

Phillips has some claim to the role of a political prophet. His *Emerging Republican Majority* (1967) predicted the conservative resurgence—and, as the architect of Richard Nixon's 1968 "southern strategy" he helped bring it about. Two decades later, in *The Politics of Rich and Poor* (1990), he suggested that middle-class woes might finally break the Republican monopoly on the White House. The relatively short time it took Phillips to go from a Republican to a Democratic Jeremiah was the time it took America, he believes, to undergo a secret revolution. In the early 1950s, he points out, \$600,000-a-year executives were taxed at around 75 percent of their income, while the median family "breadwinner" (in his quaint terminology) paid five percent. By the late 1980s "the effective combined rate of federal taxes on median or average families had climbed to the 25–28 percent range," while taxes on half-million dollar incomes had



fallen to almost the same level. "There, in a sentence," he says, "was the fiscal revolution."

But what is the middle class, anyway, in a "classless society" such as America? Even though Phillips is always ready to make assertions about "the middle-class psyche," his characterization is purely financial: It is the mathematical middle-income group. He indignantly dismisses any alternative methods that might take behavior or attitudes into account. Such rigidity forces him to banish from the middle class those most bourgeois of professions, medicine and law, and to cast them as profiteering enemies of his median group. The tendency of young householders, unable to achieve their parents' norm of "a suburban home with two reasonably new cars in the garage," to substitute "stylish clothing and sophisticated wine and food" he mocks as "simulating affluence." Such reasoning reduces his middle class to a tabular abstraction drained of social or cultural content.

Phillips's assessment of the American dream in strictly financial terms also makes it hard to assess his dark hints that bourgeois "boiling-points" have alarming political consequences. Historically, populist movements have involved marginal groups, but for the first time, he argues, it is the middle class that is in revolt. What, exactly, are the terrifying signs of this revolt? Phillips has little to display other than George Bush's receipt of a smaller percentage of the vote in 1992 than Herbert Hoover got in '32 and, also, the twangy antiestablishment gibes of a Texas billionaire. Knowing what has happened to the middle class elsewhere in the industrial world might allow readers to evaluate not Phillips's statistics—which most economists accept—but his prognostications about what these statistics portend. Yet almost the only analogy Phillips offers is to the *brede middenstand* (broad middle group) of the 17th-century Dutch Republic, with its comely houses along the Keizersgracht and Heerengracht. Readers skeptical of Phillips's barely veiled threat of a populist or fascist reaction to overtaxation may take comfort from the fact that the middle class of Amsterdam and Utrecht survived the decline on which he morbidly focuses. There is life after exceptionalism.

NO FRIENDS BUT THE MOUNTAINS: The Tragic History of the Kurds. By John Bulloch and Harvey Morris. Oxford. 242 pp. \$25

During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, responding to President George Bush's call for the oppressed peoples of Iraq to rise up, Kurdish guerrillas seized control of much of northern Iraq. Once the UN truce was signed, Saddam Hussein sent his surviving troops north, slaughtering the lightly armed Kurds and driving millions more into exile. For the Kurds, the Allies' indifference to their fate was business as usual. Constituting the world's largest stateless nationality, the Kurds reside in countries where they have at times been denied the use of their language and even fatally poisoned by chemical sprays—persecutions that are rarely reported in the world press. Why this neglect? British journalists Bulloch and Morris suggest that the major international powers share an "Arabocentric view" of the Middle East. Those who consider the region essentially an Arab domain believe that the claims of the Palestinian Arabs demand attention and redress, while those of the Kurds, an ancient non-

Arabic people, seem less legitimate. It has hardly helped that Kurdistan is partitioned among five countries (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Armenia) and that Kurdish insurgents are too faction-ridden to form a single independence movement. In this first book-length history of the Kurds in English, Bulloch and Morris make clear that the Arab-Israeli conflict is neither the longest nor the bloodiest struggle in the Middle East.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children. *By Jason Berry.* 407 pp. Doubleday. \$22.50

In the summer of 1983, in the heart of Louisiana's Cajun country, a nightmare became real when two parishioners of St. John's Catholic church learned that their trusted pastor, Father Gilbert Gauthé, had been sexually abusing their three sons, along with dozens of other St. John's altar boys. Horrible as the crime was, the response of the church hierarchy to its disclosure was nearly as appalling. Gauthé, it turns out, had been removed from a previous assignment for similar offenses. The vicar general of the diocese tried to downplay the more recent incidents, cautioning that too much talk might hurt Gauthé's career.

While journalist Berry devotes considerable space to the Gauthé affair and other similar scandals, his book is far more than a mere exposé. A devout Catholic, Berry is concerned with fundamental problems threatening the Catholic church, including the practice of celibacy and the evasive political machinations of an out-of-touch church hierarchy. Celibacy, Berry believes, and the allied opposition to women in clerical roles, are at least partially responsible for the declining number—and quality—of those choosing a priestly vocation. While there has been throughout history no lack of sexually active priests, giving rise to one scandal or another, seldom have there been so many as today. And according to several priests whom Berry quotes, there has never been so large a preponderance of gay clerics—around 40 percent, by many estimates.

To be sure, very few homosexuals are pedophiles, and heterosexuals can also be fixated upon children. The larger point of Berry's book is that an unhealthy, unventilated atmosphere now prevails in the Catholic church—one that could bring on legions of angry Luthers, far less temperate than

the loyal Erasmians of Berry's stripe. The Vatican would do well to listen now.

A DAY IN THE NIGHT OF AMERICA. *By*

Kevin Coyne. Random House. 316 pp. \$22

THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR SOCIETY: Understanding Human Limits in a World That Never Stops. *By Martin Moore-Ede.* Addison-Wesley. 230 pp. \$22.95

America's "new frontier," declares journalist Kevin Coyne, is the night. No nation in history (except, possibly, contemporary Japan) has ever had so many people working through the night—7.3 million—as America does now. To map this world, Coyne zigzagged nocturnally through 41 states, covering 18,000 miles and consuming, no doubt, about as many gallons of coffee. He accompanied oil workers on the Alaskan pipeline, Federal Express package handlers, and Las Vegas "working girls" on their nightly rounds. He soon came to view day workers "the way the military often sees civilians—pampered, undisciplined, ignorant of life's harsher truths." Most Americans who work at night do so not because they want to but because the job requires it. And the monetary rewards for night labor are meager, at best. Still, Coyne concludes his survey with an upbeat message: Humans can adapt to almost any situation.

Moore-Ede, a physiologist at the Harvard Medical School, disagrees. Why, he asks, have most notorious industrial accidents—Bhopal, Chernobyl, the Rhine chemical spill—occurred at night? Human sleep rhythms, millennia in the shaping, are ill-suited to a technological society that demands of everyone, from hospital employees to Wall Street currency traders, an elusive efficiency at 3 A.M. Moore-Ede, however, is not a Luddite who would (so to speak) turn back the clock. He proposes alternative night-work measures—ranging from artificial lighting that mimics the sun's rays to "polyphasic sleep" (strategic napping) to machines that monitor alertness. Such precautions, he believes, can save lives and billions of dollars. The growing world of night work has, until now, caught planners unprepared. No one foresaw that differences between day and night would become blurred in response to a global economy driven by telecommunications, computers, and faxes. "Societal revolutions," Moore-Ede comments, "have the habit of sneaking up on us."