porting people who "may indeed be unemployable, but their unemployability reflects rampant drug use, a chaotic upbringing, and a lack of education and work ethic rather than any physical impediment." Today, at least 250,000 diagnosed drug addicts and alcoholics are on the disability rolls, up from fewer than 100,000 five years ago. They are receiving about $1.4 billion a year in benefits.

In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration sought to rein in the disability programs. But instead of closely examining individual cases, it took "a meat-ax approach," reviewing 1.2 million cases and terminating the benefits of nearly a half-million recipients. The courts revolted. "The legacy of the 1980–84 review crisis," Mac Donald writes, "is enormous, for in the legal counterattack the reviews ignited, advocates challenged and enlarged the . . . eligibility standards. Ultimately, Congress codified virtually all of these victories" in the Social Security Disability Reform Act of 1984. It is time, she concludes, to reverse course and adopt a more sensible definition of disability.

The Sins Of the Fathers

"Feminist Theory's Wrong Turn" by John M. Ellis, in *Academic Questions* (Fall 1994), 575 Ewing St., Princeton, N.J. 08540.

Is the past a history of women's mistreatment by men, of "patriarchy" and sexist oppression? It is often presented that way by radical feminists. This is a profound misreading of the past, warns Ellis, a professor of German literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz. It threatens to turn the feminist movement, once associated with goals that enjoyed broad support, into an ever more isolated fringe group.

If women in the past were oppressed by a patriarchal conspiracy, he asks, why did they not rise up against it? To be consistent, feminists must take "a dim view of their sisters of yesterday." In reality, he contends, change is coming today for women, "not because they have at last awakened to the enormity of the plot against them, but because the conditions of human life have changed." And this has allowed growing numbers of women to enter the labor force and to compete with men on an equal basis.

Although radical feminists just don't seem to get it, the conditions of life in the premodern era simply did not permit such things, Ellis argues. The absence of modern birth control methods is one important difference, but not the only one. The absence of Social Security meant that children were a virtual economic necessity: *they* were "social security" for people in old age. The high rate of infant mortality meant that in order to have two children who would live to adulthood, a woman would have to bear perhaps six or seven. The shorter life expectancy during the 19th century meant that a woman had a much shorter span of years during which to give birth seven times. The absence of refrigeration meant that most women had to breast-feed their children. The absence of motor vehicles and telephones made it hard for women with young children to work even five miles away from home.

"There are countless other features of modern life that affect the way women are now able to live their lives," Ellis observes, "and they go well beyond the obvious labor-saving devices that enable both men and women to devote a larger share of their time to doing what they like to do." Thanks to electricity, for example, "very few jobs are left in which the greater upper-body strength of men still matters." Profound advances in science and technology, medicine, communications, travel, and social legislation now, for the first time, are equalizing the opportunities available to women and men.

"If misrule by an oppressive 'patriarchy' were a correct interpretation of the past, the logical remedy" would be hiring goals and timetables for reaching parity in all professions and occupations, Ellis points out. But if women instead "see their situation of today as one that has coalesced gradually over the last century and could never have existed earlier, they will simply move to take advantage of their new opportunities." And they will make

their own choices. If the collective result of their choices is less than mathematical parity with men, that may be intolerable to radical feminists at war with the patriarchy—but to everyone else, female as well as male, it will be just fine.

PRESS & MEDIA

Stranger than Fiction

A Survey of Recent Articles

During the Cold War, some U.S. journalists worked themselves into a lather over the fact that patriotic colleagues had given assistance of various sorts to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In a lengthy article in *Rolling Stone* (Oct. 20, 1977), reporter Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame claimed that over the preceding quarter-century, more than 400 American journalists had "secretly carried out assignments" for the CIA—and journalists, he seemed to take for granted, should not in any way be helping an intelligence agency, even their own government's. Commenting in the *Washington Post* (Sept. 18, 1977), columnist George Will saw nothing wrong with much of the cooperation that had taken place between journalists and the CIA, but agreed that no reporter should be a paid agent.

Three years later, when foreign correspondents Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss's *The Spike* appeared, a novel about *Soviet* efforts to influence the Western media, it was dismissed by many journalists as a far-fetched tale, an outgrowth of conservative, anticommunist paranoia.

Now, with the Cold War over, comes the reluctant admission by an eminent journalist at the *Guardian*, London's highly regarded left-of-center newspaper, that he had taken money from the Soviet KGB—and, incredibly, the scandal is shrugged off in many journalistic quarters. "Holdover Sniping From Cold War Claims a Victim" is the headline over the *New York Times* (Jan. 8, 1995) story about the affair, with the poor "victim" being the *Guardian* journalist himself, Richard Gott.

"Given the *Times'* remarkably incurious response to this journalistic scandal," the *New Criterion*'s Hilton Kramer comments in the *New York Post* (Jan. 17, 1995), "one naturally wonders how the paper would respond if, as more information about the KGB's penetration of the Western press comes to light, it was discovered that one of its own correspondents had been enlisted in the service of the Soviet Union."

Richard Gott's work for the KGB was brought to light by London's conservative *Spectator* (Dec. 10, 1994), in an article by Alasdair Palmer. He notes that the 56-year-old Gott—who had been an editorial writer, foreign correspondent, features editor, and, finally, literary editor of the *Guardian*—had made no secret of his communist sympathies. Indeed, Palmer writes, Gott had spent his long career "fulminating against the evils of international capitalism and attempting to airbrush out the faults of Soviet communism."

But Gott *had* made a secret of his employment by the Soviet espionage organization. The *Spectator* says he was recruited by the KGB in the late 1970s. "Richard Gott committed no legal offense in meeting and talking with the KGB," Palmer writes. But in taking money from that organization, he adds, Gott betrayed his readers' trust "in the most fundamental way possible."

The *Spectator*'s exposé prompted Gott to resign from the *Guardian* (Dec. 9, 1994), with a lighthearted admission of having taken—in an "essentially harmless saga"—what he calls "red gold" from the KGB to pay for trips to Vienna, Athens, and Nicosia "to meet their man." His letter of resignation appears under the jaunty headline: "I was a mellow traveler." The *Guardian*'s editor, Peter Preston, accepted the resignation in the same spirit, lauding Gott as "a free spirit and a brilliant journalist who has served the *Guardian* long and well," and joking that "if the Russians thought of recruiting