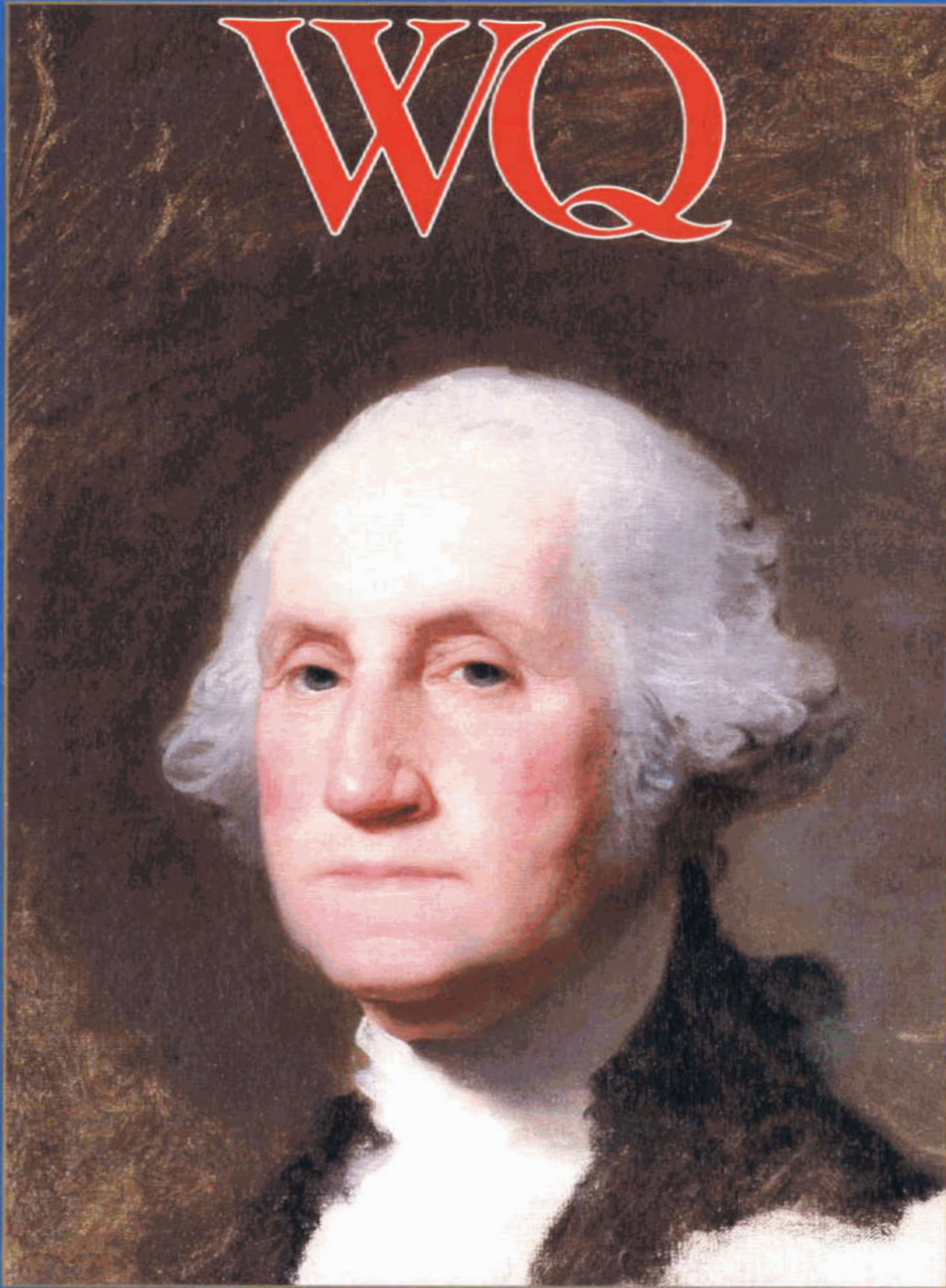


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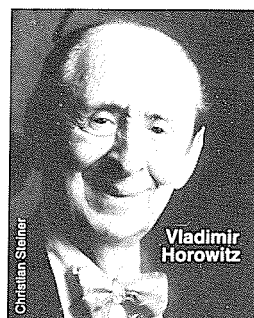
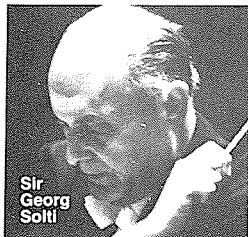
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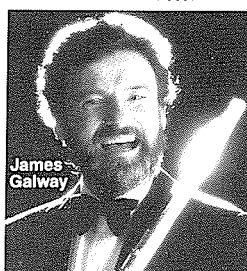
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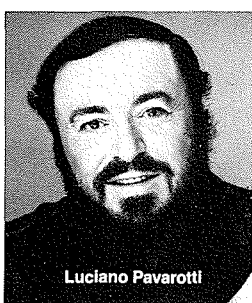
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All this is part of the Wilson Center's special mission as the nation's unusual "living memorial" to the 28th president of the United States.

Congress established the Center in 1968 as an international institute for advanced study, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relation between the world of learning and the world of public affairs." The Center opened in 1970 under its own presidentially appointed board of trustees, headed by former vice president

Hubert H. Humphrey.

Chosen in open annual worldwide competitions, some 50 Fellows at the Center carry out advanced research, write books, and join in seminars and discussion with other scholars, public officials, journalists, business and labor leaders. Often they contribute to the *Quarterly*.

The Center is housed in the original Smithsonian "castle" on the Mall. Financing comes from both private sources and an annual congressional appropriation.

In all its activities, the Center seeks diversity of scholarly enterprise and points of view. Its company of Fellows has included such figures as Fernand Braudel, George Kennan, Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, Saburo Okita, Michael Howard, Mario Vargas Llosa, Shlomo Avineri, and Patricia Graham.



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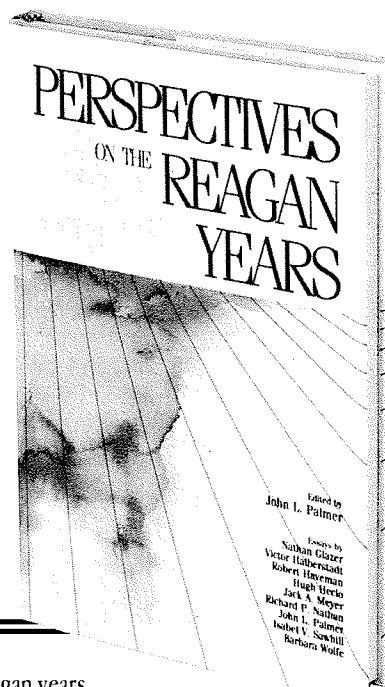
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Editor's Comment

Seven winters ago, as Jimmy Carter turned over the White House to Ronald Reagan, the Wilson Center held a series of sharp scholarly discussions on "The National Interests of the United States in Foreign Policy," region by region. Central America was on the agenda. Nicaragua's Sandinista regime was barely 18 months old; there were dissidents but as yet no contras. Both right-wing "death squads" and 5,000 Cuban-aided rebels were killing people in El Salvador.

What did all this mean? Then, as now, there was little agreement. The Hudson Institute's Constantine Menges saw dominoes: Soviet-backed Nicaragua would be Central America's first Marxist police state, with El Salvador and others likely to follow; Communist insurgencies in southern Mexico might be next. The Wilson Center's Abraham Lowenthal (now at the University of Southern California) said few Latin statesmen shared U.S. anxieties; any Marxist regime in poverty-stricken Central America would still have to do business with the West. He did not rank the Soviet-Cuban security threat very high. All in all, U.S. Latin policy, he said, tended, like a fun house mirror, to magnify "our society's traits out of all proportion, whether noble or less so."

Each man turned out to be partly right. The debate continues. As the 1988 election year gets underway in the wake of Wall Street's Black Monday, the Iran-contra hearings, and a new Central American peace plan, the *Wilson Quarterly's* contributors take a long look at Nicaragua and Central America (p. 96), and at the marathon process that Americans have developed for choosing their next president (p. 48).

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THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

the wildest ideas of government in the world

That's what Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts attributed to his compatriots when other Framers of the U.S. Constitution proposed, in June of 1787, submitting the new document for ratification to delegates chosen by voters in each state. Gerry was afraid his fellow citizens in Massachusetts and those of other Eastern states would refuse to accept the Constitution.

What that document would propose was so novel and unprecedented that in Gerry's view its best chance of passage lay in a vote by the Confederation of States already existing—an assembly that had been, as Gerry thought, sanctioned by the people themselves.

But others at the Constitutional Convention that summer in Philadelphia—especially the influential James Madison and Alexander Hamilton—felt the Confederation must be transcended. It was in their view too disorganized to focus the strength potential in its members; and its Congress might be inclined to refuse the proposed Constitution in order to preserve its own supremacy. Of particular urgency, in the opinion of both Madison and Hamilton, was some new arrangement to keep commerce and commercial activity secure from arbitrary or shortsighted regulation imposed by various states in the Confederation.

Connecticut and Pennsylvania were then at swords' points over the former's attempt to colonize western portions of the latter. New York and Pennsylvania were happily squeezing exorbitant duties out of New Jersey, called in popular parlance the "keg tapped at both ends," as the price of letting Jersey's products reach port. Hamilton warned sternly, in issue No. 7 of *The Federalist*, that this sort of state behavior—when they acted as "independent sovereignties consulting a distinct interest"—would "naturally lead to outrages, and these to reprisals and wars."

What the Framers were seeking, through the new Constitution, was "A unity of commercial, as well as political, interests..." And in devising this they created among the states something we still enjoy: the first great common market.

That system safe for enterprise is enshrined within the Constitution by a few phrases and

clauses celebrated in this series of essays but otherwise infrequently recalled. These safeguards were forged in the fiery debates attending the genesis of a Constitution so radical that it may truly be called The Second American Revolution.

The commerce clause

This appears in Section 8 of Article One and provides that: "*The Congress shall have Power... To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States...*"

Madison wrote that these phrases set up a federal power "which few oppose, and from which no apprehensions are entertained." The Framers did not see the clause as even the slightest repudiation of the federalism they were seeking but rather in the way Madison described their aims many years later, in 1829: "negative and preventive against injustice among the states rather than for the positive purposes of the federal government."

In proposing a broad national market free of state interference, the Framers ensured an environment in which businesses could: (1) compete on an equal footing; (2) gain access to an open, nationwide, and easily accessible market; and (3) be protected from undue burdens and state discrimination as they pushed the free movement of goods and people across state lines.

Invention, manufacturing, agriculture, and commerce flourished as these floods of enterprise coursed through the states thus united. And this commercial amity bound the American people together as nothing else might have done, avoiding those controversies rooted in princely power, prejudice, or dogma that had so often beggared the peoples of Europe and Asia.

Our Constitution gave birth to modern free-market capitalism—and capitalism has in turn engendered the economic strength and widespread prosperity that have kept our Constitution a beacon of hope for all the earth. It is because the Framers inseparably wedded our economic and our political liberties in one document that we and our children continue to enjoy both—and can join to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the gift the Framers left us.

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Prime-Time Presidents

"Presidential Speechmaking and the Public Audience: Individual Presidents and Group Attitudes" by Lyn Ragsdale, in *The Journal of Politics* (Aug. 1987), Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, Fla. 32611.

Presidents frequently seek to sway the public with major speeches broadcast during prime time on network television. But do these broadcasts permanently affect public attitudes toward major issues?

Ragsdale, a political scientist at the University of Arizona, studied the 93 prime-time speeches (including State of the Union messages but excluding inaugural addresses) given by Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan between 1965 and 1983. Most of these speeches dealt with long-term conditions and focused on long-term plans rather than specific events. For example, Richard Nixon delivered 11 TV addresses on Vietnam, but only one (after the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in April 1970) coincided with a particular presidential act. "By disassociating many of their speeches from specific events," Ragsdale argues, presidents "retain greater control" over the timing and impact of a given speech.

By analyzing Gallup polls, Ragsdale discovered that, with the exception of Richard Nixon, approval of the president usually increased after the broadcast of a speech. The effect, however, is temporary, declining gradually over time. Except for Ronald Reagan (whose speeches increased support among all income groups), presidential addresses proved more influential among high- and middle-income audiences than among their low-income counterparts. Ragsdale believes that presidents tend to present "the needs and desires" of the middle class when announcing new policy, thus reducing the effect on Americans with lower incomes.

Surprisingly, a president's oratorical style has little impact on his ability to influence public opinion. Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, for example, were not eloquent speakers, but both Ford and Carter "altered group opinions" among middle- and upper-income Americans as much as the more charismatic Ronald Reagan.

Prime-time TV speeches will not save a presidency racked by war, scandal, or a failing economy. Moreover, success in mounting televised

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

appeals does not necessarily signal electoral triumph; Gerald Ford's ability to create surges in support after a broadcast did not extend to the 1976 election. "Presidents," Ragsdale concludes, "cannot talk their way out of short-term and long-term political problems facing the nation."

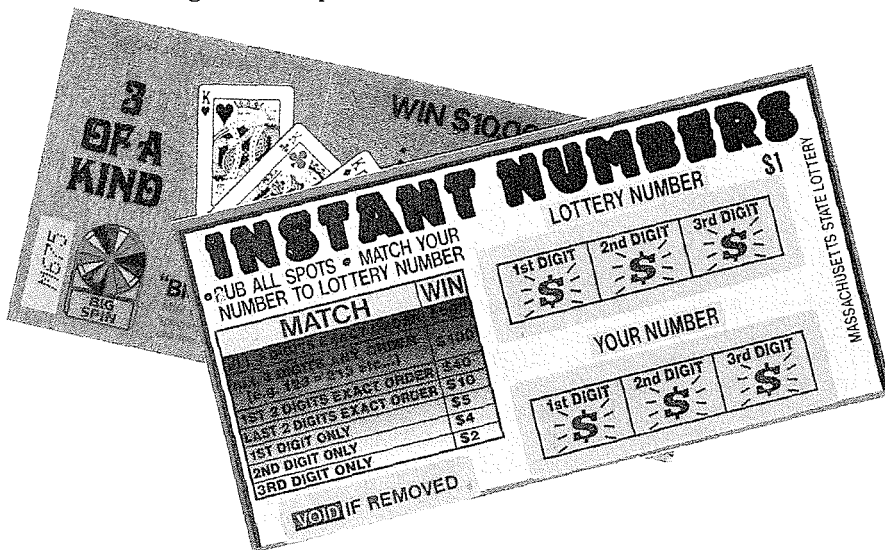
State of the States

"The New Federalism: Unplanned, Innovative, and Here to Stay" by John Herbers, in *Governing* (Oct. 1987), 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

One of the goals of the Reagan administration has been establishing "the new federalism"—transferring control of many federal programs to the states. Herbers, a visiting professor of politics at Princeton, argues that although some proposed federal cutbacks have been blocked, the consequences of reducing federal spending and regulation have been "more far-reaching than almost anyone envisioned."

Many programs designed to transfer income from the federal government to the states have either been eliminated or sharply reduced. General revenue sharing, which distributed over \$4 billion annually to cities and states, was eliminated in 1986. Federal job-training programs were reduced from \$9 billion in Fiscal Year 1980 to \$4 billion in Fiscal Year 1985.

State legislatures have responded to federal cutbacks by raising taxes and budgets. The Census Bureau reports that state tax collections (not including lotteries) increased by 33 percent (to \$228 billion) between 1983 and 1986. According to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR), state budgets have increased by 26 percent (to \$332 billion) during the same period.



Lotteries have proven a potent source of revenue for cash-strapped states. In Fiscal Year 1986, state lotteries raised \$5 billion.

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"Devolution"—the intentional shifting of power and responsibility from the federal level to the states, cities, and counties, has resulted in "renewal and invigoration" in state and local governments. Ideological and partisan divisions in cities and states are in "sharp decline," as both Republicans and Democrats agree that increased spending in some programs (such as prenatal care) saves tax dollars in the long run. State governments are also making their staffs more efficient; many states, for example, have restructured unemployment offices to help people on welfare find jobs.

States and cities have also found innovative ways to bypass Washington. Localities are making their own deals with foreign governments in order to attract investment and promote their products. Des Moines, Iowa, for example, is establishing a 1,000-acre farm in China as a showcase for local food exporters. States are also expanding regulation into areas untouched by Washington. Wisconsin requires automatic deductions of child-support payments from the wages of fathers who desert their children on welfare, thus becoming a state that goes "far beyond federal requirements in holding parents responsible for their children until age 18."

Herbers does not expect further cutbacks in federal aid to states and cities. He predicts that rather than dictating local policy, Washington will continue to "build its programs around the innovations of the states."

Judging

"What Am I? A Potted Plant?" by Richard A. Posner, in *The New Republic* (Sept. 28, 1987), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

What should the powers of federal judges be? Some legal scholars (known as "strict constructionists" or "legal formalists") believe that the primary task of a judge should be to determine the nature and limits of "private rights"—rights which only apply to particular individuals. Judges, these scholars maintain, should administer existing laws, and leave the creation of new laws or rights to the elected branches of government.

Posner, a circuit court judge and senior lecturer at the University of Chicago, argues that "strict constructionism" is politically and legally impossible. State and federal courts, he contends, have been "entrusted with making policy" since the United States began.

Legal formalists, Posner believes, wrongly assume that legislators have perfect knowledge of the consequences of the laws they pass. They fail to take into account that technological and social changes create new legal questions that courts must resolve. For example, the Supreme Court's 1972 decision that unauthorized wiretaps violate Fourth Amendment prohibitions against unreasonable searches and seizures was a needed "interpretation" of the Constitution, simply because wiretaps did not exist at the time of the Founders.

The Constitution, according to Posner, can be divided into "specific" and "general" clauses. While many of the "specific" clauses "have stood the test of time amazingly well," others, such as the Second Amendment "right to bear arms," have become "dangerously anachronistic" and in need of correction.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Is "strict construction" of the "general" clauses of the Constitution possible? Posner thinks not, because the Constitution does not include explicit instructions as to whether it is to be read "broadly" or "narrowly." A judge must base his decisions not just on the Constitution, but on his beliefs about the function and purpose of the courts. Posner cites Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who argued that judges should legislate "interstitially"—slowly, and in a less partisan way than the elected branches of government.

Liberals who attempt to enact their political agenda into constitutional law, in Posner's view, may be "imprudent and misguided." But their actions do not violate either the letter or the spirit of the Constitution just because they offend the tenets of strict construction.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

American Decline

"The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony" by Susan Strange, in *International Organization* (Autumn 1987), 55 Hayward St., Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

One of the persistent myths of our time says Strange, a professor of international relations at the London School of Economics, is that America has passed her prime as a great power. Faced with a shrinking share of world trade, a dwindling industrial base, and increasingly fractious allies, America, many scholars conclude, like Britain before it, must face an imperial sunset.

But America, Strange argues, is not in retreat. The decline of American power, she believes, has been greatly exaggerated.

Most scholars believe the best way to measure the strength of various countries is "relational power"—the ability of one nation to influence the policies of another. But "relational power," Strange contends, has become a less useful measure; the nature of the contest between states has shifted from a competition over territory to a competition over market shares in the world economy.

Strange maintains that nations should be measured by their "structural power"—the ability to shape "the global political economy." Structural power can be judged in four ways: military strength, financial clout, control over world knowledge, and production of goods and services.

In all four areas, the world is still dancing to American tunes. Of the 300 largest corporations, 142 are American, including seven of the 10 largest oil companies and the six largest computer firms. Because dollars are the currency used in most international financial transactions, the U.S. is the only government capable of creating assets "that are accepted and saleable worldwide." Large corporate research and development programs, combined with massive defense spending and universities that are bigger, richer, and less politicized than their foreign counterparts, ensure that the U.S. is the world's leading information producer. Only in military strength does the U.S. have an equally powerful rival (the Soviet Union),

 FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

and even then the U.S. has far fewer rivals than the British did at their imperial zenith.

If the U.S. has such economic clout, why does it appear to be weak? Clashing special interests, Strange concludes, result in American policies that are "inconsistent, fickle, and unpredictable." Would any other nation, she asks, preach free trade and practice protectionism?

A Threat That Faded

"Whatever Happened to the Resource War?" by Jock A. Finlayson and David G. Haglund, in *Survival* (Sept.-Oct. 1987), International Institute for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ, United Kingdom.

A dominant theme of international politics in the late 1970s and early 1980s was that America would be irrevocably drawn into a "resource war" with the Soviet Union, as both sides sought to assure themselves access to essential raw materials. As a presidential candidate in 1980, Ronald Reagan argued that Western military strength was necessary to ensure that suppliers of such strategic minerals as copper and bauxite did not succumb to the predatory advances of the Soviet Union.

Today, few scholars or politicians contend that there is a danger of a "resource war." Why did this threat vanish? Finlayson, a doctoral student, and Haglund, director of the Centre for International Relations, both at Queen's University in Canada, point to several factors that removed the strategic mineral issue from the political agenda.

Attempts in the mid-1970s to create mineral cartels comparable to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries proved abortive. Efforts by Third World producers of iron ore, nickel, and phosphate to create such organizations failed because prospective members did not control a sufficient share of global output for a cartel to be effective. Moreover, when developing countries sought to dictate the prices of their copper and bauxite, the industrialized nations either created substitutes or found alternative suppliers.

The most important noncommunist source of many strategic minerals is South Africa, a country which produced, in 1984, 40 percent of the world's vanadium and 32 percent of the world's chromite. Faced with rising turbulence in that nation, Western countries have attempted to diversify their imports, conserve existing supplies, and substitute comparable minerals (such as molybdenum for vanadium).

The authors believe that "third-world commodity power" will continue to decline. Prices for most minerals have fallen steadily as technological advances (e.g., ceramics) have reduced demand. "Substantial new reserves" of minerals in Brazil and China will increase competition and keep prices stable.

What can policymakers learn from the failure of the "resource war" to take place? Simply that peaceful trade, rather than "high-cost, risky, and ethically suspect remedies" such as military intervention, is the best tool Western nations have for obtaining vital raw materials.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Myths of World War I

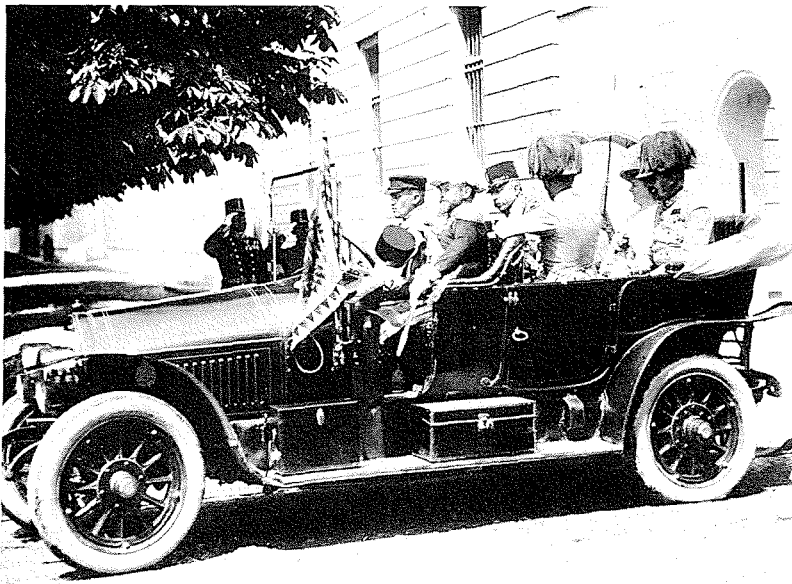
"The Sarajevo Fallacy: The Historical and Intellectual Origins of Arms Control Theology" by Patrick Glynn, in *The National Interest* (Fall 1987), 1627 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

The present Western preoccupation with arms control, argues Glynn, assistant to the director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, rests on two faulty assumptions: that arms races cause wars and that wars happen "accidentally."

Glynn believes these false lessons derive from the same source: World War I revisionist historians. "The real dividing line in modern reflection on the causes of war," he writes, "is not 1945 but 1919."

British historians of the 1920s regularly assumed that World War I resulted from an out-of-control arms race between Britain, France, and Russia (the Triple Entente) on the one hand and Germany on the other. "The moral is obvious," Sir Edward Grey, Britain's foreign secretary in 1914, wrote in his memoirs. "Great armaments lead inevitably to war . . . Each measure taken by one nation is noted, and leads to counter-measures by others."

But Germany's arms buildup was much greater than other European powers. German military spending increased 10-fold between 1870 and 1914, while comparable British spending tripled and French spending doubled during the same period. German arms spending was not due merely



Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, whose June 1914 assassination at Sarajevo started the Great Power maneuvering that resulted in World War I.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

to "a simple sense of insecurity" about other nations' strength, but to the Germans' desire to tip the balance of power in Europe in their favor. Germany was "consistently the initiator" of military buildups; for example, conscription in France occurred only after Germany's Parliament passed a massive arms bill in March 1913.

World War I, Glynn contends, was not started by accident. The officers of the German General Staff were fully aware "that they were risking general war" when they urged Austria to invade Serbia. Because many of the clauses in the Triple Entente treaty were secret, German leaders thought that Britain's support for France and Russia was ambivalent, making "diplomatic and military victories all the more plausible" in the event that Britain abandoned her allies at the outbreak of a major war.

The true lesson to be drawn from the origins of World War I, Glynn concludes, is that the best way to stop an aggressive power from starting war would be to ensure "that deterrence and defensive alliances remained unambiguously strong."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Economist's Choice

"James Buchanan & Co." by David R. Henderson, in *Reason* (Nov. 1987), 2716 Ocean Park Blvd., Ste. 1062, Santa Monica, Calif. 90405.

The award of the Nobel Prize to economist James Buchanan in 1986 was quite controversial. Critics argued that Buchanan, leader of the "public choice" school of economics, failed to display the pathfinding insight worthy of a Nobel laureate.

Henderson, a regular contributor to *Fortune*, argues that "public choice" is an important economic movement. Because of Buchanan and his followers, "ideas about government that were once considered revolutionary are now common wisdom."

"Public choice" theory offers economic analyses based on the premise that politicians, voters, and bureaucrats act to advance their self-interest rather than the public interest. The movement began in 1957, when Anthony Downs (now at Brookings) published *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Downs argued that federal programs are politically viable only if the cost of the program can be spread over large numbers of taxpayers. Consider the U.S. government program that pays dairy farmers not to produce milk. This program survives because the benefits paid to the 100,000 farmers who gain from the program cost millions of taxpayers and milk drinkers less than \$50 per year each—a relatively small sum.

Buchanan, along with longtime collaborator Gordon Tullock, extended Downs's theories into a discussion of the nature of governance. Their most important book, *The Calculus of Consent* (1962), provided an economic analysis of the size and structure of political majorities. The authors also attracted the attention of such talented graduate students as James Miller III, currently director of the Office of Management and Budget.

These students, along with other followers, used public-choice tech-

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niques to analyze other areas of policy. Gary Becker of the University of Chicago has shown that government programs that redistribute income are extremely efficient, because the beneficiaries of these programs have a vested interest in receiving as much government money as possible. Benjamin Zycher of the Rand Corp. has argued that "gerrymandered" election districts are desirable both to prevent the concentration of special-interest power and to ensure minority-party representation.

Henderson predicts that such theories will become more influential in the future, as the number of public-choice economists increases and as economic textbooks written from a public-choice standpoint proliferate. The fact that critics now find its theories "obvious," he concludes, "shows just how profound an effect the public choice school has had."

21st-Century Cars

"The Industry in 1997" by Maryann N. Keller, in *IEEE Spectrum* (Oct. 1987), 345 East 47th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Predicting the future of the automobile industry, argues Keller, a vice-president of Furman Selz Mager Dietz & Birney, New York-based stockbrokers, is a risky business. Few auto analysts, for example, foresaw the sweeping changes that resulted from the energy crises of 1973 and 1979. Many current trends (such as increasing pickup truck sales) may suddenly end if gasoline prices rise sharply. Nonetheless, Keller argues, "certain changes in the automotive industry are inevitable."

Keller predicts that U.S. auto manufacturers will continue their decline. Foreign manufacturers currently sell 30 percent of the cars bought in the U.S. (up from 18 percent in 1977); the North American share of world automobile production has dropped from 34.5 percent in 1976 to 29.5 percent in 1986. In contrast, Japan's share of the world auto market has risen from 20 percent in 1976 to 27 percent in 1986.

Third World nations, assisted by Japanese and Western manufacturers, will continue to develop automotive industries, both to satisfy consumer demand and to spur growth in such ancillary industries as metals, chemicals, and electronics. U.S. firms, Keller argues, will, by 1997, contract out 20 percent or more of their assembly and design work to outside firms. Many "American" cars are already built and designed by foreigners; the Ford Festiva, for example, is designed by Mazda in Japan and built in South Korea. General Motors' Cadillac Allante is designed and built by the Italian firm of Pininfarina.

To surmount protectionist barriers and protect market share, Japanese firms will go further than U.S. rivals and build assembly plants "in the countries they sell to." A study at the University of Michigan predicts that non-U.S. companies (Japanese firms and Volkswagen) will produce 7.3 percent of cars manufactured in the U.S. in 1995, up from 3.6 percent in 1985. Japanese firms may also build plants in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe, where "stable workforces and artificial exchange rates... make exports profitable."

Few Third World firms, Keller concludes, will be capable of acquiring

Autos are increasingly designed in one nation and built in another. The Volkswagen Fox is built in Brazil; Ford's Mercury Tracer, designed by Mazda in Japan, is manufactured in Mexico.

"The Economic Revolution in the American South" by Gavin Wright, in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Summer 1987), Princeton Univ., Princeton, N.J. 08544.

Wages in the South began to rise after World War I, when Northern

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unions and employers united against their Southern low-wage competitors. Union activism as well as campaigns against child labor and night work in the 1920s caused Southern wages to rise. During the 1930s, wages rose further as a result of minimum-wage laws and union pressure.

World War II marked the end of Southern economic isolation. Defense spending and new discoveries of oil and natural gas created thousands of high-paying jobs. The introduction of a successful mechanical cotton harvester caused Southern agricultural employment to fall by 1,000,000 between 1950 and 1959; the displaced workers (mostly black) migrated to "high-unemployment ghettos" in Northern cities rather than face continuing poverty at home. The departure of these workers caused the *average* Southern wage to rise still higher.

The major reason for the Southern economy's shift, Wright concludes, was that a new breed of Southern politicians refused to continue insularity. State officials now encouraged outside investment, through tax breaks, industrial development bonds, and spending for research parks. After Southern low-wage barriers were ended, the speed of "absorption into the national economy was breath-taking."

Liability Problems

"Injury Litigation and Liability Insurance Dynamics" by Peter Huber, in *Science* (Oct. 2, 1987), 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

The cost of liability insurance has increased sharply in recent years. The price of medical malpractice insurance has risen by 40 percent since 1985; premiums for general liability (accident) insurance have risen by an average of 70 percent, with premiums for some industries (such as toy manufacturing) increasing up to 1,000 percent. The amount of insurance available has dropped even as prices have risen.

Why has liability insurance become so expensive? Huber, a Manhattan Institute senior fellow, believes the price increase is due to the rising awards paid to winners of product liability lawsuits.

"An insurance company," Huber explains, "is a financial lake." The depth of the "lake" is its "reserves"—money or other investments set aside for future claims. Premiums flow into the reserve lake; profits, administrative costs, and claim payments flow out.

Insurance companies create separate reserves for each line of insurance they offer. "Short-tail" forms of insurance—such as health or auto accident insurance where claims are paid within a year after they are submitted—have relatively shallow reserves. Claims against riskier "long-tail" insurance policies (such as malpractice and product-liability insurance) may be made years or decades after the policy was initiated, thus requiring proportionally larger reserves. While auto accident "lakes" may have reserves equalling one to two years' worth of premiums, risky pollution-liability insurance requires up to five years' worth of premiums.

Dramatic rate increases, Huber argues, have largely occurred in "long-tail" liability insurance lines. Although "payouts" to policy-holders in these lines have only risen (after adjusting for inflation) by an annual rate of five

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to 15 percent, companies have sharply increased reserves to ensure that massive claims can be paid. As rates rise, low-risk customers either switch to a competing firm or abandon the insurance market; as a firm's best customers leave, rates increase for the high-risk customers who remain through a process of "adverse selection."

Capping insurance payouts has had "demonstrable impact" in lowering premiums. Indiana, for example, capped medical malpractice awards in 1975; 10 years later, medical malpractice insurance rates there were 30 to 50 percent lower than in neighboring states. Without such caps, Huber says, premiums will increase if payouts rise. "More liability," he warns, "brings about higher premiums for liability insurance."

Reducing Unemployment

"Bonuses to Workers and Employers to Reduce Unemployment: Randomized Trials in Illinois" by Stephen A. Woodbury and Robert G. Spiegelman, in *The American Economic Review* (Sept. 1987), 1313 21st Ave. South, Ste. 809, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

Unemployment benefits were originally designed to provide relief to workers laid off from jobs. In recent years, many economists have concluded that such insurance programs prolong joblessness by reducing the pressure on unemployed workers to search for new jobs.

What can be done to alter these trends? Woodbury, an economist at Michigan State University, and Spiegelman, executive director of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, recently conducted a year-long study of the effects cash bonuses have in reducing joblessness.

The authors studied 12,000 people between the ages of 20 and 55 who registered with Illinois state unemployment offices between July and November 1984. One-third of the claimants were assigned to a control group, one-third were assigned to a program (the "Claimant Experiment") that paid a \$500 bonus to a worker who found a new job within 11 weeks and stayed on the new job for four months, and one-third were assigned to a program (the "Employer Experiment") that paid employers \$500 if they hired and retained an unemployed person for four months.

Although only 570 of the 4,186 workers in the Claimant Experiment earned a \$500 bonus, the average length of unemployment in the entire group fell by more than one week. Unemployment insurance payments made to Claimant Experiment participants fell by an average of \$158. The earnings of newly employed workers were not substantially lower than what they had been at their previous jobs, thus suggesting that participants conducted "more-intense job search efforts" rather than quickly accepting low-wage work.

Paying employers a \$500 bonus only reduced unemployment among white females. For all other groups, the Employer Experiment had a statistically insignificant effect on both length of unemployment and benefits received. The authors suggest that employers who already plan to hire new workers "have the greatest incentive" to join such bonus programs, reducing their effectiveness.

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Because the results of the Claimant Experiment were “unequivocal and strong,” the authors propose conducting further trials to make cash bonuses more effective. Such trials, they conclude, may result in new schemes “that may effectively reduce unemployment at low or even negligible cost to unemployed workers and to society.”

SOCIETY

Learning by the Book

“How Children Learn Words” by George A. Miller and Patricia M. Gildea, in *Scientific American* (Sept. 1987), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

By the age of 12, the average child learns 5,000 new words each year, or about 13 every day—yet no more than 200 words are taught in a school year. How do children manage to learn so many words on their own? Miller, a psychologist at Princeton, and Gildea, professor of psychology at Rutgers University, believe students learn many new words by reading.

Mastering a word occurs in two distinct stages: first, a student assigns the new word to a category, such as “color” or “food”; later, he starts to recognize distinctions (e.g., the difference between red and pink) among words in a given category.

Indeed, to fully comprehend a new word, the student must find it used



Computers can enhance children's ability to build vocabulary by letting them see an unfamiliar word used in a definition, a picture, and a sentence. Here, a student learns new words in a lesson drawn from Raiders of the Lost Ark.

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in many different contexts. The easiest way to understand an unfamiliar word is to ask another person (such as a teacher). However, few teachers can devote such personal attention to students, and most resort to dictionary exercises.

But "learning from a dictionary," the authors argue, "requires considerable sophistication"—interrupting the story to find a word alphabetically listed, holding the original context in mind while sifting through the various senses of a dictionary definition—and children, through age 12, are "not good at it." After studying several thousand practice sentences written by fifth and sixth graders in which new words were consistently misinterpreted, the authors concluded that tasks relying on the dictionary are "a waste of time."

Arbitrary vocabulary lists, the authors argue, isolate words from any context. Reading proves to be the most effective vehicle for vocabulary-building because it makes the reader *want* to understand new words. The authors found that only through "reading several million words per year"—at least one and a half hours each school day—can children acquire even *average* word skills.

The ideal way to build vocabulary, the authors believe, would be lengthy reading supplemented by immediate explanations of new words. They have developed interactive video programs that students scan like books, permitting them to request an explanatory definition, a sentence, or a picture for an unknown word. By providing accessible definitions for new words when the student wants them, computers can significantly enhance language acquisition.

When I'm 64

"Inside the Empty Nest" by Brad Edmondson,
in *American Demographics* (Nov. 1987), 108
N. Cayuga St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

The 33,000,000 Americans currently aged 50 to 64, argues Edmondson, an *American Demographics* senior editor, are "wealthier, better educated, and more active" than their parents or grandparents. But they still must make hard decisions—about savings, whether or not to move, and how to spend discretionary income.

People between the ages of 55 and 64 have the "highest net worth" and highest income of any group of Americans. According to the Census Bureau, two out of three households in this group are married couples, and 43 percent of these married couples have annual incomes of \$40,000 or more. Because many of the children of 50- to 64-year-old Americans are no longer living with their parents, the "empty nester" parents have more disposable income. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that households headed by a person aged 55 to 64 spent 11 percent more on furnishings than other groups, and gave 24 percent more to charity.

The current generation of "empty nesters" is retiring earlier than their parents. The percentage of men between the ages of 55 and 59 who work has dropped from 89 percent in 1970 to 79 percent in 1986. A 1984 survey from the American Council of Life Insurance (ACLI) reports that only 14 percent of Americans aged 50 to 64 plan to move when they

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retire. Goldring & Co., a Chicago-based market-research firm, found that people aged 50 to 54 spent an average of 15 years at their current address; for people aged 60 to 64, the average increased to 18 years.

While spending more on themselves, "empty nesters" have "nagging doubts" about their financial prospects. Many 50- to 64-year-old Americans distrust government retirement programs; only 25 percent of these Americans surveyed by the ACLI felt very confident about Social Security, and 55 percent are "not confident" that Medicare benefits will continue at current levels.

Edmondson predicts that 50- to 64-year-olds will continue current spending and mobility habits for some time. But the clout of this age group will grow as the "baby boom" generation ages: The U.S. Census Bureau predicts an 81 percent rise in 50- to 64-year-olds (to 59 million Americans) by 2020.

Poor Numbers

"In Search of the Working Poor" by Charles Murray, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1987), 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Work hard, the adage goes, and you shall be rewarded. But in recent years, a growing number of sociologists have argued that hard work does not necessarily free an individual from poverty. Americans "may have been oversold on the Protestant Ethic," say the authors of *Years of Poverty, Years of Plenty*, an influential 1984 study from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, "and have refused to see the extent to which people are . . . victims."

Murray, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, disagrees. Using the data from which the authors of *Years of Poverty* drew their conclusions, he argues that "poverty in America is seldom the result of uncontrollable events."

Murray used information from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), a data base which has, since 1968, tracked the income and work histories of 5,000 American families. He found that poverty was "tightly concentrated" among people with less than a high school education. Fewer than one percent of the college graduates and white male high school graduates sampled were poor in 1970. And, although most poor people lack high school degrees, 90 percent of the people in the PSID sample without a high-school education were *not* poor either in 1970 or 1980.

Moreover, because government poverty figures do not account for cost-of-living differences between urban and rural areas, Murray argues that some rural families with incomes "below the poverty line" are not really poor. Lower housing and food costs may allow "poor" rural families to have a better standard of living than urban families with similar incomes. Purchasing-power differences between rural and urban households increase as family size increases, because some of the money city families use for food and shelter can be used by rural families for other needs. Even with a new child, a large rural family whose income falls below the poverty

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line, might not, due to lower living costs, actually be poor.

Murray calls for a new national survey of people whose incomes are officially below the poverty line. He predicts that such a survey will "slash the accepted count of poor people" by reducing the estimates of rural and small-town poverty dramatically. And most of the poor, he argues, will not see themselves as victims, but will instead "be seen as living lives that they choose to live."

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Press and Science

"The Culture of Science Journalism" by Dorothy Nelkin, in *Society* (Sept.-Oct. 1987), Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ. 08903.

Nineteenth-century American science journalists had a flair for false drama best described by a New York *Sunday World* reporter. Suppose, he wrote, you are assigned to write a story explaining the significance of Halley's Comet. "Get some good nightmare idea like the inhabitants of Mars watching it pass. Then you want a quarter of a page of big type heads . . . and a two-column boxed freak containing a scientific opinion which nobody will understand, just to give it class."

Today's science journalists, writes Nelkin, a sociologist at Cornell, are less flamboyant than their predecessors. But "the early efforts to communicate science to the public" helped frame the way today's reporters cover scientific issues.

Modern science journalism began in 1921 when Edwin Scripps, a newspaper publisher and founder of the United Press, saw that there was a market for articles about scientific developments written in "plain United States that the people can understand." He founded the Science Service, the first syndicate to distribute news about science. Science Service editor Edwin Slosson urged his writers to pack human interest and adventure into their stories. Advertisements for the service informed editors that "drama lurks in every test tube," and promised stories packed with "the pure thrill of primal discovery."

The generation of science journalists who emerged in the 1940s continued the Science Service style. While science journalists of this era frequently lacked technical training (longtime *New York Times* science editor Walter Sullivan, for example, began his career as a music critic) they nonetheless continued, unquestioningly, to praise any scientific change, describing new pesticides as "revolutionary developments," and praising "cosmic breakthroughs" in the space program.

During the 1960s, some journalists called on their colleagues to be more critical. Today's science writers keep their distance from the technical bureaucracies they cover, but still admire scientists and maintain a sense of wonder about scientific discoveries. The *San Francisco Chronicle's* David Perlman concluded that the grandeur of scientific advances keeps science writers "endlessly excited" about their jobs. "For science by definition," Perlman wrote, "is young and exciting and elegant."

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Soviet TV News

"Soviet and American News: Week of Intensive Interaction" by Ellen Mickiewicz and Gregory Haley, in *Slavic Review* (Summer 1987), P.O. Box 8180, Univ. of Texas, Austin, Tex. 78713.

In 1960 only five percent of the Soviet population had access to television; by 1986 that figure had risen to 93 percent. Though a latecomer to the Soviet Union, television has had "an enormous effect" on the way Soviets acquire information, argue Mickiewicz, a political scientist, and Haley, a graduate student, both at Emory University.

Each evening, an estimated 150 million Soviets tune into the news program "Vremia" ("Time"), which is broadcast on all television channels across the 11 time zones of the Soviet Union. "Vremia" averages about 35 minutes (versus 22 for American news shows), but may be extended to accommodate speeches by General Secretary Gorbachev (which may last well over an hour) or other national events.

"Vremia" opens with important national news—usually policy statements and directives from the Politburo and the Central Committee or activities of the general secretary—followed by domestic economic stories, international news, and stories on science and culture. More in-depth or "personalized" views of the news may be presented during occasional commentary segments, or on the late-evening international news analysis program, "Segodnya v Mire" ("Today in the World"), which is watched by 60 to 90 million Soviet citizens.

In a five-month comparative analysis of "Vremia" and ABC's "World



Host Tamara Maximova interviews professor V. Shubkin on the Soviet news program "Obshchestvenoiye Mneniye" ("Public Opinion").

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News Tonight," the authors found that "Vremia" devoted a much larger percentage of its stories to international coverage than did its American counterpart. In particular, "Vremia" focused "on the adversary": 17.6 percent of "Vremia" stories involved the U.S. and its NATO allies, whereas only 5.1 percent of ABC "World News Tonight" stories covered the USSR and Warsaw Pact countries.

The "mission" of Soviet television as an "overt and centrally directed socializer" shapes not only the agenda of news, but also the way in which it is presented. In coverage of student demonstrations in South Korea, analyzed in an intensive one-week study, for example, "Vremia" showed film of melees and tear gas, emphasizing the U.S. role as "puppet master" behind the "South Korean dictatorship." Coverage of terrorist bombings in Paris also depicted scenes of the chaos, while offering no possible explanation for the incidents.

"Vremia" stresses "insecurity in the West and [Western] fear of terrorism as an excuse to bolster repressive tendencies." And it is no different from other Soviet mass media, which use, among other things, "non-Soviet sources to legitimate Soviet positions."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Doubts About Skeptics

"The Doubting of Skepticism" by George Watson, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Autumn 1987), One West Range, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

Skepticism, argues Watson, a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, is the received wisdom of our time. From the clergyman who considers differences between right and wrong merely a matter of personal choice, to the feminists who condemn "male-dominated" science, the notion that it is impossible to objectively observe or judge life, Watson contends, is "the prevailing orthodoxy of the West."

Yet these skeptics, whose only firm opinion is that all values must be doubted, have forgotten a lesson taught by Scottish philosopher David Hume over two centuries ago. A true skeptic, Hume wrote in his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739-40), "will be diffident of his philosophical doubts as well as of his philosophical convictions."

Unquestioning skepticism, Watson believes, leads its proponents to reduce philosophical opponents to having beliefs "conditioned" by their gender, race, or religion. But classifying something—calling Felix Mendelssohn's music "Jewish," say, or Victorian fiction "bourgeois"—is not the same as determining whether that object is good or bad. Moreover, nearly all advocates of "conditioning" assume that they are exempt from processes they assign to others. No Marxist argues that Marx was "conditioned" into writing *Das Kapital* (1867).

Since the 1960s, most skeptics know that there are limits to their skepticism. While some anthropologists, for example, still maintain that it is impossible to judge the actions of other civilizations or other ethical

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systems, no one argues that condemnation of Soviet or Nazi concentration camps is simply a matter of "conditioning." Watson contends that objectivity does not mean that answers to questions are known, but rather that the tools which answer unanswered questions are sound. Before Neptune was discovered, astronomers did not *know* that a new planet existed, but made an objective judgment that a new planet could well exist. Similarly, critics prepared to make objective judgments do not *know* what these judgments will be in advance, but are certain the logical tools used to conduct their inquiries are reliable.

Philosophers have begun to question skepticism in recent years, with such works as Sir Peter Strawson's *Skepticism and Naturalism* (1985). Watson hopes the doubting of skepticism continues. "Such matters," he stresses, "need to be reopened."

Liberalism's End?

"The Liberal Ethic and the Spirit of Protestantism" by Richard Fox, in *The Center Magazine*, (Sept.-Oct. 1987), P.O. Box 4068, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93140.

American liberalism, argues Fox, a historian at Reed College, has traditionally found allies among such "celebrated religious spokesmen" as Martin Luther King, Jr. But in the 1980s, while leaders in other professions (actors, psychologists, and even astronomers) support the liberal agenda, there is no theologian "to link liberal politics to spiritual meaning or transcendent purpose."

Why did liberal theology decline? Fox traces the seeds of decay to the teachings of Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971).

In *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932), Niebuhr maintained that the progressive liberal theology of his time was naively utopian. Communal striving toward the New Jerusalem was not possible, because the fragmentation of America into special interest groups meant that a national consensus (or, perhaps, a moral consensus) could not be achieved. Christians, Niebuhr taught, should try to improve the world by somehow "inject[ing] a tension into secular society," urging secular men to look beyond amoral efficiency toward the transcendence of God and the manifest need for social justice.

Niebuhr did not explicitly state how his goals were to be achieved. Moreover, Fox argues, by belittling "the quest for communal fellowship," Niebuhr underestimated the ability of ordinary people to determine the nature and purpose of a virtuous life. Because of these flaws, Niebuhr's "Christian realism," while a major influence on such 1950s liberals as Adlai Stevenson and Hubert Humphrey, faded after Niebuhr's retirement into the secular *Realpolitik* of the Kennedy administration.

Two recent books attempt to continue Niebuhr's search for a "public theology." In *The Naked Public Square* (1984), Richard Neuhaus argues that a moral consensus can be achieved if Americans ignore the views of elites and return to Biblical virtues. In *Habits of the Heart* (1985), Robert Bellah urges Americans to return to the republican vision of working with others in common tasks.

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Both authors, Fox concludes, fail to see the extent to which America has become secularized. When some mainline Protestant churches have become places where God is merely "a beaming, glad-handing spiritual consultant," he asks, how can the social transformation necessary to restore communal life be achieved?

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Smelling the Past

"Remembering Odors and Their Names" by Trygg Engen, in *American Scientist* (Sept.-Oct. 1987), Sigma Xi, 345 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn. 06511.

"Memory can restore to life everything except smells," novelist Vladimir Nabokov once wrote, "although nothing revives the past so completely as a smell that was once associated with it." Nabokov's insight has recently been confirmed by science.

Engen, a psychologist at Brown University, identifies two distinct types of olfactory memory: the ability to call up the sensation of a particular odor and the ability to identify a smell when presented. New research has illuminated these differences.

Until recently, researchers classified odors by the "smell prism," developed by German psychologist Hans Henning over 70 years ago. The prism separates all odors into six categories, such as "flowery," "spicy," or



Wine tasters use smell to distinguish subtle differences among vintages, although they generally have only average skill in identifying other odors.

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"tarry." Engen found "not a shred of evidence" to support the validity of such a system, which assumes that people categorize odors by name.

Engen believes that people organize odors according to personal experiences. In one set of tests, Engen presented test subjects with 10 different odors, ranging from chemical "odorants" such as amyl acetate (banana oil) to "brand name" stimuli such as Vicks Vaporub. Responses such as "baby wipes" for the smell of Johnson's baby powder show that people remember odors by association with similar smells and by "the context or kind of object in which odors may be perceived."

Engen found that women name odors more easily than men, perhaps reflecting differences in hormones or verbal felicity. On the average, however, people can provide names for only about six common smells.

We can rarely recreate a smell (as we can a visual image) from its name, Engen concludes; odor memories are not retrieved "with words, but with odor." Yet encountering a familiar odor can evoke vivid memories—a judgment once made by French novelist Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Once a visual memory has vanished, Proust wrote, "The smell and taste of things . . . bear unflinching, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection."

Out of Africa?

"In Search of Eve" by Rebecca L. Cann, in *The Sciences* (Sept.-Oct. 1987), New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Scientists have long used fossilized skeleton bones as evidence for determining man's history. In recent years, the electron microscope has joined the pick and shovel in the paleontologist's investigative arsenal. Using recently developed techniques, scientists may have found "a mother of all modern humans"—an African who lived about 200,000 years ago.

Cann, assistant professor of genetics at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, argues that using electron microscopes to trace the ways that DNA molecules have mutated over time "has become the best hope for answering questions" left unresolved by years of archeological excavation.

Scientists have been researching DNA mutations for decades. In 1962 Linus Pauling and Emile Zuckerkandl of the California Institute of Technology discovered that the differences in hemoglobin between different living primate species proportionally increased as the "evolutionary distance" between the species increased; two species of monkeys whose common ancestor lived 10 million years ago had hemoglobin twice as different as monkeys whose common ancestor existed five million years ago. In 1967 Vincent M. Sarich and Allan C. Wilson of the University of California, Berkeley, studied albumin (a blood protein) in apes and Old World monkeys and found that amino acids in their samples changed once every 1.25 million years with the regularity of a "molecular clock."

More sophisticated technology allowed later researchers to examine evolutionary changes in the components of cells. In 1979 Cann began a seven-year effort to collect specimens of mitochondrial DNA—the component of the cell that metabolizes food and water—from placentas of new-

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born children in five areas of the world. Cann found that mitochondria of Africans had the widest diversity of any group she sampled, indicating the greatest degree of evolutionary change. Assuming that the African environment has not changed dramatically, this means that "their mitochondrial DNA is the oldest," and is thus the original DNA from which other races have descended.

Because mitochondria are only inherited from the mother, Cann suspects that the oldest traceable human ancestor was a woman (whom she names "Eve") who lived between 285,000 and 143,000 years ago. She argues that science's next project should be to find out if a similar evolutionary path can be found in the male Y chromosome. Only then, she concludes, can scientists debate whether the first known human man (Adam?) "lived at the same time and in the same place as Eve."

The Gallium Age

"After Silicon" by Lee Edson, in *Mosaic* (Summer 1987), National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. 20550.

Silicon is the material that defines our times. Because it is the primary element of computer microchips, silicon is as important to our age as steel was to the 19th century and bronze was to the Greeks of 3,000 B.C.

Although silicon's importance will continue indefinitely, says Edson, a free-lance science writer, many of its functions may be taken over by gallium arsenide, a synthetic semiconductor. While silicon will not be completely replaced, he argues, gallium arsenide may "carve out its own considerable niche in the silicon era."

Gallium arsenide has several advantages over silicon. Because its crystalline structure allows electrons to move freely, switches made from gallium arsenide can operate 10 times faster than equivalent silicon switches. Gallium arsenide chips run on one-tenth of the electricity used by comparable silicon switches, and are better able to resist radiation and temperature changes. Gallium arsenide also emits light when a current is applied to it, which makes it a useful material for making lasers and integrated circuits.

Although electrical engineers have known about gallium arsenide's properties since 1952, the first transistor-grade crystals were not grown until the 1970s. In the past decade, engineers in the United States and Japan have been able to fuse gallium arsenide with other elements to create transistors of extremely high power. One of the *Modfets* field-effect transistors developed by Hadis Morkoc of the University of Illinois and P. Z. Chao of General Electric has obtained speeds—in terms of frequency of operation—of 230 gigahertz, or 230 billion times a second.

New uses, however, may yet be found for silicon. British researcher R. C. Chiddick is developing "amorphous" (solid) silicon, which could be used for low-cost solar cells and flat television screens. The Pentagon's E. N. Maynard is leading an effort to produce chips that have one million or more devices on them.

But some 5,000 researchers will continue to study gallium arsenide. The reason: Potential profits from this "blessed material" have been "estimated in the multibillions of dollars."

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'Greenhouse' Gases

"The Biggest Chill" by Wallace S. Broecker, in *Natural History* (Oct. 1987), American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

The "greenhouse effect"—the rise in the Earth's surface temperature caused by increasing amounts of carbon dioxide, methane, and freon gases in the environment—is well known. But what will the consequences be in the long term?

Broecker, a geologist at Columbia University, believes that increasing amounts of "greenhouse" gases may cause shifts in ocean currents. The results, he warns, may "pose great threats to humans and wildlife."

Broecker suggests that climatic shifts may occur in sudden leaps, not by gradual changes. His evidence: experiments conducted by Danish scientist Willi Dansgaard and Switzerland's Hans Oeschger. Dansgaard examined prehistoric ice in southern Greenland and determined that the air temperature there had warmed swiftly several times over the millennia. Oeschger discovered that the carbon dioxide (CO₂) content of the air trapped in bubbles in the ice increased by 20 percent during the same periods when the air grew warmer. Because these shifts in CO₂ levels were so radical, Broecker argues that shifts in ocean currents played a part in causing the ice ages. Only some extraordinary change in the Earth's chemical cycles, particularly those affecting ocean salinity, could have produced such sharp changes in CO₂ levels.

While the first ice age was due largely to a shift in the Earth's orbit that reduced summer sunlight, Broecker maintains that the second ice age, which began about 11,000 years ago but lasted only 700 years, was due to a stoppage of the network of currents (or the "ocean conveyor belt"), which circulates warm water to the North Atlantic and cold water to the northern Pacific. The increased flow of fresh water from melting glaciers in the Great Lakes area reduced the salinity of the ocean, disrupting the flow of warmer water from the Equator to the North Atlantic.

Yet, "we have no way to predict," Broecker concludes, "how the great ocean conveyor" will respond to the greenhouse effect, because the Earth has not warmed significantly during recorded history. The question of what damage "greenhouse" gases will cause, he warns, will "be resolved only by serious study over many decades."

Chemical Feast

"Cancer From Our Food: Natural and Man-Made" by Allen L. Hammond, in *Science Impact Letter* (Aug. 1987), 10400 Connecticut Ave., Ste. 304, Kensington, Md. 20895.

Many pesticides have been found by scientists to be carcinogenic. The National Research Council estimates that 30 percent of insecticides, 60 percent of herbicides, and 90 percent of fungicides may be cancer causing. But what about organic chemicals that occur naturally in foods? Are they

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as dangerous as their manmade counterparts?

Probably not, says Hammond, *Science Impact Letter* editor. While some "naturally occurring chemicals are toxic," he argues, their cancer-causing potential is probably lower than chemicals made by man.

Bruce Ames, a biochemist at the University of California, Berkeley, studied the effects of naturally occurring carcinogens. He concluded that an eight-ounce glass of wine is thousands of times more likely to cause cancer than either DDT or ethylene dibromide (EDB), because alcohol is known to cause about three percent of human cancers resulting from cirrhosis of the liver. According to Ames, peanut butter, basil leaves, and comfrey herb tea all contain compounds at least 100 times more carcinogenic than DDT.

Ames's research, however, is contradicted by a recent report from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). An NAS study calculated that if residue from all 28 government-sanctioned pesticides accumulated in food to the maximum amount allowed under law, even the most dangerous food (tomatoes) would, at worst, only cause 8.75 cases of cancer for every 10,000 Americans exposed over a lifetime.

Hammond argues that both Ames's research and the NAS report have too many flaws to be absolutely reliable. Ames's data, for example, is derived from experiments with laboratory rodents, yet "no one knows how well such data predict a chemical's effect on humans." The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only checks a small number of food samples for pesticides; in 1982, for example, the FDA checked 14 oranges from the two billion pounds sold in the United States that year.

"The real risks from pesticides," Hammond concludes, "are probably not very high." At worst, pesticides might cause 20,000 cancers a year, one-sixth the number caused by smoking. While the cancer-causing threat of pesticides is not great, he argues, it is still "probably more than negligible," and the Environmental Protection Agency should enact tougher standards, aimed at reducing the risk from pesticide residue to no more than one additional cancer case per million people per year.

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Decaying Art

"The Trouble With Modern Art" by Catherine Barnett, in *Art and Antiques* (Oct. 1987), 89 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003.

Most 20th-century painters and sculptors have rebelled against the conventions of the past. This rebellion, says Barnett, *Art and Antiques* senior editor, has led artists to use such unconventional materials as cigarette ashes, yogurt, chocolate, and live crickets as part of their paintings or sculptures. One result: works of art that are difficult to preserve.

"Cheap materials, odd combinations, and untested techniques," Barnett says, "have caused many of the masterpieces of modern art to alter irrevocably."

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Artists have been transforming ordinary objects into art for over 70 years; during his Dada period, Marcel Duchamp created art from bicycle wheels and other household items. During the 1950s, American artist Robert Rauschenberg extended Dadaist ideas by creating art deliberately designed to change over time. Rauschenberg argued that his assemblages, made from beds, stuffed birds, garbage, and dirty laundry, were designed to capture "the smell, and the feel of our total environment."

Rauschenberg, argues Barnett, "opened up the path for art with built-in obsolescence." His successors include Christo, the Bulgarian artist who wraps bridges, cliffs, and islands in cloth, and the German artist Joseph Beuys, who creates sculptures from felt, honey, and slabs of fat to symbolize "decay and the inevitable passage of time."

Museum conservators must decide if work meant to self-destruct *should* be restored, as restoration might conflict with the artist's intent. Because modern artists are so eclectic in their choice of materials, conservators frequently preserve blemishes (such as insects) that would be removed from the art of earlier centuries. For example, a conservator left a cigarette butt embedded in one of Jackson Pollock's paintings because he believed that Pollock "must have purposely worked it into the paint."

While most artists still use longer lasting materials in their work, others are indifferent to preservation. Rauschenberg, for example, believes that decay makes art more closely resemble life. "There is nothing wrong," he says, "with the joy of living with a cherishable perishable."

The BOMC Lives

"Seven Hundred Pretty Good Books" by Terry Teachout, in *The New Criterion* (Oct. 1987), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Three decades ago, critic Dwight Macdonald, in his essay "Masscult and Midcult," argued that the Book-of-the-Month Club was the quintessential middlebrow American literary institution. The club, Macdonald claimed, "has been supplying its members with reading matter of which the best that can be said is that it could be worse."

Was Macdonald right? Teachout, a *New York Daily News* editorial writer, argues that deteriorating standards and changing methods of book distribution augur a steady decline in the club's selections and influence.

The Book-of-the-Month Club was founded by Harry Scherman in 1926. In those days, books were poorly distributed outside large cities; in 1930, for example, 32 percent of Americans had "no direct access" to a bookstore. Scherman proposed to bring these Americans "new light upon their troubled but wonderful world" by selling them mail-order books. Scherman's greatest innovation: asking a panel of distinguished literary figures, such as *Saturday Review of Literature* editor Henry Seidel Canby and critic Christopher Morley, to choose the main selections.

The club was an early success; membership increased from 4,750 to 110,588 in the club's first three years (1986 membership, including subsidiaries, stood at 2.5 million). Yet the selection board's insistence on consensus votes meant that many novelists were not chosen by the club until late in their careers. William Faulkner was ignored by the club for 36 years

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after his first novel was published; Saul Bellow was shunned for 31 years. F. Scott Fitzgerald was never selected during his lifetime.

In recent years, the club's importance has diminished. Chain bookstores have spread throughout exurbs and rural areas, cutting into the club's major market. Publishers increasingly prefer more profitable bookstore sales to splitting their profits with a book club. Moreover, Teachout reports, serious bestselling novels, such as those of John P. Marquand (*The Late George Apley*), are no longer being written. Club judges have filled this void by selecting "fifth-rate throwaway tracts" by such novelists as John Irving and E. L. Doctorow.

Teachout thinks the BOMC has done its best to survive a period of American literary decline. "In its well-meaning, idealistic way," he maintains, the club brings "pretty good books to the prairies year after year."

Emerson the Showman

"The Making of an American Prophet: Emerson, His Audiences, and the Rise of the Culture Industry in Nineteenth-Century America" by Mary Kupiec Cayton, in *The American Historical Review* (June 1987), American Historical Association, 914 Atwater, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. 47405.

For much of his career, American philosopher-essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) toiled in obscurity. Such early works as *Nature* (1836) were reviewed only by Emerson's fellow Unitarians in church tracts or by



Emerson's success on the lecture circuit coincided with the publication of his most noted works. Among them: English Traits (1856); The Conduct of Life (1860); May-day, and Other Pieces (1867), a collection of poems, and Society and Solitude (1870).

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Boston literary journals. Yet Emerson became so popular in later years that attending one of his lectures was quite fashionable. For example, the *Cincinnati Daily Commercial* reported in 1867 that an Emerson lecture attracted "the most elegant assemblages we remember to have seen on any occasion in this city."

Why did Emerson's reputation soar? The answer, says Cayton, visiting assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at Miami University of Ohio, lies both in Emerson's writing and in the changing nature of the American lyceum movement.

Lyceums became popular during the 1830s as an early form of adult education. By the 1850s, they had been superseded by "literary societies," which provided single young men with social alternatives to the tavern and the theater. Society members were always interested in developing self-reliance, largely as a way to increase their chances of success in the business world. Emerson's interest in the nature of correct conduct and individual achievement thus paralleled, on a more philosophical level, the interests of much of his audience.

Although Emerson lectured on a wide variety of subjects, audiences skipped his more abstruse discussions, preferring such practical topics as "Eloquence" and "The Conduct of Life." Emerson salted these lectures with "concrete and homely metaphors," but did not dilute his transcendentalist philosophy. His style kept audiences mystified. Emerson "don't say at all—he *hints* or *intimates* or walks around about what he *would* say but *don't* say," future president Rutherford B. Hayes wrote to a friend after attending an 1850 lecture.

Yet by the late 1850s, Emerson's success on the lecture circuit was assured. Audiences absorbed his work as "intellectual treats," Cayton notes, thinking Emerson an archetypal "embodiment of Man Thinking." Midwestern newspapers, representing young, self-conscious cities, increasingly supported Emerson's lectures as a way to show that their cities were as cultured as those on the Eastern Seaboard. By the time of his final lecture in 1871, critics ignored his speech and reviewed audience reaction. "The applause," the *Chicago Tribune* reported, "bespoke the culture of the audience."

"The people," Cayton concludes, liked Emerson "because he did their thinking for them."

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Pinochet's Chile

"Going to Extremes" by Mark Falcoff, in *The New Republic* (Sept. 7, 1987), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Eight years ago, the only democracies in South America were Colombia and Venezuela. Since then, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and four other Latin nations have joined the list.

Why does Chile, a once-prosperous nation with a strong democratic

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tradition, remain a military dictatorship? Falcoff, a visiting fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, suggests that Chile's political difficulties stem from intractable economic problems, never solved by the Right or the Left. "In spite of their wide ideological and political differences," he argues, "all three of the last Chilean presidents have failed to produce the kind of economic result they promised."

After General Augusto Pinochet overthrew Socialist president Salvador Allende in 1973, Chile "became a great laboratory of neoconservative economics." Under the direction of University of Chicago-trained economists such as Sergio de Castro (economy minister), some welfare spending was reduced and Chile's markets were opened to foreign goods.

Nevertheless, Chile's economy never became as market-oriented as that of the United States. One example: Between 1978 and 1983, the currency was artificially pegged at a low rate of 39 pesos to the dollar. Predictably, the middle class went on a buying spree, purchasing foreign goods and accumulating large dollar-denominated debts. When the peso was finally devalued, those debts jumped 20 to 30 percent overnight.

These personal debts, combined with public sector borrowing, the four-fold increase in the cost of foreign oil, and a fall in the world price of copper, caused the collapse of the Chilean economy in 1983, leading to a resurgence of political unrest.

In his efforts to maintain control, Pinochet has increasingly resorted to statist measures, including the purchase of stock in banks that failed after 1983. Falcoff asserts that Pinochet's Chile, while still capitalist, increasingly resembles the corporatist regime of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, "in which economics were ruthlessly subordinated to considerations of political power." And with turbulence likely to accompany a plebiscite (anticipated to be held in September 1988) that will determine whether Pinochet will remain in power, there is little chance that Chile's troubled economy will revive in the near future.

The Women of Japan

"The Virtue of Japanese Mothers: Cultural Definitions of Women's Lives" by Merry White, in *Daedalus* (Summer 1987), 136 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

It is difficult for American feminists to see Japanese women as being "liberated" or "fulfilled" in the Western sense, says White, associate professor of sociology at Boston University.

In modern Japan, to be a *ryosai kembo* (good wife and wise mother) is still the goal of most women. In the typical middle-class family, husband and wife operate in separate spheres: he, a "salaryman," works outside the home, while she raises the children (1.7 per family) and manages the household. Since dissatisfied wives are urged to *gambaru* (persist) rather than to confront or leave their husbands, there are only 1.09 divorces for every 1000 Japanese (versus five per 1000 Americans).

The Japanese *okusan* (housewife) sees her domestic role as valuable, and most Japanese agree. The national consensus, White explains, is that Japan's future will be determined by its children, and "the nation's most

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important job is their education."

Children in Japan are believed to be born with no innate skills; it is thus the job of the *kyoiku mama* (education mother) to motivate them to study hard in order to succeed later in the workplace. As a result, few Japanese mothers work during their children's early years, though many take part-time jobs during school hours or return to the work force later. In a 1982 survey, over 76 percent of Japanese mothers identified their children as their *ikigai* (reason for living).

The 49 percent of Japanese women who do enter the work force often face a variety of forms of discrimination. Given jobs that have lower status than those available to men, women often receive lower salaries, are discouraged from socializing with male colleagues (which limits their opportunities to advance), and are rarely allowed to return to the same job after taking maternity leave.

White believes that, as time goes by, more Japanese women will probably enter and remain in the labor force. If this happens, they are likely to demand—and get—greater assistance from the state than do American working mothers. The Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1986, which asks businesses to "endeavor to give women equal opportunity," is evidence that "a consensus now exists throughout Japanese society to support women." Just as public policy in Europe supports women as mothers, White argues, "Japanese women will continue to find support for *their* central role as mothers."



In Japanese society, raising children is a full-time job. Many Japanese mothers believe that intimate knowledge of a child's capabilities and ambitions is necessary in order to help their offspring succeed in school.

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Soviet Profits in Afghanistan

"Soviet Economic Interests in Afghanistan" by M. Siddieq Noorzoy, in *Problems of Communism* (May-June 1987), U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

How costly has the invasion of Afghanistan been for the Soviet Union? Noorzoy, a University of Alberta economist, believes that the Soviets have forced the poverty-ridden Afghans to pay most of the expenses of the war themselves. The Soviet Union, Noorzoy argues, "eventually expects to make economic gains from its involvement in Afghanistan."

Prior to 1978, the Soviet Union pursued two economic goals in Afghanistan; first, to penetrate the Afghan economy by diverting Afghan trade from free world markets to the Soviet Bloc, by granting large credits at low interest rates, and by "insinuating" direct Soviet participation in Afghan economic planning. Second, to increase Afghan dependence on the Soviet economy through bilateral trade, expanded credit, and complex monetary or barter arrangements. By 1978 the USSR accounted for 37 percent of all Afghan exports and 34 percent of Afghan imports.

Since the 1979 invasion, Soviet control of the Afghan economy has expanded sharply. In the 1985-86 fiscal year, the Soviet Union and its East European client states purchased 76 percent of Afghanistan's exports, and provided 67 percent of its imports. Many of the goods "exported" by the USSR to Afghanistan are military. For example, the Soviets "sold" \$486 million worth of aircraft and \$233 million worth of trucks to Afghanistan between 1979 and 1984; from 1974-1979, Afghanistan imported \$4.2 million worth of trucks and no aircraft from the USSR.

Afghan agricultural output has been hard-hit by the war, and industrialization has lagged. To pay for loans and a balance-of-trade deficit that now total \$2.1 billion, Noorzoy expects that the Afghan government will increase sales of minerals to the Soviet Union. The Soviets already buy Afghan natural gas at prices far below world market rates; they paid \$48 per 1,000 cubic meters in 1979-1981 for gas worth \$115 on the world market, resulting in a loss of \$336 million to Afghanistan. An atlas compiled by Soviet geologists in 1977 shows extensive deposits of gold, emeralds, and uranium, which may be mined in the future.

The Soviets, Noorzoy concludes, expect to exploit Afghanistan's mineral wealth for years to come. "In economic terms," he concludes, "Afghanistan is certainly not 'Moscow's Vietnam'."

African Failure And Success

"East African Experiment: Kenyan Prosperity and Tanzanian Decline" by Karl Zinsmeister, in *Journal of Economic Growth* (Second Quarter 1987), National Chamber Foundation, 1615 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20062.

Kenya and Tanzania are strikingly alike in many ways. They share a common border, both achieved independence from Great Britain during the early 1960s, and their populations are roughly equal (about 20 million). Yet Kenya is thriving, while Tanzania has been in economic decline for years.

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Why has Kenya been a success and Tanzania a failure? The answer, says Zinsmeister, a free-lance writer and demographer, can be found in the economic policies chosen by the founding fathers of each nation.

Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, stressed the use of *harambee* (self-help) to build Kenya's economy. Communally owned tribal lands and some white settler-owned lands were acquired by the government and transferred to small farmers, resulting in a total of 1.5 million households which owned an average of nearly 10 acres apiece by 1984. Most of Kenya's agriculture and industry remained in private hands, and even state owned institutions (such as marketing boards) paid world market prices for farmers' crops. Kenyatta's policies provided the incentives for Kenya to become "a billion-dollar agricultural export powerhouse."

Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, on the other hand, chose a "radical socialist" path. In 1967 Nyerere nationalized most private businesses and, two years later, started a "villagization" program, which forced 91 percent of the rural population to abandon their homes for government agricultural communes.

Nyerere's policies brought disaster. Farmers were forced to sell most of their produce to state-run marketing boards, which cut the prices paid to farmers even as world market prices for those crops rose. Because farmers had no financial incentives, production of export crops (e.g., sisal, cashews, cotton) dropped by 20 percent between 1970 and 1984, while basic food crop production (e.g., maize, rice, and wheat) was cut in half. Foreign exchange reserves fell so sharply that industries could not buy replacement parts or technical expertise. Today Tanzania's government-run factories operate at only 10-30 percent of capacity; Tanzanian industry provides only eight percent of the country's total national output.

Since Nyerere's retirement as president in 1985, his successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, has allowed farmers more freedom to sell their crops on the free market, and has authorized a limited reintroduction of private property. Nyerere, however, is still chairman of Tanzania's only political party, and may block future reform. Zinsmeister concludes that Tanzania's "foolish economic ideology" will cause it to lag behind Kenya economically for years to come.

Israeli Fundamentalists

"Israel's Dangerous Fundamentalists" by Ian S. Lustick, in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1987), 11
Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Orthodox Jews have long thrived in the state of Israel. In recent years, says Lustick, an associate professor of government at Dartmouth, some orthodox Jews have joined *Gush Emunim* (Bloc of the Faithful)—militant fundamentalists whose goals include expanding Israel to its Biblical frontiers and eliminating all traces of "Western-style liberal democracy."

Although *Gush Emunim*'s membership is only 10,000, its goals are supported by political parties (mostly members of the right-wing *Likud* bloc) constituting over 35 percent of the *Knesset* (Israel's parliament). Its influence may be even greater: A poll of Israeli leaders taken by the leftist

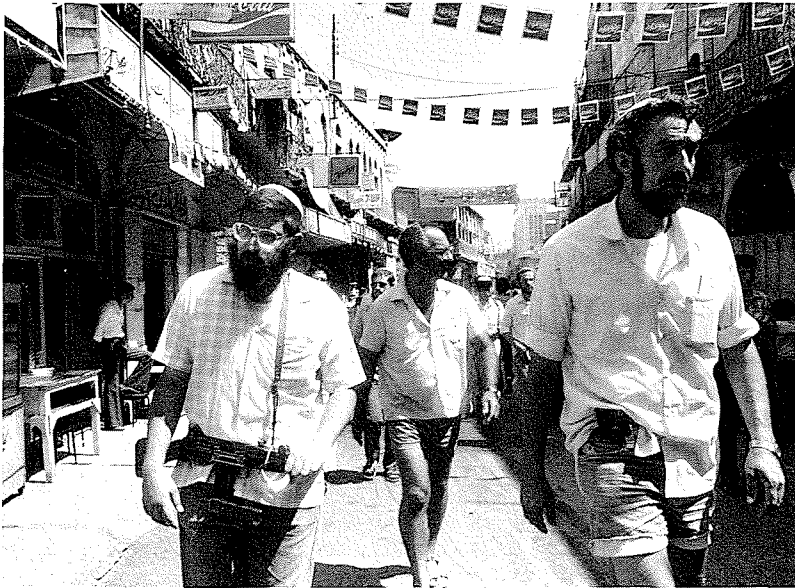
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magazine *Hadashot* in June 1987 found *Gush Emunim* leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger tied with former prime minister Menachem Begin as one of the two people with "the greatest impact" on Israeli society since 1967.

Followers of *Gush Emunim* derive their beliefs from the teachings of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. Rabbi Kook and his disciples believe that Jews are an *Am Segula* (a "treasured" people) separate and superior to other races or religions. Because Jews, the rabbi's disciples say, are divinely connected with the land of Israel, Palestinians and other Arabs must be "vomited out" of Israeli territory to ensure the arrival of the Messiah.

Until Rabbi Kook's death in 1982, most of *Gush Emunim*'s energies went into the production of more than 130 settlements in Israeli-occupied territories in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights. Since the rabbi's death, the movement has split into two factions. The militant "vanguardist" faction argues that only "spectacular and extra-legal actions," such as illicit creation of settlements in occupied territories, will fulfill God's plan for Israel. The larger "consensus" faction argues that, because Israel will not be redeemed by God for decades (or centuries), proselytizing and building coalitions with potential centrist and right-wing allies is the best way to ensure continued Jewish dominance in Israel over the long term. Both sides agree that they must destroy the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque, Muslim holy sites in the Temple Mount area of East Jerusalem, in order to rebuild the Temple of Solomon on the site.

To curb *Gush Emunim* influence, Lustick concludes, the U.S. should



Israeli fundamentalists often react to attacks by Arab or Palestinian commandoes. Here, Jewish vigilantes patrol the streets of Hebron (on the occupied West Bank) after a guerrilla attack in September 1985.

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increase duties on goods produced in Israeli-occupied territories and increase bilateral educational exchanges, in order to promote democratic and egalitarian values. Such moves might encourage moderate Israelis, who must "show their compatriots just how intolerably dangerous" *Gush Emunim* might become.

The Fading of Eurocommunism

"The Italian Communist Party: Goodbye to Eurocommunism" by Philip A. Daniels, in *The World Today* (Aug.-Sept. 1987), The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE, United Kingdom.

When the Italian Communist Party (PCI) won 34.4 percent of the national vote in 1976, its highest percentage since the founding of the post-World War II republic in 1946, the Communists seemed on the verge of full participation in government. Since that peak, however, the party's trade union support has weakened, and fewer young people are joining up. PCI voting strength declined to 26.6 percent in 1987. Daniels, a British political scientist, argues that prospects for a Communist resurgence in Italy are dim.

At the peak of its popularity in 1976, the PCI formed a "national solidarity" government with the Christian Democratic Party. The Communist Party never gained the ministries it sought, however, and in 1979 reverted to its former role as the opposition party. An attempted coalition with the Socialist Party (PSI) failed because that party's leader, Bettino Craxi, knew that the Communist Party, three times larger than the PSI, would dominate any partnership. Craxi instead joined the Christian Democrat-dominated governing coalition, serving as prime minister from 1983 until March of 1987. He attempted to isolate the PCI, accusing the Communists of being undemocratic and not truly committed to Italy's alignment with the West.

At the 17th Party Congress in April 1986, PCI leader Alessandro Natta called for a new alliance with European socialist and social democratic parties, particularly the West German Social Democrats. This alliance would replace old ties with French, Spanish, and Portuguese Communists. By accepting Italy's membership in NATO and displaying its independence from Moscow, the PCI has moved closer to the views of European Social Democrats. The goal of Natta's proposed alliance, perhaps based in the European Parliament, would be to forge links with non-aligned nations and "achieve a more independent role for Western Europe between the superpowers." The new coalition would embrace environmentalists and feminists. It has yet to take shape.

Despite their decline, Italy's Communists are still stronger than their counterparts in France, Spain, and Portugal. Why? The PCI is more flexible and self-critical. Yet, as Daniels sees it, the Communists must, like the West German Social Democrats and the British Labour Party, find "a clear vision of the meaning and relevance of socialism in the late 20th century" if they are to survive.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

"Dealing With Drugs: Consequences of Government Control."

Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, 177 Post St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108. 385 pp. \$40.00.

Editor: Ronald Hamowy

The continuing "war on drugs" is the most expensive prohibition effort in American history. In Fiscal Year 1983, for example, \$836.3 million was budgeted for drug law enforcement; in contrast, enforcing the first 10 years of Prohibition cost U.S. taxpayers \$506 million in 1983 dollars.

Yet despite the vast sums spent on eradication, argues Hamowy, a historian at the University of Alberta in Canada, "the availability and use of the major illicit drugs do not appear to have decreased." The authors of the essays in this volume raise questions about federal spending designed to stop illicit drug use.

Little reliable information about the size and nature of illicit drug use in America now exists. Robert J. Michaels, an economist at California State University, Fullerton, argues that the most commonly used drug statistics (such as those issued by the National Institute on Drug Abuse) are "meaningless political constructs," produced by government agencies with a vested interest in inflating both the numbers of drug users and the crimes they commit. Michaels predicts that federal drug statistics will continue to be unreliable for some time, simply because unlike other official numbers (such as the Census Bureau's, constantly used by demographers) no one has a vested interest in ensuring their accuracy.

Federal programs do not affect the most important channel by which drug information is transmitted. According to Norman Zinberg, a Harvard psychiatrist, "social controls"—informal warnings about drug dangers shared between users—are the best way to reduce the harmful effects of illegal drugs. These "social controls" ensure that the injury inflicted by illegal drug use will decline. For example, a user of

psychedelics in the early 1960s had a "far more extreme experience" than the user in the 1970s, because the latter user had more information about the colors, music, and sensations associated with a "trip" than did his predecessor.

Rather than banning all illicit drug use in all circumstances, Zinberg believes, government officials should explore the ways that "social controls" can be enhanced in order to promote responsible drug use.

His argument is echoed by Randy Barnett, law professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Barnett maintains that allowing illicit drug prices to fall below current artificially-high levels will bring in more occasional drug users, who are better able to understand how to use drugs without engaging in criminal activity. Government drug policies, by driving out the occasional user, may *increase* crime by forcing drug prices to rise so high as to make certain that most buyers are hardened users—the people most likely to become hardened criminals.

Moreover, most illicit drugs have beneficial uses, say Lester Grinspoon and James Bakalar, an associate professor of psychiatry and lecturer in law, respectively, at Harvard. Amphetamines can be used to combat narcolepsy and depression. LSD has had some effect in curing alcoholism. Marijuana is not only an exceptionally safe drug (there is no "reliable evidence" that anyone has ever died from marijuana use) but it also has had some effect in reducing glaucoma, asthma, and the nausea and vomiting resulting from chemotherapy treatments for cancer.

Banning certain drugs, Grinspoon and Bakalar contend, blocks medical researchers from learning if these drugs have further "medical potential."

"What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature."

Harper, 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y., 10022. 293 pp. \$15.95.

Authors: Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr.

A test taken by nearly 8,000 American 11th-grade students in early 1986 showed that many high school juniors know little about history and literature.

The 11th-graders, on the average, correctly answered 54.5 percent of the 141 questions about history and 51.8 percent of the 121 questions about literature.

Yet many students did well on the test. Why did they succeed? Ravitch, adjunct professor of history and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Finn, a U.S. assistant secretary of education, found the following factors correlated with student achievement:

Students from families that owned a dictionary, an encyclopedia, at least 25 books, and subscribe to magazines, scored higher than students from homes that lacked one or more of these items.

Students who lived with both parents scored higher than students who only lived with one parent. However, when the

mother worked outside the home, it had no effect on her child's test performance.

Students who watched more than three hours of television a day did worse than students who watched less.

Students who did more than two hours of homework a day (12.5 percent of the sample) were more successful than students who did little homework. Sixteen percent of the students surveyed reported that they did no homework, and an additional 18 percent did less than a half hour of homework each day.

Students who worked at outside jobs for up to 15 hours a week scored higher than students who did not work. However, test scores declined as work increased beyond 15 hours a week.

Scores also increased as school attendance increased. Students with perfect attendance scored 9.2 percent higher on the history test than students who missed more than 10 days of school a month.

"Job Creation in America: How Our Smallest Companies Put the Most People to Work."

Free Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. 244 pp. \$22.95.

Author: David L. Birch

Some 20 million Americans leave their jobs every year, half of them involuntarily. Another 10 million American workers change their careers each year, some of their own volition, but more often involuntarily. Some do it without changing employers; most have to switch employers, sometimes moving to another part of the United States.

Where are the new jobs coming from for the millions who quit, are laid off, or fired?

To find the answer, Birch, a lecturer in urban studies and planning at the Massa-

chusetts Institute of Technology and president of Cognetics, Inc., conducted a computer analysis of data on approximately 12 million U.S. business firms between 1969 and 1986. The study shows that as the next decade approaches, the biggest—and most consistent—source of new jobs will be small, high-innovation companies.

Approximately seven million companies in the United States, together with an unknown number of partnerships and self-employed individuals, collectively employ

85 million nongovernment U.S. workers. Almost 90 percent of these enterprises employ fewer than 20 workers. Economic life in these "bubbly... creative," businesses is characterized by "turbulence"—swift birth, expansion, decline, and death. "Taken together," writes Birch, "these small companies create more jobs than the giants comprising the Fortune 500, grow more rapidly, run greater chances of failure, and show more adaptability."

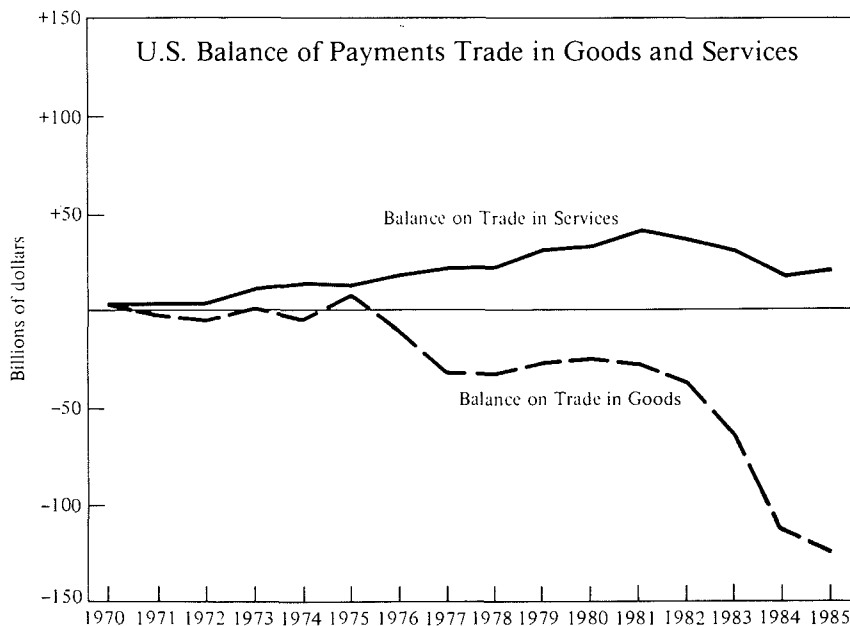
The turbulence that Birch found in many companies coincides with an overall decline in manufacturing and a rise in service industries—a fundamental shift in the structure of the economy that has "fostered an era of great innovation."

The small, high-innovation firms of the future will not necessarily be "high-tech." Some will focus on new products, such as the artificial heart. Others will package products and services in new ways, such as Nucor's advanced steel mills, or Federal Express, which revolutionized the mun-

dane task of parcel delivery. The United States—with a large pool of private venture capital and easily available technical support for small businesses—already exports 20 percent of the world's services.

The top 10 "high innovation" growth areas, according to Birch, will be Atlanta, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Washington, D.C. (including nearby Maryland and Virginia), Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg, San Francisco, San Diego, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

Factors that once attracted manufacturing firms—cheap labor, cheap raw materials, and cheap transportation—no longer apply. High innovation companies search out quality—in education, labor, government, communications, and amenities. A German manufacturer of advanced electric products scoured the country for a U.S. plant site and finally chose Connecticut, where hourly wages are high. The reason: Skilled workers in Connecticut do it right the first time.



While the U.S. trade deficit in goods steadily worsens, the U.S. continues to maintain a trade surplus in services (\$30 billion in Fiscal Year 1986).

"Anti-Protection: Changing Forces in United States Trade Politics."

Institute for International Economics, 11 Dupont Circle N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 204 pp. \$10.00.

Authors: I. M. Destler and John S. Odell

The conventional view that the debate over U.S. trade policy is a struggle between "special interests" favoring protection and the general "public interest" favoring free trade ignores a recent phenomenon—the rise of special interest "anti-protectionism."

Over the past 15 years, a rapidly growing number of U.S. trade groups have campaigned openly and vigorously, and often successfully, to defeat protectionist measures such as quotas and tariffs.

In their analysis of trade politics, Destler and Odell, both visiting fellows at the Institute for International Economics, studied 14 trade disputes that occurred between 1974 and 1986. They found that restrictions on a given imported product bear more directly on certain groups than on others. "Among those who pay for protection," the authors argue, "those who matter most in the political process are not household consumers, but the special interests that benefit most from the specific trade that would be restricted: industrial users of imports, retailers of traded consumer goods, U.S. exporters who sell to the countries whose goods would be restricted, and the companies and governments of those countries."

There was a sharp increase in political opposition to product-specific trade protection over the decade, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. For example, in 1984 U.S. shoe manufacturers asked for protection from overseas imports. The Footwear Retailers of America (FRA), representing high-volume sellers of cheap imports, mobilized to defeat the request. The FRA's Washington office lobbied Congress and commissioned studies of the cost of trade restrictions to consumers. Shoe store owners pressed friends in the Reagan administration and in Congress. Nineteen senators were persuaded to sign a letter to Presi-

dent Reagan opposing relief for domestic shoemakers. In August 1985, Reagan sided with the FRA against the U.S. International Trade Commission and decided against import relief on broad antiprotection grounds.

The study indicates that the greater a group's dependence on international trade, the more intense and persistent the political effort it is likely to mount to block the threat of protection.

In 1983, for example, the Reagan administration imposed quotas on textiles and apparel from the People's Republic of China. China retaliated against American agricultural products. U.S. wheat producers are highly dependent on foreign sales—in 1982, 68 percent of the U.S. wheat crop was shipped overseas, 11 percent to China. The threat of Chinese trade restrictions triggered a lobbying campaign by the National Association of Wheat Growers to stop the U.S. textile and apparel quotas. As a result, an agreement on textiles was concluded in July 1983, and China resumed purchasing U.S. farm products, although in smaller quantities than previously.

In contrast, U.S. soybean growers, who were also targeted by the Chinese, did little to try and resolve the dispute because their sales to China had been declining. Only a year later, however, the American Soybean Association attacked legislation in Congress that would have protected California wine producers from foreign competition. The reason: fear of retaliation by the European Community, a major soybean importer and wine exporter.

While antiprotectionist activity has been episodic and certainly did not defeat all proprotection campaigns, the authors conclude that "the growing anti-protection phenomenon does seem to have made a significant difference in product cases."

“Money to Burn? The High Cost of Energy Subsidies.”

World Resources Institute, 1735 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. 68 pp. \$10.00.

Author: Mark Kosmo

Because of price controls or subsidized electricity, consumers in many developing countries pay artificially low prices for energy. These subsidies can, on occasion, be massive. In China, for example, government subsidies for coal, electricity, and oil totaled \$19.4 billion in 1985—seven percent of the Chinese gross national product.

While governments claim that energy subsidies promote economic growth, Kosmo, a World Resources Institute research associate, argues that these subsidies “lead to excessive energy consumption [and] accelerated energy depletion.”

Countries that export fossil fuels—such as Mexico, Venezuela, and Egypt—tend to have the most extensive energy subsidies. Yet these subsidies, far from helping the poor, *increase* unemployment, by allowing “firms to substitute energy for labor.” Moreover, artificially low fossil fuel prices encourage waste and environmental damage. In Nigeria, for example, where natural gas prices are artificially low, 84 percent of the natural gas produced in Nigeria in

1984 was “flared” into the air.

Kosmo concludes that all governments should eliminate energy subsidies within three to five years. Increasing fossil fuel prices to market levels (by removing subsidies and selective taxation) will, by decreasing domestic consumption, allow developing countries to reduce oil imports and “minimize environmental damages and risks” resulting from pollution.

Developing countries should not, Kosmo concludes, abandon energy regulation entirely. But the primary purpose of such regulations should be to “maximize economic efficiency.”

These price rises, Kosmo argues, will not significantly harm either manufacturers or consumers. In Indonesia, for example, the World Bank determined that raising energy prices 150 percent would cause manufacturing costs to increase by an average of 2.1 percent. A 50 percent rise in Indonesian energy prices would result in a household cost-of-living increase of no more than 2.5 percent.



Delegates to the 1900 G.O.P. National Convention met in Philadelphia to renominate President William McKinley. But who would replace Vice President Garret A. Hobart, who had died in office? When Theodore Roosevelt got the nod, Ohio's Mark Hanna said to McKinley: "Your duty to the country is to live for four years."

Choosing America's Presidents

The presidential primary election season is about to begin. Nearly every Tuesday night during the coming months, TV anchormen will gravely report that, based on early returns or exit polls, one Democratic candidate has (or has not) pulled away from his rivals, and that a Republican aspirant has (or has not) bested George Bush, the putative G.O.P. "front-runner." Meanwhile, politicians and scholars debate the oft-reformed nominating process: Does it have to be so long and expensive? Does it produce candidates who will be able to govern the country? Here, our contributors explain how the American way of choosing presidents came to be. They describe how the early political parties soon changed the Founding Fathers' system, which twice gave the new republic George Washington as its chief executive, and discuss the origins and effects of today's "primary game."

THE PARTIES TAKE OVER

by James W. Ceaser and Neil Spitzer

Last September 17, several thousand American politicians and foreign dignitaries elbowed into Independence Square in Philadelphia to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. Addressing the crowd, President Reagan called the constitutional system "the great safeguard of our liberty," and praised the document which "has endured, through times perilous as well as prosperous . . ."

The celebration no doubt would have pleased the 39 men who signed the Constitution in September 1787. The democratic government that they designed has adapted well to the exigencies of modern life. But James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, and the other Founding Fathers would have been startled to learn how Mr. Reagan and other recent U.S. presidents have been nominated and elected to office.

The method of presidential selection that the Founders devised and inscribed in the Constitution functioned in its intended form for only two elections (in 1789 and 1792). Moreover, their method bears little re-

semblance to today's drawn-out nomination and election campaigns.

The Founders created a body that became known as the Electoral College—a group of men, chosen by the states, who would elect the president. The college, the Founders hoped, would both temper the electorate's wishes and ensure that successful candidates enjoyed a broad mandate. The college still exists, and candidates still campaign to win electoral votes. But political parties have altered the Electoral College's role. The parties choose the electors, who no longer exercise their own discretion as the Founders thought they would. Instead, electors vote for their party's choice—in December, long after the stress and pageantry of the autumn presidential campaign have faded away.

No Campaigning, Please

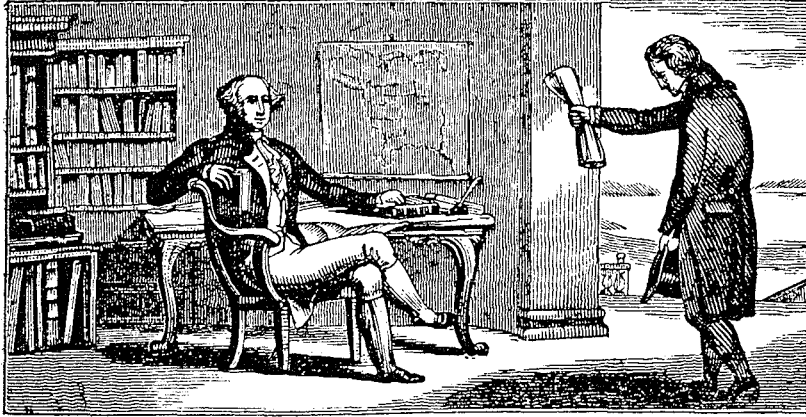
Although the Founders opposed them, political parties have, ironically, performed many of the functions that the Founders hoped the Electoral College would perform. The two major parties have generally moderated ideological extremes, tamed political ambitions, and helped mute sectional differences. In doing so, they have enabled Americans to select or reject candidates for the presidency in an orderly fashion, without triggering coups, civil strife, or mob rule.

Though short lived, the Founders' system for electing the president was not created without considerable thought and reflection. The 55 delegates who assembled at the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) on May 25, 1787, debated the matter of presidential selection many times. This was, as Pennsylvania delegate James Wilson said, "the most difficult of all [issues] on which we have to decide."

Most of the delegates shared several guiding principles as the Constitutional Convention began. They believed that the presidential election was a process that should be considered central to (not apart from) the presidency. They argued that the election, like the office itself, should not encourage *radical* change, because that harms a republic. Moreover, choosing the executive, they thought, should encourage ambitious men to pursue the presidency by acting in ways that would be helpful to the Republic. Thus, the election should be a *retrospective* process, with the emphasis on the aspirants' previous records, not a prospective exercise based on campaign promises. Indeed, the Founders did not envision any "campaign" at all.

Several different plans for electing the president circulated at the Philadelphia convention. The Virginia Plan, which 33-year-old Virginia governor Edmund Randolph read to the convention on May 29, proposed

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Washington receives word of his election. Congress considered referring to the chief executive as "His Excellency," "Elective Majesty," "His Serene Highness," and "Elective Highness," before settling on "Mr. President."

that the national legislature select the executive.* Connecticut's Roger Sherman favored the plan, because it would make the executive "absolutely dependent on that body."

The convention's "nationalists," however, wanted a system of electing the president that would keep the executive and legislative branches of government as "independent as possible of each other." The nationalists, notably James Wilson, favored a direct popular election. But that idea struck some delegates as impractical; suffrage qualifications, after all, varied from state to state. Some delegates thought that the voters might not be qualified for the task. It would "be as unnatural to refer the choice of a proper character for a chief Magistrate to the people," observed Virginia's George Mason, as it would "to refer a trial of colours to a blind man."

During July and August 1787, the Philadelphia convention repeatedly returned to the same issues. The delegates voted five times in favor of having the president appointed by Congress, only to change their minds. Individual delegates proposed, variously, that the chief executive's term last three, seven, eight, 15, and 30 years, or even for life. In all, the convention cast 60 ballots on different proposals for electing the president.

On August 24, the convention's delegates, out of frustration, turned over a host of unresolved matters—including the election of the executive—to a Committee on Postponed Parts. On September 4, the committee recommended a plan that had been proposed earlier: the election of the president by a group of electors "equal to the whole number of

*The convention did not decide to call the executive "the president" until September 1787.

Senators and members of the House of Representatives.”

According to the plan, each state would appoint presidential electors in a way to be decided by the state legislatures. Voting in their home states, the electors would cast two ballots each for president. The ballots would then be sent to the national capital, where they would be counted by the president of the Senate. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes would become president—if he received at least the number of votes equal to a majority of the number of electors. The runner-up would become vice president.

The Founders awarded each elector two ballots to make it probable that one candidate would receive enough votes to win. To give candidates from small states a chance, the elector had to cast at least one ballot for a candidate from outside the elector’s home state. So that electors would not waste their second votes on unworthy candidates, the committee created the position of vice president—an office that none of the delegates had even mentioned previously.

“Such an officer as vice-President was not wanted,” as North Carolina’s Hugh Williamson later conceded. “He was introduced only for the sake of a valuable mode of election which required two [candidates] to be chosen at the same time.”

George Washington’s Worry

The convention delegates initially decided that if there was a tie, or if no candidate received enough votes to win, the Senate would choose the president from among the five highest vote-getters. But James Wilson rose to protest. The president, he argued, ought to be a man of the people, not a “Minion of the Senate.” The delegates agreed that the House of Representatives would settle “contingent” elections. To give small states more say, congressmen would vote as members of state delegations, with each state casting one vote.

Not everyone was delighted with the contingent election plan. Madison considered the House scheme “pregnant with a mischievous tendency.” Jefferson, who was not at the convention, later called it “the most dangerous blot in our constitution.”

Though the convention set up the system to produce a winner, some delegates nevertheless thought that “contingent” elections would take place often—perhaps even “nineteen times in twenty,” as George Mason predicted. After George Washington, they reckoned, no candidate would receive a clear-cut majority, and the electors would, in effect, present nominees to the House of Representatives.

The delegates included an age requirement (35) to make it likely that the candidates would have a record of public service that others could judge. To attract capable men for the job, the convention awarded the executive a lengthy term of office (4 years), for which he could run as many times as he wished. The entire plan was embodied in Article II,

Section I of the Constitution.

The Electoral College formula was one of the Constitution's most innovative features. It had no precedent, either in Britain or in any of the American states. Significantly, it kept the executive independent of the legislature, as the "nationalists" had insisted. It was democratic enough to reflect the public's wishes, but select enough to thwart a dangerous popular candidate. Because it was not "pre-established," the college could not be manipulated in advance of the election. Thirty-two-year-old Alexander Hamilton called the system for selecting the president "excellent, if not perfect."

It was also quite temporary.

The first election took place as the Founders had intended. On the first Wednesday in January 1789, the voters in four states (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware) went to the polls to vote for the electors, who had been nominated by informal caucuses in the state legislatures, or by friends and neighbors. In the other six voting states, the legislatures chose the electors. One month later, the electors sent their ballots by mail to the capital, New York.*

Politicians must have pondered two unknowns. First, would George Washington, the electors' one and only choice for president, accept the job? His ambivalence toward accepting the task was well known. But he decided, as he wrote to Benjamin Franklin, to "forego repose and domestic enjoyment," at his beloved Mount Vernon, "for trouble, perhaps for public obloquy."

Jefferson's Gazette

Second, would the Senate gather the quorum needed for the president of the Senate to count the votes? By March 4, the day the Senate was appointed to count the electoral votes, only eight members of the upper house had arrived in New York. It took over four weeks and an urgent announcement, stressing "the indispensable necessity of putting the government into immediate operation" before a quorum (12 out of 22 senators) could be assembled.

George Washington, 57 years old, was elected president of the United States unanimously, winning one vote from each of the 69 electors. Runner-up John Adams, who collected 34 electoral votes, became vice president. Ten other minor candidates won 35 votes combined.

The first presidential election must have pleased the Founders. A distinguished body of electors had quietly selected the most capable men for the presidency and vice presidency. There had been no competition,

*The first congressional elections took place in the fall of 1788 and the winter of 1789. The state legislatures chose U.S. senators until the ratification of the 17th Amendment (1913), which called for direct election of senators. U.S. representatives were chosen by direct election from the start. Generally, candidates were nominated informally, by friends or by a caucus of state legislators. Newspapers and "committees of correspondence" publicized their candidacies. In most states, only white, male property owners could vote. They did so orally, before a polling official who wrote down the voter's choice.

no partisan squabbling, no grand promises, and no demagoguery. Most of all, there had been no parties. The “great object” of the new government, as James Madison had explained in *The Federalist*, was to “secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction [party], and at the same time to preserve the spirit and form of popular government.”

Whatever the Founders’ notions about parties, it quickly became clear that the American presidency was intrinsically a political office. As chief executive, Washington possessed the power to promote his views, to rally his political allies, and to ensure that the new government would carry out the public’s business as he saw fit.

The first parties emerged as rival factions, in both the fledgling administration and Congress, during Washington’s first term. The feuding started when Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton proposed that the federal government assume the states’ debts and create a national bank. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson opposed Hamilton’s “system” because it centralized power at the expense of the states.

Pro- and anti-Hamilton groups formed in Congress. Senators and representatives from New England supported Hamilton and his policies. But their colleagues from Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina generally followed the lead of Representative James Madison, a staunch Jeffersonian who led the anti-Hamilton forces in Congress.



Calling Aaron Burr a “Catiline of America,” Alexander Hamilton helped stop the New Yorker from becoming president in 1800. But Burr got revenge, killing Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken, New Jersey, on July 11, 1804.

Neither Jefferson nor Hamilton shied away from involving the press in their disputes. In August 1791, Jefferson hired New York editor Philip Freneau to work in the tiny State Department, ostensibly as a translating clerk. But Jefferson directed his new employee to start publishing the *National Gazette*. The new paper was needed, Jefferson argued, to counter the “hymns & lauds chanted” by the “paper of pure Toryism,” the strongly pro-Hamilton *Gazette of the United States*. Meanwhile, Washington, who refused to align himself with either group, worried that the “attacks upon almost every measure of government” with which “the *Gazettes* are so strongly pregnated,” threatened to “rend the Union asunder”

Partisan editors helped to widen the breach between the two nascent parties. In editorials and news stories, Hamiltonians (or “Federalists”) referred to their opponents as disorganizers, Jacobins—and Democrats, then a derogatory term. The Jeffersonians (or “Republicans”) called their adversaries Monarchists, Tories, and Royalists. By the end of Washington’s first four-year term, the parties, though still loosely knit, were firmly in place. “Party animosities here [in Philadelphia],” Jefferson wrote to a colleague in October 1792, “have raised a wall between those who differ in political sentiments.”

Despite all the partisan discord, Washington was re-elected unanimously in 1792. But George Clinton, the immensely popular Republican governor of New York, decided to challenge the Federalist incumbent John Adams for the vice presidency. During this contest, the two fledgling parties took the first big step in altering the role of the Electoral College: Party leaders began to nominate the presidential electors.

‘Baneful Effects’

In Massachusetts, for example, a party circular exhorted voters to cast their ballots for a “slate” of electors, which party managers had drawn up “for the purpose of concentrating the suffrages.” In all 15 states, the electors cast one ballot for Washington. In casting their other ballots for Adams or Clinton, the electors did not exercise their own discretion, but voted for their party’s candidate. Little wonder then, that in all but two states the winning slates of electors voted *en bloc* for either Adams or Clinton. Adams swept New England and retained the vice presidency.

The parties further transformed the Electoral College system four years later, during the presidential election of 1796. In September, George Washington announced that he would not seek a third term as president. In his famous Farewell Address, he warned that “the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party” constituted the “worst enemy” of popular governments. But “baneful effects” were everywhere in evidence during the election, which evolved into a contest between Republicans and Federalists. Neither John Adams nor Thomas Jefferson *campaign*ed for the

presidency as party candidates. But their supporters made it clear to which party each candidate belonged. "Thomas Jefferson is a firm Republican," proclaimed one widely circulated handbill. "John Adams is an avowed Monarchist."

Neither party needed formally to nominate Jefferson or Adams since each was the obvious candidate. But who would serve as vice president?

Neither Federalists nor Republicans in Congress would leave that decision in the hands of independent electors. There was too much at stake now. Not only did the Federalists and Republicans each want to win the presidency; they also wanted to make sure that the other party's presidential candidate did not win the vice presidency by collecting the second highest number of electoral votes. So members of each party in the House and Senate met at two different party assemblies, or caucuses, to choose a vice presidential candidate who would receive the electors' second votes. Little is known about what transpired at the caucuses. The early ones were held in secret.

The Federalist caucus chose Thomas Pinckney, the former governor of South Carolina, as its candidate for vice president. The Republican caucus could not settle on a nominee. Some favored the irascible New York senator Aaron Burr; others supported South Carolina senator Pierce Butler. Jefferson was left without a running mate.

In the end, the election of 1796 produced a strange result. Adams, the Federalist candidate, collected the highest number of electoral votes (71), thus winning the presidency. Some of the Federalist electors who voted for Adams, however, did not cast their other votes for Pinckney. Instead, Thomas Jefferson, Adams' arch rival, finished second, capturing the vice presidency.

Caucus of Conspiracy?

The parties' roles in choosing electors and nominating candidates had begun informally. Neither the Republicans nor the Federalists thought that the parties would last very long; they were formed only to head off their opponents, who they believed were subverting the Constitution. But before long, party nominations became, in the presidential election, regular, quasi-official events.

In the election of 1800, both parties held congressional caucuses to nominate presidential candidates. On May 11, 1800, 43 Republican senators and representatives congregated at Marache's Boarding House on Fourth Street in Philadelphia, and chose Jefferson for president and Burr for vice president. The Federalists held their own conclave in the Senate Chamber. "Each member in his state," the Federalists announced, should "use his best endeavors to have Mr. Adams and Major General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney run for President, without giving one a preference to the other."



In 1836, Whig editors, in the highly partisan style of the day, lambasted the Democratic nominee, Martin Van Buren. The New York Courier and Enquirer compared him to "the mole burrowing near the ground; the pilot fish who plunges deep in the ocean in one spot and comes up in another to breathe the air."

Their best endeavors were not enough. Jefferson and Burr won the contest in the Electoral College, in an unprecedented display of party solidarity. Indeed, there was too much solidarity. The Republicans had planned to withhold several electoral votes from Burr, to guarantee that Jefferson would win the presidency. But somehow, each candidate received 73 electoral votes.

The situation was almost tragicomic: Which victor would serve as president, and which as vice president? Before passage of the 12th Amendment in 1804, the ballots did not distinguish between president and vice president, even though everyone understood who was running for which office. Despite Burr's offer to "utterly disclaim any competition," the House of Representatives had to break the stalemate. Some Federalists hatched a plot to foil the Republicans, and elect Burr over Jefferson. But the scheme broke down when Alexander Hamilton, the most influential Federalist, suggested that the Virginian would make the better chief executive. Still, the House needed 36 ballots before Jefferson was elected president.

Although both parties held congressional caucuses to nominate candidates in 1800, the caucus system stirred bitter controversy. The Boston *Columbian Centinel* voiced the pro-caucus view. Members of Congress, the paper claimed, "were better qualified to judge of the dangers, the resources, and prospects of federalism in the union at large, than any individual in the several states could possibly be."

The Republican *Aurora* reprinted the editorial and criticized “this factious meeting, this self appointed, self elected, self delegated club or caucus, or conspiracy.” The editors were outraged that “about 24 persons” were deciding “for the people of the United States who should be president and vice president.”

After 1800, support for the Federalist Party began to wane, leaving the Republicans with opponents whom they could consistently beat. Between 1800 and 1820, every candidate whom the Republican caucus endorsed (Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe) was elected. Thus, for six straight elections, the Republican caucus was, in effect, choosing the president of the United States.

Henry Clay's Lament

But “King Caucus” was never as omnipotent as its critics feared. Indeed, when it existed, the conclave could not generate a consensus. It could only reflect one. By nominating Jefferson in 1800 and 1804, and James Madison in 1808, the caucus merely recognized the Republicans’ popular choice. In 1812 the caucus selected Madison again, but a group of anti-Madison Republicans and Federalists favored New York governor DeWitt Clinton. In 1816 the Republican caucus selected James Monroe, but the New Yorkers endorsed someone else again—this time, Governor Daniel D. Tompkins. Other disgruntled Republicans backed former senator William H. Crawford of Georgia. Within the 1816 Republican caucus, Monroe bested Crawford by only 11 votes, 65 to 54. The whole affair was, in Henry Clay’s words, “a spurious and unhallowed act.”

Clay was not the only critic. Others charged that the caucus was undemocratic and that it represented a violation of the Founders’ intentions by placing the president, as John Quincy Adams expressed it, “in a state of undue subservience to the legislature.” Newspapers excoriated the caucus institution in lengthy editorials. “As my soul liveth,” wrote Hezekiah Niles in the *Niles Weekly Register*, “I would rather learn that the halls of Congress were converted into common brothels than that caucuses of the description stated should be held in them.”

By 1824 King Caucus was so unpopular that it presented more of a liability than an asset to the candidate it endorsed. When the Republican caucus convened in the Capitol on the evening of February 14, hostile spectators shouted “adjourn! adjourn!” from the gallery above. The few senators and representatives who braved the heckling (only 66 out of 240 turned out) nominated William H. Crawford for president.

The experienced Georgian faced stiff opposition from four other candidates: Secretary of State John Quincy Adams; Secretary of War John C. Calhoun; the popular Speaker of the House, Henry Clay; and a Tennessee lawyer and military hero named Andrew Jackson.

Crawford’s supporters defended the caucus, arguing, ironically, that it carried little weight. The conclave’s recommendation, observed the

New Hampshire Patriot, possessed “neither the force of a law nor the authority of a command.” The people, the paper pointed out, were at liberty to disregard the caucus’s suggestion. Others called the caucus “the good old way,” and “the old democracy,” and pointed out that it had given the nation Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe.

Such claims proved unconvincing. Many of the states ignored the caucus’s choice, and nominated their own favorite sons. The South Carolina legislature backed John C. Calhoun. The Kentucky and Missouri legislatures endorsed Henry Clay. Conventions in Tennessee and Pennsylvania conferred their blessings on “Old Hickory,” Andrew Jackson. Massachusetts and Maine favored Adams. “The period has surely arrived,” declared the Pennsylvania convention’s delegates, “when a president should be elected from the ranks of the people.”

With support for each candidate so regionally fragmented, no single presidential aspirant could muster an Electoral College majority. Crawford, the caucus nominee, finished a dismal third after Jackson and Adams. The House of Representatives had to decide the election. Clay threw his support to John Quincy Adams, who won. Even before Adams made Clay his secretary of state, Jackson claimed that the two men had struck a deal and that the election had been stolen.

The Little Magician

The election of 1824 marked the end of King Caucus. With party competition gone, nominating a candidate made little sense. Most politicians welcomed this “Era of Good Feeling,” during which public affairs, as they saw it, would be free of intrigues and partisan strife.

Senator Martin Van Buren of New York, however, did not believe that a republic without parties would serve the public interest. Only parties, he stressed, could transcend regional factions, nominate candidates with broad appeal, produce a consensus on legislative issues, and get the president and Congress to work together. Though long considered a relatively undistinguished one-term president (1837–1841), many scholars now consider the “Little Magician,” as Van Buren’s friends called him, responsible for establishing national party competition in the United States.

In Van Buren’s view, the 1824 election had produced exactly what the Founders had set out to avoid: a popular election, in which a large number of candidates variously appealed to the populace on narrow grounds, moving “the bitter waters of political agitation,” as Van Buren said, “to their lowest depths.” Indeed, the contest had fostered a kind of popular demagoguery, which threatened national unity and constitutional government. Without parties, Van Buren feared, the House would have to settle inconclusive elections all too often.

As a senator from New York, Van Buren set out to re-establish the two-party system by recreating the old Republican and Federalist par-

ties. Indeed, Van Buren sought to unite "General Jackson's personal popularity with the portion of old party feelings yet remaining" by forming a coalition between "the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the North."

A master politician, Van Buren was well suited to the task. "His strength lay in his suavity," New York editor Horace Greeley remarked of him. "He was the reconciler of the estranged, the harmonizer of those who were feuding among his fellow partisans." Members of the new party would call themselves "Democratic-Republicans" or just "Democrats." Old Hickory would head the party's ticket in 1828.

Inventing the Convention

To Van Buren, Jackson's 1828 campaign presented both a danger and an opportunity. Jackson, after all, was not a party man. A victory for Jackson alone would only further the "name politics" that Van Buren opposed. But if the Tennessean committed himself to the party and its principles, his election, Van Buren believed, would "be worth something." The Little Magician wanted parties to nominate presidential candidates, perhaps at a national nominating convention. To publicize his ideas, Van Buren enlisted the support of Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond (Va.) *Enquirer*.

In a letter to Ritchie, Van Buren argued that national conventions would help the Republicans "by substituting *party principles* for *personal preferences* as one of the leading points in the contest." Such an assembly, he went on, would force New England Republicans "to decide between indulgence in sectional & personal feelings," and "acquiescence in the fairly expressed will of the party, on the other." Finally, Van Buren reflected that "the call of such a convention, its exclusive Republican character, & the refusal of Mr. Adams and his friends to become parties to it, would draw anew the old Party lines."

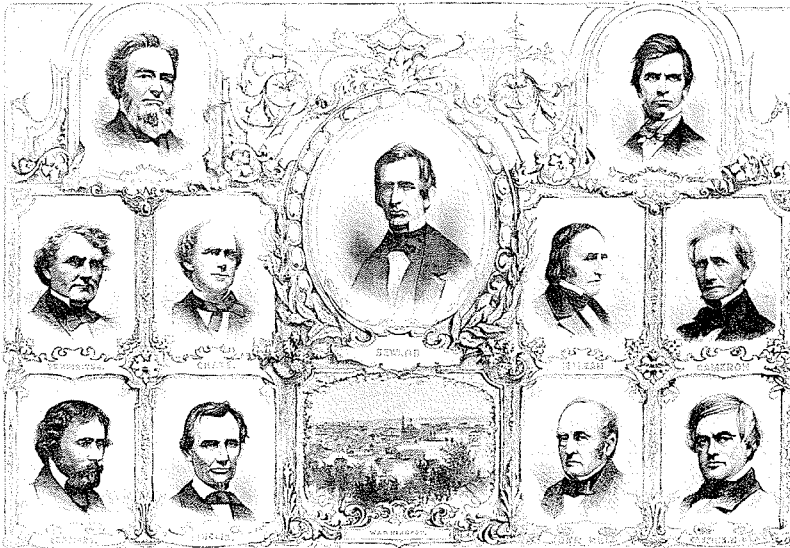
In the end, the Little Magician's political acumen helped pave the way for Jackson. On a trip to Georgia, Van Buren convinced Senator William H. Crawford to stay out of the 1828 presidential race. Another possible competitor, South Carolina's John C. Calhoun, voluntarily declined to run. Van Buren prudently chose not to hold a national convention. A fight over the vice presidential nomination, he feared, would shatter his fragile anti-Adams coalition. "Let it [the vice presidential nomination] be left to the natural course of public sentiment," he wrote to Jackson, "& it will fare best."

Instead, Jackson and his running mate, John C. Calhoun, were nominated by a series of state conventions and caucuses. The presidential election, meanwhile, had grown steadily more democratic. In 21 of the nation's 24 states, the voters—as opposed to the state legislatures—now chose the electors. Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams handily, winning 178 out of 261 electoral votes.

The convention idea, however, remained attractive. Critics had attacked the congressional nominating caucus because it was undemocratic and because it violated the constitutional separation of powers by having members of Congress nominate candidates for president. The national nominating convention, however, brought together a much larger pool of party activists from the states, most of whom did not even hold public office. Moreover, the convention, unlike the caucus, expressed the wishes of all of the state parties, whether or not they enjoyed representation in Congress.

In any case, the national parties experimented with conventions for the first time in the presidential election of 1832. The small Anti-Mason Party and the National Republican Party (basically a front for Henry Clay and his supporters) held separate conventions in a Baltimore tavern called the Atheneum in late 1831. Andrew Jackson's Democratic-Republicans staged their first national convention in Baltimore. The event, as historian James S. Chase has observed, "was a sure sign of the Jacksonians' coming of age as a party."

The first Democratic convention was not a well-rehearsed affair. Each state party decided how to choose its delegates. In Ohio and Indiana, the party elected delegates at state conventions. In Georgia, county meetings instructed the state's congressional delegation to represent the state in Baltimore. In New Jersey, a party caucus authorized public meetings to choose the delegates.



In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was one of many challengers when he upset Sen. William H. Seward (N.Y.) to win the Republican Party's nomination.

The Baltimore convention renominated Jackson for president, and nominated Van Buren for vice president. The assembly also gave the institution of conventions a ringing endorsement. One New Hampshire delegate called the convocation to order in the hope that "the people would be disposed, after seeing the good effects of this convention in conciliating the different and distant sections of the country, to continue this mode of nomination."

In the 1832 election, Jackson won again by a wide margin, this time over the National Republican candidate, Henry Clay.

Despite Jackson's victory, the question lingered: Could the Democratic Party flourish without the benefit of Old Hickory's popularity? The election of 1836 would provide the test.

To gather his forces, Van Buren, the leading Democratic presidential prospect, called for a national convention, which assembled on May 20, 1835, at Baltimore's Fourth Presbyterian Church. The show of Democratic strength was impressive. There were more than 600 delegates from 22 states. The convention chose Van Buren as the party's presidential nominee. An official party statement expressed the nominee's view that the convention was "the best means of concentrating the popular will."

The 1836 contest became, in part, a referendum on national political parties and nominating conventions. The opposing Whig Party—a coalition of former National Republicans and other Anti-Jacksonians—campaigns not only against the Democrats, but against the "undemocratic" party assemblies. "The multitudes cannot go to caucuses and conventions," said one Whig newspaper, "[which] are made up of officeholders and their agents."

The Whigs Reconsider

Believing that no single candidate could defeat Van Buren in a national election, the Whigs nominated three regional favorites for president at state conventions and caucuses. Their plan was to deny Van Buren an electoral majority, thus throwing the contest into the House of Representatives. The unorthodox strategy failed: Van Buren scored a decisive electoral victory.

Defeat forced the Whigs to reconsider the importance of party unity. From then on, they would show more interest in national conventions and consensus candidates. "We must run but one candidate," observed Kentucky senator John J. Crittenden, "lest we break up and divide when it is so necessary that we stay together and defeat Van Buren and Jacksonianism."

The election of 1836 brought party politics to maturity. From then on, all major U.S. political parties would hold quadrennial presidential nominating conventions. During the rest of the 19th century, the convention provided a way for the parties to select candidates, draft plat-

forms, and galvanize the rank and file around their nominee.

In retrospect, it is interesting to note how dramatically the modern system for selecting U.S. presidents differs from the Founding Fathers' original designs.

Political parties, acting with little reflection or foresight, altered the Electoral College's role in two major ways. First, the parties, beginning in 1792, began choosing slates of electors, who would not exercise their independent discretion (as the Founders intended), but vote for their party's choice. Second, the parties began nominating the candidates, first at congressional caucuses, and later at national conventions.

Today, it is easy to forget about the Electoral College. But the college endures. When Americans go to the polls this November, most will find the names of the presidential candidates on their ballots. But technically they will not be voting for the candidates themselves, but for either the Republican or the Democratic Party's slate of electors. Because each slate will be committed to voting for the party's candidate, Americans, *in effect*, will be voting in a direct popular election.

Were they now alive, the Founders might or might not like how political parties have changed their scheme for electing the president. But the parties have managed to transcend regional enmities (with the notable exception of the Civil War), prevent the emergence of demagogic leaders, and ensure that the winning candidate enjoys wide national support. Even as America has grown from a sparsely populated wilderness into a heterogeneous industrial society, the parties have served to "blunt the edge of disappointed ambition," as editor Thomas Ritchie promised they would, and "disarm the rage of maddened factions."

To modern Americans, it may seem surprising that the Founders could have imagined a republic—and the election of its leaders—without political parties. As it happens, the "Spirit of Party" has not been "the worst enemy" of popular government in America, as George Washington predicted, but one of its better friends.

THE PRIMARY GAME

by Jack Walker

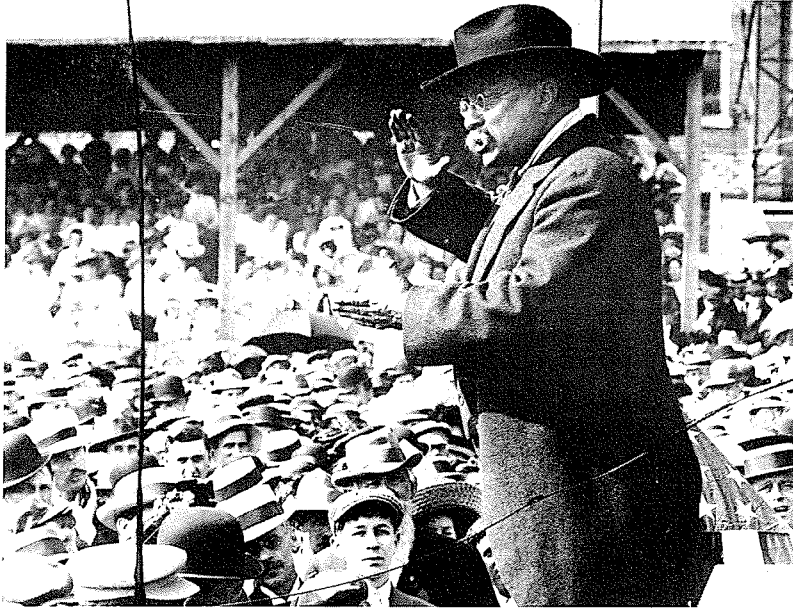
When Senator Gary Hart (D.-Colo.) bested former vice president Walter Mondale in the New Hampshire Democratic primary almost four years ago, his upset victory dazzled some press and television commentators. Declared CBS News correspondent Bob Simon: "Now there are two front-runners."

But the election disturbed many pundits and Democratic politicians; it seemed to demonstrate just how volatile the process of choosing presidential nominees had become. Echoing other complaints, the *New Republic* warned that this "bizarre system," which "makes it possible for a near unknown to get a grip on a major party nomination in the course of three or four weeks of frenzied excitement, could someday produce a genuine monster."

Since then, the system has not become any less unpredictable. Consider this year's campaign for the Democratic and Republican nominations; most of the contenders had begun campaigning by 1986, over two years before the general election. They have expended most of their effort not in canvassing large cities and populous suburbs in New York or California, but in roaming from county fairs to coffee klatches in towns and hamlets in Iowa and New Hampshire. These rural states are the first on the 1988 calendar to hold caucuses and primaries.

Most of the candidates will drop out of the race before the parties hold their national conventions this summer: The Democrats will convene this July in Atlanta; the Republicans will meet in August in New Orleans. Two Democrats who failed to survive intense press scrutiny (former senator Gary Hart and Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.) have already quit. The remaining hopefuls know that a poor showing in the Iowa caucuses (February 8) and the New Hampshire primaries (February 16) may force them to bow out too, as donors of campaign funds seek out better prospects. And the chances are good that after "Super Tuesday," March 8, when 12 Southern states will hold their primaries, only two or three candidates from each party will still be in the race—weeks before primary voters in New York (April 19), Pennsylvania (April 26), and California (June 7) make their preferences known.

The system is not only peculiar but also blatantly unfair, according to its many critics. Primary elections, they say, are expensive and time-consuming popularity contests, which discourage many qualified officeholders from entering the race. As the first to vote, Democrats and Republicans in Iowa and New Hampshire will have more influence in selecting the parties' nominees than will their counterparts in Texas and



Running on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912, Teddy Roosevelt inspired many campaign jingles: "I want to be a Bull Moose,/And with the Bull Moose stand/With Antlers on my forehead/And a Big Stick in my hand."

California. And because the more ideologically fervent 19 percent of the eligible voters go to the polls during primaries, the nominating system, the critics argue, fails to produce moderate nominees who can win the general election *and* govern effectively once in the White House.

"There is something wrong with a nominating process that gives one state [Iowa] the loudest voice and then produces candidates who cannot even carry that state [in the general election]," said one candidate, first term U.S. senator Albert Gore, Jr., (D.-Tenn.), last November. "We [Democrats] have lost four of the last five elections . . . Isn't it time for a change?"

Would-be reformers believe it is. Each party, they suggest, should hold several regional primaries, or one national primary, to make the nominating process shorter and more reflective of the wishes of Democrats and Republicans nationwide. Change party rules, others say, to bring the experienced politicians and local party leaders back into the nominating game. Lloyd Cutler, former counsel to President Jimmy Carter, has suggested that each party's 435 candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, plus its 100 Senate candidates and incumbent senators, should automatically serve as uncommitted delegates to their parties' national conventions. Journalist Robert Shogan has advocated the

nomination of candidates by "a caucus of elected officials, expanded perhaps to include representatives of major constituent groups."

All of these ideas are well intentioned. But when one analyzes why the U.S. presidential nominating system has become an exhausting and expensive process, primary elections, or the composition of convention delegations, are not entirely to blame. The way Americans now choose their presidential candidates has less to do with specific party rules and procedures than with the fact that the two major political parties have lost many of their historic functions.

As historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., explained a decade ago: "The decline of immigration deprived the political organization of its classic clientele. The rise of the Civil Service limited its patronage. The New Deal took over its welfare role . . . The electronic revolution has abolished [the two parties'] mediatorial function. Television presents the politician directly to the voter, who makes his judgment more on what Walter Cronkite [of CBS] and John Chancellor [of NBC] show him than on what the party leaders tell him."

Other trends have weakened the party system too. As Americans have become better educated, they have also become more likely to vote for candidates as individuals, less likely to vote for "the party." And since the 1960s, various "movements," (such as those on behalf of blacks, women, and homosexuals) which have helped to make American politics more democratic and inclusive, have also made the game of politics, and the process of choosing presidential candidates, more susceptible to conflict and disarray.

Would-be reformers should remember that primary elections are not a new phenomenon in American politics.

Teddy Roosevelt's Campaign

Primaries first emerged around the turn of the century as one result of middle-class protests against the selection of candidates by party bosses in "smoke-filled" rooms. Progressive Era politicians, notably Wisconsin's Robert M. La Follette and New Jersey's Woodrow Wilson, favored the referendum, the direct election of U.S. senators, and primary elections as ways of making government more responsive to the citizenry and less beholden to "bosses and the machines." Wilson supported primaries because he believed that the citizenry should choose its leaders and that leaders should form political parties according to their political views. "Eight words," Wilson wrote, "contain the sum of the present degradation of our political parties: No leaders, no principles; no

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principles, no parties.”

In 1905, at La Follette’s urging, the Wisconsin legislature passed one of the first laws providing for the direct popular election of delegates to the national party convention. Not without considerable debate, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and other states soon followed suit. By the spring of 1912, when Theodore Roosevelt declared that “My hat is in the ring”—that he would challenge incumbent William Howard Taft for the Republican Party’s presidential nomination—14 states had passed laws instituting the direct primary election.

Campaigning in states that held primaries, Roosevelt charged that the incumbent had yielded to “the bosses and to the great privileged interests.” The former president, a vigorous and colorful candidate, scored spectacular victories in California, Illinois, Maryland, Nebraska, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, but failed to win over local party leaders. After Taft won the nomination at the Republican National Convention in Chicago in June, Roosevelt’s supporters retreated to Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, and agreed to hold their own party convention the following August. The Progressive or Bull Moose* Party, as Roosevelt’s supporters called their organization, nominated him for president, and adopted a platform which endorsed, among other things, “nation-wide preferential primaries for candidates for the presidency.”

The Fading of Reform

Roosevelt’s third-party challenge split the normal G.O.P. vote, and helped throw the election to the Democratic nominee, Woodrow Wilson, then governor of New Jersey. As president, Wilson urged Congress to pass a bill setting up a national presidential primary so that “the several parties may choose the nominees for the Presidency without the intervention of nominating conventions.”

The presidential primary bill made little headway. But thanks to the efforts of Progressives, 23 states had adopted some form of the primary by 1916. Primaries, however, enjoyed more theoretical than practical appeal. These contests produced only about one-third of the delegates that a candidate needed to win the nomination. Both Herbert Hoover (in 1928) and Franklin D. Roosevelt (in 1932) officially entered primaries, but did not campaign in any of them. At the time, candidates won the party’s nomination, as historian James MacGregor Burns has noted, not by a “great campaign through the nation but by a series of guerrilla battles, by tortuous, often undercover manipulation [of local party leaders] in each of the states.”

The Progressives’ reform efforts faded after World War I under pressure from party officials who resisted surrendering control of the nominating process. Between 1920 and 1949, only one state, Alabama,

*The name comes from a remark that Roosevelt made at the G.O.P. convention. Optimistic about his chances of defeating Taft, TR said to a reporter: “I’m feeling like a bull moose.”

adopted a presidential primary law. And eight of the 26 states that had passed laws setting up primaries abandoned them by 1935. State governments, after all, had to pay for primaries, which were not inexpensive to hold. "So far as expressing the preference of the voters," stated a 1932 North Dakota report, "... the [primary] election [of 1928] was a farce which cost the taxpayers of the state \$135,635."

During the 1940s and 1950s, however, challengers to front-runners began entering primaries—not so much to win delegates as to demonstrate their vote-getting prowess. Sometimes the stratagem backfired. In 1948, Minnesota's 41-year-old former governor, Harold Stassen, staked his chances of winning the Republican nomination on a victory in the Oregon primary. But New York's governor, Thomas E. Dewey, the consensus choice of party leaders, out-campaigned Stassen. Dewey, reported *Time*, "hustled down the rain-swept Willamette Valley, over to the Pacific Coast and back to the central Oregon lumber country—pumping hands, signing autographs, ripping off ten speeches a day." The New Yorker beat Stassen by 10,000 votes and, overcoming other rivals at the G.O.P. convention, became the party's nominee.

Outsiders would later enter primaries with more success. In the 1952 Republican contest, Dwight D. Eisenhower demonstrated his popu-



Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), Gary Hart, and Jesse Jackson at the 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami. Author Theodore H. White called Hart, then George McGovern's aide, "the archetype of the new breed."

lar appeal by defeating the party leaders' favorite, Senator Robert A. Taft, in the New Hampshire, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Oregon primaries. In 1960 John F. Kennedy proved by beating Senator Hubert H. Humphrey in West Virginia that an Irish Catholic candidate could appeal to blue-collar Protestants. "Could you imagine me, having entered no primaries," Kennedy later said, "trying to tell the [party] leaders that being a Catholic was no handicap?"

Even in 1960, however, candidates could not win the nomination by racking up primary election victories. In that year, Kennedy collected, in 10 hard-won primaries, only half of the delegates he needed to win the nomination. Indeed, Kennedy, as political scientist Richard Neustadt has pointed out, needed to win over a relatively small number of "party barons [who] actually controlled and could deliver delegates at national conventions." But during the 1950s and 1960s, the United States began to change in ways that would soon make the party organizations and party conventions less important—giving way to the semi-independent efforts of individual candidates and to primary elections.

First, Americans overall became better educated. Only 15 percent of the electorate who voted for Eisenhower or Stevenson in 1952 had ever attended college—compared with 41 percent of the electorate who voted for Ronald Reagan or Walter Mondale in 1984. "More and more [Americans]," as Harvard's James Q. Wilson has observed, "are trained to think in terms of large issues, causes, and principles."

As education has increased so has awareness of public issues and with it, the amount of pressure that members of Congress and other politicians feel from their constituents. Indeed, the percentage of adults reporting that they had written letters to public officials on policy matters rose from 17 percent in 1964 to 28 percent in 1976. Thus, even as the percentage of eligible citizens who actually vote has declined—from 61.6 percent in 1952 to 53.3 percent in 1984—the number of Americans who belong to the electorate's active core has continued to climb.

St. George and the Dragon

Second, outside the two parties, new causes drew amateurs into full-time politics. First among these was the Civil Rights Movement, which began in 1955 with the Montgomery bus boycott and continued with the protest marches of the 1960s. Backed by an ad hoc coalition of liberal politicians, labor leaders, clergymen, and academics, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other black leaders challenged the moral foundations of the racial status quo in the South.

The Civil Rights Movement changed U.S. political life in two fundamental ways. First, it helped Lyndon Johnson push through Congress the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Voting Rights Act (1965), and other legislation banning various devices that Southern states had used to disenfranchise blacks and the poor. Second, the movement provided a model for a

new wave of “public interest” groups that would press for their causes in the media, in state legislatures, and on Capitol Hill. For every liberal group, it seemed, a conservative one rose in opposition. Planned Parenthood, Inc. was soon confronted by the National Right to Life Committee; the Fellowship of Reconciliation encountered the Committee on the Present Danger; the National Council of Churches was matched by the Moral Majority.

Finally, television, almost overnight, dramatized elections and other political events. In 1950 only 3.9 million American households (or 9 percent of all households) owned TV sets. By 1960 46 million households (87 percent) were so equipped. Thus, in 1960, not only voters in Wisconsin and West Virginia but millions of voters everywhere saw film clips of Kennedy scoring his primary election victories. Television, as political scientist Sidney Wise has observed, “amplified the role of the primaries by surrounding each winner (or loser) with far more drama than headlines would provide. The raised hand, the cheering partisans and the cries of ‘on to Miami’ or ‘on to Chicago’ [could] easily obscure the fact that the winner faced only token opposition in a particular primary.”

Most Americans over 35 remember the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago as a chaotic affair, a grim televised melodrama of the Vietnam era, with violent off-stage street battles between antiwar demonstrators and Mayor Richard Daley’s angry police force. It was the first major party convention where newly mobilized groups of voters—blacks, feminists, young people—made up a substantial portion of the delegates. Still, as they saw it, they were “underrepresented.” Only five percent of the convention delegates were black, only 13 percent were women. “The insurgents had come to Chicago to bring an end to old politics,” as journalist Theodore White observed. “They were crusaders playing a new convention game called St. George and the Dragon; and the Dragon was Hubert Humphrey.”

Taking Affirmative Steps

Minnesota’s Senator Eugene McCarthy (the leading “peace candidate”) and his supporters criticized, among other things, the way the party chose its nominees. Indeed, before McCarthy entered the presidential race in December 1967, Democratic leaders in the various states had already chosen one-third of the party’s 3,057 convention delegates.

Although Vice President Hubert Humphrey emerged as the nominee, he did so after the party’s insurgents and regulars clashed over the rules and the delegates’ credentials. These quarrels—as well as dissension over race and the Vietnam War—divided the Democrats and helped put Richard Nixon in the White House. Afterward, Democratic leaders set up a commission to change the way the game was played. “We are in the process of invigorating our party with a massive injection of democracy,” wrote Senator George McGovern of South Dakota, the commis-

sion's first chairman. "The day of the bosses is over."

The McGovern Commission (which was later chaired by U.S. Representative Donald Fraser of Minnesota) revolutionized the nominating process. Reflecting the *zeitgeist* of the era, the commission instructed state Democratic parties to "overcome the effects of past discrimination" by taking "affirmative steps" to include young people, women, and minorities "in reasonable relationship to their presence in the population of the state" as delegates to future conventions. As a result, 40 percent of the delegates to the tumultuous 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami were women, 22 percent were under the age of 30, and 15 percent were black. The Republicans did not follow suit with similar guidelines. But at future G.O.P. conventions, the number of female (if not black) delegates increased rapidly too.

Later, the Democratic Party also barred states from using a "winner-take-all" system in allocating delegates after a primary contest. The Republicans did not require proportional delegate selection, but soon, in many states, both parties apportioned delegates according to the number of votes each party candidate received in each primary.

A New Political Game

The McGovern-Fraser Commission did not intend to increase the number of state primaries. But the new rules were so complicated when applied to caucuses and conventions that many state party leaders adopted the primary system as a lesser evil.

The number of primaries soared. Setting the pace, the Democrats held 15 state primaries in 1968, 22 in 1972, 30 in 1976, and 35 in 1980. Despite their skepticism toward reform, the G.O.P. leaders also increased the number of their state primaries. Most of the delegates elected in these primaries were legally bound to vote for a specified candidate on the first—and sometimes the second and third—ballot. Thus, ironically, just as the representation of women, blacks, and other groups increased, making the assembly appear, to a TV audience, more diverse, the delegates lost their powers of discretion.

The "reformed" nominating system, with all of its primaries, transformed the Democratic and Republican campaigns in many unanticipated ways. First, under the new system, candidates who won or fared well (relative to the press's expectations) in the early primaries also won the notoriety that the newspapers and television networks bestowed on the "front-runner."

In 1976, for example, the media began to focus attention on candidate Jimmy Carter after he won the Iowa caucus and, shortly thereafter, the nine-candidate New Hampshire primary (gaining just 30 percent of the vote). Between February 24 and April 27, *Time* and *Newsweek*, for example, gave 59 percent of their coverage of *all* Democratic candidates to the former governor from Georgia—even though Senator Henry

MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, 1964–1984

Since 1964, the percentage of convention delegates that candidates could win in the primaries has increased dramatically. But the eventual nominee (shown in bold) has often failed to win either a majority or a plurality of all votes cast in the primary elections. (See percentage figures after each candidate's name.)

Democrats

Republicans

1964

17 primaries/46% of delegates

17 primaries/46% of delegates

President Lyndon Johnson 17.7

Sen. Barry Goldwater (AZ) 38.2

Gov. Nelson Rockefeller (NY) 22.0
former Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge (MA) 6.5
Gov. William Scranton (PA) 4.1
Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (ME) 3.8
f. Gov. Harold Stassen (MN) 1.9

1968

15 primaries/40% of delegates

15 primaries/38% of delegates

Sen. Eugene McCarthy (MN) 38.7
Sen. Robert Kennedy (NY) 30.6*
V.P. Hubert Humphrey (MN) 2.2
Sen. George McGovern (SD) 0

Gov. Ronald Reagan (CA) 37.9
f. V.P. Richard Nixon (CA) 37.5
Gov. Nelson Rockefeller (NY) 3.7
f. Gov. Harold Stassen (MN) 0.7
Gov. George Romney (MI) 0.1

1972

22 primaries/65% of delegates

21 primaries/57% of delegates

Sen. Hubert Humphrey (MN) 25.8
Sen. George McGovern (SD) 25.3
Gov. George Wallace (AL) 23.5**
Sen. Edmund Muskie (ME) 11.5
f. Sen. Eugene McCarthy (MN) 3.5
Sen. Henry Jackson (WA) 3.2
Rep. Shirley Chisholm (NY) 2.7
f. Gov. Terry Sanford (NC) 2.1
Mayor John Lindsay (NY) 1.2
Mayor Sam Yorty (CA) 0.5
Rep. Wilbur Mills (AR) 0.2

President Richard Nixon 86.9
Sen. John Ashbrook (OH) 5.0
Rep. Paul McCloskey (CA) 2.1

Jackson (D.-Wash.) had gone on to win the Massachusetts and New York contests and by the end of April had cumulatively received more primary votes than Carter.

And by winning the media coverage, the front-runner also won an influx of money that was desperately needed to pay for the increasing costs of waging a state-to-state campaign. In 1952 Eisenhower and Taft *together* spent roughly \$2.5 million seeking the G.O.P nomination—a far cry, even after considering inflation, from the \$18 million that Walter

1976

30 primaries/76% of delegates

f. Gov. Jimmy Carter (GA) 38.8
 Gov. Edmund Brown, Jr. (CA) 15.3
 Gov. George Wallace (AL) 12.4
 Rep. Morris Udall (AZ) 10.0
 Sen. Henry Jackson (WA) 7.1
 Sen. Frank Church (ID) 5.2
 Sargent Shriver (MD) 1.9
 f. Sen. Fred Harris (OK) 1.5
 Ellen McCormack (NY) 1.5
 Sen. Birch Bayh (IN) 0.5
 Gov. Milton Shapp (PA) 0.5
 Sen. Hubert Humphrey (MN) 0.4

30 primaries/71% of delegates

President Gerald Ford 53.3
 f. Gov. Ronald Reagan (CA) 45.9

1980

35 primaries/72% of delegates

President Jimmy Carter 51.2
 Sen. Edward Kennedy (MA) 37.1
 Gov. Edmund Brown, Jr. (CA) 3.1
 Lyndon LaRouche (NY) 1.0

34 primaries/76% of delegates

f. Gov. Ronald Reagan (CA) 60.8
 f. Rep. George Bush (TX) 23.3
 Rep. John Anderson (IL) 12.4†
 Sen. Howard Baker (TN) 0.9
 Rep. Philip Crane (IL) 0.8
 f. Gov. John Connally (TX) 0.6
 f. Gov. Harold Stassen (MN) 0.2
 Sen. Robert Dole (KS) 0.1

1984

30 primaries/71% of delegates

President Ronald Reagan 98.6
 f. Gov. Harold Stassen (MN) 0.3

25 primaries/62% of delegates

f. V.P. Walter Mondale (MN) 37.8
 Sen. Gary Hart (CO) 36.1
 Rev. Jesse Jackson (IL) 18.2
 Sen. John Glenn (OH) 3.4
 f. Sen. George McGovern (SD) 1.9
 Lyndon LaRouche (VA) 0.7
 f. Gov. Reubin Askew (FL) 0.3
 Sen. Alan Cranston (CA) 0.3
 Sen. Ernest Hollings (SC) 0.2

*Assassinated after winning the California primary. Died June 6, 1968.

**In 1968, Democrat George Wallace ran on the American Independent Party ticket, and won 46 electoral votes; in 1972, he was incapacitated by a would-be assassin in May.

†In 1980, Anderson entered the G.O.P. primaries; he later ran on the National Unity Campaign ticket, but won no electoral votes.

Mondale spent to capture the party prize in 1984. After Gary Hart won the 1984 New Hampshire primary, his campaign treasurer started receiving \$100,000 a day in private donations.* Thus, the point of winning

*Under the Campaign Finance Act of 1974, candidates also received \$1 in federal money for every \$1 they collected in individual contributions of \$250 or less. To qualify for matching funds, candidates had to raise at least \$5,000 in individual contributions from each of 20 states. Under the act, individuals could contribute no more than \$1,000 to each candidate; corporate or labor political action committees could give no more than \$5,000.

the early primaries, candidates discovered, was not so much to win the delegates, but to attract resources needed to carry the campaign, with its enormous outlays for TV advertising, through the ordeal of the remaining primaries.

Thus, the marathon campaign was born. Candidates began frequenting the states that held the earliest primaries as much as two years before the event, hoping that repeated personal exposure to the voters would make the difference.

This new nominating system has shifted influence from party leaders, who once controlled slates of delegates, to the most ideologically fervent members of each party. Many of these true believers, much like the young peaceniks in "McGovern's Army" of 1972, take the candidate's message from door to door in the primary states; others give generously to direct-mail requests for campaign donations. "I think there are only two mail-donating segments of our society: the right-wing fringe and the left," fund-raiser Morris Dees once said. "The average American does not consider himself part of the political process other than going out to vote."

The new process has also favored the *former* governor or senator over the working politician. "The disproportionate rewards of early success," as political scientist William M. Lunch has noted, "have produced a 'strategic environment' in which it apparently pays *not* to hold public office when running for president."

Consider 48 hours in the life of Bob Dole (R.-Kansas), Senate minority leader and presidential candidate: Last October 28—over three months before the first primary—Dole spent the morning and afternoon in Washington, busy with Senate affairs. Later that day, he flew to Houston for a "Firing Line" TV debate with five other Republican candidates. The senator then flew back to Washington after the debate, arriving in the capital at 3:00 A.M. He worked in the Capitol from 8:30 A.M. until early that afternoon, when he departed for California to attend a campaign fund raiser. Finally, Dole returned to Washington the following day for an early-morning budget conference. The senator's schedule explains, to some degree, why from 1976 to 1984, every major party nominee has been either a former office-holder, such as Jimmy Carter in 1976 and Ronald Reagan in 1980, or a president seeking re-election.

Jimmy Carter's Triumph

And finally, the reformed nominating system has favored the one-of-a-kind candidate. The primaries, as Berkeley's Austin Ranney has pointed out, express the voters' first preferences, but in a crowded field of candidates, they provide "no way of identifying, let alone aggregating, second and third choices so as to discover the candidate with the broadest—as opposed to the most intense—support."

In the 1972 Democratic primaries, for example, George McGovern,



"Super Tuesday" (March 8) has made both parties' candidates campaign hard in Dixie. But John Buckley, an aide to Jack Kemp, said: "If [George] Bush is in free fall after New Hampshire, the South won't save him."

by far the most liberal and the most antiwar candidate, collected some 4.05 million votes—more than any other *single* contender. Two more moderate candidates, senators Hubert Humphrey and Edmund Muskie, however, together collected 5.9 million votes, which were cast, presumably, by the party's more middle-of-the road voters. By virtue of winning the most votes and thus the most delegates in the primaries, McGovern went on to win the nomination, on the first ballot, at the national convention in Miami. But it is arguable that in the 1972 general election campaign against Richard Nixon, either Humphrey or Muskie might have been the stronger Democratic candidate.

In 1976 candidate Jimmy Carter was out of office and, as a progressive Southerner, he was a one-of-a-kind candidate. These attributes, combined with his shrewd use of television, enabled the former governor of Georgia to defeat four well-established Democratic opponents: Birch Bayh, Henry Jackson, Hubert Humphrey, and Morris Udall. In the campaign, Carter presented himself, as newsman Christopher Lydon observed, as the ideal "television character," the "Bible-thumping Annapolis engineer" with a "wrinkled lovable mother [and] a 13-year-old daughter." The process Lydon says, made it possible for Carter to win the White House "without a block constituency, without an organizing

issue, without a friendly network of pols around the country." But as soon as Americans got bored with Carter's television persona, both his popularity and his ability to govern waned. In December 1977, columnist Russell Baker wrote that "if the Carter administration were a television show, it would have been cancelled months ago."

The Georgian's difficulties in the White House explain why the Democratic Party, in 1981, established a commission to reform the McGovern-Fraser reforms in a way that would bring party leaders back into the nominating game. The panel was chaired by North Carolina governor James Hunt.

The commission decided to reward the largest vote-getters by permitting states to deny any delegates at all to candidates who received less than 20 percent of the vote in primaries. And it ruled that at the 1984 convention, at least 14 percent of the seats would be filled by "superdelegates"—party leaders, governors, and members of Congress. "Our goal," said Hunt, was "to nominate a candidate who can win, and after winning, can govern effectively."

Unintended Consequences

The re-reforms, inevitably, did not please everyone. The 20-percent threshold along with the superdelegates, some Democrats argued, combined to make the nominating process markedly less open. Indeed, in 1984, Mondale won only 38 percent of the cumulative primary vote, but a majority of the delegates at the convention in San Francisco. The re-reforms, said candidate Jesse Jackson, were a "move away from primaries and one-man, one-vote," and a revival of "back-room politics."

Such complaints spurred the Democratic Party to form yet another panel—the Fairness Commission, headed by former South Carolina party chairman Donald Fowler—to redesign the nominating procedures for 1988. But, "the general consensus," as one commission adviser remarked, was that "the party has got to stop mucking around with the nominating process."

For 1988 the Democrats made only one big change—and it was not crafted by the Fairness Commission. Legislatures in 11 Southern and border states moved their Democratic and Republican primaries to March 8. By having most of the Old Confederacy choose its delegates on the same day, relatively early in the campaign season, the Southern Democrats hoped the party would be more likely to select a conservative, Sunbelt-oriented nominee. But "Super Tuesday," like other reforms, may produce unintended consequences. Since almost 20 percent of all Southern voters are black, the megaprimary may instead favor the most liberal, one-of-a-kind candidate in the race: Jesse Jackson.

Efforts to reform and re-reform the nominating process have not ended. Some Democrats and Republicans will certainly call for more changes after the 1988 election. If the candidates who win the early

primaries also win the nominations, party officials in Ohio, New Jersey, and California—who have held their primaries late in the season—may decide to move their primaries to March. This shift could create *several* large regional primaries which take place early in the election year.

Would a change in “the system” actually produce a better, or even a different nominee? Probably not.

Seven years ago I wrote an article for this magazine on the nominating process. The essay prompted a reply from George McGovern, the ill-starred 1972 Democratic nominee. “My own personal bias for many years,” McGovern wrote, “has been that political and economic forces plus personal factors—candidate skills, positioning on the issues, organization, political ‘timing’ and strategy—and the vagaries of the media have more to do with winning a presidential nomination than do the party procedures or reforms prevailing at any given time.”

In any case, party leaders who hope to revive the boss-dominated nominating process are not likely to succeed. The old patronage system crumbled long ago. The nominating system will retain its unruly character due to: the rapid growth in the number of well-educated, politically active citizens; the widespread reliance on television, which, for all its grave flaws, helps Americans to form their *own* opinions about each party’s politicians; and the presence of so many organized groups with antagonistic views.

Thus, one of the great challenges facing our nation today is to devise a system that both addresses the demands of competing special interests and furthers the national interest. That task will not be easy. The public insists that candidates be nominated for the presidency in a democratic fashion. But a more open system necessarily reduces the influence of professional politicians—even though the winning candidate will need their support when it comes time to govern.

The two major parties remain essential to the entire democratic process. They alone can reconcile the needs of democracy and those of leadership. “The party system of Government,” as Franklin D. Roosevelt once observed, “is one of the greatest methods of unification and of teaching people to think in common terms.”

THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE, 1988

This year's presidential candidates are competing, variously, for 4,160 Democratic or 2,277 G.O.P. convention delegates. The far-right column shows the total numbers of delegates at stake on each caucus/primary election day. The Democratic figures exclude some "superdelegates" (governors, congressmen). Several low-profile G.O.P. state conventions and Democratic caucuses do not appear.

| | | |
|--------------|---|------------|
| February 8 | Democratic & Republican caucuses in Iowa | 58D/37R |
| February 16 | D. & R. primaries in N.H. | 22D/23R |
| February 23 | R. caucus in Minn. , R. primary in S.D. | 49R |
| February 28 | D. caucus in Maine | 27D |
| March 5 | D. caucus in Wyo. , R. primary in S.C. | 18D/37R |
| March 8 | Super Tuesday: D. & R. primaries in Ala., Ark., Fla., Ga., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Miss., Mo., N.C., Okla., R.I., Tenn., Texas ; D. caucuses in Hawaii, Idaho, Nev., Wash. ; D. primary in Va. | 1449D/712R |
| March 10 | D. caucus in Alaska | 17D |
| March 12 | D. caucuses in S.C., S.D. | 67D |
| March 13 | D. caucus in N.D. | 20D |
| March 15 | D. & R. primaries in Ill. | 188D/92R |
| March 19 | D. caucus in Kansas | 43D |
| March 22 | D. primary for Democrats Abroad | 9D |
| March 26 | D. caucus in Mich. | 151D |
| March 29 | D. & R. primaries in Conn. | 59D/35R |
| April 4 | D. & R. caucuses in Colo. | 51D/36R |
| April 5 | D. & R. primaries in Wis. | 88D/47R |
| April 16 | D. caucus in Ariz. | 40D |
| April 18 | D. caucus in Del. | 19D |
| April 19 | D. & R. primaries in N.Y. , D. caucus in Vt. | 294D/136R |
| April 25 | D. caucus in Utah | 27D |
| April 26 | D. & R. primaries in Pa. | 193D/96R |
| May 3 | D. & R. primaries in D.C., Ind., Ohio | 282D/153R |
| May 10 | D. & R. primaries in Nebr., W. Va. | 72D/53R |
| May 17 | D. & R. primaries in Oregon | 51D/32R |
| May 24 | R. primary in Idaho | 22R |
| June 7 | D. & R. primaries in Calif., Mont., N.J., N.M. | 507D/285R |
| June 14 | R. primary in N.D. | 16R |
| July 18-21 | Democratic National Convention in Atlanta | |
| August 15-18 | Republican National Convention in New Orleans | |
| November 8 | Election Day | |

BACKGROUND BOOKS

CHOOSING AMERICA'S PRESIDENTS

At the turn of the century, Chicago newspaperman Finley Peter Dunne created "Mister Dooley," a fictional Irish bartender who voiced the common man's views. "Politics ain't beanbag," Dooley once said. "Tis a man's game; an' women, childher, an' pro-hyhibitionists'd do well to keep out iv it."

If Mr. Dooley were tending bar today, writes Martin Schram in **The Great American Video Game** (Morrow, 1987), he might say that "Politics is video games. 'Tis an actor's game—an imagemark'r's an' illusionist's game—an' women, childher, an' politicians'd do well to keep out iv it."

Television had become so important to politics that by 1984, Schram, a *Washington Post* reporter, decided to cover the election campaign by watching news reports and the candidates' ads on TV. Among other things, Schram concluded that the local television news was more influential than the national network programs in presidential primary campaigns.

During the weeks prior to the crucial New Hampshire primary, some 432,000 adults living in the Boston TV market (which encompasses southern New Hampshire) watched one of the local hour-long news shows; only 312,000 stayed tuned to the half-hour NBC news program that followed. And whereas the network news stories on the candidates usually lasted between 80 seconds and two minutes, the local TV reports often ran twice that long.

Schram's chronicle is the latest of the books on TV and presidential campaigns. Television first provided (relatively) comprehensive campaign coverage during the election of 1952. As Kurt and Gladys Engel Lang report in **Politics and Television** (Quadrangle, 1968), some commentators thought that TV coverage of the 1952 Democratic and

Republican national conventions would transform the conventions into large, New England-style town meetings, enabling viewers, as one news executive put it, "to vote for men and principles, and not for party labels."

In **Television and Presidential Politics** (Christopher, 1972), Robert E. Gilbert recalls some of TV's most significant early moments. During the 1960 campaign, between 65 and 70 million Americans watched each of the four debates between Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Television, it seemed, changed not only what Americans did in their living rooms, but how they practiced politics in their communities. Gilbert quotes author James Michener, then chairman of the Bucks County (Pa.) Democratic Party: "Immediately after the debate we received funds from heaven knows where to open four additional offices . . . We got phone calls volunteering services. We got automobiles and posters. We received checks through the mail and a steady stream of visitors."

As television changed the business of politics, politics changed the business of television. In **The People Machine** (Harper, 1968), journalist Robert McNeil says that by 1964, TV executives discovered that the network that attracted the most viewers during the party conventions usually gained the Number One audience ratings over the next four years. One unnamed CBS reporter admitted that "CBS went to the [1964 Republican] San Francisco convention with the desire to beat NBC, not to cover the convention in [the] most thoughtful and original way."

Before long, some politicians began to criticize the media's role. Conservatives suspected that television and newspaper reporters were not fair-minded but biased in favor of liberal causes and candi-

dates. After being elected, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew charged that media stars were "nattering nabobs of negativism" who were out of touch with America's "silent majority." But C. Richard Hofstetter's **Bias In the News** (Ohio State Univ., 1976), a sober study of the 1972 campaign, found that ABC, CBS, and NBC did not slant their coverage to favor the Democratic nominee, George McGovern, over the G.O.P. incumbent, Richard Nixon.

But journalism is "horse racist," according to Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan, authors of **Over the Wire and On TV** (Russell Sage, 1983). Robinson and Sheehan arrived at this and other conclusions after examining more than 5,000 news stories on the 1980 presidential campaign, which had been produced by CBS and United Press International. Fully two-thirds of the stories, they say, focused not on substantive issues but on the "horse race"—that is, which candidates were ahead and which were behind. "Networks and wires," the authors observe, "won't make anybody an expert on anything except how a politician is doing in the polls."

While some scholars have pondered "bias," others have wondered whether TV really informs viewers at all. Thomas E. Patterson and Robert D. McClure complained in **The Unseeing Eye** (Putnam's, 1976) that TV news reports of the 1972 campaign "almost entirely avoid[ed] discussion of the candidates' qualifications."

In **The Main Source** (Sage, 1986), John P. Robinson and Mark R. Levy argue that television is simply a poor medium for conveying *information*. The typical TV news program, the authors point out, crams 20 rapid-fire stories into 22 minutes of commercial-interrupted air time. Television watchers sometimes cannot even tell when one news report ends and the next begins. Nor can they

go back and review news they missed or did not understand.

"For many viewers, watching the news may produce an experience of having been informed," say Robinson and Levy, "But it is a false sense of knowledge, for it is based only on a vaguely understood jumble of visual and auditory stimuli that leave few traces in long-term memory."

Whatever its effect on the voters, television has clearly transformed the way the candidates approach presidential campaigns. **Nominating A President** (Praeger, 1980), edited by John Foley, Dennis A. Britton, and Eugene B. Everett, Jr., presents a series of frank round table talks held at Harvard during the 1980 campaign. One speaker, consultant John P. Marttila, claims that most candidates now spend between 65 and 70 percent of their money on TV, radio, and newspaper advertising. "The real foundations of modern campaigning," he says, "are survey research and television." He adds that "most candidates around the country circumvent the local party organization."

Hence, the blossoming of television, combined with the proliferation of state primaries, Nelson Polsby observes in **The Consequences of Party Reform** (Oxford, 1983), has given rise to a new group of political operatives, including "fund-raisers by mail and by rock concert, media buyers, advertising experts, public relations specialists, poll analysts, television spot producers . . ."

Newspapers still set the agenda in presidential campaigns despite television's hold on the candidates.

In **Elections American Style** (Brookings, 1987), edited by A. James Reichley, Albert R. Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal* points out that in 1984 newspapermen initiated the major stories, such as Walter Mondale's links to special interest groups, and the Rev. Jesse Jackson's ties to black extremists: "Once the agenda was on the table, tele-

vision dominated the dialogue."

And a skilled magazine reporter, Hunt might have added, also introduced the "human interest" approach (which so many TV folk employ today) to covering campaigns. When Theodore White sat down to write **The Making of the President, 1960** (Atheneum, 1961), he hoped that there might be "some permanent value in the effort of a contemporary reporter to catch the mood and the strains, the weariness, elation and uncertainties of the men who sought to lead America." White's formula proved so popular that he produced *Making of the President* sequels on the 1964, 1968, and 1972 elections.

Equally important, White's book served as a model for other narratives. In **The Boys On the Bus** (Random, 1972), which covers the 1972 campaign, Timothy Crouse describes the pack of reporters who "fed off the same pool report, the same daily [press] handout." After a while, Crouse says, the reporters "began to believe the same rumors, subscribe to the same theories, and write the same stories."

Among those wayfarers whom Crouse encounters is Theodore White, who had soured on up-close journalism. White tells Crouse: "We're all sitting there watching [Democratic nominee George McGovern] work on his acceptance speech, poor bastard . . . and all of us are observing him, taking notes like mad, getting all the little details. Which I think I invented as a method of reporting and which I now sincerely regret. If you write about this, say that I sincerely regret it."

Other journalists' after-action reports

include Martin Schram's **Running for President, 1976** (Stein & Day, 1977); Jeff Greenfield's **The Real Campaign** (Summit, 1982), about the 1980 race; and two books on the 1984 Mondale-Reagan contest, **Wake Us When It's Over** (Macmillan, 1985) by Jack Germond and Jules Witcover; and William A. Henry III's bright **Visions of America** (Atlantic Monthly, 1985). All of these post-mortems examine the media's role. Germond and Witcover suggest that had Reagan, the "Great Communicator," not been able to manipulate the media, the better-informed Mondale could have won on the issues—a claim which, many of the book's critics have argued, is probably excessive.

Outstanding scholarly long-term accounts include Eugene H. Roseboom's concise **History of Presidential Elections** (Macmillan, 1957); a four-volume **History of American Presidential Elections** (McGraw-Hill, 1971), edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.; and **Congressional Quarterly's** detailed **Guide to U.S. Elections**.

Happily, there is also one respectable work—Paul F. Boller, Jr.'s anecdotal **Presidential Campaigns** (Oxford, 1984)—which takes a light-hearted approach. During the 1972 campaign, Democratic vice presidential nominee Sargent Shriver, a Kennedy in-law, liked to tell audiences how he tried to get his children to study harder, noting, "When Abraham Lincoln was your age, he walked twelve miles back and forth to school every day." "That's nothing," Shriver reported one of his children as saying, "When Uncle Jack was your age, he was President of the United States."

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Lawrence Lichty, a former Wilson Center Fellow and now professor of radio/television/film at Northwestern University, suggested many of the titles that appear in this essay.*

CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS AND THE SEARCH FOR STRUCTURE

"Such is how I view myself," wrote Lévi-Strauss in his autobiography, *Tristes Tropiques* (1964), "a traveller, an archaeologist of space, trying in vain to restore the exotic with the help of fragments and debris." Like Rousseau two centuries before him, Lévi-Strauss insisted upon the virtue of primitive peoples. Yet he went beyond Rousseau. Dissecting the art, myths, and folkways of traditional societies, he sought to find a common code or "grammar" underlying the world's diverse cultural arrangements. His quest led to a bold reevaluation of "savage" thinking, which in turn yielded fresh insights into the workings of the human mind. As anthropologist David Maybury-Lewis explains, Lévi-Strauss's search for structure has powerful reverberations in academia and beyond, even to this day.

by David Maybury-Lewis

People always and everywhere have wanted to believe that there is some sort of pattern in human affairs. They have seen their lives as part of a grand design but until comparatively recently have maintained that this design was only fully intelligible to the gods or to God, and that it would be hubris for ordinary mortals to aspire to a deep knowledge of it.

This attitude began to change with the philosophers of the Enlightenment and the growth of the scientific spirit in Europe. After thinkers such as Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) and Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689–1755) had the audacity to suggest that mere mortals, too, might be able to understand the grand design, the idea began to take hold that human societies could be studied scientifically as parts of the natural world.



Claude Lévi-Strauss, in a 1963 photograph.

Many 19th-century anthropologists felt that they could and should classify the societies of the world in much the same way as museums classify the world's flora and fauna. By refining these classifications (as they learned more about exotic peoples) and applying to them the powerful new evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, anthropologists would develop nothing less than a natural science of *human* societies.

Probably the most influential of these anthropologists was Lewis Henry Morgan, who sought in two major works, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871) and *Ancient Society* (1877), to demonstrate the mechanisms of social evolution. He argued that human societies had passed through stages characterized by technological advances, which gave rise to new family systems and forms of political control. The thesis impressed Friedrich Engels, who summarized and embellished it in his own book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), with the eventual result that Morgan became the patron saint of anthropology in communist countries.

There were skeptics, of course, but the idea of a "science" of society proved to be a vision of enduring inspiration. It was a vision that found an eloquent spokesman in A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, professor

of social anthropology at Oxford at the time of World War II. Radcliffe-Brown argued for a social anthropology that would be nothing less than a comparative sociology of all the peoples of the world—a herculean task which demanded that anthropologists be able to describe the structures of human societies so that they could be compared and classified.

In a major treatise on the Australian aborigines, *The Social Organization of Australian Tribes* (1931), Radcliffe-Brown diagrammed the clan systems and marriage arrangements of each tribal society. It was clear that he thought his diagrams represented the “structures” of the societies he was discussing. Did this mean that the aborigines’ other ideas and institutions were somehow not part of the structure? To Radcliffe-Brown’s critics, this seemed both implausible and unsatisfactory. After all, the aborigines might have seemed incredibly “primitive” to the Europeans who first met them (because of their simple Stone Age technology), but later students noted the aborigines’ penchant for philosophical speculation, their elaborate religious life, and the complexity of their social organization.



If Radcliffe-Brown’s notion of *structure* was dubious with regard to the Australian aborigines, how was it to be applied to India or the United States? And if not generally applicable, how could it become the basis for a scientific study of all the societies of the world? Many anthropologists were reluctant to abandon this vision of their discipline, though the comparative science they longed for seemed as elusive as ever. By the 1950s they had reached the stage where they were talking about structure more but enjoying it less. It was at this moment of impasse that Lévi-Strauss came to the rescue with a different and even more ambitious kind of structuralism.

A Belgian-born Frenchman, Lévi-Strauss had studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, and was doing a stint of secondary-school teaching when the University of Paris invited him to go to Brazil as one of several professors sent to help build up the programs of the University of São Paulo. In 1935, at the age of 27, he arrived in São Paulo and began teaching sociology. During the next few years he went on several expeditions into the Brazilian interior. He became fascinated

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by the study of the Indians he met. He returned to France in 1939, in time to join the army at the outbreak of World War II.

Following the defeat of France, Lévi-Strauss, who came from a Jewish family, managed to escape to New York City, where he secured a teaching job at the New School for Social Research, and began publishing his first works in ethnology. When the war ended, he served briefly as cultural attaché at the French embassy in Washington before returning to France in 1947. He has lived and taught in Paris ever since, being elected first to a chair of social anthropology at the Collège de France and then to the Académie Française.

The structuralism that he began to elaborate during the 1950s was a far cry from that of Radcliffe-Brown. Radcliffe-Brown spoke of societies having structures even as buildings or living creatures have structures. Lévi-Strauss suggested instead that scholars consider the structure of a society as being more like the grammar of a language. Here he took his cue from Roman Jakobson and Nikolay Trubetskoy, linguists of what had come to be known during the 1930s as the Prague School. These men had revolutionized linguistics by looking for the "deep structures" that shape the speech utterances of all languages. Lévi-Strauss proposed to apply a similar method to the study of human societies. The structures he aimed to uncover would be the hidden codes that generate social institutions and behaviors.

But how to uncover these deep structures?

Lévi-Strauss's examples were marvelously provocative. Rejecting the conventional divisions of subject matter that had fettered his scholarly predecessors, he tried to discern the patterns underlying peoples' ideas and institutions and often arrived at some startlingly unorthodox conclusions.



In *Tristes Tropiques*, he wrote eloquently of the Indian tribesmen whom he had met on his expeditions into the Brazilian hinterland. The Mbaya-Caduveo, for instance, had been renowned warriors when they first encountered the Portuguese invaders in the 16th century. Their nobles were arrogant seigneurs who scorned their inferiors, among whom they included the conquering Portuguese and Spanish. Dressed in stiff leather coats, they must have looked like supercilious face cards in a playing deck. Indeed, these haughty noblemen thought so highly of themselves that they refused to subject their women to the nuisance of child rearing. They either aborted noble offspring or killed them at birth. To replenish their ranks, they adopted children from below, thus bringing about a most unusual form of social mobility.

Lévi-Strauss related the exaggerated hierarchy of this society to the way its members painted (and still paint) themselves. Fascinated

by their complex but symmetrical face-painting, he concluded that the Mbaya-Caduveo designs expressed a yearning for the symmetry that did not exist in their society's hierarchical social institutions.

As Lévi-Strauss himself stated it: "The mysterious charm and (as it seems at first) the gratuitous complication of Caduveo art may well be a phantasm created by a society whose object was to give symbolic form to the institutions which it might have had in reality, had interest and superstition not stood in the way."

In *Tristes Tropiques* and a series of papers on social structure in *Structural Anthropology*, Volume I (1958), he suggested that the Bororo Indians of Central Brazil were likewise struggling to reconcile symmetry and asymmetry in their thought and social arrangements. He suggested that the prevailing scholarly view of Bororo society as highly symmetrical was mistaken. Like many traditional societies all over the world, the Bororo are formally divided into halves, or *moieties*. Every Bororo must belong to a moiety, and Bororo thought and life appear to be dominated by the interrelationship between moieties. Yet from other, asymmetric aspects of Bororo society, Lévi-Strauss concluded that the symmetries in Bororo society were a smoke screen that the Indians used to obscure the real asymmetry of their social arrangements.

For example, Bororo society ostensibly follows a symmetric system of intermarrying moieties, but in fact it also adheres to another rule dividing the moieties into Upper, Middle, and Lower segments. People in an Upper segment must marry from the Upper segment of another moiety. Lévi-Strauss argued that the asymmetry of Upper-Middle-Lower represented the true structure of Bororo society, which they are at great pains to conceal from themselves.



Anthropologists whose specialty was Brazilian Indians were intrigued but unconvinced. I, for one, noted errors in Lévi-Strauss's readings of the evidence from Brazilian societies and pointed out that—even discounting these errors—we had only been offered new readings of the data, which would have to be compared with previous readings. In fact, the symmetric readings of Bororo society are still more broadly explanatory than Lévi-Strauss's asymmetric one, and it is noteworthy that later, when Lévi-Strauss wrote at length about Bororo myth, he did not make use of his own previous insistence on asymmetry among the Bororo.

However, most of his readers had little interest in the Indians of Central Brazil. What fascinated them was the bold and imaginative attempt to get behind appearances, to dig beneath clans and moieties, and to discern the underlying "code" that had generated these social arrangements.

The analyses of Central Brazilian peoples could be passed over as mere preliminary examples. If the method worked elsewhere, Lévi-Strauss would have solved the problem that had stumped earlier analysts. The comparison of these codes, moreover, would make possible the generalizations about human beings, their ideas, and their societies that had hitherto proved so elusive.

But Lévi-Strauss's first major comparative work, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), did not reassure doubters.

Ever since anthropology emerged as a scholarly discipline in the mid-19th century, the subject of kinship has loomed large. For most of human history people organized their societies along familial lines, and many traditional societies still do. The relegation of kinship to the private sphere and the corresponding development of associations—corporations, unions, clubs—in the public-sphere, which are not (or at least are not supposed to be) based on kinship, is a relatively recent development.



Kinship itself is perplexing. All societies have to incorporate into their arrangements the fact that they can endure only if men and women produce and rear children. Yet the kinship systems built around these "facts of life" are as varied as human ingenuity can make them. There are, for example, wide differences in the way societies classify relatives. Some have no special word for "mother." She is instead addressed by a term that refers to many other women of the first ascending generation. Some societies recognize descent only in the male line, others only in the female line. Yet others structure their systems by requiring marriage with certain cousins.

How can we understand and explain these variations?

Lévi-Strauss proposed a general theory of kinship, building on the sociological work of Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) concerning the central importance of gift exchanges in human affairs. Lévi-Strauss argued that human beings had passed from a state of nature to a state of culture—had in fact become human—the moment they prohibited incest. This prohibition, more than any other, separates the human from the animal world. Quite obviously, it leads to exogamy, the practice of "marrying out," for if men may not take the women of their own family as mates, the system will work only if all other men are under the same prohibition. The imperative of marrying out forces all members of a social system to deal with and depend on outsiders; it lies at the root of perhaps the oldest ambivalence in human affairs. It also provides the tension that is released in jokes about in-laws, including a South African aphorism, quoted by Lévi-Strauss, which suggests that a relative by marriage is an elephant's hip—suffocating, presumably.

But the rule that one had to marry out of the family did not establish whom one did in fact marry. In early human societies, kinship was too important a matter to be left to chance or to individual whim. Systems of regular intermarriage among groups were therefore set up, and Lévi-Strauss demonstrated ingeniously how they could have resulted from the idea of marrying out but not too far out (i.e. marriage between certain kinds of first cousins). In fact, such systems exist in many parts of the world today, for example, among the Bedouins of the Middle East. We know how they work and also how they get around the problems of chance and demography to ensure that there are spouses available for everyone.

However, Lévi-Strauss did not intend his theory to apply only to those societies that prescribed marriage with specific first cousins. He argued, rather, that kinship systems existed essentially to regulate marriage, and that the institutionalization of these kinds of first-cousin marriages was the essential pattern from which all other systems (presumably the complex structures) were derived.



From this theory, he analyzed the caste system of India, the social organization of China, and the social arrangements of the American Indians. His arguments combined speculative leaps of inference with evidence that was so technical as to be unintelligible to nonspecialists. Yet those who could understand his arguments soon began to object. The theory was grand and many of the insights telling, but the evidence was questionable as were the inferences drawn from it.

Why should the prohibition of incest, rather than language or other institutions, be the distinguishing characteristic of humanity?

Were all kinship systems marriage systems in more than a trivial sense?

Was Lévi-Strauss's grand thesis borne out?

Was there in fact any real way of confirming it?

Soon, however, the doubters discovered that they were but-but-but-ing like pedantic outboard motors in the wake of a grand vision that was sailing, indeed soaring, away from them.

For Lévi-Strauss had moved on, writing a series of books that explored the nature of human thought itself. The most influential of these was *The Savage Mind* (1962). In it he considered the curious phenomenon of totemism, the widespread custom by which a person or a group of people is associated with some material thing or animal or species in the natural world. Lévi-Strauss concluded that totems were a matter of classification. The Australian aborigine, for example, who says, "I am a wallaby," is neither feeble-minded nor confused, and he certainly knows a great deal about wallabies. He is making a

symbolic statement to the effect that his clan is to other clans as wallabies are to other species.

Lévi-Strauss argued that both a propensity to classify and careful observation of the natural environment have been keys to human thinking since time immemorial. It was this combination that enabled mankind to make important discoveries during the Neolithic revolution, which Lévi-Strauss considers just as important in human affairs as the Industrial Revolution. The invention of agriculture, weaving, and pottery, for example, took place long before the advent of scientific thinking as we now know it. Moreover, isolated tribal societies in existence today also possess a detailed knowledge of their environment, which shows, according to Lévi-Strauss, that they likewise engage in speculative investigation and classification.

"Savage thought," Lévi-Strauss insisted, was as logical and systematic as "scientific thought," though it often reached different conclusions. He offered two reasons for this: Savage thought argues from different premises, and it refuses to accept a vacuum. Detailing the associative connections made in savage thinking, Lévi-Strauss pointed out that while science accepts "don't know" as its frontier, savage thought is *totalizing*. It insists on systems, which is why classification is such an important part of it.

By now it should be clear that savage thought is not the same thing as the thinking of savages, or at any rate not the same as the thinking of people we might be tempted to label as savages. On the contrary, it is the way people think much of the time, except when they are making an effort to be scientific. People who order their lives according to horoscopes (for which there is no scientific evidence), or who act on what we call "superstitions," or who believe that fluoridating their water is part of a conspiracy against them, or who fit their ideas into any one of a number of totalizing theories that go beyond the hard evidence, are thinking "savagely."



But the question still remains as to why some societies rely extensively on savage thought, while others, Eastern or Western, have developed an alternative way of thinking, which results in theoretical and abstract science. Lévi-Strauss's surprising answer is that theoretical science develops along with historical consciousness. In "cold" societies that see the world totemically, that is, as a system where everything fits into the grand scheme of classification, there is only savage thought. By contrast, people in "hot" societies see the world as being in a state of flux and try to explain it and themselves in historical terms—which in turn leads to scientific thinking.

The irony of this conclusion is that Lévi-Strauss ends up championing science but doubting history. *The Savage Mind* concludes

with a fierce attack on Jean-Paul Sartre's insistence in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) that history is a privileged form of knowledge. Lévi-Strauss argues convincingly to the contrary—that history as used by Sartre and most Western thinkers does not escape from ideology and subjectivity. Worse still, it is a cannibal pursuit that devours the peoples outside our Western tradition and ingests them into our own view of the world. But if historical consciousness does not enable us to get at a truth that is not culture-bound, we need not despair. The structuralist method will get us there.

In a quartet of books—*The Raw and the Cooked* (1964), *From Honey to Ashes* (1966), *The Origin of Table Manners* (1968), and *The Naked Man* (1971)—and innumerable shorter works, Lévi-Strauss embarked on a massive demonstration of the efficacy of scientific structuralism when applied to myth. He chose myth as an expression of pure thought, unconstrained by demography or ecology. In myths anything can happen, but only certain things do. Since myths follow recurring patterns, we could learn what and how myth tellers think if we could only learn to read these patterns. That would in turn teach us something about human thought and the universal structure of the human mind.



But how can we read myths correctly?

Lévi-Strauss gave his answer in "The Structural Study of Myth" (1955). He argued that myths are not simply just-so stories, intended to explain natural phenomena or other mysteries of life, nor are they parables. Rather, they are complex statements intended to resolve the painful contradictions of human experience. Their message cannot be derived simply (if at all) from the apparent "stories" that they tell. Instead, these stories have to be broken up and reordered so that we can perceive that certain elements of them hang together when contrasted with other groups of elements. The myth can then be "read" like a musical score and its real message deciphered.

Take perhaps the most famous myth in all Western civilization, the story of Oedipus. Lévi-Strauss arranges it in four columns (see opposite page). The story line runs from left to right in columns A-C, with column D adding a kind of symbolic glossary. But the real message of the myth, Lévi Strauss tells us, is in the relationship among the columns.

Column A refers to the over-rating of relations among kin.

Column B refers to the under-rating of relations among kin.

Column C refers to the killing of creatures that emerge from the earth.

Column D implies that these men have themselves been born from the earth, since in many myths one can recognize a man who

| A Over-rating of kin | B Under-rating of kin | C Denying men born of earth | D Signs of men born of earth |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Cadmos seeks his sister Europa, ravished by Zeus | | Cadmos kills the dragon | |
| | The Spartoi kill one another | | Labdacos (Laios's father) = lame |
| Oedipus kills his father, Laios | | | Laios (Oedipus' father) = left- handedness |
| | | Oedipus kills the Sphinx | |
| Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta | | | Oedipus = swollen- foot (?) |
| | Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices | | |
| Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition | | | |

has come up out of the earth by his awkwardness (such as left-handedness) or his difficulty in walking.

The message of the myth then is that A is to B as C is to D—the over-rating of kin is to the under-rating of them as the denial of origin from the earth is to the insistence on it. The purpose of the myth is to resolve the contradiction between Greek tradition—according to which men come up out of the ground—and Greek experience of the fact that they are born of women. It does this by likening one insoluble problem, one irresolvable contradiction, to another one that turns out to be not insoluble after all.

From this myth (or, as is more usual in Lévi-Strauss's analyses, from a system of myths), one learns that kin and *affine* (a relative by marriage), nature and culture, life and death are not eternal antithe-

ses that fragment human consciousness and human existence; they can indeed be reconciled. The interpretation of this myth, as of the hundreds of others that Lévi-Strauss has analyzed in his works, is both original and provocative. But, as usual, it poses problems.

Why should we suppose that the contradiction between origin from the earth and ordinary childbirth bothered the Greeks enough for them to invest intellectual and emotional energy in myths to resolve it? This contradiction is, after all, merely the difference between a theory of origins and the facts of human continuity. Modern Christian fundamentalists are not concerned by the "contradiction" between the story of Adam and Eve and the facts of childbirth any more than evolutionists are worried by the "contradiction" between the origin of the species and its present procreative habits.

Furthermore, can we be sure of Lévi-Strauss's interpretations of the meaning of various symbols in the myth? He refers to Kwakiutl and Pueblo myths that interpret difficulty in walking as an indication of emergence from the earth, but did it mean this to the Greeks?



Lévi-Strauss has a tendency to interpret myths as if they were fragments of some universal language spoken by all people at different times and places. But if it is a language that is so hard to decode, and if Lévi-Strauss can only decode Greek myths by referring to Hopi stories that the Greeks could not possibly have known, then who is saying what and to whom in this difficult language, and is anybody getting the message? A Swedish scholar, Bertil Nathorst, who considered this problem, concluded that the mythmakers must all be talking to Lévi-Strauss.

Of course it may be only we who have to use Hopi myths to decode Greek ones; the Greeks may not have needed to. Perhaps, too, Lévi-Strauss's insistence on the linguistic analogy should not be taken too literally. But the unorthodox brilliance of Lévi-Strauss's analyses, together with their grandiose theories, raises a host of similarly troubling questions. What in fact is the relationship of these analyses to the things they claim to explain?

It is a question which Lévi-Strauss blithely begs. In a famous passage from the introduction to *The Raw and the Cooked*, his first major work on mythology, he defended himself against the criticism that his interpretations of South American myth may tell more about the interpreter's thinking than about that of the Indians: "For, if the final goal of anthropology is to contribute to a better knowledge of objective thought and its mechanisms, it comes to the same thing in the end if, in this book, the thought of South American Indians takes shape under the action of mine, or mine under the action of theirs."

Here Lévi-Strauss assumes that it is possible to by-pass the

problems of social and cultural analysis that are central to anthropology and to tap directly into the panhuman mainstream of objective thought. He also avoids the problem of knowing what a correct interpretation is; for if the thought of the Indians has been misinterpreted, there is a sense in which their thought is not present at all in Lévi-Strauss's analysis. Is Greek thought really present in the desire to resolve a problem about origin from the earth? Do American Indians and others construct elaborate myth systems to encode messages about kin and *affine*, nature and culture? Some critics argue that these are Lévi-Strauss's preoccupations, not those of the myth-tellers. Alternatively, if (as some structuralists have claimed) there is no correct interpretation, then what of the claim that structuralism is scientific?



Lévi-Strauss's methods are not those of the natural sciences, and they neglect the ordinary methodological precautions of what he calls "the human sciences." In studying myth, for example, he presents some myths in paraphrase and uses partial versions of others. He does not pay much attention to how a myth was collected, by whom, from whom, what sort of a story it was supposed to be, and what sorts of reactions it usually elicited. In decoding it, he refers to whatever information he can glean about the natural environment of the myth-tellers, but he refers much less often to studies of their thought, their rituals, and their social arrangements. This enables him somehow to decode even the thoughts of people about whom very little is known at all, beyond a story or two that has been collected from them by travelers in passing.

Furthermore, his "demonstrations" and "proofs" have an inconvenient circularity. They depend on the acceptance of Lévi-Strauss's assumptions in the first place. In effect, he shows little concern for the verification of his hypotheses about other peoples and their thoughts. Indeed, he does not treat them as hypotheses at all. They are offered as suggestions and later assumed to be proved, when all that has been demonstrated is the coherence of the argument, not its correspondence to anything outside of itself.

Yet Lévi-Strauss insists on the scientific objectivity of his structuralism. It is because it is scientific, he argues, that the structuralist method enables us to uncover constants in human life and thought. The study of myths is a particularly good way of doing this because myths, he tells us, are not so much thought *up by* human beings as thought *in* human beings without their knowledge. If we understand myths, he adds, then we understand the mainstream of thought for which individual societies and individual people are only the temporary outlets. A structuralism that started by trying to discover the

essence of whole cultures and societies has now moved on to the direct investigation of human thought—not just the thought of a particular society, but the thought of humankind in general.

Many of Lévi-Strauss's critics feel that this should not be the major objective of the human sciences, and that we cannot in any case achieve it by Lévi-Strauss's methods. Nevertheless, it is possible to dissent from Lévi-Strauss's claims, to be skeptical of his theories, to disagree with him on specifics and still acknowledge that his readings of cultures and myths are both brilliant and original.



His approach is so rich in insight and new ideas that it has revolutionized the study of myth and symbolism, in and out of anthropology. It has had an enormous influence on literary criticism. Here at last was a method that claimed to enable its practitioners to break out of the endless cycle of subjectivity and to decode the thought behind the text, regardless of who its author was. Indeed, it launched a new academic vogue for the study of authorless texts.

At the same time, Perry Anderson, writing from a Marxist perspective in *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (1983), credits Lévi-Strauss, and particularly *The Savage Mind*, with having almost single-handedly destroyed the hold of Marxism over French intellectuals. He notes that Lévi-Strauss's attack on Sartre's historicism and his refusal to accept the superiority of dialectical reasoning went unanswered. Instead, Louis Althusser incorporated Lévi-Strauss's antihistoricism into his own work, and soon other influential French thinkers—Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, and others—were taking structuralism, not Marxism, as their point of reference.

Yet structuralism came under heavy fire in Paris during the student upheavals of 1968. It was attacked by students and radicals for being indifferent to people as well as to history. Indeed, it was accused of treating the study of human beings almost as an exercise in literary criticism—an attitude more likely to appeal to professors than to students. To borrow Lévi-Strauss's phrase, structuralism was being excoriated as cold theory in a hot society, which also explains how it succeeded in reemerging, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the intellectual conflagration of 1968. French Marxism, in recent years, has been in political retreat. With French society trying to "cool it," the times have seemed ripe for an impersonal theory that focuses on the constants in human affairs, turns its back on history, and appears to offer no recipe for political action. But Lévi-Straussian structuralism is by no means devoid of social implications.

Lévi-Strauss has shown, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that all human societies, not just those of the industrial nations, are capable of remarkable feats of speculative thought. This is in itself a revolution-

ary notion. It forces us to recognize that we in the West, despite a temporary scientific advantage, have no basis for claiming intellectual superiority over the rest of the world.

Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss has given us the most sophisticated refutation of evolutionary historicism—the naive faith in progress that informs the social theories of Marxists and liberals alike. We can no longer assume that our way of life represents the most advanced stage of progress, and that other societies have simply been less successful than ours in reaching it. Instead, we have to face the fact that societies develop different emphases, which in turn give them different destinies. Lévi-Strauss offers us a new vision of what it means to be human, and he challenges us to develop new ways of coming to terms with the differences between human societies. These are remarkable achievements, and they are not much diminished by the fact that his structuralism has not developed the *science* of society that it once promised us.

Yet if Lévi-Strauss has failed to establish a scientific method of comparative analysis (as I believe he has), he has more than made up for it with his imaginative brilliance. His attempt to look at cultures as though they were languages, and his effort to discover the universal structuring principles behind them, have influenced scholars in the humanities and social sciences throughout the world. New developments in semiotics (the study of signs and symbols), literary criticism, history, and even psychology have all been inspired by his work. Meanwhile philosophers argue with him but cannot ignore his influence. It seems, therefore, that although academic specialists may reject Lévi-Strauss's specific conclusions, they will be following up his leads for a long time to come.



Nicaragua's Sandinistas first took up arms in 1961, invoking the name of Augusto César Sandino, a general turned foe of U.S. intervention in 1927-33. Sandino—here (center) seeking arms in Mexico in 1929 with a Salvadoran Communist ally, Augustín Farabundo Martí (right)—led a hit-and-run war against U.S. Marines. Nearly 1,000 of his men died, but their elusive chief was never caught.

Nicaragua

Perhaps not since the Spanish Civil War have Americans taken such clearly opposed sides in a conflict in a foreign country. Church organizations and pacifists send volunteers to Nicaragua and lobby against U.S. contra aid; with White House encouragement, conservative outfits have raised money for the “freedom fighters,” in some cases possibly violating U.S. laws against supplying arms abroad.

Even after nearly eight years, views of the Sandinista regime’s fundamental nature vary widely. Some scholars regard it as far more Marxist-Leninist in rhetoric than in practice. *Foreign Policy* editor Charles William Maynes argues that Managua’s Soviet-backed rulers can be “tamed and contained” via the Central American peace plan drafted by Costa Rica’s President Oscar Arias Sánchez.

Not likely, says Edward N. Luttwak of Washington, D.C.’s Center for Strategic and International Studies. Expectations that Daniel Ortega and Co., hard pressed as they are, “might actually allow the democratization required” by the Arias plan defy the history of Marxist-Leninist regimes. Such governments, says Luttwak, make “tactical accommodations,” but feel they must “retain an unchallenged monopoly of power.” An opposition victory would be “a Class A political defeat” for Moscow. The debate continues.

As scholars point out, the U.S. *economic* stake in Nicaragua is small. Indeed, in all of poverty-ridden Central America outside Panama, *Yanqui* direct business investment is under \$800 million—about 2.5 percent of the U.S. stake in Latin America as a whole. But the troubled region, along with the Caribbean, is part of the United States’ oft-neglected “backyard.” And that, since Fidel Castro’s Cuban revolution (1959), has been the locale of several Eastern Bloc targets of opportunity—notably El Salvador, still torn by civil war, and Grenada, invaded by U.S. forces in 1983, as well as Nicaragua.

Here, Richard L. Millett traces Nicaragua’s history, into which Americans were first drawn more than a century ago. Clifford Krauss reviews the sinuous path of the Sandinistas in power. Henry A. Kissinger reflects on what the contest between the White House and Congress over Nicaragua policy tells us about *American* governance.

‘PATRIA LIBRE’

by Richard L. Millett

When President Calvin Coolidge sent U.S. Marines to Nicaragua in 1926, most Americans had little idea of where they were going or why.

The place names—Managua, Corinto, Wiwili, Bluefields—seemed out of O. Henry’s *Cabbages and Kings*. So did the Marines’ mission. Nicaragua’s government sought help in quelling a revolt led by opposition generals backing a would-be president in exile in Mexico.

Polls showed that many Americans thought Nicaragua was in Africa or the West Indies. They wondered, as Will Rogers put it, “Why are we in Nicaragua, and what the hell are we doing there?”

By 1928 discontent ran high in Congress where, 10 years after the slaughter of World War I, isolationist sentiment was strong. Senator George W. Norris (R.-Neb.) charged that Coolidge’s “unauthorized and indefensible” intervention set a perilous “precedent.” If a president can wage war in Nicaragua without congressional consent, said the senator, “he can do the same thing with many other countries.”

Yet, just as George Norris was not the last U.S. senator to invoke the specter of undeclared war in Nicaragua, Coolidge’s was not the first intervention. During the 19th century, U.S. Navy ships often called at Central America’s ramshackle ports to see to the safety of *Yanqui* residents and property. In 1854, after a U.S. envoy was roughed up by a political mob in Greytown, a British-controlled port on Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast, the sloop *Cyane* shelled the town. (The British, entering the Crimean War, let it pass.) U.S. troops first went ashore in Nicaragua in force in 1909, when President William Howard Taft sent 400 Marines to Bluefields, another Caribbean port, to back a revolt against a dictatorship. The Marines landed again in 1912, to *quell* a revolt.

Indeed, except for a few months in 1925–26, at least a few Marines were maintained in Nicaragua until 1933—a long 21 years.

I

‘A TRADITION OF REBELLION’

All in all, Nicaragua’s history is largely a history of disruptions—by foreigners, by its own leaders (or would-be leaders), and even by the forces of nature: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes. An archaeological dig uncovered footprints made by Indians caught fleeing a volcanic blast more than 2,000 years ago. Nicaraguans have been surviving



Early industry: campesinos and coffee shrubs. Coffee beans brought Nicaragua into the world economy; by World War I, coffee accounted for 63 percent of exports. German, French, and U.S. investors helped develop the trade.

disasters, natural or manmade, ever since.

Theirs is both the largest and among the least densely populated of the Central American republics. About the size of Michigan, Nicaragua averages only 68 people per square mile. Visitors have long noted its beauty. Archeologist Ephraim George Squier, U.S. chargé d'affaires in Central America in 1849–50, rhapsodized about Nicaragua's "high and regular volcanic cones, its wooded plains, broad lakes, bright rivers, and emerald verdure." The people, too, were beguiling—"the *mozo* [young lad] and his *machete*, the red-belted cavalier . . . pricking his champing horse through the streets, the languid Señora puffing the smoke of her cigarette in lazy jets through her nostrils . . ."

The hot western lowlands embrace two large lakes—on whose shores lived Nicarao, an Indian chief—a chain of volcanoes, and rich soil that supports crops of cotton, sugar cane, and rice, as well as cattle. The cool highlands produce coffee and tobacco. In the thinly-populated Atlantic coastal plain, heavy rainfall (often above 200 inches a year) nurtures lush forests. Nicaragua's location once seemed blessed: As an ideal site for a canal linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, it was, said Louis-Napoléon in 1846, fated for "prosperity and grandeur."

As Squier saw it, Nicaragua's "genial earth waits only for the touch

of industry to reward the husbandman a hundredfold."

Yet today, the 3,373,000 Nicaraguans (average income: \$790) rank with their neighbors in Honduras and war-torn El Salvador as the poorest Central Americans. Their modest "touch of industry" came late.

Central America's first railroads opened in Costa Rica in 1854 and Panama in 1855; Nicaragua's first line was begun 23 years later. Europeans brought the coffee bean from Cuba to Costa Rica, still the heart of the Central American coffee industry, a half century before it reached Nicaragua. The country was an early banana producer, but when the big Banana Boom arrived in 1900-30, The United Fruit Company and other *Yanqui* firms got most of their crop from Honduras and Guatemala.

As late as World War II, Nicaragua was tied with Honduras as the region's least developed country. Foreign investors were wary. As William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln's secretary of state, wrote to a U.S. envoy to Nicaragua during the 1860s, "everybody loses patience with them for not being wiser, more constant, and more stable."

British Intruders, Mexican Emperor

How that fateful instability developed is a complex tale.

The first Spanish conquistadors arrived from Panama in 1522, midway in Spain's era of Latin American conquest, between Hernán Cortés's seizure of the Aztec Empire in Mexico and Francisco Pizarro's plundering of Peru. As elsewhere in Central America, the Spanish settled mainly in the west (still home to nearly 90 percent of the population). They subjugated, baptized, and enslaved most of the natives. But Nicaragua's gold and silver deposits soon ran out. In two decades, 200,000 Indians—at least one-third of the population—were shipped off to toil in Panama and the mines of Peru. (A 1548 census counted just 11,137 Indians.) The province, part of Spain's kingdom of Guatemala, became a neglected colonial backwater.

The Spanish built churches and monasteries, but few roads or schools. They exploited rather than developed. What they gave, besides their Mediterranean-style architecture, their language, plantation farming, and Catholicism, to *all* of Central America was a rivalry between two groups: Conservatives, mostly aristocratic landowners with close ties to Spain and the church; and Liberals, generally native-born Creoles, anticlerical and restive about Spanish rule.

In Nicaragua, the rivalry centered around old families—Chamorro and Sacasa were big names—and two cities: Granada, the Conservative agricultural hub, and León, the Liberal commercial center.

The Spanish never really ruled all of Nicaragua. British adventurers

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roamed the Mosquito Coast, a strip along the Atlantic named for its Miskito Indians. In time, they saw that a river entering the sea at San Juan del Norte could be part of a route to the Pacific. The first of many inland forays by British buccaneers (against weak Spanish resistance) culminated in the sacking of Granada in 1665.

The Spanish Empire finally collapsed in Central America in 1821, when Agustín de Iturbide, a Mexican military chieftain, declared himself emperor of an independent "New Spain"—Mexico and Central America. By 1824, Nicaragua's Liberals and Conservatives agreed to join their four neighbors—Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala—in forming the United Provinces of Central America.

Republican *Jefes*

Led by a president in Guatemala City, the federation was eminently sensible in theory. Its government investigated an isthmian canal. Central America, said historian Alejandro Marure, will be the "happiest nation on the globe." But chronic tensions (e.g., each state remained "sovereign") broke up the union during the 1830s.

Nicaragua declared itself "free, sovereign and independent" in 1838. The idea of citizenship remained vague throughout Central America, however, and Nicaragua was particularly fragmented. The Spanish and Creoles, concentrated in the populous, prosperous west, dominated politics and the agricultural economy. The majority mestizos (people of mixed Spanish and Indian blood) scratched out a living growing rice, corn, and beans (still staples of Central American diets). The remote east was populated by the Miskitos and other indigenous Indians and by blacks, originally brought from Jamaica and the Cayman Islands by the British to work in logging.*

Unlike the predominantly Catholic west, the east coast was heavily Protestant. During the 19th century, German missionaries of the Moravian Church settled among the Indians, built schools, and devised a Miskito alphabet so they could teach the Bible (and the Moravian distaste for socialism). Other Protestant missionaries followed.

What Nicaragua's ruling Spanish elites developed, as the late Carlos Fonseca Amador, a founder in 1961 of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN), noted, was "a rich tradition of rebellion."

Early on, as Conservatives and Liberals fought for supremacy, Nicaragua came to epitomize the banana republic. Between 1824 and 1842, it endured 18 changes of power and 17 armed conflicts—typically fought by a few hundred ragged, ill-trained troops on either side, hungry for loot and armed with muskets, cannon, and swords. So often were León and

*Nicaragua's approximate racial mix: 70 percent mestizo, 17 percent white, nine percent black, four percent Indian. The Miskitos and blacks distrust "the Spanish," the whites and mestizos in the west; "the Spanish" in turn regard their east coast compatriots as inferior. Numbering about 75,000 in 1980, the Miskitos are Nicaragua's largest indigenous ethnic group.

Granada sacked that in 1857 Managua, a town midway between them, was made the capital.

By then, Americans had become involved, willy-nilly, in Nicaragua's highly contentious domestic politics.

II ENTER UNCLE SAM

President James Monroe had declared Latin America off-limits to the European powers in 1823. But for years the weak and distracted United States did little to enforce the Monroe Doctrine (which Otto von Bismarck dismissed as "a species of arrogance"). Then, in 1848, during James Polk's administration, the U.S. won the Mexican War and acquired California. The Gold Rush spurred U.S. interest in a canal, in Panama or Nicaragua. Soon, President Zachary Taylor, the "Old Rough and Ready" Mexican War hero, moved to curb the British, who had created "Mosquitia," a protectorate with a puppet Miskito king and putative control of San Juan del Norte, renamed Greytown, which was sure to be the eastern terminus of any Nicaraguan canal. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (1850) provided that neither country would seek exclusive control of any trans-isthmian route, or "occupy or fortify or colonize" any part of Central America. The United States' role as the chief foreign actor in Nicaragua had begun.

The *Yanqui* transportation tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt developed a Nicaraguan route to the California gold fields. Soon, nearly as many Forty-Niners would be crossing Nicaragua by stagecoach and lake steamer as by the trans-Panama route (on which the risk of yellow fever and malaria was greater). The possibility that Nicaragua might really prosper intensified the Liberal-Conservative contests for local supremacy. Indeed, in 1855, the Liberals wearied of trying to unseat the Conservative president, Fruto Chamorro, who had Guatemalan aid.

Fatefully, they sought help from *outside* Central America. Thus entered one of many figures who would, in varying ways, illustrate Nicaragua's chronic difficulties in mastering its own fate.

William Walker, a Tennessee-born "filibuster" (soldier of fortune) who had once tried to rule part of Mexico, was hired by the Liberals to fight the Conservatives. But within 13 months of landing at the Pacific port now named Corinto with 58 armed "immortals," Walker assembled an army, captured Granada, and became Nicaragua's president.*

Walker mesmerized Americans. (*Harper's Weekly* called him "a

*As far as is known, Walker was the second U.S.-born leader of a foreign country. Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a black freedman from Virginia, was elected to head the new African republic of Liberia in 1847.

hero.") But his erratic rule lasted only 10 months. His grandiose plans to "regenerate" Nicaragua under Anglo-Saxon leadership—to make English its language, to adopt slavery (abolished by the United Provinces in 1824), and to expand—alarmed Central Americans. With backing from Peru (which contributed \$100,000), Cornelius Vanderbilt (whose transit rights Walker annulled), and the British, the Costa Ricans led Nicaragua's three other neighbors in an invasion known as the National War. U.S. Marines finally escorted Walker out of the country in 1857. (Later, caught attempting a comeback, he was executed in Honduras.)

Among other things, the episode showed how U.S. policy toward faraway Nicaragua could be shaped by domestic issues, in this case slavery. President James Buchanan refused to recognize the pro-slavery Walker regime, so as not to worsen tensions between America's Northern and Southern states. Even so, Nicaraguans saw Walker's intrusion as proof of a U.S. desire to dominate them. And a pattern emerged: Nicaragua's political factions would repeatedly seek foreign intervention rather than accept defeat at the hands of their local opponents.

That habit was the undoing of Nicaragua's first truly nationalist leader, General José Santos Zelaya.

A member of León's rising middle class, Zelaya was one of the Central American strongmen to emerge in the "Liberal Revolution" that swept the region during the late 19th century—inspired by progress-minded *jefes* (chiefs) like Mexico's president Porfirio Díaz and European thinkers such as France's Auguste Comte. They gave economic growth priority over democracy, and felt that what Comte called "republican dictatorships" could best achieve it.

The Rough Rider's Award

No democrat, Zelaya held the presidency for 16 years (1893–1909) by beating down Conservative revolts and rewriting the Constitution to permit his re-election. (In one race, semi-literate rural voters were given a choice of three candidates, "José," "Santos," and "Zelaya.") He brought stability and some economic progress, and managed to ease the British out of the Mosquito Coast while borrowing from London bankers to build schools and a rudimentary network of roads and rail lines. (Foreign capital was important to the Liberal formula for progress.)

While saluting Washington as the "natural protector" of small republics like his, Zelaya built Central America's strongest army. (His new military academy employed a German captain and several Chileans.) Zelaya aimed to expand Nicaragua's influence. Indeed, he aided a force of Honduran Liberals in mounting a conquest of their weak homeland, a perennial focus of Central America's wars.

But Nicaragua—not for the last time—was to become embroiled in larger countries' affairs.

A far-off event—the 1898 Spanish-American War—brought U.S.

CENTRAL AMERICA: AN ISTHMUS OF OPPOSITES

They are "more opposite to one another than in Europe the Spaniard is opposite to the French, or to the Hollander, or to the Portugall." So wrote Englishman Thomas Gage, who toured Central America in 1648.

Gage referred to the "deadly hatred" between the two dominant Spanish clans, the *peninsulares* who bore Spain's yoke gladly—and the locally-born Creoles who did not. The region of seven countries* and 26 million people still has its "opposites."

Costa Rica is mostly white, in part because Spanish women joined its settlers early. (Miscegenation was common elsewhere.) Guatemalans have the most Indian blood. Nicaragua has a high proportion (nearly three-fourths) of mixed-race inhabitants, called mestizos or ladinos.

While its neighbors are uncrowded, El Salvador is the most densely populated nation in the Western Hemisphere—and the only Central American country without large amounts of public land. As recently as the 1960s, 95 percent of its acreage was owned by about 14 families.

Some 22 percent has been transferred to poor farmers under a land reform program launched in 1980 by a Christian Democratic military junta. But the program has stirred the ire of property owners and become a target of Marx-

*The old United Provinces of Central America encompassed Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. But Belize and Panama are also regarded as Central American states.



ist-Leninist insurgents. Hence, José Duarte's civilian government has been beset by both rightist groups and Cuban-backed guerrillas.

Here, political geography does not favor Communist forces as it did in the Vietnam War. El Salvador's Marxist-Leninists have not enjoyed sanctuaries in neighboring nations. But Nicaragua's *contras* do. Much as Central Americans complain about *Yanquis*, Communist revolutionaries do not have wide local appeal.

Among other incongruities, prosperous Costa Rica has no army, poor Nicaragua has the region's largest. In a Spanish-speaking world, Belize, settled by British logcutters, retains English. And in a world of *campesinos*, Panama is an international financial entrepôt; banks employ 10

percent of its work force.

The dream of unity survived the old Central American federation. (A new federal constitution was actually written in 1921.) But it remains a dream. A U.S.-sponsored Central American Court of Justice, set up following a 1906 war between Guatemala and El Salvador, lasted just 10 years. (Nicaragua's withdrawal killed it.) A more recent example of how disputes can flare in the region was the 1969 "soccer war."

The trek of landless Salvadorans—more than 38,000 of them by the early 1960s—to Honduras had long disturbed its peasants, workers, shopkeepers, and landowners. Boundary disputes erupted, and in 1967 the two countries broke relations. In 1969, when both their soccer teams reached the World Cup finals, so much violence accompanied the games in their capitals that the deciding match (won by the Salvadorans) was played in Mexico City. Even so, mobs in Honduras attacked Salvadorans there, and mobs in El Salvador returned the favor. By the time the Organization of American States intervened, a Salvadoran invasion force had pushed to within 75 miles of Tegucigalpa, and Honduran warplanes had bombed San Salvador.

Then as now, the odds were against Simón Bolívar's 1815 prediction that Central Americans will "form a confederation" and become a "happy region" enjoying "tribute from the four quarters of the globe."

BEHYZE

Population: 159,000. **Size:** 8,867 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 18 per sq. mi. **Capital:** Belmopan (pop. 2,932). **Gross National Product:** \$190 million. **Per Capita Income:** \$1,200. **Major Exports:** sugar, citrus fruits, bananas, seafood, timber. **Literacy:** 92 percent. **Independence:** 1981, from Britain. (British Honduras was last European possession on Latin American mainland; English remains official language.) **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$12,600,000 (economic), \$600,000 (military). **Leader:** Manuel A. Esquivel, Prime Minister since 1984 election.

HONDURAS

Population: 4,528,000. **Size:** 43,277 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 105 per sq. mi. **Capital:** Tegucigalpa (pop. 530,000). **Gross National Product:** \$3.36 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$740. **Major Exports:** bananas, coffee, timber, beef. **Literacy:** 60 percent. **Independence:** 1821 from Spain, 1838 from United Provinces of Central America. **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$187,800,000 (economic), \$61,200,000 (military). **Leader:** President José Simón Azcona Hoyo, elected 1985 to four-year term. **Present constitution** (1982) ended decade of military rule.

MEXICO

The map illustrates the geographical layout of Guatemala, highlighting its major urban centers and infrastructure. Key locations include San Cristóbal de las Casas, Comitán de Domínguez, Cobán, San Pedro Carrán, Guatemala City, and others. The Petén region is marked in yellow, and Lake Izabal is shown in blue. The Pan American Highway is depicted as a prominent red line. The map also shows the borders with Mexico to the north and south, and the Gulf of Mexico to the east.

HONDIIRAS

A map of Central America showing the borders of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Major cities like Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, Managua, and San José are marked. The Gulf of Fonseca is visible on the coast.

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

Population: 2,660,000. **Size:** 19,650 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 135 per sq. mi. **Capital:** San José (pop. 740,000). **Gross National Product:** \$3.67 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$1,390. **Literacy:** 90 percent. **Major Exports:** coffee, bananas, beef, sugar. **Independence:** 1821 from Spain, 1838 from United Provinces of Central America. **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$175,400,000 (economic), \$1,728,000 (military). **Leader:** President Oscar Arias Sánchez, elected 1986 to four-year term, continuing tradition of peaceful and constitutional transfers of power dating back to 1899, and since broken only twice (1917, 1948).

GUATEMALA

Population: 8,177,000. **Size:** 42,042 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 194 per sq. mi. **Capital:** Guatemala City (pop. 1,220,000). **Gross National Product:** \$7.64 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$930. **Major Exports:** coffee, cotton, sugar, bananas. **Literacy:** 58 percent. **Independence:** 1921 from Spain, 1838 from United Provinces of Central America. **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$177,400,000 (economic), \$5,490,000 (military). **Leader:** President Mario Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo, elected 1985 to five-year term, ended 15 years of military rule.

EL SALVADOR

Population: 4,861,000. **Size:** 8,098 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 600 per sq. mi. **Capital:** San Salvador (pop. 520,000). **Gross National Product:** \$4 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$820. **Major Exports:** coffee, cotton, sugar. **Literacy:** 72 percent. **Independence:** 1821 from Spain, 1840 from United Provinces of Central America. **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$452,100,000 (economic), \$111,521,000 (military). **Leader:** President José Napoleón Duarte Fuentes, elected 1984 to five-year term, amid civil war, following 52 years of military rule.

COSTA RICA

A map of Costa Rica showing major cities and geographical features. The map includes labels for San José, Cartago, Turrialba, Heredia, Alajuela, La Concepción, Ciudad Cortés, Dominical, Carate, and Golfo Dulce. It also shows the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Dulce.

NICARAGUA

Population: 3,373,000. **Size:** 49,759 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 68 per sq. mi. **Capital:** Managua (pop. 780,000). **Gross National Product:** \$2.67 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$790. **Major Exports:** coffee, cotton, beef. **Literacy:** 87 percent. **Independence:** 1821 from Spain. 1838 from United Provinces of Central America. **U.S. Aid:** None since 1982. **Leader:** Daniel Ortega Saaavedra, Sandinista comandante on Junta that took power in 1979; elected 1984 to six-year term as President. **Constitution (1986):** prescribes representative democracy, but real power held by nine-member Sandinista National Directorate.

PANAMA

Population: 2,222,000. **Size:** 29,762 sq. mi. **Pop. Density:** 75 per sq. mi. **Capital:** Panama City (pop. 470,000). **Gross National Product:** \$4.83 billion. **Per Capita Income:** \$2,170. **Literacy:** 88 percent. **Major Exports:** bananas, sugar, shrimp. (One-quarter of national income generated by the Panama Canal, due to shift from U.S. to Panamanian control in 1999.) **Independence:** 1821 from Spain, 1903 from Colombia; sovereignty over Canal Zone gained in 1979. **U.S. Aid (1987):** \$8,400,000 (economic). **\$3,518,000** (military). **Leader:** General Manuel Antonio Noriega Morena, chief of Panama Defense Forces (formerly Guardia Nacional) since 1983. Normally a representative democracy; real power has resided with the military since a 1989 coup.



A horizontal timeline of the 20th century, starting at 1900 and ending at 1987. Major tick marks are labeled every 10 years from 1900 to 1980, with an additional mark for 1987. The timeline is represented by a horizontal line with vertical tick marks extending above and below it.

[illegible]

troops to Cuba and the Philippines, and the United States became a nascent world power. U.S. relations with whoever ruled in Managua had been fairly cordial as long as Washington pondered building a canal through Nicaragua. But the canal issue was settled following the 1901 inaugural of President Theodore Roosevelt, the former Rough Rider in Cuba whose "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine would bring an era of direct U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Central America. Eventually, T.R. and the U.S. Congress awarded the prize to Panama.*

Zelaya was enraged. There was talk that he discussed a canal with Japanese officials. The upshot was a Conservative revolt, encouraged by U.S. officials and saved by the 400 Marines that President Taft sent to Bluefields in 1909. Although a pro-U.S. government was installed, in 1912 Taft had to dispatch more than 2,000 Marines to ensure its survival. Even after calm was restored, more than 100 Marines were retained in Managua as a symbol of U.S. support for the minority Conservatives and U.S. determination to prevent further revolutions.

Sandino's Rebellion

Pursuing "dollar diplomacy," the Taft administration persuaded the Conservatives to accept loans from U.S. bankers to refund Nicaragua's foreign debt and allow American officials to oversee customs receipts. (U.S.-aided "financial rehabilitation," said Taft, would bring "a measure of stability" to such countries.) The Bryan-Chamorro Treaty (1916) gave the United States rights over a Nicaraguan canal and an option to lease a naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca.

In all but name, and almost by default, Nicaragua was now a U.S. protectorate, but one which gave Washington no pride of ownership.

After a major distraction—World War I—U.S. officials began seeking a way out of Nicaragua. The Coolidge administration was particularly uncomfortable with the United States' role as the chief supporter of a minority regime. After a U.S.-supervised election, a new president backed by a coalition of Liberals and dissident Conservatives took office in Managua in 1925. Seven months later, the last Marines departed, happy to go home.

But then a revolt installed the Conservatives' leader, General Emiliano Chamorro, whereupon the *Liberals* rebelled.

As it happened, Washington—trying to *enforce* stability in Central America, to protect U.S. investments and deter Mexican ambitions in the area—sponsored a 1923 treaty providing that the region's nations

*In 1904, Roosevelt claimed a U.S. right to exercise "international police power" in shaky Latin countries. That year, European banks threatened to foreclose on the Dominican Republic, whose government was in financial straits due to the chronic pilfering of customs receipts. Roosevelt said that "backward" states should be helped to pay their bills in order to keep the Europeans out. He thus sent a receiver-general to Santo Domingo. Soon revolts erupted, and the Marines went in—to stay until 1924. Other similar interventions followed in Haiti and Honduras, as well as Nicaragua. The Roosevelt Corollary, widely criticized, was formally repudiated by the U.S. State Department in 1930.



Nicaragua was favored for a canal before U.S. senators, fearing volcanoes, made Panama a prime option in June 1902. Panama lobbyists sent them this stamp showing Nicaragua's Momotombo, a volcano that erupted that May.

would recognize no regime that replaced a recognized government via "coup d'état or revolution." The Conservatives were the traditional pro-American party, but Coolidge duly denied recognition to Chamorro.

Yet now the White House faced the delicate task of forcing Chamorro out of power without letting in the Liberals' man, former vice president Juan Bautista Sacasa, an exile in Mexico.

The leftist Mexican government, besides backing Sacasa and the Liberal generals in Nicaragua, was bitterly contesting ownership of some U.S. oil investments. The Mexicans, U.S. officials feared, had designs on their southern neighbors. In a 1927 memorandum, Undersecretary of State Robert Olds wrote that the Mexicans were attempting to undermine "our special relationship in Central America." The region "has always understood that governments which we recognize and support stay in power, while those which we do not... fall. Nicaragua has become a test case."

Finally, to avert a Liberal victory, Coolidge sent in the Marines—again. Henry L. Stimson, a former (and future) U.S. secretary of war, was dispatched to impose a peace settlement.

At that time, Nicaragua was a nation of only 700,000 people, mostly peasants. Few, as Stimson and McGeorge Bundy observed in the

former's memoir, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (1948), were "sufficiently educated or alert to be politically important." The struggle involved "rival oligarchic groups." It was typical of "backward countries; the armies on both sides were raised by impressment from the lower classes; the countryside was full of armed deserters; the fields were untilled; the already shaky national economy was being further weakened by the waste of war and civil unrest . . ."

"No prisoners were being taken by either side."

A plan was worked out—"The Peace of Tipitapa"—for disarming both sides, creating (under U.S. Marine supervision) a nonpartisan constabulary called the National Guard, and dividing cabinet and local government posts between Liberals and Conservatives. The 1928 and 1932 elections would be U.S.-supervised. But one of the rebel Liberal generals, Augusto César Sandino, the wiry, persuasive son (illegitimate, but recognized) of a landowner, would not go along.

Sandino would accept a government run by U.S. military men until the next election, he said, but not one led by a Conservative. Thereupon he took perhaps 150 armed followers into the hills. With an attack on a Marine post in Ocotal, a northern mountain town, he began what would be almost six years of raids and ambushes—not against Nicaraguan Conservatives, but against the National Guard, the Marines, and what he called "Yankee Imperialists."

Sandino had joined the Liberals after working as a staffer for a U.S. oil company in Mexico, a country whose labor movement impressed him. Abroad, his vow to have *patria libre o morir* ("a free fatherland or die") won him admirers in many quarters—including Latin American socialists and the Communist International. A division of the Communist army in China was named after him. On assignment for *The Nation*, U.S. journalist Carleton Beals visited Sandino and put him on a par with Robin Hood, Pancho Villa, and other "untamed outlaws who knew only daring and great deeds."

Practicing Continuismo

With little outside backing (Sandino was wary of Salvadoran and Mexican communist support), the revolt sputtered along nevertheless. Public and congressional pressure to bring the Marines home mounted.

By the 1930s, President Herbert Hoover was seeking to disengage the U.S. from Nicaragua. Sandino's persistence in a hit-and-run war that had cost the lives of 47 Marines was one reason. But at least as important were a Depression-bred need to cut military spending, and events in the Far East: Japanese officials rebuffed U.S. appeals to withdraw their forces from Manchuria by saying that they were only doing in China what the Marines were doing in Nicaragua.

The last Marines departed the day after the January 1933 inauguration of President Juan Bautista Sacasa, the Liberal exile against whom

MUD, MARINES, AND QUICKSILVER, 1928

Commentary on the hunt for Augusto Sandino in the New York Times of May 6, 1928, headlined "Campaigning in Nicaragua":

The philosophy of our Marines in Nicaragua must be sorely tried by the climate. [The rain does not bother] the natives, but in campaigning against a piece of human quicksilver like Sandino, soaked khaki, rotting leather, rusting rifles and sulky mules are a trial The wasps and black stinging ants are afflictions not to be meekly borne. Malaria makes a long sick list

Thomas Belt, the English naturalist, [on] travel: "The road . . . was very bad, the mud deep and tenacious, the hills steep and slippery, and the mules had to struggle and plunge along through from two to three feet of sticky clay." Belt [also endured] a revolution "The poor Indians," he wrote, "toil and spin, and cultivate the ground, being the only producers, yet in the revolutionary outbreaks they are driven about like cattle and forced into the armies that are raised." Nicaragua has not changed greatly since his day.

[Author] Eugene Cunningham observed that the Nicaraguan women were even more hostile than the men. At León "we were almost within sight of the spot where two luckless Americans, machine gunners, [were captured,] flayed alive, and then hacked to pieces." There is no doubt that Sandino with the [aid] of the country people has been able to maintain a [fine] spy system.

The Marines [arrived] under an agreement providing for U.S. supervision of a national election. For the state of war Sandino is responsible In a report by Lieut. G. F. O'Shea occurs this incident of a fight in the jungle:

"We began to receive heavy fire from a hill to our right and rear, distant about 100 yards. Ten dynamite bombs were thrown close to us at this time from above. Men were yelling to those on the other hill to fire lower, and on the other hill there were directions to drop dynamite bombs on us"

There is no glory in field service in Nicaragua and the Marines will be glad to see the end of it.



Leathernecks on a search for Sandino.

the U.S. intervention had been directed. One detail remained: Who would command the 3,000-man National Guard?

There was only one candidate acceptable to Washington, to the outgoing president, General José María Moncada, and to Sacasa. This was Anastasio Somoza García, a young (36), English-speaking member of Moncada's cabinet. Besides being kin to Sacasa—the uncle of his wife—Somoza had been well known to the *Yanquis* since 1927, when he was Stimson's interpreter.

III SOMOCISMO

"Tacho" Somoza was the son of a coffee farm owner, and a grand-nephew of Bernabé Somoza, a boisterous 19th-century Liberal politician-bandit (he once killed 20 men in a dispute over a cockfight). Tacho had learned English as a student at Philadelphia's Pierce Business School. There, he became an ardent baseball fan (under his rule, the game became Nicaragua's national sport), and met his future wife, Salvadora Debayle; a student at Beechwood (now Beaver) College, she was the daughter of a noted Liberal surgeon from León, and granddaughter of a former president, Roberto Sacasa. Back home, Tacho started out in a variety of jobs, including working as a toilet inspector for the Rockefeller Foundation's Sanitation Mission to Nicaragua.

A U.S. Marine report rated the military competence of the Guard's new commander as "practically none." But he had a talent that "in Nicaragua is much more important"—being "a shrewd politician." All in all, General Somoza was "energetic, clever, not too honest," a "pleasing personality," and "not believed to be over pro-American at heart."

Sandino soon reached a peace settlement with Juan Sacasa, but provisions allowing him to retain a small force under arms angered Guard officers. Pressed by his colleagues, Somoza sought U.S. Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane's permission to arrest and exile Sandino, but Washington would no longer enmesh itself in Nicaragua's affairs. The new American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had long argued that such involvement should be ended "for all time."

Sandino was shot and killed with his two top generals after dining with Sacasa in Managua in February 1934. Sacasa's failure to take disciplinary action was a grave error. With Washington in a hands-off mood, Somoza, the man with the guns, plotted his ascent.

In most of Central America during the 1930s, *continuismo*—a technique of holding power indefinitely in a "legal" manner—came into style. Durable *caudillos* took power in Guatemala and El Salvador in

1931, in Honduras in 1933. They would survive well into the 1940s. Somoza would start later, but exceed them all. Indeed, he would rule for nearly 20 years, and his sons would go on for 22 more.

Tacho consolidated his control of the Guard, then began building political support. Reminded that the Constitution barred the election of anyone related by blood or marriage to the president, he considered divorcing his wife, Sacasa's niece. Instead, in 1936, he forced Sacasa to resign and staged his own election. The Conservatives (who boycotted the vote) and Sacasa appealed to Washington. F.D.R.'s "Good Neighbor" policy, they were told, made U.S. intervention impossible.

A Changing Country

Once in office, Somoza rapidly developed the political style that would mark his family's rule. He kept a tight grip on the Guard, which was usually commanded by a relative. Any hint of disloyalty to Somoza—or any hint of personal ambition—was fatal to an officer's career. With its wide reach—including control of customs, immigration, airports, and even the post office—the Guard had many ways of rewarding loyalty. Each duty assignment, always made by the Somozas, carried a specific monetary value, the amount by which an officer could expect to supplement his Guard salary with income from bribes, extortion, smuggling, and other such sources. The Guard, like so many Latin military forces built up during the Liberal Revolution, became, in effect, a kind of corporate entity, dedicated chiefly not to national defense but to self-preservation and self-aggrandizement.

Somoza carefully cultivated the impression that he had U.S. backing, which discouraged local opposition. Thus, in 1939, he secured an invitation from F.D.R. for a visit to Washington. Afterwards, he renamed Managua's main street *Avenida Roosevelt*, and made F.D.R.'s birthday a national holiday. He educated his three children in the United States, strongly supported the Americans during World War II, in the United Nations, and in the Organization of American States (OAS). When in 1954 the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency maneuvered (successfully) to oust Guatemala's pro-Soviet president, Jacobo Arbenz, Somoza allowed the CIA to base at Managua's Las Mercedes airport some aging P-47 fighters used in a brief attack on targets in Guatemala.

Somoza, a "simple farmer," bridled at being lumped with such bare-knuckled dictators as Rafael Trujillo, the Dominican Republic's durable (1930–61) boss. His style was more subtle. Controlling the Guard and the Liberal Party, he divided and co-opted his opponents, and persuaded his fellow upper-class Nicaraguans that he alone could ensure order, growth, and the Left's exclusion from power. (The peasants did not matter.) Hostile newspapers like *La Prensa*, owned by the Chamorros (the old Conservative clan), were tolerated, but censored whenever Somoza felt threatened. When members of elite families made trouble,

they were first imprisoned, then sent abroad, then allowed to return. (*La Prensa* publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Zelaya spent part of the 1940s in exile in New York.) Police brutality and torture were largely reserved for those without social standing.

What Somoza's critics called his "kleptocracy" was efficient. Maintaining order had its rewards. Exacting the maximum from a poor country, Somoza amassed the largest fortune ever known in Nicaragua. He parlayed coffee *fincas* and cattle ranches bought from "heirs" into large holdings, including 10 percent of Nicaragua's farmland and interests in lumber, cement, air transport, and merchant shipping.* When he died at age 60 in 1956, after being shot at a party in León by a young Nicaraguan poet, estimates of his net worth ranged as high as \$300 million.

There were doubts, as *Time* said, that "Tacho's sons can somehow reproduce his rare blend of ruthlessness and charm." Yet Luis Somoza Debayle, who as a student at Louisiana State University had learned politics by watching Louisiana's populist governor Huey ("Kingfish") Long, smoothly acceded to the presidency at age 34. Command of the Guard passed to his brother, Anastasio ("Tachito") Somoza Debayle, 32, an alumnus of West Point. (There, local wits said that he was the only cadet in the Point's history to get an army as a graduation gift.)

Managua had to endure a brief period of harsh, precautionary repression, but afterwards the Somozas allowed considerable personal freedom and public criticism.

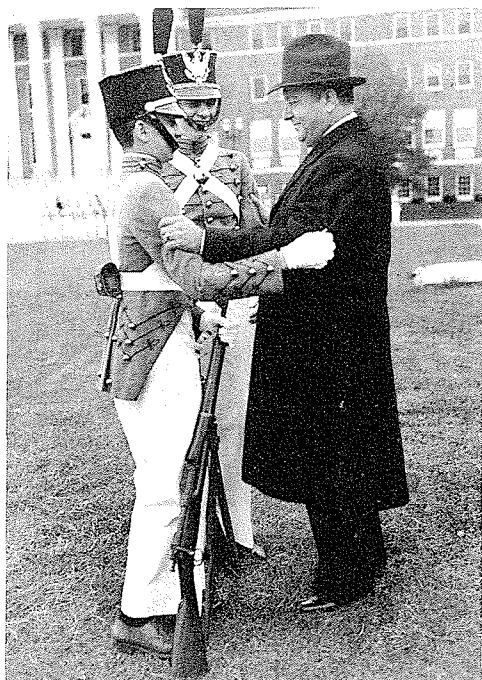
Yet postwar Nicaragua was changing.

The country had never been like the Philippines, a land of almost feudal *haciendas* where 10,000 peasants might work for a single landowner. Nicaragua's economy developed along a different pattern. Much agriculture was small scale. In the Matagalpa coffee area, family farms prevailed. The old oligarchs, although big in rice and cotton (if not politics, since Zelaya's day), increasingly turned to banking and commerce.

The Archbishop's Letter

Such trends were accelerated by a boom that developed during the 1960s. Among the spurs were increasing exports of cotton and other agricultural products, the new Central American Common Market, and the Alliance for Progress—the Kennedy administration's program to prime the Latin American economies with investments to meet the "revolution of rising expectations" being exploited by roving revolutionaries like Cuba's Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Alliance-authorized loans to Nicaragua totaled \$50 million during 1961–67; the Inter-American

*During World War II, Tacho bought seized properties of German and Italian owners at auctions where he was the sole bidder—the Guard kept others away. He got Montelimar, his beloved 40,000-acre Pacific coast estate, for only \$9,000 because he alone could develop it. Somehow, only he could get roads and rail lines built to the property, and have a sugar refinery and an alcohol distillery purchased abroad (in Cuba and Honduras) shipped in free by companies eager to help the new owner.



Following a May 1939 meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Washington, D.C., a proud Tacho Somoza went to New York to visit his successors-to-be: his teenage sons Anastasio Jr. (left) and Luis, students at La-Salle Military Academy in Oakdale, Long Island. Another son, José Somoza, born of a youthful liaison between Tacho and a family maid, became an officer in the National Guard.

Development Bank injected another \$50 million.

Some evidence of all this effort rose along the U.S.-financed Inter-American highway near Managua: a cluster of light industries, run by a new class of Nicaraguan entrepreneurs (some of them trained at the Harvard-affiliated Central American Institute for Business Management in Managua). Such firms helped to spawn a wage economy, which, in turn, changed Nicaragua's sociopolitical map. By the 1970s, Nicaragua had become the only Central American country in which half the population lived in cities and towns. Managua became a metropolis of 400,000.

Most Nicaraguans had known only *somocismo*: The nation's median age was a mere 14. But a system predicated on the bulk of population remaining rural "oxen" (as Tacho once described the farmers) was clearly outdated. It took some time for this reality to emerge.

Like Tacho, the younger Somozas valued close U.S. ties. In 1961, as the Central Intelligence Agency readied a force of Cuban émigrés for the Bay of Pigs invasion, facilities built at remote Puerto Cabezas by U.S. forces during World War II became the base for the ships and aircraft used in the ill-fated assault. But otherwise, the brothers' views differed.

Luis felt that the Somoza family should perpetuate its power via a one-party dictatorship; it would deflect domestic and foreign opprobrium by "changing the monkey" (the president) regularly. Tachito put *his*

faith in the Guard. In 1963, to Tachito's distress, Luis put a non-Somoza in the presidency. In 1967 Tachito sought the family title for himself, and won in a carefully rigged election. A coronary then killed Luis at age 44, removing a major restraint on the third President Somoza.

Ever since his West Point days (perhaps as a reaction to them), Tachito had indulged himself. He smoked big cigars, drank and gambled with cronies, went on shopping sprees in New York. Although married to a cousin, Hope Portocarrero, during the 1960s he took an auburn-haired mistress named Dinorah Sampson, whom he kept outside Managua. (Before the relationship became public, he traveled to her villa aboard a curtained mobile home. Hope eventually moved to London.)

The Somozas had long faced little armed resistance. But that changed after January 1959, when Fidel Castro's easy march to power in Cuba inspired many Latin would-be revolutionaries.

IV

ENTER THE SANDINISTAS

There were many Nicaraguan visitors to Havana that year. One was Somoza's leading Conservative foe, *La Prensa* publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, who later organized the most serious armed challenge yet to *somocismo*.^{*} Another was Carlos Fonseca Amador, the illegitimate son of an administrator of some Somoza properties; he had visited the Soviet Union and East Germany in those days, and in a booklet called *A Nicaraguan in Moscow*, sketched out a bountiful Soviet-style future for Latin America.

Fonseca and two other veterans of Nicaraguan student movements, Tomás Borge Martínez and Silvio Mayorga, founded the FSLN—the Sandinista National Liberation Front—in Honduras in 1961. In their first foray, in 1962, some 60 Sandinistas set out from Honduras to occupy Wiwili, a Miskito settlement of shacks where Augusto Sandino had once had an arms cache. The Sandinistas were not the Viet Cong. They failed to find the town, and were instead bloodied by a strong National Guard force, then captured by Honduran troops. Other failures followed, and in 1967 Somoza declared that the Sandinistas no longer existed.

Like so many previous Nicaraguan dissidents, the Sandinistas had failed to stir a peasant revolt. The FSLN's goals, beyond the removal of *somocismo*, remained imprecise—perhaps intentionally. Although by the

^{*}Castro declined to help. But with aid from Venezuela—where Rómulo Bétancourt had recently restored democracy—Chamorro managed to secure military training (in Costa Rica) for more than 100 young anti-Somoza Nicaraguans. In 1959, the youths sneaked home to make several simultaneous harassing attacks on National Guard posts. But the expected mass uprisings failed to materialize, and 103 of the rebels were caught and jailed for up to a year.

late 1960s some surviving Sandinistas were receiving training in Costa Rica, Cuba, and North Korea, a "Historic Program" issued by the FSLN in 1969 as the first important statement of its goals was quite vague. It mentioned redistribution of land and wealth, but called only for a "revolutionary structure" of government. Fonseca conceded in an article titled "Nicaragua: Zero Hour" that the FSLN had "vacillated in putting forward a clearly Marxist-Leninist ideology."

Nonetheless, during the early 1970s the anti-*somocismo* cause in general had attracted important new support from Catholic priests who urged "political commitment" among young college-age Nicaraguans, many from affluent families. In 1972 the church went public, with a pastoral letter by Managua Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo that criticized social conditions and called for "rulers who know how to rule and who are interested in their people."

Indeed, despite more than two decades of economic growth, new urban amenities like supermarkets and television, and a profusion of Mercedes-Benz cars (imported by Somoza's Caribe Motors Company), Nicaragua was still in some ways almost a Third World caricature.

A Fateful Alliance

Only five percent of Nicaraguans were completing six or more years of education, and literacy was below even the official rate of about 50 percent. Disease rates were high, diets poor; rural Nicaraguans consumed an average of only 1,623 calories a day. (The U.S. average for young adults: 2,731.) Other signs of social malaise were alcoholism (the worst in Central America) and the homicide rate (highest in the *world*). Housing was wretched, even in cities. Only 20 percent of Managua's homes had running water, and only 18 percent had their own toilets.

What crystallized resentment over *somocismo*'s failings was an act of nature: a pre-dawn earthquake on December 23, 1972 that devastated Managua, killing 10,000 people and wrecking 80 percent of the city's structures.

Immediately after the disaster, only 100 members of the vaunted Guard could be found to police the city; the rest had fled in terror. Then Somoza, who had earlier turned his executive powers over to a three-member junta, including one Conservative, grabbed direct control of the government, claiming a need to personally direct relief efforts. Those, many Nicaraguans came to believe, all benefited Somoza or his regime.

The most damaging, if hardest to document, accusations involved the Guard's looting of foreign relief funds and supplies, which were managed by Somoza's son, a Guard captain. Other suspicions were raised by the heavy use of cement in the city's rebuilding (the Somozas owned the only cement plant), and the sale of land (thought to be Somoza-owned) to the National Housing Bank.

Such apparent greed outraged not only ordinary Nicaraguans, who



Patrick Oliphant's view of U.S. Nicaragua policy, early 1979. "Ah, yes, Senorita Sandinista, how beautiful you are when you're angry, yes, indeed! Him?... Hardly know the scoundrel... Ah, may I come in...?"

had gained little from the country's modest 1960s boom but also rich folk and members of the struggling, but still rising, urban middle class. Both had seen their prospects diminish as the Somozas' personal control of the fledgling economy spread. After the quake, Somoza family members extended their business activities into new areas, such as banking and construction. In part, this was to provide jobs for retired Guard officers. Although they continued to draw full salaries in their inactive status they had to forego the extra income from corruption. (More than half the directors of the Central Bank were ex-Guard brass.)

Capitalizing on the nation's sour mood, the Sandinistas resurfaced spectacularly in 1974 with their "Christmas Party Raid"—an assault by 13 Sandinistas (three of them women) on a dinner party at the Managua home of a wealthy businessman. The hostages they took, among them Somoza's foreign minister, were exchanged for \$1 million, freedom for 14 imprisoned Sandinistas (among them Daniel Ortega Saavedra), and a special airline flight to Cuba. Somoza imposed a state of siege, restricted opposition activities, and censored *La Prensa*.

As the Christmas Raid illustrated, the Sandinistas were able to draw on the support of offspring of the Establishment, such as it was. One of the raiders was a son of Joaquín Cuadra Chamorro, a leading corporate lawyer. Later, after a period of training in Cuba, the son became an advocate of the Sandinista cause among the Managua elite.

Although Somoza had himself duly re-elected in 1974, by then his hold on power was beginning to slip. The Church boycotted his inauguration. And as the economy soured, partly as a result of a worldwide

recession induced by the OPEC oil "shock," discontent spread.

Three events in 1977 perceptibly weakened Somoza. One was the arrival in the White House of Jimmy Carter. The U.S. president's emphasis on human rights encouraged Somoza's domestic foes by raising the possibility that U.S. aid to Nicaragua, amounting to a modest but useful \$3.1 million in military assistance and \$15.1 million in "humanitarian" economic help during fiscal year 1978, might be reduced or even ended. Then, in June, the portly, 52-year-old *jefe*, who now weighed 267 pounds, suffered a heart attack (at Dinorah Sampson's villa). Flown to a Miami hospital, he soon recovered, but even his supporters now began to wonder how much longer the dynasty could endure.

Finally, in October, a number of prominent Nicaraguan businessmen and intellectuals met with Humberto Ortega Saavedra, leader of one Sandinista group, to discuss the formation of a broad alliance of organizations to oppose the Somoza regime. After additional meetings, some of the conferees, who became known as *Los Doce* (the Twelve), began a propaganda campaign against Somoza.*

Leaving it to the OAS

The collapse began in January 1978, when *La Prensa* publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, a leader of the anti-Somoza opposition, was gunned down on a Managua street. No evidence of direct Somoza involvement ever surfaced, but businessmen sponsored a nationwide general strike, riots broke out, and the FSLN increased its skirmishing with the Guard in the hinterland. Somoza weathered the initial storm and, under pressure from the Carter administration, made some token gestures at reform. He promised not to run for re-election and allowed political exiles, including *Los Doce*, to return.

In August, a Sandinista commando group headed by Edén Pastora Gómez, the celebrated Commander Zero, took the entire Nicaraguan Congress hostage at the National Palace in Managua. Again a ransom was paid (\$500,000) and Sandinista prisoners (about 50) were released, among them Tomás Borge, a fervent Marxist and the one surviving founder of the FSLN. The ex-captives and guerrillas rode to the airport through cheering crowds ("Somoza to the Gallows!") and flew to Venezuela and Panama, where Pastora was welcomed by presidents Carlos Andrés Pérez and Omar Torrijos. (About half of the Sandinistas continued on to Cuba for training and recuperation.)

Shortly thereafter, strikes and demonstrations occurred in cities all across Nicaragua—among them Masaya, where Indians set off the first

*Among The Twelve were Nicaragua's current vice president, Sergio Ramírez Mercado, a writer and academic, its current foreign minister, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockman, a Maryknoll priest, lawyer Joaquín Cuadra Chamorro, and Arturo Cruz, a Washington-based official of the Inter-American Development Bank, and a future leader of the opposition to the Sandinistas. Unbeknownst to Cruz and some others, the idea for forming *Los Doce* actually originated in a secret meeting between Ramírez and Sandinista leaders, including Humberto Ortega and his brother Daniel.

mass uprising in the country's history. Inept as rural counter-guerrilla fighters, Somoza's Guardsmen were quick to retaliate in the towns, frequently shooting any young men they encountered on the assumption that they were Sandinista sympathizers. Matagalpa, where young *muchachos* were taking pot shots at a Guard outpost, was raked with gunfire for three hours by government aircraft.

The death toll was mounting. (During the height of the war, the Red Cross later estimated, 10,000 Nicaraguans were killed, 90 percent of them civilian noncombatants.) For months the Carter administration, which had started out in 1977 viewing Nicaragua as a human rights problem, and not an urgent one at that, had had no plan for dealing with the rapidly unfolding events there. But, taken aback, as journalist Shirley Christian wrote later, the White House went "abruptly from having no plan . . . to one in which Somoza had to leave immediately, but for which the United States was not prepared to exert the necessary pressure." This job was to be left to an OAS-sponsored "mediation" between the government and its opponents. Four years after Vietnam, Carter did not want to be accused of "intervention" in another nation's politics.

'Revolution of the Scarves'

The mediation was a fiasco. *Los Doce*, unofficially representing the Sandinistas, soon quit; Somoza used the exercise to play for time, hoping to force the Carter administration and Tachito's domestic opponents to choose between himself and the Marxist FSLN. The mediation collapsed after three months, early in 1979, when Somoza rejected the mediators' last proposal and, as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Viron P. Vaky later conceded, Washington "failed to react."

As a result, Vaky observed, "the Sandinistas and the opposition's supporting patrons in Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama, and elsewhere concluded that either the U.S. was not serious [about removing Somoza or] that there was no solution to the crisis except by force of arms." Whether or not Washington "should have—or could have—exerted greater pressure and leverage to secure [Somoza's] agreement to a peaceful transition when that was relatively easy to accomplish," the lack of such an agreement was a "tragedy."

With Washington bereft of a policy, and the moderate opposition divided and discredited, Nicaragua's fate was left to an armed showdown between the Guard and the FSLN, whose patron saint was Fidel Castro.

In early 1979, with help—money and arms—from Venezuela, Panama, and Costa Rica, the FSLN built up its military strength to a claimed 3,000 guerrillas. Previously divided into three factions, the Sandinistas, at Fidel Castro's urging, created a unified leadership. Non-Marxists, such as Pastora, were excluded.

Nicaragua's economy was faltering, yet Somoza displayed confidence. Carter, he said, had told him that "the Shah will stay and I will

go." But "the Shah has gone and I am still here."

Although Cuba had aided the FSLN since the mid-1960s, it was that May, when a military success came to seem possible, that Havana began to give the FSLN significant material support. That month, rebel leaders announced a "final offensive."

The ill-disciplined Guard, whose strength was brought to more than 10,000 men, faced a rebel force whose size never rose much over 5,000. But the Guard, badly led and short of transport, could not be everywhere. Although sustained Vietnam-style combat was rare, bands of Sandinistas brought insecurity and scattered gunfire to dozens of cities and towns, gaining young recruits along the way. (Their habit of hiding their faces from local authorities with bandanas gave the cause a romantic sobriquet, the "Revolution of the Scarves.")

By June, the Sandinistas had occupied León, the second largest city, and carried their hit-and-run war to Managua. Military casualties were light but Somoza's forces were low on ammunition. (U.S. supplies had long been cut off; the regime received some munitions from Guatemala and then, for a while, from Israel.) Once, street fighting neared the Bunker, Somoza's fortified headquarters. Yet the Guard was eventually able to push the ragtag FSLN forces out of town, with the help of firepower and aircraft—little twin-engine Cessnas and a "Puff the Magic Dragon" C-47 gunship—which shot up rebel positions in slum districts.

As the shooting continued, an emergency meeting of the OAS ignored a U.S. call for a peace-keeping force in Nicaragua and demanded Somoza's ouster. It was suddenly clear that Somoza had few friends left at home or abroad. In San José, Costa Rica's capital, the Sandinistas announced a provisional government, including prominent non-Marxists, and U.S. officials, belatedly involved, began talks with its members. U.S. Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo conferred with Somoza on ways to ease his departure. On July 17, the last Somoza transferred his power to a longtime supporter, Francisco Urcuyo, and departed for Miami.

Urcuyo, supposedly at Somoza's urging, and in violation of the agreement worked out with Pezzullo, refused to yield power to the Sandinistas. U.S. threats to return Somoza to Nicaragua changed Urcuyo's mind, but by then the demoralized Guard had collapsed. Urcuyo and any Somoza supporters or Guard officers who could fled the country or sought refuge in Managua's foreign embassies.

On July 19, 1979, the Sandinistas re-entered Managua in triumph. One cruel, confused era in Nicaraguan history had ended, another was about to begin.

DEMOCRACIA

by Clifford Krauss

The memories are faded and tarnished now, but during that precious month of July 1979, virtually every Nicaraguan proudly called himself a Sandinista. As the despised National Guard collapsed on the 19th, and some 300 *muchachos* in fatigues and berets marched into Managua, the poor and privileged alike rejoiced with laughter and tears. In sublime catharsis, a crowd tore down an equestrian statue of Anastasio Somoza García, the first of three Somozas to call himself *el presidente*.

Businessmen went on the air to pledge support for the Revolution. Jimmy Carter's envoy, William Bowdler, joined a victory parade in Managua. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo delivered a blessing at the "Plaza of the Revolution" upon the arrival (aboard a red fire engine) of the five-member Junta of National Reconstruction, Managua's putative new leaders. Signs waved by many of the 50,000 celebrants hailed not Marx or Lenin but Augusto Sandino, the nationalist guerrilla who 50 years before had fought the U.S. Marines while resisting Salvadoran and Mexican communist influence.

The *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) exuded moderation. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, the only one of the nine top FSLN *comandantes* on the Junta, hoped for "friendly, respectful and noninterventionist" U.S. policies. The Sandinista radio urged respect for private property, and ordered exuberant militiamen to stop firing rifles in the air: "The people have won peace and they deserve to have it."

That peace was as bracing as the tropical downpours that steam the 90 degree heat out of Managua's July afternoons—and as ephemeral.

The turmoil that followed the FSLN triumph would exceed that which preceded it. Managua's relations with Washington—and with Venezuela, Panama, and other nations that had aided the FSLN—would sour as the Sandinistas backed Salvadoran rebels and moved easily toward the Soviet orbit. Domestic unity would fade. "Contras" would begin a sputtering civil war that was fraught with dialectical ironies.

Ex-National Guard officers, far from becoming exiled creatures of a dark past, would take up residence in the upland jungles. Former guerrillas would become colonels defending a new status quo against former colonels now serving as frontline guerrillas under the Reagan Doctrine. Sandinistas would become anti-Sandinistas—e.g., the celebrated Edén Pastora, who in 1981 would quit the FSLN and become a contra, protesting the "Cubanization" of the Revolution. *La Prensa* (circ. 75,000), the daily scourge of Somoza, would be closed by his nemesis, the FSLN.

Another Somoza foe, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Obando y Bravo,

would become the Sandinistas' most effective domestic critic—"the voice," he said, "of those who have no voice"—and, in 1987, the nation's cease-fire negotiator.

And President Ronald Reagan, hanging a portrait of Calvin Coolidge in the Cabinet Room, would vow to make the Sandinistas "say uncle"—only, like Coolidge, to find Nicaragua a festering problem, which would give him great difficulties both in Central America and on Capitol Hill.

But all that would come later.

Poems in Prison

First came the dashing of hopes (held by the Carter administration and European and Latin American Social Democrats, among others) that power in Managua would pass to "moderates."

Eight days after Somoza's fall, a *Cubana de Aviacion* jet landed to deliver doctors, nurses, and teachers from Havana—and to pick up ranking Sandinistas to help Fidel Castro mark the 26th anniversary of the start of *his* revolution. Within two months, a Venezuelan offer of military aid was rebuffed; the Sandinistas had ample supplies from Cuba. Within three months, the Soviet Bloc contingent in Nicaragua included 1,000 Cuban teachers, broadcasting technicians, and military cadres.

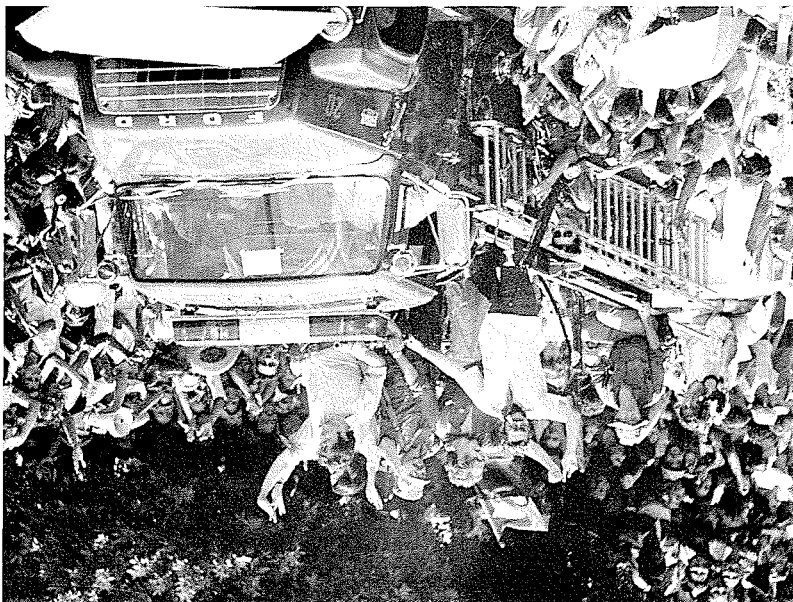
It was soon clear that the new voice of Managua was not the Junta but the FSLN—namely, Daniel Ortega, a long-haired former seminarian and alumnus, at age 33, of seven years in Somoza's prisons.

Ortega declared that the FSLN would "stay" in power until its "program is fully accomplished." By autumn, in a fashion reminiscent of Fidel Castro a generation earlier, he was on the road—attending a "non-aligned" conference in Havana, going to the United Nations (after a meeting with President Carter) to denounce "imperialist" America, touring New York City's *barrios* in a civilian suit, visiting Warsaw Pact capitals in his soon-to-be-familiar olive drab fatigues.

A December 1979 cabinet shuffle completed the FSLN's takeover. Six of the nine leading *comandantes* now held key government positions. Ortega, as the dominant member of the Junta, led the bureaucracy. His brother Humberto, age 32, commander of the new Sandinista Popular Army, became defense minister (just as Fidel Castro's brother Raúl had become chief of Cuba's armed forces). Humberto succeeded an ex-National Guard officer who had been given the post to meet the Carter administration's demand for a broad-based regime.

Interior Minister Tomás Borge Martínez, age 49, the FSLN's sur-

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July 20, 1979: The five-member Junta of National Reconstruction enters Managua. Nine months later, two quit. Said one, businessman Alfonso Robelo: "Nicaragua had become 'a satellite of the Soviet Union.'"

viving founder and most ardent Marxist, headed, with help from Cuban and East German advisers, the internal security apparatus. By 1987 his police (whom the regime styled as "Sentinels of the People's Happiness") would have perhaps 10,000 political prisoners in custody.

Although the new rulers had won popular support by promising *democracia* (a 1978 *Washington Post* headline: SANDINISTAS DIS-CLAIM MARXISM), it was becoming clear that they had grandiose plans to impose (at the very least) socialism on their country—a small nation of farmers, small entrepreneurs, and a very narrow circle of politically active citizens. Events would remind outside observers that Nicaragua is, as Arturo Cruz, Jr., son and namesake of the regime's first Central Bank president, said, "a country of families, all of whom know one another, or at least all about one another."

Ortega and his comrades were in the tradition of Latin American revolutionaries: not *campesinos* (peasants) or working people, but radicalized sons of the middle class, much like Cuba's Fidel Castro, a lawyer, and his ally, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine ex-medical student. Of the nine *comandantes* who made up the Sandinista leadership, one, Luis Carrion Cruz, had attended Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Tomas Borge, the slight, intense son of a bookseller, had

been a law student in León when his "political consciousness" emerged.

Arrested after the 1956 slaying of Tacho Somoza, Borge spent two and a half years in jail. In 1961, after fleeing to Honduras, he helped establish the FSLN. Later captured, he was one of the Sandinistas freed when Edén Pastora took the National Assembly hostage in 1978.

The Ortega brothers' parents had once been supporters of Sandino. Their father had been an accountant and owner of an export-import business in Managua. The brothers attended the same private Christian Brothers school as the sons of Tachito Somoza's brother Luis. Daniel also studied for the priesthood in a seminary in El Salvador, where one instructor was Miguel Obando y Bravo, then a priest. He was a Sandinista as a student at Managua's Jesuit-run Central American University. Jailed in 1967, he was held there, writing poems (one title: "I Never Saw Managua When Miniskirts Were in Fashion"), until 1974. Then he became one of the 14 rebels freed as a result of the Christmas Party Raid. (Obando y Bravo directed the hostage negotiations.)

'Diversifying Dependency'

While Humberto spent much of the Revolution in Costa Rica, and directed the FSLN's strategic alliance with the business/middle-class opposition to Somoza, Daniel studied ideology and tactics in Cuba.

The first year of Sandinista rule was one of improvisation. "Political pluralism exists here," Borge assured visitors. Like the National Palace's newsstand, which displayed *Cosmopolitan* next to the works of Lenin, the Revolution would not neatly define itself. Like a Picasso portrait, the regime tended to show two faces, as its leaders sought to follow their Castro-inspired socialist dreams and face political and economic realities.

Showing its socialist face, in its first week the government nationalized Nicaragua's banks and its foreign trade. All coffee (the chief export, mostly produced by family farmers), sugar, and cotton had to be sold to the government. Insurance and mining firms were nationalized. So was all property of the Somoza family and other *somocistas*—perhaps one-quarter of Nicaragua's cultivated land, some 130 businesses and factories, plus houses, cars, and other possessions. A new Sandinista labor federation carried out some free-lance seizures of factories. And the FSLN, besides controlling the armed forces, set up Cuban-style "Sandinista Defense Committees" (CDS) to extend its reach into every town and urban *barrio*. Along with such tasks as the routing of food supplies, the committees were charged with reporting on "internal enemies."

Journalists were told that "freedom of the press" was for "the press that supports the revolution." The Somoza-owned *Novedades* (News) became *Barricada* (Barricade), a Sandinista paper. The two TV networks were rechristened the Sandinista Television System.

Even so, Nicaraguan moderates who did not belong to the FSLN, such as Arturo Cruz, continued—for a time—to play important roles in

the Junta and Cabinet. The Sandinistas made a point of pledging to meet the government's obligations to Western commercial banks. (The Somoza regime left foreign debts exceeding \$1.5 billion, and only \$3.5 million in foreign exchange; an infusion of \$8 million in U.S. funds eased Managua's cash squeeze.) The government was lenient with imprisoned National Guardsmen, tough on labor agitators from Nicaragua's small Communist and Trotskyist parties (which the Somozas had more or less tolerated). Financing was guaranteed for private farmers, who still accounted for 80 percent of agricultural output. Foreign exchange was promised for firms needing to import parts and raw materials.

In foreign policy, the Sandinistas endorsed the Palestinian cause, abstained from a United Nations vote condemning the Soviets' 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, and established relations with the Soviet Communist Party. While "diversifying dependency," Managua sought help not only from the Soviet Bloc, but also from the United States, the Middle East, and Western Europe. (U.S. loans, grants, and food aid accounted for \$63 million of the \$580 million given the regime during its first year; Spain and other European democracies were major donors.)

But Western-style *democracia* was not vital to the Sandinistas once they gained power. Said Junta member Sergio Ramírez Mercado: "An electoral system is not a priority." (Eventually, even independent public opinion polls were banned.) Instead, on the Cuban pattern, the men in Managua mounted well-publicized attacks on long-neglected social problems where it would be easy to show progress.

Soviet Bloc Trampoline

A nationwide Literacy Crusade (Cuban teachers helped) raised literacy rates to a claimed 87 percent. (More than just ABCs were taught. Read one literacy pamphlet: "The popular Sandinista revolution initiated true democracy. The privileged classes are finished.")

The Sandinistas won the goodwill of many poor peasants by organizing farm cooperatives that gave them a stake in the society for the first time. New rural health clinics appeared; polio, a scourge in many communities at the outset of the Revolution, was eradicated.

But 1980 also brought disillusionment. The Revolution's July 19 anniversary brought a state visit by Castro and a military parade in Managua featuring some of the regime's burgeoning stock of Soviet Bloc weaponry. Popular hopes that elections would finally be announced went unfulfilled. And with that, the honeymoon ended.

Authoritarianism set in. In August 1980, the Sandinistas banned uncensored news stories relating to economic problems or state security. November brought a distinctly Stalinist chill.

First, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, a liberal opposition party, was forbidden to hold a rally, and youthful Sandinistas sacked its Managua headquarters. Then, the country's most charismatic opposition

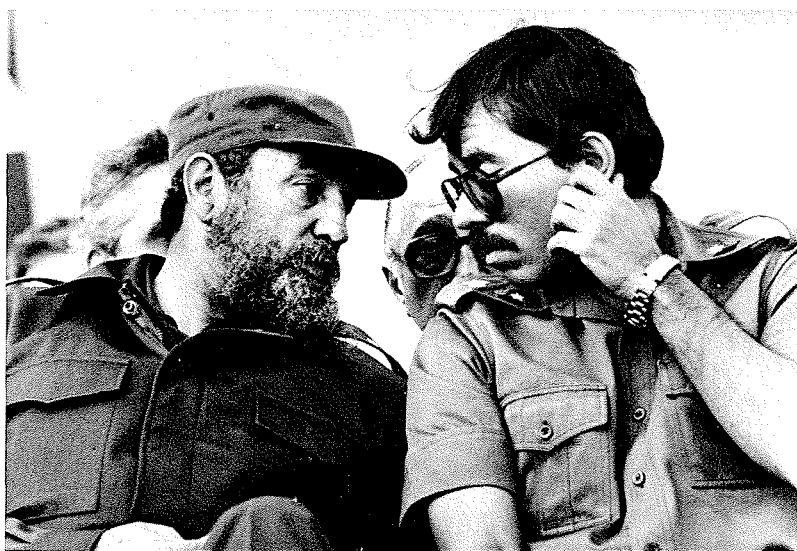
figure, Jorge Salazar Argüello, was killed by police.

Salazar was organizing an anti-Sandinista movement among the farmers of coffee-growing Matagalpa province. He was approached through third parties by a Sandinista army officer named Nestor Moncada. Presenting himself as a dissident, Moncada told Salazar that there were army units ready to rebel against the most radical Sandinistas; they wanted to return the Revolution to its original democratic path. Moncada urged Salazar to get arms from abroad for his sympathizers.

Salazar agreed, and met with leaders of the first significant contra groups, then organizing (with aid from Argentina's anticommunist military regime) in Miami and Honduras.

On November 18, Salazar was to meet Moncada at a gas station outside Managua. There, police shot the unarmed Salazar seven times. (Sandinista officials said he died in a crossfire with a co-conspirator who had fired first.) Moncada was captured unharmed, tried by a military court, and somehow freed without spending a day in prison.

Also that year, the Sandinistas concluded, fatefully, that a tide of revolution was running in Central America. They backed El Salvador's faction-ridden Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which set up training camps and a headquarters in Nicaragua. The country became a trampoline for Soviet Bloc arms, which were airdropped near the border to be moved to El Salvador by truck and boat.



Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro in January 1985 at Timal, a sugar mill built with Cuban help. It is the largest government facility of its kind in Central America, but is uneconomical. As it was built, sugar prices fell.

As the Sandinistas saw it, a "final offensive" by 10,000 FMLN guerrillas in January 1981 would greet the conservative new Reagan administration with a revolution in El Salvador. A second Marxist-Leninist regime would rise in Central America, with more to come.

But the offensive failed. And then came a turning point in relations between Managua and Washington.

Coupons with Che

The Carter administration, in its final days, had suspended an economic assistance program, hoping thereby to "moderate" the Revolution. The Sandinistas thought that U.S. aid would resume if they stopped supporting the FMLN, and in early 1981 they began to urge the rebels to seek a political settlement in El Salvador. But the incoming president not only ended U.S. aid altogether; Ronald Reagan also, in late 1981, endorsed a \$19 million CIA program to organize, train, and supply the contras, ostensibly to help them cut the flow of Soviet Bloc supplies to the Salvadoran rebels (although those supplies were, by all accounts, no longer flowing in significant quantities via Nicaragua).

A last chance for a Managua-Washington accommodation came in August 1981. Thomas O. Enders, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, forged a tentative agreement in Managua: In return for the Sandinistas' promise to curtail their military buildup and stop backing Marxist rebellions elsewhere, Washington would not use force against Nicaragua. But, back in Washington, suspicious administration conservatives undercut the deal.

At about this time, meanwhile, Soviet officials began having Second Thoughts about Central America's revolutionary potential. Soviet hardware and Cuban advisers would continue to reinforce what soon became the largest armed force in the region.* However, heeding warnings from Washington not to increase Nicaragua's aerial might beyond that provided by its Mi-24 HIND helicopter gunships, Moscow would repeatedly deny Sandinista requests for MiG jet fighter-bombers.

By then, the FSLN's popularity was eroding. Pastora had quit, the economy had turned sour. The suspension of U.S. aid, and of a line of credit from the Inter-American Development Bank, had hurt. But even more damaging were the Sandinistas' own economic policies. It was as if the men in Managua had learned nothing from unhappy "socialist" experiments in other Third World countries since the early 1960s.

Massive printing of Nicaraguan *córdobas* began a surge of inflation.

*The Sandinistas, who inherited from the Somoza regime only three tanks (all WWII vintage) in operating condition and 25 antiquated Staghound armored cars, had, by 1987, at least 250 armored vehicles as well as about 60 heavy artillery pieces and 50 helicopters (including the advanced HIND model). Today, the 120,000 Nicaraguans that Managua has under arms include 37,000 Sandinista Popular Army regulars and some 74,000 reserves and militiamen—a force of locally-based part-time troops that grew out of the bands of young, bandana-sporting *muchachos* who helped the FSLN in the late stages of its anti-Somoza campaign. Initially, the Sandinistas left the task of countering the contras largely to rural militia units.

THE VIEW FROM MOSCOW

An event of "colossal international importance . . . that demand[s] reexamination of established conceptions." That was how one leading Soviet commentator described the Sandinistas' 1979 triumph in Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas had seized power with little help from Moscow. Since the 1960s, Soviet leaders had dismissed Che Guevara's strategy of fomenting guerrilla revolution in the "backyard" of the United States as hopeless. But Cuba's Fidel Castro, subsisting on some \$3 billion in annual Soviet aid, had insisted on backing the Sandinistas and other Latin American guerrillas. Now, the Soviets were quick to revise "established conceptions."

Within a few weeks of Somoza's ouster, five Soviet generals visited Managua. During the next year, the Kremlin and Daniel Ortega signed a series of military, economic, technical, and party-to-party agreements. And, even before the contra resistance took shape, the Soviets began shipping a \$2 billion array of tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft missiles, and other weapons to Nicaragua—some of them consigned to the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, which the Soviets now actively supported.

The failure of the FMLN's January 1981 "final offensive" apparently soured the Kremlin on the prospects for exporting revolution to the rest of Central America. But the buildup in Nicaragua continued. By 1981, some 2,000 Soviet Bloc advisers, mostly Cubans, had arrived to help train and direct the growing Sandinista Army. Airfield runways were lengthened to accommodate Soviet MiG fighters (not yet delivered, thanks in part to U.S. warnings). The arrival of more than 100 Soviet T-55 tanks and 30 amphibious tanks—by far the largest armored force in Central America—stirred fears among Nicaragua's weakly-defended neighbors that the Sandinistas sought an *offensive* capability. One reaction: a series of joint U.S.-Honduran maneuvers (involving up to 7,000 U.S. troops) near the Nicaraguan border in 1981-87.

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Moscow has no bases of its own in Nicaragua. But the new Punta Huete airfield, built with Cuban aid, can handle "any aircraft in the Soviet-bloc inventory," according to a U.S. government report. Harbor improvements will allow Soviet warships to call at the ports of El Bluff and San Juan del Sur.

Along with bases in Cuba, such outposts could complicate the U.S. task (in wartime) of guarding the Caribbean sea lanes that carry half of all U.S. trade. Only 12,500 U.S. troops are posted in Panama and elsewhere in the region.

Yet political scientist Robert Leiken suggests that the Soviets may not want another expensive Latin client. One Cuba is enough. Daniel Ortega's frequent pilgrimages to Moscow, and his salutes to "the extraordinary efforts that the Soviet Union carries out in favor of peace," have not yielded as much help as he wants. The Soviet Bloc each year sends Managua some \$585 million in economic aid; military assistance totals \$590 million. Currently, "Moscow provides only enough military aid to make [any] United States military intervention costly and save the Soviet 'revolutionary' reputation," Leiken concludes, but "not enough to guarantee [Sandinista] survival."

(Eventually, the annual rate would exceed 1,000 percent, which the government dealt with by overprinting extra zeros on existing *córdoba* notes.) Price controls on food helped keep Nicaragua's city dwellers calm. But farmers were hard hit, and agricultural output declined. Meanwhile, world coffee prices fell; foreign exchange became even scarcer. Result: shortages (even of food and auto tires) and rationing, which continue. (In 1987 the allowance for gasoline, bought with coupons bearing the image of Che Guevara, was 17 gallons per month. The government-subsidized rice allowance: *one* pound per month per person.)

Interrupting the Pope

Few new jobs had been created by the big state-run projects (e.g., a government sugar refinery) on which the early foreign aid was spent. Nor could Nicaraguans see much benefit in the unresponsive, Soviet-style bureaucracy that the Sandinistas, obsessive statist, had created. A major irritant was the new Internal Trade Ministry, known as "Micoín." As a black market in basic consumer goods developed, Micoín put up roadblocks on the highway approaches to Managua; buses piled up in long lines while inspectors searched for "contraband" (sometimes taking small amounts of food that old women hid under their aprons).

Meanwhile, the *comandantes* moved into villas seized from the *somocistas*, and officials savored the pleasures of riding in the deposed regime's Mercedes-Benz cars (marked "Property of the People").

Further causes of discontent arose during 1983.

To man its growing military machine, the regime announced that males aged 18 to 40 were subject to a draft, Nicaragua's first, for a two-year stint that could be extended. (Movie attendance and bus-ridership fell because youths feared they would be conscripted on sight.) Then came some Sandinista missteps with the church.

Notably through the appointment of leftist clergymen to high posts (e.g., the Foreign Ministry was headed by Maryknoll priest Miguel d'Escoto Brockman), the regime promoted a "Popular Church." This was a network of neighborhood groups espousing "liberation theology," the Latin social reform doctrine embraced by many Catholic clergy and laymen. Nicaragua's adherents, as Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa observed, were "intellectually militant members of the middle class." They viewed the Catholic hierarchy, headed by Cardinal Obando y Bravo, as a threat to the Revolution. Indeed, via its newspaper and radio station (both eventually shut down by the Sandinistas), the hierarchy criticized the Popular Church (a "fifth column") and the government.*

*The Church-state sparring began with Somoza's fall. Sandinista leaders slighted the faith. (Dead guerrillas, said the virulently Marxist Tomás Borge, were real "saints.") The Catholic faithful displayed new religiosity. Reported apparitions of the Virgin Mary proliferated. Late in 1982, the Church decided to consecrate the nation to the Virgin in a series of open-air masses—actually intended, the FSLN feared, to spur rebellion.

The feuding came to a head during Pope John Paul II's March 1983 visit to Nicaragua. An outdoor mass in Managua drew half a million people, some waving yellow and white Vatican flags, others black and red Sandinista flags. The Pope criticized the Popular Church, championed parochial schools, embraced Obando y Bravo, and omitted any criticism of U.S. policy and the contras. But microphones had been placed among Sandinista militiamen and CDS members. During the Pope's homily, cries of "People's Power" and "We want peace" erupted. Daniel Ortega and other *comandantes* rose to lead the jeers.

John Paul, red-faced, ordered "Silence!" Thousands of the faithful began chanting "*El Papa, El Papa*"—The Pope.

The 'Overt Covert' Route

Anti-Sandinista sentiments also flared on the Atlantic coast. Upon its proud minorities—Miskito and Sumo Indians in the north, Creole blacks and mulattoes in the south—the Sandinistas imposed both Cuban teachers and the FSLN's own radical rhetoric and take-charge ways; army troops bivouacked in churches, a practice accepted in Catholic areas elsewhere but irritating to the largely Moravian Protestant Miskitos. By late 1981, Miskito leader Steadman Fagoth Müller, who had strong ties to the CIA and former National Guardsmen in Honduras, called on his "nation" to rebel, and then helped lead raids into Nicaragua from sanctuaries in Honduras. The Sandinistas, surprised, moved thousands of Miskitos from 42 villages along the border to settlements 50 miles to the south. A Miskito-Sandinista war has simmered ever since.

But the FSLN had no monopoly on political blunders. When the Reagan administration decided in 1981 to support the contras, CIA Director William J. Casey persuaded General Leopoldo F. Galtieri, then the Argentine Army's chief of staff, to send officers to train and lead them. Not only were the Argentines better at teaching torture than guerrilla tactics, but having done Washington a favor, the Argentine junta was fatally emboldened to invade *Las Malvinas* (the Falkland Islands).

The contra war was begun in March 1982 by the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), established in Honduras by Enrique Bermúdez, a former National Guard colonel who had been Somoza's military attaché in Washington, and several civilians who have since resigned. The FDN blew up two bridges in Nicaragua; the Sandinistas declared a state of emergency, further curbing civil liberties.

The contras' ranks expanded. American-provided light weapons, uniforms, and other supplies helped the expansion. (The daily cost of U.S. support is \$90,000, or roughly \$6 per contra; the troops are unpaid, although contra leaders and commanders receive monthly stipends.) The FDN, the largest and best organized of what would become a half-dozen rebel groups, started out with 600 fighters; by early 1985 it claimed 12,000. The growth came from Indians, small landholders, and peasants

(many of them members of evangelistic Christian sects), who trekked to the ever-more-crowded refugee camps in Honduras and Costa Rica.

Nonetheless, what evolved tended to be low-intensity, low-frequency combat in the classic Latin tradition.* Clinging to their Honduran and Costa Rican bases, the contras ventured into Nicaragua only sporadically. Pitched battles between rebel and Sandinista Popular Army (or even militia) battalions were rare. So was fighting in cities, and head-to-head combat in general. Nicaragua—like El Salvador—was not Vietnam.

Although the “war” became one of desultory small-unit skirmishes, the contras (and, less often, the Sandinista troops) gained a reputation for human rights abuses. Short on training and discipline, they pillaged, raped, and murdered, executed prisoners, and attacked “soft” targets—government health clinics, schools, farm cooperatives. The fighters hailed by the Reagan administration as “lovers of freedom and democracy” became, to critics like House Majority Leader Thomas P. O’Neill, “butchers and maimers.”

Popular fears of the contras tended to strengthen the Sandinistas’ hold on power at home and, remarkably, on public opinion abroad. While Daniel Ortega cited the contra threat to excuse economic failures and political crackdowns, most of Latin America and Western Europe condemned Washington’s “overt covert” policy.

Fury Over Firecrackers

In 1982 the U.S. Congress passed the first of several different Boland Amendments—sponsored by Representative Edward Boland (D.-Mass.)—limiting permissible U.S. aid to the contras. Nonetheless, the administration’s commitment to the rebels deepened.

That year, seeking to change the contras’ image as a National Guard in exile, CIA staffers went to Miami to interview candidates for a new FDN board of directors. The new chairman: Adolfo Calero Portocarrero, ex-manager of a Coca-Cola plant, Conservative Party stalwart, Somoza foe, and long-time U.S. intelligence “asset” in Managua.

But the more the CIA became involved, the worse became the contras’ “image problem.” During early 1984, a separate CIA-directed Latino force laid “firecracker” mines in Corinto and two other Nicaraguan harbors—to scare ships away and impress Nicaraguans with the power of the anti-Sandinista cause. When at least five foreign vessels hit mines without suffering much damage, the contras were instructed to take credit for an operation they had not even been aware of.

The firecrackers caused more damage in Washington. On Capitol Hill, even contra supporters like Senator Barry Goldwater (R.-Ariz.)

*The contra war, like the Sandinista guerrilla campaign during the 1970s, was bloodier than Fidel Castro’s much-touted 1953-59 campaign against the Batista regime in Cuba, during which no more than 2,000 people died on both sides. But of the nearly 22,500 Nicaraguans slain during 1980-87, a high percentage have been civilians. El Salvador’s civil war has cost over 60,000 lives, mostly civilians, in eight years.

worried about an out-of-control CIA duping the congressional intelligence committees. That year, Congress cut off contra funds entirely. (Subsequently, the committees discovered a 1983 psychological warfare manual, written by a CIA contract employee who called himself the "Priest of Death," which included instructions on "neutralizing" local Sandinista officials, evidently by execution.)

Meanwhile, tensions arose between the northern front contras led by Bermúdez and the Costa Rica-based rebels led by Edén Pastora (who later retired from the struggle). But by late 1984, contra units were beginning to find support in a few Nicaraguan provinces, such as Boaco and Chontales, home to many politically conservative cattle ranchers.

Watching from Windows

In early 1985, I took a three-day hike in northern Nicaragua's Par Par Valley with a 17-man contra scouting party. Five hours of mountain climbing from the Honduran border led us to some adobe shacks in a jungle clearing called Par Par Abajo. Food was scarce, as the swollen bellies of parasite-stricken children showed. But the rebels did find sustenance, physical and moral. Antonia Vallejo, a shriveled woman of 42, supplied corn on the cob. Of the Sandinistas, she complained, "They wanted us to study, to dance, to march. They said God was a guerrilla."

Villagers told how they had driven out a Sandinista teacher who took a stick to slow-learning children. Later, troops came to order residents to put their small plots into a cooperative. Again, the peasants balked. Similar stories were heard in other hamlets.

Most of the patrol members were also poor peasants. They said they joined the contras because they were being forced into cooperatives and suffering from the government-fixed crop prices. Several fighters, like 22-year-old "Genio," joined up to avoid and resist the draft.

As Genio told it, on November 8, 1982, a local peasant ran into his town, Santa Maria de Cedro, warning that 40 Sandinista troops were coming, apparently to press gang youths into the army or militia. Genio spread the alarm from door to door and led 200 youths into the mountains. They were chased by government forces—whom the contras and their sympathizers call *piris**—for 31 days before they joined the rebels in Honduras. "We didn't want to take orders" from the Sandinistas, Genio explained. "We already knew what communism is: all the harvests become one for rationing."

The Sandinistas were too wise to believe their own claims that the contras were only "CIA mercenaries" who kidnapped their recruits. By

*Short for *piriquaco*, or "mad dog." The term *contra*, popularized by the Sandinistas (the rebels themselves did not care for it), is a contraction of *contrarevolucionario* ("counterrevolutionary"). The Sandinistas' equivalent of "comrade" is *compañero* (literally, a person whom one breaks bread with); a short form is *compa*. Toughs who do strong-arm chores for the Sandinistas are *turbas divinas* ("divine mobs"), a term that has roots in the French Revolution. Contributions to the vernacular by U.S. military men in Central America include nicknames for government forces: "Sandys," "Hondos," "Guats," "Salvos."

THE STRUGGLE IN THE U.S.

On April 27, 1983, Ronald Reagan told Congress that the "national security of all the Americas is at stake in Central America." But the president did not urge the dispatch of U.S. troops ("They are not needed"). Rather, he sought congressional assent to \$281.8 million in aid for war-torn El Salvador—and other aid for the anti-Sandinista contras in Nicaragua.

By late 1984, the election of El Salvador's moderate president, José Napoleón Duarte, a drop in assassinations by right-wing "death squads," and the apparent decline of the Cuban-backed Farabundo Martí guerrillas had quieted controversy over the modest U.S. involvement (55 military advisers) in *that* country. Another "Vietnam" no longer seemed imminent; the news media focused on Nicaragua.

Since then, outside Washington, D.C., public debate over Nicaragua has occasionally been intense, but never widespread.

On the Left, mass protests against Reagan policy have been rare. Nevertheless, Ortega & Co. have won the sympathy of Jesse Jackson, some congressional Democrats (including former House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill), many academics, church groups, and pacifists. A "Nicaragua Network," founded in 1979, links some 300 local committees, sponsors Sandinista speaking tours, and recruits volunteers for work in Nicaragua; U.S. Representative Ronald Dellums (D.-Calif.) is an adviser. Last November, Quest for Peace, a 400-group coalition led by Detroit's Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, reported raising \$100 million in humanitarian aid in 1987. Under such auspices, perhaps 60,000 Americans have gone on work-study visits to Nicaragua. For its part, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has steadily opposed contra aid. To help out, the Sandinistas hired Fenton Communications, a Washington D.C. publicity firm (previous clients: Angola, Grenada).

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On the Right, the grassroots focus has been on fund-raising for the contras, especially when Congress cut U.S. aid. Perhaps \$10 million was received through 1987. Retired Army Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, fund-raiser Charles ("Spitz") Channell, *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, TV evangelist Pat Robertson, brewery tycoon Joseph Coors, and singer Wayne Newton—all were involved, some with the help of the White House's Oliver North of Iran-contra fame. In 1986 the State Department hired a conservative public relations firm to squire visiting contra leaders, and to seek public support for their cause.

Since 1984, the debate, such as it is, has consisted largely of the Left's attacks on the contras (their atrocities, alleged fascist tendencies, venality) and the Right's attacks on the Sandinistas (Soviet ties, atrocities, Cuban-style repression). Most newspaper editorials have tended to favor "negotiations"; Pentagon leaders have opposed any U.S. military intervention that lacks popular backing. Citing polls, *Public Opinion's* Everett Ladd noted recently that most Americans remain ambivalent; they want to "curb pro-Soviet forces in Central America and extend democracy [but] without armed conflict." If current negotiations fail to achieve this result, he added, the debate may intensify.

mid-1985, the Par Par Valley people, like others in the northern border region, were forcibly resettled so they could not shelter the contras.

The resettlement campaign was a tacit admission that not all poor peasants hailed the Revolution. But a certain Sandinista "moderation" prevailed in some matters, beginning with the 1984 election.

That was no model election. CDS-organized *turbas divinas* broke up rallies for Arturo Cruz, who had left the regime and become the chief opposition candidate, though he would later decline to run. And a few Sandinista foes were arrested or drafted. Even so, opposition parties, weak as they were, did have a chance to organize and air their views.

On a typical campaign Sunday, Virgilio Godoy Reyes, the Independent Liberal Party's presidential candidate, donned a peasant straw hat and marched through the cobblestone streets of León, a generally pro-Sandinista city. While many watched warily from their windows, 500 citizens came out to hear the candidate. He complained about the draft, and about the Sandinistas' foreign friends. "There are hundreds of East Germans here, to teach our children to be spies."

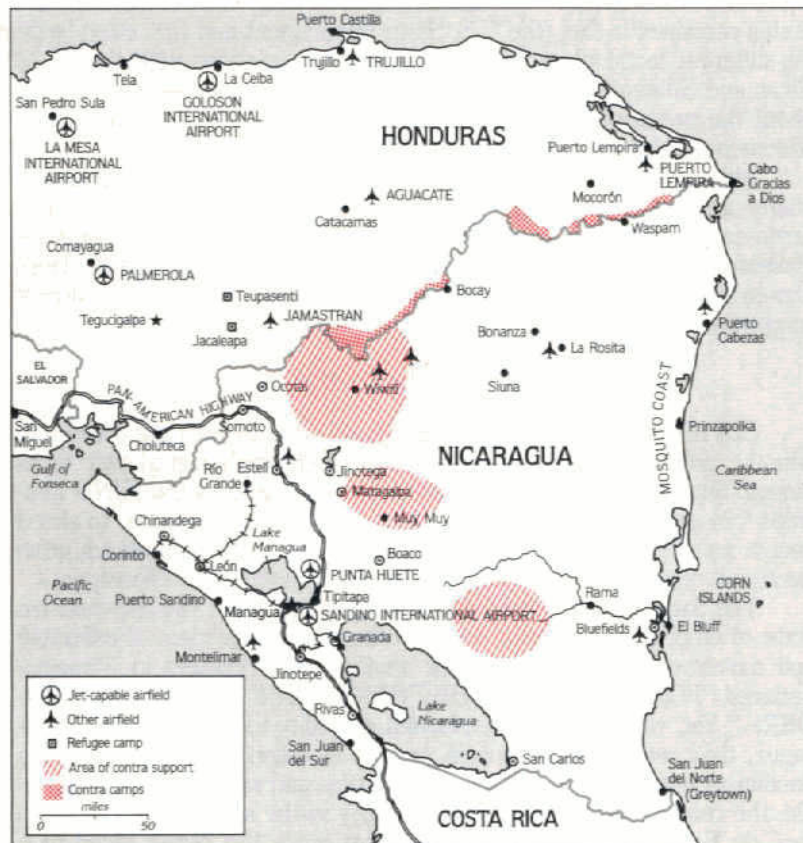
Worms in the Cornmeal

Nonetheless, the opposition (bereft of Cruz) was divided, and the Sandinistas won nearly 70 percent of what most Western observers believe was a fair vote count. Besides installing Daniel Ortega as president and Sergio Ramírez as vice president, the voters chose a 96-member legislature, with opposition representation, which in 1986 adopted a new constitution. Most important, the election set a precedent; those bent on turning the Sandinista Revolution into an unfettered Marxist-Leninist regime on the Cuban model would find it hard to repeal.

The Constitution (Nicaragua's 11th) upheld private property and freedoms of religion, assembly, and speech. Ortega, citing "sabotage and political destabilization," continued curbs on many civil liberties, but the Sandinistas took other steps to bolster their popularity.

Draftees were allowed to go home after two years. Austerity measures were imposed to deal with what Ortega now called a "hellish" economy, but regulations on commerce were relaxed. To woo the farmers, the Sandinistas began allowing consumer food prices to rise, paying hard currency (e.g., U.S. dollars) rather than only *córdobas* to growers meeting crop quotas, and modifying land reform. Where they had once emphasized state and cooperative farms, the Sandinistas now swallowed socialist principle by turning vast acreage over to small private farmers.

The Reagan administration in 1985 embargoed U.S. trade with Nicaragua, closing a market that used to absorb about half of the country's exports. The Soviet Bloc did little to take up the export slack, as it had done earlier in the case of Cuban sugar. And while no West European countries joined the U.S. embargo, the flow of economic assistance from Spain, France, and West Germany had been shrinking since 1981,



Among the Sandinistas' new military assets is a 10,000 foot runway—Central America's longest—at Punta Huete, not far from their principal air base at Managua. Most Soviet ships berth at Corinto; Cuban vessels unload at El Bluff or Rama. In Honduras, where U.S. troops exercise, the main air base is at Palmerola. Contra aid moves via dirt airstrips near the border.

offset only partially by more aid from the Scandinavian countries. (Sweden sent not only cash, \$25 million in 1986, but also technicians to help operate gold mines abandoned by U.S. owners.)

The export slump forced more austerity. Real wages sank further; by 1987, the average Nicaraguan's purchasing power was below one-fifth of what it was in 1980. Discontent was such that Micoin staffers looking for black market goods needed police help to enter some urban bazaars. And distribution snarls continued. (Last May, 700,000 pounds of bagged cornmeal were spoiled by worms at a state-owned Managua factory because Micoin did not send trucks for the food.)

But the contras' difficulties persisted too. The rebels' civilian lead-

ership remained in flux (the U.S. State Department and CIA often backing different factions), worsening the contras' relations with the Costa Rican and Honduran governments—both democratically elected, uneasy about the presence of rebel camps on their territory, and increasingly unconvinced that the contras could win their war.

Although the "Iran-contra scandal" in the United States unfolded in stages after October 1986—when the Sandinistas shot down a C-123 arms-cargo plane and captured an American crewman, Eugene Hasenfus—the flow of U.S. aid to the rebels continued. Indeed, 1987 was to be the year in which the contras, flush with \$100 million in new congressional funding, were going to show what they could do.

Risking Their Grip?

CIA men and U.S. Army Green Berets were to train the contras to win the political war with "civic action" and psychological war techniques. Shoulder-fired Redeye missiles were to counter the HIND gunships that enabled the Sandinistas, with command of the skies, to shred contra units. Freshly uniformed, possessing new communications gear, nearly all of the 12,000 contras in Honduras moved into Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas braced for trouble. In early 1987, the five-year-old state of emergency (curbing, among other things, freedom of assembly and movement) was extended for another year. Posters in Managua declared "FORWARD WITH THE FRONT. HERE NO ONE SURRENDERS." Yet, while the contras showed an ability to operate inside Nicaragua, they were unable to gain ground in urban areas or to engage Sandinista regulars or militia in major battles and win. In July, for example, the rebels claimed a significant victory in the northern town of San José de Bocay. U.S. newsmen found that while the rebels killed nine Sandinistas, they had also slain a pregnant woman and three children, and did not attack the Sandinista airstrip and headquarters in the town.

Nonetheless, the contra effort, inconclusive as it was, combined with deepening economic woes (including a foreign debt today exceeding \$6 billion) and Moscow's growing reluctance to expand its aid, put heavy pressure on the Managua regime. (The Sandinistas were shocked when, in the spring of 1987, the Soviets denied an appeal for increased oil shipments.) Geography did not help. Nicaragua was not an easily controlled island, like Castro's Cuba; the neighbors were hostile, not friendly. Concerned that the new "correlation of forces" might set them back for years, the Sandinistas sought a diplomatic settlement. And so, to the great surprise of most Central American leaders, Daniel Ortega agreed to the peace plan sponsored by Costa Rica's president, Oscar Arias Sánchez, at a conference in Guatemala City in August.

Although the state of emergency remained in effect, Ortega consented to some liberalization steps, including a limited amnesty for contras, a limited cease-fire, and freedom (with restrictions) of domestic

press and broadcasting. Perhaps most significant, Ortega agreed to negotiate a permanent cease-fire with the contras—through Cardinal Obando y Bravo, the regime's most prestigious critic, who would also head a commission to oversee compliance with the Guatemala accord. In return, Nicaragua's neighbors agreed to end their aid to the contras, who would thus lose their Honduran camps. All in all, the Sandinistas seemed ready to risk some of their grip on political power for peace, breathing space, and better relations with their apprehensive neighbors.

Nicaragua's domestic political opposition, after almost eight years of near silence, warily came alive. *La Prensa* reappeared.

In contrast to their counterparts in Cuba or Vietnam, the Sandinistas had often surprised their foreign Marxist supporters. The series of Soviet ambassadors who had served in Managua since 1979 must have found their hosts baffling. Although the U.S. administration was supporting a rebellion against the Sandinista regime, trade between the two countries continued (until 1985), and diplomatic relations were never severed. Indeed, all along Nicaragua had admitted a steady stream of American visitors—not only sympathetic academics, journalists, peace activists, and Hollywood celebrities (e.g., Kris Kristofferson), but also political figures of varying ideological hues (Jeane Kirkpatrick, New York's Mayor Edward I. Koch) and even a Reagan cabinet member, Education Secretary William Bennett.

The Sandinista leaders seldom clarified matters, swaying as they did between the rhetoric of reality and that of Castro-style revolution. In October, for example, *comandante* Jaime Wheelock Román was quoted as saying the accord "will demand changes in attitudes, styles, emphasis, structures and tasks," while *comandante* Tomás Borge insisted that "We are not going to make concessions on principles."

Ambivalence is nothing new to Nicaraguans. For more than a century, it has suffused their domestic politics (the Liberal-Conservative wrangling), their views of the region (Are one's Central American neighbors colleagues to be joined, or rivals to be subverted?), and their views of the Colossus of the North. Nicaragua's premier man of letters, Rubén Darío (1867–1916), in a celebrated poem, "To Roosevelt," warned against a United States that had "join[ed] the cult of Mammon to the cult of Hercules"—but chose to spend many years in the comfortable capitals of Europe and South America. Yet, during the 1970s, Nicaraguans, with rare unanimity, did agree on one thing, that it was time for genuine *democracia*. And during the late 1980s, most also seemed to agree that, as Costa Rica's Arias put it, "after more than 40 years of the Somoza dictatorship, the Nicaraguan people deserve something better than another dictatorship of the opposite extreme."

‘INSTITUTIONALIZED STALEMATE’

by Henry A. Kissinger

As an episode in Soviet-American global competition, the conflict in Nicaragua has served to illuminate a recurring problem in American governance: the difficulty of getting Capitol Hill and the White House together on a coherent U.S. foreign policy. Since the Vietnam debacle, the zigzags in U.S. policy overseas have intensified. The War Powers Act (1973) and Congress's initial refusal to fund anti-Communist guerrillas in Angola (1976) were just two early symptoms of the same distrust that led both to the Boland Amendments and to the White House's schemes that skirted them. Last summer's Iran-contra hearings focused on a congressional ban on military support of the contras by U.S. intelligence agencies in effect from September 1984 to December 1985. What should have been examined, contends Henry Kissinger, were "the balance between the executive branch and Congress," and each side's ambivalence.

The conventional wisdom that modern presidents and their agents in the executive branch have a tendency to break laws is too simple, too denigrating. Most public officials endure the pressures of official life because they want to make a contribution to a better world.

The real issue is not whether officials may substitute their judgment for that of Congress—not even the most zealous White House staffer would claim that—but whether our system of checks and balances is moving toward the former with ever less concern for balance between the coequal branches of government. Nearly insoluble constitutional and personal dilemmas arise when each branch acts on the premise that the other is causing disaster and must be thwarted at all costs.

There were serious errors of judgment in the Iran-contra affair, ranging from the decision to ransom hostages with arms, to the arming of a country whose victory would imperil the interests of the industrial democracies, to pursuing covert policies totally contradictory to publicly stated positions. But these do not amount to a crisis of institutions.

These arise when each branch pushes its prerogatives to the limit, destroying the restraint without which the system cannot work. The funding of contra operations clearly falls into this category.

On the formal level, the case is obvious. The executive branch cannot be allowed—on any aim of national security—to circumvent the congressional prerogative over appropriations by raising its own funds through the sale of government property. But equally, Congress has an



If the U.S. Congress has been ambivalent about the contras, U.S. cartoonists have not. In his satiric Doonesbury strip, Garry Trudeau has frequently targeted both the Nicaraguan resistance and its American supporters.

obligation to put forward a clear-cut expression of what it desires. And both branches must seek to settle controversial issues not by legalisms and subterfuge, but by a serious national debate setting forth premises, opportunities, and risks. This is emphatically not what has happened.

The Reagan administration is of the view—which I share—that Sandinista rule in its current form is a long-term threat to the stability of Central America and hence to the United States' security. It has thus sought to bring pressure on the Sandinista regime, to induce it to become more democratic or, failing that, to overthrow it (though that latter objective has never been made explicit). The administration considers the contras a key element of a new political structure in Nicaragua.

Congress has been ambivalent. The Vietnam-born reluctance to be drawn into a conflict in Nicaragua has been matched by a hesitation to assume blame for a collapse of the Nicaraguan anti-Communist resistance. The result: a series of compromises, which is how Congress decides on legislation. This process in foreign policy tends to combine the disadvantages of all policy choices. Thus the impression created by the Iran-contra hearings—that the administration violated a clear congressional mandate—is misleading. The mandate was anything but clear.

There have been at least six versions of legislation affecting contra aid, each of them authorizing aid but encumbering it with restrictions that varied from year to year, and that largely contradicted congressional consent to the principle of support for the Nicaraguan resistance:

- From December 21, 1982 to December 7, 1983, there was a

prohibition against using funds to "overthrow" the Nicaraguan government; by implication other contra activities were permitted if not encouraged, and the term "overthrow" was never defined.

- From December 8, 1983 to October 3, 1984, there was a ceiling of \$24 million on intelligence support for military or paramilitary activity inside Nicaragua, thus blessing as well as financing these enterprises.

- From October 3, 1984 to December 19, 1985, Congress reversed course, barring military or paramilitary support. For nine months *no* new funds were provided, though existing ones could be used. After August 15, 1985, humanitarian aid (\$27 million) was reinstated.

- From December 19, 1985 to October 1986, intelligence support was again permitted, though it was limited to advice and communications equipment. At the same time, the State Department was authorized to solicit humanitarian assistance from third countries.

- On October 18, 1986, Congress appropriated \$100 million in humanitarian and military assistance after a 10-week hiatus, while a meeting to reconcile technical differences between the versions of the two houses was stalled by opponents of contra aid.

What message was Congress sending? What was the rationale for approving contra aid, but constantly changing the amounts and the conditions for its use? How was the administration to interpret a congressional intent that changed so often? Did Congress approve of aid to the contras, debating only the scale of support? Or was it seeking to destroy the Nicaraguan resistance while being unwilling to assume responsibility?

Clearly Congress provided neither continuity nor criteria to which even the most scrupulous administration could orient itself. And all the while the contras in the field were in danger of collapsing before a new appropriation could be passed. Of such stuff are institutional crises made.

This in no way seeks to justify the measures the Reagan administration took to deal with its very real problem of how to keep the contras alive from one congressional cycle to another. Neither self-financing nor lies to Congress can be excused. Nor were the administration requests to Congress free of disingenuousness. For example, were the sums requested by the executive branch based on an achievable strategy, or did they reflect a judgment of what the traffic would bear? Be that as it may, to focus exclusively on administration transgressions is one-sided; congressional incoherence and ambivalence require comparable attention.

The Reagan administration's basic error was to try to achieve by

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indirection what it should have faced head on. It should have bent every effort to bring about a national debate on the choices before the country with regard to Nicaragua, and to force a congressional vote on the minimum means required to achieve its view of U.S. objectives.

There were at least three choices:

- To coexist with the Sandinista regime unless it introduced high-performance Soviet military equipment into Nicaragua.
- To bring pressure on Nicaragua to return to the inter-American system by expelling foreign—especially Cuban—advisers and reducing its military forces to traditional Central American levels, in return for the United States' not challenging the Sandinista political structure.
- To overthrow the Sandinista regime or, at a minimum (and improbably), to change its character so that the Sandinistas became one party in a pluralistic process in which the contras also participated.

The only option achievable without military pressure—contra or United States—was acceptance of the Sandinistas with no conditions other than the exclusion of certain Soviet high-performance arms. The overthrow of the Sandinistas, the third option, would almost certainly require U.S. troops.

The irony of the American political process is that each of the two coequal branches of the government chose an option at the opposite end of the spectrum, but supplied means inconsistent with its choices. A large militant minority in Congress pursued the illusion that diplomacy was an alternative to pressure. But while one can debate the nature of the pressure, and of reasonable objectives, diplomatic success presupposes a balance of penalties and incentives. In the end, a hesitant majority recognized this reality and voted for some aid, though never enough for even minimum objectives. This institutionalized ambivalence.

On the other hand, the administration's real objective has been the overthrow of the Sandinista political structure. This is unachievable by the means it has requested, which at best are enough for the second option: the expulsion of foreign advisers and the reduction of Nicaraguan military forces. This institutionalized stalemate.

I make these criticisms with diffidence, for the administration in which I served reacted with similar ambivalence to comparable congressional challenges. In retrospect, the Nixon administration's crucial mistake in the Vietnam War (which it inherited) was not to insist on an up-or-down vote regarding its judgment on how to conclude it. This would have required Congress to assume responsibility for its actions, would have avoided prolonged national anguish, and would have brought a clear-cut resolution one way or the other.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

NICARAGUA

Why is Central America so troubled?

Tulane historian Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., rounds up the usual suspects—old Spanish rivalries, the tropical climate, “Indian lethargy,” “European or North American imperialism.” But “single-cause analyses,” he argues in **Central America: A Nation Divided** (Oxford, 1976), are inadequate.

Among other ills, Indian wars began a “tradition of disunion” continued by the Spanish. Moreover, the mountains limited trade, and slash-and-burn farming ruined “millions of acres of arable land.”

Woodward’s is the most lucid all-round history of the region in English. Useful surveys include Robert C. West and John P. Augelli’s **Middle America: Its Lands and Peoples** (Prentice-Hall, 1976) and Franklin D. Parker’s **Central American Republics** (Oxford, 1964). Cornell’s Walter LaFeber, in **Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America** (Norton, 1984), approaches his subject from the Left, but acknowledges that early on, the Central American leaders themselves sought a U.S. presence. They thought “the Yankees could be played off against Mexico, Britain, or even Guatemala,” which long dreamed of ruling its neighbors.

The region pops up in many U.S. histories, such as Samuel Flagg Bemis’s **Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation** (Harcourt, 1943), Charles Morrow Wilson’s **Empire in Green and Gold** (Holt, 1947), Allan R. Millett’s **Semper Fidelis: The History of the U.S. Marine Corps** (Free Press, 1982), and Lester D. Langley’s **Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900–1934** (Univ. of Kentucky, 1983).

There is no *general* history of Nicaragua in English. **Nicaragua: A Country Study** (U.S. Govt., Dept. of the Army,

1982), prepared by American University’s Foreign Areas Studies program, helps fill the gap. So do David I. Folkman, Jr.’s **Nicaragua Route** (Univ. of Utah, 1972), concerning the canal issue; **Filibusters and Financiers** (Macmillan, 1916; Russell, 1969), William O. Scroggs’ portrait of William Walker; Harold Norman Denny’s **Dollars for Bullets: The Story of America’s Rule in Nicaragua** (Dial, 1929); Neill Macaulay’s **Sandino Affair** (Quadrangle, 1967); Richard L. Millett’s **Guardians of the Dynasty** (Orbis, 1977), a history of the National Guard and the Somoza family; and Bernard Diederich’s **Somoza** (Dutton, 1981).

Nicaragua’s latest rulers are scrutinized by Princeton’s Forrest D. Colburn, who argues that the bloom was off the Sandinistas even before the contra war began. Very early, he notes in **Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class and the Dilemma of Agrarian Policy** (Univ. of Calif., 1986), the rural poor became “sharply critical” of failures to raise living standards and “the continuing call for sacrifices.” The peasant view of the new regime: “A different bone, the same dog.”

In **Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua** (Princeton, 1987), Robert A. Pastor, director of Latin American and Caribbean affairs in Jimmy Carter’s National Security Council, concedes that U.S. fumbles helped the Sandinistas. In December 1978, Somoza sounded out the State Department on his chances of being granted U.S. exile; that news never reached White House officials, who thus missed the “best moment” to ease Somoza out of power when a moderate successor regime in Managua was possible. Carter, says Pastor, was also ill-served by U.S. intelligence: The flow of arms to the Sandinistas via Cuba and

other nations in 1979 was not detected.

Shirley Christian notes the cost of such errors in **Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family** (Random, 1985). To realize the *democratic* goals of the anti-Somoza revolt now "implies more intervention than the United States has been willing to tackle" since Vietnam.

Intervention has become a pejorative word, she says. "The basic tenets of international relations since World War II have been nonintervention and self-determination, though most Third World governments have been more concerned with advocating nonintervention . . . than with practicing self-determination." Cuba and the Soviet Union avoid "intervention" by using another term, "internationalism."

And that, as John Norton Moore's **Secret War in Central America** (Univ. Publications of America, 1987) details, is on the rise in the Latin American region. There, mostly in Cuba and Nicaragua, the Soviets had 50 times more military advisers in 1981 than did the United States (which then fielded 70 advisers, versus 516 at the start of the 1970s).

White House interest in the region has fluctuated wildly, as Abraham F. Lowenthal observes in **Partners in Conflict: The United States and Latin America** (Johns Hopkins, 1987). John F. Kennedy, president when Fidel Castro was trying to stir up Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, saw Christian Democratic regimes as the answer to "violent revolution." Later U.S. presidents (e.g., Richard Nixon, with his "Mature Partnership" policy) saw less need for urgency.

Indeed, as Lowenthal notes, Communist Cuba, a "highly personal autocracy," is now "not as appealing a model in any country of South America as it was in

1960." Since Castro's debut, the Left's "main revolutionary triumph" has been Nicaragua—and the Sandinistas have not (yet) emulated Cuba to the extent of all but outlawing the private economy.

After World War II the old conservative triumvirate of Oligarchy, Church, and Army began eroding in Latin America. But what would fill the vacuum?

Outside Cuba and Nicaragua, Lowenthal observes, ventures on the "socialist path" have been few and ill-fated: Chile under Salvador Allende (elected 1970, toppled 1973), Grenada under the New Jewel Movement (1979–83) and, to a degree, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Guyana, and Surinam. As for the military "bureaucratic authoritarian" path, the generals have bowed out in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Nor has leftist "military populism" (Peru, Bolivia) survived.

That leaves "reformist democracy," in Lowenthal's analysis "the most successful Latin American experience." Colombia, Venezuela, and Costa Rica are the familiar examples. But another is the Dominican Republic.

During the 1960s, it epitomized the "politics of chaos." In 1965 Lyndon B. Johnson dispatched more than 22,000 Marines and Army paratroopers there—the first such episode since Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1934 pledge to end unilateral U.S. armed intervention in Latin America—to forestall what he perceived as a possible Communist coup.

The Dominican Republic, says Lowenthal, has since had "six consecutive, regularly scheduled, contested presidential elections. At no previous time in [its] history had even two such elections been held without a coup intervening."

Perhaps *that*, rather than Cuba, is the model that Nicaraguans may one day try to emulate.

CURRENT BOOKS

SCHOLARS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows and staff of the Wilson Center

SHADOWS AND WHISPERS: Power Politics Inside the Kremlin from Brezhnev to Gorbachev
by Dusko Doder
Random, 1986
339 pp. \$19.95

COMRADE CHAIRMAN: Soviet Succession and the Rise of Gorbachev
by Richard Owen
Arbor, 1987
253 pp. \$17.95

For better or worse, Western newspaper correspondents have long been our chief source of news on current affairs in Moscow. Yet reporting from the Soviet capital involves unusual constraints, at best requiring special caution and at worst self-censorship. Understandably, many journalists, upon finishing their tour of duty in the USSR, have been eager to set down the full story and to draw the broader conclusions from their experiences. Dusko Doder and Richard Owen, reporters for the *Washington Post* and the *Times* of London, respectively, have made worthy contributions to this genre.

Both men observed at close hand the four-year (1982–86) succession crisis that led from Brezhnev to Gorbachev. Both are seasoned professionals who write with intelligence and balance. Doder, with his strong grounding in the Russian language and with perspective gained from earlier service in Moscow, has more insight. Indeed, in his first-name acquaintance with Soviet politicians, his relentless pursuit of their staffers and their friends' friends, and his nose for news, Doder has had no real equal for several generations. Yet if Owen cannot match Doder's several spectacular scoops, he is also a keen observer, as he proved in his earlier *Letters from Moscow* (1985).

The subtitle of Owen's volume indicates his emphasis on continuity. He sees the 1982 Andropov succession "coup" as being akin to Khrushchev's coup against his co-leaders in 1956, and the Chernenko accession in February 1984 as a conservative step taken with the backing of party *apparatchiki* in the pattern of Stalin and Brezhnev. Doder, less prone to such generalizations, takes the more optimistic view that the four-year process was something new, an inexorable move toward a break with the entire post-Stalin legacy of rule.

Owen develops his thesis by recounting the by-now-familiar histories of earlier transitions in Communist Party leadership from Stalin to Khrushchev (1953), to Brezhnev (1964), to Andropov (1982), to Chernenko (1984), to Gorbachev (1985). He traces the obvious points of similarity among the various episodes (the role of party bureaucrats, the attempts by the military and KGB to exert influence) to the inflexible nature of the Soviet system and to its leaders' intellectual formation in Marxism-Leninism. Transitions do not really bring change and, in Owen's judgment, the Gorbachev generation "... is the Brezhnev generation with smarter suits, more up-to-date technology and smoother public relations."

Doder, by contrast, detects fundamentally new currents beginning in

Brezhnev's last years. When the late Nikolai Inozemtsev, then head of the Institute of International Economic Relations, spoke in 1981 of the need to "restructure" the economy, he revealed to Doder a yearning for change that went beyond the desire of a new faction to discredit its predecessors. Once the subject was broached, it was but a short step to Gorbachev's claim that reform is inevitable.

The difference between Doder and Owen is especially pronounced in their treatment of the brief but important reign of Yuri Andropov (November 1982-February 1984). Owen considers Andropov to have been indebted to the military and the KGB, over which he long presided. Accordingly, Owen stresses Andropov's law-and-order campaign and his repression of New Left Soviet intellectuals, including those responsible for the journal, *Socialism and the Future*. Doder denies this, seeing Andropov's deference to the military simply as evidence of his sense of urgency about reform. In contrast to Owen, Doder underscores the unprecedented candor with which Andropov spoke of the nation's problems, and his relentless drive to replace Brezhnevite personnel with reformers. Needless to say, Owen goes on to interpret the brief Chernenko interlude as a reversion to Old Guard rule, while Doder, who gained a rare personal interview with Chernenko, stresses the many areas in which Chernenko continued Andropov's policies, albeit without Andropov's sense of urgency.

The crucial point on which the two authors agree concerns the level of opposition to Gorbachev's programs. As an associate of Andropov told Doder, the real problem is not the hostility of the bureaucracy but the fact that most ordinary people in the USSR stand opposed to the changes being contemplated. Owen sees the opposition as being centered more narrowly in the bureaucracy, but concurs in the view that the mentality of the general populace, shaped by years of Stalinist rhetoric, will not easily adjust to the "new thinking" promoted by the Kremlin today. However inevitable the campaign for change, these two able observers remind us that its success is by no means assured.



Top: Brezhnev and Chernenko. Lower left: Andropov. Lower right: Gorbachev.



—S. Frederick Starr
Secretary, Kennan Institute, 1974–79

**POLITICS AND
SOCIETY IN
THE SOUTH**

by Earl Black
and Merle Black
Harvard, 1987
363 pp. \$25

In 1940 the South still stood apart from the rest of the nation. Most Southerners lived in rural areas and small towns; have-littles and have-nots far outnumbered middle-class folk; and few—white or black—had a high school education. Courthouse cliques controlled local politics. The all-white primary indirectly disfranchised the small number of urban black voters. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and “understanding” requirements excluded a

goodly number of poor whites and virtually all rural blacks from politics. The result was a solid South where a conservative elite kept the electorate as small and apathetic as possible, and issues “went round and round in circles . . . a politics of limited taxation, limited spending, and, above all, determined resistance to any changes in the racial status quo.”

The racial status quo, then, was the keystone of the South’s peculiar brand of politics. Southern whites rallied to the Democratic Party as the best way to prevent outside interference; in return, they expected the party to stand by the Old Confederacy. But as Northern Democrats began to embrace civil rights and insist on liberal candidates for president, Southern loyalty began to fade. Today, no region in America is as politically volatile as the Old South.

The immediate cause of the region’s political realignment was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and ’60s. Sit-ins, freedom rides, and civil disobedience transformed the voting practices of a generation. The defense of the Jim Crow color line, which had segregated blacks from whites in the public arena, collapsed. In the states of the Deep South, less than one-third of the black electorate was registered to vote. In Black Belt counties, fraud, intimidation, and violence blocked registration. The brutality of Selma’s “Bloody Sunday” on March 7, 1965, brought direct congressional action. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 put voter registration in recalcitrant counties under federal supervision. By the 1968 presidential election, 57 percent of the Deep South’s eligible black voters had registered. Faced with an unprecedented change in race relations and a liberal Democratic candidate, 34 percent of all the Deep South’s voters turned to George Wallace’s American Independent Party, while 35 percent supported the Republicans’ Richard Nixon. “In every election since 1968,” as the authors point out, “Republican presidential candidates have either beaten their rivals decisively [in the South] or, at the very worst, remained competitive with them.”

In the South of the 1980s, segregation is no longer an issue. A majority of white voters consider the pace of change in race relations “about right,” politicians avoid blatant racism, and roughly the same percentage of blacks and whites register and go to the polls. In fact, the percentage of black children attending integrated schools is larger in the Old Confederacy than in the North.

The region’s small-town profile has also changed significantly. Until the

1960s, rural Southerners were in the majority; in 1980, only one-third of the South's inhabitants resided in the countryside. As elsewhere in the nation, political power has shifted to the cities and suburbs, where the middle class predominates. The New South is home to banking empires, insurance companies, real estate conglomerates, hospital corporations, university think tanks, and industrial parks. Little power remains with the good old boys down at the courthouse. Whether in its race relations, the character of its economic development, or the nature of its class structure, the South has never before so closely resembled the rest of the country—at least on the surface.

Beneath the clutter of fast-food chains and Interstates, however, the apparent convergence comes to an abrupt end. Closer scrutiny reveals that the South is still the most homogeneous part of America, the most self-satisfied, the most conservative, and the most inconsistent politically.



In religious beliefs, values, and ethnic background, Southern states rank at the top of the nation's homogeneity index. When asked in the 1968 Comparative State Elections Project (CSEP) survey to assess their home towns, both white (59 percent) and black (65 percent) Southerners rated their communities as "the best" and in "the best" state, in marked contrast to the rest of the country. Contented with itself and intolerant of any deviation from its way of life, Dixie shies away from self-criticism. "The Northeastern states were civilized and discontent[ed]," wrote historian John Shelton Reed, summing up the results of the CSEP survey, "the Southern states were happily backward, and the Midwest was, as usual, mediocre all the way around."

Despite their shared boosterism, have-not blacks and have-little whites in the South have not been able to forge a political coalition. Results from the University of Michigan Survey Research Center-Center for Political Studies (SRC-CPS) 1972-84 opinion polls show rather a deep divide in their views on government versus individual responsibility for economic welfare. Whites (49 percent) value individual initiative and oppose such government programs as student aid, funds for big cities, and employment training programs. They react negatively to words such as *unions*, *women's liberation*, *liberals*, or *welfare*. Black Southerners feel quite positive toward these same words, and 72 percent favor federal aid to everybody for almost any purpose. On social and political issues the white working class and the white-collar country-club set still constitute a solid South.

If white Southerners are, by and large, more conservative than other

Americans, why doesn't the region get its political loyalties straight? In fact, it does—in presidential elections. The reason is obvious: National Democratic candidates stand for most things white Southerners find unpalatable. On such issues as defense spending and welfare, abortion, prayer in the schools, and women's rights, Republicans have such an advantage among white voters that the black vote hardly matters. Since the Nixon-Humphrey race of 1968, the Republicans have consistently carried counties that account for 48 percent of the region's total vote, while counties that consistently back Democratic candidates make up only 13 percent of the vote. A Republican presidential candidate cannot lose in the South, unless he works hard at it.

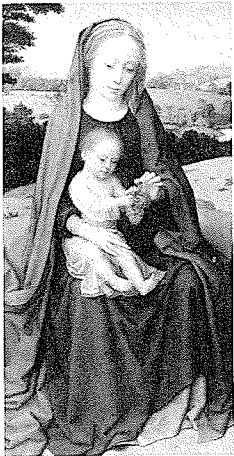
State and local elections are a different matter. To be sure, the Republicans disproportionately attract the college-educated white vote. But the Democrats can counter with reliable black support, and in the Deep South, black voters today make up between one-quarter and one-third of the electorate. Home-grown Democrats, if they steer clear of the symbolic issues that chill white voters (e.g., welfare, unions, civil rights), can combine the black vote with the white working-class vote, which is still predisposed toward the Democrats. Given the populist strain in Southern politics, Democrats do best there by rallying the common man against the country club. The result determines which segment of the local white middle class will rule. But whether the "moderates rule through the Democratic Party or conservatives govern through the Republican Party, Southern politics," conclude the authors, "can be expected to perpetuate" the traditional class and color differences of the past.

—James Lang '77-'78

NEW TITLES

History

**HOLY FEAST AND
HOLY FAST:**
**The Religious
Significance of
Food to Medieval Women**
by Caroline Walker Bynum
Univ. of Calif., 1987
444 pp. \$29.95



Throughout Europe during the Middle Ages, Christian women of extraordinary piety did strange things: they exuded miraculous fluids from breasts, fingers, and stigmata; they ingested the filth of the sick; they lived on the Eucharist alone; they felt divine teachings turn to honey in their mouths. But most of all, they fasted.

Why, in the famine-wracked years following 1200, did religious women renounce food? Medieval historians have long held that women, having internalized the misogyny of their times, sought to mortify their weak and despised flesh. Bynum, a University of Washington professor of religion and women's studies, finds otherwise.

Medieval men divided their world into dualities (God/humanity, spirit/flesh, law/mercy). Authority and spirit were male, weakness and corporeality, female. Male saints usually broke with their past lives, renouncing such things as sex or wealth. But for women, a religious vocation meant continuing the activities of childhood, and often provided an escape from the burdens of womanhood: child-bearing and the inevitable drudgery of marriage.

Medieval religious women accepted the notion that they were "poor little" creatures, their weakness being the symbol for all humankind. Female suffering—like Christ's—brought salvation.

Modern psychological analyses of anorectics, argues Bynum, do not apply to these early mystics. Rather than seeking to control their bodies in response to social ideals or family pressures, medieval women renounced food for the pain it brought them—the straightest path to God.

EMBATTLED COURAGE:
**The Experience of Combat
in the American Civil War**
by Gerald F. Linderman
Free Press, 1987
357 pp. \$22.50

Union and Confederate soldiers marched into America's first modern war determined to prove themselves men and heroes. The Civil War was to be both glorious and short.

In 1861 both the civilians and military viewed war as a struggle that only the most courageous and God-fearing could win. The realities of combat, says University of Michigan historian Linderman, shot such chivalric notions to Hell. For every man killed on the Civil War battlefield, two died of disease in camp. All told, there were 1.1 million

casualties, including 600,000 dead.

At first, the idea of "courage" spurred each army on. Officers drunk on valor led mad charges against fixed positions—until it became clear that cavalry was no match for massed rifle fire and artillery bombardment.

Midway through the war, both sides began to introduce new tactics and stricter discipline. "Forced to . . . remodel combat behavior, to abandon many of the war's initial tenets, to rationalize a warfare of destruction, and . . . changes in their relationships with commanders," writes Linderman, ". . . soldiers suffered a disillusionment more profound than historians have acknowledged—or the soldiers themselves would concede 25 years later."

**MARCUS AURELIUS,
A Biography**

by Anthony Birley
Yale, 1987
320 pp. \$25



Marcus Aurelius's strict pursuit of virtue made him the most boring ruler of the Roman Empire. It also made him the best. Contemporaries and posterity alike judged Aurelius, ruler of Rome from A.D. 161 to 180, "the perfect emperor."

Born into a wealthy, nonroyal family, Marcus became an *equus*, or horseman, at age six, and a priest at seven, under the direct patronage of the emperor Hadrian. At 12, despite his fragile health, he began sleeping on the ground and wearing the rough cloak of a Stoic philosopher.

Impressed by his rectitude, Hadrian dubbed Marcus "Verissimus," or "most truthful," playing on his family name, Verus. He directed his successor (later Emperor Pius Antoninus) to adopt the boy. Marcus modeled himself on the kindly Pius.

But unlike Pius, he could not avoid the battlefield. Abhorring violence, he nevertheless spent several years fighting Germanic tribes on the Empire's northern border, eventually dying there at age 58. As Rome's chief judge, Marcus upheld slavery but promoted freedom whenever possible within the law. His ruling that mothers could will property to their children opened the door for the legal recognition of women.

Much of Aurelius's posthumous fame rests on the strictly private, philosophical "Meditations" he set down during his last 10 years of life. "Bear and forbear," he wrote, quoting Epictetus, an important Stoic philosopher, whose views he preserved in Western thought. Sustained by the Stoic

belief that all things natural are supportable, Marcus acted nobly through plague, war, the loss of wife and children, treachery and rebellion, poor health, and his final sickness unto death.

Contemporary Affairs

DEEP BLACK
Space Espionage and
National Security
 by William E. Burrows
 Random, 1986
 401 pp. \$19.95

General George McClellan's aerial reconnaissance unit—the U.S. Army's first—advanced on Richmond in May of 1862 equipped with hot air balloons, heavy cameras, and balloonists with sketchpads. The Army Balloon Corps was credited by its leader, meteorologist Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, with saving the Union Army from at least one defeat. From its modest beginning, aerial reconnaissance has evolved into a sophisticated form of high-technology spycraft.

Despite the mystery surrounding overhead reconnaissance, Burrows, director of New York University's Science and Environmental Reporting Program, has managed to piece together its history since World War II. His book details the astonishing capabilities of spy planes such as the U-2 and its successor, the SR-71. The KH-11 satellite carries an electro-optical imaging system that transmits real-time pictures with a resolution comparable to that of the finest still cameras.

Burrows devotes considerable attention to disputes among federal agencies assigned to interpret data gathered by this sophisticated gadgetry. These include the CIA and the Air Force, not to mention the heavily funded but officially nonexistent National Reconnaissance Office, created in 1960 to design, develop, procure, and manage all U.S. reconnaissance satellites.

And what of the information gained? During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, U.S. aerial reconnaissance not only spotted Soviet missile emplacements in Cuba but also determined that the U.S. stock of nuclear weapons was, at a minimum, equal to that of the USSR, giving President John F. Kennedy a strong hand.

But can we count on this technology to verify arms control agreements? "The evidence suggests overwhelmingly," says Burrows, "that the U.S. technical collection system, with its vast network of sensors and multiple redundancies, is adequate for verification."

**CRISIS AND LEVIATHAN:
Critical Episodes
in the Growth
of American Government**

by Robert Higgs
Oxford, 1987
352 pp. \$24.95

Even the most casual observer cannot help noticing the expansion of American government. A promise to cut federal fat and take government out of the marketplace, after all, got Ronald Reagan elected president in 1980.

However, asserts Higgs, a Lafayette College economist, the vaunted "Reagan Revolution" has failed. Indeed, he devotes nine double-columned pages to listing the current federal agencies.

During political or economic crises, says Higgs, the public demands action and new agencies are formed. The crisis eventually ends, but the new agencies stay.

Documenting the growth of the American bureaucracy during the periods of 1916-18, 1930-33, and 1940-45, and the post-World War II era, Higgs shows how events affected government growth. The Progressive Era reforms of 1916-18, for example—the federal income tax and the Federal Reserve system—were reactions to government *inaction* during the economic crises of the 1890s. Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the other hand, modeled the emergency acts of his first 100 days on World War I precedents.

Each emergency, concludes Higgs, "sets in motion a variety of economic, institutional, and ideological adjustments whose common denominator is a diminished resistance to Bigger Government." Only a program of "individual rights, limited government, and a free society under a true rule of law," argues Higgs, will shrink the leviathan.

Arts & Letters

**EVELYN WAUGH
The Early Years,
1903-1939**

by Martin Stannard
Norton, 1986
537 pp. \$24.95

On September 29, 1930, Evelyn Waugh, having recently published two hilariously blasé novels (*Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*) and one highly-praised biography (*Rosetti, His Life and Works*), took the most important step of his life: He entered the Catholic Church. Ever the self-publicist, Waugh explained his conversion in the daily press: "It is no longer possible, as it was in the time of Gibbon, to accept the benefits of civilisation and at the same time deny the supernatural basis on which it rests. . . ." To Waugh, Catholicism was simply the most effective barrier against chaos.

Of the latter he had intimate knowledge. Lei-



**VOICES FROM
THE IRON HOUSE:**
A Study of Lu Xun
by Leo Ou-fan Lee
Univ. of Ind., 1987
254 pp. \$32.50

chester University's Stannard chronicles the formative years of a bright, self-centered brat. Born into a middle-class professional family, Waugh—under the spell of Oxford aesthetes and aristocrats—came to despise his origins even as he dunned his father for money. An undistinguished sojourn at Oxford, concluded without a degree, led to a suicide attempt (which was thwarted by jellyfish), years of drifting, and dismal teaching stints at second-rate schools. Yearning to be a craftsman-artist in the manner of the pre-Raphaelites, he turned reluctantly to writing. In 1929 Waugh's ill-starred marriage to Evelyn Gardner (dubbed "She-Evelyn") collapsed following her venture into adultery. His ensuing anguish may have marred his second novel, *Vile Bodies*; it certainly propelled him toward the Catholic Church.

"From the time he became a Catholic," notes Stannard, "Waugh no longer felt the intellectual burden of humanism." If anything, he became more aggressively snobbish, more sharply disdainful of humanity. A happy marriage—to Laura Herbert in 1937—failed to temper his misanthropy. For that, literature can only be grateful. Without his finely-honed malice, Waugh might never have penned such comic masterpieces as *Black Mischief* (1932) and *Scoop* (1938).

Today's visitor to China inevitably comes home with a book of Lu Xun's stories—or, at the very least, a Lu Xun pin. Fifty years after the death of China's greatest modern writer, Lee, a University of Chicago Sinologist, seeks to free the man's life and work from the distortions of Communist hagiographers.

In 1911, when Lu Xun (1881–1936) was 29, China's old imperial order collapsed, followed by the chaos of warlord politics and an even bloodier showdown between Communists and the Guomindang (Nationalists). When the Guomindang massacred Shanghai's Communists in 1927, Lu Xun's moodiness darkened into serious mental depression. He did not recover until the early 1930s, when the writer vowed as an artist to become politically engaged.

Until the early 20th century, literature, judged entirely according to traditional forms, had been the leisure-time activity of China's governing elite.

**THE RANDOM HOUSE
DICTIONARY
OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE,
Second Edition Unabridged**
edited by Stuart Berg Flexner
and Leonore Cray Hauck
2478 pp. plus supplements
\$79.95

Lu Xun, the intellectual and political loner, was a new phenomenon.

He created the uninvolved narrator, who refused to pass judgment no matter what he saw, in order to underscore the passivity of the masses. From Western-style short stories, he moved to prose poetry (in a form he invented), then to satire dealing with current events.

During the late 1920s, when China was on the brink of self-destruction, Lu Xun began to look to Leon Trotsky, Aleksandr Fadeyev, and other Soviet thinkers for inspiration. Lee portrays Lu Xun as a protean writer, a cautious revolutionary with a dark side, far more complex than the portraits by Chinese propagandists have conceded.

Poor Penthesilea. The Amazon queen was inexplicably abridged from this new, ostensibly unabridged, *Random House Dictionary II (RHD II)*. So don't throw away the first edition, *RHD I*, and by all means hold on to your *WEB III* (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, Merriam, 1966), *RHD II*'s closest competitor.

RHD II is a useful jack-of-all-trades. It includes not only an up-to-date vocabulary (e.g., *green-mail*, *wimp*, *AZT*) but also many features from *RHD I*: concise dictionaries in French, Spanish, Italian, and German; a table of signs and symbols; a directory of colleges and universities; the Declaration of Independence; the U.S. Constitution; a manual of style; a so-so atlas; and a quirky list of words commonly misspelled. (How come *initial* is here but not *squirrel*?) New in this edition is a helpful list of words commonly confused (*militate/mitigate*). And like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it tells when words entered the language (*normalcy*, 1855-60). Gone from *RHD II* are a list of major reference works, a table of major dates in history, and the full text of the United Nations Charter.

But, sadly, this jack-of-all-trades is master of none. *WEB III* is much more complete in vocabulary: *Cuban eight* (an aerobatic maneuver), *tsamba* (Tibetan flour). Etymologies, while vastly improved in this edition, cannot compare with the Indo-European root list of *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1978); for example, the *RHD II* reader won't find such unexpected hereditary

relationships as *Kamasutra/suture, five/Punjab, rose/julep*. In fairness, some etymologies in this volume open new vistas. One traces the word *kangaroo* back to Guugu Yimidhirr, an aboriginal language from Australia.

RHD II is good for modern words (including all the off-color ones) and as a general, not-too-deep reference work. But for scholars, this cannot be the only source.

Science & Technology

DINOSAURS

Past and Present

edited by Sylvia J. Czerkas
and Everett C. Olson
Univ. of Wash., 1987, 1988
Vol. I, 161 pp. \$35
Vol. II, 164 pp. \$35

Scientists once pictured dinosaurs as huge, cold-blooded animals lumbering heavily through lush jungles while bat-like creatures flapped about overhead. But according to leading American and Canadian paleontologists, this scenario no longer fits the facts.

According to the authors, evidence suggests that not all dinosaurs or pterosaurs (those that flew or, rather, glided) were cold blooded. Cold-blooded animals move slowly, constantly occupied with maintaining their body temperature. More than 225 million years ago, crocodile-like reptiles became outnumbered by warm-blooded dinosaurs, whose tracks show them to have been gregarious, variegated, and surprisingly light on their feet.

Far from lumbering, huge quadrupeds placed their feet daintily close together, while bipedal *tyrannosaurus*, *dryptosaurus*, and *deinonychus antirrhopus* sped along like ostriches with lunging, claw-footed strides.

Nor were all dinosaurs big. The forebears of birds, probably more numerous than previously thought, were chicken-sized, sprightly, and covered with proto-feather scales.

In 1979 and 1984, Louis and Walter Alvarez offered a new theory about the dinosaurs' extinction: When a huge asteroid collided with the Earth, the resulting dust cloud blocked out the sun. Dinosaurs disappeared abruptly with the end of the tropical Cretaceous era, and the subtropical Paleocene era began. But while the collision is confirmed by abnormally high levels of the heavy metal iridium (found in asteroids) in certain sediments, vertebrate paleontologists now question whether it was not the final straw in the dinosaur's slow demise, rather than the cataclysmic

cause of their extinction. In any case, some dinosaurs survived. They left their bones in Montana's Hell Creek Formation 40,000–250,000 years after the collision.

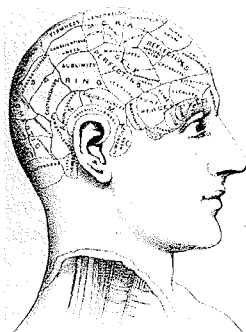
**THE HEALING BRAIN:
Breakthrough Discoveries
About How the Brain Keeps
Us Healthy**

by Robert Ornstein
and David Sobel
Simon & Schuster, 1987
301 pp. \$19.95

The more disrupted a person's life, psychologist Ornstein and physician Sobel found, the more likely he is to develop "a staggering variety of medical conditions," from influenza to leukemia.

R. W. Barthrop's 1975 study of bereavement and immune function indicated that fewer infection-fighting T-cells were at work in the blood of grieving spouses. The brain sends neurological signals to receptors now known to exist in organs of immunity (e.g., the thymus gland, spleen, and bone marrow) and can affect a person's ability to fight off disease. By the same token, people can enhance their immune responses by "purely psychological methods, such as suggestion, hypnosis, conditioning"—or even laughter. After hypnosis, for example, warts resistant to medical treatment may go away when the immune system wages an "all-out assault."

Patients' expectations also affect how fast a treatment works. In one study, half the subjects taking relaxation training were told their blood pressure should come down immediately, the other half, that results would show only after the third session. Those who expected quick results got them: Their systolic blood pressure fell seven times faster than that of the control group.



PAPERBOUNDS

JAPAN'S MODERN MYTHS: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period. By Carol Gluck. Princeton, 1985. 407 pp. \$12.50

The Late Meiji (Enlightenment) era opened in 1889 with the adoption of a new Japanese constitution. Encompassing military victories over Russia and China, the era ended with the death of the last Meiji emperor in 1912. During that time, writes Gluck, a Columbia University historian, Japan's ruling elite used ideological hocus-pocus to transform Japan's emperor into a religious symbol, and its constitutional government into a monarchy. Until 1945, when the victorious Allies imposed a new constitution on Japan, loyalty to the emperor, not free political discourse, was the national ideal. Modernization and icon-building progressed side by side: While the locomotive evolved from an exotic curio "depicted in woodblock prints" into a "fact of daily life," the emperor, who had once traveled "the countryside in a palanquin," became a remote symbol, "embellished until it was larger than life."

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS. By Horace Freeland Judson. Johns Hopkins, 1987. 266 pp. \$9.95

"In and of itself," wrote Francis Bacon (1561-1626), "knowledge is power." He was not, says Judson, who teaches science writing at Johns Hopkins University, referring to the practical consequences of knowledge—the dominion over nature that resulted in, say, Pasteur's rabies vaccine, or Fleming's discovery of penicillin, or man's walk on the moon. To Bacon, knowledge came from the active search for truth; it entailed right thinking, and therefore led to right action. Judson breaks down scientific investigation (Bacon's "active search") into pattern, chance, feedback, modeling, strong prediction, evi-

dence, and theory. He then considers, in essays and interviews, eight significant problems, including the origin of the universe—the "Big Bang" theory does not tell us what happened before the explosion—and the causes of aging and death: If errors in cell duplication inevitably accumulate until they reach "error catastrophe," how can premature aging be prevented? Applied across the "vast set of networks, densely woven and knotted" of all the sciences, says Judson, scientific investigation has given us a body of knowledge which, "collectively, is the most reliable knowledge we have got."

THE CAPITAL OF HOPE: Brasilia and Its People. By Alex Shoumatoff. Univ. of N.M., 1987. 211 pp. \$10.95

"Brasilia's like a garden that's just been planted," a friend in Rio told *New Yorker* writer Shoumatoff. "It has no character." Shoumatoff describes the new city through the eyes of its planners, architects, officials, settlers—and his Brazilian in-laws. The country's 1822 constitution called for a new capital "in the center of Brazil . . . at the joint source of the Paraguay and the Amazon," but it was never built. During the century that followed, Brazilians on the coast and in southern regions flourished; in the north and the interior, they starved. President Juscelino Kubitschek revived the inland capital scheme in 1955, seeking to unite the nation politically and economically. He completed the new capital in 1960. But did his project in fact unite the country, or was it a costly boondoggle leading only to inflation and political instability? Nobody yet knows. Shoumatoff says that the city's difficulties are real—rich sections divided from poor, insufficient facilities for an influx of newcomers—but not yet irreversible. Brasilia's more than one million residents have reason to hope.

Remembering Vietnam: Art As Therapy

Fifteen years after President Nixon achieved an ill-fated "peace with honor" and U.S. troops came home, the Vietnam War has re-emerged as grist for Hollywood (e.g., *Platoon*, *Full-Metal Jacket*), and as the subject of a flood of memoirs, novels, and exhibits of photographs. And there are retrospective conferences and multimedia "events" on Vietnam, many of them promoting psychotherapeutic themes ("healing," "reconciliation"); veterans are usually cast simply as victims. In much of all this, history and truth have been obscured, contends Henry Allen, a journalist and Vietnam veteran, by a patchy fog of bittersweet nostalgia, often solemnly applauded by the news media.

by Henry Allen

The Vietnam War was a long time ago, a whole generation past. The veterans who haunt Washington D.C.'s Vietnam memorial in their plaintive fatigues are getting middle-aged. The Marine landing at Danang is now more distant in time than Iwo Jima was for those Marines of 1965. The films and TV tape shot back then—the gritty chaos of combat, the flaccid grandeur of peace demonstrations—have the quality of history, something abstracted about them; even the color footage seems as if it were in black and white.

Nevertheless, Vietnam doesn't go away. There's a faction of Americans who keep worrying at it with a sort of gruesome tenderness, like a dog gnawing at the cast on a broken leg. It has become an industry and a Cause. Any work of art or journalism, any political gesture that arises from anger, bitterness, nostalgia, bewilderment, or pain of

any kind over Vietnam is supposed to command our respect, whether it deserves it or not.

Behind all this lies the same promise that psychotherapy makes about an unhappy childhood—once Vietnam is remembered properly, it will stop nagging at us.

But it doesn't. Since the last of our troops pulled out in 1973, we've had art that has touched the whole country and thanked and remembered its soldiers—Washington's Vietnam Veterans Memorial designed by Maya Lin; the nearby statue of three servicemen by Frederick Hart; James Webb's novel *Fields of Fire*; Michael Herr's journalistic memoir *Dispatches*; Billy Joel's song "Goodnight, Saigon," to mention a few of the successes, aesthetic, popular, or both.

The art, media, memoirs, think-tank sessions, and therapy keep on coming, good and bad.



During the past year, Hollywood has turned Vietnam into a genre unto itself with movies such as *Platoon*, *Full-Metal Jacket*, and *Hamburger Hill*. An advertisement for television's new dramatic series "Tour of Duty" says that we have to "talk about it," as if we hadn't been doing just that.

The books are so many that there are at least two bibliographies on Vietnam. Amlin Gray's play *How I Got That Story* recently returned to Washington for another run.

The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project is campaigning to put a statue of a nurse near the Vietnam memorial.

And who knows what will come next from Sly Stallone, Gloria Emerson, Noam Chomsky, Myra McPherson, Clint Eastwood, Country Joe McDonald, and the journalist-veterans traveling back to Vietnam on their bleak nostalgia trips?

In keeping with the spirit of the Vietnam era, when Americans tended to blur the difference between passion and principle, remembering the war in the late

1980s has become a "moral" position.

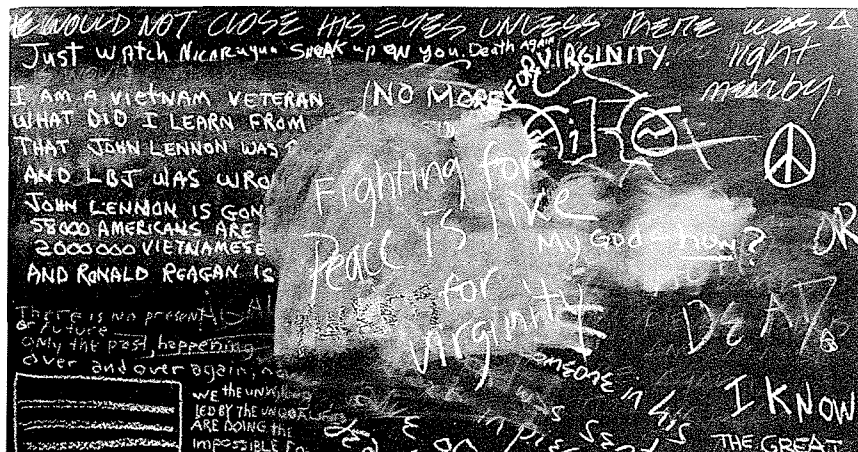
One of the most ambitious attempts to sum up what the word "Vietnam" is supposed to mean in the American psyche has been a three-month exhibit program organized by the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA), a nonprofit gallery and performance space not far from the Capitol. It is called "War and Memory in the Aftermath of Vietnam."

WPA describes the exhibit as a "multidisciplinary program of visual art, commissioned installations, photography, film, video, literature, theater, music, and public discussion."

Some of it is good, some of it is awful.

What is important is that all of it is utterly conventional—conventionally shocking, conventionally touching, conventionally moral. It does as good a job as we're apt to get of telling us how we're supposed to feel about Vietnam.

It is by turns heavy-handed, penetrating, nostalgic, ironic, decadent, and self-righteous, with occasional unmediated glints of recognition, especially in the



snapshots brought home by veterans of the war. These are simple, clumsy pictures of helicopters and rice paddies, of young men holding rifles and squinting into the sun, and they have the power of near-artless fact.

But most of the show generates the smog of unreality that hung over the whole Vietnam era—the fathomless layering of media, slogans, self-dramatization, and illusion.

For example, consider the installation called “Hotel Co Hon,” meaning “Hotel Wandering Ghosts.” It’s a big room where everything is black, white, or gray: two white French colonial tombs; stone furniture; dozens of black-and-white photographs of Vietnam; blackboards where writing covers writing in layers of chalked quotations: “He would not close his eyes unless there was light nearby . . . alive or dead . . . and then we were breathing him . . .”

There are scrolls, a map of Vietnam,

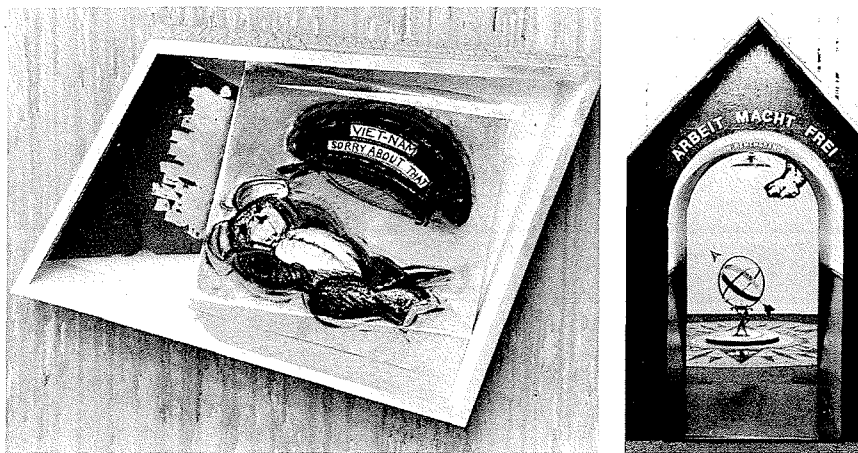
and a silhouette of the famous 1968 photograph of the Saigon police chief blowing out a Viet Cong’s brains. There are lots of words, including big black letters misted over by a scrim of white: “LOST IN A ROMAN WILDERNESS OF PAIN.”

The artist, a Californian named Richard Turner, was asked recently: Why “Roman”?

“That’s the last line from the Doors’ song ‘The End,’” he said. “That was in *Apocalypse Now*.”

That layering of imagery goes on and on. In a two-wall exhibit titled “Sorry About That” (our troops’ great ironic catch phrase), artist Cynthia Carlson has made monotype prints derived from her photographs taken of objects left at the Vietnam memorial. There are three different exhibits of photographs taken there. And a Vietnamese photographer named Hanh Thi Pham offers a picture of an actor in a North Vietnamese uni-

Henry Allen, 46, is a staff writer for The Washington Post’s Style section. Born in Summit, New Jersey, he served in South Vietnam, at Chu Lai, as a corporal in Headquarters Company, First Marine Regiment, in 1966. He received a B.A. from Hamilton College (1967). Later he was arrested and briefly jailed during an antiwar demonstration in the nation’s capital. He is the author of a novel, Fool’s Mercy (1982). This essay is drawn from an article that first appeared in The Post. Copyright © 1987 The Washington Post Company.



form who flogs an actor playing a civilian, while a print of a black-and-white photograph of Ho Chi Minh lolls in a hammock.

The WPA has issued a 448-page collection of prose and poetry about Vietnam, and there are another 10,000 words on the walls to explain the art.

This doesn't count the catalogue, critical brochures, documents, photocopies of magazine articles, five shelves of books, and all the words being spoken by narrators, authors, and politicians in films and videos played on TV screens scattered throughout this show. Nor does it count three words over the door to the corrosively smug installation by Richard Posner. This room of pictures, slogans, and symbolic knickknacks (the compass rose on the floor is a "moral compass") is based on the 16 months that Posner spent as a conscientious objector, washing dishes in a hospital.

The three words are *Arbeit macht frei*, meaning "work makes you free." They were also over the gate at Auschwitz. Perhaps Posner can contribute a dishwashing exhibit to the new Holocaust museum across the Mall.

Words, words, words. Images, images, images.

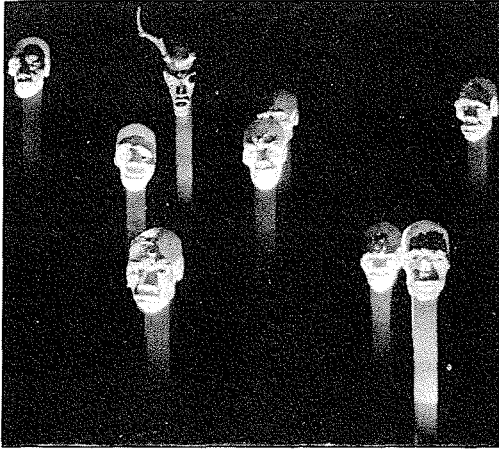
Vietnam happened during a time when

American intellectuals still thought that art could change America and save us from ourselves. The approved tone of that art was one of irony, therapy, alienation, and nostalgia. That is the tone of this show.

The ironies range from the snapshot of a soldier posing like a muscle man in the middle of a combat zone to the ham-handed use of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in a movie called *Mills of the Gods: Vietnam*. Irony ruins a Terry Allen installation called "Tables and Angels," which consists of cafe booths inside cages lit with red light bulbs. It has something of the frantic bleakness of the bars on Saigon's Tu Do Street until the sound track of helicopter noise (which sounds more like a railroad train) shifts to a harmonium playing a wheezy "My Country Tis of Thee," and then it just seems sophomoric.

The artist has invited visitors to add to the exhibit. In one booth there's a contribution of an empty bottle of vitamins with a napkin reading: "The illness has spread in and out of the immune system... we have no vitamins to heal the wounds... we have expression... and thank God(ess) for that."

There it is: Vietnam, not to mention all of American life, as a disease, with



the only cure being expressing oneself.

Alienation shows up in, say, Lloyd Wolf's photographs of people at the Vietnam memorial. In the tradition of Diane Arbus or Lee Friedlander, he shows us frightened, puzzled, freakish people. Alienation even appears in a backhanded sort of way in the dye-transfer color photographs by Larry Burrows, a *Life* photographer who found a terrible beauty in Vietnam, as in a stunning photograph of soldiers carrying the wounded through wind-blown grass. But that beauty puts you at one remove from the combat he portrays. It makes Vietnam static and final, kind of like the America you used to imagine when you finished reading an issue of *Life* during the 1950s.

More immediate, by comparison, are those veterans' snapshots, such as Nancy Floyd's memorial to her brother James M. Floyd, or the photographs taken by an ABC television journalist named Don North. He lacks Burrows' finesse, but that lack puts him closer to his subjects—a picture of a man giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a wounded comrade is enough to make you cry.

The Vietnam era was a decadent one, and decadence prompts nostalgia—the Lost Generation in the Paris of the '20s,

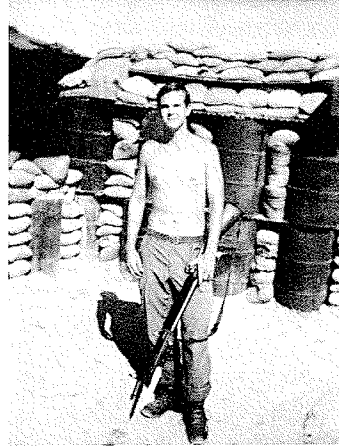
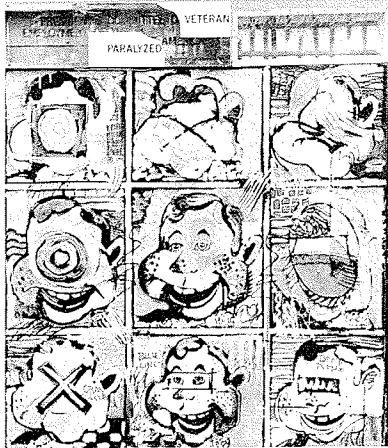
the Beat Generation of the '50s, Berlin during the Weimar Republic, turn-of-the-century Vienna.

In America during the war, the decadence on both sides of the issue was more than the violence, intellectual arrogance, situation ethics, self-righteous hating, and cookie-cutter "love" of the kind that was always trying to sell something. (Remember all the horrible smiling—by Lyndon Johnson when he wound up his speeches, by protesters when they inserted flowers into National Guard rifle muzzles?)

What was decadent was believing that abandoning law and custom and embracing outrage and cultural anarchy would lead us all to some higher good.

Everybody marched to different drummers, and all the drummers were taking nonstop apocalyptic solos.

We could hardly wait for the world to end: the college students reciting Yeats' "A Second Coming"; the John Birchers waiting for the Commies to land in California; the marijuana Buddhists keeping their bathtubs full of drinking water in case the revolution happened *that very night*; and the men in Vietnam who played so many variations on the romance of despair: "It don't mean a thing"; "Better him than me"; "No



more boom-boom for that mama-san."

There was a hellish glamour to it, not to mention the glow of moral certainty, and a soundtrack courtesy of the golden age of rock 'n' roll. No wonder a generation can't let it go.

This nostalgia and romance may account for the heaviness of so much Vietnam-era art, both good and bad—a sodden, drugged quality.

Think of Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, or movies that exploit our notions of Vietnam, such as *The Deer Hunter* or *Apocalypse Now*.

Look at an absolutely silly movie in the WPA program called *Aspects of a Certain History*, in which, among other things, the camera gives us the outside of an American barn for minutes on end while Vietnamese words appear on the screen, untranslated. It's like the worst possible combination of a Noh play and a slide show from the Dairy Council.

Look at the 16 skull-sculptures on sticks in the powerful Joe Shannon installation in the basement at WPA. (They recall the movie *Apocalypse Now*, which took the images from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.) It is called "Leroy's Tour." There are slides from Vietnam, there are slides of a black man, painted with spots, dancing around naked.

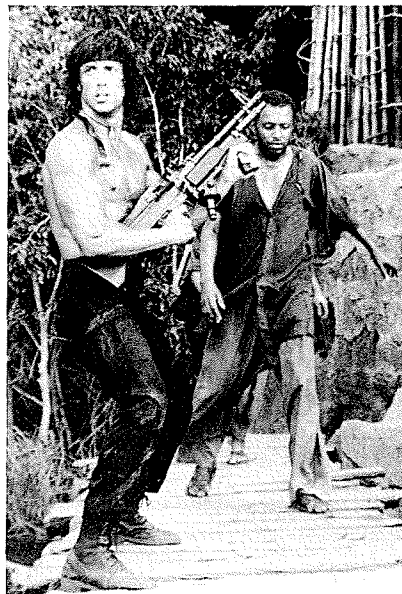
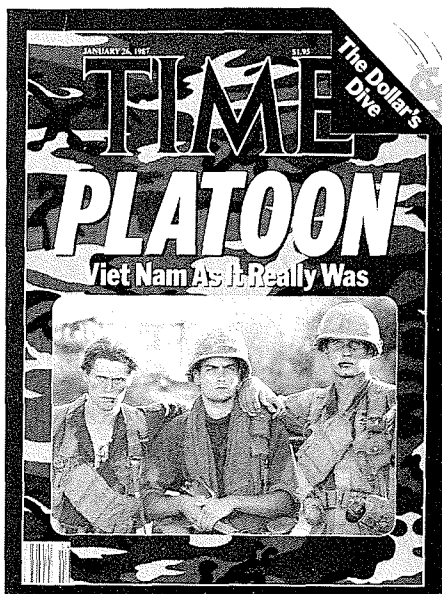
There's a soundtrack on which a woman sings, in the kind of music that gets played when the credits come up after a long, exhausting, weeper of a movie: "There is sensation . . . somewhere within the nation . . ."

There was indeed. The Vietnam era was the Age of Feelings, a sort of secular Sacred Heart movement that exalted on ecstasy and suffering, and Shannon captures it.

What has been left out of the show is just as important as what's in it.

There are the conventional omissions. There is little hint of the bravery, loyalty, and skill with which American troops fought a pathologically warlike regime; Communist Vietnam today, 15 years after our troops left, has a larger army than we do.

The WPA program almost revels in our defeat but largely ignores the Communists' victory. This is perhaps because Hanoi's leaders failed utterly to live up to their American admirers' pipe dreams of democracy and the New Man. Also, recognizing a victory would go against the piety that "in war there are no victors." Tell this to the boat people who fled Vietnam in 1975. The only hints of Communist cruelty and corruption on WPA's walls come from quilts made by



Hmong tribesmen and from photographs by Hanh Thi Pham.

There's little in this show about the satisfactions and pleasures of war. This would be heresy. But pleasures there are in slaughter (or in brotherly survival), which is one reason wars get fought, and a very big reason they get won. One film from 1968, Emile de Antonio's *In the Year of the Pig*, shows Col. George S. Patton III talking about attending a memorial service the night before. He says his soldiers were "determined" and "reverent," and then his face stretches out in a ghastly grin as he calls them "a bloody good bunch of killers." Is it the British slang that's troubling? Is it the grin? A Canadian documentary called *Mills of the Gods: Vietnam* shows an American pilot strafing and bombing. Moments afterward, in the cockpit of his A1A Skyraider, he says: "That's great fun. I really like to do that. We really hosed 'em down."

In the air-conditioned hush of a movie theater, these statements are grotesque. There is no way they couldn't be,

wrenched out of a context the uninitiated find as impossible to imagine as combat.

The Department of Defense didn't do any better with a propaganda film from 1965 called *Why Vietnam?* It provokes the same suspicion that somebody is blowing smoke at somebody; it even contains some of the same footage as the antiwar films, such as shots of the French being overrun at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. (These shots were, of course, staged for the cameras by the Communists after their victory.) WPA says *Why Vietnam?* was shown to troops embarking for Vietnam. This is hard to imagine. How could anybody hit the beaches running after watching endless minutes of Secretary of State Dean Rusk discussing the finer points of peace negotiations?

There was so much pathetic hooey from leaders and intellectuals on all sides during Vietnam.

Consider Lyndon Johnson mouthing the platitudes of internationalism and asking our soldiers to fight for peace, not victories, which is a little like asking football players to play a Super Bowl for

the exercise.

Consider a left-wing film called *The People's War*, which shows the North Vietnamese people planting rice, sawing wood, building boats, and generally working like the sort of cheery beavers that can be believed only by people who themselves have never done manual labor, except as part of some politically correct getaway, such as flying down to Cuba to help cut sugar cane. It also has a North Vietnamese saying: "We want to remember everything, not only our suffering but our hatred and our victories."

Most Americans see no virtue in remembering hatred, but it would be useful to remember the victories along with our suffering. We fought well. We should remember that.

Film had a lot more power to persuade during the 1960s and early 1970s, when we were still fascinated with the medium. Now, it seems clumsier. A look at half a dozen or so of the score of films in the WPA program demonstrates that it isn't the images that have the power, it's the soundtrack. *The People's War* begins with shots taken from a vehicle moving quickly down a narrow road. Add the sound of explosions, and the film evokes the horrors of the bombing of North Vietnam. Take the explosions away and all you've got is a travelogue.

The WPA's book is called *Unwinding the Vietnam War*. It's an anthology published by the Real Comet Press in Seattle. What good writing there is gets asphyxiated by the whining and clichés. There's poetry that you could retype as prose, and no one would know the difference. There's the claim that a deserter who died of a drug overdose was as much a "victim" of "the '60s and that war as anybody."

And here is the pervasive, insistent, absurd, nonstop therapy: "A larger national healing depends first upon hearing the anger and pain of the veterans." Here is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, in the announcement that this book supports "the shift from a mechanistic to a holistic conception of the world." And don't forget, folks, war is bad for your sex life, too: "The Soldier is virtually incapacitated when he meets women. We reduced our sexuality to an organ requiring periodic discharge. But . . . women do not want to be targets in some sexual shooting range."

It wasn't much of a war, but it was the only war we had, as a staff sergeant or two used to say. Now the alumni of the antiwar movement seem to be saying the same thing. Once it looked as if Americans would forget all about it, as they forgot about Korea. Now we can't stop remembering.

Maybe it's all culminating this year, maybe Americans will feel either satisfied or fed up, and Vietnam will be left in peace. Maybe it will turn into bad box office, and Hollywood will lose interest. Maybe we'll learn to make art about it without all the conspicuous irony, leaden sanctimony, and chronic victimhood—would it even be possible to do comedies that could be to Vietnam what *Mr. Roberts* or *Catch 22* were to World War II? In any case, it's hard to imagine that Vietnam won't be good for years more fellowships, foundation funding, and graduate design projects.

So far it has been like a tapestry that some national Penelope keeps weaving every day and unweaving every night while she waits for her Ulysses to come home a hero. Will she recognize him when he does? Will she be glad?

To Fashion a Text

Annie Dillard, whose book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* won the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction in 1974, recently published *An American Childhood*, about growing up in Pittsburgh during the 1950s. Not long ago, while the book was in progress, Dillard gave a talk at the New York Public Library about the process of deciding “what to put in and what to leave out.” This essay is adapted from that talk, in which she warned that writing a memoir is *not* a way to preserve memories. “After I’ve written about any experience, my memories . . . are gone; they’ve been replaced by the work.”

by Annie Dillard

I’m writing a book which is a memoir—insofar as a memoir is any account, usually in the first person, of incidents that happened a while ago.

It isn’t an autobiography, and it isn’t “memoirs.” I wouldn’t dream of writing my memoirs; I’m only 40 years old. Or my autobiography; any chronology of my days would make very dull reading—I’ve spent about 30 years behind either a book or a desk. The book that I’m writing is an account of a childhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I grew up.

The best memoirs, I think, forge their own forms. The writer of any work, and particularly any nonfiction work, must decide two crucial points: what to put in and what to leave out.

So I thought, “What shall I put in?” *An American Childhood* is about the passion of childhood. It’s about a child’s vigor, and originality, and eagerness, and mastery, and joy.

It’s about waking up. A child wakes up over and over again, and notices that she’s living. She dreams along, loving the exuberant life of the senses, in love with beauty and power, oblivious of herself—and then suddenly, bingo, she wakes up and feels herself alive. She notices her own awareness. And she notices that she is set down here, mysteriously, in a going world. The world is full of fascinating information that she can collect and enjoy. And the world is public; its issues are moral and historical.

So the book is about two things: a child’s interior life—vivid, superstitious, and timeless—and a child’s growing awareness of the world. The structural motion of the book is from the interior landscape—one brain’s own idiosyncratic topography—to the American landscape, the vast setting of our common history. The little child pinches the skin on the back of her hand and sees



Annie Dillard, in 1987.

skin on the back of her hand and sees where God made Adam from spit and clay. The older child explores the city on foot and starts to work on her future as a detective, or an epidemiologist, or a painter. Older yet, she runs wild and restless over the city's bridges, and finds in Old Testament poetry and French symbolist poetry some language sounds she loves.

The interior life is in constant vertical motion; consciousness runs up and down the scales every hour like a slide trombone. It dreams down below; it notices up above; and it notices itself, too, and its own alertness. The vertical motion of consciousness, from inside to outside and back, interests me. I've written about it once before, in an essay about a solar eclipse, and I wanted to do more with it.

For a private interior life, I've picked—almost at random—my own. As

an aside, this isn't as evident as it may seem. I simply like to write books.

About 12 years ago, while I was walking in Acadia National Park in Maine, I decided to write a narrative—a prose narrative, because I wanted to write prose. After a week's thought, I decided to write mostly about nature, because I thought I could make it do what I wanted, and I decided to set it all on the coast of Maine. I decided further to write it in the third person, about a man, a sort of metaphysician, in his fifties. A month or so later, I decided reluctantly to set the whole shebang in Virginia, because I knew more about Virginia. Then I decided to write it in the first person, as a man. Not until I had written the first chapter and showed it around—this was *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*—did I give up the pretext of writing in the first person as a man. I wasn't out to deceive people;

myself. I knew I wasn't the subject.

So in this book, for simplicity's sake, I've got my own interior life. It was a lively one. I put in what it was that had me so excited all the time—the sensation of time pelting me as if I were standing under a waterfall. I loved the power of the life in which I found myself. I loved to feel its many things in all their force. I put in what it feels like to play with the skin on your mother's knuckles. I put in what it feels like to throw a baseball—you aim your whole body at the target and watch the ball fly off as if it were your own head. I put in drawing pencil studies of my baseball mitt and collecting insects and fooling around with a microscope.

□

In my study on Cape Cod, where I write, I've stuck above my desk a big photograph of a little Amazonian boy whose face is sticking out of a waterfall or a rapids. White water is pounding all around his head, in a kind of wreath, but his face is absolutely still, looking up, and his black eyes are open dreamily on the distance. That little boy is completely alive; he's letting the mystery of existence beat on him. He's having his childhood, and I think he knows it. And I think he will come out of the water strong, and ready to do some good. I see this photograph whenever I look up from my computer screen.

So I put in that moment of waking up and noticing that you've been put down in a world that's already under way. The rushing of time wakes you: You play

along mindless and eternal on the kitchen floor, and time streams in full flood beside you on the floor. It rages beside you, down its swollen banks, and when it wakes you, you're so startled you fall in.

When you wake up, you notice that you're here.

□

"Here," in my case, was Pittsburgh. I put in the three rivers that meet here. The Allegheny from the north and the Monongahela from the south converge to form the Ohio, the major tributary of the Mississippi, which, in turn, drains the whole continent east of the divide via the Missouri River rising in the Rocky Mountains. The great chain of the Alleghenies kept the pioneers out of Pittsburgh until the 1760s, 150 years after Jamestown.

I put in those forested mountains and hills, and the way the three rivers lie flat and moving among them, and the way the low land lies wooded among them, and the way the blunt mountains rise in the darkness from the rivers' banks.

I put in Lake Erie, and summers along its mild shore. I put in New Orleans, the home of Dixieland jazz, where my father was heading when he jumped in his boat one day to go down the river just like Huck Finn.

I put in the pioneers who "broke wilderness," and the romance of the French and Indian wars that centered around Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt. I put in the brawling rivermen—the flatboatmen and keelboatmen.

Annie Dillard, 42, is adjunct professor of English at Wesleyan University. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she received a B.A. (1967) and an M.A. (1968) from Hollins College. She received a Pulitzer Prize in 1974 for Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, and is the author of Holy the Firm (1978), Living by Fiction (1982), Teaching a Stone to Talk (1982), and the recently published An American Childhood. This essay is drawn from "To Fashion a Text," copyright © 1987 by Annie Dillard, from the book Inventing the Truth, edited by William Zinsser, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. Copyright © 1987 Book-of-the-Month Club, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Company.

I put in the old Scotch-Irish families who dominate Pittsburgh and always have. The Mellons are Scotch-Irish, and so were Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick. They're all Presbyterians. I grew up in this world—at the lunatic fringe of it—and it fascinates me. I think it's important. I think it's peculiarly American—that mixture of piety and acquisitiveness, that love of work.

They're Calvinists, of course—just like the Massachusetts Puritans were—and I think I can make a case that their influence on American thought was greater than the Puritans'. There were far more Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, after all, and they settled all over the American colonies and carried their democracy and pragmatism with them.

In Pittsburgh, the Scotch-Irish constitute a world of many families whose forebears knew each other, who respect each other's discretion, and who admire each other for occupying their slots without fuss. The men are withdrawn, the women are ironic. They believe in their world; they all stay in Pittsburgh, and their children stay there. I alone escaped to tell thee. I and [writer] David McCullough, who grew up a few houses away. And James Laughlin, the publisher. All of us Pittsburgh Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

□

My sisters and I grew up in this world, and I put it in *An American Childhood*. I put in our private school and quiet club and hushed neighborhood where the houses were stone and their roofs were slate. I put in dancing with little boys at dancing school, and looking at the backs of their interesting necks at Presbyterian church.

Just to make trouble, I put in money. My grandmother used to tell me never to touch money with my bare hands.

I put in books, for that's where this particular book started, with an essay I wrote for the *New York Times Maga-*

zine on reading books. Almost all of my many passionate interests, and my many changes of mind, came through books. Books prompted the many vows I made to myself. Nonfiction books lured me away from the world—as I dreamed about working for Scotland Yard, doing field work in freshwater streams, rock collecting in the desert, painting in Paris.

□

And novels dragged me back into the world—because I would read whatever was handy, and what was handy in those years were novels about the Second World War. I read so many books about the Second World War that I knew how to man a minesweeper before I knew how to walk in high heels. You couldn't read much about the war without figuring out that the world was a moral arena that required your strength.

I had the notion then that everything was interesting if you just learned enough about it. Now, writing about it, I have the pleasure of learning it all again and finding that it *is* interesting. I get to inform myself and any readers about such esoterica as rock collecting, which I hadn't thought about in almost 30 years.

When I was 12, a paperboy gave me two grocery bags full of rock and mineral chunks. It took me most of a year to identify them. At a museum shop I bought cards of what they called thumb-nail specimens. And I read books about an absurd batch of people who called themselves rockhounds; they spent their evenings in the basement sawing up slabs of travertine into wavy slices suitable, they said, for wall hangings.

Now, in this memoir, I get to recall where the romance of rock collecting had lain: the symbolic sense that underneath the dreary highways, underneath Pittsburgh, were canyons of crystals—that you could find treasure by prying open the landscape. In my reading I learned that people have cracked knobs of granite and laid bare clusters of red

garnets and topaz crystals, chrysoberyl, spudomene, and emeralds. They held in their hands crystals that had hung in a hole in the dark for a billion years unseen. I liked the idea of that. I would lay about me right and left with a hammer and bash the landscape to bits. I would crack the earth's crust like a piñata and spread its vivid prizes in chunks to the light. That's what I wanted to do. So I put that in.

□

It's also a great pleasure to write about my parents, because they're both great storytellers—comedians, actually—which gives me a chance to tell their wonderful stories. We were all young, at our house, and we enjoyed ourselves.

My father was a dreamer; he lived differently from other men around him. One day he abruptly quit the family firm—when I was 10—and took off down the Ohio River in a boat by himself to search out the roots of jazz in New Orleans. He came back after several months and withdrew from corporate life forever.

He knew the world well—all sorts of things, which he taught us to take an interest in: how people build bridge pilings in the middle of a river, how jazz came up the river to be educated in Chicago, how the pioneers made their way westward from Pittsburgh, down the Ohio River, sitting on the tops of their barges and singing "Bang Away, My Lulu."

My mother was both a thinker and what one might call a card. If she lay on the beach with friends and found the conversation dull, she would give a little push with her heel and roll away. People were stunned. She rolled deadpan and apparently effortlessly, her arms and legs extended tidily, down the beach to the water's edge, where she lay at ease just as she had been, but half in the surf, and well out of earshot. She was not only a card but a wild card, a force for disorder.

She regarded even tiny babies as straight men, and liked to step on the drawstring of a crawling baby's gown, so, that the baby crawled and crawled and never got anywhere except into a little ball at the top of the gown.

She was interested in language. Once my father and I were in the kitchen listening to a ballgame—the Pirates playing the New York Giants. The Giants had a utility infielder named Wayne Terwilliger. Just as Mother walked through the kitchen, the announcer said, "Terwilliger bunts one." Mother stopped dead and said, "What was that? Was that English?" Father said, "The man's name is Terwilliger. He bunted." Mother thought that was terrific. For the next 10 or 12 years, she made this surprising string of syllables her own. If she was testing a microphone, or if she was pretending to whisper a secret in my ear, she said, "Terwilliger bunts one." If she had ever had an occasion to create a motto for a coat of arms, as Andrew Carnegie had, her motto would have been "Terwilliger bunts one." Carnegie's was "Death to privilege."

□

These fine parents taught my sisters and me moral courage, insofar as we have it, and tolerance, and how to dance all night without dragging your arms on your partner, and how to time the telling of a joke.

I've learned a lot by writing this book, not only about writing but about American history. Eastern woodland Indians killed many more settlers than Plains Indians did. By the time the settlers made it to Sioux and Apache country, those Indians had been so weakened by disease and by battles with the Army that they didn't have much fight left in them. It was the settlers in the Pennsylvania forests and in Maryland and Virginia who kept getting massacred and burned out and taken captive and tortured. During the four years the French held Pitts-

THINKING ABOUT THE BOYS

The boys. There were, essentially, a dozen or so of them and a dozen or so of us, so it was theoretically possible, as it were, to run through all of them by the time you finished school. We saw our dancing-school boys everywhere we went. Yet they were by no means less extraordinary for being familiar. They were familiar only visually: their eyebrows we could study in quick glimpses as we danced, eyebrows that met like spliced ropes over their noses; the winsome whorls of their hair we could stare at openly in church, hair that radiated spirally from the backs of their quite individual skulls; the smooth skin on their pliant torsos at the country-club pool, all so fascinating, each so different; and their weird little graceful bathing suits: the boys. Richard, Rich, Richie, Ricky, Ronny, Donny, Dan.

They called each other witty names, like Jag-Off. They could dribble. They walked clumsily but assuredly through the world, kicking things for the hell of it. By way of conversation, they slugged each other on their interesting shoulders.

They moved in violent jerks from which we hung back, impressed and appalled, as if from horses slamming the slats of their stalls. This and, as we would have put it, their messy eyelashes. In our heartless, condescending, ignorant way, we loved their eyelashes, the fascinating and dreadful way the black hairs curled and tangled. That's the kind of vitality they had, the boys, that's the kind of novelty and attraction: Their very eyelashes came out amok, and unthinkably original. That we loved, that and their cloddishness, their broad, vaudevillian reactions. They were always doing slow takes. Their breathtaking lack of subtlety in every particular, we thought—and then sometimes a gleam of consciousness in their eyes, as surprising as if you'd caught a complicit wink from a brick.

From *An American Childhood*, by Annie Dillard. Copyright © 1987 by Annie Dillard. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

burgh at Fort Duquesne, they armed the Indians and sent them out from there, raiding and killing English-speaking settlers. These were mostly Scotch-Irish, because the Penn family let them settle in Pennsylvania only if they would serve as a "buffer sect" between Quakers and Indians. When the English held Pittsburgh at Fort Pitt, they gave the Indians unwashed blankets from the smallpox hospital.

I put in early industry, because it was unexpectedly interesting. Before there was steel, everything was made out of wrought iron—which I find just amazing.

Railroad ties were made out of wrought iron, as if they were candle sconces. Men had to carry wrought iron railroad ties all up and down the country. Wrought iron is made by iron puddlers, who belong to the iron puddlers' union, the Sons of Vulcan. It's a very difficult process: You stir slag back into iron, and it requires skilled labor because carbon monoxide bubbles up. The language is also nice. To sinter, for instance, is to convert flu dust to clinker. And I finally learned what coke is. When I was a child, I thought that Coca-Cola was a by-product of steelmaking.

I learned about the heyday of the big industrialists and the endless paradox of Andrew Carnegie, the only one of the great American moguls who not only read books but actually wrote them, including one with a very American title, *The Gospel of Wealth*. He sold U.S. Steel to J. P. Morgan for \$492 million, and he said, "A man who dies rich dies disgraced." He gave away 90 percent of his fortune in the few years he had left. While he was giving away money, many people were moved, understandably, to write him letters. He got one such letter from his friend Mark Twain. It said:

You seem to be in prosperity. Could you lend an admirer a dollar & a half to buy a hymn-book with? God will bless you. I feel it. I know it.
P.S. Don't send the hymn-book, send the money.

Carnegie was only five feet three inches tall. He weighed 133 pounds. He built the workers free libraries and museums and an art gallery at the same time that he had them working 16 hours a day, six days a week, at subhuman wages, and drinking water full of typhus and cholera because he and the other business owners opposed municipal works like water filtration plants. By 1906 Pittsburgh had the highest death rate in the nation because of wretched living conditions, and yet it was the seat of "wealth beyond computation, wealth beyond imagination." People built stables for their horses with gold mirrors in the stalls. The old Scotch-Irish families were horrified at the new millionaires who popped up around this time because they liked things pretty quiet. One new millionaire went to a barber on Penn Avenue for his first shampoo and the barber reported that the washing brought out "two ounces of fine Mesabi ore and a scattering of slag and cinders."

And what to leave out?

Well, I'm not writing social history. This is not one of those books in which

you may read the lyrics or even the titles of popular songs on the radio. Or the names of radio and TV programs, or advertising slogans or product names or clothing fashions. I don't like all that. I want to direct the reader's attention in equal parts to the text—as a formal object—and to the world, as an interesting place in which we find ourselves.

So another thing I left out, as far as I could, was myself. The personal pronoun can be the subject of the verb: "I see this, I did that." But not the object of the verb: "I analyze me, I discuss me, I describe me, I quote me."

In the course of writing this memoir, I've learned all sorts of things, quite inadvertently, about myself and various relationships. But these things are not important to the book and I easily leave them out. Since the subject of the book is not me, other omissions naturally follow. I leave out many things that were important to my life but of no concern for the present book, like the summer I spent in Wyoming when I was 15. I keep the action in Pittsburgh; I see no reason to drag everybody off to Wyoming just because I want to tell them about my summer vacation. You have to take pains in a memoir not to hang on the reader's arm, like a drunk, and say, "And then I did this and it was so interesting." I don't write for that reason.

□

On the other hand, I dig deeply into the exuberant heart of a child and the restless, violent heart of an adolescent—and I was that child and I was that adolescent.

I leave out my private involvement with various young men. I didn't want to kiss and tell. I did put in several sections, however, about boys in general and the fascination they exerted. I ran around with one crowd of older boys so decadent, so accustomed to the most glittering of social lives, that one of them carried with him at all times, in his jacket

pocket, a canister of dance wax so that he could be ready for anything. Other boys carry Swiss Army knives for those occasions which occur unexpectedly; this boy carried dance wax for the same reason. He could just sprinkle it on the dining room floor and take you in his arms and whirl you away. These were the sort of boys I knew; they had worn ties from the moment their mothers could locate their necks.

□

I tried to leave out anything that might trouble my family. My parents are quite young. My sisters are watching this book carefully. Everybody I'm writing about is alive and well, in full possession of his faculties, and possibly willing to sue. Things were simpler when I wrote about muskrats.

Writing in the first person can trap the writer into airing grievances. When I taught writing I spent a lot of time trying to convince young writers that, while literature is an art, it's not a martial art—that the pages of a short story or a novel are no place to defend yourself from an attack, real or imagined, and no place from which to launch an attack, particularly an attack against the very people who painstakingly reared you to your present omniscience.

I have no temptation to air grievances; in fact, I have no grievances left. Unfortunately, I seem to have written the story of my impassioned adolescence so convincingly that my parents (after reading that section of my book) think I still feel that way. It's a problem that I have to solve—one of many in this delicate area. My parents and my youngster sister still live in Pittsburgh; I have to handle it with tongs.

As a result of all of this, I've promised my family that each may pass on the book. I've promised to take out anything that anyone objects to—anything at all. When I was growing up, I didn't really take to Pittsburgh society, and I was

happy to throw myself into any other world I could find. But I guess I can't say so, because my family may think that I confuse them with conventional Pittsburgh society people during the '50s.

I know a writer who cruelly sticks his parents into all his short stories and still pleases them both, because his mother is pleased to see his father look bad, and his father is pleased to see his mother look bad. I had, I thought, nothing but good to say about all named people, but I'll make all that better yet. I don't believe in a writer's kicking around people who don't have access to a printing press. They can't defend themselves.

My advice to memoir writers is to embark upon a memoir for the same reason that you would embark on any other book: to fashion a text. Don't hope in a memoir to preserve your memories. If you prize your memories as they are, by all means avoid—eschew—writing a memoir. Because it is a certain way to lose them. You can't put together a memoir without cannibalizing your own life for parts. The work battens on your memories. And it replaces them.

□

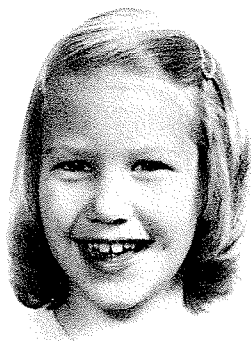
It's a matter of writing's vividness for the writer. If you spend a couple of days writing a tricky paragraph, and if you spend a week or two laying out a scene or describing an event, you've spent more time writing about it than you did living it. The writing time is also much more intense.

After you've written, you can no longer remember anything but the writing. However true you make that writing, you've created a monster. This has happened to me many, many times, because I'm willing to turn events into pieces of paper. After I've written about any experience, my memories—those elusive, fragmentary patches of color and feeling—are gone; they've been replaced by the work. The work is a sort of changeling on the doorstep—not your

baby but someone else's baby rather like it, different in some way that you can't pinpoint, and yours has vanished.

Memory is insubstantial. Things keep replacing it. Your batch of snapshots will both fix and ruin your memory of your travels, or your childhood, or your children's childhood. You can't remember anything from your trip except this wretched collection of snapshots. The painting you did of the light on the water will forever alter the way you see the light on the water; so will looking at Flemish paintings. If you describe a dream you'll notice that at the end of the verbal description you've lost the dream but gained a verbal description

Writing a book is like rearing children—willpower has very little to do with it. If you have a little baby crying in the middle of the night, and if you depend only on willpower to get you out of bed to feed the baby, that baby will starve. You do it out of love. Willpower is a weak idea; love is strong. You don't have to scourge yourself with a cat-o'-nine-tails to go to the baby. You go to the baby out of love for that particular baby. That's the same way you go to your desk. There's nothing freakish about it. Caring passionately about something isn't against nature, and it isn't against human nature. It's what we're here to do.



COMMENTARY

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.

Refuting the Myths

Since social mobility has been defined as a "complex multidimensional concept consisting of an indeterminate but considerable number of components," it is hardly surprising that the three essays in the Winter '87 issue of the *WQ*, whatever their merits, do less than full justice to the theme. Not the least of their virtues is clear prose rather than the jargon and esoteric mathematics that often attend scholarly discussion of social mobility.

Largely missing from the essays are discussions of the significance of social mobility, the many difficulties besetting attempts to measure it, the problem of "sponsored mobility" abetted by self-interested elites, and reference to the many empirical studies refuting the Horatio Alger myth.

The new interest in the career paths of blacks is welcome. Work on this matter would be enhanced by drawing on E. Franklin Frazier's brilliant and ever-timely studies of upper- and middle-class blacks [in *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States* (Macmillan, 1962) and other works] and the unique definitions of class appropriate to the black community and social structure.

Edward Pessen
Distinguished Professor of History
City University of New York

Gauging Mobility in America

... Movement up or down the socioeconomic ladder, in the articles on "Social Mobility in America," [*WQ*, Winter '87] is mostly gauged by occupational position of sons relative to their fathers. The dramatic changes that have transformed our society during the past several decades make this view increasingly problematic.

Delayed marriages, more frequent divorces, and longer periods of widowhood have produced significantly different life ex-

periences for adult men and women. Throughout their adult lives, women face a 50 percent higher risk of poverty than men; the gap between the average living standards of men and women increases with age to nearly 30 percent in old age. We can no longer assume that the experiences of women are reflected in those of men.

One-third of the people who have recently reached adulthood spent at least some of their childhood in single-parent families. What is the meaning of a child's "social origin" if a divorce perpetuates a middle-class position for the father but reduces the position of the woman and child to working-class or below?

Greater life-expectancy rates and earlier retirement now mean that many Americans spend one-third or more of their adult years unconnected to the labor force, often in economic circumstances far different from those they enjoyed while working. Indeed, the attainment of social status through spendthrift living during the working years has more and more serious consequences for living standards after retirement, especially for women after the death of their husbands. A lifetime view of status increasingly diverges from a view based on the prime working years.

These changes complicate (but will ultimately enrich) our understanding of social mobility. Collectively, they will lead to a redefinition of social origin and destination, which treats the experiences of women equally with those of men.

Greg J. Duncan
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan

Opportunity Knocks?

If the economic woes of the 1970s and 1980s have not been enough to persuade us that a new period in our history has begun, the Wall Street "crash" of October 19 may have put the final nail in the coffin of the era of pros-

perity and unlimited growth. Against this background, I found the group of articles on "Social Mobility in America" [*WQ*, Winter '87] both timely and provocative.

Though it may not lessen our pain or collective anxiety, Clyde Griffen's broad and interesting discussion of the changes that have occurred in the opportunity structure historically, and the redefinitions of opportunity and success accompanying them ["Upward Bound"], lend perspective to the present reality. I also generally agreed with Robert W. Hodge and Steven Lagerfeld's discussion of the absence of institutionalized class conflict within our political system as compared to Europe's ["The Politics of Opportunity"].

Nevertheless, there were a number of notable gaps in these articles. While it is true that socialism failed to capture the hearts of American workers, there was no discussion of the long and sometimes bloody struggle that was fought to improve working conditions and gain higher wages. It should also be pointed out that upward mobility has been fueled both by an ever-expanding economy, which creates more white-collar jobs at the top, and by the rising incomes of the working class, which enable them to more effectively assist sons and daughters through college—the gateway to the middle class.

•

More disappointing was the absence of adequate discussion of black Americans in all except the Howard M. Bahr article ["Ups and Downs: Three Middletown Families"]. Their role in the overall mobility process and their own mobility experience deserves attention. Black workers, first as slaves, then as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, were the backbone of the wealth of Southern plantation owners. With the decline in agriculture and the subsequent mass migration of blacks to Northern industrial cities, beginning in the early 20th century, blacks moved from the lowest rung of the class ladder in the agricultural sector to the lowest rung in the industrial sector. Thus, both native white and immigrant workers were able to move up the ladder of social mobility more quickly.

As I show in my recently published study of *The New Black Middle Class* (Univ. of Calif., 1987), it was not until the 1960s that substantial numbers of blacks were able to move into the middle class, due to a booming econ-

omy and a redefinition of opportunity to include blacks. The economic problems of the 1970s and 1980s now threaten these gains for blacks *and* whites. For blacks, the threat comes equally from a sluggish economy and the Reagan administration's attempt to renege on society's decision during the Civil Rights era to extend real opportunities to blacks for the first time. For whites, the decline in manufacturing threatens the very source of upward mobility, the intergenerational climb of the sons and daughters of the working class. Will these times lead to a redefinition of opportunity for all or to a renewed commitment to the ideal?

Bart Landry
Associate Professor of Sociology
University of Maryland

Recommended Reading

I hope the following bibliographic commentary on the "Malaysia" articles [*WQ*, Winter '87] will help readers who are interested in this little-known country to locate additional sources.

As an antidote to fictional accounts by novelists Paul Theroux and W. Somerset Maugham, the oral history gathered by Charles Allen and broadcast in the BBC series "Tales of the South China Seas" provides some "images of the British in Southeast Asia in the twentieth century." . . . Robert Heussler's *British Rule in Malaya, the Malayan Civil Service and its Predecessors, 1867-1942* is valuable in its own right and invaluable as a bibliographic source (Greenwood, 1981).

At least two studies of Malay politics can be commended. They are Karl Von Vorys's *Democracy without Consensus* (Princeton, 1975) and Democratic Action Party (DAP) leader Lim Kit Siang's book, *Malaysia in the Dangerous 80s*, which sharply etches a particular Chinese perspective (DAP, 1982).

Judith Nagata's scholarly *Reflowering of Malaysian Islam* (Univ. British Columbia, 1984) gives useful perspective on Islamic radicalism. Malaysia's strong contribution to the development of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is outlined in Ronald D. Palmer and Thomas J. Reckford's *Building ASEAN—20 Years of Southeast Asian*

Cooperation (Praeger, 1987).

My impressionistic reading suggestions are, I confess, drawn from my own library and reflect my idiosyncracies. These include a preference for the publications of the Malaysian branch of the Royal Asia Society, including its distinguished *Journal*.

No student of Malaysian history and politics could leave the writings of one of the 20th century's great men off his list—Malaysia's first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj. Any of Tunku's books can be read profitably, but his *Contemporary Issues in Malaysian Politics* (Pelanduk, 1984) conveys the broad range of his views. It includes portions of his *Lest We Forget* and *Something to Remember*, both published in 1983 (Eastern Univ.).

I will end this bibliographic commentary with the laconic observation that the Oxford Press Asian Reprint series contains a significant number of volumes on Malay magic.

Ronald D. Palmer
U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius

The EPA Problem

You have provided a refreshingly frank discussion of the pros, cons, and mixed results of the last two decades of U.S. environmental legislation and policy ["The Politics of the Environment, 1970–1987," *WQ*, Autumn '87]. As the essays by David Vogel and Robert W. Crandall indicate, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been a political football kicked around by a league of interest-group teams including, among others, past and present administrations, Congress, environmental and industrial lobbies, and state and local governments.

The Environmental Policy Act and the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act constituted a boon for lawyers, politicians, engineers, consultants, and the construction industry, but they were a nightmare for the courts, a disaster for many industries, and, arguably, a serious strain on U.S. national economic interests.

Particularly apt is Crandall's assertion that "Congress gave the EPA too much to do in too little time . . . [as if] asking a five-year-old boy to split an atom." That assertion goes to the core of the problem. Despite a chronic

lack of scientific understanding of complex environmental issues, this nation still plunges headlong into ill-conceived action and regulation. Falling through the cracks are critically important scientific studies at the interface between the purely basic ecological research, such as that supported by the National Science Foundation, and strictly applied monitoring, such as that required by EPA-mandated effluent permits and environmental impact statements.

The EPA supports only a trivial, peer-reviewed environmental research program and eschews basic science. Instead, mindless *monitoring*, often using inadequate or antiquated techniques, is foisted off as research—although rarely is a serious attempt made to evaluate scientifically the data collected. Almost never are follow-up studies conducted to validate prior EPA management decisions.

Many environmental scientists, including me, believe that substantial progress can only be made by evaluating environmental problems in a serious scientific way and then applying solutions which employ technology that is both appropriate and affordable. Accordingly, it is no surprise to us that a policy history of inflexible adherence to arbitrary and impractical standards has achieved less success than was hoped for.

Name withheld by request
Washington, D.C.

Corrections

On page 96 of the Winter '87 *WQ*, two sentences describing Benjamin Franklin's early career suffered an error during the editing process. The result was a misleading implication that Sir William Keith was the colonial governor of Massachusetts. In fact, Keith was the governor of Pennsylvania; he "deceived Franklin with empty promises," *after* Franklin moved to Philadelphia.

On page 94 of the Autumn '87 *WQ* ["Ideas: William James," by T. J. Jackson Lears], it was stated that William James first delivered his address on "The Moral Equivalent of War" in 1910. He actually delivered the address in 1906 at Stanford University; the essay was first *published* in 1910.

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(signed) Peter Braestrup, Editor

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