

gathering became fair game for a poll. In Pennsylvania, one political aficionado kept a record of how many toasts were made to each candidate at a Fourth of July celebration. Newspapers began reporting such results. By early October of 1824, the *Star and North Carolina Gazette* had collected poll results from 155 different meetings. Surprisingly, Smith says, the straw polls

rather accurately foretold local results.

The ultimate irony is that popular opinion finally counted for little in 1824. Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, won a plurality of the popular vote but fell short of a majority in the Electoral College. The election was decided by the House of Representatives, which chose John Quincy Adams to be the sixth U.S. president.

Budget Magic?

"Line-Item Veto: Where Is Thy Sting?" by John R. Carter and David Schap, in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Spring 1990), 1313 21st Ave. So., Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

In politics, old panaceas don't die or fade away. They just keep hanging on.

Such is the case of the line-item veto. First employed by the Confederacy, the presidential line-item veto has been proposed in more than 150 bills introduced in Congress since 1876. President George Bush, like his predecessor, frequently proclaims it the nation's fiscal elixir.

The remarkable thing, as Carter and Schap, both economists at College of the Holy Cross, peevishly note, is that governors in 33 states already possess the line-item veto, and although scholars have sliced and diced the data from these states every which way, no signs of budget magic have been detected. As long ago as 1950, Frank W. Prescott reported that governors armed with line-item veto power rarely even used it, and during the early 1980s,

the average was two item-vetoes annually.

Perhaps in exasperation, Carter and Schap take the hunt for the elusive line-item-veto effect further afield. If it is worth anything, they speculate, the veto should enhance the authority of governors. And that would be reflected in other ways, such as better chances of reelection or elevation to the U.S. Senate. But statistical tests of these and four other indicators reveal no impact.

Theoretically, the authors say, the line-item veto may keep state expenditures down by forcing legislators to tailor proposals to avoid rejection. However, there is very little evidence that this happens. The line-item veto, they write, "need not cause, and apparently has not caused, the kind of sweeping changes either feared or favored by so many policy analysts."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Soviet Gaullism?

"Inventing the Soviet National Interest" by Stephen Sestanovich, in *The National Interest* (Summer 1990), 1112 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Meeting with his staff in July 1988, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced a revolutionary change in policy. Mikhail Gorbachev had just revealed his plan to create a new legislature and thus to begin the redistribution of power within the Soviet Union. Now, Shevardnadze said, Soviet foreign policy would be reoriented as well. Henceforth, it would be guided by a new concept, the "national interest."

What sounds mundane to Western ears was revolutionary in Moscow, says Sestanovich, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. For decades, Soviet leaders had used the "national interest" as a term of contempt; Soviet foreign policy was guided by the need to advance the international class struggle.

After he came to power in 1985, Gorbachev spoke of a new foreign policy

based on "common human values." But no thorough reassessment of policy was required. Sestanovich writes: "The language of 'interest,' by contrast, provided a framework in which unilateral Soviet actions—even unilateral concessions—might make sense." Such concessions came quickly, beginning with Gorbachev's December 1988 announcement of troop cutbacks in Europe.

That is only one sign of the astonishing "minimalism" that Sestanovich sees sweeping Soviet foreign-policy thinking. Thus, Andrei Kozyrev, a top Foreign Ministry official, wrote recently: "Our country has no interests justifying the use of military resources outside the borders of the socialist community." Politburo member

Aleksandr Yakovlev told *Der Spiegel* last year: "It is beyond my comprehension why one power should want to be more important than another."

A second result of the debate over the national interest is a new pluralism in policymaking. As disenchantment with the past deepens, the military is losing its dominant role.

Finally, the Soviets are more willing to defer to international opinion. As Shevardnadze said in 1988: "We cannot simply pretend that the norms and ideas of . . . civilized conduct in the world community do not concern us. If you want to be accepted in it, you have to observe them."

But Moscow is not going to withdraw into an isolationist shell. The question, Sestanovich says, is how will it define the national interest to make "a better fit with the needs of a post-imperial medium power." The challenge, he says, is parallel to the one France confronted after World War II, and perhaps the answer will be similar to the one provided by Charles de Gaulle. What would Soviet Gaullism mean? Maintenance of a limited nuclear deterrent; establishment of "special relationships" with other European nations (especially Germany); and a "residual role" in the Third World.

Still Crazy After All These Years

Noted in *National Review* (June 11, 1990):

UNESCO . . . has named Ho Chi Minh Man of the Century, "the symbol of the common struggles of people for peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress."

The German Shadow

"One-and-a-half Cheers for German Unification" by Josef Joffe, in *Commentary* (June 1990), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Just as every silver lining has its dark cloud, so the end of the Cold War has its ominous aspect: the reunification of Germany. One German-Jewish journalist worried recently that the new Germany "may become a strange and eerie place—perhaps even the source of a new wave of darkness spreading over the earth."

Joffe, the foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper in Munich, offers partial reassurance. "Anybody reasoning forward from past disaster will be hard put to make the indictment stick," he writes. The West German legislators who were reported to have burst into *Deutsch-*

land über alles when the Berlin Wall was breached last November 9, he notes, were actually singing *Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit* (Unity, Justice, Freedom).

Joffe's larger point is that in Germany, as in the rest of the industrialized world, old-fashioned nationalism, the "murderous energy" that drove European history between 1789 and 1945, "isn't what it used to be." No longer do these nations go to war on the strength of a cry like "*Gott strafe England*" (May God Punish England). That energy has been extinguished by the memory of two world wars that left 70 million dead and by the knowledge that national