

ing.) Foreign aid that merely redistributes the wealth of prosperous nations among the poorer ones thus does not really help the people of a nation who lack the skills needed to produce wealth; educational and vocational programs, he believes, are far more beneficial. Sowell's words may chasten some would-be rescuers of the poor. But his excessive reliance on single-cause explanations, and his claim that the proof is "simple and obvious" (What, one wonders, happened to the Indians, who had the "advantage" of British imperialism?), occasionally diminish the force of his argument.

**REFLECTIONS OF A
NEOCONSERVATIVE:
Looking Back, Looking
Ahead**

by Irving Kristol
Basic, 1983
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If Irving Kristol cannot win readers over to neoconservatism, probably nobody can. Kristol is coeditor of the *Public Interest* magazine and unofficial "godfather" of neoconservatism—a movement of once-liberal intellectuals who moved Right after being, as he puts it, "mugged by reality" during the tumult and disarray of the 1960s. In this collection of essays, all previously published, Kristol recounts his own conversion, beginning with the wry "Memoirs of a Trotskyist," and lays out the key themes of neoconservatism. He joins such traditional economic conservatives as Milton Friedman in backing free-market principles, but argues that economic concerns must take a back seat to political goals. An example: Confronting the Soviets overseas requires a U.S. military build-up, even if it means bigger budget deficits. At home, Kristol favors a limited welfare state designed chiefly to provide a social safety net, not to redistribute income. Kristol believes that the government has a legitimate responsibility to shape the habits and tastes of the people. Accordingly, he supports some constraints to keep offensive behavior behind closed doors. His comment on the absence of celebration by liberal opponents of literary censorship after they won their battles during the 1960s and pornography came into the open epitomizes the neoconservative temper: "Being frustrated is disagreeable, but the real disasters in life begin when you get what you want."