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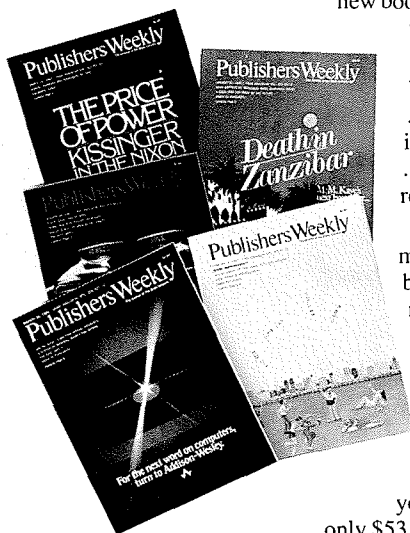
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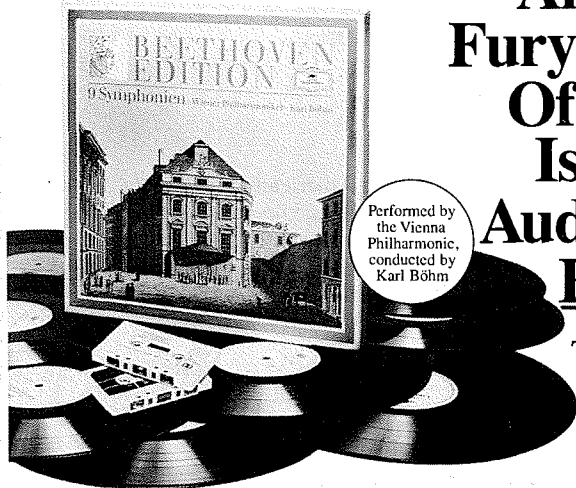
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## Editor's Comment

As Richard Betts and Leslie Gelb note in *The Irony of Vietnam*, the historical evidence concerning that war is "still alive, being shaped by bitterness and bewilderment, reassurances and new testimony." Last January, on the 10th anniversary of the Paris peace accords that ended direct U.S. involvement, the Wilson Center convened some 70 Vietnam historians and analysts for two days to discuss some of the latest findings on "the higher conduct of the war."

There was no unanimity. But there was a high degree of consensus on the answers to such questions as: Could the North Vietnamese have sustained their effort in the South without sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia? Was Lyndon Johnson eager to put U.S. troops into Vietnam in 1964-65? Did the Nixon-Kissinger policy of troop withdrawals and negotiations with Hanoi hold out any real promise of lasting success? Were allied troops unable to cope with Communist guerrillas and regular forces? The answers were, generally, No. But several scholars insisted that, given Hanoi's goals and tenacity, maintaining non-Communist control of South Vietnam would have required a sizable residual U.S. force for decades, a long-term commitment unacceptable to Congress and the American public.

In this issue, we present essays by three of the participants in the Wilson Center conference. The full conference report will be published as a book later this year.

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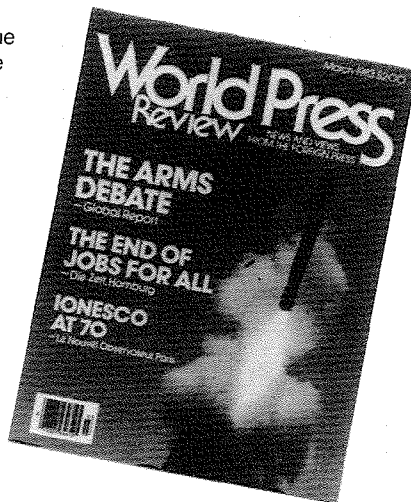
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# PERIODICALS

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## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

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### *Picking and Choosing*

"Politics in the '80s: An Electorate at Odds with Itself" by Everett Carl Ladd, in *Public Opinion* (Dec.-Jan. 1983), American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Parsing the results of elections and public opinion surveys to divine whether the voters are moving Left or Right is a hallowed pastime among Washington pundits and elected officials. It is also futile, adds Ladd, a University of Connecticut political scientist.

Massive contradictions in poll results, he argues, show that Americans are abandoning old ideological formulas. A 1982 CBS News/*New York Times* poll, for example, revealed that 75 percent of the public believes the federal government creates more problems than it solves. Evidence of a conservative groundswell? Hardly, says Ladd. Other polls yield 75 percent support for such liberal programs as free medical care and legal assistance for the needy. Sixty percent of the respondents to another recent survey rejected the notion that the "federal government over the last 20 years has gone too far in trying to help poor people."

Today's ideological divisions, says Ladd, occur less between groups than within individuals. As the public grows increasingly affluent and better educated, simple formulas lose their appeal. Now inclined to regard government as "a persisting mix of the helpful and harmful," Ladd says, Americans assess government policies case by case.

The debate over social issues highlights the new pick-and-choose attitude. Liberal views clearly prevail in some cases: Nearly 80 percent of the public favors a "pro-choice" policy on abortion and approves of married women working full time. Disapproval of premarital sex is down to 38 percent. Yet conservative positions also attract broad support. School prayer and "back-to-basics" education consistently win majority backing; a record-high 78 percent of the population favors the death penalty for murder.

"An electorate thus at odds with itself," Ladd notes, "must inevitably

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send mixed signals to the political parties and draw back from embracing either of them." A July 1982 poll, for example, revealed that Democratic and Republican approaches to the economy enjoyed roughly equal support, but a majority (62 percent of those polled) rejected both.

Candidates who try to build coalitions based on a consistent ideological appeal will be frustrated by the new "post-ideological" electorate, Ladd predicts. But innovative politicians will find the voters willing to give a fair hearing to thoughtful prescriptions for the nation's ills.

### *One Step Forward, One Step Back*

"Federal Fraud, Waste, and Abuse: Causes and Responses" by Thomas F. Eagleton and Ira S. Shapiro, in *Journal of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies* (Winter 1982/83), Airport Rd., White Plains, N.Y. 10604.

For years, nobody in Congress or the executive branch seemed to care whether federal programs were efficiently run or not. Now that such attitudes are beginning to change, "penny-wise and dollar-foolish" policies threaten to block progress.

Between 1960 and 1980, federal outlays grew by 700 percent, disbursed under 2,000 separate programs. Cost controls did not loom large to legislators and bureaucrats eager to meet pressing social and defense needs, note Eagleton and Shapiro, U.S. Senator (D-Mo.) and a staff aide, respectively. In 1976, for example, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) had only 10 investigators on its payroll.

The results were predictable. HEW reported in 1978 that between \$6.3 and \$7.3 billion of its own funds were lost every year to fraud and waste. Of Washington's \$239 billion in outstanding loans—to farmers, small businessmen, college students—\$33 billion were either overdue or in default last year.

Congress took a giant step toward reform in 1976, creating Inspector General (IG) offices in most federal agencies. (The Department of Defense, initially exempted, got an IG last year.) The independent IGs replaced auditors who worked under the very executives whose programs they were scrutinizing. The reform seems to be working: The White House says the IGs chalked up \$5.8 billion in savings during the first half of 1982 alone. A 1981 law that opens federal loan records to the private agencies that fix personal credit ratings should help deter defaults and delinquencies.

Ironically, the authors say, today's U.S. budget squeeze is making it harder to achieve greater long-term efficiency. Although experienced auditors produce between \$5 and \$10 of savings for each \$1 of salary, reinforcements are not being hired. To minimize immediate expenses, short-sighted federal agencies are also refusing to purchase computerized accounting systems and other useful management tools.

Such false economies, the authors say, cost dearly—not only in tax dollars, but in public support for worthwhile federal programs.

**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT***Eisenhower's  
New Look*

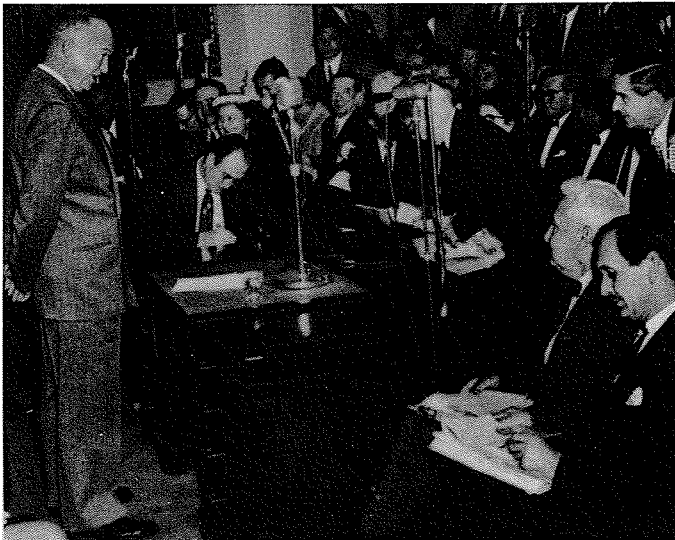
"The Ike Age Revisited" by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in *Reviews in American History* (Mar. 1983), Johns Hopkins, 34th and Charles, Baltimore, Md. 21218.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's long-denigrated Presidency (1953-61) is suddenly rising in scholars' esteem.

As Schlesinger, a City University of New York historian, notes, "the successive faults of Eisenhower's successors—activism, excess, crookedness, mediocrity, blah—have given his virtues new value." And the diaries and official papers from Eisenhower's White House years, only recently opened to researchers, confirm that Ike was not nearly as passive nor as dimwitted as he has been painted. But Schlesinger cautions against going overboard in revising the history of the "Ike Age."

From liberal academics, Eisenhower now gets high marks for warning Americans against the "military-industrial complex" and for ending the Korean War. Yet, Schlesinger argues, Eisenhower was a committed Cold Warrior who charged that Harry Truman's post-1945 troop reductions "invited the Communist attack in Korea." Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev wrote in his 1974 memoirs that President Kennedy, often criticized in America today for his crusading rhetoric, "understood better than Eisenhower that an improvement in relations was the only rational course."

Eisenhower kept a "tight leash" on the Pentagon, Schlesinger says, but also stressed nuclear retaliation against Communist aggression. Indeed, Eisenhower threatened more often than any other U.S. President to use nuclear weapons, he contends. As Ike remarked in 1955: "I



*Before a 1955 press conference, anticipating a tough question, Eisenhower told an aide: "If that . . . comes up, I'll just confuse them." Some historians believe many of Ike's garbled answers were purposeful.*

**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

see no reason why [nuclear weapons] shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else."

Moreover, Schlesinger adds, Eisenhower authorized a host of Central Intelligence Agency covert operations—backing coups in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954) and organizing the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Castro's Cuba—that ultimately damaged U.S. interests.

As to the revisionists' claims that Eisenhower harbored a grand strategy that he shrewdly camouflaged with misleading or incomprehensible statements, Schlesinger has his doubts. The memoirs of those who served under him suggest that the President was "a man of force, dignity, and restraint who did not always understand and control what was going on . . . and was capable of misjudgment and error." That, contends Schlesinger, will probably prove to be the most accurate assessment of Eisenhower.

### *Government Gets Down to Business*

"Public Management in the 1980s and Beyond" by Fred A. Kramer, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Mar. 1983), Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

Why can't government, goes the old-complaint, be run more like a business? Increasingly, says Kramer, a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, it is.

During the past decade, Washington, along with state and local governments, finally took note of the need for more professional management in the public sector. High-level state and federal bureaucrats were sent to management training seminars; Congress created a 6,000-man Senior Executive Service of federal managers in 1978. Since the early 1970s, university programs in public policy have proliferated nationwide. [Today, they number 220.]

Coping with federal budget cutbacks has fostered greater prudence. Washington has learned to try local pilot projects—such as the 1970–78 tests of the effects of providing a guaranteed minimum annual income—before launching full-scale social programs. It has even managed to close down some unneeded federal agencies, notably the Community Services Administration in 1981.

Measuring efficiency in the public sector remains difficult. How can the U.S. Department of Justice's success in defending freedom of speech be assessed? But results in many services—sanitation, health care, education—can be gauged, especially if managers are careful to use more than one measure. And with the adoption of uniform standards for governmental accounting procedures in 1979, the way is cleared for budgeting techniques similar to those used in the corporate world.

Competition is also finding its way into government, chiefly through "contracting out" (or threatening to do so) such functions as data processing, garbage collection, or even education to the private sector,

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**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**


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which prods government workers to stay on their toes.

Because politics ultimately sets the goals of senior public sector managers, Kramer notes, they will always have a more complex task than their corporate counterparts. But given the past performance of executives in such industries as steel and autos, it is wrong to assume that all the bad managers work for government, all the good ones for industry.

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**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**


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### *Three-Way Street*

"The Moscow-Beijing Détente" by Donald S. Zagoria, in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1983), P.O. Box 2515, Boulder, Colo. 80321.

The slowly ripening détente between Moscow and Beijing, a source of some anxiety in Washington, does not pose a serious threat to the West.

The two Communist powers have been at odds over ideological and security issues since the late 1950s, when China insisted on building its own nuclear weapons. Even as they move toward détente, writes Zagoria, a Hunter College political scientist, mutual fears will keep the Chinese and the Soviets at arm's length.

Both sides have good reason to reduce tensions. Since Mao Zedong's death in 1976, Beijing has muffled its ideologues, once given to vitriolic denunciations of the Soviets' "betrayal of Marxism." The Chinese now emphasize economic modernization; a lean defense budget and increased trade with Russia are keys to achieving it. The Kremlin has economic problems of its own, and would also like to see the U.S.-Chinese friendship cool.

Yet immutable differences remain. Beijing wants a pullback of Soviet troops along the 4,150-mile-long Sino-Soviet frontier, total Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Mongolian People's Republic, a resolution of the border disputes that sparked armed clashes during the 1960s, and a cutoff of Moscow's aid to Vietnam, China's chief adversary in Southeast Asia. Moscow is unlikely to yield very much. Thus, the best the two sides can hope for, Zagoria believes, is "limited détente" with increased trade, more cultural and technological exchanges, and fewer polemics.

The Chinese, he adds, "know very well that their long-range interests depend on containing the advance of Soviet power and [thus] an American connection is indispensable." Barring a major fumble by Washington, Beijing will maintain its U.S. ties and continue to discourage Soviet expansionism in Asia. And because both Communist nations desperately need U.S. trade and technology, Washington will still have the upper hand in dealings within the "strategic triangle."

The proud Chinese were not willing to become a "junior partner of the Americans" during the 1970s, says Zagoria. Nor will they now take

**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**

guidance from Moscow. Beijing's new independence means America will have to deal with the Chinese as equals, not as a "card" to be played, but the Chinese will still have every reason to lean to the West.

### *Come Home, America*

"The Case for a Withdrawal of Our Forces" by Earl C. Ravenal, in *The New York Times Magazine* (March 6, 1983), 229 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Budget-minded members of Congress who favor trimming Pentagon outlays are whittling while Rome burns. The only way to control defense spending and shore up the ailing U.S. economy is to abandon the 35-year-old U.S. strategy of "containing" Soviet global expansion.

So argues Ravenal, professor of international relations at Georgetown University. The Reagan administration's proposed 1984 budget provides \$274 billion for the Pentagon. The projected 1984 U.S. budget deficit: \$189 billion.

Even budget cutters who would scrap such big-ticket items as the B-1 bomber and the MX missile would save only a total of \$13.5 billion in 1984. Indeed, strategic nuclear forces are relatively cheap. Costing a total of \$62 billion in 1984 by Ravenal's tally, they account for only 23 percent of the Pentagon's budget. The remainder, \$212 billion, is needed to maintain U.S. conventional forces around the world.

Some defense-policy reformers believe "selective" containment of the Soviet Union would reduce such costs. But the U.S. commitments they would honor—to Western Europe, Japan, and the Persian Gulf—are the most expensive. Ravenal estimates that American naval, air, and ground forces in Europe will consume \$115 billion in 1984; Asian defense will cost \$45 billion; and the bill for Rapid Deployment Forces, chiefly designed for the Persian Gulf, will come to \$52 billion.

Ravenal's "non-interventionist" strategy would require only enough forces for home defense and for responding to overseas attacks "clearly directed against our homeland." A gradual 10-year withdrawal of U.S. troops from their bases abroad would reduce the number of U.S. servicemen from 2,165,000 today to 1,185,000 in 1994. Nuclear deterrence could be maintained by submarine-launched ballistic missiles and nuclear-armed cruise missiles, eliminating the need for costly ICBMs. U.S. defense outlays would drop to \$140 billion (in 1984 dollars).

How Moscow would respond to such a retreat is an open question, Ravenal concedes. But the Soviets, already facing economic difficulties at home, might find the costs of a greatly expanded empire too high. And our NATO allies in Europe have adequate means to defend themselves if they wish: Their combined gross national products are greater than Moscow's. The most obvious Soviet target, the Persian Gulf, supplies less than 2.5 percent of U.S. energy needs.

"Containment without tears," Ravenal believes, is no longer possible. Better to accept some losses overseas, he says, than to "wreck our economy and warp our society."

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

*What to Do About Human Rights*

"Thinking Again About Human Rights"  
by Stephen D. Wrage, in *SAIS Review*  
(Winter-Spring 1983), 1740 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Reagan administration's "quiet diplomacy" on human rights has accomplished little; President Jimmy Carter's approach was vigorous, noisy, but usually fruitless. Between the two, writes Wrage, a Georgetown University lecturer on international affairs, lies the route to an effective U.S. human rights policy.

The Carter administration claimed, justifiably, three successes: saving South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae Jung from execution in 1978, securing the release of some 30,000 Indonesian political prisoners, thwarting a 1978 effort by the military in the Dominican Republic to subvert a presidential election.

*At least 100,000 Ugandans perished during Idi Amin's reign (1971-79). But other interests—notably a fear of disrupting international trade agreements—kept Washington from reacting to the dictator's human rights violations with a trade embargo.*



In each case, Wrage says, Washington had a well-defined objective. The Carter people used a variety of pressures (e.g., rallying other countries to the cause, threatening to reduce military *and* economic aid as well as trade concessions); they allowed the offenders to find a face-saving solution, often because the regime or some faction within it already favored concessions. These lessons, he argues, should be applied to human rights policy today.

Such an approach would not rule out the kind of "public diplomacy" the Reagan administration so scrupulously avoids. But U.S. spokesmen would eschew the public sermons that attack a foreign regime's very legitimacy and make it hard to win concessions. Washington officials would also have to recognize that, however morally compelling the case for reform in a given country, pushing for change when there is no support for it within the offending government would be futile.

The most effective fighters for human rights, Wrage believes, are



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such international organizations as Amnesty International or the Red Cross. Where they fall short is in their ability to identify political prisoners and gather other information. Through an intermediary, the United States and other Western nations could supply crucial information to these agencies from embassies and intelligence operations.

"By recognizing the constraints under which we act," Wrage concludes, "and by giving the larger goal of maintaining world order priority over ending oppression, we are likely to do better by ourselves, by world order, and by the oppressed."

### *Do Diplomats Really Matter?*

"The U.S. Ambassador" by James W. Spain, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1983), Dept. 8010, Transaction Periodicals Consortium, P.O. Box 1262, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Despite high-level summit meetings, jet travel, and instant telephone communications, the United States still relies on its traditional network of ambassadors to get most things done abroad.

Indeed, suggests Spain, former U.S. envoy to Tanzania and Turkey, in some ways the importance of ambassadors has grown. They help promote American exports and set trade policy. They shape and administer U.S. economic and military aid programs in their host countries. Even "our man in Kigali" (Rwanda) presides over \$4.5 million in U.S. development funds and \$1.5 million in military assistance. Ambassadors, Spain notes, must be well versed even on "the relative merits of F-4, F-5, F-15, F-16, and F-18 fighter aircraft." Finally, ambassadors are responsible for such delicate matters as negotiating basing rights for the Rapid Deployment Force and interpreting existing treaties.

Washington officials can't match the professional diplomat's on-the-scene experience and personal contacts with foreign governments. And unlike State Department bureaucrats, an ambassador is "master in his own house" and can act quickly. While Washington makes basic policy choices, ambassadors can influence them through their reports and opinions. They also possess an ultimate weapon in policy disputes: the power to cause a public brouhaha by resigning in protest.

The diplomatic corps is not flawless, writes Spain. Arrogance and "clientitis"—an exaggerated sense of the importance of the country they are posted to—afflict many diplomats. Political appointees often view their posts as an "extended vacation abroad."

More sophisticated Senate scrutiny of White House ambassadorial nominees, instead of today's "rubber-stamp" approach, could remedy such defects, Spain says. So could review panels modeled on bar association procedures for judicial candidates. Cutting down on the number of political appointees (52 of today's 140 envoys) would also help.

To correct career Foreign Service officers' insularity and "clientitis," he adds, assignments should be made on the basis of performance, not

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seniority. Overseas experience should be stressed over Foggy Bottom desk service, and those U.S. diplomats in Washington should be encouraged to circulate outside Embassy Row—e.g., among business and labor groups, farmers, politicians.

Presidents and secretaries of state make big headlines jetting abroad to sign treaties, Spain observes. But there is no substitute for having a good man or woman on the scene to tidy up the morning after.

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### *The Lure of Export Subsidies*

"Fighting Fire with Fire" by Alan Murray, in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (Feb. 19, 1983), 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

Rising protectionism in world markets and sizable job losses at home are making it more and more difficult for Congress to abide by the principles of free trade. Advocates of a "fight fire with fire" strategy are winning new support on Capitol Hill for at least one countermeasure, a big boost in federal export subsidies.

Exports are becoming increasingly crucial to the national economy, notes Murray, a *Congressional Quarterly* reporter. During the 1970s, U.S. overseas sales doubled, to \$216 billion, with wheat and heavy machinery in the lead. Such sales accounted for 80 percent (850,000) of the new jobs created in America between 1977 and 1980; more than one million jobs have since been lost due to declining trade.

The subsidies in question take the form of low-interest loans or loan guarantees that encourage overseas customers to buy American goods. Through the federally chartered Export-Import Bank, Washington already subsidizes 13 percent of U.S. manufactured exports—chiefly "big ticket" items such as passenger jets and nuclear power plants. But other governments do far more: In 1980, France subsidized 25 percent of its manufactured exports, Japan 42 percent, and Britain 51 percent.

Some export-minded legislators, notably Senator John Heinz (R.-Pa.), want to raise the bank's loan authority from the current level—\$4.4 billion for direct financing and \$9 billion for loan guarantees. Others seek to alter a provision in the bank's charter that requires it to be self-supporting and thus forces it to offer interest rates that are sometimes nearly five percentage points higher than those of competing foreign governments. Still others want to enlarge a new Ex-Im Bank program to provide more subsidies for smaller exporters.

Export subsidies appear to be a cheap way to create jobs at home. But not everybody in Washington agrees. Reagan administration economists argue that artificially boosting exports will also increase overseas demand for the dollars to pay for them. As the dollar grows stronger, U.S. goods will become more expensive for foreign customers;

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sales of American products, especially those that are not subsidized, will decline. The result: no net gain in either exports or jobs.

But such arguments may not carry much political weight, Murray predicts. Even Congressmen who once opposed export subsidies as handouts for Big Business are now more than eager to expand the Ex-Im Bank's powers.

### *Do We Need An Industrial Czar?*

"Can Creeping Socialism Cure Creaking Capitalism?" by Robert M. Kaus, in *Harper's* (Feb. 1983), P.O. Box 2620, Boulder, Colo. 80321.

To critics of President Reagan's brand of free-market economics, proposals for a European-style national "industrial policy" have a growing appeal.

Most industrial policy advocates, writes Kaus, a *Harper's* editor, are either "preservationists" or "accelerationists." The first group, led by New York investment banker Felix Rohatyn, worries most about the urban decline and mass layoffs caused by factory closings in the Midwest and Northeast. Rohatyn favors resurrecting the Depression-era Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to revive troubled basic industries—steel, rubber, machine tools. Armed with billions of dollars in loan authority and the power to offer tax incentives, environmental waivers, and trade protection, a new RFC would be able to "knock heads," forcing unions, management, banks, and suppliers to work together.

"Accelerationist" Lester Thurow, an MIT economist, wants a new RFC, too. But under his scheme, the federal agency would direct an "orderly retreat" from declining industries, choosing only the strongest firms as survivors. Its chief mission: subsidizing "sunrise" sectors, such as semiconductors, biogenetics, and fiber optics. Also on the agenda of Thurow and his allies is more federal funding for basic research and job training.

Kaus believes Thurow's "accelerationism" is the slightly better alternative. Reviving "sunset" industries would mean diverting capital from up-and-coming enterprises, thus blocking economic progress. But he warns that all such industrial policy proposals are flawed.

With its political backers unable to agree on which sectors to finance, a new RFC could wind up trying to "help" *all* businesses—the equivalent of national economic planning. And why, Kaus asks, would RFC policy-makers be better at picking future winners and losers than would private investors, who have their own money at stake?

Ironically, he notes, most champions of an industrial policy are skeptical of elected officials' ability to direct a remedial effort. Fearing pork-barrel politics, they favor naming an independent "industrial czar."

If this economic remedy requires a "benevolent dictatorship," Kaus suggests, "maybe we should cure our sick government," before asking "the government to cure our sick industry."

## ECONOMICS, LABOR &amp; BUSINESS

## The Future of The Factory

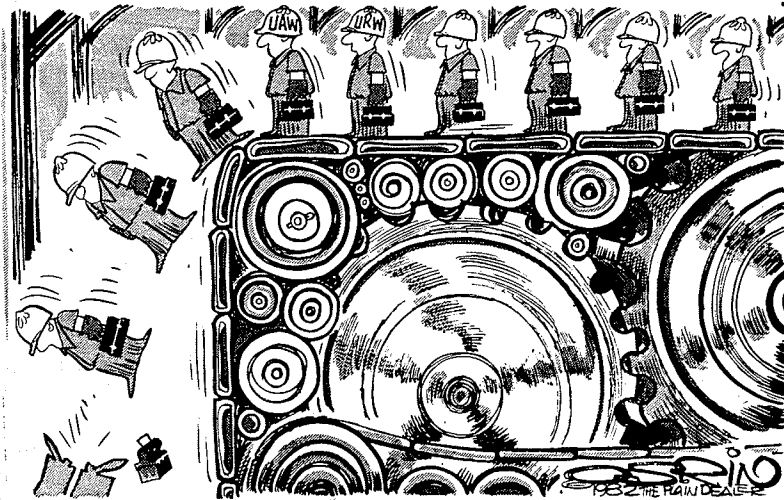
"The Race to the Automatic Factory" by Gene Bylinsky, in *Fortune* (Feb. 21, 1983), 3435 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90010.

The last major revolution in American manufacturing occurred when Henry Ford opened the first assembly line in 1913. Today, reports Bylinsky, a *Fortune* editor, another big breakthrough is on the horizon.

Coming up are so-called flexible manufacturing systems. Conventional assembly lines are relatively rigid: Each machine performs a single, narrowly defined function. Any change in the product requires that the machines be replaced or rebuilt, and often, rearranged. Workers may have to be retrained. Such systems work well in mass production industries, which turn out huge quantities of identical products—cars, televisions, toasters. But as U.S. corporations shift these operations overseas to use low-cost labor, Bylinsky predicts, American industry will increasingly emphasize production of small batches (from one to several thousand) of highly specialized goods.

In the new flexible systems, machines on the line are directed by a central computer; robots handle the parts; and remotely guided carts carry away the finished product. To switch to another product, the computer is reprogrammed, and the machines take on new tasks.

This flexibility is useful in a variety of "batch production" industries. For example, 75 percent of all machined parts, the components of sophisticated equipment, are now produced in lots of 50 or fewer. Farm



**AUTOMATION.**

*"High-tech" industries will generate up to one million new jobs by 1993: That may not be enough to offset job losses due to automation.*

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tractors, airplanes, and main-frame computers are also assembled in small numbers. General Electric Corporation uses flexible technology in a New Hampshire plant that turns out 2,000 different versions of its basic electric meter.

U.S. firms pioneered flexible manufacturing technology, but the Japanese are far ahead in actually using it. To date, American corporations have bought only 30 flexible systems; a single Japanese firm, Toyoda Tool Company, owns more. Yamazaki Machinery Works operates a \$20 million automated lathe factory that employs only 12 day-shift workers and a lone night watchman; a comparable conventional plant would require 215 employees and four times as much machinery.

But American firms are finally showing interest in the new technology. That, says Bylinsky, could be "great news for almost everyone."

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*Countering  
Discrimination*

"Discrimination and Thomas Sowell" and "Special Treatment for Blacks" by Christopher Jencks, in *The New York Review of Books* (March 3 and 17, 1983), P.O. Box 940, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

Are "affirmative action" quotas and other compensatory federal anti-discrimination efforts unnecessary?

Thomas Sowell, an influential black UCLA economist, believes they are, and his arguments in such books as *Ethnic America* (1981) have supported the Reagan administration's retreat from social activism. But Jencks, a Northwestern University sociologist, takes issue with Sowell and his conservative colleagues.

Sowell argues that American blacks today are hampered more by their background than by discrimination. Historically, he says, the success of ethnic groups in America has been largely determined by their native skills and cultural traits. Jencks disputes this generalization: American Irish Catholics rank near the top of the U.S. earnings scale, while Irish Protestants have below-average incomes, reversing the pattern that prevailed in the "old country."

Some blacks are now becoming more prosperous, Jencks reports, but others are actually losing ground. In 1979, college-educated black men earned 84 percent of what their white counterparts did, up from 68 percent in 1969. Black women with college degrees have been earning *more* than white female college graduates since 1969. Black male high-school graduates, by contrast, earned only 74 percent as much as their white counterparts in 1979, down from 75 percent in 1969. What this suggests, says Jencks, is that "employers may be reacting more to ghetto culture than to skin color per se."

Sowell argues that the free market, not federal intervention, is the

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best cure for lingering discrimination. Eventually, employers who raise their own costs by excluding blacks from the pool of job candidates will be undercut by competitors and forced to relent. Jencks concedes that this may be true in professional fields (such as law) where discrimination is not universal. But he argues that lower-class black men may face *increasing* job discrimination as crime rates and other "statistical" stigmata of ghetto culture worsen.

Since 1965, affirmative action has raised minority employment by between six and 13 percent over what it would have been otherwise, according to three studies. (A fourth study shows no net gain.) That better-educated blacks have been the chief beneficiaries is no reason to abandon it, Jencks argues. Needed, he says, are affirmative action programs that minimize "reverse discrimination," which penalizes whites.

Federal antidiscrimination efforts do indeed have unavoidable bad side effects and costs, Jencks says. But these, he concludes, are the costs of justice, and well worth bearing.

### *Revisiting the Housing Boom*

"What the 1980 Census Shows About Housing" by Arthur F. Young and F. John Devaney, in *American Demographics* (Jan. 1983), P.O. Box 68, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

The real-estate boom of the 1970s, driven by inflation, made high mortgage rates and down-payments Topic A among families seeking new homes. Less noticed was an unprecedented increase in the quantity and quality of the nation's housing.

America's total stock of houses and apartment units jumped from 68 million to 88 million during the 1970s, report U.S. Census Bureau analysts Young and Devaney. The population, meanwhile, grew by only 11 percent, the smallest increase since the 1930s.

All but 58 of the nation's 3,100 counties registered gains in housing, and two slum-ridden counties—Bronx and Kings (Brooklyn) in New York City—accounted for 80 percent of the total decline. The Sun Belt was the big winner. California, Texas, and Florida alone claimed six million of the 20 million new housing units built during the decade. On Census Day (April 1, 1980), while nearly 25 percent of U.S. families reported that they had moved into their current homes during the previous 15 months, the proportion was above 30 percent in four Western states.

Housing quality improved. The number of dwellings without complete private indoor plumbing dropped by more than half, to 2.3 million in 1980, while the average number of rooms per person went up rapidly, reaching two in 1980. Despite higher energy costs, some 23 million households added air conditioning during the 1970s.

In general, the decade was particularly good for homeowners, who comprise nearly two-thirds of all households. The median value of a single-family house rose by 178 percent to \$47,200, and homeowners'

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median family income increased by 104 percent to \$19,800. Mortgage payments consumed 19 percent of family income in 1980, up modestly from 17 percent in 1970. Renters fared less well. Average rents jumped 125 percent, consuming 27 percent of tenant income in 1980 as opposed to 20 percent in 1970. And renters' family incomes in 1980 were only 67 percent of the U.S. average, while those of homeowners grew to 125 percent, widening a gap that first appeared during the 1940s.

More than half of all American blacks and Hispanics today are renters. While the younger middle-class families who failed to profit from the housing boom of the 1970s may feel some regrets, the authors suggest, the poor were the real losers.

### *Where the Police Went Wrong*

"'To Serve and Protect': Learning from Police History" by Mark H. Moore and George L. Kelling, in *The Public Interest* (Winter 1983), 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Big-city police forces have tried everything from high technology to improved classroom training to make policemen more effective crime-fighters. Yet nothing seems to work. Moore and Kelling, both Harvard criminologists, suggest that excessive "professionalization" of police work itself is part of the problem.

The first public city police forces in America were created during the 1840s to fight rising street crime. The police patrolled the streets and performed a variety of mundane "constabular" chores, locating lost children, corralling drunks, discouraging rowdyism. Investigations were carried out by individuals or private detective agencies, who called in the police only to make arrests.

Beginning in the 1870s, however, Progressive reformers condemned big-city police departments for their ties to local politicians and for various abuses of power. In response, the authors say, police chiefs pulled back from maintenance of public order and morals and launched a "professional" war against crime. To avoid charges of unfairness, street cops often ignored certain misdeeds—violations of Prohibition, "victimless" crimes, disorderly conduct. Patrol cars, radios, and other technology grew in importance after World War II. The "cop on the corner" gradually lost touch with the people he served.

Ironically, note Moore and Kelling, "seeing a cop on the beat, allowing one's children to play unsupervised in the park, not being offered drugs on the street" make people feel safer in their neighborhoods than does a drop in the crime statistics. (Indeed, one reason that 80 percent of all violent crimes between strangers go unsolved today is that witnesses are reluctant to cooperate with impersonal police departments.)

The authors argue that police chiefs today should heed the past. Private watchdog groups, such as New York's Guardian Angels, should be encouraged, not simply dismissed as "vigilantes." And putting more

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*The Pinkerton's late 19th-century logo. Private police forces are actually far more numerous today.*

police on the sidewalks rather than in patrol cars, allowing precinct commanders more leeway in dealing with local complaints about police policies, and cracking down on disorder and vandalism might not lower crime rates, but would surely make citizens feel safer.

### *Debating How Children Learn*

"What Does Piaget's Theory Describe?"  
by Kieran Egan, in *Teachers College Record* (Winter 1982), Columbia Univ., 525  
West 120th St., New York, N.Y. 10027.

American educators have been strongly influenced by the child development theories of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980). Yet Egan, professor of education at Canada's Simon Fraser University, contends that Piaget's evidence is seriously flawed.

Piaget held that children pass through four fixed stages of "logico-mathematical" development. Using a battery of assorted tests, it is possible to determine at what age children reach particular stages, and therefore what they are capable of learning.

In one classic Piagetian test, children are shown a bunch of, say, four red and two white flowers and asked if it contains "more red flowers or more flowers." "Preoperational" children under age six normally say there are more red flowers. Egan believes the question itself is misleadingly phrased. Piaget's defenders reply that language comprehension also develops in stages. But even adults become confused by the question, Egan notes. And if the choice is clarified so the children know that they are being asked to distinguish between the *whole* group of flowers and part of it, nearly half answer correctly.



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Moreover, 50 percent or more of children who fail one test of their "operational" ability pass others. Piaget and his disciples maintain that such children are between stages. Yet Egan wonders how accurate the theory can be if it dismisses so much contrary evidence.

American researchers, meanwhile, have successfully taught children things that Piagetian theory says they cannot learn. Piaget, for example, believed that four-year-olds cannot grasp the principle of conservation: If water is poured from a narrow tube into a wide container, they will insist that there was more water in the tube because the water line was higher. To Piaget, this suggested that they were incapable of certain kinds of reasoning. But in the American tests, the children not only learned the principle on their own, but applied it to other cases as well.

Many teachers in the West have adapted their classroom methods to fit Piaget's notion that children can learn certain things only at certain ages. Given the evidence against the Swiss psychologist's "vast baroque theoretical edifice," Egan warns, such restrictions "serve mainly to impoverish the practice of education."

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*An Invisible Man*

"The Andropov File" by Edward Jay Epstein, in *The New Republic* (Feb. 7, 1983), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Does Soviet Communist Party leader Yuri Andropov play tennis? Listen to Glenn Miller records? Write comic verse?

Yes, U.S. newspapers told the American public in describing the former KGB chief last November when he succeeded Leonid Brezhnev. Yet virtually none of these piquant details can be verified, says Epstein, author of *Between Fact and Fiction*.

When he was head of the Soviet secret police, American newsmen depicted Andropov as a "shock-haired, burly man" (the *New York Times*) intent on stamping out political dissidence in Russia. But when he was elevated to his new post, the *Times* discovered that he had the "air of a scholar"; the *Washington Post*, which had once pegged his height at five feet, eight inches, now found him "tall and urbane."

Andropov's personal tastes were reported last autumn in rich detail. Fond of the tango and of jokes "with an anti-regime twist" (the *Post*), he likes "Glenn Miller records, good Scotch whisky, Oriental rugs, and American books" (the *Wall Street Journal*). The *Times* noted that Andropov's library included Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls*. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Andropov's furniture was a gift from Hungarian leader Janos Kadar; *Time* said it came compliments of Yugoslavia's late Josip Tito.

Yet Epstein says the sources of such information do not withstand

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close scrutiny. For example, Soviet defector Vladimir Sakharov, whose much-used description of Andropov's apartment appeared in John Bar-ron's 1974 book, provided a strangely similar description of his own apartment in his 1980 autobiography. (Sakharov also claimed to have seen *Valley of the Dolls* during his 1964 visit to the Andropov abode; the book was published in 1966.) Accounts of Andropov's appearance and manner came from Russian émigré Boris Vinokur, who, it turns out, once saw the Soviet leader only from afar. A Soviet dissident (now in Is-rael) said by the *Post* to have been entertained by Andropov denies the story.

The early mistakes of the press, Epstein concludes, stemmed not from sinister Soviet "disinformation" but from its own uncritical thirst for "color," obligingly provided by self-appointed "Andropov experts." The newspapermen should simply have admitted their ignorance. "He [Andropov] stands at the head of Russia," says Epstein, "but we don't even know how tall."

### *TV News Exposure And the Polls*

"Television News Coverage of Presiden-tial Primaries" by C. Richard Hofstetter and David W. Moore, in *Journalism Quar-terly* (Winter 1982), Univ. of South Caro-lina, College of Journalism, Columbia, S.C. 29208.

The contenders for next year's Democratic presidential nomination are already jockeying for position. But if they are betting that gaining wide network TV news coverage by winning big victories in the early 1984 primaries is the key to building a national following, they had better think again.

So argue Hofstetter and Moore, political scientists at the Universities of Houston and New Hampshire, respectively, citing the experiences of Democrats George McGovern and Jimmy Carter.

In 1976, an early win in the January Iowa caucuses and a surge in me-dia attention left unchanged Carter's standing in national Gallup polls of Democrats. His February 25 New Hampshire victory did boost his support from seven to 17 percent. Yet, despite a decline in network cov-erage, Carter's victory over George Wallace in Florida two weeks later pushed his rating up another nine points. One month later, during the New York and Wisconsin primaries, he garnered some 80 minutes of network TV coverage, nearly double the amount given him in New Hampshire. Yet it had no effect on his popularity. After beating the fa-vorite, Senator Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), in Pennsylvania in late April, Carter recorded an 11 percentage point gain in national polls, reaching 40 percent support among Democrats.

George McGovern's 1972 campaign followed a similar pattern. TV commentators named the South Dakotan the de facto victor in New Hampshire after Senator Edmund Muskie (D.-Maine), the front-runner, fell short of his own predicted victory margin. Yet, despite this "media

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victory," McGovern's national support among Democrats remained at about five percent until one month later, when he won his first actual primary victory in Wisconsin.

The importance of early "media victories" is overrated, conclude Hofstetter and Moore. To build a national following, candidates must show that they can win consistently at the polls in truly significant contests, not just excite TV newsmen.

### *The View from The Fringe*

"The View from the Fringe" by Fred Barnes, in *Washington Journalism Review* (Jan.-Feb. 1983), 2233 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

Spokesmen for the New Right and their left-wing opponents seldom agree on anything, but on one matter they see eye to eye: The nation's major news organizations treat them unfairly, albeit in different ways.

One complaint is more common on the Right, writes Barnes, a Baltimore *Sun* reporter: Reporters tend to label its spokesmen as extremists. Right-wing activists are tagged, pejoratively, as "ultraconservatives," while their Left counterparts are described not as ultraliberals but as "progressives."

Ideologues on both sides agree that Washington newsmen judge success or failure by parochial standards. Nannette Falkenberg of the National Abortion Rights Action League notes that while her group has been working to elect "pro-choice" state legislators, reporters focus only on the group's influence in Congress. "If the political class isn't talking about something," adds Jeffrey Bell of the conservative American Enterprise Institute, "reporters don't know about it."

The media's habit of "blowing hot and cold" on subjects also fuels charges of poor coverage, says Barnes. Newspapers and TV spotlighted the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) when George McGovern and several other prominent liberal Senators were defeated in the 1980 elections but dismissed NCPAC after its apparent failure to score again in 1982. Yet NCPAC attracted many more donors during the latter campaign. Its true influence, Barnes suggests, has never been accurately gauged.

To the Left, the chief problem is "institutional" distortion: Partly due to sloth, journalists rely almost exclusively on government and "establishment" sources for news and comment. Conservatives, on the other hand, see a liberal bias in the press corps itself. Moral Majority spokesman Cal Thomas contends that newsmen practice "subtle censorship," barring, for example, pictures of aborted fetuses as "too emotional" while film footage of slain Palestinians is standard TV fare.

Barnes concedes that the critics are often correct. Yet he notes that events can change journalists' perceptions. After the 1979 Three Mile Island accident, the confusion of government and industry sources cost them credibility among newsmen; antinuclear activists gained. American fringe groups, he suggests, should "take heart."

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**RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY**


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## *Making Sense Of Methodism*

"Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley" by Frederick Dreyer, in *The American Historical Review* (Feb. 1983), 400 A St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Many researchers dismiss the religious thinking of John Wesley (1703–91), the founder of the Methodist Church, as incoherent and emotional. That assumption flavors scholarly perceptions of Methodism today, says Dreyer, a University of Western Ontario historian. But in fact, he argues, Wesley's theology was surprisingly consistent.

"I design plain truth for plain people," Wesley once declared. "I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations." The son of an Anglican clergyman, he experienced an "evangelical conversion" in 1738 that convinced him of the importance of *feeling* the love of God. Hence, Methodism did not demand assent to any particular article of faith. Unlike his contemporaries, Wesley was preoccupied not with "what but how the Christian ought to believe," Dreyer observes.

Individual conversions to Methodism were often accompanied by fits and convulsions—interpreted by the faithful as a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence—which further detracted from Wesley's image as a theologian. But Wesley himself was skeptical of the value of such episodes: "I neither forward nor hinder them," he said.

In fact, says Dreyer, Wesley gave considerable thought to the nature of faith and human reason. His arguments closely paralleled those of

*John Wesley's 1738  
religious experience  
started him on the  
road to Methodism  
after 13 years as an  
Anglican minister.*



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John Locke, David Hume, and the other great 18th-century empiricist philosophers.

The empiricists rejected metaphysics and insisted that all knowledge must come from reflection on the evidence of the senses. Wesley agreed, calling Locke "a great master both of reasoning and language." In *Primitive Physic* (1747), "the work of an extreme empiricist," according to Dreyer, Wesley excoriated the physicians of his day for emphasizing theory over evidence in medical research. His insistence on the "direct witness" of God was a logical result of the empiricist emphasis on sensory evidence.

Like the empiricists, Wesley held that some things were beyond human ken. The Bible revealed "facts," such as the existence of the Trinity, which had to be acknowledged. *Understanding* the Trinity was quite another thing: "I have no concern with it," Wesley said.

Wesley relied more heavily on Scripture in making his arguments than did his counterparts. He "cared more about religion than he did about philosophy," Dreyer says. "But it is philosophy in the end that explains what his religion meant."

### *A Kind Word For Death*

"The Case for Mortality" by Leon R. Kass, in *The American Scholar* (Spring 1973), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Arresting the aging process and prolonging human life are top priorities of medical researchers. At first glance, such efforts seem an unqualified good, but Kass, a University of Chicago biologist, is troubled by some of their implications.

The aging process, he says, prepares us for death. "Inasmuch as I no longer cling so hard to the good things of life when I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them," wrote philosopher Michel de Montaigne in 1572, "I come to view death with much less frightened eyes." Death will become harder to accept as people live longer, healthier lives.

Nor would a longer life span significantly increase life's pleasures. "Would the Don Juans of our world," Kass asks, "feel better for having seduced 1,250 women rather than 1,000?" Indeed, he continues, "Is not the limit on our time the ground of our taking life seriously and living it passionately?" The immortals of Greek mythology, facing no such limits, were notoriously frivolous and shallow. Finally, knowledge of decay and death also heightens our appreciation of beauty.

The battle against aging, Kass argues, is at bottom a quest for immortality. It springs from a deep sense of human deficiency, a longing for "wholeness, wisdom, goodness"—rewards universally reserved for the afterlife in the world's religions. "No amount of more-of-the-same," he observes, will truly satisfy such desires.

Perpetuating oneself through one's children, though often "a snare and a delusion," is a secular tonic for such longings, Kass believes. But a society obsessed with the "narcissistic" fear of aging, he contends, "is

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in principle hostile to children" because they are a constant reminder that one is growing older and will die. New generations, Kass adds, are needed to renew society's sense of hope and aspiration.

Life-extending measures are difficult to condemn. But Kass worries that by diverting so much attention to living longer, we may sacrifice "our chance for living as well as we can and for satisfying to some extent . . . our deepest longings for what is best."

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**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**


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*After  $E = mc^2$* 

"Chasing Particles of Unity" by Michael Gold, in *Science* 83 (Mar. 1983), P.O. Box 10790, Des Moines, Iowa 50340.

Physicists have identified the particles responsible for three of nature's four basic forces—electromagnetism, gravity, and the so-called "strong force," which binds the nuclei of atoms together. But until recently, "weak-force" particles have escaped detection.

Japanese physicist Hideki Yukawa first predicted the existence of such particles, which cause radioactive decay, during the mid-1930s, notes Gold, a *Science* 83 associate editor.

By the late 1960s, Steven Weinberg of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Abdus Salam of London's Imperial College had developed a mathematical "electroweak" theory that unified the electromagnetic and weak forces and predicted the existence of three "weak" particles:  $W^+$  and  $W^-$ , both charged particles, and a neutral  $Z^0$ .

In 1980, the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland, spent some \$350 million to modify its four-mile-long particle accelerator in a quest for the elusive particles. For two months, the accelerator hurled beams of protons and antiprotons into head-on collisions at energies, Gold says, "comparable only to those reached in the first explosive seconds of . . . the Big Bang." In theory, the experiment should have yielded a grand total of 100  $W$  and 30  $Z$  particles—each existing for one trillion-trillionth of a second before disintegrating into electrons, muons, and other smaller particles.

The results confirmed the existence of both the  $W^+$  and  $W^-$  particles, identified through telltale electrons. But no  $Z^0$  particles were detected. The CERN scientists are not discouraged: They expect the more intensive second round of tests, beginning this year, to reveal the elusive  $Z^0$ .

The prize for finding them will probably be a Nobel. But proving the "electroweak" theory of Weinberg and Salam (who shared a Nobel Prize in 1979) would be the most significant result. Its ultimate usefulness, Gold notes, is hard to gauge. But when scientists in the past have validated such "unified" theories—thus proving that seemingly differ-

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ent particles and forces are only "different faces of a single, more fundamental property of nature"—the effects have been awesome. Television and radar sprang from Heinrich Hertz's (1857–94) work on the relationship between electricity and magnetism; Albert Einstein's famous  $E=mc^2$  formula linking energy to matter in 1905 led to nuclear power—and the atomic bomb.

### *Interferon's Strange Career*

"Interferon and the Cure of Cancer" by Sandra Panem and Jan Vilček, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Dec. 1982), P.O. Box 2547, Boulder, Colo. 80322.

During the 1970s, high hopes that interferon would prove to be a cure for cancer spurred heavy outlays for research. But most of those hopes have been dashed. The episode, say Panem and Vilček, virologists at the University of Chicago and New York University, respectively, shows how politics and public opinion can influence science.

Interferon, a protein produced in minute quantities in the body, was discovered in 1957, earning its name because it "interferes" with virus infections. During the early 1970s, Dr. Hans Strander, a Swedish physician, used it to treat 15 victims of osteogenic sarcoma, a bone cancer, to try to block the disease from running its usual course of metastasizing to the lungs. He achieved partial success. At the same time, however, the incidence of such diffusion among other sarcoma patients also declined, undercutting his findings.

Meanwhile, Mathilde Krim, a Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center biologist, became convinced of the drug's potential. Using "personal charm, political finesse, and determination," the authors say, Krim raised enough public and private money to hold a major Manhattan conference on interferon in 1975. While it revealed nothing new about the drug, the conference galvanized public support for research.

In 1976, the National Cancer Institute spent \$1 million for interferon research; two years later, the American Cancer Society committed \$2 million, its largest grant ever. (It later spent another \$4 million.) The publicity peaked in January 1980 when Biogen, a Swiss genetic-engineering company, announced that it had produced interferon in the laboratory. High costs—natural interferon treatments cost up to \$30,000—would no longer hamper research.

Since then, hundreds of patients have been treated with interferon—with mixed results. Although it may eventually prove useful in treating *some* cancers, it is clearly no miracle drug. Indeed, interferon has produced unforeseen side effects, such as hair loss, and may actually be harmful to some cancer patients. Yet the drug may have other uses, chiefly in fighting viruses, the source of half of all infectious diseases.

No one is to blame for the diversion of research funds to interferon, Panem and Vilček say. But the costs have been high, not only in lost opportunities for other research, but also in the "emotional toll" taken of cancer victims and their families whose hopes were raised in vain.

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### *What to Do about Toxic Wastes*

"Beyond Dumping: The Surprising Solution to the Love Canal Problem" by Bruce Piasecki, in *The Washington Monthly* (Jan. 1983), 2712 Ontario Rd. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

After the 1978 Love Canal scandal in Niagara Falls, New York, federal and state agencies hastened to tighten regulation of toxic-waste dumps. Yet some Western European countries have discovered that detoxifying chemical by-products makes more sense than dumping them.

American industry generates some 77 billion pounds of toxic waste—sulfuric acid, mercury, cyanide—every year. Eighty percent of this poison is simply dumped into landfills, pits, and ponds, notes Piasecki, who teaches humanities at Clarkson College. Less than 20 percent is treated at all; and incineration, the most common method, merely releases the poisons into the atmosphere.

In West Germany, by contrast, 15 plants detoxify 85 percent of the nation's wastes; in Denmark, a single plant transforms virtually all of the country's deadly industrial by-products into harmless chemicals.

Detoxification technology is readily available. Chlorinolysis, used in one West German plant, converts chlorinated hydrocarbons such as PCBs, pesticides, and kepone to useful substances. A technique developed by Lockheed scientist L. J. Bailin in 1978, microwave plasma detoxification, breaks down heavy metals into their marketable components. And a new generation of genetically engineered "superbug" bacteria devours benzene, herbicides such as Agent Orange, and even cyanide.

Cost poses no great barrier to wider use of such techniques, Piasecki argues. Subjecting hazardous wastes to chlorinolysis, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, would increase manufacturers' costs by less than one percent. In California, new state dumping regulations will boost the affected industries' disposal costs from \$17 million this year to \$30 million in 1985. The bill for detoxification: only \$50 million annually.

But industry will have to be prodded to adapt the new technology, Piasecki says. In 1978, Congress tightened regulation of dumping by 65,000 major waste producers, but largely exempted 695,000 "small" producers who together account for 6.5 billion pounds of hazardous wastes annually. President Jimmy Carter's EPA planned to ask Congress to close the loophole, but the Reagan EPA is sitting tight. Indeed, it has *eased* some dumping regulations and delayed implementation of others.

Ignoring the intent of Congress in this way is one thing, says Piasecki, but flouting the laws of nature is another. The nation's dump capacity will be exhausted by the year 2000. It won't be enough, he warns, to "cross our fingers and hope for the best."



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*American Farms  
Face the Future*

"The Future of American Agriculture" by Sandra S. Batie and Robert G. Healy, in *Scientific American* (Feb. 1983), 414 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

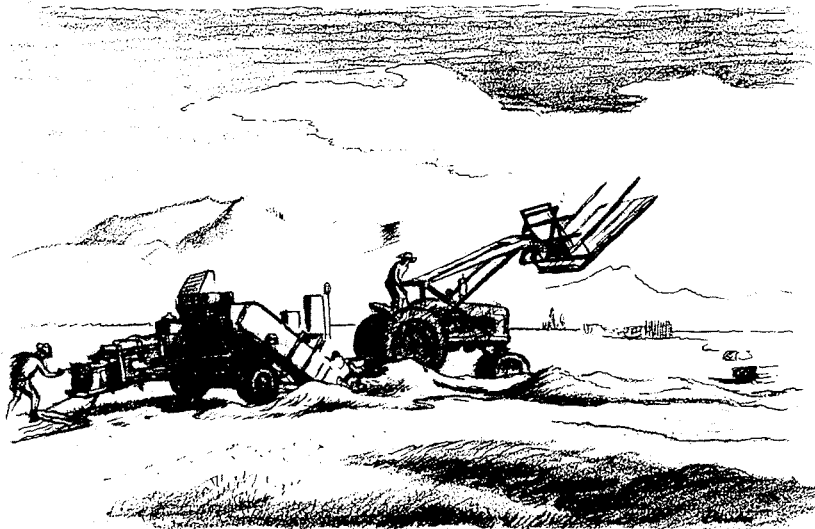
After a century of growing productivity, the nation's farmers face serious problems. Yet, Batie and Healy, economists at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the Conservation Foundation, respectively, claim that no U.S. agricultural crisis looms on the horizon.

Fears that American farmland is being "paved over," for example, are unwarranted. Between 1967 and 1975, some 875,000 acres of arable land were converted each year to "other uses." But land *actually in cultivation* reached a record high 391 million acres in 1981.

And "other uses" are not always shopping centers and exurbs. The Northeast and Southeast have lost cropland since 1939 (while other regions have gained), but much of that land has been converted to forest or pasture. Moreover, land conversion should slow down: Between 1956 and 1975, construction of the U.S. interstate highway system, now largely complete, consumed nearly two million acres and spurred industrial development on adjacent land.

Critics have also exaggerated water shortages in the arid West, the authors argue. The real problem: Managers of federal irrigation projects charge too little for water, encouraging Western farmers to waste it or use it to grow feed for beef cattle, a "luxury" food source. Higher water prices might raise local beef and other food costs, but would solve the Western water "crisis."

Soil erosion is a legitimate worry. One study of Iowa, for example, shows a sizable increase in loss of topsoil since 1957, thanks largely to



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wider cultivation of less erosion-resistant row crops, e.g., soybeans and corn. But technical remedies exist. "Conservation tillage," for example, reduces erosion by 50 to 90 percent, and is already used on about 25 percent of U.S. farmland. Higher costs, farmers' habits, and subsidies for certain crops are among the factors slowing wider implementation of such techniques.

A greater imponderable is the possibility of a sudden climate change. Nevertheless, the authors argue, Washington policy-makers should do more to limit such long-term risks. Among their options: encouraging wider dispersal of farms and diversification of crops in one-crop regions, ending farm subsidies that encourage unwise land use.

The legendary bounty of America's farms seems secure for the near future. Taking a few prudent steps now will ensure that it stays that way for a long time to come.

### *Arctic Oil*

"The Great Arctic Energy Rush" in *Business Week* (Jan. 24, 1983), 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

Although the 1981-83 oil glut has eased fears of future energy shortages, oilmen are spending billions to find and tap new oil and natural gas in the Arctic.

According to *Business Week*, OPEC's daily output is now running at least 10 million barrels below capacity. But some specialists believe that surplus may dry up by 1986. The United States, Canada, Norway, Greenland, and the Soviet Union (which owns the biggest slice of Arctic territory) are all stepping up Arctic exploration. The prize: up to 170 billion barrels of oil and 1,800 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

For the United States, the stakes are high. The flow of oil from Alaska's giant Prudhoe Bay field, which still holds 9.6 billion barrels of crude, one-third of known U.S. reserves, is slowing. But according to the U.S. National Petroleum Council, Alaska may harbor another 45 billion barrels of undiscovered oil, much of it offshore in the frigid Beaufort and Bering seas. Exploiting such deposits could help cut U.S. oil imports to less than two million barrels per day by 1990, compared to 6.6 million in 1977.

U.S. Interior Secretary James Watt is opening more Arctic areas to drilling to speed exploitation. A recent auction of Beaufort Sea leases netted more than \$2 billion. Yet environmental constraints may limit Watt's plans. Congress has declared 125 million of Alaska's 375 million acres, including a portion of the Beaufort coast, off-limits to developers. And Arctic exploration is expensive: A single offshore drilling rig can cost \$20 million. Washington estimates that the total bill for Alaskan oil development could come to \$100 billion.

Other nations are also joining the Arctic energy rush. The Soviet Union plans to invest \$40 billion during the next five years, mostly to build up natural gas output. (One reason: Moscow reaps 70 percent of its hard-currency receipts from oil and gas exports.) Also prospecting in

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the Arctic are Norway, whose offshore Troll field could increase Western Europe's natural gas reserves by 50 percent, and Canada, which is searching for successors to its Alberta oil fields.

The possibility of an OPEC price collapse or a sudden breakthrough in synthetic fuel production makes investing in Arctic oil a financial gamble. But to oilmen searching for energy supplies outside of OPEC's grasp, it seems a risk worth taking.

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### *Did Success Spoil The Naturalists?*

"American Naturalism and the Problem of Sincerity" by Christopher P. Wilson, in *American Literature* (Dec. 1982), Duke Univ. Press, East Campus, Duke Univ., Durham, N.C. 27706.

America's so-called "naturalist" writers—notably Jack London, Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair—won fame around the turn of the century. Wilson, a Boston College English professor, argues that the naive optimism of the age shaped their writing, and ultimately impoverished it.

Prosperity created a new audience for magazine stories and novels. The naturalists reacted by proclaiming themselves "professionals" and renouncing the "effete" aestheticism of their Victorian predecessors. Literature, in their view, was a product of hard work, not genius. "Don't loaf and invite inspiration," Jack London advised younger writers, "light out after it with a club." The naturalists' own work habits were legendary: Upton Sinclair churned out a potboiler every week during a yearlong stint for a Manhattan publishing house before winning fame with *The Jungle* (1906).

Sinclair and his colleagues—often reformers or socialists—tried to shun commercialism, Wilson says. They were serious advocates of "sincerity"—a combination of Romantic spirituality and Realist facts—in literature. What London called their "impassioned realism" demanded a direct, forceful writing style.

Yet from their vigorous prose to their passion for "sincerity" and hard work, Wilson argues, the naturalists unwittingly echoed the voices of the nation's emerging Big Business culture. New self-help manuals for corporate climbers, for example, stressed the importance of selling oneself by exuding confidence and an upbeat attitude. "The essential element" in such "personal magnetism," advertising mogul Bruce Barton told readers in 1925, "is a consuming sincerity."

It was the same advice that London and his colleagues received from their editors and publishers—self-made literary salesmen such as S. S. McClure and Frank Doubleday.

Once sincerity had become "a learned attribute, a public presentation rather than a spontaneous emotion," Wilson writes, the damage was done. The naturalists' embrace of the "power of positive thinking,"

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he maintains, eventually turned their writing stale, their plots into formulaic success stories.

Ironically, Wilson contends, the naturalists introduced into American literature "a nascent consumer culture's fascination [with] 'image' over reality, [with] credibility over truth."

### *A Dead End For Dance*

"Postmodern Dance and the Repudiation of Primitivism" by Roger Copeland, in *Partisan Review* (No. 1, 1983), Boston Univ., 121 Bay State Rd., Boston, Mass. 02215.

Performers and choreographers of modern dance—Martha Graham, for example—have long stressed the "primitive" elements of their art. But a new generation is abandoning primitivism, and possibly dance itself.

So says Copeland, an Oberlin College theater teacher. Primitivism, he notes, arose around the turn of the century in reaction to the "neurotic character" of modern life. Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and other modern dancers, drawing inspiration from primitive tribal rituals, sought to restore the spontaneity, emotion, and unity of mind and body that, in their view, industrial society suppressed.

Music, dance, and stage scenery were woven into one dream-like spectacle, enveloping both performer and audience. As French poet Paul Valéry noted, "part of our pleasure as spectators (of dance) consists in feeling ourselves possessed by the rhythms so that we ourselves are virtually dancing." The primitivists distrusted the intellect: "Motion and not language is truthful," Loie Fuller declared.

The revolt against primitivism began during the 1950s, when dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham, a former student of Graham, established his own "postmodern" dance troupe in Manhattan. Influenced by the "cool, cerebral qualities" of contemporary art, Copeland says, Cunningham deliberately choreographed works in which movement, sound, and decor were dissociated. Dancers were accompanied by narrators, not music; physical barriers were erected between the audience and performers to encourage critical detachment.

Unlike the primitivists, the postmodern choreographers—Cunningham and such disciples as Trisha Brown, Kenneth King, Twyla Tharp—make full use of language. Sometimes, Copeland observes, they go to extremes: During the early 1970s, King gave some performances in which he simply read aloud to the audience. Indeed, Copeland says, in their overreaction to the primitivists' anti-intellectualism, the postmodernists often appear to forget that dance is a physical art. One notable Cunningham pupil, Yvonne Rainer, has already abandoned dance for film-making, a more "detached" art form.

Cunningham and the other postmodernists long ago established themselves as the avant-garde of dance. Yet their colleagues may be reluctant to follow them, Copeland warns, if they pursue their transformation into dancers who do not dance.

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*A Revolution  
In Painting?*

"Signs of Passion: The New Expressionism" by Hilton Kramer, in *The New Criterion* (Nov. 1982), Foundation for Cultural Review, 460 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Neo-Expressionism is only one of many new styles that has swept the art world since the 1960s. Nevertheless, asserts Kramer, editor of the *New Criterion*, it signals a real change in the direction of art.

The previous major innovation in painting occurred during the early 1960s, when Andy Warhol's Pop art displaced the postwar Abstract Expressionism of such artists as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Warhol's focus on the "imagery of mass culture"—as in his famous painting of a Campbell's Soup can—set his work apart from the serious, nonrepresentational painting of his predecessors.

But Pop art and the movements that followed, notably Minimal art and Color-field painting, took the Abstract Expressionists' tendency towards a "cool," impersonal style to an extreme. "All evidence of subjective emotion," Kramer writes, "was suppressed in favor of clean surfaces and hard edges, of instant legibility, transparency, and order."

Ironically, the "cool" art movements of the 1960s and '70s flourished during a "hot" period of social turmoil, Kramer says, creating an "intolerable tension" between art and life. By the late 1970s, the Neo-Expressionists—Malcolm Morley, Julian Schnabel, Susan Rothenberg—were leading the forces of reaction.

Their paintings "swamped the eye with vivid images and tactile effects, relying more on instinct and imagination than on careful design,"

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*Today's Neo-Expressionists trace their lineage to the Expressionist school of the early 20th century, exemplified by E. L. Kirchner's Der Theosoph (far left). An example of 1960s Pop art is Roy Lichtenstein's Girl With Ball. Mimmo Paladino's Porta is a Neo-Expressionist work.*

Kramer writes. "The mystical, the erotic, and the hallucinatory were once again made welcome in painting." Not only did the new painters reinject emotion into art, they reversed a 100-year trend towards "depletion" and sparer images in painting.

The Neo-Expressionists are not the only painters who are breaking away from the art of the last two decades, Kramer notes. But their freshness and vigor are a sure sign that "cool" art is on the way out.

*The Maestros Gather Dust*

"The Conductor as Endangered Species" by Donal Henahan, in *The New York Times Magazine* (Nov. 28, 1982), 229 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Today's big-league orchestra conductors are often affluent superstars, but Henahan, a *New York Times* music critic, contends they have abandoned their most useful role—finding new music and presenting it to the public.

The first symphony orchestras were created in Europe during the late 18th century to serve new middle-class audiences that hungered for music previously heard only in the salons of aristocrats. Most conductors were also composers, natural promoters of their own music and that of their contemporaries. Hungary's Franz Liszt (1811–86), for example, performed not only his own compositions, but also those of Wagner and Berlioz. Maestros who did not compose linked their careers to favorite contemporaries who did: Pierre Monteux (1875–1964)

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introduced many new works by Stravinsky, Debussy, and Ravel.

Most conductors included no works from the past in their musical programs. Felix Mendelssohn's controversial 1829 revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* was a turning point. Gradually, older works came to dominate conductors' repertoires, and became "classics."

In Europe and America, composers themselves contributed to the change, Henahan concedes, by turning increasingly after World War I to atonality and dissonance "that audiences simply could not bring themselves to love." But he puts most of the blame for today's rift between conductors and composers on the maestros themselves.

The proliferation of orchestras in U.S. cities since the 1960s and the doubling of the number of concerts they play each season mean that even ordinary conductors seldom have trouble finding jobs. Lucrative recording contracts discourage all from straying from the classics. Some—André Previn, Eugene Ormandy, Seiji Ozawa—occasionally perform works by Dmitri Shostakovich, John Cage, and others; a few "throwbacks," notably Leonard Bernstein, compose their own works. But few avant-garde composers can claim any champions.

Most maestros, Henahan concludes, are now little more than museum curators. If they do not open their doors to new music, he warns, they will become museum pieces themselves.

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### *Zimbabwe's Fading Star*

"The Cracks in Zimbabwe" by Xan Smiley, in *The New Republic* (Jan. 31, 1983), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Four years after the end of white minority rule in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Africa's newest nation has experienced neither the bloody racial strife nor the socialist revolution that many predicted.

Instead, writes Smiley, a London *Times* editorial writer, Zimbabwe under Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, a Marxist and former guerrilla leader, appears to be evolving into the kind of semicapitalist, one-party state now typical of Africa.

The nation's 7.5 million blacks are better off today than they were in 1979. The minimum wage has doubled to \$62.50 monthly. Primary school enrollment has nearly doubled since tuition fees were dropped. Hospital care is now free for the poor. Workers' committees give blacks a voice in running farms and factories, still largely white-owned.

While private enterprise survives, whites continue to flee Zimbabwe, although the exodus is not as great as some had feared. The white population is down from a pre-1979 peak of 278,000 to some 150,000 and is expected to fall to 80,000 eventually.

Tribal loyalties, meanwhile, are coming to the fore in domestic

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politics. The Shona, accounting for 75 percent of the population, overwhelmingly back Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front Party (ZANU-PF), which has already absorbed several smaller political groupings. The Ndebele and Kalanga, about 20 percent of the population, support Joshua Nkomo's rival Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). But in February 1982, Nkomo, himself a former guerrilla leader, was fired from his cabinet post when Mugabe decided to make an issue of the arms caches maintained by his rival's supporters. Dissidents have been imprisoned; the press has begun to suffer government harassment. [In February 1983, Mugabe widened the campaign; thousands of ZAPU sympathizers and former guerrillas were killed by government troops.]

Mugabe placates other potential rivals with patronage. Of the 80 black members of Parliament, he has appointed 54 as cabinet ministers or deputy ministers with salaries of up to \$35,000. Such dubious appointments, along with the departure of white civil servants, are undermining government performance. The mail and telephone services already show signs of increasing inefficiency.

Contrary to most earlier forecasts, gradual decay, not civil war or racial turmoil, is Zimbabwe's chief problem today. While the new nation has been Black Africa's "shining star," Smiley concludes, it seems destined to become just another lackluster African dictatorship.

### *Some are More Equal than Others*

"Is There a Soviet Working Class?" by Alex Pravda, in *Problems of Communism* (Nov.-Dec. 1982), U.S. Information Agency, 400 C St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

The Soviet Union is officially a classless "workers' state." However, even Soviet academics are now documenting wide socioeconomic disparities among Russia's workers.

By Western standards, the Soviet working class is unusually large (half the population) and unskilled, writes Pravda, a University of Reading, England, political scientist.

But the recent emergence of a small new "working middle class" of craftsmen and highly skilled workers has shattered old notions of a unified proletariat. Metal workers, coal miners, and other members of the new blue-collar elite, 10 percent of the working class, are paid up to three times more than factory janitors and other manual laborers. Their salaries are on a par with those of doctors or mid-level engineers.

But Soviet workers in general are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to educational opportunities: Children from white-collar families are three times as likely to attend universities as are their blue-collar counterparts. One reason is that white-collar families spend so much on private tutoring—1.5 billion rubles yearly, equal to 20 percent of the nation's budget for secondary schools. The sluggish economy has also led some working-class children to lower their sights and go to



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technical schools rather than college.

Politics is one possible outlet for the ambitious "working middle class": One out of three, as opposed to fewer than 10 percent of other workers, belongs to the Communist Party. But there is little opportunity for such activists beyond the grassroots level. Indeed, notes Pravda, the frustrated hopes of the new "working middle class" lead to discontent. Unofficial opinion surveys, for example, suggest that highly trained technical workers were stronger supporters of Poland's Solidarity trade-union movement than were other Soviet workers. So far, the new blue-collar elites seem more interested in advancing their own interests than in pushing for reform. Even so, concludes Pravda, if "any challenge to the myth of the Soviet 'working class'" ever arises, it will come from this group.

### *Creating Hunger In Honduras*

"The Cattle are Eating the Forest" by Billie R. DeWalt, in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Jan. 1983), 5801 South Kenwood, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

In 1976, Honduras joined a growing list of Third World nations that must import corn, rice, and other basic foods. Many of its people go hungry. Yet, at the same time, the Hondurans have stepped up their production and export of beef.

Between 1961 and 1980, such exports rose more than 500 percent, while domestic beef consumption dropped. In the rich tropical southern highlands, the amount of land in pasture increased from 42 percent of the total in 1952 to 61 percent in 1974. If its population continues to grow at today's high 3.3 percent annual rate, Honduras will have to import 41 percent of its grain by 1990. Even now, perhaps 58 percent of Honduran children under age five suffer from malnutrition.

Behind the change is a peculiar dynamic that encourages the conversion of cropland and forests to pasture, says DeWalt, a University of Kentucky anthropologist. Landowners are shifting into livestock production because corn and rice yield low profits (thanks partly to official price controls), and because the export prices for coffee, bananas, and sugar are highly unpredictable. The Tegucigalpa government, with an eye on the lucrative U.S. markets that absorb 90 percent of Central American beef exports, contributed by offering low-interest loans to cattle producers. (Ironically, DeWalt adds, a modest government land reform program during the early 1970s helped speed the process: Landowners now fear "unused" timberland will be taken from them.)

The nation's tenant farmers also gain, but only in the short run. Landowners give them wooded or fallow land at low annual rents (about \$8 per *manzana* or 1.7 acres), but the peasants must clear it, share any timber, and eventually begin sowing grass between the rows of their grain crops for the owners' cattle to graze on after the harvest.

Even as cattle occupy more of Honduras's farmland and compete with humans for grains, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and other Central

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American countries are experiencing the same unhealthy transition. It is a process, DeWalt concludes, in which "some people are devouring the cattle, while the cattle [in effect] are devouring some people."

### Japan's Geisha

"The Art of the Geisha" by Liza Crihfield Dalby, in *Natural History* (Feb. 1983), Box 4300, Bergenfield, N.J. 07621.

To Westerners, Japan's "geisha girls," with their powdered faces and traditional garb, seem exotic and slightly sinful. Most Japanese, reports anthropologist Dalby, have the same reaction.

Yet the geisha are not prostitutes. The first geisha were male entertainers in 17th-century Japanese brothels. No women entered the profession until 1751, but by 1800 they had claimed the profession for themselves.

At first, geisha were Japan's fashion trend-setters. But as the Japanese began following Western styles during the 1920s, the geisha became instead informal "curators" of traditional Japanese culture. Today, geisha (literally, "artists") provide witty conversation and classical Japanese dance and music for wealthy male connoisseurs at exclusive teahouses, mostly in Tokyo or the old imperial capital of Kyoto.

Geisha enjoy private lives unique among Japanese women. They take lovers rather than husbands, and a few have wealthy "patrons." But they are "ladies of the evening" only, not "ladies of the night." "Men who imagine they will find a geisha for a one-night stand," says Dalby, "will be disappointed."

"Most Japanese," she notes, "have probably never met a geisha." In fact, there are only some 17,000 geisha in Japan today; their median age is 40. Tradition once demanded that a geisha's daughter follow in her mother's footsteps, but no longer. And the profession's peculiar status in Japanese society makes recruiting difficult.

On the one hand, because of their role as preservers of tradition, geisha are respected and considered "more Japanese" than any other group, says Dalby. (Few young Japanese women are willing to accept the stern discipline and artistic training required to enter the profession.) Yet, because geisha challenge the notion that marriage is the only proper path for Japanese women, there is more than a hint of disrepute in their image.

Thus, while "prominent Japanese will proudly present an evening of geisha entertainment to the visiting queen of England," Dalby observes, most would be aghast should their daughter enter the profession.



## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions*

### **"Prospects for Medicare's Hospital Insurance Trust Fund."**

Staff Memorandum, Congressional Budget Office, U.S. Congress, Washington, D.C. 20402. 22 pp.

Even as Congress celebrates the apparent resolution of the Social Security crisis, it may have to start worrying about another impending U.S. trust fund bankruptcy.

According to the staff of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Medicare (health insurance for the elderly and disabled) faces almost certain insolvency by 1988. Ironically, Congress hastened the problem by authorizing Social Security to borrow some \$12.4 billion from Medicare to balance the books, reducing the latter's trust fund to \$8.3 billion.

Medicare consists of two programs: Supplementary Medical Insurance (1983 outlays: \$19.2 billion), which covers doctors' services, and Hospital Insurance (\$41.1 billion), which pays for stays in hospitals and nursing homes and for home health care.

The Supplementary program is not in jeopardy because it is chiefly supported by general revenues.

But Hospital Insurance is financed through earmarked payroll taxes. At current rates, it will suffer an \$8.2 billion deficit in 1988, widening to \$18.3 billion in 1990 and to \$63.2 billion by 1995.

The chief source of red ink is escalating hospital costs, which account for 10.8 percentage points of the projected 13.2 percent average annual increase in outlays between now and 1995. Surprisingly, the aging of the U.S. population is a minor factor.

Payroll tax hikes alone would be too onerous to close the gap. The current 1.3 percent payroll tax on earnings is scheduled to rise to 1.45 percent in 1986; it would have to climb to 2.38 percent by 1995 to keep Medicare in

the black. But when scheduled boosts in the Social Security payroll tax are also factored in, the burden would be 8.5 percent—a big chunk of workers' paychecks. And, since employers pay an equal percentage, this is a deterrent to new hiring.

Financing the deficit out of general revenues would simply redistribute the tax burden.

Another option is to raise recipients' "coinsurance" costs, thus encouraging shorter and fewer hospital stays. Currently, Medicare beneficiaries pay a "first day" fee of \$304, but nothing else for the next 59 days. Closing the budget gap would require a stiff daily payment of \$100.

Cutting hospital charges is a fourth possibility. Congress could adopt a "prospective reimbursement" system—establishing in advance rates Medicare will pay hospitals—but to maintain Medicare's solvency, payments would have to be 38 percent below projected full reimbursement costs. The probable result: either an overall decline in the quality of hospital care or a dual hospital system, one for private patients and an inferior version for Medicare patients.

Relying on any single measure to staunch the Medicare red ink is probably impractical. Combining all three is probably the best alternative.

So far, Congress has been myopic about Medicare's growing difficulties, content to tinker and hope. [In March, it adopted a limited form of prospective reimbursement. This, in effect, merely replaces hospital cost control measures now in force and does not alter the CBO projections.] But it will take radical steps to save the system.

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**"A Palestinian State: Implications for Israel."**

Harvard Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 190 pp. \$16.00.  
 Author: Mark A. Heller

Amidst all the debates over whether a new Palestinian state should be created in the Middle East, few analysts have pondered what such a state actually would be like—or how much of a threat it would pose to Israel.

Heller, a research associate at Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Studies, believes that, over the long run, a Palestinian state could increase Israel's security. His hypothetical state, negotiated with a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) willing to renounce its aim of eliminating Israel, would encompass the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Added to the 1.3 million Palestinians now in the two areas, he estimates, would be 750,000 exiles returning over a five-year period. The new settlers would need 195,000 jobs, requiring new investments of \$3.3 billion. Diverting some \$220 million from the United Nations Relief and Work Agency's budget for Palestinian refugees and tapping personal savings in the new state would provide \$2 billion. The remainder, about \$260 million annually, could be supplied from other sources. The major Arab powers, for example, have pledged \$250 million annually to the PLO.

Even so, by 1985 the Palestinian state would have a gross national product of only \$2.5 billion, compared

to Israel's \$19.5 billion in 1980.

"A state might enhance conventional Palestinian military capabilities," Heller adds, "but it would also constitute a discrete and accessible target for Israel." Rifts would also appear in the Palestinian ranks: Many present-day residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be satisfied with an end to Israeli occupation and reluctant to risk all in war; the "village patriots," hard-core PLO supporters who fled their homes after the creation of Israel in 1948, would comprise at most seven percent of the population. And Arab support for the PLO would naturally diminish once a homeland was established.

Nevertheless, Heller cautions, Israel would require safeguards: full diplomatic relations with the new nation, guarantees that the Palestinians would maintain only defensive armed forces and not enter into any military alliances, and the right to maintain monitoring posts within the new state's borders.

A West Bank-Gaza Strip Palestinian state would still pose a threat to Israel. But with the Israeli defense effort now consuming over 30 percent of its GNP annually and the political divisions within Israel growing, a negotiated settlement to the "question of Palestine" seems the wisest course.

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**"Underground Government: The Off-Budget Public Sector."**

Cato Institute, 224 Second St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. 179 pp. \$8.95.  
 Authors: James T. Bennett and Thomas J. DiLorenzo

The 1970s "tax revolt" spawned a new outbreak of "off-budget" activities at all levels of government, immune to taxpayers' control.

Most "off-budget enterprises" (OBEs), explain Bennett and DiLorenzo, economists at George Mason University, are quasi-public authori-

ties that sell tax-exempt bonds and use or lend the proceeds to fund particular kinds of projects—airport, road, or hospital construction, sewer and water system operation, industrial development. Their outlays do not appear in the budgets of the governments that created them. Their borrowing, the authors add, “does not require voter approval and . . . is not subject to statutory or constitutional debt restrictions.”

In Washington, federally chartered OBEs such as the Farm Credit Administration and the Federal National Mortgage Association (“Fannie Mae”) are just part of the off-budget pie. They borrowed (and spent or loaned) \$49 billion in 1982, most of it for home, farm, and business mortgages, up from \$29 billion two years earlier.

“On-budget” federal agencies, meanwhile, have shifted more and more of their business off the books. Their off-budget outlays swelled from just \$100 million annually in 1973 to \$23.2 billion in 1981. Accounting for nearly half the total was the Department of Agriculture’s Farmers Home Administration, which provides low-interest loans for rural development.

Some 150 federal agencies extend off-budget loan guarantees, insuring banks against defaults by small businessmen, homeowners, students, and other private borrowers (who therefore pay a lower rate of interest). Washington provided \$102 billion of such guarantees in 1982.

All told, federal loans and guaran-

tees, off- and on-budget, came to \$205 billion in 1982, accounting for 40 percent of all credit extended annually.

Such massive involvement in the credit markets, the authors warn, “crowds out” private borrowing. Every \$1 billion in loan guarantees, for example, costs up to \$1.32 billion in foregone private investment.

Information about state and local OBEs is sketchier. State OBEs number in the thousands; there are perhaps 10,000 at the local level. Yet their activities have expanded dramatically, largely, the authors argue, as elected officials sought to sidestep the effects of the 1970s “tax revolt.”

Until 1974, municipalities annually issued more voter-approved bonds for such purposes as building new sports arenas or sewage systems than they did OBE bonds. But the ratio was then reversed. In 1980, city OBEs raised \$34 billion through bond sales, city governments only \$14 billion. State OBEs, meanwhile, raised an estimated \$106 billion in 1980.

Why worry? While OBE debts are normally repaid out of earnings from the projects they fund, state and local governments—and thus the taxpayers—must ultimately make good on them in the event of a default.

Bennett and DiLorenzo are not sanguine about the prospects for controlling off-budget spending. Even a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget would probably just promote the growth of more “underground government.”

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### “Reading, Science, & Mathematics Trends: A Closer Look.”

National Assessment of Educational Progress, Education Commission of the States, Suite 700, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver, Colo. 80295. 32 pp. \$4.00.

Author: Barbara J. Holmes

American elementary and high school students during the 1970s performed neither as well as they could have nor

as poorly as many critics contend.

The mixed bag of results turned up in a series of standardized tests ad-

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ministered during the decade to one million students by the federally commissioned National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Several clear trends emerged during the 1970s, writes Holmes, an NAEP staffer. Overall, reading skills improved while math and science scores dropped. Black students made relatively greater gains than did whites in all three fields. Both younger students and low achievers improved their performances while older students and high achievers lost ground.

The biggest single gain of the decade was recorded by nine-year-old black students in the bottom 25 percent (or quartile) of the achievement scale: an 8.4 percent gain in reading scores.

Overall, nine-year-olds made gains across the board in reading and held their own in math and science. The scores of 13-year-olds remained stable in reading and science, but dropped in math. Seventeen-year-olds lost ground in every field but reading, where their scores were unchanged.

Breaking the data down by race tells a somewhat different story. Black nine-year-olds fared best, outpacing their white counterparts' gains in reading, keeping even in science, and improving their math scores by 2.9 percent while their white classmates' declined by two percent.

Among 13-year-olds, there were only two changes for either group: Blacks improved by 3.2 percent in reading; whites dropped by 2.4 percent in mathematics. Seventeen-year-old black students lost less ground in math and more in science than their white classmates.

Despite their gains, black students, overall, consistently performed below

the national average during the 1970s, while their white contemporaries scored above average. Yet, while in 1971 only 5.8 percent of black nine-year-olds were in the top quartile of overall academic achievement for their age group, by 1980 the proportion was up to 10.4 percent.

The NAEP study also shows that, regardless of race, low achievers (the bottom quartile) were "catching up" with high achievers. Indeed, high achievers registered only one gain during the decade: a 1.4 percent increase in the reading scores of nine-year-olds. The heaviest losses were also incurred by high achievers: declines of 3.9 and 4.3 percent, respectively, in science and math among 17-year-olds.

No group of low achievers, on the other hand, suffered a drop in test scores during the decade, and several registered gains.

What is behind these trends? Holmes offers some tentative explanations. "Back-to-basics" advocates emphasized elementary skills, and Washington committed itself to compensatory education focused on young, underprivileged black children. These help to explain gains in reading and among blacks.

But the "back-to-basics" movement slights "problem-solving" skills. The exodus of top math and science teachers to more lucrative careers in the private sector, exacerbated by declining federal support for science education, also contributed to the losses.

To a large degree, Holmes suggests, American society got what it wanted from the schools during the 1970s. Second thoughts on education might now be in order.

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**WILSON CENTER PAPERS**


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*Summaries of key reports given at recent Wilson Center meetings*

**"Why Nations Built Bombs: 'Never in the Field of Human Conflict Was So Much Owed by So Many to So Few.'"**

Paper by Arnold Kramish, presented at a colloquium sponsored by the Wilson Center's International Security Studies Program, December 9, 1982.

Reflecting, in 1962, on America's World War II race for "the Bomb," General Leslie Groves, former commander of the Manhattan Project, observed that "without active and continuing British interest there probably would have been no atomic bomb to drop on Hiroshima." Kramish, a physicist and himself a participant in the Manhattan Project, goes further: He believes that the British discouraged early efforts toward cooperation among the major powers for the post-war control of atomic weapons.

Franklin Roosevelt, says Kramish, "was no match [for] Churchill in coping with the new atomic challenges." Churchill had actually envisioned, as early as 1925, an explosive of the size and yield of the Nagasaki bomb. His atomic adviser during the war was a close personal friend—physicist Frederick Lindemann, later Lord Cherwell. They kept tabs on American developments with the help of a group of 30 top British scientists working with colleagues in the United States.

By contrast, Roosevelt "never really understood the subject." He thought the German effort to build an atomic bomb was further advanced than it actually was (the British, who knew better, chose not to disabuse him). His political adviser, Harry Hopkins, who was not a scientist, was in touch with Churchill and Cherwell as often as with such top U.S. physicists as Vannevar Bush.

Bush began to believe that the United States and Britain should consider sharing information in the post-war world for the sake of international control. But at Churchill's bidding, contends Kramish, Roosevelt was so secretive about the bomb that, for example, even Vice-President Truman was unaware of the September 19, 1944, Hyde Park Churchill-FDR agreement to use the bomb against Japan "after mature consideration." According to Kramish, this secrecy convinced Stalin that the Americans were serious about building a weapon. He thus resumed his own secret atomic project on a modest scale—an institute with a staff of 50—at the end of 1942.

Churchill, explains Kramish, had his own reasons for secrecy—and for wanting to drop the bomb on Japan. He distrusted Stalin and felt that Roosevelt "was going soft" on the Soviets. He also anticipated American resentment if Britain did not join the Pacific war effort. As Churchill saw it, the best way for war-exhausted Britain to help was to encourage the use of the bomb on Japan.

On August 6, 1945, America bombed Hiroshima. Stalin, says Kramish, suddenly realized the full implications of the weapon so closely guarded by his allies. The secrecy and outright deceptions attending the birth of the nuclear age, he argues, were destined to impair East-West efforts to achieve arms control.

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### **“Power Changes When Decentralizing: The Case of Yugoslavia.”**

Paper by Eugen Pusić, presented at a colloquium sponsored by the Wilson Center's History, Culture, and Society Program, December 6, 1982.

Under Josip Broz Tito, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) first acquired political power, then undertook to decentralize it. Pusić, a Yugoslavian political scientist, examines the results.

When, in April 1941, the royal government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes fell to the invading Axis powers, the CPY was the most effective leader in organizing the Yugoslav resistance.

After the war, the CPY instituted a federal state, appealing to ethnic groups (Slovenes, Croatians, Montenegrins) denied local self-government for almost 500 years by the Hapsburgs and the Ottoman Turks.

The party then proceeded to build a Soviet-type, one-party regime. Its centralizing strategies, however, threatened to reduce the federal units to a “constitutional shadow existence.”

But Marshal Tito, having witnessed the excesses of concentrated power during Stalin's ruthless purges, resisted too-faithful imitation. His independent ways drew predictable reactions from Moscow; on June 28, 1948, the CPY was expelled from the Comintern. Tito's party faced the question of how to distribute power without creating threatening new power centers elsewhere.

The Yugoslavs experimented. In 1950, elected workers' councils were established in each factory and shop. The goal: gradually to divest the State

of industrial control. But power refused to stay where it was distributed. The technical and managerial staffs in Yugoslav industries enjoyed an “expertise” monopoly that “drew the workers' council into its orbit,” away from the main body of workers.

Party congresses in 1952, 1958, and 1964 mandated a transfer of political power away from the party toward “sovereign assemblies of elected representatives at all levels from the commune to the federation.”

But the transfer was not smooth. Milovan Djilas, the Vice-President expelled from the party in 1954, has written extensively on the persistence of party domination through bureaucratic maneuvering. The 1974 Constitution attempted to limit party control of local assemblies, but the CPY Congress insisted on “the principles of ‘democratic’ centralism.”

Other moves were more successful: the shifting of public services from the central government to self-managing organizations, the creation of local militia units comparable to the American National Guard.

Decentralizing, Pusić concludes, remains a challenge. Crises arising from superpower rivalries threaten Yugoslavia's internal balance. Economic and political pressures may lead to re-concentration of power. The important thing, he believes, is to keep any one group from acquiring a permanent monopoly on power.





*Brazilian novelist Euclides da Cunha once called the country's interior "the very core of our nationality." Much of it has never been explored. Brazil plans to send two homemade "remote sensing" satellites into orbit by the early 1990s to help map the Amazon Basin. On the ground, an ambitious effort to exploit the Amazon's riches has been under way for a decade.*

# Brazil

"The first thought that arises in the mind of those who are possessed, as in this age we all more or less are, by the passion for the development of natural resources, is a feeling of regret that a West European race, powerful by its numbers and its skill . . . has not, to use the familiar phrase, 'got the thing in hand.'" That was how Lord Bryce appraised the Brazilians in 1912, and it is probably what he would say if he visited their country today. On the one hand, Brazil boasts the world's 10th largest economy and manufactures everything from computers and jet aircraft to tanks and rockets. On the other, at least one-third of Brazil's people live in poverty, and at least a third cannot read or write. Thanks partly to high OPEC oil prices, the country is deeply in debt. It faces a period of turmoil as its politicians make the delicate transition from military rule back to democracy. "In five years Brazil will be a great power," the last democratically elected President, Jânio Quadros, predicted in 1961. The Brazilians are still waiting and hoping. Here Riordan Roett surveys the current scene in Brazil and reviews the events of the past two decades. Brian Kelly and Mark London focus on the vast Amazon frontier and what it may mean for the nation's future.

## STAYING THE COURSE

*by Riordan Roett*

During the 1950s, a few years before the suspension of democratic government by Brazil's military, the citizens of São Paulo on one occasion went to the polls and, after considering the choices, elected a hippopotamus, a write-in candidate, to the city council.

The hippo, a popular attraction at the city zoo, was never sworn in. But the episode illustrates the streak of good-humored cynicism that has helped Brazilians endure a century of political ups and downs. Over the past 95 years, the country has seen a monarchy, a republic, a dictatorship, a republic again, and, since 1964, a military regime that in recent years has advertised itself as a protectorate bent on restoring democracy.

What is remarkable is that Brazil's current military govern-

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ment, now pursuing the policy of *abertura*, or "opening" to democracy, first advanced by General (and President) Ernesto Geisel in 1977, seems to be making good on that commitment, albeit not without occasional backsliding. Brazil is hoping to show, as Nigeria has already demonstrated, that it is possible to dismantle a military government without violence. Succeeding Geisel as President in 1979, João Figueiredo, then the head of the National Information Service (SNI), reaffirmed the regime's commitment "to make this country a democracy."

### Casting Ballots

Last November 15, in a major advance toward democratic rule, more than 50 million Brazilians flocked to the polls to elect 22 state governors, 25 Senators (one-third of the federal Senate), all 479 members of the Chamber of Deputies, 947 state assemblers, 3,857 mayors, and some 60,000 municipal councilmen. It was the first free election in Brazil in 17 years, and Brazilians approached it with a mixture of seriousness and high spirits. Every flat, vertical space in the country, it seemed, was plastered with campaign posters. The field of candidates offered something for everyone: blacks, feminists, Indians, sports stars, adherents of *macumba*, the Brazilian version of voodoo.

Throughout the fall campaign, many of the leaders of Brazil's four opposition parties remained skeptical. Some denounced *abertura* as a "farce," reminding voters that the Presidency, the most powerful office in Brazil, would not be decided by direct vote a few years hence.\* (The term of the incumbent expires in 1986.) Nevertheless, opposition candidates gained a strong foothold. They were aided by public sentiment aroused over recession, persistent underemployment, nearly triple digit inflation, chronic trade deficits, and an \$84 billion foreign debt. The four parties opposed to the government's Social Democratic Party captured 10 governorships and 244 seats

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\*The current plan is for Figueiredo's successor to be chosen by an electoral college consisting of all members of Congress plus six representatives from each state legislature. This arrangement gives voters in sparsely populated rural states, where the government party tends to be strong, a disproportionate voice in the selection of the next President.

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*Riordan Roett, 44, is director of Latin American Studies and the Center of Brazilian Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He holds a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Columbia University and is the editor of Brazil in the Seventies (1976) and the author of Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society (1973; revised edition, 1978) and The Politics of Foreign Aid in the Brazilian Northeast (1972).*



Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

*Brazil occupies almost one-half of South America's land mass. With 125 million people, it is the sixth most populous nation on Earth.*

in the Chamber of Deputies. "Brazil will not be the same from now on," observed Leonel Brizola, a maverick socialist and the brother-in-law of former President João ("Jango") Goulart. Brizola, a controversial figure in Brazilian politics before the 1964 coup sent him into exile, was elected governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

How the Brazilian military will deal with such opponents as Brizola and Franco Montoro, his less radical counterpart in São Paulo, remains to be seen. And yet, while it is too early to say precisely how the November elections have altered the na-

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ture of Brazilian politics, altered it they have. The mere fact that free elections took place is itself grounds for optimism. If the process of "opening" is allowed to continue, the consequences could extend far beyond Brazil's own borders.

A democratic Brazil would undoubtedly cheer up the governments of three neighboring democracies—Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru. It would offer other Latin military regimes (notably in Argentina and Chile) an example of how to withdraw from power—without bloody reprisals and without dividing the armed forces into competing factions. And a democratic Brazil, its authoritarian excesses a thing of the past, would be poised to play a more active role in world affairs—as indeed it has already begun to do, notably at the "North-South" summit at Cancún, Mexico, in 1981.

### Coffee with Milk

The size and importance of Brazil notwithstanding, North Americans have generally either ignored or misunderstood the country. President Reagan, on a state visit there in November 1982, referred to it as Bolivia, a slip-of-the-tongue that prompted a local advertising agency to run the next day a newspaper advertisement headlined: "The people of Bolivia welcome the President of Canada." Lumping it in with other South American states, Americans sometimes forget that Brazil was colonized by the Portuguese, whose language it retains.

While the American empire of the Spaniards fragmented into individual nation-states during the 1820s, often after bitter wars of independence, Brazil remained unified and achieved independence without violence. As republican presidents supplanted viceroys throughout the Americas, Brazil became an empire, ruled by the son of the Portuguese king, and it remained a monarchy until the peaceful ouster of the emperor by the armed forces in 1889.

By the end of the 19th century, many of the Spanish American republics—Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, for example—had made considerable strides toward creating democratic, middle-class societies. By contrast, again, the Brazilian republic was a lopsided affair with an economy dominated by coffee. Rich planters were so heavily concentrated in São Paulo that that state, both politically and economically, was like an engine pulling 20 empty boxcars. Joined by the cattle barons of neighboring Minas Gerais, the São Paulo coffee aristocracy succeeded in shaping a weak (and rather venal) republican government in Rio; the leadership echoed the indifference of the *café com leite*

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(coffee with milk) alliance to the need for industrialization and to the social welfare of most of Brazil's population. The right to vote was restricted by literacy and property requirements high enough to exclude the average small farmer. "The aristocracy of rank is now almost gone," wrote Britain's James Bryce in 1912, "but the aristocracy of wealth remains and is in control of public affairs. In most parts of the country, it stands far above the labouring population, with little of a middle class between."

The overthrow of the Old Republic in 1930—once again by the army, allied with supporters of populist governor Getúlio Vargas—was as bloodless as the fall of the empire had been. During the 15 years that Vargas (who became President) ruled Brazil, the modernization of the country was begun.

Vargas was no social reformer; he was an economic nationalist who pointed Brazil down a path that, in many ways, it has continued to follow. The Brazilian economy had always been heavily dependent on a single export—initially brazilwood (from which the nation took its name), then sugar, then coffee, then rubber. During the 1930s, although Brazil remained very much an agricultural country, Vargas promoted diversification. Rich iron ore deposits were tapped, a steel industry was created, textiles assumed new importance. In all, despite the worldwide depression, Brazil's industrial product grew by 40 percent between 1933 and 1938.

### 'Doomed to Greatness'

Progress slowed after Vargas imposed an outright dictatorship (the *Estado Novo*) in 1937 and after the onset of World War II. After the war, during which Brazilian troops fought (in Italy) alongside the Allies, the *Estado Novo* was toppled by the military in another bloodless coup. Popular agitation for democratic government simply could no longer be ignored.

The Republic established in 1946 constituted the first modern political system in Brazil's history, with competing parties and relatively free elections. Thanks partly to U.S. investment, industrialization began in earnest, and the emergence of a new urban working class made social welfare a matter of government concern for the first time. The plight of the backward Northeast received national attention, while the frontier spirit embodied in the construction of Brasília, the new capital deep in the interior, excited international interest. All signs pointed to Brazil's "coming of age" at last.

Unfortunately, Brazil's democratic government was more fragile than many outsiders imagined. During a short period of



*Carrying Coffee, an early 19th-century rendering by Jean Baptiste Debret.*

overheated growth—Brazil’s flamboyant President, Juscelino Kubitschek (1955–1960), called it “fifty years of progress in five”—steel production doubled, hydroelectric power tripled, and new highways brought the promising Amazon frontier within reach. But if Brazil was “doomed to greatness,” as Kubitschek believed, it was also doomed to massive budget deficits and an inflation rate that approached 30 percent a year. Corruption was widespread.

Jânio Quadros was elected President in 1960 on a promise to clean things up (his campaign symbol was a broom). He got nowhere and resigned in frustration in August 1961. Vice-President João Goulart took office only after senior army officers suspicious of his leftist leanings had brought the country close to civil war.\*

Facing an economic slowdown—Quadros had deliberately applied the brakes—coupled with political stalemate and rising demands from the new working class for a greater share of the pie, Brazil lurched from crisis to crisis during the early 1960s.

\*The dispute between the military and the “constitutionalists” was resolved when Goulart agreed to accept a constitutional amendment changing Brazil’s presidential system into a parliamentary one, thereby greatly curbing the President’s powers. In practice, this arrangement proved unworkable and a 1963 referendum restored a presidential system.

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Inflation soared to 80 percent in 1963 and foreign investment plummeted. Goulart, a tragically ineffective figure, in desperation sought support from a coalition of radical students, intellectuals, and politicians—*esquerda festiva*, the “festive left,” as it was called. He called for “basic reforms” such as giving the vote to illiterates, expropriation of many large landholdings, legalization of the Communist Party, and creation of new state monopolies over such commodities as coffee. Not only those on the far right but also moderate democrats began to worry about a radical takeover of Brazil.

### Cracking Down

In March 1964, Goulart announced a mild initial land-reform program and the nationalization of all privately owned oil refineries, engendering a wave of protest from the right, a rush to organize on the left, and demonstrations in the streets by middle-class Brazilians opposed to the government’s direction. Later that month, Goulart’s demagogic appeals to noncommissioned officers and enlisted men to stand up to their superior officers—and his amnesty of 2,000 sailors who had mutinied—persuaded reluctant commanders of the armed forces that they had little choice but to remove the President. On March 31, a civilian-military uprising signaled the end of the 1946 Republic. Goulart and his allies, unable to rally significant support, fled into exile or were arrested.

It was generally assumed by most Washington observers of Latin American politics that the coup of 1964 would simply give Brazil a repressive military regime like that of so many of its Spanish-speaking neighbors. Indeed, for about a decade it did. The tenacity of the Brazilian generals was unprecedented. For, despite the military’s active involvement in political life since the overthrow of the empire, the leaders of Brazil’s armed forces had never before held on to power after having forced a change in government. Traditionally, Brazil’s military commanders had usually seen themselves as guarantors of the Constitution. But in 1964—self-confident, committed to modernizing Brazil, and sharing an esprit, as well as training in political science and economics acquired at the Superior War College (created after World War II with U.S. assistance)—the generals decided to govern the country themselves. Shortly after the coup, they issued an Institutional Act, the first of a series, that began the transformation of politics in Brazil. This act did not rest on any constitutional justification; its preamble stated that the revolution “is legitimized by itself.”



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In the view of the military high command, as initially of most middle-class Brazilians, the revolution was a moral one—"born out of the indomitable will of the people not to allow themselves to become dominated by communism or by the corruption which was undermining our national life," as one general put it. Politicians, labor and student leaders, journalists, and military officers identified as ideological enemies or as incompetents were purged from their positions. While no one was executed, some were jailed and the first reports of torture began to surface. Hundreds lost all political rights for a period of 10 years. A widely respected four-star general, Humberto Castello Branco, was named President.

### Miracle Workers

The new regime's first goal was to get control of the economy. Roberto Campos and Octavio Bulhões presided over a stabilization program that received strong financial support from the United States: curtailing government spending, increasing tax revenues, tightening credit, and squeezing wages.\* Three years later, the successor military government, led by General Artur da Costa e Silva, inherited a house that was more or less in order. New loans and grants were forthcoming from Washington and the World Bank, and foreign investment surged. Inflation had been cut in half.

While the cost of economic stability appeared to weigh most heavily on Brazil's lower classes, the government argued that the poor would ultimately profit from the creation of new jobs, the construction of new housing, and the extension of social security. That was undoubtedly true for a small minority of urban laborers. But the government's refusal to undertake land reform, to sanction rural labor unions, or to extend workers' benefits to the countryside (where 40 percent of the population then lived) left a large proportion of the Brazilian people with no stake in the country's economic progress. Many have gained no stake in it to this day.

The regime's second order of business was to alter the political system. After initial hesitation, the government rewrote the Constitution, further strengthening the decision-making powers of the President. The Supreme Court was enlarged—and packed

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\*Campos had achieved prominence during the 1950s as one of a new generation of young economists, engineers, and civil servants concerned about national planning and development. He had served as president of the National Bank for Economic Development and Ambassador to the United States. Bulhões had led Brazilian delegations in postwar economic discussions with the United States and had served as director of the Brazilian monetary authority (SUMOC) and as Minister of Finance.

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with the regime's sympathizers. Brazil's 13 political parties were distilled into two: the pro-government National Renovating Alliance (Arena) and the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), an opposition grouping. The real difference between the two parties, the joke went, was that whereas Arena said "Yes, sir!" to the regime, the MDB merely said "Yes." Elections continued to be held for some offices (direct election of state governors and big-city mayors had been eliminated in 1965), but both political parties were strictly controlled; the legislature became little more than a rubber stamp.

The Costa e Silva administration brought to prominence Antônio Delfim Netto—sometimes described as a "fiscal Merlin"—a stocky University of São Paulo economics professor who remains a controversial figure in Brazilian life. Capitalizing on the gains of Campos and Bulhões, Delfim, as Minister of Finance, reigned over the Brazilian "miracle years" of 1968–1973. Exports soared and the economy grew at rates of 10 to 12 percent each year. An urban middle class acquired growing economic and political importance. Global prosperity, cheap petroleum (Brazil must import over 70 percent of the oil it uses), and heavy public investment in development projects helped account for the boom. It all appeared to justify the generals' contentions: that political order would lead to economic stability, that a strong central government was the prerequisite for a healthy economy.

### Widening the Gap

Costa e Silva, incapacitated by a stroke in 1969, was succeeded by a third four-star general, Emílio Garrastazú Médici, who reaped the miracle's political rewards. A tide of nationalism swept Brazil. *Grandeza*—greatness—became the theme of the moment, mesmerizing everyone but the poorest of the poor and a scattering of standoffish intellectuals.

Construction began on the Trans-Amazon Highway and vast new mining and industrial projects were undertaken. In foreign affairs, Brazil showed a new independence, emphasizing among other things its historical and cultural affinity with Black Africa, in particular with the five former Portuguese colonies on the African continent. Trade with developing nations increased. And almost as important, Brazil retired the world soccer cup in 1970, convincing the nation's middle class that perhaps God was, indeed, Brazilian.

Amid general prosperity for those Brazilians whose good opinion mattered most to the regime—the relatively well-off

### RELATIONS WITH THE ESTADOS UNIDOS

"Friendship does not mean total agreement," President Ronald Reagan remarked in a toast during his two-day state visit to Brasília and São Paulo in November 1982. "Instead it suggests shared values, ideals, mutual respect, and trust."

In truth, the respect and trust had not been much in evidence for several years, and Reagan's trip was largely designed to patch up some of the many differences that had arisen between the United States and Brazil. At least on the surface, it succeeded. The tangible tokens of friendship the President brought along did not hurt: \$1.2 billion in short-term U.S. loans, for example, and a waiver of U.S. import quotas on Brazilian sugar. (Reagan also offered to send a Brazilian astronaut into orbit aboard the space shuttle.)

As it happened, President João Figueiredo's regime improved the atmosphere by holding free elections—the first in two decades—only days before the President's arrival. While sharp disagreements between Washington and Brasília persist—notably over Reagan's policy in El Salvador, the sufficiency of U.S. economic assistance to the Third World, and the fairness of Brazil's export subsidies—outwardly, relations between the two governments are better now than at any time since the mid-1960s.

Washington had welcomed the 1964 coup that swept the military into power in Brazil, and the foreign policy goals of the Castello Branco government—"to defend the security of the continent against aggression and subversion, whether external or internal"—found favor in Lyndon Johnson's White House. In 1965, Brazilian troops joined other Latin contingents and U.S. Marines in restoring order in the Dominican Republic. Between 1964 and 1967, Brazil received some \$900 million in U.S. grants and loans.

With Brazil's economic boom in 1968 came a relative lessening of dependence on American aid and a new sense of autonomy. As Yale's Albert Fishlow puts it, "Brazil now had the economic credentials required to assert its independence more seriously." It refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, claimed a 200-mile coastal limit, and strengthened its ties with Portuguese Africa. While the Brazilians continued to oppose Fidel Castro's Cuba, they refused to join Washington's effort in 1975–76 to thwart a victory by Marxist MPLA guerrillas in Angola (where Cubans were fighting).

The quadrupling of world oil prices in 1973–74, which shook Bra-

readers of *Jornal do Brasil*, for example, rather than the nation's 50 million or so illiterates—it was easy to overlook an increasing polarization of income. It was estimated in 1960 that the poorest 40 percent of the population took home 11.2 percent of the national income; 10 years later, the figure was nine percent. Dur-

zil's economy, brought new strains. Seeking to reduce its oil import bill, the regime in Brasília pursued an ambitious nuclear power program. In 1974, however, the U.S. government, citing an overload on domestic capacity, decided it could not guarantee processing of nuclear fuel for the Brazilian reactors being built by Westinghouse. Brazil took its business elsewhere.

In 1975, the Brazilians signed a \$4 billion agreement with West Germany, with the Germans undertaking (among other things) to build 60 nuclear power plants and a plutonium reprocessing facility. In 1977, the Carter administration objected to the arrangement—fearing the spread of weapons-making capabilities—and vainly sought to scuttle the deal. President Carter and his aides also periodically chided the Brazilian regime for its sins against human rights, a tactic that may have had some good effects but did nothing to endear Mr. Carter to the generals in Brasília. In 1980, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Brazil refused to participate in the grain embargo directed at the USSR or to boycott the Moscow Olympics.

The current "thaw" in Brazilian-American relations, such as it is, does not quite live up to all of its reviews. ("Brazil and the United States: Partners at Last," ran an exuberant headline in *Correio Braziliense* during the Reagan visit.) In Third World conclaves, in its dealings with Latin neighbors, and on such touchy matters as Law of the Sea, Brazil has its own objectives and will continue to pursue them. Though anticommunists to a man, the generals do not share Washington's alarm over Soviet threats in the hemisphere and have no wish to become involved in East-West disputes.

The words of former Foreign Minister Antônio Silveira (currently Ambassador to the United States), spoken in 1976, remain an accurate formulation of Brazil's diplomacy: "An emergent power, with a wide range of interests in many fields, cannot allow rigid alignments, rooted in the past, to limit her action on the world stage."



*President Ronald Reagan and Brazil's President João Figueiredo, November 1982.*

ing the same period, the share taken by the wealthiest five percent grew from more than 27 to more than 36 percent. "The economy is going well," President Médici once conceded, "the people not so well." Yet, in a naturally congenial society where Brazilians of all colors and sizes mingle in the streets day and

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night, visions of condominiums, second Volkswagens, and vacation homes bought the acquiescence of the middle class.

The disparities in good fortune were accompanied by a level of political repression not seen in Brazil for decades. During the late 1960s, a wave of urban terrorism, highlighted by the kidnapping in 1969 of the United States Ambassador, Burke Elbrick, convinced the government, and many ordinary citizens as well, that a well-organized Marxist guerrilla movement was attempting to plunge the country back into the chaos of 1964. "It is possible to defeat the dictatorship and the exploitation if we arm and organize ourselves," read the manifesto that Elbrick's kidnappers forced the government to publish as a condition for his release.

One of the masterminds of Brazil's urban terrorist movement was Carlos Marighela, whose National Liberation Alliance (ANL) combined within its ranks a number of smaller terrorist bands. Another revolutionary coalition, VAR-Palmares, with a following of university students and intellectuals, became a romantic leader of protest against the regime. Against this patchily united front, the government mobilized a highly efficient security system dominated by the SNI. Within a few years, the terrorists were eliminated—hunted down and arrested, exiled to Cuba, or, like Marighela, slain in shoot-outs.

### Settling Scores

The security apparatus itself proved harder to control. Even when terrorism subsided, the regime's witch hunt went on—against students, intellectuals, journalists, and anyone else considered possibly or potentially subversive. Some disappeared, some died during questioning. Not only federal and state security forces but paramilitary and "private" groups assumed responsibility for eliminating enemies of the state. Off-duty policemen, depraved drifters, and the thugs of São Paulo's infamous Death Squads often settled old political scores under the guise of working with the government. While never of the magnitude of the human-rights violations in Argentina or Chile, the repression clearly demonstrated the consequences in Brazil of the absence of political accountability.

The 1973–74 oil price increases decreed by OPEC mark the historical moment at which the Brazilian miracle ended, but the economy was not the only aspect of Brazilian life then in the throes of change. If the middle class had accepted or ignored the excesses of a dictatorial state during the prosperous late 1960s and early 1970s, it appeared less willing to do so by 1974.

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Opposition-party (MDB) votes in local and congressional elections increased dramatically in 1974 and again in 1976, and the MDB acquired a taste for saying "No," or at least trying to. The Catholic Church, journalists, lawyers, and other professionals—all openly questioned the right of those in power to rule without a minimal respect for human rights and civil liberties.

Against this ominous backdrop, the selection of General Ernesto Geisel as the fourth military President of Brazil was fortuitous. Geisel, an austere Lutheran, represented the "democratic" rather than the *linha dura* (hard line) faction of the Army. Though a strong adherent to the 1964 Revolution, he nevertheless conceived of military rule in Brazil as transitional. *Abertura*—his program of gradual restoration of civil rights and democratic rule—sprang as much from a personal commitment to liberalization as it did from growing public pressure.

### The Road Ahead

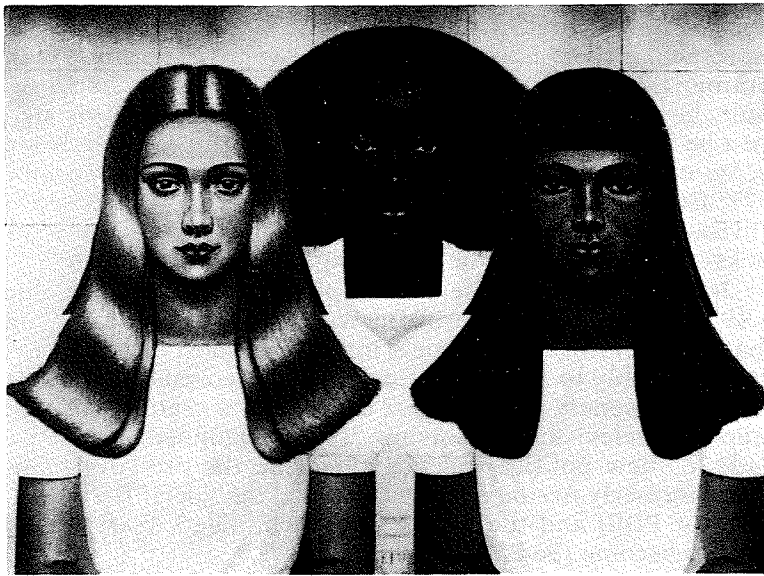
Though criticized by many in the armed forces, along with many conservative landowners, senior bureaucrats, and industrialists, the general and his chief political adviser, General Golbery do Couto e Silva, made it clear that they meant business. In a spectacular pair of decisions in 1977, Geisel first dismissed the commanding general of the Second Army, stationed in São Paulo, because of the death-under-torture of political prisoners. Then he fired the Minister of the Army, whom he correctly suspected of plotting against his policy of *abertura*. In December 1977, Geisel lifted some of the harsher sanctions imposed by previous governments—e.g., censorship of newspapers and books—and announced the beginnings of political reform.

João Figueiredo, Geisel's hand-picked successor, took office in 1979 and pledged to proceed with *abertura*. Though somewhat skeptical of the regime's intentions, most Brazilians reacted favorably to the restoration of habeas corpus, amnesty for political prisoners and political exiles, and a gradual easing of radio and television censorship. Torture stopped. Room was made for new political parties alongside the pro-government group (formerly Arena, now rechristened the Social Democratic Party, or PDS) and the old MDB (which added "Party" to its name to become the PMDB).

The government's behavior was not, it should be added, without blemish. Thus, the pre-1964 Labor Party, the PTB, reappeared, but without such former leaders as Leonel Brizola; hoping to limit Brizola's impact on the national elections, the government-controlled electoral court had awarded the PTB to

another politician. Brizola set up his own party, the Democratic Workers Party (PDT), and organized labor created the Workers Party (PT). Meanwhile, the government pushed through the legislature a series of self-serving *pacotes*, or "packages," of electoral reforms—including a "compulsory coattails" law (the *voto vinculado*, or linked vote) which, by prohibiting split-ticket balloting, gave the PDS a huge advantage wherever its local candidates were strong, especially in rural areas where the opposition was poorly organized.

Such machinations, however, did little to dampen national enthusiasm for *abertura*. Even the recognition that voting is mandatory in Brazil could not mask the obvious delight with which the average Brazilian followed the campaign and cast his ballot last November. There was little violence, and even less evidence of electoral fraud. The regime came away with control of the electoral college (as planned) and the Senate, although the opposition parties won governorships that account for 80 percent of Brazil's wealth and a majority of its population. General



Three Girls from the Same Street, by Maria Margarida. Brazil's population is one-third "mixed," one-tenth black, and about one-half European. Brazil is also home to several million Arabs and to the largest (pop. 800,000) Japanese community outside Japan.

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Golbery do Couto e Silva summed up the implications for the military high command: "The time has ended in which half a dozen individuals painted monumental panels, like the Mexican muralists but without the help of ladders, of nothing."

No sooner was the counting over—it took two weeks, because ballots are cast by hand in Brazil, not registered on machines—than speculation began over whether the regime would have the courage to allow a direct vote for President in 1985. Much depends on popular pressure and the conduct of the parties during the next two years. Dominating local government in all of industrial Brazil, newly elected opposition officials such as Montoro and Brizola along with their allies are in a good position to bargain with the national government.

It is generally believed that the armed forces want to retain the Presidency—and hence ultimate authority—for at least one more six-year term. But the regime's own party, the PDS, was badly shaken internally by the election results. While President Figueiredo emerged as a popular campaigner, he can not succeed himself, and several of the PDS candidates with presidential ambitions went down to defeat in gubernatorial races last November.

All of which could portend an acceleration of *abertura*, as rival politicians get down to the business of cutting deals and building support. On the other hand, it could bring back the kind of political turmoil that makes Brazilian generals—and other Brazilians—uneasy. My own guess is that the regime will proceed with liberalization cautiously. President Figueiredo has already disciplined mutinous officers in Rio de Janeiro who sought to bar Leonel Brizola from taking office. And public opinion seems overwhelmingly in favor of "staying the course."

If and when full democracy returns to Brazil, its champions will face many of the same problems that contributed to its demise two decades ago: general economic disarray; the need for some sort of meaningful land reform; a continuing influx of the dispossessed from the countryside to the cities; the appalling poverty that afflicts at least one-third of the country's population. It is far easier to embrace democracy, after its absence, as an *ideology* of government, than it is to employ democracy as a satisfactory *system* of government. The challenge this time is to make the system work.

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## THE NEW FRONTIER

*by Brian J. Kelly and Mark London*

During the summer of 1980, gold fever infected Brazil. Word of a major find in the eastern Amazon spread throughout the country. There were rumors of men unearthing gold rocks as big as their fists, of men who could not read or write turning into millionaires overnight and signing their checks with a thumbprint.

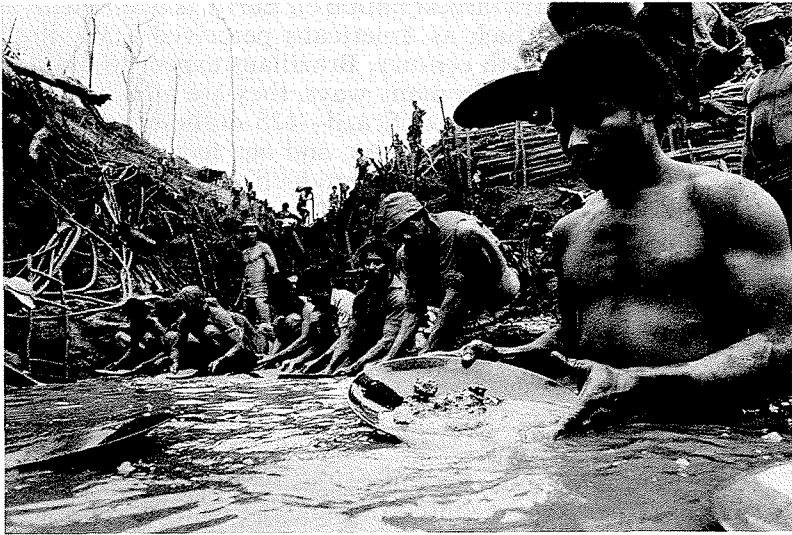
Soon the rumors were confirmed.

Three centuries after the gold strikes that had first lured thousands of men into the interior, Brazilians descended on Serra Pelada (Naked Mountain), the place where the discovery had been made, a small hill amid the dense rain forest that covers the northern half of Brazil. They came by the busload to Marabá, the closest town, and then plunged into the jungle for the 50-mile hike to the mine.

Doctors, lawyers, and businessmen in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo left their wives and children behind for a chance at El Dorado, traveling 1,000 miles north along the dirt roads that have been cut through the jungle by the government since the early 1960s in its drive to open the Amazon to exploration, exploitation, and settlement. From the rich croplands of the south came tenant farmers left jobless as the big farms switched from the labor-intensive cultivation of coffee to the mechanized cultivation of soybeans. And from the "horn" of Brazil—the drought-plagued, overpopulated Northeast jutting out into the Atlantic—came young men from city slums and subsistence farmers who could no longer subsist.

Excavated in places to a depth of 300 feet and divided into individual claims four meters square, laced together by makeshift ladders, the hilltop came to resemble a sugar bowl swarming with ants. Photographers for *Manchete*, a *Life*-like monthly, feasted on the sight of some 25,000 men sifting through less than one square mile of ground gouged out of the jungle. TV Globo, Brazil's largest network, brought the spectacle home to 80 million viewers.

The miners called the site Babylonia, after the Hanging Gardens. A handful struck it rich. One man (women were barred from the site) grossed \$6 million worth of gold in a single day.



*Garimpeiros panning for gold at Babylonia, the mine at Serra Pelada.*

Most found almost nothing and were reduced to hauling the luckier miners' dirt for a daily wage.\*

Government geologists eventually acknowledged Serra Pelada to be an exceptional find, one more manifestation of the mineral wealth waiting to be extracted in the eastern Amazon. They recommended that Serra Pelada be closed to individual prospectors and mined by machine, a process that would double Serra Pelada's average annual gold production of (currently) about nine metric tons.

But the normally unsentimental generals who have run Brazil since 1964 demurred. Even in a nation as financially embarrassed as Brazil—reeling from an inflation rate nearing triple digits and a foreign debt of some \$84 billion—a few hundred million dollars worth of unexpected income paled alongside the symbolic value of a mountain of gold, a mountain yielding not to the government's earth-moving equipment but to the picks and shovels of thousands of Brazilians with a common dream.

\*While the government, under Brazilian law, technically owns everything below the earth's surface, a Serra Pelada *garimpeiro* could place his nuggets of gold on the counter of the local bank—a shack with a counter—and receive in return three-quarters of its international price (adjusted daily). The government kept the rest to finance police protection, medical care, warehouses, and geologists who advised the prospectors on mining techniques.

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For Brazil, the fifth largest nation on Earth, is a land with a vision of greatness. Much as Americans perceived a Manifest Destiny in the early 19th century, Brazilians expect to build a great nation in the 20th. In many ways, they are already doing so. The Federative Republic of Brazil—125 million people in a union of 23 states, three territories, and one federal district—already ranks first worldwide in production of coffee, sugar, beans, and frozen concentrated orange juice (from which it reaped a \$170 million bonanza in 1982 after severe frosts blighted the Florida citrus crop); second in soybean exports; third in forest reserves; fourth in hydroelectric potential and beef production. It appears to be first in iron ore reserves and is a leader in alcohol-fuel technology.

### Growing Pains

Yet at the same time, the difficulties that afflict most of the rest of the Third World—inflation, unemployment, illiteracy, poor health care—exist also in Brazil, and on a typically Brazilian scale. One-half of Brazil's population consists of children under 16, whose ranks are swelling by about four million a year. The country's economic "miracle" of the late 1960s and early '70s failed to survive the oil price increases of 1973–74 and 1979. Disparities in income, outlook, and opportunity are extreme.

Brazil desperately needs the wealth the Amazon has thus far withheld, the capital it can create and attract, the safety valve it promises for a burgeoning population. Above all, Brazil needs the hope. The potential of the Amazon is what is new and promising about the country. Brazilians look to the Amazon with the "restless, inventive, self-confident, optimistic, enormously energetic" spirit that historian Frederick Jackson Turner saw in the American frontiersman.

"The Amazon is like your Alaska—far away, rich, empty, and mysterious," a Brazilian businessman explained over lunch not long ago. Sitting in the American Club, 30 stories above the heart of Rio de Janeiro's busy financial district, the business-

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man emphasized that the jungle is vastly more important to Brazil than America's 50th state is to the Lower Forty-Eight: "The future of your country," he said, "does not depend on Alaska."

Brazil is a big country, and the Amazon is as far away from the population centers as Alaska is from San Francisco. From Belém, a port city of one million just below the equator at the mouth of the Amazon River, it is four hours by jet to São Paulo, the industrial heartland of Brazil, and another hour and a half to Pôrto Alegre, in the southernmost part of the country. The more temperate south contains most of Brazil's wealth and more than three-fifths of its population. This is at once old Brazil and modern Brazil; it is the Brazil, one might say, that the Brazilians have begun to outgrow both physically and psychologically.

In the rich farm states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná, the settlements on the rolling plains are European in character, reflecting the massive influx of German and Italian settlers during the early part of this century. In some towns, the parents of the blond-haired, blue-eyed children still speak German. Curitiba, the capital of Paraná, is run as efficiently as, say, Zurich, and its European flavor prompts the question, "Where is the Third World?"

### Dry Lives

Farther north, the state of São Paulo shows both how far Brazil has progressed and how far it still has to go. This state accounts for more than half of Brazil's total output—everything from oranges and coffee to autos, aircraft, computers and ships; it is the most industrialized region in the entire Southern Hemisphere. An hour's drive from the Atlantic coast, the sprawling metropolis of São Paulo is at once urbane and primitive, with clusters of 30-story skyscrapers linked at ground level by crowded highways and ringed by vast stretches of scrapwood-and-cardboard slums—the *favelas*.

There are 12.5 million people living in or around the city of São Paulo. Some 200 miles to the north, in Rio de Janeiro, there are nine million more, living in similarly varied circumstances. Rio is the tourist town of the travel posters, with its beachfront boulevards where talk in the outdoor cafés is of politics, sex, and football, to a samba beat. Starting at the foot of Sugarloaf Mountain, the glass-and-concrete hotels line the seashore. But tucked into the steep hillsides that account for so much of Rio's beauty are teeming *favelas* where one-quarter of the city's in-

## DEVELOPING THE AMAZON



habitants live, without electricity or running water or jobs (though it is technically illegal to be unemployed in Brazil).

The poor have flocked to Brazil's great cities—São Paulo is growing by 500,000 people a year—because opportunities to earn a living in the countryside are often nonexistent. If the nine rural Northeastern states seceded from the rest of Brazil, the 30 million *nordestinos* would be living in one of the world's poorest nations. Once this territory supported coastal rain forests, until they were cleared by coffee and sugar producers. Little grows there now, because the January-to-May rainy season has not come in four years. The chronic misery of the Northeast has been best portrayed by the novelist Graciliano Ramos, whose most famous work says much in its title: *Vidas Secas* (*Dry Lives*).

The future of Brazil is partly a question of numbers. The numbers are the 40 million poor people, wherever they happen to live, and the annual birthrate exceeding three percent. Can the Amazon, with its inhospitable climate and its deadly diseases and its unforgiving terrain, really provide a new frontier? How many small farmers and slum dwellers will dare to pack up and move to a new land? How many of the sons and daughters of Rio's affluent professionals are willing to brave the hard-

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ships? What kinds of entrepreneurs will the Amazon attract, and how much money are they prepared to risk?

Such questions were raised in Brazil once before: during the long gestation of Brasília, the country's 23-year-old capital in the otherwise empty central plain. Brasília was 135 years in the planning, and during that century and a half, the *idea* of the city seemed to promise Brazil a brilliant future, a future that, it seemed, always lay just beyond reach.

### Staining the Sea

As early as 1822, when Dom Pedro I declared Brazil's independence from Portugal, Brazilians already envisioned a new capital in the interior, supplanting Rio de Janeiro on the coast. The name "Brasília" and a general location for the city were suggested in a postscript to the first Constitution (1824). On the centennial of Brazil's independence, a symbolic cornerstone was even laid. But it was not until 1957 that President Juscelino Kubitschek, making good on a campaign promise, announced that Brasília would finally arise from the red dirt and scrub brush of the Planalto Central. The architect he chose, Oscar Niemeyer, and the city planner, Lucio Costa, created what they hoped would be an egalitarian city whose design would foster a blending of all classes.

Brasília opened on schedule in 1960, but the ideal society never materialized. The city today is architecturally striking and in many ways innovative. (For example, a road system was devised that eliminated intersections.) It is also an austere monument to technocracy where only highly paid military officers, politicians, bureaucrats, and economists can afford to live. The cool, angled structures of steel and glass, set in vast, barren plazas, make a fitting home for a government that is at times remote from its people. Unintended ironies abound. The twin towers where Senators and Deputies maintain their offices were supposed to dominate the skyline as a statement that "the people" owned the city; as it happens, two new bank buildings now loom over them.

Critics of the government—notably Roman Catholic priests, who have provided the most vocal opposition to the regime during 19 years of military rule—consider Brasília a kind of Potemkin Village. "We have beautiful fountains here, but just outside of town they have no running water," the Rev. David Regan, a staff member of the National Conference of Bishops explained. The real Brazil has been banished to the capital's slum suburbs such as Taguatinga and Ceilandia, which do not even

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appear on most maps even though they are home to 500,000 of Brasília's 1.2 million people.

Beyond Brasília lies the Amazon River Basin. Everything to the north and west of the capital is part of it, comprising one-twentieth of the planet's land and the largest belt of rain forest in the world. Winding 3,900 miles across the South American continent, up to 40 miles wide, only 32 miles shorter than the Nile but with 17 times its volume, the Amazon River together with its tributaries holds one-fifth of the world's fresh water, pouring out a flood that stains the ocean brown 100 miles out in the Atlantic.

The Amazon is among the least populous places in the world—larger than India, but with fewer people than El Salvador. Within this realm lie not only gold but an estimated \$1 trillion worth of hardwood trees and 18 billion known tons of iron ore, along with sizable deposits of bauxite, manganese, nickel, copper, tin, kaolin, and diamonds. For centuries, the Amazon has been an unknown and forbidding place; most of it has never been accurately mapped. One reason Kubitschek built Brasília was to create a jumping-off point to reach the Amazon. And in this respect, at least, he succeeded.

### Straggling West

The government's first efforts to integrate the Amazon into the rest of Brazil went into the construction of highways, beginning with the two-lane Belém-Brasília Highway in 1960 and continuing in 1970 with the Trans-Amazon Highway, which now cuts 2,150 miles westward across the country, from the Atlantic at Recife almost to the border with Peru. These roads, which for long stretches are still unpaved, opened the jungle to settlement.

The various colonization efforts in the Amazon have had very different results. Movement from the south to the northwest—at first spontaneous, later orchestrated by the government through INCRA, the government colonization agency—has enjoyed far more success than movement westward from the northeast. The roads to the northwest, as it turns out, lead to better soils than do the roads into the interior from Brazil's horn, and the pioneers who travel them, unlike the desperate *nordestinos* straggling west, often bring confidence and expertise acquired on the prosperous commercial farms of the south.

One of these highways, which forms the spine of a new farming frontier in the southwestern Amazon, is known to the bureaucrats as BR-364, and to many who have used it as "the

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road to the promised land." The journey from end to end—São Paulo to Pôrto Velho—covers 2,300 miles. From Cuiabá to Pôrto Velho takes four days by jeep in the dry season, but up to 40 when the heaviest rains come in March and the solid surface virtually turns to mud. Sometimes people die on buses and trucks stuck for days at an impassable mud hole. Yet they have come by the thousands in the last few years to clear and farm what was once solid jungle in the region called Rondônia, the newest Brazilian state. Rondônia's population grew from about 100,000 in 1970 to 750,000 in 1982.

### **'I Am the Boss'**

Alfonso Andrade, one of the new residents, came to the town of Ouro Preto in 1976 after the price of cotton dropped by half and the bank foreclosed on his land in São Paulo. He now owns 500 acres, 360 head of cattle, and a well-stocked general store run by his wife. "I came without knowing what I was going to do," he explained. "I had a relative who told me the land was good. I brought four cows and my family." When he arrived, he found that the 250-acre plot he had purchased from the government was solid jungle. With his two sons, then 10 and 11, Andrade cleared the land and planted corn, beans, rice, and cacao. All the crops grew well, and he reported his success to friends and relatives, who packed up and followed him.

In his bare, concrete-floored living room, a picture of Christ the Redeemer pronouncing "God Bless This House" in Portuguese hangs opposite a calendar featuring a pin-up girl in black lace panties. Sitting under the calendar, Andrade ticked off his complaints: He comes down with malaria several times a year; when his children get sick, it is always a crisis; when the road is muddy, supplies are late; there is never a hot shower; he has no television. But he is happy, he said, because he has land.

In the new cattle country of the southeastern Amazon, dominated by corporate landholders clearing 100,000-acre tracts of jungle, Mario Thompson is a different kind of pioneer. He came to the Amazon in 1973 to help establish a 350,000-acre ranch owned by Volkswagen. (Mitsui, Swift Armour, Xerox, Liquigas, and King Ranch are among the other companies with large Amazon holdings.) Thompson slept in a hammock for months. He lived off the land or on supplies dropped by plane. When the land was cleared, he stayed on to supervise the construction of a nearby slaughterhouse.

On weekends, he drives a jeep down the narrow jungle track to 10,000 acres of his own, which he has been clearing for pas-



### BRAZIL'S CHANGING CATHOLIC CHURCH

During his 12-day pastoral visit to Brazil in 1980, Pope John Paul II made a point of meeting twice with the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, affirming its status as the corporate voice of the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil. The Pope also made a point of seconding the message the conference has been sounding in recent years.

"A society that is not socially just and does not intend to be puts its own future in danger," John Paul declared in the slums of Rio. He urged church leaders "to summon consciences, guard people and their liberty, and demand the necessary remedies."

Until 20 years ago, the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil was a pillar of the status quo—first of the colonial planters, then, beginning in the 19th century, of an expanding, city-centered middle class. During the turbulent 1960s, however, a "theology of liberation" began to attract adherents among Latin American bishops. The Brazilian Catholic Church—the largest in the world, with some 112 million baptized members—emerged as the chief opponent of Brazil's military regime.

The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (founded by reform-minded prelates, many of them from the impoverished Northeast, in 1952) has disclaimed both the subversive intent and the Marxist coloration that some critics in the government and press have sought to bestow. But the bishops have vigorously protested the government's abuses of human rights and its seeming indifference to social inequities. Going beyond the bishops' calls for political and economic reform, priests in São Paulo have opened church doors to illegally striking union members. In the Northeast, clergymen have aligned themselves with tenant farmers in danger of losing their homesteads.

During the late 1960s and into the '70s, throughout Brazil, powerful landowners and the government's security police retaliated with invasions of churches and with beatings, kidnappings, and the torture and murder of religious activists, including priests and nuns. But the church, led by the bishops, stood its ground, and with the coming of *abertura* the situation began to improve.

The Brazilian church's stance is rooted in the so-called preferential option for the poor proclaimed by Latin American bishops meeting at Medellín, Colombia, in 1968. The "preferential option" statement endorsed local efforts at social reform by growing numbers of priests and bishops throughout the region. It also reflected an evolution in church teaching—for example, on salvation, which was

ture. He started in 1980 with 135 head of cattle, in the expectation of doubling his herd within a year (which he did). Thompson did not come to the Amazon because he was hungry. His father was a wealthy man, once the nation's Minister of Agriculture. But Thompson, now 39, is convinced of several things:

now conceived in social as well as personal terms.

In its new role as champion of the downtrodden, the Brazilian church, whose once-strong influence within the government and among the middle class began to erode during the 1950s, has recouped a measure of power, prestige, and national visibility. It has done so not only through the outspoken stands its ministers have taken from the pulpit but also, at a more basic level, via creation of small, local organizations known as *comunidades de base* (CEBs).

In private houses, barns, or village halls, the CEB participants (usually about 15 to 35 poor villagers or slum-dwellers) meet with a priest or a trained layman. They are generally so used to poverty and powerlessness that they have never seriously entertained the possibility of bettering their lot. The CEBs try to get such people, as one group leader in Pernambuco explained it, to "see with their own eyes, think with their own heads, speak with their own mouths, and walk with their own feet." While Brazil's 80,000 CEBs are primarily religious in orientation (centered on scripture study), communal attempts to relate the Gospel to daily life have led to active protest by CEB members against unemployment, declining real wages, slum conditions, and other social and economic ills. Here and there, clinics and housing projects have been established. Lawyers have been hired to fight evictions. Electricity has been brought to some urban shantytowns.



The church's effort to turn its energies to the "struggle against everything that degrades and oppresses man" has been substantial but not uniform. At the top, among the leadership of the bishops' conference, a new cohesion is evident. Yet not all the leaders of Brazil's 200 ecclesiastical jurisdictions share the same zeal.

While São Paulo's Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns has become a national figure—denouncing economic "growthsmanship," providing sanctuary to active critics of the regime, and encouraging development of the CEBs—his counterparts in some of the other prosperous dioceses of the south pursue more traditional ministries. Thousands of the needy, all over the country, continue to convert to Protestant Pentecostal sects; as many as 20 to 30 million more have some sort of contact with Afro-Brazilian spiritist cults such as Umbanda.

that "sometimes you must abdicate the comforts of civilization to achieve something worthy"; that eventually he will make money from his ranch; that the Amazon is the future. He cannot understand why every young person in Brazil is not there, too.

With the small farmers who slog along BR-364 and the en-

trepreneurs like Thompson and the big ranchers who fly in and out by private jet, there come young professionals with a middle-class, technocratic vision of the Amazon.

At the huge government projects—the Tucuruí hydroelectric dam, the Carajás mineral complex, the Trombetas bauxite mine—there are platoons of young engineers who endure all-male, no-alcohol, bunkhouse living for a chance at responsibility. “I am doing things here that would take me 15 more years to achieve in the south,” said a 29-year-old engineer, Helio Siqueira, as he stood on the pilot ore-crusher he had helped build at Carajás. “I am not an apprentice. I am the boss.”

The *Programa Grande Carajás*, centered on vast iron ore deposits, is doubtless the most ambitious development project in the world, with a projected cost of \$60 billion by the year 2000. Plans call not only for extensive mining (a 550-mile railroad is under construction to transport minerals from the interior to the Atlantic port city of São Luís) but also for the building of seven major industrial centers for producing steel, aluminum, and copper; the construction of a series of hydroelectric dams along the Tocantins River system; and the clearing of millions of acres for farming and ranching. Altogether, an area the size of California is involved. The government itself is building the iron ore complex and the Tucuruí Dam, but the rest of the effort is in the hands of private corporations and entrepreneurs, with Brasília’s technocrats providing general guidelines and tax incentives.

### Bounty Hunters

There is one key aspect of the Amazon’s development that would surely have troubled Frederick Jackson Turner. Much of his thinking about the impact of the American frontier revolved around the fact that the new land was free. The Homestead Act of 1862 guaranteed that any American who wanted land could have it—160 acres—so long as he worked it. Brazil never passed a Homestead Act; much of the land in the Amazon has a price tag. Titles are often murky and frequently are based on land grants made several centuries ago by the Portuguese crown. A common way of acquiring ownership is by recourse to *grileiros*, specialists in fabricated deeds and forged signatures.

Squatters, by law, own *terra devoluta*, or public land, after occupying it for a year and a day. They can also claim land that is already owned if the titleholder does not tend it for 10 years. But their claims are vulnerable to official corruption and contradictory regulations. In addition to scores of thousands of In-

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dians whose tribal lands lay in the path of development, hundreds of squatters—perhaps more—have paid for their land with their lives, victims of bounty hunters employed by the wealthier ranchers and farmers on whose land they have settled.

One surviving squatter is Hamilton Perreira, a 20-year-old working a small farm in the eastern Amazon with his four older brothers. He knows that his chances of turning 21 are anything but certain. "There's a \$500 bounty on my head," he explained, "and someone is going to come for it." The rugged, blond-haired man held his 18-year-old wife, Rosa, in one arm, leaning with the other on the muzzle of an old .22-caliber rifle. The late-afternoon sun radiated in shafts through the palm fronds roofing his damp, high-ceilinged shack 30 miles outside the town of Xinguara.

The Perreira clan, never part of any government settlement plan, had ventured from the dry Northeast to look for a new life. Instead, they found themselves battling a cattle rancher who claimed he owned the land they were trying to cultivate. He announced his intention to kill them if they didn't leave, and hired gunmen to do the deed. The Perreira brothers, along with some other squatters, killed four of the *pistoleiros* in an ambush. The Perreiras ask the question that Serra Pelada gold only begins to answer: Does the little man really have a chance in the Amazon, and what will happen to Brazil if he doesn't?

### Squandering the Forest

Haste in developing the Amazon has led to waste on a grand scale. The Trans-Amazon Highway, for example, one of the great engineering projects of modern times, was conceived and planned in 10 days, after President Emílio Garrastazú Médici toured the Northeast during a particularly harsh drought in 1970. He was appalled by the squalor and famine. "Men with no land to land with no men," he announced in a ringing speech calling for a highway to help populate the jungle with pioneering *nordestinos*.

The east-west highway was built, but it failed dismally to meet the aims of its builders. One hundred thousand families were to have moved along it within five years, but only 8,000 actually did so. Secondary roads, especially access roads leading to the new *agrovilas*, were badly maintained. Technical advisers, ignorant or disdainful of the relatively efficient patchwork farming methods of local peasants (*caboclos*) and Indians, promoted inappropriate management techniques and inappropriate crops. Indeed, the government's policy was to get the



*Panorama of Rio de Janeiro, by Lia Mitterakis. Three out of five Brazilians today live in cities (versus one out of four in 1920). Many of today's urban-dwellers were driven from the countryside by increased mechanization of agriculture and a sometimes feudal system of land ownership.*

Indians out of the way, not to learn from them. Many of these people had their first contact with the 20th century when the Trans-Amazon Highway passed through their lands. Some 45 percent of the Parakânan Indian tribe were dead of disease within months of the highway's intrusion, threatening to join the other 80 Brazilian tribes known to have become extinct during this century. Surviving Indians are now thought to number no more than 200,000, compared with as many as three million at the turn of the century.

Lack of proper research—the Brazilian government had stated plainly in 1972 that “development should not be negatively affected by sometimes exaggerated concern for the preservation of the environment”—took a heavy toll. Despite the lush impression of fertility that a rain forest presents, jungle soils in fact are extremely thin, complex, and delicate, and they vary in composition from one acre to the next. Up to 90 percent of the

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nutrients in a tropical forest may be concentrated in the trees themselves, while in temperate climates, up to 90 percent will be concentrated in the soil. Thus, the ashes from slash-and-burn clearing may enrich the earth, but only temporarily. Not knowing how to identify arable soils—and there are many of them in the Amazon Basin, amounting to perhaps 20 percent of its area—small farmers along the highway found their fields quickly exhausted, and moved on from one plot to the next.

The government abandoned the new settlers along the Trans-Amazon Highway when they failed to produce or maintain satisfactory harvests. The push was declared a failure, and thousands of families were left along the roadside to watch the jungle creep back over their neatly planned villages. There is a monument in the Trans-Amazon Highway town of Presidente Médici (est. 1974) where a plaque on a stone plinth proclaims that the Brazilian people have responded to “the challenge of history, occupying the heart of Amazonia.” Today, the town is nearly deserted, and the flagpoles encircling the plaque, one for each of the states of Brazil, are perpetually bare.

### Buying a Dream

Along with the big failures, the Amazon has its own sense of parody. The pioneers in dusty towns such as Rio Maria and Rendeacao have seen the cowboy movies (“bangy-bangys,” they are called) and know how to act. The military police assigned to duty in the “Far Oeste” wear their pistol holsters slung low, like John Wayne in *Red River*. The supervisor of a slaughterhouse in Campo Alegre, looking over a roomful of his workers, solemnly told some American visitors, “These are the same people who conquered your Wild West”—and then put a videotape of a Randolph Scott movie in the Betamax and belied up to the bar for another martini.

Yet, if they are fooling themselves, the Brazilians in the Amazon may never know it. They share a combination of hope and nationalism that stems more from pride than from arrogance; a willingness to make their *own* mistakes. This attitude was something that the shipping magnate Daniel K. Ludwig, perhaps America’s richest man, discovered the hard way.

Beginning in 1967, the reclusive Ludwig, now 86, invested \$1 billion in a Connecticut-sized Amazon plantation. Ludwig wanted to show the world how to use the tropics. Foreseeing an international pulp shortage, he replaced mixed stands of native trees with a fast-maturing Asian import, the gmelina tree, in a headstrong and risky attempt at timber monoculture. He also

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towed a 17-story floating pulp mill across the Pacific from Japan and then up the Amazon to the Jarí River. With 6,600 workers, Ludwig's Jarí Project was the largest private employer in the Amazon.

But as Brazil's military regime, led by General Ernesto Geisel, began to loosen curbs on political activity and free speech during the late 1970s, one of the first things Brazilians chose to protest was the presence of the rich American on four million acres of their jungle. There were rumors (unfounded) of slavery. Critics denounced his efforts as an "American invasion of Brazil." Brazil could tame the Amazon by itself, they said. In 1982, the Jarí Project, still operating at a loss, was sold for \$280 million to a consortium of 22 Brazilian companies. The transaction was orchestrated by the Brazilian government.

Yet the evidence suggests that Brazil cannot afford to lose the Ludwigs. Brazilians have much of the technology but not enough of the money it will take to develop the Amazon. The government has already obtained German, Japanese, and World Bank financing to develop the iron ore complex at Carajás, and more will be needed. The Brazilian people have demonstrated their determination to conquer the Amazon. They have created a new agricultural frontier—though who, ultimately, will own the land remains in question—and begun to exploit the region's mineral wealth. Railroads and highways and airfields are in place. From what has already been achieved there will be no retreat. But if development is to go forward, Brazil must convince the world to buy the Amazon dream. Perhaps it can.

During the height of the rainy season in 1981, the gold mine at Serra Pelada collapsed. The walls gave way and slipped into the pit, leaving a wide, shallow mudhole. All the miners departed. It seemed a bad end to such a hopeful symbol.

But in March of last year, Serra Pelada was reopened. Rumors of the discovery of a 16.5-pound nugget of gold, worth \$100,000, became world news this time. It was the biggest sign yet, for a nation that believes in signs, of the treasure that is still there for the taking.



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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### BRAZIL

In 1494, Pope Alexander VI was asked by the kings of Spain and Portugal, the world's greatest seafaring powers, to establish a basis for future territorial claims in the Atlantic.

The pope drew an imaginary line running from pole to pole, 270 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, and gave Portugal all lands discovered east of that line (including, unbeknownst to anyone at the time, 1,200 miles of South American coastline). Spain got the rest.

Not until 1500, when Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral chanced upon it on his way to India, did the Portuguese learn that the land now called Brazil actually existed. Another three decades elapsed before they began to exploit the colony systematically. In 1532, the first town was established at São Vicente. Cattle and sugar cane were introduced, and a sugar mill was built.

By the 1570s, when Pero de Magalhães de Gandavo toured Brazil's sugar-producing provinces, he counted some 60 mills and estimated the colony's sugar exports at one million pounds a year. His detailed chronicle is translated as **The Histories of Brazil** (1922; Longwood, 1978). By 1627, exports of sugar exceeded 32 million pounds, the colony's first bonanza.

Sugar was not the only product of Brazilian farms. Tobacco from Salvador, laced with molasses, was a prized commodity, and from the cattle-ranching interior came hides for export and salted beef for local consumption.

The burgeoning trade between Brazil and the mother country was paralleled by an influx of slaves to work the plantations. Between 1575

and 1650, Portuguese slavers shipped more than 300,000 Africans from Angola to Brazil. Herbert Klein relates the story of the slave trade in **The Middle Passage** (Princeton, 1978, cloth & paper) while Celso Furtado's **The Economic Growth of Brazil** (Univ. of Calif., 1963) surveys the colony's agricultural and commercial expansion.

By the 1680s, competition from Spain's Caribbean possessions had ended Brazil's long reign as the hemisphere's sugar king. But discovery of gold in the province of Minas Gerais rescued Brazil's sagging economy. Gold shipments to Portugal rose from 514 kilos in 1699 to 14,500 kilos in 1712.

Charles Boxer's **The Golden Age of Brazil** (Univ. of Calif., 1962, cloth & paper) is a spirited account of the period from a historian who knows how to spin a good tale.

Gold lured thousands of Brazilians into the continent's interior. The selections edited by Richard Morse in **The Bandeirantes: The Historical Role of the Brazilian Pathfinders** (Knopf, 1965) capture the trailblazing spirit. From São Paulo, the daring *bandeirantes* in their fragile canoes followed the Paraná River deep into the backlands (the *sertão*). From Belém, adventurers traced the Amazon and its tributaries all the way to Mato Grosso. In essence, Brazil reached its present boundaries by 1750.

The *sertão* has always held a fascination for Brazilians—much as the Old West has for Americans. It is depicted by novelist João Guimarães Rosa in **The Devil to Pay in the Backlands** (Knopf, 1963) as a mag-



ical land of renewal and discovery.

But it was also a region where laws did not rule, where outlaws sometimes became folk heroes. Billy Chandler brings to life the notorious Lampião in **The Bandit King** (Texas A&M, 1978). Lampião's story is still told on Brazilian television—in soap opera form.

Race relations in colonial Brazil diverged sharply from the pattern in the American South. During the turbulent gold rush era, Brazilians of diverse races and social backgrounds mixed indiscriminately, and slaves purchased their freedom with surprising frequency. As mechanics, artisans, shopkeepers, and small farmers, they were indispensable to the colony's economy.

Tolerance did not make slavery less harsh, but it did create more flexible racial attitudes, and Brazilians today perceive race in very different terms than do Americans. As Gilberto Freyre wrote in his classic **The Masters and the Slaves** (1933; Knopf, 1964), "Every Brazilian carries in his soul the birthmark of the African."

Other worthwhile works on race in Brazil include **Neither Slave Nor Free** (Johns Hopkins, 1972, paper only), a collection of essays on the colonial period edited by David Cohen and Jack Greene; Roger Bastide's **The African Religions of Brazil** (Johns Hopkins, 1978, cloth & paper); and Jorge Amado's novel **Tent of Miracles** (Knopf, 1971, cloth; Avon, 1978, paper), set in the city of Salvador, where Afro-Brazilian culture displays a special vitality in its artistry and dance, its *carnaval* and *candomblé* (folk religion).

By 1800, Brazil's "golden age" was over—the mines, it was thought, had been exhausted. Yet Brazil was actually more prosperous than ever, ex-

porting great quantities of sugar, tobacco, rice, indigo, and cotton. As Kenneth Maxwell points out in **Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808** (Cambridge, 1973), the Portuguese were well aware that "Portugal was neither the best nor the most essential part of the empire. . . . Brazil was the kernel, Portugal the shell."

When Napoleon invaded Portugal in 1807, the Portuguese court took refuge in Rio de Janeiro. The empire was ruled from Rio until 1821. Then, brought back to Lisbon, the monarchy was unable to reassert control over Brazilian affairs. Backed by the planter elite, Prince Dom Pedro in 1822 declared Brazil's independence from Portugal and proclaimed it an empire.

Brazil's path to independence is traced in **From Colony to Nation** (Johns Hopkins, 1975), edited by A. J. R. Russell-Wood. A good supplement is **Every Inch a King** (New York: Macmillan, 1950; Hale, 1972), a biography of Dom Pedro I by Sérgio Corrêa da Costa.

"A tropical Don Juan," writes Corrêa da Costa of Dom Pedro, "something of a throwback to his lusty grandfather, John V, he would lunge into the night, muffled like a conspirator, in search of gallant adventures. Riding on horseback, he would sometimes go so far as to draw back the curtains of passing litters or coaches, in search of beautiful ladies."

Economically, imperial Brazil was much like colonial Brazil, except that cultivation of coffee gradually came to replace that of sugar. Exports of coffee rose from a million sacks annually during the 1830s to more than five million sacks a year during the 1880s—accounting for 60 percent of Brazil's total exports.

The government in Rio drew much of its support from sugar planters in the northeast. But coffee production was based in the southern province of São Paulo. As that commodity's importance grew, the regional balance of power was upset. Self-made men, the coffee planters disliked the empire's aristocratic veneer and the obstacles the monarchy posed to their own ambitions. After slavery was abolished in 1888, disgruntled coffee planters joined with the military to overthrow the monarchy.

The result was creation of a republic, the so-called Old Republic (1889–1930), whose life coincided with four decades of dynamic economic growth. In the province of São Paulo, for example, planters did much more than simply cultivate coffee. They controlled most of the railroad system, and moved into banking, manufacturing, insurance, and commerce.

"Coffee was the basis of domestic industrial growth . . . and nearly all Brazilian entrepreneurs came from the planter elite," writes Warren Dean in **The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880–1945** (Univ. of Tex., 1969).

The opportunities available in what was becoming Brazil's richest province attracted an unprecedented number of immigrants; between 1890 and 1910, some 1.8 million people, mostly Italians, Germans, Spaniards, and Portuguese, left Europe for Brazil. São Paulo mushroomed from a small town of 65,000 in 1890 to a densely populated state capital

of almost 600,000 in 1920. The impact of immigration is described by Rollie Poppino in **Brazil: The Land and the People** (Oxford, 1973, cloth & paper), a good general introduction to Brazilian society.

Brazil's economic modernization made obsolete a basically agrarian political system held together by shaky alliances and shady deals. In 1930, backed by the military, the populist governor of Rio Grande do Sul, Getúlio Vargas, turned out the old guard, established the "new state," and unequivocally pointed Brazil toward industrialization.

Yet if the Old Republic was unable to reconcile the competing claims of economic development and political democracy, neither was the Vargas regime. Nor have subsequent governments proved any more adept. This is the enduring dilemma of Brazilian history, and the focus of two excellent surveys—Peter Flynn's **Brazil: A Political Analysis** (Westview, 1978, cloth; 1979, paper) and E. Bradford Burns's **A History of Brazil** (Columbia, 1980, cloth & paper). Both books end with the first stirrings of *abertura*.

Whatever their nation's woes, Burns notes, Brazilians have always shown an irrepressible, perhaps naive, faith in the future. "In spite of you," wrote the popular composer Chico Buarque de Holanda, addressing the military regime during the early 1970s, "tomorrow will be another day." The lyrics were censored. The sentiment endures.

—James Lang

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Professor Lang, a former Wilson Center Fellow, teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Vanderbilt University. He is currently a Kellogg Fellow. For additional titles, readers should consult WQ's Background Books essay on Brazil appearing in the Autumn 1976 issue.

Poetry in America:

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## THE SUBURBS OF CAMELOT

Has poetry ceased to matter to most Americans? And if it has, should the blame be placed on the poets, the reading public, or the times? Here critic Frank McConnell considers the state of contemporary American poetry and describes the efforts of some of our better poets to make their art matter once again.



*by Frank D. McConnell*

"The suburbs of Camelot"—one may as well admit, at the outset, that the poet in America has really never gotten closer to the center of things than that. If it is not an especially honorable position, at least it is not a particularly disgraceful one. It is, rather, as countryfolk say, a middling spot. And that may explain the special despair of the American poet. For no country ever harbored greater expectations about the marriage of imagination and expedience, vision and policy, than America. No republic ever asked more of its poets, or, by doing so, made it harder for its poets to function.

As early as the mid-19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson advanced the theory that the new world would have to have a new voice, its own, democratic Homer. Much of the subsequent turmoil of American writing—not to mention much of its occasional excess and absurdity—originated in this sense that there is, or ought to be, a "national voice." Such nations as England, France, or Germany do not trouble themselves about a national voice or a distinctive sensibility; they are both secure and settled enough to have outlived that adolescent identity crisis.

America, on the other hand, is not. We still think of ourselves as a young country, even though we are over 200 years old, older than most of the working democracies on the planet. We also think of ourselves, with more than a touch of hubris, as the last, best hope of man. Out of this national adolescence issues a crying need for self-definition, both political and literary.

Not surprisingly, much of American poetry, and particularly much of that written since World War II, has been intimately involved with this quest for identity. There are, of course, so many distinctive voices and styles in the poetry of the postwar years that it is impossible to give them all a single characterization. But if we think of the American poet

as a person trying to find a voice that could be at once public and private, political and lyrical, then I think we have begun to track something like a national poetic burden.

There is even an image—a sad yet pertinent image—for the special crisis of poetic identity I am trying to describe. In 1961, at the presidential inauguration of John F. Kennedy, Robert Frost read a poem he had composed for the event. An old man, eyesight failing and voice quavering, he was barely able to get through the reading. It was not, after all, one of that distinguished poet's more distinguished poems.

Nevertheless, that moment is a special one in the history of those difficult transactions between the American imagination and American political reality. As part of our memory of our popular culture's Camelot, it recalls a time when art and politics seemed ready to march hand in hand toward the New Frontier. Never mind that the Vietnam tragedy, Watergate, and the shipwreck of New Deal economics lay in the future. For one brief moment, America had found a leader wise, young, and adventurous enough to appoint a poet laureate. That was how the newscasters and the reporters described Frost on that occasion.

Clearly, the selection of Frost to read an inaugural poem said more about Kennedy and his sense of public image than it did about Frost or *his* sense of the poet's role in society. The performance was both tawdry, a bit of clever public relations, and profoundly significant, an expression of the American hope for a union of poetic and political vision. It is revealing and ironic that the most memorable utterance on that occasion was not Frost's poem but the rhetoric of Kennedy's inaugural address. That irony may stand, for the moment, as a metaphor of the troubled position of the American poet since World War II.



But, as I have said, the American poet's troubles extend further into the past, with the formulation of his special role. Walt Whitman, in *Song of Myself* (1855), expressed very forcefully what the American poet would like to believe about himself, about his poetry, and about its use. Earlier, Percy Bysshe Shelley, the defiant English romantic, had described poets, in "A Defence of Poetry" (1840), as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world." But Whitman went beyond Shelley by insisting that poets should be the *acknowledged* legislators of the world—at least of the new world whose bard he appoints himself. In a real democracy, it would be the visionaries, the lyric sensibilities, who would have the most immediate effect upon public policy:

The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the  
great Secretaries,  
On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined  
arms, . . .

And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,  
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

All walks of life, all ranges of experience are united in what the poet sees, feels, and sings. And his song, with its quasi-Biblical parallelism of each element in the human catalogue, is the warrant, the sacred text, of that union. Thus did Whitman create the scripture his mentor, Emerson, had called for.

It is a long way from *Leaves of Grass* to Frost's inaugural poem. And it is a longer way from the promise of the 1850s to the diffident, doubtful voices of recent American verse. But perhaps not so long as it at first appears. Much more explicitly than any other writers of the 19th century, Americans envisioned a wedding of romanticism and pragmatism, a political lyricism that would allow the full expression of both selves, public and private. Only Emily Dickinson, perhaps—who seems so much more "modern" than Whitman—wrote out of a healthy despair at never being more than a private voice.

Our century has, in general, enforced the split between public and private. W. B. Yeats, a great poet and a successful political figure, described the fissure when he observed that we make rhetoric out of our quarrel with others, and poetry out of our quarrel with ourselves. But that fissure is not one which poets—including Yeats himself—find comfortable. The exact inversion of Shelley's ideal of the unacknowledged legislator, and of Whitman's visionary republic, it is a formula against which much modern poetry struggles, and one which it occasionally overcomes.

Two crucial 20th-century figures, T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden, dramatize the situation we are discussing and its particular relevance to the American tradition.

Eliot, though born in St. Louis and educated at Harvard, is nevertheless thought of as a British poet. All his major work appeared after his emigration, in 1914, to London. And he frequently avowed, in both his poetry and his critical writing, the predominantly British quality of his sensibility and cultural loyalties.

Furthermore, at least as far as Eliot himself was concerned, the "Britishness" of his personality was part and parcel of the subjectivity of his poetry. *The Waste Land* (1922) may well be the most influential poem of the 20th century: One hears echoes of its most famous lines, and of its general tone, throughout the poetry and fiction of the next decades. But this most public of poems—taken for years as an indictment of society, a dirge on the decline of the West—is, we can now see, an intensely private utterance, nearly a therapeutic exercise, designed to relieve Eliot of the psychosexual trauma of his first marriage.

To be sure, this new light on the poem does not diminish its power or its genius. Nor does it contravene its importance for the younger writers it affected so intimately. Indeed, we can apply to Eliot the same

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Declaring himself a  
 "Kosmos," Walt  
 Whitman proposed to  
 sing "The Female  
 equally with the Male"  
 and to show that a  
 "leaf of grass is no less  
 than the journey-work  
 of the stars."



formula for greatness that Jacques Maritain applied to Dante: "innocence and luck." He was innocent enough to accept and give expression to his soul's central hurt, and lucky enough to have his own personal pain coincide with the shape of his civilization's discontent. But his was the most private of poetic sensibilities. Eloise Hay, in *Eliot's Negative Way* (1982), suggests that the whole arc of his career is that of the medieval tradition of the "negative way": a progressive disengagement from things of this world until the soul is left alone with only its own emptiness and God. Whitman would have hated it.

Auden's history and career are almost too conveniently the inverse of Eliot's. He was, of course, an Englishman and, during his country's intellectual and political turmoil of the '30s, was probably the most distinctive voice of his era. Biographer Samuel Hynes quite rightly entitles his history of that decade *The Auden Generation* (1976). And what Auden's contemporaries—Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Graham Greene, Christopher Isherwood—and, above all, Auden himself insisted upon was nothing less than a refoliation of the Waste Land. That is, while retaining and expanding the techniques of their precursor, Eliot, these writers were passionately committed to a poetry of political relevance, a poetry that could express both the private, idiosyncratic per-

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sonality of the poet, and at the same time the poet's sense of himself as a man among men, involved in the major and dangerous public issues of his world and his time. "All I have is a voice," writes Auden in his great, suppressed poem "September 1, 1939":

All I have is a voice  
 To undo the folded lie,  
 The romantic lie in the brain  
 Of the sensual man-in-the-street  
 And the lie of Authority  
 Whose buildings grope the sky:  
 There is no such thing as the State  
 And no one exists alone;  
 Hunger allows no choice  
 To the citizen or the police;  
 We must love one another or die.

That he later suppressed this poem is really of less importance than that he wrote it. Its resonance has become part of the resonance of our century. In fact, the powerful last line became a catch-phrase of Lyndon Johnson's speeches in his 1964 campaign for the Presidency—appropriately, for it is a line that incarnates the kind of prophetic populism Americans have always, at their best, desired.

Just as Eliot became an Englishman, Auden became an American, partly out of historical accident, but more out of imaginative necessity.

None of Auden's poetry after he emigrated to America in 1939 carries quite the urgency of his work of the '30s. But it is appropriate to think of him, if not as an American poet, then as a poet with strong affinities—elected affinities—to the dilemma of the American poet.

He may be the last truly public poet of his century, that is, the last poet who could truly regard himself as a private sensibility and a public activist at the same time, and in the same voice. This, and not Eliot's, is the voice that later American writers can take as the standard of their own success or failure. The morality of art and the morality of politics in Auden at his best achieve that unity envisioned by the English Romantics and longed for by their American cousins.



But that unified vision is an endangered species of poetry in the 20th century. And it was to be challenged in a particularly violent way in the decades after World War II. So the date of Auden's emigration to America, 1939, takes on a special retrospective significance. The war, whatever moral complexities and ethical horrors it involved, appears increasingly to have been the Last War: the last justifiable "Crusade." That, anyway, was the propaganda phrase applied to it—and, for once, propaganda appears to have coincided with truth.

I do not mean to indulge in undue nostalgia for that troubled and

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perilous time. But, particularly in the light of what came *after*, it is difficult not to see it as an annealing, purifying process for the poets who lived through it. The war was a cataclysm with a *point*: a dark passage that, for all its darkness, nevertheless seemed to be leading to the light. Karl Shapiro was the first and perhaps the best of the "G.I. poets" to be published while the fighting was still going on. And the last lines of his "Elegy for a Dead Soldier" (*V-Letter*, 1944) have lost none of their eloquence:

Underneath this wooden cross there lies  
 A Christian killed in battle. You who read,  
 Remember that this stranger died in pain;  
 And passing here, if you can lift your eyes  
 Upon a peace kept by a human creed,  
 Know that one soldier has not died in vain.

But a "peace kept by a human creed" was to be exactly what the years following the end of the war did not bring. The escalation of the Cold War, the red scare of the early '50s, and the debacle of Vietnam seemed only the most visible signals of a general decline in the national self-image and of a parallel decline in the American poet's sense of his involvement with the general and official life of the Republic.

The same year Shapiro published *V-Letter*, another, younger poet was imprisoned for five months as a conscientious objector, after having twice previously tried to enlist. It was Robert Lowell, who would become one of the most indispensable poets writing during the '50s.

Lowell's refusal to serve does not invalidate the stately humanism of Shapiro's epitaph. But it does foreshadow what would be the displaced position of the poet in the years after the war. Inhabiting an America that seemed increasingly adrift from the clear purpose of the war years, and more and more suspicious of its nontechnological intellectuals, the poet found himself—or herself—retreating into silence, into exile from the public life, or, worst, into madness, the most sinister trap for the romantic writer.

To be sure, in the modern period, poetry has been permanently threatened by a sense of its own irrelevance. But the postwar years in America bring that threat to a pitch of urgency. Saul Bellow's novel *Humboldt's Gift* (1975) is, among other things, an elegy for the death of a truly political identity for the American poet. Why, Bellow asks, does the culture allow its poets to be charlatans, clowns, and (often) suicides, but not ordinary, functioning citizens of the state? Why do we give our visionaries carte blanche for self-destruction but demand, as the cost of that irresponsibility, their admission of political impotence?

Bellow's grim answer is that this is a way of defusing the potentially explosive power of the imagination, of short-circuiting the current that ought to run from poets to Presidents, from lyricists to legislators. And this evasion, he feels, severely threatens the future of the Republic itself.

That, of course, is the story from the poets' point of view. What it



does not explain is why the poets themselves have accepted this exile, or even whether there *has* been such a concerted attempt to banish them to a landscape of ineffectuality. Any consideration of the treatment of dissident writers in the Soviet Union, for example, should effectively still claim about the "exile" of the American poet from his society. And yet, in a strange way, the sense of exile among American poets *does* persist. To examine the important American voices of the postwar years is to examine the ways in which poets have felt both their exclusion from and their presence in political life; the ways our best poets have, while feeling themselves to be outsiders, devised strategies and subterfuges to make their insights indispensable—or at least dangerously pertinent—to the insiders.



Among the various strategies of recent American poetry, three broad trends stand out: the formalist, the confessional, and what we have to call the epic. They are not, of course, "schools" in any sense. And many of their constituents would feel uncomfortable being grouped in this way. Nevertheless, they do define an array of tactics by which major writers have sought over the last 30 years to overcome the deafness of America to poetic utterance, and to burrow their way from the suburbs of Camelot into the heart of the kingdom.

The formalist tradition is the natural one to examine first, because it is both the most conservative and the earliest strategy to emerge. The phrase, as generally employed, refers to a concern for the formal elements of poetry—intricacies of meter, stanza form, and rhyme—and implies, with more or less prejudice, a certain degree of academic coolness and detachment on the part of the poet. But I would like to extend its meaning to include those poets who, academic or not, display a concern for the idea of the poem as a self-sufficient form, a *made* object. This sounds like a fairly simple, even a self-evident idea of poetry. But with those writers who take the idea with full seriousness, it is actually a powerful way of reconciling the elements of privacy and publicity, self and citizen, in the act of the poem.

Among the important formalists, in this sense, of the postwar years are William Jay Smith, W. D. Snodgrass, Vassar Miller, Richard Wilbur, Howard Nemerov, and A. R. Ammons. Behind all of them lies the work of two early modern masters, Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens. Frost and Stevens were very different men with very different visions; but one thing they did share was the sense of poetry as a "heterocosm," an imaginative universe unto itself that somehow partakes of both "real" universes—the one inside the poet's head and the one outside it—and reconciles them through the alchemy of art. In the formalist vision, in other words, the poem is a kind of holy no man's land: a demilitarized zone where private and public self meet in truce and chat, on friendly terms, about their conflict.

The formalist poem *is* detached. But its detachment is the detachment of irony, of that special cast of mind that can hold opposites in a

healthy balance against one another, and stay sane.

Indeed, we can say that terms such as health and sanity are among the most important ones for this sort of writing. It is the poet's *duty* to remain sane, just because it is the poet's burden to see his world so clearly that madness (of either ecstasy or despair) becomes such a temptation. No poet of the last 30 years has been more faithful to that counsel than Richard Wilbur, whose "Advice to a Prophet" (from the volume of the same name, 1956) is virtually a model of the power such irony can achieve. The prophet to whom Wilbur addresses his advice is a hypothetical speaker warning us against the horror and madness of nuclear war. And Wilbur's advice is that the prophet not simply rant at us about statistics and kill-ratios, but talk to us calmly about the cost of a war that would destroy the earth, its people, and poetry:

Ask us, prophet, how we shall call  
Our natures forth when that live tongue is all  
Dispelled, that glass obscured or broken

In which we have said the rose of our love and the clean  
Horse of our courage, in which beheld  
The singing locust of the soul unshelled,  
And all we mean or wish to mean.

Ask us, ask us whether the worldless rose  
Our hearts shall fail us; come demanding  
Whether there shall be lofty or long standing  
When the bronze annals of the oak-tree close.

Wilbur has continued on his brilliant, witty, and grim way in his two volumes of poetry, *Walking to Sleep* (1969) and *The Mind Reader* (1976). And his production alone would guarantee the persistent vitality of the formalist ideal. But there is also Howard Nemerov, whose poems frequently attain a bitterness—and a bawdy humor—Wilbur never attempts. And there is A. R. Ammons, whose Frost-like "nature poetry" is a deceptively simple exploration of the nature of consciousness itself ("I hope I'm/ not right/ where frost/ strikes the/ butterfly:/ in the back/ between/ the wings," reads his haiku-like lyric, "The Mark"). In fact, Ammons may well be the most challenging formalist poet to emerge since Wallace Stevens himself. Once glimpsed beneath the smooth surface, his poems take on the complexity of metaphysics, and the excitement of forays into the unnamable.



But the formalist position could not long be held unchallenged. At least it could not long be unchallenged by people who took their poetry seriously. Sooner or later, it was bound to be asked, What does your irony, your wit, your detachment matter in a world that takes none of these gifts seriously? What does your perilously achieved sanity *mean*

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to a nation that will not admit that it *needs* to be sane? Or, to ask the question no poet wants to be asked, and the question the best poets all, finally, ask themselves: How can you spend your time *saying* this stuff? And once that question becomes askable, the confessional mode in poetry becomes thinkable:

After a hearty New England breakfast,  
 I weigh two hundred pounds  
 this morning. Cock of the walk,  
 I strut in my turtleneck French sailor's jersey  
 before the metal shaving mirrors,  
 and see the shaky future grow familiar  
 in the pinched, indigenous faces  
 of these thoroughbred mental cases,  
 twice my age and half my weight.  
 We are all old-timers,  
 each of us holds a locked razor.

That is Robert Lowell, at the conclusion of "Waking in the Blue" (from *Life Studies*, 1959)—a straightforward, and frightening, account of his experience in a mental hospital. Lowell began his poetic career as what might be called a formalist (*Lord Weary's Castle*, 1946), but very soon became the leader, the model, and in a way the patron saint of the confessional mode in American poetry.

"We asked to be obsessed with writing,/and we were." That is how Lowell puts it in his poem, "For John Berryman," included in his volume *Day by Day* (1977). Obsessed is the relevant word here. If the formalist tradition insists upon the aesthetic unity of the poem as a work of art, and upon the sanity and clarity of the artwork as a model of consciousness, then the confessional tradition—if it can be called a tradition—insists upon exactly the opposite. The confessional poets—Lowell, John Berryman, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton, among others—are writers for whom the act of writing has none of the calm, lucid, purifying quality we associate with the idea of art as aesthetic form. For them, art is a way of staying alive: a deliberate and desperate gamble, with their private pain as the stakes and the transfiguration of that pain into something like grace as the hoped-for jackpot. "My mind's not right," says Lowell in "Skunk Hour" (again, from the crucial *Life Studies* volume). And it is part of the power of this poetry that we take that statement not as a self-pitying whine but as a human cry of immense appeal, as an attempt to orient the wounded self within the world and to make it function there.

To be sure, to talk in these terms is to romanticize the idea of confessional poetry, to give at least a nod in the direction of that myth of the suffering poet that has been such a terrible burden for so many poetic careers over the last two centuries. Why should we care, asks the sensible reader, about the versified self-revelations of misfits and paranoids? And the sensible reader is at least half right. The confessional impulse in poetry has surely spawned more bad verse, more embarrass-

ing self-psychoanalysis masquerading as poetry, than any other trend in recent writing. But no artistic movement can be fairly judged in terms of the disasters it legitimizes. And the confessional poets, at their best, represent one of the most exciting and humanizing directions of recent American writing.

It is not enough to say that these are *troubled* poets. All poets—all fully conscious human beings, probably—are troubled, and deeply so. But these writers seek to turn their troubledness, sometimes even their neurosis, into the stuff of human, public discourse. They *confess*; they do not merely wallow in self-pity at their own and the century's mental disorientation; rather, they seek to voice that disorientation so as to externalize it, to make it part of the public discourse. In this attempt, they are profoundly political. If the work of the formalists is like a demilitarized zone of irony, where the ancient political strife of self and society is held for a while in abeyance, the work of the confessional poets reads like a series of front-line dispatches from the the heat of that permanently pitched battle.

John Berryman, Lowell's good friend and one of the most fascinating, self-destructive characters in recent American literature, carried the confessional mode to the point of excess and greatness in his long series entitled *The Dream Songs* (first part, 1964; completed series, 1968). A cycle of 18-line poems, written in an absolutely original, simultaneously slangy and sublime diction, it is the story of Henry, a drunken, successful, and self-tormenting poet in middle age, and Berryman's alter ego.

Henry's troubles range from the most intimately personal (his health, his fear of death, his sanity) to the most public (he is a Stevensonian Democrat, he opposes the war in Vietnam, he is revolted by racism in America). And in transforming his private anguish into this massive, versified novel, Berryman creates what amounts to a bitter, funny epic of the self. The very first song says much about the tone of the whole volume:

All the world like a woolen lover  
 once did seem on Henry's side.  
 Then came a departure.  
 Thereafter nothing fell out as it might or ought.  
 I don't see how Henry, pried  
 open for all the world to see, survived.

Being "prided open for all the world to see" and, at the same time, surviving, is what this sort of poetry is about. And the high incidence of mental disorder among these poets—a common taunt of the very vulgar—is really of less importance than the radiant, *earned* sanity with which they record the burden of consciousness.

Anne Sexton, who died in 1974, may well have been the bravest of the confessional poets. With a subtler, wittier version of Berryman's comedy, she wrote a series of poems that narrate her attempt to become a person. They are, at the same time, a kindly, even comfortable

*A self-portrait done  
by Anne Sexton in  
the 1950s. Afflicted  
by mental illness,  
she took her own  
life in 1974.*



journal of a voyage of self-discovery. In “You, Doctor Martin” (from her first book, *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*, 1960), she writes these unforgettable lines about madness from the perspective of the madhouse:

And we are magic talking to itself,  
noisy and alone. I am queen of all my sins  
forgotten. Am I still lost?  
Once I was beautiful. Now I am myself,  
counting this row and that row of moccasins  
waiting on the silent shelf.

But for the confessional poet—and particularly for Anne Sexton—the perspective of the madhouse is only the necessary prelude to the perspective of the fully clarified individual. And in her last volume, *The Awful Rowing Toward God* (1975), Sexton writes poems of that earned sanity, that mature joy, which is the aimed-for end of confessional writing. In “Welcome Morning,” she writes:

So while I think of it,  
let me paint a thank-you on my palm  
for this God, this laughter of the morning,  
lest it go unspoken.

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The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard,  
dies young.

Of course, that could be taken as the most sentimental and most undistinguished greeting-card verse, or as the lyric for a belated flower child's wobbly song for acoustic guitar and off-pitch voice. That is the great danger of confessional poetry: It depends greatly, perhaps too greatly, upon the reader's faith in the seriousness and honesty of the poet/speaker. And that faith is often based on extraliterary matters—on an awareness of the poet's life, perhaps, or on a sense of shared ideology. For better or worse, confessional poetry calls more for a personal judgment than for a strictly formal one.

Not that the confessional tradition in modern American poetry is an unrelieved or formless affair of soul-baring. John Ashbery may be the most original and most fascinating poet to emerge over the last decade. And though it is a gross insult to his intricacy to describe him as a confessional poet, there is really no other category to which he belongs. Ashbery's obsession is a simple one: It is with what the critic Harold Bloom has called "the anxiety of influence," the poet's nagging sense that anything he says—anything he *can* say—has been said before, and better. His confession, in other words, is a confession of impotence and emptiness; of exactly that sense of belatedness that a writer like Whitman so hated, feared, and spent his career declaiming against.

But miraculously, out of even this conviction of aridity, Ashbery makes new, humanizing, and often splendid poems. In "The One Thing That Can Save America" (from *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, 1975), Ashbery describes the seemingly hopeless situation of the poet:

I know that I braid too much my own  
Snapped-off perceptions of things as they come to me.  
They are private and always will be.  
Where then are the private turns of event  
Destined to boom later like golden chimes  
Released over a city from a highest tower?

This most intensely private of voices is, finally, a public speaker, announcing not just the hardships of being a poet, but the hardships of staying conscious at all at a time when so much of our public, popular culture wants to lull us to comfortable sleep.



The formalist and the confessional poets between them account for much of the history of American poetry since World War II. Indeed, it would be possible to write a history of recent American verse using no other descriptive terms than those two. But there is another impulse—probably the oldest and probably the most urgent impulse of poetry—at work in recent American writing.

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I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,  
 starving hysterical naked,  
 dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking  
 for  
     an angry fix,  
 angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly  
 connection  
     to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
 who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up  
 smoking  
     in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating  
     across the tops of cities contemplating jazz. . . .

That may be one of the most shocking openings in poetry of this century: the first lines of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, published in 1956. We have, by now, survived the historical moment when terms such as beatnik or the Beat Generation could get in the way of seeing the strength of this poetry. We have even survived the historical moment when Ginsberg's own irrepressible clowning could get in the way of the profound seriousness of his writing. For *Howl* is nothing more or less than an attempt to write the epic of a generation: to create the voice that, transcending both formal irony and confessional anguish, could articulate the political stance of the poet in the way Whitman believed it could be articulated.

It is a foolhardy and a suicidal enterprise, of course. Ridicule and condescension are bound to greet any attempt to write poetry of this sort—and, during the '50s, they did. What Ginsberg had the courage to do—along with poets like Kenneth Rexroth, Gregory Corso, and Michael McClure—was to remind us that the poet *is* a public voice, and that—at least in an Emersonian democracy—his visions *ought* to be taken seriously, since he is the amanuensis of those passions and pains that keep us human. Ginsberg has continued this lonely battle on behalf of the fully enfranchised American imagination up through the publication of *Plutonian Odes* in 1982.

Ginsberg was born in 1926, in Paterson, New Jersey. And his *Howl* volume appeared with an introduction by William Carlos Williams, the poet and physician whose long, maddening, and stunning poem, *Paterson*, may, coincidentally, be the closest thing we shall have to a 20th-century American epic.

Williams was the oldest of our contemporary poets. In fact, he was one of the acknowledged masters of early modern poetry. But *Paterson*, which appeared during the '40s and early '50s, was both the culmination and the transformation of his early career. Proposing to reclaim the promise Whitman announced for American poetry, it is, indeed, quite the "youngest" poem discussed here.

Williams's *Paterson* is both the city and a man: both a single human being, and a collection of human beings who represent, in their collectivity, the fate of any society, anywhere. In the simplest language, Williams creates the man/landscape of *Paterson*, and in doing so resur-

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rects the ideal of a democratic speech:

The province of the poem is the world.  
 When the sun rises, it rises in the poem  
 and when it sets darkness comes down  
 and the poem is dark. . . .

No amount of quotation or explanation can catch the special power of *Paterson*. Its egalitarianism, its generosity, and its anti-academic (never anti-intellectual) exuberance make it perhaps the central American poem of the last few decades. Williams believed in the power of poetry—not, as had Whitman, to make the world habitable, but at least to make it bearable.

"The language is worn out," he keeps saying of the unhappy and confused citizens of Paterson. Yet no man tried more heroically to reinvigorate that language, to return the words of the tribe to their original freshness—a freshness which would also be the freshness of our shared life (and it is significant that Williams was as proud of the babies he had delivered as of the poems he had written).

So here, with the youngest poem by the oldest poet, the survey ought to end. But it cannot. Because there is one detail of modern American poetry that we have not yet addressed fully: the fact that almost no one reads it. The warfare of the private and the public voices of the poet is a very nice thing to talk about; it is even an interesting academic subject for a dissertation or a book. But it does not cover the fact that poetry is not a going concern in America, and has not been for a long time. Major presses publish volumes of poems—even by distinguished poets—as loss leaders. The Muse—if she is still around at all—is probably by now a bag lady, looking for a place to sleep and keep warm for the night.

Not that this is an unusual situation. Poets are rarely best sellers. And most of them would probably be deeply chagrined if they *were*. But we still ought to be able to ask why it is that we find it impossible to cherish our poets until long after they are dead.

I have no doubt that most educated Americans do not read poetry for one of two reasons. Either they have been trained, by teachers and critics of the most academic sort, that they *cannot*; or they have been told, by critics and teachers of the most pandering sort, that they *need not*. The difficulties of contemporary poetry (and of all good poetry, for that matter) are undeniably real. But by worshipping or irrationally fearing the subtleties of modern writing, we do it a disservice. And in doing poetry a disservice, we do ourselves an even greater one.







*"[We] all had grave objections to major U.S. ground force deployments," the White House's McGeorge Bundy wrote to Lyndon Johnson in July 1965, but, as Communist victory loomed in Vietnam, "[we] . . . moved from the mission of base security to the mission of active combat."*

# Vietnam as the Past

Were our Presidents right or wrong in involving the United States in Vietnam? Did our leaders adopt the best strategy for fighting the war? Did Hanoi wage a "revolutionary" struggle? How important was the American antiwar movement? What are Vietnam's lessons, and nonlessons, for today's U.S. policymakers—and America's allies? As more documentation becomes available 10 years after the Nixon administration's "peace with honor," American historians have begun to supply some new answers. Their findings often challenge old clichés. Here Richard Betts analyzes U.S. entry into the war; Douglas Pike looks at the Communists' side; and Harry Summers re-examines the conduct of the war by America's leaders.

## MISADVENTURE REVISITED

*by Richard K. Betts*

Each November 22nd, representatives of the U.S. Army Special Forces—the Green Berets—join members of the Kennedy family at a memorial ceremony at President John F. Kennedy's grave. This joint tribute symbolizes the ambiguous legacy of the U.S. venture in Vietnam. Kennedy had personally championed the Green Berets as an elite vanguard combating Communist revolution and subversion in the Third World. But just four years after the President's assassination, his brothers Robert and Edward had moved into the vanguard of congressional opposition to this commitment.

Last autumn, there was an added irony; the Reagan administration had recently moved, as Kennedy did two decades ago, to re-emphasize the role of the Special Forces. The United States was once again speaking as if it would "pay any price, bear any burden" to oppose challenges to the free world.

To the extent that Ronald Reagan's assertive policy in El Salvador recalls the early period of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, it is useful to re-examine the White House assumptions, deliberations, and expectations of the 1960s. One finds lessons and nonlessons.

The U.S. commitment to South Vietnam was impelled by

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the overarching post-1945 goal of "containing" Communist expansion, first in Europe, then, with the Korean War, in Asia.

In the case of Vietnam, a few critics in Washington and in academe quarreled with applying "containment" to a theater low in priority to the West. Indeed, scholar-diplomat George F. Kennan, the Soviet affairs specialist who had coined the term, was an early critic of the Johnson administration's involvement in Indochina. But not until late 1965, after Lyndon Baines Johnson started bombing North Vietnam and sent 184,000 troops to the South, did many in Congress, the press, the universities, or the politically sensitive public begin to doubt that South Vietnam was a vital testing ground in the global East-West struggle to keep the world safe for democracy.

By the time Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger gained the White House in 1969, the war had become a political fiasco; the whole notion of containment was under heavy attack. Disillusionment over Vietnam, Sino-American rapprochement, and high hopes for détente and arms control soon eroded the bipartisan constituency for maintaining a strong U.S. military presence overseas, even outside the Third World.\*But the reaction proved more transient than the consensus that led to Vietnam. As the Soviets or their allies advanced in Angola, Ethiopia, and Yemen, as revolutionary Iran humiliated the United States, and as Soviet troops went into Afghanistan, assertiveness slowly became popular again.

The U.S. experience in Vietnam will not inevitably repeat itself elsewhere, despite all the recent hue and cry over Central America. But it is worth examining what circumstances, beliefs, and judgments make Presidents and their advisers in Washington decide that in certain cases they have only one choice, and that they are better off enduring high costs rather than backing off from further engagement.

The United States became gradually involved in Indochina after 1950. Even before the outbreak of the Korean War, Presi-

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\*In May 1971, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D.-Mont.) offered an amendment to a military draft bill that would have required the United States to withdraw one-half of its 300,000 troops in Europe as of December 31, 1971. After intense White House lobbying, the Senate defeated the amendment by a margin of 61-36.

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*In early 1968, LBJ meets with top aides (left to right): McNamara, Wheeler, Defense Secretary-designate Clark Clifford, National Security Adviser Walt Rostow, White House staffer Tom Johnson, Press Secretary George Christian, the CIA's Richard Helms, and Rusk.*

dent Harry S Truman began to take on the financial burden of the vain struggle by America's NATO ally, France, to defeat Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh, which was assisted by Communist China, America's foe in Korea. Dwight D. Eisenhower continued and increased that support, and committed the United States to the new regime in South Vietnam after French withdrawal. South Vietnam did not become a high U.S. priority until Kennedy's Presidency, and it did not become the highest overseas priority until the Johnson era.

The 1960s were, of course, a turning point, but not because Washington's goals changed. Ever since the Korean War, U.S. policy in Indochina had vacillated between contrary objectives—preventing a Communist takeover while avoiding American participation in a major war in Asia. Yet the contradiction between these two aims did not become acute until 1965. The efforts of Kennedy and Johnson differed in scale—the 1961 decision to increase the number of U.S. advisers (from 948 in November 1961 to 2,646 in January 1962) pales beside the 1965

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decisions to bomb the North and to dispatch combat troops to the South. But in both cases, U.S. involvement grew dramatically in order to prevent imminent South Vietnamese collapse under Communist pressure and to shift momentum to the anti-Communist side. What was required to do this in 1961 was far less than what was required four years later.

All in all, Kennedy was less willing to disengage than later apologists suggested, and Johnson less deceptive about his goals and less anxious to escalate than later detractors believed. The notion that Kennedy intended to extricate the United States from South Vietnam after the 1964 U.S. election is belied by his actions right up to his death: a continuing build-up of aid and advisers, presidential reaffirmations\* that would have been gratuitous if he were looking forward to withdrawal, and prior endorsement of the 1963 Saigon coup against President Ngo Dinh Diem. Johnson's campaign rhetoric against Barry Goldwater in 1964 exploited public fears of war, but he never suggested that defeat would be an acceptable alternative.† And, although Johnson ordered contingency planning for direct U.S. military action before November 1964, he continued to search for alternatives *after* the election.

### Losing and Winning

Indeed, LBJ was a most reluctant warrior. Like his predecessor, he refused to accept any radical options proposed by subordinates that promised *victory*. Early in 1965, he authorized the bombing of North Vietnam, but only in limited, gradually increasing doses—not the quick and overwhelming effort sought by the Air Force. In July 1965, he ordered a build-up to 125,000 men in South Vietnam, despite the lack of promises of a long-term solution from Army leaders. In late 1965, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara privately estimated that 600,000 U.S. troops (10 percent more than the highest level ever reached during the war) might be needed by 1967 and admitted that even that number “will not guarantee success.”

Once the air strikes against the North began, Johnson abste-

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\*E.g., on September 12, 1963: “In some ways I think the Vietnamese people and ourselves agree: we want the war to be won, the Communists to be contained, and the Americans to go home . . . . But we are not there to see a war lost, and we will follow the policy which I have indicated today of advancing those causes and issues which help win the war.”

†In Akron, Ohio, on October 21, 1964, Johnson stated: “[We] are not about to send American boys 9 or 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.” But Johnson added that “we are going to assist them [the South Vietnamese] against attack as we have” in the past and “[we] will not permit the independent nations of the East to be swallowed up by Communist conquest.”

miously expanded them (rejecting military protests that such gradualism vitiated their effect) in consonance with his civilian advisers' hopes that mounting pressure might induce Hanoi to negotiate on U.S. terms.

As U.S. troop strength grew, General William C. Westmoreland's ground operations in the South expanded too, and soon, after Hanoi's spectacular but costly 1968 Tet Offensive, their cumulative effect—even if blunt and wasteful—forced the Communists, both regulars and guerrillas, onto the defensive and rolled back many of their earlier gains. But, in most circumstances, guerrillas win as long as they do not lose, and government forces lose as long as they do not win. And Hanoi, with its sanctuaries at home and its bases and routes of reinforcement in Laos and Cambodia, could keep from “losing” indefinitely. Colonel Harry G. Summers ruefully described his encounter in 1973, during negotiations on American MIAs (Missing-in-Action) in Hanoi, with a North Vietnamese officer who, confronted with the assertion that the Communists had never beaten U.S. troops in a major battle, replied, “That is correct. It is also irrelevant.”

In March 1967, Westmoreland told LBJ and McNamara that unless his forces were allowed to cut off Hanoi's infiltration of men and supplies, the war could continue indefinitely. Later in the year, despite their public optimism, Westmoreland and General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the President that with current U.S. troop levels, the war would continue as an indecisive “meat-grinder”; with a reinforcement of 95,000, it could drag on for three years; and with one of 195,000 (to a total of 665,000), it could last two years. Yet Johnson authorized an increase of only 55,000.

### A Quest for Compromise

Like JFK, LBJ chose a *limited* strategy. He chose to nibble the bullet rather than bite it. He feared provoking Chinese intervention and undertaking a full-scale war (or withdrawal) that could wreck his primary ambition: to build the Great Society.

Most important was his unwillingness to provoke a domestic political assault from either the Right (for “selling out” Vietnam) or the Left (for going too far militarily). In effect, he preferred to compromise on the battlefield and to suffer limited attacks at home from both ends of the political spectrum rather than face the full fury of either—although until the Tet Offensive, he feared the hawks more than the doves. A consensus-seeking, centrist political strategy drove the White House military policy. In this, too, Johnson's approach reflected that

**A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY**

1954-1975

1954 Geneva Accords end Indochina War between French and Viet Minh, dividing Vietnam into North and South. Eisenhower offers aid to South Vietnamese government.

1955 U.S. advisers take over training of South Vietnamese army (ARVN) from French. Diem becomes leader of South Vietnam.

1958 Growth of Communist guerrilla war against Diem regime.

1959 Hanoi decides to unify Vietnam by force, organizes Ho Chi Minh Trail infiltration routes to South Vietnam.



*Vo Nguyen Giap, Ho Chi Minh (1945)*

1960 Hanoi forms southern National Liberation Front (Viet Cong). Kennedy elected President.

1961 As Viet Cong pressure grows, JFK increases aid to Saigon, raises number of U.S. military advisers from 685 to 16,000—by late 1963.



*Ngo Dinh Diem (1955)*

1962 Soviet-American agreement in Geneva provides for "neutral" Laos, but does not end Hanoi's use of Ho Chi Minh Trail or CIA counterinsurgency effort.

1963 After suppressing Buddhist dissidents, Diem is ousted and killed by army; Kennedy assassinated; Johnson becomes President. McNamara notes Viet Cong gains after anti-Diem coup.



*John F. Kennedy (1962)*

1964 Hanoi starts sending regular army (PAVN) units to South. United States pledges assistance to South Vietnam as required to defeat "Communist aggression"; issues warnings to Hanoi. After clash between North Vietnamese PT boats and U.S. destroyers, Congress passes Tonkin Gulf Resolution supporting U.S. efforts to "prevent further aggression." Johnson elected President, as his Great Society gets under way. 23,000 U.S. advisers are in Vietnam.

1965 Communists batter ARVN; U.S. planes start bombing North Vietnam; Marines land at Da Nang to protect air base; Nguyen Cao Ky becomes Premier of South Vietnam; LBJ announces build-up to 125,000 men but refuses to call up reserves; Hanoi rejects U.S. offers to negotiate.

1966 U.S. Senate hearings on war policy; many antiwar demonstrations; Cultural Revolution in China; the *New York Times* reports from Hanoi on civilian damage caused by U.S. air strikes. Cambodia's Norodom Sihanouk secretly allows Hanoi to use Sihanoukville (Kompong Som) as supply port. War of attrition grinds on in South Vietnam. Filipinos, Australians, New Zealanders, South Koreans send troops.

**1967** Guam "summit": Westmoreland tells LBJ more decisive strategy is required to end the war, but LBJ does not respond. Johnson raises U.S. troop ceiling in South Vietnam to 525,000, calls for 10 percent surtax. Elections of Thieu and Ky. McNamara privately urges end of U.S. bombing and limit on U.S. manpower in Vietnam, resigns to become president of World Bank in 1968.

**1968** LBJ curbs most direct U.S. investment abroad and restricts overseas travel of U.S. citizens to cut growing balance-of-payments deficit. North Korea seizes *Pueblo*, U.S. Navy "spy ship." In Vietnam, Giap's forces besiege Khe Sanh, launch countrywide Tet Offensive and, later, "mini-Tet" attacks against Saigon. Eugene McCarthy, peace candidate, wins 42.4 percent of Democratic vote in New Hampshire presidential primary; Johnson receives 49.5 percent. LBJ orders partial bombing halt and announces he will not run for re-election; Hanoi agrees to peace talks in Paris. Clifford fixes 549,500-man U.S. troop ceiling and gradual transfer of war burden to South Vietnamese. LBJ ends all bombing of North. Nixon elected President with 43.4 percent of popular vote.



*Nguyen Van Thieu (1968)*

**1969** In "Vietnamization" effort, Nixon withdraws 68,000 troops during year; Ho Chi Minh dies; mass antiwar march in Washington. Peace talks continue.

**1970** Joint U.S.-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia after Lon Nol coup ousts Sihanouk. Four protesters at Ohio's Kent State University are slain by National Guardsmen; students close 100 colleges.

**1971** South Vietnamese troops, with U.S. air support, invade southern Laos, in raid on Ho Chi Minh Trail. The *New York Times* begins publication of "Pentagon Papers." Re-election of Thieu. U.S. troop strength in Vietnam drops below 200,000. Congress votes to end draft in 1973.

**1972** U.S. election year. Equipped by Soviets, North Vietnamese launch massive tank-led Easter Offensive; Nixon orders mining of North Vietnam's ports and renews bombing. He attends summits in Beijing, Moscow. Watergate break-in. Hanoi's offensive stalls. Kissinger says "peace is at hand," but year ends with peace agreement unsigned. Nixon re-elected President, orders all-out "Christmas bombing" of Hanoi area to force North Vietnam back to Paris conference table.



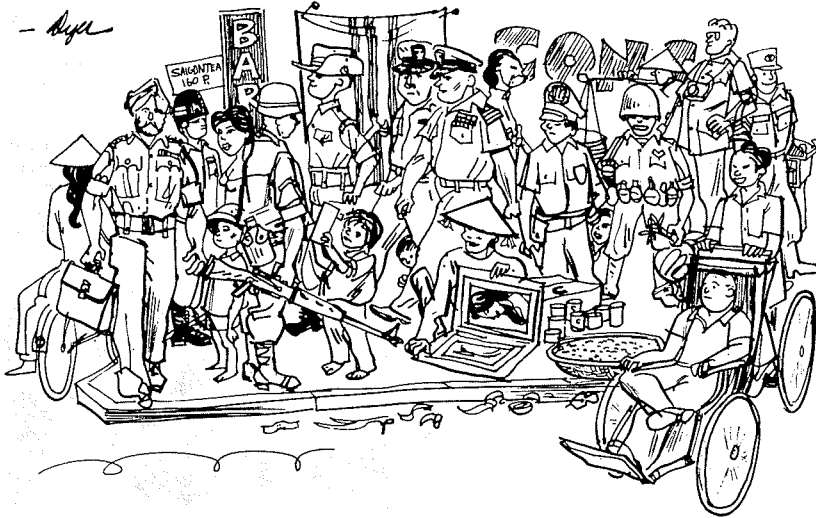
*Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger (1970)*

**1973** Nixon halts all air operations against North Vietnam. After he privately assures Thieu that the United States will react with force to Communist violations, the United States, North and South Vietnam, and Viet Cong sign peace pact in Paris. In August, obeying Congress's mandate, United States ends bombing of Khmer Rouge insurgents in Cambodia, and thus all direct U.S. military intervention in Indochina. As Watergate disclosures engulf White House, Congress passes War Powers Act.

**1974** Both sides violate cease-fire in South Vietnam. U.S. Senate and House cut back military aid to Saigon requested by Nixon. In August, climaxing Watergate scandal, Nixon resigns as President, and is succeeded by Gerald Ford.

**1975** Communists triumph in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. North Vietnamese take Phuoc Long province against feeble resistance, then open Great Spring Offensive that routs South Vietnamese forces and ends with capture of Saigon. Americans help 150,000 escape. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge capture Phnom Penh, begin massacres across Cambodia. Pro-Hanoi Pathet Lao forces occupy Vientiane, Laos's capital. Peace.





*Saigon street scene (c. 1966) includes an Indian observer, an Australian soldier, U.S. Navy officers, a city cop, a newsman, an American GI.*

of his predecessors.

Nixon also sought to follow a middle path between his own instincts (more hawkish than Johnson's) and the growing opposition in Congress and the broader public. He successfully appealed to the "Silent Majority"—who, polls indicated, wanted to withdraw but not to lose—by combining "re-escalations" (secretly bombing Communist bases in Cambodia in 1969, briefly invading Cambodia in 1970, supporting a short-lived Army of the Republic of Vietnam [ARVN] invasion into Laos in 1971, renewing the bombing of North Vietnam and mining Haiphong harbor in 1972) with peace talks, the phased withdrawal of U.S. troops, and "Vietnamization."

Actually, Nixon's approach was no less contradictory than that of his predecessors. Like Kissinger, Nixon overestimated his ability to solve the problem through the negotiations at Paris that Johnson had initiated in 1968. Nixon milked his "madman" theory—that the Communists would quail before the threat of his irrational behavior—but his hopes (like those of LBJ) of enlisting Moscow's aid to sway Hanoi did not materialize, and Nixon, not the enemy, made the crucial negotiating concession in May 1971 by implicitly accepting the presence of North Vietnamese troops in the South after a cease-fire.\*

\*Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years*, Little, Brown, 1979, p. 1,018.

Under Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, senior policy-makers in Washington were seldom deluded that the odds of routing the Communists in Vietnam were high. Indeed, in most cases, they increased U.S. deployments of men and/or firepower simply to stave off defeat, with no real expectation of victory. What made the men in Washington believe that they were making efforts that with luck might pan out, rather than marching *inevitably* toward defeat?

### The Iron Combination

The answer lies between hubris and hope. During the early 1960s, both civilian and military theorists of "counterinsurgency" promoted the fateful illusion that American tutelage could reshape the fragile, war-battered South Vietnamese political system, creating a new nationalism among the South Vietnamese that could confront Marxist revolutionary élan with some sort of vigorous Asian Jeffersonianism—through land reform, free elections, better government.

Some U.S. "pacification" techniques proved successful—in the short term. For all their much-publicized deficiencies, the sheer weight of allied manpower and economic resources produced major gains in rural prosperity, population control, and road security during the years between Tet and the 1972 Easter Offensive. Increasingly unable to enlist new recruits, the southern Communist guerrillas (Viet Cong) were ground down by attrition; North Vietnamese forces took over the chief burden of combat. Large-scale *conventional* North Vietnamese attacks, with bases in Laos and Cambodia, rather than Viet Cong guerrilla insurgency, brought on the 1975 collapse of the Saigon regime.

Even more important was limited war theory,\* an outgrowth of opposition to the Eisenhower administration's post-Korea "massive retaliation" policy. The focus was on using measured doses of force to induce an adversary to negotiate and to compromise. The 1965–67 air war against North Vietnam exposed the holes in some versions of the theory. The Pentagon civilians who had designed the air war originally expected to "calibrate" the U.S. response to each enemy provocation and to use incremental pressure to convince Hanoi to desist. This aim was inevitably subverted by practical difficulties—targeting, timing, communications—that derailed Washington's "orches-

\*Its chief academic proponents were Robert Osgood and Thomas Schelling; their views found many echoes in the Army, notably in writings by Generals Maxwell Taylor (*The Uncertain Trumpet*, 1959) and James Gavin (*War and Peace in the Space Age*, 1959).

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tration" of words and deeds.

Most of all, the theory foundered because its proponents vastly underestimated Hanoi's determination and overestimated the basis for a negotiated compromise. The Vietnam War was primarily a civil war, and, overall, a struggle involving *incompatible* ideologies and visions of society, not just a proxy conflict between great powers over influence in a third area. Both American leaders and their critics in Congress and the press found this reality hard to understand. As Kissinger reflected with hindsight,

Because the United States had become great by assimilating men and women of different beliefs, we had developed an ethic of tolerance; having had little experience with unbridgeable schisms, our mode of settling conflicts was to seek a solution somewhere between the contending positions. But to the Vietnamese this meant that we were not serious about what we put forward and that we treated them as frivolous. They had not fought for forty years to achieve a compromise.

Professional military men never agreed with the civilians' game-theory logic. Yet, with few exceptions, until 1968 both military and civilian leaders in Washington assumed that South Vietnam *had* to be saved. The United States could not just walk out on its ally. The disputes, seldom publicized, were over means, not ends.

Only if President Johnson, McNamara, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk had known for *sure* in early 1965 that "graduated pressure" would fail and that the most pessimistic military estimates of what would be required to bend Hanoi's will were correct would there have been a chance for a White House decision to disengage. Like Kennedy, Johnson distrusted the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Some of his civilian lieutenants viewed bleak JCS estimates or pleas for "decisive" strategies as "worst-case" ploys designed to maximize their options and to protect their reputations in case of failure.

This tragic misjudgment aside, the fact remains that LBJ & Co. knew that gradually building up U.S. strength in Vietnam offered no assurance of victory. Yet at each juncture until Tet 1968, they saw no alternative to pressing on, *hoping* that the Politburo in Hanoi would grow weary and negotiate.

The air war strategy was flawed, but the details of its rationale fade in significance beside the overarching White House decision in 1965 to keep the war effort, as a whole, limited. Ex-

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cept for the military, who did not protest in public, there were virtually no officials in the executive branch—and few newspaper editors or legislators—who in 1965 questioned the premise of limitation.

The tragedy stemmed from the iron combination of this consensus with the premise that the war still had to be fought.

The one high-ranking official who opposed escalation was Under Secretary of State George W. Ball. Beginning in 1963, he argued that Vietnam was of secondary importance, and that our commitment there drained resources away from NATO. LBJ's negative reaction was ironic, since the initial U.S. involvement in Indochina was spurred by the priority of NATO—to support France in the early 1950s even though Washington had no love for colonialism. But not until 1965, after the first Marines went ashore at Da Nang in March, did Ball recommend outright withdrawal.

In 1964–65, Congress was quite complaisant; only Senate mavericks like Wayne L. Morse (D.-Ore.) and Ernest H. Gruening (D.-Alaska) opposed crucial decisions of the mid-1960s. When J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, turned against the war in 1966, he was still countered by colleagues of equal rank such as John C. Stennis, chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

There was little early active support for Johnson administration policy on Capitol Hill, but, contrary to myth, even well after Tet, nearly all congressional war foes, from Edward M. Kennedy (D.-Mass.) to George S. McGovern (D.-S.D.) issued calls for faster troop withdrawals and greater concessions in peace talks, *not* for unconditional U.S. withdrawal. Though opposition on Capitol Hill mounted with time, it was not until *after* U.S. troops had been withdrawn and the POWs returned in 1973 that the raft of legislation was passed constraining both presidential war powers and aid to the South Vietnamese ally.

### Running Out of Time

In short, the remarkable American consensus behind the initial intervention, from 1961 to the 1968 Tet Offensive, has been obscured in retrospect by the force of later disillusionment. Only *after* it became clear that the cost of prolonged U.S. intervention in Vietnam was prohibitive did it begin to seem to large segments of Congress, the media, and academe that the alternative, a Communist victory in South Vietnam, was not so grave a disaster (for America). But by that time, compromises that had seemed radical during the Johnson administration seemed in-

### THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT, THE NEW LEFT, AND PUBLIC OPINION

On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon Baines Johnson announced on TV that he would not seek re-election. "With America's sons in the fields far away, with America's future under challenge right here at home," he could not both serve as the nation's wartime Commander-in-Chief and fight the partisan battles of a political campaign.

The growing antiwar movement claimed credit for Johnson's decision. But did its efforts hasten the war's end? Probably not.

Mild dissent first surfaced in 1964–65. A few prominent intellectuals, notably Hans J. Morgenthau, argued that the Free World's interests in South Vietnam did not justify a massive expenditure of U.S. blood and treasure. Said columnist Walter Lippmann in July 1965, "We can search the globe and look in vain for true and active supporters of our policy." Liberal doves—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard H. Rovere, the *New York Times's* John Oakes—variously called for bombing halts, cease-fires, and talks leading to a coalition regime in Saigon that would include the southern National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), which, some of these writers suggested, enjoyed autonomy from Hanoi.

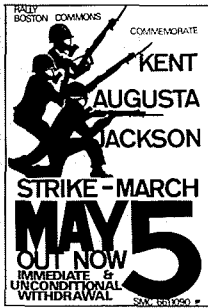
New Left intellectuals demanded much more. Besides condemning LBJ, the U.S. military, and South Vietnamese leaders, they cheered on Ho Chi Minh. Visiting Hanoi in 1968, the *New York Review of Books's* Susan Sontag discovered "an ethical society" whose government "loves the people." Her hosts' only defect was that they "aren't good enough haters"; Hanoi's jailers "genuinely care about the welfare of the hundreds of captured American pilots. . . ." No less impressed was novelist Mary McCarthy, who concluded that Prime Minister Pham Van Dong presided over "a moral, ascetic government, concerned above all with the *quality* of Vietnamese life." And MIT's Noam Chomsky described his own country as "the most aggressive power in the world"; he urged "a kind of denazification" of U.S. leaders.

More widespread was a larger movement centered at first in the elite universities. As higher draft calls came in 1966–67, such groups as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) conducted "teach-ins" on college campuses and then mounted protest rallies in cities across the nation. Against such opposition, Lyndon Johnson's failure to offer "a convincing moral justification" for the U.S. war effort, *Commentary's* Norman Podhoretz argued in 1982, doomed his quest for stronger support at home.

Yet through most of the 1960s, nearly two-thirds of the public, judging by polls, favored a continuation or intensification of the struggle. The Vietnam War, political scientist John E. Mueller has shown, only became more unpopular (in September 1969) than the Korean War after U.S. casualties in Vietnam had substantially surpassed those of the earlier, shorter conflict (see charts, pp. 112–113).

Moreover, Mueller argues, the protesters' disruptive style was in some ways self-defeating. In a 1968 poll by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research in which the public was asked to rate various groups on a 100-point scale, one-third gave antiwar protesters a zero, while only 16 percent put them anywhere in the upper half of the scale.

The dramatic efforts of antiwar Democrats to elect presidential peace candidates gained only Pyrrhic victories. The surprising 42.2 percent vote that Senator Eugene J. McCarthy won in the party's 1968 New Hampshire primary largely reflected "anti-Johnson" rather than "antiwar" sentiment. Among McCarthy voters, hawks outnumbered doves by nearly three to two. Moreover, the Democratic Left, Mueller contends, "helped to elect Richard Nixon twice": in 1968, by convincing a sufficient number of disaffected liberals to sit out the election and give Nixon a narrow victory over Hubert H. Humphrey, and in 1972, by securing the Democratic nomination for a landslide loser, Senator George S. McGovern.



The antiwar movement crested in 1969–70, as moderate Democrats, notably Humphrey and Edmund S. Muskie, came out against what was now Richard Nixon's war. But when the last great Washington protest march occurred in April 1971, the heteroge-

neous antiwar coalition was already fragmenting into a number of single-issue groups, notably feminists, environmentalists, homosexuals. And as draft calls dwindled with Nixon's gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, campus unrest noticeably subsided.

The Vietnam conflict did not cause the "cultural revolution" of the late 1960s in America (and Western Europe). "If there had been no Vietnam War, we would have invented one," Yippie leader Jerry Rubin wrote in 1970. Rather, the war came to represent all that dissident groups believed was wrong with the United States: It offered, in Sontag's words, "the key to a systematic criticism of America."

In the end, as Mueller suggests, antiwar protest (and congressional outcries) inhibited administration policy-makers, but it was not decisive. It may have prompted Nixon to speed up U.S. troop withdrawals, to pull back from his 1970 incursion into Cambodia earlier than planned, and to join Democrats in ending the draft. It did not prevent him from bombing the North in 1972. Congress adopted the most consequential antiwar measure, the restrictive War Powers Act of 1973, well after street protest had faded.

Still, most scholars agree, the disarray of the Vietnam era brought one long-term consequence: It helped to shatter the U.S. foreign policy consensus forged during the early Cold War, greatly complicating the task of later Presidents in defending U.S. interests abroad.

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sufficient. As Kissinger recounts:

By August of 1969 we had offered or undertaken unilaterally all of the terms of the 1968 *dove* plank of the Democrats (which had been defeated in Chicago). We had exceeded the promises of the Republican platform, expecting by our demonstration of flexibility to foster moderation in Hanoi and unity at home. We were naively wrong in both expectations.

The American effort in 1965–72 was not subverted by moral objections (such objections remained those of a minority even to the end), but by a gradually building public perception that all the blood and treasure was simply being *wasted* to no visible end. The United States may be able to fight a major limited war again, say, in the Persian Gulf, but only if it is not long and inconclusive. As Harvard's Samuel P. Huntington observed: "The most crucial limitation . . . is not the limitation on weapons or geographical scope or goals, but rather the limitation on *time*."

Wide recognition of such U.S. political realities reinforces the military's argument against limitations on the use of conventional forces. But this recognition provides no guarantee against future mistakes. The necessary scale and duration of successful military operations can never be known for sure in advance. What the Vietnam record shows is that Washington's top decision-makers knew in 1964–65 that, given the limits they imposed on U.S. strategy, victory would not come quickly, if it came at all. A similar prognosis by the White House in a future case, with the Vietnam experience in mind, could produce a presidential choice between a decisive hard-hitting use of force or no military intervention at all.

### Hindsight Is Easier

Should future U.S. ventures overseas be undertaken only if a cut-off point is decided in advance? Political scientist Richard Neustadt has criticized the White House National Security Council staff in 1964–65 for not seriously addressing "the option of getting out of Vietnam . . . . It was always taken to be unacceptable on the face of it." Doing this, however, is politically dangerous; any leak to the press about such a study would surely subvert the commitment's support and credibility.

White House decisions on what is vital to U.S. interests abroad are affected by limited information and by official perceptions that may not be known to be—or may not *be*—incor-

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rect until later. For example, as Rusk was wont to explain, part of the rationale for sending U.S. troops to South Vietnam was to prevent Chinese advances further into Southeast Asia. The problem was not simply an obtuse U.S. failure to recognize the Sino-Soviet split. Despite their dispute, Moscow and Beijing were seen in Washington as having parallel interests in promoting violent Communist revolution. Because a Sino-American rapprochement occurred during the 1970s does not mean that it could have happened during the 1960s—before the 1969 Soviet-Chinese border clashes and before Soviet hints of a future preventive attack on China's new nuclear facilities pushed Beijing toward accommodation with Washington.

### **A Yearning in Washington**

Moreover, the President does not act in a vacuum. Had North Korea, armed by the Soviets, not attacked South Korea in 1950 (shaking Washington into revision of judgments about whether Communist leaders would resort to armed conquest), Truman might have felt no urge to become more involved in support of the French in Indochina. Had Eisenhower not just concluded the Korean War and scored anti-Communist successes in Iran and Guatemala, he might not have felt secure enough in 1954 to accept the partition of Vietnam (though his acceptance resulted in a U.S. commitment to the new regime in the South). Had Kennedy not experienced the unsettling Vienna summit with Nikita Khrushchev, the Bay of Pigs, a new Berlin crisis, and setbacks in Laos—all in 1961—he might have felt he had more leeway in avoiding a major increase in the U.S. advisory effort in South Vietnam later that year.

The crucial phase of any overseas commitment is the formative period, when presidential rhetoric becomes mortgaged and initial costs are sunk. Yet during this early phase, the long-range consequences are least certain and the commitment is a secondary matter, rather than the centerpiece it may become later as U.S. involvement and costs accumulate. When costs are still limited, the alternative seems bleaker than when the commitment burgeons into full-blown national sacrifice.

John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and lesser policymakers during the 1960s faced these pressures and ambiguities and decided that a gamble in South Vietnam was preferable to the alternative; uncertain prospects of victory were better than certain prospects of defeat. The results make clear the folly of this judgment.

By 1975, the dominant "lesson" was that Washington



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should take no risks, that it should not begin messy involvements in the Third World if there is *any* danger that they cannot be concluded without considerable sacrifice. Despite President Jimmy Carter's creation of a much-publicized Rapid Deployment Force in 1979–80, the lesson still has a powerful hold. In 1983, Congress has shown little enthusiasm for the Reagan administration's modest efforts to counter Marxist guerrillas in Central America, and none at all for direct combat involvement of U.S. military men, even as advisers. Yet "containment," in theory at least, has been reinvigorated. Reagan's rhetoric recalls the staunchness of the New Frontier. The Pentagon speaks of a global "maritime strategy."

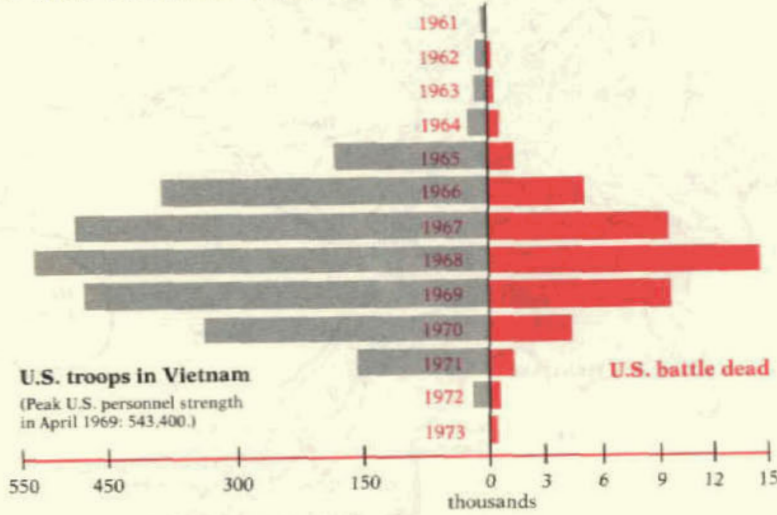
What has not rebounded to the same degree is the bipartisan consensus among politicians and in the press behind containment. If anything, there seems to be a yearning in Reagan's Washington for the containment of the Eisenhower years, to bestride the globe and confront Soviet power without spilling blood, to be strong but at peace, to support anti-Communist allies or clients with money and arms but not men, all without raising the spectre of war.

Dwight Eisenhower could accomplish all that because the predicament that his successors faced—imminent collapse of the whole row of Indochina dominoes—did not develop while he was in office. We know more now, but we still do not know how a disastrous war could have been avoided except at the price foreseen in 1961 as in 1965—apparently disastrous defeat. John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were wrong in moving into Vietnam on so grand a scale, but neither was wrong in thinking that his failure to do so could produce unpleasant reactions at home and abroad. Now, as then, neither containment nor disengagement is risk-free.

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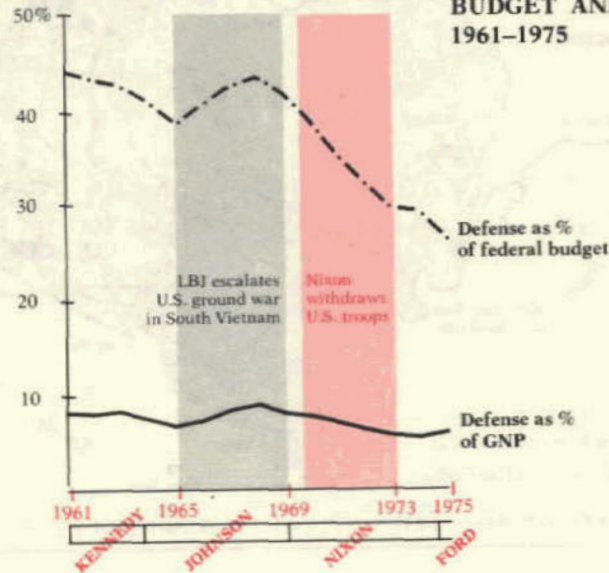


**YEAR-END U.S. TROOP STRENGTH AND BATTLE DEAD IN THE VIETNAM WAR, 1961-1973**

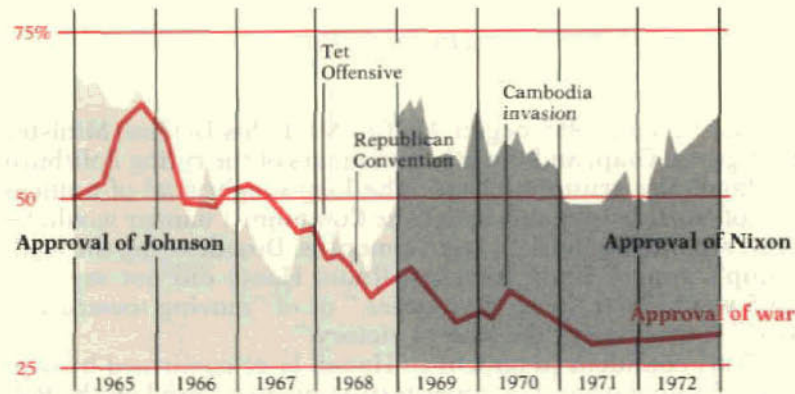


*57,717 U.S. servicemen had died by the end of 1973: 47,268 in battle, 10,449 from other causes. Defense spending as a percentage of both the U.S. budget and Gross National Product declined long before the war ended.*

**DEFENSE SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF FEDERAL BUDGET AND GNP 1961-1975**

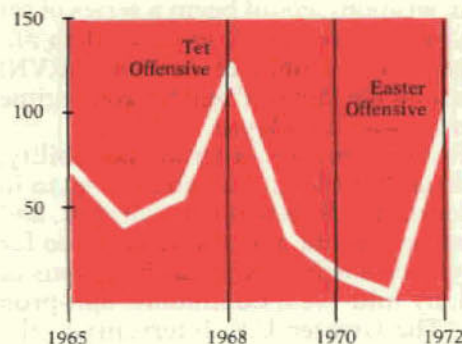


## POPULAR SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM WAR AND TWO PRESIDENTS

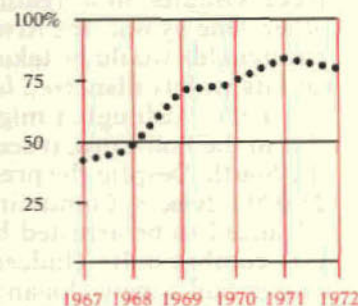


The Gallup poll questions (above) were: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way (the incumbent President) is handling his job?" and "Do you think the United States made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" Answers to the "mistake" question do not indicate policy preferences, e.g., escalation or withdrawal. Americans reacted similarly to the Korean War (See WQ, Summer '78). Ironically, the erosion of U.S. popular support coincided with a long decline in enemy battalion-size (400- to 500-man) attacks after the 1968 Tet Offensive. After Tet, the percentage of South Vietnamese in relatively "secure" areas, as measured by (uncertain) U.S. statistics, rose steadily until 1972, when Hanoi launched its Easter Offensive.

## COMMUNIST BATTALION-SIZE ATTACKS, 1965-1972



## PERCENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S POPULATION IN 'SECURE' AREAS, 1967-1972



Source: U.S. Department of Defense; *The Budget of the U.S. Government, 1970 and 1977*, Government Printing Office; John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*, 1978; *Journal of Defense Research*, Series B, Fall 1975.

## THE OTHER SIDE

*by Douglas Pike*

As the year 1965 began, Ho Chi Minh, his Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, and the other members of the ruling Politburo in Hanoi saw triumph ahead. The long-sought goal of unification of North and South under the Communist banner would be achieved during the next twelve months. Broadcasting the leadership's annual State message, Radio Hanoi did not say that 1965 would be a "year of victories," or of "moving toward victory." It said flatly "the year of victory."

This confident judgment in Hanoi, later confirmed by captured documents and prisoner testimony, was based on the Politburo's survey of the battlefield in South Vietnam and its interpretations of Washington's capabilities. All in all, it was not an unrealistic estimate.

Outside Saigon, Da Nang, and the South's other major cities, the People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong) regulars were chewing up, one by one, the South Vietnamese government's dozen mobile reserve battalions of paratroopers and marines as they were sent in with American advisers to rescue local garrisons under attack. Soon the Saigon regime, its faction-ridden military and political leadership in chronic disarray since the 1963 overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem, would have no reserves to spare.

At that point, the Viet Cong, evolving, under Hanoi's control, into regular regiments and divisions equipped with mortars, rockets, and automatic weapons, could begin a series of set piece assaults, first against one isolated city or base, then another. One by one, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) strongholds would be taken, and the demoralized Saigon regime and its widely dispersed forces would collapse.

That Washington might intervene was a strong possibility. But to the Politburo, it seemed that the rot had already set in in the South. Despite the presence of U.S. helicopters, aircraft, and 23,000 advisers, Communist battlefield gains were now too far advanced to be arrested by necessarily piecemeal injections of U.S. combat units. (Indeed, by mid-1965, Communist agit-prop cadres had a new slogan: "The Greater U.S. Intervention, the Greater U.S. Defeat.") The Viet Cong continued to hit U.S. advisers' barracks, airfields—and the U.S. embassy in Saigon.

Sporadic American air strikes had already begun (in mid-



*North Vietnamese farmers, with water buffalo, wend their way home from rice fields. To wage war, Hanoi depended on massive Soviet aid.*

1964) against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. Lyndon Johnson ordered retaliatory bombing of the North in August 1964 after the Gulf of Tonkin encounter between North Vietnamese patrol boats and U.S. Navy destroyers. (Yet to come were the regular, but still limited, "Rolling Thunder" bombing raids that began in February.) As the North Vietnamese leaders saw it, provision by the Soviet Union of modern air defense radar and weaponry would blunt the impact of any U.S. air effort, although the North would still have to take heavy punishment.

Had the men in Hanoi adhered to this assessment, rather than losing confidence and switching strategy, the year 1965 might well have been the year of Communist victory.

However, by mid-March 1965, with the landing of 3,500 U.S. Marines to defend Da Nang air base, the ever-cautious Giap began to hedge his bets. He did not press for an all-out effort to win the war before the Americans were in South Vietnam in force, although he had already started moving regiments of the North Vietnamese Army (People's Army of Vietnam or PAVN) south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in 1964. Instead, he spent the first six months of 1965 in what, in effect, was a holding operation. His calculation was that he faced a new war against a new

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enemy that required new tactics and a readapted grand strategy. This decision, coupled with the psychological lift given to Saigon by the American intervention, served to pull the South Vietnamese out of the jaws of defeat.

The actual onset of the sustained U.S. bombing of the North, despite confident-sounding Communist public pronouncements, engendered enormous apprehension in Hanoi. The French, during the 1945–54 Indochina War, had been able to employ only a feeble air arm (some 100 combat aircraft); the Americans had more than 1,000 fighter-bombers available, plus the B-52 bomber with its 30-ton bomb-load.

Yet the American bombing efforts during 1965–68 were (by Washington's orders) sharply delimited, confined mostly to roads, bridges, power plants, barracks, supply dumps. The B-52s were not used. Hanoi was off-limits. So were North Vietnam's major Mig fighter bases, such as Phuc Yen (until 1967), and the key port facilities of Haiphong.

Among the North Vietnamese leaders the belief grew, and then became entrenched, that, aided by increasingly sophisticated Soviet-provided missiles and other weaponry, the North was absorbing the *worst* punishment that the United States could deliver. This view persisted until the shock of Richard Nixon's all-out "Christmas bombing" campaign of 1972, which was followed by the Paris peace agreement of January 1973.\*

As 1965 wore on, and American ground strength grew in the South, Giap decided (despite contrary advice from some Politburo colleagues) to meet the United States head-on. No longer applicable, he later wrote, were the techniques which had worked for the Communists against the French (and the ARVN): the regimental ambush, the entrapment of mobile units, the isolation and destruction of enemy garrisons, the slow, steady gain of territory and population. The Americans had enormous fire-

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\*In my view, this sequence suggests that a similar "all-out" bombing effort in early 1965 could well have prompted Hanoi's leaders to negotiate an agreement, then sought by Lyndon Johnson, providing for a cease-fire and mutual withdrawal of Northern forces and U.S. troops from South Vietnam. Such an accord, of course, would not have ended Hanoi's quest for unification; it would simply have brought a change in tactics and a new timetable.

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power (fighter-bombers, artillery, helicopter gunships), superb communications, and the ability, lacked by the road-bound French, to move troops rapidly by helicopter and air transport.

For his part, Giap had some long-term advantages. Geography, the implications of which were usually overlooked by American pundits and politicians, was on his side. The Saigon government (and the newly arrived Americans) had more than 600 miles of open border to protect and more than 16 million people to defend in an area the size of Washington state, with 44 provincial capitals, 241 district towns, and upwards of 15,000 hamlets that were all vulnerable to terrorism and guerrilla attack. Jungle and mountains covered more than half the country.

### **Just Us Southerners**

In such terrain, the Viet Cong had long enjoyed secure bases and rest areas: These in turn were linked to "sanctuaries" in southern Laos and eastern Cambodia, tied to the Ho Chi Minh Trail transit routes from the North. According to recent North Vietnamese accounts, it took cadres and military replacements six months to traverse the trail when it was first organized in 1959; its roadnet was steadily improved, despite U.S. bombing, after 1965 and soon accommodated well-organized truck traffic and, by 1972, tanks. The trail was the key to Giap's war.

To support Communist forces in the Mekong Delta and north of Saigon, Hanoi also secured (in 1966) secret permission from Prince Norodom Sihanouk of "neutral" Cambodia to use Sihanoukville (now Kompong Som) as a supply port.

Lastly, the North ("the Great Rear") was bombed but not blockaded or invaded. Soviet freighters unloaded SAM missiles, tanks, Moltava trucks, and artillery at Haiphong. From neighboring China came light weapons, ammunition, and rice. U.S. air strikes could slow but not halt these goods—and North Vietnamese reinforcements—on their way to the battlefield.

The ruling Lao Dong (Workers') Party also had strong human assets. A decade after victory over the French, Ho Chi Minh, Giap, Party Secretary Le Duan, Premier Pham Van Dong, and their colleagues commanded a Spartan, highly organized party, purged of dissenters, led by a generation of cadres tested in war, and convinced that "unification" of North and South under Hanoi's rule was a "golden" objective worthy of any sacrifice.

There were periods in the North of low morale and discontent, of malingering and petty corruption, as party documents made clear. But the iron grip of the party cadres and the society's own strong discipline and ethnocentrism sustained the war



### THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE

By Third World standards, the easygoing Saigon government of 1954–75 was as efficient as most, and far less repressive than many, notably the ruthless regime in Hanoi. Given a peaceful post-colonial decade or two, and some good leadership, the Republic of Vietnam might have developed into a fairly prosperous, stable nation like, say, Malaysia or Thailand.



But there was no peace. And neither Ngo Dinh Diem, the South's first Chief of State (1954–63), nor its last, Nguyen Van Thieu (1965–75), was a bold leader. Each suffered from personal insecurity, caution, and remoteness from ordinary South Vietnamese. Neither was able—or willing—to build broad-based political support outside the French-educated urban middle class. As a result, Army generals, themselves divided by rivalries, were the arbiters of South Vietnam's turbulent politics.

To stay in power, Thieu, himself a general, felt compelled to pick senior commanders on the basis of loyalty first, honesty and competence second. As one ARVN officer told the *New York Times* in 1975, "The generals amassed riches for their families, but the soldiers got nothing and saw no moral sanction in their leadership." In one year (1966), more than one-fifth of ARVN's soldiers deserted—not to the Viet Cong but to go home.

Land reform did not come until 1970. The war ravaged entire districts, notably in Quang Ngai and Hau Nghia provinces; overall, 1.2

effort, allowing General Giap repeatedly to suffer enormous losses (perhaps 900,000 dead by 1973), then to rebuild PAVN units for yet another battle. "The North Vietnamese," observed Laos's French-educated Premier Souvanna Phouma in 1967, "are the Prussians of Southeast Asia."

What drew most attention in Washington during 1961–65 were the guerrillas in the South, whose early local cadres were Viet Minh veterans of the French war. One of the myths fostered by Hanoi and accepted by many Westerners was that the National Liberation Front (NLF), or Viet Cong, was an independent creation set up by Southerners in 1960 to combat the injustices of the Diem regime and allied to, but independent of, Hanoi.

In fact, Hanoi decided in May 1959 at the 15th Party Plenum to reunify the North and the South by force. The 559 Unit was established to develop the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam through "neutral" Laos and Cambodia for southbound political and military cadres; by Hanoi's own recent account, some

million refugees were generated between late 1965 and mid-1967 alone. And each year, the Viet Cong kidnapped or assassinated thousands of village chiefs, schoolteachers, relief workers.

Yet, despite official corruption, lackluster leadership, and severe hardships, the South Vietnamese people never went over en masse to the revolution. No ARVN unit defected to the foe. According to political scientist Samuel Popkin, the Communists' costly 1968 Tet Offensive (and their massacre of civilians in occupied Hue) discredited two Viet Cong propaganda themes: inevitable victory and a happy future under Communist rule. After Tet, Saigon belatedly organized more than two million civilians into local armed self-defense groups. By war's end, more than 220,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and militiamen had died to defend their country.

The massive U.S. presence from 1965 to 1973 both helped and hindered the South Vietnamese. American troops, advisers, and firepower offset Hanoi's advantages and staved off defeat—but encouraged Saigon's psychological dependence on the Yanks. Washington decried Saigon's shortcomings but did not insist on solutions. The unilateral withdrawal of their powerful but war-weary ally in 1973—and later U.S. aid cuts—demoralized Thieu, his troops, and his best commanders. Left alone to face the Northerners, the South was fated to succumb.

"We small nations can end up losing high stakes [by counting on U.S. pledges of support]," observed Bui Diem, former Ambassador to Washington, on the 10th anniversary of the Paris peace accords. "You can . . . say 'Well, it is an unhappy chapter [in] American history.' But that is not the same . . . for the South Vietnamese."

20,000 men moved South during the first few years to help organize and lead the Viet Cong insurgency.

The NLF changed after Diem's overthrow in 1963. Northerners took over the organization with unification under *Hanoi's* leadership as the main aim. The NLF's public face was Southern; it issued its own communiqués, had its own representatives abroad. Hanoi always refused to admit it had troops in the South. But, remembering the 1954 division of Vietnam, Hanoi kept a tight leash on the NLF. Northerners, or northern-trained Southerners, directed most major military operations and held the key political party posts. (Hanoi kept similar control over the Communist Pathet Lao forces in Laos.)

Reviving the old Viet Minh techniques—propaganda, indoctrination, "selective terrorism," and tight organization—drew rural recruits and cowed local government officials. With its networks of agents, tax collectors, and porters, the Viet Cong was stronger in some provinces (usually those where the Viet

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Minh had been active during 1945–54) than in others. It was unsuccessful in enlisting significant support from dissident Buddhist factions, urban workers, the ethnic Chinese or the *montagnard* (hill) tribesmen. Even so, thanks to the administrative chaos that followed Diem's ouster, the NLF was able to make steady progress, recruiting and sustaining 85,000 well-armed regulars and 115,000 paramilitary local troops by 1966.

Giap used all these assets as he experimented with PAVN thrusts against U.S. units in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965 and below the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) against the Marines in 1966–67, with a view toward devising a winning strategy. At the same time, he used Viet Cong battalions to fight allied forays into contested areas and to raid allied outposts and district towns. These tactics variously eased or interrupted the growing allied pressures against the elusive local Viet Cong and inflicted losses, but they did not end the steady attrition of the guerrillas. Nor did Giap, taking heavy casualties, succeed in overrunning a U.S. defensive position or destroying a major U.S. unit.

#### America As Domino

By mid-1967, Giap had completed his strategic experimentation. He then launched the most important campaign of the war, the winter-spring campaign of 1967–68. Giap combined "coordinated fighting methods"—set piece battles with his main force regiments, usually on battlefields close to his bases in Cambodia or Laos—with "independent fighting methods"—simultaneous small-scale attacks all over the country—to launch a "continuous comprehensive offensive." After his usual lengthy build-up of men and supplies, he combined these assaults with a major political effort. The chief aim was to collapse the Saigon regime's administrative apparatus and its 650,000-man armed forces, thereby undermining the whole U.S. effort.

The climax neared as two PAVN divisions lay siege to the U.S. Marines' outpost at Khe Sanh, near Laos. Then, in what is now called the 1968 Tet (or lunar new year) Offensive, Saigon, Hue, and 100 other places were hit on January 30–31. Some 84,000 troops, mostly in Viet Cong units, were committed in the first assaults. Agents were sent to urban areas to promote a "general uprising" by the inhabitants against the Thieu regime.

Just as the allies underestimated Giap's boldness, so Giap overestimated the Saigon government's weaknesses and the popularity of the Viet Cong; his intelligence agents may have erroneously equated urban complaints against the Thieu regime and the Americans with pro-Viet Cong "revolutionary" senti-

ment. In any event, no general uprising occurred. ARVN fought back. Khe Sanh held. Even as Washington was shaken, the Saigon regime, buttressed by U.S. aid and advisers, coped with one million new refugees and muddled through. And in and around the cities, the Viet Cong lost heavily, exposed for the first time to the full weight of allied firepower. Truong Nhu Tang, one of the NLF's founders now in exile, observed: "The truth was that Tet cost us half of our forces. Our losses were so immense that we were simply unable to replace them with new recruits."\*

This military failure was followed up by a weaker "second wave" attack in May, coinciding with the onset of peace talks in Paris. North Vietnamese regulars and local Viet Cong battalions struck at Saigon and several other points. This effort failed, too, although Saigon was penetrated, with heavy urban damage.

By mid-1968, Giap, a better logistician than tactician, was back on the defensive. Against the strong allied effort to take territory and population away from the now-weakened Viet Cong, he made few countermoves. He did on occasion, during 1969-71, launch what the allies called "high points"—simultaneous attacks by sappers and rocket teams against several dozen bases and towns—but these employed mostly local forces. He launched a few thrusts in border areas. But he usually kept his big units in base camps in, or close to, eastern Laos and Cambodia, as his engineers kept developing the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

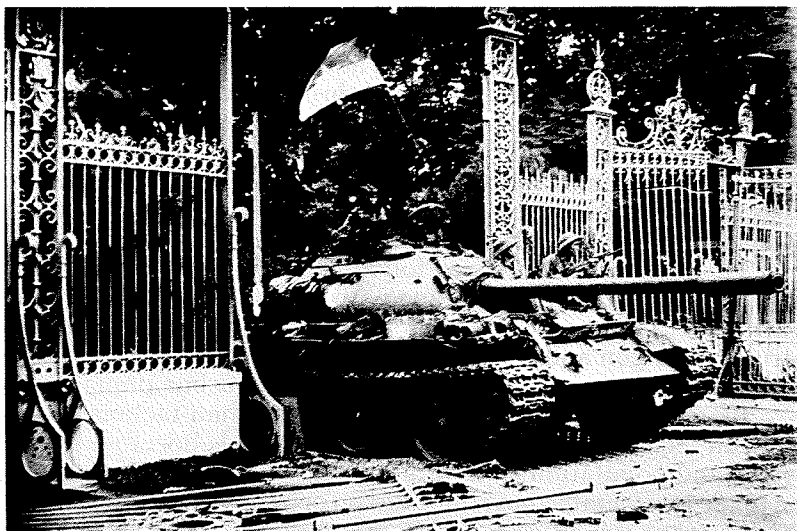
He did not abandon the Viet Cong; as they slowly gave ground, he sent in North Vietnamese "fillers" to sustain their local battalions, and tried to keep the supply lines open. Even so, by U.S. estimates, the Viet Cong guerrilla strength dropped by 50 percent between 1968 and 1972.† In some districts, the surviving Viet Cong simply stopped fighting.

However, by mid-1969, even as the Communists lost ground in the South, from Hanoi's point of view, the "contradictions" in the enemy camp promised new gains. Thanks to U.S. domestic political pressures, Hanoi had already achieved two major concessions, gratis: first, Lyndon Johnson's pre-Election Day total halt to the bombing of the North in 1968 and a "cap" on U.S. troop strength (549,500) in the South; then, Richard Nixon's mid-1969 decision to start withdrawing U.S. troops unilaterally from Indochina. If American antiwar sentiment had been under-

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\**The New York Review of Books*, Oct. 21, 1982.

† Source: U.S. Army Center of Military History. Few Viet Cong "hard-core" cadres surrendered or rallied to the Saigon side. However, even before Tet 1968, thousands of Viet Cong wearied of life in the bush, on short rations, far from home. In 1967 alone, there were some 27,000 *chieu hoi* (ralliers), mostly rank-and-file guerrillas, porters, and the like.



*A Soviet-built PAVN T-54 tank flying a Viet Cong flag crashes through the presidential palace gates in Saigon on April 30, 1975.*

estimated before Tet, it became an important part of Hanoi's political *dau tranh*\* strategy during 1969–72. At the Paris peace talks initiated by LBJ, Hanoi's Le Duc Tho stalled for time; the North Vietnamese periodically hinted in public of possible "breakthroughs," thus stirring new clamor in Washington, then held firm in secret talks with Henry Kissinger.†

By early 1972, after mauling an ill-fated ARVN thrust against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos a year earlier and surviving the allies' 1970 Cambodia incursion, General Giap was ready to return in force to the South. He would launch not a "people's war" but a conventional assault. He sought to re-establish his regular units back inside the South, upset Richard

\* *Dau tranh* was a strategic concept meaning "struggle," with both military and political emphases. See Douglas Pike, *War, Peace, and the Viet Cong*, MIT, 1969.

† In a February 1969 interview, Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci said to Giap: "General, the Americans also say that you have lost half a million [men]." Giap replied: "The exact number." Fallaci: "Exact?" Giap: "Exact." Assigning responsibility for the failed 1968 Tet Offensive to the NLF, Giap went on to say that the Americans would lose eventually: "The Americans will be defeated in time, by getting tired. And in order to tire them, we have to go on, to last . . . for a long time. That's what we've always done." Fallaci, *Interview with History*, Liveright, 1976, pp. 82–84.

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Nixon's "Vietnamization," and lend succor to the remaining Viet Cong guerrillas. Giap and the Politburo felt that Nixon's rapprochement with Beijing and détente with Moscow threatened to isolate the North Vietnamese over the long term. Hanoi's leaders, thinking of Tet 1968, believed that a spectacular success during a U.S. election year amid pervasive antiwar sentiment would force Nixon to agree to the replacement of the Thieu regime by a pro-Communist coalition in Saigon.

### A Decent Interval

Giap failed to anticipate the resilience of the South Vietnamese, the vigor of the U.S. response, and the lukewarm backing of Hanoi's allies, China and the Soviet Union. Neither Mao nor Brezhnev cancelled his scheduled summit with Nixon.

Seeking once again to shatter the South Vietnamese, Giap massed his new Soviet-supplied tanks and artillery at three points: the DMZ, the Central Highlands near Kontum, and An Loc north of Saigon. For the first time, he committed 14 regular North Vietnamese divisions, virtually his entire army, to battle in the South. The initial gains were considerable: The green Third ARVN Division broke at Quang Tri, and other ARVN units retreated. But nowhere did Giap deploy enough forces to score a breakthrough. American C-130 transports shifted ARVN's paratroops and marines from crisis to crisis. Although most of the 95,000 U.S. troops still "in-country" eschewed combat, American advisers coordinated firepower, helicopter support, and logistics. And Nixon quickly reinforced U.S. air power and naval gunfire in the South, resumed bombing the North, and mined the supply port of Haiphong. General Creighton Abrams was able to use 129 B-52s to strike hard whenever the North Vietnamese regiments massed to attack. As at Tet 1968, Giap's forces were unable to exploit initial gains; once again the ARVN, despite its heaviest casualties of the war, and the Regional and Popular Forces militia muddled through. This time, the Viet Cong played almost no military role. The Easter Offensive stalled by June, then receded slightly, leaving behind prisoners and scores of wrecked tanks.

At a price of an estimated 100,000 dead, Giap did score some significant gains. His PAVN regulars were back inside the South and, here and there, in good position to threaten ARVN units, or to ease the pressure on surviving local Viet Cong guerrillas. As he began to rebuild his decimated forces, Giap was well positioned for another drive, and his foe, as events would show, was badly overextended.

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But to his colleagues in Hanoi, the Easter Offensive did not count as a glittering success. The decision was made to embrace a "talk-fight" strategy, resuming the Paris peace negotiations, putting reliance on war-weariness in the United States and on Nixon's quest for a quick ending.

When Hanoi obstructed the talks in November and took advantage of a U.S. bombing halt to rebuild its defenses (and resupply its troops in the South), Nixon unleashed the Navy and Air Force and for the first time sent B-52s over Hanoi (and Haiphong). During a 12-day campaign (interrupted by a Christmas cease-fire), the U.S. bombers left the North Vietnamese capital largely unscathed but smashed up both air defenses and transport, leaving North Vietnam open to further attack. A peace agreement was signed in Paris on January 27, 1973.

In dealing with Henry Kissinger, Le Duc Tho succeeded in securing an American withdrawal, coupled with a continued North Vietnamese presence in the South and in Laos and Cambodia. Soon, Hanoi realized that Saigon could not count on further American support. PAVN commanders prepared for a final offensive in 1976. Their chief worry, the possible return of American B-52s, eased after Washington failed to react to the PAVN's seizure of Phuoc Long, a border province north of Saigon, in early 1975, in a clear violation of the Paris cease-fire accords. Even more surprising to the Politburo was the failure of ARVN, poorly deployed and badly led, without direct American support, to fight effectively, as they had in 1972.

Hanoi sped up its timetable. General Van Tien Dung's Great Spring Offensive, with Soviet artillery and tanks, began in March with a push through the Central Highlands; the ARVN defense turned into a rout. Saigon was captured on April 30, 1975. Thieu fled into exile, and the war was over. Hanoi quickly abandoned any pretense of autonomy for the Viet Cong. By 1976, the NLF was dissolved, and the South was part of the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Liberation brought tens of thousands of South Vietnamese, including former critics of the Thieu regime, into Communist "re-education camps," and eventually sent hundreds of thousands more escaping by sea—the "boat people." More than 425,000 Vietnamese are now in the United States. Their children speak English and attend local schools. In Washington, D.C., in Los Angeles, in San Francisco, Vietnamese names are cropping up with increasing frequency on lists of National Merit Scholars and high school valedictorians. Meanwhile, back home, General Giap's forces, supplied by the Soviets, are still at war, this time to prop up a friendly regime in Cambodia.

## LESSONS: A SOLDIER'S VIEW

*by Harry G. Summers, Jr.*

A story made the rounds of the Army during the closing days of the Vietnam War. When the Nixon administration took over in 1969, so the story goes, Pentagon officials fed all the data on North Vietnam and the United States into a computer: population, gross national product, manufacturing capacity, size of the armed forces, and the like. The computer was then asked: "When will we win?" It took only a moment to answer: "You won in 1964!"

From the American professional soldier's perspective, the most frustrating aspect of the Vietnam conflict is that the U.S. armed forces did everything they were supposed to do, winning every major battle of the war, yet North Vietnam, rather than the United States, triumphed in the end. How could U.S. troops have succeeded so well, but the war effort have failed so miserably?

Some historians, notably Herbert Y. Schandler, have blamed President Lyndon Baines Johnson's refusal to curtail his Great Society programs to meet the needs of wartime. That is only part of the answer. Even if Johnson had chosen between "guns and butter," Schandler himself observes, no amount of men and firepower could have won the war without a coherent White House war strategy.

Others, such as historian Russell F. Weigley, argue that America's failure was tactical, an attempt to apply conventional military doctrines to a "revolutionary" war. But the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces decimated the Viet Cong guerrillas after Hanoi's 1968 Tet Offensive, and the Communists emerged victorious only in the spring of 1975, after the Americans went home, when Hanoi launched a conventional armored assault upon the South.

Few Army officers who served in Vietnam accept the simplistic explanation that a collapse of national will, or a home-front "stab in the back" fostered by the New Left and the news media, made this country lose the war. Older officers tend to blame civilian leaders, notably Defense Secretary Robert S.



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McNamara, while younger men criticize senior generals, notably General William C. Westmoreland, the U.S. field commander.

The causes of U.S. failure, in my view, are more complicated. And they start at the top.

First of all, President Johnson made a conscious political decision not to mobilize the American people for war. This was a fundamental mistake. (Among other things, Johnson had forgotten that the attempt to fight a war in Korea in 1950–53 without a congressional declaration of war had helped to cripple the Truman Presidency.) This misjudgment of the nature of limited war was highlighted by McNamara, who was quoted as saying that Vietnam was “developing an ability in the United States to fight a limited war, to go to war without the necessity of arousing the public ire.”

Why was this approach adopted?

### Carrots and Sticks

Civilian limited-war theorists such as Robert Osgood and Thomas Schelling had (falsely) postulated that the existence of nuclear weapons had entirely changed the nature and conduct of warfare and that all past battlefield experiences were thus irrelevant. Political leaders, the academic theorists seemed to contend, should tightly control the conduct of a limited war, “fine-tuning” while ignoring public opinion and the demands of the fighting men if necessary. As defense analyst Stephen Peter Rosen observes, such arguments, widely echoed, helped to persuade the Vietnam-era generation of policy-makers—particularly McNamara, National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, and President Johnson himself—to think of limited war as an *instrument* of diplomacy, of bargaining with the enemy, rather than as a bitter struggle in which the nation invested blood and treasure to secure important goals.\*

Largely accepting this approach during the 1964–66 build-up in Vietnam, LBJ and his civilian advisers stressed the dispatch of “signals” to the enemy rather than military meas-

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\*“Vietnam and the American Theory of Limited War,” *International Security* 7, Fall 1982.

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*The Vietnam GI averaged 19 years of age compared with 26 in World War II. Two-thirds of the men killed in Indochina were 21 or younger.*

ures to win the war. They avoided seemingly risky strategic decisions that could have ended the war.

"I saw our bombs as my political resources for negotiating a peace," Johnson later explained to political scientist Doris Kearns. "On the one hand, our planes and our bombs could be used as carrots for the South, strengthening the morale of the South Vietnamese and pushing them to clean up their corrupt house, by demonstrating the depth of our commitment to the war. On the other hand, our bombs could be used as sticks against the North, pressuring North Vietnam to stop its aggression against the South."

Washington's overall defensive stance in Indochina surrendered the long-range initiative to the enemy and, inevitably, alienated the American public. In effect, Lyndon Johnson limited not only his objectives in the war, but the military and political means employed to attain them. Fearing Communist Chinese intervention,\* the President variously declared that he

\*But CIA estimates in 1965-67 belittled this possibility: Little love was lost between Hanoi and Beijing, and the Chinese would only enter the war if the U.S. invaded North Vietnam.

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would restrict the bombing to the southern portions of North Vietnam, that U.S. troops would never invade the North, and that the United States would under no circumstances use nuclear weapons. He forbade U.S. ground commanders to interfere with crucial Communist base areas and reinforcement routes in neighboring Laos and Cambodia; in short, he chose to treat South Vietnam as an "island."

Johnson did not apply political pressure upon the Soviet Union to stop its materiel support of North Vietnam, without which the war would have soon ended. His successor, Richard Nixon, took firm action during Hanoi's 1972 Easter Offensive, sharply increasing the bombing against the North and mining Haiphong harbor. But he refused to take such decisive steps in 1969 to end the war, partly because he feared such bold action would endanger the budding U.S. rapprochement with China and détente with the Soviet Union. (He secretly bombed Hanoi's bases in Cambodia instead.)

#### **Don't Alarm the Home Folks**

In sum, the civilian policy-makers failed to understand what most ordinary Americans know in their bones: *War*, whether limited or not, imposes a unique national effort. It has its own imperatives, its own dynamic. It requires the undivided attention and dedication of the President, the Congress, and the citizenry. The President, in particular, has the duty to define the aims of the war, to fix a military strategy for success, and to clarify for the American people why they and their sons should be willing to make major sacrifices.

As Dean Rusk stated in 1976, "We never made any effort to create a war psychology in the United States during the Vietnam affair. We didn't have military parades through cities. . . . We tried to do in cold blood perhaps what can only be done in hot blood, when sacrifices of this order are involved."

Unlike North Vietnam, the United States never focused its full attention on the war. President Johnson believed that destiny had chosen him to transform America through his Great Society programs, and that the country could simultaneously afford guns and butter. "I knew from the start," Johnson confided to Kearns in 1970 about the early weeks of 1965, "that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs. All my hopes to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. . . . I was de-

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terminated to be a leader of war *and* a leader of peace.”

In addition to refusing to cut back his domestic programs as the war began, the President failed to seek a congressional declaration of war against North Vietnam, to call up the reserves, or to ask for a tax increase until 1967.\*

The Johnson administration also sought to disguise the cost and impact of the Vietnam effort by engaging in a slow and incremental build-up of the air war and U.S. combat forces. Demonstrating strength and determination to the enemy—without alarming the home folks—became the primary aim of Washington’s early policy in Vietnam.

By increasing air sorties over the North from 55,000 in 1965 to 148,000 in 1966, for instance, U.S. policy-makers entertained few illusions about turning the tide: In 1966, the bombing cost the United States \$9.60 for every \$1 of damage inflicted upon the enemy, to say nothing of American pilots lost in action. Rather, they thought the growing air effort would convey the strength of the U.S. commitment to South Vietnam.

Similarly, William Bundy, then Assistant Secretary of State, favored sending U.S. troops to the northern provinces of South Vietnam in January 1965 because “it would have a real stiffening effect in Saigon, and a strong signal effect to Hanoi.” But gradualism in the air and on the ground proved poor psycho-strategy. It was also poor politics: Congress and the public never mobilized for war.

### Johnson’s War

The Vietnam War made clear that Congress should declare war whenever large numbers of U.S. troops engage in sustained combat abroad. As General Westmoreland later wrote, “President Johnson . . . should have forced the Congress to face its constitutional responsibility for waging war.” Following Communist attacks against U.S. bases (at Pleiku, in February 1965), Johnson probably could have obtained a congressional declaration of war against North Vietnam, thereby slowing the rise of later opposition from Congress. And if Johnson had failed to win a congressional mandate, he at least would not have felt compelled by fears of right-wing criticism to commit U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam’s defense. In both cases, the country would have shared in the debate and in the decision.

By failing to bring the public and the Congress into the war effort, Johnson drove a wedge between the Army and large seg-

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\*Truman did not ask for a declaration of war against North Korea in 1950, but he did mobilize reserves, seek price controls, ask for tax increases, and curb domestic programs.

### THE VIETNAM VETERAN

"There is something special about Vietnam veterans," antiwar psychologist Robert Jay Lifton wrote in *Home from the War* (1973). "Everyone who has contact with them seems to agree that they are different from veterans of other wars." U.S. intervention in South Vietnam, Lifton suggested, had produced a deeply troubled Lost Generation. On television and in the movies (*Coming Home*, *The Deer Hunter*) of the 1970s, the Vietnam GI was regularly portrayed as either victim or psychopath—at war with himself and society. In effect, such stereotypes helped to make the veteran a scapegoat for an unpopular war.

The available facts, drawn from Veterans Administration data and other surveys, supply a different portrait.

Of the 8,744,000 personnel on active duty during the "Vietnam era" (August 5, 1964, to January 27, 1973), 3,403,000 served in the Southeast Asia theater. Roughly 2,594,000 of that number served in South Vietnam; perhaps 40 to 60 percent of them fought in combat, provided close combat support, or were frequently exposed to hostile action.

How well did the U.S. combat soldier and Marine perform during their one-year tours? Most analyses support the conclusion that American officers and men learned fast and fought well against a tenacious, often elusive foe during the 1965–68 period preceding President Nixon's 1969 decision to begin to withdraw. Thereafter, discipline eroded. Recorded "fraggings"—assaults by troops upon officers with intent to kill, to injure, or to intimidate—rose from 96 in 1969 to 222 in 1971. Drug abuse reached epidemic proportions; in 1971, 28.5 percent of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam admitted to using narcotics such as heroin and opium. Worldwide Army desertion rates rose from 14.7 per thousand in Fiscal Year (FY) 1966 to 73.5 per thousand in FY 1971.

But U.S. Army desertion rates during World War II were not dissimilar (63 per thousand in 1944). Indeed, most desertions by those who served in Indochina took place *after* they came home and were seldom related to opposition to the war; drugs and insubordination were a worldwide Army phenomenon. Ninety-seven percent of Vietnam-era veterans earned honorable discharges.

The "psychopath" image was equally far-fetched. Despite the war's peculiar strains, the rate of psychological breakdowns ("combat fatigue") among servicemen in Vietnam was below those of Korea and World War II. Yet American servicemen suffered permanently disabling wounds at a far greater rate in Vietnam than in earlier wars—300 percent higher than in World War II, 70 percent higher than in Korea—partly because of the Viet Cong's use of mines and booby traps. Improved medical care enabled more badly wounded men to survive.

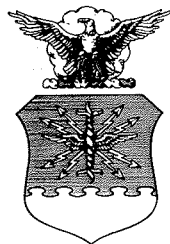
Despite the much-publicized March 1968 massacre of civilians at the hamlet of My Lai by an Army platoon led by Second Lieutenant William L. Calley, few U.S. infantrymen committed atrocities during the Vietnam War; prosecution of offenders tended to be vigorous and punishment harsh.

U.S. troops in Vietnam represented a much broader cross-section of America than is commonly supposed. For example, blacks accounted for no more than 12.5 percent of U.S. troops in Vietnam, and for 12.3 percent of the total number of Americans killed in the war at a time when blacks constituted 13.5 percent of the total U.S. male population of military age. Only 25 percent of U.S. personnel deployed in Vietnam consisted of *draftees*, versus 66 percent of military personnel during World War II.

The chief inequities were economic. Three-fourths of the troops in Vietnam came from lower-middle- or working-class families (and one-fourth came from families below the poverty level). Compared with their more affluent peers, individuals with lower-income backgrounds faced twice as great a likelihood of serving in the military. (Ivy League college graduates were conspicuously rare in Vietnam.)

Most Vietnam veterans have adapted successfully to civilian life; and 14 are now in Congress (two Senators, 12 Representatives). "Post-traumatic stress disorder," which has afflicted perhaps one-fourth of Vietnam veterans, appears to derive from the common perception among these men that they received a far less friendly reception upon their return than did veterans of other American wars. This perception is not inaccurate. For one thing, neither Lyndon Johnson nor Richard Nixon (nor the nation's college presidents) proposed a "GI Bill" for Vietnam veterans that matched the federal education benefits awarded to earlier generations of ex-servicemen.

Even so, statistics on suicide, divorce, crime, and drug use show that the Vietnam veteran compares favorably on these counts with his nonveteran peer. And in March 1982, despite the economic recession, more than 90 percent of Vietnam veterans held jobs.



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ments of the populace, notably intellectuals and college students. Even in the eyes of many moderate critics, the armed forces and the GIs in combat soon became the executors of "Johnson's war," rather than the instruments of the national will. For future Presidents, the War Powers Act of 1973, which bars presidential commitment of U.S. troops in combat beyond 90 days without congressional approval, partially solves this problem. But only partially. It does not necessarily force the President to mobilize the entire nation.

### Back to Basics

Thus, as the Constitution envisions, the civilian leadership—the President and the Congress—must make the basic decisions about going to war and define the war's objectives. For their part, the nation's senior military leaders have the obligation to devise the strategy necessary for success—as they did in World War II and Korea. During the Indochina conflict, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) did not play this role. Unlike all his wartime predecessors, the President allowed civilian strategists with little or no combat experience to take charge, as if their "cost-benefit" or "psychological" approaches were superior to the insights of the military commanders. One result: From June 1965 to June 1966, as U.S. troop strength in Vietnam grew from 60,000 to 268,000, the President met privately with his Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, only twice.

Seeking always to "keep their options open," the civilian leaders never determined the maximum number of troops that the United States *should* commit to Vietnam, let alone a plan to win the war. For example, despite strong reservations expressed by Under Secretary of State George W. Ball and National Security Adviser Bundy, McNamara persuaded Johnson in July 1965 to approve a build-up of U.S. troops in South Vietnam to more than 200,000 men without any assurance that that number would suffice to shore up the beleaguered Saigon regime, let alone to defeat the Communist forces decisively on the battlefield. At the Pentagon, during the Tet 1968 crisis, Defense Secretary Clark M. Clifford discovered that he "couldn't get hold of a plan to win the war. [When] I attempted to find out how long it would take to achieve our goal, there was no answer. When I asked how many more men it would take . . . no one could be certain."

Westmoreland, despairing of winning White House approval of the higher troop levels that he believed necessary to win the war, had received much the same impression in Wash-

ington in late 1967 when he proposed—and proclaimed—a strategy for Vietnamization. “The [Johnson] administration was totally noncommittal on it,” he later wrote. “They kind of nodded their heads and did not disagree.”

The Joint Chiefs, led by General Earle Wheeler, strongly questioned the White House’s approach in private, but Johnson (and Nixon) rarely consulted them directly. The Chiefs acquiesced in presidential mismanagement of the war, even allowing Johnson to set weekly bombing targets in North Vietnam; they hoped for better days. But the military leaders could have best served their country in early 1965 by dramatically protesting against the President’s policies. By quietly threatening to resign, for instance, the Chiefs might have forced the Commander-in-Chief to adopt a winning strategy in Indochina—notably, by cutting the Ho Chi Minh Trail and isolating the southern battlefield. Or, failing that, the JCS could have brought the dispute before the American people and spurred a national debate on the war *before* a major commitment put a half-million U.S. troops into battle *without* a strategy.\*

In any event, the military leaders should not have echoed Washington’s euphemisms—“kill ratio,” “neutralize,” “incur-sion”—to disguise the bloody realities of combat. General Fred Weyand argued in 1976 that as

military professionals we must speak out, we must counsel our political leaders and alert the American public that there is no such thing as a “splendid little war.” There is no such thing as a war fought on the cheap. War is death and destruction. The American way of war is particularly violent, deadly and dreadful. We believe in using “things”—artillery, bombs, massive firepower—in order to conserve our soldiers’ lives. The enemy, on the other hand, made up for his lack of “things” by expending men instead of machines, and he suffered enormous casualties. . . . The Army must make the price of involvement clear *before* we get involved, so that America can weigh the probable costs of involvement against the dangers of uninvolved . . . for there are worse things than war.

In the field, the military’s role is to destroy the enemy’s forces and its will to fight, even in an allegedly “revolutionary” conflict, as the North Vietnamese proved conclusively in their

\*LBJ worried about keeping the generals in line. Indeed, he once told Westmoreland, “General, I have a lot riding on you. . . . I hope you don’t pull a MacArthur on me.” Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, Doubleday, 1976, p. 159.





*In this 1969 cartoon for the New York Review of Books, David Levine savaged Richard Nixon—and his predecessors—for explaining U.S. policy in South Vietnam in terms of prior commitments.*

spring 1975 blitzkrieg. In my view, the U.S. Army should never have become so heavily engaged in “nation-building,” pacification, and, thus, local politics as it did in South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese Army and the Saigon government, perhaps with the aid of the U.S. embassy, could have conducted the struggle for the “hearts and minds” of the South Vietnamese people. In any case, this struggle, so heavily publicized by Washington, was *secondary*. As events made abundantly clear, the troops of the North Vietnamese Army, not the southerners of the Viet Cong, posed the primary threat to South Vietnam’s independence, and eliminating that danger should have been the chief concern of both the U.S. Army and the White House from the start.

Even as it alienated or confused Americans at home, the gradualist and almost timid manner in which the United States had waged the war surely eroded its diplomats’ credibility when talks began in Paris in 1968. The Americans and their allies could not conduct successful negotiations—successful in the sense of securing a withdrawal of Hanoi’s troops from the South with residual U.S. air power serving as a deterrent against fu-

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ture invasion from the North—from a position of weakness. No one could. President Johnson's nine unilateral U.S. cease-fires and 10 bombing halts during 1965–68 had only earned the enemy's contempt, as Hanoi's repeated cease-fire violations and accelerated transport of supplies over the Ho Chi Minh Trail during these episodes demonstrated.

And by announcing in June 1969 that the United States would begin withdrawing its troops without any quid pro quo from the enemy, President Nixon similarly signaled a lack of resolve to Hanoi that probably encouraged the enemy to stall the negotiating process, in the expectation of an eventual total American pullout. Predictably, "Vietnamization" proved an empty threat since no President could guarantee perpetual U.S. aid to the vulnerable South Vietnamese, let alone the re-entry of American naval and air power into the region in the event of renewed North Vietnamese aggression from Laos and Cambodia.

In war, negotiations with the adversary cannot be a *substitute* for a coherent military strategy. To Americans, weary of bloodshed, negotiations with North Vietnam seemed to promise an end to the war. But Hanoi's unwillingness in 1968–72 to reach a compromise with Saigon, rather than the presence of U.S. ground troops or Saigon's intransigence, posed the key obstacle to a peaceful settlement in South Vietnam. Always hoping that a "reasonable" (i.e., painless) settlement was possible, the Johnson and Nixon administrations sought "honorable" conditions for American extrication, which, in the end, amounted only to the release of Americans held prisoner by Hanoi and a "decent interval" for the South Vietnamese ally we left behind.

War may be too serious a matter to leave solely to military professionals, but it is also too serious a matter to leave only to civilian amateurs. Never again must the President commit American men to combat without first fully defining the nation's aims and then rallying Congress and the nation for war. Otherwise, the courageous Americans who fought and died in the defense of South Vietnam will truly have done so in vain.

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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### VIETNAM

As the *New York Times's* Fox Butterfield wrote after the Wilson Center's Vietnam history conference last January, "a small group of scholars, journalists, and military specialists . . . have started to look afresh at the war."

In so doing, examining new documentation, they have challenged many of the old claims of the "hawks" and, more notably, of the antiwar "doves" whose views largely prevailed in academe and book publishing and often gained media acceptance during and after the turmoil of the Vietnam years.

Perhaps the first apolitical "revisionist" study was *Tet!* (1971) by *Washington Post* veteran Don Oberdorfer, who concluded, as most historians do now, that the Communists' spectacular 1968 Tet Offensive was a defeat for Hanoi in South Vietnam, even as it demoralized political Washington. In *The Unmaking of a President* (1977), Herbert Schandler, a retired Army colonel and one of the authors of the *Pentagon Papers*, followed up with a scholarly, eye-opening dissection of Washington decision-making during the hectic February-March 1968 period. Another *Postman*, Peter Braestrup, analyzed press and TV performance during the Tet drama; he found that journalists had been overwhelmed by this *Big Story* (1977) and too hastily portrayed what turned out to be a Communist setback as a battlefield disaster for the allies.

A major contribution to understanding how the United States got into Vietnam came from Richard Betts (see p. 94) and Leslie Gelb, director of the *Pentagon Papers* project

and now a *New York Timesman* in Washington. In *The Irony of Vietnam* (1979), Betts and Gelb undercut one widespread notion that the press itself had fostered: that Lyndon Johnson secretly decided on massive escalation in Vietnam even as he seemed to promise the contrary during his 1964 presidential campaign. Working with newly released documents at the LBJ Library in Austin, political scientist Larry Berman followed up with a closer examination of LBJ's decisions and hesitations during the 1965 escalation in *Planning a Tragedy* (1982); he is now working on a sequel covering the 1966-68 period.

American hopes for a negotiated settlement only led to confusion, wrote political scientist Allan Goodman in *The Lost Peace* (1978), a history of U.S. peace "feelers" and peace talks with Hanoi. The North Vietnamese had told Washington from the outset, Goodman added, that there was really "nothing to negotiate"; victory, not the prewar status quo, was the North Vietnamese objective.

Relying partly on newly obtainable military files, Guenter Lewy, a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts, produced a controversial, data-packed study of *America in Vietnam* (1978). Even as he criticized U.S. tactics and described South Vietnam's long ordeal (including 300,000 civilian deaths), Lewy concluded that Americans did not wage an "immoral" or unusually destructive war in the South, or engage in "terror bombing" of the North, as alleged by the Left.

Memoirs aside, few U.S. military

men have dwelt, at book-length, on the lessons of the war. However, Colonel Harry Summers (see p. 125) broke the ice in 1981 with *On Strategy*, an attempt to prod his fellow officers (and civilian policy-makers) into re-reading the maxims of Clausewitz as they applied to the U.S. failure in Vietnam.

And a former critic of the war, *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, stirred up a storm in literary Manhattan by exhuming the wartime statements of the New Left and analyzing *Why We Were in Vietnam* (1982). It was not "immoral" to help the South Vietnamese defend themselves against Hanoi, he argued, but it was probably impossible, given the circumstances, to win.

None of these books is the last word. Much territory remains to be explored. Many complex issues need added investigation.

The further study of the conduct of the war (especially after 1968) has been limited by the slow—and slowing—rate of declassification of official U.S. documents, and the reticence of some major figures. Lyndon Johnson, Henry Kissinger, and Richard Nixon have done their memoirs. But none has been forthcoming from Dean Rusk or Robert S. McNamara (who, unlike Rusk, declines even to discuss Vietnam). Moreover,

no great enthusiasm has been shown by private foundations or universities for Vietnam studies using the sizable archival resources that now are open to scholars.

Even so, research is being done. Journalist Arnold Isaacs is writing *Without Honor*, a study of the fall of South Vietnam. Political scientist Timothy J. Lomperis will soon publish a critique of the oft-cited "revolutionary" aspects of Hanoi's war in the South, *Vietnam: The War Everyone Lost—and Won*. Editor Robert Manning is shepherding an illustrated multivolume history, *The Vietnam Experience*, for Boston Publishing Company. Newsman Neil Sheehan is finishing a biography of John Paul Vann, the archetypal U.S. adviser in Vietnam. Journalist Stanley Karnow is completing a fresh survey, *Vietnam, A History*.

Keeping track of such efforts—as well as of contemporary affairs—is Douglas Pike (see p. 114). His quarterly *Indochina Chronology* newsletter is available free by writing to Professor Pike, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

The armed services have employed by far the largest number of historians devoted to chronicling the Vietnam War, especially U.S. combat experience. The Army published a



series of monographs of uneven quality (on the Special Forces, riverine tactics, etc.) during the 1970s; its 16-volume official history of the war will only start appearing later in this decade, in the tradition of its massive, highly regarded accounts of World War II and Korea.

The Marine Corps has published three volumes of its war history (through 1966); the Air Force and Navy have moved more slowly. A "Select Bibliography of Department

of Defense Publications of the Southeast Asia Conflict" is available by writing LTC A. G. Traas, Histories Division, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C. 20314.

A lengthy essay on Vietnam books was published in *The Wilson Quarterly* ("Vietnam as History," Spring 1978), too early to include James Webb's *Fields of Fire* and several other first-rate combat novels. However, most of the books listed below were cited in that essay.

#### A SHORT VIETNAM BOOKLIST

*History, Memoirs, Journalism, Polemics, and Fiction*

Air War Study Group, Cornell Univ., **The Air War in Indochina** (Beacon, rev. ed., 1972); Michael Arlen, **Living Room War** (Viking, 1969).

Larry Berman, **Planning a Tragedy** (Norton, 1982); Douglas Blaufarb, **The Counter-Insurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance** (Free Press, 1977); Anthony T. Bouscaren, ed., **All Quiet on the Eastern Front: The Death of South Vietnam** (Devin-Adair, 1976); Richard Boyle, **The Flower of the Dragon: The Breakdown of the U.S. Army in Vietnam** (Ramparts, 1972); Peter Braestrup, **Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington** (Yale, rev. ed., 1983); Jack Broughton, **Thud Ridge** (Lippincott, 1969); C. D. Bryan, **Friendly Fire** (Putnam's, 1976); Josiah Bunting, **The Lionheads** (Braziller, 1972); Joseph L. Buttinger, **Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled** (Praeger, 1967), **Vietnam: The Unforgettable Tragedy** (Horizon, 1976).

Philip Caputo, **A Rumor of War** (Holt, 1977); Michael Charlton and Anthony Moncrieff, **Many Reasons Why: The American Involvement in Vietnam** (Hill & Wang, 1978); Charles Coe, **Young Man in Vietnam** (Four Winds Press, 1968); John L. Cook, **The Advisor** (Dorrance, 1973); Chester L. Cooper, **The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam** (Dodd, 1970).

William J. Duiker, **The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam** (Westview, 1981); Dennis J. Duncanson, **Government and Revolution in**

**Vietnam** (Oxford, 1968); Van Tien Dung, **Our Great Spring Victory** (Monthly Review, 1977).

Frank Callihan Elkins, **The Heart of a Man** (Norton, 1973); Gloria Emerson, **Winners and Losers** (Random, 1976).

Bernard Fall, **Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu** (Lippincott, 1966), **Street Without Joy: Insurgency in Indochina, 1946-63** (Stackpole, rev. ed., 1963), **The Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis** (Praeger, rev. ed., 1964); Frances FitzGerald, **Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam** (Little, Brown, 1972); Charles B. Flood, **The War of the Innocents** (McGraw-Hill, 1970).

Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts, **The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked** (Brookings, 1979); Allan E. Goodman, **The Lost Peace: America's Search for a Negotiated Settlement of the Vietnam War** (Hoover, 1978), **Politics in War: The Bases of Political Community in South Vietnam** (Harvard, 1973); Zalin Grant, **Survivors** (Norton, 1975); Sen. Mike Gravel, ed., **The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam** (Beacon, 1971).

David Halberstam, **The Best and the Brightest** (Random, 1972), **The Making of a Quagmire** (Random, 1965), **One Very Hot Day** (Houghton, 1967); P. Edward Haley, **Congress and the Fall of South Vietnam and Cambodia** (Assoc. Univ.

- Presses, 1982); Larry Heinemann, *Close Quarters* (Farrar, 1977); James B. Hendry, *The Small World of Khanh Hau* (Aldine, 1964); Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (Knopf, 1977); George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Wiley, 1979); Seymour Hersh, *My Lai 4: A Report on the Massacre and Its Aftermath* (Random, 1970); Gerald Hickey, *Village in Vietnam* (Yale, 1964); *Sons of the Mountains* (Yale, 1982); *Free in the Forest* (Yale, 1982); John G. Hubbell et al., *P.O.W.: A Definitive History of the American Prisoner of War Experience in Vietnam, 1964-1973* (Reader's Digest Press, 1976); Ken Hurwitz, *Marching Nowhere* (Norton, 1971).
- Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-69* (Holt, 1971); Ward S. Just, *To What End: Report from Vietnam* (Houghton, 1968).
- Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (Harper, 1976); Steven Kelman, *Push Comes to Shove: The Escalation of Student Protest* (Houghton, 1970); Douglas Kinard, *The War Managers* (Univ. Press of New Eng., 1977); Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Little, Brown, 1979); *Years of Upheaval* (Little, Brown, 1982); Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam* (Rand, 1972); David Kraslow and Stuart Loory, *The Secret Search for Peace in Vietnam* (Random, 1968); Nguyen Cao Ky, *Twenty Years and Twenty Days* (Stein & Day, 1976).
- Anthony Lake, ed., *The Vietnam Legacy: The War, American Society and the Future of American Foreign Policy* (N.Y. Univ., 1976); Daniel Lang, *Casualties of War* (McGraw-Hill, 1969); Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (Oxford, 1978); Don Luce and John Sommer, *Vietnam: The Unheard Voices* (Cornell, 1969).
- S.L.A. Marshall, *Ambush* (Cowles, 1969), *Bird* (Cowles, 1968), *The Fields of Bamboo* (Dial, 1971), *West to Cambodia* (Cowles, 1968); John T. McAlister, *Vietnam: The Origins of Revolution* (Knopf, 1969); John T. McAlister and Paul Mus, *The Vietnamese and Their Revolution* (Harper, 1970); Harvey Meyerson, *Vinh Long* (Houghton, 1970); John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (Wiley, 1973).
- Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (Grosset, 1978).
- Don Oberdorfer, *Tet!* (Doubleday, 1971); Tim O'Brien, *Going After Cacciato* (Delacorte, 1978); *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (Delacorte, 1973); Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Westview, 1979).
- D. R. Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective* (Presidio, 1978); Howard R. Penniman, *Elections in South Vietnam* (American Enterprise Institute, 1973); Douglas Pike, *History of Vietnamese Communism, 1925-1976* (Hoover, 1978), *The Vietcong Strategy of Terror* (U.S. Mission, Saigon, 1970), *War, Peace, and the Viet Cong* (MIT, 1969), *Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam* (MIT, 1966); Robert Pisor, *The End of the Line: The Siege of Khe Sanh* (Norton, 1982); Norman Podhoretz, *Why We Were in Vietnam* (Simon & Schuster, 1982); Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Univ. of Calif., 1979); Thomas Powers, *The War at Home: Vietnam and the American People, 1964-1968* (Grossman, 1973).
- Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Univ. of Calif., 1971); Walt Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History* (Macmillan, 1972).
- Harrison E. Salisbury, *Behind the Lines: Hanoi, December 23-January 7* (Harper, 1967); Al Santoli, *Everything We Had* (Random, 1981); Herbert Y. Schandler, *The Unmaking of a President: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam* (Princeton, 1977); Jonathan Schell, *The Military Half: An Account of Destruction in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin* (Knopf, 1968); Robert Shaplen, *The Lost Revolution: The U.S. in Vietnam, 1946-1966* (Harper, rev. ed., 1966), *The Road From War: Vietnam, 1965-1970* (Harper, 1970); U.S.G. Sharp and William C. Westmoreland, *Report on the War in Vietnam* (Government Printing Office, 1969); Susan Sheehan, *Ten Vietnamese* (Knopf, 1967); Frank Snepp, *Decent Interval: An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam* (Random, 1977); Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Presidio, 1982).
- W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzell, eds., *The Lessons of Vietnam* (Crane, Russak, 1977); Robert F. Turner, *Vietnamese Communism: Its Origins and Development* (Hoover, 1975).
- Sidney Verba et al., *Vietnam and the Silent Majority: The Dove's Guide* (Harper, 1970); Sandy Vogelgesang, *The Long Dark Night of the Soul: The American Intellectual Left and the Vietnam War* (Harper, 1974).
- James Webb, *Fields of Fire* (Prentice-Hall, 1978); F. J. West, *The Village* (Harper, 1972); William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Doubleday, 1976).

# CURRENT BOOKS

## FELLOWS' CHOICE

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

**AKÉ: The Years of  
Childhood**

by Wole Soyinka  
Random, 1982  
230 pp. \$14.95

In well over a dozen books—as a playwright, poet, novelist, and essayist—the Nigerian Wole Soyinka has decisively proved himself Africa's most demanding, and possibly most accomplished, creative thinker. But those readers who may have recoiled at the complexities of his earlier works will find in this autobiographical volume the easy, graceful, practiced glide of the homing pigeon. They

will judge it, with good reason, the best book that Soyinka has written.

At least two risks attend the writing of a memoir of childhood. One is to comment on the past with such superior wisdom (and, indeed, condescension) as to deny innocence its rude beauty—to pretend, in other words, the child had nothing to do with the shaping of the man. The other is to exaggerate the mystique of the unfamiliar ideas with which the child groped and of the equally overpowering adults before whom he grew, thus inflating the chronicle into a romantic fantasy.

Soyinka's achievement is to have successfully straddled these two territories of risk. His world as a child—a bicultural world where Western values compete with native Yoruba customs and superstitions—is very much an unfamiliar one, full of failed heroes with amulet-covered bodies, man-eating chiefs who embroil themselves in various follies, and hypocritical colonial headmasters. But that world is confronted by a child who so continually questions its mysteries that they are eventually exposed as pretenses. The child is accurately revealed for what he is: an intellectual in the making.

Soyinka's account of his first 11 years in the western Nigerian town of Abeokuta (Aké was his specific neighborhood) begs comparison with another classic of African childhood, Camara Laye's *The African Child* (first French edition, 1953). Laye, a Mandingo from Guinea, was the son of a village blacksmith, credited, as were all smiths in Mandingo society, with deep spiritual powers. So besides growing up amidst the arcane wisdom of the traditional society, Laye encountered mystery even in objects and creatures that were part of the natural environment. Soyinka, though not unaffected by traditional superstitions, was still very much the son of an argumentative, British-educated schoolmaster; thus, before the eyes of the growing child, everything stood the risk of being probed and reduced.

Consider how each of these two young artists-in-the-making responded to snakes. The one that crawled confidently into Laye's household or into his father's workshop was calmly introduced to the frightened

child as an ancestral spirit. The snake that Soyinka encountered on a relative's farm received no such greeting: It was instantly stoned and slated for dinner. Even during Soyinka's childhood, pragmatism and secular intelligence prevailed over traditional religion, just as they do in his mature fiction, where gods of the Yoruba pantheon are led out of their hallowed niches in cult shrines and set squarely in the company of fumbling men—for literary and not pious purposes.

In *Aké*, Soyinka comes through far less as a romancer than as a sweet remembrancer. His picture of the 1930s and '40s is re-created with charming vividness: sleeping children ("veteran warriors of sleep") fighting infernal battles for mat space on the floor; Hitler as a bogey man haunting the village as well as the nearby sea; the radical Kuti family championing a feminist revolt against the combined tyranny of the Alaké (the paramount chief) and the British colonial administration; the dawning of nationalist politics in the figures of Oged Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Perhaps the best thing about this book is the language. Soyinka is renowned for his skillful—sometimes too skillful—manipulation of English, and his descriptions here of everything from food to manners to smells bear witness to long practice at the trade: "Even the least pleasant smell, such as the faintly nauseating smell of a smashed bedbug, tinged with the whiff of camphor that should have prevented its appearance in the first place was part of Aké's extended persona; it was of the same order as the nocturnal rumblings of Sorowanke, the madwoman who lived by the mango tree, talking in her sleep." But the real stunner here is Soyinka's frequent use of Yoruba. Western-educated Nigerians often say that, during a truly down-home conversation in an indigenous language or even pidgin, correct English is likely to spoil the fun. *Aké* shows Soyinka "going home" in a way he has never done before. I salute the genius and the man, and look forward to the inevitable sequel.

—Isidore Okpewho

**HANDBOOK OF NORTH  
AMERICAN INDIANS,  
Volume 10, Southwest**  
edited by Alfonso Ortiz  
Smithsonian, 1983  
868 pp. \$25

If anyone ever runs a contest to pick the most misleading book title, then the *Handbook of North American Indians* will be one of the top contenders: Each volume is the size of a respectable dictionary, and when the series is complete, there will be 20 volumes. Together they will give an extraordinarily full and lively account of the native Americans, from the time that man first set foot on this continent down to the last quarter of this century.

The technical problems involved in a work of this scope are awesome. Transcribing words (in California alone, for example, well over 60 Indian languages were spoken), ascertaining tribal boundaries and settlement sites (particularly when the tribe is long extinct or has long since left the area), tracking down illustrations (sometimes misidentified items from European archives or museums)—all these require exact scholarship of



the first order and unrelenting editorial supervision.

The series falls into two parts: Ten volumes deal with particular regions, while the other 10 deal with particular topics, including languages, technology, and the history of Indian-white relations. So far, all the volumes to appear (this is the fifth, despite its number) have been regional ones, covering California, the Northeast, the Subarctic, and the Southwest (two volumes). Each of these begins with sections on the archaeology, history, and languages of the region, then goes on to deal with the individual tribes.

For the overall quality of these volumes, much of the credit must go to the general editor of the series, William Sturtevant of the Smithsonian Institution. He has succeeded in making the *Handbook* all things to all readers. The general plan and indexing allow the series to serve as an encyclopedia, yet each volume can be read alone. And while the *Handbook* is the indispensable starting point for the specialist, the whole series has been written with the layman in mind. When completed, the *Handbook* will stand as one of the glories of 20th-century American scholarship.

—Frank H. Stewart

**NONE OF THE ABOVE:  
Why Presidents Fail—And  
What Can Be Done About It**

by Robert Shogan  
New American Library,  
1982  
312 pp. \$15.95

**THE HIDDEN-HAND  
PRESIDENCY: Eisenhower  
As Leader**

by Fred I. Greenstein  
Basic, 1982  
286 pp. \$16.95

At first glance, observers of the modern Presidency might find these books pointing in different directions. A closer look reveals otherwise.

Robert Shogan, a *Los Angeles Times* correspondent, traces the growing enfeeblement of the Presidency from John Kennedy's brief tenure through Ronald Reagan's—a "twenty-year record of frustrations and failure" despite changing personalities, parties, and ideologies. Each Chief Executive and his men took power with unquenchable optimism, blaming unresolved national problems on their predecessors. None finished two full terms; all left in defeat (Kennedy, in death); each one, from LBJ to Nixon to Ford to Carter, expressed frustration toward the end.

Shogan sees this as a strong indication that something is basically wrong with the system, not with the individuals (he might have easily said both), and finds "the heart of the problem [is] a gap between politics and government" caused by "constitutional impediments to a healthy development of political parties."

Unwilling to leave his reader in despair after a nine-chapter recital of White House ineffectiveness, he extracts a set of remedies from the abundant recent literature on party reform. His recipe: Elect President and Congress together; add at-large seats to Congress; establish coordinating party councils made of Chief Executive, congressional leaders, and others; nominate Presidents by party caucuses of elected officials; provide for British-

style national elections when the President no longer has the confidence of Congress.

These are drastic measures by the standards of American political incrementalism, amounting to repudiation of the separation of powers as engineered by the Founding Fathers. But Shogan's proposals have all been made before, and discussing them as Reagan's Presidency wears on seems timely, not audacious. In assuming that the roots of our difficulties are constitutional and not embedded in our society, he operates from a much less radical position than his call for constitutional reform might suggest.

Does it contradict Shogan's interpretation to write, as does Greenstein, a Princeton political scientist, that Dwight Eisenhower was a successful leader, and not so long ago?

Greenstein's book completes a revisionist trend in Eisenhower studies which has been under way for some time. He draws upon both new internal evidence (diaries, interviews with Ike's associates) and our contemporary respect for any government that controls inflation and avoids war. The result is the portrait of an Eisenhower who was energetic, politically astute, enormously popular, and, by contrast with the six presidents who followed him, uncommonly effective.

Greenstein discerns a special pattern in Ike's leadership. The "hidden-hand style," as he calls it, was characterized by the use of words to obfuscate and buy time to maneuver, of subordinates to deflect criticism, of concealed rather than open political intervention. Greenstein does not argue that Ike's methods were invariably successful, but he spends most of his time describing what he thinks were Ike's successful or best-possible solutions, making the somewhat strained argument that his "handling" of Joe McCarthy in 1953-54 was the best that a President could have managed, given the public's thin support for civil liberties.

Is Greenstein's rehabilitated Eisenhower a rebuttal to Shogan's call for constitutional revision? If Ike could lead America with the existing machinery, why not find another Ike, leaving the system intact? But the book does not sustain this conclusion.

Ike's methods kept his Presidency intact and effective, but at a high cost. He conducted a successful eight-year term, Greenstein writes, "by emphasizing the chief-of-state over the prime-ministerial component of the presidency." Successful in the ceremonial and unifying role of national leader, he invested less effort in the role of domestic political manager, a responsibility fraught with potential conflicts. This he did because there was little domestic business about which he cared, and because he recognized that a modern President could not be successful at both roles. He thus confirmed Shogan's "crippled Presidency" thesis in his own way.

The lesson of Eisenhower's leadership, if there is one for the 1980s, lies not in reviving "hidden-hand" methods that might be applied to solve the nation's current difficulties. It lies in the reminder that America's only reasonably successful recent President was a war hero of considerable intelligence and skill who knew better than to try to change course. Neither of these two books should be especially heartening to Reagan's successor, or to the nation.

—Otis Graham

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**NEW TITLES**


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*History*

**THE AMERICAN  
INQUISITION: Justice and  
Injustice in the Cold War**  
by Stanley I. Kutler  
Hill & Wang, 1982  
285 pp. \$16.50

During the decade after the Second World War, exploiting domestic fears of Communism, politicians, bureaucrats, and newsmen put America's Bill of Rights through one of its severest tests. Their targets ranged from the prominent to the obscure: Owen Lattimore, a respected Asia scholar and government adviser, fought efforts by Senator Joseph McCarthy and others to cast him as a "fellow traveler" backing Mao's takeover of China; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize-winning chemist and critic of America's growing nuclear arsenal, found his movement abroad curtailed by the U.S. Passport Office; Beatrice Braude, a U.S. Information Agency researcher, supposedly fired because of staff reductions, tried unsuccessfully for 25 years to re-enter government work, unaware most of that time she had been branded a possible Communist. The chase after Reds was not the only threat to American justice. Kutler, a University of Wisconsin historian, also shows how the legal system was twisted to protect the well-connected (poet Ezra Pound, who had made pro-Fascist wartime broadcasts, profited from a carefully orchestrated psychiatric defense) or to satisfy popular demand for scapegoats (Walter Winchell's newspaper columns stirred up wide support for the prosecution of "Tokyo Rose," even though preliminary FBI investigations had found no hard evidence proving the Japanese-American's treason). Not the least of Kutler's talents is his ability to make these thorny legal issues the stuff of a compelling cautionary tale.

**LÉON BLUM**  
by Jean Lacouture  
trans. by George Holoch  
Holmes & Meier, 1982  
571 pp. \$39.50 cloth,  
\$24.50 paper

Léon Blum (1870–1950) never attained his highest political goal—a socialist France. Yet frustration and personal suffering did not destroy his faith in the democratic tradition of the French Republic. The son of Alsatian Jews, a brilliant student, a lawyer, and a literary journalist, Blum was drawn into politics in 1898 when he defended Emile Zola, a



critic of the government in the infamous Dreyfus Affair. (Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, had been wrongly convicted of treason.) Blum became the leader of the Socialist Party shortly after its break with the Communist Party in 1920. He shaped his party's policy of "nonparticipation"—no cooperation with parties unwilling to back a socialist program. However, argues Lacouture, a former reporter for *Le Monde*, Blum was not inflexible. The threat of fascism in 1936 prompted him to form a coalition government, the Popular Front, with the middle-class Radicals. Serving as Premier for less than a year, he still managed to extend obligatory schooling, nationalize the arms industry, and introduce collective bargaining and the 40-hour work week. Despite his pacifist principles, he followed Charles de Gaulle's advice to strengthen the French military. It was too little and too late. During the World War II German occupation, the Vichy government imprisoned Blum, then sent him to Buchenwald—not the first or last time that he suffered from anti-Semitism. Blum returned to politics after the war, serving twice briefly as Premier. Critics on the left attacked Blum as a timid "legalist." But Lacouture praises Blum for his commitment to the welfare of the common man and for his refusal to abandon political persuasion as the only legitimate means to achieve his dream.

**THE ROOTS OF  
AMERICAN  
BUREAUCRACY:**

**1830-1900**

by William E. Nelson  
Harvard, 1982  
208 pp. \$22.50

During much of the 19th century, reform-minded Americans struggled to create a healthy balance between majority rule and individual rights. Their failure, argues Nelson, an NYU law professor, resulted in a less-than-ideal compromise: a powerful central bureaucracy. In the 1830s and '40s, antislavery advocates such as John Quincy Adams championed blacks' rights to freedom in a political culture (Jacksonian Democracy) dominated by party rule. But after the Civil War, reformers realized that their use of U.S. courts to advance blacks' civil rights jeopardized the rights of the states; maintaining a

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balance between state and central governments was one of the reformers' larger goals. Recognizing the dilemma, high-minded idealists of the 1880s and '90s (e.g., George Pullman and Henry Adams) preached civic-mindedness and social responsibility. But moral crusading went largely unheeded in a society of competing interest groups—including Big Business, organized labor, and the political parties themselves. So President Rutherford Hayes's Interior Secretary Carl Schurz and other reformers challenged the strongest interest, partisan politics (and its spoils system), by applying "scientific morality" to the existing bureaucracy. Policy decisions, they believed, were best made by "experts," not by cronies and hacks. Thanks to the reformers, party influence was increasingly tempered by civil service reforms and by regulatory agencies. The judiciary became professionalized, more mindful of precedent than of current politics. The reformers *were* staunch defenders of democratic pluralism, concludes Nelson. But they could accomplish their goal of advancing individual rights only by creating a strong, professional elite to administer the laws of the land.

**MEMOIRS**

by Petro G. Grigorenko  
trans. by Thomas P.  
Whitney  
Norton, 1982  
462 pp. \$19.95

While chronicles of the Devout Communist's fall from faith could now stock a small library, these memoirs by the Soviet Union's first exiled general earn a special place. Born in 1907 on a Ukrainian farm, Grigorenko witnessed the bloody struggles between the Bolsheviks and the Whites, enlisted in the Communist Party in 1927 (despite its brutal "collectivization" of agriculture), joined the Red Army four years later. A skilled engineer during the prewar years, he proved to be an able combat leader during World War II. After early doubts, Grigorenko became convinced that Stalin was a "brilliant military commander." But the Stalinist state soon seemed a vile corruption of Marxist-Leninist principles. Under Nikita Khrushchev's relatively liberal regime, he began publicly criticizing the Soviet leadership and its violations of civil rights. Such boldness led to the first of

two forced internments in mental hospitals and, ultimately, to the loss of his citizenship. Grigorenko's memoirs are rich in anecdotes and personalities—heroic soldiers, self-serving party functionaries (including Leonid Brezhnev in wartime), and fellow dissidents. His account of a furtive overnight visit to Solzhenitsyn in 1969 reads like a story by Chekhov, with each detail hinting at a national tragedy: large-souled men trapped in petty, dehumanizing circumstances.

*Contemporary Affairs*

**THE SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION OF  
AMERICAN MEDICINE**

by Paul Starr  
Basic, 1982  
514 pp. \$24.95

The medical profession in America today commands considerable power and prestige. But in the early days of the Republic, writes Starr, a Harvard sociologist, medicine was "a relatively weak, traditional profession of minor economic significance." During the Jacksonian era (when resentment of expertise and privilege was at its height), doctors were unable to prevent states from dropping licensing requirements. "Medical botanists" and a variety of "bonesetters" gave the M.D.s stiff competition. Not until the 19th century did the growth of cities and improvements in transportation create a sizable market for professional physicians. In the 20th century, the doctors, led by the American Medical Association, secured their independence and sovereignty through a series of triumphs: establishing dominance over a vastly upgraded hospital system (in the previous century, only the poor went to hospitals), restricting the range of services offered by community public health centers, defeating national health insurance proposals made after World War II, winning concessions (e.g., extremely liberal reimbursement schedules) from the Medicare and Medicaid programs. But "doctor control" of medical institutions may soon be lost, writes Starr. Burgeoning costs have led to the widespread creation of corporations to run local hospitals and health care centers. Doctors may soon become salaried employees meeting goals set by corporate managers.

**DISTANT WATER: The Fate of the North Atlantic Fisherman**

by William W. Warner  
 Little, Brown, 1983  
 338 pp. \$17.95

Combining an overview of the North Atlantic fishing industry since World War II with a firsthand look at the fishermen's daily lives, Warner has produced a book as authoritative and entertaining as his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs, and the Chesapeake Bay* (1976). Warner went to sea aboard the ships of five different nations, finding distinctive styles of work on each. The Russians stay at sea for long stretches (up to five months), but good food, women crew members, and periodic pep rallies stave off boredom. The Spaniards, superstitious to a fault, never use the words "fox," "snake," or "priest" (and the author discovered he was one crew's lucky talisman). West Germans are the most successful distant-water fishermen, but the superlative means little: Innovations in technology have made the fleets of all nations perhaps too successful. Sophisticated fish-hunting scanners, 500-ton capacity nets, and automated factory trawlers have helped deplete the schools of cod, capelin, and pollock. Yields have not grown since 1974, despite a stronger worldwide fishing effort. The large fishing fleets may soon find their own ranks being thinned.

*Arts & Letters***THE ICON**

edited by Kurt Weitzmann,  
 Gaiane Alibegashvili, Aneli  
 Volskaja, et al.  
 Knopf, 1982  
 419 pp. \$60

With this volume, edited by a multinational team of scholars, the icon may be said to have completed its long passage from the monastery to the museum to the coffee table. One of the most varied and well-produced anthologies of holy pictures of the Christian East ever assembled in one book, it provides examples of icons from the early models in 10th-century Constantinople to the more abstract forms in 16th- and 17th-century Russia. It also includes a particularly rich array from lesser-known collections in Greece, Georgia, and Serbia. But something has been lost in the process of artistic recovery: quite simply, a clear sense of what icons were all about in the first place. As integral parts of the devotional life of Orthodox Christianity, icons



have served as a kind of pictorial theology, in contrast with the more strictly verbal theology of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Thus icons must be understood in terms of the Orthodox Christian's life of liturgical worship, veneration of the saints, and personal devotion through "meditation in colors." Weitzmann understands all this, and his introduction and commentary on the Byzantine and Crusader icons provide the best parts of the text. In much of the rest, unexplained historical details compete with overly technical description, and some commentary (such as a Marxist contributor's reference to "cultic objects") is actually offensive. The uninitiated reader will have to turn to two earlier books, Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky's *The Meaning of Icons* (1969) and Weitzmann's own *Age of Spirituality* (1979), to understand the broad historical context and the theological significance of these magnificent devotional works.

#### SHILOH AND OTHER STORIES

by Bobbie Ann Mason  
Harper, 1982  
247 pp. \$12.95

A country preacher's wife begins skipping vespers to watch TV talk shows and play video games. A drugstore clerk signs up for college English and body-building, then decides to leave her husband, a truck driver. Men lose their wanderlust, while women overcome what one character describes as their "fear of open places." Something has happened in rural Kentucky, Mason's native ground and the setting of her stories. Economic progress has brought shopping centers and discount drug stores, TV and pop psychology; it has also plowed under old traditions and assumptions. Folks who once simply persevered—bowing to local custom or to nature—now suffer uncertainty and life crises. Mason's stories invite comparison with those of two other outstanding Southern women writers, Flannery O'Connor and Eudora Welty. All create characters who suddenly awake to new possibilities; all are masterly creators of atmosphere and place. But Mason's stories finally lack the dramatic force of O'Connor's or Welty's. Her characters



**THE SACRED  
EXECUTIONER:  
Human Sacrifice and the  
Legacy of Guilt**  
by Hyam Maccoby  
Thames & Hudson, 1983  
208 pp. \$19.95



wait for a sign, be it an x ray or a photograph of an ancestor, anything to measure their drift through the matter-of-fact. Yet the changes they undergo are largely superficial. The reader waits for intimations of a more significant change of heart.

The origins of both Judaism and Christianity can be traced to the practice of human sacrifice. What distinguishes the two, asserts Judaic scholar Maccoby, is the response of each to its primitive origins. Many ancient myths include a human sacrifice offered to the gods by a "Sacred Executioner" who becomes both progenitor and scapegoat of his blood-tainted community. Old Testament authors drew upon such myths, altering them piecemeal to reflect the Hebrew belief that human sacrifice was anathema and had to be replaced by other rites. Maccoby's interpretive *tour de force* shows that the Genesis story through the Flood derives from a Kenite tribal myth whose protagonist, Cain, initiates his people's history with a human sacrifice. The Old Testament represents the act as a brutal murder—incited by rebellion against God's expressed preference for Abel's offering. Noah's animal sacrifice after the flood sublimates the ritual human slaughter performed by the mythical Kenite, Lamech, the original Noah. In the Abraham and Isaac story, human sacrifice is explicitly rejected by God, who provides an animal substitute. But, says Maccoby, the rise of Christianity, influenced by the dying-and-reborn gods of Greek religion, was a step backward to human sacrifice. To bear the guilt for such a primitive expiation, Jews became the collective "Sacred Executioner." Fated to wander until the millenium, they would finally be converted or exterminated. The virulent Anti-christ doctrine that inspired Nazi anti-Semitism derived from such visions of the Jews' destiny, argues Maccoby. Deepening our understanding of Old Testament sources, Maccoby challenges the notion of a seamless "Judeo-Christian" ethic.

*Science & Technology***SCIENTIFIC  
TEMPERAMENTS: Three  
Lives in Contemporary  
Science**

by Philip J. Hilts  
Simon & Schuster, 1982  
302 pp. \$15.95

Staking out three of the more exciting frontiers of 20th-century scientific investigation—particle physics, genetics, and artificial intelligence—*Washington Post* reporter Hilts profiles three Americans who have labored at the furthest reaches of their fields. Physicist Robert Wilson considers himself a modern-day cathedral builder. During the late '60s and early '70s, he designed the world's most powerful particle accelerator, the multi-colored, earth-covered, four-mile doughnut called Fermilab, located near Weston, Illinois. There Wilson reenacts the beginning of the universe, transforming energy into matter. Mark Ptashne, a Harvard molecular biologist and founder of the commercial Genetics Institute, solved, in the 1970s, perhaps the single most important question after the discovery of the role of DNA: how differentiation occurs when all cells in the body have the same genes. Argumentative and ambitious, Ptashne has been in the thick of the public debate over the hazards of genetic experimentation. John McCarthy heads the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. A mathematician by training and a philosopher by inclination, he asks: "What is intelligence and how can it be made mechanical?" Hilts's prose can be overwrought (he describes "a vegetable soup of postadrenaline confusion"), but his explanations of genetic engineering and particle physics will earn the gratitude of science-shy readers.

**MARGARET MEAD AND  
SAMOA: The Making and  
Unmaking of An  
Anthropological Myth**

by Derek Freeman  
Harvard, 1983  
379 pp. \$20

In 1925, the 23-year-old anthropologist Margaret Mead voyaged to Samoa to study adolescence, urged on by her mentor at Columbia University, Franz Boas. After nine months' field work, Mead concluded that, for Samoans, adolescence was the easiest, most pleasurable stage of life. The reason: Samoan society was free of social conflict, unhealthy competition, aggression, individualism, or familial strife. Moreover, premarital sexual



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freedom made lovemaking among adolescents "the pastime *par excellence*," a "light and pleasant dance." This idyllic portrait, published in 1928 as *Coming of Age in Samoa*, won immediate acclaim and endured as a classroom staple for five decades. Supporting Boas's theory of "cultural determinism" (cultures, more than heredity, made individuals and societies what they were), the book seemed to undercut the position of scientists (including supporters of the eugenics movement) who insisted that biological nature was more powerful than nurture. However, according to Freeman, an anthropologist at Australian National University, Mead's description of Samoan society was wrong on nearly every count. Freeman, who lived among native Samoans for a total of six years (Mead actually stayed with Westerners during her brief sojourn), discovered a very different people, fiercely rank-conscious, authoritarian, competitive, prone to violence, and sexually repressed. Samoan teenagers, he found, were anything but carefree. Did Mead lie? Freeman thinks not. But she did wear theoretical blinders, did not fully master the Samoan language, and was probably duped by her informants. Why did few anthropologists challenge Mead's uncorroborated findings? Freeman concludes that the need of the "Boasian" school of anthropologists for a supportive myth outweighed healthy scientific skepticism.

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**PAPERBOUNDS**

**MARY CHESNUT'S CIVIL WAR.** Edited by C. Vann Woodward. Yale, 1982. 886 pp. \$14.95

Those fascinated by the romance of the Civil War have long had recourse to *Gone With the Wind* (1936). Now those interested in the reality can turn to this rich memoir. Written by Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823–86), the wife of a wealthy South Carolina planter and politician, the book appears to be a diary dating from February 1861 to July 1865. It was actually an artful reworking of her cruder (and sometimes more revealing) wartime journals. After the war, Chesnut tried her hand at writing novels, but her fiction never found an audience. Nevertheless, the literary apprenticeship paid off when she decided, in the early 1880s, to re-create the diary. It abounds in vividly drawn scenes (the plantation on the verge of financial collapse, political dinners in Richmond and Charleston) and sharply rendered characters (her lordly, philandering father-in-law; President and Mrs. Jefferson Davis). Chesnut's perspective is interesting in itself: Though a loyal Southerner, she was both an abolitionist and an early feminist who yearned for a more active life. Parts of Chesnut's work appeared in magazines after her death, but Woodward, the noted Yale historian, has pieced together the whole diary, adding selected passages from the original journals.

**THE OLD SOCIAL CLASSES AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS OF IRAQ.** By Hanna Batatu. Princeton, 1982. 1,284 pp. \$27.50

This enormous volume is the best study yet to be written on the politics of a modern Arab state. Batatu, a political scientist at the American University of Beirut, first traces the transformation of Iraqi so-

ciety from the late 19th to the mid-20th century; he explains how the British (eager to hold the monarchy in check) helped the old tribal leaders become large and powerful landholders. Then he discusses the rise of the Iraqi Communist Party, including its ideological debts to early Arab levelers (the Syrian, al-Kawakibi, writing around 1900, argued that true Islam was consistent with communist egalitarianism) and its middle-class urban leadership. Finally, he analyzes the conspiracy that led to the overthrow of Premier Nuri as-Sa'id and the monarchy in 1958 and chronicles the many bloody twists and turns of Iraqi internal politics down to the early '70s. To the extent that any mortal can make sense of oil-rich Iraq's social and economic cleavages and of the resulting power struggles, Batatu has.

**THE PORTABLE EDMUND WILSON.** Edited by Lewis M. Dabney. Penguin, 1983. 647 pp. \$6.95

He was a child of Anglo-Saxon privilege, a brilliant editor, and perhaps America's most complete man of letters. Edmund Wilson (1895–1972) thought of himself as, above all, a journalist, a popular interpreter of important trends in politics and culture. He brought to all his subjects a probing curiosity, whether writing about his 1936 stay in a Soviet hospital or the American Civil War or an interview with Henry Ford. ("I don't like to read books," said Ford. "They muss up my mind.") Wilson complained that his fiction was little read. A pity indeed, because in such stories as "The Man Who Shot Snapping Turtles," which satirizes the excesses of idealism, he artfully confronted his own weaknesses. Editor Dabney has given us here a bright sampling of Wilson's achievement.

## Galileo's Science And the Trial of 1633

"Nature . . . is inexorable and immutable; she never transgresses the laws imposed upon her." Thus did Galileo argue in 1615 for the authority of science over that of Scripture in the physical world. The Catholic Church's 1633 condemnation of Galileo is popularly seen as the response of theological dogmatism. But the issue debated by scholars today is whether Galileo actually *proved* that the Earth revolves around the sun. Here, as he analyzes Galileo's ordeal, historian William A. Wallace explores the complexities of demonstrating truth in science.

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by William A. Wallace

The casual tourist in Rome, should he climb the Spanish Steps and approach the imposing palace to which they lead, might notice a green marble pillar bearing an inscription in Italian that translates as follows:

The next palace is the Trinità dei Monti, once belonging to the Medici; it was here that Galileo was kept prisoner of the Inquisition when he was on trial for seeing that the Earth moves and the sun stands still.

The first part of that inscription is undoubtedly true, but less certain is the claim that Galileo was brought to trial "for seeing that the Earth moves and the sun stands still." One cannot actually observe the Earth's movement; proof of this now commonplace notion is considerably more complex.

Notwithstanding the conservatism, overzealousness, and incompetence

of the Catholic Church officials who prosecuted him, Galileo's defense, scientifically speaking, was not nearly so strong as is commonly thought. All of the evidence marshalled *after* his time distorts modern judgments of the trial. We must return to Galileo's assessment of his own work to appreciate his real achievements.

Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) brought the theory of a rotating Earth that revolved around the sun into public discourse with the publication in 1543 of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*. But it was Galileo's work that sparked debate, almost 70 years later, over this heliocentric theory.

Galileo Galilei was born at Pisa on February 15, 1564, and in his early years he apparently thought of becoming a monk. His father per-

sueded him to study medicine instead, and he pursued courses at the University of Pisa with that intention from 1581 to 1585, when he dropped out, without a degree, and devoted himself increasingly to the study of mathematics.

Such was his competence in mathematics, both pure and applied, that the University of Pisa called him back in 1589 to teach courses in geometry and astronomy. In 1592, he was offered a more prestigious position at the University of Padua, and there, for the next 18 years—which Galileo recalled as “the happiest of my life”—he flourished as professor of mathematics. He taught courses in astronomy; experimented with pendulums, inclined planes, and falling bodies; and perfected the telescope as a reliable instrument for astronomical observations.

On the basis of such observations, he published his *Sidereus nuncius*

(*The Starry Messenger*) in Venice in 1610, and soon won acclaim throughout Europe as the foremost astronomer of his time.

Galileo’s teaching notes from his stays at Pisa and Padua have survived, and from these we know that he was aware of the Copernican theory. But he preferred to teach the geocentric theory of Ptolemy (second century A.D.), which at the time was the dominant theory in the universities. Half a century after the appearance of Copernicus’s book, only a few scholars had seriously entertained his views.

One such scholar was the German astronomer Johann Kepler (1571–1630), who corresponded with Galileo, and to whom Galileo wrote in 1597 that he himself had become a committed Copernican. Recent research suggests, however, that Galileo wavered in his commitment; his treatises on astronomy published



Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Copernicus (left to right) are depicted in the frontispiece to the first edition of Galileo's *Dialogue* (1632).

during the early 1600s show him still arguing for the Ptolemaic system. What transformed Galileo after 1610 into an enthusiastic supporter of the Polish astronomer were his own discoveries with the telescope.

Between 1609 and 1611, he discovered the moons of Jupiter, which showed that not all motions in the heavens had to be around the Earth as a center. He saw mountains on Earth's moon, which suggested that Earth and moon were made of the same material and possibly underwent similar motions. He discerned the phases of Venus, which showed that its orbit had to be around the sun, not around the Earth as had previously been supposed.

#### Citing the Cardinal

On the strength of the publication of *Sidereus nuncius*, Galileo obtained the patronage of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II de Medici. He gave up his teaching duties at Padua and moved to Florence where he served as mathematician and philosopher to the Grand Duke.

His advocacy of the Copernican theory as the true explanation of the universe soon came under attack from two camps. On the one hand, Italian philosophers were concerned over the Copernican system's apparent violation of the principles of Aristotelian physics. Theologians, on the other hand, claimed that Copernicanism violated Scripture, notably the Old Testament's assertions that the sun moves across the heavens (e.g.,

Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, Josh. 10:12), and that the Earth is the immovable center around which God made the heavenly luminaries rotate (e.g., Ps. 93:1).\*

Encouraged, it seems, by his patron, Galileo responded to both parties: to the conservative Aristotelian philosophers with a *Discourse on Floating Bodies* (1612), and to the theologians with a *Letter to Castelli*, later enlarged as the *Letter to Christina* (1615), wherein he suggested that the Scriptures could be reconciled with the Copernican system by interpreting the Bible allegorically rather than literally. He cited Caesar Cardinal Baronius, a contemporary who said: "The intention of the Holy Spirit is to teach us how one goes to heaven, not how heaven goes."

Meanwhile, a Carmelite friar, Paolo Foscarini, had published in 1615 a theological treatise in which he interpreted the Scriptures in a fashion similar to Galileo's. The works of both men were brought to the atten-

\*According to Aristotelian physics (which St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastics had followed), the Earth's position in the center of the universe explained local motions such as the downward fall of bodies. Further, the heavenly bodies appeared to be immutable; such perfect spheres, it was thought, could only move in circles. The Earth appeared to be so unlike the celestial luminaries that it seemed impossible to attribute to it the same heavenly motion. Even before Galileo's time, astronomical observations had cast some doubt on some features of this cosmology, and philosophers were divided into those committed to preserving it (the Peripatetics) and those willing to revise it (the more progressive Scholastics).

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*William A. Wallace, O.P., 64, is professor of philosophy and history at the Catholic University of America (CUA). Born in New York City, he received a B.E.E. from Manhattan College (1940), an M.S. from CUA (1952), and a Ph.D. from University of Fribourg, Switzerland (1959). He was ordained in 1953, and his most recent book is Prelude to Galileo: Medieval and 16th-Century Sources of Galileo's Thought (1981).*

tion of Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, a learned Jesuit in Rome who at that time was investigating the criticisms of the Reformers and what the Roman church regarded as their heretical interpretations of Scripture.

In April 1615, Bellarmine wrote to both Foscarini and Galileo, advising them that the Copernican system was as yet only a hypothesis, since the motion of the Earth had not been conclusively demonstrated. He cautioned that until such time as solid proof was offered, the commonly accepted interpretation of Scripture was to be preserved.

Shortly thereafter, in 1616, the Congregation of the Index (a church agency that judged works as heretical or correct) published a decree against the Copernican teaching, condemning Foscarini's book outright and suspending publication of Copernicus's work of 1543 pending correction of its text.

#### Necessary Demonstrations

Oddly enough, in his *Letter to Christina*, Galileo had agreed with Bellarmine that the traditional interpretation of Scripture was to stand unless the new system could be "well founded on manifest experiences and necessary demonstrations." He apparently felt that he would soon provide such evidence. But, as we shall see, he subsequently ran into difficulties.

In February 1616, when he was in Rome, Galileo had an important meeting with Cardinal Bellarmine. In the files of the Holy Office, a much-discussed document is preserved, dated February 26, which states that Galileo, while in Bellarmine's household, was enjoined not to hold, teach, or defend the Copernican system "in any way whatever."

The document seems to be a record

of an injunction that was to be served on Galileo should he not agree to Bellarmine's instructions. It appears that the injunction was never actually served on Galileo, and thus there is some doubt whether he was told that he could teach the Copernican system as a mathematical *hypothesis* that simplified astronomical predictions, or whether he was told that he was not to hold, teach, or defend it in any way whatsoever.

I will return to this matter later, for the question of whether the injunction was actually served on Galileo assumed some importance at the trial of 1633.

#### Difficult Dialogue

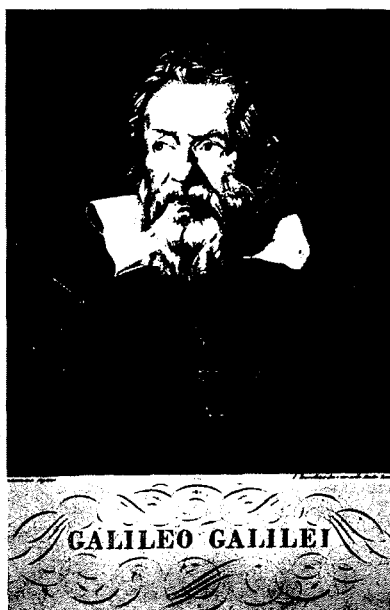
Galileo's early relations with the papacy and the Jesuits were, on the whole, good. Cardinal Bellarmine had questioned the Jesuit astronomers at the Collegio Romano about the accuracy of the new observations with the telescope; they had promptly confirmed Galileo's findings. The Collegio's greatest mathematician, Christopher Clavius, knew of Galileo's work and had helped him get his teaching positions.

Clavius died in 1612, however, and soon after, Galileo got into a nasty dispute with a German Jesuit, Christopher Scheiner, over the nature and motion of sunspots. The situation worsened a few years later, in 1618, when Galileo launched another attack on one of Clavius's successors at the Collegio, Orazio Grassi, over the paths and appearances of comets.

While this argument was raging, in 1621 three important figures died: Pope Paul V, Cardinal Bellarmine, and Galileo's patron, Cosimo de Medici. Fortunately, Paul V was succeeded by a Florentine cardinal, Matteo Barberini, who had been sympathetic to Galileo during the



Portrait by Flemish painter Justus Susterman of Galileo, who was elected in 1611 to the Academy of the Lynx-eyed, Europe's first scientific society.



troubles of 1616 and who generally took Galileo's side in his battles with the more orthodox Jesuits.

When Barberini assumed the papacy in 1623 as Urban VIII, Galileo took the opportunity to dedicate his definitive answer to Grassi on comets, *The Assayer*, to the new pope. No doubt Urban VIII was pleased and flattered by this action; Galileo was granted the favor of six papal audiences. Most scholars agree that Galileo secured some kind of permission from Urban to resume work on the Copernican system.

By 1630, he had finished his great work, the *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World*. In it he evaluated all of the evidence and arguments for and against the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems, coming down rather hard on the side of the Copernicans and making the Ptolemaists and the Aristotelians look

somewhat foolish in the process. Galileo caricatures their positions through a fictional character, the inept Simplicio, a Peripatetic who finds his philosophy in the text of Aristotle rather than in the book of nature.

The importance of the *Dialogue* is twofold. It was the first frontal attack on the whole of Aristotelian physics. It focused on the weakest point of Aristotelian physics—its account of the motions of bodies.

Galileo had difficulty obtaining permission to have the *Dialogue* published. The Dominican Niccolò Riccardi, charged with censoring the work, was mindful of the decree against Copernicanism handed down in 1616. But, by doctoring the manuscript, Galileo was able to get Riccardi's approval, and his book was printed by Landini at Florence in 1632. He had added a preface and a

note at the end, wherein he disclaimed giving any actual proof of the Copernican system and labeled it a pure mathematical hypothesis.

The "dialogue" takes place over four days among the fictional characters Salviati, Sagredo, and Simplicio, with a different series of arguments being developed in the course of each day. On the first day, Salviati, Galileo's mouthpiece, argues that there is no clear dichotomy between the celestial and terrestrial regions, a central tenet of Aristotelian cosmology. He says the world is one, probably constructed of the same kind of material (e.g., the mountains on the moon, just like those on Earth) and probably undergoing the same kinds of motion.

On the second day, the main topic is the rotation of the Earth on its axis. Here Galileo rebuts most of the proofs that the Earth is at rest (such as the fact that a stone dropped from a tower always falls at its foot) and shows that, if one knows the proper principles of mechanics, the proofs offered yield the same results whether the Earth is still or turning.

### Rejecting Kepler

The arguments, he admits, do not *prove* that the Earth is rotating. They simply destroy the proofs of his adversaries that it must be at rest. The Earth's diurnal rotation is thus left an open question.

The third day is devoted to a more difficult problem: whether the Earth is immobile in the center of the universe or actually travels in a large, annual orbit around the sun. Arguing by analogy, Galileo asks: Since the other planets revolve around the sun, why should not the Earth do likewise? Further, earthly revolution can explain the movement of sunspots.

Finally, on the fourth day, Galileo

puts together the conclusions of the second and third days' discussions, showing how they provide a simple explanation of a universally observed phenomenon, the motion of the tides.

His argument, in summary, is that the combination of the Earth's daily rotation on its axis with its annual revolution around the sun results in unequal forces being exerted daily on the waters on the Earth's surface. These unequal forces give rise to the tides.

To make his point, Galileo had to reject Kepler's theory of tides—that they are caused by lunar attraction—the theory that is accepted by scientists today. In the preface, Galileo himself refers to his argument on tides as an "ingenious fantasy"; he labored over it for years without removing all its flaws.

### Coming to Trial

With the publication of the *Dialogue* in 1632, Galileo found himself in deeper trouble than he had ever imagined. Pope Urban VIII was furious, probably because he felt Galileo had betrayed his earlier pledge that he would write impartially, and almost certainly because he felt that Galileo had misused, and ridiculed, Urban's own preferred answer to the Ptolemaic-Copernican controversy, namely that it could not be definitively resolved by human intellect.

In August 1632, all further publication and sales of the book were prohibited by the Holy Office. Galileo was summoned to Rome from Florence to be tried by a tribunal of 10 cardinals on the charge that he had willfully taught the Copernican doctrine despite its condemnation as contrary to Scripture. In preparing for the trial, the clerical prosecutors discovered the written injunction

that had putatively been given to Galileo on February 26, 1616, enjoining him not to hold, teach, or defend the Copernican system in any way.

Accordingly, a number of theologians examined the *Dialogue* to ascertain whether Galileo had or had not actually held, taught, or defended Copernicanism in that work. The results were, predictably, that Galileo had undoubtedly *taught* the motion of the Earth and the immobility of the sun in the *Dialogue*, and that he had also *defended*, without a doubt, the same teaching.

#### House Arrest

But had Galileo actually *held* a belief in this teaching? Basing their judgment on the preface Galileo had written (presumably to please Ricciardi and so get his work approved for publication), the theologians gave him the benefit of the doubt and decided that he might not have proffered the work as a statement of his own personal conviction.

During the course of the trial, Galileo, for whatever motive, took the obvious way out and said that the theologians' finding on the third point was correct. As a devout son of the church, he would not personally believe anything that was contrary to sacred Scripture. He was made to swear that he did not believe in the Earth's motion, and on this basis he was given a salutary penance ("for the spiritual benefit of former heretics who had returned to the faith") and confined to house arrest. The *Dialogue* was banned, and Galileo was forbidden to write any more on Copernicanism.

Galileo then retired to his villa at Arcetri, outside Florence, and there spent the remaining years of his life studying and writing. In 1638 (four years before his death), he published

*Two New Sciences*, a work regarded by scientists as laying out the principles of the modern science of mechanics. It has earned him the title "Father of Modern Science."

The work is replete with claims that the author has founded a "new science," that he has provided demonstrations or strict proofs pertaining to the motions of earthly bodies. Such claims are conspicuously absent from the earlier *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World*, and their absence, I argue, necessitates reevaluation of what Galileo did and thought he did in *that* book, and of why he recanted.

Return to the inscription on the pillar in Rome and its implication that Galileo actually *saw* the Earth's motion, i.e., that he was able to prove, on the basis of incontrovertible evidence, that the Earth was rotating on its axis and revolving in a closed orbit around the sun. Did Galileo believe he had done this? To answer this, one must know precisely what he took to be scientific proof.

#### Galileo's Sources

Unfortunately, this has proved difficult for historians of science to discover. My study, over the past 15 years, of three notebooks that Galileo composed while he was a young math professor at Pisa, has turned up an unsuspected possibility. These notebooks, now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, cast an entirely new light on the way Galileo structured his *Dialogue*.

What is surprising about the notebooks is that they summarize and explore the logical and physical treatises of Aristotle, not in the conservative and textual style of the Peripatetics in the Italian universities, but rather in a progressive application of Aristotle's principles to cur-

rent problems. For example, in the third notebook, Galileo applies Aristotelian principles to the motions of heavy bodies.

Even more surprising are the sources on which the notebooks draw, since Galileo has been so often cast in opposition to both the church and the Aristotelians. The first two volumes were drawn from Latin notes used by Jesuit lecturers at the Collegio Romano on logic and natural philosophy, respectively. The third is an adaptation of the same materials to Galileo's own study of the motion of projectiles and falling bodies. Galileo apparently obtained the lecture notes through his correspondence with the Jesuit Clavius.

#### Using Suppositions

The key to my solution is an expression that occurs repeatedly throughout Galileo's writings from his earliest to his last years, namely, the Latin term *suppositio*, especially as applied to a type of demonstration. Reasoning *ex suppositione* is rarely discussed in the present day, but it assumed considerable importance at the end of the 16th century among progressive Aristotelians. It is in these notebooks that the clearest statement of Galileo's methodology, that of *ex suppositione*, is found, and its debt to Aristotle is unmistakable.

Identifying the Jesuit Aristotelian precursors of his thought gives us a new appreciation of Galileo's later contacts with Jesuits such as Bellarmine, Scheiner, and Grassi, particularly in evaluating Galileo's claims for demonstration and proof. All of these men used precisely the same terminology employed in Galileo's early notebooks. When we reread the *Dialogue*, we can assume that his later Jesuit protagonists understood and to some extent shared both the

concept of *ex suppositione* and the methods for evaluating such reasoning as applied therein.

What is reasoning *ex suppositione*? Unlike the hypothetico-deductive method scientists use today (which denies that there can be positive, incontestable proof of any conclusions based on hypotheses), it allows the possibility of *demonstrating* the truth and certainty of some results through the use of appropriate suppositions. Both Galileo and the Jesuits recognized that there were two types of *suppositiones*: some would be merely imagined situations that could not be verified, whereas others would be capable of verification, either by induction from sense experience or by measurement to within a specified degree of accuracy.\*

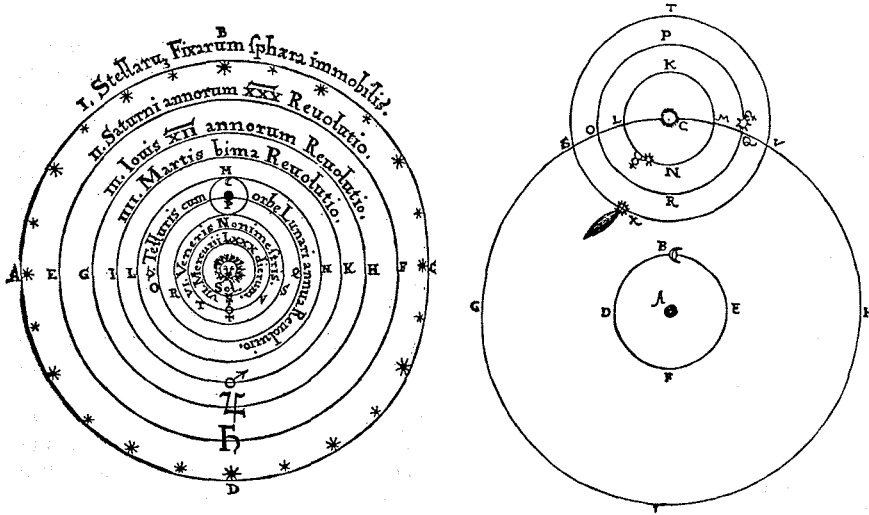
In all of Galileo's serious scientific writings up to, but not including, the *Dialogue*, he is at pains to identify and verify the suppositions on which his reasoning is based, to justify his claims for strict proof. He follows the same procedure in *Two New Sciences*, where the new science of local motion is finally worked out. But in the *Dialogue*, such claims are strangely absent. Thus one must wonder whether Galileo really did think in 1632 that he had proved the Earth's motion. Was the question, in his own eyes, still debatable?

My suspicion is that Galileo himself was aware, in 1632, that he lacked rigorous proof of the Earth's motion. He supported the Coperni-

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\*For example, the supposition of epicycles in the geocentric theory was postulated *merely* for predicting planets' positions—not because it was believed to be physically true. On the other hand, Galileo's supposition in the *Two New Sciences* that a body falls with uniformly increasing velocity is mathematically formulated in terms of time and distance; this formula he then verifies experimentally.

## THE COPERNICAN CHALLENGE... VS. THE TYCHONIAN COMPROMISE...



can system anyway on the grounds that the arguments he had been able to muster, though not conclusive, were better than his opponents'.

We now know that during his 1592–1610 stay at Padua, Galileo continued to work on problems of motion and mechanics and that he made drafts of proofs and demonstrations on which his “science of motion” would one day be erected. By 1609, when he started to work with the telescope, he had completed all the investigations that would be required to write the *Two New Sciences*—a book that would not be published for another 30 years.

Galileo's familiarity with the subject was such that in 1609 he had implicitly grasped the demonstrative force of the arguments he would later formalize in the *Two New Sciences*. He had already experimentally validated the *suppositiones* (e.g., the definition of accelerated motion; the negligible effects of fric-

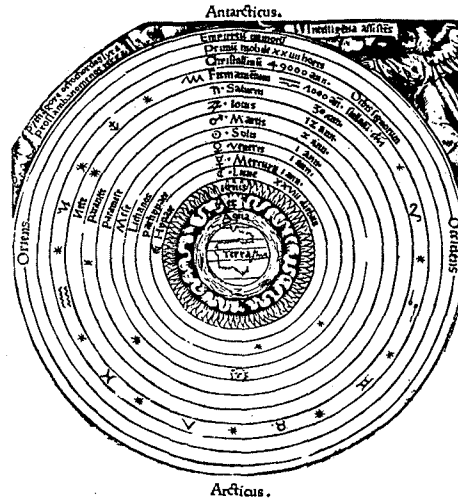
tion) on which his work would be based, and he spoke with confidence of the book's imminent appearance.

It was a confident Galileo, then, who gazed through the telescope, and his intuition was this: If he could systematize his new observations, and couple these with the principles of motion he was soon to formulate, he could quickly extend his demonstrations to cover the Earth's motion—not only in its diurnal rotation but in its revolution around the sun as well. Such a comprehensive system would be an imposing rival to Aristotelian physics.

It was the prospect of these demonstrations that led him to make the extravagant claims in the *Letter to Christina*. And it was the same prospect that was to haunt him when he came to write his definitive treatise defending the Copernican system. He had to cast it as a dialogue precisely because the proof of the suppositions on which the reasoning was based

## VS. THE MEDIEVAL WORLDVIEW

The Copernican system's (far left) main attraction was its mathematical simplicity. Galileo sought the same simplicity in motions on Earth. The Tychonian system (left) appealed to those who believed the Earth could not possibly move as fast as Copernicus's theory required. It, too, simplified the Aristotelian model (right), whose defects Ptolemy had sought to remedy with complex devices such as epicycles and equants.



(i.e., the Earth's rotation and revolution, and the sun's immobility) still eluded him in 1632.

Both before and after the publication of the *Dialogue*, then, Galileo gives abundant evidence of his awareness of and adherence to the canons of demonstrative proof as required by the method of reasoning *ex suppositione*. In the *Dialogue* itself, persuasive argumentation is used, not demonstration, and no mention is even made of the Tychonian system, favored by Galileo's real opponents, which could just as readily explain all of the observational evidence provided with the telescope.\*

Finally, as if to add insult to injury, the rebuttal to Galileo's proof of the tides—perhaps dictated by Ur-

\*Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) maintained that the other planets circled the sun, and that this system as a whole revolved around the Earth, thus preserving the geocentric theory of the universe.

ban VIII—is voiced at the end of the work by Simplicio, the “simpleton,” whose judgment and credibility have already been questioned at every turn. Urban's argument was that God in his infinite power could effect the tidal motion in many ways beyond the reach of man's intellect, and thus that no human explanation, however ingenious, should be regarded as true and conclusive.

But the rebuttal also leads one to wonder whether Galileo was really forced to make the statements in the preface and endnote. Did he use them freely, aware that his arguments for the Earth's motion had barely progressed beyond the level of hypothetical reasoning, appealing enough, but still short of incontestable proof? More important, did he perjure himself when he swore after his trial that he personally did not believe in the Earth's motion?

If his concept of proof was indeed the one outlined of necessity *ex sup-*

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*positione*, then one must conclude that he did not verify the mathematical principles on which the *Dialogue* was based. And only if one concludes that Galileo himself was aware of this shortcoming, do we give proper credit to his intelligence and to his character, to both his brilliance and his will. He was perceptive enough to recognize the limitations of his argument, skillful though it was, and he was honest enough, as a believer, to acquiesce in the church's interpretation of the Scriptures when he lacked the "necessary demonstrations" to show it was otherwise.

Such a resolution of the problem posed by Galileo's abjuration of Copernicanism is not easy to grasp in the late 20th century, when there is no clear and accepted demarcation between the provinces of faith and reason. But in Galileo's day, in the Italy of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, an important teaching of Aquinas prevailed: Faith and reason have radically different spheres.

This means that a person cannot assent to one and the same truth by faith and by reason at the same time. If one *knows* something by reason, for example, one cannot assent to it by faith. If one *believes* something, on the other hand, one does so only because one's *reason* is unable to decide whether it is true or not.

In light of this teaching, the human intellect can go only so far in penetrating the secrets of the universe. Yet reasoning does not exhaust the sphere of the knowable, as it can be supplemented by faith—in those instances where God chooses to reveal something important.

Galileo, on such an accounting,

would have two options on the matter of the Earth's motion: either he could *prove* it, and so *know* the truth of the proposition "the Earth moves" on the basis of his own reasoning; or he could *not prove* it, leaving it an open question which could still be decided by faith.

Early on in his investigations, if my analysis is correct, Galileo thought that convincing proof of the Earth's motion was within his grasp. Later, he saw the difficulty and complexity of the situation and came to admit, begrudgingly, that the opposite conclusion would have to be accepted on faith—because the church was proposing it to him as something beyond man's knowing powers and directly revealed by God.

Galileo's only "crime," to use historian Giorgio de Santillana's term, was that he was too precipitate in urging his intuitions on others, too presumptuous in expecting others to "see" what he could "see." Very human are faults such as these. But we need not add to these the further charges of arrogance and insincerity, of stubborn adherence to a position he was finally unable to defend, of swearing under oath that he did not believe what he truly believed.

It is much better, in my view, to see him as a true son of his church, willing to accept its teachings when his reason—despite its strong intuitions—was unable to establish their opposite. And, as a true scientist, he not only admitted that he failed to meet the standards of his profession but also persevered during his last years in the quest for a new science that would, one day, be able to furnish the proofs that eluded his grasp.

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## Telling Lives

"A well-written life," wrote Thomas Carlyle, "is almost as rare as a well-spent one." Even so, biography has lately become a literary growth industry in America, perhaps because the modern novel no longer satisfies the popular appetite for life stories presented in their entirety. Here Edmund Morris, the prize-winning author of *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, discusses the appeal of biography and recalls his own apprenticeship.

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by Edmund Morris

I guess I should have known I would one day write biography when, at the age of 10 or so, I discovered that the heroes I most craved to meet were not taxpaying residents of Nairobi, Kenya.

Alexander the Great, Tom Sawyer, Winston Churchill, and test pilot Chuck Yeager lived in "a world elsewhere," and seemed unlikely to visit mine, except perhaps on safari. Lacking their company, I was forced to improvise novels in which tow-headed aviators fought confusedly with Prime Ministers wearing Macedonian plumes. I made no distinction between the true and imaginary characters: Their common remoteness made them equally real to me.

Later, I developed an adolescent passion for Brigitte Bardot. But that divine *vision pneumatique* never swam further south than St. Tropez, let alone the equator. Lacking her flesh—and what flesh!—I began to write erotic fantasies with lines like "And the ripe mulberries rose in Brigitte's breasts."

Thus diverted, I paid little atten-

tion to the face of Theodore Roosevelt, which grinned at me one day from the pages of a civic history entitled *Nairobi: The First Fifty Years*. The caption said something about a former U.S. President who had made an expedition to British East Africa in 1910, and decimated most of the local wildlife. I stared briefly into his kindly, bespectacled eyes, and forgot about him for the next quarter of a century.

My first serious interest in biography as literature came when I decided to be a famous pianist, and checked Dent's *Master Musicians* series out of the school library. These excellent short studies introduced me to men who still loom large in my life: Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms. I memorized every detail that would enable me to see, hear, feel, and smell them (that regrettable chamber pot beneath Beethoven's Broadwood piano, those Lisztian cigar stumps moldering on the bosoms of adoring matrons).

Desperate for even closer ac-



quaintance, I combed the iconographical resources of the Nairobi Library, i.e., a few illustrated encyclopedias. I flicked impatiently past reproductions of painted and drawn portraits; it was the reality of photographs I craved. Curiously enough, only the oldest and blurriest of these excited me—a haunting daguerreotype of the seated Chopin, hawk-nosed with a furrow of pain between his eyes. It was taken in 1849; he had but 10 months to live. For some reason, the picture overpowered me with a sense of loss, of regret that Chopin's vanished, soft-hued Paris—so palpable all around him—would be forever denied me. Here was I, 100 years later, imprisoned under the harsh African sky.

#### Weekends with Tolstoy

My quest for *le temps perdu* did not, however, become active until I was 30 years old and living in New York as a freelance copywriter (*The Heat-rae Natural Gas Boiler: A User's Guide*). To while away the time between assignments, I began to research the life of Josef Lhévinne (1876–1944), an obscure Russian pianist whose few recordings are among the glories of the RCA archives. I discovered that his 92-year-old widow Rosina was still alive and teaching at the Juilliard School of Music.

On impulse, I went to interview her with a tape recorder. She began to talk casually about Josef's private recitals in Chekov's apartment, of

evenings with Tchaikovsky and Scriabin, and about weekends together “with the Tolstoy's at Yasnaya Polyana.”

#### The Rooseveltian Oak

I listened enraptured, and came away from her apartment determined to create a biography of Lhévinne in sound. For six months, I interviewed his surviving friends and pupils, compiled a chronology and discography, studied microfilms of his press clips, and pored over photographs until I could at last envision him shambling onstage, with his sleepy eyes and loose red wig. The resultant three-and-a-half hour *Josef Lhévinne: A Radio Portrait* was broadcast by WNCN, New York, in December 1971, and elicited the greatest listener response in the station's history.

Even then I never thought that I could make a living doing this sort of thing. Furthermore, as a college dropout, I felt unqualified for scholarly research. Was that not the province of Ph.D.s? I should have taken heart from Harry Graham, who wrote in *Misrepresentative Men*:

All great biographers possess  
Besides a thirst for information  
That talent which commands  
    success,  
I mean of course Imagination;  
Combining with excessive Tact  
A total disregard for Fact.

Instead, I tried to become successively a travel writer, a journalist,

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*Edmund Morris, 42, a current Wilson Center Fellow, is the author of The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt, which won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for biography in 1980. Born in Nairobi, Kenya, he briefly studied music and history at Rhodes University in South Africa. Mr. Morris immigrated to Britain in 1964 and then to the United States in 1968, supporting himself by freelance writing. He is now at work on the second volume of his projected three-volume life of Theodore Roosevelt.*



"I have a constant plan to write the life of Mr. Johnson," vowed James Boswell in 1772. Samuel Johnson agreed to provide all particulars "for twopence."

and a screenwriter. Then, in 1974, President Nixon resigned and made his tearful farewell to the White House. Like millions of other Americans watching on television, I was mystified to hear him read a 19th-century eulogy, written in a moment of high emotion by one of his predecessors: "She was beautiful in face and form . . . as a flower she lived, and as a fair young flower she died."

"Well," said Nixon after a pause, "that was TR."

At this, a forgotten, bespectacled face floated up from the depths of memory, and I was consumed with curiosity about the circumstances in which Theodore Roosevelt wrote those words. I dug out Noel Busch's *TR*, learned that the circumstances were extremely moving, then searched and found much more in Carleton Putnam's *Theodore Roose-*

*velt: The Formative Years*, a neglected masterpiece. It occurred to me that this period of TR's life, beginning with the death of his first wife, Alice Lee, in 1884 and ending with his marriage in 1886 to his childhood sweetheart, Edith Carow, would make an excellent screenplay, comprising his cowboy years out West, his conquest of melancholy and ill health, and his discovery that he was destined for the Presidency.

I wrote the screenplay (still unproduced, alas), doing massive research simply because I wanted to make it as authentic as possible. Then my agent made a fateful remark, "Since you've done all this work, why don't you write a short, popular biography?" In 1979, the first volume of this "short" work appeared—886 pages of it. By an odd coincidence, I counted 886 gray hairs in my beard

on the day of publication. I am now writing a second volume covering TR's Presidency (1901–1909), and will have to write a third before I am through—by which time, no doubt, my beard will be snowy.

I suppose I should be grateful to Nixon, because like a passing traveler who treads an acorn into the ground, he has afforded years of shade and comfort to someone lost by the wayside. My Rooseveltian oak is sturdy now (although I wish to God it didn't grow so slowly), and it may possibly survive me. I count myself lucky to have become a biographer at a time when biography is once again becoming a serious art form, as it was in the late 18th and mid-19th centuries.

### The Hairy Hand

The gentleman-biographer, so elegantly personified by James Boswell and John Lockhart, is reappearing at the toniest dinner parties, although often as not "he" is now a woman. Indeed, one of New York's *plus chic* hostesses, Arianna Stassinopoulos, is the biographer of Maria Callas, and is now working on a life of Picasso. Barbara Tuchman (*Stillwell*) rates pretty high at any table, and Antonia Fraser (*Mary Queen of Scots*) is no stranger to caviar.

Women, come to think of it, are naturally suited to biography, with their natural intuition, flair for live interviews, and love of reading other people's mail. When femininity is allied with real literary ability, as in the case of Judith Thurman (*Isak Dinesen*), Jean Strouse (*Alice James*), or Cecil Woodham-Smith, whose *Florence Nightingale* is one of the greatest biographies ever written, the combination is pretty hard to beat.

Which is not to say that the hairy hand may not occasionally wield a

competitive pen. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* has yet to be surpassed for depth of sympathy, wealth of detail (those mysterious bits of orange peel!), and tragicomic power. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* ends with the most poignant flashback in non-fiction, and Richard Holmes's *Shelley* begins more beautifully than any novel I recall. George Painter's *Proust* is almost as good as Proust's Proust.

### Painting the Truth

What are the reasons for the newfound popularity of biography, apparent on both sides of the Atlantic? One seems to be that a good biographer courageously tackles what Thomas Beer called "that most dangerous of materials, ourselves." Modern novelists largely lack this courage. They also, to my mind, lack the energy to write sustained narrative—the literary equivalent of running a marathon. Biographers *have* to be storytellers, in that their subject is the organic growth of character perceived in action. When the story is well told, and the character original enough to engage our sympathy, we can still feel that sense of final-page regret which used to be the sign of great fiction.

I confess that Boswell remains the master against whom I vainly measure my own efforts. I also shamelessly imitate him, particularly in the dramatization of dialogue, a quite legitimate device that for some reason has seldom been used by other biographers:

*Roosevelt.* I appointed him because he was the best man, regardless of race, color, or creed. Isn't that so, Mr. Schiff?

*Jacob Schiff (rather deaf).* Dot's right, Mr. President, you came to me and said, "Chake, who is der best Choo I can put in my Cabinet?"

It is just as legitimate, in my opinion, for a biographer to use the narrative techniques perfected by Tolstoy and Dickens (and in our own century, the movie serial), such as rhythmic cross-cutting, dramatic exit and entry, symbols, clue-planting, and cliffhangers. There is no reason either why the modern biographer should not indulge in metaphors as freely as the novelist or poet. For example, I used a subtextual metaphor of climbing throughout *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (having discovered that TR could never resist scaling any mountain in his vicinity, even when he was ravaged by asthma attacks). Chapter after chapter, as he rises through life, finds him cresting this or that cliff or mountain, sinking occasionally into valleys, yet always reaching higher plateaus, searching out purer air and wider vistas.

On the final page, he is Vice-President of the United States, picnicking atop Mount Marcy, the loftiest point in New York State, at the very moment President McKinley begins to die of an assassin's bullet. He sees a ranger running up the slopes of the mountain, clutching the

yellow slip of a telegram. "Instinctively," the last sentence reads, "he knew what message the man was bringing."

Now that sentence, I submit, is as dramatic as any a novelist might write. I get letters from readers who say it makes their skin prickle. Yet I do not assume undue credit for it, because it is grounded in fact: Theodore Roosevelt's own testimony, twice repeated. What I did was recognize a moment of supreme drama for what it was worth, in obedience to TR's own injunction, in his great essay, "History as Literature":

He [the historian] must always remember that while the worst offense of which he can be guilty is to write vividly and inaccurately, yet that unless he writes vividly, he cannot write truthfully; for no amount of dull, painstaking detail will sum up as the whole truth unless genius is there to paint the truth.

I make no claim to be a historian, much less a genius, but the vivid truth tantalizes me as much now as it did 30-odd years ago, when I first shaded my eyes against the equatorial glare, and saw those Macedonian plumes tossing under the baobabs.

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## COMMENTARY

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We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some of those printed below were received in response to the editors' requests for comment.

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### *Homelands for Exiles*

Re "Israel" [WQ, New Year's 1983]:

No discussion of Zionism and the State of Israel can omit the Jews of the Golah ("Exile"), those who do not live there.

There is no Zionist theory of the Golah. We who do not live in Israel are in Exile and should take steps to go home. Herzl's original theory paid slight attention to the Jews who in time to come would not need the salvation provided by a Jewish state. Today, no Israeli thinker will concede "legitimacy" to the Golah. As a first-rate Zionist historian told me, "If you are right, we are wrong." If Jews could build a stable and constructive community for themselves in the Western democracies, then the rationale for a Jewish state, in his view, would prove false.

If, however, Zionist theory cannot account for the endurance of the Jews outside the State of Israel, we must account for our relationship to our homelands and to the State of Israel. Clearly, we place our highest loyalty to our homelands. Equally clearly, we care very deeply for the welfare of the Jewish state. These loyalties need not come into conflict. But an uneasy truce between them—and equivalent concerns of other Americans for their countries of ancestral origin—hardly constitutes an answer. American Jews cannot explain who they are as Jews in the world in which there is a Jewish state, and what it means to be a Jew after the murder of six million Jews in Europe. What explanation do American Jews give themselves for continuing to live under those very conditions in which, in our

times, six million Jews of the Golah were wiped out? And if, as we all suppose, America is different, the issue of what it means to be different in America, to be Jews in a gentile society, still demands attention.

Jews are practical people. They have had for too long to solve only concrete problems of politics: of state-building in Israel, of community-building in this country. But in the end, ideas do matter. What we think about ourselves governs what we do. It must follow that problems of intellect and soul must engage once again the Jews who wonder who they are, and why they are where they are, and what they should become.

*Professor Jacob Neusner  
Program in Judaic Studies  
Brown University*

### *Realpolitik in Zion*

Shlomo Avineri's summary of the history of Zionism ["The Roots of Zionism"] is generally sound and persuasive, but one could not possibly imagine Menachem Begin arising from the movement and the history that Avineri has described. Avineri's Zionism appears to be composed of liberal nationalism, social revival, and the recovery of a Hebraic identity. But the pogroms in Russia (1881) and Central and Western European anti-Semitism (the 1890s) turned Leon Pinsker and Theodor Herzl to Zionism. Zionism contains both the spacious, positive dream that Avineri describes and *ressentiment*, which the Nazi years increased.

Don Peretz asserts ["A Different Place"] that Begin's second electoral victory in 1981 proved "the Conservative trend in Israeli politics" and that it had nothing to do with the economic situation of the country. On the contrary. In the run-up to the 1981 election, the Likud was losing, despite Begin's "charisma" and Peres's lack thereof. What persuaded the floating vote (mostly Sephardic) to go with Likud was a sudden easing by the Ministry of Finance of restrictions on consumer goods. It is reasonable to argue the reverse of Peretz's assertion: The half of the electorate

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that voted for Labor was motivated by foreign policy considerations, and those who in the end provided the victory for the Likud were persuaded by short-term, contrived prosperity.

Arthur Hertzberg  
Adjunct Professor of History  
Columbia University

### *Dubious Welcome*

I read with great interest the two articles on immigration in the New Year's 1983 issue of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

Especially informative was the distinction drawn by Willi Paul Adams ["A Dubious Host"] between the ideals of American immigration and the reality of our immigration policy: It was discriminatory from 1882 (with the Chinese Exclusion Act) until 1965, and it was often unduly restrictionist, especially during the 1920s. The Immigration Reform and Control Act that I am sponsoring intends not to repeat these past prejudices.

Aaron Segal's "The Half-Open Door" was, on the whole, a rational description of the limitations on the United States's ability to take new immigrants and of the unattractiveness of either the extreme restrictionist or the "open-door" solution to our current immigration problem. He correctly points out that one of illegal immigration's most serious threats is that it breeds further illegality.

However, some of Mr. Segal's statements need clarification: First, while the net effect of illegal workers on the U.S. economy might be "neutral" in the short-term, a likely long-run effect is to hold down wages in some industries and discourage modernization. Over time this could reduce U.S. economic competitiveness. Second, the United States accepts more refugees for permanent resettlement than any other country in the world. Many Third World countries "accept" refugees across their borders, but few offer significant permanent resettlement opportunities.

Alan K. Simpson, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Immigration  
and Refugee Policy, U.S. Senate

### *The Third Wave*

Two major demographic shifts have already shaped American society. First, a combination of extreme mortality among native Americans and massive immigration from Western Europe created American society. Second, declining fertility among descendants of those European settlers and a shift in the number and origin of immigrants in the later 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in a redefinition of "white America." Now a third demographic shift—extremely low fertility in the resident population of the U.S. and high levels of immigration from non-European sources—is beginning to affect our society.

U.S. fertility is now so low that, without immigration, population decline would occur within 30 years. The population will continue to grow, however, given the approximately 800,000 to one million (including illegal entry) immigrants arriving each year. And the newest immigrants will be an increasingly larger portion of the total population until current residents and their descendants no longer constitute a majority.

Is the nation prepared for this challenge? Will the United States of the early 21st century become the first truly multi-racial democratic society as the United States of the early 20th century became the first truly multiethnic white society?

Leon F. Bouvier  
Population Reference Bureau  
Washington, D.C.

### *Illegal Benefits*

Immigration policy-making is a complex process, but Aaron Segal glosses over some of the complexities in at least two places. About the use of income transfer programs by illegal migrants, he says: "The U.S. Department of Labor estimated in 1976 that 73 percent of undocumented Mexican workers had federal income tax withheld from their paychecks. . . ." This statistic came from a re-



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port that Marion Houstoun and I wrote in 1976 about a group of Mexican and non-Mexican illegal alien *workers*. One would expect healthy young male workers to be much more likely to pay taxes than to use benefits.

Segal apparently has not examined any work on illegal migrants' use of income transfer programs since 1976. For example, Roger Conner's "Breaking Down the Barriers: The Changing Relationship Between Illegal Immigration and Welfare" notes that Illinois found in 1982 that half of sampled alien applicants for unemployment insurance (UI) presented counterfeit green cards, and that the cost of UI benefits to illegal alien applicants, in one year, was about \$66 million. Similarly, Los Angeles County routinely turns away \$36 million of welfare claims a year on the grounds of illegal presence in the U.S.

Further, Segal does an injustice to the Immigration and Naturalization Service's "Project Jobs" program. In most of the project locations, U.S. workers appeared in droves to replace the apprehended aliens.

*David S. North, Director  
Center for Labor and Migration Studies  
Washington, D.C.*

## *Role Definition*

Perhaps my article, "The European Question" (reviewed in *WQ*, Spring 1983), gave the impression that the United States is facing an either-or choice with regard to Europe—either involvement and conflict or disengagement to pursue better its more natural and traditional global role and interests. Such was not my intention. My view is a case not of loving Caesar less but Rome more.

I noted that a North Atlantic power with pretensions to a global role must also assure its security in Europe. Britain's failure to maintain the balance of power in Europe led to two world wars and her own loss of world power. The lesson from this is that the United States must maintain its stake in Europe as a prerequisite to fulfillment of her interests

and obligations elsewhere.

Times have changed. In order to safeguard our relations with Europe, we must recognize that change and adapt to it. The European Question now involves not only the Soviet problem but also the restoration of Europe itself. Therefore, our relations with Europe would be better served if we encouraged European revival and unity rather than perpetuated a status quo which is as much a trap for us as it is for the Europeans and the Soviets. The restoration of Europe would liberate us all and do more for disarmament, peace, and prosperity than any massive program for rearmament.

The balance between America's worldwide and European interests is difficult to maintain. The Atlantic relationship would better resolve its potential for either domination or divergence through the common denominator of a wider partnership, including the Pacific democ-

racies, within which all could grow and find security.

Robert K. Olson  
Washington, D.C.

### Media Books

In Background Books on "The News Media" [WQ, Special Issue 1982], I noted two significant omissions: *TV and National Defense: An Analysis of CBS News, 1972-1973*, Ernest W. Lefever (Institute for American Strategy Press, 1974); and *The Prestige Press and the Christmas Bombing, 1972: Images and Reality in Vietnam*, Martin F. Herz (Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980). These books deserve serious consideration by students of the media.

Ernest W. Lefever, President  
Ethics and Public Policy Center  
Washington, D.C.

Credits: P. 9, U.P.I.; p. 13, From Pierre Merle, *Amin Dada* (Paris: S.E.C.L.E.-Régine Deforges, 1978); p. 17, Osrin in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*; p. 21, Pinkerton's, Inc.; p. 25, Ernest A. Pickup, Frontispiece to *What Happened at Aldersgate*, ed. Elmer T. Clark (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1938); p. 30, From Thomas Hart Benton, *An Artist in America* (University of Missouri Press), Lyman Field and the United Missouri Bank of Kansas City, N. A. Trustees, Benton Testamentary Trusts; p. 34 (L) The Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation, Beverly Hills, California; (R) 1961, oil on canvas, 60.5 x 36.5 ins. Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson; p. 35, Mimmo Paladino, *Porta: 1975-1978*; p. 46, *Mata Virgem Perto de Mangaratiba* from João Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca através do Brasil* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1943); p. 52, In *Viagem Pitoresca e Histórica ao Brasil—1816-1831*, by Jean Baptiste Debret, ed. by Miryam Ellis, 1971, Melhoramentos, Brasil; p. 57, Courtesy of Wide World Photos (Associated Press); p. 60, *Three Girls from the Same Street* from a painting by Maria Margarida; p. 63, Kevin Horan; p. 71, Jesuino do Monte Carmelo, *Painel Teto Nave*; p. 74, Lia Mattarakis, *S/Titulo—1977*; p. 76, From *Arte no Brasil*, vol. 1 (São Paulo: Abril S/A Culturel e Industrial, 1979); p. 83, Charles Cullen, Frontispiece to *Leaves of Grass* (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1933); p. 90, Courtesy of Linda Gray Sexton; p. 94, Ronald E. Pepin, Courtesy of the U.S. Army Center for Military History; p. 97, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library; p. 100, Kennedy, Wide World Photos (Associated Press); Diem, Wide World Photos (Associated Press); Ho and Giap, Wide World Photos (Associated Press); p. 101, Nixon and Kissinger, National Archives; Thieu, Wide World Photos (Associated Press); p. 102, Captain John T. Dyer, U.S. Marine Corps Art Collection; p. 107, From Gary Yanker, *Prop Art* (London: Studio Vista, 1972); p. 115, Ta-Thuc-Binh, *Ripe Rice*, In *Nghê thuật tạo hình Viet Nam* (Hanoi: Culture Publishing House, 1973); p. 122, John Spragens, Jr; p. 127, Copyright © George L. Skyepeck, *Three Soldiers*. All rights reserved; p. 134, Drawing by David Levine. Reprinted with permission from *The New York Review of Books*. Copyright © 1969 Nyrev, Inc.; p. 137, From *The Reporter*, Feb. 20, 1966; p. 145, From *Leon Blum*, trans. George Holloch (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1962); p. 149, From Kurt Weitzmann et al., *The Icon* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. © 1983); p. 150, Albrecht Durer; p. 152, Reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* by Derek Freeman, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1983 by Derek Freeman; p. 155, Smithsonian Institution Libraries; p. 158, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina; p. 162 (L) Yale Medical Historical Library; (R) Ann Ronan Picture Library; p. 163, Reproduced from the copy of Aristotle's *Libri de caelo. IIII*, ed. by Johann Eck (Augsburg, 1519), in the Rare Book Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; p. 167, Henry Rowlandson engraving of Boswell from *The Hypochondriack*, vol. II.

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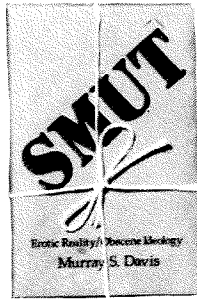
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