D.-N.Y.) Subcommittee on Monopoly Power. Eugene Grace's reaction was swift. "All of it," he told newsmen, "is aimed at forwarding the socialistic state and nationalization and bureaucratic control of business."

Grace was increasingly unwilling to countenance criticism—or even to hear it. His isolation had grown steadily since the war. Having deeded the title of industry spokesman to Benjamin Fairless of U.S. Steel, the aging chairman kept mostly to his Pennsylvania home, venturing out chiefly to indulge in golfing junkets to the Palmetto Club in Aiken, South Carolina.

Although loyal to Charlie Schwab's principles of pursuing bigness and bolstering the next quarter's bottom line, Grace lacked his predecessor's imagination and energy. Asked in 1956 why the company did not split its stock to make it more attractive to small investors, he replied: "It took us some time to get into the blue chip class. We're enjoying it."

Becoming Number One

Grace's executives shared their leader's sensibilities. The board of directors was still composed entirely of "insiders." Except for the vice president of shipbuilding, all of the top executives lived in company compounds such as Bonus Hill and Weyhill. As in Schwab's day, the officers lunched daily in the corporate dining room, occupying leather chairs with gold nameplates. On Saturdays, they socialized at the Saucon Valley Country Club. Wall Street analysts and brokers referred to Bethlehem as "the biggest little company in the world."

At Sparrows Point, the superintendents and managers were engrossed in honing their skills in daily production; few questioned the 60-year-old premises of integrated steelmaking.

The Point's No. 1 open-hearth shop boasted the best average "heat" (or batch) times, tap to tap, in the country; No. 2 shop was second. Every day, the Point made enough steel to frame out a 30-story skyscraper. It was such evidence of managerial prowess that made the executive pulse quicken. One supervisor's wife remembers the day when her husband called her to report that a "seven-hour heat" had been achieved at the No. 2 open hearth. "Well, that was a marvelous thing," she said. "Mac called me sometimes to tell me how many hours he thought they would take. And when he got together with his brothers at the country club all they'd do was compare their tonnage figures."

On October 2, 1957, the construction program that Grace had announced the year before came to fruition. When the first heat of steel was tapped from Sparrows Point's new No. 4 open-hearth shop that day,

the crown of the "world's largest steel mill" passed from U.S. Steel's Gary, Indiana, works to the Point.

Sixty-seven years after it had first lit up the skies, Sparrows Point was the hub of a manufacturing corporation that turned out more than \$2 billion worth of goods annually. Some 28,000 men and 600 women worked all hours of the day and night, and from their labors 1/15th of the nation's steel could be produced. There was nothing in the free world that could match it. The capacity of Japan's major plant, the Yawata works, was less than three million tons, compared to the Point's eight million. To redress their competitive disadvantages, the Japanese were experimenting with the basic oxygen furnace (invented in Austria), a more efficient but still trouble-plagued substitute for the open hearth.

At Sparrows Point, Bethlehem was still pursuing Charlie Schwab's decades-old prescription for steelmaking on a grand scale. A mammoth power station supplied the Point with enough electricity to light up the equivalent of 600,000 homes. Maintenance crews used 180,000 gallons of paint and plaster every year to keep the plant's 758 buildings in good repair. In a press release, Bethlehem proudly noted that it would take a 100-car train 140 trips to fill the Point's coal storage yard.

The mid-1950s were wonderful years for the American steel industry. During the first six months of 1957, U.S. Steel and Bethlehem achieved the highest output and earning figures in their histories. That June, as expected, the industry raised steel prices by an average of \$6 a ton. Spokesmen explained that the increases were necessary to pay for higher union wages and capital costs.

The "boys" celebrated their good fortune in traditional style. Eugene Grace, it was revealed, had reclaimed his title as the highest paid executive in America, pocketing \$809,001 in salary and bonuses. Overall, 11 of the 18 best-paid corporate officers in the United States were on Bethlehem's payroll.

Only a few days after the first heat at the new Sparrows Point open hearth, the headlines were dominated by the seemingly unrelated news that the Soviet Union had launched the world's first manmade satellite into space. *Sputnik* was small and lightweight (only 23 inches in diameter and weighing less than 200 pounds), but it heralded changing times.

A new era of technological sophistication had arrived. Other nations were racing to catch up with America in science and manufacturing. Suddenly, it was an unsettling time for a nation and for business leaders accustomed to unchallenged supremacy.

III. SUNSET

“We had the steel mill that the other people wanted,” recalled Sparrows Point veteran Ben Womer, reminiscing about the 1950s. “Hell, none of this business about Japanese steel or German steel. People came to visit us. We were making steel and making it faster than anybody else.”

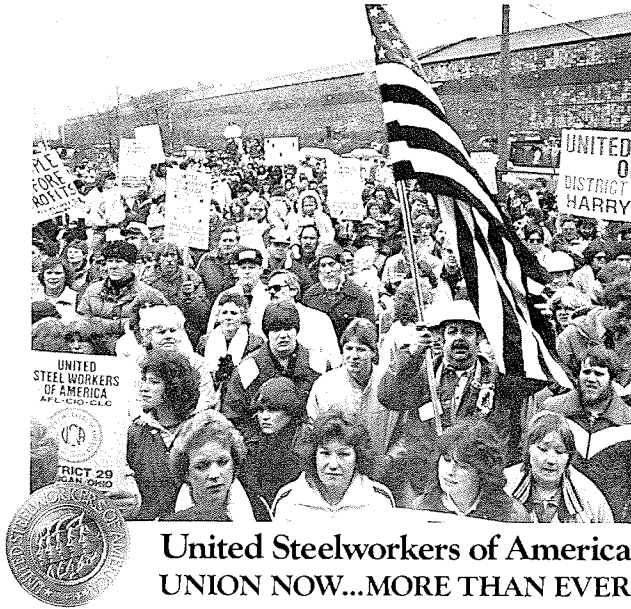
Today, little more than 30 years after it became the world’s biggest steel mill, Sparrows Point’s glorious epoch is preserved only in the memories of Ben Womer and the other retired veterans of that era. The plant, now partially abandoned, has been making less than half as much steel as it did in 1957, and the payroll has shrunk from more than 28,000 to fewer than 8,000. The drama is much the same in Pittsburgh, Gary, Buffalo, and other once-proud American steel towns.

The plight of Sparrows Point and other long-established U.S. mills usually prompts two conventional economic explanations, frequently repeated by steel executives, politicians, and business journalists: “overpaid” American workers and “unfair” foreign competition. These claims are part of a familiar argument that steel is a victim of special circumstances, and thus deserves special treatment in Washington. In recent years, the industry has used the threat of plant closings to extract wage and work-rule concessions from the Steelworkers union. Its lobbyists, seeking a political solution to Big Steel’s economic woes, have made government protection against imported steel their top priority.

Yet, unhappily, neither limits on steel imports imposed by Washington nor wage concessions granted by the Steelworkers have stemmed the industry’s decline. For one simple reason: Such remedies do not address the fundamental cause of steel’s present plight.

A shrinking domestic market for traditional steel-mill products, not overseas competition or high wages at home, has been the overriding source of the steel industry’s distress. In the face of rising prices, steel consumption in the United States grew sluggishly from 1957 to 1973, when it reached 122 million tons, then dropped. Americans now consume only about 90 million tons of finished steel each year from all sources—for all purposes, from jet engines to girders to hand tools.

In a competitive world economy, it is imperative for any business to link its future to new technology, new markets, or substantial savings through improved productivity of labor and capital. But America’s steelmakers have seldom faced up to these realities. Since Charlie Schwab’s day, steelmen have persisted in the belief that the only challenge for corporate managers is to produce *more*. And for just as long, the top executives’ prevailing attitude has been consistent: Because their industry supplies an essential commodity to the nation, it is *owed* a comfortable existence. After all, as Frank Brugler, a Bethlehem execu-



**United Steelworkers of America
UNION NOW...MORE THAN EVER**

"Stop Plant Shutdowns," urged a recent Steelworkers campaign. Here, workers rally in 1982 at the Trenton, Michigan, plant of bankrupt McLouth Steel. New owners came in, but the 5,000-worker payroll was cut in half.

tive, put it in 1962, "We're not in business to make steel . . . We're in business to make money."

During the growth years, from the Civil War through the 1950s, it was difficult for steel producers *not* to make money, except during the 1930s. But when times changed, senior executives, who thought of themselves as hard-headed and pragmatic, did not adjust. They spurned product research. They choked off innovation. They inflated steel prices to maintain quarterly dividends, and they let their mills become obsolete.

In so doing, they created opportunities for their rivals—not only for the Japanese and other foreign steelmakers but also for domestic "mini" mills and for makers of steel substitutes, such as aluminum and plastic.

The recession of 1958 flashed the first warning that steel had badly overexpanded. Production at Sparrows Point and other plants skidded to under 60 percent of capacity, the first significant drop since the Depression. Convinced that demand would soon rebound, as it always had in the past, the industry simply relied on another price hike to keep its earnings steady. The \$4.50-a-ton advance came in the middle of the country's worst downturn since the Depression.

Steel was no longer the cheap commodity that built America. Steel prices had jumped by 165 percent since 1945—double the rate of in-

creases in concrete, plastics, and other industrial products. After absorbing seven price hikes in eight years, many industrial buyers began searching for steel substitutes.

Aluminum was one of the first invaders of steel's traditional domain. For years, the leading aluminum companies (Alcoa, Reynolds Metals, and Kaiser Aluminum) had been searching for new business outside of their established footholds in construction, airplane components, and engine parts. They were seeking a mass market, explained one industry executive, where "the product is consumed—not put in place to last forever." The \$2-billion-a-year metal-container business, hitherto a monopoly of steel, offered such an opportunity.

Surrendering to Aluminum

The first loosening of that monopoly came during the 1958 recession, when Esso Standard Oil switched from using tin plate (much of it supplied by Sparrows Point) to aluminum plate at the can-making plant in its Bayonne, New Jersey, refinery. Reynolds Metals had offered the oil company a creative deal to keep costs down: It agreed to buy back the used one-quart cans from Esso service stations.

Esso's conversion to aluminum involved only 35 million cans per year—a tiny share of the overall 50-billion can market. Yet, while the steel industry looked on, the aluminum makers assigned engineers to improve aluminum can-making and enlarge their market.

In January 1960, Reynolds shipped a truckload of aluminum can-making equipment from its research laboratory in Richmond, Virginia, to a Minute Maid orange juice plant in Florida City. The new machinery turned out seven million cans in three weeks. Minute Maid purchased a second can line and, before long, Reynolds also had orders from two other major juice canners, Winter Garden and Birds Eye.

Steel's response was lethargic. First, there was general disbelief that the market was threatened; then the steelmakers made a belated move toward providing lighter, cheaper canning stock. It was not until mid-1961 that U.S. Steel and Bethlehem published prices for a new "skinny" tin plate. For a brief period, it was priced lower than aluminum. Then, Alcoa and Reynolds dropped their prices. Unwilling to meet the challenge, U.S. Steel and Bethlehem simply withdrew. They announced that they would no longer supply tin plate to citrus packers, thus surrendering a two-billion-can-per-year market.

Over the next 30 years, aluminum would wrest more and more of the metal container business from steel, winning even the share of the beer-can market that steel had captured from glass bottle manufacturers during the Depression.*

*Today, 99 percent of all beer cans and 90 percent of all soft-drink cans are made of aluminum. (One of the few beers still available in tin cans is Pittsburgh Brewing's Iron City brand.)

Even as aluminum was making inroads into steel's markets, years of research in plastics by the U.S. chemical industry, led by DuPont, were beginning to pay off. As steel became more expensive, for example, Detroit's automakers found that they could save money by replacing some steel components with plastic parts coated with a thin layer of metal. Increasingly, "plated plastics" were substituted for metal in instrument panels, dome lights, ventilation grills, and other car parts. By 1963, the steel content of autos made in Detroit was down to 76 percent, compared to 85 percent in 1946. (Today, the figure is only 56 percent.) That was just the beginning. In small ways at first, other manufacturers began to find ways to replace steel with plastics—in knobs for television and radio sets, as trim on toasters.

If the steel trade was to continue to prosper, it had to defend itself by creating lighter, stronger, more flexible steel, while also seeking out new avenues of growth through specialized applications. For example, as critics noted, it could have explored ways to combine plastics, ceramics, or other new materials with steel-based products.

But Bethlehem and other big steelmakers persisted in spending less than other corporations did on research and development (R&D).^{*} Although Bethlehem opened a large new laboratory in 1961, this did not change the company's approach to research, which, as always, stressed incremental improvements in existing steelmaking processes.

Although it had plenty of cash on hand during the early 1960s, Bethlehem was reluctant to invest in the new basic oxygen furnace (BOF), a high-technology replacement for the open-hearth furnace. As Bethlehem executive John Jacobs explained in 1962, large BOFs were still plagued by technical shortcomings. And these more productive furnaces would shorten the useful life of the costly open hearths built during the 1950s. "We move only when improvements are so good we can no longer afford what we've got," he said.

A Matter of Conviction

Meanwhile, Japanese and West German steelmakers had somehow largely overcome the problems of large-scale basic oxygen furnaces. While their new BOFs were making 200 tons of steel every 45 minutes, the ponderous American open hearths required eight hours, on average, to tap a 425-ton heat. Finally, in 1964, Bethlehem's board authorized the construction of a basic oxygen furnace at Sparrows Point.

Having accepted the oxygen furnace, management failed to take advantage of another important new production tool, the continuous caster. After A. J. Townsend's experiments of the 1930s, American interest in the device had waned. But West German steelmakers had

^{*}A 1966 study by the National Science Foundation reported that the leading steelmakers spent only 60 cents of every \$100 in revenues on research, compared to an average of \$1.90 for all U.S. manufacturers.

BIG STEEL VERSUS THE STEELWORKERS

"Attaboy, Harry! Attaboy, Harry!" said Philip Murray, president of the Steelworkers union. It was April 8, 1952. President Harry S. Truman was on the radio, announcing that he had ordered a government takeover of the nation's steel mills to avert a steel strike.

The president was furious. While U.S. troops were fighting in Korea, the industry's leaders, as Truman saw it, were threatening to disrupt the war effort by refusing to settle with the union unless he consented to a sharp price increase. Not only did the companies want enough to pay for higher wages, Truman declared, "they want to double their money on the deal."

The mills operated under federal control until early June, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the takeover illegal. Then the Steelworkers went out on strike. When they returned to work, on July 26, the industry had won a \$5.20-per-ton price increase, \$1 less than it had sought; the Steelworkers gained 21½ cents per hour. Truman won the undying antipathy of steel executives.

Later, during the 1950s and '60s, the pattern was repeated. Big Steel's labor-management conflicts, the product of decades-old enmities, frequently ended up in Washington. Steel was simply too big and too important to the nation for politicians to ignore.

Big Steel added to its own woes during a 26-day strike in 1956, when executives proposed a contract provision (Clause 2B) that preserved "past practices" in the mills. The idea was to rationalize a hodge-podge of local plant agreements; the unintended effect was virtually to freeze manning levels. By 1959, steel executives had realized their mistake. With the backing of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who agreed not to intervene, the steelmakers decided to "take a strike" in 1959.

At the bargaining table, however, industry negotiators produced little hard evidence of "featherbedding." Explained newsman John Strohmeier: Plant bosses refused to supply headquarters with particulars, choosing "to protect their work force for the day that production would pick up again." Steelworkers president David J. McDonald was gleeful. "I couldn't have written the script better myself," he said. Finally, after 116 days, Eisenhower stepped in, and the strike was settled in the union's favor. Clause 2B survived intact.

Although that was the last major steel strike for 26 years, the two sides frequently approached the edge. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson summoned deadlocked negotiators to the White House, barked threats and curses at them, and ordered them to come to terms. Two days later, they did.

been developing a caster since the 1950s. In 1962, Roanoke Electric, a small independent Virginia company, introduced continuous casting to the United States.

Despite the fact that continuous casting would eliminate hundreds of mill jobs and cut production costs substantially, Bethlehem stuck to its decades-old method of making steel. Sparrows Point was not to get a caster for 20 years.

What was remarkable, one former Sparrows Point manager mused

Such brinkmanship proved costly. Every two or three years, as a strike deadline approached, major customers, notably Detroit's automakers, amassed huge stockpiles of steel. When no strike occurred, the steel mills, lacking fresh orders, were still forced to shut down for months.

To "smooth out" the market, the union agreed in 1973 to a "no strike" agreement. The price: an annual cost-of-living adjustment *plus* a three percent pay hike every year. The pact was widely hailed as a breakthrough.

What nobody saw coming was the inflationary surge of the 1970s. In 1973, Steelworkers' wages and benefits totaled about \$8 per hour, about 50 percent more than the average in U.S. manufacturing. By 1982, hourly compensation had soared to \$23, or double the manufacturing average. Japanese steelworkers, meanwhile, earned \$10. By 1975, to make matters worse, the Japanese eliminated the U.S. edge in labor productivity. Yet, steel executives twice renewed the "no strike" pact with the Steelworkers during the 1970s.

By 1983, Big Steel was suffering plant shutdowns, bankruptcies, and layoffs. The Rustbelt—autos, machine tools, heavy equipment manufacturing—was in trouble. The Steelworkers reluctantly agreed to (temporary) concessions worth \$1.25 per hour. In recent years, each company has bargained separately with the union, wringing out more concessions.

Even so, labor costs remain close to \$23 per hour, about \$4 more than in Japan and \$20 more than in South Korea. As in other U.S. heavy industries, payrolls have shrunk: Steel now employs 121,000 production workers, down from 291,000 in 1980. Partly as a result of these huge cutbacks, American steel again enjoys a slight edge in labor productivity over Japan.

Yet, labor and management are still at war. In July 1986, 22,000 workers at USX (formerly U.S. Steel) went back to the picket line after the company demanded more concessions. The strike (or "lockout") lasted 184 days, longer than the great stand-off of 1959.

This time, however, there were no conferences at the White House and few headlines in the newspapers. The longest strike in Big Steel's history was barely noticed outside of Pittsburgh; the industry was no longer regarded as the key to American might.



David J. McDonald

during an interview years later, was that nearly everyone in management was "oblivious" to the company's declining competitiveness. Such was the hazard of a corporate culture that had rewarded conformity and promoted insiders. In this closed world, supervisors went about their daily routines, worshipping the daily production figures, lulled by the acres of heavy machinery that still made Sparrows Point the biggest mill in the world during the mid-1960s. They were convinced that steel was indispensable to the nation, regardless of cost. "We listened to our [own]

propaganda for so long, we believed it," said the former executive.

Traditionally, success in manufacturing is determined by the so-called Three M's: Men, Materials, and Machines. And it was in the latter two areas that Big Steel first stumbled. The early strength of Sparrows Point, even before Charlie Schwab took it over, was the production of high-quality, low-cost steel rails during the late-19th-century heyday of the great railroads. Cheap raw materials and new labor-saving technology were the keys to its success. In retrospect, Schwab's greatest contribution was to move the Point forward into production of flat-rolled steel for the new consumer industries—canned goods, home appliances, autos—of the early 20th century. Yet, his successors lacked his ability to look ahead and adapt to changing technology and markets.

Adding to these failures was the needless wrangling between the companies and the Steelworkers union. [See box, p. 76.] Strains between labor and management, not much reduced since the 1930s, led to several costly strikes during the 1950s. The worst was the 116-day strike in 1959. Executives at Bethlehem and the other major steel mills entered the contract talks that year determined to win a one-year wage freeze and concessions on work rules, which, they said, fostered "featherbedding and loafing."

The Steelworkers, led by the uninspiring David J. McDonald, probably were willing to settle for a small increase in wages. At \$3.04 an hour, they were already among the best-paid blue-collar workers in the nation. But at Sparrows Point and other plants, old-timers remembered the abuses of power they had endured during the 1930s, when management enjoyed unrestricted authority in the mills. Younger men feared for their jobs. A revision of work rules, given the prevailing distrust between the two sides, was out of the question.

Foreign Steel

Idling 511,000 men, the strike began in July 1959 and dragged on until November. It was halted only by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's reluctant invocation of his emergency powers under the Taft-Hartley Act. The Detroit automakers, who had stockpiled steel in anticipation of the strike, were running out of supplies and beginning to lay off workers. With Vice President Richard M. Nixon mediating, the two sides reached an accord: no changes in work rules, and a hefty 40-cents-an-hour increase in wages and benefits over three years.*

It is an article of faith among veteran steel executives, frequently repeated in the press, that the 1959 strike opened the door to the "import problem." But steel imports had been on the rise before the strike. They nearly doubled from January to June 1958. Then, with the

*A different style of labor relations prevailed in the competing aluminum industry, where management had not sought confrontation. When the union's contract with the aluminum makers expired the same year, negotiations continued, without a strike, and the union settled for an increase of 28 cents an hour.

industry's mid-recession price hike that July, imports surged, exceeding exports. The gap widened during the first six months of 1959, then increased by another 50 percent during the 116-day strike. The United States has remained a net importer of steel ever since.

Labor *was* cheaper overseas. But wages alone did not determine the cost of steel; labor productivity and capital investment were the most important variables. In the past, superior U.S. technology and output had compensated for higher U.S. wages. Moreover, according to former industry economist Donald Barnett, the overseas wage advantage was *diminishing* as America's imports of steel were rising. "The extent to which U.S. [steel] wage rates exceeded those of its international competitors," he wrote recently, "was relatively greater in the first 15 years after World War II than at any time before or since."

The Mini Mills Emerge

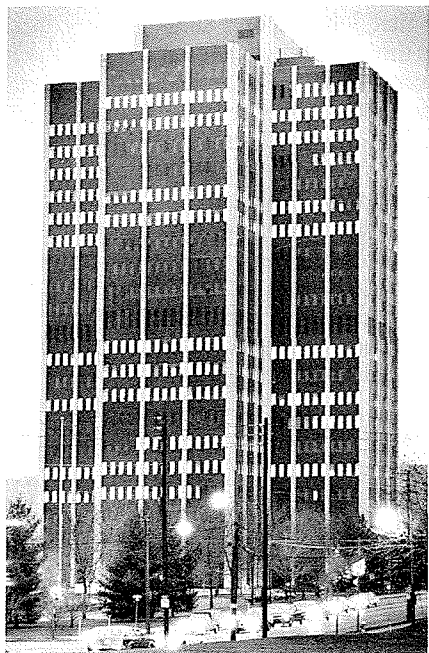
The same management decisions that had put Sparrows Point and other U.S. steel plants at a disadvantage compared to producers of substitute materials now proved costly in meeting foreign competition. The Americans found themselves progressively outclassed by steelmakers in West Germany, Canada, Brazil, and, much later, South Korea. But the chief competitors were the Japanese.

By 1962, Yoshihiro Inayama, president of Yawata Steel, could boast of a new mill at Tobata that incorporated the latest in basic oxygen furnaces and continuous casting technology. His steel was soon considered superior in terms of chemical purity and corrosion resistance to the basic carbon products supplied by American mills.

Another company, Fuji Iron & Steel, began exporting a new product to the United States: chrome-plated strip steel. Developed in response to the rising cost of tin, this extremely thin yet flexible new product was cheaper than aluminum or tin plate. It was to find great favor among U.S. canners.

Japanese steel shipments to the United States increased exponentially, from a mere 31,466 tons in 1957 to 4.5 million tons in 1967, as steel became the island nation's top export. The economics that drove up the sale of imports was simple: The quality of wire rod shipped 10,000 miles from Japan to New York City was comparable, if not superior, to that shipped from Sparrows Point 200 miles away—and about 15 percent cheaper. The domestic companies refused to "meet the competition" with price cuts, even on items where their costs were no greater than those of the Japanese. In fact, when imports were running at record levels in 1967, U.S. Steel, Bethlehem, and Republic again *raised* prices.

Instead of confronting the Asian challenge head on, the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), the industry trade association, embarked on a lobbying campaign to persuade Congress to erect trade barriers against foreign steel. The Steelworkers leadership joined in. The AISI



Erected during the early 1970s, when Big Steel seemed to be rebounding, Bethlehem Steel's \$35-million headquarters building in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was put up for sale in 1987. It remains (only partially occupied) in Bethlehem's hands today.

and the union argued that Big Steel was a victim of "dumping" at below-cost prices by Japanese and European steelmakers. Without government protection, industry spokesmen declared, American companies could not be expected to compete with overseas producers. "Bethlehem and other U.S. producers can justify continued investment in steel manufacturing properties *only* if they have the opportunity to participate in market growth," warned Bethlehem's Edmund Martin.

In 1969 the Nixon administration persuaded the Japanese and Europeans to sign "Voluntary Restraint Agreements" on steel. Imports were reduced to 14 million tons, or roughly 25 percent below existing levels, and would be allowed to increase gradually over the next three years.

For a short time, the strategy worked. But Bethlehem, U.S. Steel, and other major steelmakers resumed their old ways. Steel prices rose by 58 percent from 1969 to 1974, while the Consumer Price Index rose by 34 percent.

Meanwhile, a new kind of *domestic* competition was growing. The major steelmakers had built few mills in the South and West, partly for fear of undermining the value of their older plants in the Midwest and East. Texas and California, which consumed 25 percent of the nation's steel, possessed only four percent of its production capacity. As early as the 1950s, a few small independent steel companies had begun to capi-

talize on the excessive caution of the majors.

The "mini mills" departed from the dogma that steel had to be big to prosper. Pioneering minis such as Florida Steel and Virginia's Roanoke Electric were very small—and very efficient.

The nonunion mini mills enjoyed an edge in labor costs over the major producers,* but they had other, more important, advantages. They used downscaled equipment to pare expenses. For raw material, they used scrap metal that they melted down in electric furnaces—much less costly than making steel from scratch. They quickly adopted new technology. With start-up costs as low as \$4 million, the independents could turn out selected products cheaply. Their marketing strategy was simple. By undercutting the standard list prices for steel products, they dipped under the majors' price umbrella and got all the business they could handle.

Once scorned by steelmen at the major companies as "bandits," the mini mills proliferated and grew. By 1972, about 20 small companies were producing steel wire, reinforcing bars, and rods.

But the big "integrated" steelmakers did not change course. In 1972, Bethlehem's board of directors, buoyed by company forecasts of a 25-million-ton surge in domestic steel demand by 1980, rejected alternative technologies and decided to build a traditional-style blast furnace at Sparrows Point. With a price tag of \$175 million, it would be the largest in the Western Hemisphere.

At a gala opening ceremony for Maryland politicians and businessmen in 1978, Bethlehem unveiled the new structure as "'L' Furnace—Symbol of Progress." The company had itself a showcase, a gleaming, three-sided edifice that towered 298 feet—higher than most office buildings in downtown Baltimore.

Clinging to Illusions

Even before the "Big L" opened, the perennial optimism of Bethlehem headquarters again proved mistaken. On top of softening demand for steel, the company suffered a major flood at its Johnstown plant. In 1977, Bethlehem reported a net loss of \$448.2 million, the worst loss ever suffered by a U.S. corporation, until Chrysler eclipsed it two years later. Major sections of Bethlehem's Johnstown and Lackawanna works were shut down. Seven thousand jobs were eliminated.

The money that was poured into the "Big L" did little to break Bethlehem's fall. The company needed new markets, not a new multi-million-dollar blast furnace.

If Big Steel clung to its illusions, it was not alone. "Make no mistake about it," Bethlehem chairman Lewis Foy declared in 1979, "the market

*By 1985, major U.S. firms were paying an average of \$22.50 per man-hour in wages and benefits for workers in wire and rod mills, compared with \$17.50 at the booming mini mills. (Wages alone were about \$14 per hour.) At integrated Japanese plants, labor costs averaged \$11.70 per man-hour.

for steel is growing." As evidence, he pointed to a new study by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The federal agency had just projected that the steelmakers would need to expand capacity by 12 percent during the 1980s to meet increased domestic demand. Washington had been encouraging steel's expansion for decades—it was good for America, good for workers, and good politics.

After a brief revival, steel sales tumbled again in 1982 amid a general recession, as Paul Volcker's Federal Reserve Board tightened the money supply. Mill production fell to 55 percent of capacity. Bethlehem was back in the red. Chairman Donald Trautlein, Foy's successor, responded with massive layoffs. By May 1982, the number of workmen idled at Sparrows Point reached 5,030, the highest total since 1933.

The bad news piled up. As output at Sparrows Point dropped to 40 percent, the pipe mill, the rod and wire mill, and a battery of coke ovens were shut down. The unemployment lines lengthened. Bethlehem reported a loss of \$1.47 billion in 1982, accounting for nearly half of all losses reported by the nation's top 15 integrated steel producers. Foreign steelmakers, aided by the strong dollar (which reduced the price of imported goods) captured one-fourth of the U.S. market that year. Domestic mini mills claimed another 20 percent. Collectively, the mini mills had a larger share of the market than either Bethlehem or U.S. Steel.

The effects of the trauma at Sparrows Point were felt throughout Maryland. A 1982 report by Chase Econometrics ranked the Baltimore metropolitan area at the bottom of all cities in the hard-hit Northeast in terms of economic growth. Since 1980, Baltimore had lost 20,000 jobs.

No New Philosophy

Once again, executive myopia contributed to the rout. In 1982, Chairman Trautlein made the first of several cuts in Bethlehem's already modest R&D outlays. (By contrast, Japanese steelmakers, hurt by the same slump in demand for steel, increased R&D spending.) In 1985, Trautlein pulled Bethlehem out of production of bolt fasteners, saying such work had no future; that year, North Carolina's Nucor Corporation, an aggressive mini mill, broke ground for a new bolt plant. (Nucor now enjoys a \$45-million-a-year business.) In 1986, employee morale, already low due to pay cuts and layoffs, was dealt another blow when it was revealed that Chairman Trautlein (salary: \$542,060) had just received an 11 percent pay hike.

By the time Trautlein retired in 1986, the company had plummeted from the ninth spot on the *Fortune 500* list in 1957 to 89th. His successor was Walter Williams, a long-time company man. "Mr. Williams has made it clear," reported the *New York Times*, "that he would apply no new philosophies in his efforts to restore profitability."

Williams succeeded in returning Bethlehem to the black in 1987, through the sale of assets, including valuable raw material deposits.

Bethlehem was also helped by federal tax breaks and by the Reagan administration's imposition of a quota on imports of semifinished steel slabs. Even obsolete equipment can operate profitably in a captive market, so Bethlehem re-fired several antiquated open hearths at Sparrows Point. Financial analysts expect the company to turn a profit in 1988.

Despite the current upturn in earnings, the long-term outlook for Bethlehem—and for Big Steel in America—is not bright. Today's transient prosperity is based on protectionism and high prices. While Bethlehem and other steelmakers have cut costs sharply by closing down mills and laying off workers, the industry still has not dealt with the fundamentals: finding new markets and catching up with foreign technology.

At Bethlehem, the same breed of corporate "insiders" have been in command almost continuously since Charlie Schwab died. And, unlike their counterparts in the auto and other manufacturing industries, where economic woes have improved cooperation between management and labor, steel executives and Steelworker leaders seem to have learned little. They are still locked in the mutual hostility that has long separated the two sides. "We are reliving the past," observed Dave Wilson, the Steelworkers' district director in Baltimore, commenting on the perpetual quarrels over job reductions and work-rule revisions.

Today at Sparrows Point there are 10,000 fewer jobs than in 1980; 21,000 fewer than in 1957. The workers, some 7,900 men and women, pass through the guard booths into a world of empty railroad tracks and partly used buildings. The plant survives by supplying sheet and canning metal for General Motors and Campbell Soups, and semifinished slabs and galvanized products for other industrial buyers. A continuous caster, so long delayed, was installed recently, increasing quality and lowering costs. It was imported from Austria.

The oldest open-hearth sheds, too big to demolish, dominate the west side of the peninsula, facing Baltimore Harbor. To the south, the old blast furnaces have been dynamited and the debris carted away by truck. Acres of abandoned coke ovens cast a sepulchral shadow over the waterfront. Amid the rusting towers, it is hard to imagine what was once here, the thousands of strong men who came to the Point over the decades, sweating, shouting, and forging mountains of foreign ore into rivers of American steel.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF BIG STEEL

Of all the wounded giants of American industry—autos, rubber, machine tools—Big Steel stands out as perhaps the most dismaying case.

Its often lackluster management, technological lethargy, and dismal labor relations were widely discussed by economists, politicians, and businessmen as early as the 1950s. Yet, the industry's downward spiral was not halted.

By the late 1970s, steel and other U.S. smokestack industries were in disarray. Ships carrying foreign-made steel, autos, and farm equipment filled American ports. From Akron and Detroit to Baltimore, hundreds of thousands of well-paid factory jobs disappeared—some 265,000 in steel alone—between 1975 and 1986.

From the universities and think tanks came calls for a Japanese-style “industrial policy”—recently rechristened “competitiveness policy.”

In **Minding America's Business** (Random, 1983), Harvard's Robert B. Reich and business consultant Ira C. Magaziner warned that foreign domination of the steel business could “jeopardize the competitiveness of many sectors of our domestic economy.” Their proposals, echoed among many in Congress, included: government loans to industry, export subsidies, and government “guidance” for corporate executives.

In **Manufacturing Matters: The Myth of the Post-Industrial Economy** (Basic, 1987), Berkeley economists Stephen S. Cohen and John Zysman call the notion that the decline of manufacturing is part of the economy's “natural” progression from farming to manufacturing to services a delusion.

“If we lose mastery and control of manufacturing,” they warn, many high-paying service jobs will disappear. While only 21 million Americans now work in factories, the authors estimate that an-

other 20–40 million provide various services to manufacturers, from driving delivery trucks to underwriting bonds for plant expansions. Cohen and Zysman also advocate a federal industrial policy.

But Paul A. Tiffany, of the Wharton School, finds little reason to endorse such an approach. Washington, he writes in **The Decline of American Steel** (Oxford, 1988), did have a de facto industrial policy for steel during most of the 20th century. It was a failure.

Like the industry's executives, Tiffany says, federal officials exhibited “almost a willful lack of creativity” in dealing with the industry's difficulties.

After World War II, for example, the Truman administration prodded the reluctant steelmakers to increase capacity, took them to court over alleged price fixing, and helped increase labor costs by siding with the Steelworkers union in wage disputes. Later, as part of his effort to “contain” communism by promoting prosperity abroad, President Dwight D. Eisenhower encouraged the World Bank and other U.S.-backed international agencies to provide \$176 million in aid to Japan's rising steelmakers during 1957–60.

Such chronic contradictions in policy do not augur well, Tiffany concludes, for any new federal initiative.

But few specialists share Tiffany's readiness to blame Washington. Until the 1970s, there was general accord outside the industry that Big Steel should be broken up, forcing it, as Walter Adams wrote in **The Structure of American Industry** (Macmillan, 7th ed., 1985), to “play the capitalistic game according to its naked, shameless, yet vitalizing and invigorating rules.”

But steel preferred a cozier game. Beginning in 1907, Adams recalled, U.S. Steel's Elbert Gary hosted occasional dinners for lesser steelmen, where he

“exhorted them like a Methodist preacher at a camp meeting to follow the price leadership of U.S. Steel.” Thereafter, the companies generally practiced what Gary called “friendly competition.”

Under the antitrust laws, federal prosecutors were unable to win many cases. After the Supreme Court rejected an effort to break up U.S. Steel in 1920, Washington stuck to occasional prosecutions for collusive pricing.

When foreign steelmakers began invading the U.S. market during the 1950s, the complacency bred by years of friendly competition hurt Big Steel.

Today, many economists admire the cooperation among business, government, and labor that, in their view, fostered the growth of Japanese and West German steelmakers.

They pooh-pooh the popular notion that these foreigners gained unique advantages because they had to rebuild their plants from scratch after World War II: U.S. steelmakers increased their own plant capacity by 50 percent between 1945 and 1960.

What about the role of labor in Big Steel's tumble?

“Steel labor and management failed to respond to ample warnings of the industry's declining competitiveness,” concludes John P. Hoerr in **And the Wolf Finally Came** (Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1988). Both sides must be faulted for the big wage hikes of the 1970s, which came just as the industry was trying to fend off a surge of steel imports.

Meanwhile, observes Robert W. Crandall in **The U.S. Steel Industry in Recurrent Crisis** (Brookings, 1981), new federal environmental regulations were increasing the industry's pollution cleanup costs to \$600 million annually.

Apart from economists' analyses, there are few solid chronicles of the decline of American steel. John Stroh-

meyer's **Crisis in Bethlehem** (Penguin, 1987) is one bright exception. **Steel Titan** (Oxford, 1975), by Robert Hessen, sketches Charles Schwab, the creator of “the biggest little company in the world.” Sparrows Point is the subject of a film, *One Voice*, by the Baltimore Steelworkers' History Project.

By all accounts, the worst is yet to come. In **Up from the Ashes** (Brookings, 1986), Donald F. Barnett and Robert W. Crandall estimate that the major steelmakers, who have shed 30 percent of their plant capacity since the mid-1970s, may have to cut an additional 50 percent by the end of the century. Sparrows Point may survive, they predict, but only as a producer of steel slabs, shipped elsewhere for finishing.

The authors foresee a continuing decline in U.S. steel consumption and a gradual rise in imports. These are the trends, under way for a decade or more, that have made Big Steel's decline all but inevitable.

Yet, Barnett and Crandall are encouraged by the production performance of America's “mini mills.” By the year 2000, they write, “the United States will boast a highly competitive small-scale steel sector that accounts for nearly 40 percent of the country's steel requirements . . . at prices competitive with the lowest-cost producers in developing countries.”

The flexibility and relatively small size of the mini mills may provide a better model for future U.S. manufacturing competitiveness than do the much lauded “industrial policies” of other nations. Indeed, even Japanese and West German steelmakers face their own competitiveness problem, as Brazil, Taiwan, and South Korea step up exports of low-priced steel. No longer is steel the monopoly, or the measure, of the world's great economic powers.

Ideas

JAMES BRYCE AND AMERICA

"A presidential election in America," observed James Bryce, "is something to which Europe can show nothing similar." For three months, the British visitor wrote, "processions, usually with brass bands, flags, badges, crowds of cheering spectators are the order of the day and night . . ." In 1888, the year that the Republicans' Benjamin Harrison narrowly vanquished the Democrats' Grover Cleveland, Bryce's mammoth portrait of *The American Commonwealth* was published on both sides of the Atlantic. Here, Morton Keller assesses this oft-quoted classic on U.S. politics, and its peripatetic Victorian author.

by Morton Keller

During the summer of 1870, two young British barrister-intellectuals, James Bryce and Albert V. Dicey, embarked on a voyage of discovery to the United States. Out of this trip (and two later visits) came one of the most widely read books ever written about America, Bryce's *The American Commonwealth*.

Bryce and Dicey were following in famous footsteps. Forty years earlier, another pair of young lawyers, Alexis de Tocqueville and his friend Gustave de Beaumont, also undertook a journey to America. That visit resulted, of course, in Tocqueville's great *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840).

Bryce and Tocqueville had the same subject: the nature of American institutions, most particularly the country's politics and government. Both came to the New World as men of letters and public affairs, and as 19th-century European Liberals. In that turbulent experiment across the Atlantic, each sought answers to the most compelling political question of their time: What was, and what would be, the character of a young society whose guiding principles were individual freedom, political liberty, and democratic government?

Tocqueville called himself "a liberal of a new kind"; one who combined "a lively and rational passion for liberty" with an equally strong belief in the virtues of social order. (He came from a royalist family; his father narrowly escaped Robespierre's guillotine.) How to combine the two? That, as he saw it, was the great problem facing modern political philosophy.

Author James Bryce (1838–1922), here portrayed in middle age, became ambassador to Washington and an early advocate of the League of Nations after World War I.



He came to the United States in search of an answer. He found a society uniquely, passionately dedicated to the values of individual liberty and freedom of voluntary association. But, Tocqueville observed, it was also a society that imposed order (including the order of black slavery) through a conformity imposed by public opinion: a tyranny of the majority comparable, in his mind, to the tyranny of royal authority under the *ancien régime*.

Tocqueville's account of America's early 19th-century public and private institutions, and the values and manners of its people, is to this day the most profound of all inquiries into our society. More than that, *Democracy in America* remains a seminal text on the strengths and deficiencies of democracy as a system of political organization.

And what of Bryce and *The American Commonwealth* 40 years later? What led this enormously bright, learned, energetic Scots-Irishman to set out for the United States in 1870 (and again in 1881 and 1883–84)? What prompted him to make American government and politics his chief intellectual interest for almost 20 years, to produce a three-volume study, over 1,800 pages in the first edition, and then doggedly to add, revise, and amend on a large scale in three succeeding editions? (Tocqueville never returned to the United States after his 1830 visit, never revised *Democracy in America*, and showed little further interest in the new society he had so tellingly described.)

The answer lies in the kind of man that Bryce was, and in the purpose of *The American Commonwealth*. He criticized Tocqueville for having too philosophical a purpose: "It is not democracy in America he describes, but his own theoretic view of democracy illustrated from America."

Bryce, by contrast, sought knowledge directly and massively accumulated,

and then turned to systematic analysis. His was a positivist, Victorian intellectual style exemplified in the work of both Karl Marx and Charles Darwin. (Late in life, Bryce recalled that reading Darwin's *Origin of Species* was one of the most exciting intellectual experiences of his youth.) In spirit and approach, *The American Commonwealth* resembles other pioneering works of its time such as Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution* (Bagehot, like Bryce, subscribed to "the cardinal value of occasional little facts") and Woodrow Wilson's *Congressional Government*.



Bryce was an inveterate collector—of facts, experience, people. Philosopher William James once said that to Bryce, "all facts were born free and equal." And he led one of those breathtakingly active, productive Victorian lives that so astonish us today. He was born in Belfast and raised in Glasgow, the child of vigorously intellectual Scots-Irish Presbyterian parents. His father was a teacher. He entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1857, successfully insisting on his right as a Dissenter not to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. Bryce was an academic prodigy, gathering up prizes, firsts, and fellowships as if they were collectibles. He then read law at Lincoln's Inn—at the same time writing a short history of the Holy Roman Empire that won him an international reputation. In 1870, at the age of 32, Bryce was appointed Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, a well-paid sinecure that he held until 1893; he served as a member of Parliament for a quarter of a century and occupied three cabinet posts; he was British ambassador to the United States from 1907 to 1913; he was created a viscount in 1914; he served on government commissions looking into British education, German atrocities in World War I, and the reform of the House of Lords.

Bryce's avocations were no less numerous. He traveled to (and wrote a book about) every inhabited continent; by his own account in 1907, he had visited every country and capital in Europe, plus Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, South Africa, India, Asia Minor, the Greek isles, Transcaucasia, Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, almost all of the United States and Canada—"also Iceland." Soon he added Australia and New Zealand, Japan, China, and Siberia to his itinerary. He swam in every body of water and climbed every mountain within reach (including Ararat, which he proudly, if erroneously, believed he was the first European to ascend); he botanized with near-professional skill, discovering 13 new species of plants in South Africa alone. Like so many Victorian intellectuals, Bryce was

Morton Keller, 59, is professor of history at Brandeis University. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he received a B.A. from the University of Rochester (1950), and an M.A. (1952) and a Ph.D. (1956) from Harvard. He is the author of several books, including The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (1968), Affairs of State: Public Life in Late Nineteenth Century America (1979), and Parties, Congress and Public Policy (1985). He is currently working on a sequel to Affairs of State entitled The Pluralist Polity: Public Life in the Early Twentieth Century.

besotted by exotic places: The one major country whose politics and government he never systematically examined was Great Britain.

Small wonder that he did not find time to marry until he was 51. He never had children.

It would be no distortion to regard *The American Commonwealth* as both a Victorian travel book and a work of Victorian social science. It is the account of a journey through the world of late-19th-century American politics and government by an exceptionally urbane, well-informed, sharp-eyed visitor. One of Bryce's reviewers said, not unjustly, that his book attained everything that was possible with a camera.

And indeed, by amassing a mountain of facts, Bryce hoped to demonstrate how the people of the world's leading democracy governed themselves.

But there was, of course, no way of avoiding the generalizing for which he criticized Tocqueville, however different their conclusions were. "The general theory I have tried to set forth," he declared, "is that in the U.S. the impression of the direct governing power of opinion, as apart from legal machinery, is far stronger than in Europe; and that while there is very little abuse of power by the majority [here he takes issue with Tocqueville], there is, at least in the realm of thought, too much disposition to believe the majority right. But possibly I have strained the facts to prove the theory."



Bryce claimed that five-sixths of his data came from observation and from conversations with Americans. He traveled everywhere: not only to New England and the Northeast but also to the upper Midwest, the Pacific Coast, the South. In particular, he relied on the knowledge and insight of experts. He said that he tried "simply to piece together and reproduce the best views of the best American observers as I picked them up." On his first day in America, he looked up E. L. Godkin, editor of *The Nation* and the *New York Evening Post*, who became perhaps his most influential source. (He failed to acknowledge Godkin's aid in the preface to his first edition, an omission that the latter did not take well. Bryce explained that if he had properly recognized Godkin, critics would have said "(not without truth) that I was reproducing the *Evening Post* and Mugwump view.")

Other notables of the Northeast, such as Harvard's President Charles W. Eliot (who remained a lifelong friend), Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., economist and financier Edward Atkinson, and the rising young politician Theodore Roosevelt, also guided him. James Angell, president of the University of Michigan, and Washington Gladden, congregational minister and social reformer, advised him on the intricacies of Midwestern politics; Thomas M. Cooley, the judge and treatise writer, introduced him to the powerful constraints on state activism imposed by the Constitution and the political culture; historian Henry C. Lea instructed him on the politics of Pennsylvania, with its railroad barons, coal towns, and party patronage.

Bryce had the gifted traveler's knack of being in the right place at the right time. On his first visit to America in 1870, he managed to meet most of the

surviving lights of New England transcendentalism and the antislavery movement: Emerson, Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Samuel Gridley and Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the elder Oliver Wendell Holmes. His first direct exposure to American politics was at the 1870 New York State Democratic convention in Rochester, where he was able to see the regnant Tweed Ring and Tammany in full bloom.

The book that came out of Bryce's attentive listening, seeing, and reading was an exceptionally detailed, informed picture of late-19th-century American government and politics. Much of Parts I and II of *The American Commonwealth*, dealing with national and state government, may seem stilted and out-of-date when read today. But one chapter tried to answer a question that was germane before and after the Civil War, and is very much alive in our own time: "Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President." Bryce concluded that "great men are rare in politics; . . . the method of choice may not bring them to the top; . . . they are not, in quiet times, absolutely needed": not far from the present state of understanding.



Part III of *The American Commonwealth* (23 chapters, more than one-fifth of the first edition) discusses "The Party System"; here it comes alive. Bryce's perceptive description of party politics as practiced in the Gilded Age was the first, and in many ways remains the best, analysis ever written of the distinctive American system. Everything—bosses and machines, how they work and what they do; the machinery of elections; the color and passion of campaigns; the role of money and corruption—came within his view. Long before Moisey Ostrogorsky, Max Weber, and other European social scientists, Bryce recognized that "the spirit and force of party has in America been as essential to the action of the machinery of government as steam is to a locomotive engine In America the great moving forces are the parties. The government counts for less than in Europe, the parties count for more."

He held that American party politics historically embodied the conflict of two "permanent oppositions": between centralized and localized government and "between the tendency which makes some men prize the freedom of the individual as the first of social goods, and that which disposes others to insist on checking and regulating his impulses." In short, he discovered in America the same tension between "the love of liberty" and "the love of order" that so intrigued Tocqueville.

It might seem surprising that Bryce identified more closely with the Hamilton-Federalist-Republican than the Jefferson-Jackson-Democratic tradition. But it was a measure of the difference then between British and American political culture that Bryce, a member of the radical wing of mid-19th-century British Liberalism, was most comfortable with the more conservative sector of contemporary American politics.

In truth Bryce had little interest in American history (for which Woodrow Wilson, who reviewed the book when it appeared, chided him). Rather, his primary interest was in the American party politics of his own time, the 1870s

A BRYCE SAMPLER

On the American Character:

"They are a hopeful people. Whether or no they are right in calling themselves a new people, they certainly seem to feel . . . the bounding pulse of youth. They see a long vista of years stretching out before them, in which they will have time enough to cure all their faults, to overcome all the obstacles that block their path."

On the Separation of Powers:

"[The Founding Fathers] so narrowed the sphere of the executive as to prevent it from leading the country, or even its own party in the country, except indeed in a national crisis, or when the president happens to be exceptionally popular. They sought to make members of Congress independent, but in doing so they deprived them of some of the means which European legislators enjoy of learning how to administer, of learning even how to legislate in administrative topics. They condemned them to be architects without science, critics without experience, censors without responsibility."

On American Women:

"The respect for women which every American man either feels or is obliged by public sentiment to profess has a wholesome effect on his conduct and character, and serves to check the cynicism which some other peculiarities of the country foster. The nation as a whole owes to the active benevolence of its women, and their zeal in promoting social reforms, benefits which the customs of Continental Europe would scarcely have permitted women to confer."

On Politics and Sports:

"Even now business matters so occupy the mind of the financial and commercial classes, and athletic competitions the minds of the uneducated classes and of the younger sort in all classes, that political questions are apt, except at critical moments, to fall into the background."

On Presidential Elections:

"If the presidential contest may seem to have usually done less for the formation of political thought and diffusion of political knowledge than was to be expected from the immense efforts put forth and the intelligence of the voters addressed, it nevertheless rouses and stirs the public life of the country. One can hardly imagine what the atmosphere of American politics would be without this quadrennial storm sweeping through it to clear away stagnant vapours, and recall to every citizen the sense of his own responsibility for the present welfare and future greatness of his country. Nowhere does government by the people, through the people, for the people, take a more directly impressive and powerfully stimulative form than in the choice of a chief magistrate by 15 millions of citizens voting on one day."

and '80s. And here, to his displeasure, he found that "neither party has any principles, any distinctive tenets . . . Both have certainly war cries, organizations, interests enlisted in their support. But those interests are in the main . . . getting or keeping the patronage of the government. Tenets and policies, points of political doctrine, and points of political practice, have all but vanished . . . All has been lost, except office or the hope of it."

This disillusioned judgment appears to be at odds with his generally positive view of American institutions, and needs explaining. There was more to Bryce—and to *The American Commonwealth*—than facts, facts, facts. Both his letters and his masterwork had a strongly didactic tone; his book is as much the product of a moral and political philosophy as is Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Bryce believed in Liberalism, the classic 19th-century Liberalism of John Bright and William Gladstone, of free trade, free speech and press, personal liberty, and *responsible* leadership. This notably genial, gregarious man had his hates, chief among them illiberal regimes: the Turkish oppressors of Bulgars and Armenians, and, later, the Kaiser's Reich in World War I.



For one holding such views, a close look at the United States of 1870 was irresistible. (Bryce toyed initially that year with a plan to cross the Channel and observe the Franco-Prussian War, but the lure of America was too great.) After a civil war fought—and won—for the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery, the United States was, in European Liberal eyes, the Golden Land. John Bright (with Gladstone one of the patron saints of Bryce's Liberalism) called the North's victory "the event of the age. The friends of freedom everywhere should thank God and take courage." The prevailing mood is evident in the English novelist-poet George Meredith's 1867 "Lines to a Friend [John Morley] Visiting America," which spoke of:

The strange experimental land
Where men continually dare take
Niagara leaps;

Adieu! bring back a braver dawn
To England, and to me, my friend.

Bryce then and later was distinctly more optimistic about the present health and future prospects of the country than were his American friends such as Godkin and Holmes. He says in *The American Commonwealth*: "A hundred times in writing this book have I been disheartened by the facts I was stating: A hundred times has the recollection of the abounding strength and vitality of the nation chased away these tremors." He told Godkin, "Having criticized the machinery of government and the party system rather more sharply than I quite like—but feeling bound to do so—I have sought in describing public opinion to set out the better side of the people and of politics."

To the end of his long life he was firm in the belief that "America marks the highest level, not only of well-being, but of intelligence and happiness, which the race has yet attained." His Scots-Irish Liberalism drew him powerfully to the relative lack in America of pauperism, class distinction, and class hatred, and the diffusion of wealth among small proprietors.

It is not surprising that his book was immensely popular in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. About a quarter of a million copies of its several editions and a widely used school abridgement were sold. It had less success in England (where one reviewer took Bryce to task for ignoring "the malaria, catarrh, earthquakes, blizzards and tornadoes" that "fill the cemeteries" of America).

But he was no Pangloss. By the time of *The American Commonwealth's* appearance in 1888, the post-Civil War euphoria of Bryce and his American friends had substantially diminished. He strongly shared Godkin's distaste for a political system dominated by machines and bosses (though he recognized more acutely than did upper-class American reformers that most professional politicians played a necessary role in American public life).

Perceptively he observed that while Englishmen spoke of "politicians," Americans called them "the politicians," thus bestowing on them the character of a distinct social group. He ranked public men in an elaborate hierarchy of moral and intellectual qualities, descending from "the non-professional or Outer Circle politicians, those who work for their party without desiring office," down to the large, immigrant-dominated cities: "As there are weeds that follow human beings, so this species thrives best in cities, and even in the most crowded parts of cities. It is known to the Americans as the 'ward politician.'"

Bryce's condemnation of city politics and government as the great failure of American civilization is perhaps his most famous *aperçu*. But he had little more use for state governments, which he dismissed as "perennial fountains of corruption"; state legislators "can barely read the Constitution, and the nature of its legal operation is as far beyond them as the cause of thunder is beyond cats." He devoted a chapter of his book to explaining "Why The Decent Men Do Not Go Into Politics."



There was much about American politics during the 1870s and '80s to repel a British (or American) Liberal intellectual. The Civil War era had been dominated by great issues of national identity and human freedom. Intellectuals and publicists were intoxicated by that political atmosphere. Godkin, who, like Bryce, was of Irish Protestant origins and immigrated to America in 1856, wrote to a friend during the war: "I am duly thanking Heaven that I live here and in this age." In 1865 he founded *The Nation* as an organ designed to apply to postwar issues the Liberal spirit of the crusades for antislavery and the Union.

The chaos and disillusionment of Reconstruction, and the increasing domination of the political system by machines and bosses, was a profound shock to the ideological Liberals of the Civil War era. The work of Thomas Nast, the pre-eminent political cartoonist of his time, vividly portrays the change in political

generations. During the 1860s, Nast, with great power, portrayed the antislavery, Unionist creed of Republicanism and Liberalism. In the same spirit, he created his famous images of the rapacious Tammany tiger and the gross, porcine Boss Tweed. But as the politics of organization superseded the politics of ideology, Nast produced what came to be the accepted symbols of the major parties: the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey. These were docile beasts, without strong symbolic meaning—eloquent embodiments of a politics that relied more on organization and sentiment than on ideology and purpose.

During the decades that followed, a running battle continued between politicians and genteel reformers. Bryce fully shared the distaste for party politics felt by most of his American friends. His own career in British politics was not unlike theirs. He never attained influence in Parliament or government commensurate with his abilities or reputation; and his dislike of British political professionals such as Joseph Chamberlain (who always referred to Bryce as “Professor”) or Randolph Churchill matched Godkin’s hatred of spoilsmen Roscoe Conkling and William McKinley.



The final sections of *The American Commonwealth* are given over to extended discussions of public opinion and—in the spirit of Tocqueville—American social institutions. Bryce’s analysis of public opinion in America lies somewhere between Tocqueville’s view of it as an independent force exercising all-powerful sway over American public life, and the more modern view (expressed by Walter Lippmann in *Public Opinion*, 1922) that it is a compound of the irrationality of the masses and manipulation by powerful vested interests. Bryce recognized that popular opinion was a significant reality in American public life—politicians ignored it at their peril—but that it was also subject to the influence of leadership.

Most Americans, he thought, were influenced by sentiment rather than by informed opinion. But he still had faith in the judgment of the majority: “The masses of the People are wiser, fairer, and more temperate in any matter to which they can be induced to bend their minds than most European philosophers have believed it possible for the masses of the people to be.” Nor did he have any great faith in the wisdom of the well off: “The possession of property does more . . . to make a man timid than education does to make him hopeful.” Predictably, he believed that the best hope for American public life lay in the leadership of “the group of classes loosely called professional men”; the educated, public-spirited men who were his closest American friends; indeed, the “class” to which he himself belonged. Over the past 100 years, many an American Liberal reformer has felt the same way.

Bryce dealt also with a variety of social groups and institutions, ranging from the bar and the universities to Wall Street and the situation of American women. He shared the conventional view of his time that blacks and women should not participate in politics. He lumped together blacks and recent immigrants as a social “residuum” whose views were neither worthwhile nor significant. But he never gave voice to the then prevailing belief, shared by Liberals

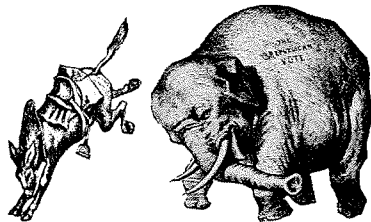
and conservatives, in black racial inferiority. And his faith in the assimilative power of the nation was strong: "The future of America will be less affected by the influx of new blood than any one who has not studied the American democracy of today can realize."

In later years Bryce observed with growing alarm such developments as imperialism and the pre-World War I arms race, the rise of Big Business, organized labor, and, at home, socialism. These trends threatened to consign his classic 19th-century Liberalism to the dustbin of history. But he never gave way to the pessimism and despair that swept over Godkin or Henry Adams (who on renewing his acquaintanceship with Bryce in the early 1900s found his Liberalism naive). He wrote to an American friend in 1903: "The truth is that when I go to America I always see much that is depressing and disgusting, but I see also that many of the evils which I saw formerly have not increased, or are even diminishing; and I see also more clearly than before how grand are the evils arising around us in England. Hence it seems right to allow a wide margin in America for the action of the representative forces which have often proved stronger than was expected."

To the end—he died in 1922 at the age of 84—Bryce remained what he had always been, an archetypal Gladstonian Liberal. He was also widely regarded as the most learned, knowledgeable, polymathic Briton of his time. The English journalist A. G. Gardiner wrote in 1913: "If one were asked to name the greatest living Englishman, I think it would be necessary to admit, regretfully, that he was a Scotsman born in Ireland."

And yet there is a disparity between Bryce's qualities and his overall achievement—a gap evident in the book whose centennial we celebrate. Its description of the late-19th-century American polity assures it immortality. But we do not find in it the more profound insights into the nature of American society that Tocqueville's work continues to provide. The reason is that Bryce never was able to transcend his Liberalism as Tocqueville did. For all its rich detail, its recurrent, oft-quoted insights, the fact remains that while Bryce's book wonderfully illuminates its subject, it never takes the reader to a new level of understanding.

Nevertheless, on its own terms, *The American Commonwealth* remains a national treasure: a vivid, affectionate, informed portrait of how we were governed—and governed ourselves—a century ago.





Foreign leaders who visit the Ivory Coast may be greeted in Abidjan by an engaging sight: a troupe of dancers displaying pictures of the guests and their hosts on their dresses. These women bear likenesses of Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor (wearing glasses), Ivorian president Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and their wives.

The Ivory Coast

Of all of Black Africa's 40-odd nations, none is more out of step than the Ivory Coast. All five of its West African neighbors, for example, are poor, and four are military-ruled; the Ivoirians can claim post-colonial Africa's chief economic "miracle" and a stable civilian regime. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, president since independence from France in 1960, is the longest surviving leader on the continent. His fertile country of 11,000,000 people has avoided most of the usual afflictions of the world's emerging nations, including xenophobia. The Ivoirians once delayed introducing their own flag (orange, white, and green vertical bands) for a year, lest the change make foreign investors uncomfortable. Even today, the majority of the country's secondary-school teachers are French, and their salaries are paid by the French government; about half of the judges are French too. Here, Timothy C. Weiskel sketches the colonial past. David Lamb examines how the country came to be what Houphouët foresaw: "an oasis of prosperity in the middle of a desert of misery."

MISSION CIVILISATRICE

by Timothy C. Weiskel

Louis-Gustave Binger, France's first governor in the Ivory Coast (1893-95), was no statesman. He was an army captain, an ethnographer, an explorer, and a shrewd promoter.

It was his expedition across the savannah and through the dense forests to secure the allegiance of the local chiefs that planted the French flag in the Ivory Coast. And, willy-nilly, it was he who implanted the French colonial style.

Binger knew what appealed to *fin de siècle* Europeans. "A white man traveling in this country," he wrote in his 1892 journal, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée*, "whomever he may be, should not prostrate himself before a black king, however powerful he may be." Europeans "should come as masters . . ."

As of the mid-1880s, Europeans controlled little of Africa.

Their largest holdings were in the south. Dutch Boers and British settlers, having suppressed the Xhosa and other chiefdoms, vied for land, diamonds, and African labor. And Kaiser Wilhelm I's new German Empire claimed what would be German South-West Africa (now Namibia).

Up north, on the Mediterranean, the French had moved into the old Ottoman provinces of Algeria and Tunisia; the British had elbowed the French aside in Egypt, which then extended to the Sudan.

Elsewhere, the white man's presence was limited to the coasts.

Playing Monopoly

In West Africa, whose shores Portuguese mariners first reached during the 15th century, Europeans had to battle not only tropical heat but also cholera, malaria, and sleeping sickness. Nonetheless, the French had a growing colony in Senegal—a first step, they thought, to riches that lay farther east. Farther down the Atlantic coast were two territories settled by former slaves: Sierra Leone, where British abolitionists had established a “Christian Community for Freed Blacks” in 1787, and Liberia, founded in 1824 by the American Colonization Society as a haven for U.S. freedmen.

Otherwise, the European presence consisted of a string of trading stations on the Atlantic shore, particularly on the Gold Coast.

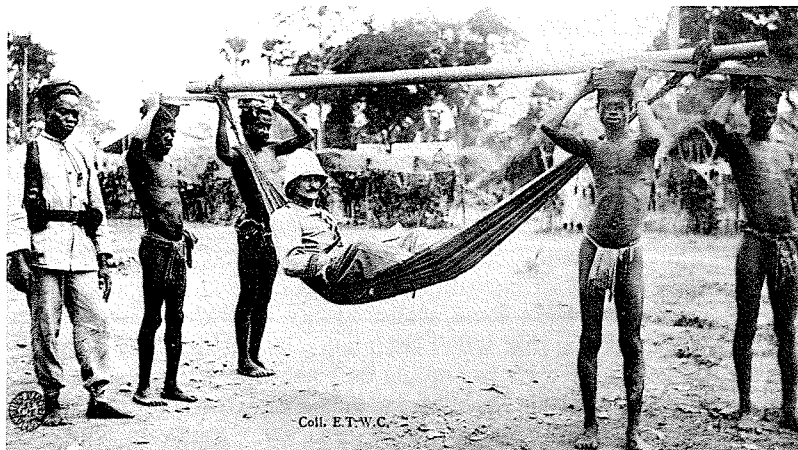
The Ivory Coast, just to the west on the Gulf of Guinea, had long been ignored. Binger had not gone there on a mission of discovery in the style of such early explorers as Mungo Park, René Caillié, and David Livingstone. He was a point man in what had been christened (by *The Times* of London in 1884) the Scramble for Africa.

This was a race that would, by the early 1900s, bring all but a few corners (Liberia, Ethiopia) of the world's second largest continent under the domination of Europeans. In roughly 60 years, less than a lifetime, European rule would come to an abrupt end almost everywhere.

In the Scramble's economic background was an early 19th-century shift in trade patterns. The traffic in slaves faded.* “Legitimate trade” expanded, not only in such “royal trade” items as ivory and precious stones but also, and more importantly, in agricultural products. For ex-

*After the Danes (1803) and the British (1807) banned slave trading, other Europeans were enjoined to follow (as France did in 1818). The aim was not all humanitarian. British abolitionists were backed by businessmen who feared slaving would slow development of Africa's resources. The British and French kept antislavery patrols at sea in part to prevent rivals from sending more Africans to *their* lands in the Americas. By the time Atlantic slaving finally ended during the 1860s, more than 15 million captives, sold into the trade by fellow Africans in West Africa and elsewhere, had reached the Americas.

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Coll. E.T.V.C.

A French battalion commander circa 1910, during the "pacification" of the Ivory Coast. Like the shoeless soldier at left, those who fought for what H. G. Wells called "the development of 'Black France'" were mostly Africans.

ample, in that pre-petroleum age, West African peanut and palm oil were used as lubricants for Europe's machinery and to make candles and fuel for lamps. That most of West Africa's "coasters" (traders) were British was not surprising. Britons were big consumers; much earlier than the French, for instance, they learned to like the cheap yellow soap made from West African palm oil. And they wanted African markets for their textiles, liquor, and other exports.

But the Scramble's main attractions were political, as dramatized by an odd event: the Berlin Conference on West Africa of 1884-85.

The conference was called by modern Germany's creator, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. "My map of Africa," he said, "lies in Europe." For 16 weeks, delegates from 14 European countries (with U.S. observers in attendance) discussed the division of Africa with an eye to limiting European conflicts over the continent. It was without much fuss, for example, that the mineral-rich Congo Free State was awarded to Belgium's King Leopold II, and that Germany got Togo, Cameroon, and Tanganyika as well as South-West Africa. (The Kaiser had asked for "a place in the sun.")

Bismarck may have had other aims. The French had been smarting since the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), which cost them Alsace-Lorraine as well as indemnities to the victorious Germans. Bismarck hoped the conference would distract his sullen neighbors and spur them to join the European competition for overseas colonies.

The Dark Continent seemed ideal: The French, though out of Egypt, were expanding elsewhere in the north, and in Senegal.

Indeed the French, notably their underemployed army officers, entered the Scramble with enthusiasm—even if it was, as Premier Jules Ferry conceded, “an immense steeplechase towards the unknown.”

French *amour-propre* (self-esteem) was involved. Militarily humiliated in Europe, the French sought to hoist the tricolor abroad and, in the process, create, as British writer Paul Johnson put it, “a gigantic system of outdoor relief for army officers.” In West Africa, historian Michael Crowder observed, the Scramble was especially intense—“rather like a game of Monopoly with France and Britain the only two serious contestants, Britain relying for her success on Park Lane and Mayfair, Whitechapel and the Old Kent Road, whilst France bought up anything she could lay her hands on that hadn’t been taken by Portugal or Germany.”

By 1913, the French flag would be planted in 16 African colonies and possessions. Those in West Africa, in number (then seven) and area (1,800,000 sq. mi.), far exceeded those of Britain (480,000 sq. mi.) and the other Europeans. But their population was less than British-ruled Nigeria’s. Few Frenchmen minded that, as Britain’s Lord Salisbury disdainfully noted, France had mainly gained a lot of sand.

Woe in Ouagadougou

Before the Scramble, the focus of French interest in West Africa had been the areas surrounding the Senegal and Gambia rivers. A stockade built at the mouth of the Senegal under Louis XIII in 1640 grew into St. Louis, the region’s first French settlement. French captains had sailed on down the coast, but chose to bypass much of what they saw, including the Ivory Coast. Heavy surf, sandbars, and lagoons lined its shore. Beyond, it was thickly forested and seemed thinly populated. In the immediate hinterland, there were not many Africans with whom they could trade.

French traders landed at Assinie, a town on a barrier island, and built a trading fort in 1701. A local chief’s son was brought back to France as an “ambassador” to the court of Louis XIV and given a Catholic baptism. The Sun King himself played godfather. Yet the Africans at Assinie were hostile, and in 1704 the fort was evacuated.

There would be no official French intrusions again until 1842. Edouard Bouët-Willamez, a navy captain on an antislavery patrol, secured treaties with chiefs at Assinie, Grand Bassam, and other points. For a “custom” paid in goods (later cash), France got the right to build forts with full sovereignty. In contrast to the British pattern, trade *followed* the flag. A firm headed by Régis Ainé of Marseilles became the largest trading concern on the Ivory Coast.

African brokers whom English traders dubbed “Jack-Jacks” often attacked the forts. The Jack-Jacks feared losing their role as intermediaries between inland folk and the Europeans.

At the time, that threat appeared remote. The interior seemed

impenetrable. A Lieutenant Hecquard was charged with the task of exploring the caravan routes between the coast and the western Sudan. In 1849–50, he set off for Timbuktu, the Muslim desert city 800 miles north in what is now Mali, but hostile Africans he met on the way forced him to retreat.

Soon France's presence was reduced to one trader, an ex-navy officer named Arthur Verdier, whose *Compagnie de Kong* did business with the Africans in the interior. The governor in St. Louis during part of the 1850s and '60s, Louis Faidherbe, tried in vain to swap France's Ivory Coast concessions for Britain's corridor along the Gambia River, to consolidate French control of Senegal and the Sudan.

In the end, the Scramble rescued the Ivory Coast from obscurity.

France's hesitant Third Republic politicians were urged to seize the day by soldiers, railroad men, and assorted freebooters. Two railroad promoters named Philibert and Rolland published a typical call for action: It warned that European "zones of influence" in Africa were growing, and "as always Britain is getting the lion's share." There was no "place left for France except in West Africa."

Indeed, with the Union Jack in Egypt and South Africa, there was already talk of what Cecil Rhodes would promote as a "Cape-to-Cairo" British dominion.

Even on the Ivory Coast, Britons dominated trade. The French had to act. To support a claim to the hinterland, two French agents were dispatched, beginning in 1887, to sign treaties of "protection" with in-



A sketch from Louis-Gustave Binger's account of his 1887–89 exploration. Led by two "tam-tams," porters are carrying agents of Ardjoumani, the king of the Abbron people. He ruled in Bondoukou, a center of gold trading.

land chiefdoms and trade centers.

One operative, Marcel Treich-Laplène, got to the eastern town of Bondoukou just days before a British party from the Gold Coast. The other French agent, Captain Binger, also found himself in a race.

To escape British notice, Binger set out from present-day Mali. Following routes used by Muslim traders, he and his entourage—10 donkey drivers, a cook, a groom, a personal servant—trekked along a great loop that brought them south into the Ivory Coast and then back up north to Ouagadougou (now the capital of Burkina Faso). There, he found that its ruler had already signed a treaty with a German from Togoland named Von Krause.

After negotiating its western and eastern borders with Liberia and Britain in 1892–93, the Ivory Coast was declared a full-fledged colony by France. Binger was appointed governor. But making the Ivory Coast a colony in fact as well as in name was to prove difficult. The complete subjugation of its population did not come until after World War I.

Queen Poku's Heir

The French in West Africa pursued what historian S. H. Roberts called a “delightfully simple policy of ‘Peace or Powder.’” There were always Africans who were tempted to reject “peace,” partly because European traders, the French included, sold firearms to anyone who could pay. Yet the French forces—usually *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* (Senegalese riflemen) under French officers—had superior breech-loading weapons* as well as the new semiautomatic Maxim gun, which could fire eight rounds a second. The Anglo-French satirist Hilaire Belloc's couplet pretty much described early French thinking:

Whatever happens we have got
The Maxim gun and they have not.

Even so, one of the longest wars fought between Europeans and Africans in West Africa was brought on by resistance to the French conquest of the Ivory Coast's many ethnic groups.






The “assimilation” policy that France had begun in Senegal, where residents of St. Louis, Dakar, and other early *communs* were considered French citizens, had faded. Beginning during Napoleon III's rule (1852–70), Africans were treated as subjects. Their purpose came to be to serve the goal of making the colonies self-supporting. In fairly short order, the French would end the *African* practice of slavery, but would

*Infantrymen with old muzzle-loaders like those sold to the Africans had to stand erect to prepare for each shot; those with breech-loaders could stay prone, presenting a small target. Africans did not always appreciate this: Even when they did get breech-loaders, mostly by capture, they loaded and fired in battle standing up—often to their subsequent cost. And as far as is known, an operable Maxim gun never fell into their hands.

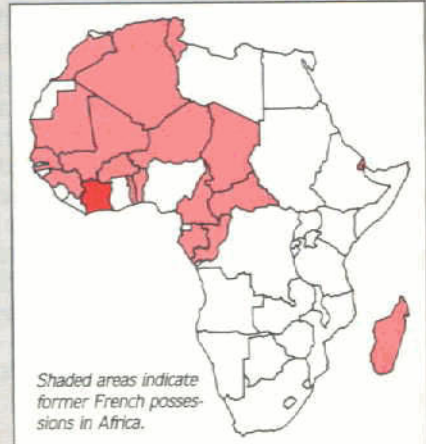


ATLANTIC OCEAN

THE IVORY COAST

	Major airport		Offshore oil platform
	Port		Railroad
	Primary road		

0 50 100
miles



impose their own system of forced labor and a "head tax" designed to make Africans seek paid work. Troublemakers were dealt with via the *indigénat*, a system of summary justice under which officials could repeatedly imprison anyone, even a chief, for short stretches (15 days at first, later five) without charge, trial, or right of appeal. The French colonies, noted one Briton, Sir John Harris, offered "little Liberty, less Equality, and no Fraternity."

In the Ivory Coast, the Gouro, the Bété, the Abbé, and other inland peoples were irritated by the French intrusion. So, too, were the Baule, a populous group in the center of the new colony. In 1900, French occupying troops did something that the civilian administrators had not yet dared: To support the military advance, they taxed the Baule. Annually, each Baule household was to provide, among other things, one porter for two days, three days of work to clear roads, and 10 yams.

When the Baule resisted, a Captain le Magnen led a "monitory" attack on several villages, seizing eight prisoners, seven rifles, and some booty—"chickens, salt, loincloths, soap, etc." But the show of force only aroused the spirit of rebellion. One Baule partisan traveled around urging resistance: "When the whites have no more to eat, they will leave."

In time, Baule warriors sealed off the French garrison at Bouaké, a large town. A request for reinforcements had to be forwarded all the way to Paris, and not until weeks later was the siege broken.

The Baule resistance seemed to end after June 1901, when a French force took Kokumbo, the area where slaves mined gold for the Baule chiefs. Eventually, the paramount chief Kouamé Dié—reputed descendant and heir of Queen Aura Poku, the Baule group's 18th-century founder—showed up in Bouaké with his principal wives, village and regional headmen, and 200 others. A French official recorded that Kouamé "accepts our authority" and would pay a tribute in gold. Other chiefs followed suit.

Suborning the Chiefs

The Baule thought that, once they paid tribute—as losers in local wars usually did—the French would depart. But the French mistakenly read the tributes as a sign of permanent submission. Then they made another error: Worried about the financial losses of traders and the colony's treasury, in March 1902 they ended a ban on arms sales in the Baule area. Within eight months, 776 rifles and 45 tons of powder were sold at Tiassalé, a southern Baule town. Nearly 10 years of skirmishing and open warfare ensued. In 1908, a new Governor, Gabriel Angoulvant, vowed to end the Africans' "independence and anarchy."

Angoulvant had hardly achieved what he called the colony's "pacification" when France began drafting Africans to fight Germany in World War I. More than 60,000 fled French West Africa to the Gold Coast and other British territories. (Angoulvant urged his superiors to



As late as 1946, Africans were forced to toil on European-owned plantations. The laborers here are gathering cocoa pods harvested from cacao trees.

end conscription, lest the “native masses” think “we are not strong enough in Europe to defend ourselves.”*)

The conquest and then conscription were not the only disruptive aspects of what the French called their *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission). In the Ivory Coast, cheap European imports hurt cloth weavers, jewelry makers, and iron workers. And the French substantially altered the traditional social hierarchy.

Unlike the British, who worked with existing local chiefs, the French installed collaborators as “official chiefs.” As one administrator, Albert Nebout, noted, “the ones that side with us will be compromised in the eyes of the others and will have to remain faithful.”

For example, as the new *chef* of the Akoué, a Baule subgroup, the French installed Kouassi Ngo, the headman of Yamoussoukro, who had been of service during the conquest of the Akoué. But after the last rebel Akoué leader was finally caught and executed in 1910, his vengeful partisans assassinated Kouassi Ngo.

Collaborating chiefs who survived kept part of the head tax they collected, and could be exempted (with their families) from forced labor. Their children might be the first to be admitted to local French

*French West Africa did ship 200,000 African troops—about two percent of its population—to France in 1914–18, compared with only 30,000 from more populous British West Africa. After the war, African troops were used in the French occupation of the German Rhineland.

schools—the route to a paid job in the colonial bureaucracy.

In British West Africa, as Crowder observed, chiefs simply “had to learn what sort of things upset the British District Officer—like slavery, cruel punishment—and then carry on very much as an independent ruler. [But] the hierarchized French African chief had clear instructions [from the French], issued in circulars, as to just what he was allowed to do and had to do.”

The “politics of collaboration” the French fostered would become an Ivory Coast tradition. Collaboration, by its nature, does not invite public scrutiny: Deals are usually made privately. Nor are its politics very ideological; what matters is the practical resolution of immediate problems, not purity of analysis or political belief.

Because the colonies had to be self-supporting, the French soon pushed villagers to grow new “cash crops,” particularly coffee and cocoa. The first who did were Fanti traders originally from the Gold Coast, and Senegalese brought in by the French. The local folk, content with raising yams, plantains, maize, and rice, found new crops bothersome.

Nonetheless, the French set production quotas for each village. Chiefs might have to recruit labor for the “Commandant’s fields”—acreage seized under a rule that “unused” land could be given to anyone who would raise cash crops. Agricultural experiment stations were created. The long-term goal was this: Plantations owned by French settlers and worked by Africans would supply food and fiber to France.

But policy was never consistent. In Paris, there had been 21 changes in colonial ministers during 1882–99 alone, and in the colonies the soldiers ignored the bureaucrats. In the Ivory Coast, the French planners’ control had become tenuous at best by the mid-1920s.

Ending the Dream

On the coast, a handful of import-export firms dominated commerce. Inland, things were changing. To suppress the Fanti traders (who spoke English), the French favored French-speaking Diula or Senegalese Muslims. But soon the timber trade, most imports, and much of the bulk purchasing of coffee and cocoa fell into the hands of new arrivals from Syria and Lebanon, which had become French mandates after World War I. The Levantines were already shrewd traders.

The European landowners—never more than a few hundred—had been drawn to the Ivory Coast by government publicity about the glories of plantation farming. They got top prices for their crops, often the first to be bought when shipping to Europe was scarce. They also often enjoyed priority, and low prices, when they needed imported supplies. And local chiefs still provided them low-wage “volunteers.”

The third force in the economy, the independent African farmers, paid two or three times as much as the Europeans for labor. They resented the whites’ considerable advantages. And in time, they would

end the dream of an Ivory Coast Arcadia for French planters.

Who were these African farmers? Many had fled forced labor and conscription to work on African-owned cocoa farms in the Gold Coast; they returned to plant coffee and cocoa themselves. Then, during the 1930s, the colonial regime (seated in Abidjan from 1934 on), encouraging more European immigration, further downgraded the local chiefs; they became little more than labor-recruiters. And as the Depression sank world cocoa prices, African farmers—hurt more than the Europeans—became acutely aware of their second-class status.

Five Acres for Freedom

One was Félix Houphouët, nephew of the assassinated collaborator, Kouassi Ngo of Yamoussoukro. After his uncle was killed, Houphouët was pointedly favored by the French. He won a privilege normally given to the heirs of high chiefs: an education in Dakar, Senegal's capital, at the École Normale William Ponty, a school for African civil servants. Houphouët (pronounced oo-foo-ETT) graduated in 1925 as an Auxiliary Doctor. Back home, he was appalled by the condition of men on work gangs ("skeletons covered with sores"). And, while serving in Abengourou, a cocoa area, he was struck by the European planters' advantages. For Dakar's *Le Progrès Colonial* he wrote an anonymous 1932 article titled "*On Nous A Trop Volé*"—"They Have Robbed Us Too Much."

The Africans' sense of grievance deepened during World War II, as racist ideas gained favor among supporters of Vichy France.* Africans were barred from some European restaurants and segregated in movie houses. Fights erupted between urban Africans and Europeans.

Amid general hardship, the Europeans' privileges continued. And money was scarce: A British blockade of French West African ports exacerbated wartime shipping shortages while products from British colonies were in demand in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.

In mid-1943, after the Allies had landed in North Africa and the Germans had occupied the whole of France, General Charles de Gaulle's Free French took control of the French African colonies. Then, early in 1944, de Gaulle assembled the governors of the Black African colonies at Brazzaville, the Congo River town that was the capital of French Equatorial Africa and the site of the Free French headquarters.

It was a delicate moment. De Gaulle warmly observed that in Africa, France had found "her refuge and the starting point for her liberation." But empire was out of fashion, especially in the United States. The

*After the fall of France to the Germans in June 1940, French West Africa, like France's Arab and Indochinese territories, accepted Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain's collaborationist government at Vichy and its policy of official neutrality; only the governors of French Equatorial Africa (present-day Gabon, Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Congo) lined up with General Charles de Gaulle's Free French *Comité Français de la Libération Nationale*. But at one point, after all the African territories came under de Gaulle's sway, French West Africa provided half of the Free French forces.



Africans at a 1951 ceremony opening Abidjan's harbor. At left is an Ebrié village chief. At right, holding a staff of office, is an aide to a regional Abbron chief. By that time, the chief's authority was debased throughout French West Africa. The African political journal Réveil found him merely the "domestic" of the French: "Fiercely oppressed, he oppressed."

Atlantic Charter that Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill drew up in 1941 endorsed national self-determination. A 1942 *Life* editorial had said that "one thing we are sure we are *not* fighting for is to hold the British Empire together."

All this troubled the French. They had invested much pride, if not much capital, in their empire, parts of which they would soon designate as "overseas territories" of France. They did not want them engulfed by independence movements (one was simmering in Algeria) or placed in a postwar "trusteeship" under U.S. and British influence.

Thus, the Brazzaville conference was a marvel of political ambiguity. The opening declaration stated that "any idea of autonomy" for the colonies was "out of the question." Self-government was "to be avoided." Yet, on their return to their own capitals, the governors enacted sweeping reforms. Africans were allowed to set up labor unions and professional associations, and they began to organize politically.

The French approach in Black Africa thus did not differ greatly from that of the British, whose aim, a 1948 White Paper would say, "was to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth." Both countries were to find that their attempts to modernize only helped to encourage local nationalists.

In the Ivory Coast, African farmers were stirred by the prospects for reform. Reviewing the revenue projections, Governor André Latrille realized that Africans could do more to expand coffee and cocoa production than could the few quarrelsome European settlers. And during the war, most whites had backed the Vichy regime, an error that Latrille, a

Free French partisan, probably saw no reason to reward.

Latrille encouraged the African planters to organize. In 1944, they formed the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* (SAA). Triply qualified—he was a “chief,” a member of the educated elite, and a plantation owner—Félix Houphouët was elected the SAA’s first leader.

Governor Latrille and Houphouët worked hand in hand—the politics of collaboration. Houphouët limited the SAA to African farmers who had more than two contiguous hectares (about five acres) of coffee and three of cocoa. Latrille exempted such planters—in effect, anyone holding an SAA membership card—from forced labor. These steps, enormously popular in rural areas, spurred a coffee and cocoa boom.

Mitterrand’s Deal

From the SAA evolved the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire* (PDCI), which launched Houphouët into a series of electoral victories. When Paris’s postwar reforms permitted Africans to elect representatives to the 1945 and 1946 Constituent Assemblies that created the Fourth Republic, Houphouët led the list. In 1946, he had forced labor ended, making him an overnight hero even outside the Ivory Coast.

To his name he added “Boigny” (Bwahn-YEE), the word for ram.

European planters and alarmed merchants responded by forming a lobby, the *États Généraux de la Colonisation Française*. In true dialectical fashion, Houphouët and others then created the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), a union of French West Africa’s parties. The RDA made a tactical alliance with the Communists in the French legislature—the latter backed the Africans’ struggle against settler colonialism. But because so many French Communists were at the RDA’s 1946 debut in Bamako (capital of what is now Mali), conservative Malian and Senegalese delegates stayed on the sidelines. Houphouët’s Ivory Coast group was left to set the tone for a new level of local political militancy throughout French Africa.

Thus, what began during the last months of World War II as a limited drive by some West African farmers for a fairer deal had grown by the late 1940s into a full-blown anticolonial political campaign. Besides African planters, the PDCI attracted many “intellectuals”—government employees, school teachers, lawyers, and physicians. These groups resented their second-class status in the French-dominated bureaucracies.

The urban “bureaucratic bourgeoisie” was more openly anticolonial than the “planter bourgeoisie.” And gradually the PDCI-RDA became identified with the anticolonial Left. In 1947 André Latrille was removed. A new governor, Laurent Péchoux, vigorously pursued instructions to suppress the PDCI. Demonstrations, strikes, and violent incidents ensued. By mid-1950, scores of PDCI sympathizers had been killed or wounded, and many party militants were in prison.

Houphouët, who had parliamentary immunity, was never arrested.

He also deplored the African intellectuals' strident nationalism. And after the Communists' expulsion from the French government in 1947, the legislative alliance of the RDA and the far Left was of no use to him.

Ever the pragmatist, Houphouët opened talks with France's minister of colonies. He and the minister, François Mitterrand,* reached an agreement. In exchange for official recognition and tacit support by the French as the Ivory Coast's leading African politician, Houphouët would break publicly with the French Communists and the PDCI radicals.

Mitterrand released several imprisoned PDCI militants, but made it clear to them that no further anticolonial agitation would be tolerated. Those black politicians who saw Houphouët as too accommodating to the French found themselves defeated in elections and harassed by French administrators. As for the militants, many owed their freedom to the deal with Mitterrand. Were they to criticize it too loudly, their cases might be "reviewed." Mostly, they kept silent.

Leaving 'Almost Nothing'

Some militants felt betrayed by Houphouët. But his course had been predictable. He was, after all, the heir of a famous collaborating chief—the basis of his claim to status as a chief among the Baule. He was a product of the colonial education system. And, like the other black planters, he was a reformer, not a revolutionary.

The French saw in Houphouët a needed ally. Their global empire was threatened by insurgencies in Indochina and Madagascar—where in 1947 a rebellion was put down brutally, at a cost of as many as 80,000 native lives. "In order to keep Africa and stay there," Mitterrand wrote in his 1957 autobiography, "wasn't it [necessary] first to give [the Africans] political and economic rights?"

France did, and in return Houphouët continued to work closely with Fourth Republic regimes. He became the first African cabinet minister in the French government (1956–59). At home, his PDCI evolved from a voice of mass opinion to a vehicle for mobilizing mass support. A generally benevolent farm-based African autocracy emerged.

Africans outside the planter bourgeoisie—intellectuals, students, people not in cash crop areas—began to feel ignored.

The centralization of power was perhaps tolerable during the booming 1950s. African-owned coffee and cocoa farms grew in size and number. And Paris, having dropped its insistence that its colonies be self-financing in 1946, was subsidizing agricultural prices and spending on improvements. The Ivory Coast's first deep-water port was formally opened at Abidjan in 1951, with Mitterrand officiating; the road network was extended. When, during the late 1950s, world cocoa and coffee

*Mitterrand, a Socialist from Nièvre, and minister for overseas territories during 1950–51, eventually went on to win the French presidency (on his third try) in 1981, and was re-elected last May.

prices sagged, exports of still-abundant tropical hardwoods took up the slack. By decade's end, the Ivory Coast easily surpassed Senegal as France's richest West African territory.

But also by then, what Britain's Prime Minister Harold Macmillan was to call the "winds of change" were already blowing.

Houphouët ignored local radicals' calls for independence. The idea, he said, had become a "mystique," and he was not interested. Indeed, it was General Charles de Gaulle who forced the issue.

On his return to power in 1958, after a 12-year absence, the Fourth Republic was in a shambles, mostly because of its costly struggle to hang onto Muslim Algeria. De Gaulle used the referendum that created the Fifth Republic to head off trouble in the sub-Saharan African colonies; the referendum, held that September, offered the Black Africans a choice of 1) association with France in a Franco-African Community that would provide local autonomy but leave Paris in control of defense, foreign affairs, and overall economic policy, or 2) full independence. Only Guinea chose the latter (the French withdrew promptly). But still, the independence issue would not fade.

Soon, Senegal and the French Sudan joined in a short-lived Federation of Mali and sought independence *before* discussing links with France. A meeting of Community leaders in St. Louis, Senegal, in 1959 accepted the Mali federation's "accession to international sovereignty," as de Gaulle put it. And the general came to acknowledge the persistence of an "elementary psychological disposition" toward independence. By the end



When Charles de Gaulle, here in Abidjan, toured French Africa in August 1958, he would not soften his take-it-or-leave-it offer on the colonies' future ties with France: "I, de Gaulle, say 'Federation,' and there we stop."

of 1960, the Community's remaining Black African members sought and were quickly granted independence before negotiating future ties with France on generous terms. Among them was the Ivory Coast, whose leader remained a proponent of "the idea of fraternity" with France.

The results of the many decades of rule by Paris were mixed.

A number of individuals eventually gained fame or fortune in French Africa—Louis-Gustave Binger and Arthur Verdier among them. But the colonies never yielded windfall returns to France or its taxpayers. The conquest had been protracted, and then two traumatic world wars distracted French governments. The *mission civilisatrice*, too, long remained more talk than action. Colonial Minister Henri Cosnier's 1918 lament that "we have left almost nothing" in terms of economic development remained all too valid until French development funds began to flow in quantity after World War II. (The British had begun providing such funds to their colonies in 1929.)

Grand plans went unrealized—e.g., a trans-Sahara rail line to link the Black African colonies with French colonies in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), which had a large French population, got the bulk of French foreign investment, and accounted for far more French trade than the sub-Saharan territories. Such a line was once deemed "indispensable" by French officials, but it was never built.

Left at the Church

The French, like the British, governed on the cheap. In 1922, Paris had just 526 administrators in Black African colonies whose population then totaled some 15 million. Although France's colonial medical services were superior, it lagged far behind Britain in all other social welfare efforts, notably education; 20 years after World War I, there were only 59,000 youngsters in school in all French West Africa.

Among the foreign admirers of the French colonial style were American Pan-Africanists; after a visit to Dakar, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in 1925 that he saw in French West Africa nothing "like the open race repulsion, the studied separation that one sees in British West Africa." Yet French treatment of the colonized was not always exemplary, as the brutality of the conquest period made clear. After World War I, when France and Britain were maneuvering to take over parts of the German Empire as mandates, stories of atrocities in Germany's African lands abounded. A French author, Camille Fidel, wrote luridly of "the barbaric destruction of tribes which [the Germans] exploited cruelly; the appropriation of land; forced labor; flogging erected into a method of government." But research has shown that the weight of German rule did not differ greatly from that of the British or the French.

The infusion of development capital after World War II, by Britain as well as France, helped to fill out what might have been a very thin investment legacy. Most important, the money was used to build endur-

ing facilities—ports, rail lines, road networks—that (notably in the Ivory Coast) committed the colonies to remain exporters of agricultural produce for world markets.

Beyond this, the colonists' most influential legacy was their language. The Ivory Coast, where more than 60 African dialects were spoken, was left with an irreversible commitment to French as the medium of official discourse and of its narrow political and social "elites." Local leaders could express their demands effectively only in a foreigner's tongue, forcing upon them a significant break with their past.

Such breaks with tradition were perhaps greater in the French colonies than in the British ones. The French were generally more disruptive. The British set up their own white enclaves on the outskirts of towns; the French moved into the center. The British favored "indirect rule" via traditional chiefs, who were not encouraged to imbibe European culture or even to learn English; the French installed their own "scatter of puppets," as Cosnier called their chiefs, and added their culture to the local ones.

The difference would prove profound. In the British colonies the African societies and their hierarchies remained relatively intact, for good or ill. New people were more apt to come to the fore—under colonial auspices—in the French territories. That may be part of the reason why, after independence, most of France's former West African territories—most notably the Ivory Coast—stayed closer to the *Metropole* and fared better economically than many other young African countries. In the Ivory Coast, both the Ivorians and the French would profit tangibly from neocolonialism.

In any case, even when independence fever was rising, hatred of France was seldom the prevailing sentiment among most West African leaders. When elections for the postwar Constituent Assembly in Paris were being held, Léopold Sédar Senghor, the French-educated poet and future president of Senegal, declared his aim: "a single category of Frenchmen, having exactly the same rights since all are subject to the same duties, including dying for the same country."

Years later, when in 1960 the West Africans themselves pulled away from Charles de Gaulle's offer of partnership with the *Metropole* in a Franco-African Community, one of their leaders openly vented his disappointment with his fellow blacks: "I waited on the steps of the church, my bouquet of flowers wilted in my hand."

The man on the steps was Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

A DIFFERENT PATH

by David Lamb

The Ivory Coast and its neighbor, Guinea, share many things, among them a common border, a tropical climate, and a colonial history that left a French veneer over an African peasant culture. The two nations won independence, without bloodshed, at roughly the same time: Guinea in 1958, the Ivory Coast two years later. Each was then run by a one-man, one-party regime. Each sought economic growth, modernization, and self-esteem.

Yet Guinea failed. The Ivory Coast was the "African miracle."

"It is not the shell of independence which counts," Félix Houphouët-Boigny once said, "it is the contents: the economic contents, the social contents, and the human contents." To a remarkable degree, the Ivory Coast seems to have all of them.

The country boasts political stability rare for Africa and a history of extraordinary economic expansion. During the first two decades of independence, its annual growth exceeded seven percent, a record acknowledged by the World Bank as "unique on the African continent." And although the number of Ivorians has more than tripled since 1960, the Ivory Coast's economic growth has also been robust on a per capita basis: The only sizeable African countries that did better were those able to export substantial amounts of oil (Libya, Nigeria, Gabon) or valuable minerals (Togo, Mauritania, Tunisia). Its gross national product per capita (\$660 in 1985) is double the average of Guinea (\$320) and its other neighbors. Washington considers the Ivorians too well off to qualify for further bilateral aid.

At one time, the Ivory Coast and Guinea had been about on a par.

World War II's end found the Ivory Coast largely dependent on two crops, coffee and cocoa. Its sleepy capital, Abidjan, was home to 20,000 Africans and a scattering of French officials and planters.

Guinea also had a narrowly based economy—dependent on bananas, of which it was Africa's top exporter, and coffee. It also had gold, diamonds, and a third of the world's known reserves of bauxite, the ore of aluminum. A rise in metal prices during the Korean War had spawned some industry, and thus the urban labor movement that became the political base for the country's leader, Ahmed Sékou Touré. The tidy, white-washed capital, Conakry, with palm-fringed beaches and fine hotels, attracted French tourists.

But the two countries set off along divergent paths.

Guinea's President Touré was young—age 36 at independence—and determined not to be beholden to the old colonial masters. He was a



Houphouët-Boigny in 1960, the year of independence. Democracy had to wait; new countries, he has said, "need a chief who is all-powerful for a specified period of time. If he makes mistakes, we shall replace him later on."

compelling orator, as he showed when he went to Paris as an African member of France's National Assembly during the 1950s. There he fell in with the French Communist Party. To him, the future seemed to be the "African socialism" that came into vogue among European and African intellectuals during the early 1960s, and was pioneered in Ghana by Touré's friend Kwame Nkrumah. Touré called his philosophy "Marxism in African clothes."

His retort to France's offer of association drew cheers on the Left: "We prefer poverty in freedom to opulence in servitude."

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a generation older,* once a sort of political godfather to Touré, and at one time also an ally of the French Communists, described his approach as simple "State capitalism." He would keep ties to France, welcome foreign investment, and attract European businessmen and technicians with laws that put few restrictions on the repatriation of capital, profits, or salaries.

The Ivory Coast, along with six other former French West African colonies, kept the existing currency, still known as the CFA franc, whose value was (and remains) tied to the French franc. Guinea dropped the CFA franc and eventually introduced the *syl*i, which, translated, meant elephant but was redefined by Touré as "the will of the people of Guinea

*Based on his official birth date of October 18, 1905, Houphouët was 54 at independence. But his real age is unknown, perhaps even to him. Now officially 82, he is almost certainly closer to 90.

to destroy colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism.”

Houphouët had hoped that de Gaulle’s short-lived Franco-African Community would preserve the Ivory Coast’s links with France, and thus to the new European Common Market. Touré’s refusal to join the Community made him a hero in Black Africa, but as he himself said, it was “no time for dancing.” Guinea was soon alone and adrift.

De Gaulle had been warned by Houphouët that Touré would turn East if doors were closed to him in the West. Sure enough, the Soviets and their allies became the dominant foreigners in Guinea.

Empty Stores, Tasty Fruit

Under Touré, the government takeover of the economy was complete. State-run firms even shunted aside the market women—in all of West Africa, the principal purveyors of food, clothing, and household necessities. To extend its reach into the smallest villages, Touré’s *Parti Democratique de Guinée* organized the country into 2,500 cells. Officials learned to snap out “*Prêt à la révolution!*” (Ready for the revolution!) when answering phones.

To challenge the “Clairvoyant Guide” or his plans for the “mental development” of his people could be fatal. By one count, 17 of Touré’s cabinet ministers were hanged or shot, and 18 were given life sentences. Once, the bodies of five erring officials were left to hang from a bridge in Conakry for two days. Perhaps two in five Guineans fled their homeland, many to the Ivory Coast. Food grew scarce (it had to be exported to pay Soviet debts); inflation soared.

By the early 1980s, a visitor arriving at the Conakry airport would ride into town on a potholed road that wound past decaying old French plantation houses (where trees grew in the living rooms) and empty shops. The local state-owned Nafyaya (“Plentiful”) department store, as big as a basketball court, had only Chinese shaving brushes, pineapple juice, and a few boxes of macaroni. On one wall was Fidel Castro’s picture, on another a slogan: “To Suffer is to Succeed.”

Meanwhile, Abidjan, 700 miles away, had become Black Africa’s most modern city, a blend of Miami and Paris. [See box, p. 120.]

Indeed, a striking feature of the Ivory Coast is its French contingent. Barely 10,000 at independence, it has grown as large as 50,000. Today, it numbers about 27,000; an economic slump has driven many of *les Européens* back home during the past few years. But the French remain an important presence. As of the early 1980s, by the World Bank’s estimate, expatriates held 80 percent of the Ivorian jobs requiring

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a university degree. (One attraction is pay that may be two or three times as high as that which similar work would command in Europe.) French businessmen controlled up to 40 percent of the investment in industry and 50 percent of the country's trade. Behind the scenes, French civil servants still have decision-making roles in every government department. A visitor to the Ministry of Planning and Development, for instance, finds that the minister and his two or three well-dressed top deputies are African, as are the janitors and some of the secretaries, but almost everyone in between is French.

The French contingent also includes "colonists" from the old days who have made careers as planters, lawyers, and physicians, and *petits français* working as maitre d's, bartenders, and store clerks.

"The Ivorian tree offers its shade and tasty fruits to all who settle beneath it," Houphouët has said. But "it is the ordinary French" who put "their confidence in us." Yet while crediting them, and "genuine cooperation," he has maintained that the key to his country's economic success has been "the work of our farmers."

The Ivory Coast flourished in large part because Houphouët focused on the land. The farmers who formed the core of the *Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI), of which he remained president, prospered on coffee and cocoa. Not content with that, however, Houphouët set out to make the Ivory Coast one of the few African countries to succeed in diversifying into new crops. To accomplish that, a number of quasi-government agencies called "parastatals" were established—SODEPALM (palm oil), SOCATCI (rubber), SODESUCRE (cane sugar), CIDT (cotton), SODEFEL (fruits and vegetables).

"Diff'rent Strokes"

One result is that, although the share of the population dependent on agriculture has been declining (it is below 70 percent today), the acreage under cultivation has risen sharply since independence. And the new acreage is in Ivorian hands: A post-independence law barred further purchases of farms or cultivation of cash crops by outsiders.

The Ivory Coast remains the world's third largest coffee supplier, after Brazil and Colombia. Output of its *robusta*—typically grown by family farmers and used for instant coffee—has tripled since independence. However, it no longer accounts for nearly half of Ivorian export revenues as it did in 1960. Starting far behind Ghana, the Ivory Coast now leads the world in cocoa, much of it sold to chocolatiers in the Netherlands. The country is also Africa's top palm-oil producer.

In production of cotton, one of its "new" crops, the Ivory Coast is now third in Africa. In the dry northern reaches are broad tracts of sugar cane; the lowlands of the hot, swampy south have been turned into plantations that produce bananas and pineapples for export.

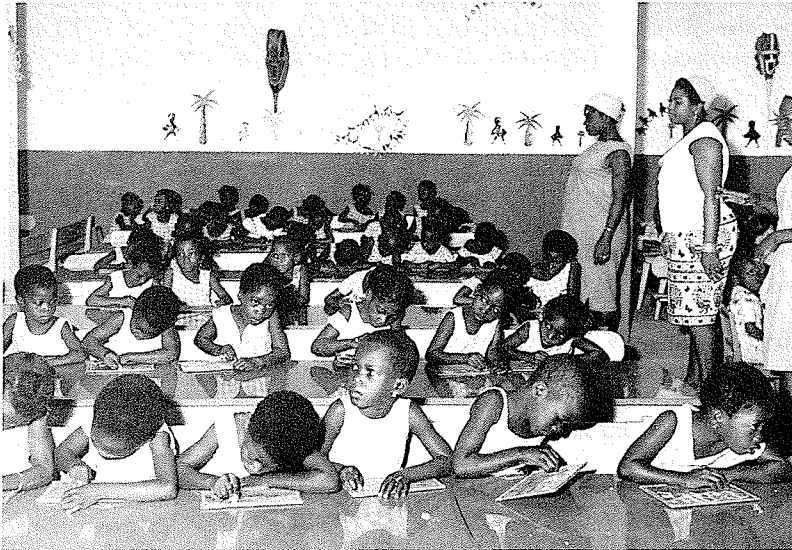
It is also on its way to becoming Africa's chief producer of latex

rubber. Meanwhile, timber from the Ivory Coast's once-great hardwood stands remains a major export—at a cost, however. Trees 200 and 300 years old have been cut down to make bedroom furniture for Lyons and Marseilles; forests that once blanketed half the country now cover just three percent (just as the elephants are disappearing; the tusks that gave the land its European name are still sought by poachers).

Light industry, too, has grown; notably in textiles, shoes, and cement, local production is supplanting imports (albeit at high prices). In short, the Ivorians have done what all the other newly independent Black Africans talked about but none, except maybe the Kenyans, ever did.

"The nation's Number One peasant," as Houphouët calls himself, started out with land inherited from an uncle and got rich as a coffee planter long before independence. Subsequently, he became the country's leading producer of pineapples, avocados, and poultry. One engine of the economy over which he presides is a kind of farmer-government partnership. Under the state marketing system, the government purchases the farmers' output at a fixed price and sells it abroad for more. The growers get a guaranteed cash income, which has risen over the years and has never been allowed to fall even when world prices have sagged. And in turn, the system provides revenue for the government.

The money helps pay for the improvements by which progress is measured in Africa. In the rural villages, where more than half of Ivorians live, there are telecommunications lines, paved roads, and run-



Ivorians are taught French, the official language, from the first grade. Theirs is a young nation: Life expectancy, while above the 30-38 years of 1956-58, is still only 52. (The average for all of sub-Saharan Africa: 48).

ning water for the one-room huts. In 1966, Abidjan alone had a water system; now over 235 localities do. There are more than 2,500 miles of paved roads, six times the 1966 number. Television reaches a third of the nation, bringing not only French films and French news broadcasts relayed by satellite but also American sitcoms. (What Ivoirians make of such fare as "Diff'rent Strokes," which deals with some Harlem children adopted by a white Park Avenue widower, is unclear.)

Meanwhile, the government is able to spend four times as much on education as it does on its military forces, in part because France shoulders much of the Ivory Coast's defense burden.*

Debt, Drought, Blackouts, Bailout

The "Ivorian tree" draws many outsiders. Today, the largest non-African presence is not the French but the Lebanese Christians: Numbering about 190,000, up tenfold just since 1975, they dominate domestic commerce. People from other African nations make up as much as a fourth of the population. (The closest African parallel is South Africa, where, apartheid notwithstanding, the wages paid by the gold and diamond mines attract thousands of black workers from other countries.)

To other Africans, Ivorian wages—the minimum for urban workers is \$5 a day—are compelling. There are so many Ghanaians in Abidjan that one district is called Koumassi, the French spelling for Ghana's second city. In the month it takes a cook to earn \$65 in Benin, he can pocket \$165 in the Ivory Coast. Immigrants may earn \$800 in a season on an Ivorian plantation or factory. When they drift back to the millet fields of Mali or the idleness of Guinea, they carry radios, shirts, and cans of cooking oil, goods often unavailable at any price at home.

It is not only labor that brings a cash reward. Herders may be seen leading livestock from inland Burkina Faso and Mali along the shoulders of the roads to Abidjan, or resting in the plains near the airport, amid dust stirred by bulldozers readying sites for new factories, offices, and roads. Because demand is steady and prices are high at the Abidjan slaughterhouses, a journey of many days to them is worthwhile.

Outsiders arrive in such numbers that in 1983 the government began requiring foreign residents to obtain identity cards. Yet the Ivory Coast has no plans to become yet another African country attempting to impose severe restrictions on entry.

But prosperity is never permanent. After the 1976–77 commodities boom pushed the world price of coffee and cocoa to record levels, a plunge ensued. Still, the Ivory Coast's spending on development re-

*The Ivory Coast's armed forces include 7,720 men in an army that boasts five light tanks and 52 other armored vehicles; a coastal navy; an air force with six German-made Alpha ground-attack jets; and a 3,600-man national *gendarmerie* (police force) under military command. External security is provided primarily by an agreement, dating to 1961, that French forces will deal with any aggressors. A unit of some 300 French troops based near Abidjan's airport can be reinforced by jet transport from France or from other African countries, where French forces totaling some 21,000 men are still stationed.

ABIDJAN: 'SO CLOSE TO AFRICA'

"Abidjan is very nice," goes an Ivorian wisecrack, "and so close to Africa."

Indeed, the city on the Ébrié Lagoon does have a First World look. Office towers bear such names as Datsun and Shell. There are fine restaurants, and boulevards named for Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand. Newsstands carry *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*, flown in from Paris. Supermarkets stock French food and wines (one store has such American fare as El Paso taco sauce and Aunt Jemima pancake mix). Water-skiers skim the bay between the affluent Plateau area and the "Beverly Hills of Abidjan," Cocody. There, wealthy Europeans and Ivorians (including the president) have homes, and the Hôtel Ivoire maintains tropical Africa's only ice-skating rink.

The Frenchmen who in 1898 recommended the lagoon as a "salubrious site" for settlement would be surprised that some 2,000,000 people reside there 90 years later. When engineers arrived in 1903 to build a rail line to the interior, the only residents were a few hundred fishermen living in reed huts.

Abidjan's boom began after 1950, when a canal opening the lagoon to the sea was completed. The city became a shipping hub for West and Central Africa, and a manufacturing center; for a time, it boasted a Renault plant.

Most Abidjanis live in teeming districts like Treichville, where the first railway workers settled. They now vie for jobs with some 500,000 African immigrants. Still, central Abidjan is without the shantytowns that mar such capitals as Niger's Niamey and Gambia's Banjul. Days begin much as Ivorian novelist Bernard Dadié wrote: "The air brightened . . . stores opened, people went to their work. Cyclists argued the right-of-way with taxi drivers and with the pedestrians . . ." Evenings bring soccer fans to matches at the Félix Houphouët Stadium. Well-to-do Europeans and Ivorians play the Riviera golf course or repair to the Club Méditerranée or a private resort down the coast.

Visiting Abidjan in 1980, Pope John Paul II decided that the problem Ivorians faced was not poverty, but being "consumed with materialism."



mained high. Foreign debt soared near \$6 billion and in 1980, for the first time, Houphouët had to go to the International Monetary Fund for help. French civil servants were brought in to oversee spending by government ministries, with virtual line-item veto powers; 27 parastatals that had become mired in graft and inefficiency were pared down, sold off, or just eliminated. ("The state is never the best industrial manager," Houphouët conceded.)

Then, during the early 1980s, a drought cut hydroelectric power, which remains vital even though offshore oil deposits were discovered during the 1970s, and now supply about a third of the country's petroleum needs. Abidjan factories suffered blackouts, and Ivoirians began lamenting *la conjoncture*, the combination of woeful circumstances.

Out of His Mind

The Ivorian "miracle" has had critics, inside Africa and out.

A complaint voiced by some Western academics and Ivoirians is that Houphouët's reliance on export markets has yielded "growth without development," which benefits only the old African planter bourgeoisie and a "new class" of black politicians and bureaucrats. Indeed, as political scientist Crawford Young has noted, the Ivory Coast has not fostered private local capitalism to the extent that Kenya and Nigeria have. And wide income gaps do exist—between the prospering south and the poorer north, between urban wage-earners and farm laborers, between industrial Abidjan and everywhere else. Nonetheless, as Young observes, the gaps do not appear to be as yawning as they are in other African countries, and even immigrant plantation hands in the Ivory Coast are able to send money home.

That *Houphouëtisme* is just neocolonialism—black façade, white control—was always the view from Guinea, where Touré's press sneered at the Ivoirians as "de Gaulle's niggers." To Africa's new breed of younger, more radical leaders, Houphouët came to seem an anachronism: too paternal, too French, too bourgeois; not a revolutionary.

Certainly, on some issues, Houphouët stood well apart from his peers. The 1960–63 tumult in Zaire, the former Belgian Congo, and the 1967–70 civil war in Nigeria stirred the fears of many African leaders that their own tribally fragmented nations could unravel, that the boundaries left by the Europeans—the "scars of history," Houphouët called them—could tear open.* Yet the Ivorian supported Moïse Tshombe's breakaway attempt in the Congo's Katanga province, and backed the Biafran rebellion in Nigeria, giving refuge to Gen. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Ibo commander, when the revolt failed. And, like many young Afri-

*The charter of the 51-nation Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, affirms the independence and sovereignty of the African states. To a remarkable extent, the boundaries established during the colonial era have held firm. Yet OAU attempts to mediate the Biafran secession in Nigeria and civil war in Chad during the 1980s failed.

can nations, the Ivory Coast accepted Israeli technical aid, but, unlike his peers, Houphouët did not rush to break relations with Israel when pressure from the Arabs rose. He did not relish "betraying friends." Although he did take the step in 1973, relations were restored in 1985.

Nowhere has Houphouët stood more alone than on South Africa.

Only one black nation, Malawi, a former British colony and neighbor of South Africa, has diplomatic relations with Pretoria; virtually none admit to doing business with the white minority government there, although much back-door trade goes on.* Houphouët's sin was to propose dealing openly with the white regime, engaging in a "dialogue" to avoid racial conflict that would surely invite Soviet interference. In 1971, Houphouët created a sensation by announcing that he would go to Pretoria himself to meet with then-prime minister John Vorster. From Dar es Salaam came a typical reaction: The Tanzanian government press wondered aloud if he was out of his mind.

Renoirs on the Walls

That year, an official Ivorian delegation, without Houphouët, was received with great pomp in the South African capital. And twice subsequently, outside South Africa, Houphouët did confer privately with Vorster. However, diplomatic relations were never established.

In personal style as well, Houphouët did not seem the typical Black African leader. A small, stocky, soft-spoken man, a Catholic who never drinks or smokes, he was not one to flaunt his Africanism with symbolic trappings, such as the fly-whisk of Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta or the leopard-skin cap of Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko. He eschewed the military garb of Uganda's Idi Amin or Liberia's Samuel K. Doe.

Preferring black Homburg hats and, usually, even in the hottest weather, three-piece European-tailored suits, Houphouët explained that for him to wear the loose, comfortable toga-like dress of his own Baule people would be to slight the Ivory Coast's many other ethnic groups; he was the president of all.

Nor did he affect the grand titles and sobriquets used by leaders such as Ghana's Nkrumah (the *Osagyefo*, or Redeemer) and Zaire's Mobutu ("all-powerful warrior, who because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake"). The names that Ivorians have had for Houphouët—*le Vieux* (the Old Man) or, in the Baule language, *Nana* (Grandfather)—suggest a more human regard for him, and for his role.

On a current reggae album by the Ivorian star Alpha Blondy, there is a song, *Jah Houphouët*, wishing long life to Nana Boigny:

*Kenya buys South African maize, which it says comes from Mozambique; Zambia buys South African beef, which it says comes from Botswana; Gabon buys South African construction equipment, which it says comes from Europe. Zaire gets half its imported food from South Africa; the bulk of landlocked Zimbabwe's trade goes through South African ports.



Some of Black Africa's founding fathers (clockwise from top left, with years of rule): Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah (1957-66); Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta (1964-78); Guinea's Sékou Touré (1958-84), here visiting Ronald Reagan in Washington in 1982; Tanzania's Julius Nyerere (1964-85); and Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor (1960-80), one of the few African leaders to retire of his own volition.

He's bled himself white for us,
 his grandchildren;
 He's devoted his life to us,
 his little ones . . .

Not quite. In 1983, *le Vieux* admitted publicly that he had salted away "billions" of CFA francs in a Swiss bank ("What sensible man wouldn't?")—but he had also, he took care to note, kept billions in the Ivory Coast. His summers continued to be divided between an estate in Switzerland and an apartment in Paris. He fathered four children during a rare mixed marriage to a Muslim woman in his youth; he met his second wife, Marie-Thérèse, when his son was courting her. And early in his regime, he began transforming his native village, Yamoussoukro, into what has been described as an "African Versailles."

While the government still operates out of Abidjan, in 1983 the national capital was officially moved to Yamoussoukro, which now has a population of 150,000. Its centerpiece, approached by an eight-lane highway, is Houphouët's walled palace. Gold-painted statues of rams flank

the gates; a moat within contains crocodiles that are fed live chickens every afternoon. The marble palace has carpets given by the Shah of Iran; Renoirs and Chagalls are on the walls. Nearby is a 36-hole golf course. Construction continues on a basilica that will accommodate 18,000 people inside and another 300,000 in an adjacent square.

For all his expansive living, Houphouët has stayed close to his roots in the Ivorian interior. For the first 20 years of his presidency, he took the country's independence day celebrations on a circuit, staging them in a different region each year, passing out favors, hearing complaints, complimenting the village elders. His performance was that of the tribal chief that, in fact, he had become as a young man. Although a Christian, in speeches he liked to call up the world of the spirits—the occult beings with whom some African animists deal via mystics called *marabouts*—who are so much a part of his countrymen's everyday lives.*

A Tropical Tammany Hall

Houphouët once likened himself to the denizen of his palace moat: "I am like the crocodile. I sleep with my eyes open."

Ivorians could believe that.

His political machine, the PDCI, remained as much under his personal control as ever. In one brusque demonstration of where the power still lay, Houphouët, then in his late seventies, chose the party congress as an occasion to sack the secretary-general, Philippe Yacé, and announced his dismissal from the dais; it was the first that Yacé, seated just below Houphouët, had heard of it. Ivorians say he was stunned (in Guinea, Yacé might have ended up with a rope around his neck).

With the party running the press, Houphouët was spared any trouble from that quarter too. Foreign newsmen have always been free to enter the country—no small privilege in present-day Africa—and write what they pleased. Houphouët enjoyed talking with them, and once held court for an international group of journalists for five hours.

What appears on Ivorian newsstands is another matter. The PDCI paper, *Fraternité Matin*, slickly produced in Abidjan on modern equipment, is the Ivory Coast's main daily. It offers lurid crime reporting, but its approach to sensitive political areas might best be described as aggressively noninvestigative journalism. The minister of information has described government information policy thusly: "Censorship is nonexistent. There's only one rule: 'Don't stick your nose in other folks' business.'" (Last year, the popular weeklies of the *Jeune Afrique* group, published in Paris, were summarily banned in the Ivory Coast.)

*Most Ivorians are animists. Close to 25 percent, concentrated in the north, are Muslim. Among urban, literate, middle-class southerners, including the bulk of those who hold important positions in government and elsewhere, Christianity predominates; most Christians (roughly 15 percent of the population) are Roman Catholics, like Houphouët, but there are also many Methodists. During World War I, a barefoot Liberian Methodist preacher named William Wadé Harris won thousands of converts by inveighing against idolatry, fetishism, adultery, theft, and lying. "Harrist" churches remain today.

Since before independence, Houphouët's justification for a one-party regime had been that it was the only unifying mechanism possible in a tribally divided country. In France, he once explained, the Socialist Party could encompass Bretons and Corsicans alike, but in the Ivory Coast "if we enter into multi-party politics, we are going to have a Baule Party, a Bété Party We do not want that."

Here, Houphouët has not been alone. Zimbabwe, another country with sharp tribal divisions, had been one of the last African states with a recognized opposition party. But that party, ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo, last year merged into the government party, ZANU, of Nkomo's old rival for power, President Robert Mugabe.

With the PDCI, Houphouët did fairly well at enveloping and muffling tribal claims. He did so partly by judicious distribution of patronage, in a fashion that has been likened to Tammany Hall's division of Democratic Party patronage among New York's turn-of-the-century ethnic groups. Also, he kept enlarging the pie to be sliced.

The number of seats in the National Assembly, 85 in 1960, was stepped up regularly. In 1980, the practice of submitting a single slate for voter ratification, common under Communist or revolutionary regimes, was dropped: The PDCI lists were thrown open to intraparty competition. That year, some 650 candidates campaigned for 147 seats; of 80 members of the old assembly running for re-election, 53 were retired by the voters.

Breaking Jaws

In 1985, grass-roots participation in the PDCI's workings was encouraged with the formation of 10,000 village committees to select 235 regional party satraps, and with the directive that 97 more municipalities (for a total of 176) would have mayoral elections. The National Assembly was expanded again, to 175 members; this time half were newcomers. Houphouët, as usual the sole presidential candidate, was re-elected to a sixth five-year term—as usual, with almost 100 percent of the vote.

Houphouët did not entirely squelch ethnic conflict. In 1959, the country's Agni group, related to the Ashanti of Ghana, invoked a treaty signed with France 116 years earlier and tried to secede; the French obligingly arrested the Agni envoys to Paris and shipped them back to Abidjan. In 1970, there was a clash between dissident Bété villagers and Ivorian police at Gagnoa, where families were being resettled after construction of a hydroelectric project. One policeman was killed. The army intervened savagely, shooting and bulldozing into mass graves victims numbering in the hundreds, and perhaps thousands. Houphouët's personal role in the episode is unclear. It is also unclear whether French paratroops aided the Ivorian army.

As elsewhere in Africa, political turbulence among Ivorian teachers and university students, particularly those who have studied abroad, has

GETTING AND SPENDING

In 1962, Houphouët-Boigny's regime enacted a law: Citizens were no longer permitted to mark themselves with tattoos, ritual scars, and filed teeth.

The aim was to suppress differences among ethnic groups and foster a sense of being "Ivorians." Ethnically, the nation is, as one scholar says, "a total accident." Probably none of the 25 or so major groups—the largest are the Agni, the Baule, the Dan, the Malinké, and the Sénufo—account for more than 15 percent of the population. All arrived from other areas. Indeed, the Sénufo and Mandingo extend into Mali and Burkina Faso; the Agni are related to the Ashanti in formerly British Ghana. Some Agni so admire their Ashanti kin, "*les Anglais*," that they buy English bicycles, clothes, and beauty products.

Historically, the groups have had predominance in certain areas—the Malinké, Sénufo, and Diula in the north, the Baule in the center, and the Agni in the southeast. But these patterns are blurring. One reason is urbanization; the Ébrié, indigenous to the Abidjan area, make up less than 10 percent of the city's population. A greater agent of change has been the cash economy.

Once, any "stranger" was a rarity. If he entered another group's territory, he might be held as a slave. But with the introduction of cash-crops by the French, many "strangers" moved to the new coffee and cocoa plantations in the southeast, aiming to make some money and find a future. Today, a farm laborer (the preferred term is "contractual worker") might move up to be an *abou-san* farmer, or sharecropper. Beyond that, ambitions vary.

Of the three major groups whose youths venture south to find plantation work, the Mossi are most likely to return; they come from what they regard as a higher civilization in Burkina Faso. A Mossi will work as a laborer—and even affect Islam if his employer is a Muslim Diula—to earn enough "to return home without shame." The Baule takes farm work in hopes of becoming a planter himself, or a merchant or artisan. The Diula, coming from a long line of traders, is West Africa's model of mobility; he aims to climb from *abou-san* worker to landowner or merchant. He will send money to his home village, but will not return except to visit, every few years, with his growing family.

What are the *employers'* ambitions? If he is an Agni, he is at heart an aristocrat. An Agni planter may, as he prospers, become a trader, a storekeeper, a moneylender, or a kind of "bush lawyer." His son will become a civil

been a constant. The 25-year-old University of Abidjan has often had student strikes; higher education seems to stir higher resentments.

But against his regime, Houphouët said in 1980, "there never has been a plot in the Ivory Coast, or threat of a coup d'état." A frequent claim of the president's, it brought a sarcastic rejoinder from a vocal Ivorian critic, Laurent Gbagbo, the twice-jailed former director of Abidjan's Institute of African History, Art and Archaeology. From exile in Paris, Gbagbo wrote: "It's only that every time Houphouët felt he didn't have the situation in hand in this sector or that, he himself invented a 'conspiracy,' designated the 'authors,' and had them arrested."

servant, and own a farm on the side. If he is lucky, the son may rise further and become a cabinet member or win a seat in the National Assembly or on the judiciary. These are the Ivoirians at the top; their salaries and expense accounts permit a modern house in Abidjan (and a second place in the home district), autos, imported food, and foreign travel.

In the countryside, most households produce what they consume. Yet the cash economy reaches here too. Even in remote areas, where families build their huts and cook outdoors, markets offer soap, canned food, and imported cloth and liquor. And there are status items—refrigerators, bicycles, cars—that subsistence farmers want, even if it means working for wages for a time.

One curb on individual prosperity is the tradition of sharing with the extended family. A salary meant to support four people may have to cover a dozen. And when relatives crowd in, blocks of new housing become slums.

Ivoirians are not big savers. And while a social-security system exists, families are expected to provide the prime safety net. Only job-holders qualify for retirement benefits, workmen's compensation, and the nation's French-style family allowances, intended to help workers with children.

In part because of the pull of cash, polygamy and the "bride price" have been hard to eradicate. Both were ostensibly abolished by a Civil Code adopted in 1964. But because it provides a "birth grant" for the first three children, the family allowance system has been known to spur Ivoirian men to take additional wives just to obtain more grants. And in a money economy, bride prices may be more likely to rise than fade away. Among the forest folk of the southwest, dowries were once so high that men had to wait years to marry. This was a problem because, by local custom, subsistence farms were tilled only by wives. Unable to have a farm without a spouse, many youths had to leave their villages and work on plantations to earn enough to take a wife.

In such ways, the cash economy has operated to reinforce the virtues listed in the Ivory Coast's motto: "Union, Discipline, Work."



Perhaps so. But in sharp contrast to neighboring Guinea, Liberia, and Ghana, the Ivory Coast has not witnessed an execution since independence. As a boy, Houphouët has said, he swore on the sacrificial tree of his Baule ancestors that he would never shed human blood; and of all the death sentences issued over the years as a result of various alleged plots, not one was carried out. Indeed, in most cases, the resolution has been relatively benign—commutation of the most severe sentences, followed by eventual amnesty.

One who was condemned was Jean-Baptiste Mockey, a former PDCI secretary-general and National Assembly president. Houphouët

released him, befriended him, attended his daughter's wedding, and restored him to the cabinet as minister of health. To a U.S. visitor, Houphouët explained, "To pardon an enemy is to break his jaws. He can no longer hurt you."

An illustration of this tactic is the so-called Boka affair, which, though long past, remains fresh in Ivorians' memories.

The 'Black Diet'

Shortly after New Year's 1963, a new state security court was established. Within days, in the aftermath of the murder of Sylvanus Olympio, president of nearby Togo, by a band of ex-servicemen—it was Black Africa's first coup d'état—Houphouët staged a party purge. The court jailed 129 persons, and 13 were condemned to death. The chief justice, Ernest Boka, resigned in protest. The next year Boka too was inculpated and died in prison—a suicide, it was claimed.

In a long public address explaining that Boka had confessed in writing, then hanged himself by his pajama pants in the shower of his cell, Houphouët charged the jurist with having been tempted by advice from the spirit world (via *marabouts*) into plotting the murder of the chief of state who blocked his way to power. Displayed in proof were miniature coffins, allegedly seized from Boka, containing Houphouët's effigy. (It was not the first time Houphouët charged that fetishes were being used against him; in 1959 he claimed to have found in his Yamoussoukro quarters the severed head of a black cat, with a cow's horn clutched in its jaws, placed there by his enemies.)

Following Boka's death, the state security court was reorganized and an additional 96 plotters were tried. This time poisoned arrows were allegedly the proposed murder weapons. Just as 1964 ended, six more death sentences were handed down (Mockey's among them), but as with the previous trials, the executions were stayed.

In 1967, on the occasion of his aunt's funeral, Houphouët declared an amnesty (in the funeral oration, he also explained that he was violating family tradition by not offering human sacrifices). And in 1971, he invited all the former Boka affair prisoners to Yamoussoukro and professed his friendship; their ordeal was all the fault of his overzealous security chief, he declared.

From the outside, Houphouët never faced serious trouble. Accusing the Russians of subverting Ivorian students, he closed down the Soviet Embassy in 1969 for more than a decade. From Guinea, of course, came constant blasts: Radio Conakry reported that Houphouët had "bought a woman in Guinea," he had had Boka killed, he was a stooge of the imperialists—an African "Ngo Dinh Diem." Abidjan replied in kind, yet without the same personal invective against Touré.

In later years there was something of a rapprochement between the two leaders. In 1972, Houphouët paid a state visit to Guinea; in

1978, he and Touré attended an African summit in Liberia together.

By then, Sékou Touré was turning to the West. He grumbled that the Soviets were "more capitalistic than the capitalists," pointing to the \$25 million a year Guinea was paying Moscow for its early loans and "assistance." Three-quarters of what foreign exchange Guinea could count on was coming from Western consortiums' bauxite operations.

In 1978 Touré welcomed the French president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, to Conakry, affirming renewed relations with Paris. He traveled to the United States, where he marveled at the productivity of the Midwest's family-owned farms. In 1982 he called on President Ronald Reagan at the White House and courted Wall Street financiers. He started easing out of his alliance with Moscow and toned down his Marxist rhetoric; his philosophy became a more typically African mélange of socialism, nationalism, and Islam. Guinea's "economic police" were disbanded and contraband goods appeared in markets; some private firms were allowed to operate, prisoners were freed.

Where all this would have led is unknown. Touré was ill with heart trouble, and ever more distant from the few qualified aides left around him. In March 1984, he was flown aboard a Saudi plane to Cleveland, Ohio, for coronary surgery; he died on the operating table. Vice Presi-



All the amenities: Abidjan boasts an ice-skating rink; Yamoussoukro, the official capital, has a golf course, kept green by a costly watering system.

dent George Bush flew to Conakry for the funeral. The week after Touré's death, Guinean soldiers overthrew the caretaker government in a bloodless coup, abolished the Constitution, declared a Second Republic, and began the massive task of cleaning up. As the prisons were opened, the horror stories emerged of beatings and torture, of prisoners locked away without food or water—Guinea's infamous "black diet."

Sékou Touré had rejected de Gaulle's offer of continued ties to France; he had said his people preferred poverty over servitude. Guineans got poverty *and* servitude.

Heeding the Wise Men

Just as Guinea faced a reckoning after Sékou Touré, so will the Ivory Coast after Houphouët-Boigny. Such were the predictions in Paris and Abidjan as *le Vieux* neared his official 83rd birthday this October. For one thing, the economy's future is not assured, nor can it be in an agricultural country so dependent on volatile world demand for a few major commodities. Exchange rates present further complications; the rise of the dollar during the early 1980s increased the nation's debt-service load. Rescheduled again, beginning in 1984, the external debt is now over \$7 billion.

For all its agricultural wealth, the country does not feed itself. Many basic foods, notably rice and wheat, are imported. And young Ivoirians are not staying on the farm. A *retour à la terre* (return to the land) propaganda effort, coupled with a Peace Corps-type program employing university students to help improve village life, has not yet stemmed the exodus. Of those who come to the capital in droves, young educated folk—Ivoirians and immigrants from Guinea and elsewhere who have gone to the University of Abidjan—face a squeeze top and bottom. Below them are African immigrants from Mali, Burkina Faso, or Ghana who perform the menial jobs at cut-rate wages that Ivoirians scorn; above, in government offices and industry, are the French.

Here lies the potential for real trouble. "Ivorization," the progressive replacement of expatriates by Ivoirians, is the government's stated aim. The problem is its pace. Inevitably, Africans feel it is too slow. But Houphouët has declared that he did not want Ivorization "on the cheap," that is, before Ivoirians were qualified to take over.

Indeed, in Houphouët's own presidential entourage, most of those doing the real work of government are white. Those who play a protocolary role—appearing with Houphouët when he hosts foreign dignitaries, for instance—are black, or at least non-European.

What might happen after Houphouët, whether a xenophobic wave might sweep the French out, is the question. There has been little overt tension between Ivoirians and the French—a few incidents, but nothing like the antiforeign feeling that has boiled up in Abidjan, sometimes violently, against immigrants from African countries. If the French were

to withdraw, or be driven out, the resultant turmoil would not match that of Angola or Mozambique in 1975, when the Portuguese left overnight; the Ivory Coast now does have a substantial educated class of capable people. But there could be, among them, a rush for positions and for power, in which the tribal rivalries that Houphouët managed to contain would surely surface. The Ivorian army, although very much part of the system now, could get into the scramble too.

To a degree, the post-Houphouët era has already begun. During the 1980s, *le Vieux* was, as Ivorians noticed, slowing down with age. His speeches were getting shorter, his vacations abroad longer. (The fact that he could leave the country so often was always regarded as an indication of how secure his hold was.) This summer, the succession, more than ever, was Abidjan's topic A.

Various names were being advanced. One was Philippe Yacé, who returned to office in 1986 as president of the policy-making Economic and Social Council. Another was a long-time Houphouët protégé: National Assembly president Henri Konan Bédié, a former minister of finance and ambassador to the United States.

For once, Houphouët was not making the country's decision.

In 1980, when he was elected to his fifth term, he gave in to pressures from the French, and others who wanted political insurance for their investment in the country, and established a vice-presidency. In 1985, for his sixth term, the Constitution was re-amended and the office abolished; instead, the National Assembly president would act as interim head of state and PDCI leader, pending elections in 45 to 60 days.

So, Houphouët explained, African custom would be preserved: A new chief would not be chosen while the old chief was alive. "I listen to my people . . . wise old men from the heart of the country paraded before me, or sent me letters. They all reminded me that here, I am by custom the Chief; that we have principles that must be respected . . . They do not want a successor's name known while I am still in power."

But that successor, he thought, would have an easier time of it: "God will help us find the man who, tomorrow, will carry on my work—and with far greater facility, as it is much more difficult to lay out a path than to widen a road."

Perhaps.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE IVORY COAST

"Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at the present there is none; there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness . . . and darkness is not the subject of history."

That 1962 remark by Oxford's Hugh Trevor-Roper is often cited to show what little even scholars in the West knew of the "Dark Continent" until recently. As Michael Crowder notes in **West Africa Under Colonial Rule** (Northwestern, 1968), European colonists truly believed they were civilizing "a benighted people."

In the most complete survey of the subject in English, the two-volume **History of West Africa** (Columbia, 1972-73) edited by J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, Thurstan Shaw traces "the misfortune of Africa" to 3,000 B.C., when final drying out of the Sahara began.

The desert blocked the spread of the Bronze Age Egyptians' innovations—writing, mathematics, the wheel. Not until camel transport became common 3,000 years later did the Sahara barrier fall. Sub-Saharan Africa did have an Iron Age. It probably began in West Africa: Slag deposits—some in the Ivory Coast—testify to the making of metal farm tools and weapons. These allowed the rise of expansive societies—e.g., the Mali Empire, which peaked during the 14th century, and the Songhai Empire, which flourished in what is now Mali, Niger, and Nigeria until a 16th-century invasion from Morocco destroyed it.

As John Ralph Willis writes in **The Horizon History of Africa** (American Heritage, 1971), Islam, which Arabs brought to North Africa, was carried south of the Sahara by Mande-Diula traders. In the Ivory Coast, Bondoukou and Kong were founded as Muslim towns around the start of the 15th century. But Muslims did not bring civiliza-

tion. When they came, "a well-arranged system of commerce" was in place.

The Europeans, when *they* arrived, faced not only organized societies—such as the Ashanti and Dahomey kingdoms, founded during the 17th century—but also another foreign influence, Islam.

Yet, as Crowder notes in **Colonial West Africa** (Cass, 1978), the only West Africans to defeat the Europeans soundly in more than one major battle were the Ashanti in the Gold Coast, who won two of eight clashes with the British beginning in 1823. Tribal rivalries, poor weapons, and superstition (mostly, the Africans dared attack only by day) were fatal military flaws.

In **France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule** (Yale, 1972), edited by Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, Gifford and Timothy Weiskel deal with colonial education.

Africans could not be Frenchmen: A 19th-century authority, Gustave Le Bon, said that "a Negro" will get "all the diplomas possible without ever arriving at the level of an ordinary European." So Africans were just taught to respect the French. Thanks to them, read one text, "the exertions of the little tyrannic powers have given way to the good works of regular and stable administration."

Other colonial histories are John D. Hargreaves' two-volume **West Africa Partitioned** (Univ. of Wisc., 1974); Edward Mortimer's **France and the Africans, 1944-1960: A Political History** (Walker, 1969); and Dorothy White's **Black Africa & De Gaulle: From the French Empire to Independence** (Pa. State Univ., 1979).

In **False Start in Africa** (Praeger, 1969), René Dumont forecast enduring poverty for the new nations. One cause: Africa's "balkanization" into many states, each with a "bourgeoisie of the civil service." West Africa alone had

“several hundred cabinet ministers, and several thousand members of parliament”—paid in six months what a peasant earns in a “lifetime of hard labor.”

Dumont’s forebodings proved all too accurate, suggests Martin Meredith’s **First Dance of Freedom: Black Africa in the Postwar Era** (Harper, 1985). A generation after independence, Africa’s future is discussed “only in pessimistic terms.” Its ills include “a form of personal rule exercised in an arbitrary and authoritarian manner.”

Most all the former French, British, Belgian, and Italian colonies had democratic constitutions. Yet, Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg note in **Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant** (Univ. of Calif., 1982), the nations’ economic woes and scant political experience made governance “more a matter of seamanship and less one of navigation—that is, staying afloat rather than going somewhere.” What arose was not Western democracy but leaders who had to devise “personal systems of governance in the absence of effective institutions.”

The authors define the prevalent leader type as the *Prince*—men such as Kenya’s Jomo Kenyatta and Senegal’s Léopold Senghor, who ruled via other oligarchs. A Prince presides; an *Autocrat*—the Ivory Coast’s Houphouët-Boigny, Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko—commands. “The country is his estate.”

Other leader types are the *Prophet* (visionaries, such as Guinea’s Sékou Touré, who seek to remake society) and the *Tyrant*. The latter has been rare, despite such despots as Equatorial Guinea’s Francisco Macías Nguema and Uganda’s Idi Amin, whose “state of blood” (1971–79) may have claimed 300,000 lives.

Crawford Young’s **Ideology and Development in Africa** (Yale, 1982)

examines the links between political style and economic success. As the 1960s began, many nations—Nigeria, Zaire, Cameroon, Malawi, the Ivory Coast—chose Western-style market economies, but the “African socialism” espoused by Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere got the attention. As that failed to bring progress, in 1969 Congo-Brazzaville’s military rulers set up a “Marxist-Leninist” regime. Somalia, Benin, and Madagascar followed, as did Angola, Mozambique, and other ex-Portuguese colonies.

Soon, nearly one in five African states were professing Marxist-Leninist ideals. Moscow became Africa’s major arms supplier. Still, notes Young, rapid growth remained elusive. The only black “Afro-Marxist” state to show “respectable” progress was Tanzania. The only countries to “stand out,” besides oil-rich Nigeria, were two “African capitalist” nations, Kenya and the Ivory Coast.

The ex-colonists’ ties to Black Africa are frayed. In **Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power, 1960–1980** (Yale, 1988), edited by Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch finds that true even of France. It still sends aid, but “no longer has an obvious commercial interest” in Francophone Africa. The ex-colonies account for only two percent of France’s imports and four percent of its exports; only a third of their exports go to France. With the Ivory Coast now struggling with debts, the former French colonies seem no better off than their neighbors.

Even so, the Ivorian achievement stands. Twenty years ago, Zaire’s Mobutu toured the land and its plantations. “Now that I’ve visited Houphouët and his country,” said the man who had won power in a military coup, “I wonder which of us is the real revolutionary.”

CURRENT BOOKS

SCHOLARS' CHOICE

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

THE CULTURE OF CAPITALISM

by Alan Macfarlane
Basil Blackwell, 1987
254 pp. \$34.95

A decade ago, Alan Macfarlane, a professor of historical anthropology at Cambridge University, published *The Origins of English Individualism*, an extended essay that provoked widespread scholarly debate about the character of English social development since the Middle Ages. The harsh critical response to that book has not caused Macfarlane to pause, much less retreat, from his pursuit of evidence that what he calls the culture of capitalism was established in England as early as the 12th and 13th centuries.

Macfarlane's controversial thesis posits an English exceptionalism. While other European societies would have to go through the crucible of revolution in order to become "modern," no radical changes were required of English law, economy, family, or social structure. The concept of transition from feudalism to capitalism may be appropriate in the case of the European continent, Macfarlane allows, but no similar discontinuity marks English history. Basing his conclusion on local records spanning several centuries, he asserts that there never was, and never could be, an English revolution. England was the one place on Earth equipped with all that was necessary for a capitalist version of modernity: an unfettered notion of private property, an already disenchanting view of the natural world, a family system that placed no barriers in the way of true love and individual ambition, even a sexuality liberated from the burdens of procreation and the risks of overpopulation.

Now, in a collection of lively and pointed essays, Macfarlane pursues a number of themes that have been central to his work. He is particularly determined to show that there never was such a thing as a peasantry in England, arguing that its smallholders have always acted like agrarian entrepreneurs, buying and selling land without sentimental regard for place, for community, or even for perpetuation of family. In his extended analysis of English family and kinship, he asserts that the English have always been ego-centered, indifferent to kin and ancestry, that their courtships have been based on romantic love from the Middle Ages onward, that parents had no interest in arranging the marriages of their children, and that marriage was always concerned with creating companionship rather than making children. In an extensive discussion of love, Macfarlane makes the case that the English have always been romantically inclined. Given a society where the market already reigned supreme and the bonds of kinship did not matter, it could not be otherwise: "Romantic love gives meaning in an otherwise dead and cold world."

The author goes on to argue that the English have never needed a

sexual revolution, for they have always separated sex from reproduction. Consequently, English women never required liberation. They are, he writes, "full, complete persons without children and they seem for many centuries to have had many roles and outlets—economic, social, and religious—which were independent of their reproductive ability."



In a fascinating chapter on ideas of nature, Macfarlane uses evidence of a precocious English fondness for gardening and pets as proof of a modern attitude of ambivalence toward land and animals. Equally suggestive is his assessment of English attitudes toward evil, which he believes were moderated early on by the pragmatic utilitarianism of a capitalist culture. Moral absolutes never pushed the English to the fanaticism that could be found on the continent or, for that matter, just a few leagues to the north in Scotland. Having never really believed in black magic, the devil, or even hell, they felt no need to burn witches, Jews, or Jesuits.

Given this inherited—almost genetic—modernity, England's history is without sharp breaks and great turning points. Macfarlane would have us reject what he calls the "revolutionary" view of English history, and erase all those old period markers—the Reformation, the English Civil War (1642–51), the Industrial Revolution—which suggest discontinuity. He is particularly scornful of those such as Christopher Hill and Eric Hobsbawm who work in the Marxist tradition, but he is also critical of liberals such as Lawrence Stone who refuse to smooth out the rough contours of the past. Yet this book would bring little comfort to those who romanticize the English past as the locus of long-lost communal and family values. These have had no place in what has been a "dead and cold world" from the Middle Ages onward.

Macfarlane's version of the English past would seem to appeal mainly to those who want to believe in Margaret Thatcher's vision of an English future. His book can, in fact, be read as an extended defense of present Tory policy. The new enterprise culture would seem to be the culmination of 700 years of peculiarly English development, although one wonders what is to be done about the Scots and Welsh with whom the English must now share a nationhood.

But the most troubling aspect of Macfarlane's work is the fact that his definition of modernity does not always square with English society as it is today. Take family and women as examples. If a mark of the modern outlook is indifference to family ties, why is it that family name and family heritage are so important to the English in the 1980s? And even if it could

be proved that a woman's identity was not yoked to childbearing during the 15th and 16th centuries, how can Macfarlane explain away the fact that recent studies have shown that maternity is generally regarded as the mark of "true womanhood" in England today? Perhaps there has been massive backsliding somewhere between the 16th century and now; perhaps England is unique in having moved away from rather than toward modernity. More likely, Macfarlane has pushed his thesis just a little too far, and, in misreading the present, has also distorted the past.

—John R. Gillis, '88

**WHOSE JUSTICE?
WHICH RATIONALITY?**
by Alasdair MacIntyre
Univ. of Notre Dame, 1988
410 pp. \$22.95

When Alasdair MacIntyre's last book, *After Virtue*, appeared in 1981, it was immediately recognized as a significant critique of liberal individualism, the foundation of Western moral thought for at least the last two centuries. MacIntyre, a philosopher at Vanderbilt University, charged that this moral tradition has consistently failed to provide a framework for evaluating competing moral claims. Affirming a variety of moral beliefs and practices (hence embraced by liberals and conservatives alike), it does not put forth a unified standard of conduct. As a result, the remnants of now defunct premodern beliefs and habits, the "simulacra" of older ethical traditions, guide moral actions.

All this, MacIntyre concluded, has made for a "moral calamity," expressing itself in nihilism or in ad hoc decision-making strategies. But what was to be done? MacIntyre proposed that the internal logic and tacit cultural assumptions of a specific moral tradition could alone offer a foundation for judging various moral claims. Yet in order to choose one traditional system of rationality over others, one must support one's choice with an account of the historical and cultural contexts in which various types of rationality originate and function.

In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, MacIntyre sets out to do precisely that, and he begins by making clear what he means by tradition. It is not, we learn, one long and essentially undifferentiated continuum.

MacIntyre defines it, specifically, as a temporally extended argument through which fundamental moral agreements are expressed, and that persists or is destroyed by internal criticism or historical assault. The four Western *traditions* he focuses on are the Aristotelian, the Augustinian, the Thomistic, and the Scottish Enlightenment.

Within the first of these traditions (which, like most others, was an amalgam of practices and beliefs, literary and religious as well as more strictly philosophical), justice was the balancing of the competing claims described by the poet Homer: on one hand, *arete*, or excellence for its own sake; on the other, success in a rule-governed contest. *Arete* was what made individual achievement possible, while justice-as-success was bound up with the realization of social goals. The ancient Greek *polis* incorporated both notions into its ideal of the good life.

Practical reason, as Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) conceived of it, determined both how to act when “good” was the goal *and* how to provide reasons for actions so that the goals of rival participants in a moral activity, or contest, could be realized. The skills of practical reason were first acquired by modeling one’s actions on the behavior of those already initiated into the moral practices of a just community. What was learned in this way were moral habits, which were then honed by repeated application of rules to a specific range of actions.

The widening Hellenistic and Roman worlds that succeeded the *polis* required a new moral tradition. As MacIntyre shows, this was to be a theologically broadened conception of justice embracing all rational beings under a single natural law. Judaic and early Christian teachings, combined with the ethical principles of the Stoics, helped shape the new thinking. The apostle Paul (A.D. 5?–67?), for example, found the claims of divine revelation compatible with natural law and applicable to all people, not merely to those of a specific community. But without the love of Christ, he taught, the Platonic form of justice was insufficient to bring about moral behavior. Extending this view, Bishop Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430) argued that only a reorientation of the individual’s will, assisted by divine grace, could achieve the true end of man, citizenship in the republic founded and ruled by Christ, the City of God.

The third tradition MacIntyre discusses is the Thomistic theology of the High Middle Ages. Benefiting from the recovery of certain long-lost Aristotelian texts, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) forged a powerful intellectual synthesis of Augustine’s psychology and Aristotle’s practical reason. Specifically, the Dominican monk used Augustine’s concept of will to interpret Aristotle’s arguments about the rational conclusion of deliberation: Since the will is free, Aquinas asserted, it is open to alternative contingent judgments. Aquinas, however, adhered strictly to the Augustinian position in arguing that the supreme good for human beings was the contemplation of God.

The road leading to our current moral disarray began, MacIntyre ar-

*David Hume**Thomas Aquinas*

gues, with the last tradition that he considers, the Scottish Enlightenment of the 18th century. This philosophical tradition emerged at a time when the Scots were working to keep their institutions free from English cultural and intellectual imperialism. Combining Dutch Calvinism (with its powerful admixture of Augustinian thought) with the Aristotelian notion of first principles in the sciences, the moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) claimed that people's actions have moral worth when they are governed by reason rather than by interest, advantage, or the passions, as some contemporary English philosophers held. At the same time, however, he accepted the view of the English empiricist, the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), that the passions are the springs of action and are not of themselves bad. Doing so, Hutcheson opened the way for a morality of sentiment, a breach into which his fellow countryman, David Hume (1711–1776), easily moved.

Although born and educated in Scotland, Hume was, at least until late in life, an ardent Anglophile who not only abandoned Edinburgh for Bristol but also repudiated his youthful Calvinism for 18th-century English aristocratic notions of ultimate worth—political moderation and “pride in houses and other such possessions, and in one's place within a hierarchy.” In the England of Hume's day, MacIntyre notes, law and justice had “as their distinctive function the protection of the propertied.” Taking the ethos of this hierarchically ordered society for granted, Hume could dismiss the lingering metaphysical or religious concerns with highest good or first principles. “All probable reasoning,” Hume argued, “is a species of sensation.” Furthermore: “When I am convinced of any principle 'tis only an idea, which strikes more strongly upon me.”

As long as the various passions (pride, hatred, love) were tethered to fixed social objects (property, family, hierarchy), the empiricist philosophy

of “ideas”—that is, ideas as products of sensation—could produce a coherent moral tradition. But as political and economic change replaced England’s relatively static aristocratic order with a more fluid egalitarian arrangement, the coherence was gradually lost. England, and indeed the rest of the modernizing Western world, acquired “unphilosophical” cultures in which individuals were free “to express and implement preferences.” Lacking any single notion of ultimate good, liberal individualism led inevitably to moral eclecticism, and the pursuit of justice became a strictly legal concern. As MacIntyre ruefully observes, “Lawyers, not philosophers, are the clergy of liberalism.”

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MacIntyre’s presentation of the philosophical reasoning behind several key Western moral traditions is a labor of careful explication. He not only demonstrates that rationality is a mode of inquiry that originates and develops in a specific community; he helps us understand how rationality works as a tradition’s ongoing creative reformulation of beliefs and institutions in response to concrete historical conditions. All this is of considerable value.

But MacIntyre’s thesis invites challenge on both historical and logical grounds. First, for all his interest in history, MacIntyre offers no philosophy of history to account for the breakdown of the specific traditions he discusses. Does Scottish moral philosophy founder because of the growing availability of private property, as Marxists might claim, or is the Augustinian-Aristotelian synthesis conceptually fragile, as rationalists think? Second, traditions are not spread out side by side, but bound up with one another, and bound up in a way that defies explanation if they are, as MacIntyre insists, comprehensible only from within. Third, it is naive, or at least wishful thinking, on MacIntyre’s part to suppose that a tradition can be brought to life without accounting for the effects of historical distance.

Most troubling of all, however, is a seam of irony that runs through MacIntyre’s entire argument: He attacks modern liberalism while at the same time profiting from its disinterested stance. Despite his strong preference for Thomism, MacIntyre refuses to station himself within that or any other tradition. He remains conceptually disaffiliated. And so while his diagnosis of what ails recent moral philosophy is brilliant, his manner of philosophizing from nostalgia ultimately proves unsatisfactory.

—*Edith Wyschogrod, '87*

NEW TITLES

History

THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM:

The Civil War Era

by James M. McPherson
Oxford, 1988
904 pp. \$35

RECONSTRUCTION: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877

by Eric Foner
Harper, 1988
690 pp. \$29.95



In his 1861 inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln promised to “hold, occupy, and possess” all federal property. His resolve was soon put to the test. Fort Sumter, South Carolina, a federal garrison, was awaiting resupply when the newly seceded Republic of South Carolina demanded its surrender. Five of Lincoln’s seven cabinet members urged him to abandon the fort, but Northern opinion mocked such timidity. “The bird of our country is a debilitated chicken, disguised in eagle feathers,” complained one New York lawyer. Compelled to act, Lincoln sent provisions, but it was too late. On April 14, the Confederacy seized the fort.

Following Sumter’s fall, the erstwhile United States embarked upon four years of civil warfare that would claim 620,000 American combatants’ lives—more than the combined totals of all the nation’s wars before and since.

In his masterful one-volume account, McPherson, a Princeton historian, undertakes to paint the broad social, political, and military panorama of what he calls “a war of peoples rather than of professional armies.” He gives particular emphasis—roughly one-third of the book—to events leading up to the war: the debates, the fears, the expectations. Amateurs engaged in a “glorious cause” soon came to see that they were involved in a “ghastly harvest of death,” but McPherson has no patience with the soft revisionist line that the main issue was not slavery. The “Union victory,” he notes, “destroyed the Southern vision of America and ensured that the Northern vision would become the American vision.”

But how—and how conclusively—would that vision be imposed on the defeated side? That is the question that Foner, a Columbia historian, asks in *Reconstruction*. At stake was the future of the four million ex-slaves and their descendants. To secure their civil rights and to destroy what Senator Charles Sumner called “the demon of Caste,” the Republican-controlled Congress embarked on a legislative crusade that eventually added the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution. The effort successfully created “the idea of a national citizenry whose common rights no state could abridge.”

Yet, despite the rhetorical and legislative

achievements of Reconstruction, Foner endorses W. E. B. Du Bois's gloomy assessment of its practical results: "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery." Even before Reconstruction ended in 1877, blacks were on their way to becoming a "disenfranchised class of dependent laborers." Economic depression in the early 1870s, the rejection of federally sponsored land reform, as well as factionalism and corruption among Southern Republicans were factors. But none of these, Foner concludes, would have "proved decisive without the campaign of violence that turned the electoral tide in many parts of the South, and the weakening of Northern resolve . . ." Almost 100 more years would pass before the lofty promises of Reconstruction would be fulfilled.

**HIDDEN HISTORY:
Exploring Our Secret Past**
by Daniel J. Boorstin
Harper, 1988
332 pp. \$19.95

In this collection of essays written over the past 40 years, Boorstin, former Librarian of Congress, opens, aptly, with a meditation on the elusiveness of the past. How, he asks, can one construct early American Puritans' "real" thoughts about religion when the chief text of compulsory education in 18th-century Massachusetts, *The New England Primer*, cannot be found? Honest historians must confront what Boorstin calls the "biases of survival" if they are to overcome "the bizarre miscellany which is our inheritance."

Elsewhere, in "The Therapy of Distance," he remarks upon the far-reaching effects of the simple fact that the American colonies were 3,000 miles from the mother country. Ireland struggled for independence too, but the "Atlantic Ocean proved a more effective advocate than all the constitutional lawyers of Ireland." America's revolution was unique in other respects: It was successful at first go, compared with France's serial revolutions of 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1870. The Republic's quick inception, and the Founding Fathers' basic agreement on principles, has resulted in a relative paucity of U.S. political theorizing.

If the Republic emerged almost pristinely, technology, as Boorstin shows, threatens to sully it. The "Graphic Revolution," by multiplying means of disseminating the printed word and images, has made advertising the real language of democracy. Promising everything to everybody, it has made

Americans "the first people in history to have a centrally organized, mass-produced folk culture." Popular culture could once be leaned on as a source of continuity, says Boorstin, but "the popular culture of advertising attenuates and is always dissolving before our very eyes." Among its other baneful effects: the replacement of leaders by "voices of the people," news by "pseudo-events," and heroes by "celebrities."

**THE POLITICAL
LANGUAGE OF ISLAM**

by Bernard Lewis
Univ. of Chicago, 1988
168 pp. \$14.95

Too often, claims noted orientalist Lewis, Westerners misinterpret events in the Islamic world because they understand neither the relevant history nor the language that Muslims use to describe them. Case in point: The Iranian revolutionaries in 1979 looked "to the birth of Islam as their paradigm," not to the cataclysms that shook France in 1789 or Russia in 1917. They sought not to create a new form of government but to restore a centuries-old ideal of Islamic order. When he returned from exile in France, Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolution's leader, was following the pattern of conquest of the Prophet Mohammed (A.D. 570?-632), who left Mecca for Medina, only to return again in triumph to Mecca.

The basic tenet of Islam is, indeed, the eventual conquest of the unbelieving infidels. During the life of the Prophet and his immediate successors, the dramatic spread of Islam throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia seemed to confirm a sense of destiny. But then came setbacks: the Crusades of the 11th century, the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, the imperial ventures of European powers in the 19th century. As each Muslim region struggled to cope with an infidel presence, the traditional political vocabulary underwent changes: A concept such as "nation," once understood to signify a unified society of believers, now came to mean an individual nation-state. Similarly, Islamic autocrats adopted limited parliamentary rule, constitutions, and other Western political practices and institutions.

The perceived failure of these Westernizing efforts has, in recent years, prompted "increasing numbers of Muslims . . . to look to their own past . . . to find a diagnosis for their present ills." But the Iranian Revolution and its aftermath proved that a reconstructed past never quite du-

plicates the past as it truly was. Muslims must decide whether to follow the Iranian example, or, as Lewis says, "find a better alternative, in order to return to the . . . Islam of the Prophet."

ADAM, EVE, AND THE SERPENT

by Elaine Pagels
Random, 1988
189 pp. \$17.95



Current attacks on Judeo-Christian morality have sent scholars in search of alternative moral strategies. Pagels, a Princeton professor of religion, suggests that we look to the past—to the first four centuries after Christ—to see how basic ideas regarding sexuality, freedom, and human nature were formulated. How did it happen, she asks, that by the end of this period a doctrine that had once celebrated human freedom had become one that stressed the bondage of original sin?

Pagels explains how major figures of the early church interpreted the Genesis story of Adam and Eve—from the Apostle Paul to Augustine of Hippo. Early on, when Christians were persecuted within the Roman Empire, they were buoyed by Jesus's promise of redemption and freedom from man's fallen condition. But as early as the third century A.D., orthodox Christians shunned the Gnostics for their loose, allegorical interpretation of the creation. Increasingly, Christians embraced the Apostle Paul's teachings, that sexuality was the source of man's sinful state. Zealous ascetics such as St. Anthony sought to regain prelapsarian innocence by rejecting the desires of mind and body. Finally, during the century after Emperor Constantine's conversion (A.D. 313), as Christianity became the established faith of the Empire, Bishop Augustine (A.D. 354–430) brought the understanding of Adam and Eve full circle: "Adam's sin not only caused our mortality," Pagels writes, "but cost our moral freedom, irreversibly corrupted our experience of sexuality . . . and made us incapable of genuine political freedom."

But Augustine's view did not hold sway in the West for 16 centuries simply because of its political utility. Pagels speculates that its power is paradoxical, a promise of freedom within unfreedom: Augustine attributed man's often miserable fate to a real and logical cause, the sins he willingly commits; at the same time, he attributed man's sinful nature to Adam and Eve's fall. The doctrine appeals, says Pagels, "to the human need to imagine ourselves in control, even at the cost of guilt."

Contemporary Affairs

**IN THE AGE OF THE
SMART MACHINE:
The Future of
Work and Power**
by Shoshana Zuboff
Basic, 1988
468 pp. \$19.95

In jargon that sometimes fogs her otherwise lucid argument, Zuboff, a professor at Harvard Business School, sketches one of the challenges of our most recent Industrial Revolution: "As the work of the sentient body is displaced by the newer demands of intellectual effort, who is to tell the 'white collars' from the 'blue collars'?"

The cause of this uncertainty is, of course, the "smart machines," the information technologies that have transformed the work routines of pulp-mill employees, Wall Street clerks, and insurance processors. Many industrial workers now have little or no direct physical contact with what is made; office clerks no longer perform on a single-task assembly line among peers. Such changes often lead to alienation and a sense of abstraction. But the fact that information technology "both accomplishes tasks and translates them into information" holds promise for greater job satisfaction: It enables workers to comprehend and even direct the entire production process.

Yet here lies the greatest challenge, says Zuboff. Will management allow workers to use their new-found knowledge and power, or insist on the rigid top-down hierarchy of command? Zuboff identifies the source of managers' anxiety—their own feeling of self-worth. After all, their traditional function is to serve as centers of information and decision-making. She argues, however, that organizational restructuring, with concentric rings of authority replacing the old ladder-like order, will benefit manager and worker alike. Zuboff supports her concept of "organizational integration" with several exhaustive case studies.

Arts & Letters

**HOGARTH TO
CRUIKSHANK:
Social Change
in Graphic Satire**
by M. Dorothy George
Viking, 1988
224 pp. \$39.95

Throughout the 18th century, England's graphic satirists lampooned the failings and abuses of their society with a broad brush. Yet modern viewers often mistake these brutal caricatures for charming period pieces, dismissing as gross exaggeration true portraits of the age's bottomless poverty and gargantuan excesses. However difficult to interpret, satirical prints—engraved and sold sepa-



rately to shock and amuse the rich in their drawing rooms and tavern patrons in their stews—remain the major pictorial record of the times.

In this handsome volume, first published 21 years ago, George, an English social historian, brought together prints from the Hogarth era (1720–64), the “golden age” of caricature under George III (1765–1810), and the Regency period (1810–35), the last ending with the advent of *Punch* magazine and illustrated journalism.

Products of the Age of Reason, artists such as George Cruikshank and William Hogarth condemned social abuses and called for reform, yet, catering to the superstitious masses, ridiculed “progress.” With no libel laws, everyone was fair game: young surgeons robbing graveyards (*The Anatomist Overtaken by the Watch Carrying off Miss W—in a Hamper*, W. Austin, 1773) or society dandies practicing the “art of not knowing people” (*The Cut Direct*, M. Egerton, 1827).

**COLUMBIA LITERARY
HISTORY OF
THE UNITED STATES**

Emory Elliott, general editor
Columbia, 1988
1263 pp. \$59.95

Robert Spiller, editor of the 1948 *Literary History of the United States*, maintained that “each generation must define the past in its own terms.” The *Columbia Literary History of the United States* handily meets the challenge. Not only does it reflect the “diversity, complexity, and contradiction” of critical opinion that has emerged during the past 40 years; it also manages to be both authoritative and provocative.

Without stinting on acknowledged masters such as Emerson and Faulkner, Elliott, the general editor of the volume, has broadened the scholarly canon to include previously neglected aspects of America’s rich literary heritage. Nontraditional media, such as songs and prayers, are given their due as influential expressions of national identity.

Women, minority, and ethnic writers’ contributions are given more than perfunctory nods. Wendy Martin’s essay on Emily Dickinson disputes previous “distorted” analyses that focus on the poet’s reclusiveness and its alleged causes (mental illness, repressed homosexuality). Robert Stepto finds that much criticism of black writers consigns them to “periods” or “movements,” assuming that their “significance is more social than literary.” Ignored, Stepto charges, are blacks’ stylistic contributions and diversity.



The volume is divided chronologically into five parts, but the editors resist imposing "an image of continuity." Indeed, the section on origins includes four essays examining the distinct yet complementary contributions of native American literature, the writing of early explorers, and the English and Puritan traditions. As a result, some unexpected congruities emerge: In both American Indian and Puritan culture, the concept of "literature" is fundamentally spiritual. For the native American, words are "magical," and a person who utters a prayer or recounts a tale "is dealing with forces that are supernatural and irresistible." To the Puritans, the "central emphasis was on the Word," and the sermon united both artistic and divine impulses.

Science and Technology

THREE SCIENTISTS AND THEIR GODS: Looking for Meaning in an Age of Information

by Robert Wright
Times Books, 1988
324 pp. \$18.95

Science and religion, like the lion and the lamb, seldom lie down together. But when a scientist stumbles upon a plausible unifying principle behind the world's workings—Darwin upon natural selection, say, or Einstein upon relativity—he transforms himself from searcher into believer. "The scientist," says Wright, an editor at *The New Republic*, "enthralled by the principle's power, tries to expand that power" and "looks everywhere for manifestations and affirmations of its unity."

The three scientists profiled in this wide-ranging book labor in different fields—Edward Fredkin in computer science, E. O. Wilson in sociobiology, and Kenneth Boulding in economics and general systems theory. But Wright sees in their individual efforts to find patterns of meaning in the physical, biological, and human worlds an intellectual convergence. Moreover, the language that best describes this convergence comes from the theory of information. The brainchild of Bell Laboratory scientist Claude Shannon, information theory reverses (or restates in a subtler way) the second law of thermodynamics, which holds that the amount of disorder, or entropy, in the universe increases over time. But according to Shannon, the more disorder within a system, the more information—and therefore, paradoxically, the greater potential for structure and order.

With calculated ingenuousness, Wright induces

his subjects to explain how their arcane labors relate to *What It All Means*. Hearing Fredkin explain how the universe is “governed by a single programming rule,” or Wilson elaborate upon “the evolutionary epic” of gene-culture interplay, or Boulding muse upon the rise of cultural diversity out of the division of labor, we feel as though we had wandered in on the ultimate bull session—with real geniuses as participants. This is science—and science writing—with a refreshingly human face.

**THE QUESTION OF
THE COMMONS:
The Culture and Ecology
of Communal Resources**
edited by Bonnie M. McCay and
James M. Acheson
Univ. of Arizona, 1987
439 pp. \$35



In 1968, ecologist Garret Hardin outlined the principles of a theory that he labeled the “tragedy of the commons.” According to Hardin, the world’s commonly held resources—e.g., air, oceans, fish, grasslands—were in danger because no one is motivated to take care of them. The “rational individual” is impelled to do only one thing: “to take as much as possible before someone else does.” Freedom and equality in the use of the “commons” condemns them to ruin.

Twenty years later, anthropologists McCay and Acheson, of Rutgers and the University of Maine, respectively, have assembled 18 essays by researchers in various fields examining different aspects of Hardin’s much-cited prediction. Their broadest conclusion: It is still too early to judge its general validity.

More immediately helpful are the objections that the contributors raise to various blurred distinctions and hidden assumptions in Hardin’s theory. For example, Hardin too quickly assumes that the terms “commons,” “communal activity,” and “communal tenure” mean roughly the same thing to all cultures. In many societies and subcultures, whether those of Maine lobstermen or Tigray farmers, access to the commons (lobsters in one case, fertile land and pasturage in the other) is limited by any number of natural or established restraints. Social pressures, whether formalized in law or religious taboos, prevent pure selfishness from prevailing.

In the industrialized West or in the jungles of the Third World, interdependence, communication, and cooperation can help lead to what the editors see as “less inexorably tragic outcomes” than Hardin anticipated.

Discovering Mexico

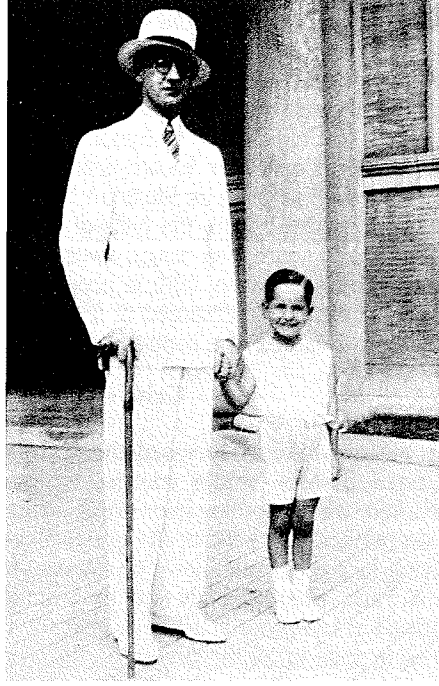
Novelist Carlos Fuentes has spent much of his life on the move. He has served as Mexico's ambassador to France and has been a visiting professor at numerous European and American universities. The son of a diplomat, he grew up in Panama, the United States, Chile, and Argentina. As a result, Fuentes explains, he learned "to imagine Mexico" before he really knew it. The experience proved invaluable. It taught him that the only worlds that remain new are those discovered by the imagination—the New Worlds of literature.

by Carlos Fuentes

I was born on 11 November 1928, under the sign I would have chosen, Scorpio, and on a date shared with Dostoyevsky, Crommelynck, and Vonnegut. My mother was rushed from a steaming-hot movie house in those days before Colonel Buendía took his son to discover ice in the tropics. She was seeing King Vidor's version of *La Bohème* with John Gilbert and Lillian Gish. Perhaps the pangs of my birth were provoked by this anomaly: a silent screen version of Puccini's opera. Since then, the operatic and the cinematographic have had a tug-of-war with my words, as if expecting the Scorpio of fiction to rise from silent music and blind images.

All this, let me add, took place in the sweltering heat of Panama City, where my father was beginning his diplomatic career as an attaché to the Mexican legation. Since he was a convinced Mexican nationalist, my father insisted that the problem of where I was to be born had to be resolved under another "sign": not of Scorpio but of the Eagle and the Serpent. The Mexican legation, however, though it had extraterritorial rights, did not have a territorial midwife, and the minister, a fastidious bachelor, would not have me suddenly appearing on the legation parquet. So if I could not be born in a fictitious, extraterritorial Mexico, neither would I be born in that even more fictitious extension of the United States of America, the Canal Zone, where, naturally, the best hospitals were. So, between two territorial fictions—the Mexican legation, the Canal Zone—and a silent close-up of John Gilbert, I arrived in the nick of time at the Gorgas Hospital in Panama City at eleven that evening.

Portrait of the artist as a young boy: Carlos Fuentes with his father, counselor of the Mexican Embassy, on the streets of Washington, D.C., in the early days of the Great Depression.



The problem of my baptism then arose. As if the waters of the two oceans touching each other with the iron fingertips of the canal were not enough, I had to undergo a double ceremony: My religious baptism took place in Panama, because my mother, a devout Roman Catholic, demanded it; but my national baptism took place a few months later in Mexico City, where my father, an incorrigible Jacobin and priest-hater to the end, insisted that I be registered in the civil rolls established by Benito Juárez. That I am a native of Mexico City for all legal purposes illustrates a central fact of my life and my writing: I am Mexican by will and imagination.

All this came to a head when my father was counselor of the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C., and I was growing up in the vibrant world of the American '30s, more or less between the inauguration of Citizen Roosevelt and the interdiction of Citizen Kane. When I arrived in the United States, Dick Tracy had just met Tess Truehart. As I left, Clark Kent was meeting Lois Lane. You are what you eat. You are also the comics you peruse as a child.

My father made me read Mexican history, study Mexican geography, and understand the names, the dreams, and the defeats of Mexico: a non-existent country, I thought, invented by my father to nourish my infant imagination; an Oz with a green cactus road, a landscape and a soul so

different from those of the United States that they seemed a fantasy.

A cruel fantasy: The history of Mexico was a history of crushing defeats, whereas I lived in a world, that of my D.C. public school, which celebrated victories, one victory after another, from Yorktown to New Orleans to Chapultepec to Appomattox to San Juan Hill to Belleau Wood: Had this nation never known defeat? Sometimes the names of U.S. victories were the same as Mexico's humiliations: Monterrey-Veracruz. Chapultepec. Indeed: from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli.

To the south, sad songs, sweet nostalgia, impossible desires. To the north, self-confidence, faith in progress, boundless optimism. Mexico, the imaginary country, dreamed of a painful past; the United States, the real country, dreamed of a happy future.

Grits Over Guacamole

Many things impressed themselves on me during those years. The United States—would you believe it?—was a country where things worked, where nothing ever broke down: Plumbing, roads seemed to function perfectly, at least at the eye level of a young Mexican diplomat's son living in a residential hotel on Washington's 16th Street, facing Meridian Hill Park, where nobody was then mugged, and where our superbly furnished seven-room apartment cost us 110 pre-inflation dollars a month. Yes, in spite of all the problems, the livin' seemed easy during those long Tidewater summers when I became perhaps the first and only Mexican to prefer grits to guacamole. I also became the original Mexican Calvinist, and an invisible taskmaster called Puritanical Duty still shadows my every footstep: I shall not deserve anything unless I work for it, with iron discipline, day after day. Sloth is sin, and if I do not sit down at my typewriter every day at 8:00 A.M. for a working day of seven to eight hours, I will surely go to hell. No *siestas* for me, alas and alack and *hélas* and *ay-ay-ay*.

The nation that Tocqueville saw destined to dominate over half the world realized that only a continental state could be a modern state; in the '30s, the United States had to decide what to do with its new power, and Franklin Roosevelt taught us to believe that the United States had to show that it was capable of living up to its ideals. I learned then—my first political lesson—that this idealism is the true greatness of the United States, not (the norm during my lifetime) material wealth, not power arro-

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gantly misused against weaker peoples, not ignorant ethnocentrism burning itself out in contempt for others. I saw a nation of boundless energy and the will to confront the great social issues of the times without blinking. It was a country identified with its own highest principles: political democracy, economic well-being, and faith in its human resources, especially in that most precious of all capital, the renewable wealth of education.

I saw the United States during the '30s lift itself from the dead dust of Oklahoma and the grey lines of the unemployed in Detroit, and this image of health was reflected in my life, in my reading of Mark Twain, in the movies and newspapers, in the North American capacity for mixing fluffy illusion and hard-bitten truth, self-celebration and self-criticism: The mad-cap heiresses played by Carole Lombard coexisted with Walker Evans's photographs of hungry migrant mothers, and the nimble tread of the feet of Fred Astaire did not silence the heavy stomp of the boots of Tom Joad.

My school—a state public school, nonconfessional and coeducational—reflected these realities and their basic egalitarianism. I believed in the democratic simplicity of my teachers and chums, and above all I believed I was, naturally, in a totally un-self-conscious way, a part of this world. It is important, at all ages and in all occupations, to be “popular” in the United States; I have known no other society where the values of “regularity” are so highly prized. I was popular, I was “regular” until a day in March—18 March 1938. On that day, a man from another world, the imaginary country of my childhood, the president of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, nationalized the holdings of foreign oil companies. The headlines in the North American press denounced the “communist” government of Mexico and its “red” president; they demanded the invasion of Mexico in the sacred name of private property, and Mexicans, under international boycott, were invited to drink their oil.

The Community of Time

Instantly, I became a pariah in my school. Cold shoulders, aggressive stares, epithets, and sometimes blows. Children know how to be cruel. And this was not reserved for me or for Mexico. At about the same time, an extremely brilliant boy of 11 arrived from Germany. He was a Jew and his family had fled from the Nazis. This young man, Hans Berliner, had a brilliant mathematical mind and he walked and saluted like a Central European. He wore short pants, high woven stockings, and Tyrolean jackets, and had an air of displaced courtesy that infuriated the popular, regular, feisty, knickered, provincial, Depression-era little sons of bitches at Henry Cooke Public School on 13th Street N.W.

I discovered that my father's country was real. And that I belonged to it. Mexico was my identity, yet I myself lacked an identity. Hans Berliner suffered more than I—headlines from Mexico are soon forgotten and another great issue becomes another 10-day media feast—yet he had an identity: He was a Central European Jew. I looked at the photographs of

President Cárdenas: He was a man of another lineage; he did not appear in the repertory of glossy, seductive images of the saleable North American world. He was a *mestizo*, Spanish and Indian, with a faraway, green and liquid look in his eyes, as if he were trying to remember a mute and ancient past. Was that past mine as well? Could I dream the dreams of the country suddenly revealed in a political act as something more than a demarcation of frontiers on a map or a hillock of statistics in a yearbook? I believe I then had the intuition that I would not rest until I came to grips myself with that common destiny that depended upon still another community: the community of time. The United States had made me believe that we live only for the future; Mexico, Cárdenas, the events of 1938, made me understand that only in an act of the present can we make present the past as well as the future: To be Mexican was to identify a hunger for being, a desire for dignity rooted in many forgotten centuries and in many centuries yet to come, but rooted here, now, in the instant, in the vigilant time of Mexico that I later learned to understand in the stone serpents of Teotihuacán and in the polychrome angels of Oaxaca.

Rugby, Ruskin, and Stiff Upper Lips

In 1939, my father took me to see a film at the old RKO-Keith in Washington. It was called *Man of Conquest* and it starred Richard Dix as Sam Houston. When Dix/Houston proclaimed the secession of the Republic of Texas from Mexico, I jumped up on the seat and proclaimed on my own and from the full height of my nationalist 10 years, "*Viva México! Death to the gringos!*" My embarrassed father hauled me out of the theater, but his pride in me could not resist leaking my first rebellious act to the *Washington Star*.

In the wake of my father's diplomatic career, I traveled to Chile and entered the universe of the Spanish language, of Latin American politics and its adversities. President Roosevelt had resisted enormous pressures to apply sanctions and even invade Mexico to punish my country for recovering its own wealth. Likewise, he did not try to destabilize the Chilean radicals, communists and socialists democratically elected to power under the banners of the Popular Front. In the early '40s, the vigor of Chile's political life was contagious: active unions, active parties, electoral campaigns all spoke of the political health of this, the most democratic of Latin American nations. Chile was a politically verbalized country. It was no coincidence that it was also the country of the great Spanish-American poets Gabriela Mistral, Vicente Huidobro, Pablo Neruda.

I only came to know Neruda and became his friend many years later. This King Midas of poetry would write, in a literary testament rescued from a gutted house and a nameless tomb, a beautiful song to the Spanish language. The Conquistadors, he said, took our gold, but they left us their gold: They left us our words. Neruda's gold, I learned in Chile, was the property of all. One afternoon on the beach at Lota in southern Chile, I saw

the miners as they came out, mole-like, from their hard work many feet under the sea, extracting the coal of the Pacific Ocean. They sat around a bonfire and sang, to guitar music, a poem from Neruda's *Canto General*. I told them that the author would be thrilled to know that his poem had been set to music. What author? they asked me in surprise. For them, Neruda's poetry had no author: It came from afar and had always been sung, like Homer's. I learned in Chile that Spanish could be the language of free men.

Chile offered me and the other writers of my generation in Santiago both a fragile, cornered language, Spanish, and one that preserved the Latin of our times, the lingua franca of the modern world, English. At the Grange School, a mini-Britannia under the awesome beauty of the Andes, José Donoso and Jorge Edwards, Roberto Torretti, the late Luis Alberto Heyremans and myself, by then all budding amateurs, wrote our first exercises in literature. We all ran strenuous cross-country races, got caned from time to time, and recuperated while reading Swinburne; we were subjected to huge doses of rugby, Ruskin, porridge for breakfast, and a stiff upper lip in military defeats. When Montgomery broke through at El Alamein, the assembled school tossed caps in the air and hip-hip-hoorayed to death. In South America, clubs were named after George Canning and football teams after Lord Cochrane; no matter that English help in winning independence led to English economic imperialism, from oil in Mexico to railways in Argentina. There was a secret thrill in our hearts: Our Spanish conquerors had been beaten by the English; the defeat of Philip II's invincible Armada compensated for the crimes of Cortés, Pizarro, and Valdivia. If Britain was an empire, at least she was a democratic one.

The Summer of '44

And here lay, for my generation, the central contradiction of our relationship with the English-speaking world: You have made universal the values of modernity, freedom, economic development, and democracy; but when we develop these values in Latin America in our own way within our own culture, your governments brand us Marxist-Leninist tools, side with the military protectors of a status quo dating back to the Spanish conquest, attribute the dynamics of our change to an evil Soviet conspiracy, and finally corrupt the movement toward modernity that you yourselves have fostered.

Nevertheless, my passage from English to Spanish determined the concrete expression of what in Washington had been the revelation of an identity. I wanted to write and I wanted to write in order to show myself that my identity and my country were real: As I scribbled my first stories for school magazines, I learned that I must write in Spanish.

In Chile I came to know the possibilities of our language for giving wing to freedom and poetry. The impression was enduring; it links me forever to that sad and wonderful land. It lives within me, and it transformed me into a man who knows how to dream, love, insult, and write



The glee club at Spain's University of Alcalá de Henares salutes Carlos Fuentes (second from left) shortly after he received the prestigious Miguel de Cervantes Prize for Literature at a royal ceremony on April 21, 1988.

only in Spanish. It also left me wide open to an incessant interrogation: What happened to this universal language, Spanish, which after the 17th century ceased to be a language of life, creation, dissatisfaction, and personal power, and became far too often a language of mourning, sterility, rhetorical applause, and abstract power? Where were the threads of my tradition, where could I, writing in mid-20th-century Latin America, find the direct link to the great living presences I was then starting to read, my lost Cervantes, my old Quevedo, dead because he could not tolerate one more winter, my Góngora, abandoned in a gulf of loneliness?

After Santiago, I spent six wonderful months in Argentina. They were so important in this reading and writing of myself. Buenos Aires was then, as always, the most beautiful, sophisticated, and civilized city in Latin America, but in the summer of 1944, as pavements melted in the heat and the city smelled of cheap wartime gasoline, rawhide from the port, and chocolate éclairs from the *confiterías*, Argentina had experienced a succession of military coups: General Rawson had overthrown President Castillo of the cattle oligarchy, but General Ramírez had then overthrown Rawson, and now General Farrell had overthrown Ramírez. A young colonel called Juan Domingo Perón was General Farrell's up-and-coming minister of labor, and I heard an actress by the name of Eva Duarte play the "great women of history" on Radio Belgrano. A hack novelist who went by the pen name Hugo Wast was assigned to the Ministry of Education under his real name, Martínez Zuviría, and brought all his anti-Semitic, undemocratic, pro-fascist phobias to the Buenos Aires high school system, which I

had been plunked into. Coming from the America of the New Deal, the ideals of revolutionary Mexico, and the politics of the Popular Front in Chile, I could not stomach this, rebelled, and was granted a full summer of wandering around Buenos Aires, free for the first time, following my preferred tango orchestras as they played in the Renoir-like shade and light of the rivers and pavilions of El Tigre and Maldonado.

The Gold and Mud of Mexico

Two very important things happened in Argentina. First, I lost my virginity. And second, I started reading Argentine literature, from gaucho poems to Sarmiento's *Memories of Provincial Life* to Cané's *Juvenilia* to *Don Segundo Sombra* to Borges. Borges belongs to that summer in Buenos Aires. He belongs to my discovery of Latin American literature.

I read Borges's *Ficciones* as I flew north on a Pan American Airways flying boat. It was wartime; all cameras were banned, and glazed plastic screens were put on our windows before we landed. By the time we landed in Trinidad, "Funes the Memorious" and "Pierre Ménard, Author of Don Quixote" had introduced me, without my being aware, to the genealogy of the serene madmen, the children of Erasmus. I did not know then that this was the most illustrious family of modern fiction, since it went, backwards, from Pierre Ménard to Don Quixote himself. During two short lulls in Santo Domingo (then, horrifyingly, called Ciudad Trujillo) and Port-au-Prince, I had been prepared by Borges to encounter my wonderful friends: Toby Shandy, who reconstructs in his cabbage patch the battlefields of Flanders he was not able to experience historically; Jane Austen's Catherine Moreland and Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary, who, like Don Quixote, believe in what they read; Dickens's Mr. Micawber, who takes his hopes to be realities; Dostoyevsky's Myshkin, an idiot because he gives the benefit of the doubt to the good possibility of mankind; Pérez Galdós's Nazarín, who is mad because he believes that each human being can daily be Christ, and who is truly St. Paul's madman: "Let him who seems wise among you become mad, so that he might truly become wise."

As we landed at Miami airport, the glazed windows disappeared once and for all and I knew that, like Pierre Ménard, a writer must always face the mysterious duty of literally reconstructing a spontaneous work. And so I met my tradition: *Don Quixote* was a book waiting to be written. The history of Latin America was a history waiting to be lived.

When I finally arrived in Mexico, I found that my father's imaginary country was real, but nonetheless fantastic. Mexico: the only frontier between the industrialized and the developing worlds, between all of Latin America and the United States, and between the Catholic Mediterranean and the Protestant Anglo-Saxon strains of the New World.

I approached the gold and mud of Mexico, the imaginary, imagined country, finally real but only real if I saw it from a distance that would assure me, because of the very fact of separation, that my desire for

reunion with it would be forever urgent, and only real if I wrote it.

My first contact with literature and its language had been sitting on the knees of Alfonso Reyes. When the Mexican writer was ambassador to Brazil in the earlier '30s, Reyes had brought the Spanish classics back to life for us; he had written superb books on Greece; he was the most lucid of literary theoreticians; in fact, he had translated all of Western culture into Latin American terms. In the late '40s, he was living in a little house the color of the *mamey* fruit, in Cuernavaca. He would invite me to spend weekends with him, and since I was 18 and a night prowler, I kept him company from eleven in the morning, when Don Alfonso would sit in a cafe and toss verbal bouquets at the girls strolling around the plaza that was then a garden of laurels and not, as it has become, of cement. Then we would go to the movies in order, Reyes said, to bathe in contemporary epic, and it was only at night that he would start scolding me: You have not read Stendhal yet? The world didn't start five minutes ago, you know.

He could irritate me. I read, against his classical tastes, the most modern, the most strident books, without understanding that I was learning his lesson: There is no creation without tradition; the "new" is an inflection on a preceding form; novelty is always a variation on the past. Borges said that Reyes wrote the best Spanish prose of our times. He taught me that culture had a smile, that the intellectual tradition of the whole world was ours by birthright, and that Mexican literature was important because it was literature, not because it was Mexican.

Egg Without Salt

One day I got up very early (or maybe I came in very late from a binge) and saw him at 5:00 A.M. working at his table, amid the aroma of the jacaranda and the bougainvillea. He was a diminutive Buddha, bald and pink, almost one of those elves who cobble shoes at night while the family sleeps. He liked to quote Goethe: Write at dawn, skim the cream of the day, then you can study crystals, intrigue at court, and make love to your kitchen maid. Writing in silence, Reyes did not smile. His world, in a way, ended on a day in February 1913 when his insurrectionist father, General Bernardo Reyes, fell riddled by machine-gun bullets in Mexico City.

My father had remained in Buenos Aires as Mexican chargé d'affaires, with instructions to frown on Argentina's Axis sympathies. My mother took advantage of his absence to put me in a Catholic school in Mexico City. The brothers who ruled the institution were preoccupied with something that had never entered my head: sin. At the start of the school year, one would come before the class with a white lily in his hand and say: "This is a Catholic youth before kissing a girl." Then he would throw the flower on the floor, dance a little jig on it, pick up the bedraggled object, and confirm our worst suspicions: "This is a Catholic boy after . . ."

Well, all this filled life with temptation. Retrospectively, I would agree with Luis Buñuel that sex without sin is like an egg without salt. The

priests made sex irresistible for us; they also made leftists of us by their constant denunciation of Mexican liberalism and especially of Benito Juárez. The sexual and political temptations became very great in a city where provincial mores and sharp social distinctions made it very difficult to have normal sexual relationships with young or even older women.

All this led, as I say, to a posture of rebellion that for me crystallized in the decision to be a writer. My father, by then back from Argentina, sternly said, OK, go out and be a writer, but not at my expense. I was sent, again, to visit Alfonso Reyes. He said to me, "Mexico is a very formalistic country. If you don't have a title, you are nobody: *nadie, ninguno*. A title is like the handle on a cup; without it, no one will pick you up. You must become a *licenciado*, a lawyer; then you can do what you wish, as I did."

The Perils of 'Proustitution'

So I entered the School of Law at the National University, where, as I feared, learning tended to be by rote and where cynical teachers spent the whole hour of class taking attendance on the 200 students of civil law, from Aguilar to Zapata. But there were exceptions: The true teachers—mainly exiles from defeated Republican Spain—understood that the law is inseparable from the concerns of culture, morality, and justice. Don Manuel Pedroso, former dean of the University of Seville, made the study of law compatible with my literary inclinations. When I would bitterly complain about the dryness and boredom of learning the penal or mercantile codes by heart, he would counter: "Forget the codes. Read Dostoyevsky, read Balzac. There's all you have to know about criminal or commercial law." He also made me see that Stendhal was right: that the best model for a well-structured novel is the Napoleonic Code of Civil Law. Anyway, I found that culture consists of connections, not of separations.

In 1950 I went to Europe to do graduate work in international law at the University of Geneva. Octavio Paz had just published two books that had changed the face of Mexican literature, *Libertad Bajo Palabra* and *El Laberinto de la Soledad*. My friends and I had read these books aloud in Mexico, dazzled by a poetics that managed simultaneously to renew our language from within and to connect it to the language of the world.

At 36, Octavio Paz was not very different from what he is today. Writers born in 1914, like Paz and Julio Cortázar, surely signed a Faustian pact at the very mouth of hell's trenches; so many poets died in that war that someone had to take their place. I remember Paz in the so-called existentialist nightclubs of the time in Paris, in discussion with Albert Camus, who alternated philosophy and the boogie-woogie in La Rose Rouge. In the generous friendship of Octavio Paz, I learned that there were no privileged centers of culture, race, or politics; that nothing should be left out of literature, because our time is a time of deadly reduction.

For my generation in Mexico, the problem did not consist in discovering our modernity but in discovering our tradition. The latter was brutally

denied by the comatose teaching of the classics in Mexican secondary schools: One had to bring Cervantes back to life in spite of a school system fatally oriented toward the ideal of universities as sausage factories—in spite of the more grotesque forms of Mexican nationalism of the time. A Marxist teacher once told me it was un-Mexican to read Kafka; a fascist critic said the same thing (this has been Kafka's Kafkian destiny everywhere), and a rather sterile Mexican author gave a pompous lecture warning that readers who read Proust would *proustitute* themselves.

'The Warp of a Single Idea'

In Geneva, I rented a garret overlooking the beautiful old square of the Bourg-du-Four, established by Julius Caesar as the Forum Boarium two millennia ago. The square was filled with coffeehouses and old bookstores. The girls, from all over, were beautiful and independent. After kissing them, one did not become a sullied lily. We had salt on our lips. We loved each other, and I also loved going to the little island where the lake meets the river to read. Since it was called Jean-Jacques Rousseau Island, I took the *Confessions*. Many things came together then. A novel was the transformation of experience into history. The modern epic had been the epic of the first-person singular, of the I, from St. Augustine to Abélard to Dante to Rousseau to Stendhal to Proust.

And I wondered: Could I, a Mexican who had not yet written his first book, sitting on a bench on an early spring day as the *bise* from the Jura Mountains quieted down, have the courage to explore for myself, with my language, with my tradition, with my friends and influences, that region to which the literary figure bids us? Cervantes did it. He brought into existence the modern world by having Don Quixote leave his secure village (whose name has been, let us remember, forgotten) and take to the open roads, the roads of the unsheltered, the unknown and the different, there to lose what he read and to gain what we, the readers, read in him.

The novel is forever traveling Don Quixote's road, from the security of the analogous to the adventure of the different and even the unknown. This is the road I wanted to travel. I also discovered the challenge of Rimbaud. His mother had asked him what a particular poem was about, and he answered: "I have wanted to say what it says there, literally and in all other senses." This has been an inflexible rule for me; and the present-day vigor of the literature of the Hispanic world is not alien to this approach: Say what you mean, literally and in all other senses.

I think I imagined in Switzerland what I would try to write some day, but first I would have to do my apprenticeship. Only after many years would I be able to write what I then imagined; only years later, when I not only knew that I had the tools with which to do it, but also, equally important, when I knew that if I did not write, death would not do it for me.

In the summer of 1950, on a hot, calm evening on Lake Zurich, some wealthy Mexican friends had invited me to dinner at the elegant Baur-au-

Lac Hotel—a floating terrace lighted by paper lanterns and flickering candles. As I unfolded my white napkin amid the soothing tinkle of silver and glass, I raised my eyes and saw the group at the next table.

Three ladies sat there with a man in his seventies. This man was stiff and elegantly dressed in double-breasted white serge and immaculate shirt and tie. His long, delicate fingers sliced a cold pheasant, almost with daintiness. Yet even in eating he seemed to me unbending, with a ramrod-back, military bearing. His aged face showed “a growing fatigue,” but the pride with which his lips and jaws were set sought desperately to hide the fact, while the eyes twinkled with “the fiery play of fancy.”

As the carnival lights of that night played with a fire of their own on the features I now recognized, Thomas Mann's face was a theater of implicit, quiet emotions. He ate and let the ladies do the talking; he was, in my eyes, a meeting place where solitude gives birth to beauty unfamiliar and perilous, but also to the perverse and the illicit. Thomas Mann had managed, out of this solitude, to find the affinity “between the personal destiny of [the] author and that of his contemporaries in general.” Through him, I had imagined that the products of this solitude and affinity were named art (created by one) and civilization (created by all). He spoke so surely, in *Death in Venice*, of the “tasks imposed upon him by his own ego and the European soul” that as I, paralyzed with admiration, saw him there I dared not conceive of such an affinity in our own Latin American culture, where the extreme demands of a ravaged, voiceless continent often killed the voice of the self and made a hollow political monster of the voice of the society, or killed it, giving birth to a pitiful, sentimental dwarf.

Yet, as I recalled my passionate reading of everything he wrote, from *Blood of the Walsungs* to *Dr. Faustus*, I could not help feeling that, in spite of the vast differences between his culture and ours, literature in the end asserted itself through a relationship between the visible and the invisible worlds of narration. A novel should “gather up the threads of many human destinies in the warp of a single idea”; the I, the You, and the We were only separate and dried up because of a lack of imagination. Unbeknownst to him, I left Thomas Mann sipping his demitasse as midnight approached and the floating restaurant bobbed slightly and the Chinese lanterns quietly flickered out. I shall always thank him for silently teaching me that, in literature, you know only what you imagine.

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What Went Wrong?

One could say that younger-generation-bashing is as old as the Republic. It provides certain satisfactions for the elders and, presumably, due warning to the next age cohort. During the 1950s, for example, *Time* decried a Silent Generation of college graduates; Tom Wolfe harpooned the "Me Generation" of the 1970s; others have happily targeted the "Young Urban Professionals" of this decade. But here, humorist P. J. O'Rourke, 40, looks askance at his *own* peers—America's much-publicized Baby Boom children of suburbia who, he says, first proclaimed their idealism, then traded in protest for consumerism, and a year ago were stunned by Wall Street's sudden "melt-down."

by P. J. O'Rourke

Ever since the stock market went to the bathroom a year ago, a lot of us have been pretty busy—talking our broker pals down from window ledges and convincing friends in the junk bond business to shut off the Porsche and open the garage door. We've been so busy that we may not have noticed that Black Monday, Blue Tuesday, Black-and-Blue Wednesday, etc. marked the end of an era. Neo-poverty means curtains for the Now Generation, a.k.a. the Dr. Spock Brats. Everybody born between WWII and the early '60s is going to have to grow up. It's all over now, Baby Boom.

Of course, the collapse of the Reagan Pig-Out wasn't the only thing that did us Boomers in. There was massive drug-taking, which turned out to be a bad idea. Maybe drugs make you a better person, but only if you believe in heaven and think John Belushi could get past the

doorman. And having sex with everyone we could think of—this broke up our first two marriages and gave most of us chronic venereal diseases and the rest of us obituaries. And then there was us, just being ourselves—"finding out who we are," "getting in touch with our feelings," "fulfilling our true inner potential"—frightening stuff. You'll notice that this year we all ran out to see *Fatal Attraction* so we could moon over a nuclear family and cheer for traditional morals. It seems like that boring middle-class suburbia where we grew up was swell after all. The problem is, we've spent all our money on cocaine and Reeboks and we can't afford it.

What went wrong? We were the generation of hope; the generation that was going to change the world; the biggest, richest, best-educated generation in the history of America—the biggest, rich-



It seems like only yesterday I was OK, you were OK.

est, best-educated spot in this or any other galaxy. Nothing was too good for us. It took thousands of doctors and psychiatrists to decide whether we should suck our thumbs or all our toes too. Our every childhood fad had global implications. One smile at Davy Crockett and forests were denuded in the search for raccoon-tail hats. When we took up Hula Hoops, the planet bobbed in its orbit. Our transistor radios drowned out the music of the spheres. A snuffle from us and *Life* magazine was sick in bed for a month. All we had to do was hold a sit-in and governments were toppled from the Beijing of Mao Zedong to the Cleveland of Dennis Kucinich. "We are the world," we shouted just a couple of years ago. And just a couple of years ago we were. How did we wind up so old? So fat? So confused? So *broke*?

The truth is our generation was spoiled rotten from the start.

We spent the entire 1950s on our butts in front of the television while

mom fed us Twinkies and Ring-Dings through strawberry Flavor Straws and dad ransacked the toy stores looking for 100 mph streamlined Schwinn's, Daisy air howitzers, Lionel train sets larger than the New York Central system, and other novelties to keep us amused during the few hours when Pinky Lee and "My Friend Flicka" weren't on the air.

When we came of age in the 1960s, we found the world wasn't as perfect as Mr. Greenjeans and Mrs. Cleaver said it would be, and we threw a decade-long tantrum. We screamed at our parents, teachers, the police, the president, Congress, and the Pentagon. We threatened to hold our breath (as long as the reefer stayed lit) and not cut our hair until poverty, war, and injustice were ended.

That didn't work. So we whiled away the '70s in an orgy of hedonism and self-absorption, bouncing from ashram to bedroom to disco to gym, at a speed made possible only by ingesting vast quantities of Inca Scratch-N-Sniff.

Even this proved unsatisfying, so we elected President Reagan and tried our hand at naked greed. We could have it all—career, marriage, job, children, BMW, Rolex, compact disc player, another marriage, more children, and a high-growth, high-yield, no-load mutual fund. Actually, for a while, it looked like we *could* have it all. As long as we didn't mind also having a national debt the size of the Crab Nebula, an enormous underclass making its living from five-cent beverage can deposits, and currency that the Japanese use to blow their noses. But now our economy has the williwaws, and our Youth Culture has arthritis, Alzheimer's, and gout. Life's big VISA card bill has come due at last.

The Baby Boom has reached middle age. It's time for us to pause, time to reflect, time to . . . OH, GOD, DARLING DON'T DO IT WITH A GUN—WE JUST REDECORATED THE BATHROOM!!! . . . time to evaluate the contributions that we, as a generation, have made to a world that presented us with so many remarkable and even unique advantages. Contributions such as . . . uh . . . um . . . BZZZZZZZZZ *Time's Up!* Well, some of the Beatles' songs are really great. (Although, technically, the Beatles aren't part of the Baby Boom.) And there's that first Tom Robbins novel, *Another Roadside Attraction*. That was good, I think. I mean I was very stoned when I read it. And . . . and . . . New Coke?

Wait a minute, I hear dissenting noises. Civil Rights, you say? But the Civil Rights Movement was founded by people a lot older than us. Harriet Tubman, for in-

stance. We *did* start the Peace Movement. That was a big success. The Vietnam War only lasted another eight or 10 years, once we got the Peace Movement going. Then, darn it, the Communists took over South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and killed everybody they could get their hands on, just like General Westmoreland, that pig, said they would. So I don't think we can count the Peace Movement as a major contribution, especially not as far as the former citizens of Phnom Penh are concerned.

Our political commitment, however, really changed things. You can tell by the quality of the presidents that we used to have, such as Truman and Eisenhower, compared to the quality of the presidents that we got as soon as the Baby Boom was old enough to vote, such as Carter and Reagan. And our idealism has made a difference. Ever since Live-Aid, all the Ethiopians have had to do the Jane Fonda work-out to keep from larding up around the middle.

It is true that our generation was the first to take feminism seriously. That's because old-timey feminists used to worry about boring things such as voting rights and legal status. But Boomer Women put some real life in the issues by emphasizing upscale grabbiness, pointless careerism, and insane arguments about pronoun antecedents. Fitness is another trend pioneered by the Boom. Millions of us are leading empty, useless, pitiful lives and lifting weights and eating fiber to make those lives last longer. Also, the computer revolution—we invented a brilliant matrix of complex and intricate software programs that al-

P. J. O'Rourke, 40, is an "investigative humorist" for Rolling Stone. Born in Toledo, Ohio, he received a B.A. from Miami University, Ohio (1969) and an M.A. from Johns Hopkins University (1970). He has written for The Herald, National Lampoon, and The American Spectator. He is the author of Republican Party Reptile (1987) and the forthcoming Holidays in Hell. This article is drawn from an essay in The American Spectator. Copyright © 1988 The American Spectator.

low us to compile, cross-reference, and instantly access all the nothing that we know. Finally, there's our creativity—our wild, innovative artistic gifts—surely a legacy to the ages. Huh? Huh? Sorry, I couldn't hear you. I had the new L. L. Cool J *Bigger and Deffer* tape turned all the way up on my Walkman.

•

Let's face it, our vaunted rebellion against bourgeois values meant we didn't want to clean the bathroom. All our mystical enlightenments are now printed in Hallmark cards with pictures of unicorns on them. Our intellectual insights led to a school system that hasn't taught anybody how to read in 15 years. All we've done for the disadvantaged is gentrify the crap out of their neighborhoods. And now we're about to lose our jobs.

Do we have any skills or anything? No. Complaining, playing Donkey Kong, and rolling joints with E-Z Wider papers are the only things this generation has ever been able to do. Will anyone feel sorry for us? No. We've been making pests of ourselves for four decades, hogging the limelight, making everybody feel un-hip and out of it. The Earth has had a bellyful of us. We'll be selling kiwi fruit on the street and rattling microchips in a tin cup and people will *laugh*.

We're the generation whose heroes were Howdy Doody, Jerry Rubin, Big Bird, and Ivan Boesky. We deserved the stock market crash, and herpes and the Betty Ford Clinic, besides. We're jerks. We're clowns. We're 40 and still wearing jeans. Nobody takes us seriously . . .

Wait a minute. *Serious*. That's it. Oh, man, this will really bug the squares! What we do is we all start wearing dumpy corduroy sport coats and cheap, shiny, navy-blue wash pants and Hush Puppies. We get half-glasses and wear them way down on the end of our noses. We read Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, Kant, all those guys. We call it *The New Seriousness*. The media will wig-out. We'll be all over network TV again.

Dig this—we start going to church, not Moonie church or born-again church but real Episcopalian church, every Sunday. We invite each other over to afternoon teas and discuss the novels of Thomas Mann. We take up the cello. We do the *London Times* crossword puzzle in ink. We admire Woody Allen's *recent* movies. We vote in local elections.

We'll be *crazy* serious—international superstars of, like, heavy, pensive eggheadery. We fire David Letterman and replace him with Jean-Paul Sartre. (Is he still alive? Well, somebody like that.) Shoot MTV videos for Handel and Rimsky-Korsakov. Do a feature movie about the life of Euripides with the sound track in ancient Greek. There are 76 million of us. Everybody's going to want a books-on-tape cassette of Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* for their car. We'll make a fortune! We'll be famous! And we'll change the world!

The New Seriousness—it's bitchin', it's far-out, it's rad to the max, it's *us*. Gotta go now. Gotta call Merrill Lynch and buy stock in the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra.

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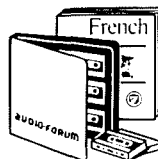
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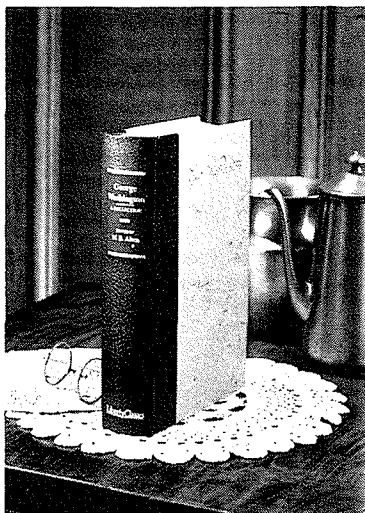
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COMMENTARY

We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some of those printed below were received in response to the editors' requests for comment.

Two Berlins

Re Josef Ernst's coverage of West Berlin ["The Berlin Scene," *WQ*, Summer '88]:

The proximity of East Germany (GDR) to West Berlin serves that country's dissident groups rather well. Thanks to West Berlin, the East Germans are able to obtain prohibited books and magazines, and—insofar as the GDR allows it—exchange occasional visits with West Berliners.

Moreover, East German dissidents receive the encouragement of sympathetic West Berliners from the city's many opposition groups, who sometimes organize demonstrations at the Wall on their behalf. For this reason, this colorful mixture of West Berliners is just as troubling to the East German government as it is to the West Berlin authorities. Under the motto, "Bureaucrats of all lands, unite, you have nothing to lose but your subjects," the East German authorities often intimate to their West Berlin counterparts that they would favor any measures that might quiet the noisy West Berlin opposition.

There are plenty of West Berlin officials who are only too willing to comply. Interior Minister Wilhelm Kewenig, for example, seems to believe that Western freedom guarantees the city's more stolid citizens the right to enjoy coffee and cake on the city's main avenues—without being disturbed by the noise, sight, or presence of unruly demonstrators. Professor Kewenig, in this sense, may be described as a figure whose ideology transcends the sector boundaries.

*Norman Birnbaum
University Professor
Georgetown University Law Center*

The City's Future

Journalists and scholars, novelists and politicians, writers of all sizes have told their Berlin story, reported the exciting, the normal, and the ugly. A few have come up with the prediction that Berlin, surrounded by Communist countries, has no future. They are

wrong. Anyway, most Berliners do not read them. Berlin is still there, and some of us think it has lively decades ahead.

Architecturally, Berlin is not New York, Paris, London, or Rome, but it has a spirit, a way of life that is to be recommended. The better you know it, the more attached you become. (I say this as an American who was a graduate student in Berlin in 1929–1933, and who has been a part of Berlin's life, on and off, over the past 60 years.)

Berlin is a big city, without losing the touch of the small, where you can combine work with pleasure and feel no stress. It is a green city, with lakes, rivers, and miles of forest, where, notwithstanding political encirclement, you are able to breathe. The Berlin Philharmonic, if you can forget Herbert von Karajan's bad manners, the German Opera, the theaters, museums, restaurants, and pubs (the food is improving), the students, the universities, the scientific institutes, the Germans, Turks, Yugoslavs, Italians, Americans, French, British make it Germany's most interesting and international city . . .

In the long run there will be changes, and Berlin, some of us predict, will have a brighter economic future. And intellectual and artistic cross-currents and creativity will keep it slightly mad. It will not be the Berlin of the 1920s, but some of the old spirit of "anything goes" will prevail.

*Shepard Stone
South Newfane, Vt.*

Celebrating Jazz

About Terry Teachout's reference to me in his essay on jazz: "While jazz was never, as Grover Sales and other jazz critics claim, 'America's classical music,' it is now nonetheless generally recognized as a true art music" ["American Music," *WQ*, Summer '88].

The title of my book, *Jazz: America's Classical Music*, refers to the book's continuing theme: Coinciding with an exploding technology, jazz, in less than a century, recapitulated the entire history of European concert music,



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*Grover Sales
Belvedere, Calif.*

Classic(al) Problems

Having spent most of my own critical energies on the classical musical tradition, I was surprised to find that the only melancholic chords sounded in the three "American Music" essays were in the pieces on pop music and jazz. For the factors noted by authors Howard Husock and Terry Teachout—audience fragmentation, narrowness of vision, funding systems that encourage artifice, a museum culture, and contemporary lack of vi-

tality—are not only common on the classical end of things, they *define* it. But K. Robert Schwarz sees hardly a cloud on the horizon.

This enthusiastic position was more common a decade ago, when skepticism about the vitality of the tradition was greeted with disbelief. But the situation has reached such a state of crisis that a critical consensus is finally being reached. It cannot be meliorated by misplaced hopes in the desperately uneven minimalist movement that, pace Schwarz, represents the music of a very circumscribed subculture and does indeed thumb its nose in very particular directions.

Moreover, Schwarz's familiar mapping of American classical musical life as a rivalry between the Good populist tradition and the Bad elitist one has proven itself inadequate either for identifying important works or for explaining the contemporary dilemma. None of the "accessible" compositions of del Tredici, Harbison, or Schwanter give any reason to

hope for a revival of our moribund musical life, nor any indication of where we are to go from here.

*Edward Rothstein
Music Critic
The New Republic*

Out of the Ballpark?

In "The Joys and Sorrows of Being a Word Snob" [*WQ*, Spring '88], Joseph Epstein traces the phrase "ballpark figure" to the practice of estimating crowds at ball games, and claims that it means, roughly, "approximation." He is out of the ballpark on this one.

The true sense of "ballpark figure" comes from describing long fly balls. Some are *in* the ballpark; others are out of the ballpark.

Thus, a "ballpark figure" is a guess made against a constraint that marks the boundary beyond which the matter cannot be pursued further. A fly hit over the fence is "out of the ballpark." An estimate we can work with productively—one that does not bring play to an end—is "in the ballpark."

*John Churchill
Dean, Hendrix College
Conway, Ark.*

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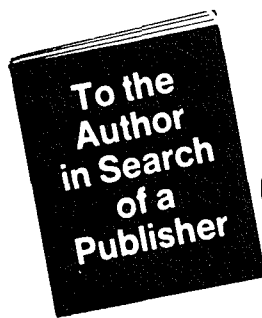
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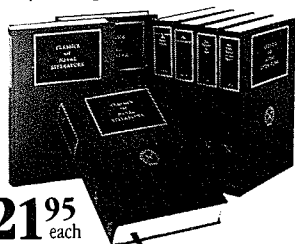
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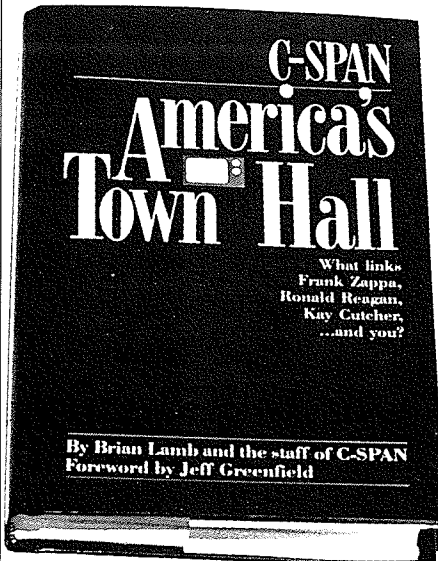
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