

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS

results in "debilitating falseness." (Even Emily Dickinson, that most private of poets, still recognized the world she rejected—"The soul selects her own Society/Then—shuts the Door.") But neither should it be "political poetry," which plays a didactic role. Pinsky argues that poetry may *use* politics as material, as it uses family or theology. But the poet, as both advocate and judge, weaves what he sees into grand designs. Lastly, the poet should treat his art in the way first described by 17th-century British dramatist Ben Jonson: "As thou art all, so be thou all to me."

## OTHER NATIONS

*Red Army Resilience*

"The Economic Constraints on Soviet Military Power" by G. Jonathan Greenwald and Walter B. Slocombe, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1987), 1800 K St. N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006.

In his 1941 memoir *Mission to Moscow*, Joseph Davies, Franklin D. Roosevelt's ambassador to the USSR (1936-1938), wrote that the Soviet economy was on the verge of collapse. "To maintain its existence," Davies wrote, the Soviet Union "has to apply capitalistic principles. Otherwise it will fail and be overthrown."

Forty-six years later, the Soviet economy remains both socialist and relatively healthy. Although the Kremlin has "ferocious economic problems," say Greenwald, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, and Slocombe, a deputy undersecretary of defense for policy during the Carter administration, there is "remarkably little evidence" to suggest either that Soviet performance cannot be improved or that Soviet military spending *must* be slashed.

Soviet economic growth has slowed in recent years. The USSR's gross national product (GNP) grew, on average, 2.2 percent during the past decade, dropping from an average rate of five percent between 1966 and 1970. Consumption rates have also slowed, falling from close to four percent increases between 1965 and 1975 to 1.5 percent increases (on average) since 1976. (Food consumption *fell* by two percent in 1985.)

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has tried to streamline the bureaucracy by reducing the number of officials responsible for overseeing production of consumer goods, and by giving plant managers more control in such matters as investment and wages. Gorbachev's goal, the authors argue, is not to imitate the West but to shore up the system by making the Soviet economy as efficient as that of staunchly communist East Germany.

Annual increases in Soviet defense spending (which, according to the CIA, currently consumes between 15 and 17 percent of GNP) have slowed during the past decade. The authors argue that Gorbachev can achieve some cost savings without diminishing real military strength. For example, air defense and civil defense units now "produce remarkably little benefit against U.S. and allied countermeasures." Many of the 45 army divisions in Siberia now assigned to the long Chinese border could be demobilized if Sino-Soviet tensions recede.

OTHER NATIONS

Yet the Kremlin's defense budget will not be drastically cut, the authors conclude, because the Soviet high command will veto any such attempts. And the economy, however troubled, can sustain Soviet military power at its current "comfortable" level indefinitely.

*Canada's Confusion*

"Canada—the Empty Giant" by Daniel Casse, in *The National Interest* (Summer 1987), 1627 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Canada emerged from World War II with massive surpluses of food and industrial goods and the third largest navy in the world. Forty-two years later, Canada has a sluggish economy, contributes less per capita to NATO than any other member, and defends 44,000 miles of coastline with 20 frigates, four destroyers, and three aging submarines.

Why has Canada's role diminished? The answer, says Casse, managing editor of *The Public Interest*, is that Canada is not a unified nation, but a collection of regions "whose residents give little thought to one another and, hence, share no national purpose." Attempts by the Canadian government to artificially create a national identity have resulted in domestic protectionism and an "ingrained anti-Americanism" in foreign relations.

"It is in our security interest," states a paper from the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs, "to play an active role *between* East and West." But following an "independent course" in foreign policy, says Casse, means



*Canadians complain about U.S. cultural and economic dominance, but America still beckons. Recently, 10,000 visas for permanent U.S. residency were made available; in one week, 80,000-plus Canadians applied.*