

cynicism, he says, has its origins in the aesthetic theories of the Dadaist painter Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), who declared during the 1950s that artists produce only a raw product; “it must be ‘refined’ as pure sugar from molasses, by the spectator through the change from inert matter into a work of art.” Duchamp’s notion that life and art are inseparable was more revolutionary than anything Picasso did, Gray says, “for the final and inescapable conclusion to be drawn from it was that art could be entirely dispensed with.” No longer an expression of the painter’s spirit, art increasingly became just another market-place commodity. A few contemporary critics, notably Jean Baudrillard, encourage artists to think of their work as nothing

more than objects of consumerism.

A booming art market and a generation greedy for quick riches and fame have speeded the decline of art, Gray says. But his particular peeve is the reproduction of art in 35-mm. slides now used by curators and critics and in competitions and art schools. Paintings so reproduced, he says, are reduced in scale and stripped of their character. “To an ever increasing degree,” the critic Walter Benjamin observed in 1936, “the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.” The result is art intended to shock and startle rather than to invite contemplation. And in the end, says Gray, that is the difference between most contemporary art and what went before.

OTHER NATIONS

Latin America's Protestant Ethic

“Speaking in Latin Tongues” by David Martin, in *National Review* (Sept. 29, 1989), 150 West 35th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

“Close to the tall iron tower [in Guatemala City] commemorating the 1871 liberal revolution are a converted cinema with ‘Jesus salva’ on its marquee and the tent-like structure of an independent church called Verbo. As you trundle and bump

through the barrios there is a storefront church every two or three hundred yards: Calvary, Jerusalem, Bethesda, Galilee, Tabor, Ebenezer, Prince of Peace.” They are not Catholic churches, writes Martin, a sociologist at the London School of Economic

and Southern Methodist University. Latin America, he says, “the great Catholic continent, home of almost half the Catholics in the world, is swarming with evangelicals, above all with Pentecostals.”

Since 1960, Martin reports, perhaps one Latin American in 10 has converted to Protestantism. In Brazil, where the Catholic Church has been weakened by the importation of foreign priests, there are some 25 million converts; a third of Guatemala’s population, perhaps a fifth of Nicaragua’s, and three percent of

A Disneyland for Moralists

Southern Africa, as described in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1989) by Chester A. Crocker, who was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan administration.

Southern Africa is a beautiful region, magnificently endowed with human and natural resources, the potential economic engine of a continent and a place whose web of racial and civil conflict tears at our hearts, urging us to engage ourselves. But at another level, southern Africa can become, as former ambassador to Pretoria Ed Perkins put it, a sort of “political vending machine” into which we insert our coins to receive moral hygiene or instant ideological gratification. Featuring almost every form of odious human behavior—racism, brutal oppression, Marxism, authoritarianism, terrorist violence, organized butchery of unarmed villagers and gross official corruption—the region became a moralist’s theme park.

Mexico's have converted. Fifty million souls in all. A case of gringo cultural imperialism? Apparently not. While missionaries from the United States have helped spread the faith, Martin says, Protestantism has gone native.

What is the attraction? The converts, mostly poor people, leave behind "a Catholicism reduced to one or two external markers, to godparenthood and the fiesta," Martin writes. They join churches which offer "participation, a healing of body and

soul, and a network of mutual support. What they demand is discipleship and discipline, at work, in the family, and in the church."

Just as the rise of Protestantism in Europe after the 16th century fostered the personal discipline and attitudes that launched the industrial revolution, as Max Weber wrote in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5), so, in Martin's view, the evangelical revolution bids fair to transform Latin America.

Gorbachev's Ethnic Surprise

"Ethnic Politics in the USSR" by Paul Goble, in *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1989) U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Mikhail Gorbachev must dread reading *Pravda*. Each day brings fresh news of ethnic unrest in his country, whether it be Baltic states demanding their independence or Armenians and Azerbaijanis clashing over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Is the Soviet Union disintegrating? Have Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* opened a Pandora's box of turmoil that ultimately will topple him as party leader?

Gorbachev clearly was caught off guard by the level of unrest. As Goble, a State Department analyst, points out "Gorbachev had little experience or expertise on nationality questions before coming to power" in 1986. Now that the lid is off, Goble thinks Gorbachev can avoid disaster, and he may be able to use the troubles to advance his own agenda of loosening Party control over Soviet society.

More than 100 separate ethnic groups—ranging from the vast Ukrainian community of more than 50 million down to the Small Peoples of the North (26 micro-nationalities each numbering fewer than 2,000)—are clamoring for a say in what happens in their respective homelands. The party chiefs in the 15 republics for the first time are having to listen to the voices of their people or risk being rendered ineffective. A telling example: When outspoken Dinmukhammad Kunayev was replaced as Kazakhstan's party chief by

Russian-born Gennadiy Kolbin in 1986, the appointment sparked mass demonstrations. But Kolbin himself was soon forced to become "more Kazakh than his Kazakh predecessor," amplifying the crowds' demands for more regional autonomy. Gorbachev has found himself bound by his own democratic style to permit such adaptability to ethnic demands.

Three of Gorbachev's policies have contributed to the growing dissent in the republics. First, *glasnost* revealed past sins of Kremlin leaders. As Goble says, "collectivization looks very different in Ukraine and Kazakhstan—where millions died as a direct result of it—than in Moscow, where Russian workers were guaranteed some food." Second, Gorbachev's call for mass participation in national politics has raised expectations of a larger role for the republics. At the same time, his plan to reduce some republic ministries has prompted a scramble among party chiefs to protect their own turf.

Ironically, the mass demonstrations have created two misconceptions in the West. Goble asserts that they are often the sign of a group's last-ditch desperation, not its power. What occurs behind the scenes is still what matters most. And although Moscow has seemed to let unrest get out of hand—albeit repressing it brutally at times, as in Azerbaijan—Gorbachev may be using the demonstrations to force the