

ments, outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, and other diseases, and shocking examples of intemperance by the immigrant population. Those who were without work lived in hovels, barely staving off starvation. The 1870s saw a steady series of “strikes, booms, panics, recoveries, and depressions.”

Yet Bellamy also found himself fascinated both by the awesome extent of the mill complex, with its rationally designed streets and production processes, and by the military-like discipline of the workers as they changed shifts, walking to and from their nearby homes “in virtual lock step.” It is here, speculates Mullin, that “one can see the precursor

of his concept of an industrial army.”

Bellamy was not alone in trying to predict what would emerge from America’s industrial turmoil; the same period saw other utopian works from Mark Twain, Ignatius Donnelly, and William Dean Howells. But Bellamy’s vision captured the nation’s imagination like no other. This quiet man living on a Massachusetts hilltop was widely seen as a prophet—his ideas helped inspire the Populist Party, whose candidate won more than a million votes in the 1892 presidential election. Bellamy, however, would not live to see the new century. Tuberculosis claimed him at his Chicopee home in 1898.

## OTHER NATIONS

### *The Shanghai Illusion*

“Asia Minor” by Joshua Kurlantzick, in *The New Republic* (Dec. 16, 2002),  
1331 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

“China’s economic development is just mind-boggling,” says an enthusiastic Chinese-American executive based in Beijing, and many other foreign businesspeople agree. So do publications such as *BusinessWeek* and *Forbes*. But Kurlantzick, *The New Republic*’s foreign editor, says the emperor has no clothes.

“The country’s growth rates are vastly overstated, the result of cooked books and massive deficit spending,” he writes. “Companies selling to the Chinese market—foreign and domestic alike—are struggling just to break even. The economy is plagued by persistent deflation and a useless banking system.”

Yes, China has made some impressive strides since 1978, when it began to open its economy to the outside world. Shanghai, then a drab metropolis of Mao-suited servants of the state, is now “a vibrant city boasting dozens of European fashion outlets.” The Chinese middle class—less than 10 percent of the country’s population—has experienced a sharp rise in affluence.

But Shanghai and other flourishing coastal cities are the glittering exceptions. The government claims that the overall economy has grown by seven to 10 percent a year for the past two decades. But except for the “economic bright spot” of exports, Kurlantzick says, “the government’s numbers do not add up.” The offi-

cial, Soviet-style statistics are gathered from provincial data, and local officials are under intense pressure to meet targeted goals. In 2001 alone, the government itself said there were more than 60,000 reported falsifications.

Over the past five years of supposedly break-neck growth, points out economist Thomas Rawski of the University of Pittsburgh, China has experienced deflation, rising unemployment, and declining energy use. He calculates that the actual annual rate of economic growth between 1998 and 2001 was only four percent—not enough, with millions of peasants leaving the farm, to keep the rural jobless rate from exceeding 15 percent, according to several Chinese economists.

Foreign companies that use China as a place to manufacture and export goods are doing well, but Joe Studwell, editor of the *China Economic Quarterly*, and other leading specialists figure that less than 10 percent of the foreign companies that sell to Chinese markets are making profits. “Major Chinese companies often are doing even worse,” according to Kurlantzick. Smaller domestic firms can’t get loans because “China’s indebted banking system remains focused on propping up state-owned enterprises backed by the Communist Party.” As its recent five-year fall from 21st to 31st on the World Competitiveness Scoreboard

shows, “China’s economy is becoming less efficient and competitive.”

“Ultimately, China’s economic façade

probably will crack,” Kurlantzick concludes. “And, when it does, the consequences may be disastrous.”

## *Qaddafi’s Muslim Problem*

“Qaddafi and Militant Islamism: Unprecedented Conflict” by Yehudit Ronen, in *Middle Eastern Studies* (Oct. 2002), 75 Lawn Rd., London NW3 2XB, England.

Move over, America. One of the more surprising targets of jihad in recent times has been the regime of Libyan strongman Muammar al-Qaddafi.

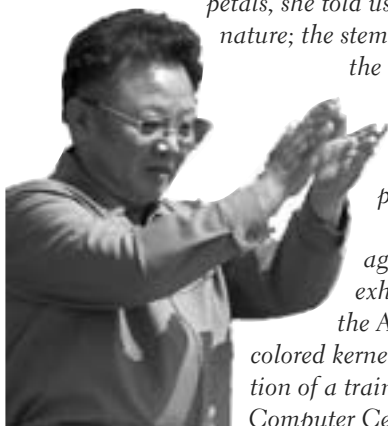
Other Middle Eastern governments have faced threats from Islamists, of course, but Qaddafi’s case is different. Unlike neighbors such as Algeria, Egypt, and Sudan, “Libya has never experienced eco-

nomie collapse, demographic crisis, desperate mass poverty, or acute socioeconomic and cultural gaps,” observes Ronen, a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Qaddafi has remained an unrelenting foe of Israel, and he has emphatically avoided the ties to Western powers that have complicated the

### EXCERPT

## *By Any Other Name*

*The weeklong celebration [of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il’s 60th birthday on February 16, 2002] began with the ceremony at the Kimjongilia Exhibition in the Grand Peoples’ Study House, presented by the Korean Kimjongilia Federation. The young guide, shivering in her flimsy lilac hanbok (Korean traditional dress), explained that the Kimjongilia, an oversized red flower that resembles a poinsettia, was the creation of a Japanese horticulturalist named Kamo Mododeru. The red petals, she told us, symbolize the Great Leader’s passionate nature; the stem can grow to one meter, straight and fearless like the Great Leader; the heart-shaped leaves celebrate the generous heart of the Great Leader; the slight downward angle of the petals evokes the way the Great Leader always watches over his people.*



*Over 14,300 Kimjongilias were lined up against the walls of the four floors of the exhibition hall. Our guide led us from a display of the Agricultural Committee’s handpicked 216 red-colored kernels of grain to the Ministry of Railways’ illustration of a train in which the Great Leader once rode. The Computer Center presented the portrait of Kim Jong Il on a flat panel screen, with Kimjongilias arranged as a keyboard.*

*Weary from seeing the same name everywhere, I stared at the ceiling only to find it plastered with slogans. A quote by Kim Jong Il read, “The one believing in the people will be given healthy medicine but the one betraying the people will be given poison.”*

—Suki Kim, a South Korean-born American novelist, in *The New York Review of Books* (Feb. 13, 2003)