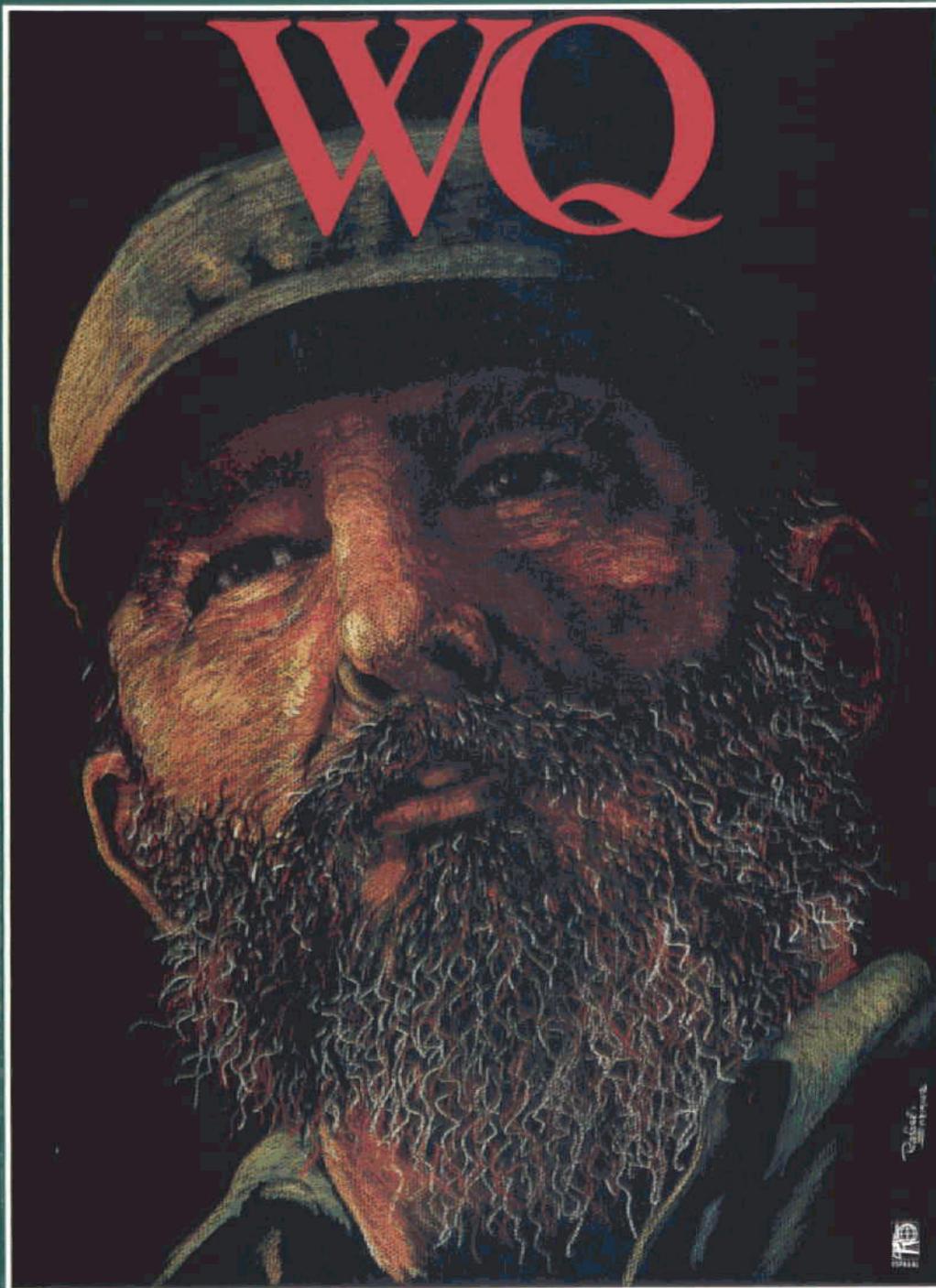


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## Once more, through the looking glass

Suppose an American company—one that operates all over the world—wants to open a new factory, store, warehouse, or office building in the United States. Such a facility, of course, would create new jobs for Americans, along with all the other good things that happen when people are put to work.

But when the company's top executives take a final look at the economics, they hesitate. So a foreign company steps in, the project gets built, and everybody lives happily ever after—except the American company, and maybe some American workers, who find themselves penalized by American tax law, and thereby beaten out by a foreign competitor.

The above-mentioned script seems highly illogical, like something out of Alice in Wonderland, if not Franz Kafka. But it's eminently possible, and even probable, thanks to the vagaries of the 1986 tax law passed in the name of reform.

The culprit in our example is the section of the rewritten tax law dealing with the allocation of interest expense.

What those words mean is that for a U.S. multinational company, with affiliates operating in many parts of the world, the interest paid on money borrowed to finance a U.S. business is treated as if it were paid in part to finance foreign operations. And this, of course, results in a partial loss of the tax deduction. Foreign companies have no such requirement. That's the technical definition. As a practical matter, the words mean that it's often cheaper for a foreign company to create American jobs than for a U.S. company to do so. And the foreign companies, because their after-tax interest costs are lower, are more competitive in the U.S. than many U.S. companies.

Here's why:

An American affiliate of the U.S. multinational, Global Widgets, Inc., wants to build a widget plant in Anytown, Iowa, and borrows money to do so. Under the tax law, part of the interest on the loan is allocated to Global Widgets' operations in Kiribati, an island country

in the Pacific, even though Global Widgets Kiribati borrowed no money and has no relationship with the Iowa operation. As a result, Global Widgets' U.S. affiliate cannot deduct the full amount of its interest expense in the U.S. Moreover, it cannot deduct anything in Kiribati, either, where the government would surely frown on any tax return claiming Iowa expenses as a deduction. But any foreign-owned widget maker who wanted to build a plant in the U.S. could deduct all of its interest expense against revenues earned in the U.S. Global would therefore be the highest-cost producer, compared to the foreign-owned company operating here.

Here's another example. Suppose a U.S.-based multinational manufacturing company buys a major U.S. retailer, with borrowed money. Parts of that borrowing are treated as if they were made by affiliates in far-flung places, well-removed from the U.S. So part of the tax deduction is lost. But that isn't the end of it. Suppose the retailing arm then borrows money to finance its inventories of lawn mowers in southern California. A portion of that debt is treated as if it were accrued by the parent company's operations in Zimbabwe. So the retailer would have a smaller tax deduction—and higher operating expenses—than a U.S. retailer with no overseas ties, or any of the major retailers, household names all, who have recently been bought by foreign companies.

Our tax law, in other words, needs some intensive rethinking, well beyond the technical fixes currently being made in Congress. We should be thinking about why multinational U.S. companies are treated like second-class citizens, compared to strictly domestic companies. And we should be thinking about why even foreign firms operating here get better tax treatment.

Congress is understandably reluctant to go deeply into reforming tax reform. But sooner or later the bullet will have to be bitten. American tax law needs to be pulled back through the looking glass into the real world, where, one hopes, logic and fairness prevail.

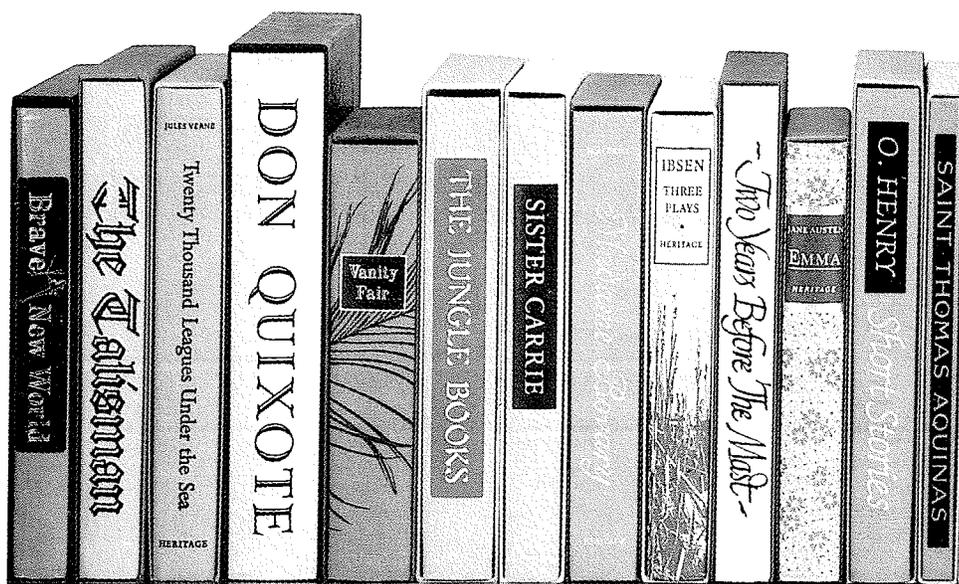
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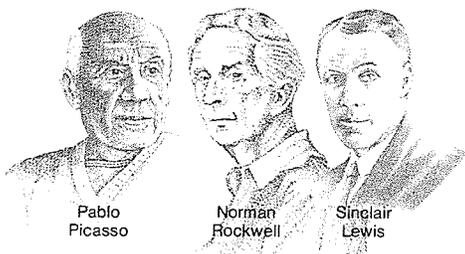
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- 4 Editor's Comment
- 11 **PERIODICALS**
- 44 Research Reports
- 48 **CASTRO'S CUBA**
- 49 *Fidelismo*  
*by Tad Szulc*
- 64 Washington and Havana  
*by Pamela S. Falk*
- 75 The Odd Partners  
*by W. Raymond Duncan*
- 84 Background Books
- 88 **IDEAS**
- Kafka's World  
*by Milan Kundera*
- 100 **CLIMATE**
- 101 Climatology  
*by Diana Morgan*
- 117 Coping With Change  
*by Steven Lagerfeld*
- 129 Background Books
- 132 **CURRENT BOOKS**
- 146 **REFLECTIONS**
- Saving America's Symphonies  
*by S. Frederick Starr*
- 154 What Happened to Mother?  
*by Paul Fussell*
- 163 Commentary
- 172 **BIENNIAL INDEX**



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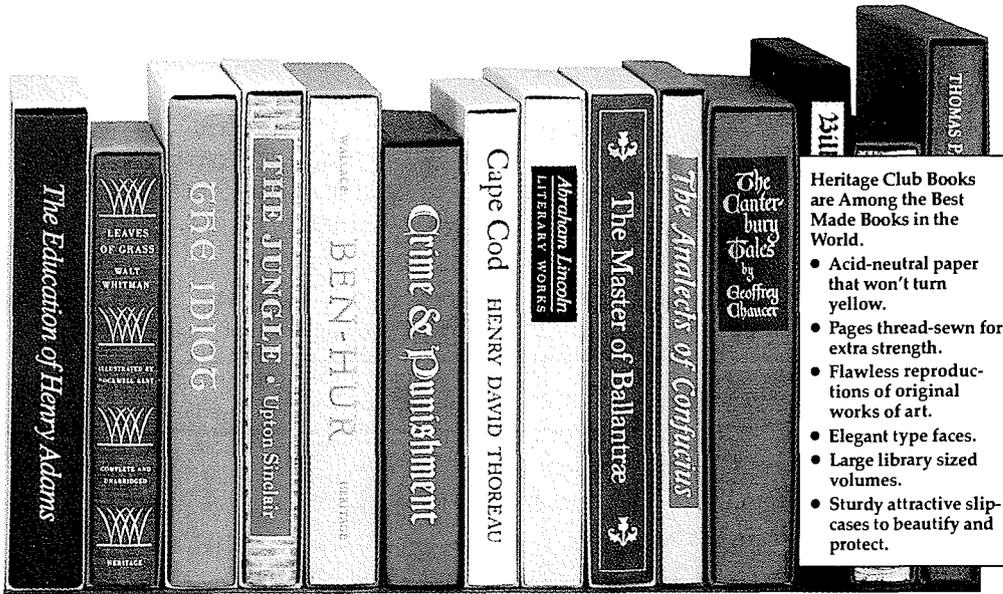
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## Editor's Comment

Reflecting the Wilson Center's international interests, the *Quarterly's* editors enlist scholars and other specialists to look at significant long-term developments overseas. Sometimes a single country's experience illuminates the recent evolution of much of a continent (the Ivory Coast, in the Autumn issue). Or another nation's successes and failures in forging a multiracial society (Malaysia, Winter '87) illustrate a worldwide phenomenon—ethnic self-consciousness. Another country's economic history may stir anxieties over our own future (Britain, Autumn '87).

In this issue, our contributors examine Fidel Castro's Cuba from several different vantage points. After almost 30 years, Castro may be the last of the 20th-century revolutionary charismatics, who, for a time, seemed to many in the West to represent the wave of the future, a future marked by the transformation of the Third World via violent upheavals. Indeed, Castro has had more impact on history than most rulers of small island societies. His alliance with Moscow led to the Cold War's most alarming Soviet-American confrontation (the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis); his joint ventures with the Soviets in Africa (Angola, Ethiopia) and Central America helped local Marxists stay in power; and his own totalitarian regime has impelled almost a million Cubans to migrate to the United States.

Today, *Fidelismo* is not what it used to be, as author Tad Szulc notes. Our essays on Castro's Cuba begin on p. 49.

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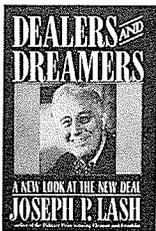
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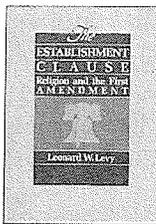
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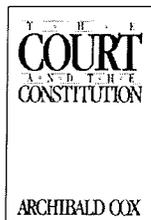
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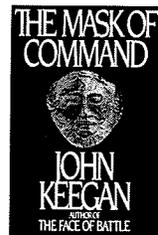
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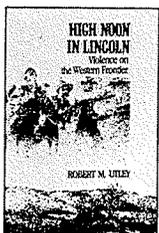
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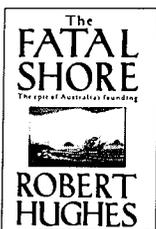
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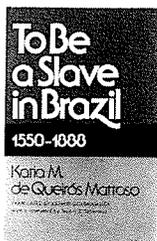
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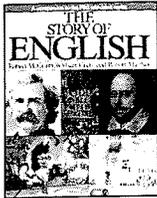
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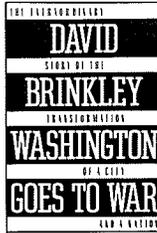
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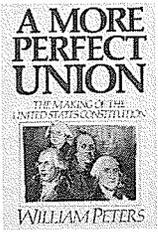
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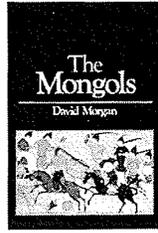
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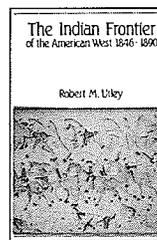
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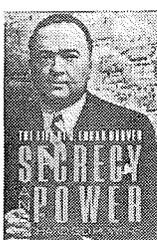
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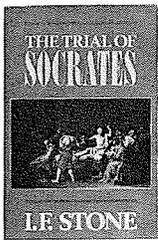
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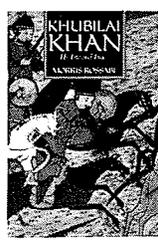
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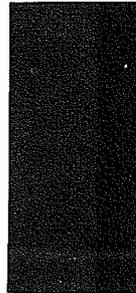
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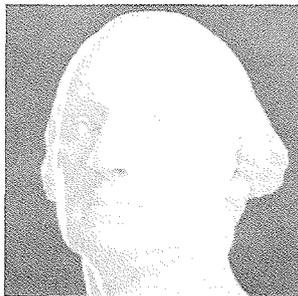
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*Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad*

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT 11	RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY 28
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE 15	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 31
ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS 18	RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT 34
SOCIETY 21	ARTS & LETTERS 36
PRESS & TELEVISION 26	OTHER NATIONS 39

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## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

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### *Status and the Presidency*

"Social Class in the Oval Office" by E. Digby Baltzell and Howard G. Schneiderman, in *Society* (Sept.-Oct. 1988), Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

What makes a successful president? Historians have examined many presidential traits. "Great" presidents (as rated by scholars) tend to be tall; Abraham Lincoln stood over 6' 4", and George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were over 6' 2". But a chief executive's childhood, choice of college, political experience, and age at time of election seem to show little correlation with his success in office.

Baltzell, emeritus professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Schneiderman, a Lafayette College sociologist, point to socioeconomic status: Upper-class presidents, they claim, tend to do better than average; presidents from middle- and lower-class backgrounds tend to be mediocre.

Most of the Republic's early chief executives were well-to-do. Even Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), far from being poor, was a "frontier aristocrat" who inherited large amounts of land and money. From Zachary Taylor's death in 1850 until Theodore Roosevelt's accession in 1901, presidents usually were of lower- and middle-class origins and fared badly in the White House. Millard Fillmore, for example, whom most historians rank "below average," was the only president to have been born in a log cabin. And Lincoln, the one great president of this period, came from a family less humble than he later claimed: Lincoln's father owned 1,200 acres in Hardin County, Kentucky, including several town lots.

During the 20th century, most "great" presidents (the Roosevelts, Woodrow Wilson) have come from higher status families. In contrast, Richard Nixon was one of the few to come from the lower rungs of the social ladder; his early struggles with poverty, the authors believe, may have caused him to feel like an outsider throughout his political career.

Why do relatively higher-status men do well? The authors suggest that the best of America's old patrician traditions, which demand excellence *in* a job rather than a constant hunt for a *better* job, may inspire such individuals who choose public service. In any case, the authors add, Americans should reject fashionable "anti-elitist" dogma and choose the best people for elective office, regardless of class or ethnic origin.

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

*The Spirit of '76*

"The Shot Heard Round the World" by Henry Fairlie, in *The New Republic* (July 18-25, 1988), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once described the April 19, 1775, Battle of Concord, the first of the Revolutionary War, as "the shot heard round the world." But how did people abroad react to news of the Revolution? Fairlie, a *New Republic* contributing editor, reports that the Americans gave liberty-minded Europeans "a profound political philosophy" that immediately stirred controversy in Britain and across the Continent.

Not surprisingly, most of Europe's absolute monarchs were hostile. Austrian emperor Joseph II told a British ambassador that England should be supported by "all sovereigns who have a joint interest" in keeping their subjects under control. "The American record," added Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, "is filled with declarations in which there is too little that is reasonable and too much that is unbecoming impertinence." (Catherine, however, refused George III's request for Russian troops.)

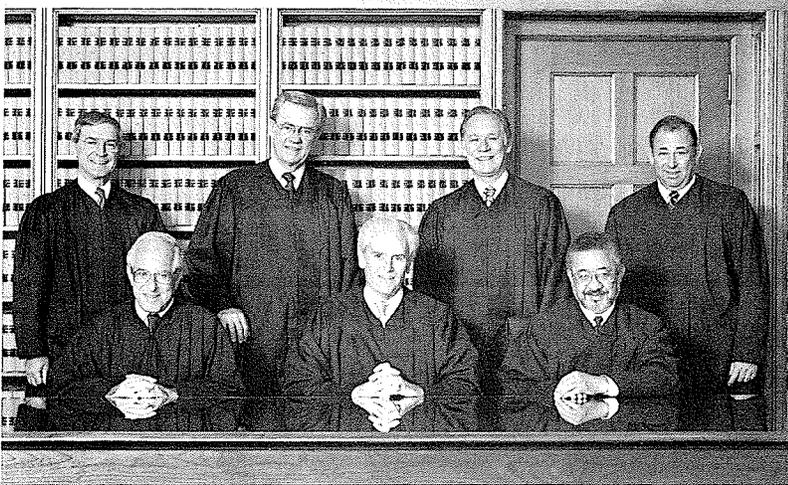
The European press eagerly printed reports from America; the Declaration of Independence, for example, was published in newspapers in Denmark, Germany, and Russia. And the American Revolution was a subject of intense debate; in Copenhagen, *Aftenpost* columnist Edmund Balling reported that Danish opinion ranged from those who thought that George Washington's men should be "beaten over the Forehead like Bulls" to others who favored Britain's defeat. "The public here is extremely occupied with the [American] rebels," Denmark's foreign minister, A. P. Bernstorff, wrote in October 1776. The "mania of independence," he added, "... has spread imperceptibly from the works of the philosophes all the way out to the village schools."

Perhaps America's staunchest foreign supporters, aside from its French allies, were in Great Britain. As early as 1774, essayist Horace Walpole wrote that Britain "could even afford to lose America"; by 1777, Walpole thought that the British were "horribly the aggressors." Some British politicians took their zeal to extremes; William Pitt the Elder collapsed on the floor of the House of Commons after one speech in defense of the American colonists.

But support of America in Britain, Fairlie argues, was not limited to liberal politicians. Many merchants thought the taxes imposed on America were unjust, and called for independence—and free trade. American cries of "no taxation without representation" were also endorsed by leaders in "rising middle-class cities" (Manchester, Sheffield) unrepresented in the House of Commons. No one in Britain was arrested for promoting the American cause during the Revolutionary War.

American political ideals continued to influence Europeans after the U.S. gained its freedom in 1783. When the Austrian Netherlands broke away from Austria in 1789, the new nation was known as the United States of Belgium; the Belgian Declaration of Independence, Fairlie notes, "followed the American Declaration faithfully." And, as late as 1849, that declaration strongly influenced the politicians who moved Denmark from absolute monarchy to a constitutional regime.

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT



*Justices of the Supreme Court of California. Top row (from left): Edward A. Panelli, David N. Eagleson, John A. Arguelles, Marcus M. Kaufman. Seated: Stanley Mosk, Chief Justice Malcolm M. Lucas, Allen E. Broussard.*

### *Activism in State Courts*

"State Supreme Courts: Tilting the Balance Toward Change" by Elder Witt, in *Governing* (Aug. 1988), 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

In Detroit, Michigan, 400 acres are being cleared by the city for a new Chrysler plant. In New Jersey, a new state income tax takes effect to help pay for local schools.

These steps, and others, were not simply initiated by elected officials. They resulted from state court actions. Witt, a *Governing* staff writer, notes that the supreme courts of the 50 states have moved beyond interpreting the law and have "become makers of public policy."

Much like the U.S. Supreme Court, each state supreme court's primary task is to interpret its state constitution as it applies to legal disputes. But states frequently adopt new constitutions or expand existing ones; 116 amendments have been added to the Massachusetts Constitution since it was first adopted in 1780. State courts face a greater variety of issues.

Moreover, at least a dozen states allow judges to issue "advisory opinions" to executive agencies and the legislature before a legal dispute actually arises, giving courts more influence over policy. In Michigan, for example, the state Supreme Court issued an advisory opinion that "tax increment financing" could be used as a business subsidy, thus enabling the city of Detroit to aid Chrysler in building a new auto plant.

Many state supreme court decisions involve financial matters. Courts in 18 states have examined whether paying for schools largely through local property taxes is fair. In seven states, including California and New

**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

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Jersey, courts have ruled that the property tax discriminates against less affluent school districts, and have called for more equitable spending. Land use is also a major concern; the California Supreme Court has ruled that citizens can use initiatives to block government zoning decisions, resulting in over 100 local ballot initiatives during the past two years.

State judges are increasingly preoccupied with civil liberties. During the past decade, state courts have issued more than 200 decisions declaring, in effect, that their state's constitution provides more protection for citizens than does the U.S. Constitution. Courts in four states, for example, have ruled that prosecutors cannot use evidence obtained by police in a manner that may violate a suspect's constitutional rights, contravening a 1984 U.S. Supreme Court decision that such evidence is admissible if acquired in "good faith."

The activism of state supreme courts, Witt predicts, will continue. "Issue by issue," he observes, "state judges are proving to be willing partners in the ongoing experiment of government."

### *Liberals and the Constitution*

"Liberal Virtues, Constitutional Community" by Stephen Macedo, in *The Review of Politics* (Spring 1988), Univ. of Notre Dame, P.O. Box B, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.

In *The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton argued that the ultimate arbiter of the Constitution's meaning was not any of the three branches of government, but the people. "Whatever fine declarations may be inserted in any constitution," Hamilton wrote, "must altogether depend on public opinion, and on the general spirit of the people and of the government."

Today, many liberals agree, contending that key issues should be decided not by determining the "original intent" of the Framers of the Constitution, but through a public consensus arising from reasoned debate. However, if there are no absolute principles, asks Macedo, a Harvard professor of government, how can proper decisions (such as court rulings) based on "public morality" be made?

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), Richard Rorty says that "community agreement" will ultimately create a virtuous society. The "adaptive behavior" of rational citizens, Rorty contends, will ultimately prevail over more irrational views. However, according to Macedo, Rorty does not address the question of who should prevail when communities clash. Many white Southerners during the 1950s, for example, thought that federal efforts to end bias against blacks were violations of "community standards." Moreover, to claim that the virtuous life should be based only on standards *enforced* by any community reduces morality to "If you want to get along, go along."

The Constitution, Macedo argues, can be used as the basis for determining goals, such as basic human equality, toward which all citizens can strive. Thus, rather than consensus-building, or debating the extent of individual rights, liberals should view their task as fulfilling the "standard maxims" embodied in the Constitution's text.

His fellow liberals, Macedo believes, should see the Constitution as an "aspirational" document whose principles govern American public life, but

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 POLITICS & GOVERNMENT
 

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are debated and reinterpreted by each generation. And in advancing his cause, a liberal should heed the advice of H. L. Mencken and assume that "his opponent is as decent a man as he is, and just as honest—and perhaps, after all, right."

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 FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE
 

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*American Decline?*

"Understating U.S. Strength" by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1988), 11 Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In recent years, many pundits and scholars, most notably Yale's Paul Kennedy (in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*), have argued that the United States is a victim of "imperial overstretch." Massive defense outlays and huge trade and budget deficits, these critics contend, will eventually result in a prolonged period of U.S. decline, much like Britain's gradual slide since 1900.

Nye, director of Harvard's Center for Science and International Affairs, replies that the pessimists have overstated their case. Despite its fiscal excesses, he writes, the United States is likely to remain the world's strongest single nation "far into the future."

Consider defense spending. The Reagan administration's military buildup increased the Pentagon's share of the U.S. gross national product (GNP) from 5.2 percent to 6.3 percent. But defense budgets under Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy were, proportionally, far higher, since their administrations annually spent around 10 percent of U.S. GNP on the military.

Nye believes that comparisons between Ronald Reagan's America and Edwardian Britain are misleading. By 1914, Britain faced formidable competitors on the world scene (Russia, the United States); its chief adversary, Germany, had overtaken Britain economically, and was threatening to gain military supremacy before World War I began.

In contrast, America today has only one military equal, the Soviet Union, a nation suffering from a stagnant economy and defense spending (counting subsidies to client states) that consumes up to 20 percent of its GNP. Most potential *economic* rivals, with the exception of Japan (whose economy, while growing steadily, is still only half as large as America's), can only challenge the United States over the long term. China remains undeveloped, and Western Europe "lacks the necessary cohesion to play a great-power role."

The United States, Nye predicts, will remain the leading power in a multipolar world *if* it continues to maintain its alliances and avoids protectionism and other autarkic measures. Closing America to immigrants and foreign products, for example, would block "the open flow of goods, talents, and information" that keeps the nation strong. And withdrawing from existing international commitments "would reduce U.S. influence without necessarily strengthening the domestic economy."

## FOREIGN POLICY &amp; DEFENSE

*Has the Bomb  
Deterred War?*

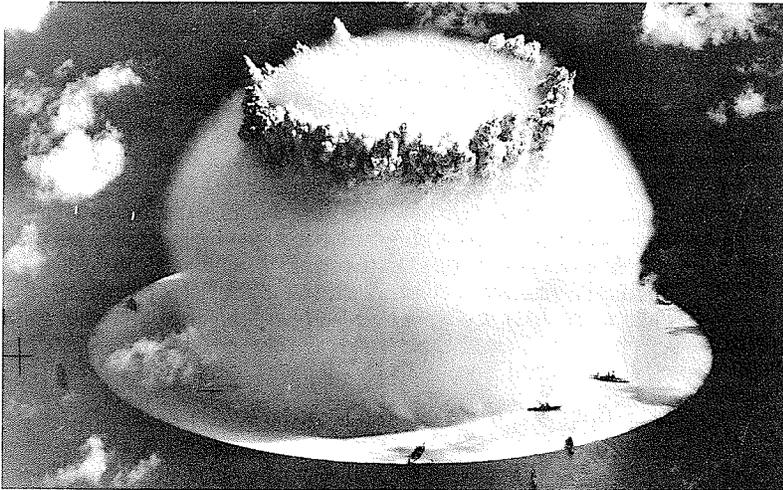
"The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons" by John Mueller, and "The Political Effect of Nuclear Weapons: A Comment" by Robert Jervis, in *International Security* (Fall 1988), MIT Press, 55 Hayward St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Long after the Allies' victory over the Axis in 1945, Winston Churchill predicted that fears of nuclear holocaust would prevent another world war. Peace, he declared, was "the sturdy child of [nuclear] terror."

Was Churchill right? Mueller, a political scientist at the University of Rochester, contends that the nuclear threat has not had a "significant impact" either on Soviet-American relations or on deterring World War III. Jervis, a Columbia political scientist, responds that Churchill's widely echoed maxim has been proven correct.

Mueller maintains that all-out war has been losing its appeal anyway. Both Moscow and Washington have, essentially, been content to maintain the post-1945 status quo in Europe. Once aggressive nations, such as Japan, are now peaceful; countries that fought each other for centuries (e.g., Britain and France) are now allies. Aside from the Greek civil war (1944-49), no civil war has occurred in the developed world for more than four decades. Can the existence of the atomic bomb, Mueller asks, explain why France and Germany, once bitter foes, are now peaceful neighbors?

The Soviets and Americans, Mueller adds, have been constrained from fighting each other not because of their nuclear stockpiles, but because they fear that any conventional conflict would escalate into something as costly as World War II. It does not matter *precisely* what the "ultimate



*A major U.S. postwar nuclear test (1946) at Bikini atoll in the Pacific. Since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, neither the U.S. nor the Soviets have come close to using military force against each other.*

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**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**


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unbearable punishment" would be; even if nuclear weapons did not exist, each great power, mindful of the wartime losses suffered by Japan and Germany, would resist any urge to do battle with the other.

For his part, Jervis insists that the specter of "near-absolute levels of punishment" inflicted by atomic weapons has had a decisive effect on both superpowers; each has avoided both escalation of local conflicts and direct Soviet-American confrontation. As for World War II, most of the citizens of the defeated countries survived, and many later prospered; the losers—and winners—of a *nuclear* war might well be unable to reconstruct their societies. After a nuclear exchange, France's Charles de Gaulle noted in 1960, the belligerents "would have neither powers, nor laws, nor cities."

### *Adjusting to Glasnost*

"America's 'New Thinking'" by Daniel Yankelovich and Richard Smoke, in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1988), Council on Foreign Relations, 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Mikhail Gorbachev has called for "new thinking" about Soviet relations with the United States. Citing polling data, Yankelovich, president of the Public Agenda Foundation, and Smoke, a Brown University political scientist, report that while Gorbachev calls for rapid change, Americans prefer *gradually* adjusting U.S. relations with the Soviets.

Many voters still endorse the "achievements of the Reagan administration" in foreign affairs and defense, but they question whether these policies should continue. Sixty-six percent of those surveyed by Americans Talk Security (ATS), a bipartisan polling organization, agreed that the U.S. arms buildup of the 1980s was necessary, but 84 percent feel that defense increases should now cease.

Mikhail Gorbachev enjoys rising popularity. A 1986 Louis Harris poll reported that 51 percent of Americans had a "favorable impression" of Gorbachev; by July 1988, this figure had risen to 83 percent, according to an ATS survey. A 1986 Gallup poll found that 37 percent of Americans believed that U.S.-Soviet relations were "stable or getting better"; 94 percent of those surveyed by ATS in July 1988 supported this statement.

Americans remain hopeful—and wary. In a 1987 ATS poll, 64 percent believed that the Soviets would "lie, cheat, and steal" to advance the communist cause. The authors suggest that many Americans fear a return to the détente policies of the 1970s, which brought a "superficial improvement" in U.S.-Soviet relations and high expectations, then a costly military buildup after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The public, Yankelovich and Smoke predict, *will* back agreements with the Kremlin, as long as Washington does not seem to depend too much on trusting the Soviets. Arms control treaties that rely on "an arcane debate among technical wizards" over means of verification (e.g., spy satellites) are not likely to win much voter support; treaties that rely on such "direct and unambiguous" measures as stationing American observers at Soviet military sites will gain greater approval.

The next U.S. president should heed the voters' desire for caution. "No new American administration," the authors say, "can afford to move more rapidly than the American public."

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**ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS**


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### *The Telephone's Early Years*

“‘Touch Someone’: The Telephone Industry Discovers Sociability” by Claude S. Fischer, in *Technology and Culture* (Jan. 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Today, chatting on the telephone is commonplace—and promoted in TV commercials. But, oddly enough, the first telephone companies frowned on the use of the device for social calls rather than business matters. For example, in 1909, a manager of Seattle’s system complained that 30 percent of all local calls were “purely idle gossip,” which should be curbed both by time limits and by public education campaigns.

Why were personal conversations discouraged? Fischer, a Berkeley sociologist, points to the corporate culture of the early telephone industry.

Many telephone companies evolved from telegraph operations; most of the pioneers were “telegraph men.” Not only did many terms (e.g., “messages”) derive from telegraph usage, but the telephone, like its predecessor, was viewed by company executives simply as a practical tool for sending vital information quickly.

A second reason may lie in the increased efficiency of American Telephone and Telegraph lines. AT&T’s average residential rate rose from just under \$2 per month in 1909 to between \$2 and \$3 two decades later; the average monthly telephone bill, in real terms, *fell* from four percent of the average monthly manufacturing wage to about two percent. Rather than promoting low-profit local calls, the company advertisements of the time stressed more lucrative services, such as long distance.

By the late 1920s, many of the AT&T “telegraph men” had retired. A new generation of managers, seeing that American households had more cars than telephones, decided that social calls were, after all, good for revenues. In 1928, A. W. Page, an AT&T vice president, observed that discouraging the customers from gossip was about as logical as an auto-maker insisting that his product only be used for “a serious errand.”

### *Are Mergers Beneficial?*

“Productivity and Changes in Ownership of Manufacturing Plants” by Frank R. Lichtenberg and Donald Siegel, in *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (#3, 1987), 1775 Massachusetts Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036.

The number of mergers and acquisitions of U.S. corporations is steadily rising. In 1979, there were 1,529 such transactions, worth \$34.2 billion; in 1986, 4,024, with a value of \$190.5 billion. But such deals, note the authors, both researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research, do not just enrich corporate raiders or “junk-bond” brokers. Changing a plant’s ownership, they contend, usually results in increased efficiency.

The authors examined U.S. Census data on 20,493 factories owned by 5,700 firms, which account for 55 percent of U.S. manufacturing employ-

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**ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS**


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ment and 67 percent of the value of manufactured goods shipments. Eighty-two percent of them employed at least 250 workers.

Between 1972 and 1981 nearly 21 percent of the plants surveyed changed hands. Workplaces that were inefficient tended to be sold more often than ones that were not. The 1973 productivity of plants sold between 1974 and 1980 was 3.2 percent lower than others with continuous ownership. Factories sold off more than once between 1974 and 1980 had "especially inferior" performances in 1973.

Improvement tended to occur gradually. By 1981, factories that changed owners between 1974 and 1976 had become more efficient; those that were merged or acquired between 1977 and 1980 had not yet done so. Surprisingly, new owners tended to continue "implicit contracts" with workers and suppliers; a change of owners tended to slow, not increase, employee layoffs.

Why does changing ownership help improve a factory? The authors suggest that corporations tend to sell one of their manufacturing divisions when it loses a "comparative advantage" over its rivals. In particular, major conglomerates during the late 1960s bought up many unrelated businesses; big firms unable to digest such "unwarranted acquisitions" often sold them later to specialized competitors who knew how to make them work better. Such transactions, by some estimates, may have accounted for 40 percent of all corporate sell-offs during the 1970s.

### *The Future of Oil*

"World Oil—An Essay on its Spectacular 120-Year Rise (1859–1979), Recent Decline, and Uncertain Future" by Henry R. Linden, in *Energy Systems and Policy* (Vol. 11, #4), Taylor and Francis, 3 East 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Around World War I, coal was the world's dominant source of energy, capturing 75 percent of the market. Then oil use, buoyed by the rise in gasoline-powered cars, began to climb; by the early 1970s, oil claimed just under 50 percent of the world market for fuel (including coal, nuclear power, natural gas). Since the Arab oil embargo of 1973, petroleum's share has steadily dropped; today, it accounts for about 40 percent of all energy consumption.

Linden, a professor of chemical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, believes the chances are slim that oil prices will again surge.

From the discovery of Texas' massive Spindletop field (1901) to the Arab embargo, oil prices were remarkably stable. Between 1901 and 1972, according to Salomon Brothers, an investment-banking firm, a barrel of crude oil cost between \$2 and \$6 (in 1972 dollars).

Because U.S. output remained strong, disruptions overseas did not affect prices. For example, after the 1956 war between Israel and Egypt, the Suez Canal was closed temporarily, blocking 40 percent of Persian Gulf crude from reaching the West. But because the United States had huge *surpluses* (pumping in Texas was limited to 15 days a month), no shortages occurred. Only when American output slackened was the "market power" of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

## ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

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strong enough to boost prices.

During the 1980s, OPEC's power diminished with new oil discoveries elsewhere. Brazil, for example, once a major oil importer, now produces 600,000 barrels of crude per day. (Total world output in 1987 averaged between 53 and 58 million barrels a day, roughly equal to the 1975 level.) And no shortage looms. During the mid-1940s, Western geologists estimated that no more than 400 to 600 billion more barrels of oil could be extracted from the Earth; current estimates are that two trillion barrels of oil are recoverable. Constant searches and more efficient production technology ensure that much-publicized "disaster scenarios" are unlikely.

U.S. production, however, will continue to slide, since new finds in the much-explored "lower 48" are unlikely. In response, Linden says, Washington should not impose an oil import tax, which would "reduce U.S. world competitiveness" by boosting domestic manufacturers' costs. Rather, the federal government should completely decontrol domestic oil prices and abolish the "windfall profits tax," which discourages new production. Such measures, among others, should help maintain "relative price stability."

### *The Economics of Empire*

"The Costs and Benefits of British Imperialism 1846-1914" by Patrick K. O'Brien, in *Past and Present* (Aug. 1988), 175 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 7AW, United Kingdom.

In 1914, Great Britain, an island kingdom of 45 million people, ruled no fewer than 61 colonies and five dominions, embracing 351 million inhabitants. Was this vast empire an *economic* asset? O'Brien, an Oxford historian, thinks not. He agrees with Adam Smith (1723-1790), who called the Empire "not a gold mine but the project of a gold mine."

For one thing, trade and settlement did not always follow the Union Jack. Capitalists preferred foreign investments to imperial ones; between 1865 and 1914, 44 percent (£1.28 billion) of British overseas investment went to foreign countries, while only 19 percent went to the Empire. Moreover, between 1853 and 1910, two-thirds of Britain's emigrants settled *outside* the Empire, mostly in the United States. Thus, the "institutional framework" of imperial rule failed to prove attractive to most potential British colonists and investors.

Trade within the Empire constituted a relatively small share of all Britain's trade; by 1914, the Empire supplied one-fourth of Britain's imports (largely foods such as wheat, tea, and cheese) and bought, on average, between one-quarter and one-third of Britain's exports. But imperial products were as expensive as foreign goods. Had Britain's colonies gained independence, O'Brien suggests, protectionist barriers erected by these ex-colonies would have been balanced by "mutually agreed tariff reductions" by Britain's European rivals and the United States. This would have enabled London to reduce her trade deficits.

The direct costs of imperial rule were high. Between 1860 and 1914, British taxes per capita were more than twice those of her European, American, and Japanese competitors. Most of the money went to the military, especially the Royal Navy, either to maintain current forces or to

## ECONOMICS, LABOR &amp; BUSINESS

Some foreigners, as this 1896 cartoon from Puck shows, saw the British as selfish folk who refused to open their country—and Empire—to foreign goods. In fact, Britain relied on imports; by 1913, 90 percent of the raw materials used by British factories (except for coal) came from abroad.



repay debts from previous Empire-expanding wars. Twenty-seven percent of Britain's budget during this period—the heyday of the Empire—was spent on debt interest. And defense spending per capita was nearly three times that of other European nations, partly because they, unlike Britain, relied on low-paid conscript armies. O'Brien writes that, had there been no far-flung colonies, the savings on defense could have been invested at home to improve the competitiveness of British industry.

Nonetheless, despite some criticism in Parliament, London's leading statesmen, including Winston Churchill, continued to view the Empire as a prop to Britain's ailing economy and to her Big Power role—until reality dawned after World War II.

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**SOCIETY**


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*Middle-Class Decline?*

"The Declining Middle-Class Thesis: A Sensitivity Analysis" by Michael W. Horrigan and Steven E. Haugen, in *Monthly Labor Review* (May 1988), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C. 20212.

Is the American middle class shrinking?

Although the median U.S. family income rose from \$26,276 in 1969 (in 1986 dollars) to \$29,458 in 1986, most specialists think the answer is yes. Yet both the extent of middle-class decline and the fate of those moving out of the middle class are still hotly disputed.

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**SOCIETY**


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Horrigan and Haugen, economists at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, decided to resolve these issues by using two different measuring techniques—the “interval deflator” and the “fixed percentage” method. Both calculations reveal a shrinking middle class. The share of U.S. families earning \$20,000–\$56,000 (in 1986 dollars) fell from 60.2 percent in 1969 to 53 percent in 1986 using the “fixed percentage,” or from 58.8 percent to 53 percent using the “interval deflator.”

Where did these disappearing middle-class families go?

Many rose into the upper class. By 1986, the proportion of families earning over \$56,000 per year (in 1986 dollars) had considerably increased. Using the “interval deflator” method, this category grew from 7.5 percent in 1969 to 15.3 percent; “fixed percentage” techniques show a slightly smaller rise.

As for the lower class: in 1986, 31.7 percent of all U.S. families earned less than \$20,000 per year, representing either a fall of two percentage points or a rise of three since 1969, depending on the measuring technique. Either way, the lower-class fraction of the nation’s population has remained more stable than the others.

Although most of the much-discussed middle-class decline is reflected in the growth of the upper class, this does not mean that all Americans are better off. The authors note that the average U.S. family income has been affected both by the influx of wives into the labor force and increases in the number of single-parent households. The size of the lower class has been relatively constant over time, but its share of total U.S. personal income has diminished, reflecting the increasing inequality of income distribution in the United States.

### *Black Successes*

“Boom Time for Black America” by Joseph Perkins, in *Policy Review* (Summer 1988), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Most public discussions about black Americans, notes Perkins, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer, have focused on “negative indicators”—the numbers of blacks in poverty, on welfare, in prison. But while many blacks are having difficulties, a majority “have fared quite well” during the 1980s. Black business people have been particularly successful.

According to estimates by economist Andrew Brimmer, black businesses took in \$18.1 billion in 1987, up from \$12.4 billion in 1982; these businesses grew, on average, 7.9 percent annually, much better than the average growth rate for all U.S. corporations (five percent). Some black-owned enterprises have made the major leagues; Wall Street attorney Reginald Lewis, for example, used the oft-criticized “junk bond” to create TLC Beatrice International Holdings, a firm with \$1.8 billion in sales last year. Incidentally, none of the four *largest* black-owned firms—TLC Beatrice, Johnson Publishing, Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling, the construction firm of H. J. Russell Co.—depended on contract “set-asides” or other government measures to help minority businesses.

More blacks have slowly climbed the corporate ladder in white-owned

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 SOCIETY
 

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firms. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reports that the number of black managers and officers in all U.S. corporations with 100 or more employees rose from 165,000 in 1980 to 215,000 in 1985. Far from being "tokens," many corporate officers wield considerable power; Xerox vice president A. Barry Rand heads a division that produced over \$4 billion in revenues in 1986, and McDonald's senior vice president Robert M. Beavers oversees more than 1,600 restaurants.

*Overall*, says Perkins, the number of black jobholders has risen from 9.2 million in 1982, a recession year, to 11.5 million in 1987. As more blacks complete high school and college, the black employment *rate* has risen "to record levels," increasing from 49 percent in 1982 to 56 percent in 1987. These workers are enjoying higher incomes; in 1985, nearly a million black families earned \$40,000 or more, and 300,000 others earned between \$35,000 and \$40,000.

### *The Trials of Youth*

"The Transition to Adulthood in Comparative Perspective: Professional Males in Germany and the United States at the Turn of the Century" by Tom Taylor, in *Journal of Social History* (Summer 1988), Carnegie-Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213.

Many young Americans in college or graduate school wonder if they will *ever* complete their educations and find jobs. But, in the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II, would-be professionals faced far higher hurdles. Taylor, a historian at Seattle University, notes that even lawyers did not expect to begin their careers until they were 32 or 33.

In 1900, less than two percent of all young German men passed the *Abitur* exam required to enter a university. (German women rarely completed high school.) The gymnasium (high school) requirements were strict; youths who failed one course frequently repeated an entire year of study. Young men did not, on average, enter the university until they were over 21.

Thereafter these students ran into new difficulties. The *freiwillige Jahrdienst*—military service—interrupted studies for at least a year. Those students wanting to enter a profession (law, medicine, teaching) encountered added frustration. Prospective high school teachers, for example, generally spent eight to nine semesters in classes, one to two more preparing for examinations, and one semester taking the examination. Only 30 to 40 percent of the students who took certification exams passed; students who failed had to repeat the test. Hence, on average, it took some seven years for a would-be teacher to become "eligible for employment."

After graduation, says Taylor, "the real wait for independence began." Most professions in Germany required years of unpaid apprenticeship. Applicants for high-ranking civil service jobs had to spend years as nonsalaried *Assessoren* (assistants) before a position became available. Eleven years ensued after a student passed a law examination and before he was hired by the state.

Caused in large part by a shortage of jobs, the long waiting periods

## SOCIETY

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exacted a toll. Suicide rates rose, and many students turned to protest; many older members of the *Wandervogel* youth movement, Taylor finds, were university graduates. Even those who did find jobs did not enjoy financial ease; a common complaint of unemployed doctors or ministers was that they could only find work in a "hick, Polish village," thus remaining dependent on parental subsidies.

By contrast, during the same era, American youths faced fewer hurdles; many medical schools, for example, accepted high school graduates. Job prospects were also better. As a result, Americans of the era became independent adults much sooner than their German peers. In 1900, U.S. doctors began to practice at age 24, on average, and 44 percent of all U.S. teachers were under 25.

### *Women Workers*

"What Is a Working Woman?" by Horst H. Stipp, in *American Demographics* (July 1988), 108 North Cayuga St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

How many of America's women work?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in July of 1986, 51.9 percent (49.3 million) of American women 16 and older were employed full or part time. But Stipp, NBC director of social research, warns that simply counting women at work in any given month makes the active female labor force appear far smaller than it is.

This is because women tend to enter and exit the workforce much more often than men do. The BLS reports that while 60.2 percent (57.5 million) of all women worked *at some point* in 1986, only 37.4 percent were employed all year. Nearly 12 percent of women worked 26 weeks or less in 1986, while an additional 10.7 percent worked between 27 and 49 weeks. "Discontinuity in employment" occurs among the well educated; 29 percent of working women who had completed four years of college worked less than 50 weeks in 1986.

Why do women quit working? Not surprisingly, the most often-cited reason is to devote time to family and children. One-third of the departees left to have a baby or spend more time at home; only one percent of U.S. men stopped working for family reasons. Women are less likely than men to leave work because of layoffs, retirement, illness, a disability, or a return to school.

But a woman who stays at home seldom intends to stay there forever. A 1987 Roper survey of females over the age of 16 reported that only 26 percent had *not* worked in the past two years and had no plans to work. Only seven percent of women between 18 and 49 were "continuously nonworking"; 46 percent of the women in this age group had worked continuously, and an additional 31 percent had worked at some point during the past two years.

On average, women will probably never work as steadily as men, since many prefer interrupting their careers to raise children. But the stay-at-home life is becoming increasingly unpopular; in a recent NBC poll, only 20 percent of women (aged 18 to 49) saw their "ideal lifestyle" as "mainly homemaker or mother." The typical housewife, Stipp suggests, "has become rare indeed."

## SOCIETY

## *Asian-Americans Then and Now*

"The Educational and Economic Achievement of Asian-Americans" by Everett S. Lee and Xuelan Rong, in *The Elementary School Journal* (May 1988), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

The achievements of Asian-Americans, in school and at work, are well publicized. The National Center for Education Statistics, for example, reports that Asian-American students tend to earn more A's and B's and fewer D's and F's than any other ethnic group.

But Asians have been crossing the Pacific for a long time. The Chinese began arriving during the 1850s; Japanese have settled in the United States for over a century. Why were Asian-Americans, as a group, not successful from the start? The authors, an emeritus professor and a researcher at the University of Georgia, point to changing demographic and cultural patterns.

Before World War II, most Asian immigrants to the United States were Chinese or Japanese. They were usually lower-class bachelors. In the 1890 census, for example, Chinese men outnumbered Chinese women by 27 to one. Unions and local governments, especially in California, often barred Asians from high-wage jobs; they were also hampered by widespread illiteracy. (In 1900, 27 percent of Chinese men in the United States could not read English, compared to six percent of whites whose parents were born in the United States.)

After the war, Asian immigration surged. And as time went on, more people came from different countries—Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, India. In 1980, there were 3.5 million Asian-Americans; by 1985, there



*In 1984, 8.3 percent of Asian-American students were in programs for the gifted and talented, compared to 4.7 percent of white students.*

## SOCIETY

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were 6.5 million. Most important, unlike their early predecessors, these newcomers tended to be well-educated, middle-class people, including many women. The result: an influx of ambitious couples eager to focus "their energies and earnings" on the raising of their offspring.

Today, such Asian-American families enjoy a competitive edge. Couples tend to stay married; in 1980, 27 percent of American white women had already been divorced by age 32, while only 14 percent of Asian-American women had been divorced by age 55. Asian-American households tend to be small; in 1980, 1,358 children, on average, were born to every 1,000 white women aged 15-44, compared to 1,164 for the Asians.

These small, close-knit families produce motivated students: In 1980, only 17 percent of all white American men had graduated from college, compared to 32 percent of Asian-American men. Thus, Asian-Americans are conspicuous in "upper-status occupations," notably in science and engineering. One indicator: In 1980 only 24 percent of all U.S. whites were managers, professionals, or executives; no less than 33 percent of native-born Chinese-Americans and 26 percent of native-born Korean-Americans and Japanese-Americans had comparable jobs.

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## PRESS & TELEVISION

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### *Unwiring Cable*

"Wiring the Constitution for Cable" by Thomas W. Hazlett, in *Regulation* (1988, No. 1), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Cable television has provided increasingly popular alternatives to the programs of the three major broadcast networks and independent stations. Currently, 51.1 percent of American households subscribe to a cable TV service. Hazlett, an economist at the University of California, Davis, notes that while consumers may see cable TV as a "nifty new competitor" for ABC, CBS, and NBC, city officials view it as a local "natural monopoly" under their control, a utility like the telephone or electric company. The result: higher prices for subscribers and a dent in the First Amendment.

The first U.S. cable TV system was created in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, in 1948. Beginning around 1960, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) imposed tight restrictions on the fledgling industry. Then, in 1972, when the FCC began to remove limits on the program content and the number of channels a system could carry, cable companies began to lobby city halls for municipal franchises.

Financially ailing municipalities saw cable TV as a godsend; New York City's Mayor John Lindsay called cable franchises "urban oil wells under our city streets." To gain more revenue, many cities, towns, and counties mandated cable-TV monopolies awarded to the "best" bidder. Not surprisingly, some prospective franchise owners bribed local officials (resulting in a nationwide FBI probe); others gave unrealistic pledges to win contracts. In Sacramento, for example, United Tribune Cable promised to plant 20,000 trees and spend \$90 million on various civic projects.

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 PRESS & TELEVISION
 

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Yet, in Sacramento and elsewhere, franchise holders never supplied such "economically infeasible" services to the host city; in 21 of the 30 largest cable-TV markets, tortuous "give-back" renegotiations have resulted in cable TV that costs subscribers more and provides less than what cable operators originally promised. The "give-back" process has resulted in long delays. For example, New York City has been studying cable since the late 1960s, but only 20 percent of the city's homes were wired for cable by mid-1987.

In 1984, the FCC began to restrict local government control of cable prices and programming. Municipalities were discouraged from impeding cable's new rivals, such as satellite dishes or private systems in apartment complexes. Recently, several California courts have held that cable TV is not a utility, but an "electronic publisher," whose competitors are protected by the First Amendment. With great implications for the nation's 5,000-6,000 municipal cable-TV franchises, the constitutional issue has yet to be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

### *Television and the Primaries*

"How the Press Covered the Primaries" by S. Robert Lichter, in *Public Opinion* (July-Aug. 1988), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Has TV coverage distorted the presidential selection process?

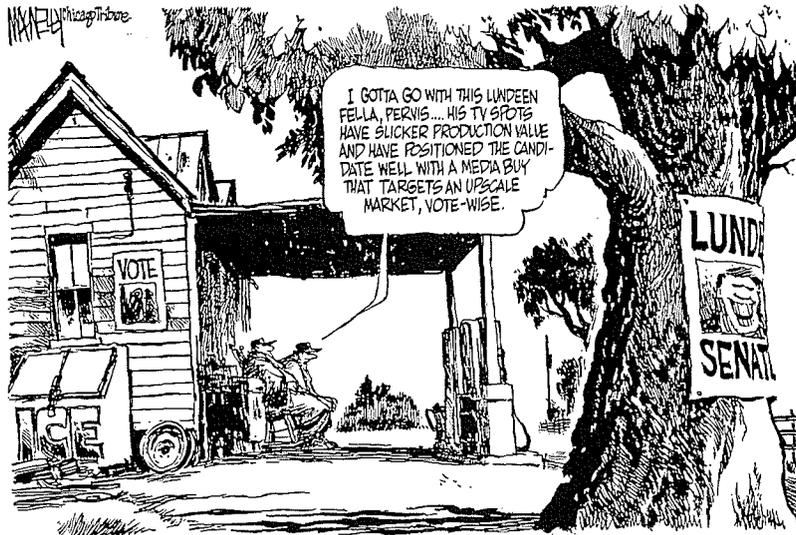
Not during the 1988 primary elections, according to Lichter, co-director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. He evaluated 1,338 campaign stories (over 35 hours of airtime) on the major networks' nightly newscasts from February 1987 through June 7, 1988, when the major Democratic and G.O.P. primaries ended.

As always, most of the coverage focused closely on the campaign itself. No less than 537 stories on ABC, CBS, and NBC discussed who was ahead in the "horse race" among the candidates; 312 were devoted to general campaign matters, and 280 concentrated on candidates' strategy and tactics. But the networks did not ignore "the issues"—there were 215 stories that dealt with policy questions. The Iran-contra affair, with 114 mentions, was most popular, followed by taxes (97) and unemployment (85).

Overall, 56 percent of the coverage of the Democratic contenders was favorable, compared to 53 percent for the Republicans. Jesse Jackson garnered the most applause; 74 percent of the mentions about him from all sources (including candidates, their families and campaign staffs, as well as reporters, election analysts, and voters) were positive. The G.O.P. favorite was Bob Dole, with 64 percent positive coverage from all sources. Comments from journalists themselves (about one-seventh of all assessments) were favorable to Democrats two thirds of the time and to Republicans half the time.

Did TV's "frontloading" of coverage of early primaries (Iowa, New Hampshire) give undue "momentum" to the Iowa winners—Dole and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D.-Mo.)? No, says Lichter. True, more network TV stories were done first about Iowa and then New Hampshire than about all the later primaries; both Dole and Gephardt jumped 12 points in the polls after their victories in Iowa. But "momentum" from these early triumphs

PRESS & TELEVISION



was nowhere near what it was in 1984 when Democrat Gary Hart gained 31 points within 10 days of his better-than-expected showing in Iowa.

Why? It was a different horse race in 1988. For one thing, Dole's and Gephardt's rivals enjoyed strong advantages in New Hampshire (e.g., Bush's strong ties to Reagan, Dukakis being from a neighboring state), so earlier wins in Iowa did not weigh so heavily. And TV reporters took hard second looks at both Dole and Gephardt after their initial successes. Only Jackson managed to attract favorable coverage throughout the primary campaign season.

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RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

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*Up from Plato*

"The Recovery of Practical Philosophy" by Stephen Toulmin, in *The American Scholar* (Summer 1988), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

One recurring idea in the West is that philosophy is no longer a valid intellectual pursuit. Since echoed by others, Albert Einstein once wrote of philosophy's "nakedness and poverty," and suggested that the Mother of Science was not just old, but barren too.

Toulmin, a professor of humanities at Northwestern University, be-

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**RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY**


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believes that philosophy can regain its lost glory—by abandoning the “theory-centered” approach ascendant for 300 years.

In Europe, the 17th century was an era of moral and spiritual disorder. Old political and religious allegiances were eroding, and science was casting “radical doubts” on man’s central role in the cosmos. “’Tis all in peeces, all cohaerance gone,” England’s John Donne wrote in “An Anatomy of the World” (1611). “Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot/For every man alone thinks he hath got/To be a Phoenix.”

Philosophers began to protect their endeavors against the intellectual turbulence of the time by making their work more abstract. Instead of practical arguments to be discussed, philosophy became a matter of proving *theories* using “timeless, universal ‘principles’” (Freedom, Good, Justice); formal logic replaced rhetoric as the philosopher’s chief tool. Thinkers who relied on traditional methods of study were ridiculed. For example, many scholars examined ethical questions case by case, much as law is studied today, but France’s Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) so vigorously lampooned the Jesuits who practiced “casuistry” that the case method was permanently discredited. *Worldly* philosophy—in medicine, the law, and among the casuists—gradually fell into disrespect.

For three centuries, most Western philosophers then followed the theoretical path first traced by Plato (428?–347 B.C.). This approach, Toulmin believes, is now exhausted; philosophers should once again become as practical-minded as Aristotle (384–322 B.C.). The philosopher observing how a doctor diagnoses illness can gain new insight into the nature of logic. And the philosopher who examines environmental issues is no less pure than his colleague exploring “illocutionary force.” Worldly controversies over the environment, nuclear arms, or judicial practice can shed new light on perennial questions. Public debates, Toulmin argues, “are no longer ‘applied philosophy’: They are philosophy itself.”

### *Marketing Religion*

“Bringing in the Sheaves” by Brad Edmondson, in *American Demographics* (Aug. 1988), 108 North Cayuga Street, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

America’s religious faith remains strong. A 1986 Gallup poll reported that 94 percent of U.S. adults believed in God, down two percent from 1967. And 76 percent believe that Jesus Christ was either God or the son of God, a rise of one percent between 1965 and 1983.

But belief in God does not necessarily mean support for a church. Edmondson, an *American Demographics* senior editor, reports that Americans now demand “choice and diversity” in all things, including worship. The result: increasing fragmentation of the Protestant churchgoing public. “The real story of American religion,” observes former pastor Jack Sims, is “about aging donors, declining revenues, declining market share, and a changing market.”

The National Council of Churches of Christ reports that in 1987 there were 218 religious sects in the United States, sponsoring 346,000 churches with 143 million members or 59 percent of the U.S. population. Many of these sects attract former “mainline” Protestants (e.g. Episcopalians, Presbyterians) who have become “born again” fundamentalists.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

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According to Gallup, 33 percent of Americans consider themselves "born again." While most such evangelical Christians tend to be Southern or black, 23 percent of all Americans aged 30 to 49 see themselves as "born again," as do 22 percent of college graduates and 23 percent of those in households with incomes of \$40,000 or more. According to consultant George Barna, 32 percent of born-again Christians are Baptists (mostly Southern Baptists), 30 percent belong to Pentecostal, nondenominational, and other small sects, and 12 percent are Catholic.

To counter declining membership, mainline Protestant churchmen have turned to market research. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for example, prepares "zip-code-level demographic analyses" to help local pastors search for potential new members. In some cases, marketing goes further. In southern California recently, a new Presbyterian church hired a marketing consultant to choose the most appealing name. After rejecting "cultlike" names (Southwind Church) or "intimidating" ones (Church of the Savior), the members ultimately chose "North Coast Presbyterian Church"—combining tradition and an emphasis on the church's attractive beachside location.

Sims warns that many traditional Protestant churches must do more than change their names to attract new parishioners. Some churches are so cool to outsiders, he contends, that attending an after-service coffee hour is "like going to someone else's family reunion."

### *The Virtues of Humor*

"Humor and the Virtues" by Robert C. Roberts, in *Inquiry* (June 1988), Norwegian Univ. Press, P.O. Box 2959 Tøyen, 0608 Oslo 6, Norway.

In *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), philosopher George Santayana held that telling jokes about others detracts from the joke-teller's character. "Satirical delight is closely akin to cruelty," Santayana wrote. "Defect and mishap stimulate our fancy, as blood and tortures excite in us the passions of the beast of prey."

Roberts, a Wheaton College philosopher, disagrees. Far from being a vice, "a sense of humor can be a moral virtue."

Many jokes act as a verbal or artistic analogue to the distorting mirror; comedy arises from incongruities, such as a cartoonist's caricature or the literal translation of words from one language into another. Virtue, Roberts believes, consists of following one's chosen destiny, of fulfilling one's potential (or *telos*). Humorous tales allow the reader momentarily to embrace another person's perspective; such stories help in appreciating others and understanding one's own nature. Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1863) is a tragedy with satirical elements; the comedy heightens Tolstoy's portrait of Ivan Ilyich's fall.

But what of jokes that might seem malicious—say, ethnic or sexual ones? Telling an ethnic joke does not *necessarily* imply that the teller is a bigot; these stories may allow the teller to "enter into" the world of a bigot without accepting bigotry, just as a reader of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* can grasp a better understanding of the Fascist mind without subscribing to Hitler's Nazism. Only when one *consistently* tells such stories does one cross the border from playfulness to malice, such as a man who repeatedly

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 RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY
 

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makes sexist cracks about women without finding putdowns of male chauvinism amusing.

Humorlessness, while not a vice, puts one in a "spiritual straitjacket." For example, the ability to laugh at oneself, Roberts argues, allows a person to achieve "blithe humility," the ability to accept painful truths about one's character without fatally wounding the ego. Since moral improvement cannot take place without first acknowledging one's faults, humor, by encouraging individual self-understanding, is "fundamental to any moral character."

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 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
 

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*The Birth of Speech*

"Voice in the Wilderness" by Philip Lieberman, in *The Sciences* (July-Aug. 1988), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

How did humans learn to talk? Some researchers, most notably MIT's Noam Chomsky, believe that linguistic dexterity emerged spontaneously in humans, as an innate mastery of "deep structures," the rules that are the foundation of all languages and grammars. Evolution, they argue, has played no role in the ability to use language, since "deep structures" do not, in their view, change over time.

Lieberman, a professor of cognitive and linguistic sciences at Brown University, disagrees. Recent research has shown that human speech developed "not *despite* evolution but *because* of it."

The first evolutionary steps toward speech occurred when vocal cords enabled mammals to produce sounds. At first, these organs were used chiefly for respiration; the horse's vocal cords allow it to signal mates or warn others of danger, but were intended primarily to deliver oxygen efficiently to the lungs. Man's ancestors underwent further evolutionary adaptations; the voice box descended into the throat, and the tongue gradually recessed inside the teeth, giving humans the ability to make such phonetic sounds as *a* or *i*.

These changes, Lieberman suggests, would have been pointless *unless* they were designed to facilitate speech; to accommodate the recessed tongue, for example, the human jaw shrank and the teeth became fewer, making eating more difficult.

As the organs for producing speech evolved, the brain's ability to control these organs was enhanced. For example, computer models show that the chimpanzee's vocal cords have the capacity to produce *all* human sounds except the vowels *a*, *i*, and *u*, and such consonants as *g* and *k*. But humans have never been able to teach chimpanzees to speak, because apes cannot voluntarily control the muscles that shape sounds. Humans not only have this ability (centered in "Broca's area," the section of the brain devoted to language), they can also perform *automatic* actions of great sophistication, freeing the brain to create speech.

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

The automatic "subroutines" of language, grounded in specific circuits in the brain, incorporate the logic of syntax that governs sentence structure. People with brain lesions in Broca's area have difficulty both in producing speech *and* in understanding complex sentences; this suggests that the abilities to transmit language and to receive it both descend from similar "neural mechanisms" that evolved over time. Thus, the development of human speech, Lieberman says, resulted not from "deep structures" but from "the outcome of Darwinian processes."

*Stereotypes*

"The Physicist as Mad Scientist" by Spencer Weart, in *Physics Today* (June 1988), 335 East 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

The "mad scientist," a sinister figure who lives to manipulate, create, or destroy life, is a surprisingly persistent archetype, still appearing in everything from children's TV cartoon programs to debates over genetic engineering. But where did this archetype originate? Weart, a historian at the American Institute of Physics, traces the origin of the mad scientist phenomenon to the 18th century.

Austria's Franz Mesmer (1734–1815) claimed he could cure numerous ailments through a form of hypnosis known as "Mesmerism." His exploits, which attracted thousands of admirers, were used by popular 19th-century authors (most notably Nathaniel Hawthorne) as the basis for pulpish tales of Mesmeric "scientists," who enticed the unlucky with eerie scientific powers. By the turn of the century, this stereotype was deep rooted; a popular American stage show of the time featured the villainous Svengali, who seduced victims with "hypnotic rays."

During World War I, scientists created new weapons (including poison gases) of unprecedented destructive power. After the war, many prominent American and European laymen feared that scientists, left unchecked, would produce devices that could destroy civilization. Lawyer Raymond B. Fosdick, for example, warned in *The Old Savage in the New Civilization* (1928) that a technological civilization could become "a Frankenstein monster that will slay its own maker." Critics' fears were shared by some scientists: A French Nobel laureate in chemistry, Frédéric Joliot, cautioned in 1935 that the forces of atomic energy could make the Earth explode if left uncontrolled.

Articles, stories, and films that did not show scientists as evil geniuses frequently portrayed them—as in Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith* (1925)—as selfless saints. But even these heroic representations made scientists seem inhuman. Thus, in the film *Madame Curie* (1944), Marie Curie, discoverer of radium, is portrayed as "unable to mourn" her husband's death; in reality, she had to be dragged from the room where her husband's corpse lay.

Rather than creating false images of scientists as "wonder-workers," Weart suggests, the best antidote to the "mad-scientist" archetype is realistic journalism, and fiction that does not treat researchers as either godlike or satanic. In everyday life, men and women in laboratories work to *improve* civilization, not "to seize personal control over it."

## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY

*Genetic Safeguards*

"The High Fidelity of DNA Duplication" by Miroslav Radman and Robert Wagner, in *Scientific American* (Aug. 1988), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

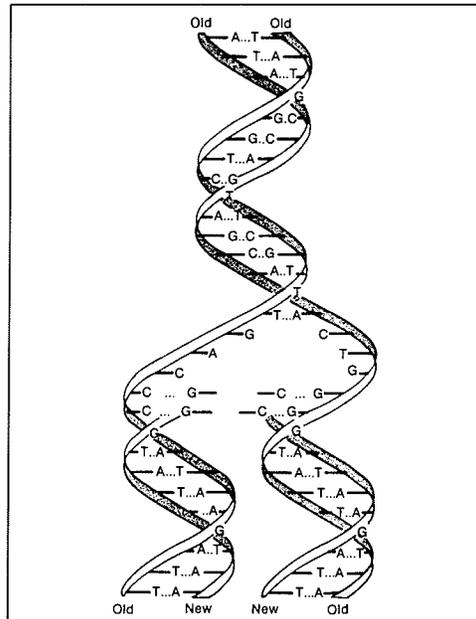
Diseases resulting from genetic mutations are of rising concern. A small mistake can have major consequences; a *single* error in the three billion bits of information that constitute the human genetic material can result in sickle-cell anemia or certain types of cancer.

Recently discovered enzymes and bacteria, note the authors, who conducted their studies at France's National Center for Scientific Research, serve to safeguard the body against potentially harmful genetic mistakes. Functioning as "quality control" devices, these biological protectors ensure that the error rate in duplicating the genetic "message" is extremely low. Without these safeguards, replication errors occur at a rate of one per 100 "letters" (or "bases"); with them, the error rate is reduced to one per 10 billion.

These enzymes start to function when a gene begins to replicate. After the strands of the DNA molecule split like a zipper, the DNA polymerase enzyme attaches freely floating strands of genetic material to an independent half of the DNA molecule. Mismatched strands that are bound with DNA polymerase form weaker bonds than do correct matches; because DNA polymerase acts to form the strongest bonds, only one in 100,000 incorrect bonds are formed.

Another enzyme, exonuclease, then begins to work as a kind of proof-reader. An incorrect genetic match, like a mistake in an assembly line,

*An artist's depiction of the DNA molecule in the process of replicating. When the DNA molecule duplicates, the molecule unwinds from its original "double helix" configuration, then splits into two halves. The DNA polymerase enzyme then attaches freely floating "nucleotide" pieces to each half of the original molecule.*



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**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**


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slows further bonding; during the delay, exonuclease removes the error, allowing DNA polymerase time to select the correct base before genetic bonding becomes permanent. Exonuclease reduces the error rate to one in 10 million—a rate that, although low, would result in 300 mistakes every time the genome is duplicated.

Strains of the *Escherichia coli* bacteria known as MutH, MutL, MutS, and MutU then act as final safeguards. The MutS and MutL proteins somehow detect errors, the MutU unwinds the strands of DNA to be repaired, and the MutH breaks the mismatched genetic bond, allowing DNA polymerase a chance to make the fix.

These biological checks, however, are best at correcting *small* genetic errors. Major errors—those mismatched genes that cause the genetic strands to bulge—are the least likely mistakes to be repaired by *E. coli* bacteria. Such errors, if not caught by DNA polymerase or exonuclease, are “beyond recall”; they thus become permanent genetic mistakes that could result in crippling disease.

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**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**


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### *Biocontrols*

“A New Crop of Pest Controls” by Omar Sattaur, in *New Scientist* (July 14, 1988), 1-19  
New Oxford St., London WC1A 1NG, United Kingdom.

The Cañete Valley is Peru's chief cotton-producing area. After World War II, the valley's farmers began spraying with insecticides. At first these chemicals killed harmful bugs, but, as insects' genetic resistance grew, more potent insecticides proved necessary. By 1956, Cañete Valley's farmers were spending 30 percent of their production costs on insecticides; yet as they sprayed up to 40 times a season, insects were destroying 70 percent of their cotton crop.

The farmers then tried a new strategy—integrated pest management. By regular counting of insects, quarantining of diseased plants, and use of small doses of pesticides, entomologists brought pests under control. Within two seasons, cotton crop yields were approaching normal, and farmers cut their use of insecticides to no more than twice a season.

Sattaur, a *New Scientist* consultant, notes that Cañete Valley is not an isolated example. Biological pest controls may prove more popular as pesticides become more costly—and more hazardous.

A 1983 UN study estimated that each year two million people are poisoned by pesticides; of these, 40,000 die. Pesticides are a “blunderbuss” method of killing insects, destroying beneficial insects as well as harmful ones. Third World governments are beginning to recognize such dangers: Indonesia, for example, recently banned 53 chemicals whose overuse eliminated biological checks against the brown planthopper, a predator that devoured much of that nation's rice crop.

Integrated pest management can take several forms. Consider the

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**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**


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strategies developed at the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru. To protect potatoes, a food staple for much of the Third World, researchers have introduced a fungus that destroys potato weevils; they also use sex pheromones to lure potato tuber moths away from stored crops. Genetic engineering may also prove helpful; studies are now being conducted in Bangladesh and Egypt to find out if potato genes can incorporate the granulosis virus, which may shield tubers against moth larvae.

Major barriers still stand in the way. Few entomologists in the Third World are trained in integrated pest management techniques. Many government agricultural departments are still skeptical. Pesticide manufacturers are reluctant to market locally effective biological pest controls that cannot be applied worldwide. But as a practical alternative to chemicals, Sattaur concludes, "the 'biocontrol' industry, though small, is growing."

### *Cash from Trash*

"Building a Market for Recyclables" by Cynthia Pollock Shea, in *World Watch* (May-June 1988), 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In 1983 the state of New York passed a law mandating deposits on beverage containers. But while the state could find buyers for the millions of aluminum cans and glass bottles returned by consumers, industry could not find new uses for old plastic. The result: Plastic bottles continued to be buried in landfills.

However, as time went on, the secondhand plastic market—in New York and elsewhere—steadily grew. Today, one out of five plastic bottles in the United States is recycled, turned into paint brushes, filling for ski jackets and pillows, and other useful products.

Shea, a Worldwatch Institute senior researcher, points out that only 10 percent of the nation's discards are recycled. As in the case of plastics, new uses must be found for recyclable materials. Without buyers for such materials, she contends, recycling will only become a more expensive collection and disposal program.

For some throwaway items, such as scrap aluminum cans and computer paper, "demand appears insatiable." Other markets are expanding as a side effect of current U.S. economic policies. The falling dollar, for example, has increased overseas demand for recyclable throwaways from America. Wastepaper exports have increased by 900 percent since 1970. Including scrap steel, 41 percent of the goods shipped from New York Harbor are discarded "secondary materials."

Some states encourage recycling through tax rebates. In Oregon, 163 companies use a "Business Energy Tax Credit" to deduct 35 percent of the cost of recycling equipment—a move that encouraged two paper mills to expand their capacity to transform old newspapers and boxes into fresh newsprint and paper bags. Proposed legislation in California would provide tax credits ranging from 10 to 22 percent for purchasers of scrap glass, wastepaper, and used plastic—a move its proponents calculate would divert 350,000 tons of waste annually from California's landfills.

Such state programs partially offset federal practices that work *against* recycling. The U.S. Forest Service's custom of selling timber

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**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**


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from national forests at below-market prices has not only cost the taxpayer over \$2 billion but, by artificially reducing pulpwood prices, has also discouraged the use of recycled paper. Until Congress and the White House end such contradictory policies, Shea warns, "the federal government promotes the continuation of a throwaway society."

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**ARTS & LETTERS**


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**Willa Cather's  
Long Ordeal**

"Becoming Noncanonical: The Case Against Willa Cather" by Sharon O'Brien, in *American Quarterly* (Mar. 1988), Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 701 West 40th St., Baltimore, Md. 21211.

During the 1920s, Willa Cather (1873–1947) was one of the major figures in American letters. Her six novels of that decade included the Pulitzer Prize-winning *One of Ours* (1922); she was awarded honorary degrees from Yale, Columbia, and the University of Michigan.

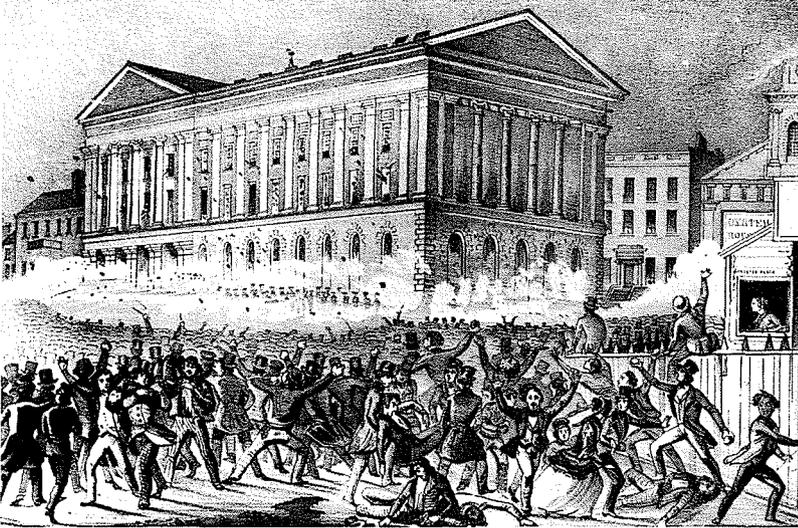
But during the ensuing Depression years, Cather's reputation faded. Reflecting contemporary political fashion, American critics denounced her, as they did playwright Thornton Wilder, for being an old-fashioned conservative. A *New Republic* reviewer in 1931 claimed that, by setting her works in the remote American past, Cather wrote as if "mass production" and the class struggle did not exist. More often, male critics disdained Cather simply for being female; Granville Hicks, for example, charged that Cather's gender barred her from having the "stern stuff" necessary to be a good novelist.

Why, asks O'Brien, a professor of English and American studies at Dickinson College, did a new breed of male critics during the 1930s suddenly rank Cather as a "minor" writer? The arbiters of the previous decade tended to be independent men of letters such as H. L. Mencken. But critics of the 1930s, including Lionel Trilling (Columbia) and Henry Seidel Canby (Yale), were mostly academics seeking to legitimize American literature as a field of study. To these ambitious scholars, who expressed their views in new journals such as *The New England Quarterly* (est. 1928) and *American Literature* (est. 1929), women writers were unfit to be included in the definition of a national literature.

In a collection of essays, *Not Under Forty* (1936), Cather took on her foes, defending her right to ignore contemporary social problems in her work and praising such distinguished female predecessors as her mentor, novelist Sarah Orne Jewett. The essays were sharply attacked, and Cather vowed never to publish literary criticism again. She also refused to permit her writing to appear in high school and college anthologies.

Yet, as her stock among the literati fell, Cather received hundreds of letters of support from loyal readers. Her biographer, Edith Lewis, said these letters were for Cather "a great anonymous affirmation of her art," and they helped her to keep writing. Since Cather's death, her fiction has continued to attract an audience; *O Pioneers*, *My Antonia*, all her other novels, and most of her short stories are currently in print.

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS



Lithographer Nathaniel Currier's sketch of the May 10, 1849, riot at the Astor Place Opera House in New York, pitting partisans of English actor William Macready against admirers of American star Edwin Forrest.

### *Being Seen at the Opera*

"New York Operagoing, 1825-50: Creating an Elite Social Ritual" by Bruce A. McConachie, in *American Music* (Summer 1988), Univ. of Ill. Press, 54 East Gregory Dr., Champaign, Ill. 61820.

Americans have been enjoying opera sung in foreign languages since at least 1825, when impresario Manuel Garcia's company performed nine operas in Italian at New York's Park Theatre. But as McConachie, an American studies scholar at the College of William and Mary, observes, opera snobbery has existed in the United States for almost as long. His evidence: a study of New York opera audiences before the Civil War.

Garcia's productions were attended by all classes of folk. The wealthy paid two dollars for a box seat, or one dollar for the pit; craftsmen and servants could buy gallery seats for a quarter. However, Garcia's successors courted the rich. By the time the Astor Place Opera House opened in 1847, the well-to-do were favored with reserved seating, and a dress code that required men to wear fresh waistcoats and kid gloves. The view from the inexpensive seats was obstructed by a chandelier. "The fashionable world is now completely organized," wrote a *New York Herald* critic. "The *canaille* [rabble] must keep themselves a respectable distance from Astor Place hereafter. Read and obey."

Operagoing became popular among the wealthy as a convenient occasion for conspicuous display. The opera house became a suitable locale for the banker's daughter to meet eligible bachelors, or for a wealthy philan-

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS

thropist to find candidates for his pet charity's board of directors.

Rituals learned by opera audiences, such as withholding applause until *after* an aria was completed, added to the general sense of self-esteem. Salting a conversation with such "high-sounding" Italian phrases as *cantina* or *parlando* allowed operagoers to feel superior—a verbal "distancing" technique also used for centuries by lawyers who cited tidbits of Latin. Old New York patricians, McConachie suggests, came to believe that only those "who could get through an Italian opera without a social gaffe" were worthy of acceptance.

New York's masses, shut out of the opera, occasionally expressed their antipathy; an 1849 disturbance at the Astor Place Opera House resulted in a riot that cost 22 lives and led to the eventual closing of the theatre. But the social exclusiveness of Astor Place continued intact in New York's next permanent opera house, the Academy of Music, which opened in 1854. By the time the Metropolitan Opera House opened in 1883, operagoing's prestige in American life was well established.

*Harmony and Art*

"America's Measure of Mankind: Proportions and Harmonics" by Jonathan L. Fairbanks, in *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* (Winter 1988), Oxford Univ. Press, 16-00 Pollitt Dr., Fair Lawn, N. J. 07410.

Nearly three centuries of American furniture designers, architects, and sculptors were influenced by rules first devised in classical times. Fairbanks, a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, notes that ancient "absolute harmonies" proved to have a lasting effect on American art.

Early in the 18th century, a new awareness of antiquity prompted American craftsmen to obey rules of proportion such as the "golden mean" discovered by Pythagoras. Incorporating classical columns, capitals, and mythical figures, cabinetmakers in New England designed entire chests of drawers in which each element was placed according to complex geometric relationships. Samuel McIntire's carved female figure, "Fame" (1796), has the same proportions as the columns that flank the chest she adorns: Fame's face is one-tenth the length of her body, just as the scrolled capital is one-tenth the height of its column.

Nearly a century later, American sculptors began to examine ancient classical statuary to discover "universal" proportional standards.

But artists could not help noticing that few human beings possessed the ideal proportions of Greek statuary. In Boston in 1865, sculptor Martin Milmore finally resorted to a classically draped cape to render heroic his statue of a Massachusetts governor, John A. Andrew. By the turn of the century, sculptors began to collaborate with "anthropometrists" (such as Harvard professor Dudley Allen Sargent) to formulate new physical ideals based on the measurements of college students. Amid the chauvinism of World War I, Sargent endorsed the white North American woman as the possessor of the most perfectly proportioned figure.

Ideas of human proportional theory have continued to fascinate specialists. But no longer are human bodies seen as "unified aesthetic systems basic to understanding beauty and truth."

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**OTHER NATIONS**


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### *Working Less in Japan*

“What Makes Salarymen Run?” by Phyllis Birnbaum, and “Japan’s Working Wounded: In Limbo by the Window” by Daniel Masler, in *Across the Board* (June 1988), The Conference Board, 845 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Americans, who work an average of 1,800 hours per year, are among the West’s most industrious employees. The Japanese do better: 2,100 hours per year. A mere 27 percent of all Japanese workers enjoy a two-day weekend, and a move to reduce the 48-hour workweek was opposed not only by executives but also by wage earners wary of the temptations of excessive leisure.

Some Japanese want their fellow countrymen to work less. Responding to pressure from foreign competitors citing Japan’s work habits as a cause for its massive trade surpluses, new Japanese laws will gradually reduce the maximum workweek to 44 hours. The Ministry of Labor promotes the two-day *tsuin horidee* (twin holiday) weekend; the Japanese media exalt the “super salaryman” who spends more time with his family.

Some young people are beginning to listen; in a recent poll, 85 percent of Japanese college graduates said they would put their families before their jobs, and 60 percent of male students thought they would work for more than one company before they retired.

Yet, according to Birnbaum and Masler, most Japanese still prize the security afforded by corporate guarantees of lifetime employment and regular promotions. Individualism and competition are shunned by Japanese in favor of teamwork and brotherhood; the “lone warrior” craftsman or entrepreneur is a rarity in Japan.

Despite their long working hours, Japanese employees get less for their money than do their Western counterparts. Although the Japanese worker now earns more than the average American, his paycheck buys 40 percent less; consumer prices run 80 percent higher than in the United States. Housing is particularly expensive, especially around Tokyo; as much as nine years’ income is required to buy a single-family home in Japan, compared with 3.3 years, on average, in the United States.

Japan also suffers from a labor surplus, which threatens lifetime employment guarantees. The recessionary effects of the strong yen, coupled with an increase in Japan’s working-age population, has created the *madogiwa zoku*—the “by-the-window tribe”—managers over 40 who are no longer deemed useful to their employers, but are kept on the payroll out of loyalty to the worker.

To stay competitive, Japanese companies are beginning to resort to early retirement and transfers to reduce their work forces and boost profits. In 1986, Nissan retrained 10 percent of its people as car salesmen, while Japan Line, a shipbuilding firm, retired 40 percent of its 2,500 employees. These trends may accelerate: The Japan Committee for Economic Development estimates that in the 21st century one out of three Japanese employees will work only part time.

OTHER NATIONS

*The Soviets  
and Drugs*

"Drug Abuse in the Soviet Union" by John M. Kramer, in *Problems of Communism* (Mar.-Apr. 1988), U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

For decades, the Soviet Union refused to admit that any of its citizens consumed illegal drugs. As late as May 1984, the Moscow journal *New Times* claimed that "not a single case" of addiction to amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, or LSD had ever been recorded in the country.

Kramer, a political scientist at Mary Washington College, writes that Soviet attitudes have undergone dramatic changes since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Officials and the national news media now spotlight the problem. For example, in 1986 *Izvestia* reported that drugs were routinely sold by gang leaders who kept "hundreds and thousands of rubles under their doormat."

Data on the extent of Soviet drug use is imprecise. Most evidence is anecdotal. National statistics only count users who reveal their habits to the police in order to receive treatment; in 1988, 52,000 people reportedly registered as addicts, with another 80,000 counted as people who use drugs on occasion. Yet these numbers are so low as to invite disbelief. The health minister of the Russian republic called official counts of only one or two drug addicts in many *oblasti* (provinces) "naive." One explanation: Many drug users have not registered because of the stiff penalties they would risk—until November 1987, up to two years in a labor camp; now, usually just fines.



"Beware of the White Cloud!" warns a Soviet antidrug pamphlet. "For a few minutes' high, the consequences are terrifying." Three million copies of this pamphlet were printed for distribution in schools.

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## OTHER NATIONS

From Leningrad to Vladivostok, addicts acquire narcotics by various means. Some illicit drugs are homegrown; collective farmers can double their incomes by selling poppies on the black market. As in the West, some drugs are stolen from hospitals and pharmacies. Five hundred people were indicted early this year for such thefts from Ministry of Public Health facilities. Despite strict Soviet frontier controls, smugglers provide another source of supply, particularly in Turkmenistan, which borders on Afghanistan and Iran.

Belatedly, the Soviets have begun to combat drug use. Antidrug TV documentaries, with such titles as "Business Trip to Hell" and "Pain," have been heavy handed and overly didactic. Narcotics treatment programs (which serve perhaps 40,000 people annually) rely on seven- to eight-day sessions that are "woefully inadequate" in achieving permanent cures. The USSR has begun to cooperate with other nations; at Moscow's request, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency is now training Soviet antinarcotics police. Yet, says Kramer, such measures have been "limited and mostly ineffectual" so far.

*A Forgotten War*

"The Loneliest War" by Robert D. Kaplan, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1988), 8 Arlington St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

Ethiopia is entering its 28th year of a civil war—Africa's longest conflict—that has already killed more than 250,000 people and displaced about three times that number. The 35,000 guerrillas of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) are battling a much larger Soviet-backed government army over a Red Sea province the size of Mississippi.

According to Kaplan, the current struggle reflects old sentiments. Since the 11th century, Ethiopia's rulers have been Amhara people from the southern interior. But these rulers have never gained more than a tenuous hold over the Eritreans, who, unlike the Amhara, were exposed to the "cosmopolitan influence" of foreigners coming by sea, notably the Egyptians and the Arabs.

The idea of Eritrean separatism slowly took root during centuries of foreign domination. In 1889, after 300 years of Turkish occupation, the territory was annexed by the Italians. They mobilized Eritreans to build a local road-and-rail network, says Kaplan, suddenly spurring "the growth of a modern national consciousness." Thousands of Eritreans fought alongside Mussolini's Fascist troops during his 1935 conquest of Ethiopia. In 1941, the British ousted the Italians from Ethiopia and moved into Eritrea.

A 1952 UN mandate declared Eritrea a semi-autonomous territory under Ethiopian control. Eritreans considered this act "a gross betrayal by outside powers." Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie disregarded "semi-autonomy"; he proceeded to ban the Eritrean political parties. He also replaced the Eritrean languages with Amharic. He formally annexed the territory in 1962, fueling the civil strife that had begun a year earlier.

Haile Selassie was ousted in a 1975 coup by a group of Marxist officers called the Dergue. Two years later, the Soviet Bloc began to send advisers and weapons. Their reward: bases on the Dahlak Archipelago in the Red Sea and an abandoned American base in Asmara, once the Eritrean capital

## OTHER NATIONS

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under the Italian colonial rule.

Even though Mengistu Haile-Mariam's Ethiopian regime is inept and dictatorial, Western nations have been reluctant to support the rebels, whom the U.S. State Department also views with suspicion. (Although EPLF leaders deny any political alignment, the front does center around a "Leninist command structure," including a politburo and central committee.) Despite the lack of Western arms, the EPLF has pursued independence with battlefield efficiency and a "maniacal singlemindedness" that the Ethiopians cannot overcome. Recently, Kaplan notes, the Mengistu regime in Addis Ababa has acknowledged that the rebels are "threatening the very foundations of the Ethiopian state."

### *A New Portugal*

"Another New World" by Merrill Stevenson, in *The Economist* (May 28, 1988), 25 St. James St., London SW1A 1HG, United Kingdom.

On April 25, 1974, Portuguese strongman Marcelo Caetano was ousted in a military coup, restoring democracy after 42 years of dictatorship by Caetano and his predecessor, Antonio Salazar. Within two years, most Portuguese colonies, including Angola and Mozambique, had gained independence; at home, dozens of private companies were nationalized, workers' wages increased dramatically, and six provisional governments formed and fell.

Today, reports Stevenson, a writer for *The Economist*, Portugal is a far more stable nation. That stability, she contends, is due largely to two men: Socialist president Mario Soares and Social Democratic (PSD) prime minister Anibal Cavaco Silva.

Prime minister from 1976 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1985, the charismatic Soares led the campaign to make Portugal a member of the European Community, and presided over austere policies that brought a falling inflation rate and a reduced national debt. In 1987, Soares became Portugal's president; as head of state, he provides a "reassuring presence" similar to that in Spain of King Juan Carlos.

A former finance minister and chief of planning, the intellectual Cavaco Silva holds a Ph.D. in economics. He led a coalition government from 1985 until July 1987, when his PSD became the first party to gain an absolute majority in Portugal's Parliament.

Both the military and the Communists have lost ground. Following the loss of the African colonies, Lisbon cut the armed forces in half; defense spending's share of the budget has fallen from 50 percent in 1970 to less than 10 percent today. The military men responsible for the 1974 coup are either retired, in prison, or out of politics; Cavaco Silva's current cabinet is the first with no military members. In 1976, the Communists gained 14 percent of the Portuguese vote; fewer than four percent of those citizens polled in April 1988 said they would vote Communist. A new, non-Communist trade union, the UGT, has emerged to challenge the Communist CGTP; while the CGTP is still Portugal's largest union, its adherents seem "to be increasingly confined to low-skilled jobs in state industries."

Portugal still faces many difficulties—reducing illiteracy, modernizing aging factories. But Portuguese democracy now seems secure.

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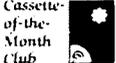
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## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions*

### **“Israel’s Grand Strategy: David Ben-Gurion and Israel’s Next Great Debate.”**

Paper presented by Shai Feldman at a colloquium sponsored by the Wilson Center.

Recent Arab uprisings in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip may stir Israelis to look beyond national security “to the essence of the state’s purposes and its grand strategy.”

Feldman, a Wilson Center Fellow and senior research associate at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, suggests that his fellow citizens might do well to reconsider the principles formulated by that nation’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973). Ben-Gurion’s “grand strategy,” Feldman asserts, assured Israel of both a strong defense and a vibrant democracy; Israelis’ neglect of Ben-Gurion’s vision over the past 20 years has resulted in “cumulative difficulties”—excessive dependence on America, divisive ventures in Lebanon, the continuing West Bank troubles.

Israel, Ben-Gurion believed, should be based on *aliya*—welcoming Jews from all continents to return to their homeland. To protect these Jewish returnees, Ben-Gurion consistently pursued policies to ensure that Israel would remain as Jewish as possible. During the 1930s, Ben-Gurion sided with those Zionists who preferred a small, largely Jewish state to a larger state with a substantial Arab minority. As prime minister (1948–53, 1955–63), Ben-Gurion opposed plans to occupy the West Bank territories (then in Jordan) in order to secure “more normal” boundaries along the Jordan River. High Arab birth rates, he warned in 1958, would mean that the West Bank’s one million Arabs would ultimately outbreed Israel’s 1.75 million Jews, resulting in an Arab majority. “Our urgent problem,” he said, “is a shortage of Jews, not a shortage of territory.”

Ben-Gurion’s foreign policy, Feldman

contends, could be summarized in the motto “talk tough and act moderately.” As prime minister, he “repeatedly rejected proposals that entailed the excessive use of force.” For example, Ben-Gurion blocked a request in 1950 by General Moshe Dayan to break an Egyptian blockade of the Israeli port of Eilat and in 1955 to invade the Gaza Strip. The one war Ben-Gurion *did* launch, the 1956 Sinai campaign against Egypt, was instigated as a *preventive* measure. France was willing to be the first Western power to supply “modern and sophisticated arms” to Israel *only* if Israel would launch a joint action against Egypt. Fearing the growing might of Egypt’s military (strengthened by massive shipments of Soviet arms), Ben-Gurion felt he had no choice but to use force.

After his retirement in 1963, Ben-Gurion’s principles were widely ignored. Israeli strategists began to favor “defensible borders” over Ben-Gurion’s insistence on a largely Jewish state. The result: military occupation of not only Egypt’s Sinai, but also such areas as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after the 1967 Six-Day War. Yet, ruling large numbers of Palestinian Arabs has diminished “Israel’s moral standing.” Occupying the territory of other nations, such as the strategic Golan Heights in Syria, has increased these countries’ “willingness to confront” Israel.

Feldman advises Israeli leaders to return to Ben-Gurion’s vision. They should take their foreign policy goals beyond simple reliance on “defensible borders.” Israel’s “ultimate political objective” should be peace; but to secure a stable and lasting peace, some way must be found to accommodate and reconcile “the national aspirations” of both Jews *and* Palestinians.

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### **“Economic Impact Studies: Inaccurate, Misleading, and Unnecessary.”**

The Heartland Institute, 59 East Van Buren St., Ste. 810, Chicago, Ill. 60605. 20 pp. \$4.50.  
Author: William J. Hunter

Advocates of government subsidies for private enterprises (e.g., new factories, football stadiums), as well as for public works, typically promise that such outlays will have a “multiplier effect”; they will create jobs directly and also give the entire local economy a boost.

Hunter, a Marquette University economist, contends that such calculations are not only difficult to substantiate but also inherently misleading. For one thing, “multiplier” formulas (so many tax dollars, so many new jobs) ignore the “opportunity cost”—spending power lost to local consumers whose taxes are raised to pay for the project.

Moreover, “multiplier” formulas tend to favor the costlier project over the cheaper one, since the prospective local benefits seem so much greater. Building a new \$22

million bridge seems to promise far more secondary employment and more “indirect” community income than a \$15 million repair of the old bridge. “This phenomenon may best be described,” says Hunter, “as the Taj Mahal syndrome.”

State and local governments, he adds, should be particularly wary of economic studies that assume all the jobs and income generated by a new venture are retained within the region. The state of Illinois, for example, recently gave Mitsubishi/Chrysler \$86 million for an auto factory, relying on “multiplier” formulas that predicted the project would create 8,000 jobs in Illinois outside the plant. As it happened, less than 16 percent of the factory’s contracts went to Illinois suppliers; the projected \$300 million in additional state personal income is unlikely to be realized.

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### **“Automatic Government: The Politics of Indexation.”**

Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 276 pp. \$31.95.

Author: R. Kent Weaver

In 1949, the federal government began to “index” dairy price supports. Since then, notes Weaver, a Brookings senior fellow, indexation—annual percentage gains in individual benefits or wages, typically based on the inflation rate or the Consumer Price Index—has become popular among legislators on Capitol Hill.

This mechanism ensures automatic growth in certain entitlements and avoids political controversy.

In Fiscal Year 1986, for example, 95 percent of all federal spending for housing assistance programs was indexed, as were 83 percent of all federal wages and 80 per-

cent of retirement and disability payments for federal workers. Not indexed: the minimum wage, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, disability compensation for war veterans.

Indexation is a two-edged sword, allowing individual benefits to grow steadily but also checking such programs’ further expansion. Congress rarely acts to make an indexed benefit *more* generous. Consider Social Security, which has been indexed since 1972: Indexation has meant that legislators can now avoid voting on “general benefit changes,” since increases that once needed to be approved by Congress have

become automatic.

The Reagan White House has usually frowned on indexation; the few new initiatives (income tax rates, Medicare reimbursements) "were generally consistent" with the administration's efforts to check government expansion and limit spending. Already-indexed programs have been the ones most difficult for politicians to cut; Social Security cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), for example, are the only inflation adjustments protected from reduc-

tions under the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit-reduction plan.

But indexing, Weaver argues, can be used selectively in positive ways. For example, employers are required to pay unemployment taxes on wages over \$7,000, a wage base that has changed only three times since 1940. Allowing this wage base to rise to a more realistic level through indexation would decrease payroll taxes, thus increasing the incentive for businesses to hire new workers.

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### **"Youth Indicators 1988: Trends in the Well-being of American Youth."**

U.S. Dept. of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 137 pp. \$7.

How are young Americans faring in the 1980s? Staff members of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement have collected the latest data. They show that in many ways income, employment, and education of youths have unexpectedly improved since the 1960s. Problems still remain. Some interesting numbers:

- Two-parent families are still in vogue. The number of divorces each year per 1,000 married women doubled from 10.6 in 1965 to 20.3 in 1975; the rate rose to 22.8 in 1979, then fell to 21.8 in 1985. And while the number of single-parent households is steadily rising (particularly among blacks), most American children still live in two-parent families (including step-parents). In 1985, only 11 percent of all U.S. families with children were headed by a single parent, up from 8.8 percent in 1975 and 5.7 percent in 1965.

- More youths are staying in school. In 1965, 27.2 percent of whites and 49.7 percent of blacks failed to finish high school;

by 1986, these rates had fallen to 13.6 percent for whites and 16.7 percent for blacks. Out of school, students prefer television to homework; in 1983-84, only 14 percent of 11th graders reported spending more than two hours on homework each night. Of youths surveyed, 39 percent of whites and 63 percent of blacks watched television more than three hours a day.

- Teen-age unemployment rates rose during the 1981-82 recession, but have fallen steadily since then. Black male teen-age unemployment, for example, rose from 37.5 percent in 1980 to 48.9 percent in 1982, but dropped to 39.3 percent in 1986. (White male teen-age joblessness rose from 16.2 percent in 1980 to 21.7 percent in 1982, then fell to 16.3 percent in 1986.)

- Since 1975, teen-age women have, on average, been less likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts. In 1986, for example, the unemployment rate for U.S. men aged 16-19 was 19 percent; for U.S. women, only 17.6 percent.

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*When Fidel Castro entered Havana in triumph on January 8, 1959, placards (Gracias Fidel), television cameras, and bell ringers were ready. But there was no need to fake what one American reporter called "the magic of his personality." His political skills would help make him the longest-surviving head of government in a major nation after North Korea's Kim Il Sung and Jordan's King Hussein.*

# Castro's Cuba

At the age of 62, Fidel Castro seems to be outliving the forces that helped establish him in power almost 30 years ago. The Cold War, which brought him Moscow's patronage, is in at least partial remission; Mikhail Gorbachev is negotiating with Washington on arms control and reducing Soviet involvement in several regional wars (Afghanistan, Angola). And the old Marxist-Leninist vision of the "purifying" revolution has accumulated some new blots outside Cuba itself—notably the brutal excesses that have blighted much of Africa, created the boat people of Indochina, and added to the hardships of Central Americans. Marxist guerrillas still seek to seize power in the Philippines and El Salvador. But ethnic differences or simple nationalism now sustain far more local conflicts than Marxism does. Indeed, historian James H. Billington, former director of the Woodrow Wilson Center and now Librarian of Congress, suggests that "the wave of revolution—and the idea of violent convulsive upheaval effecting meaningful social change—are becoming anachronistic."

Here, Castro biographer Tad Szulc reflects on the sinuous course of the Cuban leader's long reign—and its possible aftermath. Pamela S. Falk views Castro's Cuba as it has vexed seven U.S. presidents. And W. Raymond Duncan describes how Nikita Khrushchev's dream of easy gains in the Third World—and Castro's own ambitions—gave a succession of Soviet leaders expensive new allies in Latin America and Africa.

## ***FIDELISMO***

*by Tad Szulc*

"It was much easier to win the revolutionary war than it is to run the Revolution now that we are in charge."

So Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz observed some months after taking power in Cuba early in 1959. Only 33 years old, he had just launched Latin America's most fundamental social and political upheaval in a half-century, proclaiming a wide-ranging agrarian reform and ordering a

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mass literacy campaign to teach all Cubans to read and write as prerequisites for progress.

On this particular evening, over steaks served in the kitchen of a Havana hotel, the fiery young "Maximum Leader" was explaining to a few friends and visitors how hard it was to transform his Caribbean island. The conversation went on through midnight, and then past day-break. As one of the guests, I vividly remember the glorious dreams and promises Castro spun off, and the excitement that pervaded Cuba at the dawn of what was to be a splendid new age.

### Going Spearfishing

Thirty years later, a still-ebullient Castro has not solved the problem that confronted him in 1959: How to provide his 10 million compatriots (there were six million when he ousted Gen. Fulgencio Batista) with a modicum of satisfaction, if not the boundless Marxist-Leninist joy that he so often promised during the 1960s.

After three decades of experimentation, of costly zig-zagging in economic plans, of vast national effort and sacrifice, and increasing Soviet subsidies, Fidel's overarching revolutionary goal—the creation of a new "Socialist Man" in an efficient socialist system—still eludes him. And to make matters worse, old and new Cuban generations are paying a heavy price—the denial of personal and political freedoms—for the social gains that do exist today.

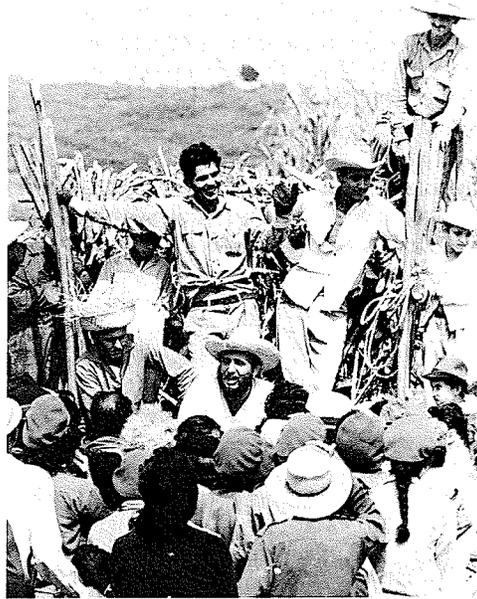
Thus, especially to its early sympathizers at home and abroad, Castro's regime on the threshold of its fourth decade must answer a poignant question: Why was political freedom not welcomed alongside the Revolution's accomplishments in the realm of social progress? Castro's revolution, widely admired when it began, might well have turned out better if, instead of exercising absolute power, he had tolerated personal freedoms, creating a form of partnership with the nation. After all, as he told us that night in the hotel kitchen, that was what the Revolution would be all about: freedom and happiness. Yet, even today, he keeps hundreds of political prisoners, many of them at the penitentiary on the Isle of Pines where he himself was confined during 1953–55.

Unquestionably, Castro's regime stands at something like a final crossroads. At home, it is stagnating. Following the sizable gains of the 1960s and '70s, Cuban living standards have declined during the 1980s. In 1987, for example, domestic production dropped by 3.2 percent from the previous year. Abroad, Castro finds himself out of step in the Marx-

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*Tad Szulc, 62, is a journalist and author. Born in Warsaw, Poland, he studied at the University of Brazil (1943–45). Among his 15 books are Twilight of the Tyrants (1959), The Cuban Invasion (1962), The Winds of Revolution (1963), The Illusion of Peace (1978), and Fidel Castro: A Critical Portrait (1986). Copyright © 1988 by Tad Szulc.*

*The Maximum Leader with cane cutters, 1965. Sugar production fell sharply during the early 1960s, in part because of a scarcity of skilled specialists. Of 300 agronomists working in Cuba in 1959, 270 fled the country—joining a “brain drain” that also saw the departure of about half the island’s teachers, more than half of its 6,000 physicians, and nearly all of its 6,500 North American residents.*



ist-Leninist world. He clings to a public orthodoxy that most other Communist leaders have begun to abandon. He has refused to emulate Mikhail Gorbachev's push toward decentralization, modernization, and higher productivity (*perestroika*), and relative openness and liberalization (*glasnost*) in the Soviet Union. China's economic reforms have been anathema to him. Today, Cuba is, with the possible exception of Kim Il Sung's North Korea, the most inefficient and repressive Communist country in the world. (During a speech on the revolutionary holiday of July 26 this year, Castro asserted that the Cuban Revolution “need not imitate others; she creates.”) In the Soviet Bloc today, ironically, the Cuban leader stands with the anti-Gorbachev conservatives—East Germany's Erich Honecker, Romania's Nicolae Ceaușescu, and Czechoslovakia's Miloš Jakeš.

Yet Castro, a public relations virtuoso, generally succeeds in projecting an image of tolerance, bonhomie, and unruffled self-assurance. Last April, for example, he found time to meet at length with New York's Roman Catholic Archbishop, John Cardinal O'Connor, and actor Robert Redford to discuss Cuba's relations with the church and the fate of political prisoners held by the regime. Like so many other foreign visitors, both the Cardinal, the first U.S. churchman of his rank to travel to Cuba in well over 30 years, and the Hollywood star declared them-

selves very impressed by their host.

That Castro has not lost his touch as Cuba's great master of political seduction is as obvious on Cuban television as in the many interviews he gives to U.S., West European, and Latin American TV networks. And there are his all-night meetings with Yankee businessmen, professors, and politicians, all of whom are welcome in Havana. Having given up cigars—his trademark olive-green uniform and beard remain, although the latter is now greying and kept closely trimmed—he emphasizes the healthy life for himself and all Cubans. He swims, goes spearfishing, plays basketball with the children when visiting Cuban schools, and in general behaves as if all were well in the best of all possible worlds, i.e. socialist Cuba.

### Back to 'Spiritual Incentives'

But his outward show of confidence, his ability to woo visitors, mask the travail of his people: the shortages of consumer goods, the lack of urban housing, the glaring inefficiencies of the state-run economy, and, finally, the likelihood that little will change in the foreseeable future. They live in a mood of hopelessness.

And there is a private Castro—moody, impatient, irascible, and downright violent with his subordinates. His behavior patterns have not changed in 30 years: Since the time he entered Havana riding a column of jeeps, tanks, and trucks on January 8, 1959, he has never deviated from "*L'état, c'est moi*" (I am the state), and, like Louis XIV, he has kept himself surrounded by sycophants. Yet, for all his outward ebullience, he is a very lonely man, trusting no one.

Since I first met him in 1959, I have been impressed by his erudition, his sense of history, and his political agility and imagination. These qualities—and others—brought him victory over Batista against immense obstacles. For several decades, they helped make him a widely admired Third World leader and made Cuba a player in Central America and Africa. What, then, is happening to Fidel Castro?

It appears that he has, oddly, become both the victim of his unfulfilled promises to construct socialism in "the most orderly manner possible" and the prisoner of his enduring conviction, unchallenged by his colleagues, that he alone understands what is good for Cuba. The added difficulty Castro seems to have created for himself (and for Cuba) stems from his misperception of what is really happening among the Cuban people. He still crisscrosses the island on trips by helicopter or Mercedes limousine, but he seems not to see and not to hear what is around him. And, increasingly, there is the steady murmur of discontent.

"Fidel is desperate over his inability to make Cuba work," a man who has known Castro all his life told me not long ago, when we ran into each other in Europe, "and this is why he is losing control and he is doing things that make no sense." This man doubts that Castro believes in

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Marxism-Leninism viscerally or intellectually. He suggests that Fidel adopted it as convenient revolutionary dogma, and that his only true beliefs, underneath all the rhetoric, now revolve around himself—*Fidelismo*. We were discussing the great ideological campaign the Maximum Leader unveiled in 1987, known as “Rectification of Errors . . . and Negative Tendencies.”

Specifically, Castro has re-introduced in Cuba the notion of “spiritual incentives” to inspire the citizenry to labor unselfishly for the common welfare, instead of the various “material incentives” that the Chinese, Soviets, and East Europeans have begun to offer. Under “rectification,” Cuba’s workers and students are instructed to “volunteer” for unpaid work in the fields or in construction on their days off, just as they did during the 1960s when the nation was still in the grip of nationalistic (if not ideological) fervor, and most Cubans were ready to do almost anything Fidel proposed.

Interestingly, Castro is stressing “spiritual incentives” (medals, awards, publicity) to revive the ideal of “Socialist Man” that the famous Ernesto “Che” Guevara propounded during the Revolution’s early years. Guevara, the Argentine-born physician who joined Castro’s exiled rebel movement in Mexico in 1955 and became his chief lieutenant in the guerrilla campaign, was probably the purest believer in Marxism-Leninism of his generation; he was also Castro’s only intellectual equal among the rebels, and his principal ideological counselor.

### Firing the Technocrats

Castro told me several years ago that the greatest error committed by the “Revolution” (Fidel never says *he* has committed mistakes; it is “we” or the “Revolution”) was to try to implant pure communism in Cuba, skipping over the preparatory “socialist” stage that Marx and Lenin had recommended. Not even Stalin’s theoreticians saw the Soviet Union achieving the status of a classic “communist” society, but Fidel and Che set out to create such a society on their Caribbean island. They were on the verge of abolishing money altogether (in 1966) when the Soviets persuaded Castro that premature experimentation with classical communism would sink Cuba economically.

Che Guevara was killed in October 1967 in the Bolivian mountains where, for reasons that remain unclear to this day, he had launched a guerrilla movement, hoping to rouse local Indian peasants. For the next 20 years, Castro appeared to have forgotten “spiritual incentives” and “Socialist Man,” concentrating on other themes. Meanwhile, Fidel used pay raises and favoritism in the distribution of scarce consumer goods to keep both top officials and lowly workers attentive to their duties. One result was creeping corruption in the Cuban Communist Party—Fidel is its first secretary as well as president of Cuba and the armed forces’ Commander in Chief—which has added to the erosion of popular faith in

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the selfless qualities of Cuba's rulers.

That his regime is in profound crisis is, to some degree, publicly recognized by Fidel himself. During the mid-1980s, he berated Cuba's "workers who do not work" and "students who do not study." He has also been discarding the annual plans drafted by his top economists, and firing the authors for being "despicable technocrats." Castro personally redrafts the plans, down to the smallest detail—typical of his intervention in almost every arena of government.

### Imitating Mao?

Fidel has reacted in other ways. To the call for "spiritual incentives," he added a series of harsh austerity measures early in 1987. These ranged from a cut in the sugar allowance (even rice and meat are still imported and rationed) to an increase in urban transit fares (the bus system is in shambles) and a curtailment of daily television broadcast schedules. Cuba's external debt to Western Europe had to be renegotiated because Havana had no hard currency with which to make payments; the Soviets presumably extended again the deadline for payments on the billions (the figures are never published) that the Cubans owe to Moscow. Thus, Castro had no choice but to embrace some sort of radical crisis management.

What is surprising, however, is Castro's recourse to the old Marxist-Leninist gospel. Fidel's "rectification" campaign is aimed at warding off the twin demons of "capitalism" and the "bourgeoisie." He has closed down small farmers' markets that he authorized in 1980, claiming that peasants were getting too rich selling piglets, chickens, and garlic directly to private customers. He now contends that any free-market experiment pollutes Marxism-Leninism. In a public remark that must have reached Gorbachev's ears in Moscow, Castro announced recently that the way things were being managed around the world, he regarded himself as the last true bearer of the Marxist-Leninist banner. And Fidel does not joke about such matters.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to fathom his apparent belief that contemporary Cubans will be turned toward noble socialist purposes by the revival of ideological slogans. Most Cubans are of the postrevolutionary generation (40 percent are under age 15). Although they may increasingly regard Fidel Castro as a heroic figure, they regard his revolutionary goals as abstractions. They did not experience the struggle of the 1950s. They take for granted universal education and health care, and, like people elsewhere, they want to enjoy a better life—a life they hear about via Spanish-language radio stations 90 miles away in Florida, where some 1.5 million native-born Cubans now reside.

An exile in Miami remarked recently that "what throws me is that Fidel really seems to think that a team of aging revolutionaries—a 30-year-old team—can rekindle the fires of revolution in Cuba." Another



Rich soil, broad plains, and abundant rain (wet season: May-October) make Cuba the world's leading sugar producer. Cane is grown on much of the island, but other assets are scattered. In the west is the finest tobacco and the Havana area, where nearly one in four Cubans live. Around Camaguey and Las Tunas are large cattle ranches. In the east are nickel and iron mines, and Guantánamo, the U.S.-leased (\$2,000 a year) base long used for the training of navy ship crews.

Cuban, who lives in Havana, drew a comparison between Castro and China's late Mao Zedong. He suggested that Fidel had made a decision to risk everything on his version of a "Cultural Revolution" (though a bloodless one) to preserve the purity of the original struggle. "But please remember that Mao lost in the end, and the reformists took over to liberalize and modernize," the Cuban said. "No two situations are alike, yet there are constants in human behavior, and Fidel, who should know better, is disregarding reality."

Castro won his struggle against the Batista dictatorship 30 years ago precisely because he had disregarded what was widely perceived as reality at the time: that his tiny guerrilla force in the Oriente Mountains

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could never oust an entrenched (albeit incompetent) military regime. Castro's faith in himself is as strong today as it was then.

Relying on his own audacity and imagination, Castro has always moved from one turning point to another, either defining them himself or exploiting events. His first move after the 1959 victory was the decision to transform the ouster of Batista into a continuing radical revolution. As Fidel explained it later, mocking "liberals" and "imperialists," he had always planned it that way, but "our enemies never understood what we had in mind, and we didn't act until we were good and ready." Castro also understood that the United States would never endorse a radical regime next door, one committed to the nationalization of U.S.-owned land and other investments and to the rejection of Washington's continued influence over Havana, and he behaved accordingly.

### Literacy, Not Liberty

America-baiting was a key element in Castro's strategy. He foresaw that his regime would gain at home and in the eyes of much of the world if the Eisenhower administration (and later President Kennedy) reacted with hostility to his actions and his rhetoric; the Yankees would be the bullies. And, given the 60-year history of American dominance on the island, it was easy for Fidel to rouse latent nationalist sentiment among his compatriots. Quickly, his supporters came up with the chant, repeated endlessly at every public appearance by Castro: "... Fidel, for sure ... Hit the Yankees Hard! ..." This was the atmosphere as the Revolution acquired momentum—and as Washington officials began hatching plans to remove the Maximum Leader, especially after he declared himself a Marxist-Leninist in December 1961.

But Castro's decision to sever links with the United States required some new ally who could compensate for the loss of resources and trade from the mainland. Given the Cold War rivalries of the superpowers and Castro's public fealty to communism, the Soviet Union was the logical candidate. By early 1960, high-level talks were underway between Havana and Moscow, and soon Soviet weaponry as well as oil and wheat began arriving in Cuba. By all accounts, Premier Nikita Khrushchev was as anxious as Castro to nurture the new relationship, inasmuch as it gave the Soviets their first strategic foothold and a Marxist-Leninist ally in the Western Hemisphere. But it is possible to argue that, in truth, Fidel manipulated the eager Soviets into providing massive economic aid. In any case, Castro owes his regime's survival to the Soviet connection; it is less clear what continuing real profit the Kremlin has reaped from its long investment.

Soviet weapons (and Washington's bungling) helped to save Castro from the ill-fated 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion by CIA-organized Cuban exiles. And Khrushchev's installation of Soviet nuclear missiles on the island in 1962 led to the now-famous "eyeball-to-eyeball" U.S.-Soviet

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confrontation, still depicted in the United States as a Cold War triumph for John F. Kennedy. The story has another side. In return for removal of the missiles, President Kennedy gave private assurances to Khrushchev that the United States would never invade Cuba, thereby guaranteeing the future of Castro's regime.

Still, a regime with revolutionary aspirations must do more than simply survive. To prosper as a social and political phenomenon, it must create a better life for its citizenry. This became Castro's overwhelming concern along with the permanent Soviet-aided defense of the island. Yet immense contrasts developed between the regime's success in achieving social progress and its failure in economic development.

That social progress did occur, to a degree rarely achieved elsewhere in the Third World, is widely recognized. As a result of the mass read-and-write campaign of the early 1960s, Cuba today has an impressive 96 percent literacy rate. The island has an ample network of schools and universities, and the postrevolutionary generation is by far the best educated in Cuban history; nowadays it lends teachers and doctors to other Third World countries. Public health in Cuba is better than in most Latin countries: Between 1960 and 1986, infant mortality below the age of one dropped from 62 to 15 per 1,000 live births (the U.S. rate: 10 per 1,000). Life expectancy at birth is 74 years (lower than the United States' 75, but far ahead of Bolivia's 53); caloric intake per capita is 127 percent of the international standard (it is 79 percent in Haiti). One can dispute such statistics, but few observers, hostile or friendly, dispute Cuba's progress in these areas. Health, literacy, and education *have* improved since Batista's time, even as political freedom has not.

### **The Green Belt Fiasco**

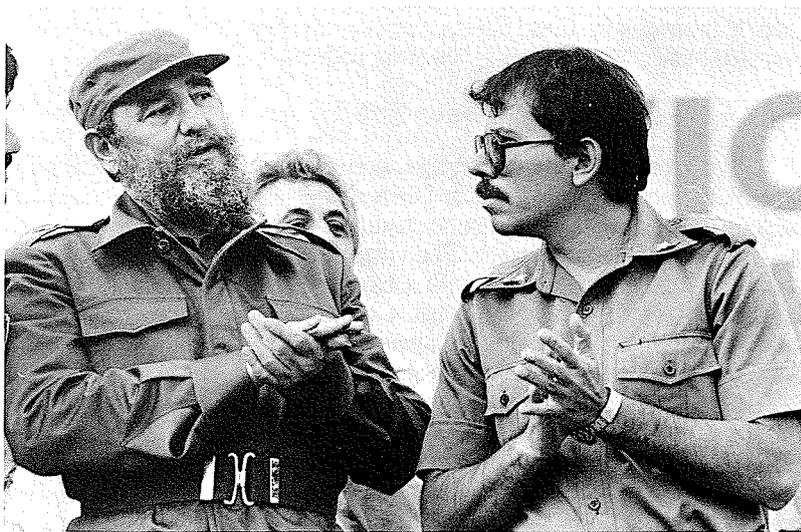
The economy is a disaster, and, in retrospect, one of the reasons is that Fidel Castro, the Maximum Leader, kept changing his mind. When he took power, Cuba was a monocultural country with sugar as its principal product and export-earner. The vulnerable, narrowly based economy could have been transformed with a blend of diversified agricultural and industrial growth. This was what Castro talked about at our hotel kitchen dinner in 1959. But his ideas never seemed fully thought out. And, in the end, they were never realized.

At the start, both Castro and Che Guevara believed, almost as a matter of dogma, that the role of sugar cane had to be greatly diminished. But sugar was the only commodity that Cuba could produce in quantity for export to the Soviet Union. By 1968, when that reality could no longer be ignored, Fidel shifted gears so brusquely as to strip them altogether. Although the normal crop yielded about six million tons of sugar, the 1970 crop, Castro proclaimed, would yield a record 10 million tons. In the attempt to reach that goal (the harvest came up 1.5 million tons short), he damaged the rest of the economy by diverting transport,

labor, and other resources to the cane fields. Today, sugar remains the mainstay of Cuba; the Soviet Union not only purchases the export crop, but pays more than the world market price. But Cuba's inability to meet all of its economic production quotas led to the austerity measures of 1987. In fact, Castro has recently admitted that he has had to buy sugar at 10½ cents a pound on the world market to live up to his export commitments to the Soviet Bloc.

Sugar has been only one of the failures. Much of the once flourishing cattle industry was destroyed when Cuban- and American-owned estates were broken up under land reform; professional managers were replaced by untrained army officers. Herds began dying off, and they were never replenished. Castro, meanwhile, experimented with mass production of poultry; it was a fine idea, but, again, nobody in the state apparatus knew how to make it work. And, at the start, Fidel refused to encourage tourism; it represented a throwback to "imperialism." When, during the 1970s, he finally decided that tourism could provide desperately needed foreign exchange, Cuba no longer had the facilities to handle visitors; major efforts to spruce up resorts and colonial towns such as Santa Clara, Santiago, and Trinidad did not start until the 1980s.

For years, Fidel was repeatedly distracted by new economic visions, neglecting Cuba's existing assets—such as sugar and tobacco. One of his grander concepts was to surround Havana with a "Green Belt" where coffee, fruit, and vegetables would grow in abundance. After



*Fidel in 1985, with Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega at a Cuban-built sugar plant near Managua. The Sandinistas followed Castro's script, including his 1959 argument that "real democracy is not possible for hungry people."*

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great investments of time, effort, and money, Castro quietly dropped the idea; for one thing, it was discovered belatedly that there was no water available for irrigation. In the end, the best that can be said of Castro's hands-on management is that perhaps a quarter-century—and billions of dollars in Soviet aid—has been wasted in the process.

Amid austerity, mismanagement, and worker absenteeism, Cuba suffers increasingly from unemployment and underemployment. The island has seen growth in population without equal growth in jobs. The 1980 exodus of 125,000 Cubans—freedom-seekers as well as convicts, inmates of mental asylums, and other undesirables—from the port of Mariel to Florida eased the pressure briefly. The absence of many Cubans (around 55,000 as of mid-1988) serving in military units in Angola and Ethiopia has also helped to reduce joblessness. And in 1987, Castro agreed to an annual flow of emigrants to America: ex-political prisoners, and up to 20,000 others with U.S. relatives or certain skills. From exporting revolution, Cuba has turned to exporting unemployment.

### **Mozart, Hemingway, Marx**

The Cubans are tired. One sees it in the faces of men and women riding to work in Havana's rickety, overcrowded buses and in the faces of shoppers queuing up for rationed goods in front of nearly empty stores. It may take long years to be able to rent an apartment (72 percent of Cubans now live in Havana, Santiago, and other cities). To purchase a car (a Soviet *Lada*), the buyer must be recommended by the Communist Party, the labor union, and the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (part of the Interior Ministry's neighborhood police network).

Cubans work every other Saturday as an extra boost to the economy. Under Castro's "rectification" campaign's "voluntary" labor requirements, men and women have little time to themselves—or for leisure. In addition to full-time jobs, most employees are expected to attend frequent indoctrination meetings at the workplace or at local Communist Party headquarters—often to discuss Castro's latest speech. Then there are long hours of mandatory drill in the Territorial Militia. Thus, ordinary people are physically exhausted much of the time, and bored much of the rest.

Leisure activities are severely limited. Those fortunate enough to own cars face gasoline rationing. Most people find it difficult to reach the beautiful beaches that Castro had proclaimed as the proud property of the *pueblo*; buses are few and tardy. Travel to the lovely old colonial towns is no easier. So, by and large, Cubans stay at home, visit neighbors, read, or watch television.

The residents of the capital fare better. Old Havana, the colonial *barrio* adjoining the harbor, has been beautifully restored, and thousands stroll in the narrow streets and wide plazas on serene evenings. A pianist

### A CHRONOLOGY OF CASTRO'S REVOLUTION

*1952* Fulgencio Batista ousts civilian "regime of blood and corruption."

*1953* Fidel Castro imprisoned on Isle of Pines for attack on Moncada barracks.

*1956* Castro establishes 26th of July Movement at La Plata in Sierra Maestra.

*1959* Batista abdicates. Castro becomes premier a month later. U.S. sugar holdings seized. Peasant militia formed. "Revolutionary justice" trials held.

*1960* Pro-government unions take over major newspapers opposing Castro regime. U.S. assets seized. "Literacy brigades" formed. Military mobilization against "imperialism" begins. First Soviet advisers, arms arrive.

*1961* Bay of Pigs. Castro declares Cuba socialist; literacy campaign begins.

*1962-63* Missile Crisis. Moscow withdraws MRBMs and 20,000 troops, leaves air-defense rockets and "Soviet brigade" behind. Private farms nationalized.

*1965-66* Communist Party rule established. Prospects for industrialization dim; reliance on sugar renewed. Rice ration halved.

*1969-70* Bread rationing instituted in Havana. Castro publicly admits economic woes. Drive for record 10-million-ton sugar harvest fails.

*1972-73* Sugar ration reduced by 35 percent; beef allowance cut 20 percent.

may play Chopin in the courtyard of a restored palace, a violin quartet may perform Mozart's works in a chamber next door, and a Caribbean ensemble may evoke tropical rhythms down the street. They all blend marvelously—and provide an escape from reality.

Under Castro, the official encouragement of culture has been constant, but highly selective. The government awards literary prizes to Cuban and foreign writers and poets. But nothing that is politically (or even aesthetically) unorthodox—of Cuban or foreign origin—is visible in the bookstores. Yes, there are novels by Fidel's friend Gabriel García Márquez, the Colombian Nobel laureate, and by Ernest Hemingway (who lived in Havana before his death in 1961), but not by many other "bourgeois" authors. The collected works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin are in every bookshop, but even telephone directories and foreign language dictionaries are difficult to obtain.

Movie houses (Havana alone has about 30) show some good Cuban productions. Television, to which Cubans are condemned as their principal distraction, is less well endowed. Its menu relies on East European

*1974* Leonid Brezhnev visits. Voters in first provincial elections in 15 years choose delegates to Municipal Assemblies.

*1975* Cuba's First Five-Year Plan calls for growth; planners emphasize profitability, decentralized decision-making. Troops go to Angola, beginning Cuban intervention in Africa that goes on for 13 years.

*1976* Popular referendum approves constitution making Cuba a "socialist state" and the Communist Party its "leading force." Campaign by some Cubans for direct election of National Assembly members—the one effort at democratizing Cuban Marxism—fails: Municipal Assemblies get task of naming deputies.

*1979* First medics, teachers, and military and security advisers depart to aid new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

*1980* Mariel exodus shocks regime into relaxation: "Free stores" stock once-rationed foods (at high prices); farmers' markets allowed in cities.

*1985* For the first time, sugar is bought abroad (from the Dominican Republic) to ship to Soviets. "Difficult" talks held on new trade agreement with Moscow.

*1986* In the name of "rejuvenation," Castro stresses orthodoxy, closing farmers' markets and expanding already large militia (one in 10 Cubans belong).

*1988* Castro criticizes Soviet economic reforms as "prescriptions for someone else's problems that we never had."

movies with Spanish subtitles (Western films cost too much to rent in hard currency), Mexican soap operas, occasional Cuban historical dramas, propaganda-laden news programs, baseball (the national sport), live broadcasts of official ceremonies, and speeches by Fidel Castro.

The Cuban National Ballet is among the world's best, but it is difficult to see a regular performance; there are 1,000 applicants for each ticket. Nightlife, to the average citizen of Havana, means a few bars with loud music; the traditional hot spots, such as the hotel nightclubs and the famous Tropicana with its spectacular floorshows, are reserved for visiting foreign delegations or hard currency-spending tourists from Canada and Western Europe.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, Cuba has little trouble with alcoholism: At more than \$20 a liter, Cuban rum is out of the average Cuban's reach, and foreign liquor is only obtainable in special hard-currency stores. But beer is cheap; young people in Havana drink it with gusto, especially on weekend evenings downtown.

What will their future be? The simple answer is that as long as Fidel

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Castro keeps his health, nothing is likely to change. Since he appears to be in fine fettle, chances are that he will be in charge for some time—although he claims, unpersuasively, that he has already turned over many of his responsibilities to others, e.g., the Communist Party, the labor confederation, and “Popular Power” self-government groups operating locally under the aegis of the National Assembly (it meets twice a year for some speechmaking and rubber-stamping).

Clearly, governing will become more difficult for Castro because he cannot arrest the waning of the old revolutionary esprit or (at this late date) perform economic miracles. For three decades, the threat of a U.S. invasion has been invoked (with some reason during 1959–62), and it is still used to justify the 500,000-member armed forces and reserves, and the even-larger militia. But the Yankee menace, now more illusory than real, cannot keep a growing, well-educated society united forever in the absence of some other kind of glue.

### A Different World

This is the crux of Castro's problem. *Fidelismo*, in contrast to Marxism-Leninism, seems strong enough to assure him a certain mass following—quite apart from the all-pervasive security apparatus that watches out for deviants. Yet, people talk more and more about having “one son in Miami and one son in Angola,” alluding to those Cubans who have fled to the United States and to those dispatched to fight in Africa in the name of socialist “internationalism.” Fidel still electrifies a great many Cubans when he rises to perorate, threaten, promise, and cajole, but the heartfelt explosive response that came from the admiring crowds during the early 1960s is no longer heard. Today, the cheers are much more ritualistic. Cubans know that the political system does not really work, and they increasingly, if quietly, resent the Communist Party's privileged bureaucrats.

The challenge to the existing system probably will come from the younger generations. They were educated by the Castro regime, they listen to foreign radio, and nowadays they ask why the system does not function more rationally. To be sure, they do not ask such questions in public. During Fidel's student years, Havana University was a forum for great political debates; under communism, there simply are no such forums. In contrast to Eastern Europe, in Cuba there is no visible political dissent and no underground literature.

One can glean enough from casual conversations to suspect that young Cubans are more attentive to what America and the West can offer them—in material ways and in ideas—than they are to the strictures of Marxism-Leninism. After 30 years of Castro's rule, young Cubans do not seem convinced that trading total dependence on the United States for total dependence on the Soviet Union was a triumph of national policy. They probably would be delighted if Castro could find ways

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of establishing a fruitful dialogue with the next U.S. administration. In Havana, one finds no overt resentment over the Bay of Pigs or the CIA's past plotting against Castro. Generally, Cubans remain attracted to the United States, where so many have relatives, and U.S. visitors get a friendly reception (Russian residents are almost never seen in public).

What seems beyond firm prediction is Cuba's future when Fidel becomes incapacitated in some fashion. An agreed-upon mechanism for succession exists: Raúl Castro, Fidel's younger brother by five years, has been formally designated as the inheritor of the state, the Revolution, and the Communist Party.

Recent history demonstrates, however, that such advance arrangements may not function as planned. In Cuba's case, it would be preposterous to assume that Raúl Castro could enjoy Fidel's personal popularity. Raúl is feared and respected, but he is not loved. His command of the armed forces and security services would presumably assure him of a period in power—it would most likely resemble a military occupation. It is doubtful that any other figure could emerge from among Castro's aging revolutionary peers to take on Fidel's role for long. Cuba would be plunged into instability.

In the Maximum Leader's absence, the reformist tendencies surfacing in the Communist world today would surely come to the fore in Cuba. It is even questionable whether any vestiges of Marxism-Leninism would survive Fidel. Moreover, one must assume that the United States would not sit idly by as the process of change unfolded. And it may be that the Soviets would not greatly object if a new Cuba sought better relations with the West—and lessened its need for Soviet subsidies.

In a real sense, the coming 30th anniversary of Castro's rise to power marks the end of an era in Cuba, Latin America, and the rest of the Third World. Fidel Castro, his political genius, and his rhetoric may remain with us for a time, but this is a different world from the heady days of 1959. To a degree that neither Fidel nor his foes could have imagined, the East-West relationship has changed, as has the communism that Castro embraced. The poorer nations increasingly seek other development models: Marxism-Leninism has fallen out of favor in most of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. So has Fidel Castro's revolution. The struggles for national liberation on which he sought to capitalize are essentially over. Castro is gradually shrinking as a major figure on the international stage.

*Fidelismo* is not what it used to be.

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## WASHINGTON AND HAVANA

by *Pamela S. Falk*

President Dwight D. Eisenhower had been in office six months. The Senate had almost completed the confirmation of his first cabinet appointees, among them Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Like Ike and the vice president, Richard M. Nixon, Dulles thought inadequate the Truman policy of "containment" of Soviet expansion. One indication, he had told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was that communism was a "rising menace in South America."

But few Washington officials took notice of an event that occurred just about then, on July 26, 1953, closer to home, in Cuba.

Following a sugar-harvest festival, about 130 armed rebels, most wearing army uniforms, squeezed into cars to drive into Santiago, Cuba's second city. At 5:15 A.M., they attacked several targets, including the Moncada barracks of President Fulgencio Batista's army. Militarily, the raid was a fiasco. Some raiders got lost; perhaps 80 were taken prisoner. Yet, the raid was a political success. Panicky troops killed nearly 70 of the captured rebels. Then came a wave of repression—and protests from middle-class Cubans and foreign critics of Batista.

The captured leader of the Moncada raid, an obscure Havana University law graduate named Fidel Castro, was able to play both martyr and hero. At his trial, sentenced to 15 years in prison, he concluded a two-hour oration with the vow that "history will absolve me."

In fact, Castro was absolved by Batista, who two years later declared an amnesty for the jailed Moncada rebels. Then Batista's foes enjoyed another stroke of luck. In March 1958, responding to U.S. critics of human rights abuses in Cuba, the Eisenhower administration stopped the shipment of arms to Batista. By then, Castro had returned from self-exile in Mexico with a small band of guerrillas on the motor yacht *Granma* to lead his "26th of July Movement."

Thus began a revolution that would tear Cuba away from a long, unhappy relationship with its neighbor across the Straits of Florida.

So close at hand, Cuba had fascinated U.S. officials for more than a century. In 1823, before he became the sixth president, John Quincy Adams observed that the island's connection with distant Spain was "unnatural," and that it was also "incapable of self-support." Someday, he thought, Cuba would "gravitate" toward the "North American Union, which, by the same law of nature, cannot cast her off from its bosom." Over the decades, four presidents—Polk, Buchanan, Grant, and McKinley—tried to buy the island from Spain, and some enterprising Cubans promoted U.S. annexation. Indeed, Cuba's flag (white star on red trian-

*After talking with Castro for three hours in Washington in April 1959, Vice President Richard M. Nixon wrote that "his ideas as to how to run a government or an economy are less developed than those of almost any world figure I have met in 50 countries." The Cuban leader did make one thing clear, however. Repeatedly during his U.S. visit, he insisted that "we are not Communists."*



gle, blue and white bars), adopted after Cuba came under U.S. occupation following the 1898 Spanish-American War, was originally designed by an anti-Spanish rebel to suggest a Cuban aspiration to join the Union.

During the 1950s, many, if not most, Cubans were prospering thanks to the *Yanqui* connection—sugar quotas, investment, and tourism. Cuba's annual income per capita, \$400 in early 1957, was among the highest in Latin America. Cubans had more television sets than any other Latins, more telephones than all but the Argentines and Uruguayans, more cars than anyone but the Venezuelans, and nearly twice as many doctors as the Mexicans. Havana had slums, but also 18 daily newspapers, 32 radio stations, and five TV centers. The broad Malecón avenue skirting the coast linked Old Havana to the new center of town, Vedado. There, the old Hotel Nacional was joined by several newcomers. Nearby, in Miramar and El Country Club, were big homes, yacht clubs, and the Tropicana, the "largest night club in the world."

But Cuba's prosperity was as unevenly distributed as it was dependent on U.S. dollars. And, as a legacy from more than 300 years of colonial rule, the island had weak institutions. Plagued by corruption and civil violence, it was a mobster's haven. Rival Cuban gangs and politicians were as much to blame as the much-publicized American hoodlum-in-residence, Meyer Lansky. Student elections at the radicalized University of Havana were settled by fistfights, firearms, and kidnappings. Indeed, it

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was to stop such chronic ills that Fulgencio Batista and some other noncommissioned army officers had first seized power in 1933.

Castro was no peasant rebel. His father was a Spanish immigrant who rose from railway worker for the United Fruit Company to landowner in Oriente, Cuba's easternmost province, with 500 field hands. A graduate of the University of Havana political wars, Fidel had an "explosive nature," as his brother Raúl said. But he led just one of many groups opposing the now-reviled Batista. Few Americans knew much about him. As he noted in his memoirs, Eisenhower was surprised that it was Castro who emerged after Batista left Cuba on January 1, 1959, "to avoid more bloodshed." *Life* welcomed him as a "soldier-scholar" who had toppled an "oppressive, corrupt, and commercially astute" regime.

### An 'Educated Fanatic'

For most of his two-year struggle, Castro was holed up in the Sierra Maestra mountains in Oriente, a traditional rebel's lair. His headquarters, the capitol of the "*Territorio Libre de Cuba*," had an infirmary, a cigar store, a radio station (*Radio Rebelde*), and a newspaper (*El Cubano Libre*). Position papers were mimeographed, daily press briefings were held. Castro's Rebel Army, which had fewer than 200 guerrillas in the early days, did not do a lot of fighting.\* As historian Hugh Thomas observed, Castro saw that Cuba's civil war was "really a political campaign in a tyranny," and he worked as hard at "seeking to influence opinion as he did as a guerrilla seeking territory." Cuban political leaders paid calls on him, and Roman Catholic Church officials assigned a chaplain to the Sierra.

U.S. journalists were also among the admiring visitors. In a land where license, as portrayed in Graham Greene's 1958 novel *Our Man in Havana*, was all too evident, the apparent selflessness of the Rebel Army reformers was striking. Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times* noted their daring, reporting how Raúl Castro had seized as hostages a "busload" of U.S. Marines from the Guantánamo naval base. Matthews found Fidel "overpowering," an "educated, dedicated fanatic, a man of ideals." Castro told the *Washington Post*'s Karl Meyer that he

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\*Indeed, a month before Batista's fall Castro had only 1,500-2,000 guerrillas. Neither the rebels nor Batista's forces—a pampered, corrupt officer corps leading \$30-a-month recruits—cared much for combat. Deaths on all sides during 1952-58 probably totaled about 2,000; unhappily, those who suffered most were members of the anti-Batista Civic Resistance (many of them boys and girls) in the cities.

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had no political ambitions; after the revolution, he might go into farming.

Without the attention that Castro generated, the fateful 1958 U.S. embargo of arms to Batista might not have occurred. Indeed, after Castro's victory, Ernesto "Che" Guevara conceded that throughout the rebellion, "the presence of a foreign journalist, American for preference, was more important for us than a military victory."

Of all the rebels who had ever taken up arms in Cuba, none had appeared at a more propitious time in world history than Castro.

During the Cold War era, the Eisenhower administration was heavily engaged in holding back the Communists everywhere. Especially after Nikita Khrushchev came to power in the Kremlin in 1953-54, Washington and Moscow sparred repeatedly over the Western enclave in Berlin. And in 1954, a CIA operation had been mounted to remove what looked like the Kremlin's first beachhead in the Western Hemisphere, the pro-Soviet regime of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala.

U.S. officials were wary of Castro and hoped to forestall a regime led by him. But by December 1958, when Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith was directed to nudge Batista into exile, it was too late.

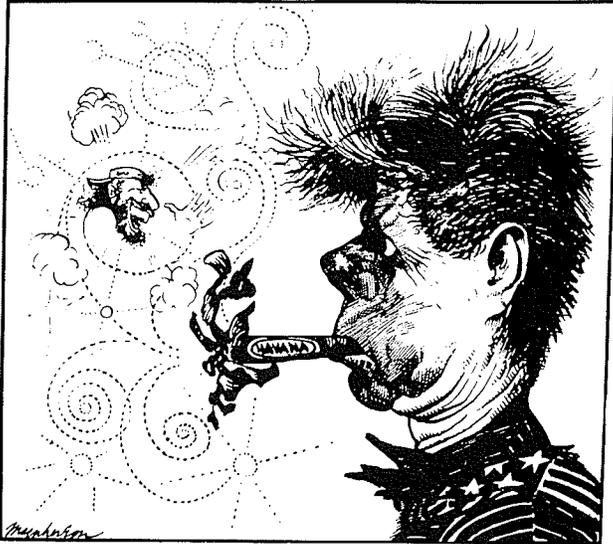
### Watching the *Barbudos*

On the day Batista fled,\* Eisenhower was busy with Berlin (he sent Khrushchev a message that a solution there was "critically important"). The State Department quickly recognized Havana's new government—nominally headed by a provisional president, Judge Manuel Urrutia Lleo. (He happened to be the only judge to vote for Castro's acquittal at the Moncada trial.) But what was the new regime's true nature? Castro's 26th of July Movement was clearly dominant. Dulles's undersecretary, Christian Herter, was sure that Cuba's long-outlawed, pro-Soviet Communists had penetrated the movement; Dulles's brother Allen, the CIA director, was sure that, even so, the Communists would not shape Castro's policies. For his part, the new U.S. ambassador to Cuba, Philip Bonsal, viewed Castro as a "nice fellow" who was taking advice from all parts of the anti-Batista spectrum.

But by April 1959, when Castro visited the United States at the invitation of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, his revolution was showing an antidemocratic and anti-*Yanqui* turn. The Communist Party was legalized. Elections were postponed, dashing hopes for Castro's promised "return to the 1940 Constitution." Anti-American jibes appeared in Fidel's speeches (he vowed to "do things better than those who spoke of democracy and sent Sherman tanks to Batista"). And a spate of trials, including one in Havana's sports stadium, meted out rough justice to Batista "criminals" and "counterrevolutionaries."

Americans became concerned about the *barbudos* (bearded ones) in

\*He went to the Dominican Republic, then ruled by his sometime foe Rafael Trujillo, before beginning a comfortable exile in Spain. He died in 1973 at age 72.



*A post-Bay of Pigs cartoon. A Kennedy commission found that "no long-term living" with Castro was possible. But JFK, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote, was "drifting toward accommodation" before his death in 1963.*

Havana. When Castro visited Washington, Eisenhower went out of town on a golfing holiday, leaving the Cuban prime minister to meet with Vice President Richard M. Nixon. (Nixon thought Castro "naive" about communism, but felt then that he did not appear to be a Communist himself.)

By early 1961 there had been perhaps 2,000 executions in Cuba. In 1965, Castro himself would mention 20,000 political prisoners on the Isle of Pines and elsewhere; others put the total closer to 40,000. Some were ex-*Fidelistas*: The Revolution was devouring its own.

Back home after his 1959 U.S. visit, Fidel found himself under fire from the left for being conciliatory to U.S. business interests and from rightists, including Urrutia, for being soft on the Communists. Seizing the hour, he enacted a sweeping land reform program, nationalizing the estates of such U.S. owners as the United Fruit Company and the King Ranch. Urrutia soon fled to the United States, and Florida-based Cuban exiles began sporadic raids on the island.

In January 1960, senior Washington planners ("Committee 5412") began to consider ways to overthrow "the mad man," as Eisenhower now called Castro. In March, five weeks after Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Havana, the CIA began devising an elaborate scheme to oust Castro that included a landing in Cuba by an exile force. Castro learned of the CIA project in two days; he soon formally established relations with the Soviet Union.

Events then moved quickly, spurred by Soviet-American antagonisms. In May 1960, at the behest of U.S. officials, Cuba's three main oil refiners—Standard Oil, Texaco, and Royal Dutch Shell—informed Havana that they would not accept the Soviet crude that they were told was coming. Castro subsequently ordered the foreigners to refine the Soviet oil or be nationalized. That very day, the U.S. House of Representatives authorized the president to cut Cuba's sugar quota. By the time the law was signed on July 6, the oil refineries had been seized.

Then Castro nationalized the Cuban holdings (total value: \$1.8 billion) of all U.S. firms—there were more than 1,000, led by such giants as International Telephone and Telegraph, Cuban Electric Company, North American Sugar Industries, and Freeport Nickel Company. Eisenhower invoked the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 to bar further U.S. commerce with Cuba. And two weeks before John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration, he broke diplomatic relations with Havana.

The break would turn out to be all but permanent.

### Throwing Away the Key

Kennedy abandoned Eisenhower's step-by-step pressure, but not the CIA's invasion plans. Crushed by Castro's forces within 48 hours, the poorly conceived landing by 1,350 Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs gave Fidel a rationale for ordering a permanent military alert and embracing his Soviet ally. That December he declared himself a Marxist-Leninist.

By then, Kennedy had authorized planning for "Operation Mongoose," a six-phase effort designed to "help Cuba overthrow" Castro. The goals never came close to realization.\* The culmination, an "open revolt" in Cuba, was to occur in October 1962—which instead turned out to be the month of the famous U.S.-Soviet Missile Crisis.

Nikita Khrushchev, who had feared since the Bay of Pigs that Moscow might "lose Cuba" to another attack, had shipped 42 medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) to the island—the rockets whose discovery by U.S. intelligence triggered the great confrontation. Although Castro was left out of the 13 days of tense negotiations, he fared rather well. As Senator Barry Goldwater (R.-Ariz.) complained, JFK forced the Soviets to remove the MRBMs,† yet his implicit pledge not to invade Cuba had "locked Castro and communism into Latin America and thrown away the key to their removal."

Thereafter, U.S. policy on Cuba remained essentially frozen.

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\*When Mongoose was created, the CIA pulled out old plans to kill Castro. Senate hearings in 1975 detailed six attempts, some involving such fanciful devices as cigars packed with explosives. Former CIA director Richard Helms testified that assassination was never formally ordered. Yet, as the agency saw it, the policy was "to get rid of Castro," and murder "was within what was expected."

† The Soviets also withdrew their Il-28 bombers. And a secret part of the agreement called for removal of the obsolete U.S. Jupiter missiles close to Soviet territory in Turkey. They were pulled out in April 1963, without announcement.

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Castro did poorly in U.S. opinion polls from the start, and the press euphoria faded. (*Life* was soon noting that “glory and noble purpose” in Cuba had become “demagoguery and chaos.”)

Yet for many Americans, Castro was a charismatic figure. Posters emblazoned with the slogan *Venceremos* (We shall conquer) and his (or Che's) image papered college dorms; many young *Yanquis* went to Cuba as volunteer cane-cutters. To Havana trooped such Castro admirers as writer Lee Lockwood (who saw Fidel as “a bearded Parsifal”), economist Edward Boorstein, and sociologist C. Wright Mills. In *Listen, Yankee* (1960), framed as a lecture by a Cuban to Americans, Mills wrote that “Cuba is your big chance”—a chance to “make it clear how you’re going to respond to all the chaos and tumult and glory, all the revolution and bloody mess and enormous hopes that are coming about among all the impoverished, disease-ridden, illiterate, hungry peoples of the world in which you, Yankee, are getting so fat and drowsy.”

Castro also charmed other foreign notables. Khrushchev, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, and India's Jawaharlal Nehru paid homage to the Maximum Leader in 1960, when he stayed at Harlem's Hotel Teresa while attending the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. Among other callers in Havana were Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal, Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, French agronomist René Dumont, Paris journalist K. S. Karol (whose books Fidel banned for their “leftist” criticism of the Revolution), and Ahmed Ben Bella, the first head of independent Algeria.

Ben Bella invoked Castro in his speeches so often that one of his aides suggested he stop until Fidel mentioned *him* once. (Ben Bella was silent on Castro thereafter.) After a 1962 visit by Ben Bella, Castro dispatched 50 medical students to Algeria, beginning his practice of sending “volunteers” to Third World countries.

### Stability in Angola

Picking up part of the Eisenhower-Kennedy plan, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued covert anti-Castro activities, while Che Guevara tried in vain to stir up revolution in Central and South America.\* In 1964, Johnson persuaded the 21-nation Organization of American States (OAS) to vote to condemn Cuban “aggression and intervention” in Venezuela, and to sever all diplomatic and economic ties with Havana.

The first U.S. effort to open a dialogue with Havana did not occur until 1975. Henry Kissinger, Gerald Ford's secretary of state, signaled in a speech that Washington saw “no virtue in perpetual antagonism” with Cuba. Subsequently, a majority of OAS members voted to end the 11-year collective embargo of the island. And Assistant Secretary of State William D. Rogers, meeting Cuban emissaries, said that even the Guan-

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\*Partly out of fear that civil strife would turn the Dominican Republic into “another Cuba,” LBJ sent in some 22,000 Marines and paratroopers to restore order in Santo Domingo in 1965.

tánamo naval base, leased "in perpetuity" since 1901, could be negotiated. Castro's frosty response was to raise Cuba's troop strength in Angola and begin advocating Puerto Rican independence.

Polls continued to show Americans to be, overall, highly critical of Castro. Yet a shift began to appear among businessmen. By the time Jimmy Carter came to the White House in 1977, many firms were examining the possibility of doing business in Cuba; Dow Chemical, the Florida East Coast Railway, and Burroughs Corp. were ready to invest.

But, Castro still seemed uninterested in restoring relations.

In an early speech, Carter declared it time to put to rest an "inordinate fear of communism": Cuba was no longer considered a threat to U.S. security. His United Nations ambassador, Andrew Young, even argued that Castro's troops in Angola brought "stability and order."

Agreements were signed on fishing rights and other matters. Negotiations led to diplomatic "Interests Sections" set up in Washington and Havana. Such notables as Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Frank Church (D.-Idaho) visited Havana. As Wayne S. Smith, head of the U.S. Interests Section there during the Carter years, recalled, full relations seemed destined to follow "in short order."

### Go to the Source?

Yet once again, Castro dashed U.S. expectations.

The Carter White House thought it had an understanding that the Cubans would not expand their involvement in Africa. But early in 1978, Cuban troops arrived in Ethiopia to aid its Soviet-backed Marxist regime in a quarrel with Somalia (which had just expelled *its* Soviet and Cuban advisers) over the Ogaden region. Result: a split within the administration, primarily between Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. The latter felt that "SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden"—i.e. Soviet-Cuban adventurism in the Horn of Africa would kill the Soviet-American SALT II arms control treaty in the Senate.

Then in 1979 came what David Newsom, then undersecretary of state, calls a "bizarre and instructive" episode: The "brigade" furor.

A Brzezinski-ordered intelligence study found signs of a brigade-sized Soviet unit on Cuba. Senator Church, battling for re-election, argued that SALT II's ratification would require the troops' removal. Actually, the brigade was neither new nor in violation of U.S.-Soviet agreements.\* But as Vance later wrote, "a rational separation of the brigade issue and SALT was not possible." Further openings to Cuba

\*Neither the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement banning offensive nuclear weapons and delivery systems in Cuba nor the 1970 prohibition of Soviet submarine bases covered ground forces. The "brigade," as veteran specialists knew, had been in Cuba since 1962. To Washington's requests that the brigade's weapons (among other things) be removed, Leonid Brezhnev replied that it was a "training" unit and that there was "no intention of changing its status." The remaining chances for Senate ratification of SALT II ended with the late-1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

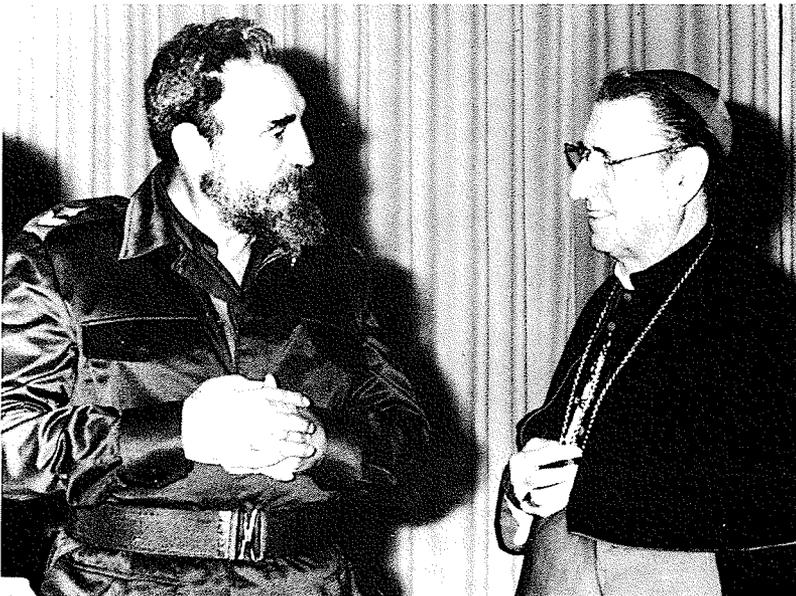
were abandoned. Indeed, Carter dropped plans to establish relations with Angola for fear of appearing soft on Havana.

"As a nation," Vance lamented, "we seemed unable to maintain a sense of perspective about Cuba."

Castro made that even more difficult in 1980: Angered by a crowd of working-class Cubans seeking asylum at the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, he offered anyone who wished to leave the island the chance to go to the United States. No fewer than 125,000 people showed up at the Mariel embarkation port—some of them mental patients and ordinary prisoners freed by Castro.

By the time Ronald Reagan moved into the White House in January 1981, Cuban troops were established in Ethiopia and Angola. And Havana was sponsoring the new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, assisting Marxist rebels in El Salvador, and helping to furnish an airport suitable for jet transports for the Marxist regime on the tiny island of Grenada.

Reagan put some emphasis on the United States' neglected neighbors to the south. The first visiting foreign leader he welcomed was Edward Seaga of Jamaica, Cuba's southern neighbor. His first term brought both the 1982 "Caribbean Basin Initiative," a program to provide extensive aid to the region—and the October 1983 landing on Grenada. If Reagan did not "go to the source," in the phrase of his first



*Castro, here with New York's John Cardinal O'Connor last April, welcomes American visitors, but cites a U.S. "threat." Cuba, he has said, will not be swayed "even if we have to live like the Indians" Columbus found in 1492.*

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secretary of state, Alexander M. Haig, he made it clear that further Cuban meddling would carry risks.

Interestingly, the Reagan administration subsequently concluded agreements with Havana on emigration to the United States and exchanges of technological information. (Thus a delegation from Cuba's atomic energy commission, which is headed by Castro's son Fidelito, quietly visited a North Carolina nuclear power plant.) And Castro released some political prisoners (albeit in anticipation of a UN investigation of human rights) and began warming up to the Roman Catholic Church (the Pope has a standing invitation to visit Havana). And the Cubans, joining in this year's American-led negotiations on the armed conflicts in southern Africa, promised to withdraw their troops in Angola—the main bar to a restoration of normal U.S.-Cuban relations.

### Playing David and Goliath

It is odd, indeed, that the United States and Cuba should still have virtually no economic and cultural relations. The U.S. rapprochement with China is now a decade old. And even before the current thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations, the Bolshoi Ballet paid occasional visits to the United States. Moreover, Cuba's isolation in Latin America has long since begun to break down. Today, the only countries with which Cuba does not have diplomatic relations are Chile, Paraguay, Honduras, and El Salvador. And while Americans still deplore Castro, 51 percent of those polled in a 1988 Gallup/Potomac Associates survey favored talks leading to normal ties with Havana.

The roots of U.S.-Cuban antipathies go back 90 years, to the time when Teddy Roosevelt was leading his Rough Riders up San Juan Hill—part of the U.S. "assistance" that snatched victory over Spain from rebel Cubans and led to the island's long, quasi-colonial dependence on the United States.

Fidel Castro has invoked such ancient history to maintain what now might be called the "30 years' antagonism" between the two countries. It can be argued that Castro's policies have been more successful than those of the seven U.S. presidents he has seen take office. While Washington did succeed in isolating Cuba from the rest of the West, its chief objective—taking the island out of the Soviet fold—remains far from realization. And although U.S. antipathy made Cuba pay a price for Castro's policies, as the analysts say, U.S. *interests* have not gained. Indeed, the Americans have mostly been in the position of reacting to Cuban moves in Latin America and Africa.

The antagonism continues in part because, after so many years, it is more "normal" than normalization would be. On both sides, there are certain advantages. To emphasize his revolutionary credentials, Castro can denounce U.S. leaders (calling JFK an "illiterate millionaire," for instance) to his audiences at home or in the Third World without fear of

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material consequence. U.S. politicians can denounce Castro with the same ease to certify their anticommunism.

Some factors that augur for change in the present frozen situation are demographic: Most Cubans have no firsthand knowledge of the Batista era or of American "colonialism," just as for many younger Americans the Missile Crisis is a paragraph in the history books. Another is that, since 1959, more than 10 percent of Cuba's people have emigrated to the United States (in fact, a tenth of the entire *Caribbean* population has made that journey over the past 30 years). And while the Cuban exile organizations all remain anti-Castro, some now favor opening relations with Havana.

But in diplomacy the old rule remains that, for a successful negotiation to take place, each side must gain something it wants. And therein lie some difficulties. For the moment, both sides are able to conclude that they do not have much to gain.

For his part, Castro has found it highly useful politically over the past 30 years to have a Goliath against whom he could play David. But Cuba faces pressures, brought on by the Castro regime itself, that it may not be able to bear into the 1990s: notably the cost of maintaining one of Latin America's largest and best-equipped military forces, and a now-huge level of foreign debt.

As for the United States, perhaps no aspect of its foreign relations has stirred more domestic passion over the past few decades than its policy toward Castro's Cuba. And no other political antagonism has brought the United States closer to a nuclear confrontation. Yet during 1959 and 1960, both Washington and Havana bungled opportunities to build a relationship. And by 1961, Cuba had become the first nation in the Western Hemisphere to join the Soviet system, and Washington had begun an elaborate effort to overthrow Castro. How do the poison pens, exploding cigars, and other products of the CIA mischief-making of the early 1960s fit the reality of a Marxist revolutionary regime seeking early support from the Soviet Union and bent on "exporting" its revolution? The history of U.S.-Cuban relations reads more like Ian Fleming than Henry Steele Commager.

Nonetheless, the United States and the new administration will have to weigh the nation's present no-relations policy against the benefits that might be brought by agreements in various areas (e.g., cooperation on coast guard matters and environmental issues) and by the symbolism of a Cuban "return to the West."

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## THE ODD PARTNERS

*by W. Raymond Duncan*

That the Soviet Union should find its most enduring overseas ally in the Caribbean tropics is one of the great ironies of this century.

In Moscow, Latin America was for decades rather a mystery. Vladimir Lenin knew little of the area. Josef Stalin suffered a rebuff in Mexico when the government responded to Comintern meddling by breaking off diplomatic relations (1930) and offering a welcome to his exiled arch rival, Leon Trotsky. And during the 1950s, when Nikita Khrushchev spoke of the Third World as a "zone of peace" where Soviet influence might readily be extended, he really meant Asia and Africa—where he gained his first ally-client, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, in 1955.

To the men in the Kremlin, the Latins were distant folk in a vast alien region of Hispano-Catholic culture, hot weather, huge estates, and military juntas. It was a scene they viewed with great ignorance and some contempt.

Even Khrushchev might be astonished that today Cuba is receiving more than half the total assistance extended by Moscow to all foreign nations, including Vietnam. Besides its contributions to Castro's treasury, Moscow pays above-market prices for Cuba's sugar, and ships oil to the island at below-market rates; Havana sells some of it at a profit. Castro gets his Soviet MIG jets, T-62 tanks, and other weaponry (more than \$13 billion worth since 1960) free.

All told, the Soviets probably spend \$4-5 billion a year on Cuba. That is roughly what the United States spends on its leading aid recipient, Israel, and more than it contributes to Egypt. But the Soviet-Cuban relationship is unique. As University of Pittsburgh Sovietologist Cole Blaiser has observed, "there has never been anything quite like it, not in the experience of the developing countries in the Third World, nor of the socialist countries, most particularly the USSR."

When Castro found himself in power in 1959, there were no cheers from Moscow. To Khrushchev, the Cuban may have seemed a Caribbean Don Quixote, tilting at windmills. His record as a guerrilla was uneven. And he had said he was "not a communist" but sought only "a democratic Cuba and an end to the dictatorship." Considering that Cuba was in the Americans' strategic backyard—and that Washington had recently ousted a pro-Soviet regime in Guatemala—Moscow had told Cuba's communists to back Batista, not Castro, during the late 1950s.

At the time of Castro's triumph, however, the Soviets were waging a post-Sputnik diplomatic offensive in Latin America. So at Castro's invitation, Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan was pleased to visit

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Havana in early 1960. Results: a Soviet agreement to buy up to a million tons of Cuban sugar annually over four years, and a \$100 million loan.

Then came Castro's joust with the Eisenhower administration over oil refineries and the sugar quota. That July, Khrushchev vowed to "defend Cuba with rockets" if the United States attacked (a purely "symbolic" pledge, he said later). And, oddly, Khrushchev's rhetoric began to sound like Castro's: Communism, he said in January 1961, would be spread by "national liberation wars" in the "centers of revolutionary struggle against imperialism"—Asia, Africa, *and* Latin America.

### A Revolutionary's Duty

It was after Castro both survived the Bay of Pigs invasion and declared himself a Marxist-Leninist that Moscow decided that he was safe physically (i.e. the Americans could not take direct action to oust him) and ideologically. Yet, in his memoirs, Khrushchev claimed he sent the Soviet rockets that led to the October 1962 Missile Crisis just "to protect Cuba's existence as a socialist country."

Scholars still debate whether Castro was, like his brother Raúl, a communist *before* Batista quit Cuba. What is certain is that after he embraced Marxism-Leninism, he could ingratiate himself with Moscow and adapt Cuba's Moscow-line Communist Party to his needs. The *Fidelistas* in his 26th of July Movement could be grafted onto the communist political framework. By adopting Marxism-Leninism, Castro gained all at once a *Fidelista*-controlled political organization, a useful adversary (Washington), and a ready-made ideology around which to rally the Cuban masses.

Many Western scholars, such as Luis Aguilar, argue that Cuba is no longer sovereign, but a vassal state dominated by its superpower patron. Indeed, Castro conceded at the Cuban Communist Party's first congress in 1975 that "without Soviet aid, our country could not have survived the confrontation with imperialism." Then again, there are analysts who believe that the Cuban tail often wags the Soviet dog: Castro seduced Khrushchev, and has set the Moscow-Havana agenda ever since.

Actually, as I see it, the relationship is best viewed in terms of converging interests. Moscow is the chief material benefactor, Cuba, the recipient. Yet the more Soviet leaders needed Cuban help in their Third World pursuits, the more leverage Castro gained to pry aid out of them.

Cuba provides Moscow with a secure outpost, close to Florida, that

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*Leonid Brezhnev, Castro, and Premier Nikita Khrushchev near Moscow in May 1963. At their first meeting (New York, 1960), Khrushchev dubbed Fidel a "heroic man," sealing an alliance that has endured to this day.*

is a kind of counter to NATO listening posts in Turkey and Norway, near the Soviet Union. Soviet warships can call at the Cienfuegos navy base, and the largest Soviet electronic intelligence facility on foreign territory is located near Havana. But something else that Castro supplies—assistance to Moscow in furthering its global ambitions—has served as a kind of barometer of Soviet-Cuban relations.

Since Khrushchev's day, Moscow has viewed the Third World\* (unlike Europe) as an arena where it could vie with the West without direct military confrontation. At stake, Soviet analysts reckoned, were two-thirds of the globe's population, raw materials, markets, and "chokepoints" where shipping could be blocked in wartime. Khrushchev began seeking Third World allies in 1954–55 (Egypt, as noted above, was his first catch).

Castro's larger ambitions emerged during the early 1960s. He backed leftist guerrillas in Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, sent weapons and medical supplies to Algeria's National Liberation Front

\*The French journalists who coined the term during the early 1950s defined the *Tiers Monde* (Third World) simply as all the underdeveloped countries that were outside both the capitalist West and the communism of the Eastern Bloc. Eventually, leaders who claimed to speak for the large and heterogeneous group decided that it was a bloc of its own, and gave its members a new, if misleading, name: the "nonaligned" nations.

(FLN), and set up a military mission in Ghana. Before he finally left Cuba to "export the Revolution" to Bolivia, Che Guevara toured Africa. He found it "one of the most important, if not *the* most important, battlefields against all forms of exploitation in the world."

Castro's passion for armed uprisings ("The duty of every revolutionary is to make a revolution") beguiled Khrushchev. But it worried the pragmatic men who ousted him in 1964, notably Leonid Brezhnev.

The Brezhnev group blamed Khrushchev's "hare-brained" ideas for the Missile Crisis. They sought good relations with existing governments, especially in Latin America.\* Soviet diplomats courted right-wing leaders who wished to show their independence of Washington (such as Panama's dictator, Omar Torrijos). And in other countries (notably Peru, Bolivia, and Chile) they sought to merge communists and left-wing nationalists into "united fronts" that might gain legitimate political power.

### Rendezvous in Africa

Castro's persistence in arming Latin rebels nearly led to a Moscow-Havana split during 1966-68. But no break occurred. As it happened, Cuba's adventures were curbed by the diplomatic isolation imposed on Havana by Lyndon Johnson's administration and by the Organization of American States. And Moscow pressured Castro (via reduced oil shipments, for example) to toe the Kremlin line. Among other things, in August 1968—to the dismay of many Western communists—Castro dutifully blessed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia as "a bitter necessity" to keep Prague out of "the arms of imperialism."

Castro's responsiveness was rewarded. After the 1970 sugar harvest failed, Soviet-Cuban economic agreements were revised on terms highly favorable to Havana (e.g., all payments on credits were to be deferred until 1986, and then extended over 25 years). And Cuba was admitted to Comecon, the Soviet trade bloc. But Brezhnev's conservatism persisted. He avoided getting close to any Third World regime except those of Cuba, North Vietnam, and Syria. Leaders backed earlier by Khrushchev in Guinea, Ghana, Mali, and Indonesia did not last long.

Where Brezhnev and Castro finally became partners was in Africa.

Among the anticolonial groups that Castro had aided during the 1960s was the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), a Marxist-Leninist organization led by Castro's friend Augustinho Neto. After Portugal's April 1975 revolution, Castro sent troops to back the MPLA in a post-independence civil war among rival African factions.

Neto had not received much encouragement from Moscow. But

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\*There, the Soviets have had striking, if belated, success. Most Latin American governments denied recognition to the men who ended the rule of the tsars in the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. And most again broke diplomatic relations with Moscow as the Cold War began during the late 1940s. As recently as 1960, the Soviets had relations with only Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay. Today, they have such ties with almost all the region's governments.

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Brezhnev was aware that Neto's rivals were then getting Chinese (and U.S.) backing. He decided to buttress Cuba's "fraternal assistance" with shipments of aging T-34 and T-54 tanks and MIG-21 fighter-bombers (flown by Cuban pilots). By 1976, perhaps 15,000-20,000 Cubans were shoring up the lackluster MPLA forces. Without Soviet aid, it is doubtful that Cuba could have provided many troops. Without Castro, however, it is unlikely that Brezhnev would have moved so boldly in Africa.

So began a new development in Soviet-Cuban relations: joint aid to Marxist-oriented liberation movements. And from Moscow's perspective, the United States' exit from Vietnam and the advent of détente probably seemed to invite some Soviet advances in the Third World.

The backing of local Marxists—first in Angola, later in Mozambique, Ethiopia, Grenada, and Nicaragua—began at an opportune time. Following their 1972 expulsion from Egypt by Anwar Sadat, the Soviets needed a visible success in Africa. And Castro's eagerness to commit his own countrymen appealed to Brezhnev's desire to limit Soviet risks. (Cuban troops would also be less obtrusive than Soviets in Africa.)

Angola gave Castro a new cause around which to rally his tired people, renewed his claim to leadership among the underdeveloped nations, and bolstered his (successful) demands for still more Soviet aid. With Brezhnev backing Castro, and Cuban troops carrying their nation's flag far from home in Ethiopia and Mozambique as well as in Angola, one could envision the Cuban leaning back with a Havana cigar, sighing, à la Jackie Gleason, "How sweet it is."

### Snubbing Chernenko

By 1982, after Moscow had joined Havana in arming and advising Nicaragua's Sandinistas, many senior Soviets were hailing Castro's zest for "armed struggle." The Cubans did all the work. By 1984, the number of Soviet Bloc military personnel in the Third World (outside Afghanistan) was still far exceeded by the 39,600 troops that Cuba had deployed. Last summer, the Cuban expeditionary force in Angola alone totaled more than 50,000 men.

Yet creating a Third World empire (of sorts) is one thing, managing it, quite another. By the mid-1980s, all of the regimes supported by both Moscow and Havana—in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Grenada—were beset by civil strife and economic crises. And adversity did not always enhance Soviet-Cuban solidarity.

Take little Grenada. The 1983 struggle within its ruling Marxist New Jewel Movement led to the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, U.S. military intervention, and the first direct combat between U.S. and Cuban forces. After 600 of an estimated 800 Cuban soldiers and airfield engineers were quickly captured (24 were killed and 59 wounded), some of the others continued to fire on the invading U.S. troops; by contrast, the 50 Soviets on the island offered no resistance, to



*Photographed at a South African army post in Namibia last summer, the jungle-suited Cuban officers at right traveled from Angola to observe the withdrawal of South African troops under an international truce agreement.*

the Cubans' distress. Castro was also angry that Moscow hardly protested the U.S. landing.

Castro has also occasionally been at odds with the Soviets over Nicaragua, whose Sandinistas he helped put into power in 1979 with arms shipped via Panama.\* For instance, when in 1984 a Soviet tanker was damaged by a U.S. mine in a Nicaraguan port, Castro sought a "muy macho" (very strong) Kremlin response, such as the dispatch of a fleet to the Caribbean. But Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko did not wish to give Washington a pretext for armed intervention. Pointedly, Castro did not attend Chernenko's funeral in Moscow in 1985.

Following Mikhail Gorbachev's elevation to general secretary that year, Soviet-Cuban relations entered yet another phase. New differences have developed.

Gorbachev, seeking time to revive the stagnant Soviet economy, has sought to reduce some East-West tensions, in part by settling old

\*As journalist Shirley Christian reported, in 1978 Panama's dictator, Omar Torrijos, sent a top aide, Manuel Noriega, to Havana to seek arms for the Nicaraguan rebels. Torrijos later became jealous after Castro's emergence as the Sandinista regime's foreign godfather. But Castro has remained close to Gen. Noriega, who came to power in Panama after Torrijos died in a 1981 plane crash. Panama has helped Cuba deal with the U.S. trade embargo by serving as a transshipment point for imported goods. And Castro has provided Noriega with propaganda support in his struggles with Washington.

regional conflicts swirling around Angola and Kampuchea. But Castro has continued to support liberation movements—lately in Chile and Colombia as well as El Salvador. (“As long as the Salvadoran patriots struggle,” he told NBC-TV, “they will receive our sympathy and support.”) Thus, even if Castro makes good on his promise of a “gradual and total” troop withdrawal in Angola—as part of a truce worked out this summer by U.S. officials (with Soviet concurrence)—he will try to remain in the armed-struggle business elsewhere. Meanwhile, he diverges in other small ways from the Moscow line (e.g., boycotting the 1988 Olympic Games in South Korea, maintaining close ties with Iran).

### Unwelcome Ideas

But will Castro adjust to Soviet shifts in foreign policy?

He has good reason to. A recent Cuban defector, Gen. Rafael del Pino, has spoken of lowered morale among both Cuba's armed forces and its civilians, resulting from the high casualties (including perhaps 10,000 deaths) suffered over 13 years of stalemate in Angola. And Gorbachev's apparent desire to cut back on Third World activities could diminish Castro's value to Moscow. For all of Castro's orthodoxy, his island is no Marxist-Leninist showcase, as Soviet officials are aware: In October 1987, when Castro was in Moscow, the journal *Novoye Vremya* (New Leader) published a pointed critique of Cuba's lack of economic progress despite 20 years of Soviet aid. Castro, for his part, makes no secret of his distaste for Gorbachev's economic reforms. In a speech last July, he vowed to guard his revolution's “ideological purity” against anything “that smells of capitalism.” He would not “slavishly” copy “prescriptions for someone else's problems.” Havana's situation was unique. “We are not located on the Black Sea. We are on the Caribbean Sea. We are not 90 miles from Odessa. We are 90 miles from [Florida].”

Castro is out of step with Soviet Bloc regimes (even in Vietnam) that are now experimenting with market-oriented reforms. Cuban National Bank statistics suggest that Gorbachev may be pressing Castro to follow suit: Until 1987, Soviet trade with Cuba was rising by about 10 percent annually; that year, imports from the Soviet Union during the first nine months fell for the first time in nearly three decades. Deliveries of Soviet oil were more than halved between 1985 and 1987.

If, as some specialists believe, Moscow has cut its subsidy for Cuban sugar,\* Castro's difficulties may grow. In addition to its debt of perhaps \$8 billion to the Soviets, Cuba owes about \$2.4 billion to Spain, France, Britain, West Germany, and Japan. Counting another \$3.1 billion owed to

\*The Soviets took over the U.S. role as the main buyer of Cuban sugar. In 1960, before the Eisenhower administration slashed Cuba's quota, U.S. imports from the island were to total some 3.1 million tons at a price of five cents a pound, about two cents above the world rate. The Soviets also pay generously. Indeed, although Moscow has apparently cut the rate from 45 cents a pound to 36 cents, that is still more than three times the prevailing world price—a handsome bonus, especially considering that the Soviet Union produces its own beet sugar.

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Western banks and suppliers, the island's external debt is, on a per capita basis, half again as high as Brazil's—about \$1,300 for every Cuban.

Especially during the Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko years, Castro looked like a vigorous young innovator in comparison to his Soviet patrons. But now Fidel is the aging leader, a kind of Old Guard figure opposing Soviet (or Chinese) innovations. And his fellow Cubans now seem fascinated by changes in the Soviet Union. The Spanish-language Soviet weekly *Novedades de Moscu* (*Moscow News*) sells out rapidly on Havana newsstands. Like their counterparts in East Germany, senior Cuban officials appear slightly worried, perhaps anticipating that the tens of thousands of Cubans studying or working in the Soviet Union will bring home unwelcome ideas—notably *glasnost* (“openness”), an import that Castro seems to suspect would undermine his authority.

### Seeking Nehru's Mantle

Nevertheless, Moscow and Havana have been striving of late to present an image of the marriage of an odd couple surviving the ravages of time. In truth, despite the occasional strains, the image is plausible enough. Soviet direct financial and military aid remains at a high level despite some shifts on sugar, and Gorbachev is unlikely to forfeit a Soviet presence on the island, if only because of its strategic location. And Castro, despite his grumping, knows where to draw the line in asserting his independence. He negotiated the future of his troops in Angola—“the Gurkhas of the Soviet empire,” Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D.-N.Y.) has called them—without consulting Moscow. But, at home, he stoutly hails the Soviets, arguing that while their presence in Cuba is substantial, they are not “imperialist”; there are no Soviet-owned industries on the island. And he is now following the Kremlin's lead in courting established governments in Latin America's larger democracies (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay) and seeking to settle regional conflicts, even if it means supporting the Arias peace plan in Central America.

Speaking at Havana's Karl Marx Theater on the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Raúl Castro insisted that there is not “the slightest breach in the community of principles between Cuba and the USSR . . . There are no cracks or splits and there never will be.”

There is a certain advantage for the West in the Moscow-Havana partnership: It is so costly to Moscow financially that the Soviets cannot afford “another Cuba.” That much was signaled in 1983, when Yuri Andropov declared in a Moscow speech that nations espousing socialism can expect Soviet aid “to the extent of our ability,” but their progress “can be, of course, only the result of their leadership.”

Of course, Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union exists in the larger context of the two nations' relationships with the Third World. Those relationships—and the Third World itself—have been changing.

When Khrushchev became interested in the Third World during the

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1950s, its acknowledged leader was India's Jawaharlal Nehru. His successors also came from large nations—Indonesia's Sukarno, host of the 29-nation Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955, and Egypt's Nasser. Castro, although his island was small, and tucked away in the Western Hemisphere, also sought the mantle. It was the troops he sent to Africa during the 1970s that finally won it for him. At the Sixth Conference of Nonaligned Nations, in Havana in 1979, delegates from 92 countries elected him chairman of the Nonaligned Movement for 1979–82.

Castro sharpened the movement's leftward turn. If Western "imperialism" was the enemy of the nonaligned, he maintained, Moscow was their "natural ally."

But today, a decade later, Castro's highly personal autocracy and Cuba's petrified economy are not widely regarded as models—particularly not in Latin America. During the early 1970s, there was worry in Washington that, somehow, the region, as President Richard Nixon put it, had become enveloped by "a red sandwich"—the halves being Castro's Cuba and Salvador Allende's Chile. Yet the reign of Chile's Marxist president was brief (1970–73). And so far, the only Latins who have tried to imitate Castro's 30-year-old revolution are the Sandinistas in troubled Nicaragua.

The Third World, in all its variety, has not turned out to be very fertile ground for the Soviets, either. Today, Gorbachev may simply be cutting his country's losses (Afghanistan, Angola) rather than beginning a general retreat. And his mild words on socialism's inevitability—"... we do not impose our convictions.... Let everyone choose for himself"—may be disingenuous. But the men in Moscow have come a long way from the days when Nikita Khrushchev—like Castro—was envisioning "centers of revolutionary struggle" all over the globe.



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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### CASTRO'S CUBA

Cuba is an island, but, notes historian Hugh Thomas, it was never isolated.

Since the 18th century, when the Cubans began producing sugar in quantity for sale abroad, their history "has been like the history of the world seen through the eyes of a child: an invention in Silesia [involving *beet* sugar], a plague in Africa, a war or a prosperous time in England or France—these apparently unconnected events beyond Cuba's control have determined the lives of Cubans who, despite their tropical innocence, were the only links between them."

In his long (1,696 pages), vivid chronicle, **Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom** (Harper, 1971), Thomas argues that Fidel Castro was no more able to "escape the bondage of geographical as well as economic circumstances" than any other Cuban. He sought independence, but wound up in the Soviet embrace.

In 1762, when Thomas's narrative begins, an English force under Lord Albemarle seized Havana. It was then a metropolis of perhaps 40,000 people—larger than Boston or New York, and indeed all cities in the New World except Lima and Mexico City. The Spanish had found little gold and few Indians in Cuba, but Havana was the rendezvous for the treasure fleets sailing home from Central and South America. Spanish troops soon retook the island—but only after the British had opened it to foreign trade and began importing African slaves, permitting the rise of a plantation economy.

During Cuba's 19th-century Golden Age, it produced as much as a fourth of the world's sugar. Then came a series of local rebellions over several years that ended in 1898 when a much-weakened Spain was defeated in the brief Spanish-American War.

A long period as a virtual U.S. protectorate ensued under the Platt Amendment—the 1901 U.S.-Cuban agree-

ment, in force until 1934, recognizing a U.S. "right to intervene" to maintain Cuba's independence and ensure a government "adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty."

In **Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution** (Oxford, 1988), Louis A. Pérez, Jr., notes that Castro's revolution inspired a vast literature that soon "became possessed of one of its most enduring qualities—engagement."

Among early paeans to Castro were C. Wright Mills' **Listen, Yankee: The Revolution in Cuba** (McGraw-Hill, 1960), Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy's **Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution** (Monthly Review, 1961), and Herbert L. Matthews' **Fidel Castro** (Simon & Schuster, 1969). Matthews saw him as "the romantic revolutionary who keeps cropping up in history, like Cromwell in England or John Brown in the United States."

The early anti-Castro literature included books by exiles—e.g., Fulgencio Batista's **Growth & Decline of the Cuban Republic** (Devin-Adair, 1964)—and such works as Nathaniel Weyl's **Red Star Over Cuba: The Russian Assault on the Western Hemisphere** (Devin-Adair, 1960).

Rare was the cool objectivity of Theodore Draper's **Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities** (Praeger, 1962) and **Castroism in Theory and Practice** (Praeger, 1965). (Draper found a "red thread or threads" in early Castroism; Matthews countered that Castro's was "a coat of many colours.")

More recent analyses maintain a salutary distance from the subject.

In **Cuba: Order and Revolution** (Harvard, 1978), historian Jorge I. Domínguez, an exile who claims allegiance only to "scholarly discipline," finds that Castro succeeded Batista "through a mixture of competence,

shrewdness, and luck." His luck included the removal—by death or other circumstances—of alternative rebel leaders, e.g., the dissident Colonel Ramón Barquín and Castro's 26th of July Movement comrade Frank País.

The rebels alone did not topple Batista. Eventually, even sugar-mill owners, cane growers, cattlemen, and bankers turned against the general and financed various rebel groups. Castro, leader of the longest-surviving group, simply allowed no coalition to form that failed to "recognize his supremacy."

Castro's chief bit of luck was made in America, argues Wayne Smith in **The Closest of Enemies: A Personal & Diplomatic History of the Castro Years** (Norton, 1987). Smith, once head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, maintains that Castro came to power because Dwight D. Eisenhower's noncareer envoy to Havana during the late 1950s, Earl E. T. Smith, was stubbornly pro-Batista and sabotaged efforts by State Department officials to remove the general while there was still time to install some other successor.

What made Fidel run? Scholar Maurice Halperin, in **The Taming of Fidel Castro** (Univ. of Calif., 1981), accepts Castro's claim that he was "born with a calling for politics and revolution." In **Diary of the Cuban Revolution** (Viking, 1980), Carlos Franquí, a former comrade-in-arms who left Cuba in disillusionment in 1968, recounts Fidel's story of how he became his "own master" as a sixth-grade day student at a Jesuit school. Tired of the people with whom he was living, he one day "told them all to go to the devil, and entered school as a boarder that very afternoon."

The full profile of the Maximum Leader is Tad Szulc's **Fidel: A Critical Portrait** (Morrow, 1986). Castro's model was always José Martí, "the island's greatest thinker and patriotic hero."

Castro sought total "identification with Martí's martyrdom." After his 1959 victory, Castro visited Oriente, where Martí arrived by boat in 1895 (after exile in New York) to fight Spanish rule. Castro did a beach tour, filmed for TV and movie audiences, because he was "fulfilling the Martían code." Martí had been killed by Spanish troops only 25 miles from where Castro was born.

Castro is always discovering "enemies." As a boy, he battled his father, Angel, who built the family *finca* into a spread of 26,000 acres (mostly rented from U.S. owners) and fought for the Spaniards against Martí and other rebels. At age 18, the son accused the father of being "one of those who abuse the powers they wrench from the people with deceitful promises."

Fidel's style as Maximum Leader has not changed. In 1968, Szulc relates, Castro nationalized all remaining private retail business—58,000 auto repair shops, hot dog stands, etc.—as part of a Mao-style "Great Revolutionary Offensive." In a fiery speech, he scourged the proprietors as "counterrevolutionaries," emphasized that "this is a Revolution of Communists," and asserted that "nobody shed his blood" to "establish the right for somebody to make 200 pesos selling rum, or 50 pesos selling fried eggs or omelets."

Portraits of *typical* Cubans include the "Oral History of Contemporary Cuba" undertaken by the late anthropologist Oscar Lewis. In three volumes—**Four Men, Four Women, and Neighbors** (Univ. of Illinois, 1977)—Lewis's widow, Ruth M. Lewis, and Susan M. Rigdon published the stories of 28 Cubans who variously praise the Revolution, worry about it, or condemn it. One early Castro backer tells how he came to resent rising prices, rationing, and the loss of U.S. investment, dashing his hopes that Cuba might industrialize à la Yugoslavia: "Tito knew how to do things; he wasn't rash."

In **Family Portrait with Fidel: A Memoir** (Random, 1984), Carlos Franqui relates how, after the Revolution, Castro outlawed gambling, launched public works projects, and halved the costs of rent, medicine, telephone service, and food: "This was Fidel's utopian side . . . No one gave a thought to increasing production, or to . . . the fact that we were living on what the old society had left, not on what we ourselves had made."

Carmela Mesa-Lago's **The Economy of Socialist Cuba: A Two-Decade Appraisal** (Univ. of New Mexico, 1981) traces Castro's policy-making from the early attempt at Soviet-style central control and the arrival of rationing (1962) and Soviet-style wage scales (1963-65).

The latter did reduce Cuba's wide gaps in income: The ratio of the lowest wage (for an agricultural peon) to the highest (for a cabinet minister) fell to about 1 to 10. Yet all boats have not risen equally under Marxism-Leninism. During the 1970s, farm hands remained at the bottom of the wage ranks. Service workers moved up; Cuba's "best paid group" was its armed forces.

Cuba's all-but-forgotten men have been its political prisoners. Armando Valladares's **Against All Hope** (Knopf, 1986), his story of 22 years in a Cuban jail, focused belated foreign attention on Castro's human rights record.

In **Cuban Communism** (Transaction, 1981), editor Irving Louis Horowitz suggested that the Castro regime must somehow return to its "egalitarian inspiration" if it is not to become a "sad and not so special chapter of a nation that has seen numerous tyrants ruling in the name of the people."

The world has changed since Castro's guerrilla days in the Sierra Maestra. In

**Semper Fidel: America & Cuba, 1776-1988** (Nautical & Aviation, 1988), Michael J. Mazarr suggests that the shift from the bipolarity of the post-war world to a "less ideological, more economic and political multipolarity" will allow the U.S.-Cuban relationship to be viewed in a fresh light on both sides.

In time, says Mazarr, Castroism may be seen to have been not much more than a belated "experiment" in nationalism in a land whose experience with independence, after all, went back less than 60 years when Fidel took power.

The idea of revolution has lost much of its appeal since the 1960s, both in the Third World and among Western intellectuals. Few U.S. college youths today would be spellbound by a Che Guevara—or a Frantz Fanon, the West Indian firebrand who went about urging Algerians to "shoot down a European" during the 1960s, and, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, hailed violence as a "cleansing force."

Castro launched his new regime in what seemed to some intellectuals an ideal setting. In **Fire in the Minds of Men** (Basic, 1980), a study of the origins of the idea of revolution in 18th-century France and Germany, James H. Billington observed that "when a Cuban national revolution came into conflict with the imperial power of the first nation to be born in revolution, the United States, it attracted considerable sympathy—but more among the well-fed young students in the overdeveloped West than among the hungry in the underdeveloped world.

"Utopia for many intellectuals had simply returned to a tropical island in the New World—which is where the intellectuals of early modern Europe had always imagined it might be."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Related titles are cited in WQ's Background Books essays on "Cuba" (Winter 1978) and "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Legacies and Lessons" (Autumn 1982).*

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## KAFKA'S WORLD

Born in Prague in the twilight years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Franz Kafka (1883–1924) has become the supreme prose poet of 20th-century anxiety. His enigmatic parables—dark, angst-ridden works such as “The Metamorphosis,” *The Castle*, and *The Trial*—have been taken up by critics of every stripe. To Freudians, they demonstrate a thwarted Oedipal rage; to Marxists, the alienation of capitalist society; to existentialists, the loneliness and dread of man in a Godless cosmos; to all sorts of religionists, the desperate search for God. Here, novelist Milan Kundera, himself a former resident of Prague, argues that Kafka uncannily anticipated man’s spiritual condition in a world that was to emerge after his death—the world of the totalitarian state.

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by *Milan Kundera*

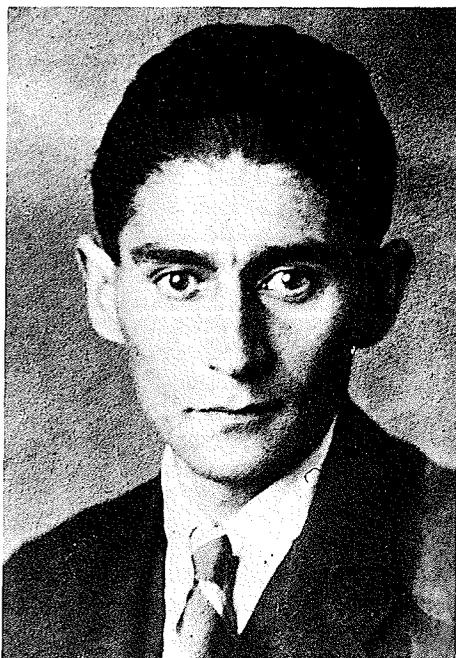
Poets don't invent poems  
The poem is somewhere behind  
It's been there for a long long time  
The poet merely discovers it.  
—JAN SKACEL

In one of his books, my friend Josef Skvorecky tells this true story:

An engineer from Prague is invited to a professional conference in London. So he goes, takes part in the proceedings, and returns to Prague. Some hours after his return, sitting in his office, he picks up *Rude Pravo*—the official daily paper of the Party—and reads: A Czech engineer, attending a conference in London, has made a slanderous statement about his socialist homeland to the Western press and has decided to stay in the West.

Illegal emigration combined with a statement of that kind is no trifle. It would be worth 20 years in prison. Our engineer can't believe his eyes. But there's no doubt about it, the article refers to him. His secretary, coming into his office, is shocked to see him: My God, she

*A photograph of Kafka taken during the early 1920s. The son of an overbearing merchant, Kafka struggled with feelings of inadequacy all his life. Yet—despite his nocturnal literary labors—he proved to be a competent lawyer for a state insurance agency. Kafka fell in love several times, but he never married. He died of tuberculosis on June 3, 1924, not long after urging his closest friend, Max Brod, to destroy his last writings.*



says, you're back! I don't understand—did you see what they wrote about you?

The engineer sees fear in his secretary's eyes. What can he do? He rushes to the *Rude Pravo* office. He finds the editor responsible for the story. The editor apologizes; yes, it really is an awkward business, but he, the editor, has nothing to do with it, he got the text of the article direct from the Ministry of the Interior.

So the engineer goes off to the ministry. There they say yes, of course, it's all a mistake, but they, the ministry, have nothing whatsoever to do with it, they received the report on the engineer from the intelligence people at the London embassy. The engineer asks for a retraction. No, he's told, they never retract, but nothing can happen to him, he has nothing to worry about.

But the engineer does worry. He soon realizes that, all of a sudden, he's being closely watched, that his telephone is tapped, and that he's being followed in the street. He sleeps poorly and has nightmares until, unable to bear the pressure any longer, he takes a lot of real risks to leave the country illegally. And so he actually becomes an émigré.

The story I've just told is one that we would call *Kafkan*. This term, drawn from an artist's work, determined solely by a novelist's images, stands as the only common adjective for situations (literary or

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real) that no other word allows us to grasp, situations to which neither political nor social nor psychological theory gives us any key.

But what is the *Kafkan*?

Let's try to describe some of its aspects:

*One:* The engineer is confronted by a power that has the character of a boundless labyrinth. He can never get to the end of its interminable corridors and will never succeed in finding out who issued the fateful verdict. He is therefore in the same situation as Kafka's Joseph K. before the Court, or the Land-Surveyor K. before the Castle. All three are in a world that is nothing but a single, huge labyrinthine institution that they cannot escape and cannot understand.

Novelists before Kafka often exposed institutions as arenas where conflicts between different personal and public interests were played out. In Kafka the institution is a mechanism that obeys its own laws; no one knows now who programmed those laws or when; they have nothing to do with human concerns and are thus unintelligible.



*Two:* In Chapter Five of *The Castle*, the village mayor explains to K. in detail the long history of his file. Briefly: Years earlier, a proposal to engage a land-surveyor came down to the village from the Castle. The mayor wrote a negative response (there was no need for any land-surveyor), but his reply went astray to the wrong office, and so after an intricate series of bureaucratic misunderstandings, stretching over many years, the job offer was inadvertently sent to K., at the very moment when all the offices involved were in the process of canceling the old obsolete proposal. After a long journey, K. thus arrived in the village by mistake. Still more: Given that for him there is no possible world other than the Castle and its village, his entire existence is a mistake.

In the *Kafkan* world, the file takes on the role of a Platonic idea. It represents true reality, whereas man's physical existence is only a shadow cast on the screen of illusion. Indeed, both the Land-Surveyor K. and the Prague engineer are but the shadows of their file cards; and they are even much less than that: They are the shadows of a mistake in the

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*Milan Kundera, 59, novelist and essayist, currently lives in Paris. Born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, he attended the Film Faculty of the Prague Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts from 1948 to 1950, when he was expelled from the Communist Party. Active in support of the "Prague Spring" reforms of 1968, he was forced to leave his native country seven years later. Among his many novels and short-story collections: Laughable Loves (1974), The Joke (1969, 1983), The Book of Laughter and Forgetting (1980) and The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984). This essay is drawn from Art of the Novel, copyright © 1986 by Milan Kundera. Translated from the original French by Linda Asher. English translation copyright © 1988 by Grove Press, a Division of the Wheatland Corporation. Published by arrangement with Grove Press.*

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file, shadows without even the right to exist as shadows.

But if man's life is only a shadow and true reality lies elsewhere, in the inaccessible, in the inhuman or the suprahuman, then we suddenly enter the domain of theology. Indeed, Kafka's first commentators explained his novels as religious parables.

Such an interpretation seems to me wrong (because it sees allegory where Kafka grasped concrete situations of human life) but also revealing: Wherever power deifies itself, it automatically produces its own theology; wherever it behaves like God, it awakens religious feelings toward itself; such a world can be described in theological terms.

Kafka did not write religious allegories, but the *Kafkan* (both in reality and in fiction) is inseparable from its theological (or rather: pseudo-theological) dimension.

*Three:* In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov cannot bear the weight of his guilt, and to find peace he consents to his punishment of his own free will. It's the well-known situation where *the offense seeks the punishment*.

In Kafka the logic is reversed. The person punished does not know the reason for the punishment. The absurdity of the punishment is so unbearable that to find peace the accused needs to find a justification for his penalty: *The punishment seeks the offense*.

The Prague engineer is punished by intensive police surveillance. This punishment demands the crime that was not committed, and the engineer accused of emigrating ends up emigrating in fact. *The punishment has finally found the offense*.

Not knowing what the charges against him are, K. decides, in Chapter Seven of *The Trial*, to examine his whole life, his entire past "down to the smallest details." The "autoculpabilization" machine goes into motion. *The accused seeks his offense*.



One day, Amalia receives an obscene letter from a Castle official. Outraged, she tears it up. The Castle doesn't even need to criticize Amalia's rash behavior. Fear (the same fear our engineer saw in his secretary's eyes) acts all by itself. With no order, no perceptible sign from the Castle, everyone avoids Amalia's family like the plague.

Amalia's father tries to defend his family. But there is a problem: Not only is the source of the verdict impossible to find, but the verdict itself does not exist! To appeal, to request a pardon, you have to be convicted first! The father begs the Castle to proclaim his daughter's crime. So it's not enough to say that the punishment seeks the offense. In this pseudo-theological world, *the punished beg for recognition of their guilt!*

It often happens in Prague nowadays that someone fallen into disgrace cannot find even the most menial job. In vain he asks for certifica-

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tion of the fact that he has committed an offense and that his employment is forbidden. The verdict is nowhere to be found. And since in Prague work is a duty laid down by law, he ends up being charged with parasitism; that means he is guilty of avoiding work. *The punishment finds the offense.*



*Four:* The tale of the Prague engineer is in the nature of a funny story, a joke: It provokes laughter.

Two gentlemen, perfectly ordinary fellows (not “inspectors,” as in the French translation), surprise Joseph K. in bed one morning, tell him he is under arrest, and proceed to eat up his breakfast. K. is a well-disciplined civil servant: Instead of throwing the men out of his flat, he stands in his nightshirt and gives a lengthy self-defense. When Kafka read the first chapter of *The Trial* to his friends, everyone laughed, including the author.

Philip Roth’s imagined film version of *The Castle*: Groucho Marx plays the Land-Surveyor K., with Chico and Harpo as the two assistants. Yes, Roth is quite right: The comic is inseparable from the essence of the *Kafkan*.

But it’s small comfort to the engineer to know his story is comic. He is trapped in the joke of his own life like a fish in a bowl; he doesn’t find it funny. Indeed, a joke is a joke only if you’re outside the bowl; by contrast, the *Kafkan* takes us inside, into the guts of a joke, into the horror of the comic.

In the world of the *Kafkan*, the comic is not a counterpoint to the tragic (the tragi-comic) as in Shakespeare; it’s not there to make the tragic more bearable by lightening the tone; it doesn’t accompany the tragic, not at all, it destroys it in the egg and thus deprives the victims of the only consolation they could hope for: the consolation to be found in the (real or supposed) grandeur of tragedy. The engineer loses his homeland, and everyone laughs.

There are periods of modern history when life resembles the novels of Kafka.

When I was still living in Prague, I would frequently hear people refer to the Party headquarters (an ugly, rather modern building) as “the Castle.” Just as frequently, I would hear the Party’s second-in-command (a certain Comrade Mendrych) called “Klamm” (which was all the more beautiful as *klam* in Czech means “mirage” or “fraud”).

The poet A., a great Communist personage, was imprisoned after a Stalinist trial during the 1950s. In his cell he wrote a collection of poems in which he declared himself faithful to communism despite all the horrors he had experienced. That was not out of cowardice. The poet saw his faithfulness (faithfulness to his persecutors) as the mark of his virtue, of his rectitude. Those in Prague who came to know of this collection

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gave it, with fine irony, the title "The Gratitude of Joseph K."

The images, the situations, and even the individual sentences of Kafka's novels were part of life in Prague.

That said, one might be tempted to conclude: Kafka's images are alive in Prague because they anticipate totalitarian society.

This claim, however, needs to be corrected: The *Kafkan* is not a sociological or a political notion. Attempts have been made to explain Kafka's novels as a critique of industrial society, of exploitation, alienation, bourgeois morality—of capitalism, in a word. But there is almost nothing of the constituents of capitalism in Kafka's universe: not money or its power, not commerce, not property and owners or anything about the class struggle.

Neither does the *Kafkan* correspond to a definition of totalitarianism. In Kafka's novels, there is neither the party nor ideology and its jargon, nor politics, the police, or the army.

So we should rather say that the *Kafkan* represents one fundamental possibility of man and his world, a possibility that is not historically determined and that accompanies man more or less eternally.

But this correction does not dispose of the question: How is it possible that in Prague, Kafka's novels merge with real life, while in Paris, the same novels are read as the hermetic expression of an author's entirely subjective world? Does this mean that the possibility of man and his world known as *Kafkan* becomes concrete personal destiny more readily in Prague than in Paris?



There are tendencies in modern history that produce the *Kafkan* in the broad social dimension: the progressive concentration of power, tending to deify itself; the bureaucratization of social activity that turns all institutions into boundless labyrinths; and the resulting depersonalization of the individual.

Totalitarian states, as extreme concentrations of these tendencies, have brought out the close relationship between Kafka's novels and real life. But if in the West people are unable to see this relationship, it is not only because the society that we call democratic is less *Kafkan* than that of today's Prague. It is also, it seems to me, because over here, the sense of the real is inexorably being lost.

In fact, the society we call democratic is also familiar with the process that bureaucratizes and depersonalizes; the entire planet has become a theater of this process. Kafka's novels are only an imaginary, oneiric hyperbole of it; a totalitarian state is a prosaic and material hyperbole of it.

But why was Kafka the first novelist to grasp these societal tendencies, which appeared on History's stage so clearly and brutally only after his death?

Mystifications and legends aside, there is no significant trace anywhere of Franz Kafka's political interests; in that sense, he is different from all his Prague friends, from Max Brod, Franz Werfel, Egon Erwin Kisch, and from all the avant-gardes who, claiming to know the direction of History, indulged in conjuring up the face of the future.

So how is it that not their works but those of their solitary, introverted companion, immersed in his own life and his art, are recognized today as a sociopolitical prophecy, and are for that very reason banned in a large part of the world?

I pondered this mystery one day after witnessing a little scene in the home of an old friend of mine. The woman in question had been arrested in 1951 during the Stalinist trials in Prague, and convicted of crimes she hadn't committed. Hundreds of Communists were in the same situation at the time. All their lives they had entirely identified themselves with their Party. When it suddenly became their prosecutor, they agreed, like Joseph K., "to examine their whole lives, their entire past, down to the smallest details" to find the hidden offense and, in the end, to confess to imaginary crimes. My friend managed to save her own life because she had the extraordinary courage to refuse to undertake—as her comrades did, as the poet A. did—the "search for her offense." Refusing to assist her persecutors, she became unusable for the final show trial. So instead of being hanged she got away with life imprison-



*Kafka's bleakly suggestive drawings reveal as much about his interior life as his prose does. "I've no qualifications for life, so far as I know, except the usual human weakness," he wrote in 1918. "With this—in this respect it's an enormous strength—I've vigorously incorporated what's negative in my period, which is very close to me, and I've no right ever to go against it, only in some measure to represent it."*

ment. After 14 years, she was completely rehabilitated and released.

This woman had a one-year-old child when she was arrested. On release from prison, she thus rejoined her 15-year-old son and had the joy of sharing her humble solitude with him from then on. That she became passionately attached to the boy is entirely comprehensible. One day I went to see them—by then her son was 25. The mother, hurt and angry, was crying. The cause was utterly trivial: The son had overslept or something like that. I asked the mother: “Why get so upset over such a trifle? Is it worth crying about? Aren’t you overdoing it?”

It was the son who answered for his mother: “No, my mother’s not overdoing it. My mother is a splendid, brave woman. She resisted when everyone else cracked. She wants me to become a real man. It’s true, all I did was oversleep, but what my mother reproached me for is something much deeper. It’s my attitude. My selfish attitude. I want to become what my mother wants me to be. And with you as witness, I promise her I will.”

What the Party never managed to do to the mother the mother had managed to do to her son. She had forced him to identify with an absurd accusation, to “seek his offense,” to make a public confession. I looked on, dumbfounded, at this Stalinist mini-trial, and I understood all at once that the psychological mechanisms that function in great (apparently incredible and inhuman) historical events are the same as those that regulate private (quite ordinary and very human) situations.

The famous letter Kafka wrote and never sent to his father demonstrates that it was from the family, from the relationship between the child and the deified power of the parents, that Kafka drew his knowledge of the *technique of culpabilization*, which became a major theme of his fiction. In “The Judgment,” a short story intimately bound up with the author’s family experience, the father accuses the son and commands him to drown himself. The son accepts his fictitious guilt and throws himself into the river as docilely as, in a later work, his successor Joseph K., indicted by a mysterious organization, goes to be slaughtered. The similarity between the two accusations, the two culpabilizations, and the two executions reveals the link, in Kafka’s work, between the family’s private “totalitarianism” and that in his great social visions.



Totalitarian society, especially in its more extreme versions, tends to abolish the boundary between the public and the private; power, as it grows ever more opaque, requires the lives of citizens to be entirely transparent. The ideal of life without secrets corresponds to the ideal of the exemplary family: A citizen does not have the right to hide anything at all from the Party or the State, just as a child has no right to keep a secret from his father or his mother. In their propaganda, totalitarian societies project an idyllic smile: They want to be seen as “one big family.”

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It's often said that Kafka's novels express a passionate desire for community and human contact, that the rootless being who is K. has only one goal: to overcome the curse of solitude. Now, this is not only a cliché, a reductive interpretation; it is a misinterpretation.

The Land-Surveyor K. is not in the least pursuing people and their warmth, he is not trying to become "a man among men" like Sartre's Orestes; he wants acceptance not from a community but from an institution. To have it, he must pay dearly: He must renounce his solitude. And this is his hell: He is never alone. The two assistants sent by the Castle follow him always. When he first makes love with Frieda, the two men are there, sitting on the cafe counter over the lovers, and from then on they are never absent from their bed.

It is not the curse of solitude but the violation of solitude that is Kafka's obsession!



Karl Rossmann is constantly being harassed by everybody: His clothes are sold; his only photo of his parents is taken away; in the dormitory, beside his bed, boys box and now and again fall on top of him; two roughnecks named Robinson and Delamarche force him to move in with them and fat Brunelda, whose moans resound through his sleep.

Joseph K.'s story also begins with the rape of privacy: Two unknown men come to arrest him in bed. From that day on, he never feels alone. The Court follows him, watches him, talks to him; his own private life disappears bit by bit, swallowed up by the mysterious organization that is always on his heels.

Lyrical souls who like to preach the abolition of secrets and the transparency of private life do not realize the nature of the process they are unleashing. The starting point of totalitarianism resembles the beginning of *The Trial*: You'll be taken unawares in your bed. They'll come just as your father and mother used to.

People often wonder whether Kafka's novels are projections of the author's most personal and private conflicts, or descriptions of an objective "social machine."

The *Kafkan* is not restricted to either the private or the public domain; it encompasses both. The public is the mirror of the private, the private reflects the public.

In speaking of the microsocial practices that generate the *Kafkan*, I mean not only the family but also the organization in which Kafka spent all his adult life: the office.

Kafka's heroes are often seen as allegorical projections of the intellectual, but there's nothing intellectual about Gregor Samsa. When he wakes up metamorphosed into a beetle, he has only one concern: in this new state, how to get to the office on time. In his head he has nothing but the obedience and discipline to which his profession has accustomed

him: He's an employee, a functionary, as are all Kafka's characters; a functionary not in the sense of a sociological type (as in Zola) but as one human possibility, as one of the elementary ways of being.

In the bureaucratic world of the functionary, first, there is no initiative, no invention, no freedom of action; there are only orders and rules: It is the world of obedience.

Second, the functionary performs a small part of a large administrative activity whose aim and horizons he cannot see: It is the world where actions have become mechanical and people do not know the meaning of what they do.

Third, the functionary deals only with unknown persons and with files: It is the world of the abstract.

To place a novel in this world of obedience, of the mechanical, and of the abstract, where the only human adventure is to move from one office to another, seems to run counter to the very essence of epic poetry. Thus the question: How has Kafka managed to transform such gray, antipoetical material into fascinating novels?

The answer can be found in a letter he wrote to Milena: "The office is not a stupid institution; it belongs more to the realm of the fantastic than of the stupid." The sentence contains one of Kafka's greatest secrets. He saw what no one else could see: not only the enormous importance of the bureaucratic phenomenon for man, for his condition and for his future, but also (even more surprisingly) the poetic potential contained in the phantasmic nature of offices.

But what does it mean to say that the modern office belongs to the realm of the fantastic?

Skvorecky's engineer would understand: A mistake in his file projected him to London; so he wandered around Prague, a veritable phantom, seeking his lost body, while the offices he visited seemed to him a boundless labyrinth from some unknown mythology.



The quality of the fantastic that he perceived in the bureaucratic world allowed Kafka to do what had seemed unimaginable before: He transformed the profoundly antipoetic material of a highly bureaucratized society into the great poetry of the novel; he transformed a very ordinary story of a man who cannot obtain a promised job (which is actually the story of *The Castle*) into myth, into epic, into a kind of beauty never before seen.

By expanding a bureaucratic setting to the gigantic dimensions of a universe, Kafka unwittingly succeeded in creating an image that fascinates us by its resemblance to a society he never knew, that of today's totalitarian state.

A totalitarian state is, in fact, a single, immense administration: Since all work in it is for the state, everyone of every occupation has

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become an employee. A worker is no longer a worker, a judge no longer a judge, a shopkeeper no longer a shopkeeper, a priest no longer a priest; they are all functionaries of the state. "I belong to the Court," the priest says to Joseph K. in the cathedral. In Kafka, the lawyers, too, work for the Court. A citizen in today's Prague does not find that surprising. He would get no better legal defense than K. did. His lawyers don't work for the defendants either, but for the Court.



In a cycle of one hundred quatrains that sound the gravest and most complex depths with an almost childlike simplicity, the great Czech poet Jan Skacel writes:

Poets don't invent poems  
 The poem is somewhere behind  
 It's been there for a long long time  
 The poet merely discovers it.

For the poet, then, writing means breaking through a wall behind which something immutable ("the poem") lies hidden in darkness. That's why (because of this surprising and sudden unveiling) "the poem" strikes us first as a dazzlement.

I read *The Castle* for the first time when I was 14, and the book will never enchant me so thoroughly again, even though all the vast understanding it contains (all the real import of the *Kafkan*) was comprehensible to me then: I was dazzled.

Later on my eyes adjusted to the light of "the poem" and I began to see my own lived experience in what had dazzled me; yet the light was still there.

"The poem," says Jan Skacel, has been waiting for us, immutable, "for a long long time." However, in a world of perpetual change, is the immutable not a mere illusion?

No. Every situation is of man's making and can only contain what man contains; thus one can imagine that the situation (and all its metaphysical implications) has existed as a human possibility "for a long long time."

But in that case, what does History (the ever-changing) represent for the poet?

In the eyes of the poet, strange as it may seem, History is in a position similar to the poet's own: History does not invent, it discovers. Through new situations, History reveals what man is, what has been in him "for a long long time," what his possibilities are.

If "the poem" is already there, then it would be illogical to impute to the poet the gift of foresight; no, he "only discovers" a human possibility ("the poem" that has been there "a long long time") that History will

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in its turn discover one day.

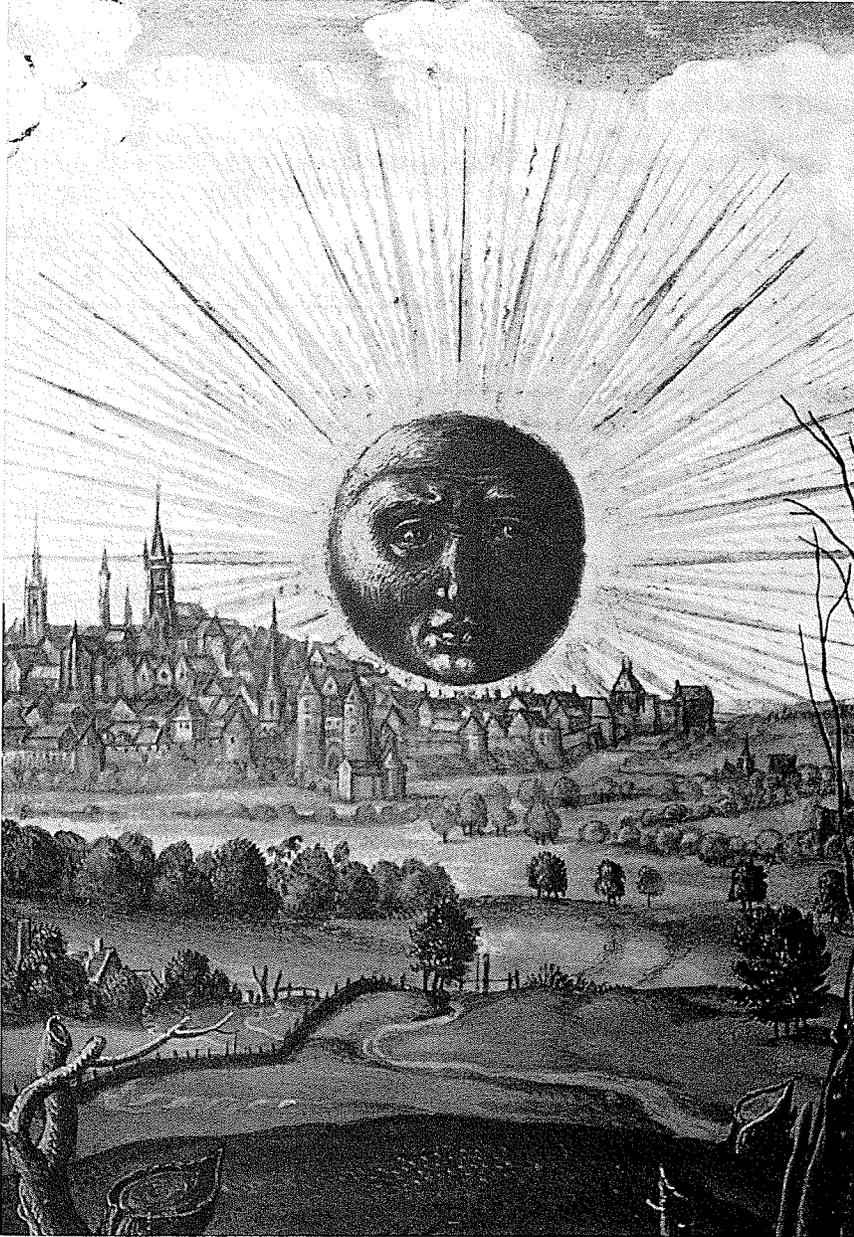
Kafka made no prophecies. All he did was see what was "behind." He did not know that his seeing was also a fore-seeing. He did not intend to unmask a social system. He shed light on the mechanisms he knew from private and microsocial human practice, not suspecting that later developments would put those mechanisms into action on the great stage of History.

The hypnotic eye of power, the desperate search for one's own offense, exclusion and the anguish of being excluded, the condemnation to conformism, the phantasmic nature of reality and the magical reality of the file, the perpetual rape of private life, etc.—all these experiments that History has performed on man in its immense test tubes, Kafka performed (some years earlier) in his novels.

The convergence of the real world of totalitarian states with Kafka's "poem" will always be somewhat uncanny, and it will always bear witness that the poet's act, in its very essence, is incalculable; and paradoxical: The enormous social, political, and "prophetic" import of Kafka's novels lies precisely in their "nonengagement," that is to say, in their total autonomy from all political programs, ideological concepts, and futurological prognoses.

Indeed, if instead of seeking "the poem" hidden "somewhere behind," the poet "engages" himself to the service of a truth known from the outset (which comes forward on its own and is "out in front"), he has renounced the mission of poetry. And it matters little whether the pre-conceived truth is called revolution or dissidence, Christian faith or atheism, whether it is more justified or less justified; a poet who serves any truth other than the truth to be discovered (which is dazzlement) is a false poet.

If I hold so ardently to the legacy of Kafka, if I defend it as my personal heritage, it is not because I think it worthwhile to imitate the inimitable (and rediscover the *Kafkan*) but because it is such a tremendous example of the radical autonomy of the novel (of the poetry that is the novel). This autonomy allowed Franz Kafka to say things about our human condition (as it reveals itself in our century) that no social or political thought could ever tell us.



*A benign sun rises over a European city in this picture from Solomon Trismosin's text, Splendor Solis (1582). Europe was then plagued by the so-called Little Ice Age. Summers were often short and cool, causing crop failures and famines, and spurring fears of a permanent change in climate.*

# Climate

Last summer, as much of the United States endured stifling heat waves and severe drought, climatologists warned that the hot weather could be a harbinger of worse to come. Because of the atmospheric “greenhouse effect,” they said, Planet Earth is slowly becoming warmer. Their specific predictions vary: In a “greenhouse world,” some regions may benefit, others may suffer. The outlook has changed; only a decade ago, several respected scientists feared the onset of a new Ice Age. Here, Diana Morgan assesses the recent evolution of climatology—the study of climate and its impact. She describes past efforts to determine how changes in climate have influenced human history. Today, Steven Lagerfeld’s survey of the research indicates, most climatologists think that the “greenhouse effect” is here to stay. They believe that mankind can learn to live with a slight “global warming,” and may be able to avert more radical shifts in temperature and rainfall.

## CLIMATOLOGY

*by Diana Morgan*

Climate, along with the stars and the tides, is one of the oldest subjects of human speculation. What accounts for heat waves and times of drought? How does climate influence the evolution of societies and the course of history?

In China, archeologists have unearthed some of the oldest evidence of man’s anxiety about climate: a set of oracle bones inscribed with a weather report for the 10 days from March 20 to 29, 1217 B.C., along with prayers for snow and rain. Three thousand years later, climatologists have the technology to chart the outlines of the world’s changing climate over a timespan going back millions of years. Even without the aid of Chinese oracle bones, they can now reconstruct a portrait of the weather in some parts of the world around the year 1217 B.C. with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Scholars have recently managed to document the periodic droughts, hot and cold spells, and other climatic fluctuations that have afflicted, and sometimes aided, human societies in

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various regions of the Earth over the centuries.

Yet scientists and other researchers are still far from understanding *why* climate changes and far from agreeing on *how* (or whether) climate has altered human history. They still cannot reliably predict the weather 10 days from now, or the climate 10 years from now. As Reid A. Bryson of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, observes, climatologists sum things up with the quip: "Forecasting is very difficult, especially if it deals with the future."

### Climatic 'Energy'

The Greeks may have been the first people to recognize climate as something distinct from weather, as a phenomenon that might change over time and distance. More than 2,000 years ago, Greek captains sailing north in the Black Sea to trade wine and oil found the air turning colder, just as the weather grew more inviting as they sailed farther south from their homeland toward Crete, Egypt, and Libya. *Klima*, a word originally denoting latitude, came also to mean the kind of weather specific to a locale.

The Greeks were also the authors of the oldest surviving theories about the effects of climate on human health and history. A fifth-century B.C. medical treatise, "On Airs, Waters, and Places," possibly authored by Hippocrates, attributed what the Greeks viewed as the "pusillanimity and cowardice" of the Asians to "the nature of the seasons [in Asia], which do not undergo any great changes either to heat or cold, or the like; for there is neither excitement of the understanding nor any strong change of the body whereby the temper might be ruffled . . . . It is changes of all kinds that arouse the understanding of mankind, and do not allow them to get into a torpid condition."

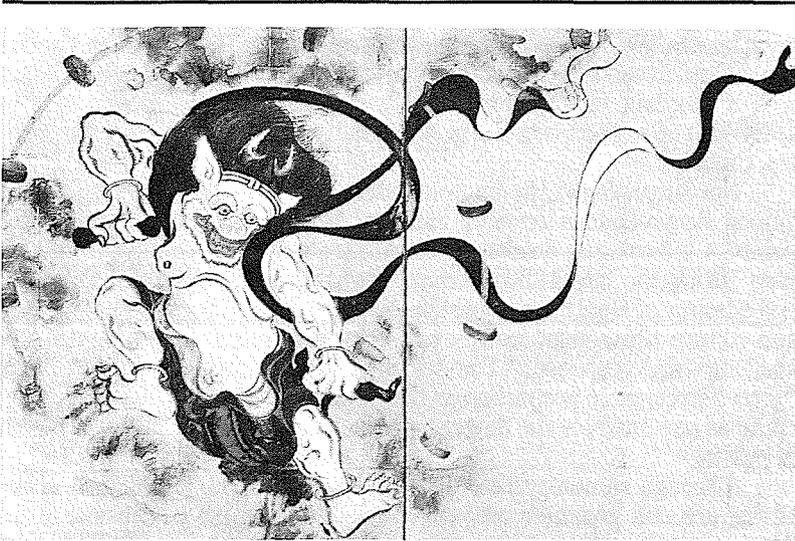
Greek notions about climate and its effects persisted for centuries. "In the North," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1785, men are "cool; sober; laborious; independent . . . . In the South they are fiery; voluptuary; indolent; unsteady."

But no grand theory of climate's effects emerged until the early 20th century, after Darwin's concepts of natural selection and evolution had opened the way to a questioning of man's position in the natural world. No longer would man be universally regarded in the Christian world as a creature made in God's image, only modestly affected by his surroundings on Earth. Adherents of a new school of climatology marched in Darwin's wake: To these determinists, man was solely a creature of his environment, especially climate.

The "grand old man" of climatic determinism was Ellsworth Hun-

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*Diana Morgan, 30, formerly an editor at Science 86, is a writer specializing in science. Born in Washington, D.C., she received a B.A. from Johns Hopkins University (1980). Copyright © 1988 by Diana Morgan.*



*In Buddhist mythology, the winds were ruled by the White Tiger god of the West, depicted here by the 17th-century Japanese painter Sōtatsu. In many ancient faiths, priests looked chiefly to wind deities for good weather.*

tington, a Yale geographer who expounded his theories in a series of semipopular books, such as *The Pulse of Asia*, between 1907 and 1945. Huntington contended that the productivity and mental ability of individuals—and, ultimately, the rise and fall of entire civilizations—were inseparable from the impact of climate.

In some of the first scientific studies of climate's physiological and psychological effects, Huntington diligently measured the impact of seasonal fluctuations of temperature and humidity on human beings: the weight gains of 1,200 tubercular patients in New York between 1893 and 1902, the efficiency of 65 young women in a North Carolina label-pasting factory, and the mathematics grades of 240 West Point cadets between 1909 and 1912.

Huntington's conclusion: A climate with an average temperature of 64 degrees Fahrenheit and relative humidity of 60 percent was most conducive to health and to physical and mental performance. Equally important were the stimulation of daily and seasonal weather fluctuations and, significantly, racial inheritance. (For example, the "Teutonic race," he wrote, enjoyed "an ineradicable" advantage in "mentality.")

Writing at a time of Anglo-Saxon hubris, when the British Empire was at its apex and the United States was a rising power, Huntington maintained that no nation "has risen to the highest grade of civilization except in regions where the climatic stimulus is great." The civilizations of Rome, Persia, and Egypt had declined, he believed, because of chang-

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ing climates. He singled out northwestern Europe, the Pacific and northern Atlantic coasts of the United States, and Japan (which had recently won a startling victory over the Tsar in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05) as regions with the greatest natural “climatic energy” of modern times.

Not surprisingly, Huntington’s ideas won broad popular acceptance among Anglo-Saxons on both sides of the North Atlantic. They also gained a following in academia, especially among scientists. But, beginning during the late 1920s, Arnold Toynbee, a noted English historian and admirer of Huntington, developed a new theory, arguing that climate and culture throughout history had been involved in a *pas de deux* of challenge and response. “The stimulus toward civilization,” he wrote, “grows stronger in proportion as the environment grows more difficult,” citing as one example the flowering of Hellenistic Greece in the arid heat of Attica.

Although Huntington’s empirical data on climate and individual behavior are still generally respected by specialists, his conclusions were soon rejected as racist, exaggerated, and overly deterministic. (Toynbee fell out of favor for other reasons.) Huntington’s notions were also undermined by the work of scholars in several new specialties. By the 1930s, sociologists and other practitioners of the social sciences were advancing a more sophisticated picture of the evolution of human societies; they included such influences as religion and migration. At roughly the same time, the field of climatology was moving away from speculation about climate’s *influence* into an era of technological inquiry and precise historical measurement of climates past.

### Appealing to the Deities

In retrospect, it is surprising how late this effort began—much later than some of man’s other scientific investigations (notably in astronomy and biology). Yet, climate long ruled man. It is difficult for modern American city-dwellers, cossetted by central heating in winter and air conditioning in summer, and virtually assured of supermarket groceries even when drought-stricken crops are withering in farmers’ fields, to comprehend how important a predictably stable climate was to the people of earlier times. As late as the 15th century, historian Fernand Braudel writes, the world population “consisted of one vast peasantry where between 80 and 95 percent of people lived from the land and from nothing else. The rhythm, quality, and deficiency of harvests ordered all material life.”

But prior to our own century, man’s ability to measure the vagaries of weather and climate was limited—and slow to develop. The first known attempts were in ancient Egypt, from which archeologists have unearthed fragments of a large stone stele, carved by minions of the pharaohs during the 25th century B.C., that was used to record the levels

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of the annual Nile River floods. The Egyptians counted on these annual floods to irrigate the fields and nourish the croplands with nutrients from upstream. The Chinese, who began systematic observations shortly after the Egyptians, were compulsive record-keepers. They can probably claim mankind's longest continuous documentation of natural events. But, aside from crude rain gauges, weather vanes, and other simple devices, these early investigators possessed few reliable measuring instruments.

Utterly dependent upon a friendly climate for their survival, but with very little understanding of the atmospheric forces that could bring a crop-destroying drought or a decade of bountiful harvests, farmers appealed to the deities for favorable weather. The Greeks paid tribute to several gods of the winds, including Zephyrus, who ruled the western wind; medieval Catholics appealed to Saint Médard for rain. The earliest climatologists were probably priests; they studied the sky to determine the time for sowing and reaping. In ancient Sumer, they were responsible not only for predicting the onset of the seasonal rains and floods but also for inspecting the irrigation canals, which channeled precious water to the fields.

### 'Erratic' Boulders

Man's sinfulness was believed to be at the root of many calamities. Throughout Europe from the fifth through 15th centuries, rich harvests were celebrated by ritual feasts; times of famine were often followed by purges of heretics and unbelievers. In Germany, Catholic priests exhorted their congregations to destroy witches in the wake of hailstorms and other meteorological scourges.

By the end of the medieval era, Europeans were beginning to expand their knowledge of the physical world. But it was not until about 1590 that Galileo invented the thermometer; one of his followers, Evangelista Torricelli, created the first barometer soon thereafter. Comparative meteorology was born in 1654, when the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II of the de' Medici family, ordered dozens of identically calibrated thermometers from an Italian glass blower and established the world's first meteorological network across Italy.

After periods of unusually bad weather, the anxious monarchs of France (in 1775) and Prussia (in 1817), fearful of a permanent climatic change, also established nationwide networks to record daily temperatures, barometric pressure, and rainfall.\* For the first time, Europeans

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\*As researchers now know, the climate of 18th- and early 19th-century Europe *was* in flux. But Prussia's King Frederick William III acted after the extraordinary (and disastrous) "year without summer" of 1816, when crops in some parts of the Northern Hemisphere were killed by frosts as late as mid-June. Many climatologists now suspect that the violent eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora in April 1815 was the likely cause. They believe that ash and gases from the volcano, high in the atmosphere, reduced the amount of sunlight reaching the Northern Hemisphere. Eruptions as massive as Mount Tambora's, which killed 10,000 islanders, are rare.

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had turned to scientists rather than priests or folklorists to understand the forces of climate.

The bad seasons passed, but the weather stations remained. Toward the end of the 19th century, scientists were able to report that, while average temperatures did indeed fluctuate from year to year, they could find no evidence of long-term changes. Classicists, poring over the scattered weather observations of the ancient Greeks, concurred. Europe's climate, they believed, had not changed for at least 2,000 years.

Of course, there had been inklings that the Earth's climate had been dramatically different in the very distant geologic past. In Europe's glacier-studded Alps, country folk who lived surrounded by ice-scarred rockface and rubble at the foot of the mountains took it for granted that the glaciers had once advanced and then retreated. Until the mid-19th century, however, most geologists rejected the notion as fanciful.

Western theologians had determined from readings in the Bible that the Earth could not possibly have been as old as the existence of ancient moving glaciers would suggest. The 17th-century conclusion of John Lightfoot, vice chancellor of Cambridge University, was still taken as the last word on the subject: "Heaven and Earth and clouds full of water and Man were created by the Trinity on 26th October 4004 B.C. at nine o'clock in the morning." The so-called erratic boulders in the Alpine valleys, early 19th-century geologists said, were probably deposited by the Flood described in the Book of Genesis.

### Discovering the Ice Ages

Bits of contrary evidence continued to accumulate, however, and by 1832, Reinhard Bernhardt, a professor at an obscure school of forestry in the German town of Dreissigacker, dared suggest that an enormous ice sheet had once blanketed all of northern Europe. A few years later, the Swiss-born naturalist Louis Agassiz began to popularize this view, writing dramatically of the frozen past, when the sun, which had once risen over a Europe "covered with tropical vegetation and inhabited by herds of great elephants," met only "the whistling of northern winds and the rumbling of the crevasses."

By the 1860s, thanks to Agassiz's efforts and much new evidence, few scientists still doubted the existence of a past Glacial Epoch.

The Glacial Epoch was an era, later research would show, that began almost three million years ago—one that, in fact, we may still be living in. At various times during the Glacial Epoch, the Earth was colder than it is today by as much as 36 degrees Fahrenheit, and the oceans were perhaps 500 feet below current levels. Ice sheets up to two miles thick blanketed a third of the Earth's land mass, extending as far south as the Great Lakes and Cape Cod in North America, covering Scandinavia and the British Isles in Europe, and burying much of northern Asia.

These cold periods during the Glacial Epoch were the Ice Ages.

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There have been perhaps 10 of them during the last million years; scientists still are not certain. (It was probably during the last Ice Age, 15,000–35,000 years ago, that humans first crossed what is now the Bering Strait from Asia to North America.) The Ice Ages were punctuated by warmer spells known as “interglacials.” It was not until about 8,000 B.C., as the Earth began to warm during one such interglacial, that homo sapiens first took up farming, probably in ancient Mesopotamia and other areas. The interglacials have been rare and relatively short, lasting 9,000 to 12,000 years. “The present ‘interglacial,’” observes climatologist Reid Bryson, “has been with us for about 10,800 years.”\*

As late-19th-century geologists began their first crude attempts to map the movement of the ancient ice sheets, other researchers continued to dismantle the concept of an unchanging climate.

### Climate’s ‘Morse Code’

During the 1860s, Scotland’s James Croll, a self-taught physicist who was employed as a janitor at Glasgow’s Andersonian College before his theories won him international acclaim, suggested that 100,000-year variations in the Earth’s orbit may have drastically reduced the amount of sunlight reaching the planet during the Ice Ages.

Others speculated that the solar system had passed through one of the Milky Way’s spiral arms, becoming blanketed in dust dense enough to filter out light from the sun. As the 19th century wore on, other scientists scrutinized the influence on climate of everything from the tidal effect of neighboring planets and the slow “drift” of the Earth’s continents to the spewed effluvia of volcanoes, the wandering of the magnetic poles, and sunspots. Finally, during the 1920s, a Serbian mathematician named Milutin Milankovitch reworked Croll’s theory of variations in the Earth’s orbit, showing with a series of complicated equations how “stretch,” “tilt,” and “wobble” might have produced the Ice Ages. Gradually, climatologists came to accept (albeit with many qualifications) the general outlines of Milankovitch’s theory.

Meanwhile, geologists and climatologists searched the glaciers and other sites for physical clues to date the waxing and waning of the Ice Ages, turning to Nature herself to chronicle the planet’s tumultuous climatic history.

The concept of Nature as self-chronicler was not new. It had apparently been the brainchild of Robert Hooke, a brilliant, irascible English philosopher who counted among his accomplishments the invention of the first accurate pocket watch and a famous feud over the nature of gravity with Sir Isaac Newton. In 1686, toying with fossilized shells that,

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\*During the 1970s, a cluster of especially cold winters in the United States stirred widespread fears that a new Ice Age was dawning. The National Academy of Sciences warned that it could begin within 100 years; analysts at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency prepared an assessment of American power in “a cooler and therefore hungrier world.”

## CLIMATE AND EVOLUTION

Climate clearly has put its imprint on the tint of our skin, the size of our noses, and other physical traits.

The study of skin color and racial differences has been a touchy matter in Western science ever since the mid-19th century, when naturalist Louis Agassiz asserted that whites had bigger brains than others, and promptly concluded that they must therefore be more intelligent. Today, scientists differ over what a "race" is. During the late 1960s, for example, anthropologist Grover S. Krantz of Washington State University distinguished between "climatic races"—groups that share traits, such as skin color, which can change over generations in response to climate—and "descent groups," which share ancient and immutable genetic traits, such as blood type. Climatic races have evolved separately from descent groups, Krantz maintained, and the two should not be considered "inherently connected."

Amid such discussions, however, a consensus exists that climate *has* influenced the evolution of the human physique.

Skin color, for example, is determined largely by the amount of melanin, a dark pigment, in the outer layer of the skin. (Carotene imparts a yellow tint.) In sunny climates close to the Equator, natural selection has favored dark, melanin-rich skin, which protects its owner by absorbing harmful ultraviolet rays before they penetrate to lower layers. But *some* ultraviolet light must penetrate the skin so that the body can produce Vitamin D. Thus, at higher latitudes, where sunlight is less intense, pale skin with little melanin is the norm.

Among dark-skinned people, moreover, there are great variations in skin color. The drawback of dark skin is that, like dark cloth, it absorbs more heat from the sun than does lighter skin. In prehistory, anthropologists explain, those who roamed the savannah "traded off" some protection from ultraviolet rays for the reduced heat retention of lighter skin. For forest-dwellers, living in less extreme heat, a darker complexion was an evolutionary advantage.

Melanin also determines eye color. The human eye appears blue when there is no melanin in the outer iris, and turns darker as melanin increases. In the iris, as in the skin, melanin absorbs light, protecting the eye from glare. Thus, dark eyes are generally favored by nature. In Europe, however, almost 50 percent of the population has blue, green, or gray irises. Such people may see further in dim light, but scientists still do not fathom the evolutionary logic of blue eyes—or blond hair, for that matter.

The eyes of the Chinese, Japanese, Eskimos, and other people of Mongoloid descent—one third of the world's population—are protected by epicanthic folds. These folds, composed of fatty tissue, probably evolved among their forebears inhabiting the Arctic in order to insulate the eye against freezing, and to provide an additional shield against glare from snow and ice.



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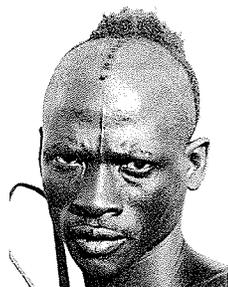
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Even the human nose adapts to climate. Inside the nose, a series of wet, mucus-lined air chambers “conditions” inhaled air before it reaches the throat and the delicate air sacs of the lungs, warming it to about 95 degrees Fahrenheit and raising its relative humidity to 95 percent. Humans in cold climates—or in hot, dry ones—thus have the greatest need to condition the air they breathe. Natural selection in such climes generally favors larger noses with more mucus lining: flattened, to protect against frostbite, in frigid environments; long and narrow in arid regions.

In a like manner, the size and shape of the human form help the body regulate internal temperature. Over thousands of years, cooler climates tend to produce larger people. The reason: Their extra mass helps them retain heat. Although large people also have more skin surface from which heat can escape, the tradeoff still works to their advantage. As the body grows larger, mass becomes greater *relative* to skin area.



The Alakaluf Indians on the frigid southern tip of South America, for example, are 25 percent taller than the Ituri Pygmies of Central Africa. Yet, the Alakalufs are more than two times heavier—and thus store much more body heat.

Variations in body *shape* complicate the picture. A tall, skinny man has more surface area—and heat loss—than does a shorter, huskier man of the same weight. Thus, cold territories closest to the North and South Poles tend to be populated by stocky folk.

In southern Africa, Pygmies, the world’s shortest people, dwell very near the Nilotic tribes (e.g., the Dinka), the tallest. But the Nilotic tribes live in the dry, open savannahs, the Pygmies, in the shaded forests. The Nilotics’ environment puts a premium on having more skin surface to release heat, thus their extremely tall, slender build. And, occasionally, there appear uniquely adapted humans. A notable example: the Khoikhoi women of the open African savannah, who have thin torsos suited to the hot climate, but also protruding buttocks (steatopygia) containing storehouses of fat to draw upon in times of famine.



Just as it is difficult to *prove* a correlation between past climatic change, and, say, the demise of an ancient civilization, so today’s anthropologists are

not certain that all their inferences about climate and human evolution are well founded. Very few of the world’s peoples in all their variety now inhabit the same territories where, long ago, their ancestors presumably developed certain characteristics in response to climate. Often, notes Grover Krantz, anthropologists resort to “pulling people out of areas where their . . . traits don’t fit the environment and putting them back where they do fit.”

—D.M.

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though plucked from his native shore, more resembled tropical species, Hooke mused whether Britain had once lain within a “torrid zone,” its climate since altered by a series of natural calamities. It is very difficult “to raise a *chronology*” by examining the shells, he observed, “and to state the intervals of the times wherein such and such catastrophes and mutations have happened; yet ’tis not impossible.”

It seemed impossible for more than a century thereafter. Before they could “raise a chronology,” scientists needed field methods and technologies that would allow them to quantify past climatic change.

One such method was dendrochronology—the technique, developed during the early 19th century, of counting growth rings to determine the ages of trees. At the turn of the century, Andrew Douglass of the University of Arizona advanced the science further. He likened the annual rings to Morse code: The sequence of dots (narrow rings indicating growth-limiting conditions) and dashes (wider rings indicating years of favorable conditions) relayed a message about the climate during the tree’s lifespan. Around 1910, Douglass pushed the technique forward by showing how the rings of a recently felled tree could be matched with those of an older stump or piece of fossilized wood, which could then be linked to an even older sample, ultimately allowing dendrochronologists to stretch the record back 8,200 years. Still, that took the story only to the edge of the last Ice Age.\* Other methods would be needed to delve deeper into the past.

### The Dust Bowl

The Earth’s history is written in layers of environmental debris. If each stratum of ocean sediment, ancient soil, or Arctic ice was layered more or less chronologically, scientists reasoned, the perceptive investigator, by sifting through layered clues, would be able to discover the climate at the time each layer was formed.

In 1916, Swedish botanist Lennart von Post capitalized on this now common notion when he reported on his study of rich deposits of pollen grains dug from lakes and bogs in his native land. Soon, scientists throughout the West were digging up soil samples, analyzing everything from beetle genitalia and fossilized leaves to microscopic creatures and chemical isotopes for clues to climate changes in the past.

By examining a millimeter of soil under a high-powered microscope, investigators such as von Post could make a connection between the relative amounts of pollens and prehistoric climate, up to 100,000 years in the past. An abundance of grass and shrub pollen suggests the existence of frigid tundra and grasslands at the edges of glaciers; birch and pine pollen hints at a somewhat warmer climate; and the presence of oaks and elms signals a temperate zone. In China, the spread of bamboo

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\*Tree rings are wonderfully specific, however, and recent techniques allow scientists to calculate yearly variations in temperature, rainfall, and even atmospheric pressure at sea level.

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is a reliable indicator of regional warming in centuries past.

By the early 20th century, most educated laymen had accepted the once unbelievable, once sacrilegious notion that the planet had experienced a climatic upheaval during the distant Ice Age. But, among scientists and laymen alike, the comforting belief that Mother Earth had remained immutable at least since the dawn of civilization died hard. Most American college textbooks remained adamant on this point until the late 1940s.

In the United States, the Dust Bowl disaster in the Great Plains during the 1930s (which was exacerbated by poor farming methods) and several abnormally hot summers during the 1940s jolted the public into a new awareness of climate. Actually, the warming trend had begun during the 1890s; it peaked during the 1940s, when the Northern Hemisphere endured its highest summer temperatures, and enjoyed its mildest winters, in perhaps 1,000 years. (The 1980s have been warmer still, with several of the hottest years on record; yet *average* annual temperatures have been less than one degree Fahrenheit above normal.)

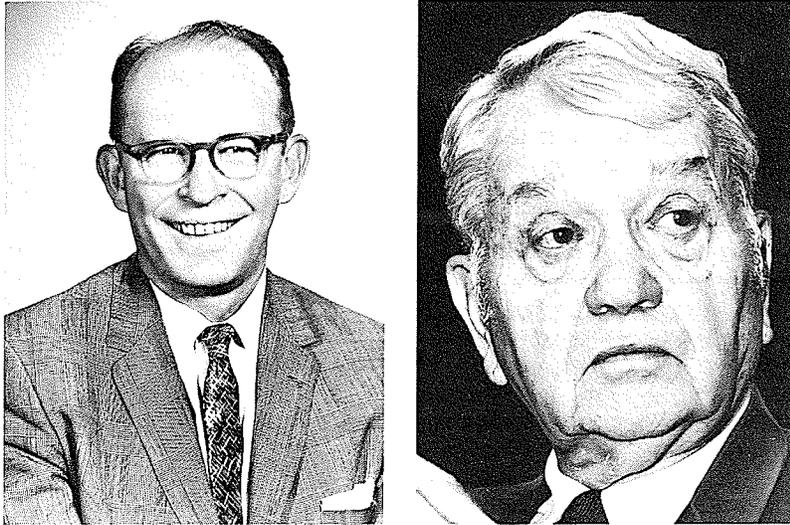
### Climate and History

In America and Europe, all of this prompted the first wide discussion among scientists (if not in the press) of the "greenhouse effect": Heat that formerly would have escaped into outer space, the argument went, was being trapped close to Earth by vast amounts of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere from factory smokestacks and other manmade sources. For the first time, it seemed possible that man could inadvertently alter the global climate.

Then, for reasons unknown, a worldwide cooling began during the late 1940s.

Although researchers' concerns over the greenhouse effect faded, they began to recognize that the Earth's climate could no longer be viewed as stable and predictable. As a byproduct of the World War II boom in technology, moreover, new and highly sensitive dating techniques and field methods were created, bringing the science of climatology into a rambunctious adolescence. Suddenly, there seemed to be no aspect of learning that climate did not touch, as historians, historical geographers, economists, botanists, sedimentologists, dendrochronologists, glaciologists, archeologists, and medical scientists, as well as meteorologists and other researchers, flocked to the study of climate and developed their own sub-themes.

One of the most important new technological developments was radiocarbon dating, a technique developed in 1947 by Willard Libby, a University of Chicago chemist, later a Nobel laureate. It allowed scientists to determine the age of fossilized plants and animals up to 40,000 years old. At about the same time, Harold Urey, also an American Nobel laureate in chemistry, introduced another far-reaching technique: isotope



*Two chemists whose discoveries have greatly aided the work of climatologists: Willard Libby (1908–1980), the inventor of radiocarbon dating, and Harold Urey (1893–1981), the creator of isotope analysis.*

analysis of ocean sediments and ice cores.\* Suddenly scientists could peer into the very distant past—up to 570 million years ago—when ancient deep-sea creatures began absorbing oxygen from the oceans to form protective shells.

A 20-foot “core”—a cylinder of compacted mud and ooze from the ocean floor—can provide a sampling of sediments built up over millions of years, allowing geologists, using Urey’s method, to chart not only the progressive deep freezes of the Ice Ages but also the temperature fluctuations of the interglacial warm spells. In 1950, when Urey shaved a sliver from the 150 million-year-old fossil of a squid-like creature, he was able to determine that the creature had been born in early summer and died four years later in early spring.

When the technique was later applied to the comparatively spongelike material of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, scientists were able to trace the waxing and waning of the interglacial periods with remarkable precision. They were suddenly much closer to an under-

\*On average, 99.8 percent of the oxygen in water is ordinary oxygen, but .2 percent is composed of isotope atoms weighted with two extra neutrons. In warm weather, when ocean water evaporates quickly, the relative amount of the isotope  $O^{18}$  increases as the lighter  $O^{16}$  is drawn up into the clouds. Urey reasoned that past ocean temperatures could be measured by determining the ratio of the two isotopes in ancient sea fossils: The more  $O^{18}$  in the fossil, the warmer the weather had been. Urey’s method did *not* allow scientists to date samples; that had to be done by other means, chiefly by counting the layers of sediment or ice.

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standing of past climatic change—and, possibly, by extension, climate present and future.

Just as scientists after World War II were mapping broad climate variations across millions of years, a new breed of “documentary” climatologist began the painstaking task of reconstructing climate over a shorter timespan.

A leader of the “documentary” school was Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, an unconventional French historian. Ladurie was determined to develop a new historiography of the past 1,000 years, with special emphasis on Western Europe during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. His chief method was to assess written records of vineyard harvest dates in 18th-century France. The principle behind this “phenological” method, as Ladurie described it in 1971, was simple. The date at which the grapes ripened reflected the temperatures “to which the plant [was] exposed between the formation of the buds and the completion of fruiting . . . . These dates are thus valuable climatic indicators.”

Other “documentary” climatologists, before and since, have dusted off epistolary accounts of winter storms or counted the number of prayers said for rain. They have looked for clues to climatic change in the accounts of Venetian diplomats, the ships’ logs of sea captains, and in reports on the frequency of the canals freezing over in the Netherlands. They have made two periods of relatively drastic climatic change the focus of especially obsessive examination.

The Medieval Warm Epoch (circa A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1400) brought the world the highest temperatures in perhaps 5,000 years. During this brief spell, the Vikings, unconfined by sea ice, invaded Europe’s Atlantic coast, traded with the Italians and Arabs, colonized now inhospitable Greenland, and possibly voyaged to North America. Plagues of locusts descended on Continental Europe. In Britain, farmers cultivated flourishing vineyards and began working lands in the north of Scotland, only to abandon them forever a few centuries later.

### **The Little Ice Age**

The Earth began to cool again around A.D. 1200, gradually dropping about two to four degrees Fahrenheit below today’s levels, and the period from 1400 to 1850 has been christened, with considerable exaggeration, the Little Ice Age. Those four centuries saw the modest advance of glaciers in the Alps and elsewhere, the occasional wintertime freezing of the Thames River, and periods of widespread famine, as Europe’s summers became shorter, cooler, and wetter. Massive ice floes hampered ocean travel in the northern Atlantic: In 1492, Pope Alexander VI cited “the extensive freezing of the waters” in lamenting that no Catholic priest had visited Greenland for 80 years.

The Europeans of that era scribbled as busily as do their chroniclers today; diaries, monastic and manorial chronicles, and tax reports have all

### HEAT, COLD, AND THE HUMAN BODY

Although most climatologists are reluctant to draw broad conclusions about climate's effects on human societies, the study of its impact on *individuals* has flourished since World War II. "Human health, energy, and comfort are affected more by climate than by any other element of the physical environment," observes Howard Critchfield of Western Washington University.

"Bioclimatology" attracts researchers from a variety of specialties, with markedly different interests—industrial psychologists, physicians, space scientists. They have linked climate to everything from homicide to human fertility to mental acuity.

At the extremes of hot and cold, climate's effects are relatively easy to measure—and to avoid. In the United States, heat stroke and hypothermia together claim only about 325 lives each year. Yet W. Moulton Avery, of the Center for Environmental Physiology, contends that it "would be front page news" if federal researchers had actually collected data on the thousands of heat-related deaths (e.g., from stroke) among elderly Americans last summer.

Climate exerts its influence in subtler ways. According to one study, for example, "excessive aggressiveness" begins to manifest itself between 82.4 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit, when the relative humidity is 100 percent. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) lists climate as one of a dozen factors that influence crime rates.

Some researchers have tried to link climate-induced physiological changes to physical and intellectual performance. As temperatures rise above 86 degrees, they note, the body cools itself by increasing blood flow to the skin and reducing the flow to the brain and muscles. One result: a loss of energy and ability to concentrate. When the thermometer drops below 68 degrees, the body conserves warmth by restricting blood flow to the skin. Yet, some groups, such as Eskimos, may have developed different tolerances through evolution; individuals undergo short-term adaptations to harsh climates.

Most studies suggest that comfort and mental vigor are not entirely synonymous. Andris Auliciems of the University of Toronto found that English schoolchildren performed best on a variety of tests at temperatures of 58.5 to 62.9 degrees. Some bioclimatologists have put the optimum temperature as high as 82 degrees; others dismiss such correlations as worthless.

Science does confirm much folk wisdom. Winter in the temperate zones of the world means more flu, partly because the cold depresses the body's immune system, but mostly because it drives people indoors, where microbes spread easily. Other sicknesses plague the tropics because certain disease-bearing organisms flourish in heat and humidity.

Climate has other, unexpected, effects. Wolf H. Weihe, a Swiss biologist, reports that the fertility rate of women in Bombay, India, drops by more than 50 percent during the monsoon season. In the United States, he says, statistics indicate that fertility is lowest during the winter—except, for some reason, in Kansas, where it jumps when the temperature drops to 18 degrees below zero.

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become fodder for countless late-20th-century doctoral theses packed with the minutiae of a lost age. It is difficult to find a season in Europe during the past 1,000 years for which there is not an account of someone's impression of the weather.

Until the last decade or so, however, the "documentary" climatologists, for all their obsession with detail, were regarded with indifference by most "hard" scientists, who dismissed their attempts to stitch together definitive analyses from stacks of crumbling church records and other sources. However, since the 1960s, when Britain's Hubert H. Lamb, originally trained as a meteorologist, came to the fore of documentary climatology and began urging his colleagues to employ greater rigor, the discipline has gradually won more acceptance from scientists.

Recently, other scholars, such as historian David Hackett Fischer of Brandeis University, have criticized some of the "documentary" climatologists (and most mainstream historians) for giving short shrift to the effects of climatic change on human affairs. Ladurie came in for especially harsh criticism. To Ladurie, rigorous documentation and strictly factual chronology were everything, and "climate merely in its human or ecological aspects" next to nothing. "In the long term," the Frenchman concluded in 1971, "the human consequences of climate seem to be slight, perhaps negligible."

### **Sinning Against Nature?**

Not so fast, said Fischer. In 1980, he proposed a history of the "conjunctions" of climate and culture. During the first conjunctive period, up until about 10,000 years ago, he wrote, "variations in climate determined the possibility for human culture to exist at all." Later, climate influenced the survival of complex civilizations. During the third epoch, from about A.D. 1000 to the present, man has been able to adjust, albeit painfully at times, to changes in climate.

These modern historians, along with a few climatologists and popular writers, have avoided the determinism of Ellsworth Huntington; but they have not shied away from large generalizations. Even Fischer, an exacting historian, has pointed out that during the climatic upheaval of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., which seems to have brought droughts to large parts of the world, many of the "world's great ethical and religious systems were created." He suggests that the teachings of Confucius in China, Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Iran, and the Jewish prophet Deutero-Isaiah were all responses to the same problem of creating stable values in a world of disquieting social and climatic change.

No less single-minded, other researchers have debated the reasons for the disappearance of the advanced Indus society in northwestern India 5000 years ago, pitting the impact of Indo-European invasions against flooding in the Indus Valley and, dubiously, to a long period of drought. Analysts have variously tied the global distribution of political

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stability to temperature, and correlated the size of standing armies with the degree of north or south latitude. In 1970, a popular author, Robert Claiborne, went so far as to suggest that a climate shift in A.D. 1200, which led to the failure of the German herring fishing fleets, paved the way for the rise of Adolf Hitler seven centuries later.

And just as Ellsworth Huntington advanced a theory of climate with an explicitly ideological message earlier in the 20th century, so have others in more recent times. For example, Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya, an Indian political scientist, argues, much as Huntington did, that climatic handicaps account for the underdevelopment of the Third World. Western scholars, he claims, have suppressed the study of warm weather's negative impact on man, emphasizing racial superiority as the cause of the West's economic pre-eminence. But Bandyopadhyaya argues that the "neo-imperialist" West has a moral obligation to level the climatic playing field. His proposal: The United States and Western Europe should invest in research on "global climatic engineering" to find ways to artificially cool down the tropics.

Eccentric as Bandyopadhyaya's position may be, some climatologists warn that ideology subtly influences all scholarly research on climate and culture. "Even among the modern scientific community," observe British researchers M. J. Ingram, G. Farmer, and T. M. L. Wigley, "ideas about climate are inevitably influenced to some extent by current ideologies." They see the rising worldwide alarm about threats to the environment since the 1970s as the chief impetus to the growing debate over the relationship between changing climate and man's culture.

Just as 16th-century Germans viewed hailstorms as punishment by God for individual sins, many scientists (and laymen) today see man on the verge of self-destruction as a result of sins against Nature—the rapacious exploitation of natural resources, pollution, the development of harmful technologies. According to Ingram and his colleagues, the personal views of climatologists "undeniably condition differing interpretations of the often ambiguous evidence."

Even without such sentiments, serious scientists trying to penetrate the mysteries of climate past and present confront a frustrating task. Climate, it turns out, is the result of a vast array of thousands of interacting variables. Climatologists now often find themselves in the uncomfortable position of knowing more about climate every day, and seeming to understand less.

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## COPING WITH CHANGE

*by Steven Lagerfeld*

Ever since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Americans have been repeatedly alerted to tangible threats—dirty water, polluted air, toxic waste dumps, pesticides—to what is now called “the environment.” In recent years, environmentalists, federal officials, and scientists have shifted their attention to “invisible” threats, from airborne asbestos particles in schools to cancer-causing radon gas in the basements of suburban homes. And this autumn, after several summers of drought and record-breaking heat waves, American headline writers rediscovered two unseen phenomena miles above the surface of the Earth: the depletion of the protective ozone layer in the atmosphere and the rise of the “greenhouse effect.”

The thinning of the Earth's ozone shield, which screens out harmful ultraviolet light, has been discussed, off and on, since the 1970s. [See box, p. 124.] The hot 1988 summer and some strong rhetoric have focused far more attention recently on the greenhouse effect, which appears to be gradually making the planet grow warmer.

At an international conference on “The Changing Atmosphere” sponsored by the Canadian government in Toronto last June, some 300 reputable scientists and government officials warned that “Humanity is conducting an uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war.” A “greenhouse doomsday scenario” by author Jeremy Rifkin conjures up images of the Netherlands disappearing under the waves like a latter-day Atlantis, Bangladesh swept by floods claiming millions of lives, and the Mississippi River transformed into a “vast earthen plain”—while Manhattan's West Side Drive is lined with palm trees.

Exaggerations aside, there is a growing consensus among climatologists and other researchers that both the greenhouse effect and ozone depletion are not simply alarmist fantasies.

Last June, James E. Hansen, a senior physicist at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), found himself on the network television news when, noting that the mean global temperature has increased by one degree Fahrenheit during the last century, he told a congressional committee that “the greenhouse effect has been detected and is changing our climate now.” On Capitol Hill, Senators Timothy E. Wirth (D.-Colo.) and Robert T. Stafford (R.-Vt.) have each introduced legislation calling for improved energy conservation, more research, and tighter environmental regulation to combat the greenhouse effect.

Scientists are not totally certain that the greenhouse effect is the

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sole cause of the warming. The hot summers of the recent past could well be, at least in part, the result of natural climatic fluctuations. "Climate is a complicated thing," notes Roger Revelle of the University of California, "and the changes seen so far may be due to some other cause we don't yet understand." Indeed, even the rising temperatures of the past century were punctuated by an unexplained cool period between 1945 and 1975, when some scientists began to worry about the eventual onset of a new Ice Age.

Hubert H. Lamb, a leading British climatologist, is also wary. While the greenhouse effect is real, Lamb believes, the long-term global warming may also have natural causes. Even scientists, he cautions, follow "fashions." A particular theory "catches on and gains a wide following, and while that situation reigns, most [researchers] aim their efforts at following the logic of the theory and its applications, and tend to be oblivious to things that do not quite fit."

### Bubbles in the Ice

Nevertheless, *most* scientists now agree that the greenhouse effect will warm the Earth during the decades ahead. Sometime between the year 2025 and 2050, average global temperatures could be as little as three degrees Fahrenheit above current levels, or as much as nine degrees higher—unless nature intervenes and suddenly cools the planet. Some of this change we may be able to avert; some of it we will have to adapt to.

The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon. The Earth's atmosphere, consisting chiefly of nitrogen and oxygen, but including many other gases, is almost transparent to sunlight. The Earth's surface reflects some of the sunshine, but much of it is absorbed, only to be emitted later as infrared radiation. That is where the greenhouse effect comes in. While most sunlight easily passes through the atmosphere on its way to the planet's surface, some of the outbound radiating infrared is trapped by gases in the lower atmosphere before it can escape into space. These "greenhouse gases," chiefly water vapor and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), then warm up, heating the Earth's atmosphere.

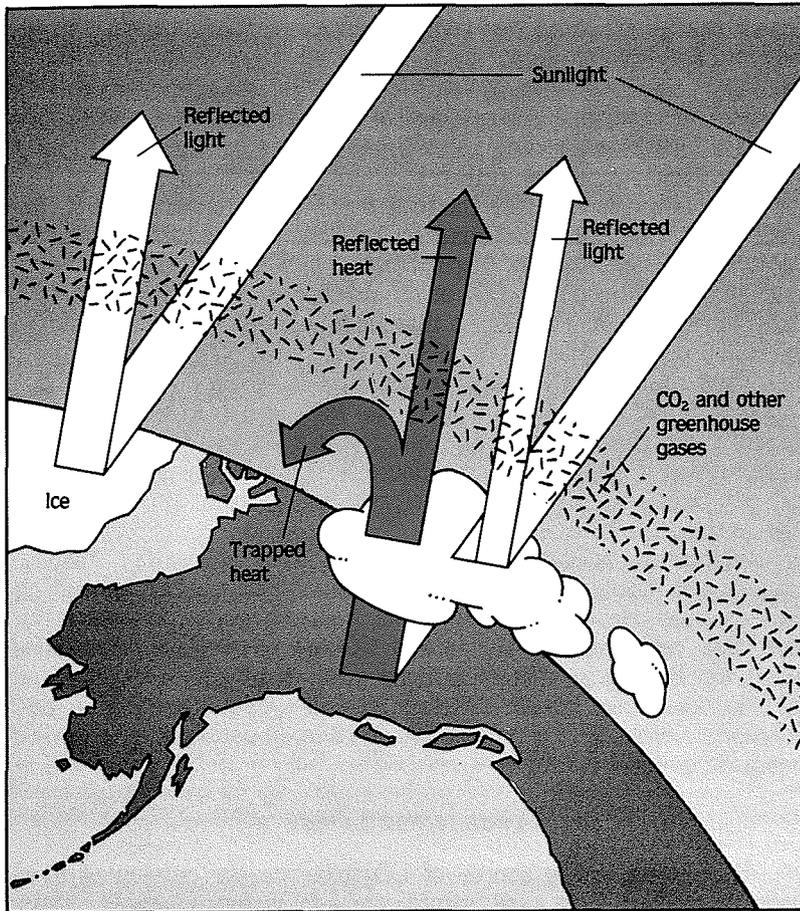
The greenhouse gases occur naturally; by regulating temperature, precipitation, and soil moisture, they make life on Earth possible. A paucity of CO<sub>2</sub> leaves Mars frigid and dry, while an overabundance of it makes Venus a furnace.

Carbon dioxide is also the raw material of photosynthesis in plants. Trees, shrubs, grasses, and other plants return some of the CO<sub>2</sub> they absorb to the atmosphere through respiration, but they store vast quantities (in the form of carbohydrates) in their cells. Only after the plants die and decay or are burned is that carbon transformed into CO<sub>2</sub>. The

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## THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT



The Earth's atmosphere functions much like a giant greenhouse, admitting sunlight from outer space, but preventing heat from escaping. About 50 percent of all incoming sunlight penetrates to the Earth's surface. As this simplified diagram suggests, clouds reflect (and absorb) much sunlight; so do haze and dust in the air. The Earth's surface, especially where it is covered by snow and ice, also reflects some light. The remaining sunlight is absorbed by the land and oceans. As the Earth warms, it emits heat in the form of invisible infrared radiation. About 15 percent of this heat ultimately escapes from the atmosphere. The rest is "trapped" by a layer of clouds, water vapor, carbon dioxide, and various other "greenhouse gases" that extends from ground level up to 10 miles above the planet's surface—thus providing the warmth that supports, but at higher levels could disrupt, life on Earth.

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emitted carbon is continuously reabsorbed by the Earth's "sinks"—the oceans and the "biomass" (all plant and animal matter). But carbon dioxide has been building up in the atmosphere faster than it can be reabsorbed by these "sinks."

Only in relatively recent times have scientists gained the ability to measure the gases that are responsible for the greenhouse effect.

In 1980, by examining air bubbles trapped in the glacial ice of Greenland and Antarctica, researchers discovered that CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere before the Industrial Revolution (circa 1750) was about 280 parts per million (ppm). In 1958, as part of the International Geophysical Year, scientists began the first systematic readings of current levels of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> at an observatory atop Mauna Loa, an 11,000-foot peak in Hawaii. At that time, the level had increased to about 315 ppm. By the end of 1986, it had risen to 345 ppm.

Thus, the Earth's atmosphere now contains about 25 percent more CO<sub>2</sub> than it did at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and 10 percent more than it did a mere quarter of a century ago. Today, the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is increasing by about 0.4 percent per year. That is fast enough to produce a doubling of the preindustrial level within 35 to 60 years.

Why is this buildup occurring? During the 19th century, loggers, farmers, and ranchers cleared vast tracts of virgin forest throughout the United States, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Eastern Europe, thus releasing vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. Since World War II, logging (of teak, mahogany, and other tropical woods) and land clearance have largely shifted to Africa, South America, and Asia. This source probably accounts for about 10 to 20 percent of the world's manmade emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Winners and Losers

The largest single source of CO<sub>2</sub> today is the burning of fossil fuels—coal, petroleum, and natural gas—in factories, power plants, home furnaces, and automobile engines. Between 1950 and 1979, worldwide fossil fuel use quadrupled. Higher oil prices and greater fuel efficiency in industry and autos have since slowed the rate of increase. But, this change has been accompanied by a shift to coal, which produces far more CO<sub>2</sub> than either oil or natural gas.

Carbon dioxide is not the only greenhouse gas. Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) are naturally occurring substances that also have "greenhouse" properties, as do the manmade chlorofluorocarbons that have been implicated in the destruction of the ozone layer. As a result of rapid population growth, increasing affluence, and industrial expansion, they have been increasing even more rapidly than CO<sub>2</sub>.

Nitrous oxide rises into the atmosphere from automobile exhausts, factory smokestacks, and the decomposition of the chemical fertilizers



Amid last summer's heat waves, "Washington" cartoonist Mark Alan Stamaty poked fun at attitudes toward the "greenhouse effect."

that the world's farmers are using in ever-increasing amounts.

As for methane, cows are among the chief culprits. Beef and dairy cattle (along with other ruminant animals) release the gas from their digestive tracts. The global cattle population has surged during the past century, partly to satisfy the appetites of affluent Americans and Europeans for steaks and hamburgers. Methane is also produced by bacteria in the world's swamps (thus, the term "swamp gas") and the rice paddies of Asia, which have been expanded dramatically since World War II to feed growing populations. Termites, especially numerous in the savannahs and forests of Africa, where they feed on grass and felled trees, emit the gas from their digestive tracts.

Together, the buildup of nitrous oxide, methane, and other "trace gases" makes a major contribution to the greenhouse effect. "These are the little guys," observed Stephen Schneider, of the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research. "But they nickel and dime you to the point where they add up to 50 percent of the problem."

The ill effects of an eroded ozone layer are fairly narrow and easy to predict—an increase in the incidence of skin cancer, crop damage. But the consequences of a strong greenhouse effect are less certain. Climatologists use computerized "general circulation models" to predict how and where the world's climate will change in a greenhouse atmosphere.\* The models have serious limitations: Scientists do not yet know

\*The federal government now spends about \$195 million annually on climate-related research under the nine-year-old National Climate Program. A variety of federal agencies are involved, including the departments of Agriculture, Energy, and Commerce, and the National Science Foundation. The leading U.S. researchers in the field are concentrated at about 10 universities, from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, to Florida State University, Tallahassee.

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exactly how temperature, winds, precipitation, and other elements of climate interact and alter one another.

Even so, climatologists seem to agree on the *outlines* of change in a “greenhouse world.” They believe that the tropics will warm slightly, but land surfaces in the high latitudes in both hemispheres, especially the Northern Hemisphere, will heat up considerably more. A warmer atmosphere would hold more water, resulting in greater rainfall overall—although some regions would be drier.

But there is very little agreement among the five or six major climate modeling teams in the United States and Western Europe on how *specific* regions might be affected, especially by changes in rainfall. One thing is clear: around the world, there would be winners and losers.

### A Boon to Farmers?

For example, some scientists predict that the midlatitudes of the Northern Hemisphere continents (the Great Plains in the United States, Central Europe, parts of the Soviet Union) are likely to become hotter and much more drought-prone than they are today. Others disagree. They add that the Sahara and other dry regions could get *more* rainfall. Changes in the circulation of monsoons might augment the annual rains in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, helping to avert the periodic droughts and famines that have cost thousands of lives in these populous lands. On the other hand, the sometimes catastrophic annual monsoon floods in Bangladesh could become more dangerous.

One much-publicized doomsday vision raises the specter of huge chunks of the Antarctic ice sheet breaking off and melting to engulf the world’s coastal cities. That is highly unlikely. Scientists now know that Antarctica was largely unaffected by rapid global warmings in the distant past. But some increase in sea levels is quite possible, due to “thermal expansion” of water molecules as the oceans’ waters warm. Already about five inches higher than they were a century ago, the oceans could rise by an additional five to 15 inches within the next four decades, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Bangladesh and other low-lying countries could lose valuable coastal croplands and suffer much greater damage from storms and hurricanes. Throughout the world, beaches, marshes, and coastal farmland would be endangered. Just a one-foot rise in sea level would wash away most recreational beaches in the United States and destroy large portions of the coastal wetlands where many birds and fish breed.

In many places on Earth, even minor changes in temperature, rainfall, and water levels of streams and rivers could wipe out innumerable small plant and animal species that have adapted to very narrow local ecological “niches.” A lower water level in one river, or increased flooding in another, might wipe out isolated species of birds or fish.

The rising level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere could have one important

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positive result. Biologists have long known that bigger doses of CO<sub>2</sub> speed up plant photosynthesis and reduce water consumption. (Indeed, some agronomists maintain that increases in CO<sub>2</sub> in the air helped western U.S. wheat farmers achieve their remarkable tripling of crop yields between 1920 and 1980.) Thus, in a "greenhouse world" of the future, there might be some overall increase in farm productivity. But the most important result might be the expansion of farming in areas of the world, notably Africa's Sahel region, where lack of rainfall now limits crop production—assuming, of course, that other unforeseen climatic changes do not cancel the benefits.

These predictions are based just on the *warming* due to the greenhouse effect. Other features of the global climate may also be affected—for better or worse. The amount of sunshine reaching field crops may vary because of changing cloudiness. Winds and humidity may also shift. As always, the complex interaction of such fluctuations makes it difficult to predict exactly how the world's overall climate may be transformed. As physicist S. Fred Singer and others have noted, for example, heavier cloud cover might *cool* the globe, counteracting some of the greenhouse "warming" effect.

Most scientists agree that a worldwide temperature increase of at least three degrees Fahrenheit during the next few decades seems inevitable. But they also agree that human beings can do much to slow the rate of increase, to prevent even more severe temperature increases, and to adapt to the climatic changes that we cannot stop.

### Hangin' Together

Many scientists and politicians favor international efforts to restrain emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. (No one is quite sure what to do about the methane emitted by cows and some of the other greenhouse gases.) But effective agreements will be hard to produce. Today's global efforts to control ozone depletion, a threat with much clearer causes and effects, reveal some of the pitfalls.

In September 1987, after two years of difficult negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), representatives of 24 nations and the European Economic Community, meeting in Montreal, signed an agreement to cut production and consumption of certain chlorofluorocarbons by 50 percent by 1998. But, despite all the cheering that greeted the agreement, it was really only, as David D. Doniger of the Natural Resources Defense Council recently put it, "a major half-step forward."

The pact's many compromises foreshadow the difficulties that will hamper any international effort to deal with the greenhouse effect. Only the industrialized nations are required to reduce production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons; the world's poorer nations are permitted to increase output until 1999; and the Soviet Union is allowed a two-

### THE EARTH'S ERODED SHIELD

Ordinary Americans probably first heard about the ozone layer some 20 years ago. During the late 1960s and early '70s, scientists and environmentalists warned that emissions from the supersonic transport (SST) favored by President Richard M. Nixon would gradually destroy ozone in the upper atmosphere. Such fears, along with high cost estimates, led Congress to kill the SST in 1971.

Three years later, in *Science*, chemists Mario Molina and F. Sherwood Rowland discussed another possible threat: chlorofluorocarbons, manmade chemicals then used chiefly as propellants in aerosol cans. In the upper atmosphere, they suggested, chlorofluorocarbons decompose, liberating chlorine molecules that then destroy ozone. Official reaction was swift. In 1977, the United States joined several other nations in banning the use of chlorofluorocarbons in aerosols—"the first time," note Stephen H. Schneider and Starley L. Thompson, "a substance suspected of causing global harm had been regulated before the effects had been demonstrated."

Meanwhile, however, chlorofluorocarbons grew into a \$750 million industry in the United States alone. They were used increasingly as refrigerants, as propellants in making styrofoam, and as industrial solvents. Another class of chemicals with similar effects, the halons, were used in fire extinguishers. And it was discovered that methane and other trace gases also destroy ozone.



Why worry about the ozone layer? About 21 percent of the Earth's atmosphere is composed of oxygen, mostly in the two-atom molecule,  $O_2$ , but a tiny fraction exists as ozone,  $O_3$ . When it envelops major cities, ozone is considered a pollutant; in the frigid stratosphere (six to 30 miles above the Earth), it screens out the most harmful portions of the sun's ultraviolet rays. When it is absorbed by DNA, ultraviolet light can inhibit the human immune system and cause skin cancer and cataracts; it also appears to retard plant growth and reduce crop yields.

After chlorofluorocarbons in aerosol cans were banned in 1977, public concern about the ozone layer dissipated. Then, in 1985, a team of scientists led by Joseph Farman of the British Antarctic Survey discovered a massive "hole" in the ozone layer—a 40 percent drop since 1979 in the atmospheric concentration of ozone over the frozen continent. Since then, new studies have documented a less drastic, but worldwide erosion of the ozone layer.

"We have strong evidence that change in the ozone is wholly or in large part due to manmade chlorine," declared Robert Watson of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration last March. There are other possibilities: It could be that the past decade's cyclical decline in solar activity (indicated by sunspots), which has curtailed the production of fresh ozone in the stratosphere, is partly responsible. But the ozone loss is greater than can be explained by temporarily reduced solar activity. Day by day, the evidence is growing that Watson is correct; man is the villain.

thirds increase before it must begin cutting back.

Evaluating the agreement recently, the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment estimated that it might cut chlorofluorocarbon emissions by 45 percent at best—but could also permit an *increase* of 20 percent. In part because chlorofluorocarbons remain in the atmosphere for about 100 years, even a 45 percent reduction of emissions, Doniger observes, “will only reduce the *acceleration* of [ozone] depletion.”

Meanwhile, the scientific studies on which the 1987 pact was based have become outdated. Just a day after the U.S. Senate approved the agreement, a new study indicated that the planet’s ozone shield has eroded by 1.7 to 3 percent since 1970—even more rapidly than had been predicted. Last September, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency called for a worldwide ban on production of chlorofluorocarbons.

Dealing with the greenhouse effect is going to pose a considerably greater political and financial challenge. The causes are much more numerous, and many are not under man’s control; the costs of various proposed remedies could be much higher; and the benefits (relief from unfavorable shifts in climate) will very likely be unequally distributed among the world’s regions.

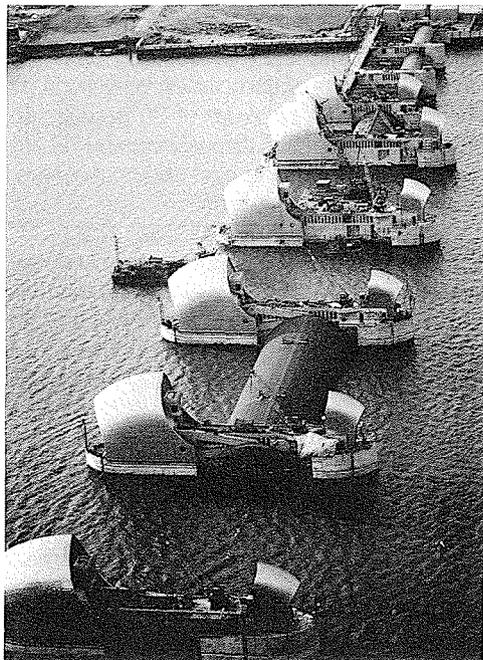
### Nuclear Power Revisited

The United States and the Soviet Union now produce nearly half of the world’s CO<sub>2</sub>. Yet, much of the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the decades ahead will be produced by industrializing Third World nations, such as South Korea and Brazil. “How do you get rapidly developing, hand-to-mouth nations to give up their first taste of economic security in the name of some vague and distant scare scenario?” *The New Republic* asked recently. “Environmentalism is a luxury they can’t afford.” Mainland China, for example, with its immense population and relative poverty, is not likely to slow the exploitation of its vast coal reserves unless scientists can point with near certainty to dire consequences for China’s farmers. They cannot. In fact, China now plans to virtually double its burning of coal by the year 2000.

Similarly, as steel, autos, and other energy-intensive industries continue to shift production to the Third World, these poorer nations are not likely to take kindly to the suggestion that they cut back on the use of coal and oil—unless the West somehow finds a way to compensate them for the sacrifice of economic opportunity.\*

Neither is the West eager to reduce its standard of living to combat a vaguely perceived global threat. Coal use in the United States and

\*A creative experiment by Conservation International, a private organization, suggests one way this might be done: so-called debt-for-nature swaps. Using private contributions, the Washington-based group bought up (at a discount) \$650,000 worth of Bolivia’s international debt, then turned it over to the Bolivians. In return, the Bolivian government pledged to limit development of four million acres of Amazon lands, thus preserving a valuable CO<sub>2</sub> “sink.” Yet, it remains to be seen whether the leaders of Bolivia and other Third World nations will be able to exert strict control over the development of such remote areas.



*Adapting to climate: London's \$765 million Thames Barrier, a pivoting dam, was completed in 1982. The slight rise in sea levels caused by the planet's warming during the 20th century, along with certain geological anomalies, have left the city vulnerable to flooding from once-a-century North Sea "storm surges."*

Western Europe is likely to grow well into the next century. The chief "alternative" energy sources—wind and solar power, biomass conversion—are a long way from being practical (or economical) enough to make a difference. Synthetic fuels, the great energy panacea of the 1970s, are even "dirtier" than coal. The only major energy source that does not create CO<sub>2</sub> is nuclear power, but it faces vehement political opposition in the United States and much of Western Europe. Attitudes toward the atom may be changing. Senator Timothy Wirth's pending "greenhouse" bill includes \$500 million for research into "safe" forms of nuclear power. America, said the Colorado Democrat, must get over its case of "nuclear measles."\*

Stronger efforts to conserve energy would help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions somewhat. According to the World Resources Institute, the latest electrical appliances, light bulbs, and building designs are twice as energy-efficient as older versions. Greater fuel economy in automobiles is also possible. The average new car in the United States now gets 25

\*Since the Three Mile Island reactor accident in 1979, American utility companies have ordered no new nuclear power plants, and have canceled earlier plans for 65 reactors. Even so, 46 new nuclear reactors have gone into operation since Three Mile Island, serving such major cities as Houston, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. Today, 109 reactors across the United States supply 18 percent of the nation's electricity. Nuclear power generates 70 percent of all electricity in France, 50 percent in Sweden, and 44 percent in Taiwan.

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miles per gallon, up from only 13 in 1973, but still only half of what some existing cars achieve. Even so, as S. Fred Singer notes, more conservation "can only nibble" at the CO<sub>2</sub> problem.

A few scientists are beginning to think about exotic schemes to combat climatic change. They range from covering the world's oceans with white styrofoam chips to reflect vast amounts of sunlight back into space, to launching huge solar power stations into orbit around the planet, to lobbing frozen "bullets" of manmade ozone into the atmosphere. As Princeton physicist Thomas H. Stix concedes, however, such ventures remain "mighty speculative."

A simpler way to slow the buildup of CO<sub>2</sub> is simply to plant more trees. A vast forest of fast-growing sycamores or poplars—covering approximately 1.2 million square miles, roughly twice the area of Alaska—might contain enough trees to absorb all of the excess CO<sub>2</sub> that man is producing today (about three billion tons annually). But even such a dramatic effort would only postpone the day of reckoning. When trees reach maturity, after about 40 years, they stop absorbing CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Living in the Greenhouse

Cutting down and replanting such vast forests would present new problems. Burn the wood as fuel, and you liberate the carbon within it (creating CO<sub>2</sub>); sell it as lumber and you threaten the lumber industry and the woodlands that it controls.

Whatever mankind does, it now seems inevitable to most scientists that the greenhouse effect will change the world's climate somewhat—more heat waves and droughts in some areas, heavier rains and milder temperatures in others. In some locales, the shifts may be extreme. But, overall, a three-degree increase in temperatures is well within man's ability to cope. We have, after all, barely noticed the one-degree warming during the past century. And, during the so-called Little Ice Age of 1400–1850, when average annual temperatures dropped by about two degrees below today's levels, the far less sophisticated societies of Europe suffered only scattered disruptions. "If we have 20 or 50 years to plan," observes Paul Portney, a researcher at Resources for the Future, "we can take steps to mitigate the adverse effects."

Levees can be erected to contain rising seas and rivers; if need be, people and industries can gradually move, as they always have, to follow the weather.

Surprisingly, the world's farmers may find it relatively easy to deal with change. They have always been pawns of the weather, and so have learned to respond quickly to year-to-year changes in temperature and rainfall. In the past, agricultural scientists and farmers have overcome severe local handicaps caused by climate. Since the 1920s, for example, plant breeders have helped American farmers expand the range of hard red winter wheat from Kansas and Oklahoma, south to Texas and as far

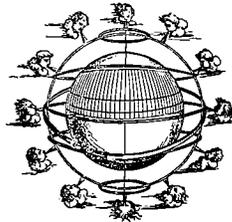
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north as the Canadian prairies. This kind of wheat now grows as well in Sidney, Montana, as it does in Sidney, Nebraska, although the Montana town's growing season is 10 days shorter, rainfall is 20 percent less, and annual temperatures are more than seven degrees cooler. Unlike traditional spring wheat, winter wheat is planted in autumn, quickly establishes a root system, and then lies dormant under the winter snows. It begins to grow again as the soil warms in spring, normally flowers and sets seed after the spring frosts, and is harvested before the extreme heat and drought of summer.

Farmers can shift to improved, drought-resistant plant varieties or to entirely new crops. They can employ new water-conserving tillage techniques, and irrigate more acres only at critical stages of plant growth rather than fewer acres all the time, as they do now. In short, farmers in the United States and elsewhere ought to have little trouble feeding the world in a moderately warmer climate.

This relatively optimistic view reflects the assessments of many specialists who have studied the ways in which farmers and agronomists have responded to normal weather fluctuations—drought, extremely cold winters, heavy rainfall. Scientists are by no means unanimous in rejecting more sombre scenarios. That mankind has managed to adapt to climate as it has changed in the past, however, seems to justify a fair degree of confidence in our ability to cope with a moderate warming of the globe during our lifetime.

But even the optimists warn that if the peoples of the world do not begin to restrain their output of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases, global temperatures could *eventually* climb by nine degrees, and by much more in some places. That, they say, would take us far beyond the bounds of any climatic change that mankind has experienced in its short history, and possibly beyond our ability to cope.



## BACKGROUND BOOKS

### CLIMATE

Why did dinosaurs suddenly disappear, along with dozens of plants and other animal species, in what appears to have been a mass extinction some 65 million years ago?

That question has long fascinated schoolchildren and scientists alike. In the popular imagination, the answer always seemed obvious: A colder climate did in the dinosaurs. To scientists, as Stephen H. Schneider and Randi Londer report in **The Coevolution of Climate and Life** (Sierra Club, 1984), the answer is not nearly so clear.

Some researchers have suggested that dinosaurs were sterilized when the Earth suddenly warmed due to an early "greenhouse effect." Others have proposed that they were destroyed by a supernova exploding in outer space.

Recently, physicist Luis Alvarez and his son Walter, a geologist, have found evidence that the planet was struck by a huge asteroid at about the time of the dinosaurs' extinction. If so, it may have thrown up a massive cloud of dust, shrouding the Earth against sunlight and leading to a catastrophic cooling. On the other hand, the Earth may have *warmed*—or it may have gone dark, or it may have temporarily lost part of its protective ozone layer. The Alvarazes are not sure. Many scientists are intrigued by the asteroid theory; but others reject out of hand the whole notion of such a catastrophic extinction.

Such are the difficulties of the climatologist; and Schneider, himself a climatologist, and science writer Londer are by far the best guides to the work of these scientists. Their book becomes, in effect, an intriguing essay on how much is still unknown.

Planet Earth, now about 4.6 billion years old, appears to have been a hot, dry, generally inhospitable place during most of its history. During the seven rel-

atively brief Glacial Epochs, each, on average, a mere 50 million years long, Planet Earth has been, in general, *cold* and inhospitable.

If those 4.6 billion years were compressed into 46 years, then the dinosaurs vanished just over six months ago, humanity emerged about seven days ago, and the Industrial Age is about two minutes old. The last Ice Age began about a week ago. From this perspective, as Britain's Sir Crispin Tickell notes in **Climatic Change and World Affairs** (Univ. Press of America, 1986), "we live in a tiny, damp, curved space at a pleasantly warm moment."

In modern times, at least, scientists have concentrated most of their efforts on simply trying to calculate what past climates were like—with mixed success. And readers in search of cosmic speculations about the influence of climate on evolution and human existence are likely to be disappointed.

As Ronald Pearson, a University of Liverpool zoologist, shows in **Climate and Evolution** (Academic Press, 1978), most researchers fasten on discrete cases, such as documenting the adaptation of *Cepaea nemoralis* (a species of snail) to different environments by changing its coloration.

Generally, it seems, every bit of new evidence about, say, the extinction of the woolly mammoth toward the end of the Quaternary Succession (the period beginning 2.5 million years ago and ending 10,000 years ago) spawns a new theory without necessarily eliminating several competing older ones.

Nevertheless, the discussion is often fascinating. The woolly mammoth was just one of scores of species of "mega-fauna"—sabre-toothed tigers, giant baboons and pigs, the 20-foot tall North American sloth, and beavers as large as bears—that perished in a surprisingly

short period of time beginning about 60,000 years ago. Deepening the mystery is the fact that the oversized mammals survived a whole series of Ice Ages, only to die off as the world's climate was again warming and stabilizing.

In conference papers, learned articles, and books such as **Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause** (Yale, 1967), edited by P. S. Martin and H. E. Wright, Jr., scientists have offered several new explanations.

For his part, paleontologist John Guilday suggested that the Earth's post-Ice Age warming expanded southern deserts and northern forests, squeezing many animal species into diminishing grasslands. The smaller mammals, requiring less food, were better suited to survival in the new environment; only those megafauna that experienced evolutionary "dwarfing" (e.g., the bison) were able to survive.

But there were objections to this theory. For example, it was known that many of the later extinct species had been able to extend their range *beyond* the retreating grasslands.

Other theories were proposed. Diseases bred among animal species isolated by glaciers during the Ice Age may have been unleashed as the planet warmed; a sudden warming could have turned vast areas of the world into deadly bogs that entrapped large mammals; or perhaps "racial senility" rendered entire species unable to adapt to climatic change. Finally, during the late 1960s, some scientists, pointing to fossil evidence that prehistoric man had slaughtered thousands of animals at a time in mass hunts, argued that humans were largely responsible for the relatively swift extinctions.

Today, as Windsor Chorlton notes in his popular account, **Ice Ages** (Time-Life Books, 1983), the "hunter" theory has few proponents. Scientists now gen-

erally agree that man may have speeded the demise of the megafauna, but that a changing climate and a variety of other factors (e.g., changing sea levels) appear to have been the chief causes. *How* climate may have helped kill the megafauna, however, remains a matter of intense debate.

The same caution and strict attention to case studies that characterize current research on climate's influence on evolution carry over to most serious investigations of its impact on human history.

The classic work on climatology is Hubert H. Lamb's two-volume **Climate Present, Past and Future** (Methuen, 1977). In his more recent **Weather, Climate and Human Affairs** (Routledge, 1988), Lamb chides historians for ignoring the effects of climate, and allows himself some passing observations about the subtlety of climate's influence. He notes, for example, that architecture seems to be affected by changes in climate. The abnormally dry weather of the 1930s and '40s encouraged the building of flat-roofed houses in England—a fashion, Lamb adds, that the present owners of these leaky-roofed dwellings no doubt regret.

As Theodore K. Rabb writes in **Climate and History: Studies in Interdisciplinary History** (Princeton, 1981), however, historians have not yet developed techniques to gauge climate's effects on human history with any accuracy—except, perhaps, in a few localized cases where climate changed rapidly.

**Climate and History: Studies in Past Climates and their Impact on Man** (Cambridge, 1985), edited by T. M. L. Wigley, M. J. Ingram, and G. Farmer, provides a scholarly overview of work in the field. Essays include "Climate and Popular Unrest in Late Medieval Castile," "The Economics of Extinction in Norse Greenland," and "The Historical Climatology of Africa."

Historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's **Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A**

**History of Climate Since the Year 1000** (Doubleday, 1971), despite its grand title, is chiefly of interest to scholars exploring methodologies for reconstructing past climates.

**The Last Great Subsistence Crisis in the Western World** (Johns Hopkins, 1977), by John D. Post, is one historian's ambitious attempt to trace the effects of a single climatic drama: the eruption in 1815 of Indonesia's Mount Tambora, whose ash and gases shut off sunlight and cooled the Northern Hemisphere. The result: crop failures and bread riots throughout Europe. Among the other consequences, according to Post, were a surge of emigration to the New World—and an outbreak of anti-Semitism in southern Germany. Ultimately, he says, "it is not difficult to believe that [climate-induced] economic crisis and social unrest fused with political conservatism to foreclose the emerging liberal ideas of 1815."

Scholars seem to agree that studies of such isolated episodes and their effects are relatively easy work. The greater hazards of more wide-ranging, speculative history are illustrated by the search of climatologists Reid A. Bryson and Thomas J. Murray for past **Climates of Hunger** (Univ. of Wis., 1977). Apparently caught up in a mid-1970s anxiety about the slow onset of a new Ice Age, to which they attributed severe droughts in the Sahel region of Africa, the authors consulted history for precedents. They argued that Mycenae and several other ancient societies had perished because of

droughts—produced chiefly by global cooling, exacerbated by the practices of farmers and herders.

They warned of a possible repetition in the future: "Our conclusion is that the net effect of man's burning of fossil fuels, his slash-and-burn agriculture, and his other activities that produce both carbon dioxide and dust, is to *reduce* temperatures" (emphasis added).

Today, of course, most scientists take a contrary view. Their findings and recommendations pour forth in such publications as **Developing Policies for Responding to Climatic Change** (World Meteorological Organization, 1988); **A Matter of Degrees: The Potential for Controlling the Greenhouse Effect** (World Resources Institute, 1987), by Irving M. Mintzer; and **Present State of Knowledge of the Upper Atmosphere 1988: An Assessment Report** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1988). For the layman, the proceedings of various congressional hearings, such as **The National Climate Program Act and Global Climate Change** (Government Printing Office, 1988), provide some of the most accessible guides to current research and prognostications.

The study of climate is still in its youth. It lacks a grand theory. Without much fanfare, scores of scientists and other researchers, in America and abroad, are trying to devise more rigorous approaches to the investigation of the globe's changing climate and its impact on man.

# CURRENT BOOKS

## SCHOLARS' CHOICE

*Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows and staff of the Wilson Center*

**REMBRANDT'S  
ENTERPRISE:  
The Studio and  
the Market**  
by Svetlana Alpers  
Univ. of Chicago, 1988  
160 pp. \$29.95

Having grown up in the era of moderately priced cigars, I know the appeal for the common puffer of the label "Dutch Masters" as a would-be synonym for value. The name in fact was a generalization of that byword for supreme value (and supreme mastery), "a Rembrandt"; and a Rembrandt appropriately presided over the open box. I note that a recent Manhattan phone book lists a Rembrandt Films, a Rembrandt Lamps, a Rem-

brandt Lithographs, a Rembrandt Travel Service, a Rembrandt Sales Company, both a Rembrandt Graphics and a Rembrandt Graphic Arts, and a Rembrandt's Mother, Inc. The last sounds suspiciously like a case of heroic accretion, illustrating the power of the name and the style to ingest even so formidable a cultural icon as Mrs. Whistler.

In *Rembrandt's Enterprise*, Svetlana Alpers, an art historian at the University of California, Berkeley, is concerned both with the conscious creation of value in art objects and with heroism. Her point of departure is the parenthesis hedging Rembrandt in *The Art of Describing* (1983), her transforming account of Dutch art in the 17th century. There she acknowledged Rembrandt (1606–69) to be an exception, an outsider with respect to contemporary Dutch painting and its strategies of presenting the physical world with scrupulous objectivity.

It is a curious fact that, for a time, the Leiden-born painter dominated the art world of Amsterdam by going his own way. During his best years, he received the most desirable commissions from Amsterdam's prestigious professional guilds (e.g., *The Anatomy Lesson of Professor Nicolaes Tulp*) and its most prosperous burghers. It also appears that this same independence led to declining popularity toward the end of his career, particularly when his disdain for fashionable notions of "finish" put him out of favor with Dutch art consumers. Now Alpers both qualifies and explains the nature of Rembrandt's exceptionalism. She demonstrates Rembrandt's intricate professional involvements with the art world of his day by exploring certain critical junctures: the surface of the canvas, the performance of the model, the practice of the studio, and the exchange of the marketplace. These junctures provide the focus for the four major sections of the book, and they put Rembrandt back in the picture.

But Alpers does even more than that. In a society much given to cutting its cultural heroes down to size—by exposing their feet of clay, as in recent accounts of Hemingway, Picasso, and Rembrandt himself, or by publishing their debts to the ruck of conventional art and thought—Alpers pushes against the tide. That is, she manages to rescue Rembrandt from mere biography and context by redefining his heroism and originality in the

terms that threaten them.

Her Rembrandt is a hero, seen “not outside, but inside his culture,” because he bent the contemporary social, intellectual, and economic conditions of art production to his imperious, creative will. And biographically he thrust the creative self into the foreground of art, imposing that presence as the locus of value in the studio and in the marketplace. In this, Alpers urges, he is an “originary” genius, changing the future and throwing off avatars. The 19th-century myth of Rembrandt, which is here revalorized, is also explained as a delayed but implicit Rembrandt production. That label would equally suit the facts of life in the 20th-century art world, where art is art when it is not just a *Night Watch* or a *Night Square* but a Rembrandt or a de Kooning.



The lynchpin of Alpers' argument is found in the book's third section, “A Master in the Studio.” Here Alpers aims at bringing into relation Rembrandt's essential individuality and isolation (to which his work bears witness) and his large and gregarious studio operation. Alpers serves up important findings on the “distinctive, even idiosyncratic” nature of Rembrandt's workshop practices. She also challenges the established methods of Renaissance art history, notably iconographic source study. Rather than proclaiming his sources visually in good Renaissance fashion, Rembrandt appears to have taken all from enacted life, specifically from models in a theatricalized studio. This “Protestant” reluctance to invoke and acknowledge authority makes the business of unearthing obscure analogies a feeble instrument for penetrating Rembrandt's meanings.

Though Alpers' text is full of such challenge and suggestion, her interpretations of particular paintings sometimes fail to clinch the argument. I am not convinced, for example, that in Rembrandt's *Lucretia* the fictivity of the scene (“a fiction of enactment”) is deliberately brought forward and presented for savoring. In the theater such appreciation is at the root of much of our pleasure, especially in comedy. But such foregrounding of Lucretia's performance as “performance” is not manifest to me in the painting. (The performance of the *painter* is a different matter.)

Elsewhere, however, Alpers stands on firmer ground. For example, she uses the painting called *The Jewish Bride* superbly to show how Rembrandt subverts the generic and contractual difference between costumed portraiture and studio narrative, so clear in other painters. Are the figures paying clients or paid models? There is no way to tell. By extension, Alpers raises the question whether Rembrandt's notorious gift for representing the sitter's “individuality” and “uniqueness” bespeaks something found in the model or imposed by the painter, as a further expression of the imperial self.

The last section, which presents Rembrandt as “not only a man of the studio but also a man of the market,” is perhaps the most venturesome in

its exploration of the intimate relations among the three driving imperatives of Rembrandt's enterprise: "Freedom, Art, and Money." The argument is far ranging and often brilliant. It suggests among other things how Rembrandt used his paintings to create credit, turning promises to deliver into a kind of circulating paper currency. It relates the look and manner of the paintings to the basis of payment: Rembrandt's choice of the freedom of the market over patronage converts into a rejection of both "finish" and labor time as standards of value. As a result, the artist came to be in charge not of price but of what should be thought of as valuable.

Alpers shows Rembrandt manipulating the market "to add honor to art" (that is, market worth); she shows him stripping away conventional or inherent values to monetarize art; and she shows how Rembrandt in proliferating himself, in the studio and in his own pictorial practice, threatened the authenticity that he had enhanced as a value. She ends where she begins, with *The Man with the Golden Helmet*, whose relation to Rembrandt's hand has recently been challenged. Nearly all the dimensions Alpers has identified in Rembrandt's enterprise—its worked materiality, the structure of contrasts, performative and generic ambiguities, the economics of avarice and extravagance—are there splendidly contained, so that its values, Alpers says, are "almost too good to be true." As such, it is the most convincing testimony to Rembrandt's heroic achievement, even if it is a Rembrandt painted by another hand.

—Martin Meisel '88

**THE PATRIOT GAME:**  
Canada and  
the Canadian  
Question Revisited  
by Peter Brimelow  
Hoover, 1987  
310 pp. \$26.95

Peter Brimelow, born in Britain, late of Canada, and now resident in New York, says he has "succeeded in becoming an alien in three national communities." In the wake of *The Patriot Game*, he will certainly be unwelcome among Canadian nationalists, whose most cherished tenets he vigorously attacks. Apparently, he will not miss their company. "Canadian Nationalists," as he puts it, "are not on the whole a very likable lot."

Brimelow's dim view of Canadian nationalism—the "patriot game" of the title—comes from his misgivings about the ends to which it is put. He believes that it serves to justify the power of a Canadian elite or "public" class, politicians and bureaucrats who have clung mainly to the Liberal Party of Canada, the party of former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, which has held office in Ottawa for 36 of the past 53 years. In the name of national unity, the nationalists have sought to cut English Canada loose from its British heritage, despite the fact that Canadians of British stock form the largest ethnic group in the country, and despite the key role Britain and British institutions have played in Canadian history. They have also tried to deny the obvious cultural identity between English-Canadians

and Americans. "All of Anglophone Canada is essentially part of a greater English-speaking North American nation," Brimelow says. And to this he adds that "Canada is a sectional variation within this super nation, just like the American South or Far West . . ."

Canadian nationalists, having done their best to minimize true English-Canadian culture (trying in effect to make English-Canadians feel guilty for such natural inclinations as wanting to honor the Queen), have, according to Brimelow, constructed a shallow, ersatz, pan-Canadian identity based on "multiculturalism," bilingualism, anti-Americanism and the heavy hand of the Canadian federal government in the country's economy. Each of these elements serves the interests of the nationalist public class.

Consider bilingualism. Few Canadians are, in fact, bilingual. Canada still consists largely of two cultural solitudes, one English-speaking and the other French. Given this reality, a small bilingual elite has entrenched itself by playing the role of mediator, especially in the federal civil service. But why do the nationalists foster anti-Americanism? Quite simply because opening the Canadian economy to that of the United States would diminish the role of the government, around which the public class clusters. (Accordingly, the Liberal Party has blocked ratification of the 1987-88 Canada-U.S. free trade agreement and promised to "tear it up" if the party wins the next election, which must be held no later than September 1989.)

For all their efforts, Brimelow concludes, the nationalists are doomed to failure. "Canada's fundamental contradictions cannot be resolved in the present Confederation." English Canada will eventually "recover from its post-Imperial hangover" and "assert its North American identity," by which Brimelow seems to mean its *American* cultural identity. Regional divisions among English-Canadians will further confound nationalist schemes, which tend to favor the rich and heavily populated provinces of Ontario and Quebec at the expense of the western provinces. And above all, Canadian nationalists will see their concept of a pan-Canadian identity fail most dramatically in modern, French-speaking Quebec: "The evolution of the province of Quebec into a Francophone nation-state is the unmistakable long-run message of Canadian history," Brimelow says.

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At the very least, Brimelow's book should dispel the notions that Canada has "solved" its linguistic problem, and that French-Canadians will now act like any other minority group in essentially English-speaking North America. But Brimelow goes too far. The establishment of an independent Quebec nation-state is not inevitable. Most Quebeckers still see nothing contradictory about being firmly *Québécois* and at the same time Canadian. A popular joke nicely catches the dual loyalties: "What Quebeckers want is a free and independent Quebec within a strong and united Canada."

As for English Canada, Brimelow skirts the question his analysis ultimately raises: Why bother with the maintenance of a separate country if its culture is nothing more than a regional variant of North American cul-

ture—again, meaning *American* culture? His description of the chimera of “multiculturalism” is devastating, his account of the erasing of English Canada’s British heritage is saddening, and his chronicle of the problems of bilingualism sobering. But he passes a bit too lightly over the notion that the true heritage of English Canada, however manipulated by the nationalists, is the establishment of a second English-speaking society in North America that is less individualistic, less violent, less competitive, more oriented toward community, and more reliant on government than is the exuberant United States. Many Canadians, nationalists or not, see these characteristics of their country as worth preserving, indeed, as being the reason for even having a country. The question facing Canadians in today’s world of competitive trading blocs is how to preserve their identity while at the same time creating a more open economic relationship with their rambunctious neighbor to the south.

—Joseph T. Jockel '88

**BENEATH THE  
AMERICAN  
RENAISSANCE:  
The Subversive  
Imagination in the  
Age of Emerson  
and Melville**

by David S. Reynolds  
Knopf, 1988  
625 pp. \$35

The decades of the 19th century when Poe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson flourished marked the arrival of an American literature that finally bore comparison with other national literatures. So extraordinary was the outpouring—during the 1850s alone *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, *Walden*, and *Leaves of Grass* appeared—that critics and historians have readily adopted F. O. Matthiessen’s term for

the era, the “American Renaissance.” No other period in American literary history has received anywhere near the same attention.

But no work since Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance* (1941) comes close to the length of David Reynolds’ study. Reynolds, director of Whitman studies at Rutgers University, Camden, offers his book as a model of what he calls “reconstructive criticism.” This approach, he explains, “calls upon the historical critic to reconstruct as completely as possible the socioliterary milieu of literary works through the exploration of a broad array of forgotten social and imaginative texts.”

Cleaving to his method, Reynolds makes available the results of his Herculean reading of long-ignored sermons, reform tracts, popular journals, and cheap novels, assigning their themes to categories such as “Conventional,” “Subversive,” and “Romantic Adventure,” and arranging the fictional characters who recur time and again under the stereotypes he finds to have prevailed. He proceeds topically, treating religious reform, sensationalism, sexuality, women’s issues, and popular humor. With each, he first discusses the popular literature so as to establish his categories; he

then turns to the major writers to show how they reflected them.

Not surprisingly, certain works, such as *The Scarlet Letter*, are visited over and over again, with the unfortunate result that this long book becomes, at last, too long a book. The excitement Reynolds generates with his discovery of neglected literary trends and his plot summaries of delightfully outrageous threepenny novels eventually pales and then fades into tedium as the exposition ticks back and forth between the categories of popular literature and their reappearance in the major works.

This is a pity, for Reynolds' knowledge of the popular genres is unmatched. It adds a vital dimension to works we thought we knew well. But his method is so insistent that, finally, whatever has been added to our reading of, say, *Moby Dick* is all but lost in the often petty details that pile up against it like sand blown by an unceasing simoon.

One cannot read *Beneath the American Renaissance* without taking a great deal of local information from it. Now that Reynolds has exposed them, the influence of popular sermon styles on Emerson, for example, or the effect of frontier humor styles on Melville become recognizable aspects of their work. And it is valuable to learn—for who other than Reynolds has read so many cheap novels for us?—how many stereotyped fictional cousins Hester Prynne, Ishmael, and Whitman's "I" had.

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But, even here, Reynolds' method does a disservice by indiscriminately insisting on too much. The unhappy Arthur Dimmesdale of *The Scarlet Letter* does bear some faint resemblance to the hypocritical clergymen of highly popular novels such as those of George Lippard, ministers who preach morality from the pulpit and practice seduction in the parlor. Reynolds labels this persistent character the "reverend rake." When the metronome sounds its inevitable tick, however, and poor Dimmesdale is required to exemplify the label in order to fulfill the method, one wants the music to stop. Dimmesdale, after all, had relations with but one parishioner, and if there were a seduction, as opposed to a mutual passion, then surely Hester, and not he, was the seducer.

If in one way Reynolds insists on too much, in another he sees too little. Although many of the stereotypes he locates in American popular literature were undoubtedly used and modified by the major writers, one cannot stop at popular literature in identifying their origin: The same stereotypes lie behind the characters of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Fielding as well.

Strikingly, with his unparalleled knowledge of the many neglected works of the period, Reynolds finds none that make a bid for a place on the shelf occupied by the recognized masterworks. In his epilogue, he notes that there are "a good number of unfamiliar writings that merit attention on their own," but in his comprehensive survey no such meritorious works emerge. Whatever else is reconstituted in Reynolds' book, the American canon of great literature remains intact.

—Larzer Ziff '87

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## NEW TITLES

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### *History*

**THE FOUNDER:  
Cecil Rhodes  
and the Enigma  
of Power**

by Robert I. Rotberg  
Oxford, 1988  
752 pp. \$35



The sixth of nine children of the Anglican vicar of Bishop's Stortford, Cecil Rhodes sailed in 1870 from England to Durban, Natal (South Africa). The 17-year-old boy was, according to Rotberg, "clear-headed, bright-eyed, enthusiastic," and characteristically confident of "his own resources." Thirty-two years later, on March 26, 1902, Rhodes died of heart failure in Cape Town. "So little done, so much to do," he murmured shortly before the end.

For someone who lived only 49 years, he had not done badly: A dominant figure in the international diamond industry, premier of the Cape Colony, founder of Rhodesia (and, through his will, the Rhodes Scholarships), Rhodes had made himself a man to be reckoned with. His actions, for good or ill, were always on a grand scale.

A scale almost matched by this biography. Drawing from all relevant archives and his personal knowledge of southern Africa, Rotberg, academic vice president of Tufts University, portrays Rhodes' ceaseless energy, his driving vision, his ruthlessness and political skill, his homosexuality, and his territorial megalomania. Rhodes' legacy to southern Africa was, as Rotberg shows, complex and primarily negative. He undid the Cape Colony's color-blind franchise, nearly destroyed the independent Ndebele tribe in what is now Zimbabwe, and, through his policies, heightened tensions between Boers and Britons.

But Rhodes sometimes did more good than he intended. The fact that his prestigious scholarships now go to people Rhodes would have excluded, notably blacks and women, is, in Rotberg's words, "an ironic tribute to the final workings of his uncommon genius." Not a good man, the biographer concludes, but "great and far-seeing."

**IDEOLOGY AND U.S.  
FOREIGN POLICY**

by Michael H. Hunt  
Yale, 1987  
237 pp. \$25

While 20th-century U.S. leaders have claimed to manage foreign affairs according to their understanding of complex global issues, Hunt, a historian at the University of North Carolina, argues that they have rarely seen past an inherited American ideology. Fully formed by 1900, but drawing on legacies as old as the views of the 18th-century Founding Fathers, that ideology embraces three "core ideas": expansionist visions of American



**THE SECRET LIVES OF  
TREBITSCH LINCOLN**

by Bernard Wasserstein  
Yale, 1988  
327 pp. \$27.50

greatness (or what came to be known as “manifest destiny”); a notion of racial hierarchy, with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom; a growing fear of revolution.

Hunt’s brisk survey of each of these ideas is a masterpiece of historical compression, closely attentive to ironies. He traces, for instance, Thomas Jefferson’s gradual conversion to Alexander Hamilton’s ideal of an aggressive international role for the American republic, which required the very sort of strong central government and ruling elite that Jefferson once considered anathema. Elsewhere, he explores the seeds of antirevolutionary dogma in the writing of the erstwhile Yankee revolutionary John Adams.

Hunt’s historical analysis not only exposes certain deeply embedded notions governing America’s behavior abroad; it also buttresses his case for a restrained policy that will “not be a vehicle for the pursuit of national greatness abroad but a buffer against outside shocks and threats to our pursuit of greatness at home.”

Scholarly serendipity sometimes yields rare gems. A fine specimen is this biography of one of history’s greatest rogues and sham-artists, Trebitsch Lincoln (1879–1943), a Hungarian-born Jew who, at age 19, after an orthodox religious education and failed careers in acting and journalism, “embarked . . . on a lifetime of wanderings.”

Arriving in Montreal via Germany (where he converted to Christianity), Ignacz Trebitsch became a Presbyterian missionary among the city’s Jewish immigrants. Three years later, he sailed to England, became curate in an Anglican parish in Kent, and adopted the surname Lincoln. The clerical life proving too placid, he moved on, first to politics (as a Liberal M.P. for one unremarkable year) and then to business, forming, through various shady deals, several interlocking companies to promote the fledgling oil industry in Romania. These ventures collapsed at the outbreak of World War I, and Lincoln fled to Western Europe, offering his services as a double agent to Britain and Germany, both of which snubbed him. Trickster then turned forger, was caught and convicted in Britain, then deported for life.

On he went, sometimes carrying six passports—engaging in right-wing revolutionary poli-



*Contemporary Affairs*

**THE GOOD RULER:  
From Herbert Hoover  
to Richard Nixon**  
by Bruce Kuklick  
Rutgers Univ., 1988  
202 pp. \$17.95

tics in Weimar Germany and warlord struggles in China (where he served as an adviser) before adopting Buddhism and emerging in a Nanking monastery with the name Chao Kung. After offering to serve as a Nazi spy in China (an offer refused by Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop), the "human chameleon," as the *New York Times* dubbed him, finally died in relative tranquility in wartime Shanghai in 1943.

Why did Wasserstein decide to resurrect this strange man and his career? Because, the Brandeis historian explains, "it seems somehow to mirror . . . the unquiet spirit of the age . . . [offering] us an unintended but revealing parody of the style and substances of politics, diplomacy, and religion in a period of lost ideological, social, and spiritual bearings."

What makes for a successful presidency? In answering this question, scholars too often focus on policy considerations and tendentious "what-if?" scenarios. All miss the point, says Kuklick, a professor of humanities at the University of Pennsylvania. Since the New Deal era, he argues, the key to presidential success has been the chief executive's ability to win the confidence and affection of the people.

Franklin D. Roosevelt changed American politics, setting the standard for the "inspirational presidency." In an increasingly secular society that wanted politics to be "religious and dramaturgical," the president became the "focus of the social order." The success or failure of the New Deal may remain a subject of intense controversy, but no one disputes that FDR was able to create a sense of optimism at a time of despair. Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy were also loved and admired by the people. Despite their relatively slight legislative accomplishments, they were able to make Americans feel good about themselves and their country.

Not so FDR's immediate predecessor, Herbert Hoover (perceived as cold-hearted when compassion was called for), or, more recently, Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson (both perceived as incapable of controlling domestic and international

developments), or Richard Nixon (who came across as devious). At crucial moments, all failed to convey "trust and assurance" to the public.

Kuklick's sensible-sounding thesis may soon be put to the test in the 1989-93 White House. History will judge whether an efficient pragmatist can match the political success of Ronald Reagan, the "Great Communicator."

**CHINA BUILDS  
THE BOMB**

by John Wilson Lewis  
and Xue Litai  
Stanford, 1988  
329 pp. \$29.50

**CHINA'S NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS STRATEGY:**

**Tradition within  
Evolution**

by Chong-Pin Lin  
Lexington, 1988  
272 pp. \$40

Why should the People's Republic of China, a nation with an income per capita of less than \$300, invest heavily in developing nuclear weapons and intercontinental missile systems? As these two pathbreaking books show, this sustained commitment of manpower, materiel, and money owes to several factors: traditional Chinese military strategy, current perceptions of foreign threats, the historical legacy of China's humiliation at the hands of foreign powers, and the overpowering will of one man—Mao Zedong.

In 1955, the Great Helmsman, eager to assert China's national independence and international strength in the wake of the Korean War and the Taiwan Strait crisis, set in motion a crash program, described in remarkable detail by Lewis, chairman of Stanford's International Strategic Institute, and Xue, a researcher at Stanford's Center for International Security and Arms Control. Supported by the Soviet Union until 1959, when Beijing-Moscow relations chilled, the program mobilized a small cadre of scientists and technicians to develop atomic and, later, hydrogen bombs. The first nuclear device was set off on October 16, 1964, at the Lop Nur test site—China's Alamogordo. During the 25 years since that day in the Xinjiang desert, the Chinese have developed a complete triad of delivery systems—air-, sea-, and land-based—and a total nuclear force third only to those of the United States and the Soviet Union.

To what purpose? Lin, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, finds that China's strategic nuclear doctrine is based on traditional concepts of war and deterrence, some dating to Sun Zi's *Art of War* (early 4th century, B.C.). Accordingly, China's leaders see their nuclear arsenal primarily as a means of denying an adversary Chinese territory rather than as a weapon for projecting force abroad.

**INSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
IN LATIN AMERICA:****A Report from the  
Dominican Republic,  
Colombia, and Brazil**by James Lang  
Univ. of N.C., 1988  
307 pp. \$37.50

Small-scale projects designed around people instead of numbers is an idea that has become commonplace in progressive think tanks and non-profit organizations concerned with developing nations. It appeals to almost anyone who has observed that pharaonic, capital-intensive projects more often benefit narrow elites than the poor for whom they were supposedly intended.

But if the idea is not brand new, Lang, a sociologist at Vanderbilt, gives it fresh expression. He does so by making his account of development efforts in three Latin American countries dramatically personal—and even something of a wild, seat-of-the-pants tour. Writing in the first person and inserting himself in the narrative, he avoids the usual ethnocentric condescension of the “foreign policy specialist.” He never presumes, for instance, to say locals should be spending less on deodorants and TV sets and more on beans, however “correct” such notions may be. Instead, he reports what Dominicans think about luxury, and how their ideas compare with his own. Elsewhere, rather than lamenting poverty and backwardness, he examines agricultural and health projects that work. (And what is needed, he suggests, is more political and financial support for the dedicated professionals and semiprofessionals who devote their lives to such projects).

Lang’s sensitivity to Latin culture allows him to see solutions where other North Americans see only problems. Efficiency in the service sectors, he points out, is predicated upon personal relations. Corruption? Not to Latins who consider it a way of humanizing the impersonal nature of capitalist economic organization. Discussing festivals in Brazil or ticket-scalping in Colombia, Lang illuminates original, indigenous ways of generating wealth and easing class resentments.

*Arts & Letters***POET IN NEW YORK**by Federico García Lorca  
translated by Greg Simon  
and Steven F. White  
Farrar, 1988  
275 pp. \$25

On arriving in New York City in 1929, 31-year-old Spanish poet García Lorca wrote to his family: “New York has given me the knock-out punch . . . It is incredible.” The poet took up residence at Columbia University, ostensibly to study English. But Lorca’s true education came from the city itself—and from his struggle to overcome



“one of the worst crises” of his emotional life, his failed eight-year relationship with sculptor Emilio Aladren. The 34 poems that came out of his stay in the bewildering metropolis (June 1929–March 1930) constitute a compelling—if often tortured—vision of place and passion.

Urban North America both fascinated and repelled Lorca: “Such a wave of mire and fireflies above New York!” The city, in Lorca’s imagination, was the setting for a phantasmal confrontation between the manmade and the natural: “Cobras shall hiss on the top floors./Nettles shall shake courtyards and terraces./The Stock Exchange shall become a pyramid of moss.” But even as he railed against the city’s automated, technologized deadness and its social alienation, the great Iberian poet of death and tragedy found New York a powerful correlative for his own suffering. In one poem he identifies himself “Bumping into my own face, different each day,” or becoming a “poet with arms, lost/in the vomiting multitude.” In the black arts movement of Harlem, moreover, he found a vitality that defied the city’s inhumanity: “It’s necessary to cross the bridges/and reach the murmuring blacks.”

Simon and White’s new translation ably captures both the elegance and hardness of Lorca’s Spanish. The poet’s letters and a lecture enrich the poetical text, as do Lorca’s nightmarishly suggestive drawings.

**THE COMPANY  
OF CRITICS:  
Social Criticism and  
Political Commitment  
in the 20th Century**  
by Michael Walzer  
Basic, 1988  
260 pp. \$19.95

How detached should the social critic be from his own society? Without some distance, obviously, there can be no fidelity to ideas or ideals. But those critics who are completely alienated from their own societies will never touch the souls of their audience. They will fail to instruct.

Walzer, a political philosopher at Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Studies, looks at 11 modern critics, including Julien Benda, George Orwell, Albert Camus, Herbert Marcuse, and Breyten Breytenbach, to tell the story of “the making and unmaking of critical connection” in the 20th century. During the early decades of the century social and political struggles opened paths to true engagement for critics such as Ignazio Silone and George Orwell, but things have grown more problematical during recent years. Critics such as the German-born Herbert Marcuse, who came to re-



*Science and Technology*

**HEAVY DRINKING:  
The Myth of  
Alcoholism as  
a Disease**

by Herbert Fingarette  
Univ. of Calif., 1988  
166 pp. \$16.95

ject almost everything about his adopted American homeland, felt compelled to "recover authority by establishing distance."

But in Walzer's view, that extreme distance, an understandable response to disappointment, is unnecessary and unfruitful. He holds up as a model Albert Camus, who, when forced during the late 1950s to "choose between eternal justice and French Algeria, . . . rejected eternal justice," even though he had long been a critic of his fellow *piets noirs*. Today, similarly, Breytenbach, an Afrikaner exiled in France, refuses to give up the hope that his own white South African tribe will find some way to make its peace with the other tribes. The best critics, Walzer holds, never forget that "even people in the wrong have rights and can rightly lay claim to a secure future."

"First the man takes a drink . . .," runs an Oriental adage, "Then the drink takes the man!" But is overuse of demon rum an illness, as Alcoholics Anonymous and many other reputable organizations claim? Fingarette, a philosopher at the University of California, thinks not. The notion that alcoholism is a disease has become, he claims, a "myth" of exceptional persistence and pervasiveness—and one that flies in the face of extensive scientific research.

The "classic disease concept" of heavy drinking holds that chronic intoxication results from an individual's innate and incurable inability to moderate his consumption of alcohol. The alcoholic's manner of metabolizing alcohol tends to be qualitatively different from that of nonalcoholics, and heredity may make some people more susceptible to the disease than others.

While not completely rejecting the utility of the disease concept for some individuals, Fingarette finds inadequate evidence to support its largest claims: that the pattern of the "disease" is universal; that its development is inevitable; that no designated "alcoholic" can moderate his drinking. Acceptance of this "myth" has produced treatments that fail to acknowledge the many problem-drinkers who do not fit the accepted profile. Moreover,

these therapeutic programs (notably, complete abstinence from alcohol) are ultimately unrealistic for the majority of heavy drinkers, and can even be psychologically unhealthy.

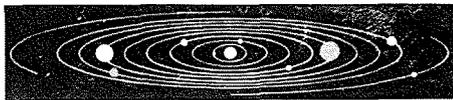
**MATHEMATICS AND  
THE UNEXPECTED**

by Ivar Ekeland  
Univ. of Chicago, 1988  
146 pp. \$19.95

The physical sciences since Isaac Newton have revealed an increasing measure of randomness in the universe. Sometimes, as Henri Poincaré made clear in the 1890s, it is our scientific methods themselves that predict the impossible—and at that point we must be open to different methods, to new ways of seeing the world.

That task may be simplified by knowing where to look. Ekeland, professor of mathematics at the University of Paris, demonstrates that scale is all-important in understanding how the universe works. "Like the Queen of England, determinism reigns but does not govern. Its power nominally extends over vast territories, where local rulers are in fact independent, and even turn against it." The paths of the planets, the weather for the next few days, the position of a molecule—all of these can be computed with some accuracy. But in another time frame, or on another spatial scale, these predictions become impossible.

Enter catastrophe theory. Since the 1970s, practitioners of this controversial approach to mathematics have attempted to catalogue rather than predict, to picture rather than compute. By graphing the possible outcomes of the simplest of dynamic situations, say, a ball nearing the edge of a table and falling off, catastrophists attempt to record changes in equilibrium rather than all the factors at play. They create a world, lyrically evoked by Ekeland, where time is cast out, and "the future is mostly hidden, and the mathematician inspects the flow of events for forms to recognize and classify, like a butterfly catcher."



## Saving America's Symphonies

In his recent book, *High Brow/Low Brow*, historian Lawrence Levine notes that "in the 19th century, especially in the first half, Americans, in addition to whatever specific cultures they were part of, shared a public culture less hierarchically organized, less fragmented than their descendants were to experience a century later." Performances that were once accessible to broad popular audiences—whether the tragedies of Shakespeare or the symphonies of Mozart—have become exclusively the entertainment of the elite. But snobbery has its price. Today, many local American symphony orchestras face extinction. To survive, argues Frederick Starr, they must abandon the stuffy decorum introduced by puritanical culture-custodians. Only by getting rid of "a wall of grim convention and self-conscious rituals" will classically based music regain "its rightful place in our national life."

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by S. Frederick Starr

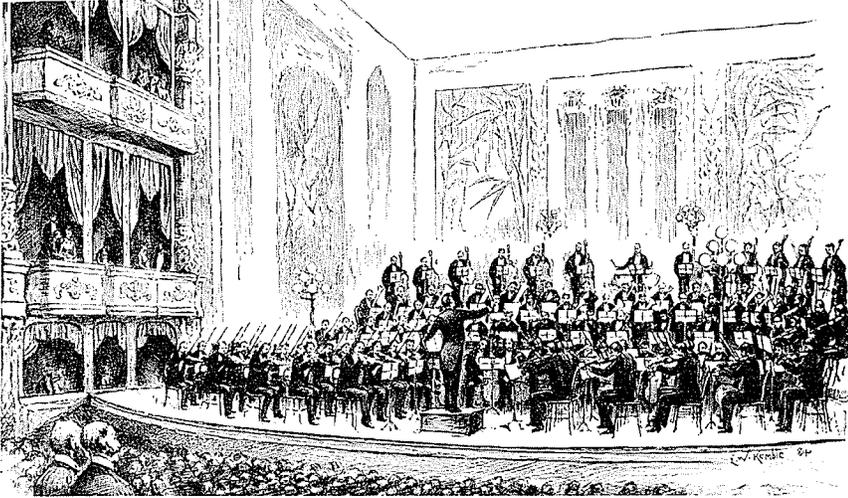
A pessimist might suggest that Franz Joseph Haydn wrote the main theme for this year's orchestral season in his *Farewell Symphony*, in which, one by one, the musicians depart the stage. In a wave of depressingly authentic performances, orchestras in Oakland, Kansas City, Detroit, New Orleans, Nashville, and San Diego have variously cut back seasons, suspended operations temporarily, or gone out of business.

According to Louis Harris's recent poll, the audience is also beginning to leave the hall, causing the first year of declining attendance after 15 years of growth. The audience still remaining in the hall is aging and, surveys tell us, drawn mainly from the ranks of affluent

professionals and business people, with few of the young of any background.

Finances reflect the grim situation at the box office. Our leading orchestras' combined deficit from operations has trebled in a decade, the bottom-line deficit now pushing \$15 million annually. By projecting a few years into the future, we can foresee deficits on a scale that would have sent Haydn back into his father's business of farming, and Prince Esterhazy back to his solo *baryton*, the now-extinct instrument that lured Esterhazy into music in the first place.

More than a few pessimists have declared the orchestra to be a moribund museum. Gunther Schuller, observing the human impact of the decline of or-



*A concert at the Academy of Music in New York City in 1884 epitomizes the culture-reformers' ideal: "serious" music wedded to "correct" deportment.*

chestras on their members, reported to a Berkshire Music Center audience in 1979 that a "cancer of apathy" and a "loss of spiritual identification with music" afflicts orchestral musicians themselves. In an attempt to reverse these trends, we have gone through a full cycle of prescriptions, cures, and nostrums.

The age-old remedy was to pep up programs with superstar soloists. Touring virtuosi doubtless added interest to performances, as they have since Paganini's day, but they failed to check the problem. Trustees next turned to a breed of energetic and well-coiffed conductors to impart a sense of jet-set dynamism to the enterprise. But the supply of conductor-superstars proved limited, and many aspirants lacked even a rudimentary command of English. These conductors also discovered the possibility of serving two cities at once, a kind of musical polygamy that denies both employers the kind of commitment needed to create anything substantial and lasting. About the same time, trustees and

managers began urging artistic directors to mine the pop repertoire, in the hope that orchestral adaptations of Willie Nelson favorites would somehow compete successfully with Willie Nelson originals, and also lead audiences on to Bartók and Mahler. But our fickle public continued to prefer the wailing sound of the originals to the Montevani-like copies.

A parallel round of therapy was applied to the management of orchestras. Early on, it was thought that government would pick up the tab. When that dream faded, hope was placed in the gurus of marketing. Entrepreneurial hotshots introduced terms like "discounting" and "packaging" into board discussions, to the accompaniment of rising eyebrows *furioso*. Yet another new band of doctors then appeared on the scene, hard-headed businessmen who, constituting 90 percent of many boards, declared that the orchestra's main problem was poor management. For nearly three centuries the term "bottom line" had referred to low G on the bass staff.

Suddenly it meant responding remorselessly to the fact that costs were rising 15 times faster than ticket receipts.

Common sense tells us that a colorful conductor, popular soloists, and genuinely accessible programs are bound to build audiences. And that federal support, better marketing, and stricter accounting will help the balance sheet. To some degree they do, and they should all be pursued. Yet all these measures together have failed to turn around the situation. Nor will they alone succeed, for the malaise runs much deeper.

"Aha," you say, "we're about to hear that classical music's day has passed, that most Americans today have little taste for 'serious' music—in short that those who declared the symphony orchestra to be a dead museum are right."

#### Looking Back

Quite the contrary. I would like to suggest that Americans all too rarely get an opportunity simply to take pleasure in classical music. Instead, they are separated from it by a wall of grim conventions and self-conscious rituals having nothing to do with the music itself. This wall isolates the music from its natural audience and prevents classically based music from taking its rightful place in our national life. It also contributes significantly to the malaise of orchestras, both financial and spiritual.

To defend this seemingly outlandish proposition, I ask you to permit me a historical digression, and also some observations drawn from my life as a jazz musician and as a frequent attender of concerts at America's oldest conserva-

tory of music, at Oberlin.

Most 19th-century European orchestras were linked to opera houses. American orchestras, however, developed separately from the beginning. Several peculiarly American obstacles had to be surmounted before they could flourish.

The first great challenge was to assemble enough good musicians to create a truly professional ensemble. The hero of this crucial battle was the irrepressible German-born conductor Theodore Thomas, who by his death in 1905 had established and nurtured a number of this country's greatest orchestras.

#### Order in the Hall

The second great battle, far more difficult than the first, was to form an audience willing to sit quietly through an entire concert. This was no simple matter, for outgoing, restless Yankees were accustomed to throwing themselves into events on the stage, cheering and hissing in response to the performance, and generally coming and going as they pleased. Back in the 19th century, the Metropolitan Opera House accommodated these national eccentricities with its relaxed atmosphere, made still more so by the fact that booze was allowed in the boxes, as at the Astrodome today.

Drinking—even quiet drinking—was banned at orchestral concerts, but no rule could keep Americans from responding animatedly to events on stage. Thus, we read of "talking and buzzing" throughout a New York concert in 1875, with poor Maestro Thomas issuing a "scathing rebuke . . . to those ill-bred and ignorant people" making the noise.

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*S. Frederick Starr, 48, a former secretary of the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, is president of Oberlin College. Born in New York City, he received a B.A. from Yale (1962) and a Ph.D. from Princeton (1968). His books include Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society (1978) and Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union (1983). He is co-founder of the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble. This essay was first delivered as a speech to the American Symphony Orchestra League in Chicago on June 16, 1988. Copyright © 1988 by S. Frederick Starr.*

The Yankee audience was not easily tamed. Far into the 20th century, reports appeared that Stokowski, Monteux, and even Koussevitzky had to rap like schoolmasters for order in the hall.

The "hero" (if we may call him that) of this battle to tame the naturally bump-tious American audience was John Sullivan Dwight, a crusty ex-minister who, from the 1830s to '60s, was this country's chief apostle of "serious" music and of "correct" deportment in its presence. Dwight hailed from Boston, a city where waltzing was taboo until the 1850s. He equated deadly earnestness with goodness. He was immune to playfulness and frivolity and struggled to make the German classics an instrument for vaccinating the whole population against those baleful traits. Few outdid Dwight in what Alexis de Tocqueville called "this astonishing American gravity." With Dwight's help, concertgoing in America ceased to be a source of pleasure and delight. Instead, it was transformed into the secular equivalent of the Puritan worship service: long, serious, utterly predictable, and ever so good for your soul.

#### Cultural Insecurity

In his widely read journal, Dwight railed against all composers whose music did not fit his notions of moral uplift, particularly Rossini, Berlioz, and their Italian and French compatriots. He saved his deadliest venom for his own compatriot, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, the New Orleans-born virtuoso and composer who dazzled Chopin in Paris during the 1840s with his lush and brooding evocations of the American tropics. Gottschalk's music was thoroughly Latin, filled with Caribbean warmth, if not Catholic decadence. This was precisely Gottschalk's great sin in Dwight's eyes. Dwight helped destroy Gottschalk's career.

There you have it. The symbiosis of classical music: puritanical and turgid earnestness and ritualized performance. The only missing ingredient was social

insecurity, and this, too, Dwight dished up in bucketfuls. As Alexis de Tocqueville noted in *Democracy in America*, Americans "imagine that to appear dignified they must remain solemn." The philosopher George Santayana referred to our "cultural insecurity." The worst thing was to appear undignified or provincial, which amounted to the same thing. No wonder Dwight boasted that his purge of classical music would be "the very best symptom of our ceasing to be provincial in art."

#### Cheering Mozart

It is not surprising that socially insecure Americans submitted to this hectoring from the critics' corner and from the conductors, who were like Bismarckian autocrats in the puritanical concert hall. The musicians put up with all this nonsense because they somehow believed it would raise the dignity of their art. Cultural pretension and cultural insecurity thus combined to make a newly affluent public accept a very un-American strait-jacket in culture.

The great irony of the situation is that what Dwight strove mightily to achieve had little in common with the environment in which much of the greatest European music was created and enjoyed. True, there were composers, such as Schumann, who demanded attentive submission from their audiences and who did not care if the strictness of their regimen emptied the hall. But this was scarcely Mozart's stance when he wrote a glorious group of wind octets with no deeper purpose than to provide *Unterhaltungsmusik* for Viennese couples strolling about and sipping wine. Nor was it Mozart's attitude when he reported to his father that he had placed many passages in his D-major ("Paris") Symphony for no other purpose than to delight the public. In his debut concert in 1800, even the dour Beethoven was pleased to include arias, symphonies, an overture, and even improvisations based



*Symphony concerts were not always dignified occasions. Conductors and musicians once did everything in their power to engage their audiences. Here, 19th-century French composer Hector Berlioz conducts a concert à mitraille (with cannon).*

on themes called up from the audience. This is the same Beethoven who gladly accepted from his patron a collection of popular songs issued by the Russian tsar's propaganda ministry and wove them into the magisterial *Razumovsky Quartets* (Opus 59).

The audiences for which the classical masterpieces were composed had nothing in common with Dwight's Americans, cowed into stultifying passivity. The great orchestra of the Elector of Mannheim literally lifted the audience to its feet when it performed its renowned crescendos. I can find no evidence that such demonstrativeness hurt the music. Parisians cheered with gusto at the passages Mozart had included for their pleasure in the D-major Symphony, and the composer bragged about their hearty response in a letter to his father.

A self-conscious American highbrow, accustomed to equating all shows of enthusiasm with vulgarity, must squirm with discomfort by reports such as the following, on the mood at the premier of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* in

Dresden in 1843. Berlioz wrote that:

The ordinary public simply let itself be carried along by the current of the music, and it applauded the March to the Scaffold and the Witches' Sabbath more warmly than the other three movements.

The audience applauding between movements? Crude provincialism! Low-brow vulgarity! Yet, as a jazz musician, I realize that there was something in that hall in Dresden that orchestral musicians today experience only rarely, if ever: namely, the warm engagement of an unself-conscious audience with the music and the musicians who make it. Such engagement vastly stimulates and inspires musicians, who in turn further reward and uplift the audience.

Can this occur with a program of classical music written a century or more ago? Of course it can. I invite you to any campus for a concert by a student ensemble or touring orchestra. I can assure you that at Oberlin you will hear

cheers, clapping, and the stamping of feet, even boos and hisses from time to time. You will also experience rapt attention and a kind of electric excitement that links performers and audience.

Thanks to the presence of so alive an audience, we have truly live music, full of the tension of the moment, utterly unpredictable, at times infuriating but at other times inspired to a rare degree. And let me state unequivocally that most of those same young men and women are also keen and knowledgeable fans of rock music.

### A Puritan Pall

The same capacity for enthusiasm over classical music shown by our students can be found in the general public. Stanley Kubrick exploited this fact when he used the slow movement from Schubert's Trio Opus 100 in his film *Barry Lyndon*, a segment from Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in his *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and sections of Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth Symphonies in *Clockwork Orange*. All led to waves of record sales, as did the appearance of the slow movement from Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in the Swedish film *Elvira Madigan*.

One of America's now-aging avant-garde composers once denounced attending live concerts as a "peculiar and prehistoric form of self-abuse." I'm sure that for Milton Babbitt it is. Younger audiences don't see it that way, nor do the majority of older listeners. I'll take a live if imperfect performance any day to the mood of lifeless curatorship that prevails wherever the spirit of John Sullivan Dwight still holds sway. Having experienced live music of any type—whether jazz, rock, Schubert songs, gamelans, or a symphonic orchestra—one cannot help feeling stifled by the desiccated atmosphere created by our highbrows' insistence on dead perfection.

Well and good, you say. Granting for the moment that classical music in

America has long been smothered by a pall of puritan earnestness, can anything really be done about it? Is it really possible to transform the relation of audience and musician when the music in question is so remote from the rhythms and melodies that surround us in our daily lives? There are obvious limits to what can be done. Yet, I can think of at least four measures that, together, would do much to enliven and, hence, render financially more viable the moribund format of our concert life.

First, we should open up the repertoire. By this I do not mean that we should turn all performances into Pops concerts. Rather, we should mine the entire repertoire and boldly juxtapose unlikely works: long and short; accessible and abstruse; old and new; serious and frivolous. We should also mix, in one program, works for large orchestras and small ensembles, vocal and instrumental. We might even lift the old taboo against performing only sections of works that the audience may not wish to swallow in toto. Such programming is quite compatible with the highest musical standards, and would quickly dispel the tedious predictability now stifling our concert halls. It would also lift the musicians out of their rut.

### The Salad-Bar Approach

Besides pulling classical music back to its more vital roots, such programming would accord well with American tastes today. For years art museums would hang a single painting on eggshell white walls, as if commanding us to venerate it. Today, innovative museums are reverting to the centuries-old practice of placing many contrasting works together on a single wall (often painted a rich color) so that the viewer can muse from one to another in a more personal way. Something like this occurs also in the realm of gastronomy, where diners concoct meals at the salad bars and juxtapose unlikely courses on the plate.

Second, we should open the orchestra to the public. The modern symphony orchestra is the most complex instrument of music ever devised, bringing together a formidable array of talent. Yet in most concert halls only the conductor and a few first violinists and cellists are visible, the latter in profile. Local society lionizes the highly paid itinerant conductor, while at the same time ignoring the musicians who actually make the music or, worse, treating them as cogs in a machine.

#### Talk About It

Why not instead seat the orchestra so its members are all in view, and then showcase the players, instead of treating them like hired help? The feat of a flautist playing the last movement of Prokofiev's *Classical* Symphony or a horn player doing the solo in Tchaikovsky's Fifth is no less astounding than a half-back taking a quick hand-off and weaving behind blockers to score a touchdown.

Americans are quite accustomed to appreciating individual talents as they contribute to team efforts in sports. Why should we not be given the pleasure of doing the same for our local orchestra? Besides, it would greatly enhance the loyalty and commitment of musicians to their city and its orchestra, and would eventually foster the creation of a truly local sound.

Third, we should not hesitate to talk about the music. Some years ago the jazz band of which I am a part, the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble, was asked to give the Doubleday Lecture at the Smithsonian. The sponsors expected a straight concert. We gave them a lecture/concert, followed by a dance. The music we performed that evening predated the living memory of just about everyone in the hall. But by talking about it first, we enabled our listeners to enter into the music and its world. When we later invited the large audience to dance, they threw themselves into it with abandon, erasing the temporal gap between

their day and Jelly Roll Morton's.

This can be done with classical music as well, by the judicious use of the spoken word. The conductor or a musician might introduce each work with a few sentences. Musicologists or knowledgeable enthusiasts, of an age and style likely to reach target audiences, might be added to the staff, as has already been done at two or three orchestras.

Obviously, it won't do to beat the audience over the head with erudition or to indulge in what Virgil Thomson dubbed "the music appreciation racket." But we should welcome the genial low-key communicator who can enliven those moments at a concert now given over to deathly harrumphing or silence.

#### Harmony Needed

Fourth, and most important, we should examine every aspect of the orchestra's public and internal life to identify and remove elements of repressiveness. Why, for example, do we begin concerts at 8:00 P.M., rather than, say, 6:00 P.M.? Presumably it is to prevent people from arriving with too much good food in their bellies, or from being able to go out afterward while restaurants are still open. This, at any rate, is the effect, and Dwight would have loved it. Why, again, do we insist on two- or two-and-a-half-hour concerts, rather than shorter or longer ones? And why are most of our symphony orchestras tied to just one hall, when they could be moving among many venues, including *al fresco* ones, in order to bring fine music to their audiences?

Finally, would it really hurt to allow the violist to take a bow after the movement in which he solos? Opera singers and ballet dancers do it all the time, and without destroying the continuity of the work. And if this is allowed, will I then be permitted to applaud between movements? What was acceptable to Berlioz is acceptable to me. And who knows, it might help destroy the somnolent-atmo-

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sphere in the concert hall, make concert-going less intimidating, and even attract some of those younger people who regularly pay \$30 a ticket to attend rock concerts but wouldn't show their face for one of yours.

Most efforts to save our orchestras have concentrated on only one area, be it audience development, the cultivation of links with industry, or cost containment. What I am calling for requires changes in every element of the orchestra's life, including conductor, musicians, trustees, management, and audience. Nor would this reform stop at simply changing each element in isolation. Rather, the idea is to bring each element into a closer, more sustained relation to the others. This is no easy task. Is it possible?

It is no simple matter to turn around an unprofitable company, an eroded school system, or a weakened hospital. But it happens all the time. As with industries, so with orchestras; any effort at renewal that concentrates on only one element—be it repertoire, musicians, education, or “bottom line” management—is doomed to fail. If all aspects can be addressed together, and all interested parties enlisted in a single effort, success should follow.

The collective nature of the process bears emphasis. When the American Symphony Orchestra League first met in Chicago in 1942, conductors and musicians were in attendance, along with trustees. They should be invited back in order to participate in a new type of decision-making. Trustees cannot and should not keep musicians out of the action, any more than management or musicians should try to keep trustees at arm's length, as often happens. There is no place for aloof trusteeship, even if it is nominally “businesslike.” Nor is there room for authoritarian personalities in

the lives of successful orchestras, whether they be managers, conductors, musicians' representatives, or trustees.

By no means are boards currently constituted so as to be able to carry out a revitalization program of the sort I have described here. Most are too old, too dominated by corporate CEOs, and too little disposed to get to know either those who make the music or those who, in the future, will listen to it.

But this too can change. The symphony orchestra is a young institution in this country. Most of our orchestras were founded within living memory, with only a handful antedating World War I. Theodore Thomas and John Sullivan Dwight proved that orchestras can indeed be redirected and reshaped. It is past time for us to do so once more.

This said, the suspicion persists, even among the most committed of us, that the symphony orchestra has had it. Maybe our culture has changed too much for it to be possible to preserve orchestras as living institutions.

If this is so, you'd better tell our young people. Oberlin and other leading conservatories are inundated with applications from young men and women who have decided to devote their lives to performing and teaching the supposedly dead and irrelevant musical classics. Campus audiences today respond to committed performances with the passion of fresh discovery. The mass public, young and old, pays out tens of millions for tickets to a film on Mozart.

Surely, then, there exist solid grounds for optimism, and certainly enough to sustain a commitment to classical music and labors in its behalf. Our task, very simply, is to *love* the music, to *enjoy* the music, and to remove whatever impediments prevent our fellow Americans from doing so.

## What Happened to Mother?

“It was a place apart, a walled garden, in which certain virtues too easily crushed by modern life could be preserved,” historian Walter Houghton wrote of the idealized Victorian home. At the center of this earthly sanctuary reigned the figure of the loving mother. The English poet Coventry Patmore dubbed her “The Angel in the House,” and with the revival of chivalry in 19th-century Britain and America, her standing was even further enhanced. Celebrating Mother’s Day was not enough. A son’s duty, according to this domestic version of the knightly code, was not merely to obey but to revere his mother. But as Paul Fussell here explains, the sacrosanct image of Mother, like many another 19th-century ideal, began to lose its luster amid the horrors of the First World War.

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*by Paul Fussell*

To the traditional Anglo-American male imagination in the late-19th century, it was taken for granted that one’s attitude toward one’s mother should be conspicuously chivalric, if not reverential. It was axiomatic not only that Mother Knows Best, but—more startling—that A Boy’s Best Friend Is His Mother.

Wherever you went, Mother was likely to go too, safeguarding your chastity, making sure you were protected from the evils of drink and tobacco and low friendships. And from Mother’s omnipresence you suffered no loss of manliness. When Douglas MacArthur arrived at West Point as a cadet in 1899, he was attended by Mother. She lived there for four years as self-appointed moral-tutor-in-residence, scrutinizing his every move, praising or blaming him as appropriate. And when, commissioned a

*This 1952 florists' advertisement urged sons to "send flowers by wire" on Mother's Day. This practice remains so prevalent that some ascribe the invention of Mother's Day (the second Sunday in May) to the florist industry. In fact, the idea began with a school teacher, Anna Reeves Jarvis, in 1908.*



second lieutenant, he proceeded to his first post (in San Francisco with the Corps of Engineers), she accompanied him. In England at about the same time, Lord Northcliffe, the newspaper magnate, was revealing by his extravagant devotion to his mother how deeply he was dyed in the style of the period. His mother he always called "darling," while his wife was only "dear." On his deathbed, his last coherent words were, "Tell Mother she is the only one."

In such an atmosphere, it was to be expected that mothers would not just demand their due but would seize all the power they could grasp. Franklin D. Roosevelt's mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt, would be found to be a terrible person by any civilized standard. She was ignorant, intolerant, and opinionated, uneducated but assertive, anti-Semitic and snobbish, a lifetime practitioner of the *libido dominandi*, and she visited her tyranny on anyone she could cow. Her favorite victim was Franklin's wife, but Franklin himself was by no means safe from her bullying and nosiness. When he went to Harvard, she quite naturally moved into an apartment in Cambridge, where for the full four years she kept the customary motherly eye on him. She never willingly yielded her prerogatives to meddle and interfere. According to Ted Morgan, one of Roosevelt's biographers, Betsy Cushing, his daughter-in-law, was once in his office with him when

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the secretary of state telephoned. As she remembers, Roosevelt picked up the phone and said, "Oh yes, Cordell."

She pointed at herself and silently mouthed, "Shall I go?" and FDR shook his head. Then he said, "Mama, will you please get off the line—Mama, I can hear you breathing, will you *please* get off the line?"

You sometimes see a photograph of a sad-faced Roosevelt at his desk just after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He is signing the Congressional Declaration of War, and on his left jacket sleeve he wears a black mourning band. Captions on this picture sometimes assert that by this traditional token he is mourning the deaths of the 2,000 men killed on December 7, 1941. Not at all. He is mourning his mother, who died three months before. The erroneous captions measure the speed with which we have moved past the traditional usages, especially those associated with the overpowering devotion to Mother.

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To realize the oddity of this canonization of Mother, the historian of ideas and styles must try to imagine it flourishing during the Renaissance or the 18th century. It clearly belongs only to the 19th and to its afterglow in the earlier part of the 20th. Mother is "the noblest thing alive," said Coleridge in 1818. And once Queen Victoria matured into motherhood, her image as patriotic totem and head of the Established Church doubtless added a weight more than trivially sentimental to the mother cult. It was during her reign that it became popular to domesticate Britannia, formerly imagined as a rather threatening classical warrior, by designating her "Mother Britain." (It is impossible today to envisage or delineate a noble, allegorical Britannia. She has suffered a fate similar to the demeaning of the female "America" referred to in the GI graffiti in the Saigon latrine: AMERICA LOST HER VIRGINITY IN VIETNAM, to which a later hand has added: YES, AND SHE CAUGHT THE CLAP TOO.)

And it was just after Victoria's reign that the mother fixation attained an additional ritualizing, at least in the United States, when in 1908 a new holiday, Mother's Day, was devised—by florists, the cynical said. The creation of this special day rapidly gave birth to symbolic floral conven-

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tions, such as sons wearing a white or red carnation to proclaim their homage to Mother whether dead or alive.

The soldiers of 1914–1918 began the war with their traditional imaginations intact, and it seemed wholly appropriate that their main visitors at their training camps should be not girlfriends, mistresses, or even wives, but mothers. It is not surprising that a Civil War song was revived for this later occasion, a song requiring the singer to announce, “Just before the battle, Mother, I am thinking most of you.” The prevailing Victorian attitudes toward Mother are readily available in a little book produced by the Reverend Dr. L. M. Zimmerman, the Methodist pastor of Christ Church, Baltimore, titled *Echoes from the Distant Battlefield*, issued in 1920. Zimmerman had corresponded copiously with his boy-soldier parishioners during the war, and in his book he selected high-minded chivalric passages from their letters to him. Hardly a one neglects to deliver “period” encomiums to Mother. One soldier, commenting on the loneliness in camp on Sundays, says, “One longs to see . . . his best friend, his mother, God bless her.” And introducing a letter from a hospitalized soldier, Zimmerman points out—the parallelism seems significant—that “His Mother and his God are his very first thoughts.” Many of Zimmerman’s correspondents emphasize that only the principles of chastity enjoined by Mother have kept them pure abroad, amid the numerous temptations incident to residence in Latin countries.

Indeed, the ultimate monitor and gauge of perfect purity is Mother. “Don’t use language your mother would blush to hear,” the American soldier is adjured by a YMCA pamphlet of 1918. And it is assumed as too obvious for discussion that the main sufferers in the war are by no means the soldiers in the cold and deadly line, but the mothers at home. Their *sacrifice*—the word was used freely—was recognized by the more traditional minded of their sons as even greater than the one required of them. “GIVE YOUR SONS,” commands one preconscription pamphlet issued by the British Mothers’ Union. It goes on to invoke chivalric images, casting Mother now in the role formerly played by the knight’s courtly mistress. “The right sort of Mother for Old England,” says this pamphlet, must gird the armor on her son “just as truly as the ladies of old braced on the armor of their knights.” And no one seemed to doubt a mother’s ability to override her son’s instinctive pacifism or her capacity to deliver him up to the services on call. One mother depicted on a U.S. Navy recruiting poster resolutely presents her boy to Uncle Sam with the words, “Here he is, Sir.” Mother’s coercive power is similarly recognized in a British recruiting leaflet shrewdly addressed not to sons but to their mothers: “MOTHERS!” this leaflet asserts, “One word from YOU and he will go.” Likewise, a British poster shows a white-haired mother with her hand on her son’s shoulder. He looks uncertainly into the distance, but she gestures thither-

# U. S. NAVY



*A World War I recruiting poster.*

**"Here he is, Sir."  
We need him and you too!  
Navy Recruiting Station**

ward broadly, saying to him, "GO! IT'S YOUR DUTY, LAD. JOIN TODAY." Did the British recruiting slogan say, "Every single one is ready to carry a gun"? No, it said, "Every mother's son is ready to carry a gun."

The conservative poet Alfred Noyes, writing for the government on behalf of the war effort, visited a munitions factory in September 1916, as the gruesome Somme battle in France was beginning to wear itself out. In the armaments factories, Noyes insisted, there was no labor trouble whatever, as the troops frequently believed. Indeed, the affection of the workers (many of them women) for their work can be described only as motherly. The women Noyes saw working, he reports, as they heaved "great shells into the shaping machines" or pulled "red-hot copper bands from furnaces, . . . seemed to lavish all the passion of motherhood upon their work; for this gleaming brood of shells, rank after rank, had indeed been brought forth to shield a dearer brood of flesh and blood. 'Mothers of the Army' was the thought that came to one's mind . . . . An army of little mothers . . . ."

Like other tenets of the chivalric code, this mother cult was going to suffer grave wartime damage. Before World War I, it would seem that the customary family quarrels popular in literature were with Father; Mother seemed to be protected by the codes of chivalric convention—privileged,

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as it were. In books such as Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) and Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907), Mother is still sacrosanct, and it is Father who is exposed as an ignorant bully or a menace to the freedom of the young. But following the shocks and disillusionment of the Great War, satiric assaults upon Mother begin to recommend themselves to the new postwar audience. And despite the formal persistence of Mother's Day, the former adoration of Mother has scarcely weathered the scorn of such psychically damaged veterans as Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque, and Robert Graves.

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Looking back over Hemingway's total production, one notices that although there are some fathers in it, such as "My Old Man," mothers are virtually absent. Indeed, the Hemingway hero, such as Jake Barnes or Frederic Henry, seems to belong to no family at all. But on the one occasion when a mother makes a conspicuous appearance in Hemingway's writing, she is ruthlessly anatomized and ridiculed. I have in mind the short story "Soldier's Home," published in Paris in 1924 in the volume *In Our Time*. Here, Harold Krebs, a Marine Corps corporal who has been through the bloodiest battles on the Western Front, returns badly shaken to his somnolent, incurious Midwestern town. (Some have identified it with Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway's parents' home.) The gulf is deep and unbridgeable between his empirical knowledge of the war and his mother's sentimental image of it. For him, it has changed everything. For her, it has changed nothing, since to her mind it has been only a matter of received images and clichés, words about *gallantry* and *little Belgium*. For her, we find, the war has meant primarily a threat to Harold's chastity. She is disturbed now at his lassitude, his unwillingness to resume his prewar life as if nothing has happened:

"Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?"  
his mother said, taking off her glasses.

"No," said Krebs.

"Don't you think it's about time?"

"I hadn't thought about it," Krebs said.

"God has some work for everyone to do," his mother said.

"There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom."

"I'm not in His Kingdom," Krebs said.

"We are all of us in His Kingdom."

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful . . . .

"I've worried about you so much, Harold," his mother went on. "I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are . . . ."

After exhorting Harold to make something of himself and become a credit

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to the community, his mother asks, "Don't you love your mother, dear boy?" In 1910 he would have answered, "Of course." Now he answers, "No." She collapses in tears, and he realizes that, having uttered the inexplicable postwar thing, he must make amends:

He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

"I didn't mean it," he said. "I was just angry at something. I didn't mean I didn't love you."

He manages to pacify her, whereupon she says, "I'm your mother . . . I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby." Before the war, this appeal might have reduced Harold to a subservient atonement, but now, we are told, "Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated." His mother invites him to kneel and pray with her. He declines. As he leaves the house he feels sorry for his mother, but he knows that soon he will have to leave home for good.

Equally unable to understand the way the war has changed everything for those who fought it is Paul Bäumer's mother in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929). When Paul returns home to Germany on leave, he discovers that the only way the new world of the trenches, that is, the new world of industrialized mass violence, can greet the traditional one is by lies. "Was it very bad out there, Paul?" his mother asks, and, hating himself, he answers, "No, Mother, not so very." As he prepares to return to the front, she honors the prewar convention that one of a mother's main duties is preventing her son's access to sexual pleasure (or, once he is married, hating the agent of it). She says: "I would like to tell you to be on your guard against the women in France. They are no good." He informs her: "Where we are there aren't any women, Mother." Formerly the all-wise Boy's Best Friend, Mother has now turned into a hopelessly unimaginative, ignorant, sentimental drone and parasite.

And there's a similar mother, but a more dangerous one, in another important work of 1929, Graves's highly fictionalized memoir, *Good-bye to All That*. Here, the mother is a literary character devised by someone in the British propaganda services. He has denominated her "A Little Mother," and in a letter imputed to her, reprinted in a vastly popular pamphlet of 1916, she is made to reprehend any thought of a compromise peace by insisting that any such would be an insult to mothers who have already "sacrificed" their sons. Her bloodthirsty call for more war is accompanied by a train of solemn, illiterate testimonials from third-rate newspapers, noncombatant soldiers, and fictional bereaved mothers, one of whom is quoted as saying: "I have lost my two dear boys, but since I was shown the 'Little Mother's beautiful letter, a resignation too perfect to

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describe has calmed all my aching sorrow, and I would now gladly give my sons twice over."

From these and similar exposures of maternal self-righteousness, callousness, and egotism the mother cult never recovered, and by the 1920s the cult had become one of the numerous casualties of the Victorian understanding of human rights and privileges. The British infantry veteran Charles Carrington has described the way the Great War was recalled in the disillusioned memoirs and novels of the late 1920s: "Every battle a defeat, every officer a nincompoop, every soldier a coward." And, we can add, every mother a monster.

Twenty more years would virtually complete the ruin of the chivalric mother, when Philip Wylie, in his wide-ranging satire *Generation of Vipers* (1942), stigmatized Mom and Momism as central signs, if not causes, of America's cultural backwardness and perpetual psychological adolescence. And by the time of the film *Midnight Cowboy*, in 1969, the mere display of Mother's picture in an easel frame in a hotel room constituted bad news.

Thus, the transition from the chivalric to the antichivalric, from romance to irony. The whole process, relatively rapid as it has been, might be taken to be an image of the much longer process of secularization since the Middle Ages. In the spring of 1912, after the *Titanic* disaster, a number of American women contributed money toward a monument to be installed in Washington, D.C., a monument specifically devoted "to the everlasting memory of male chivalry"—that is, the action of many gentlemen aboard the *Titanic* in insisting that the women and children occupy the lifeboats, leaving themselves to drown. "To the . . . *memory* of male chivalry": There, even if unintentionally, is the appropriately elegiac note.

Today it would be impossible to imagine a plane-crash evacuation with the men standing aside, calmly, nobly inhaling flames and gases for several minutes and feeling their fingers, ears, and noses burning off, while encouraging the women and children to leave down the slides. Like much else that is traditional, chivalry has proved unsuited to the world we have chosen to create.

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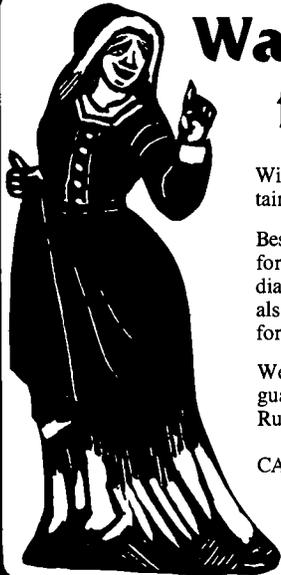
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## COMMENTARY

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*We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some of those printed below were received in response to the editors' requests for comment.*

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### *The Ivory Coast 'Miracle'*

Timothy C. Weiskel's excellent article on the Ivory Coast ["*Mission Civilisatrice*," *WQ*, Autumn '88] raises the question: Does it continue to make any difference whether African territories were subjected to the relative advantages or disadvantages of British or French colonial rule?

Historians of Africa generally used to hold that, to an African, it would have been a matter of indifference whether Belgium, France, or Britain happened to be in control of the colonial administration. Imperialism was imperialism, regardless of nationality.

Yet, a quarter of a century after decolonization, it appears incontestable that the former French colonies have a greater sense of identity with the former metropolitan government, and a greater sense of camaraderie among themselves, than do their counterparts in the British Commonwealth.

Why is this? How is one to explain the phenomenon of "Francophonie"? France's post-colonial economic and military commitment to the former colonies is much higher than Britain's. "Neo-colonialism" is a function of the continuing links. Unfortunately or fortunately for the British, they were less successful at this post-colonial game than were their old rivals, the French.

*Wm. Roger Louis  
Kerr Professor of English History  
and Culture  
University of Texas, Austin*

### *A Binding Legacy*

Your articles on the Ivory Coast effectively illustrate the dilemmas facing the new nations of Africa in their formidable task of development and nation-building. These dilemmas are inherent in the ambivalence that the Africans feel toward their former colonial masters and their heritage.

Independence meant disaffiliation from colonial bondage, not only as expressed in the hierarchy of power relations, but also as a

system of material and moral values with their structures and modes of operation. And yet, the very concept of the nation-state, with its political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics, was a creation of colonialism. Whether Africans rejected or accepted the colonial legacy, they were almost inextricably bound to it.

The choice between building on what the West has to offer and delinking from the former colonial masters could only be a matter of degree, since neither extreme was possible. But the degree itself could be critically important in determining the level of success or failure. The cases of the Ivory Coast and Guinea, which the two articles describe, are good examples of the contrasting choices that confronted the African leaders.

In evaluating their performance, the Ivory Coast model appears to have been more successful. However, quite apart from the difficulties of agreeing on the criteria for evaluation, the degree of the Ivorian success is usually acknowledged with significant qualifications. How much real independence has it allowed? To what extent has it permitted the level of equality that Africans generally espouse? And how secure is the model beyond President Félix Houphouët-Boigny?

The answer to these questions must be that success, whatever its degree or potentials for viability, is better than failure. And to the extent that the Ivorian success is recognized, the motivation for protecting, preserving, and continuing to improve it should be a priority for the Ivorians.

*Francis M. Deng  
Senior Fellow  
The Brookings Institution  
Washington, D.C.*

### *Houphouët's Achilles Heel*

David Lamb's article on the Ivory Coast ["A Different Path," *WQ*, Autumn '88] provides an introduction to the country's successes and failures, but it does not show clearly the relationship between the two. The indepen-

# Cuba

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Louis A. Pérez, Jr.

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dence leaders of the Ivory Coast and Kenya as well derived their political support from local agricultural capitalists. Indeed, as the article points out, both Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta themselves maintained extensive personal farm enterprises. The development strategies they chose served the interests of cultivators, especially wealthy ones, far better than did the programs pursued by most sub-Saharan governments—which, in general, subsidized industrial development and urban expansion.

As long as the world market prices for export crops such as coffee, cocoa, and cotton remained stable or increased, these policies generated income to fuel development programs and encouraged farmers to maintain or expand production. But government interventions that benefit farmers in the short-run can have serious long-term consequences for a country's economic health and political stability. In the Ivory Coast, the government purchases all cocoa production from plantations and from the many individual cultivators and tries to make money for development from the sale of cocoa abroad. When the world price falls, the continuation of guaranteed producer prices means that the government earns less and must go into debt.

As politicians elsewhere in Africa (and in the United States) well know, deregulating prices is politically costly. It is an especially difficult step to take in the case of a crop that takes long to mature, and the farmers who invested in it when prices were high stand to lose their wealth overnight. Such is the case with cocoa, whose world price has fallen by about 50 percent since 1986.

So concerned is the government about the prospect of discontent in the cocoa zone that the Ivorian daily, *Fraternité Matin*, ran stories this summer reassuring farmers that prices would not change and attributing rumors of cuts to foreign intrigue. Houphouët-Boigny's government sent Minister for Defense Konan Banny to meet with frightened cultivators. Crop surveyors from London-based cocoa purchasers were asked to leave.

In recent months, the Ivory Coast has simply withheld its perishable supplies from the market, in the hope that this will increase world demand. The government tried this earlier in the decade in the belief that its dominant market share would enable it to

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manipulate the price. Because Nigeria and Ghana, fellow cocoa producers, were unable to sustain the short-term costs of cartelization, the scheme failed. This time, there is even less chance of success. Malaysia has entered the cocoa market.

Within the next several months, the Ivory Coast will need international assistance to help ease the situations of small farmers in the transition from a fixed-price regime to a pricing system that allows fluctuation. The country cannot hold out, as it had hoped, for a substantial increase in cocoa prices. It has to do what it has done in the case of the palm industry: allow local prices to reflect world realities, and encourage farmers to move to more remunerative crops.

*Jennifer A. Widner*  
Assistant Professor of Government  
Harvard University  
Center for International Affairs

### *Big Steel Today*

Not covered in Mark Reutter's "The Rise and Decline of Big Steel" [*WQ*, Autumn '88] were the major contributions made by America's steel producers to rebuilding and modernizing the steel industries of Europe and Japan after World War II. Nor was the intense U.S. government pressure on steel industry leaders to continue expanding industry capacity during the 1950s given its proper due. Nor was the market targeting by foreign steel producers, and the subsidization of them by their governments through the 1970s and early '80s, fully discussed.

However, that is history, and it is more important to look at today. Unfortunately, your article misses the mark by a wide margin in evaluating today's steel industry and its products. Far from the impression of "no change" conveyed by the author, a dramatic revolution has been occurring throughout the industry during the 1980s.

At Bethlehem Steel, for example, the five-year period beginning with 1982, when steel production and shipments plummeted to their lowest annual levels since 1963, proved to be the most challenging in its history.

Buffeted by an economic recession early in the decade, record levels of imports (26 percent of the market in 1984), steel overcapacity abroad as well as at home, a sluggish do-

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mestic market, severe price competition, and a too-strong U.S. dollar, Bethlehem had to take drastic actions. Capacity was reduced by 27 percent and employment slashed by 57 percent, as steel plants, mills, manufacturing operations, mines, and shipyards were shut down or sold. The company also sold facilities that produced plastics, building materials, and fabricated steel products.

During this period of unprecedented turmoil, Bethlehem mobilized its human, technological, and financial resources and it *did* change—by dramatically reducing costs and improving product quality and service.

From 1981 to 1987, Bethlehem spent more than \$2 billion to improve its remaining steel product facilities—including well over a half billion dollars at our Sparrows Point Plant in Baltimore—even though the company incurred heavy losses during most of the period. These investments have greatly improved our competitiveness.

Bethlehem has restructured its operations into more efficient units, reduced the number of hourly and salaried employees, negotiated innovative new labor agreements, and initiated employee involvement programs. It has cut the costs of materials, energy, and inventory. It has improved productivity and yields and made quality a top priority.

As a result of these achievements, the Bethlehem of today is a leaner, more efficient steel company, producing higher quality steel at significantly lower costs. Our customers are more competitive today as a result of our improved performance.

Production is no longer the prime measure of American steel industry performance. Quality of product and service to customers have taken precedence in the establishment of management goals.

Today's steel industry is not a rusty old relic. On the contrary, it has made great advances in the 1980s under extremely trying circumstances. The national interest requires that the United States have a privately owned, internationally competitive domestic steel industry. In the last few years, management and labor have made great strides toward achieving that goal.

*Walter F. Williams  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Bethlehem Steel Corporation  
Bethlehem, Pa.*

### *Playing Catch-Up*

By tracing the history of the Sparrows Point plant, Mark Reutter has ably documented the growth and decline of Big Steel. Much of the public is aware of the role that poor management-labor relations played in this decline. However, many are unaware that an equal or greater factor in making our larger mills non-competitive was the reluctance to develop or accept new technology.

During the last 40 years almost all the major developments in the steel industry were made outside of the United States. The Basic Oxygen Furnace was developed in Austria and perfected by the British and the French. The sliding gate valve system for ladles was developed by the Germans. The Japanese were the first to operate a blast furnace with computers. There were 18 continuous casters in the world before there was one in this country—and then, as Reutter points out, it was installed by a mini-mill producer in Roanoke, Virginia . . .

But we are making progress. In the past six years, we have made important strides in modernizing our larger steel mills and in improving the management-labor relationship.

The integrated steel mills of the future will be smaller than those of the past, but much more efficient.

I am completely convinced we have the natural resources and the skills to build a steel industry that can compete with any steel industry in the world. My hope is that we have learned from our past mistakes. In the steel industry you cannot afford to fall behind technologically; the cost of catching up is too painful.

*F. Kenneth Iverson  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Nucor Corporation  
Charlotte, N.C.*

### *Labor's Role*

Author Mark Reutter adds a solid dimension to an economic story that deserves the fullest exposure. By focusing on Bethlehem Steel and its Sparrows Point plant in Maryland, he chose the right place to look for the hits and misses in the industry. However, while he comes down hard—and properly so—on management that refused to get in step with the times, he handles the significant role of

labor quite gingerly.

Reutter points out that "in recent years, the industry used the threat of plant closings to extract wage and work rule concessions from the Steelworkers union" and that management and labor "are still locked in mutual hostility." That is far too bland and too acknowledged a point to make when, in fact, the resistance of the Steelworkers union to modernizing work stations must be the worst in all manufacturing. It took a 184-day strike for USX, the largest steelmaker, to win the right to combine crafts for greater productivity; the United Auto Workers conceded essentially those same rights to the automakers years ago, without a strike.

Furthermore, the story of plant-by-plant negotiations in steel is just as dismal. Although the Bethlehem plant in 1986 reached an agreement with the Steelworkers union to phase out 550 jobs by changing certain work rules in exchange for a promise to keep Bethlehem's hot metal mills operating through 1989, a year and a half later the union has kept only half of the bargain.

In addition, the three Bethlehem locals actually set up an incentive program to harass foremen who might help the work flow by changing a motor belt, moving a ladder, or doing anything else that hinted of a violation of work rules. The steel union offered a prize each month to the worker who filed the most grievances and won. The prize: a T-shirt emblazoned with the words, "I Caught Him Working."

I do not want to excuse management for its faults. Reutter is correct in saying that it still relies too heavily on government protection and higher prices for salvation. But the industry cannot cope with the forces eating away its vitality until a new generation of steelworkers recognizes its obligation to change with the times. Unfortunately, most of the new generation is on layoff and few new people are hired by the mills. The hard-hats who have the seniority are still calling the shots the old-fashioned way—a message I missed in your essays.

*John Strohmeier*  
Atwood Professor of Journalism  
University of Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Author, *Crisis in Bethlehem*

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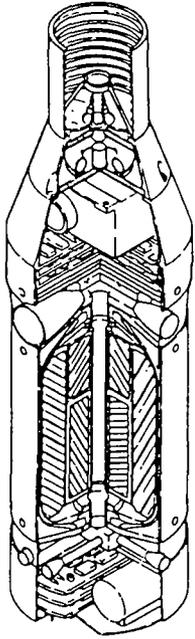
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### Corrections

In William M. Shea's review of David Tracy's *Plurality and Ambiguity* [*WQ*, Summer '88, p. 143], due to an editing error, Paul Tillich was mistakenly identified as a Jewish theologian. As a number of readers soon pointed out, Tillich (1886-1965) was a noted Protestant theologian.

In a review of "Sweden: Failure of the Welfare State" [*WQ*, Autumn '88, p. 37], we wrote that total U.S. public sector expenditures in 1982 were 20 percent of the country's gross national product (GNP), compared with 70 percent for Sweden. Our figure for U.S. expenditures, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, represented only government purchases of goods and services; it did not include transfer payments to individuals or net interest paid, as the figure for Sweden did. The comparable figure for the United States is 35 percent.



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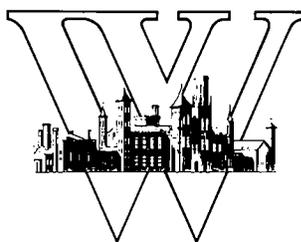
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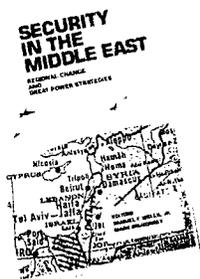
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# THE WILSON QUARTERLY BIENNIAL INDEX

Volumes XI and XII (New Year's 1987 through Winter 1988)

---

*In alphabetical order below is a guide to separate articles by title and, when necessary, by subject; clusters of essays on given topics (set out by capital letters); and all authors appearing in the Quarterly in 1987-1988. Corrections of factual errors are indicated.*

---

## A

Aksyonov, Vassily, **Getting Into Trouble**, *Autumn '87*, 164; **Hating (and Loving) The U.S.A.**, *Winter '87*, 161

Allen, Calvin, H., Jr., **A Separate Place**, *New Year's '87*, 49

Allen, Henry, **Remembering Vietnam: Art as Therapy**, *New Year's '88*, 156

AMERICAN MUSIC, *Summer '88*: **Popular Song**, Howard Husock, 49; **Jazz**, Terry Teachout, 66; **Classical**, K. Robert Schwarz, 77

ASTRONOMY, *Summer '87*: **From Astronomy to Astrophysics**, James Trefil, 50; **The Universe and Man**, George B. Field, 64; **Beyond Astronomy**, Eric J. Chaisson and George B. Field, 74

## B

Bahr, Howard M., **Ups and Downs: Three Middletown Families**, *Winter '87*, 128

BERLIN, *Summer '88*: **Dividing a City**, Neil Spitzer, 101; **The Berlin Scene**, Josef Ernst, 123; **West Berlin: The Political Geography**, 128

**The Uses and Abuses of Biology**, Howard L. Kaye, *New Year's '87*, 80

Bloom, Allan, **How Nietzsche Conquered America**, *Summer '87*, 80

**Books, Gadgets, and Freedom**, Mario Vargas Llosa, *Spring '87*, 86

BRITAIN, *Autumn '87*: **Why England Slipped**, Richard Rosecrance, 97; **The English Disease, 1945-79**, Paul Johnson, 111; **Thatcher's Half-Revolution**, Will Hutton, 123 (Correction: *Winter '87*, 175)

**James Bryce and America**, Morton Keller, *Autumn '88*, 86

## C

Ceaser, James W., and Neil Spitzer, **The Parties Take Over**, *New Year's '88*, 49

Chaisson, Eric J., and George B. Field, **Beyond Astronomy**, *Summer '87*, 74

**Women in China: Ah Bing and Her 'Sisters'**, Alice Greenway, *Summer '87*, 152

CLIMATE, *Winter '88*: **Climatology**, Diana Morgan, 101; **Coping With Change**, Steven Lagerfeld, 117

Condee, Nancy, **Russian Remedies**, *Summer '88*, 167

THE CONSTITUTION, *Spring '87*: **'It Is Not a Union'**, Peter Onuf, 97; **Philadelphia Story**, Jack N. Rakove, 105; **Making It Work**, A. E. Dick Howard, 122; **Text of the Constitution**, 136 (Correction: *Summer '87*, 174)

Crandall, Robert W., **Learning the Lessons**, *Autumn '87*, 69

Cranston, Maurice, **John Stuart Mill and Liberty**, *Winter '87*, 82

CASTRO'S CUBA, *Winter '88*: **Fidelismo**, Tad Szulc, 49; **Washington and Havana**, Pamela S. Falk, 64; **The Odd Partners**, W. Raymond Duncan, 75

## D

Delzell, Charles F., **Remembering Mussolini**, *Spring '88*, 118

**Discovering Mexico**, Carlos Fuentes, *Autumn '88*, 148

Dillard, Annie, **To Fashion a Text**, *New Year's '88*, 164

Donoso, José, **The Old House**, *Autumn '87*, 152

Duncan, W. Raymond, **The Odd Partners**, *Winter '88*, 75

THE DUTCH, *Spring '87: Beyond Perfection*, Thomas R. Rochon, 53; *The Independent Ally*, Stanley R. Sloan, 70

## E

Thomas Eakins: *The Heroism of Modern Life*, Elizabeth Johns, *New Year's '87*, 162

Meeting Mr. Eliot, Frank D. McConnell, *Spring '88*, 152

THE POLITICS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, 1970-87: *Autumn '87: A Big Agenda*, David Vogel, 51; *Cleaning Up the Chesapeake*, 64; *Learning the Lessons*, Robert W. Crandall, 69

Epstein, Joseph, *The Joys and Sorrows of Being a Word Snob*, *Spring '88*, 164

Ernst, Josef, *The Berlin Scene*, *Summer '88*, 123

## F

Falk, Pamela S., *Washington and Havana*, *Winter '88*, 64

Ferrell, Robert H., *The Last Hurrah*, *Spring '88*, 66

Field, George B., *The Universe and Man*, *Summer '87*, 64

Field, George B., and Eric J. Chaisson, *Beyond Astronomy*, *Summer '87*, 74

Politics in America: *San Antonio's Battle Over Fluoridation*, Jack H. Scudder and Neil Spitzer, *Summer '87*, 162

Fuentes, Carlos, *Discovering Mexico*, *Autumn '88*, 148

Fussell, Paul, *What Happened to Mother?*, *Winter '88*, 154

## G

Getting Into Trouble, Vassily Aksyonov, *Autumn '87*, 164

Gibney, James S., *Mahathir's Dilemma*, *Winter '87*, 70

Greenway, Alice, *Women in China: Ah Bing and Her 'Sisters'*, *Summer '87*, 152

Griffen, Clyde C., *Upward Bound*, *Winter '87*, 94

## H

Hamby, Alonzo L., *The Accidental Presidency*, *Spring '88*, 49

Hating (and Loving) The U.S.A., Vassily Aksyonov, *Winter '87*, 161

Himmelfarb, Gertrude, *In Defense of the Victorians*, *Summer '88*, 90

Hodge, Robert W., and Steven Lagerfeld, *The Politics of Opportunity*, *Winter '87*, 109

Sherlock Holmes: *Detecting Order Amid Disorder*, Frank D. McConnell, *Spring '87*, 172

Howard, A. E. Dick, *Making It Work*, *Spring '87*, 122

Husock, Howard, *Popular Song*, *Summer '88*, 49

Hutton, Will, *Thatcher's Half-Revolution*, *Autumn '87*, 123

## I

ITALY, *Spring '88: Partitocrazia*, Joseph LaPalombara, 99; *Remembering Mussolini*, Charles F. Delzell, 118

THE IVORY COAST, *Autumn '88: Mission Civilisatrice*, Timothy C. Weiskel, 97; *A Different Path*, David Lamb, 114

## J

James, Timothy M., *Money and Sailors*, *Summer '87*, 133

William James, T. J. Jackson Lears, *Autumn '87*, 84 (Correction: *New Year's '88*, 175)

Mr. Ito's Dance Party, James L. McClain, *Winter '87*, 154

Johns, Elizabeth, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life*, *New Year's '87*, 162

Johnson, Paul, *The English Disease, 1945-79*, *Autumn '87*, 111

*The Joys and Sorrows of Being a Word Snob*, Joseph Epstein, *Spring '88*, 164

## K

Kafka's World, Milan Kundera, *Winter '88*, 88

Katz, Mark N., *A New Dawn?*, *New Year's '87*, 64

Kaye, Howard L., *The Uses and Abuses of Biology*, *New Year's '87*, 80

Keller, Morton, *James Bryce and America*, *Autumn '88*, 86

Kissinger, Henry A., *'Institutionalized Stalemate'*, *New Year's '88*, 136

Krauss, Clifford, *Democracia*, *New Year's '88*, 119

Kundera, Milan, *Kafka's World*, *Winter '88*, 88

## L

Lagerfeld, Steven, *Coping With Change*, *Winter '88*, 117

Lagerfeld, Steven, and Robert W. Hodge, *The Politics of Opportunity*, *Winter '87*, 109

Lamb, David, *A Different Path*, *Autumn '88*, 114

LaPalombara, Joseph, *Partitocrazia*, *Spring '88*, 99

Lears, T. J. Jackson, *William James*, *Autumn '87*, 84

Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Search for Structure, David Maybury-Lewis, *New Year's '88*, 82

A Long Line of Cells, Lewis Thomas, *Spring '88*, 86

## M

MALAYSIA, *Winter '87: Monsoon Country*, 47; *The British Legacy*, J. Norman Parmer, 54; *Mahathir's Dilemma*, James S. Gibney, 70

THE MARITIME WORLD, *Summer '87: Traders*, Clark G. Reynolds, 95; *America's Stepchild*, James M. Morris, 112; *New York: A Changing City of Ships*, 128; *Money and Sailors*, Timothy M. James, 133 (Correction: *Autumn '87*, 174)

Maybury-Lewis, David, *Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Search for Structure*, *New Year's '88*, 82

McClain, James L., *Mr. Ito's Dance Party*, *Winter '87*, 154

McConnell, Frank D., *Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Order Amid Disorder*, *Spring '87*, 172; *Meeting Mr. Eliot*, *Spring '88*, 152

John Stuart Mill and Liberty, Maurice Cranston, *Winter '87*, 82

Millett, Richard L., *'Patria Libre'*, *New Year's '88*, 98

Morris, James M., *America's Stepchild*, *Summer '87*, 112

Morgan, Diana, *Climatology*, *Winter '88*, 101

What Happened to Mother?, Paul Fussell, *Winter '88*, 154

## N

NICARAGUA, *New Year's '88: 'Patria Libre,'*

Richard L. Millett, 98; *Central America: An Isthmus of Opposites*, 104; *Democracia*, Clifford Krauss, 119; *'Institutionalized Stalemate,'* Henry A. Kissinger, 136 (Correction: *Spring '88*, 176)

*How Nietzsche Conquered America*, Allan Bloom, *Summer '87*, 80

Nurnberger, Ralph D., *'Bridling the Passions,'* *New Year's '87*, 96

## O

*The Old House*, José Donoso, *Autumn '87*, 152

OMAN, *New Year's '87: A Separate Place*, Calvin H. Allen, Jr., 49; *A New Dawn?*, Mark N. Katz, 64

Onuf, Peter, *'It Is Not a Union,'* *Spring '87*, 97

O'Rourke, P. J., *What Went Wrong?*, *Autumn '88*, 162

## P

Parmer, J. Norman, *The British Legacy*, *Winter '87*, 54

AMERICA'S PEACE MOVEMENT, 1900-1986, *New Year's '87: 'Bridling the Passions,'* Ralph D. Nurnberger, 96; *Between the Wars*, Robert Woito, 108; *Peace, War, and East-West Relations, 1945-86*, 128; *A Long March*, George Weigel, 122

*Life Under the Jolly Roger*, Marcus Rediker, *Summer '88*, 154

CHOOSING AMERICA'S PRESIDENTS, *New Year's '88: The Parties Take Over*, James W. Ceaser and Neil Spitzer, 49; *The Primary Game*, Jack Walker, 64 (Correction: *Spring '88*, 176)

## R

Rakove, Jack N., *Philadelphia Story*, *Spring '87*, 105

Rediker, Marcus, *Life Under the Jolly Roger*, *Summer '88*, 154

Reutter, Mark, *THE RISE AND DECLINE OF BIG STEEL*, *Autumn '88*, 46

Reynolds, Clark G., *Traders*, *Summer '87*, 95

Rochon, Thomas R., *Beyond Perfection*, *Spring '87*, 53

Rosecrance, Richard, *Why England Slipped*, *Autumn '87*, 97

*Russian Remedies*, Nancy Condee, *Summer '88*, 167

## S

- Schwarz, K. Robert, **Classical**, *Summer '88*, 77
- Scudder, Jack H., and Neil Spitzer, **Politics in America: San Antonio's Battle Over Fluoridation**, *Summer '87*, 162
- Sloan, Stanley R., **The Independent Ally**, *Spring '87*, 70
- SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AMERICA, *Winter '87*: **Upward Bound**, Clyde C. Griffen, 94; **The Politics of Opportunity**, Robert W. Hodge and Steven Lagerfeld, 109; **Ups and Downs: Three Middletown Families**, Howard M. Bahr, 128 (Correction: *New Year's '88*, 175)
- Spitzer, Neil, **Dividing a City**, *Summer '88*, 101
- Spitzer, Neil, and James W. Ceaser, **The Parties Take Over**, *New Year's '88*, 49
- Spitzer, Neil, and Jack H. Scudder, **Politics in America: San Antonio's Battle Over Fluoridation**, *Summer '87*, 162
- Starr, S. Frederick, **Saving America's Symphonies**, *Winter '88*, 146
- THE RISE AND DECLINE OF BIG STEEL, *Autumn '88*: Mark Reutter, 46
- Saving America's Symphonies**, S. Frederick Starr, *Winter '88*, 146
- Szulc, Tad, **Fidelismo**, *Winter '88*, 49
- T
- Teachout, Terry, **Jazz**, *Summer '88*, 66
- Thomas, Lewis, **A Long Line of Cells**, *Spring '88*, 86
- To Fashion a Text**, Annie Dillard, *New Year's '88*, 164
- Trefil, James, **From Astronomy to Astrophysics**, *Summer '87*, 50
- TRUMAN VS. DEWEY: THE 1948 ELECTION, *Spring '88*: **The Accidental Presidency**, Alonzo L. Hamby, 49; **The Last Hurrah**, Robert H. Ferrell, 66
- V
- Vargas Llosa, Mario, **Books, Gadgets, and Freedom**, *Spring '87*, 86
- In Defense of the Victorians**, Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Summer '88*, 90
- Remembering Vietnam: Art as Therapy**, Henry Allen, *New Year's '88*, 156
- Vogel, David, **A Big Agenda**, *Autumn '87*, 51

## W

- Walker, Jack, **The Primary Game**, *New Year's '88*, 64
- Weigel, George, **A Long March**, *New Year's '87*, 122
- Weiskel, Timothy C., **Mission Civilisatrice**, *Autumn '88*, 97
- What Went Wrong?**, P. J. O'Rourke, *Autumn '88*, 162
- Woitto, Robert, **Between the Wars**, *New Year's '87*, 108

## BACKGROUND BOOKS

- American Music**, *Summer '88*, 88
- Astronomy**, *Summer '87*, 78
- Berlin**, *Summer '88*, 138
- Britain**, *Autumn '87*, 135
- Climate**, *Winter '88*, 129
- The Constitution**, *Spring '87*, 154
- Castro's Cuba**, *Winter '88*, 84
- The Dutch**, *Spring '87*, 84
- The Politics of the Environment, 1970-87**, *Autumn '87*, 81
- Italy**, *Spring '88*, 136
- The Ivory Coast**, *Autumn '88*, 132
- Malaysia**, *Winter '87*, 80
- The Maritime World**, *Summer '87*, 135
- Nicaragua**, *New Year's '88*, 140
- Oman**, *New Year's '87*, 78
- America's Peace Movement, 1900-1986**, *New Year's '87*, 144
- Choosing America's Presidents**, *New Year's '88*, 79
- Social Mobility in America**, *Winter '87*, 136
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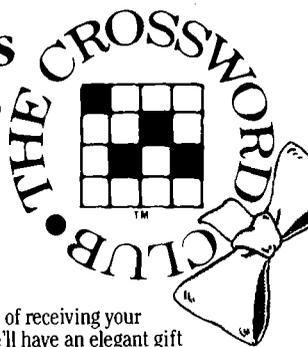
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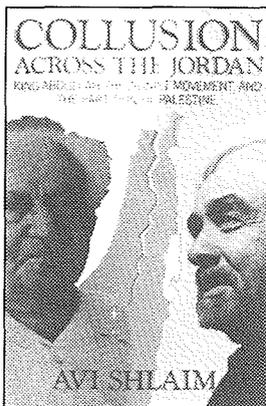
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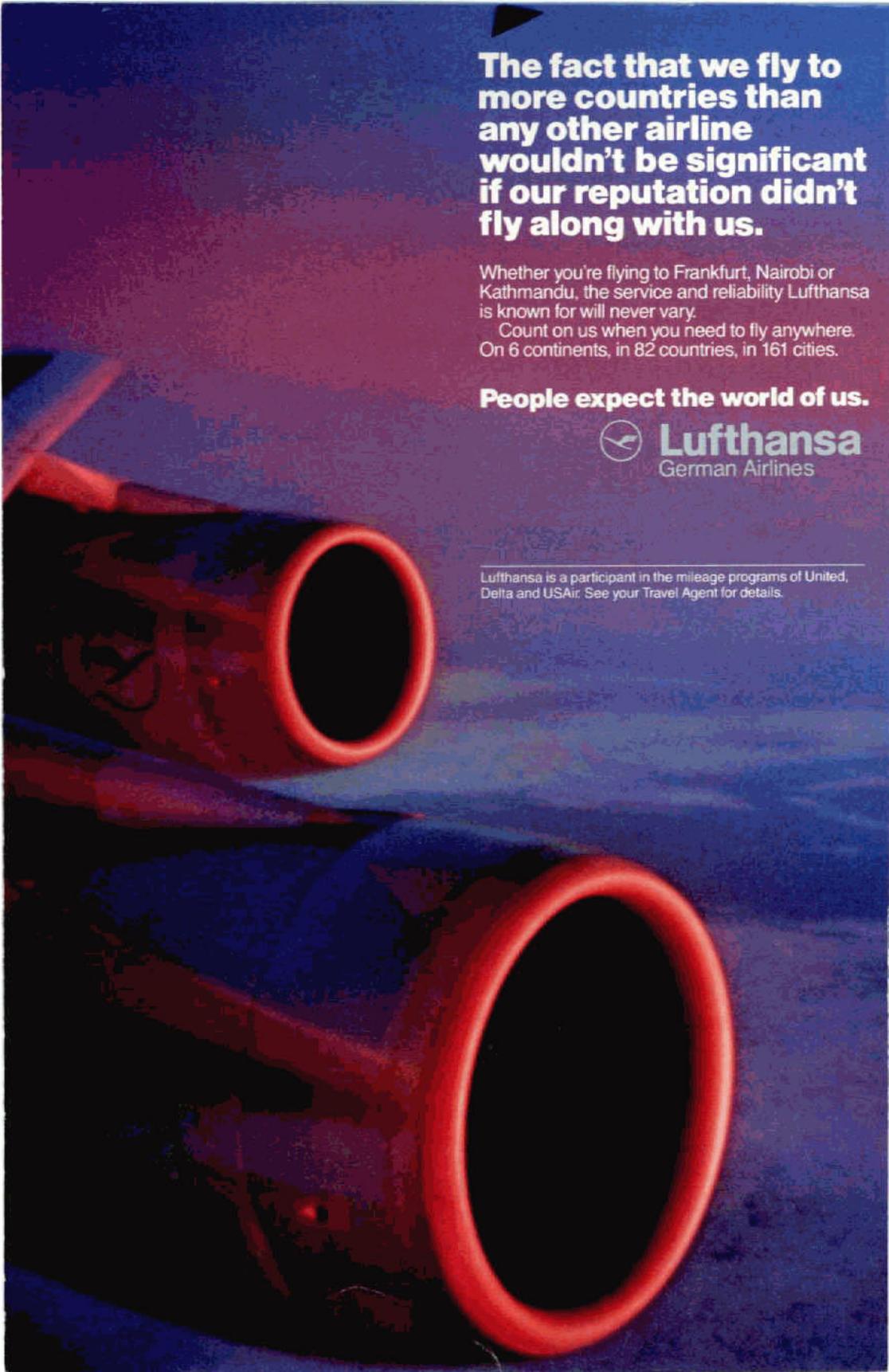
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