

## OTHER NATIONS

out sides"). He sought improved relations with Pakistan. He also agreed to take \$2 billion in credits from the anti-communist Shah of Iran and got financial commitments from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as well.

The prospect, however faint, of a Teheran-Kabul-Islamabad coalition of Muslims began to worry the Soviets. Daoud seemed unreliable. His April 1977 visit to Moscow to sign a treaty providing for more Soviet aid was marked by "frankness" rather than cordiality. One year later, leftist Afghan military officers, encouraged by the Soviets, seized power in Kabul. They slew Daoud and replaced him with a communist, Nur Muhammad Taraki, who soon stirred tribesmen's ire with his Marxist "modernization" efforts. [In 1979, Taraki was succeeded by another communist, Hafizullah Amin, who proved too independent for Moscow. Late in 1979, the Soviets intervened in force and replaced him.] Ambitious but inept, Daoud had started his country on the road to disaster.

*Asia's Fat  
'Little Dragons'*

"Pacific Optimism: Parts I and II" by Donald K. Emmerson, in *UFSI Reports* (nos. 4 and 5, 1982), Universities Field Staff International, P.O. Box 150, Hanover, N.H. 03755.

Since the late 1970s, American intellectuals and journalists have engaged in a round of "Pacific optimism." *Business Week*, for example, saw Japan and the other non-communist nations of East Asia as "the stars of the developing world." Milton and Rose Friedman, in their best-selling *Free to Choose* (1980), lauded Japan, Malaysia, and the four "little dragons" (South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan) as models of democracy and free-market prosperity.

Emmerson, a University of Wisconsin political scientist, suggests that Americans' "Pacific optimism" may be a kind of psychological compensation for the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. Moreover, he adds, the Friedmans and other analysts who go on to attribute the Asian success story to laissez-faire economics and democracy are seriously mistaken.

The six nations cited by the Friedmans *are* prosperous, averaging a \$3,000 income per capita as compared with \$253 in China and \$204 in India. But a comparison of all 26 Asian nations, communist and non-communist, shows no link between prosperity and limited government. The poorest countries devoted 19.2 percent of GNP to government spending, the next poorest 24.8 percent, and the richest 22.6 percent. "The virtues of the private sector," Emmerson observes, "are most apparent once a nation [lifts] itself out of dire poverty."

How do these 26 governments spend their money? The poorest countries spend more on the military (up to 19.3 percent of expenditures) than do the richest (13.7 percent). Outlays for education, however, progress from 11.8 percent of the budget among the poorest nations to 16 percent among the wealthiest. But Emmerson argues that the armies in less-developed nations serve to train manpower and build infra-

## OTHER NATIONS

structure—here, military outlays are a form of social spending.

A country-by-country analysis also contradicts the laissez-faire argument. Singapore, one of the world's best economic performers, is neither democratic nor non-interventionist. The government built more public housing per citizen than any other non-communist regime and ordered several steep general wage hikes during the late 1970s.

The "magic of the marketplace" is respected by Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore. But in each case, government waxes the magician's wand. And a host of other special factors—political stability, cultural traits, geography—have contributed to their success.

### *Feminism, Italian Style*

"1968-79—Feminism and the Italian Party System: Women's Politics in a Decade of Turmoil" by Yasmine Ergas, in *Comparative Politics* (Apr. 1982), Dept. 8010, Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

As elsewhere in the West, the feminist movement came alive in Italy during the late 1960s, an offshoot of the "New Left." Championing a single issue—abortion—it reached its peak during the mid-'70s, then faded from the political scene. Ergas, a law instructor at the University of Macerata, traces the movement's rise and fall.

Student rebellions rocked nearly every university in Italy during 1968. Young women caught up in the New Left tumult got an education in anti-establishment thought and in militant politics—so much so that they became frustrated by the "sexism" within New Left organizations and formed their own groups. In 1974, the feminists embraced legalized abortion as their chief cause. Women's groups, including a small Radical Party faction, began transporting as many as several hundred women a month to abortion clinics abroad and, illegally, in Italy.

The principal political parties shunned the small feminist movement. The Christian Democrats, proclaiming themselves moderates and maneuvering for votes on the right, condemned feminist ideas as destructive of traditional family values. The Communists, hoping to ally themselves with the Christian Democrats and fearful that feminists' ideas might provoke divisions within their own ranks, stayed clear of the movement. Then, in early 1975, Italy's Constitutional Court found the existing anti-abortion law unconstitutional. The controversy that ensued focused politicians' attention on the movement—particularly after 50,000 pro-abortionists marched in Rome that December.

But the feminists, still in thrall to their New Left vision, spurned the established political parties. They insisted, for instance, that members of such parties not proclaim their affiliations at the Rome demonstration. (In 1978, Parliament enacted a compromise abortion law. It did not go far enough to satisfy the feminists, but it was liberal enough to make their abortion services unnecessary.)