

Hitler had backed away from confrontation with the Church, fearing that it would hurt the morale of Nazi Germany's armed forces, and he did so again in 1940-41, when Catholics and Protestants protested the *Führer's* euthanasia program, which would have claimed the lives of "unfit" Gentiles. Hitler postponed it.

On their own, Germany's Catholic and Protestant clergymen were of no mind to oppose the anti-Semitism that led to the Final Solution. Germany's churches were so saturated in nationalism, writes O'Brien, that "the *Volk* [the German people] came ahead of any Gospel message in their hearts and minds."

Nationalism, ironically, was a product of the Enlightenment, which had aspired to replace religion with reason. "War, persecution, and the spirit of intolerance would fade away along with the [religious] authority which had legitimized these things," writes O'Brien. Instead, the Enlightenment bred new creeds, none more

virulent than nationalism. And nationalism nowhere became more virulent than in Nazi Germany.

It soon infected Germany's Protestant theologians. They came to view the German *Volk* as "the carriers of God's will in history." From there, it was but a short step to declaring Hitler, "a 'pious and faithful sovereign'" sent by God to save the *Volk*, as a relatively moderate Lutheran thinker, Paul Althaus, wrote in 1937.

Catholic doctrine was made in Rome, and thus did not bend as easily to Nazism. But, without papal leadership, German Catholics also succumbed to the nationalist disease. Like the Protestants, they accepted Hitler's depiction of the Jews as enemies of the *Volk*, responsible for Germany's humiliating surrender in 1918. The Christians "preserved a frigid and universal silence" when Hitler launched the first pogroms during the 1930s, and the *Führer* "understandably, took that Christian silence for consent."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Shuttle Trouble

"U.S. Access to Space" by John M. Logsdon and Ray A. Williamson, in *Scientific American* (March 1989), Box 3187, Harlan, Iowa 51593.

Three years after the *Challenger* disaster, the U.S. space shuttle is flying again. The bad news is that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has not learned from its past mistakes.

According to Logsdon and Williamson, of George Washington University and the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, respectively, NASA's exaggerated hopes for the shuttle booster and orbiter during the early 1970s led it to abandon development of other space launchers. Entrepreneurs were discouraged from creating new rockets as long as NASA offered to launch scientific and commercial satellites into orbit at (subsidized) low prices. When the *Challenger* blew up in January 1986, the United States

had only a few Delta, Atlas, and Titan missiles (all based on the technology of the early 1960s) to fill in. They failed, too. Today, up to five years after their scheduled launch, several important satellites remain in mothballs.

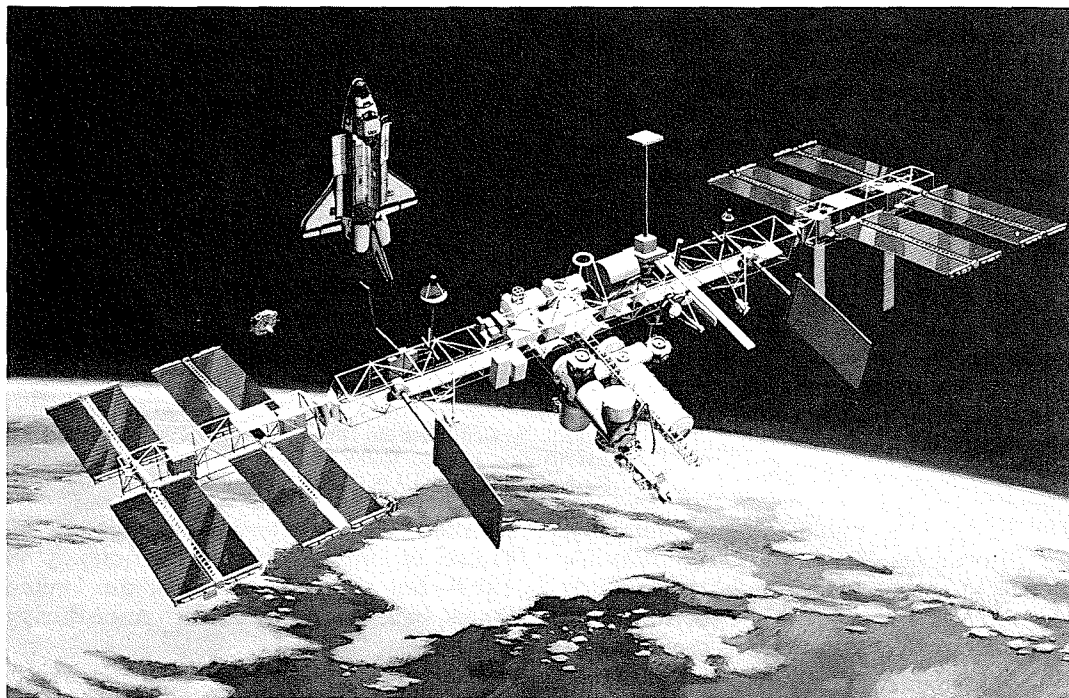
Although the Pentagon is now developing updated versions of the old rockets to launch military satellites, NASA still has all its eggs in one basket, the authors say. After a fourth orbiter comes into service in 1992, it plans 12 to 14 flights per year, at a cost of between \$250 and \$500 million per launch. Fortunately, if NASA's plans again prove too optimistic, new private and foreign rockets will be available to launch most U.S. civilian satellites. But NASA also plans to complete a manned space station

by 1998, relying almost exclusively on the shuttle. What if the shuttle fleet is grounded again after the station is manned?

So far, NASA has rejected scientists' pleas to create either new rockets or a larger unmanned version of the shuttle.

NASA *has* begun long-term research into a 21st-century replacement for the shuttle. The new craft may take off from airfields like normal jet aircraft and then

enter outer space at hypersonic speeds. Significantly, the work is under the Pentagon's control. Such a craft could finally realize the goals set for the shuttle—putting people into space cheaply and often. But even if the project succeeds, the authors warn, NASA may repeat the fundamental error that has plagued the shuttle program: "substituting a decision about a means . . . for a decision about the purposes [of] U.S. activities in space."



The U.S. space station has a name (Freedom), a price tag (\$29 billion), and a completion date (1998), but lacks a clear mission.

Savant Syndrome

"An Unlikely Virtuoso" by Darold A. Treffert, in *The Sciences* (Jan.-Feb. 1989), 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Blind, stooped, and palsied, Leslie Lemke, 36, has for 15 years astonished audiences with flawless renditions of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. He has mastered not only the piano but the ukelele, the concertina, the xylophone, and the bongo drums. His performances are all the more amazing

because Lemke has an I.Q. of 58. The same fingers that adroitly navigate the 88 keys of the piano cannot begin to fit a wooden block into a square hole.

Lemke is in many ways typical of the several hundred reported cases of "savant syndrome," writes Treffert, a Wisconsin psychiatrist. Savants are mentally re-