

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

*Managing the  
Welfare State*

"Thoughts on the 'Governability Crisis' in the West" by Walter Dean Burnham, in *The Washington Review of Strategic and International Studies* (July 1978), Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The specter of "ungovernability" has come to haunt Western politicians and intellectuals in the 1970s.

Today's predicament in the United States, Britain, Italy, and other Western countries is ultimately the by-product of severe strains in advanced capitalist societies, says Burnham, an M.I.T. political scientist. These strains stem from the depression of the 1930s, the convulsions of World War II, and the growth of expensive, new, and complex welfare state systems financed by the affluence that came with rapid, post-1945 economic growth.

Disappointment with governmental performance has now produced a spontaneous revolt by ordinary people against unresponsive power. In the United States, citizens are rejecting the authority of the central government at the very time the country needs a "new American ideology" to reconcile competing interest groups and find rational, comprehensive solutions to major problems like energy.

The American political system has confounded its critics in the past by its capacity to adapt, says Burnham. It could do so again, perhaps through development of mass support for an aggressive foreign policy initiative in response to a serious threat to Israel or Western Europe.

There are three possible lines of evolution, he concludes: the creation of a new political formula to regain popular consensus; a subversion of the political system to concentrate power in the executive branch (e.g., President Nixon's projected "administrative presidency"); or a continuation of the present unhealthy fragmentation.

*Deadly Gases  
and Weak Seats*

"Airline Passenger Safety: Two Studies in FAA Dalliance" by Charles E. Hill and Mark A. Borenstein, in *Trial* (Aug. 1978), P.O. Box 3717, Washington, D.C. 20007.

The Federal Aviation Administration has been charged by Congress with the responsibility to promote the safety of air travel "by prescribing and revising . . . such minimum standards . . . as may be required in the interest of safety." Safety standards are to be promulgated as soon as possible after the need for them has been established, say Hill and Borenstein, associate director and staff attorney, respectively, at the Institute for Public Interest Representation in Washington, D.C. Yet, in at least two key areas, the FAA has been slow to act.

Since 1970, when federal investigators began measuring the hydrogen cyanide level in blood from victims of fiery air crashes, nearly 275 deaths have been directly or indirectly blamed on deadly gases or