



Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, and John Kenneth Galbraith, among others—hold that society must be structured so as to encourage the individual's fullest development.

Readers familiar with Sowell's work will not be surprised that he tends to favor the constrained vision. He marshals support for his "gut feeling" from history as well as from philosophy. The triumph of the unconstrained vision, as during the latter stages of the French Revolution, often leads to "surrogate decision-making," whereby the "enlightened few" end up making choices for the good of the "benighted masses."

Advocates of the constrained vision trust in processes and restriction on power more than in man's intentions: Peaceful nations must be militarily strong to be secure; judges must apply rules rather than prescribe social conditions; economies must evolve independently. Unconstrained thinkers seek to influence the course of events through judicial activism (the Warren Court), manipulation of the economy (New Deal policies), or compensation for particular groups (affirmative action).

Sowell's instructive presentation allows for complexities, including the "hybrid visions" of thinkers such as Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill. Marx, says Sowell, "spoke of 'the greatness and temporary necessity for the bourgeois regime'—a notion foreign to socialists with the unconstrained vision, for whom capitalism was simply immoral."

**WITNESS TO A CENTURY:
Encounters with the Noted,
the Notorious, and
Three S.O.B.s**

by George Seldes
Ballantine, 1987
544 pp. \$19.95

All centuries have their wars, catastrophes, and heroes, but none has been as painstakingly documented as the 20th. Perhaps one of its most peripatetic witnesses, and certainly one of its longest-lived, is reporter George Seldes, now 96, who took his first job with the *Pittsburgh Leader* in 1909 and quickly plunged into the main events of his day. He covered the battles of World War I, Russia shortly after the revolution, the Spanish Civil War, and the rise of Hitler and Mussolini, corresponded with J. Edgar Hoover, and became an admirer of Tito. His memories range from presidents to buffoons. Among the latter was the bombastic Mussolini: "I am a fatalist," he told Seldes in 1924. "I believe in the star of destiny. . . I am not afraid of death." While a special student at Harvard in 1912, Seldes came to know John Reed as a "ribald minnesinger" and was sur-

prised when this prankster-playboy became a revolutionary. (He was less surprised to learn that Reed, ever the eccentric, openly debated "the real meaning of Marxism with Zinoviev and other notables of the 1917 Revolution.")

Seldes does not dwell only on personages. He candidly exposes the press at its worst. At the end of World War I, Field Marshall Paul von Hindenberg confessed to Seldes and three other reporters that Germany had been beaten "fairly in the field." But the story was suppressed by General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, the U.S. field commander, with the backing of several members of the press corps who had been scooped on the story. Immediate publication of the confession, Seldes believes, would have made a lasting impression, thus undercutting Hitler's later contention that Germany had lost because of betrayal by businessmen and Jews at home.

Seldes's urge to set the record straight led him to found his own newsweekly, *In fact*, which he edited from 1940 to 1950. Attacking everything from Representative Martin Dies's House Un-American Activities Committee to cigarette advertising, he was often derisively called a "muck-raker." But Seldes wears the label with pride.

Arts & Letters

**KARL KRAUS:
APOCALYPTIC SATIRIST:
Culture and Catastrophe
in Habsburg Vienna**

by Edward Timms
Yale, 1986
443 pp. \$32.50

Writing in Vienna near the end of the Habsburg Empire, Karl Kraus (1874-1936) produced satire as savage and finely tuned as that of the great Jonathan Swift. Kraus's target was formidable: the culture and society of Vienna at the turn of the century—the world of Sigmund Freud, painter Oskar Kokoschka, novelist Robert Musil, and others whose work presaged the major artistic and intellectual developments of the 20th century.

Kraus's journal, *Die Fackel* (The Torch), was avidly read, even by the people it attacked. "Psychoanalysis is that mental illness of which it believes itself to be the cure," ran one of Kraus's more famous apothegms (although, says Timms, the satirist did not ridicule all of Freud's ideas). Bureaucrats, military officers, industrialists, and Jews all figured as frequent butts of Kraus's scorn. Contempt, in the last case, bordered on self-loath-