

**NUCLEAR POWER AND  
NONPROLIFERATION:****The Remaking of  
U.S. Policy**

by Michael J. Brenner  
Cambridge, 1981  
324 pp. \$24.95

Despite the awful specter of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the 1950s saw a remarkable flowering of American confidence in the peaceful potential of the atom. Charged with overseeing both military and civilian projects, the Atomic Energy Commission zealously carried out Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" program to bring atomic energy to the rest of the non-communist world, trusting that bilateral agreements would prevent buyer nations from converting their nuclear capacity into atomic arsenals. The Nixon administration's commitment to commercial nuclear power led to the private ownership of enrichment plants and to the spread of increasingly sophisticated nuclear technology. Finally, in 1974, India's explosion of a nuclear device brought to an end over two decades of wishful thinking. Two years later, the United States launched its first full-scale review of atomic policy since 1953. Concluded during the last months of the Ford administration, the Fri Review urged subordinating commercial interests to nonproliferation considerations, but the responsibility for action fell to President Carter. While crediting him with good intentions, Brenner, a professor of international affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, shows how Carter alienated our friendly competitors in the nuclear energy trade, notably France and Japan, with his sudden unilateral pronouncements (e.g., his "ban" on the breeder reactor) instead of trying for nonproliferation accords through steady diplomacy. For the declining exclusivity of the "nuclear club," Brenner puts most blame on the early U.S. nuclear policymakers, who naively failed to consider the dangers down the road.

**THE EUROPEAN  
AND THE INDIAN:****Essays in the Ethnohistory  
of Colonial North America**

by James Axtell  
Oxford, 1981  
402 pp. \$19.95

According to one scholarly view—voiced in the 1820s and revived in the 1960s—it was the white man who first taught friendly Indians to cut off scalps (of other Indians) as proof of a kill. Axtell, a historian at the College of William and Mary, mocks this account as the imaginative "product of Indian activism and white guilt." Citing archaeological discover-

ies and the writings of early Spanish explorers, he shows that the natives were scalping one another long before Columbus arrived. But the Europeans *did* introduce much that was new to the Indians, including typhus, smallpox, and yellow fever, which decimated tribes, destroyed family networks, and often weakened religious beliefs. Missionaries largely failed to tempt natives with "Christianity for their souls"; it was hard to displace old faiths, polygamy, and easy divorce. Colonists frequently proved more willing to learn from the natives. Some captured Europeans were treated so well that they chose to remain with their adopted tribe when given the chance to leave. But, in general, contacts with the Indians served to convince Europeans of the "savage" baseness that could dominate human nature without the constraints of government, religion, and hard work.

*Contemporary Affairs*

**THE ARAB  
PREDICAMENT:  
Arab Political Thought  
and Practice Since 1967**  
by Fouad Ajami  
Cambridge, 1981  
220 pp. \$19.95

With close analysis and considerable literary grace, Lebanese scholar Ajami accomplishes what so many outside (and inside) observers have failed to do: He produces a clear, coherent picture of the ideologies and movements that have swept through the Arab world in recent times. Concentrating on events since the humiliating Six-Day War of 1967, he traces a confrontation between modernity and tradition—the social, political, and cultural consequence of Arab defeat. He describes the collapse of pan-Arab and socialist movements, associated with states such as Egypt (under Nasser) and Syria, and the rising influence of more traditional monarchies such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Egypt, a country Ajami describes as a "mirror" of the Arab world, comes in for special attention: The legacy of Nasser, Sadat's experiments with nation-building and bold diplomacy, and Egypt's cultural ferment define the "limits and possibilities of Arab history." Finally, Ajami points to the 1973 October War and the specious Arab victory as the start of a