

(up to 1,000 yards) compelled commanders such as Grant to rely on telegrams rather than personal observation for their information. Yet Grant mastered the necessities of total war, while his modest style of "unheroic heroism" was, in Keegan's view, perfectly suited "to the populism of the society he led to victory."

The gulf between commanders and their forces in the field continued to grow. During World War II, Hitler commanded German armies as far away as 1,300 miles, even as he cultivated a "false heroic" style. His "mask" was based, Keegan explains, "on the concept of lonely suffering, on his internalizing of his soldiers' risks and hardships . . . [and] ultimately on the ritual of suicide as the equivalent of death in the face of the enemy."

Contemporary Affairs

THE HEALTH OF NATIONS: True Causes of Sickness and Well-being
by Leonard A. Sagan
Basic, 1987
233 pp. \$19.95

During the past 150 years, the advanced industrial nations of the world have enjoyed a dramatic increase in their citizens' average life expectancy. This has usually been attributed to advances in public sanitation, the discovery of "miracle" drugs and vaccines, and improved nutrition.

Sagan, a California epidemiologist, argues that these factors alone do not account for the change. Indeed, declining morbidity and mortality rates preceded the safeguarding of public water supplies, the routine delivery of babies in hospitals, and the introduction of antibiotics.

Then what else matters? Through adroit correlation of existing social, economic, and health data, Sagan points to such factors as class, family cohesiveness, education, and quality of work. Emotional health, solid self-esteem, creative and challenging jobs—these all contribute significantly to a healthy life, Sagan finds. Discussing the role of stress, he attacks head on the romantic notion that premodern societies are less taxing than modern ones; the day-to-day struggle to survive creates emotional distress that is ultimately reflected in a higher incidence of disease and lower life expectancy. But modern nations are not out of the woods: The pronounced slowing down of the growth of life expectancy in the United States can be directly correlated with such diverse phenom-

ena as rising illiteracy and the dissolution of the family through divorce.

Above all, Sagan's analysis suggests that high health expenditures do not alone achieve gains in life expectancy, and, after a point, produce diminishing returns. Despite Britain's national health-care system, its lower classes still have higher mortality and morbidity rates than do its upper classes. And although America ranks second only to Sweden in per capita health outlays, it lags behind 18 other countries in average life expectancy.

**ECONOMICS: Between
Predictive Science
and Moral Philosophy**

by James M. Buchanan
compiled by Robert D. Tollison
and Viktor J. Vanberg
Texas A & M, 1988
413 pp. \$48.50

These 26 essays by the 1986 Nobel laureate in economics represent what the volume's editors call "a modern revival of [the] classical political economy" practiced by free-market advocate Adam Smith (1723-90). What Buchanan, a professor at George Mason University, admires most about Smith's approach is its modesty. Instead of trying to predict the outcome of the market process, Smith studied the relationships between the institution and the individual in the hope of finding how self-interest translated into public good.

Such modesty has been lost, says Buchanan. Economics is now a predictive "science," increasingly used by governments seeking to control and promote specific outcomes. Unfortunately, says Buchanan, neither economics nor politics can produce efficiency and justice. Unable to forecast individual choices, economists cannot aggregate individual choices into a "social welfare function." Governments, lacking the unanimous support to produce a truly "collective" choice, use temporary majorities to push through temporary policies.

Governmental hyperactivity in the United States has produced voluminous laws and regulations, which in turn spawn a growing number of interest groups seeking to manipulate government for personal or ideological gain. This unseemly scramble has served only to undercut respect for laws. And in a society with only a minimal "national community," respect for laws, institutions, and the rights of others is crucial.

Buchanan maintains that the restoration of the moral order requires the "rollback of governmental intrusions into the lives of citizens." Simple Reaganism? Perhaps. But it may be foolish to dismiss Buchanan with a partisan label. Foolish, also,