

Don't Worry, Be Angry

Arguing that Japanese are too restrained in the presence of foreigners, novelist Junichi Watanabe offers his countrymen some pointers on getting mad in the monthly *Chuo Koron* (Jan. 1989), translated by the Asia Foundation's Translation Service Center:

For one thing, few Japanese can speak a foreign language well enough to respond to a rude remark . . . I've often racked my brain trying to figure out how to say something [in English] as simple and direct as "You're a creep." But I find the right words too late to dish out the



insult. Timing is crucial. If you don't respond immediately, there's no point in saying anything at all.

In Tokyo, I often see foreigners arguing among themselves or yelling at Japanese employees in hotels and restaurants.

When abroad, Japanese, too, should express themselves freely . . . Many Japanese wonder how you can express outrage in a language you don't speak. That's not a problem . . . If you can't express yourself, use Japanese, especially when you're furi-

ous. Facial expressions and gestures will get the message across. When in doubt, shout.

protests to the segregated black townships—many of them accessible only by one road. After a 1985 uprising in the township of Langa, South African security forces abolished the township and forcibly relocated thousands of residents.

During the early 1960s, notes Herbst, the revolutionary African National Congress (ANC) renounced popular insurrection as futile. Nelson Mandela warned that it would lead to strife among blacks. In fact, perhaps one third of the 2,600 blacks who were victims of political violence between 1984 and November 1987 were killed by other blacks. But the ANC has

been no more successful with its chosen strategy—guerrilla warfare. South African troops have deprived it of sanctuaries in neighboring countries. With 10,000 men under arms, the ANC is able to keep only 400 men inside South Africa. Outgunned and penetrated by spies, the ANC has been a military failure. In 262 attacks between 1976 and 1985, most of them minor, it lost 249 men killed or captured.

In Herbst's view, neither popular protest nor guerrilla war poses significant threats to white rule. Ahead, he sees only increasingly violent protests, harsher repression, and more black suffering.

Who Created the Welfare State?

"The Scandinavian Origins of the Social Interpretation of the Welfare State" by Peter Baldwin, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Jan. 1989), Cambridge Univ. Press, 32 East 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Scandinavia is widely regarded as the birthplace of the modern welfare state, and embattled working-class socialists are seen as its midwives.

Such perceptions are only half accurate, contends Baldwin, a Harvard historian. The early architects of Scandinavia's "middle way" were its prosperous farmers, and their motives were far from altruistic.

The Scandinavian welfare state was born not after World War II, as is com-

monly supposed, but around the turn of the century. Scandinavians took a cue from Bismarck's Germany, which launched the first national old-age pension system in 1883. But Bismarck's system, designed chiefly to avert working-class discontent, was limited in scope and financed by regressive payroll "contributions."

In Denmark, the push for social security came from the nation's numerous small farmers. Growing in importance but still

denied government aid, the farmers, who backed the liberal Venstre Party, "used social policy tailored to their specifications to squeeze concessions from a state they did not yet control," writes Baldwin. A national old-age pension fund would reduce the burden of the countryside's increasingly costly local poor relief. Tax financing spread the costs to urban workers and manufacturers. Universal coverage allowed the farmers themselves, after retiring, to reap some of the benefits. In 1891, the conservatives gave in, agreeing to a social security scheme partly financed by a

new tax on workingmen's beer.

Sweden trod much the same path when it created its social security system in 1913, notes Baldwin. Only later would Scandinavia's socialists take credit for (and build upon) measures which many of them had in fact opposed.

Scandinavia's welfare states, says Baldwin, are not the product of "supposedly unique Scandinavian social virtues or . . . socialism's heroic march in these most quintessentially petty bourgeois of European nations. The origins of virtue turn out to be mundane"—even rustic.

The Middle East's Missing History

"The Map of the Middle East: A Guide for the Perplexed" by Bernard Lewis, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1989), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

The Middle East is one of the "cradles of civilization." Yet, today, it is a region without any fixed identity, comprised of "nations" which lack unity, tradition, or history. That, contends Lewis, a Princeton historian, partly explains the region's frightening instability.

Unlike the civilizations of China and India, which have been relatively unified by language and faith for millennia, "Middle Eastern civilization began in a number of different places and evolved along different lines," notes Lewis.

To make matters worse, most of the various cultures that did flourish in the Middle East were buried by a succession of cataclysms: Greek and Roman invasions; the coming of Christianity; and finally, during the seventh century, Islam. (Only Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia bear any significant geographic or ethnic resemblance to ancient empires.) By the late Middle Ages, most of the Middle East's "ancient languages were dead, its writings locked in scripts that no one could read. Its gods and their worship [were] known only to a small number of specialists and scholars." Islam provided the region's only unifying identity—a not altogether successful one at that, as the failure of pan-Islamic movements from the 19th century to Khomeini suggest.

Beginning during the early 19th century, European colonialists repeatedly redrew the map of the Middle East, utterly disregarding whatever pockets of local historical, ethnic, or linguistic unity remained. As a result, even many of the names of today's Middle Eastern countries are artificial "restorations and reconstructions" of ancient (and usually alien) names. In 1934, for example, the Italians combined two former Ottoman *sanjaks* and dubbed the new entity Libya, a name they plucked from ancient Greek atlases. The French named Syria in a similar way.

By the late 19th century, some Middle Eastern peoples, notably the Egyptians, began trying to "rediscover and repossess" an ancient identity. This search for a usable past has often been quixotic, Lewis remarks. Today, Saddam Hussein, the leader of ethnically divided Iraq (and arch-foe of Iranian leaders), evokes the memory of an ancient Iraqi nation that never existed and proudly cites Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar as a national hero who resolved "the Zionist problem" of his day.

Throughout the Middle East, Muslim fundamentalists are aggressively calling for a supra-national Islamic community. But Lewis believes that the borders drawn by Europeans will retain "their power to enclose and to divide" for years to come.