

CURRENT BOOKS

FELLOWS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows of the Wilson Center

THE UNITED STATES AND POLAND

by Piotr S. Wandycz
Harvard, 1980
465 pp. \$25

In the early 1770s, American colonists were too preoccupied with their own impending conflagration to notice that, 4,600 miles away, Poland was being carved up by Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Wandycz, a Yale historian, surveys U.S.-Polish relations (to the extent that they have existed at all) since then. After World War I, crusading U.S. foreign policy makers first showed an interest in the "Polish Question." With the support of Woodrow Wilson, independence was conferred on the long-suffering Poles at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Yet after World War II, the Western Allies conceded the "borderlands of Europe" to their Soviet "liberators." Why? In Wandycz's view, the fates of small Eastern European states became less important to U.S. Presidents than maintaining a clear East-West balance of power in Europe as a whole. Since 1945, U.S.-Polish diplomacy has been a "barometer" of U.S.-Soviet tensions. When relations between America and Russia are relatively genial, Wandycz contends, the United States seems less worried over Poland's satellite status and domestic politics than when *détente* is foundering.

—Vlad Georgescu ('80)

DEEP SONG AND OTHER PROSE

by Federico García Lorca
New Directions, 1980
143 pp. \$10 cloth,
\$4.95 paper

In intellectual circles these days, an author's popularity usually conspires against his reputation, as if only esotericism guarantees excellence. The writings of Spanish poet and playwright Lorca (1896-1936) circulate widely. Spaniards and Latin Americans who seldom enter a theater have seen *Blood Wedding*. While Francisco Franco, Spain's flamboyant dictator, lived, criticism of Lorca was rare. Assassinated by rightist nationalists be-

cause of his political views, the poet was a bitter symbol of the brutality of Franco's regime for Spanish artists in need of a martyr. Today, the situation has changed. Lorca's knifewielding gypsies, his bullfighters, his virgins are out of favor. Critics reproach him for depicting "Spain of the tambourines" rather than the political turmoil of his time. I do not share their opinion. *Deep Song* contains almost all of Lorca's important nonfiction works, many of them in English for the first time. The essays help unravel the sources of his poetry—exposing the phantoms of love, death, and art behind his picturesque images. But the richest discoveries are in the glimpses of Lorca himself. He had one obsession: Do not bore the audience. He never did.

—Mario Vargas Llosa ('80)

**THE URBAN CRUCIBLE:
Social Change, Political
Consciousness, and the
Origins of the American
Revolution**

By Gary B. Nash
Harvard, 1979
548 pp. \$18.50

To colonial America's wealthy planters and businessmen, "liberty was essentially the condition of being secure in one's property." The American Revolution, however, was not simply a revolt of the affluent. In Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, workers took to the streets in defiance of British authority. What did the rebellion mean to humble shoemakers and tailors? According to social historian Nash, the most radical revolutionary ideas were fomented among working-class folk by religious evangelicals, who spoke of "family, religion, and community rather than capital accumulation." Philadelphia's artisans, for example, considered the concentration of property, power, or commercial privileges in a few hands—British or otherwise—"dangerous to the rights and happiness of mankind." They favored suffrage without property qualifications. (Such "extreme" republicanism, warned John Adams, might prostrate "all ranks to one common level.") The desire for a government that would protect property and guarantee personal freedom drove successful lawyers and merchants to rebellion, argues Nash; colonial tradesmen, by contrast, rose up demanding social equity.

—James Lang ('78)