

was proof of a special compact made between God and the Dutch). Responding to this Afrikaner intransigence, South African blacks are now altering their own political mythology—from an emphasis on common humanity to a rejection of Western values and capitalism.

*Contemporary Affairs*

**HERE THE PEOPLE RULE  
Selected Essays**

by Edward C. Banfield  
Plenum, 1985  
348 pp. \$39.50

The bane of democracy is the pursuit of perfection. That, in a nutshell, is the argument underlying these 20 sensible, often provocative essays by the author of *Unheavenly City* (1968). Banfield, a professor of government at Harvard, harks back to the Founding Fathers in his bedrock conviction that man is a "creature more of passions than of reason." Thus, certain things are inevitable, including, Banfield explains in a discussion of American federalism, the futility of trying to limit government to "some defined sphere." People simply "cannot be relied upon voluntarily to abide by their agreements, including those upon which their own political order depends." In a prescient essay written 25 years ago, Banfield sees the perfectionist urge to "clean up" political parties (and to make them more "democratic") as a threat to their continued effectiveness; a follow-up piece surveys the actual damages of subsequent reforms. Profiting from his experience on a White House urban task force, Banfield explores the contradictions of Washington's Model Cities program (1966–74), where plans quickly became "plans to plan," and shows how grant-in-aid projects aimed at social uplift can quickly run amok. He laments the legacy of President Woodrow Wilson: Trying to separate the administration of policy (clean and scientific) from politics (dirty and human), he only succeeded in producing a bloated, self-serving bureaucracy. In addition to his skeptical ruminations on topics such as urban crises, "public policy" studies, economic explanations of political behavior, Banfield offers some wry suggestions, including a plan for structuring public libraries to serve the serious reader rather than the consumer of pulp.