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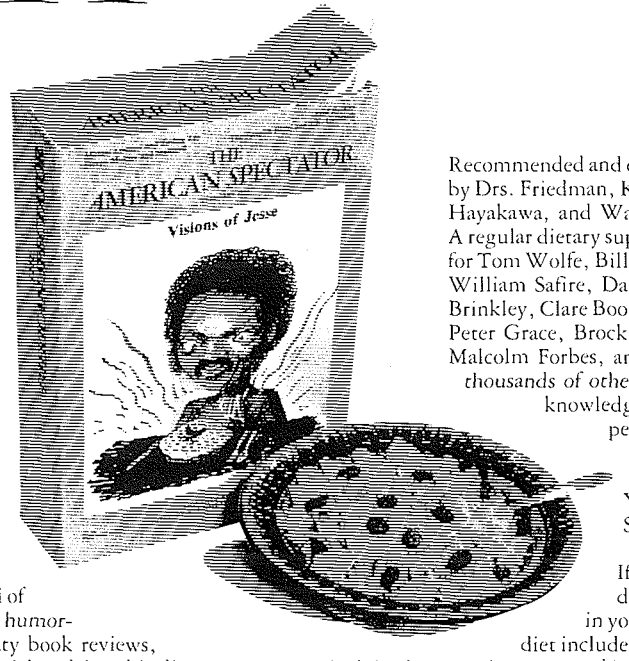

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Editor's Comment

The Wilson Quarterly's editors make a strong effort to present the latest work by specialists on significant developments overseas. We do this in our short reviews of articles (see "Other Countries," pp. 39–42) and books, and, at greater length, in essays on individual countries. At its best, this approach yields some notion of what the world looks like to politicians, writers, and ordinary folk in places far removed from Washington, New York, or Tulsa, Oklahoma.

This emphasis reflects the everyday life of the Woodrow Wilson Center, where both American and foreign scholars come to write books and trade ideas. It also stems from our belief that Americans have something to learn from the perceptions, mistakes, and successes of others. Lastly, the *WQ* partly fills a gap left by the mass media; a TV news producer's current view of the world overseas would probably show the Soviet Union, South Africa, and the Mideast looming large, with El Salvador, the Philippines, Libya, China, and Nicaragua popping up now and then, and the rest of the globe in relative obscurity.

In this issue, our contributors draw a sharp portrait of New Zealand and its new role in the South Pacific (p. 47) and examine the latest post-Mao wave of books on China (p. 163). And Mexico's noted poet-essayist Octavio Paz tells us (p. 80) how the United States looks from south of the border.

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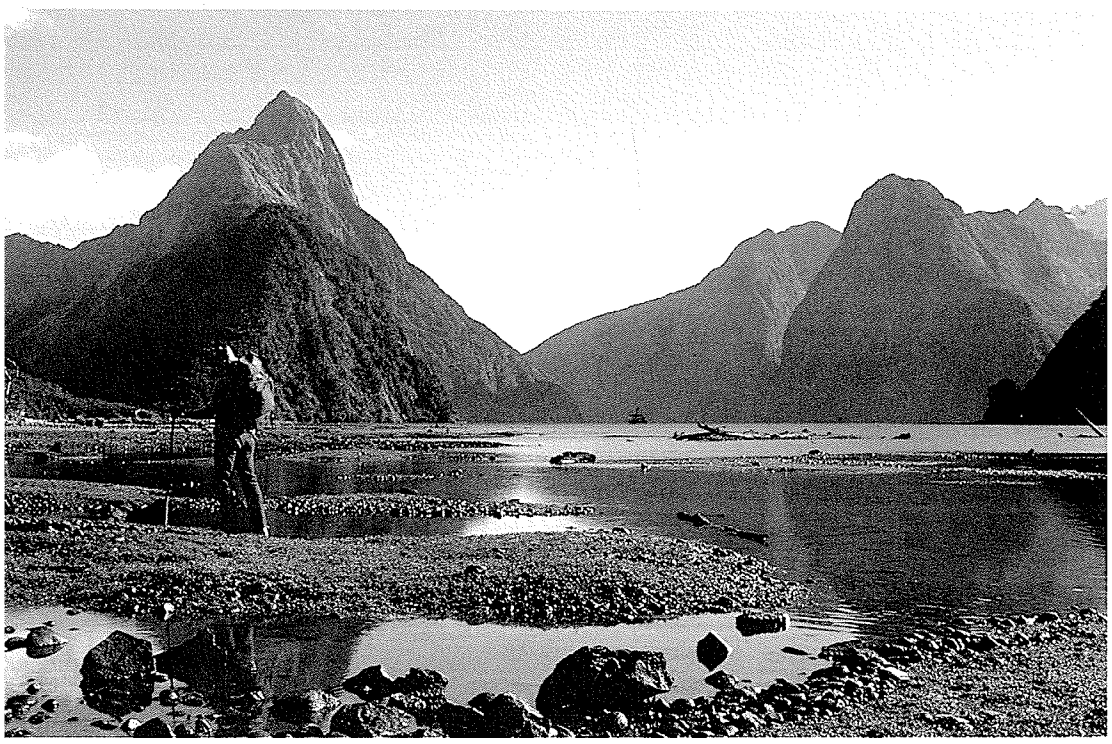

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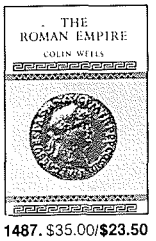

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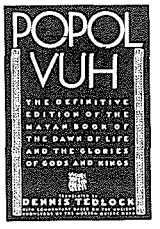

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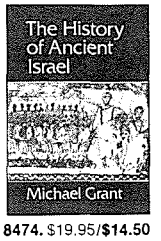

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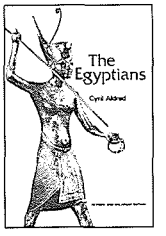

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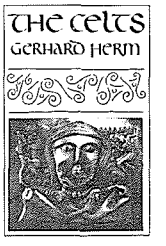

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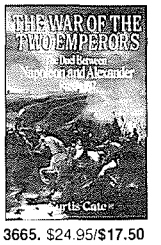

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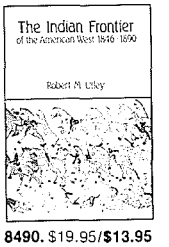

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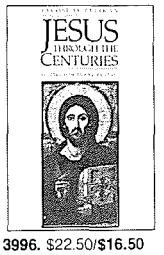

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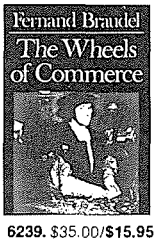

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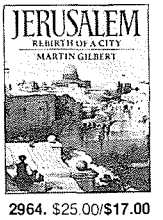

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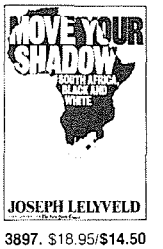

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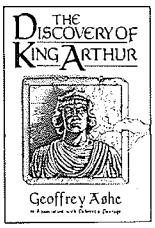

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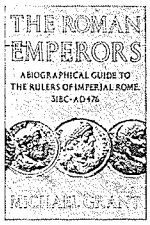

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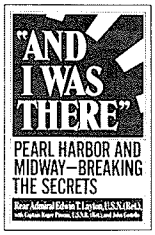

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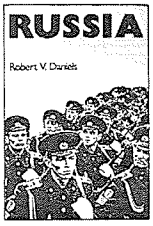

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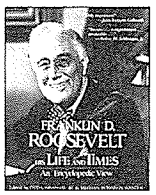

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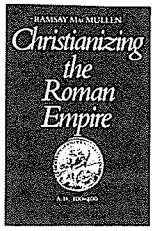

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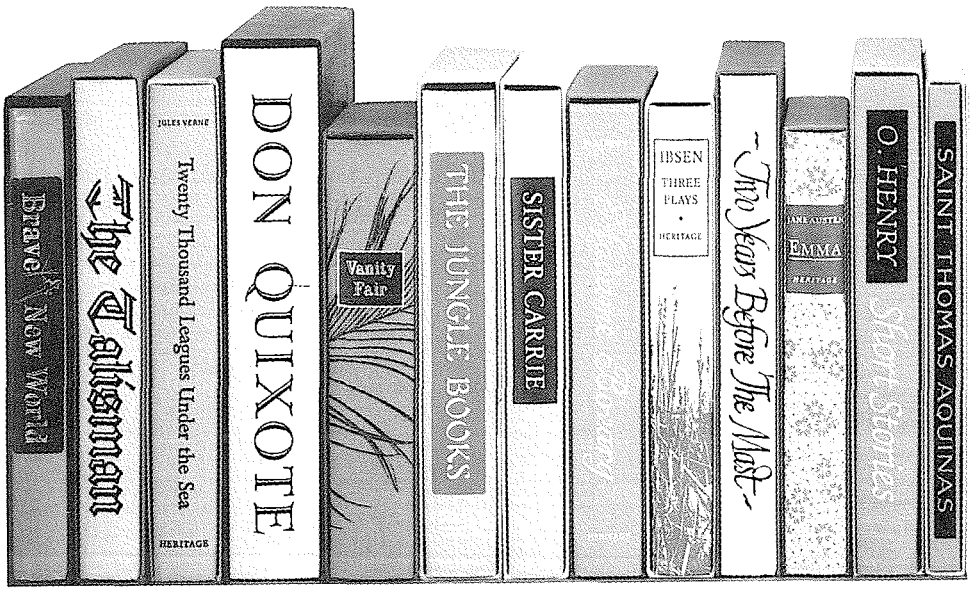

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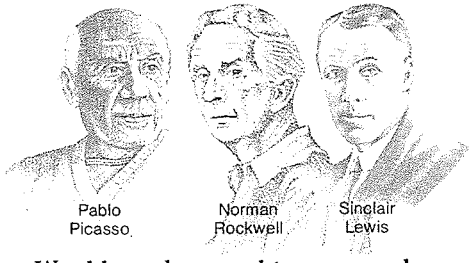

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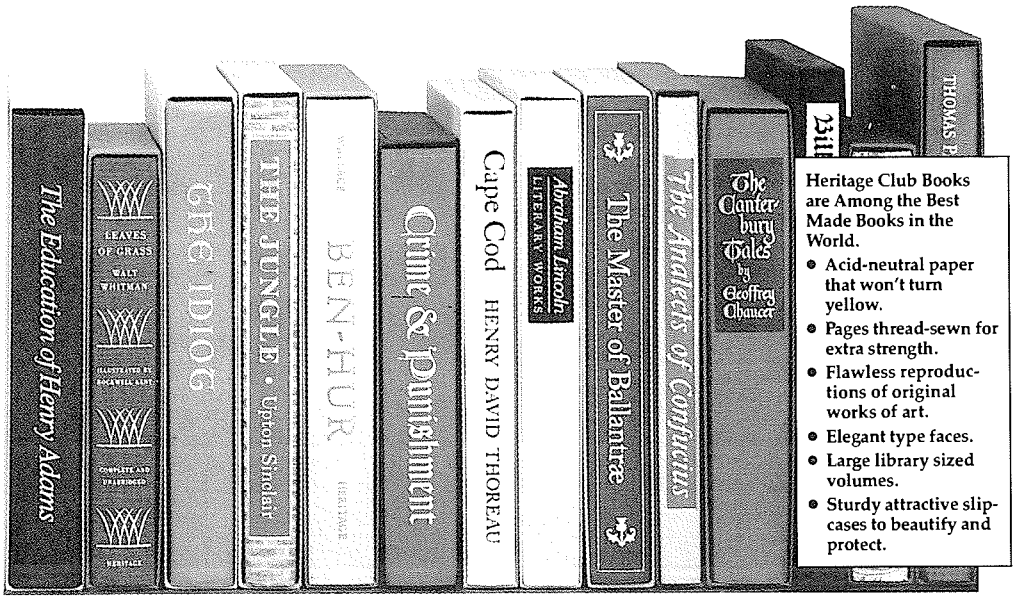

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SPRING 1986

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Cover: New Zealand's 1911 coat of arms, modified in 1956 by the removal of the lion, the small union jack, and the motto.

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It's time for a tax on consumption

In recent weeks, we've argued that current attempts at income tax "reform" have created more problems than they would solve. We've stated that the income tax bill passed by the House of Representatives would weaken the ability of American industry to grow at home and compete in world markets, thus creating more protectionist pressure. And we've argued that it would neither reduce the deficit, nor slow the growth of the underground economy—two problems eating away at the nation's well-being.

What could narrow the deficit after spending has been cut to the bone, collect taxes from the underground economy, and at the same time help the competitive position of American industry is a tax on consumption—a tax levied on the money Americans spend, instead of the money they earn.

Traditionally, the American tax system has penalized savings and investment and encouraged consumption. Even after the tax law of 1981 addressed this bias, such countries as Japan and West Germany continued to devote far greater portions of their total economies to capital formation than does the U.S. (The House bill would reverse the 1981 thrust, thereby negating much of America's recent gain in productivity.)

But a tax on consumption—on transactions as they occur—would make saving more attractive (and savings flow to investment and enhance productivity). Moreover, unlike an income tax, a consumption tax would stop at the U.S. borders. Because it wouldn't be levied on exports, it wouldn't drive up the price of U.S. goods abroad. Conversely, it would be levied on imported goods and services—an accepted trade practice under international rules.

Furthermore, a broad-based consumption tax could raise substantial amounts at low rates, and make meaningful inroads on the budget deficit. A one-percent tax on all consumption expenditures, for example, would yield around $20 billion a year. Such a tax would also capture some of the underground revenue that now completely escapes taxation. Even those who operate on a strict cash basis would have to pay the tax as they made purchases.

Like any other levy, a consumption tax could pose problems. It could be argued that such a new tax would only encourage government spending, and therefore have little impact on the deficit. Of course, deficit reduction, to the maximum extent possible, should be achieved through spending cuts. Further deficit reduction could be achieved by earmarking all proceeds of a consumption tax for that purpose. A line-item veto would be a powerful new tool to limit spending levels.

Similarly, special provisions could be written to protect those less able to pay. Certain categories, such as food, clothing, rent, medical care, and education might be exempt from the tax altogether. Of course, those with large amounts of spendable income would pay more in total taxes because they presumably spend more.

America's current fiscal problems—the budget deficit, the trade imbalance, the overpowerful dollar, the underground economy—won't be addressed by an income tax "reform" bill that could only make the problems worse. What's needed is a genuinely fresh approach that would avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater. In our view, a tax on consumption fills the need. It should be fully debated in the Congress, and the sooner the better.

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Two Cheers For Uncle Sam

"Are Parliamentary Systems Better?" by R. Kent Weaver, in *The Brookings Review* (Fall 1985), Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachussetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Washington is not a model of efficiency.

With power divided among three governmental branches (including a bicameral legislature) and two heterogeneous political parties, America's regime is often criticized for being slow-moving and indecisive. Those who fault the U.S. system often cite England and Canada as examples of lean, smooth-running democracies. Both are governed by parliaments, where a majority party rules the legislature and its leader serves as prime minister.

But London and Ottawa have their troubles too, notes Weaver, a Brookings Fellow. When times are good, for example, parliamentary majorities can easily expand the welfare state. However, in the face of an economic slowdown, parliamentary cohesion (and decisiveness) usually fades. Strictly accountable to the voters for their party's legislative actions, prime ministers have difficulty tightening the national belt.

Indeed, the oft-heard claim that parliaments are fiscally more conservative is nonsense, says Weaver. It *is* true that with so many hands in the budget-making process, the U.S. government—through its system of congressional appropriations (tempered by presidential veto)—has great difficulty staying in the black. Presumably a parliamentary cabinet, smaller and more disciplined, could keep the national checkbook in better order.

The historical record tells another story. Using data from the International Monetary Fund, Weaver measured America against three parliamentary democracies, in terms of their budget deficits as a percentage of their respective gross domestic products. In 1982, they ranked as follows: the United States (4.2 percent), Britain (4.3 percent), Canada (5.5 percent), and Sweden (9.9 percent).

Moreover, prime ministers (like presidents) do not always stick to

their campaign promises. The Canadians can attest to that: In 1974, Pierre Trudeau and his Liberal Party won election on a platform attacking the Conservatives' proposal for wage and price controls. A year later, Trudeau imposed wage and price controls.

Parliamentary systems have some built-in hazards as well. They tend to discourage bipartisan cooperation, exacerbate regional tensions, and encourage splinter parties (e.g., Britain's Social Democrats, Ulster Unionists, Scottish Nationalists). Nor do they offer more long-range predictability in policy than Washington does. Consider the plight of Britain's steel industry: The Labour government nationalized it in 1967. Now Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative coalition wants to denationalize it.

By comparison, says Weaver, Uncle Sam's regime—for all its faults—does not look so terrible.

Court Battles

"How the Constitution Disappeared" by Lino A. Graglia, in *Commentary* (Feb. 1986), 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Addressing the American Bar Association last July, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese said, among other things, that federal judges (especially those on the Supreme Court) should interpret the U.S. Constitution according to the intentions of its original framers.

Three months later, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan retorted that Meese's "facile historicism" would require judges to "turn a blind eye to social progress."

For his part, Graglia, professor of constitutional law at the University of Texas, takes issue with Brennan's advocacy of what he calls "judicial activism." While he does not support Meese's literal reading of the Constitution (which originally included provisions for slavery and property requirements for voting), he also rejects Brennan's antihistoricism. In essence, Graglia argues, during the past 30 years the High Court has usurped the role of federal and state legislatures. On many matters, the nine Supreme Court justices have become nonelected legislators for the entire country. Yet, contends Graglia, their opinions do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the nation's majority (on such issues as capital punishment). And, by bearing down on a multitude of state and local laws, the justices have overstepped the Constitution's limits on federal authority.

Through judicial review, the Court is able to invalidate legislative actions as it sees fit. Although judicial review was initiated in 1803 (*Marbury* v. *Madison*), judicial activism did not take hold until after the Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka*. (In that decision the Court overturned an 1896 ruling in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, which sanctioned "separate but equal" status for whites and blacks.) The "undeniable rightness" of the 1954 decision, notes Graglia, led the Court to become a self-directed "engine of social change" in many areas for the next 30 years.

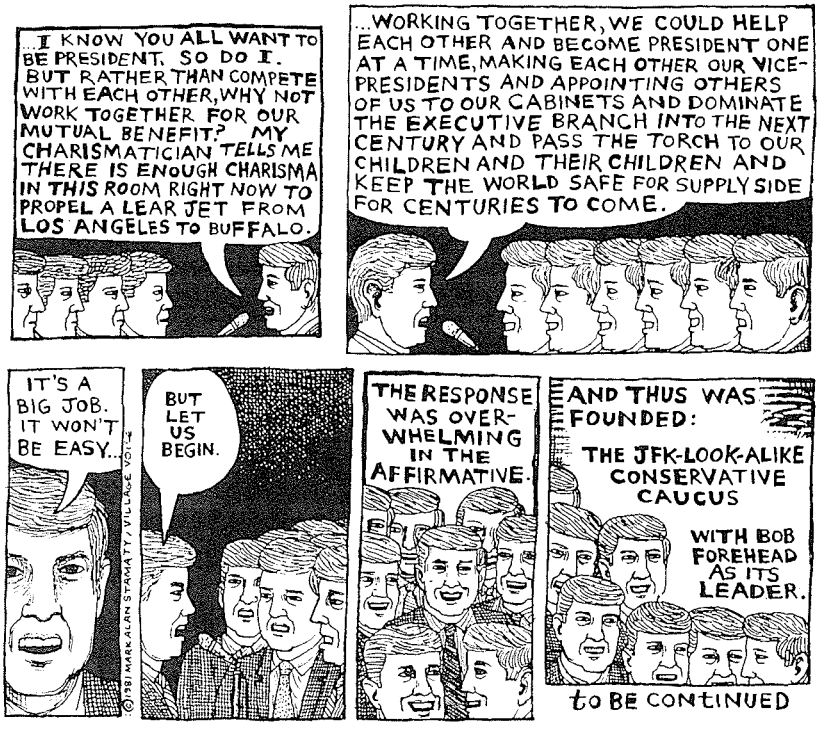
Though Justice Brennan thinks that the Court should shelter the nation's political minorities from "the reach of the temporary political majorities," Graglia sees such fears as unfounded. Expressed through the political process, "the good sense of the American people," he says, will afford adequate protection.

Who Likes Charisma?

"Evaluating Presidential Candidates: Who Focuses on Their Personal Attributes?" by David P. Glass, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 1985), Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., 116th St. and Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Everyone knows that personality plays a big role in determining who ends up in the Oval Office. But which voters are most swayed by style over substance?

Contrary to popular assumptions, Glass, a demographics researcher at the University of California, Berkeley, asserts that college-educated voters pay more attention to a candidate's "personal attributes" than do



Grooming for the presidency: Rep. Bob Forehead and his colleagues brainstorm in the cartoon strip Washingtoon *by Mark Alan Stamaty.*

those with less schooling.

Glass drew on data from the National Election Studies (NES) of the University of Michigan Center for Political Studies, which has been recording voters' "likes" and "dislikes" vis-à-vis presidential candidates since 1952. Among people with a college education, 55 percent of candidate evaluations through 1984 have involved such "personal attributes" as: "competence" (dependability, experience), "character" (leadership, integrity, education), and "personal attraction" (appearance, friendliness, sense of humor). Only 42 percent of those with less than a ninth-grade education said that they would cast ballots for or against a candidate because of some personal trait.

Glass did find that, on average, voters more often rated candidates on the basis of character (50 percent) and competence (33 percent) than on superficial appeal (17 percent). This last trivial factor influenced equally the voting decisions of the college-educated and those who did not complete high school. In the elections of 1972 (Richard Nixon versus George McGovern) and 1976 (Jimmy Carter versus Gerald Ford), personal attributes actually outweighed the candidates' political positions in the minds of most voters. Indeed, in 1980, a majority of those voting for Democratic incumbent Carter over Republican Ronald Reagan did so because of the 69-year-old challenger's "age." A perceived "weakness/indecisiveness" in Carter lost him more votes than did any of his policies.

Such voter response can be disheartening, says Glass. Perhaps Americans are justifiably skeptical of campaign promises and cast ballots based on intuition. On the other hand, apathy may also play a part.

Whatever the case, concludes Glass, the scholar's prevailing "rational voter model"—which assumes that voters judge candidates mainly by their political stance—does not hold up.

Go West, Republicans

"Republican Prospects: Southern Discomfort" by Richard Scammon and James A. Barnes, in *Public Opinion* (Oct./Nov. 1985), American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In recent years, for one party to control both the House of Representatives and the Oval Office has been a rarity. Particularly stymied by this "disalignment" has been the GOP: Although Republicans have won six of the last nine presidential elections, Democrats have kept a majority in the House for 32 years.

With the Democrats controlling 253 of the 435 congressional districts, the Republicans are a long way from bringing about "realignment" in their favor. But they have hopes, and are pinning them on the South. Today, of the 116 House seats allotted to the 11 states of the old Confederacy, an all-time high of 43 are held by Republicans. Indeed, of the 15 net seats that the party gained in 1984, eight were Southern. Yet Scammon and Barnes, a Visiting Fellow and a research associate, re-

spectively, at the American Enterprise Institute, maintain that the GOP's hopes for the South are misplaced.

Fueling them are Census Bureau predictions. They show the South gaining up to 10 new congressional seats in 1992, after redistricting. But the authors argue that Democrats are likely to seize most of those seats. Holding majorities in all of the South's state legislatures, and nine of 11 governorships, the Democrats dominate local politics. (In 1982, when the South gained eight new seats from redistricting, Democrats captured six of them.) Taking more conservative stances than their Northern counterparts, Democrats in local Southern elections have parried the Republican effort to link them to the national party's liberalism.

Scammon and Barnes suggest that the GOP would do better to target the West, which may get nine new House slots in 1992. With Republicans now controlling the state legislature or governorship in five of the six states expected to gain seats, they also may benefit from redistricting. If they can forge ahead in *both* the South and West, the Republicans may capitalize on a demographic trend. By 1992—for the first time in U.S. history—Southerners and Westerners will together hold the majority in both the Electoral College and the House of Representatives.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Management Vs. Strategy

"Why We Should Stop Studying the Cuban Missile Crisis" by Eliot A. Cohen, in *The National Interest* (Winter 1985/86), 1627 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

"There is no longer any such thing as strategy, only crisis management." So said Robert McNamara, then Secretary of Defense, commenting on President John F. Kennedy's successful resolution of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

Cohen, who teaches strategy at the Naval War College, takes issue with McNamara and subsequent "crisis managers." Their approach to global conflicts is flawed, not least because it is based on a brief historical example with little contemporary relevance.

On October 15, 1962, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency identified Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba. One week later, President Kennedy told the Soviets, and the American people, that the missiles must be withdrawn. By October 24, a U.S. naval blockade of 19 warships had intercepted 25 Soviet vessels approaching Fidel Castro's island. Four days later, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev agreed to remove 42 medium-range ballistic missiles from Cuba, and to destroy the Soviet launching sites.

Encouraged by their success, says Cohen, Kennedy's civilian policymakers became confident of their ability "to handle complex politico-military situations . . . independent of military advice." Thus was born

the science, or art, of crisis management.

But Cohen argues that the 1962 showdown offers little "historical guidance for American statesmen." When JFK stood "eyeball to eyeball" with Khrushchev, the United States had nuclear superiority and, indeed, a "first strike" capability. Future conflicts will occur under conditions of approximate nuclear parity. The strength of conventional forces will play a larger role, and America's adversaries are more likely to be Soviet proxies than the USSR itself.

Crisis management's emphasis on avoiding military clashes may hamper our ability to win truly unavoidable conflicts. Cohen cites the Vietnam War as a case where short-term political considerations clouded strategic thinking. The Philippines, in Cohen's opinion, may turn out to be another. To avert future military debacles, Cohen suggests that policy-makers look beyond the two-week Cuban affair. Examining episodes that illustrate the overextension of military commitments (Britain after the Boer War), the logistics of coalition warfare (the 1942 Allied invasion of North Africa), and the complexities of small wars (Korea and Vietnam) shows that management is no substitute for strategy.

To keep harping on the Cuban crisis, maintains Cohen, is to allow an exception to displace the rule.

NATO's Inherent Difficulties

"Security and Solidarity: NATO's Balancing Act after the Deployment of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces" by Richard K. Betts, in *The Brookings Review* (Summer 1985), Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachussetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

When the 16-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed in 1979 to counter a Soviet build-up by deploying 100 U.S. Pershing II and 462 cruise missiles in Europe, its political leaders did not anticipate big trouble. But during 1980 and '81, antimissile protest groups sprang up across Western Europe; the Soviets walked out of arms control talks in Geneva.

Today, with 236 of the missiles in place and the Soviets back in Geneva, much of the uproar has subsided. But Betts, a Brookings Fellow, warns that "it would be naive to believe that these strains [in the alliance] have vanished." The deployment controversy was just the most recent manifestation of the tensions within NATO.

At the heart of NATO's troubles is an inevitable conflict between its "strategic purpose" and its "political solidarity." The alliance must deter Soviet aggression, but it must also avoid heightening public fears of nuclear escalation. Judged in that light, observes Betts, the stationing of Pershing and cruise missiles was a Pyrrhic victory. It enhanced the West's deterrent capability but provoked Europeans' anxiety—even though their leaders requested the missiles in the first place.

Viewed in the West as a sign of U.S. commitment to European security, the new missiles have greatly alarmed the USSR. Hence, Betts

maintains, prospects for arms control or revived détente—another European priority—are "dim." An added reason: The United States, France, and Great Britain refuse to include French and British nuclear weapons in any arms reduction deal, insisting (incorrectly, in Betts's view) that they are not "theater," or regional, weapons, but non-negotiable strategic deterrents.

Fortunately, the damage to East-West and "West-West" relations has bottomed out, Betts says. To avert a resurgence of internal divisions, NATO must stick with the cruise missile deployment, even if the Soviets counter with more missiles. Upgrading NATO's conventional forces would help matters; so, of course, would negotiating "radical reductions in the Soviet threat," which Betts regards as a "utopian" prospect. More feasible is a redistribution of NATO burdens. Today, in terms of dollars for European defense, the United States contributes (per capita) more than twice the average outlay of any one of its Atlantic allies. To help strengthen NATO's solidarity, Betts recommends that the European partners assume a larger share of the expense.

In the long run, Betts believes, "managing East-West relations will depend on managing West-West relations."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

No to Morality

"Morality and Foreign Policy" by George F. Kennan, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1985/86), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

"Whenever one has the agreeable sensation of being impressively moral, one probably is not."

Such is Washington's chief conundrum, observes Kennan, professor emeritus at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies. U.S. policymakers, or those who would guide them, have consistently come up short in attempts to apply "morality" to foreign policy.

To begin with, notes Kennan, there are "no internationally accepted standards of morality." The grandiose language of the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928), the Atlantic Charter (1941), and the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe (1945) allowed the signatories to interpret the agreements as they saw fit. The Helsinki accords (1975) suffered the same flaw: Though some aspects of the 35-nation pact on East-West security and cooperation in Europe did hold up, the human rights provisions did not. "Whether it is morally commendable to induce others to sign up to declarations . . . which one knows will not and cannot be implemented," observes Kennan, "is a reasonable question."

In Southeast Asia, Central America, and Eastern Europe, the United States has variously intervened in the affairs of other nations—in the name of democracy, human rights, and majority rule. "It was seen as our moral duty to detect these lapses on the part of others." But "democracy, as Americans understand it, is not necessarily the future of all mankind, nor is it the duty of the U.S. government to assure that it becomes that." Moreover, inconsistency has often undermined America's "moral" actions in the eyes of the world. Though the United States brought sanctions against the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it took little notice when the Chinese crushed a 1959 revolt in Tibet.

The "histrionics of moralism" may be appropriate for individuals, but not for governments. Leaders should adopt policies "founded on recognition of the national interest, reasonably conceived," and pursue them "without either moral pretension or apology." Washington, Kennan urges, must abandon the idea that it "must have the solution to everyone's problems and a finger in every pie."

ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS

Going It Alone

"America, Europe, and Japan: A Time to Dismantle the World Economy" by Lester Thurow, in *The Economist* (Nov. 9, 1985), 25 St. James St., London, England SW1A1HG.

Americans live today in a "global economy." Thanks to steady increases in international trade, exports now account for 22 percent of the world's total output, up from 12 percent in 1962.

However, according to Thurow, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the days of international economic *integration* are now numbered.

Although cooperation among the top industrial nations is sorely needed to stabilize trade imbalances, interest rates, and currency exchange rates, such cooperation is politically impractical. America, Western Europe, and Japan must first put their economic houses in order. The easiest way to do so: withdraw from the world market.

A big problem facing the United States has been a slowdown in labor productivity growth, from an annual average of 3.3 percent (1947–65) to zero from mid-1984 to mid-1985. Thurow blames lackluster management, a poorly trained work force (eight percent of those entering the job market in America's big cities cannot read at a fifth-grade level), and insufficient investment in civilian research and development. Plagued by these shortcomings, U.S. industries will continue to manufacture "shoddy" products that cannot compete abroad.

The Europeans must contend with unemployment rates in the double digits (versus 6.8 percent in the United States). High wages and benefits—six-week vacations are the legal norm in Belgium—have made workers more expensive than machinery. As a result, European economies have generated no new jobs (on balance) since 1970.

Meanwhile, Japan has saturated its export markets. (Exports accounted for two-thirds of Japan's economic growth in 1984.) The United States, Japan's biggest customer, suffers a $36.8 billion trade deficit—an amount that Thurow deems "economically and politically unacceptable." The only way for Japan to retain its export markets is to absorb more imports, something it cannot now do.

Thurow doubts that the voters of the United States, Europe, and Japan will make the sacrifices necessary to preserve the current free trade system. With regard to America, he notes that "the social changes necessary to meet foreign competition . . . are difficult to accomplish, while the laws necessary to keep the rest of the world out of the American market are easy to pass."

Already, the steel, shipbuilding, and electronics industries show the effects of this isolationist trend. Quotas are slowly blocking the free movement of goods across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

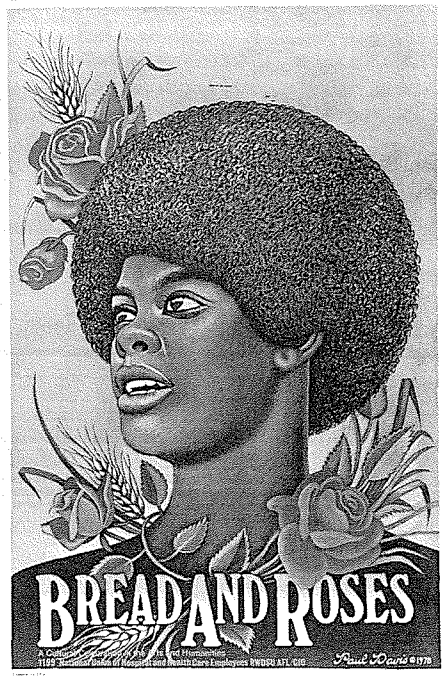
Unions and Minorities

"The Effect of Unions on the Employment of Blacks, Hispanics, and Women" by Jonathan S. Leonard, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Oct. 1985), Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14853.

Do unions help minorities and women get (and keep) factory jobs?

Generally speaking—they do, says Leonard, who teaches business administration at the University of California, Berkeley. He reviewed data on 1,273 manufacturing firms (467 union and 806 nonunion) in California for the period 1974–80.

ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS



More than 20 percent of all workers in the U.S. labor force are now represented by unions. In recent years, more minorities have come to work in union shops. Of the 10.1 million blacks employed in America, nearly 2.8 million (27.6 percent) are covered by union contracts.

His conclusion: Not only have unions done little to hinder either class of worker (a phenomenon once feared), but they often boost minority participation in the labor force.

Most noteworthy is the experience of black males. Their share of blue-collar employment increased more rapidly in union plants than in nonunion ones—at a time when overall union membership was declining. In 1974, 6.6 percent of the work force in California's unionized plants (employing 100 or more persons) were black males; in nonunion plants, only 4.9 percent were black men. By 1980, black males accounted for 7.7 percent of those in unionized plants, but only for 5.3 percent in nonunionized ones.

Several studies done during the 1970s suggest that black men favor unionized plants more than do their white counterparts. One reason, asserts Leonard, is "the relative freedom from discrimination afforded to [blacks] and others by the unions' egalitarian policies." More telling may be the "union wage effect" (i.e., higher pay).

The benefits of union membership to other minorities were less significant. Black women, for example, made equal strides in union and nonunion factories from 1974 to 1980. Asians of both sexes doubled their respective shares in both types of plant.

The only group of individuals to gain relatively nothing from unionization were Hispanic women. Their share of the nonunion work force

grew by more than one-third, while their portion of the unionized jobs barely changed.

Surprisingly, the unions' often rigid seniority rules rarely barred the hiring and advancement of qualified minority applicants. Indeed, judging from the experience of black males, Leonard argues that unions in manufacturing open more doors for minorities than do federally mandated affirmative action programs.

Looking Again At Flat Taxes

"Is the Flat Tax a Radical Idea?" by James Gwertney and James Long, in *The Cato Journal* (Fall 1985), 224 Second St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Since 1913, when Congress established a progressive federal income tax (whereby higher salaries are taxed at a higher rate), progressive taxation has been a clay pigeon for some tax reformers.

Why not tax everyone at the same rate?

Advocates of progressive taxation argue that high earners *ought* to shoulder a greater share of the tax burden than low earners, that the tax system should help to redistribute wealth. Progressive tax rates, they contend, are more egalitarian than a "flat" tax (one rate for all).

Gwertney and Long, economists at Florida State and Auburn universities, respectively, disagree. "In practice," they maintain, "progressive taxation is not very egalitarian."

For starters, Uncle Sam often levies high taxes on the wrong folk. Those with high nominal incomes do not always have greater financial surpluses (or "ability to pay") than those with lower incomes. For example, a family of five residing in a Boston suburb, owning two cars (needed for commuting), and earning $40,000 a year may not enjoy a higher standard of living or more spare cash than a four-person family earning $25,000 in Atlanta, where a typical "bundle" of vital goods and services costs 28 percent less. Yet the New Englanders will face a federal marginal tax rate 11 percent above that levied on their Southern counterparts.

Other flaws in progressive taxation: As taxpayers' incomes rise above $40,000 a year (and tax rates approach 50 percent), the incentive to avoid taxes grows. So does the difference between what people owe (the "statutory" tax rate) and what they actually pay (the "effective" tax rate). In 1979, the statutory tax rates for persons annually earning $100,000 and $1 million were 29.1 percent and 51.5 percent, respectively; yet both *effective* tax rates were roughly 23 percent. Consequently, observe the authors, little income is redistributed—not to mention the capital wasted on nonproductive tax shelters.

Between the end of World War II and the mid-1960s, a "quasi-flat" tax prevailed in the United States. Roughly 80 percent of American taxpayers shelled out 20–22 percent of their income. Not until the federal government began to swell in size and cost during the 1960s did multiple tax brackets, and high marginal rates, come into vogue.

All in all, the authors see no gains from the 1913 changeover to a progressive tax: The tax system is disorderly; incentives to earn and invest have faded; and the federal deficit is larger than ever.

Flunking the Public Utilities

"Public Ownership vs. Energy Conservation: A Paradox of Utility Regulation" by James Q. Wilson and Louise Richardson, in *Regulation* (Sept./Oct. 1985), American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Publicly owned utilities are supposed to champion the needs of consumers. They should promote energy-saving measures and offer lower rates than their privately owned counterparts.

But they do not, say Wilson and Richardson, both of Harvard's department of government.

During the 1960s, economies of scale ruled the day in the electric power industry. This meant low rates for consumers, with big generating plants keeping efficiency up and marginal costs down. State public utility commissions were generally happy, so long as private power plants kept their prices low.

Unfortunately, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries price hike of 1973 changed this rosy picture. Between 1970 and 1975, rising demand for electricity instead drove up the rates by 90 percent nationwide. Plans to boost electricity generation were hampered by delays on nuclear-powered plants, newly mandated pollution control devices, and costly conversions from oil to coal. As a result, many utilities strove to cut energy consumption by customers rather than to expand production.

On the whole, observe the authors, private utilites curtailed demand *more effectively* than did their public counterparts. A study by the Electric Power Research Institute in 1983 found that more than one-half of the nation's investor-owned utilities (versus six percent of those publicly owned) had adopted conservation-oriented pricing systems that encouraged less costly off-peak use.

In 1981, Southern California Edison promoted programs that reduced energy use by 4.2 billion kilowatts. The publicly owned Los Angeles Department of Water and Power made no equivalent effort. In Florida and Texas, the authors found the same dichotomy: Whereas City Public Service of San Antonio simply allowed rates to rise, privately owned Dallas Power & Light spent $50 per kilowatt on conservation programs to reduce consumption.

Since they are insulated from the marketplace, municipal utilities do not have to scramble when fuel prices go up. Rather than wait for favorable economic conditions to build a new power plant, they can always sell tax-exempt bonds. Moreover, entitled to a share of their utility's gross revenues, cities have little incentive to discourage the use of electricity. Los Angeles drew $55.3 million from its public utility in 1983; San Antonio, roughly $73 million.

SOCIETY

Prisons Are Cost-Effective

"When Have We Punished Enough?" by Edwin W. Zedlewski, in *Public Administration Review* (Nov. 1985), American Society for Public Administration, 1120 G St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

The odds that an American will report having been raped or robbed are three times greater today than they were in 1964. To cope with this criminal onslaught, the number of beds in U.S. state prisons has steadily risen, roughly from 243,000 in 1978 to 365,000 in 1983.

Yet the nation's penal system is still under pressure, its prisons overcrowded. In 1983, the state prison population outstripped the available capacity by some 35,000 inmates.

Policy-makers now face two courses of action: Punish felons less severely, or build more prisons.

Zedlewski, an economist for the National Institute of Justice, recommends the latter. Jailing lawbreakers is less expensive than any alternative punishment.

To begin with, Zedlewski notes, prisons are cost-effective. Although each prison bed space appears to cost $50,000 in construction fees, the real annual expense is much lower. With state bonds (paying 10 percent interest) financing the building, the yearly cost per bed space drops to $5,000 per year. Adding estimated worker productivity losses (prisoners cannot hold jobs) of $5,000 per year, plus estimated yearly custodial fees of $15,000, the bill comes to roughly $25,000 per prisoner per year.

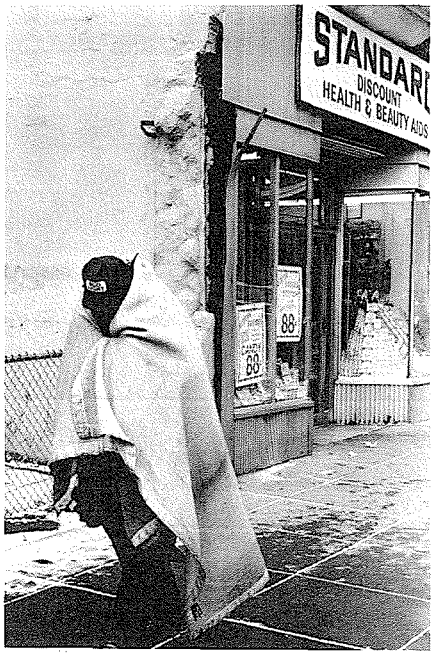
That figure may seem high, Zedlewski contends, but it represents a net savings for the country when compared to the other options—especially in the case of repeat offenders.

Drawing on a 1982 Rand Corporation study of 2,190 inmates, the author estimates that, overall, felonies cost the United States about $2,300 apiece (including expenses incurred by the justice system and damages to property). Even if U.S. judges each year were to put only 1,000 additional felons behind bars—adding roughly $25 million to the country's prison costs—American taxpayers still would benefit. Zedlewski suggests that U.S. citizens could save as much as $400 million in averted crime damages.

According to the author, "alternative" punishments also have hidden costs. Probation, for example, only works under careful supervision. One 1984 study in Arizona showed that incarceration was less costly than keeping criminals under probation, on parole, or in "halfway houses": $11,640 versus $26,868 (on average) per year.

The author maintains that prisons (and stiff sentences) *do* prevent crimes. Citing criminologist Kenneth L. Wolpin's study—conservatively estimating the deterrence effect of incarceration in England and Wales—Zedlewski figures that a one percent increase in the U.S. state prison population of 1983 (roughly 4,000 people) would have reduced the nation's crime rate by just under one percent.

SOCIETY



Cloaked in an old blanket, a resident of Washington, D.C., searches for a sidewalk steam vent to warm himself. According to the District of Columbia Commission on Homelessness, there are roughly 5,000 homeless persons in the nation's capital.

Helping The Homeless

"Homelessness: Not One Problem, but Many" by Nelson Smith, in *The Journal of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies* (Autumn 1985), Airport Road, White Plains, N.Y. 10604.

Homeless people can be found everywhere in America, but exactly how many there are, nobody knows. The Community for Creative Non-Violence, a Washington-based advocacy group, estimates two to three million. Smith, a U.S. Department of Education consultant, believes that 300,000 to 400,000 is a more accurate count.

Although critics blame President Reagan's federal budget cuts for the vagrants' plight, Smith does not hold Washington wholly responsible. Noting that U.S. *state* treasuries collectively ran a $6.3 billion surplus in 1985, he points to less obvious causes. Since 1963, the "de-institutionalization" of the mentally ill has pushed some 388,000 patients out of state hospitals. During the 1970s, inflation and real estate speculation squeezed one million low-cost, "single room occupancy" units—about half the total supply—out of the U.S. housing market.

At the same time, rent hikes in the remaining units have outpaced rises in welfare housing allotments. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, for example, the Illinois General Assistance grant of $144 per month in 1985 supplied only one-half of the official minimal subsistence level of $286 per month in Chicago.

Despite the Reagan administration's "inexplicable" two-year delay in implementing a 1983 federal voucher system to assist low-income renters, the White House has mounted "an impressive response" to the

problems posed by the homeless, says Smith.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has allocated $210 million in direct aid to 3,650 volunteer organizations. And by January 1985, the Housing and Urban Development Agency had distributed roughly $53 million in Community Development Block Grants to U.S. cities. On Capitol Hill, legislation to create a National Endowment for the Homeless is awaiting Senate approval. Costing $160 million per year, the endowment would supplant FEMA in financing programs for the homeless. It would act as a "clearing house" for information about them. And it would coordinate public, private, and voluntary measures to help them.

Smith opposes the congressional measure. Endowing the homeless, he argues, will bureaucratize the problem. Instead he urges an immediate expansion of the federal voucher program, and more money for FEMA—since the existence of hundreds of thousands of Americans in need of public shelter *does* constitute a national emergency.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Monopoly's Effects On the News

"Newspaper Competition and First Amendment Ideals: Does Monopoly Matter?" by Robert M. Entman, in *Journal of Communications* (Summer 1985), The Annenberg School of Communications, Univ. of Pa., 3620 Walnut St. C5, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-3858.

If competition is needed to ensure a healthy press, then U.S. newspaper readers are in trouble. In 1985, only 30 U.S. cities had two or more completely separate, competing newspapers.

Not to worry, says Entman, a Duke University political scientist. After analyzing a 1974 survey of 96 newspapers by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies, the author reports finding "little convincing evidence that competition independently and strongly influences newspaper content."

Entman variously categorized each newspaper as one of three: a monopoly, a quasi monopoly (sharing its market with a jointly owned competitor), or a competitive vendor. Rating them on quality, diversity, fairness, and public responsiveness, he noted nearly indistinguishable scores for monopoly and competitive papers. One significant difference: Quasi monopolies exhibited "superior quality," as measured by the number of staff-written stories (versus wire service), and greater fairness, as measured in terms of balanced reporting on issues.

If market pressures do not have a major influence on the journalistic end product, why do so many "rival" newspapers fold? Entman suggests that marketing, rather than reporting, makes or breaks a big-city paper these days. Writers and editors usually work without interference from

their paper's marketing offices, while the business folk tinker with "non-news" components, such as comic strips or lotteries.

Freed from the pressure to retain readers and advertisers, monopolies can, theoretically, devote more of their resources to better reporting. Given that fact, asserts Entman, the newspaper monopoly trend may pose a lesser threat to the First Amendment than the sensationalism and gimmickry that can corrupt journalism in fiercely competitive markets.

Shielding Public TV

"The Assault on Public Television" by John Wicklein, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan./Feb. 1986), 700 Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027.

The U.S. Congress created America's public broadcasting network in 1967. The purpose: to free some of America's radio and television airwaves from marketplace pressures.

Today the public broadcasting system costs almost $1 billion annually to operate; roughly 16 percent ($159.5 million for 1986) comes from congressional appropriations. Such financial support is intended to spur production of "educational" programs and innovative documentaries, in contrast to the mass appeal programs of commercial TV.

But Wicklein, a former officer of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) now teaching at Ohio State University's School of Journalism, contends that the public broadcasting system no longer works. It has become too politicized.

The troubles began with President Richard M. Nixon, who in 1972 tried to eliminate the congressional appropriations for the CPB and to rein in its news–public affairs programs. "The President's basic objective," read one internal White House memo, was "to get the left-wing commentators who are cutting us up off public television at once." He partially succeeded, replacing the CPB's board with his own Republican appointees. Jimmy Carter's White House, while openly praising the public news system, attempted to block a 1980 docudrama, "Death of a Princess," because of its anti–Saudi Arabia stance. (It was aired anyway.)

For his part, President Reagan urged public TV and radio stations to accept commercial advertisements during 1981–82; persuaded Congress to cut $35 million of the $172 million in CPB appropriations in 1983; vetoed CPB's proposed 1984 appropriations; and filled the CPB board with his appointees in 1984. Sonia Landau, the current CPB board chairman (and 1984 head of the Women for Reagan/Bush campaign), has spoken out against the public system's programming agenda, trying to steer CPB away from controversial documentaries.

To stop such meddling, Wicklein advocates shielding public TV from "the politics of direct appropriations." Abolish the CPB, he says, and replace it with an Independent Public Broadcasting Authority. Run by nongovernment folk, it would distribute some $400 million a year to independent stations across America. The money would come from a two percent special tax levied on the earnings of all U.S. commercial broadcasting companies, which netted profits of $21.3 billion in 1983.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

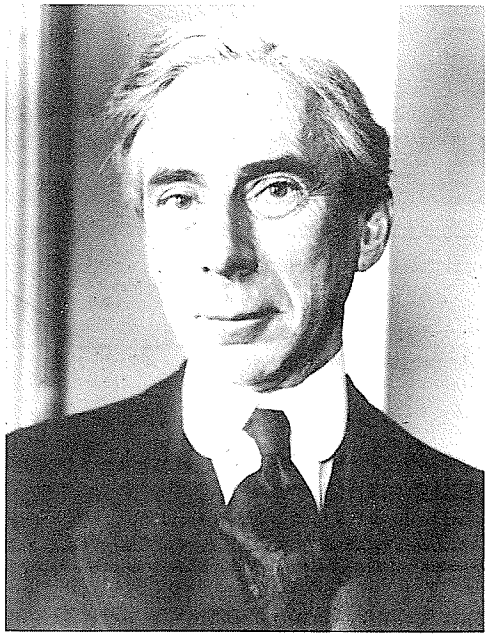
Bertrand Russell

"Confession and Concealment in *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*" by Robert H. Bell, in *Biography* (Fall 1985), Dept. of English, Univ. of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

While visiting Beijing in 1921, Bertrand Russell fell gravely ill. "I was told that the Chinese said that they would bury me by the Western Lake and build a shrine to my memory," wrote Russell (1872–1970). "I have some slight regret that this did not happen, as I might have become a God, which would have been very *chic* for an atheist."

Despite Russell's claims to godlessness, Bell, who teaches English at Williams College, argues that *The Autobiography* of the logician and moral philosopher reveals a profoundly spiritual dimension. Russell was the father of Logical Atomism, a materialist view of nature that reduces life to scientific principles. Yet during his darkest hours Russell scrawled in his diary: "O God forgive me; I have sinned grievously."

Reared by his British Calvinist grandmother, Russell, by the age of 11, had chosen the certainties of mathematics over the uncertainties of religious faith. After graduating from Cambridge University, he taught philosophy and economics in the United States, Germany, and England. He wrote *German Social Democracy* (1896) and *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903). At the height of his early analytic work, he experienced a "mystical illumination" that transformed him into an ardent



Bertrand Russell in 1931. A professed athiest, he showed no patience with religious beliefs. He once remarked, to the dismay of clerics, that "the idea that the world is a unity is rubbish."

pacifist. Twice he was imprisoned for antiwar protests (once during World War I and later during a 1961 nuclear disarmament sit-in).

After receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 1950, he turned almost completely to left-wing politics. He publicly condemned America's 1954 H-bomb tests, presided over the first meeting of scientists from the East and West at Pugwash, Nova Scotia, in 1957, and launched the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958. During the mid-1960s, he led an International War Crimes Tribunal to castigate alleged U.S. atrocities in Vietnam.

But Russell—by then the author of more than 50 books, including *Authority and the Individual* (1949), *New Hopes for a Changing World* (1951), and *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare* (1959)—was plagued by a feeling of "desolate solitude." His numerous philanderings and three marriages all failed. His theories of knowledge had fallen out of favor in the academic world.

"The sea, the stars, the night wind in waste places, mean more to me than even the human beings I love best," Russell wrote in his diary. "I am conscious that human affection is to me at bottom an attempt to escape the vain search for God."

Pulpit Politics

"Religion and Democracy" by A. James Reichley, in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (Nov. 1985), 3533 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

The growing participation by America's religious leaders in the nation's secular politics has provoked strong reactions among Americans—almost 90 percent of whom identify with some branch of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Some would muzzle outspoken zealots; others would give them megaphones. For his part, Reichley, a Senior Brookings Fellow, argues that although religious values should permeate the world of politics, the leaders of America's churches and synagogues should be careful not to squander their moral authority.

On such secular quandaries as whether to support the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill of 1978, or to protest renewed American support for the International Monetary Fund in 1983, many religious leaders on the Left did not hesitate to voice their opinions publicly. Yet, observes Reichley, "they advocated policies that most competent economists predicted would produce effects opposite those intended, causing great harm to the poor."

Similarly, many religious spokesmen on the Right opposed U.S. cession of the Panama Canal to Panama in 1977 and embraced Reaganomics, even when their judgments "had no clear relation to their theological or moral principles."

No one can expect churches to shy away from the ethical issues inherent in abortion, civil rights, and nuclear war. To remain silent on these subjects is to lose credibility. Indeed, in some cases intervention

by the clergy is not only justified but necessary. Black churchmen are a good example, Reichley says. They championed civil rights during the early 1960s, when secular black leaders were scarce. However, he believes that their political activity should fade as secular blacks gain influence in Washington.

Excessive meddling in civil affairs threatens a church's standing as a moral arbiter, transforming its leaders into just another advocacy group. And by raising the emotional pitch of debates about complex topics such as disarmament and poverty, politically active churchmen "may even make pragmatic compromises more difficult."

Clergymen are ideally fitted to act as mediators or fact-finders on many issues over which technical experts disagree. Reichley recommends that they stick to that role.

The 'Kairos' of Paul Tillich

"Tillich as Interpreter and Disturber of Contemporary Civilization" by Roger L. Shinn, in *Bulletin: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Jan. 1986), Norton's Woods, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Karl Marx once wrote: "The philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

Shinn, professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary, argues that Paul Tillich (1886–1965) sought to do both.

The Lutheran clergyman and theologian worked, throughout his life, to reconcile Christian orthodoxy with modern scientific skepticism. Following service as an Army chaplain during World War I, Tillich became active in the Christian-Socialist movement in his native Germany. As a member of an intellectual circle known as the "Frankfurt School," Tillich drew on the ideas of Marxism and psychoanalysis, all the while criticizing their worth as dogmatic systems. Indeed, as Shinn points out, Tillich repudiated "every kind of social utopia." His brand of "religious socialism" called instead for constant striving for a spiritual revolution—designated by the New Testament term *Kairos*—that would ameliorate social and economic inequities.

Not surprisingly, Tillich's notion of *Kairos* found little favor in Hitler's Germany. In 1933, after protesting Nazi harassment of students, Tillich was barred from teaching in German universities—the first non-Jew "to be so honored," he said.

Invited to teach at Union Theological Seminary, Tillich came to America, where he wrote extensively. In his two most widely read books, *The Courage To Be* (1952) and *Dynamics of Faith* (1957), Tillich argued that man's desire to find spiritual fulfillment forces him to come to terms with his own mortality.

According to Shinn, the inspiration for *Kairos* was borne out of Tillich's "ecstacy" at the end of World War I. But after World War II, Tillich despaired. "An element of cynical realism is prevailing today," Tillich wrote in his diary in 1957, "as an element of utopian hope was prevailing at that earlier time."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Space Chic?

"Space Science, Space Technology, and the Space Station" by James A. Van Allen, in *Scientific American* (Jan. 1986), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Outer space has long been an American obsession. Indeed, even as President Reagan vowed to reduce a $185 billion federal deficit, he pledged (in his 1984 State of the Union Message) continued support for efforts to launch a manned space station by 1993.

Yet Van Allen, an astrophysicist at the University of Iowa, considers space stations, and the U.S. manned space program, to be wasteful. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), he argues, could get more for its money by using unmanned spacecraft: "Apart from serving the spirit of adventure, there is little reason for sending people into space."

To date, NASA has spent some $30 billion on a Space Transportation System that now includes four manned space shuttles. This project, too, is only the first phase of what the U.S. National Commission on Space calls the "infrastructure" required for Americans to explore, and eventually colonize, the inner solar system. On the drawing boards are a fleet of shuttles as well as three space stations, designed to orbit the Earth, the Moon, and Mars. The dollar cost will run into the hundreds of billions—if not trillions.

Advocates of the manned space program predict great economic returns, both from specialized manufacturing in space and the deployment of satellites. But Van Allen is not persuaded. Those same proponents argued during the early 1970s that, within a decade, the U.S. shuttles would take over the cargo-carrying role of "expendable launch vehicles" (e.g., the Scout, Delta, Atlas, and Titan rockets); 50 shuttle flights per year would carry payloads for only $100 per pound. In reality, the 10 shuttle flights of 1985 transported materials at a cost of $5,000 per pound ($2,000 in 1971 dollars). Moreover, the great expense of the shuttle program—which currently consumes two-thirds of NASA's budget—has forced the delay or cancellation of other space ventures, including unmanned probes to Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and the Sun.

Van Allen notes that manned spacecraft have inherent technical drawbacks, such as bulky life support systems and safety requirements. Leaving man behind, robots and radio-controlled spacecraft will soon be versatile enough to repair damaged satellites and assemble equipment in near-zero gravity. Their computerized arms will not tire, contaminate their surroundings, or err as a result of stress. As for scientific experiments, warm bodies can even be a nuisance: "An astronaut's sneeze could wreck a sensitive experiment in a microgravitational field."

In further support of his case, Van Allen points to the financial success of telecommunications satellites, an unmanned venture. These satellites can stay aloft not only in the Earth's orbit but in the international marketplace—without a lift from U.S. taxpayers.

Good-bye, Freud

"Can Psychoanalysis Be Saved?" by J. Allan Hobson, in *The Sciences* (Nov./Dec. 1985), The New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

"Psychoanalysis, born amid doubt in 1900, could well be dead by the year 2000."

So says Hobson, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He maintains that doubt about the legitimacy of Sigmund Freud's method of probing the mind through the free association of words now looms large in psychiatric circles—even among Freudians. As a result, psychoanalysis itself lies ailing on the couch.

Psychiatrists are currently split into two camps. The American "ego psychologists" (the hard-core Freudians) have tried to reconcile psychoanalysis with neurobiology; they have strayed from the old method of penetrating the patient's subconscious mind solely by interpreting his utterances. Across the Atlantic, the Freudian followers of the French psychoanalytical theorist Jacques Lacan (1901–81) regard the ego psychologists as renegades; they insist that speech reveals the only true road to the unconscious.

Aggravating this breach is another issue: Does psychoanalysis constitute a "scientific" discipline?

One group of critics, led by British philosopher Sir Karl Popper, rejects psychoanalysis' claims as a science because clinical investigations can neither prove nor disprove its tenets. Frank Sulloway, a historian at University College London, further undermines psychoanalysis' status as a science by arguing in *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (1979) that the Viennese physician doctored some of his case histories to protect his reputation.

Recently, two scientists have attempted to rescue Freud. Psychoanalyst Morton F. Reiser of Yale, in *Mind, Brain, Body* (1985), contends that biology can explain such Freudian concepts as "memory repression" and "signal anxiety" (a feeling of impending danger). Neurobiologist Jonathan Winson of Rockefeller University, in *Brain and Psyche* (1985), asserts that man's brainstem houses his unconscious mind, which emerges during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep.

Hobson finds neither argument convincing. Instead, he lauds a critic of Freud, Adolf Grunbaum, a philosopher of science at the University of Pittsburgh. In *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis* (1985), Grunbaum points out that Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) relates a vengeful dream Freud had about his patient Irma. Yet the dream—with no allusion to Freud's childhood—contradicts Freud's main thesis that repressed infantile wishes are acted out in dreams.

Moreover, Grunbaum highlights a contradiction in the psychoanalytic method: If an analyst guides a patient's "free associations" of thoughts to build a psychological profile, then the patient is not, in fact, thinking freely; the psychoanalytic process is merely self-fulfilling. Without expunging "the ghost of suggestion," psychoanalysis quickly comes to resemble its progenitor, hypnosis.

If Grunbaum is right, Hobson concludes, then "the scientific value of the [psychoanalytic] technique is hopelessly impugned."

RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

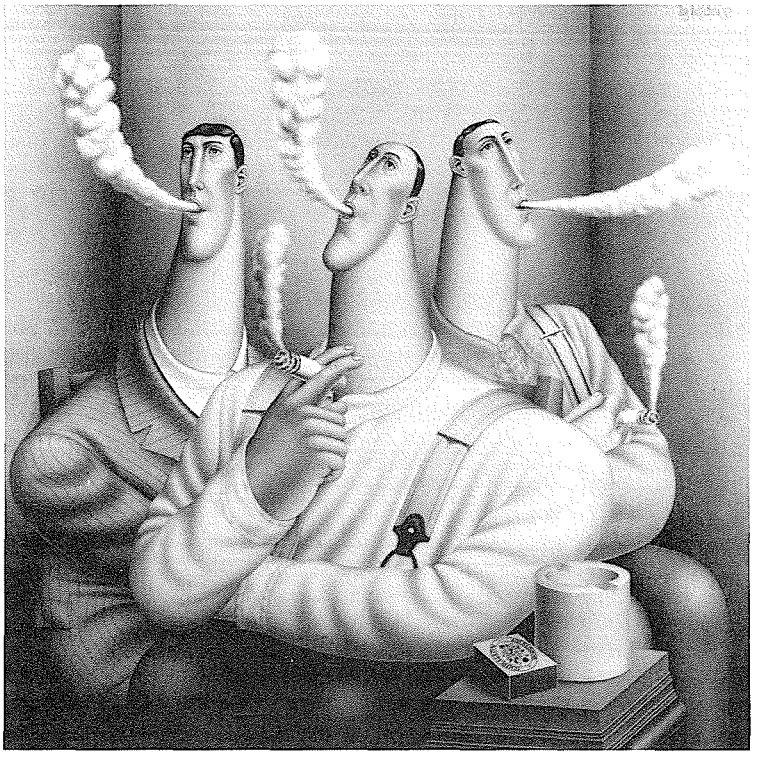
Does Pollution Cause Cancer?

"Does New Jersey Cause Cancer?" by Michael R. Greenberg, in *The Sciences* (Jan./Feb. 1986), The New York Academy of Sciences, 2 East 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Cancer Alley. That was the name journalists gave America's Northeastern industrial corridor in 1974 after a National Cancer Institute (NCI) report revealed that the rates of cancer mortality in New Jersey and its neighboring states were far above the national average.

The Atlas of Cancer Mortality for U.S. Counties: 1950–1969 showed that New Jersey residents were far more likely to contract the dread disease than were their counterparts in Mississippi. No one knew why such a plague had visited the Garden State. Some scientists blamed a fungus unique to the region. Others pointed to an influx of cancer-prone European immigrants. But most accused industrial pollutants.

Greenberg, a Rutgers sociologist, argues that the "Cancer Alley" label



Lung cancer, a leading cause of death in the United States, seemed unusually high in New Jersey 20 years ago. Today the state's lung cancer rate is close to average.

was humbug from the start. A new analysis of the NCI data has shown not only that New Jersey had no cancer epidemic in 1974 but that the differences among the cancer rates in New Jersey and other areas of the nation were *decreasing*.

Granted, New Jersey did suffer from abnormally high cancer rates during the 1950s. Between 1950 and 1954, for example, New Jersey men aged 35 to 54 died of cancer at a rate 20 percent above the national average. But by the early 1970s, the two rates differed by no more than a single percentage point.

This "convergence" of the rates, Greenberg maintains, had little to do with air and water pollution. Medical wisdom now links outdoor pollution to only one percent of all U.S. cancers; tobacco smoking, eating fatty foods and other nutritional factors, and exposure to carcinogens in the workplace are responsible for 60 to 90 percent of all cancer deaths in America. By the time NCI had released its report, a variety of factors, including affluence, was already eroding *regional* variations of such "lifestyle" effects, and thus pockets of high (and low) cancer incidence.

Today, notes Greenberg, the general convergence of cancer rates *throughout* America is proceeding apace, as the lifestyle differences between U.S. cities and rural areas, between the Northeast and the Southwest, slowly fade. Cancer rates are rising in the industrial Northeast, but they are growing even faster in rural areas west of the Mississippi, including the Rocky Mountain states.

As long as individual Americans choose to put themselves at risk, Greenberg concludes, cancer will be no less a threat "on a mountaintop in Montana than on a street corner in Hoboken."

Of Mites and Men

"Getting Off the Pesticide Treadmill" by Michael Dover, in *Technology Review* (Nov./Dec. 1985), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Room 10-140, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

For more than 40 years, U.S. farmers have relied on synthetic pesticides to keep crop-eating bugs at bay. Dover, an ecologist formerly with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), argues that Mother Nature has cheaper and safer ways to get rid of agricultural pests.

To begin with, pesticide sprayings often create vermin troubles where none existed before. Wiping out certain predatory insects has allowed tobacco budworms in Texas and Mexico, for example, and spider mites in the Pacific Northwest to reproduce unchecked. Thanks to years of exposure, many pests have also become immune to pesticides. From 1970 to 1980, the number of "resistant species" of mites, ticks, and other insects jumped from 224 to 428—an upsurge that threatens U.S. cotton and potato farming.

American farmers are in a bind. They must simultaneously control insects *and* the use of insecticides. The solution, in Dover's opinion, lies in various "biological controls." One method—"inoculative release"—calls for breeding a pest's natural enemies. A more extreme

procedure, "inundative release," requires blanketing croplands with mature insects and microbes that attack parasites. Both systems work. During the 1940s, California farmers introduced *Chrysolina* beetles to kill off a range weed toxic to cattle. So far, the initial investment of $750,000 has saved farmers $100 million.

Dover notes that such "natural" methods often yield greater economic benefits than their synthetic counterparts. One World Bank study found that the benefit-cost ratio for inoculative release can be more than 100 to 1—compared with a 4 to 1 ratio for chemical pesticides. But to be effective, natural methods must be part of "integrated pest management" (IPM). Under the guidance of scientists at Texas A & M University, east Texas cotton growers now coordinate irrigation and planting times, plow under crop residues, and carefully monitor pest populations *before* resorting to pesticides. As a result, usable acreage has risen from 105,000 acres in 1970 to more than 235,000 acres today. Higher yields and lower production costs have generated an estimated $29 million in additional revenue since the program began.

Dover sees great potential in IPM. Although the Reagan administration cut funds for IPM research at the EPA in 1981, Dover argues that the U.S. Department of Agriculture ought to pick up the slack. Funds could come from a nominal sales tax of two cents per pound on pesticides. Raising an estimated $20 million per year, the tax could easily finance a substantial research program—considering that the EPA's total 1970–80 IPM research budget was only $19 million.

Toxins at Sea

"Incineration of Hazardous Wastes at Sea: Going Nowhere Fast" by Pamela S. Zurer, in *Chemical and Engineering News* (Dec. 9, 1985), 1155 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

"Eleven years after the [U.S.] Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials declared the technology environmentally sound, ocean incineration of hazardous waste is not [yet] a commercial reality," writes Zurer, a reporter for *Chemical and Engineering News*. "There are many who think it never should be."

Among the critics are chemists and environmentalists who contend that EPA tests of the smoke produced during 1981–82 trial runs of ocean-going incinerator ships have been inadequate. They worry that some toxic wastes are escaping, unburned, into the atmosphere. And they argue that the EPA backed the high-seas solution chiefly because it seemed like the easiest course—four incinerator ships were available.

Such objections have some merit. Yet, faced with managing the disposal of some 250 million metric tons of toxic waste each year, the EPA must do *something*. Currently, most of the waste is stored in dumps. Roughly 25–35 percent of it is incinerated on land. Only one percent of the toxins are burned annually at sea. The EPA would like to raise that amount to 15 percent.

Some foes of offshore incineration would like to see more waste

burned on land, where the process can be monitored more closely. Unfortunately, notes Zurer, only 10 percent of the roughly 250 U.S. onshore hazardous waste incinerators are available for general commercial use (the rest are small, specialized facilities), and they are already running at full capacity. These incinerators are more reliable, albeit more expensive, than their floating counterparts. According to a recent EPA study, 30 incineration ships or 80 new land-based incinerators are now needed to destroy America's mounting backlog of toxic waste. Because they are prone to leaks and seepage (e.g., Love Canal, N.Y.), dumps are an unpopular alternative.

Another objection to using incinerator ships is the possibility of accidental spills. The EPA puts the probability of such a mishap at only one per 1,200 operating years. But critics question that figure. Moreover, they charge that giving a green light to incinerators at sea would halt work on other promising disposal methods—such as blending the toxins with salt or glass and then burying the leak-proof compound.

Nevertheless, this spring the EPA plans to burn one shipload of PCB-contaminated oil 140 miles off the nation's Atlantic coast.

Although the EPA has heeded the alarms of U.S. environmentalists, observes Zurer, "The agency contends that few innovative technologies are ready to be commercialized, whereas the ocean ships are set to sail."

Food News Is Good News

"Agricultural Productivity and the World Food Market" by Patrick M. O'Brien, in *Environment* (Nov. 1985), 4000 Albermarle St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016; "U.S. Farm Dilemma: The Global Bad News Is Wrong" by Dennis Avery, in *Science* (Oct. 25, 1985), 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

A decade ago, pessimistic neo-Malthusians (e.g., members of the Club of Rome) warned that the globe's population was growing faster than its food supply. The world, they predicted, would face a major food crisis by the year 2000.

But O'Brien and Avery, an agricultural economist and an agricultural analyst for the U.S. Department of State, respectively, contend that the doomsayers were wrong.

Since 1950, global farm output has grown at an average rate of 2.5 percent a year, and world food production has more than doubled. Despite a global population increase of nearly two billion people, worldwide food production *per capita* is up by more than 25 percent. In the Third World, farm output grew by 33 percent between 1972 and 1982, nearly twice as much as it did in the developed countries.

That is not the end of the good news. Real food prices in the world market are declining (wheat and corn by 1.5 percent annually). The percentage of the world's income spent on food has shrunk from 40–50 percent during the 1950s to 30–35 percent today. In addition, advances in agricultural technology are helping Third World farmers to boost their crops even more. In India and the Sudan, for example, farmers have learned how to cultivate nearly 750 million acres of black, sticky

RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

"vertisol" soil that was once left fallow. And in Peru, a new "upland" variety of rice has raised crop yields by 40 percent during each of the past two years. Avery sees even more promising agricultural technologies on the horizon. Genetic engineers are now perfecting viral insecticides, new varieties of ammonia-producing bacteria (to fertilize soil), and vaccines against the hoof-and-mouth disease in livestock.

The sad exception to this otherwise rosy picture is famine-ridden sub-Sahara Africa. Avery blames bad planning by government leaders (and Western advisers) who rushed to industrialize backward societies. They failed to educate their farmers in new agricultural techniques. To appease city-dwellers, they fixed food prices at bargain-basement levels. The result: African farmers lacked the means and the incentives to get the most out of their fields. Among others, Tanzania and Ethiopia made matters worse by "collectivizing" family farms. Yet Avery believes that many African regimes have learned from their mistakes. He expects that their farm output will begin to rise soon.

Ironically, such successes spell trouble for the United States, a major grain and soybean exporter. The cost of federal crop subsidies to highly productive U.S. farmers has soared to $15 billion a year. Under the present system, such payments may rise even more, as U.S. crop surpluses mount at the same time that overseas competitors of America's farmers put more food on tables throughout the world.

ARTS & LETTERS

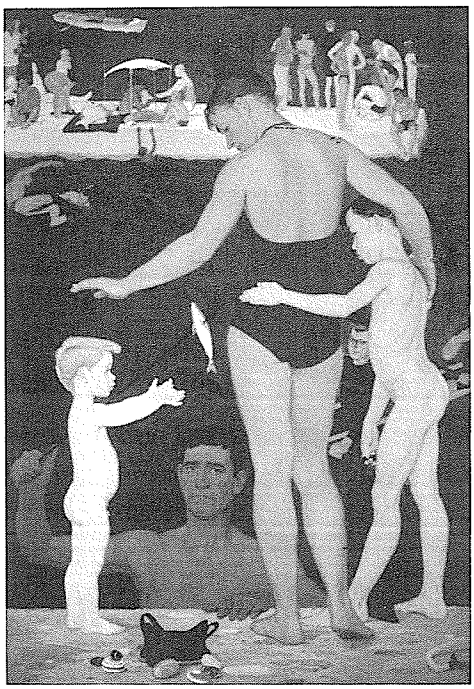
Soviet Art After the Thaw

"Report from Moscow: Soviet Art Today" by Jamey Gambrell, in *Art in America* (Nov. 1985), Brant Art Publications, 980 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Imagine, says Gambrell, a contributing editor of *Art in America*, that the U.S. government controlled all art exhibits, art magazines, and art projects in America. The result would be pretty dull art.

For Soviet artists, such control has been a reality since the days of Josef Stalin (1924–53). His state-mandated "socialist realism" (the credo that art should applaud Soviet political aims) left room only for a "varnished reality"; painters such as Dmitrii Nalbandian filled museums with austere portraits of the Great Leaders (e.g., Lenin and Stalin) and scenes of industrious citizens at work. After Stalin's death, the "cult of personality" became a political liability. Tributes to the Great Leaders fell by the wayside. A cultural "thaw" under Nikita Khrushchev (1953–64) allowed men such as Petr Ossovskii, Alexander Savitskii, and Yurii Korolev, among others, to paint with "ferocious seriousness." Patriotic battle scenes, sharp-edged and dour, counterbalanced images of nameless peasants in daily life.

Despite its didactic approach, recent Soviet art has exhibited a greater diversity in style and subject matter than Western art critics anticipated.



Family at the Ocean *(1964). Although Dmitrii Zhilinskii studied painting along Stalinist lines during the 1950s, he soon rejected the severe style. Recently, when asked about Soviet art of the 1940s and '50s, he replied that it was "a very bad time for art."*

In Moscow, "The Exhibition of 23" (1981) assembled the works of the best Soviet artists of the 1970s: Alexander Sitnov displayed chimerical Chagall-like animals, while Vadim Dementiev romanticized Moscow's streets; Natalia Nesterova portrayed lovers and squat folk strolling though parks; Olga Bulgakova showed the 19th-century author Nikolai Gogol in a surreal setting. Thematically, many Soviet artists moved away from "politically correct" subjects, toward domestic scenes. Patriotism was reserved for images of pre-revolutionary Mother Russia.

Today's Soviet art has found little favor among the Moscow intelligentsia. The latest fad is "hyperrealism," a style derived from the crisp objectivity of contemporary American "photorealists." The elite critics complain that the artists of the 1980s lack imagination, that they do no more than paint "just what they see."

Given Moscow's ever-changing aesthetic climate, what endures in Soviet art? Cambrell's answer: the works of painters such as Ilya Glazunov, whose images of medieval Russia, filled with religious and nationalist motifs, are despised by many Soviet artists but adored by the public. In 1978, his one-man show packed Moscow's largest exhibition hall, drawing over two million viewers and earning Glazunov the coveted accolade of "People's Artist."

Ignoring the reservations of the Kremlin, Glazunov has even painted portraits of Western rock idols (The Beatles) and movie stars (Gina Lollobrigida). Thus, in Cambrell's opinion, Glazunov may owe his popular success in part to "a bit of dissidence."

ARTS & LETTERS

Da Vinci's Jesus

"Saving 'The Last Supper'" by Curtis Bill Pepper, in *The New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 13, 1985), 229 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

After eight years of effort by a Milanese art restorer, Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpiece, *The Last Supper*, may once again see the light of day.

Encrusted in grime and the residue left by earlier restorers, Da Vinci's vision of Jesus seated among the Twelve Apostles at his final Passover meal was, until 1977 (when the restoration began), just a shadow of its original self. Today, the 28-by-15-foot mural mounted on a wall inside Santa Maria Delle Grazie (an old Dominican cloister in Milan, Italy) is on its way to recovery. This spring, Pinin Brambilla Barcilon hopes to finish cleaning the now nearly obliterated face of Jesus.

Overshadowing this project, observes Pepper, a former *New York Times* reporter and Renaissance scholar, is the fear that nothing remains of Jesus' original face. Beneath the paint and glue of previously botched touch-ups, Brambilla Barcilon may find only a blank. Over the years, pollution, humidity, and even moisture from the cloister's 200,000 annual visitors have taken their toll on the mural. During World War II, a bomb nearly shattered the wall, which was already perilously thin and weak from centuries of seasonal expansion and contraction.

But Brambilla Barcilon continues undaunted. Gently flaking off old varnish and mold from the painting with a scalpel, she daily restores an area the size of a postage stamp. Even with the aid of infrared cameras and ultrasound machines, she still has five years of labor ahead.

"The uncovering of the 'new' face is expected to mark the most drastic change in a religious image in the history of art, and perhaps to shed new light on the meaning Leonardo intended for the painting," says Pepper. For nearly five centuries, artists and theologians have pondered the meaning of Da Vinci's image. Was Leonardo depicting the moment when Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me" (Matthew 26:21)? Or had that instant passed—leaving Jesus about to begin the Eucharist, the basis for the Christian rite of communion?

The answer, says Pepper, depends on Jesus' expression: If he looks resigned and transcendent, or if he is speaking, many scholars will assume that the Eucharist had begun. Otherwise, they will presume betrayal, the leading interpretation since the turn of the 16th century.

Finnomania

"The Crowded Raft: *Huckleberry Finn* and Its Critics" by J. C. Furnas, in *The American Scholar* (Autumn 1985), Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Last spring, *Huckleberry Finn* had its 100th birthday. Since its American debut in 1885, Mark Twain's tale of the teen-age lad and the escaped slave Jim, rafting down the Mississippi River, has spawned a cottage industry of literary criticism.

Furnas, a novelist and Finn-critic himself, contends that worship of Twain's novel has gotten out of hand. Prone to humorless, overzealous

symbol seeking, many "Finnophiles" not only "misrepresent" but "obscure" the virtues of the book, which Furnas prefers to call "an unruly, lopsided, half-inadvertent joy."

After Waldo Frank in *Our America* (1919) deemed Huck "the American epic hero," the grand-comparisons poured forth. Finn rose to near mythic heights. Critic Kenneth Rexroth even proclaimed that Twain *must* "have had Homer constantly in mind" while writing *Huckleberry Finn*, likening Huck to the Greek hero Odysseus. Moreover, observes Furnas, Old Man River became "the world's first 2,348-mile cliché." Lionel Trilling referred to Twain's Mississippi as "a strong brown god"; novelist Norman Mailer called the Muddy Waters "a manifest presence, a demiurge to support the man and the boy, a deity to betray them, feed them, all but drown them." Furnas prefers critic DeLancey Ferguson's more humble evaluation: Twain "simply took a clever and uninhibited boy and let the whole world of the Mississippi happen to him."

Furnas sees the unrestrained accolades as groundless, and finds some appalling critical errors. For example, he takes Mailer to task for asserting that the name of Huck's sidekick is "not Jim but Nigger Jim." Nowhere in the text, Furnas maintains, does Twain use the word "Nigger" as a title. Yet, he adds, "that 'Nigger Jim' distortion is curiously common in the accumulated literature—used by, among others, [Ernest] Hemingway, Ralph Ellison, Lionel Trilling, Leslie Fiedler. It typifies in miniature the liberties so often taken with the book."

To would-be analysts, Furnas recalls the author's own cautionary words of advice. In a foreword to the first edition of *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain warned that "persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot."

OTHER NATIONS

A Red Manila?

"The New Khmer Rouge" by Ross H. Munro, in *Commentary* (Dec. 1985), 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

On the outskirts of Manila these days, Communist insurgency is no longer a minor nuisance inflicted by a handful of lackluster guerrillas. It is a real—and growing—threat on which Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos, and Washington, had best keep a watchful eye.

So says Munro, New Delhi bureau chief of Time-Life News Service. In 1974, he notes, members of the New People's Army (NPA) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) numbered no more than 3,000. Today an estimated 30,000 Party members and 20,000 guerrillas are seeking to transform the country into a People's Democratic Republic. Founded in 1968 by José Maria Sison, a poet and Maoist ideologue,

OTHER NATIONS

the CPP has thrived since 1978 under Sison's protégé, Rodolfo Salas. The 37-year-old former engineering student has forged a formidable guerrilla network now active in 59 of the nation's 73 provinces.

Many U.S. and Filipino analysts blame the "corrupt and exhausted" Marcos regime for the Communists' rise. During his 20 years in power, Marcos has presided over the virtual collapse of the Philippine economy and the unraveling of Manila's authority. But Munro points out that "trashing the Marcos regime . . . fails to give proper attention and credit to the Communists themselves." From northern Luzon to southern Mindanao, the NPA's "Armed City Partisans" (i.e., hit squads) have been torturing and killing suspected informers in a manner "rivaling the [Cambodian] Khmer Rouge in savagery if not yet in scale." Official statistics show the NPA "liquidating" more than 130 civilians a month. Munro believes the actual figure is higher.

Ironically, he maintains, the NPA has gained respectability in the eyes of many Filipinos (90 percent of whom are Catholic) because of ideological support from some 1,200 priests and nuns who make up the clandestine pro-Communist Christians for National Liberation (CNL). These Church activists have sheltered wounded NPA guerrillas, transmitted CPP messages, even helped to organize sugar workers on the island of Negros.

Needless to say, the Communists do not look fondly upon Washington. The CPP has stated that it wants to take over U.S. military bases and nationalize all foreign properties. Lately the once-Maoist CPP has even spurned Beijing, instead soliciting arms from the Soviet bloc and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In Munro's opinion, the CPP's future looks all too good—while the outlook for the country is bleak. Unless the Marcos regime is replaced by a competent reformist government, and the Communists are checked, the Filipinos might be "staring at a 'Pol Pot future.'"

Unconstructive Engagement

"South Africa: Why Constructive Engagement Failed" by Sanford J. Ungar and Peter Vale, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1985/86), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Viewed from almost any angle, the situation in South Africa looks grim: Cuban troops and military advisers are still in nearby Angola; racial violence plagues the nation of 4.6 million whites and 23.8 million blacks; moderates on both sides are losing ground.

Ungar and Vale, former managing editor of *Foreign Policy* and director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, respectively, put much of the blame on the United States. After more than five years, they say, the U.S. policy of "constructive engagement"—which sought to pressure the white South African government indirectly to reform its institutional racism—"has failed on every front."

In 1981, the Reagan administration said it would "underpromise and

This final newsletter of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (November 1985) marked the voluntary demise of a black group that began in April 1979 with 16,000 members. It was merged into a larger national black labor congress with a membership of roughly half a million.

overdeliver" on its commitment to halt apartheid in South Africa. In fact, the authors argue, it has done nothing of the sort. Even as Western allies condemned the country's racist policies and actions, the White House lifted curbs on U.S. arms exports to Pretoria, provided training for the South African coast guard, and sided frequently with South Africa in the UN Security Council. Furthermore, by not opposing the 1983 creation of separate parliamentary chambers for "Coloureds" and "Asians" (or a whites-only constitutional referendum), the authors maintain, the Reagan White House tacitly supported Pretoria's "divide and rule tactics."

Not until September 1985 did Washington step up its efforts by imposing "limited economic sanctions" against South Africa, including a halt on loans to President P. W. Botha's regime. Yet, argue Ungar and Vale, these sanctions only amount to a stronger dose of an essentially ineffective policy. During the last year, South Africa has experienced the worst upheaval since its unification as a state in 1910. Saddled with a debt of $23.7 billion, the country saw its gross national product drop by more than one-third between 1982 and 1984. (In some rural areas, the rate of black unemployment has neared 60 percent.) The only "concrete achievements" of constructive engagement, in the authors' opinion, were Pretoria's recognition of the nation's black trade unions (representing roughly 20 percent of the 7.5 million–member black labor force) in 1981 and the issuing of exit visas to key black leaders.

What should America do now? Among other things, the authors ar-

gue, Washington should officially recognize the outlawed black African National Congress, support South Africa's black-led unions, and further restrict (or suspend) U.S. intelligence cooperation with Pretoria.

"Courageous efforts must be made," Ungar and Vale conclude, "to convince black South Africans that Americans identify with their plight and are willing to help."

Hungary's Malaise

"Hungary: A Malaise Thinly Disguised" by Ivan Volgyes, in *Current History* (Nov. 1985), 3740 Creamery Rd., Furlong, Pa. 18925.

Hungary stands out among the seven East European nations of the Warsaw Pact. Blessed by relative prosperity, the country has won the admiration of more than one Western observer.

But Volgyes, a Rutgers political scientist, warns of troubles to come. Outwardly stable, Hungary's "economic, social, and political life," he argues, "is very close to a major crisis."

In 1968, Hungarian Communist Party chief Janos Kadar launched a series of reforms known as the New Economic Mechanism. Stressing a flexible price structure, upgrading the role of the consumer, and minimizing central planning, this brand of "market socialism" gave the country's 10.7 million citizens a 1983 gross national product per capita of $2,150—above that of most other Soviet bloc nations. And while careful to follow Moscow's lead in foreign policy, Kadar has not resorted to authoritarian political controls. Volgyes reports that "very few" dissidents are in jail; "nonofficial" candidates unseated five Central Committee members during last year's legislative elections.

But a variety of factors now threatens to undermine Hungary's stability. On the economic front, a reluctance to close down inefficient state-run factories (and create unemployment of "capitalist" proportions) has hampered attempts to modernize industries. Hungary must also rely on the USSR for oil and raw materials and rarely receives them in sufficient quantities. During the winter of 1984, while Europe and the United States were awash in cheap oil, Hungary suffered an "energy shortage." Finally, the same policies that have filled shops with French perfume, American jeans, and Czech crystal have also kept annual inflation rates at eight to 10 percent over the last four years. "Beyond the glitter of prosperity," observes Volgyes, "is a society deeply divided between the rich and the poor."

The state's economic difficulties have complicated the Communist Party's search for a successor to the 73-year-old Kadar, the nation's leader for the last 30 years. Members of one Party faction contend that economic survival demands a leader who will opt for even greater liberalization. Their rivals argue that current reforms have gone too far, that they have eroded the Party's power. Volgyes fears that the latter group will prevail: Dissatisfaction among the have-nots of Hungarian society may well fuel support of a "more orthodox, more egalitarian, and more dictatorial political course in the years to come."

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

"Choosing Elites."

Basic Books, 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 267 pp. $19.95.
Author: Robert Klitgaard

At Harvard, 7.1 percent of all incoming freshmen are black. If the admissions committee were to choose students only on the basis of their Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, that figure would fall to 1.1 percent.

So reports Klitgaard, former special assistant to Harvard president Derek Bok, in a statistics-laden study of the college admissions process. Indeed, being black was the biggest single boon to a candidate for Harvard; members of other favored groups enjoyed a lesser edge.

At Harvard, Klitgaard says, most applicants rated academically as "two" or "three" (on a scale of one to five) have about a 30 percent chance of being accepted. But the odds soar to 60 percent for the progeny of faculty members, to 64 percent for promising athletes, and to 73 percent for blacks.

Most topflight universities give blacks a boost, Klitgaard observes, because they seek racial and ethnic diversity. A Harvard faculty panel noted in 1977 that in selecting students the university "weighs an applicant's individual strengths carefully while also considering his membership in some broader constituency."

Black youths, Klitgaard suggests, need the helping hand. In 1983, 8.5 percent of all whites taking the SAT scored above 1,200—roughly the minimum score for admission to elite colleges. But only 0.7 percent (or 570) of all blacks did.

Critics have charged that such standardized tests are culturally biased in favor of whites. But blacks, on average, Klitgaard points out, do worse in college—and in graduate schools—than do their white counterparts who have the *same* test scores. He suggests that the competitive ethos of many elite institutions may dishearten minorities.

Whatever the reasons for blacks' classroom performance, the author states, college administrators face "a trade-off between the benefits and costs of greater [black] representation."

Both, of course, are "vague and controversial" and difficult to quantify. A racially diverse student body, Klitgaard says, may "foster tolerance and understanding," both in school and in society at large. Preferential treatment may also encourage black initiative. Knowing that "the system is open to them," he adds, black youths may be motivated to "study harder, aim higher."

But affirmative action also exacts costs. If minorities are admitted with test scores and prior grades that are much lower than those of their white peers, they tend to be over-represented at the bottom of their college class. Hence, "because of preferential treatment, all members of the [favored group] may be stigmatized [by their peers] as second rate or not up to the white standard," Klitgaard says. Second, colleges that practice affirmative action also forgo the classroom presence of academically superior students who were *not* admitted. And third, when elite schools such as Harvard "stretch" to admit more blacks, they shrink the pool of black candidates available to other, less prestigious schools.

Klitgaard does not oppose affirmative action, but he urges college officials to make decisions systematically, based on costs and benefits—and not to gloss over the harsh realities. "The issue," he says, "is no longer whether to have [preferential treatment], but how much."

"Woe unto the Defeated: Political Executions in Vietnam, 1975–1983."

Institute of East Asian Studies, Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, Calif. 94720. 27 pp.
Authors: Jacqueline Desbarats and Karl D. Jackson

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford warned Americans that the withdrawal of U.S. support from South Vietnam could result in a "bloodbath." One Central Intelligence Agency analyst went so far as to predict the execution of 100,000 South Vietnamese in the event of Hanoi's victory in the Indochina war.

Most American politicians and pundits dismissed such dire predictions. To find out what really happened, Desbarats and Jackson, both political scientists at the University of California, interviewed 615 randomly selected Vietnamese refugees, now living in Chicago and Northern and Southern California.

Twenty-six percent of the respondents said that they had spent time in a "re-education camp" or jail, and 60 percent reported that they knew about a friend or relative who had been incarcerated. Thirty-five percent of the refugees said they knew about or had heard of political executions—usually of high-ranking members of the South Vietnamese governmment or military. One-third of those accounts were eyewitness reports. Additional interviews with Vietnamese refugees living in France produced roughly the same results.

Extrapolating from these and other findings, Desbarats and Jackson estimate that between 1975 and 1982, at least 850,000 South Vietnamese were incarcerated (in jails or re-education camps) and that at least 65,000 were *executed*. Little wonder, the researchers conclude, that one million South Vietnamese have chosen to flee their homeland since the fall of Saigon in 1975.

"Underdevelopment Is a State of Mind."

University Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Md. 20706. 192 pp. $16.95.
Author: Lawrence E. Harrison

The Caribbean nations of Haiti and Barbados have much in common. Both are islands with tropical climates. Both are populated by descendants of slaves from West Africa. And the economies of both have long depended on several cash crops, such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar.

Yet today, the 250,000 Barbadians enjoy a much higher standard of living than do the six million Haitians. In 1980, Barbados's gross national product per capita was $3,040, compared with just $270 in Haiti. In Barbados, 99 percent of all adults are literate; only 23 percent are in Haiti. The average Barbadian can expect to live 71 years—18 years longer than his Haitian counterpart.

Some observers blame Haiti's impoverishment on a lack of resources or on First World exploitation. Others point to the country's politics. For 29 years (1957–86), Haitians suffered under the harsh dictatorships of François Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude.

Harrison, veteran former field officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), does not entirely discount these factors, but he does believe that economic development is a matter of culture—"the values and attitudes a society inculcates in its people."

"What makes development happen," Harrison says, "is our ability to imagine, theorize, conceptualize, experiment, in-

vent, articulate, organize, [and] manage." Some cultures, Harrison believes, nurture these skills; others do not.

To prove his point, Harrison contrasts the histories of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and the two extremes, Haiti and Barbados. Barbados, he asserts, owes much of its modern success to its three centuries under British rule. The British settled the island in 1627 and proceeded to shape Barbadian society until the achievement of independence in 1966. They abolished slavery (in 1834), established representative government, and slowly transferred political power from the affluent planters to the black middle and lower classes. Most importantly, he says, they instilled in Barbadians "the values of fair play, cooperation, social responsibility and achievement."

Haiti's experience, by contrast, has been less happy. The French plantation owners who controlled the country from 1697 to 1804, observes Harrison, were "fundamentally aristocratic and antidemocratic." After independence in 1804, the reigning mulatto and black elite adopted Francophile attitudes, remaining indifferent to the needs of middle-class blacks. As a result, Harrison says, Haitians have never really enjoyed the benefits of nationhood. "Haiti is a country," he says, in which "the extended family largely describes the radius of trust."

Not incidental to Haiti's problems, Harrison adds, is Vodun, or voodoo, a magical quasi religion whose adherents focus on spirits and their ancestral past. Vodun at once helps Haitians survive daily life and stymies progress. The religion, says the author, "explains worldly phenomena" and "propagates the view that existence is essentially static and the world unchangeable."

"International Capital Flows and the United States: Palliative, Panacea, or Pandora's Box?"

International Economic Policy Association, 1400 Eye St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. 62 pp.
Author: Stephen E. Thomsen

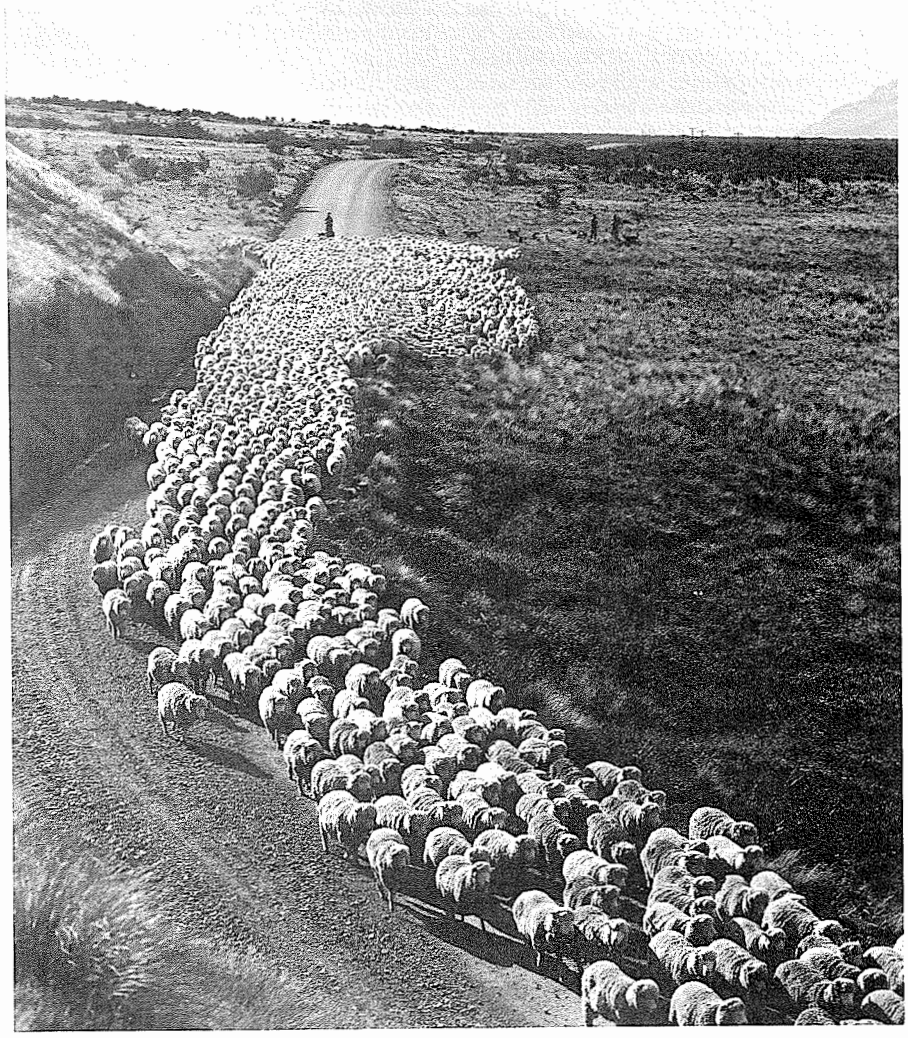
In 1984, foreigners invested roughly $100 billion in the United States. That statistic impressed Ronald Reagan. It showed, the President said, that foreigners recognize the U.S. as "the best and safest investment in the world today."

But Thomsen, an economist with the International Economic Policy Association, argues that high interest rates—not the promise of future U.S. economic growth—have lured record amounts of foreign capital to the United States. Outside investors, he says, are pursuing short-term, high-yield securities, not long-term investments.

Foreign direct investment, for example, sank in 1982 and 1983 before climbing modestly to $22.5 billion in 1984. And foreign holdings of corporate stock decreased by $3 billion in 1984.

Meanwhile, international sales of high interest-bearing U.S. Treasury securities have jumped from $8.7 billion in 1983 to $22.4 billion in 1984, with Japanese investors ($6.1 billion) leading the way.

Thomsen stresses that the situation is a risky one for the United States, which now depends on foreign capital to finance the federal debt. These capital flows are highly volatile. "A sudden change in foreign investors' expectations," he warns, could "send billions of dollars out of the country, wreaking havoc on the domestic economy."



A river of sheep: mustering the Merino flocks from their summer pastures on the slopes of Mount Cook to the grass-covered flatland of New Zealand's South Island, where they will spend the winter. Yet ranchers are rare these days. Fewer than one percent of the 3.3 million New Zealanders earn their livelihood raising the country's 70 million sheep. Four-fifths of all New Zealanders live in cities.

New Zealand

Until a year ago, if Americans thought about New Zealand at all, they probably thought of it as an old ally, a faraway vacationland something like California, a pair of picturesque islands dominated by sheep and English traditions. Then Prime Minister David Lange hit the headlines. He told Washington to keep the U.S. Navy's nuclear-armed ships out of his country's ports. Surprised, the Reagan administration said that New Zealand's sudden self-assertiveness threatened the 35-year-old ANZUS alliance. Nevertheless, New Zealand's parliament will soon vote on a bill formalizing Mr. Lange's anti-nuclear ban. Our contributors examine New Zealand's changing society and its new dilemmas as a South Pacific nation.

THE ALMOST NEW WORLD

by Peter J. Coleman

When Abel Janszoon Tasman, commanding two small ships flying the flag of the Dutch East India Company, explored the western shores of New Zealand's South Island in 1642, the natives were less than friendly: Maori warriors adorned with blue-spiral tattoos attacked Tasman's cockboat as it landed to obtain fresh water, killing four men. Tasman quit what he called Murderers' Bay in disgust, later describing the South Island as a place with "no treasures or matters of great profit."

In 1796, Capt. James Cook, arriving aboard H.M.S. *Endeavour*, received a similarly hostile reception, but this time it was the Maori, not the sailors, who died in the ensuing skirmish.

The British were in no hurry, despite Cook's voyage, to claim New Zealand (or Nieuw Zeeland, after the Dutch province), much less to settle a faraway land filled with inhospitable natives. So for nearly 75 years, New Zealand served as a way station for American and British whalers and traders. It also became a refuge for convicts fleeing from Britain's recently established penal colonies in Australia. Disturbed by the drunken,

licentious behavior of the denizens of the port of Kororareka—dubbed "the hellhole of the Pacific"—British authorities dispatched missionaries and officials from Australia's New South Wales to establish some semblance of order.

Not until the 1830s did anyone in London give much serious thought to settling New Zealand. One of the first to realize that Abel Tasman had overlooked New Zealand's greatest "treasure"—land—was an eccentric British visionary named Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Wakefield abhorred Britain's "degenerate, bigoted" American cousins ("in two words, a people who become rotten before they are ripe") and wanted a better model for New Zealand. To that end, he helped create the New Zealand Company, which would colonize New Zealand "systematically." His plan was to transport, for a fee, every element of the English village—the clergy, schoolmasters, lawyers, doctors, "decent yeomen," and "honest laborers"—minus the dissolute "lower segment," to the new territory.

The first boatload of New Zealand Company settlers dropped anchor at Port Nicholson (later named Wellington after the victor of Waterloo) in late January 1840.* The newcomers to the North Island found green, lush terrain that seemed well suited to farming; those who sailed south found fertile plains covered with grasses for their flocks. At the same time, the land looked more magnificent than any they had ever seen. The long, slender islands, stretching 950 miles north to south, almost as far as Winnipeg is from New Orleans, boasted "alps as glorious as those of Switzerland," according to one traveler, "lakes as beautiful as those of England; mountains among the highest and grandest in the world, as grand as those of Norway; and rivers rivaling those of Orinoco and the Amazon."

But this was "under down under." Christmas came in midsummer, and the fauna and flora were more surprising than anything the English Pilgrims had encountered two centuries earlier on Cape Cod. Roaring winds swept in from the Tasman Sea, the Pacific, and Antarctica; smoking volcanoes punctuated the North Island, where the emerald-hued rain forest stayed

*Other Company settlements quickly followed at Nelson, New Plymouth, and Wanganui. In 1848 and '50, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland planted separate but similarly organized communities at Christchurch and Dunedin, flourishing cities that even today bear the imprint of England and Scotland in architecture, custom, and accent.

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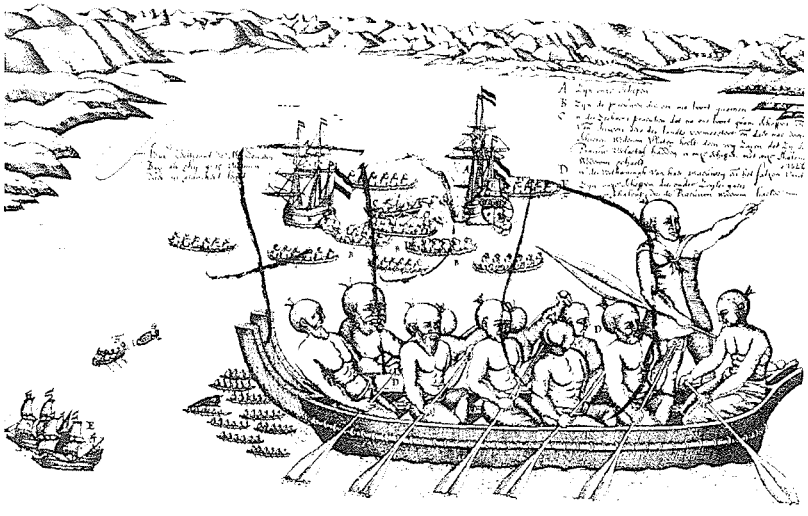


As seen in this first European rendering (1642) of the Maori, Dutch sailors misunderstood the aborigines' war trumpets, replying with "tunes" that the Maori interpreted as an invitation to battle.

jungle-thick even in winter. Exotic birds abounded, such as the flightless weka and the bewhiskered, nearly blind kiwi that eventually became New Zealand's national symbol. By day, the intense, hard sunlight picked out the smallest details and gave settlers a seemingly perpetual squint. By night, new constellations, such as the Southern Cross, and the flame-red aurora borealis reminded colonists that Mother England was in the Northern Hemisphere, 13,000 miles away.

Despite occasional skirmishes, the first few settlers did little to trouble the Maori. Tribesmen around Auckland and the Bay of Islands enthusiastically adopted modern axes and fish hooks, raised wheat and flax, or worked alongside whites as sailors and harpooners. The Anglican, Wesleyan, and French Marist missionaries left over from the days of Kororareka had some success among the Maori, many of whom eagerly embraced the drama of resurrection and eternal life and the new religion's anthems and hymns. (Visitors are startled even today to hear Bach chorales sung not only in Maori but with a distinctive Polynesian rhythm.) Some Maori even adapted to the rudimentary settler society. Only two weeks after Robert FitzRoy, later the colony's second governor, arrived in Auckland in 1837, his wife reported: "The natives are certainly a most intelligent and interesting race—many well dressed in European clothing have been with

us at different meals and behaved *perfectly*."

These "civilizing influences" notwithstanding, the Maori remained broadly Polynesian in language, tradition, and custom. Maori canoes reached New Zealand around 800 A.D., probably from the Cook, Marqueses, and Society islands, the heart of Polynesia, several thousand miles to the northeast. Mythological heroes peopled their past and a pantheon of gods dwelt in all animate and inanimate objects, making the land and everything that was on it sacred: A tree for a canoe could not be felled, for example, until Tane, the god of the land, had been placated through prayers and fasting.

Getting On

Their complex, highly ritualized culture baffled British colonists and officials alike. Witnesses were astounded by feasts of thousands of celebrants that lasted as long as a week. The Maori lived "dispers'd in small parties," as Captain Cook had been the first to note, settling their disputes through warfare and celebrating victory either by eating or enslaving their captives. The settlers may have professed horror over the cannibalistic practice, but the sale of shrunken heads enjoyed a brisk business in the new settlements.

An uneasy coexistence between the *pakeha*, as whites came to be called, and the Maori might have continued, except for one inescapable fact: The settlers wanted New Zealand to become English, not Polynesian. They wanted racial homogeneity, or, as a columnist in the *New Zealand Herald* put it, "people of our own race and kindred . . . the British man; the white man, not the *kanaka* [native]." This meant that who was kept out of the new colony was just as important as who got in. Publicity handbooks in the 1850s and '60s excluded not only those of "undesirable" color but also the "Too-lates" (the broke), the "De Smythes" (the "fastidiously genteel people of feeble intellect"), the "Grumblers" ("who only wish they were back"), and the "Fast Gents" (the "ne'er-do-wells").*

Not surprisingly, this informal immigration policy meant that the clerks and shepherds, carpenters and laborers, felt right at home when they arrived. They had not been banished from Britain, like the men in the penal colonies of Australia; nor were they fleeing from persecution, like the Pilgrims. Some hoped to turn New Zealand into a working man's paradise, a place where, as a shoe polish salesman of Taranaki put it, "the laboring class is as well off . . . as the nobs are at home." In

*An Immigration Restriction Act codified the informal restrictions in 1899; in 1920, New Zealand kept the "coloureds" out by giving the Minister of Immigration the sole right to permit or deny entry.

Nelson, for example, newly arrived laborers demanded a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work." But most simply wanted, as Sir George Grey, governor and later Prime Minister, put it, "a chance to get on."

During the first decade of organized settlement, "getting on" meant living in the native-style reed huts (even for British officials), clearing the forests with ax and fire, throwing up fences to mark proprietorship, sowing English grasses for cattle and sheep, raising goats and pigs, planting wheat and other grains, and establishing apple orchards. It meant building towns and ports and villages, churches and schools, banks and jails. It also meant shouldering the Maori aside, peacefully if possible, by force if necessary.

With land at a premium, those Maori not co-opted at dinner parties of British officials feared, as one chief said, that their people would "be reduced to the condition of slaves." In one of the most confused episodes in New Zealand's history, the Crown, represented by William Hobson, the colony's first governor, tried to protect the Maori with the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. "Hastily and inexpertly drawn up, ambiguous and contradictory in content" according to one settler-historian, the treaty annexed New Zealand for England and gave the Maori "full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands." But it also gave the Crown the sole right to buy—and hence to sell—New Zealand. Which it did, piece by piece, to the settlers.

Never, Never, Never

During the 1850s and early '60s, the discovery of gold in Otago on the South Island helped turn what had been only a trickle of immigrants into a flood; the number of British and Scottish settlers skyrocketed from 98,000 to 500,000 in 20 years. Taking, buying, or simply squatting on what they could find, the newcomers ignited a "fire in the bracken," as an early historian called the Anglo-Maori wars, that began on the North Island during the early 1860s.

As in the American Indian wars, both sides committed acts of great barbarism. British troops practiced a scorched earth policy, in some areas burning villages, destroying crops, looting, and occasionally shooting prisoners. In one of the more grisly Maori episodes, fanatical warriors called the Hau Haus hung the Reverend Carl S. Volkner outside his Opotiki church, mutilated his body, and drank his blood.

Despite the bitterness that such acts inspired, the wars, oddly enough, did not become race wars: Some British officials and missionaries supported the Maori and vice versa. Both

"Under down under": Long dependent on faraway Europe and the United States, New Zealand now stresses links with its South Pacific neighbors on foreign policy issues. All distances shown are in nautical miles.

sides displayed courage and chivalry. Colonial and British troops earned 15 of the newly created Victoria Crosses. And the Maori response to a demand for surrender in 1863—"ake, ake, ake," meaning "never, never, never"—has passed into New Zealand legend.

At least for whites, Maori bravery eventually created what colonial historian M. P. K. Sorrenson called "a warm comradeship between victor and vanquished" that lent the Maori a lasting measure of respect and eased their assimilation into what became modern New Zealand. But the Maoris paid a heavy

price for resisting the British tide. One Maori survivor said: "They came to teach us to pray to God, and as our eyes were uplifted in prayer they stole our land from under our feet." So great was the white land hunger that by the 1890s, the Maori had lost more than three million acres on the North Island, much of it now New Zealand's finest pastures and orchards. War, land confiscation and sales, and European diseases so devastated the Maori that officials and settlers alike predicted that the "native races" were, as Capt. W. R. Russell put it, "doom[ed]... to eventual extinction" (see box, pages 54–55).

The Golden Fleece

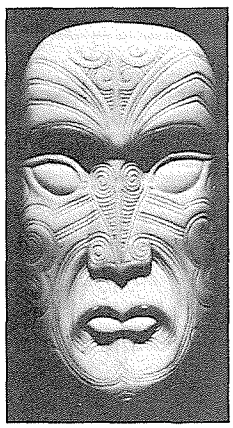
The settlers moving into the newly won areas took to heart Wakefield's advice to "possess yourselves of the soil." Poor farmers scratched out a subsistence living much as American frontiersmen had done, raising a few crops, some sheep, and a few cattle. Pioneering in remote areas imposed heavy costs. The nearest neighbors might live a day away by horseback. Women found themselves not only cooking and washing and sewing for both family members and hired men but also doubling as schoolteachers and farm hands for shearing or "dipping." For their husbands, stocking a run called for strength and courage. One backcountry sheep owner reputedly carried his flock, one by one, on his shoulders along the treacherous coast to reach his Wairarapa property, west of Wellington. Even so, a pioneer woman reflecting on her life during the 1860s in the Aorere Valley remembered: "We greatly enjoyed the easy way of life then the fashion in New Zealand.... People thought themselves quite comfortable with bare floors, a sofa or two, a table, a few boxes nicely covered with chintz."

Those same "comfortable" bare floors drove Samuel Butler, the philosopher and novelist, out of New Zealand after five years of sheep farming. Had he remained, he might have joined the few who made fortunes from the "golden fleece."

Wool growing favored the big producer, especially on the plains of Canterbury on the South Island, where vast ranges of tussock grasses supported runs, or stations, that measured in square miles rather than acres and flocks of sheep numbered in the thousands rather than the tens. The big growers eventually became New Zealand's landed aristocrats, who built noble homes filled with fine furniture and paintings and employed gardeners to care for their flower gardens and ornamental shrubs. They sent their sons "home" to English public schools or to their New Zealand equivalents (Christ's, Nelson, and Wanganui colleges) and maintained Victorian-style mansions

THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

When the British explorer Capt. James Cook landed at "Young Nick's Head" in 1769 (near the present-day city of Gisborne), perhaps 250,000 Maori lived in what the natives called *Aotearoa*, the Land of the Long White Cloud. By the end of the Anglo-Maori wars a century later, the Maori race was close to extinction. "You brought us your civilization, and you decimated our ranks with strange diseases and modern armaments," mourned a chief of the Arawa tribe. "You supplied us with firearms, and when in the lust of war we had slain almost half of the flower of our race (and a few of yours), you punished us as rebels and confiscated our lands."



The Maori survived, but they never again dominated their homeland. When Te Kooti, the last of the great warriors, finally ended the long battle against the British in 1872, he and most of the remaining Maori fled to the remote "King Country"—home of Tawhiao, the Maori king—at the center of the North Island or to the isolated East Cape. Local *pakeha* (white) writers told tales of a dying people, the "Noble Relic of a Noble Race," that gained much popularity among the British, who meanwhile turned New Zealand into a country that was "more English than England."

Maori fortunes improved somewhat at the turn of the century. Three university-trained activists, Apirana Ngata, a lawyer, Maui Pomare, a doctor, and Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), a distinguished anthropologist, founded the Young Maori Party. Their objective was simple: to save the Maori through integration by encouraging them to become "brown *pakehas*." They were not entirely successful in spreading their message. Even after some Maori began to move during the 1930s to Auckland—today the largest Polynesian city in the world—the majority still had little contact with whites except at work, where they were stereotyped as hewers of wood and drawers of water, or on the rugby field, where they excelled. During the 1950s and '60s, the apparent isolation of the Maori so alarmed government housing authorities that they started "pepper-potting"—sprinkling Maori families throughout government-subsidized suburbs. Most Maori, however, chose to ignore the State's inducements, preferring instead to live in Maori enclaves. Even today, they resist the term *ghetto*, which journalists (and Maori activists, when it suits them) insist on calling their neighborhoods.

Yet despite decades of segregation, differences between Maori and *pakeha* slowly disappeared. Intermarriage dulled racial distinctions, so much so that census takers stopped recording New Zealanders as Maori unless they wished to be identified as such. Many Maori young-

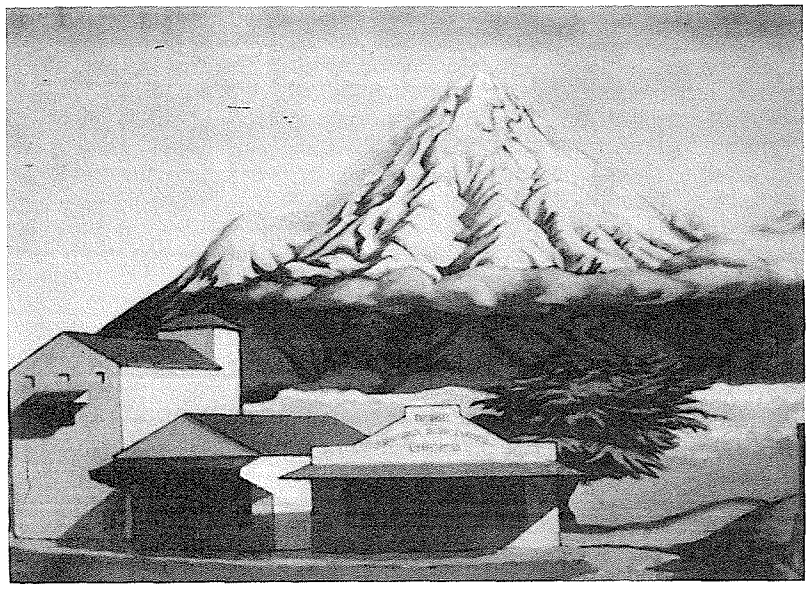
sters growing up during the 1950s and '60s, when Maori was not an acceptable classroom subject, did not learn the Maori language.

Traditional Maori ways seemed to be waning until Indian and black protest movements in the United States kindled a like-minded Maori political revival. Maori college students and blue-collar workers founded Nga Tamatoa (Brave Young People)—the largest Maori protest group—in 1970; other organizations, such as Te Reo Maori and Te Roopu o te Matakite, soon followed. Armed with Nga Tamatoa's slogan ("There is no Maori problem, what we have is a problem with the *pakehas*"), leaders of the new Maori movement demanded the return of land taken during the days of white settlement, better jobs, Maori study programs in the schools, and greater access to the white-dominated media in New Zealand.

The young activists' demands and tactics—including "sit ins," heckling government leaders, marching on Parliament—perplexed and dismayed most white New Zealanders who pointed proudly to four seats in Parliament reserved for Maori and to Maori motifs on everything from stationery to clothing as proof that Maori enjoyed the same rights as their *pakeha* brothers.

Maori assertiveness, however, has brought about some changes in recent years. A Maori, Kara Puketapu, was appointed head of the Department of Maori Affairs (similar to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs) for the first time in 1978, and university students can now get graduate degrees in Maori studies. Members of the Mana Motuhake (Self-determination) Party, founded in 1980 by Matiu Rata, a former member of Parliament, won one of the Maori seats in both the 1982 and '84 general elections. The Maori Council and the Maori Women's Welfare League, both advisory groups, now provide forums for Maori grievances and regularly convey the opinions of the Maori people to government leaders. Parents in the northern half of the North Island, where most Maori live, have begun over 350 community-run "language nurseries"—kindergartens where only Maori is spoken. Fearing that the ties of kinship essential to the Maori community were weakening, families in Auckland recently created *matua whangai*, a foster parent program for Maori street kids.

Today, thanks to their success in adapting old ways to new ends, the 300,000 Maori in New Zealand are closer than ever before to the goal sought by Young Maori Party leader Ngata during the 1920s: to have "your hand grasping the arts of the *pakeha* for your material well-being and your heart cherishing the treasures of your ancestors."



This 1931 painting of the North Island's Mount Taranaki by Christopher Perkins captures some of the rural scene: the ubiquitous corrugated iron-roofed dairy factory producing milk, butter, and cheese.

in Christchurch so that they could enjoy the "social season." There they attended balls or the theater, duly presented their debutante daughters to the governor, and prayed in Christchurch Cathedral.

Life, at least for the few thousand landed gentry, was the pot of gold at the end of the colonial rainbow. But others resented their good fortune. William Pember Reeves, journalist, poet, Liberal, and later director of the London School of Economics, called them "social pests." Class divisions widened in a nation that American progressives erroneously assumed had "neither millionaires nor tramps." Dock workers and day laborers filled the cities; by 1896, one-quarter of New Zealand's population lived in the four largest cities. A new urban proletariat—swollen by the Australians, Chinese, and Californians who stayed when the gold fields played out—mostly male and scornful of Victorian manners, demanded an eight-hour day and an end to the concentration of power in the hands of the "leading families." Small farmers and herders, "locked out" of legislative life, particularly as it dealt with land and tax policy, turned to liberal politicians such as James E. Fitzgerald, who campaigned for a fairer distribution of income so that New

Zealand could escape "Old World prejudice."

A worldwide depression that engulfed the colony from the late 1870s to the mid-1890s brought growing disenchantment with colonial life, especially among Liberals and their supporters. On the London market, wool prices dropped precipitously, wiping out some of New Zealand's gentry when British banks called in their loans. Bread lines and soup kitchens appeared in all the major towns, tramps roamed the countryside searching for jobs, and the bubonic plague threatened the slums in Auckland and Dunedin. Alarm that Old World problems had taken up residence in the Antipodes led to pleas such as that of a pamphleteer in 1892 "to hasten . . . that 'new era' of human life . . . an era in which the spirit of brotherhood . . . will supplant the spirit of individualism."

State Socialism

Throughout the hard times, conservative governments tried to stay afloat by cutting subsidies and payrolls. When these policies failed, voters in 1890 turned the conservatives out, bringing in a group of Liberals championing a heady if improvised mix of remedies variously drawn from John Stuart Mill, Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Christian and Fabian socialism. Over the next 50 years, a succession of Liberal and then Labour prime ministers (Richard John Seddon, 1893–1906; Joseph G. Ward, 1906–12; Michael J. Savage, 1935–40; and Peter Fraser, 1940–49) and their Cabinet officers pushed through the reforms that inspired American and British observers, and not a few locals, to call New Zealand "the world's most advanced democracy."

Richard John Seddon, born in Lancashire, England, former gold digger and failed pub owner, led the Liberal upheaval. He became what W. H. Oliver, in *The Story of New Zealand*, called the "Seddonian model," the die from which all subsequent New Zealand politicians have been cast. Even though he lacked "refinement and culture," he was "King Dick" to his supporters; as Oliver put it, a man of "energy, good fellowship, the common touch, a crude intelligence untempered by reflection." To detractors, such as the *West Coast Times*, he was a "full grown rat, skin, teeth, whiskers, claws and everything complete." In any event, he played his cards shrewdly, building New Zealand's first modern political organization, using patronage and the pork barrel to keep his supporters in line. "Keep the bastards on a string," he advised, "and they'll keep you in Office."

By the time Seddon took office, Otago gold had financed

STOUT ALLIES

The valor of New Zealand's soldiers has repeatedly won worldwide recognition. During World War II, for example, a 1941 cover of *Life* featured the "insubordinate, hard-fighting independent men" of New Zealand's expeditionary force who "bear a marked resemblance to Texans and have a reputation as soldiers fully as brilliant." A German general who fought them at Cassino in 1944 called the New Zealand infantry "well-trained and formidable in close range fighting . . . in many cases strongpoints had to be wiped out to the last man, as they refused to surrender."

The New Zealanders' casualty rates have often been staggering. Their losses have been suffered far from home, in battle side by side with the troops of New Zealand's larger, more powerful allies, first Britain, then the United States:

ANGLO-BOER WAR: 1899–1902. For the first time, New Zealanders fought overseas. Some 6,500 men (and 8,000 horses) were dispatched to South Africa, a contribution surpassed only by Britain and Rhodesia. A total of 288 New Zealanders died and 166 were wounded.

WORLD WAR I: 1914–18. In October 1914, New Zealand shipped 8,427 men to France, the largest contingent ever to leave the country at one time. In 1915, the 11,600 New Zealanders in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. After eight months of bloody, inconclusive trench warfare against the Turks, the ANZAC troops withdrew, having suffered 2,721 dead and 4,572 wounded. New Zealand infantry and mounted rifle brigades also served on the western front in France. During the final stages of the Somme offensive in September 1916, some 1,560 New Zealanders were killed and 5,440 were wounded. During the battles for Messines and Passchendaele the next year, the New Zealand Division took heavy casualties.

By the end of the Great War, 100,444 New Zealand troops had served overseas. All told, 16,697 lost their lives and 41,317 were wounded. By one reckoning, the 58 percent casualty rate was second only to Australia's (68 percent) among the Allied nations.

WORLD WAR II: 1939–45. New Zealand joined the United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Canada in declaring war on Hitler's Germany in

the construction of some railways, roads, bridges, and public buildings. Seddon's Liberal reformers expanded these projects and touched virtually every other aspect of colonial life as well. In the cities, they improved sanitation and built workers' housing to replace the growing slums. They kept a campaign promise to "burst up the big estates" through lotteries that gave sections of large holdings to applicants whose names were drawn out of a box, a procedure which prompted a visiting American to remark, "It isn't much like Oklahoma, is it?"

Seddon's Minister of Labour, Pember Reeves, engineered new laws regulating safety conditions in factories and the em-

September 1939. The Cabinet authorized the mobilization of a 6,600-volunteer Special Force, which became the nucleus of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF), and appointed Maj. Gen. Bernard Freyberg as commander.

The New Zealand battalions fought in North Africa alongside the Australians, British, and Free French during the seesaw struggle against Erwin Rommel's famed Afrika Korps, which was climaxed by the British Eighth Army's assault on the German-Italian line at El Alamein in late 1942 and the surrender of the Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943. Over 2,700 New Zealanders died in action in North Africa and 6,000 were wounded. New Zealand soldiers then spent 18 long months in Italy, where nearly 35,000 troops in the 2NZEF joined the fight for Anzio and Florence in 1944.

During the entire conflict, British troops suffered three-quarters of a million casualties (killed, wounded, missing, prisoners); U.S. forces, nearly one million. New Zealand's 28,625 casualties may seem small by comparison, but not if one considers that the population of the home country was barely 1.5 million at the time.

KOREAN WAR: 1950–53. New Zealand sent a special unit, called Kayforce, to serve in the British Commonwealth Division alongside U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula. In all, 3,794 New Zealand soldiers served in Kayforce; 33 died and 79 were wounded. (Of U.S. servicemen in Korea, 54,246 died and 103,284 were wounded.)

VIETNAM WAR: 1965–72. National Party prime minister Sir Keith Holyoake ordered a Royal New Zealand Artillery unit to South Vietnam to fight alongside the Australians (and Americans) against Hanoi's forces in 1965. A total of 3,890 troops (all volunteers) served in the field before newly elected Labour prime minister Norman Kirk ended New Zealand's involvement in December 1972. Losses were 35 dead and 187 wounded. Though New Zealand soldiers participated in the Sinai Multinational Peacekeeping Force in 1982, Vietnam was the last place where New Zealand soldiers died overseas.

ployment of women and children. His plan for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes was considered so advanced that neighboring Australia promptly adopted it. Reeves's labor laws led Albert Métin, a French radical visiting New Zealand in 1899, to coin the phrase "state socialism," which is still used to describe the country's regime.

New Zealand's Parliament is generally credited with being one of the first legislatures to give women the vote (the state of Wyoming beat New Zealand by 24 years), but it happened more by chance than by design: In 1893, under pressure from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a rider enfranchis-

ing women was attached to a bill that the Prime Minister did not expect to pass. It did so, by two votes. The Liberals also began free education for working-class children, old-age pensions for the "respectable poor," and improved public health service programs, a package of social benefits that led the Boston Progressive Frank Parsons to declare New Zealand "the birthplace of the 20th century."

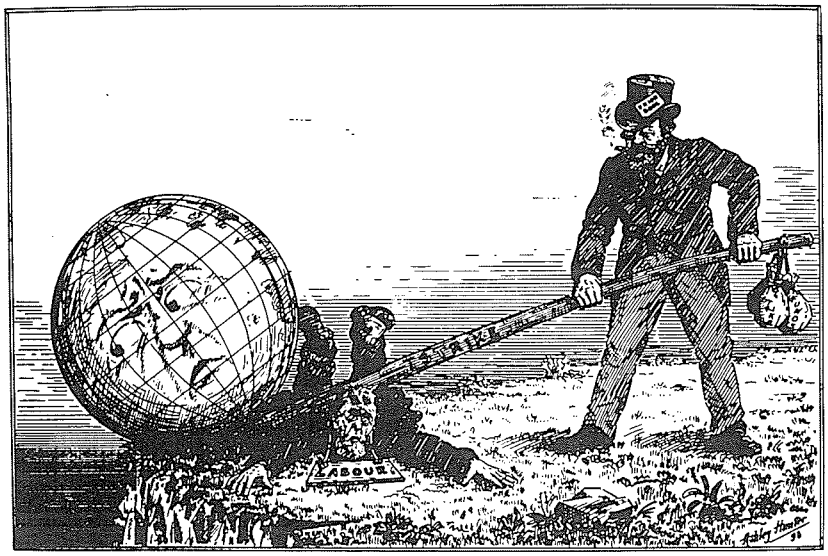
Parsons was as much wrong as right. In the decades ahead, interventionist governments were to become nearly universal in the West. America's New Deal, for example, brought the United States abreast of where New Zealand had been 30 years earlier. But Parsons erred in believing that New Zealanders had created a land of universal brotherhood. For all the appearances of "state socialism," New Zealanders remained stubbornly capitalistic. Their "advanced democracy" was no less vulnerable than others to world economic cycles.

Going Beyond FDR

New Zealand had to export to live. Shortly after the Liberals took office, prices for wool and other nonperishables rose, due in part to European demands for exports during World War I. More importantly, new refrigeration techniques opened markets in Europe and Britain. For the first time, the butter, cheese, beef, lamb, pork, apples, and pears that New Zealand's farmers produced more cheaply than anybody else in the world had international buyers. The export boom in turn financed an expansion of the welfare state. But as farmers everywhere learned—in Argentina, Australia, Canada, and the United States—this "golden age" was fleeting. In 1921 and '22, prices plummeted, credit tightened and then disappeared, and farmers walked away from their land in despair. As in other high-export countries, the economy went from bad to worse following the October 1929 crash of the Wall Street stock market and the onset of depression in Europe and America.

Desperate voters turned again to the liberals—now called the Labour Party—to finish what Seddon and his followers had begun. The 1935 election brought to power a new group of people led by a trade unionist, Labour prime minister Michael ("Micky") Joseph Savage. A "benign, cosy, political uncle," Savage allied himself with such flamboyant figures as "Fighting Bob" Semple of the Miner's Union, "Paddy" Webb, another militant miner, Peter Fraser of the Labourer's Union, and Walter Nash, traveling salesman, devout Anglican, Christian socialist.

Savage responded to the Great Depression with programs very similar to those of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, but he



Conservatives predicted that unions would run amok after compulsory arbitration became law in 1894, but the country remained "strikeless" for over a decade. Even today, New Zealanders frown on labor militants.

went much further than FDR. He took over the marketing of perishable exports and gave the farmer "guaranteed prices" for his produce. Mindful of New Zealand's almost complete dependence on Britain for manufactured goods, he promoted light industry—especially the assembly of automobiles, radios, washing machines, and refrigerators—through tariffs and import quotas. He nationalized domestic airlines and some long-distance bus services. He added state-subsidized housing, a 40-hour work week, and largely free education from kindergarten through university. By the time World War II began in Europe in 1939, Savage's Labour Party had reshaped the economy and created a more egalitarian society.

Yet New Zealand remained in many ways, as Mark Twain said, a "junior England," so close were the ties between the two countries. My own mother, born in a Manchester slum in 1893, immigrated to New Zealand in 1912 yet still spoke as late as the 1970s of "going Home." And my father, born in New Zealand in 1884 to cooks trained in London's Carlton Club, shared her sentiment, though his only visit to England was as an artificer conscripted in 1917 to fight England's war with the Kaiser.

So perhaps it is not surprising that no Western country

sacrificed a higher proportion of its men in battle on behalf of a country thousands of miles away (see box, pages 58–59). But New Zealand's valor did not produce the same kind of national self-assertion that it did in Australia. New Zealanders continued to cling to the Mother Country's skirts and skittishly resisted full autonomy long after Britain offered it in 1931.* Only after World War II came the realization that the United Kingdom had neither the resources nor the will to police the world as it had once done. With great reluctance, New Zealand voters and politicians recognized a new postwar reality. The Pacific was now an American ocean, and only the United States could protect them from what they feared most: a Japanese military resurgence. As university students in the late 1940s, we used to debate whether New Zealand should "hitch its wagon to the American star" by becoming the 49th state, but New Zealand's leaders, rather more wisely, opted for military protection instead. In 1951, Australia and New Zealand petitioned the United States (since, as Prime Minister Peter Fraser put it, New Zealand "could not expect to *compel* a huge country like America to act") to form ANZUS, a mutual defense treaty for the Pacific basin.

New Zealand's reluctance to accept political and economic autonomy contrasted oddly with the country's fledgling attempts to have a voice in the affairs of the world. New Zealand's leaders strongly supported the League of Nations during the 1920s, believing that their endorsement carried special weight abroad because, as an advanced democracy, New Zealand knew how to promote human progress and world order.

Brain Drain

But the truth was that "God's Own Country," as Seddon had been the first to call it, was not heaven on earth, especially on matters of civil liberties. At the Waihi quartz mines in 1912, the government authorities used troops to break a strike; on the West Coast in 1913, the Prime Minister imprisoned striking coal miners for refusing to pay fines; in 1932, mounted police broke up demonstrations by the unemployed; and farmers deputized as "special constables" bashed strikers' heads with their wooden batons on several occasions before World War II.

Conformity was always the rule. During both world wars, the government conscripted men when the volunteer pool dried up. Pacifists and other conscientious objectors were dealt with harshly—given Hobson's Choice either to fight or be treated as

*Great Britain granted dominion status to New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa in 1907, giving each country the right to establish a national government. The Statute of Westminster in 1931 gave the Dominions full autonomy, but New Zealand refused to adopt it until 1947.

criminals deprived of voting and other political rights. And during the Cold War, New Zealand more or less allowed its foreign policy to be dictated by Washington. Anti-communist fears brought about conscription for the first time in peacetime and led the Labour government to dissolve one left-wing trade union and threaten others with a similar fate.

These and other changes crowded in on New Zealand in the decades after 1945, producing both insecurity and a feeling of intellectual and artistic inferiority vis-à-vis Britain and Europe. The 1950s and '60s were a time of prosperity in New Zealand and, in many matters, a sense of moderation prevailed. But despite the country's reputation as a cornucopia of food and fiber, despite its contributions to global peace, and despite the creation of a society much of the world could envy, the anonymous critic who said that New Zealand consisted of "60 million sheep and two-and-half million Philistines" struck a nerve among the country's scholars and artists.

Perhaps the intellectual exodus began with Samuel Butler's return to England in 1864; it was certainly established by Ernest Rutherford's departure for the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University in 1895. (Rutherford later developed the model for the atom, thereby heralding the atomic age.) Others followed—artists, poets, novelists, painters, politicians, scholars, administrators, engineers—few of whom received any recognition from a society where "ditchers were more esteemed than poets," as New Zealand's first historian, A. S. Thomson, commented in 1859. Only after European critics had praised their achievements did such figures as Frances Hodgkins, the distinguished painter, Katherine Mansfield, the world-renowned writer, David Low, the great political cartoonist ("Colonel Blimp"), Inia te Wiata, the Maori bass baritone, or even Ngaio Marsh, whose mystery stories have intrigued millions, gain acclaim from their own countrymen.

The truth is that it is difficult for any country, especially a young one, to inspire distinctive voices and visions if it does not see itself as distinct, as a nation. But during the comfortable 1950s and '60s, only a few artists and intellectuals fretted about "the brain drain." In fact, no one else seemed to be worrying about much of anything at all.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

by Roderic Alley

"Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, and apart"—so begins Rudyard Kipling's 1896 ode to Auckland, on New Zealand's North Island. Even today, facing the quiet waters of mile-wide Waitemata Harbour and flanked by a phalanx of 60 volcanoes, Auckland retains a certain South Pacific flavor.

In the shadows cast by Air New Zealand's glass and concrete office tower, Polynesian greengrocers sell taro, yams, and coconuts to Maori housewives along Karangahape Road. Amid the hibiscus, frangipani, and banana trees in Albert Park, briefcase-toting bankers dressed in shorts, knee-socks, shirts, and ties discuss the latest trade agreements with Australia. Comfortable Edwardian cottages overlook weekend bathers on the city's numerous secluded beaches.

Yet during the last few years, Auckland has lost just a bit of its special charm. Tourists may now gawk not only at bowlers on the lawns of the Mission Bay Club but also at the nude revue at the Pink Pussy Cat. On downtown Queen Street, the city's main shopping thoroughfare, broken windows and looted shops periodically attest to skirmishes between Maori and Samoan youth gangs, members of New Zealand's new underclass. With 825,000 inhabitants, Auckland now suffers the distinction of ranking number one among cities of the world in burglaries.

Aucklanders—and indeed, all New Zealanders—have long considered themselves "a special people with a special destiny," in the words of expatriate journalist Peter Arnett. Yet the economic upheavals of the 1970s and '80s have shaken this cherished assumption. The first jolt came when Britain entered the European Common Market in 1973, effectively ending its days as New Zealand's largest overseas market for farm products. Then New Zealand's energy bill jumped 123 percent in a single year after OPEC raised the price of oil in 1973–74. Soon thereafter world prices for lamb, wool, and butter slumped. New Zealand's once-healthy export economy began to sicken. By the end of the 1970s, "New Zealand had come through the most relentlessly traumatic decade . . . since the Great Depression," wrote economist Mervyn Pope. The hard times left in their wake an "anxious, lethargic, and bitter" people.

Today, feelings of pessimism and uncertainty persist. The economy is still in an uneasy state. No longer sure of their spe-

Tourists may gawk at Auckland businessmen sporting knee-socks, shorts, ties, and short-sleeved shirts; New Zealanders do not mind. The 550,000 tourists who visited the islands in 1984 spent nearly $300 million.

cial destiny, bitterly divided in their politics, New Zealanders wonder whether their society remains capable of assuring a "fair go" for the ordinary citizen. "For better and for worse," as economic historian John Gould put it, "New Zealand has become much more like everywhere else."

New Zealanders have long been accustomed to a certain modest, if unimaginatively expressed, prosperity. "The average house of the average New Zealander displays his soul truly, and utility is its essence," an anonymous contributor once wrote to the *Triad* magazine. Yet 70 percent of the nation's families own homes, slightly more than in the United States. Even the "inner-city" neighborhoods of the poor, with their indistinguishable, red-roofed "ticky-tackys" built on exactly one-eighth of an acre, look to Americans like respectable lower-middle-class suburbs. Most families have enough extra income* for at least a small Australian-built Ford—even though gasoline at $3.50 a gallon

*The average New Zealand family now makes about $233 (U.S. dollars) a week, compared to $472 for Americans. To support the country's massive welfare system, taxes may eat up to 66 percent of personal income, not far behind Sweden and Denmark.

makes driving expensive. And food is plentiful, although the average household's cuisine may strike visitors as uninspiring. "They exhaust their ingenuity on . . . vast cream sponges," complained novelist Eric Linklater. "Soup is neglected . . . [and] their admirable mutton . . . incinerated."

The citizens of what a Welsh poet once called "the suburb of the South Seas" put a high premium on leisure. Few New Zealanders spend more than 40 hours a week on the job, and those who work on weekends may command a fortune in overtime pay. Indeed, until 1980, shops closed on both Saturday and Sunday; a few remain obdurately shut on Saturdays, and all are still closed on Sundays. The weekends, instead, are for gardening, hiking, or sports. Sailboats tack across the bays around Auckland each Saturday, and even the smaller cities empty as workers head for the "bach," a family cottage in the mountains or on the beach. Of those who stay closer to home, the women play a weekend version of basketball called netball, while the men go off to watch rugby or to drink with cronies. (Getting "a bit full" is a national male indulgence; New Zealanders rank 12th internationally in consumption per capita of alcohol.)

Cradle-to-Grave Mendicants?

In short, New Zealanders, civilized and courteous, are not a people driven by ambition. In egalitarian New Zealand, "everyone receives the same amount of the world's goods," according to essayist Bill Pearson, and the consequence is that "everybody acts the same . . . everyone moves in the same directions." Some students from New Zealand's 34 private secondary schools, such as the pinstriped lads of Christ's College in Christchurch, ape the mannerisms of their British public school peers, and a few of the "old boys" have gone on to Parliament or the Cabinet. But to most New Zealanders, private schooling, like wearing black tie to an art gallery opening, smacks not of status and sophistication but of pretentiousness. "No particular prestige adheres to rising in society from poverty to power, affluence, or eminence," notes historian Keith Sinclair. "Nor does any great stigma attach to changing from white collar to overalls."

Hard-driving Americans may feel a twinge of envy over the slower pace of life. Some New Zealand authorities, however, became so alarmed by their countrymen's disdain for upward

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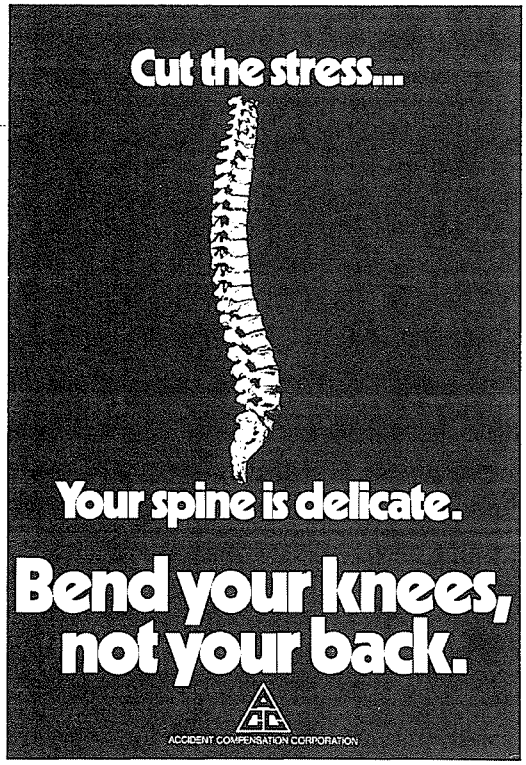


A government poster warns homemakers and wage-earners alike to guard against accidents: The state-run accident insurance program pays lost wages, medical bills, even funeral costs, for some 120,000 people a year—to the tune of nearly $55 million. The state treasury disburses another $200 million in other health benefits, more than half of it going for prescription drugs.

mobility that New Zealand's state-owned TV network interrupted regular programming during most of 1979 with the message: "We must work harder, otherwise we are not going to make it." Ronald Nairn, entrepreneur and native son, criticizes not only the leisurely suburban lifestyle but also the country's social welfare cushion for creating a race of "cradle-to-grave mendicants" reluctant to strive or excel in any sphere.

This "time trap of the spirit," as local humorist Gordon McLauchlan calls it, a desire to hang on to a "village mentality," may have left New Zealanders singularly unprepared for the disorderly and disturbing 1970s. When the economy suddenly sagged and real income per capita began to plunge in 1973 (dropping 45 percent by 1976), New Zealanders searched for a scapegoat. The ruling Labour Party, in power for the first time in 12 years, took the blame.

In opposition, conservative National Party leader Robert D. Muldoon, an accountant from Auckland, emerged as what one political writer called a "tough-talking father-figure" who would return New Zealand to its former prosperity. His pledge to "pre-

serve what we have always enjoyed" attracted even old-time Labour partisans from the city's working classes. They, together with National Party loyalists—the farmers and wealthy urban manufacturers—handed Muldoon the prime ministership, with a landslide 23-seat Parliamentary majority in November 1975.

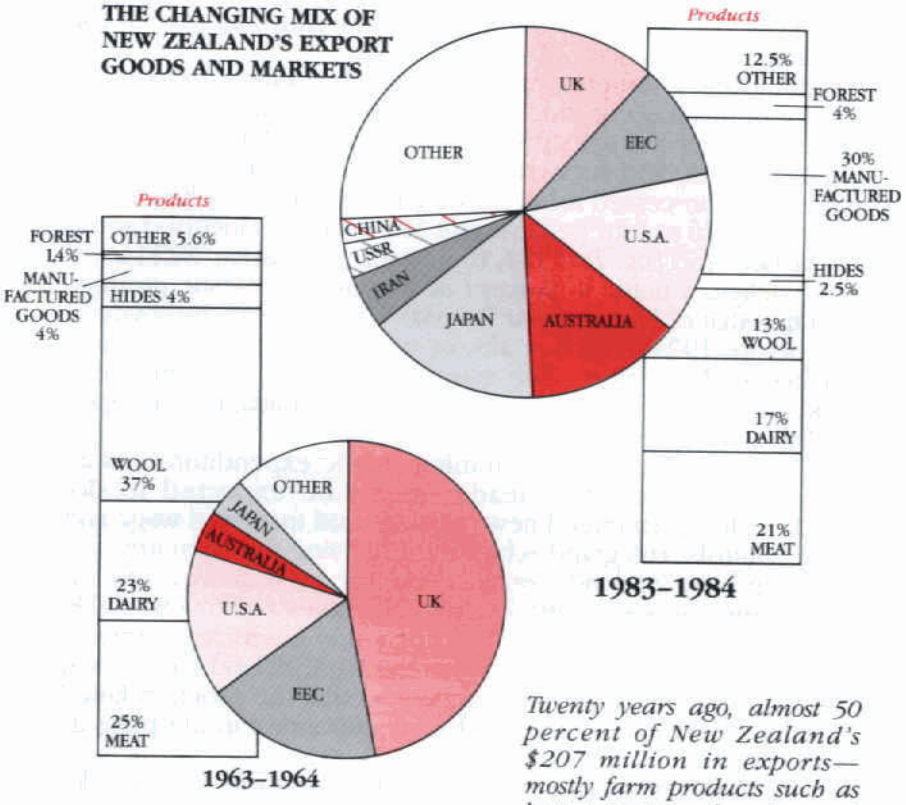
Muldoon proved to be a curious ideological amalgam. A senior French official visiting Wellington decided that rather than trying to locate Muldoon along any conventional Left-Right spectrum, he would place the Prime Minister midpoint between the rabble-rousing French populist Poujade and the Italian dictator Mussolini. The comparison was far from inapt. Muldoon's undoubted strength as Prime Minister lay partly in his willingness to use the long arm of the state to direct the economy as he thought fit. But he also profited from his ability to appeal to the prejudices and instincts of "the ordinary kiwi bloke."

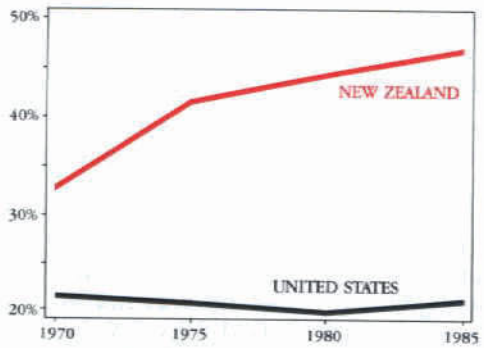
Rob's Mob

Those instincts were—and are—not completely benign. One product of New Zealand's pragmatic way of life is what James Michener once called "probably the most conservative white man still living," and Muldoon played to his sentiments. He campaigned against the "stirrers," the militant trade unionists, feminists, and radical students who dared criticize New Zealand's "unique qualities." He ordered police to raid the homes of Pacific Islanders—"the Turks of the South Pacific"—suspected of exceeding their allotted time in the country as guest workers. "Rob's mob," Muldoon supporters with a penchant for "rugby, racing, and beer," applauded his declaration that critics of a New Zealand rugby tour to South Africa were nothing less than traitors (see box, page 72).

Muldoon's rhetoric and his ad hoc economic policies, however, were not universally popular. Newspaper cartoonists poked fun at his abrasiveness. Police raids against the Polynesians in particular stirred protests from civil rights groups and fed the burgeoning Maori rights movement. Environmentalists were unhappy with Muldoon's attempts to expand the country's tiny manufacturing sector. Inspired by their success during the early 1970s in saving the remaining "native bush" (including Kauri trees the size of California redwoods) from the pulp factories, protestors zeroed in on hydroelectric plants planned for scenic rivers such as the Clutha on the South Island and on government proposals to reopen old coal mines.

Muldoon ignored his critics because for most of a decade he could afford to do so. "Real bloke" New Zealanders, particularly in rural areas, continued to support him as opposition La-





TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
As percent of Gross Domestic Product

Twenty years ago, almost 50 percent of New Zealand's $207 million in exports—mostly farm products such as butter, meat, and wool—went to Mother England. In today's nearly $5 billion export market, aluminum, steel, and machinery rank alongside meat in percentage of sales; the United States, Japan, and Australia buy as much as Great Britain. As New Zealand has diversified and expanded its exports, so too has government spending mushroomed. Today, public spending accounts for over 45 percent of the gross domestic product (versus 21 percent in the United States).

Sources: New Zealand Statistics Department; U.S. Department of Commerce.

bour leaders disagreed amongst themselves over election tactics. Thus, Muldoon retained power, if by slim margins, in the Parliamentary elections of 1978 and 1981.

Muldoon's tumultuous regime finally came to an end in 1984. On the positive side, he had expanded markets for New Zealand's meat and dairy products in Japan, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, and strengthened the manufacturing industries, particularly processed food, paper, and aluminum. Inflation was down from 16 to four percent. But Muldoon also incurred some big debts—too big. In 1984, the country's massive NZ$14 billion* deficit, a hefty 36 percent of the gross domestic product, matched that of Honduras or Bolivia. Where the unemployment rate before 1973 had been almost too low to calculate, it now reached eight percent. The country's standard of living, once ranked third behind the United States and Canada, had dropped to 29th among Western nations.

Ironically, instead of trimming public expenditures, as an ostensibly conservative leader might be expected to do, Muldoon had guaranteed new pensions and instituted wage and price controls. His grand scheme for reviving the economy and reducing New Zealand's reliance on imported energy, labeled "Think Big," was to attract foreign companies and investors. Yet so much red tape remained uncut (one American company planning to build a new factory on the North Island had to deal with 23 different government agencies) that the program failed to deliver what it promised and was lampooned in the press as "Sink Big."

To Wellington satirist Tom Scott, Muldoon looked like someone attempting to drive a car with both brake and accelerator pedals jammed to the floorboards.

Rogernomics

If Muldoon was a state socialist in conservative clothing, then his Labour Party opponent in the July 1984 Parliamentary elections, a 41-year-old criminal lawyer named David Lange (pronounced LONG-ee), was an economic conservative masquerading as a middle-of-the-road socialist. Calling vaguely for "reconciliation, recovery, and reform" (the "Three R's"), Lange convinced New Zealanders, with difficulty, that he was not an "economic illiterate," as Muldoon charged. Anti-Muldoon sentiment was strong enough, however, to propel Lange's party to a 19-seat Parliamentary majority, ousting the National government that had been in power for nine years.

*By the end of Muldoon's tenure, the New Zealand dollar was worth about 63 cents; in January 1986, it was worth around 57 cents.

After the election, Lange moved almost immediately to support the sagging New Zealand economy with his so-called more market strategies. Dubbed Rogernomics, after Lange's finance minister Roger Douglas, the changes included fewer restraints on imports such as kitchen appliances and farm machinery; higher rates for government-produced timber, coal, and electricity; an end to cheap loans and price supports for farmers; and less state interference in wage negotiations.

Many New Zealanders have yet to feel the effects of Lange's tinkering. They still have enough time and money for the outdoor life and for betting at the racetrack. The state still provides full pre- and post-natal care free of charge. University tuition is still less than $1,000 a year. The aged still get their pensions; national accident compensation covers everyone, regardless of whether they have other forms of insurance.

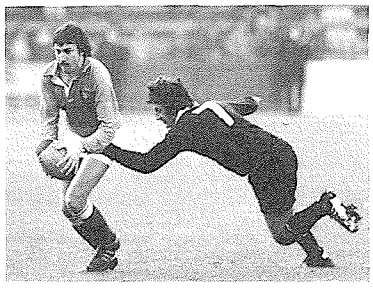
New Zealand consistently produces able cartoonists, some of whom have built international reputations. Here, three Prime Ministers get their comeuppance: Fred Hiscocks caricatures "King" Dick Seddon (1893–1906), while Tom Scott lampoons Robert Muldoon (1975–84) and David Lange (1984–).

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

Its aficionados call rugby New Zealand's "national religion," and only the brave dare disagree. Since the first local match in 1870, New Zealanders have developed a mania for the rough-and-tumble sport, following the fortunes of the national 15-man All Blacks team even more devotedly than Dallas watches the Cowboys.

Today, rugby remains the "last brave bastion of male brawn and skill" that a Canterbury sociologist once claimed it to be. Each Saturday, 200,000 self-described "dedicated amateurs" (even national players are nonprofessional) take to the field. Half a million more pitch in as umpires, spectators, and coaches. To Americans, rugby looks like sheer mayhem: a mix of soccer, football, and wrestling. But to former All Blacks coach J. J. Stewart, it is a game of drama and simplicity that "grips the player for life."

In recent years, however, the political furor generated by events off the field has threatened rugby's future as "an inalienable human right," as one Auckland columnist describes it. As early as 1967, the All Blacks made world headlines when Balthazar Johannes Vorster, then Prime Minister of South Africa, canceled their scheduled visit because Maori were members of the team. When the South African team, the Springboks, toured New Zealand in 1981, two matches in Auckland were canceled and others played behind barbed wire to protect players from 6,000 anti-apartheid protestors hurling gasoline bombs.



Bitter pulls-and-tugs among the All Blacks, the New Zealand government, and South Africa surfaced again when Prime Minister David Lange tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade the All Blacks from making a trip to South Africa in 1985. Nearly 42 percent of New Zealanders expressed support for the tour (according to a local poll). Yet more than 70,000 people protesting the trip took to the streets of Auckland, Wellington, and Matamata. Worse yet, a group calling itself Women Against Rugby declared war on the entire sport by refusing to chauffeur their husbands to games and by making them launder their own uniforms.

With New Zealanders at apparent loggerheads, two rugby-playing lawyers obtained an injunction from Wellington's High Court to bar the All Blacks' departure for Capetown, claiming that it would "damage, perhaps irreparably, the goodwill of the community." The national Rugby Union, with some ill grace, canceled the trip.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's local clubs are feeling the side effects of bad press and politics. Some secondary schools no longer teach the game; others ban rugby practice during school hours. But through it all, Cez Blazey, the 76-year-old head of the Rugby Union, remains stoutly optimistic: "People opposed to the Tour say that rugby is going to disappear. Nothing of the kind will happen."

Even members of Lange's Cabinet are unwilling to speculate about the long-term consequences of his schemes. As Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer put it, "This is the time to pause—to regroup after the first wave of policy development." But from the outset, there seem to have been some apparent winners and some big losers.

Lange's policies initially bolstered industry, something that business leaders had not expected from a self-proclaimed socialist. Entrepreneurs in Auckland and Wellington applauded loosened trade restrictions and a devalued New Zealand dollar, believing that they would spur local competition and make New Zealand exports more attractive abroad. Lower tax rates scheduled for mid-1986 promise more affluent New Zealanders some surplus income to spend at local art galleries or on private schools for their children.

Sacred Cows

But Lange has not brought back a golden age. With last season's lamb crop still hanging in the freezers in Southland province and the country's principal markets for lamb in Europe and the Middle East drying up, country folk fleeing failing dairy and sheep farms now throng Auckland and Wellington. And since the New Zealand dollar unexpectedly strengthened in 1985, even some manufacturers are finding Labour's brisk version of private enterprise a bit risky.

The biggest losers, though, are Labour Party stalwarts: blue-collar employees in New Zealand's construction, transport, and manufacturing industries. Union leaders warn that fewer trade restrictions on imported goods (and hence more competition from cheaper shoes, clothes, and machinery) may put as many as 400,000 workers out on the street. Nor does the workingman's paycheck buy what it did a year ago. Since Lange changed the way companies and unions negotiate wage increases, most union men have gotten smaller wage hikes than in previous years. At the same time, prices for gasoline, utilities, and housing have risen variously from 25 to 80 percent since late 1984. The net impact, as elegantly described by the *Economist*, has been "a sudden impoverishment of the working man, achieved during an abattoir session for Labour's most sacred cows."

Lange's foes, however, are not limited to critics of his economic policy. Social conservatives, fretting over a supposed Lange-inspired erosion of traditional values, may be the most aggrieved and most vocal of his detractors. In early 1985, liberal members of Parliament submitted a bill to decriminalize homosexual relations, fully expecting it to pass Parliament without

debate. But American-style religious fundamentalists, galvanized by the fear that homosexuals would "teach their lifestyle in the schools," led what they claim is the largest petition drive (800,000 signatures) in New Zealand's history to stop passage of the bill. Founders of the organizing group, the Coalition of Concerned Citizens, warning Lange "that we have had enough," now threaten to oust the Labour Party in the 1987 election.

Moreover, after nearly a decade of having the stage to themselves, New Zealand feminists in groups such as Auckland Women's Liberation and Sisters Overseas Service—which helps women needing abortions to get them in Australia—now battle "conservative Christian" women over abortion, equal pay, and child care. Members of Women for Life and Save Our Homes champion the deeply entrenched idea that the husband is the breadwinner in New Zealand and that women, especially mothers, should be "satisfied with family life."* Their appeal is perhaps stronger than it would be in the United States, since the proportion of women working outside the home (40 percent) is roughly the same as one would find in Greece.† Working mothers often endure the opprobrium of women who remain at home. Feminist demands for state-supported child-care centers, Swedish-style, have been met with comments echoing those of a Cabinet minister who once said the government should not be in the child-care business because it "encourages mothers to place their children in day care unnecessarily."

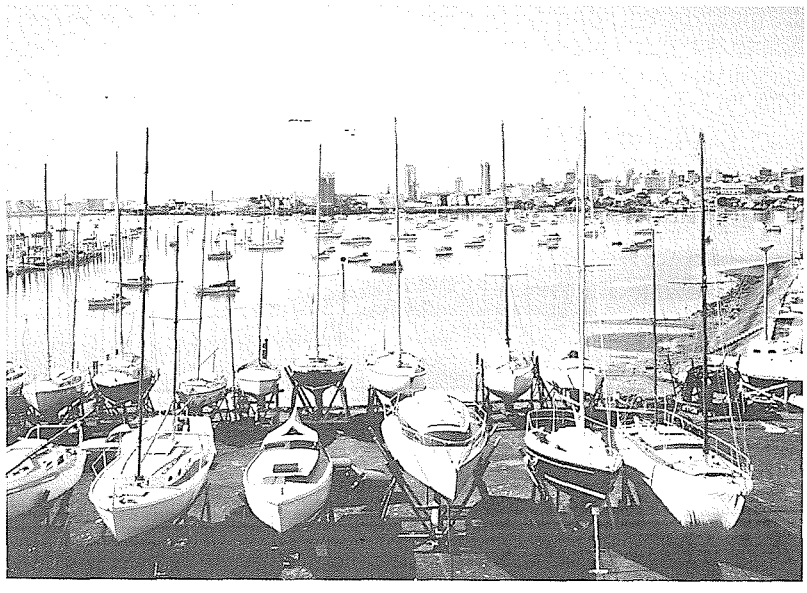
No Nukes, Please

All in all, Lange has curtailed the growth of state spending, at least for the time being. Rollbacks in agricultural subsidies and fewer trade restraints have reduced the government's ability to intervene in the economy; lower wages and higher fees for government services may have exacerbated social tensions. But none of this has attracted much attention abroad. What put New Zealand—and Lange—on page one in America and Europe was his February 5, 1985, decision to bar a U.S. Navy destroyer, the *Buchanan*, from New Zealand's harbors unless Washington gave assurances that the ship was neither nuclear-powered nor nuclear-armed.

Lange's defiant attitude was a novelty in a country whose Prime Minister in 1939, Michael Savage, declared as war broke out in Europe: "Both with gratitude for the past and confidence

*While a local poll shows that a majority of New Zealand women are happy at home, some clearly are not. Roughly one-third of all marriages now end in divorce, and though married women do not drink as much alcohol as their men folk, they take one-third more tranquilizers.

†The corresponding U.S. figure is 55.5 percent.



Like Californians, New Zealanders enjoy easy access to outdoor recreation. Yachts fill the marinas in Auckland's harbor, and the city's residents can drive to the North Island's Mount Ruapehu in three hours for a weekend of skiing.

in the future, we range ourselves beside Britain. Where she goes we go, where she stands, we stand."

Yet Lange's hard line should not have surprised Washington officials. Muldoon and most of the members of his Cabinet belonged to the old breed, men who had fought alongside American troops during World War II. Lange is part of a generation that protested against New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam War during the 1960s. (The U.S. State Department once denied him a visa, probably because of his antiwar activities.) He and his young Cabinet are determined to set New Zealand on a "self-reliant" political course, independent of its traditional allies, including and perhaps especially the United States.

Leaders in the United States and Australia (New Zealand's partners in the ANZUS defense treaty) do not seem to understand that Lange's decision to ban nuclear ships from New Zealand ports is not the work of some leftist faction in temporary control of the Labour Party. Nuclear protesters have been intermittently active in New Zealand (as in Britain) since 1949, when a trade union in Canterbury on the South Island established an anti-nuclear peace group. As early as 1963, a petition endorsing

a nuclear-free zone in the Southern Hemisphere ("No Bombs South of the Line") garnered 80,000 signatures. In the 1984 elections, Muldoon's National Party was the only major party that failed to endorse a nuclear ban.*

Today, the anti-nuclear symbol, a nuclear warhead with a diagonal slash through it, has become a familiar sight in New Zealand's cities—displayed in stores, sold on "Nukebuster" T-shirts, and spray-painted on walls. The people who oppose nuclear weapons include 58 percent of all New Zealanders, according to local polls, and they represent a broad spectrum of middle-class groups—professionals, women, local guilds, and environmentalists—as well as the usual left-wing radicals.

Reluctant Nation

Faced with strong public pressure, Lange is taking no political chances. Having alienated much union support with his conservative economic policies, the Prime Minister risks further fracturing the Labour Party—thereby jeopardizing the outcome of the 1987 election—if he reneges on his rebuff to Washington. With voters increasingly resentful over the nation's loss of prosperity, Lange knows that his future depends far more on whether he produces—or seems to produce—an economic recovery, this year and next.

One step toward that recovery, in Lange's view, can be taken close to home. Australia remains indisputably the biggest power in the South Pacific, but the Lange administration hopes to increase New Zealand's influence and—not coincidentally—to help strengthen the country's economy by becoming a major supplier to tiny countries such as Kiribati and the biggest buyer of local goods from islands such as Samoa. More importantly, Lange seeks to assure New Zealanders, at least, that "we in the Pacific are capable of making up our own minds." He wants New Zealand's "military efforts shifted to the South Pacific," in particular to the 13-member South Pacific Forum.† In August 1985, as part of this new "security commitment," Lange, along with Australian prime minister Robert Hawke, convinced the forum to declare its territories a nuclear-free zone, to avoid becoming "the cockpit of superpower confrontation."

How, in the long run, New Zealanders will take to Lange's "self-reliant" policy remains unclear. Unlike the Australians to

*Four major political parties ran candidates for the 95-member Parliament; the National, Labour, and Social Credit parties won seats.

†The members are Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa. New Zealand has a 5,700 man all-volunteer army, a 10-ship navy, and a small air force.

whom they are so often compared, New Zealanders have not been enthusiastic chauvinists. The reasons for this difference are many. Australia began breaking away from Britain earlier than New Zealand perhaps because the Irishmen who settled there were less well inclined toward the Mother Country than New Zealand's Scottish colonists. Perhaps Australia's natural resources—coal, oil, uranium, iron ore—made self-assertion not simply desirable, but possible.

Whatever the reasons, New Zealand is still the "reluctant nation" that political scientist Austin Mitchell found it to be a few years ago. Despite the public furor over nuclear weapons, New Zealanders seem divided over what direction to take. A recent poll shows that most New Zealanders—regardless of their views on nuclear arms—favor remaining in ANZUS. Many older men who fought in World War II fear that Lange's anti-nuclear, anti-ANZUS policies will alienate a good friend in the United States. Many blue-collar workers worry that less trade with the United States could mean fewer jobs. Some journalists and educators who support Lange's policies are concerned that the government's current quest for economic and political self-assertion may prove too arduous for the voters. If so, New Zealanders may simply adopt a new "mother protector," becoming an economic underling of neighboring Australia.

During its long, often hesitant search for a national identity, "New Zealand has been like one of her own schoolboys," as local historians Keith Jackson and John Harré put it, "forced to continue wearing short pants long after maturity." As they cope with their present dilemmas, New Zealanders are discovering that wearing "long pants" takes some getting used to.

NEW ZEALAND

"It may well be that we are on the very brink of an astounding new era of spiritual and aesthetic growth, a period when the heart shall count as the head. In this wiser dispensation, like to the scriptural grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, so shall a new New Zealand adorn the Pacific."

This hope, that New Zealand might be freed from the "binding . . . chains of custom [and] the tight stranglehold of use and want," closes one of New Zealand's greatest literary creations, Herbert Guthrie-Smith's **Tutira, the Story of a New Zealand Sheep Station** (Blackwood, 1921). Faithfully recording the natural and human history of 61,000 acres near Hawke's Bay from its geological beginnings to the 1920s, speaking sternly of weeds as "burdens of sin . . . dropped by many pilgrims," Guthrie-Smith testifies to New Zealanders' passionate, but ambivalent, love of their land.

Unlike Guthrie-Smith, who cherished the countryside as it was, many British colonists were bent on domesticating both the wild bush and the native Maori. In archivist Ray Grover's **Cork of War: An Historical Narrative** (John McIndoe, 1982), a fictional Scottish settler, moving through real history, watches as English and Australian speculators in 1839 buy one-acre plots of land from the Maori with "the usual assortment of slops, firearms, and gewgaws" and then sell them to eager white buyers, "although nobody . . . knew if these sections would be swamp, bush, or goldfield."

Most newcomers toiled on small farms, but some led a harsh, nomadic existence. In **Station Amusements in New Zealand** (William Hunt, 1873), Lady Barker, an English aristocrat, describes the lives of these itinerant "swaggers"—men who subsisted on game and fern roots, only occasionally leaving the wilderness to beg for jobs, food, or lodging from settlers.

"It's a damn' bloody hard country wherever you live in it," concludes a settler in John Mulgan's famous novel **Man Alone** (Selwyn & Blount, 1939). Unlike the swaggers, who took only what they could find, the settlers struggling to bring order to the outback produced what Mulgan describes as "desolate country. . . . Blackened trees still standing, blackened, unrotted logs on the ground gave the hills the derelict air of a battlefield."

New Zealanders no longer wage war on the bush, but the modern-day landscape—well described in the **New Zealand Atlas** (A. R. Shearer, 1976), edited by Ian Ward—retains its monumental, and sometimes threatening, proportions. So rugged is the mountainous back country that much of it remained unexplored until this century. And although the rivers have been harnessed, providing 75 percent of the country's electricity, earthquakes remain a constant hazard.

While swaggers and settlers contended with the wild, men such as Henry Sewell, New Zealand's first Premier, began constructing a new government. Unfortunately, like many works chronicling New Zealand's colonial period, **The Journal of Henry Sewell, 1853–7** (Whitcoulls, 1980), edited by David McIntyre, is not readily available in the United States. American readers may turn to the **Oxford History of New Zealand** (Oxford, 1981, cloth; 1983, paper), whose 16 authors paint with a broad brush,

beginning before British annexation, touching on the politics of the Lib-Labs of the 1890s and the Red-Feds of the 1920s, and ending with the "society of 'fair shares'" during the 1970s.

The book's authors largely ignore New Zealand's international ties, particularly the cozy relationship with Britain that heavily influenced the country's military and economic decisions. **Beyond New Zealand: The Foreign Policy of a Small State** (Methuen, 1980), a collection of papers edited by John Anderson et al. and written by academics and defense officials, conveys the growing sentiment among New Zealanders that the "interests of the large industrialized Western nations and... a small, isolated island nation do not always coincide." Historian M. P. Lissington, in **New Zealand and the United States, 1840–1944** (A. R. Shearer, 1972), focuses on World War II, when New Zealanders looked to America for help against the Japanese menace and provided a way station for more than 100,000 U.S. Marines and other servicemen who passed through the islands between 1942 and 1944.

On the home front, the welfare state, described in detail in **Social Welfare and New Zealand Society** (Methuen, 1977), edited by A. D. Trlin, expanded rapidly before the war, helping to cushion the economic hardships that afflicted New Zealand no less than the rest of the West. But, as economist John Gould reflects in **The Rake's Progress?** (Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), the affluent 1950s and '60s were followed by the topsy-turvy '70s, bringing hard times, anti-nuclear protests, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and the video store next to the corner dairy.

The 1970s also brought on a Maori renaissance. Maori remained an unwritten language until missionaries began to transcribe it during the 1820s, and Maori literary tales—as opposed to oral ones—have only recently flourished. The "indissoluble tie of kinship" and the *mauri*, the life force shared by the human and natural worlds, that anthropologist Margaret Orbell describes in **Natural World of the Maori** (Sheridan, 1985) take literary form in stories like those in **Into the World of Light: An Anthology of Maori Writing** (Heinemann, 1982, cloth; 1983, paper), edited by Witi Ihimaera and D. S. Long and written in both Maori and English. A reverence for kin and community pervades Ihimaera's **Whanau** (Heinemann, 1974, cloth; 1983, paper), a tale about a rural Maori wedding, as the *mauri* does in Keri Hulme's award-winning **The Bone People** (Spiral, 1984; La. State Univ. Press, 1985).

Despite the ferment of recent decades and the Maori literary efflorescence, most white writers are still stuck in the old themes. With exceptions such as Janet Frame (*A State of Siege, Owls Do Cry*), Maurice Gee (*Plumb, Meg, Sole Survivor*), and a few poets and novelists excerpted in **New Zealand Writing Since 1945** (Oxford, 1983), most remain haunted, as editor Vincent O'Sullivan puts it, by "the old but potent fact of this country's isolation—of writer from community, [of] community from its parent and from [the] indigenous culture."

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Most of the titles in this essay were suggested by Ray Grover, director of the New Zealand National Archives in Wellington.*

NOTES ON THE UNITED STATES

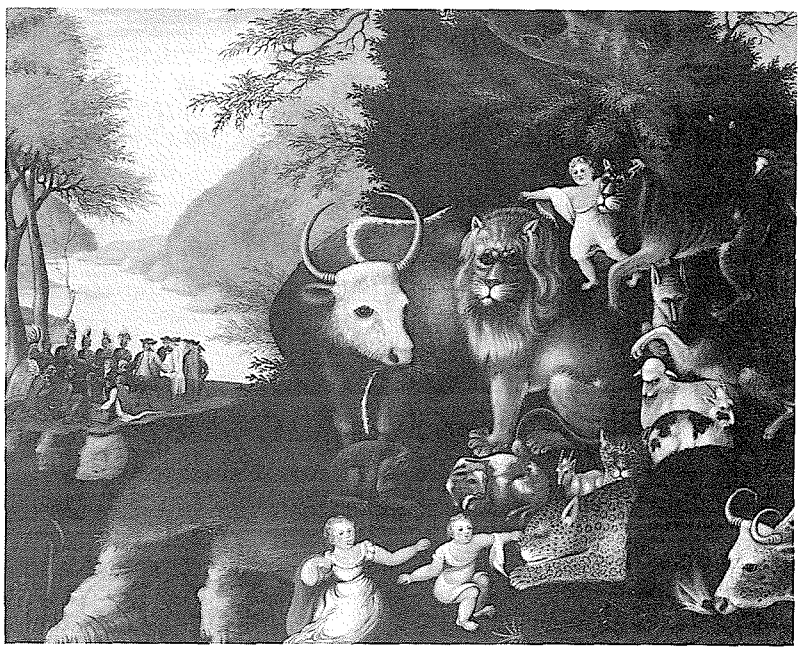
Latin America's intellectuals and artists have long been known for their leftist, even Marxist, sympathies. Few today emulate the late Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who remained loyal to Moscow even after the horrors of the Stalin era. But Colombia's Gabriel García Márquez, Argentina's Julio Cortazar, and others have ritually denounced Washington's *imperialismo* while singing the praises of Fidel Castro. Mexico's Octavio Paz is one of the exceptions. The widely read poet-essayist and former diplomat first learned to distrust communism when he supported the anti-Franco cause in the Spanish Civil War. And it was not long after Cuba's 1959 revolution that Paz voiced disenchantment with Castro's new workers' state. Paz, a self-described democratic socialist, is no cheerleader for the *Yanquis*. Here, however, he offers them an unusual view of their place in history.

by Octavio Paz

Faced with the concrete reality of the United States, the first, natural reaction of any visitor is utter amazement.

Few have gone beyond that initial shock of surprise—admiration mingled at times with revulsion—to realize the immense originality of that country. One of those few, and the first of them, was Alexis de Tocqueville. His reflections, set down in *Democracy in America* (1835), are still as pertinent as ever. He foresaw the future greatness of the American Union and the nature of the conflict that has lain at its heart ever since its birth, a conflict to which it owes, at one and the same time, both its great successes and its great setbacks: the opposition between freedom and equality, the individual and democracy, local freedoms and federal centralism.

Henry Adams's vision, though less broad, was perhaps more profound: Deep within American society he saw an opposition between the Dynamo, which transforms the world but



Peaceable Kingdom *(1834) by Edward Hicks*.

reduces it to uniform series, and the Virgin, the natural and spiritual energy that irrigates and illuminates the human soul and thus produces the range and variety of our works. Tocqueville and Adams saw, clearly and sharply, what was going to happen; we, today, see what is happening.

When I speak of America's originality, I am not referring to the familiar contrasts—great wealth and extreme privation, the cheapest vulgarity and the purest beauty, greed and altruism, active pursuit of goals and the passivity of the drug addict or the frenetic violence of the drunkard, proud freedom and the docility of the herd, intellectual exactitude and the fuzzy delirium of the nut case, prudishness and license—but, rather, to the *historical novelty* that the United States represents.

Nothing in our human past has been comparable to this reality that is made up of violent clashes and glaring contrasts, and is, if I may use the expression, full of itself. Full and empty. What lies behind this tremendous variety of products and goods flaunted before the eyes of the world with a sort of shamelessness born of generosity?

A wealth that is fascinating—that is to say, deceptive.

I am not thinking of the injustices and inequalities of Amer-

ican society. Though they are many, they are fewer and less grave than our own, than those of most nations. I say "deceptive" wealth not because it is unreal but because I ask myself whether a society can live trapped within the confines of the circle of production and consumption, work and pleasure.

There are those who will say that this situation is not unique, but common, rather, to all industrial countries. That is true, but in the United States, since it is the nation that has gone the farthest along this path and is thus the perfect expression of modernity, the situation has reached its extreme limit.

●

I repeat my question: What lies behind this wealth? I cannot answer; I find nothing, there is nothing. I explain myself: All institutions in America—its technology, its science, its energy, its education—are a means, a *way toward*. Freedom, democracy, work, inventive genius, perseverance, fulfillment of promises and obligations: Everything is *useful*, everything a means to attain—what? Happiness in this life, salvation in the life beyond, the good, the truth, wisdom, love? Ultimate ends, those that really count because they give meaning to our lives, are not visible on the horizon of the United States. They exist, that is certain, but they appertain to the private domain.

Questions and answers as to life and its meaning, death and the life beyond, traditionally taken over by Church and State, have heretofore always been matters in the public domain. The great historical novelty of the United States lies in its attempt to return them to the private domain, the private life of each and every citizen. What the Protestant Reformation achieved in the sphere of beliefs, the American Union has achieved in the secular sphere.

American society, unlike all other societies we know of, was founded in order that its citizens might realize their private ends in peace and freedom, on the theory that the common good lies not in a collective or metahistorical end but in the harmonious coexistence of individual ends. Can nations live without common beliefs and without a metahistorical ideology?

In the past, the acts and deeds of each people were nour-

Octavio Paz, 72, is a poet, essayist, and former diplomat. Born in Mexico City, he attended the National University of Mexico. He is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose, including The Labyrinth of Solitude *(1950). This essay is excerpted from* One Earth, Four or Five Worlds *(1985).*

ished and justified by a metahistory; in other words, by a common end that lay above individuals and had to do with values that were, or were presumed to be, transcendent. Americans naturally share beliefs, values, and ideas: freedom, democracy, justice, work, and so on. But all such concepts are a means, something *for* this or that. The ultimate ends of their acts and thoughts lie not in the public domain but in the private. The American Union was the very first historical attempt to give back to the individual what the State had stolen from the person in the beginning.

I do not mean by that that the American State is the only liberal State: Its founding was inspired by the examples of Holland, England, and the philosophy of the 18th century. But the American nation, and not only the State, is different from others precisely because it was founded on these ideas and principles. Unlike what happened elsewhere, the United States Constitution does not modify or change a prior situation (in its case, the monarchical regime with its hereditary classes, estates, and special jurisdictions); it institutes, rather, a new society. It marks an absolute beginning.

It has frequently been said that in liberal democratic societies, especially in the United States, the power of individuals and groups, above all of capitalist enterprises but also of workers' bureaucracies and other sectors, has grown without restraint, to the point where State domination has been replaced by that of special interests. The criticism is a fair one. It must be added, however, that while this reality seriously distorts the original design, it does not nullify it altogether. The founding principle is still alive. Proof of that can be found in the fact that it continues to inspire the movements of self-criticism and reform that periodically shake the United States. All of these have represented themselves as a return to the country's origins.

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The great historical originality of the American nation, and also the root of its contradiction, lies in the very act by which it was founded. The United States was founded in order that its citizens might live, among themselves and by themselves, free at last of the weight of history. It was a construct aimed against history and its disasters, oriented toward the future, that *terra incognita* with which it has identified itself.

The cult of the future fits naturally within the American design and is, so to speak, its condition and its result. American society was founded by an act of abolition of the past. Its citizens, unlike Englishmen or Japanese, Germans or Chinese,

Mexicans or Portuguese, are not the offspring of but the beginning of a tradition. Instead of carrying on a past, they inaugurate a new time. The act (and the document) of foundation—a canceling-out of the past and a beginning of something different—has been repeated throughout its history.

But the United States is not in the future, a region that does not exist; it is here and now, among all the rest of us, in the midst of history. It is an empire, and its slightest movements shake the whole world. It would like to be outside the world but it is in the world—it *is* the world. Hence the contradiction of contemporary American society: Being at once an empire and a democracy is the result of another, deeper contradiction, having been founded against history yet being itself history.

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The United States has undergone a period of doubt and disorientation. If it has not lost faith in its institutions—Watergate was an admirable proof of this—it no longer believes as fervently as it once did in the destiny of the nation. The present state of mind of the American people is in all likelihood the consequence of two phenomena that used to be opposites but, as frequently happens in history, have now become conjoined. The first is the sense of guilt that the Vietnam War aroused in many minds; the second is the waning of the puritan ethic and the waxing of the hedonism of abundance.

The sense of guilt, coupled with the humiliation of defeat, has reinforced the traditional isolationism, which has always regarded American democracy as an island of virtue in the sea of perversities that is world history. Hedonism, for its part, takes no notice of the outside world or, along with it, of history. Isolationism and hedonism coincide in one respect: They are both antihistorical. Both are expressions of a conflict present in American society since the war with Mexico in 1847, but not fully apparent until this century: The United States is a democracy and at the same time an empire.

A peculiar empire, I must add, for it does not wholly fit the classic definition of one. It is something quite distinct from the Roman, Spanish, Portuguese, and British empires.

Standing bewildered in the face of its dual historical nature, the United States does not know which way to turn today. The dilemma is a fateful one. If it chooses a truly imperial destiny, it will cease to be a democracy and will thereby lose its reason for being a nation. But how to renounce power without being immediately destroyed by its rival, the Russian Empire?

It will be objected that Great Britain, too, was both a de-

mocracy and an empire. The contemporary situation is very different, however: Great Britain's imperial rule was exclusively colonial and exercised overseas; moreover, in its European and American policy it sought not hegemony but a balance of power. But the policy of the balance of powers belongs to another stage in history; neither Great Britain nor any other great European power was forced to confront a State such as the Soviet Union, whose imperialist expansion is inextricably linked to a universal orthodoxy. The Russian Bureaucratic State not only aspires to world domination but is a militant orthodoxy that does not tolerate other ideologies or systems of government.

If, instead of comparing the international situation that confronts the United States today with that prevailing in Europe during the second half of the last century, we think of Rome in the last days of the Republic, the comparison shows American democracy to be in an even more unfavorable position.

The political difficulties of the Romans of the first century B.C. were primarily internal in nature, and this partially explains the ferocity of the struggles among the various factions: Rome had already achieved domination over all the known world, and its only rival—the Parthian Empire—was a power on the defensive. Moreover, and most important, none of the powers that had fought the Romans sought to further a universalist ideology.

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By contrast, the contradictions of American foreign policy—a result of the controversies among groups and parties as well as of the inability of the nation's leaders to formulate a long-term overall plan—exist side by side with an aggressive empire that embraces a universalist ideology. To make matters still worse, the Western alliance is made up of countries whose interests and politics are not always identical with those of the United States.

The expansion of the American republic has been the natural, and in some ways fatal, consequence—if I may so put it—of its economic and social development; Roman expansion grew out of the deliberate action of the senatorial oligarchy and its generals over a period of more than two centuries. The foreign policy of Rome is an outstanding example of coherence, singleness of purpose, perseverance, skill, tenacity, and prudence—precisely the virtues that we find lacking in Americans. Tocqueville was the first to see where the fault lay:

> With regard to the conduct of the external affairs of society, democratic governments appear to me to be decid-

> edly inferior to the others. . . . Foreign policy requires the use of almost none of the qualities that characterize democracy, and on the other hand calls for the development of almost all those which democracy lacks by its very nature. . . . Democracy would find it most difficult to coordinate all the details of a great undertaking, draw up a plan in advance, and stubbornly follow it to the end despite all obstacles. It has little aptitude for preparing its means in secret and patiently awaiting the results.

American democracy is religious in origin and extends back to the communities of Protestant dissenters who settled in the country during the 17th century. Religious preoccupations were later transformed into political ideas steeped in republicanism, democracy, and individualism, but the original religious tone never disappeared from the public conscience.

In the United States, religion, morality, and politics have been inseparable. This is the major difference between European liberalism, which is almost always secular and anticlerical, and the American variety. Among Americans, democratic ideas have a religious foundation, in some instances implicit and in others (the majority) explicit. These ideas served to justify the attempt, unique in history, to constitute a nation as a *covenant* in the face of, and even against, historical necessity or history as fate. In the United States the social contract was not a fiction but a reality, and it was entered into in order *not* to repeat European history. This is the origin of American isolationism: the attempt to establish a society that would escape the vicissitudes that European peoples had suffered. American expansion, up until the war with Mexico, was aimed at colonizing empty spaces (Indian peoples were always regarded as *nature*) and that space more empty still, the future.

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If they could, Americans would lock themselves up inside their country and turn away from the world, except to trade with it and visit it. The American utopia—in which, as in all utopias, monstrous features abound—is an interweaving of three dreams: those of the ascetic, the merchant, and the explorer. Three individualists. Hence three American traits: Their reluctance to confront the outside world; their inability to understand it; and their lack of skill in manipulating it. Americans are citizens of an empire, surrounded by some nations that are allies and by others out to destroy it, yet Americans would rather be left alone: The outside world is evil, history is perdition.

America is the opposite of Russia, another religious country but one that identifies religion with the Church and finds the confusion between ideology and party legitimate. The communist State—as was quite evident during the last war—is not only the successor of the tsarist State but its continuer. The notion of a social contract or "covenant" has never held an important place within the political history of Russia, or within the tsarist or Bolshevik tradition. Nor has the idea of religion as something belonging to the sphere of heartfelt individual belief; to the Russians, religion and politics appertain not to the sphere of private conscience but to the public sphere. Americans have endeavored, and are endeavoring, to construct a world of their very own, a world outside of this world; the Russians have endeavored, and are endeavoring, to dominate this world in order to convert it.

The basic contradiction of the United States has an effect on the very foundations of the nation. Hence our reflections on the United States and its present predicament lead to the question: Will it be able to resolve the contradiction between empire and democracy? At stake are its life and its identity.

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Though it is impossible to answer this question, it is possible to venture a comment.

The sense of guilt can be transformed, can lead directly to the beginnings of political salvation. Hedonism, on the other hand, leads only to surrender, ruin, defeat. It is, admittedly, true that after Vietnam and Watergate we have been witness to a sort of masochistic orgy and seen many intellectuals, clergymen, and journalists rend their garments and beat their breasts as signs of contrition. These self-accusations, as a general rule, were not and are not false, but their tone was and is frequently hysterical (as when a journalist, writing in the *New York Times*, held American policy in Indochina responsible for the subsequent atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese).

Yet this sense of guilt, besides being a compensation that maintains a psychic equilibrium, carries moral weight: It stems from a searching conscience and the recognition that a wrong has been committed. Hence it can become a sense of responsibility, the one and only antidote against the intoxication of hubris, for individuals as for empires. On the other hand, it is more difficult to transform the hedonism of modern masses into a moral force. It is not blind illusion, however, to place our trust in the ethical and religious foundations of America: They are a living source whose flow has been obstructed but not yet en-

tirely dammed.

The foreign policy of the United States has followed a zigzag, erratic course, frequently contradictory and at times beyond all understanding. Its principal defect, its basic inconsistency, is attributable not to the failings of American leaders, which are many, but to its being a policy more sensitive to domestic reactions than to foreign ones.

The United States' objectives are to contain the Soviet Union and its shock troops (Cuba, Vietnam), to consolidate its own alliance with Japan and the European democracies, to consolidate its ties with China, to bring about an agreement in the Middle East that will preserve the independence of Israel and at the same time strengthen friendship with Egypt, to gain friends in the Arab countries and in those of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

These are its avowed ends, but its real ones are to win the votes and satisfy the aspirations and ambitions of this or that group at home, whether Jews or blacks, industrial workers or farmers, the "establishment" of the East or Texans. It is evident that the policy of a great power cannot be subordinated to the shifting and divergent pressures of various groups within the nation: The cause of the downfall of Athens was not so much Spartan arms as the struggles between internal parties.

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Any list of the errors of American policy must end with the following reservation: These errors, magnified by the mass media and by political passions, are revealing of vices and faults inherent in plutocratic democracies, but they do not indicate an intrinsic weakness. The United States has suffered defeats and setbacks, but its economic, scientific, and technological power is still superior to that of the Soviet Union.

So is its political and social system. American institutions were designed for a society in perpetual motion, whereas Soviet institutions correspond to a static caste society. Hence any change in the Soviet Union endangers the very foundations of the regime.

There is much talk of the inferiority of the Americans in the military sphere, especially in the area of traditional weapons. This is a temporary inferiority. The United States has the material and human resources to re-establish the balance of power.

And the political will? It is difficult to give an unequivocal answer to that question. In recent years, Americans have suffered from a psychic instability that has taken them from one extreme to another. Not only have they lost their sense of direc-

tion; they have also lost control of themselves. What the United States has lacked is not power but wisdom.

Above all, the American people and its leaders lack that sixth sense that almost all great nations have had: *prudence*. Since Aristotle, this word designates the highest political virtue. Prudence is made up of wisdom and integrity, boldness and moderation, discernment and persistence in undertakings. The best and most succinct definition of *prudentia* was given recently by Cornelio Castoriadis: the ability to find one's bearings in history. This is the ability that many of us find lacking in the United States.

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To Montesquieu, the decadence of the Romans had a two-fold cause: the power of the army and the corruption of luxury. The first was the origin of the empire, the second its ruin. The army gave Rome dominion over the world but, along with it, irresponsible sybaritism and extravagance. Will the Americans be wiser and more temperate than the Romans; will they show greater moral fortitude? It seems most unlikely. However, there is one aspect of the situation that would have raised Montesquieu's spirits: The Americans have succeeded in defending their democratic institutions and have even broadened and perfected them.

In Rome, the army backed the despotism of the Caesars; the United States suffers from the ills and vices of freedom, not those of tyranny. Though deformed, the moral tradition of criticism that has accompanied the nation all through its history is still alive.

In the past, the United States was able to use self-criticism to resolve other conflicts. It continues to give proof of its capacities for self-renewal. During the last 20 years it has taken great strides in the direction of resolving the other great contradiction that tears it apart, the racial question. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that by the end of this century the United States will have become the first multiracial democracy in history. Despite its grave imperfections and its vices, the American democratic system bears out the opinion of antiquity: If democracy is not the ideal government, it is the least bad.

One of the great achievements of the American people has been to preserve democracy in the face of the two great threats of our day: the powerful capitalist oligarchies and the bureaucratic State of the 20th century. Another positive sign: Americans have made great advances in the art of human cohabitation, not only in terms of different ethnic groups that live peacefully to-

gether but also in domains heretofore ruled by the taboos of traditional morality, such as sexuality. Some critics lament that permissiveness and the relaxation of morals; I confess that the other extreme strikes me as worse—the cruel puritanism of communists and the bloody prudery of Khomeini. Finally, the development of the sciences and technology is a direct consequence of the freedom of investigation and criticism predominant in the universities and cultural institutions of the United States. American superiority in these fields is no accident.

How and why, in a democracy that has proved itself to be so endlessly fertile and creative in science, technology, and the arts, should its politics be so overwhelmingly mediocre? Can the critics of democracy be right? We must grant that the will of the majority is not a synonym for wisdom: The Germans voted for Hitler, and Chamberlain was elected democratically. The democratic system is exposed to the same risk as hereditary monarchy; the popular will is no more unerring than the genes, and elections that turn out badly are as unpredictable as the birth of defective royal heirs.

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The remedy lies in the system of checks and balances: the independence of judicial and legislative power, the weight of public opinion in governmental decisions through the healthy and sensible exercise of their critical function by the communications media. Unfortunately, neither the U.S. Senate nor the media nor public opinion has given signs of political *prudence* in the years just past.

The inconsistencies in American foreign policy are attributable not just to officeholders and politicians but to the entire nation. Not only do the interests of groups and parties come before collective ends, but American opinion has shown itself incapable of understanding what is happening beyond its borders. This criticism is as applicable to liberals as to conservatives, to clergymen as to labor leaders. There is no country better informed than the United States; its journalists are excellent and they are everywhere, its specialists have all the data and background facts needed for each case—yet what comes forth from this gigantic mountain of information and news is, almost always, the mouse of the fable.

An intellectual failure? No: a failure of historical vision. Because of the very nature of the endeavor that founded the nation—sheltering it from history and its horrors—Americans suffer from a congenital difficulty in understanding the outside world and orienting themselves in its labyrinths.

Another defect of American democracy, already noted by Tocqueville in his day: egalitarian tendencies, which do not suppress individual selfishness but merely deform it. These tendencies have not prevented the birth and spread of social and economic inequalities, while at the same time they have held the best back and hampered their participation in public life.

A major example is the situation of the intellectual class: Its first-rate achievements in the sciences, technology, the arts, and education stand in sharp contrast to its scant influence in politics. It is true that many intellectuals serve and have served in government, but this has almost always been as technicians and experts—that is, *in order to do* this or that, not in order to help define ends and goals. A few intellectuals have been counselors of presidents and have thus contributed to planning and executing American foreign policy. But they are isolated cases. The American intellectual class, as a social entity, does not have the influence that its counterparts in European and Latin American countries enjoy. For one thing, society is not inclined to grant this class such a role.

American intellectuals, in turn, have shown little interest in the great philosophical and political abstractions that have roused deep passions in our era. This indifference has had a positive aspect: It has kept them from going as badly astray as many European and Latin American intellectuals. It has also kept them from the despicable moral lapses and relapses of so many writers who, without so much as blinking an eye, have accepted public honors and international prizes as they hymned paeans of praise to the Stalins, the Maos, and the Castros.

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American intellectuals' mistrust of ideological passions is understandable; what is not understandable is their ignoring the fact that these passions have moved several generations of European and Latin American intellectuals, among them some of the best and most generous. In order to understand these others and to understand contemporary history as well, it is necessary to understand these passions.

When the subject under discussion is the American character, the word *naiveté* almost invariably crops up. Americans themselves value *innocence* very highly. Naiveté is not a character trait that fits well with the pessimistic introspection of the puritan. Yet the two coexist within the American character. Perhaps introspection allows Americans to see themselves and discover, within their heart of hearts, the traces of God or of the devil; naiveté, in turn, is their mode of presentation of self to

others and their manner of relating to them.

Naiveté is an appearance of innocence. Or, rather, it is protective gear. Thus the apparent defenselessness of one who is naive is a psychological weapon; it preserves that person from the contamination of the other and, by isolating him or her, makes it possible to escape and launch a counterattack. The ingenuousness of American intellectuals in the face of the great ideological debates of our century has fulfilled that double function. It has kept them from falling into the moral errors and perversions into which certain Europeans and Latin Americans have fallen; and it has permitted them to judge and condemn those who have strayed from virtue—without understanding them. Both American conservatives and liberals have substituted moral judgment for historical vision. Admittedly, it is not possible to have a view of the other, that is to say a vision of history, without moral principles. But a moral perspective cannot replace true historical vision, above all if this moral perspective is that of a provincial puritanism combined with variable but strong doses of pragmatism, empiricism, and positivism.

The two missions of the modern intellectual are, first, to investigate, create, and transmit knowledge, values, and experiences; and, second, to criticize society and its usages, institutions, and politics. Since the 18th century, this second function, inherited from the medieval clerics, has assumed greater and greater importance. We are all familiar with the work of Americans in the fields of the sciences, literature, the arts, and education; they have also been honest and courageous in their criticism of their society and of its defects. America's intellectuals have been faithful to the tradition upon which their country was founded and in which the scrutiny of conscience occupies a central place.

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This puritan tradition, however, by emphasizing and encouraging separation, is antihistorical and isolationist. When the United States abandons its isolation and participates in the affairs of the world, it does so in the manner of a believer in a land of infidels.

American writers and journalists have an insatiable curiosity and are extremely well informed about what goes on in today's world, but instead of understanding, they pass judgment. It must be said, in all truth, that they reserve their severest judgments for their compatriots and those in public office. That is admirable; yet at the same time it is not enough. In the days of their country's intervention in Indochina, they denounced, with good reason, the policy emanating from Washington; yet their criticism, based

almost exclusively on moral grounds, generally neglected to examine the nature of the conflict. Critics were more interested in condemning President Lyndon B. Johnson than in understanding how and why there were American troops in Indochina. Many said that this conflict "was no concern of America's," as though the United States were not a world power and the war in Indochina were a local episode.

Morality is no substitute for historical understanding. That is precisely why many liberals were so surprised at the outcome of the conflict: the installation of a military-bureaucratic dictatorship in Vietnam, the mass murders under Pol Pot, the occupation of Cambodia and Laos by Vietnamese troops, the punitive expedition by the Chinese, and, in recent days, the hostilities between Vietnam and Thailand. And today, confronted by the situation in Central America, liberals mouth the same simplistic nonsense.

Apart from the fact that it is not always sincere, the moralizing attitude does not help us to understand the reality that lies outside ourselves. Morality, in the sphere of politics, must be accompanied by other virtues. Central to all of them is historical imagination. This intellectual faculty has a counterpart in the realm of sensibility: sympathy for the other, for others.

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The image presented by the United States is not reassuring. The country is disunited, repeatedly torn apart by dissensions that do not have the least element of grandeur, eaten away by doubt, undermined by a suicidal hedonism, dazed by the ranting of demagogues. It is a society divided, not so much vertically as horizontally, by the clash of tremendous selfish interests: great corporations, labor unions, "the farm bloc," bankers, ethnic groups, the powerful communications industry.

The remedy is to regain unity of purpose, without which there is no possibility for action—but how? The malady of democracies is disunity, mother of demagogism. The other road, that of political health, leads by way of soul-searching and self-criticism: a return to origins, to the foundations of the nation. In the case of the United States, this means to the vision of its founders—not to copy them, but to begin again. Not to do exactly as they did but, rather, like them, to make a new beginning. Such beginnings are at once purifications and mutations: With them something different always begins as well.

At the end of a humid summer day in the mid-18th century, Japanese women air precious books to prevent mildew. The Japanese adopted Chinese ideographs beginning around the third century. Today, reading and writing require a knowledge of some 1,850 characters, yet literacy in Japan is universal.

The Struggle for Literacy

"Reading maketh a full man," Francis Bacon declared in 1597, "and writing an exact man." His aphorism, penned a century and a half after Gutenberg's creation of the printing press, expressed the West's revived faith in the awesome power of literacy—to elevate the human mind, to uplift the citizenry, to spur progress. Today, many Americans, awash in memos and junk mail, take the written word for granted. Yet perhaps 27 million of their countrymen are "functionally illiterate." They must strain even to decipher the warning label on a bottle of aspirin. In many other places, reading and writing remain uncommon, the printed word a mystery: Illiteracy afflicts more than 90 percent of the people in some Third World countries. Indeed, of mankind's 3,000 spoken languages, only some 78 are written. Here, Walter A. Fairservis traces the development of writing in ancient times; Steven Lagerfeld describes the impact of literacy in the West; and David Harman examines the uneven state of reading and writing in the United States today.

FROM STICKS AND BONES

by Walter A. Fairservis

Early in 1835, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, a young British Army officer and amateur Orientalist, stood in the shadow of a fabled mountain near the town of Bīsotūn, in what is now western Iran. His superiors in London had sent him to Persia to reorganize the army of the shah; his passion for the history of ancient civilizations had brought him to the mountain.

Far above him, carved into a vertical expanse of rock 60 feet long and 23 feet high, loomed a huge bas-relief of nine men in chains being led before a king. Beneath the tableau were hundreds of lines of cuneiform inscriptions, their meaning lost to

history. Rawlinson was determined to unlock their secret.

Just copying the inscriptions into his notebook cost him years of grueling labor: crawling from toehold to toehold in the hot sunlight, dangling from ropes suspended 500 feet above the desert floor, perching on flimsy ladders lodged on narrow outcroppings of stone. When he was done, he had copies of a single inscription written in what proved to be three ancient tongues—Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian-Assyrian. Rawlinson already had some knowledge of Old Persian; he thought he would be able to use a translation of the Persian inscription to crack Elamite and Babylonian-Assyrian.

Making Marks

Even so, it took him another 10 years of toil to decipher the Persian cuneiform—the bas-relief, he discovered, celebrated the victories of King Darius of Persia during the sixth century B.C. Four more years passed before he made sense of Babylonian-Assyrian. He never did decode Elamite (the language of a people who lived in what is now southwestern Iran), and indeed it was only in 1890 that scholars managed to decipher parts of it. Some of its secrets remain hidden to this day.

But Rawlinson's achievement was monumental. He opened the world of ancient Mesopotamia to a 19th-century Europe newly curious about the "lost" civilizations of the past.

Rawlinson was not alone in his passion for decoding the scripts of the ancients, but the information that he and other 19th-century Europeans gleaned provided little more than a tantalizing glimpse of the cultures that produced the earliest writing. Not only did translation remain a daunting task, but written records were (and are) few, and the interpretation of other artifacts required painstaking scholarship. Only during the last 50 years has scholars' knowledge of the ancients deepened enough to allow them to draw firm conclusions about the role of writing in the rise of early civilizations.

Some scripts—the so-called Linear A and the Phaistos Disc from Crete—still defy translators. Nevertheless, from those that have been deciphered, researchers now know that the birth of civilization and the development of writing were intertwined.

Writing alone does not explain the greatness of ancient

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In the ancient world, scribes led lives of privilege and high status, indicated by the exaggerated proportions of these Egyptian scribes busily tallying a wheat harvest around 1400 B.C.

Egypt, China, or Greece. But writing always accompanied the flowering of civilizations. As the University of Chicago's Ignace J. Gelb, one of the scholars who pioneered the 20th-century study of ancient scripts, put it in 1952: "Writing exists only in a civilization and a civilization cannot exist without writing."

In recent years, archaeologists and linguists have gone beyond the old "uniformitarian" view that early writing did little more than extend the political rule of reigning elites. Instead, researchers such as C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky of Harvard's Peabody Museum now argue that the effects of the early scripts were far more varied and complex, subtly influencing commerce, the arts, and farming, as well as government.

Man's use of graphic symbols dates back at least to the late Stone Age (between 25,000 and 12,000 B.C.), when the people of prehistoric Europe painted vivid pictures of the deer, bison, and other animals that they hunted. The paintings were in part the expression of an animistic faith: Prehistoric man hoped that he could influence the hunt by symbolizing his prey. This notion that symbols can affect the life of what is represented has endured. To this day, for example, certain groups in India have no word for the cobra, a threat in everyday life, because they fear

that creating the word may conjure up the thing itself.

A new array of symbols was added to the old as prehistoric man increasingly took to settled farming and livestock herding after about 8000 B.C. One reason was the need to keep accounts. By the late Stone Age, it had become common practice to notch sticks and bones to record the passing of days and months and the number of animals claimed in the hunt. With the development of sedentary village life the emphasis changed to recording the number of sheep or goats in a flock or the amount of grain held in storage. Often, easily counted tokens were used. As the new way of life increased the importance of private property, incised or painted marks and various kinds of stamps appeared as a way of marking one's possessions. Always prey to the vicissitudes of nature, farmers created symbols for the supernatural forces that governed rainfall, fertility, earth, and water.

Not all the new farming cultures used symbols for all these categories, but the practice was widespread, particularly in the Near East, Egypt, southeastern Europe, the Indo-Iranian borderlands, and probably northern China. These were the places where the earliest civilizations took root.

The first was probably Sumeria, which emerged in ancient Mesopotamia beginning around 3200 B.C. At the heart of the Sumerian world were its cities, strategically positioned where tributaries flowed into the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These waterways, augmented by canals, fed the cities' outlying fields of wheat, barley, and oats. But Mesopotamia was in the end a desert land flanked by the mountains of the Iranian Plateau and the arid wastes of the Arabian deserts, and the Sumerians were beset by unpredictable cycles of drought and plenty.

Hammurabi's Laws

The precariousness of their existence, compounded by the scarcity of stone, metal, and wood within their realm, made the Sumerians the ancient world's premier traders. Notched sticks and other devices were no longer sophisticated enough for keeping records of rates of exchange, past transactions, and inventories. Thus, after a period of evolution, Sumerian cuneiform writing made its appearance around 3100 B.C. ("Cunei" were the wedge-shaped marks that the Sumerians incised in soft clay tablets, which were then baked.)

But another concern spurred the creation of cuneiform, one that led the Sumerians to make an enduring contribution to civilization itself. Vulnerable to nature, to enemies near and far, and to turmoil in their own cities, the Sumerians realized that they would never survive without a formal system of regulation

The Phaistos Disc, discovered in a Minoan palace in 1980, has never been deciphered. Its mysterious figures, houses, and plants are unlike anything in other writing from ancient Crete. Some scholars speculate that the disc is a game piece of some kind, the figures meaningless.

and control. Their solution was to create a system of laws.

Sumerian philosophers were aware that nature itself seemed to be controlled by laws of regularity: sunrise, sunset; dry season, wet season; death and rebirth. In addition, there seemed to be "functional" laws: birds flew, plows plowed, soldiers fought. Violation of these laws created disorder. Beginning about 2600 B.C., the Sumerians promulgated a series of very specific written laws, which are preserved in the code of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1792–50 B.C.), the successor to the Sumerian kings. The Code of Hammurabi touched on nearly every realm of human activity, specifying, for example, the rights of women and war veterans, the responsibilities of city architects, and the legal rights of slaves.

Literacy at first was probably confined to Sumeria's temple scribes, but it seems likely that aristocrats and merchants also learned to read and write. The Sumerians established schools with regular hours and a full complement of teachers and teachers' assistants, offering instruction that went well beyond writing, to geography, astronomy, law, ethics, and perhaps other languages. A culturally sophisticated people, the Sumerians used writing not only for practical purposes but for narrative histories and commentaries on the human condition.

The exigencies of existence led some to profound speculations on the meaning of life itself, expressed in such Sumerian writings as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in which a hero-king vainly seeks immortality. Such writings survive—and will probably turn out to be the largest cache of surviving documents of any of the ancient civilizations—because they were written on virtually

imperishable clay tablets.

If the Sumerian world view was pervaded by pessimism, a sense of helplessness in the face of nature's unpredictability, the Egyptians, living some 1,000 miles to the west in the fertile Nile River valley, were generally optimistic. Long before the first great Pyramids were built, the Egyptians believed that death was simply another form of existence, not an end, and thus that a person's name was a label for all time. By the time King Narmer unified ancient Egypt around 3100 B.C., kings and nobles were concerned that their names be represented not only by artifacts left in their tombs, as in the past, but by writing. "Thy name shall endure" is one of Egypt's most ancient epithets.

As the Pharaohs consolidated the Egyptian state, implanting the fundamental belief that the Pharaohs themselves were gods, Egyptian writing became almost entirely a priestly function. It was not that the scribes were priests, but that their writing served priestly, as well as secular, purposes. Because much of the writing that survives has to do with religion, the script is called hieroglyphic (sacred writing).* The Egyptians referred to it as "God's writing." This formal script of "beauty, dignity, and above all, permanence," as British ethnologist Albertine Guar described it, was part of the symbolism that held Egypt together.

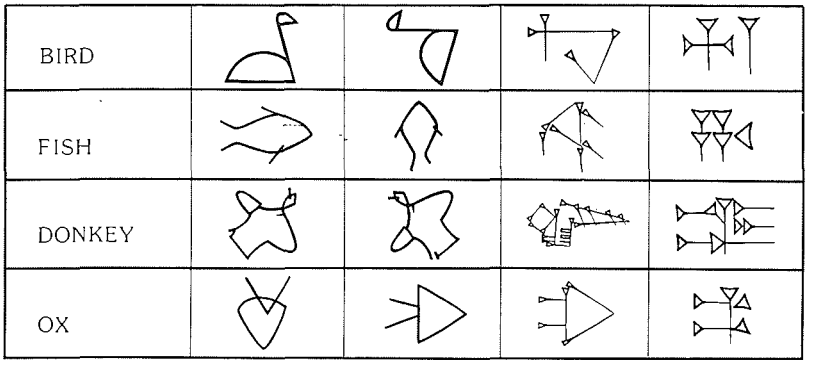
Inventing the Alphabet

Egypt's scribes also developed two cursive forms of writing (hieratic and, later, an even more abbreviated form called demotic), usually brushed onto papyrus, that were used as a kind of shorthand in the day-to-day business of an empire.

By creating a system of signs with specific meanings, the Egyptians made ordinary messages, religious statements, and the Pharaohs' directives as readily understood in the southern reaches of their empire in the Sudan as on the shores of the Mediterranean. Without writing, it is doubtful that the Egypt of the Pharaohs would have endured over the centuries. Yet, because the Egyptians restricted literacy to a scribal class, hieroglyphic writing perished with the old Egypt some four centuries after the birth of Christ.

In China, religious beliefs nurtured early writing, just as they had in Egypt. Almost as far back as settled life can be traced in China, the Chinese were conscious of their social relationships. Each individual's identity was linked to his social class, his extended family, and quite likely his lineage. Systematic Chi-

*Egyptian hieroglyphs make up a so-called logo-syllabic system that has three elements: ideograms, which are pictures of the things referred to; phonograms, which stand for consonants (there are no vowels in Egyptian writing); and determinatives, which clarify the meaning of the glyphs.



Sumerian cuneiform, like most scripts, began as a series of pictures. During a millennium of evolution, signs came to signify sounds instead of objects; images, pared down and tilted, became more abstract.

nese "ideographic" writing (in which each word is represented by a pictorial sign) was probably created during northern China's Shang dynasty during the second millennium B.C. Ideographs were commonly used to record names, lineage, and ownership, but one of its most important uses was in "oracle writing." It was unthinkable to embark on an important endeavor without first seeking guidance from the ancestral gods. Shang kings and nobles consulted them through diviners, who drilled holes in animal shoulder bones or turtle shells and then heated them over a fire. The resulting cracks were read as divine statements and recorded by scribes on the bone or shell.

Chinese writing had existed before the Shang dynasty, but it took the invention of a series of indicators, much like the determinatives in Egyptian hieroglyphics, to make the system more efficient. Essentially, these indicators (over 200 in number) told readers how to distinguish the meaning of words that share the same ideograph and pronunciation. The indicators were developed after the Shang dynasty, but they were rooted in the picture writing concept.

Chinese ideographic writing may seem cumbersome to Westerners, but it had (and has) one great strength: A word might be pronounced differently in Shantung, the birthplace of Confucius, than in Kansu to the west, but it was always "spelled" the same way, using the same ideogram.* Written Chinese thus united a dispersed people who spoke several different dialects.

Other societies besides those of Sumeria, Egypt, and China invented their own forms of writing: By 1400 B.C., for example, the merchant princes of Crete and Mycenae were using Linear B

*Some 50,000 ideographs exist in written Chinese, but only about 3,500 are in everyday use.

to create commercial and governmental archives. Across the Atlantic, the Maya were using glyphs by the fifth century and the Aztecs were using a form of picture writing nine or so centuries later. But in the Old World, with the exception of Chinese ideographs, virtually all of the writing systems that had survived slowly died out after the invention of a markedly more efficient writing system, the alphabet.

Scholars generally credit the creation of the alphabet to the Phoenicians, the merchant seamen of the eastern Mediterranean, who had in turn derived some of *their* signs from Egyptian hieroglyphs. The Greeks then adopted the Phoenician system's consonants and added the crucial missing element: vowels. Greek, like all the Indo-European languages that came after it, changed the meaning of words by changing vowels. (In English, for example, "man" becomes "men.") An alphabet made learning to read and write breathtakingly simple. Instead of using hundreds or even thousands of symbols, each standing for a specific object, word, or idea, the alphabet equated a scant handful of signs with the sounds of speech.

The Romance of Writing

The Greek alphabet may have been in the making before the time of Homer (who probably lived during the ninth or eighth century B.C.). Already in love with rhetoric and the spoken word, the Greeks became a highly literate people. A grave insult among ordinary Athenians of the fifth century B.C. was to say of a man: "He can't read, he can't swim."

"Cadmus, the legendary inventor of the alphabet, is said to have sown the dragon's teeth that raised a crop of warriors," writes Long Island University's Robert Pattison. "On Greek soil, the alphabet, once established, also bore a mighty crop." The results are still with us: the comedies of Aristophanes, the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, the philosophy of Aristotle.

The alphabet proved to be at least as precious a legacy as the Greeks' great works of intellect and art. In Italy, new alphabets—amalgamations of borrowed Greek letters and indigenous signs—sprang up like weeds in a garden. Latin writing was a hybrid of Greek, Etruscan, and native letters, adapted to the Latin language, and, finally, refined to only 23 signs. Like the Greeks before them, the Romans prized literacy. At least as early as the first century B.C., they pressed reading and writing on their citizens, helping to create an empire unified by its cultural beliefs and by Rome's ability to have its written proclamations understood from the British Isles to North Africa. Polybius, who recorded the rise of Rome in the second century B.C., writes that

the army required literacy even of its lowliest soldiers. The gift of writing was so widespread that one of its curses was also common. On the walls of Pompeii and other towns, ordinary Romans freely scrawled graffiti, misspellings and all.

The writings of Virgil, Cicero, and Seneca, republican ideals, and the elements of Roman law are among the literate Romans' legacy to the West.

The spread of alphabetic systems beyond these early beginnings is a long and complex story. The Latin alphabet became the basis of the writing systems of modern Western Europe, while some of the alphabets of Eastern Europe and Russia were derived from Greek letters. By the fourth century, Greek letters had also supplanted hieroglyphs in Egypt. The generally vowelless alphabet of Aramaic, an early Semitic language common in the Levant as early as 1300 B.C., became the basis of several alphabets in India, far to the east. Arabic and Hebrew also owe much of their written character to Aramaic.

All of the ancient civilizations that created scripts, including those that lacked an alphabet, also developed a sense of themselves as superior to nonliterate cultures. Yet many societies thrived without writing: the "chieftainships" of Polynesia, the Ashanti and other tribal kingdoms of West Africa, the Indians of America's Pacific Northwest. In most cases, they developed symbols, such as the totem pole or the designs used in painting pottery, that served their purposes. The Inca of what is now Peru used a pendant of knotted cords called a *quipu* to keep an accurate census, assess taxes, and record trading transactions. Over the course of three centuries, the Inca managed to build a sizable empire, marked by elaborately terraced farms and an extensive network of well-engineered roads, which they lost only when the Spanish *conquistadores* destroyed it in 1532.

Yet writing clearly made a vast difference. The history of writing and the cultures that developed it is a romance of immense significance. The invention of writing was probably the most significant step in man's cultural evolution. Aside from its daily utility, writing has preserved long-dead tongues and the record of ancient institutions. It has preserved the history of man's triumphs and failures. It has made possible the rapid sharing of new knowledge. Above all, it is magical in its ability to bring the past alive and to allow us to imagine the future.

THE READING REVOLUTION

by Steven Lagerfeld

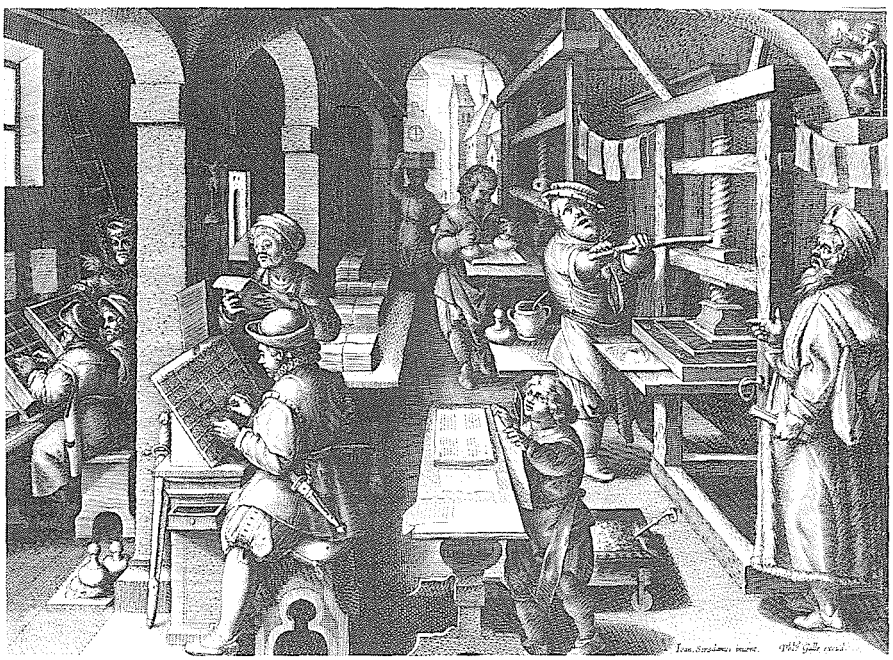
Writing "will implant forgetfulness in [men's] souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written." Thus Plato (speaking through a character in one of his dialogues) questioned the value of literacy some four centuries after the Greeks began adopting the alphabet. Only knowledge gained through spirited debate, Plato argued, "is written in the soul of the learner."

Of course, the ultimate reply to Plato is that his doubts about literacy are known to us only because he committed them to writing. Yet, in one form or another, Plato's reservations have preoccupied thinkers through the ages. Do reading and writing transform human consciousness? How so? Is literacy best left in the hands of the few, or is *mass* literacy better? Will widespread literacy ensure social and economic progress? Never in the past were the answers to all these questions self-evident, and some remain, in one form or another, subjects of scholarly debate.

Despite the invention of the alphabet, which vastly simplified the task of learning to read and write, the spread of literacy was far from inevitable. The leaders of Greece and Rome had chosen to promote reading and writing among their citizens. For many centuries, their successors in the West did not.

Interestingly, the early Christians sided with Plato. Christ is said to have written only once—in the dust, as if to signify the transience of the written word. His disciples did not commit his teachings to writing until some 30 to 60 years after his death, preferring that the Word be transmitted orally, kept alive on the tongues of men. Yet Church leaders soon recognized that a holy book would be needed to keep the faith intact. (The Gospels and Old Testament had already been written.) Amid the cacophony of Europe's hundreds of languages and dialects, few of them written, only the old imperial language of Latin could be read as easily in the British Isles as in Holland or Italy.

Reluctantly, the Church adopted Latin as its official language. The *litterati* of the Middle Ages—mostly priests, along with a handful of nobles and merchants—reserved the ability to read and write for themselves, in part because they believed that it gave them power over the souls of commoners. (Not only in Europe: In medieval India, for example, only the Brahmin, or "twice born," were permitted to read the sacred Veda.) Indeed,



In Gutenberg's time, printing presses were few and compositors worked for months on each book. By the 16th century, every major town in Europe had a print shop, which often doubled as an informal university.

a mystical quality was attached to the written word; in Middle English, the word *grammar* referred to occult lore; in medieval Britain, those accused of murder who could read from the Latin Bible were automatically spared the hangman's noose.

But the truth was that from the fall of the Roman Empire until the 14th or 15th century, even most of the high-born cared little for literacy. "Letters are removed from manliness," a group of German Goths told Queen Amalasuntha of sixth century Italy, "teaching . . . results for the most part in a cowardly and submissive spirit." Among the notable illiterates of the era were William the Conqueror and Charlemagne—whose clerics did their reading and writing for them. It was the Church, with its legions of literate men, that organized and spearheaded the Crusades. It was the Church that provided Western Europe with a semblance of cultural unity.

The common folk did not begrudge the *litterati* their monopoly on letters. Reading and writing, quite simply, were unnecessary luxuries for the peasant farmers of the Middle Ages. Knowledge passed by word of mouth from father to son, from

mother to daughter. As late as the 17th century, English country squire Nicholas Breton noted, farmers could "learn to plough and harrow, sow and reap, plant and prune, thresh and fan, winnow and grind, brew and bake, and all without book."

Imagining today what daily life was like in such an oral society is as difficult as putting oneself in the place of a blind man. Say a word and a literate person will immediately see it spelled in his mind's eye: It is the written word that has form, substance, and meaning, that produces the mind's order. But in an oral world, the written word is ephemeral. In the courtrooms of 12th-century England and France, written deeds and bills of sale counted for less in resolving legal disputes than human witnesses who, according to St. Louis University's Walter Ong, "were alive and . . . could defend their statements; writing was [viewed as] dead marks on a dead surface."

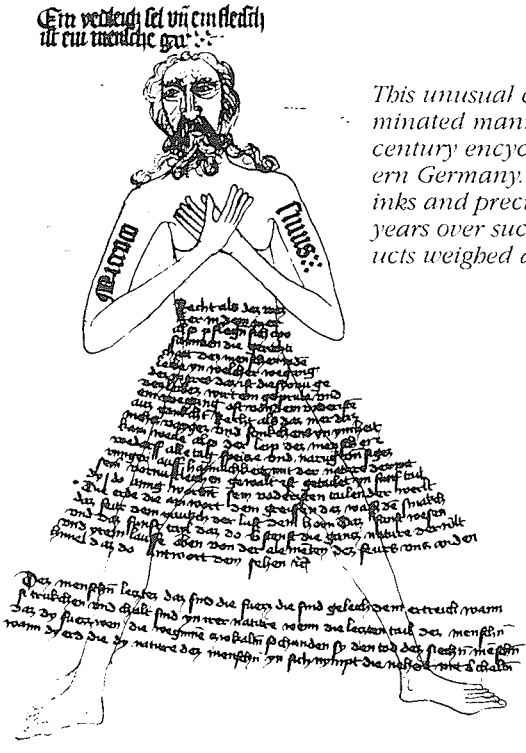
Even among the literate of the Middle Ages, old ways lingered. Reading more often meant speaking aloud (or sotto voce) than thinking in solitude. In the scriptoria of the monasteries, one monk would read from the pages of the Bible while his fellows labored over their rote transcriptions; in the classrooms of medieval universities, professors recited to their students from the few available texts. (Books were so lightly regarded that old writings were commonly rubbed out when paper and vellum were scarce so that the monks could continue their copying.) Writing was no different. Few medieval authors, observes Ong, wrote with quill in hand, painstakingly building their arguments word by word, brick by brick, a house of logic. Rather, most dictated their thoughts aloud to scribes.

God's 'Extremest Act of Grace'

Reading (or writing) in silence, *internalizing* words, is an experience of a very different kind. "To engage the written word," notes New York University's Neil Postman, "means to follow a line of thought. . . . It means to uncover lies, confusions, and overgeneralizations, to detect abuses of logic and common sense. It also means to weigh ideas, to compare and contrast assertions, to connect one generalization to another."

Europe during the Middle Ages was not completely without literacy, but it shared some characteristics with the unlettered Third World tribes that contemporary scholars have studied. Such oral societies, says Ong, "must invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. This need establishes a highly traditionalist or conser-

Steven Lagerfeld31, is senior editor of The Wilson Quarterly.



This unusual example of a hand-illuminated manuscript is part of a 15th-century encyclopedia made in southern Germany. Monks, using colored inks and precious metals, labored for years over such works; the final products weighed as much as 25 pounds.

vative set of mind that with good reason inhibits intellectual experimentation.... By storing knowledge outside the mind, writing and, even more, print downgrade the figures of the wise old man and the wise old woman, repeaters of the past, in favor of younger discoverers of something new."

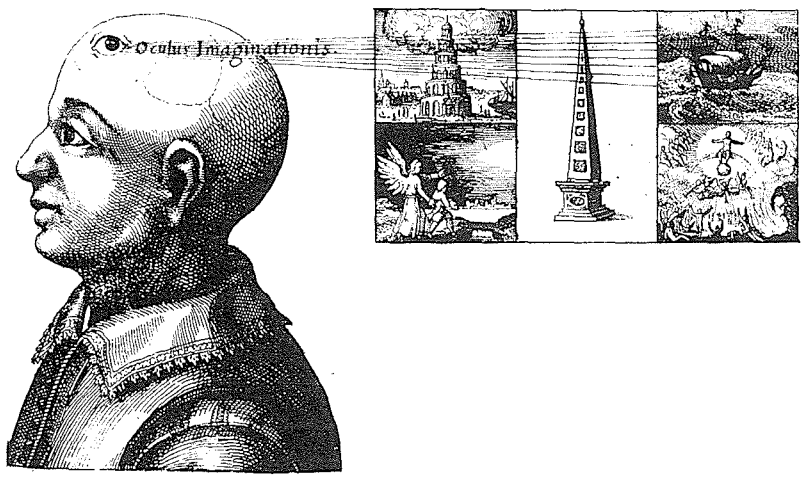
In Europe, the first discoverers of the new appeared in 14th-century Venice, Florence, and other wealthy Italian city-states. Owing to their energetic merchant princes, who bartered and bargained throughout the Mediterranean, these cities had grown large and affluent by European standards of the day. They also harbored distinguished scholarly communities, which the merchant princes favored with ancient Greek and Roman texts retrieved mostly from libraries in Egypt and the Arab world. Urbanization, prosperity, and the rediscovery of ancient works nourished a new skeptical and secular outlook on life, the early Italian Renaissance. Still, the revival might never have spread so quickly beyond Italy without two other developments.

The first was Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press during the 1440s and '50s; it stands alongside the cre-

ation of the alphabet some 2,500 years earlier as a landmark in the long history of the rise of literacy. As in the case of the alphabet, however, human choice was needed to transform a technical invention into a revolutionary device. Within decades of Gutenberg's discovery, Europe felt the first stirrings of the Protestant Reformation, led by Martin Luther (1483–1546). Luther was at first dismayed when the printing press made his famous 95 Theses, nailed to the door of a church in the tiny German village of Wittenberg in 1517, the news of all Europe. But during the ensuing years he broadened his challenge to the Catholic Church, calling for a more direct relationship between Man and his Maker. He insisted that the faithful be able to read God's Word themselves, and in their own "vulgar" languages, not in the Church's Latin. For him, Gutenberg's press was a weapon; printing was "God's highest and extremest act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward."

Printers responded to the new market with an outpouring of Bibles, Books of Days, and other holy works. Religious fervor propelled book sales and literacy rates to unprecedented levels in Protestant lands—Scandinavia, the German states, Holland, and Britain.

One of the most dramatic transformations occurred in 17th-century Sweden, where a Lutheran home-teaching movement swept the countryside. Once a year in Sweden's small towns and



In preliterate Europe, the "arts of memory"—repetition, proverbs, and rhymed verse—were essential to preserving the past. By the 17th century, the "third eye" of memory was regarded as an aspect of the occult.

villages, pastors assembled their flocks for public tests of reading and writing: Anyone who failed was forbidden to marry or take communion. Though lacking public schools, Sweden achieved near-universal literacy by the beginning of the 18th century, even before most other Protestant lands.

There is no telling what would have come of Gutenberg's invention without Luther's crusade. In China, an alchemist named Pi Sheng had designed a system of movable type during the 11th century, well before Gutenberg's time. It contributed to the flowering of literature during the later Sung dynasty and to the rise of the powerful Chinese civil service. China outstripped the rest of the world in book production until the end of the 18th century. But China's Confucian-trained scholars and bureaucrats restricted education to the elite, and it was virtually impossible for commoners to learn the tens of thousands of characters of the Chinese language at home. As a result, more than 70 percent of the Chinese population remained mired in illiteracy at the beginning of the 20th century.*

A Rearguard Action

Even before literacy reached Europe's common man, the printing press had an enormous effect on the life of the mind. At first, notes the University of Michigan's Elizabeth Eisenstein, the foremost historian of the printing revolution, printers churned out (apart from holy books) countless reproductions of ancient tracts on astrology and alchemy, fragments of "magia and cabala"—a "vast backlog of occult lore." But eventually, more illuminating works were put into print. The spread of reading and books alarmed some of the powerful. Pope Paul V, for example, banned Copernicus's *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* from Catholic-run presses in 1616.

Printing did for intellectual life what the invention of money thousands of years earlier had done for trade and commerce, spurring an explosive growth in the exchange of information and ideas. Now the astronomers and physicians and philosophers of 16th-century Europe had at their fingertips in book form all the accumulated wisdom of the ancients. When the great works of the past were placed side by side, writes Eisenstein, "contradictions became more visible, divergent traditions more difficult to reconcile. The transmission of received opinion could not proceed smoothly once Arabists were set

*The Arab world reluctantly adopted the press 300 to 400 years after Gutenberg, preferring instead the magnificent calligraphy and miniature paintings that flourished in books of the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. Today, literacy remains spotty throughout the Muslim Middle East, ranging from under 10 percent in countries such as Yemen and Qatar to nearly 30 percent in Saudi Arabia.

THE THIRD WORLD'S WARS ON ILLITERACY

"Can there be a more moving spectacle than . . . this tall old man with his white beard, his tremulous voice, his unsteady limbs, as he slowly lifts a long bamboo pointer toward the blackboard, and with difficulty tries to pick out the letters on it?"

Such scenes, from French schoolteacher Gerard Tongas's account of a mid-1950s literacy campaign in communist North Vietnam, have been repeated thousands of times in the Third World. With high hopes for spurring economic development, promoting national unity, or indoctrinating the "masses"—and at great expense—dozens of governments have launched efforts to eradicate adult illiteracy.

Progress worldwide has been slow but steady. In 1980, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 28.6 percent of the world's adults were illiterate, down from 32.9 percent in 1970.

The greatest fanfare has accompanied the all-out drives against illiteracy mounted by many communist regimes. In 1961, Fidel Castro sent "an army" of 100,000 literacy *brigadistas* into the hinterlands and later announced to international acclaim that they had taught some 700,000 Cubans to read and write. Cuba now claims a literacy rate of 96 percent; Vietnam, 85 percent; and Nicaragua, after a similar "war," 87 percent.Yet the North Vietnamese campaign, Tongas says, "merely consisted of teaching the illiterate masses to recite 20 or so slogans

against Galenists or Aristotelians against Ptolemaists."

The creation of a market for books also helped writers and thinkers free themselves from the whims of aristocratic patrons. New arguments and discoveries, treatises on theology and philosophy, poetry, fiction, works of outrageous fantasy, all shot through the ranks of the educated like jolts of electricity. The results were momentous. It was the age of Erasmus and Bacon, Shakespeare and Cervantes, Galileo and Leonardo. By 1704, when Jonathan Swift published *The Battle of the Books*, contending that the ancients were superior in wisdom and learning to modern men, he was fighting, as far as the small, educated sector of the English public was concerned, a rearguard action.

Gradually, books made their way into the hands of the common folk.* The ability to read and write spread slowly through Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, partly through education. Frederick III, later the first King of Prussia, ordered farmers' children "to school, at least for two hours in the morning"

*Books were much cheaper than hand-illuminated manuscripts, but they still came dearly. In 16th-century France, for example, the cheapest New Testament cost the equivalent of a whole day's wages for a journeyman carpenter. Still, the popular market for books throughout Europe was huge. A prodigious 22,000 titles rolled off English presses between 1641 and 1662, about one book or pamphlet for every 42 readers.

['Long live President Ho!'] and to copy them more or less legibly." The old man with the pointer, like most of his countrymen, never really learned to read and write for himself. The Cuban story is similar.

Few non-communist lands have claimed results as impressive as Castro does. Even in the West, teaching *adults* to read and write is difficult. The chief obstacle: persuading men and women who have lived into their middle years without literacy that a heavy investment of time and effort will pay off. Most Third World adult literacy campaigns, writes Abdun Noor of the World Bank, "have been uneconomic with a high dropout rate and a high incidence of relapses to illiteracy."

Noor is skeptical of splashy, centrally directed campaigns. Churches and other local organizations are generally best suited to doing the job, he says, and textbooks that teach people practical skills (e.g., animal husbandry) are the most effective tools. Brazil, Uganda, and Tanzania are among the nations where such localized efforts have worked.

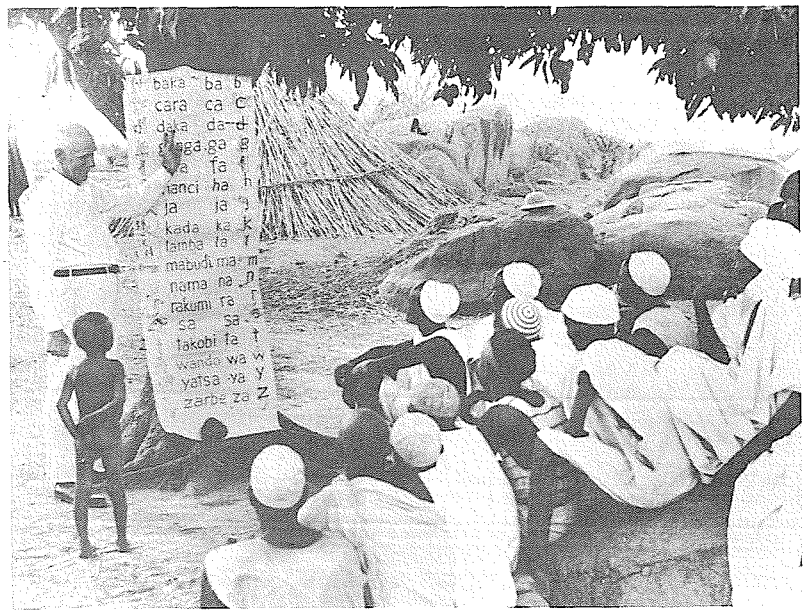
Few specialists predict that more than a minority of the world's 800 million adult illiterates will ever learn to read and write. The best hope may lie with the next generation. Even Africa, with its estimated 60 percent illiteracy rate, now enrolls 78 percent of its children in elementary schools. Asia and Latin America, with far less illiteracy, boast even higher rates of school enrollment.

Literacy alone may not deliver economic progress, enlightened minds, or any of the other benefits that it seems to promise to the Third World, but without it such gains will remain forever out of reach.

in 1698. But, as in 17th-century Sweden, most commoners learned from their literate acquaintances or from primers like preacher Valentin Ickelsamer's *A German grammar—from which one might learn to read for oneself* (1534).

Modern historians have been able to reckon early literacy rates only by digging through parish records, diaries, and deeds, counting men who signed with their names as literate, those who made an X as illiterate. By the end of the 18th century, printing and the spread of schooling had produced relatively high rates of literacy, at least in Protestant countries. The Swiss were 80 percent literate by 1850 (thanks to widespread public education), as were 80 percent of the Prussians and 50 percent of the English. Catholic Italy and Spain, by contrast, suffered much lower rates of literacy—20 and 25 percent respectively. Tsarist Russia, with a vast population of impoverished serfs who "did not see any material benefit" in becoming literate, as a 19th-century Russian priest remarked, still remained 80 percent illiterate at the turn of the 20th century.

Everywhere, the notion of literacy for all remained a distant dream. The well-to-do were more literate than the poor, city-dwellers more literate than farmers. Men, from France to China,



Youngsters learn to read their native Hausa, one of Nigeria's three major tongues. In many lands, literacy education is hampered by the need to create writing systems from scratch for spoken languages.

were far more likely to learn their letters than were their wives and sisters. Sweden's highly literate women were among the most fortunate in Europe, where literacy rates for women ranged variously from 20 percent in Italy and Spain to 55 percent in England by the middle of the 19th century.

Often literacy was a gift that unlocked in an individual an enormous potential that in times past would have remained dormant. Historian Margaret Spufford tells the story of Thomas Tryon, son of a poor 17th-century Oxfordshire plasterer, who left school at the age of six having "scarcely learnt to distinguish my letters." At 13, he learned to read from fellow shepherds; later he paid an itinerant teacher to teach him to write (tuition: one sheep). He moved to London, where he spent his wages on books, and before long he was writing them. There were six in all, including *A New Method of Education*, as well as *Averroes Letter to Pythagoras* and *The Good Housewife Made a Doctor*. For most people, however, limitations of social class, circumstance, and native ability tempered the impact of reading and writing. When they took an interest in the printed word, Europe's common folk favored "how-to" pamphlets offering in-

struction in carpentry or farming or home medicine.

Today, it is an article of faith around the world that the appearance of such a rapidly growing, educated reading public (however prosaic its reading) was one of the essential ingredients in sparking the Industrial Revolution. During the 1960s, sociologist C. Arnold Anderson and economist Mary Jean Bowman, both of the University of Chicago, concluded that a national literacy rate of 40 percent is the bare minimum needed to achieve such an industrial "take-off." England during the 1750s had reached the "40 percent threshold."

Fearing the Poor

Yet, as other scholars have since discovered, industrialization had an unexpected effect: In England, the literacy rate stagnated or fell (as it did in France) as factory owners hired young workers away from schools at the age of six or seven. The rate did not turn up again until the 1880s.

Nor did factory owners need great numbers of workers who could read and write. A few agreed with reformers such as Canadian educator Charles Clarke that literacy "has lightened the toil of the laborer [and] increased his productive ability." But as British historian Michael Sanderson writes, the new jobs—furnaceman, cotton cleaner, weaver—in the Yorkshire and Lancashire mills and factories "required even *less* literacy and education than the old ones (wood- and metalworking, for example)." Once a worker learned to operate a loom or a blast furnace, Sanderson argues, he (or in the cotton mills, she) needed to learn no more. A "knack" for things mechanical was more important than book learning.

There is no doubt that the printing press and the book, and the rise of literacy that followed, set the stage for Europe's modernization. They made possible new technology—James Watt's steam engine (1769), Sir Henry Bessemer's converter (1856)—and the educated managers, engineers, and technicians needed to run large factories and distribution networks. Whether *mass* literacy was needed remains an open question.

Indeed, many of the well-to-do of the mid-19th century plainly feared it. In England, as reformers waxed eloquent about the education of the workers, many of the gentry saw instead "the terrible spectre of a literate, politically minded working class," as Cambridge historian J. H. Plumb put it. Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society in England in 1807, feared that literacy would teach the poor to "despise their lot in life." Instead of burying their noses in harmless popular novels, he fretted, literate English and Scottish workers were reading "sedi-

tious pamphlets [and] vicious books."

Equally worrisome was the rise of a popular press frequently given to political agitation. During the French Revolution, an event that terrified Europe's aristocrats (and other Europeans as well), the Parisian press had become, in the words of one French observer, "simply a machine of war," educating what the Paris *Globe* called "a new generation . . . smitten with liberty, eager for glory." By 1820, the introduction of new technology slashed the cost of newsprint and sent circulation skyrocketing. Newspapers proliferated in London and the major cities of Europe and the United States, with some claiming up to 30,000 readers. In 1865, Paris's *Petit Journal* was turning out 250,000 copies a day. Years earlier, a little known journalist named Karl Marx had remarked upon the usefulness of newspapers in forging "party spirit" among the workers.

Khomeini on Cassettes

Despite conservatives' fears of mass literacy, most educated Westerners by the end of the 19th century had come to believe that it was the first step on the road to greater progress. Certainly, higher rates of literacy (along with widespread public education) eased the transition to industrial innovation in the United States and Canada. Teaching reading and writing seemed to be the key, as one writer put it, "to instruct[ing] a man how to live and move in the world as befits a civilized being." By the 1930s, state-supported schooling had made near-universal literacy a reality in the West.

Today, the scene of the struggle to achieve basic literacy has shifted to the Third World, where nations such as Ethiopia (with a seven percent literacy rate) and Pakistan (16 percent) have set their sights on the "40 percent threshold." Their leaders are convinced that mass literacy will secure what the Iraqi government once called "the political, economic, and social progression of the country." Maybe so. Yet, as the Cuban example shows (see box, pages 110–11), a literate population alone is not enough to ensure economic progress or political liberty. The Shah of Iran, who made literacy a keystone of his modernization efforts, was toppled by an old man who, from his exile in France, stirred the passions of his zealous followers back home with rousing polemics—tape recorded on audio cassettes.

For all that, no nation that hopes to tap the potential of its people can achieve very much without widespread literacy. Lacking the ability to read and write, the farmer most likely will continue to tend his crops just as his father's father did; his children will not dare to imagine what it is like to build a bridge

or write an essay; democracy will make as much sense as the theory of relativity.

Even if it is not a magic recipe for personal or national progress, literacy is an essential ingredient. Oddly enough, among the few people who now question that reality are some of the Western scholars who study literacy and related subjects. Literary "deconstructionists," such as Jacques Derrida, view language as a kind of prison that constricts human thought. But at least they acknowledge the power of the written word. Others do not. In the United States, a few education specialists have argued that spoken "black English" ought to be taught in the schools. Among anthropologists, one sometimes finds a certain sentimentality about oral societies—their unsullied traditions, their lively communal storytelling, their free exchange of local news and gossip at gatherings. And, like many other social scientists, literacy specialists tend to expound their views in a style so obtuse that it even makes Washington's federal regulation writers seem like prose artists of the first order.

If understanding our politics, our science, or simply one another is the ultimate purpose of achieving literacy, then the West still has a long way to go. Instead of more reading and writing (and thus, thinking), we have talk, talk, and more talk. The television set, the radio, the telephone, never-ending rounds of conferences and meetings, scholars and businessmen and bureaucrats all produce a continuous, deafening chatter. Marshall McLuhan saw the rise of television as a sign that the West had left the Age of Typography behind. But it may be that, like the medieval monks who read aloud from their handwritten Bibles, we have yet to reach it.

KEEPING UP IN AMERICA

by David Harman

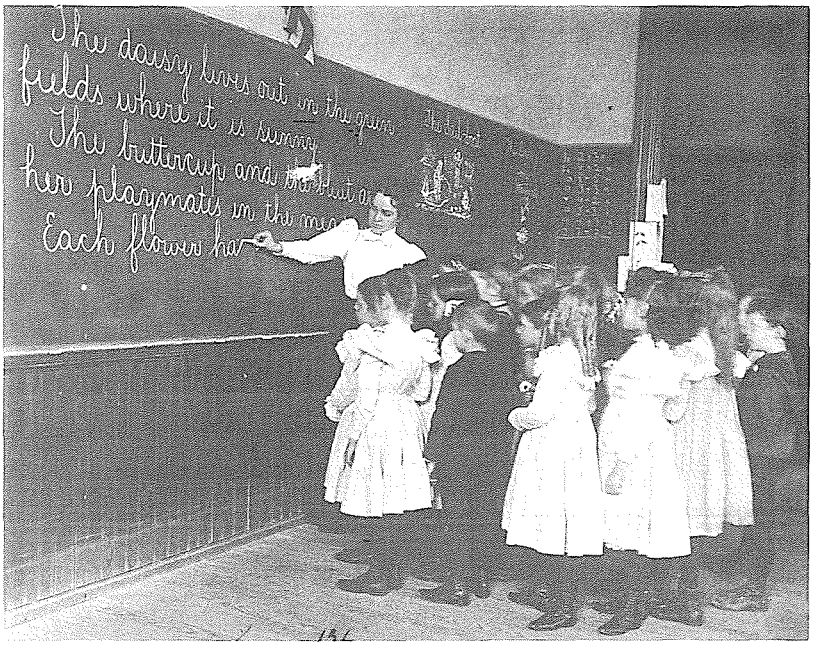
"Learn them to read the Scriptures, and be conversant therein," the Reverend John Cotton urged his Boston parishioners in a 1656 homily on child rearing. "Reading brings much benefit to little Children."

"Benefit" was an understatement. In the harsh moral universe of Cotton's New England Puritans, ignorance was no excuse for sin: A child who died young (as many did) could expect no mercy in the hereafter merely because he had not been able to read the Bible. Massachusetts' colonial authorities had already acted on the fear that parents were not doing enough to protect their children from the "old deluder Satan." In 1647, nine years before Cotton's sermon, they required every township of 50 families or more to provide a teacher for the young.

Satan may be, in this sense, behind us, but the challenge of making Americans literate is not. Almost any adult born in America today can read well enough to satisfy John Cotton; but the preacher set a simple standard. His flock did not need to ponder the meaning of a ballot referendum, or the requirements of a Help Wanted advertisement, or the operating instructions for a word processor—all frequently written by people who may be only semi-literate themselves.

"The ability to understand an unfamiliar text, rather than simply declaim a familiar one," as researchers Daniel P. and Lauren B. Resnick put it, is today's new standard of literacy. That kind of *functional* literacy may seem almost quaint in an age of telephones and TV news, and of computers (with languages of their own) and color-coded cash register keys that make counting or reading almost unnecessary for teen-age clerks at fast-food restaurants. Time after time in the past literacy has seemed, for a brief historical moment, redundant, a luxury, not needed by ordinary folk.

Yet those Americans who could not read and write, then as now, became the servants of those who could; they were sometimes deprived of prosperity and liberty, always of autonomy and knowledge. What will become of today's students who fail to become fluent in the English tongue? Even those who achieve *technological* literacy, staking their futures on a narrow mastery of FORTRAN or UNIX or some other computer lan-



Reading instruction in turn-of-the-century America. Literacy today is more widespread, yet often shallow. Youngsters who are ill-schooled in history, civics, and science cannot comprehend the words they "decode."

guage, will be at a disadvantage. Eventually, predicts Robert Pattison of Long Island University, they will wind up working for "English majors from Berkeley and Harvard."

It has been said that we live in an Information Age. The information that is important is not bits and bytes, but ideas and knowledge conveyed in clear English. All this requires a more sophisticated level of literacy. The worker of the future, warns the National Academy of Sciences, must be "able and willing to learn throughout a lifetime." By that new standard, America probably has nearly half the proportion of illiterates among its population in 1986 that it did in Cotton's time.

Traditional literacy spread rapidly in 17th- and 18th-century America, mostly through church-run schools and through informal education—parents teaching their children, masters teaching their apprentices. But it is unclear just how literate colonial America was. As Americans have been painfully reminded in recent years, schooling and literacy are not always synonymous. And in the days before the Revolution, American schoolchildren

probably spent, at most, three years in the classroom.

By counting the number of men who could sign their name to deeds and other public documents as literate (literacy for women was deemed irrelevant in most of the colonies; for slaves, dangerous), historians have reckoned that literacy in America rose from about 60 percent among the first white male colonists to about 75 percent by 1800. That figure masks a great deal of diversity. City-dwellers were more literate than country folk, Northerners more likely to read and write than Southerners and Westerners, the well-to-do better schooled than the poor. Ninety percent of New Englanders could sign their own names by the time the U.S. Constitution was ratified, yet the U.S. Army found in 1800 that only 58 percent of its recruits, drawn from the lower strata of the population, were literate.

And then one must ask *how* literate? The evidence is contradictory. The farmers, blacksmiths, tanners, and shopkeepers of colonial America did not need or possess a very sophisticated understanding of written material. For the vast majority, literacy probably meant reading the Bible, almanacs, and, occasionally, newspapers, but without necessarily being able to make inferences from their reading or to decipher more complicated texts. Historian Carl F. Kaestle of the University of Wisconsin-Madison estimates that perhaps 20 percent of adult male Americans were "sophisticated readers" by the 1760s.

Heeding James Madison

Lawrence A. Cremin of Columbia University takes a more generous view. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, he notes, "sold a hundred thousand copies within three months of its appearance [in 1776] and possibly as many as a half million in all. That means one-fifth of the colonial population bought it and a half or more probably read it or heard it read aloud."

About one thing there is no doubt. From the start, Americans, for various reasons, *valued* the ability to read and write. "A people who mean to be their own governors," James Madison declared, "must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the

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means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both." One Ohio newspaper offered a more mundane rationale in 1839, a variant on the "read to win" theme that nowadays draws thousands of Americans into Evelyn Wood speed-reading courses. A young man who delayed marrying by five years, its editor calculated, would gain 7,300 hours of "mental application," including reading, that would advance his material fortunes later in life. But moral and religious uplift remained the strongest impulse behind the spread of literacy well into the 19th century. As William H. McGuffey warned the young readers of his *Newly Revised Eclectic Second Reader* (1853), "The boys and girls who can not read . . . will never know whether they are on the right road [in life] or the wrong one."

No More Bare Bones

Almost by accident, America's industrialization during the 19th century helped boost literacy rates. Employers in the United States, as in Europe, preferred to hire factory workers who could read and write: These skills were not always needed on the job, but businessmen believed, not unlike John Cotton, that graduates were superior in "moral character" to their unschooled and unlettered peers. Advocates of public education such as Horace Mann of Massachusetts emphasized primary-school graduates' "greater docility and quickness in applying themselves to work" in arguing for an expansion of schooling. Mann and his allies had their way in part because the growth of densely populated cities and factory towns in New England during the 1830s and '40s made mass schooling more economical.*

In 1840, when the U.S. Census Bureau first asked adults whether they were literate, all but nine percent said Yes. By 1860, only seven percent admitted to illiteracy. The U.S. Army's records tell another story: They show 35 percent illiteracy among recruits in 1840, declining to seven percent only in 1880. Schooling was showing its effects.

Or so it seemed. It was the U.S. Army that delivered the first shock to the believers in a literate America. By 1917, when the United States mobilized for World War I, the Army had a new way to test the competence of draftees and recruits: standardized intelligence tests, developed by psychologist Robert Yerkes. Yerkes was astonished to find that 30 percent of the young

*As before, Massachusetts led the way. It had established the first common schools in 1647, but it was not until 1800 that the state allowed local school districts to levy taxes. Most of the existing states followed suit by the time of the Civil War. Compulsory attendance was slower in coming. Massachusetts was the pioneer again, requiring as early as 1852 that parents send their children to school; more than 50 years passed before Mississippi made compulsory education universal. Because schooling was coeducational, the male-female literacy gap quickly closed.

"I'll wait out here for you, Hal. My generation doesn't read." As this 1984 New Yorker *cartoon suggests, many literate younger Americans, reared on TV, never acquire the habit of reading for pleasure.*

men, while ostensibly literate, could not read well enough to understand his Alpha test form. Public reaction was muted by the fact that many of the near-illiterates were Southern blacks, hence ill-schooled, but the stage had been set in America for a new definition of literacy.

Already the "old bare bones" notion of literacy as a matter of knowing your ABCs and the Bible had been stretched. At Ellis Island, more and more immigrants were arriving from the poor countries of southern Europe, illiterate in their own languages, not to mention English. More than ever, the newcomers were also unfamiliar with the workings of democracy. Only then did the nation's political leaders begin to view the Founding Fathers' call for an informed citizenry, literate in English, as a social imperative. "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism," former President Theodore Roosevelt warned in 1915. And steel magnate Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), convinced that free libraries were "the best agencies for improving the masses of the people," dipped into his vast fortune to help create 2,500 new public libraries.

President Herbert C. Hoover launched a U.S. Advisory Committee on National Illiteracy in 1929 to study and publicize the problem, but, like Hoover himself, it was swamped by the Great Depression. And with "one-third of a nation" ill-fed and ill-clad, more important matters filled Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal agenda. It took another world war to bring illiteracy back to the forefront. Early in 1941, before Pearl Harbor, the Army declared that it would reject draftees who failed a fourth-grade equivalency test; within a year 433,000 men otherwise fit for duty were still in civvies thanks to the test. In the summer of 1942, the Army relented, deciding that any illiterate who could understand spoken English and follow basic oral instructions was good enough to wear khakis and serve under the flag.

27 Million Functional Illiterates?

After World War II, attention shifted to children's ability to read and write. Rudolf Flesch, an émigré writer and education specialist, designed the first modern "readability" formulas that made it possible to gauge the level of reading ability required by children's textbooks. By measuring the length of words and sentences, Flesch could determine whether they were written for comprehension at a fourth-, fifth-, or sixth-grade level. In 1955, he authored *Why Johnny Can't Read*, a best seller that sparked a debate between advocates of instruction in phonics ("sounding out" words letter-by-letter) and the prevailing "look-say" method (recognizing whole words) that continues today.* Look-say not only sounded Chinese but required students to learn English (by memorizing whole words) as if it *were* Chinese. "Do you know," Flesch declared, "that the teaching of reading never was a problem anywhere in the world until the United States switched to the present method?"

Only during the past two decades has *adult* illiteracy aroused sustained public concern in peacetime. "Adult literacy seems to present an ever growing challenge," writes Harvard's Jeanne S. Chall, "greater perhaps than the acknowledged challenge of literacy among those still in school."

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that the number of *functional* illiterates grows by 2.3 million every year: some 1.3 million legal and illegal immigrants, 850,000 high school dropouts, and another 150,000 "pushouts" who graduate with inadequate reading and writing skills.

All told, as many as 27 million Americans over age 16—nearly 15 percent of the adult population—may be functionally

*A dissatisfied Flesch published *Why Johnny Still Can't Read* in 1981, charging that educators are still ignoring phonics. But most U.S. schools today use a mixture of phonics and look-say instruction.

CHEATING AMERICA'S YOUTH

When the Class of '86 graduates from high school this June, at least 100,000 functionally illiterate youths will receive diplomas. Among their classmates will be hundreds of thousands of "marginally competent" readers, unable to comprehend their own 12th-grade textbooks.

What has gone wrong? The dozens of studies that have been published since Washington sounded the alarm against a "rising tide of mediocrity" in *A Nation at Risk* (1983) agree that television, student drug abuse, and weakened families have all contributed to declining academic achievement. But the most important influence on students' performance is still what goes on inside the classroom. (See "Teaching in America," *The Wilson Quarterly*, New Year's 1984.) And the evidence here is sobering.

Time, one of the most precious commodities in the schools, is often scarce and poorly used. In *A Place Called School* (1983), John I. Goodlad of the University of California, Los Angeles, reports that some schools cram all real teaching into a mere 18.5 hours per week. (In contrast, longer hours and shorter vacations give Japanese students the equivalent of four extra years of instruction by the time they leave high school.)

In elementary schools, American students spend nearly one-third of their class time on writing exercises—but that often means merely filling in the blanks in workbooks. And as students move on to high school, the class time they devote to writing falls by 50 percent.

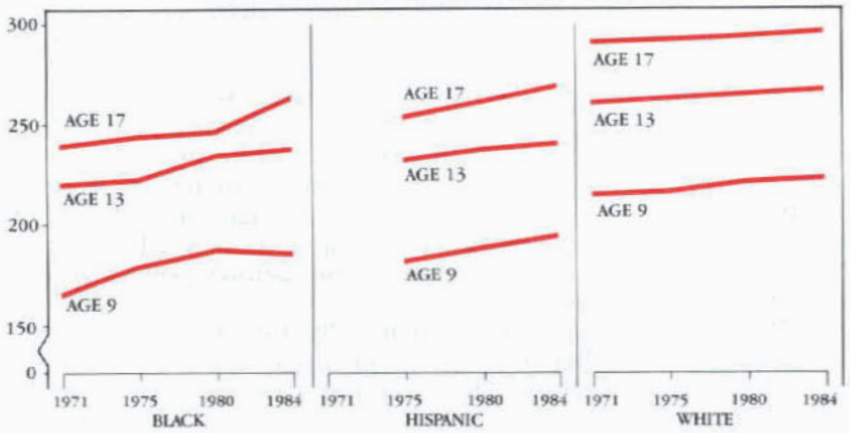
Even more disheartening is Goodlad's discovery that "reading occupie[s] about six percent of class time at the elementary level," a mere two percent in high school. Students do even less at home. High school sophomores average four hours of homework per week; their Japanese counterparts two hours *every night*.

When students do read in class, they use "dumbed down" textbooks—stripped, says Bill Honig, California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, "of any distinguishing content, style, or point of view" by publishers adhering to rigid "readability" formulas. Honig recalls that a local school district he once headed was forced to buy junior high school history books for fifth-graders "because the reading levels of the [standard fifth grade] series were pitched so low."

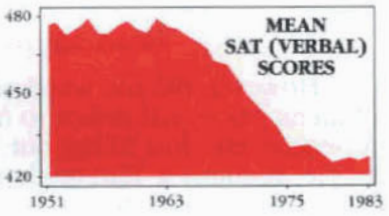
Honig contends that the "reformers" of the 1960s deserve much of the blame. In the name of "relevant" education, they added classes like Marriage Simulation and Baja Whalewatch to the curriculum and eased academic requirements. By the late 1970s, nearly one-half of the nation's high school students were enrolled in lax "general track" programs, up from just 10 percent a decade earlier.

Honig and other analysts see the recent slight upturn in students' scores on standardized tests as a sign that America's public schools have begun a turnaround. But Honig also warns that the damage done to literacy and general learning during two decades of turmoil in the schools will not quickly be undone.

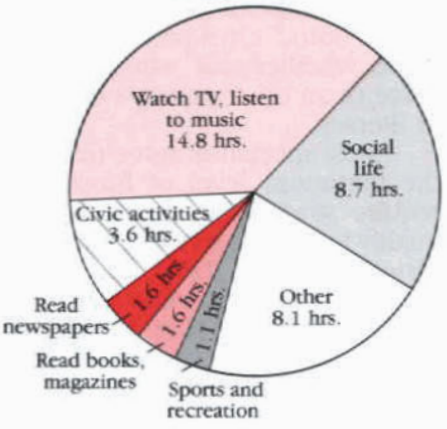
TRENDS IN READING TEST SCORES, 1971–84



Black and Hispanic youths have made significant gains in reading proficiency since 1971. Yet educators worry about the flat performance among nine-year-olds in all groups since 1980. These youngsters will have difficulty meeting the marks set by their elders. Even among white 17-year-olds, the highest scoring group, more than half cannot comprehend material designed for college-bound students. Student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, a more general measure of academic ability, turned up slightly in 1981. At home, parents do not seem to be setting a good example for their offspring. The average American devotes less than 10 percent of his leisure time to the printed word.



HOW AMERICANS USE THEIR LEISURE TIME



Sources: National Association of Educational Progress; Education Testing Service; Survey Research Center, College Park, Maryland.

*Based on 39.5 hours of leisure time per week, in 1981 (excluding sleep).

illiterate today.* Another 45 million are "marginally competent," reading below the 12th-grade level. To varying degrees, all are handicapped as citizens, parents, and workers.

More than a decade ago, the U.S. Senate's Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity put the cost of such slippage to the U.S. economy—in reduced labor productivity, trimmed tax revenues, higher social welfare outlays—at $237 billion annually. (Today, the burden of illiteracy in terms of unemployment and welfare benefits alone is about $12 billion.) What costs Americans pay in terms of the nation's politics and civic life are not measurable.

What does it mean to be "functionally illiterate"? The term is elusive. The number of people who simply cannot read and write today is infinitesimal: The United States is about as literate in these terms as Ivory Soap is pure. Going by the standards of 1840, this represents a smashing success.

Straining to Read the News

However, the old standards no longer apply. The 1840 sort of literacy does not suffice to master the details of contemporary American life. Just filling out federal income tax forms, for example, requires a 12th-grade education. And, if individuals are to prosper, literacy means more than just getting by. "If we are literate in 20th-century America," writes Harvard's Patricia Albjerg Graham, "we expand the ways in which we can learn, understand, and appreciate the world around us. [Literacy permits] us to become more autonomous individuals, less circumscribed by the conditions of social class, sex, and ethnicity into which we are born." On a practical level, getting ahead in the world of work, whether that world is an insurance company's clerical office or an oil company's executive suite, requires a high level of literacy.

Most specialists agree that an eighth-grade reading ability is the minimum level of functional literacy. Twenty states now require students to pass an eighth-grade competency test to qualify for a high school diploma. This is a modest standard: the *New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* are written at a 10th- to 12th-grade level. Jeanne Chall cites the case of a notice she received from the New England Telephone Company. In short sentences, it told customers how to determine whether malfunctions originated in the equipment or the telephone line.

*Opinion is by no means unanimous. A National Assessment of Educational Progress study due to be published this spring will probably posit a much lower level of functional illiteracy. In *Illiterate America* (1985), teacher-activist Jonathan Kozol endorses an eighth-grade standard but estimates that 60 million adults fail to meet it. Jeanne Chall argues that a 12th-grade level is the minimum acceptable standard: Some 72 million adults fall below it.

Yet, according to Chall's readability formula, a ninth- or 10th-grade level of reading ability was needed to understand the notice. "For about 30 to 40 percent [of the customers] it might as well have been written in Greek or Latin."

Pegging functional literacy to an eighth-grade reading ability leaves many ambiguities. Specialists are not certain, for example, whether the skills that an eighth grader needs to pass a competency test are the same as those that a worker needs on the job. More troublesome is that most estimates of functional illiteracy are based on data on the number of years of schooling adults have completed, not on actual tests of their abilities. And, as educators well know, merely completing the eighth grade does not mean performing thereafter at that level. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 35 percent of today's 13-year-olds (mostly in the eighth grade) read just above a "basic" level.

One major study does roughly confirm the estimate of 27 million functional illiterates. After testing 7,500 adults on their ability to accomplish everyday tasks—reading the label of an aspirin bottle, following the directions for cooking a TV dinner, writing a check—University of Texas researchers in 1975 put the number of functional illiterates nationwide at 23 million.

Dropping Out

The majority of these people are poor and/or black or Hispanic, residents of the rural South or Northern cities. The University of Texas researchers found that 44 percent of the blacks they tested and 16 percent of the whites were functionally illiterate. "Eighty-five percent of juveniles who come before the courts are functionally illiterate," writes Jonathan Kozol. "Half the heads of households classified below the poverty line by federal standards cannot read an eighth-grade book. Over one-third of mothers who receive support from welfare are functionally illiterate. Of eight million unemployed adults, four to six million lack the skills to be retrained for hi-tech jobs."

A large number of the nation's functional illiterates are high school dropouts. Among adults over 25, nearly 17 percent of blacks and 31 percent of Hispanics left school before the eighth grade. Millions more stayed in school a few more years but never reached an eighth-grade reading level. In 10 Southern states, more than 40 percent of the adult population, white and black, are dropouts. Happily, overall dropout rates (now about 25 percent) have been falling fast during recent decades, but they remain high among blacks and Hispanics in city schools, auguring ill for the future progress of these minorities.

"Computer literacy," training the young to program computers, proved to be a short-lived fad. But well over one-half of the nation's elementary schools now use the machines to help teach the three Rs.

Functional illiteracy tends to be passed from generation to generation—illiterate parents cannot read to their children, help them with their homework, or introduce them to the world of books. The NAEP reports that youngsters whose parents failed to complete high school are nearly twice as likely as their peers to be functionally illiterate.

Reflecting on the U.S. Army's experience with illiterates, an American educator once wrote: "An overwhelming majority of these soldiers had entered school, attended the primary grades where reading is taught, and had been taught to read. Yet, when as adults they were examined, they were unable to read readily such simple material as that of a daily newspaper." The educator was May Ayres Burgess, writing in 1921 about the Army's experience with the Alpha tests of draftees during the First World War. Complaints like hers had been heard before in American history, and they are being repeated today.

In 1986, as we have noted, most of the nation's 2.3 million new adult functional illiterates are either immigrants or dropouts. But that is not to say that the schools are blameless. According to the NAEP, one million children between the ages of

12 and 17 now read below a fourth-grade level. Among minority groups, the problems are more severe: 41 percent of black 17-year-olds (and eight percent of their white peers) are functionally illiterate, hence not likely to escape from the underclass.

There are signs everywhere that such data understate the extent of the problem, that many more youths—white, black, and Hispanic—do not read well enough to make their own way in American society. Of nearly 1,400 colleges and universities surveyed recently, 84 percent had found it necessary to create remedial reading, writing, and math programs. Big Business spends millions of dollars every year on "job training," often merely a euphemism for "bonehead" English courses. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company bankrolls $6 million worth of remedial education for 14,000 employees. The Polaroid Corporation teaches engineers bound for management positions how to read nontechnical material. "They never learned to scan. They don't know you can read a newspaper differently from a book or that you can read just *parts* of a book," said a company official.

Reading Jane Fonda

Mastering the technique of reading is no guarantee of understanding the substance of what is read. That requires *cultural* literacy. Most high school seniors can probably "decode" *Time*, but one wonders how much of it they understand. A 1985 study of 17-year-olds by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) found that one-half did not recognize the names of Josef Stalin or Winston Churchill. One-third could not point to "Great Britain, *or* France, *or* West Germany, *on a map of Europe*." The NEH did not ask its young subjects whether they knew who Mikhail S. Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher were, but chances are that the answers would have been discouraging. Daily newspaper circulation has remained stagnant at about 62 million copies since 1970, while the nation's population has grown. At least one-fourth of America's 86 million households appear to go without a newspaper.

U.S. book publishers are selling more books per capita than ever before—output totals 3.5 million copies daily—but if Jane Fonda's best-selling *Workout Book* is any guide, not many of these exercise the mind very much. The book trade's biggest sellers overall—the Gothic novels and mysteries and romances sold in drugstores and supermarkets—are mostly written at a seventh- or eighth-grade level.

Even with this wide selection of light fare, 29 percent of all 16- to 21-year-olds, according to a survey by the Book Industry

Study Group, say that they do not read books at all.

Along with functional illiterates, such "aliterates" do manage to scrape by. Most are gainfully employed, active members of society, even if their lives are complicated or their futures dimmed. *Glamour* magazine recently reported the case of a successful 29-year-old female real estate broker hampered by an eighth-grade level reading ability. "I'm constantly with customers who use words that go over my head. I often have to ask them to expand on what they just said. If I can't manipulate them into saying things in words I understand, I'm lost." Her fiancé helped her read letters and contracts.

"You have to be careful not to get into situations where it would leak out or be with people that would—ah—make it show," said an illiterate Vermont farmer. "You always try to act intelligent, act like you knew everything.... If somebody give you something to read, you make believe you read it and you must make out like you knew everything that there was on there ... and most of the time you could. It's kinda like show biz."

"Illiterates become the greatest actors in the world," noted Arthur Colby, president of Literacy Volunteers of America.

Use It or Lose It

Colby's organization is one of many around the country that try to help functional illiterates. But widespread literacy training for civilian adults is a relatively new phenomenon. President Lyndon B. Johnson, calling functional illiteracy "a national tragedy," got Washington involved when he launched the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program in 1964 as part of his Great Society. Today, Washington spends $100 million (matched by $200 million from the states) for several kinds of ABE programs: adult elementary and high school equivalency classes, as well as English as a Second Language instruction. All told, ABE enrolls some 2.6 million adults annually.

In 1970, Commissioner of Education James E. Allen, Jr., launched an ambitious national "Right to Read" effort for illiterates of all ages, but Allen was fired for his public opposition to President Richard Nixon's 1970 incursion into Cambodia; his educational "moonshot for the '70s" never really got off the launch pad. In a September 7, 1983, speech marking International Literacy Day, President Reagan called for "a united effort" to eliminate adult functional illiteracy in America. Yet Washington has not chipped in any more money for the effort so far.

The private sector sponsors hundreds of literacy programs. Literacy Volunteers of America (founded in 1962) and Laubach Literacy International (1930) are the two biggest charitable ef-

READING, WRITING, AND . . . TELEVISION

Next to sleeping and working, watching television is the most popular American activity. The average American household turns on the "boob tube" for nearly seven hours every day, and children are the chief audience. In 1982, the National Institute of Mental Health estimated that high school seniors had spent more time in front of the television (15,000 hours) than in the classroom (11,000 hours).

Does passively watching television affect the ability of children to learn to read and write? The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports that children who watch up to two hours of television per day score *above* average on reading tests; but *six* or more hours of television watching is "consistently and strongly related to lower reading proficiency."

Sesame Street's Big Bird

Television, however, may not actually be responsible for bad reading skills. "Poor readers," the NAEP says, "may simply choose to watch more television."

Jerome and Dorothy Singer, both Yale psychologists, argue that television viewing *does* have a negative effect. Children who watch TV for 20 to 35 hours a week, they assert, simply have little time to read. Moreover, the TV screen "holds viewer attention by piling up novelty through shifts of scene, content, mixtures of visual movement, music, sound effects, and speech." Bombarded daily by this "cluttered stimulus field," children lose the ability to reflect, relax, and focus their attention.

Other scholars disagree. Educator Susan E. Neuman of Eastern Connecticut State College argues that television is a red herring. In her view, it does not displace reading; it displaces other forms of entertainment. Watching television is just one of many factors—whether a child's parent reads to him, his personality, intelligence, schooling, and socioeconomic status—that affect reading ability.

The specialists are also divided over the much-touted merits of "educational" television. Public television's *Sesame Street* employs jokes, stories, rhymes, and puppets to make learning to read more fun. Some studies suggest that *Sesame Street* helps teach its 10 million preschool viewers to recognize numbers, letters, and words—at home, without fear of failure or embarrassment. The Singers, however, find that *Sesame Street* does more harm than good. Each 60-minute show, they say, includes up to 35 unrelated scenes. The result: "short attention spans." *Sesame Street* watchers are bored by classroom work and the "relatively calm, bland environment of most public schools."

For all that, children may be better off watching public television's *Sesame Street* or *Reading Rainbow* than *Dynasty* or the *A-Team*. Yet watching seven hours a day of *any* kind of TV does not strike most researchers as a recipe for intellectual growth among the young.

forts aimed at adult illiterates. They enroll some 75,000 students annually. Community colleges, local public libraries, churches, community-based education and development organizations (with a mixture of private and government support), corporations, and labor unions do substantial work in the field. All told, private and public literacy efforts spend less than $1 billion annually (versus $90 billion for higher education) and reach 4.5 to six million people.

Although perhaps one-fifth of America's adult illiterates enroll in these programs every year (not counting those who need help to climb from an eighth- to a 12th-grade level), many will have to stay in for several years to learn to read and write effectively. Dropout rates are often very high—over 50 percent in some classes. And among graduates, there is a disturbing tendency to lapse back into illiteracy, as the ability to read and write atrophies from disuse once classes end.

What works? The American military has the longest experience with combating adult illiteracy, and even it has found no magic formulas. The switch to an all-volunteer Army made the search more desperate: From 10 percent in 1975, the proportion of functionally illiterate recruits jumped to 31 percent in 1981. (By 1985, thanks in part to high civilian unemployment that improved the quality of recruits, the rate dropped back to nine percent.) The Army has achieved its greatest success with efforts like Project FLIT (Functional Literacy Training)—an intensive six-week course using operating manuals and other written material that soldiers actually need to use in the line of duty.

The Need to Read

The same kind of approach seems to work best in the civilian world. Recently, a New York City Teamsters Union local sponsored a 10-week literacy course for card-carrying municipal exterminators. It focused on teaching the students what they needed to know to pass a certification exam and function in their jobs. Perhaps as important, the teachers were exterminators themselves, peers of the students. The result: few dropouts and a 100 percent success rate on the test for the graduates.

Unfortunately, the Teamsters example is the exception rather than the rule. The government's ABE programs and many others typically use middle-class instructors and rather abstract texts. Lower-class students who see few links between what is being taught (using texts like *Memories of East Utica*) and what they consider important (e.g., writing résumés, comparing life insurance policies) often grow discouraged and drop out. Adds McGill University's Rose-Marie Weber, "Teachers [in adult liter-

acy courses] often complain about the students' apparent lack of motivation, their negative attitudes toward learning, and their failure to recognize the long-term value of literacy skills."

Weber's observation suggests why the "all-out literacy war" that some specialists advocate would be unrealistic. Literacy is not just a simple mechanical skill that people can learn and stow away. It is almost a way of life, requiring constant exercise and the acquisition of new knowledge. The x-ray technician or computer repairman who knows how to read but ignores newspapers and books and turns on the television set when he gets home is not going to achieve or sustain a high level of literacy.

Every generation seems to face its own obstacles to literacy. For the Puritans, one barrier was simply the cost and difficulty of reading by candlelight; for 19th-century Americans, the temptation to leave school to go to work. Today, we lack neither light nor leisure, and the "need to read" is stronger than ever. At the very least, every citizen ought to be able to learn *how* to read and to acquire the knowledge to know *what* he is reading.

Improving the quality of U.S. public education is an obvious (albeit expensive) first step: There is no logical reason why tax-supported high schools in America should produce graduates who can not read and write at a 12th-grade level. Continuing to do so merely consigns another generation of youths, especially low-income youths, to the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. Federal backing for successful local, "community based" literacy efforts for adults, like those of the Teamsters, San Antonio's Barrio Education Project, and the Bronx Educational Services Program, is also needed. Yet many realities of modern life—the increasing influx of unlettered immigrants, the rising literacy standards, and television's continuing competition with the printed word for Americans' attention—suggest that functional illiteracy in America can be curbed but not eradicated. The illiterate, like the poor, will always be with us.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

LITERACY

"The first and the greatest of European poets," as Greek historian H. D. F. Kitto called Homer in **The Greeks** (Penguin, 1951, cloth; 1984, paper), may not have been the creative genius that most Western academics long assumed him to be. In 1923, classicist Milman Parry, whose work appears in **The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry**, (Oxford, 1971; Ayer, 1980), edited by Adam Parry and Richard M. Dorson, shocked his fellow scholars by arguing that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been orally composed and recited by wandering bards for several generations before being written down.

For at least a century, scholars of ancient writing have split hairs over such questions as whether Homer was the sole author of his epics and whether the alphabet spread from a single source or was independently invented in several places. Among the notable works in this tradition are archaeologist Ignace J. Gelb's **A Study of Writing** (Univ. of Chicago, 1952, cloth; 1963, paper), linguist David Diringer's **The Alphabet: A Key to the History of Mankind** (Hutchinson, 1948), and the more readable **A History of Writing** (Scribner's, 1984) by the British Library's Albertine Gaur.

Parry and A. B. Lord, the student who continued Parry's work in **Singer of Tales** (Harvard, 1960, cloth; 1981, paper), may have solved what historians call "the Homeric question," but they also opened the door to a controversy among anthropologists, psychologists, linguists, and classicists.

Was the transformation of the Greek mind between the time of Homer's verse and that of Aristotle's logic *caused* by writing? Does literacy in the modern world change the way people *think*?

In **Preface to Plato** (Harvard, 1963, 1982) and **The Greek Concept of Justice** (Harvard, 1978), noted classicist Eric A. Havelock answers in the affirmative. The nonliterate mind, according to Havelock, relies on concrete images, rhythmic patterns, and narrative. To put Euclid's abstract notion of an equilateral triangle in "Homeric dress," one would have to say something like: "The triangle stood firm in battle, astride and posed on equal legs." Only someone endowed with the abstract, analytic skills bestowed by literacy could have created the Platonic dialogues.

"Concrete" thought is not the only characteristic attributed to nonliterates. Soviet psychologist A. R. Luria, whose landmark study of Russian peasants during the 1930s, **Cognitive Development** (Harvard, 1976, cloth & paper), has only recently been published in the West, adds that language shapes perception. People who lack separate *words* for "blue" and "green," for example, may confuse those colors.

Likewise, Luria's peasants could not classify objects like a hammer, a saw, and an ax as tools or respond correctly to questions of logic. To the syllogism "In the Far North . . . all bears are white. Novaya Zemlya is in the Far North. . . . What color are the bears?" a peasant replied: "I don't know. Each locality has its own animals."

Language scholar Walter J. Ong, in **Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word** (Methuen, 1982), and anthropologists in **Literacy in Traditional Societies** (Cambridge, 1968), edited by Cambridge University's Jack Goody, offer other examples from medieval Europe, Af-

rica, and India. Goody and Ian Watt of Stanford University, for instance, write that the Eskimos of Alaska or the Tiv of Nigeria "do not recognize any contradiction between what they say now and what they said 50 years ago" because they lack written records. Myth and history for the nonliterate thus "merge into one."

On the other hand, psychologist Jean Piaget, in **The Development of Thought: Equilibration of Cognitive Structures** (Viking, 1977), and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in **The Savage Mind** (Univ. of Chicago, 1967), argue that there are few, if any, differences between the cognitive or intellectual abilities of literate and nonliterate people.

Nonliterate villagers in Africa, North America, or Asia, Lévi-Strauss contends, have their own sophisticated systems of classification and logic that do not depend on writing. The Navaho of old, for example, could identify more than 500 species of desert plants off the top of their heads—a feat that any literate person would be hard-pressed to equal.

"The use of more or less abstract terms," says Lévi-Strauss, "is a function not of greater or lesser intellectual capacity, but of differences in the interests . . . of particular social groups."

Psychologists Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole make much the same argument in **The Psychology of Literacy** (Harvard, 1981), a report of their seven-year study among the Vai of Liberia. The two researchers found that nonliterate and literate but self-taught Vai performed equally well on most tests of cognitive ability. Only Vai educated in Western-style schools surpassed their fellows in what Scribner and Cole call "logical functions."

The notion that simply learning the ABCs is not enough would not have surprised the organizers of a major effort, sponsored by Northern Protestant churches and abolitionist societies, to "teach & civilize" illiterate freedmen after the Civil War. Historian Robert C. Morris, in **Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction** (Univ. of Chicago, 1976, 1982) describes what W. E. B. Du Bois called "the crusade of the New England schoolma'am."

To the dismay of some white Southerners, the Yankee teachers taught more than 7,000 young blacks in Dixie everything from reading and arithmetic to "John Brown's Body." The schoolma'ams were successful in attracting many of their students to the Republican banner and, during the 1870s and '80s, helped found many of the South's black high schools and colleges.

Today, as Third World governments struggle to make their citizens literate and U.S. colleges and corporations push remedial writing programs, academic specialists in the West continue to debate the impact of literacy on the human condition.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Many of the titles cited in this essay were suggested by Richard M. Long, Washington representative of the International Reading Association. Related works can be found in WQ's Background Books essays on The Public Schools (Autumn 1979), The Brain (Summer 1982), Teaching in America (New Year's 1984), and The Mind (Winter 1984).*

CURRENT BOOKS

SCHOLARS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows and staff of the Wilson Center

YANKEE BLUES: Musical Culture and American Identity
by MacDonald Smith Moore
Indiana, 1985
213 pp. $20.50

There are many parables, from the story of Aladdin to those of Huckleberry Finn and Jay Gatsby, about heroes who strove to achieve their fondest dreams only to realize, at the moment of achievement, that their dreams come true did not take the shape of their own hopes. It may be one of the oldest, and surely one of the saddest, stories in the world.

It is also, at least according to MacDonald Smith Moore's brilliant book, *Yankee Blues*, the story of American music in the 20th century and, by extension, of the still unfinished American attempt at self-definition. No country has ever more strenuously tried to *invent* itself—and none has found that auto-invention more perilous. This is the subtler point of Moore's study, which, in addition to treating early American responses to jazz, offers a clear profile of the American psyche in all its richness and divisiveness.

Moore, the president of New York Digital Recording, chronicles the careers of what he calls the "centennial composers"—those New England–born composers whose birthdates more or less coincided with the centenary of the Declaration of Independence. Particularly, he focuses on Daniel Gregory Mason and Charles Ives. Both men, like their colleagues, were patrician, classicist, and committed to, if not obsessed with, the creation of a native American symphonic music that would express the aspirations and ideology of the still-young Republic. Their characteristic heroes were not composers, as Moore points out, but American philosophers and writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. Ashamed of the potentially "unmanly" profession of music-maker, they sought to make their art an expression of "redemptive culture," an art that would participate in the spiritual formation of the greatest society in human history.

"Unlike romantics, who characteristically worshipped art, the Victorian Yankee composer worshipped culture," writes Moore. And the distinction matters: Culture is art staring at itself, and wondering what it is *for*. Mason and Ives, like their centennial cohorts, were disappointed in their attempts to reach the wide popular audience for which they longed and which would have validated their transcendentalist-democratic hopes. Mason ended up an influential critic, historian, and theorist of music. Ives, composer of some of the most original music in America (including the *Concord Sonata* and *Variations on America*), stopped writing: "Like a scorned lover, he daily tasted the acid indifference of an audience toward which he scarcely dared to reach."

And then came jazz. After years of laboring under what Moore calls the "nervous burden" of being cultural torchbearers, Yankee

composers found themselves confronted by an original, vibrant, fascinating music that Europe itself regarded as the truly *American* art form. Worse, this music came not from the Ivy League but from New Orleans brothels. Worse still, this music was played mainly by what used to be called "Negroes." Could this be American?

In the long middle section of *Yankee Blues*, Moore traces the meteoric rise of jazz in the favor of European intellectual circles, and its rather more reluctant acceptance by the Yankee composers and the white musical establishment in general. "A certain Dr. Beets," writes Moore, "warned that if American Indians heard jazz, they would go wild again." For its part, the Cincinnati Salvation Army feared that the construction of a theater next to a home for unwed mothers would insinuate "jazz emotions" in the minds of the babies born there. The devil's music, indeed—and its diabolism only underscored by the enthusiasm of such iconoclastic European composers as Stravinsky, Dvořák, and Bartók. Moore observes that much of the American animosity to pieces like Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* involves not just the challenging originality of the music itself but also the uneasy sense that that originality may partly derive from the "nigger music" (it was the phrase used) firmly ignored by Yankee classicists.

Moore's chronicle, in fact, is a kind of love story, involving betrayal and jealousy as well as finer things. Longing to produce an American music that could take its place beside the European masterpieces, longing for the approbation of the loved, feared, and hated Continental culture, the centennial composers found the nation praised by Europe for just what they did *not* want it to be praised for: nigger music.

I have used that hateful phrase twice now because it is an essential part of *Yankee Blues*. Indeed, it is central to the book's very suggestive study of American racism. An explosively popular phenomenon, jazz was viewed—and attacked—from a curiously divided mindset by the white, predominately Yankee establishment. On the one hand, it was regarded as savage, erotic, and potentially corrupting "jungle music" (the very phrase, by the way, that Duke Ellington used to market his band during the 1920s). And on the other hand, its persistent and syncopated rhythm was described as an expression—or an incarnation—of the machine-like dehumanization of modern culture. Moore is nowhere more eloquent than when he examines the implications of these two attitudes: Jazz was bad, first, because it was played by blacks and, second, because it was written by Jews.

Aaron Copland and George Gershwin feature as prominently in

the third part of Moore's study as Mason and Ives do in the first. But where Mason and Ives were self-conscious, traditional, rural New Englanders striving for the popular audience they knew they deserved, Copland and Gershwin were urban Jews who found that audience almost without trying. For Yankee composers—and they were not evil men—the bitterness in watching this happen must have been almost unbearable. "As late as 1949," writes Moore, "a critic skewered Copland with a veritable litany of codewords and code images"; he goes on to quote one of the most funnily, or nastily, written pieces of anti-Semitism one has encountered.

"Oriental," Moore says, was the word applied most often to the Jewish composers and songwriters who completed the jazz revolution. And "Oriental," of course, meant "non-Yankee": hedonistic, acquisitive, opportunistic. That these were precisely the traits encouraged by white, middle-class capitalist culture only indicates the degree to which all societies are capable of projecting their worst features onto an "other" group and thereby distancing themselves from those traits.

As a history of American self-definition, Moore's book is indispensable. Along with Lewis Erenberg's *Steppin' Out* (1981) and Peter Conn's *The Divided Mind* (1983), it tells us about the ideals that spurred Americans during the opening of this century, *the* American moment, perhaps, when a people attempted to identify itself and direct itself according to its highest aspirations. More important, this fine book shows that the melting pot finally worked—perhaps even better than its stirrers could or would have hoped.

—Frank McConnell '78

THE NEW DIRECTION IN AMERICAN POLITICS
edited by John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson
Brookings, 1985
409 pp. $26.95

CANARSIE: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism
by Jonathan Rieder
Harvard, 1985
290 pp. $22.50

In 1968, the tide turned in American two-party politics.

With the debacle of the Democratic Party convention in Chicago and the subsequent defeat of Hubert Humphrey by Richard Nixon, the coalition that had dominated public affairs since the Depression began to disintegrate. The elections of 1980 and 1984 registered seismic changes in presidential politics, voter loyalty, party organization, and in the fundamental language of political debate.

As the economists, political scientists, and other contributors to *The New Direction in American Politics* demonstrate, by 1984 nearly every demographic, economic, ethnic, and geographical group had moved closer to the Republican Party, except for Jews, blacks, and the unemployed. Policies pertaining to defense, domestic

spending, welfare, and social insurance all shifted direction. Now the public agenda no longer reflects the priorities of the New Deal. The Republican Party is no longer perceived as the party of Wall Street but as the party of economic growth for the middle class. The defining issue of national debate is no longer how much the role of the government ought to expand but by how much it will be curtailed.

Along with the desertion of the Democratic Party by white Southerners, a sizable number of new, young, conservative, affluent white voters have made the most conspicuous difference in recent presidential politics. In their essay, Thomas Cavanaugh and James Sundquist describe the political demographics of these voters: Largely a college-educated group, 40 percent of them earn more than $25,000, 75 percent are under 30, and all of them see the GOP as the party most able to deliver on the perennial American promise of prosperity.

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But the sea change in mass political sentiment, in particular the disillusionment with the legacy of the New Deal, runs deeper and wider. Long before Ronald Reagan made social issues—abortion, prayer in school, busing, affirmative action—the heart of his symbolic politics, the white ethnic constituencies of the Democratic Party had lost their belief in the liberal litany. Scholarly explanations for this phenomenon include "white racism," "embourgeoisement," racial rivalry in the labor market, "apple pie" authoritarianism, Lockean individualism, and neopopulist revenge.

While the Brookings volume provides a helpful broad-gauge look at this important political shift, no scholarly book of recent memory better conveys the specific sense of outraged betrayal that swept through the urban precincts of the Democratic Party in the mid-1970s than does Jonathan Rieder's brilliant study, *Canarsie*.

Located in Brooklyn, N.Y., Canarsie is a neighborhood of shabby respectability inhabited by about 70,000 people, mostly middle-income Jews and Italians. These folk are cab drivers, teachers, craftsmen, policemen, salesmen, and merchants. They are second- and third-generation immigrants. All managed, through much toil and scrimping, to escape poor ethnic ghettoes. Proud, patriotic, and solidly Democratic, they suddenly found themselves threatened by racial and cultural change brought to a head by a court-ordered plan for neighborhood school integration. It is a sadly familiar story, culminating in nasty street violence. Rieder tells it with wit, compassion, and insight.

Canarsie in the early 1970s was a community at risk, just barely coping with the strains brought on by developments of the previous decade. These included the Vietnam War, stagflation, black power, feminism, and the revolution in manners and morals. Blacks, bureaucrats, and well-to-do liberals seemed to have joined in threatening Canarsie's few, fading privileges. Liberalism stood for spinelessness, waste, muddle-headed idealism, hypocrisy, and condescension. Conversely, conservative politics seemed the best hope for reviving all those traditional values—responsibility and discipline, among others—that had served so well a generation that came of age amidst the

rigors of the Great Depression.

In his portrait of Canarsians, Rieder manages to steer between the conventional liberal caricature of the racist Archie Bunker and a romanticized image of the People. He evokes the profoundly ambivalent world of the village in the city: a comforting haven of kin, community, and faith, but also a breeding ground of narrow provincialism and prejudice. In the super-heated atmosphere of the late 1960s, the residents of this world felt attacked from two directions. From one, spokesmen for the "patrician conscience," notably Mayor John Lindsay, blamed them for social ills of which they considered themselves guiltless. These same high-minded liberals rewarded the indolent and riotous with public moneys in a fit of giving that seemed to Canarsians to be less like generosity than a kind of "decadent promiscuity." From the other side, an alien ghetto world of blacks threatened them with its monstrous "anti-culture" of unbridled desire and appetite, lacking in all the civilized restraints. Toward both, Canarsians expressed moral contempt and "plebian rancor."

"Law and order," so often the battle cry of this neopopulist rage, was not, Rieder argues, merely a code word for racism. It was also an encompassing plea for a return to stability, moral order, and the old verities. Behind the rancor and racism, Canarsians dreamed wistfully of an Edenic past—a time before crime and "racial balance," a romantic vision made all the more poignant by "the precariousness of their hold on middle-class status."

Canarsie thus does more than illuminate the psychic, political, and moral aspects of lower-middle-class conservatism. It is also an indictment of liberalism for its spectacular failure of empathy. "Deriding lower-middle-class nervousness as racism, many reformers saw Middle America as a defiant stumbling block to an enlightened society," writes Rieder. "When they performed that moral excision, left-liberals abandoned much of the traditional mass base of the Democratic Party." A community that had consistently voted Democratic since 1932 gave its overwhelming support to Reagan in 1980, even in those strongholds of the Jewish middle class where a Republican vote was considered close to sacreligious.

As both *The New Direction* and *Canarsie* make clear, the coalition behind Reagan's Republicanism is an uneasy alliance of lower-middle-class populists, traditional business conservatives, and urban professionals united by the prospect of a Republican-led prosperity, but otherwise deeply divided by issues of religion and morals, foreign policy and social welfare. The rest of the decade will reveal whether in fact we have entered a new era of Republican hegemony.

—Steve Fraser '85

NEW TITLES

History

TOBACCO CULTURE: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution
by T. H. Breen
Princeton, 1985
216 pp. $19.95


The Bell York River

Of late, scholars have become increasingly interested in the attitudes of colonial Americans. Breen, a Northwestern University historian, looks at Virginia's 18th-century elite: the Carters, the Lees, and other Tidewater tobacco planters. Why, he asks, did these men, so dependent on Britain for fashion and trade, become leading agitators for independence?

Tobacco growing was a year-round endeavor at which only a few "crop masters" truly succeeded; most planters had to struggle to live up to their ideal of financial, and thus moral, independence. All left commercial matters to British agents, who sold Virginia tobacco in the London market and brought back expensive clothing, cut crystal, and other luxuries that the Anglophile planters yearned for.

The planters' taste for fine goods and their crop's long growing season led to mounting debts. The agents usually extended credit, but economic depressions in Europe during the 1760s forced them to call in loans. The planters complained to no avail: "I dread very Much," wrote Robert Beverley to his agent in 1764, "from the Appearances of this Day that [the colony] will be condemned forever to a state of *Vassalage & Dependence*."

Under increasing financial stress even such resolute landowners as George Washington had to give up tobacco for wheat. By becoming mere "farmers," the members of the Tidewater gentry were able to survive. But the loss of personal autonomy and of a mode of life based on honor and shared assumptions embittered these men—and made radical political realignment thinkable.

RENAISSANCE ESSAYS
by Hugh Trevor-Roper
Univ. of Chicago, 1985
312 pp. $22.50

Because he attracted such wide attention with his books on 20th-century history (e.g., *The Last Days of Hitler*), it is often forgotten that Trevor-Roper is first and foremost a specialist on the Renaissance. He is also one of those historians who range easily from political analysis (as in his treatment here of the origins of

Europe's Thirty Years' War) to interpretations of culture and ideas.

In an essay on the influence of the Swiss-born physician-mystic Paracelsus (1493?–1541), Trevor-Roper shows how the alchemist's ideas about the chemical properties of the microcosm (man) and the macrocosm (the universe) led to some sound medical practices. Paracelsus held, for instance, that diseases were not just imbalances of "humors" but invasions of parasites; his prescriptions of chemical potions (such as laudanum) often brought relief and encouraged the wider use of medications.

Trevor-Roper pens two excellent studies of the giants of Renaissance humanism, Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) and Erasmus (1466–1536). Their hopes for preserving a balanced world, based on humanism and Christian faith, animated by "the spirit of confidence, gaiety, good-humored raillery, and love of life," were disappointed after Martin Luther divided Christendom in 1517.

But the quest for balance did not cease. It survived, among other places, in Robert Burton's tome *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). The intent of the Oxford librarian's *omnium gatherum* was to cure melancholy "at its base" through highly individualized behavioral prescriptions. Counseling moderation (the depressed scholar should escape from books), Burton even recommended the Anglican Church because it was a happy medium between "popish" formality and Calvinist severity. But since Burton's advice was more utilitarian than theological, it is hardly surprising, notes Trevor-Roper, that his "best-selling propaganda for conformity . . . is never cited by the clerical champions of orthodoxy."

WILLIAM MARSHAL: The Flower of Chivalry
by Georges Duby
Pantheon, 1986
155 pp. $15.95

William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, faithfully served five kings of England during his long (1145?–1219) and heroic life. Two years before he died, while acting as regent, the Anglo-Norman earl repelled an invading French force at the Battle of Lincoln, thus assuring continued control over the island by the Plantagenet kings. The battle (in which Marshal himself

fought) was the culminating victory of a life dedicated to a single ideal: knightly service.

Fortunately for historians, one of Marshal's surviving sons engaged a poet to set down the details of his father's life. The "song" (or *chanson de geste*), written in medieval French and running to 19,914 verses, has survived intact.

Duby, a noted French medievalist, is not the first historian to explore this valuable text. But his brief, gracefully written commentary illuminates a 12th-century world of complex and often conflicting obligations, shrewdly arranged marriages, and endless knightly tests and trials. It was not enough for the good knights of Normandy, Flanders, or England merely to survive their training, to find patrons, to live through battles, crusades, and tournaments (which, involving up to 10,000 combatants, could often be as bloody as regular battles). In Marshal's day, knights also had to keep one step ahead of an army of creditors who were ready to strip the very armor off their backs. "Henceforth," Duby explains, "money appears to be increasingly indispensable to honor at the very moment honor demands it be scorned."

Marshal survived such pressure by marrying well, but the world of chivalry died before he did. After the Battle of Lincoln, Marshal allowed the vanquished French commander to return home—the perfect knightly gesture. Yet some of England's younger lords assailed his action as treasonous.

Contemporary Affairs

THE MAKING OF A MOONIE: Choice or Brainwashing?
by Eileen Barker
Blackwell, 1984
305 pp. $19.95

"Why should—*how could*—anyone become a Moonie?"

With refreshingly little reliance on the jargon of her trade, sociologist Barker of the London School of Economics offers a convincing answer to her own question. She also sets forth the history and doctrine of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. Born in northern Korea in 1920, Moon converted as a child to Presbyterianism, was briefly imprisoned in Communist jails, and started his own

religion in South Korea in 1954. Moon's teachings rest on his special interpretation of the Old and New Testament and his claim to be the new Messiah. His first missionaries came to the West in 1959 but met with little success until the early 1970s. Anticommunist in its politics, puritanical in its morality, Moon's movement *claims* millions of members, although, thanks to a high dropout rate, there may be no more than 250,000 on the rolls at any time. However many strong, the church owns businesses, newspapers, and real estate in South Korea, the United States, and elsewhere.

The church's recruitment methods, it turns out, are less sinister than popularly portrayed. Dismissing anti-Moonie charges of "brainwashing," Barker finds that Moonie missionaries do not employ debilitating diets or drugs. Aggressive proselytizers, they do use a form of group manipulation (called "love-bombing"). Highly susceptible to the Moonies are young, idealistic adults (mostly male) of average or better intelligence from warm, supportive families, often with traditional religious backgrounds, including a high percentage of Catholics.

Barker concludes that the Unification Church's appeal lies in providing bright but somewhat insecure young adults with something close to a continuation of a happy childhood. This analysis is unlikely to please either the Reverend Moon's followers or his critics.

THE END OF THE PALESTINE MANDATE
edited by Wm. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey
Univ. of Tex., 1985
197 pp. $20

On May 14, 1948, Great Britain ended its 28-year mandate in Palestine. On the same day, David Ben Gurion and his comrades proclaimed Israel an independent nation, received immediate recognition from the United States, and, at midnight, confronted the invading armies of five Arab states.

How and why all this happened is what seven essayists, representing a variety of viewpoints, here attempt to explain.

Coeditor Louis, a University of Texas professor of English history and culture, opens with a discussion of the British role. Drawing on his earlier *The British Empire in the Middle East* (1984), he tells how Foreign Secretary Ernest

Bevin, fearful of losing influence among the new Arab nations, struggled unsuccessfully to realize his dream—a "binational" state. Washington's policy, as *Foreign Affairs* editor Peter Grose shows, partly resulted from poor communication between the State Department and President Harry Truman. The latter, famously ignorant of Middle Eastern affairs, turned a deaf ear to "the striped-pants boys" at State (who also favored binationalism) and pursued an erratic course that culminated with the surprisingly swift recognition of Israel.

The Soviets also supported the Zionists, recognizing Israel on May 17. Lehigh's Oles Smolansky suggests that Stalin hoped thereby not only to hasten the decline of British influence but also, by "ensuring continuing hostility between the Jewish state and its neighbors," to create chronic turmoil in the Mideast. Israeli scholar Michael Cohen considers the Zionists themselves. Their success, he argues, came from effective lobbying in Washington and from the superior military and administrative skills of the Jews in Palestine.

An early, decisive blow to Palestinian Arabs, says Walid Khalidi of the American University of Beirut, was Britain's nonenforcement of its White Paper of 1939, a plan designed, among other things, to limit the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Suspicious of the West, Palestinians turned increasingly to the Arab League, which proved dilatory and indecisive. Left in the lurch, the Palestinians soon found themselves without a homeland.

Arts & Letters

HENRY JAMES: A LIFE
by Leon Edel
Harper, 1985
740 pp. $24.95

So much happened in Henry James's sentences that his readers, at least his sympathetic ones, could overlook how little frequently happened in his plots. Not all were sympathetic: A hippopotamus pushing a pea, H. G. Wells remarked of him. But James, surviving both disdain and worship, has come to be seen for what he was: a writer who extended language's power to depict the complexities and ambiguities of peo-

ple's inner lives.

His own inner life was capacious. Biographer Edel devoted roughly two decades and five volumes to describing its peculiarities, including James's thoroughly repressed homoerotic tendencies. Edel's definitive study, here scaled down to a single volume by editor Catharine Carver, also paints the broad panorama, from James's birth in New York City in 1843 to his death in Sussex in 1916. In between came a comfortable childhood shared with two brilliant siblings, William and Alice, an informal education, extensive travels abroad, resettlement in England, an ever-expanding network of notable friends and acquaintances, literary triumphs and failures.

To this volume, Edel has added a franker discussion of James's sexual ambivalence and more details about the difficult relationship with his brother, William, the famed Harvard psychologist. One learns, for instance, that William was often cruel to his adoring brother, finding fault not only with his novels but also with his "whole way of taking life." Of all the criticisms he suffered, those may have hurt Henry most.

THE ART OF BIBLICAL POETRY
by Robert Alter
Basic, 1985
228 pp. $17.95

Much of the Hebrew Bible is poetry, among the best verses written by man. Yet precisely because of the Bible's status as sacred text, its literary dimensions have been largely neglected.

An 18th-century Anglican bishop, Robert Lowth, was one of the first analysts of the Bible's poetic form. He found that parallelism between two, sometimes among three, elements of a line ("Ada and Zilla, hear my voice. Wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech") constituted the main structural principle of ancient Hebrew verse. Using Lowth's insight as his starting point, Alter, a literature professor at the University of California, Berkeley, delves into the many ways the parallel parts work—how one image begets another and, in the process, creates the unique "movement" of the poems.

Alter's reading of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and other poetic books is closely attentive to the word play, punning, and verbal ambiguity of

the ancient Hebrew. (This may be as close as nonreaders of Hebrew will get to the richness of the original Old Testament—a reward in itself.) Alter's underlying argument clearly emerges: Poetry is no mere ornamental aspect of the Bible; it is by poetry, and poetry alone, that the Bible's authors were able to "realize" their mysterious, ever-compelling meanings.

Science & Technology

THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT and Other Clinical Tales
by Oliver Sacks
Summit, 1985
233 pp. $15.95

An elderly, respected musician, Dr. P., comes to neurologist Sacks because, though his vision is fine, he cannot recognize familiar objects or people. Tests reveal that he can identify the components of a thing but is unable to combine the parts into a sense of the whole. (He describes a rose as a "convoluted red form with a linear green attachment.") On the way out of the office, reminded to pick up his hat, the genial musician reaches for his wife's head. An extremely odd case, Dr. P's: It was as though he "construed the world as a computer construes it, by means of features and schematic relationships," concludes Sacks.

Not all of the cases assembled here are so unusual, but in most of them, Sacks, a professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, explores the (often heroic) ways people deal with the "organized chaoses" of disease. He tells how a woman laboriously relearned to control her physical movements after losing her body (or "proprioceptive") sense; how twin idiots savants with IQs of 60 performed marvelous numerical feats until they were, for "therapeutic" reasons, separated; how a Tourette syndrome sufferer came to depend so much on his hyperenergetic state that he abandoned his medication on weekends so that he could be his "old self."

Sacks's first book, *Awakenings* (1973), about the arduous recoveries of 20 victims of sleeping sickness, found a small but devoted following. These essays enter the mysterious world of illness with equal imagination and sympathy.

PAPERBOUNDS

CITIZENSHIP WITHOUT CONSENT: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity. By Peter H. Schuck and Rogers M. Smith. Yale, 1985. 173 pp. $22.50

Somewhere between 3.5 and six million illegal aliens currently reside in the United States, and the number increases by about 200,000 each year. Any of their children born in the United States automatically become citizens. The time has come, say Schuck and Smith, professors, respectively, of law and political science at Yale, to reconsider birthright citizenship. Tracing American notions of citizenship from English common law and Enlightenment philosophy, they identify two opposing traditions, one based on birth, the other on consent. While American law has always contained elements of both, the authors call for a tilt toward the latter. Ideologically, this emphasis is more consistent with America's founding principle of political membership by mutual consent—even though, as the authors acknowledge, this principle has been invoked in the past (*Dred Scott* v. *Sanford*, 1857) to exclude blacks and Indians from citizenship. A more important consideration is that birthright citizenship has become a further enticement to illegal immigration—something the United States can now ill afford.

MORAL TALES. By Jules Laforgue. Translated by William Jay Smith. New Directions, 1985. 160 pp. $8.95

These seven parodic treatments of great literary and mythological figures by the French poet Laforgue (1860–87) had a tremendous influence on such modernist writers as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. From Laforgue's example, they, and others, learned, as translator Smith puts it, to bring "legend and myth down to earth." Here is Laforgue's Hamlet, musing *ad infinitum*: "But Art is so great and life is so short! And nothing is feasible. I was damned in advance by my mother and my brother, by everything. (Yes, there's something in that.)" Laforgue's Pan, soon to be maddened by the elusive Syrinx, cries, "Oh, Woman, Woman! Creator of monomaniac humanity!" In parody, style is all, and Laforgue, in his version of *Salome*, made so bold as to mock the great French stylist Gustave Flaubert for his excessive use of detail: "And, under the enjambments of natural bridges, long mossy ravines in which ruminate in the mire the slate-covered carapaces of rat-tailed king crabs, some seeming to writhe upside down but probably just doing it on purpose to give themselves a rubdown." To deflate, as Laforgue taught was one way to make things new.

POPPER SELECTIONS. Edited by David Miller. Princeton, 1985. 479 pp. $9.95 (cloth, $32.50)

If one test of a philosopher is how well his ideas stand up in "samplers" such as this, then Karl Popper (born 1902), the Vienna-born exponent of "critical rationalism," is an outstanding thinker indeed. Simply put, critical rationalism is the belief that knowledge grows through conjectures which are then subjected to uncompromising tests. Ideas that cannot be subjected to criticism (i.e., cannot be falsified) are not worth entertaining. Included here are Popper's history of the critical rationalist tradition, beginning with the pre-Socratic Greeks; his demolitions of Marxist philosophy and empiricism (the latter naively supposes that knowledge begins with sense experiences and not with hypotheses about those experiences); and his reflections on the aims and methods of science. Popper writes such uncluttered prose that one almost forgets that his business is contemporary philosophy.

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The Evolution Of a Poet

It seems an unlikely story. An unhappy, somewhat affected young man from turn-of-the-century Prague begins his career as a highly imitative versifier. By dint of hard work and ascetic discipline, he becomes a poet, indeed the foremost European poet of his generation. He dies in 1926, but for the next 60 years, poets from all over the world—from Boris Pasternak in Russia to Randall Jarrell in America—claim him as their inspiration and model. This man, Rainer Maria Rilke (born in 1875), becomes known as the poet's poet of the 20th century. Here, Jeffery Paine tells how Rilke transformed himself and, so doing, helped chart the course of modern poetry.

by Jeffery M. Paine

Ask the question—or perhaps merely overhear it, for it's already asked frequently—who is the 20th century's greatest poet, and you will inevitably hear a variety of responses. W. B. Yeats is probably named most often, T. S. Eliot perhaps second, but a whole anthology of names eventually gets proposed.

Alter the question somewhat, however, to who is the greatest poet in a language other than English, and for the past 25 years in America and England there has been a nearly unanimous consensus.

Ten years ago, the London *Times Literary Supplement* called Rainer Maria Rilke "one of the greatest poets of all times." And during the past decade Rilke's reputation has, if anything, grown unabated.

In the United States, whole doctoral dissertations have investigated Rilke's influence on such poets as Theodore Roethke, Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, John Berryman, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath. Among poets themselves, Rilke seems firmly seated on a pedestal—a model of what the poet should be.

Yet, paradoxically, until the excellent, recent translations by Stephen Mitchell, only one volume of poetry, Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, was available in a decent, generally respected English translation (by J. B. Leishman and

A sketch of the 25-year-old Rilke in Moscow. The artist, Leonid Pasternak, was the father of the noted novelist Boris Pasternak. Rilke later described Russia as "the homeland of my instinctual being."

Stephen Spender); and regardless what other claims are made for it, no one can claim it is much longer than 30 pages.*

Rilke's English readers have fed their admiration on two prose works—a half-autobiographical novel, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, and Rilke's published *Letters*—and while both may be masterpieces of their kind, it is more the image of Rilke himself in them that has so tantalized and beguiled other writers. In the history of poetry, perhaps no one else's personality ever exerted quite the influence Rilke's did and does. It seems to be for this century what the anonymous troubador's was for the Middle Ages—the proper persona for a poet. Rilke's life sometimes appears to be the answer itself to what, for many poets of this century, has become a most vexing question.

That question is, of course, what remains to be written?

Even as the poet's tools—rhyme, meter, simile—came one by one to seem superfluous, so likewise did the poetical subjects—nature's gran-

*Stephen Mitchell has translated *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke* (1982), *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1983), and, most recently, the *Sonnets to Orpheus* (1985).

deur, the morals of experience, lovers' exquisite emotions—become obsolete, old hat. The question of what could suffice as a new matter for poetry forms the point of departure for nearly every poet we call modern. In "Of Modern Poetry," Wallace Stevens stated the problem succinctly:

> The poem of the mind in the act of finding
> What will suffice. It has not always had
> To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
> Was in the script.
> Then the theatre was changed
> To something else. Its past was a souvenir.
>
> It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
> It has to face the men of the time and to meet
> The women of the time. It has to think about war
> And it has to find what will suffice. It has
> To construct a new stage. . . .

Part of Rilke's appeal to other writers, his haunting image, is that his attempts to conduct his life in a novel, unique way seemed to create that new stage—a stage, a way of life, in which the "poetic" would materialize almost automatically. Here, T. S. Eliot, a fastidious prim clerk in an office, or W. B. Yeats, with his grandiose old-fashioned themes of magic and Irish rebel nationalism, offer little help.

Rilke's life, by contrast, can be taken almost as an argument: Only conduct yourself in a certain way—purely, ascetically, attentively—and the prose objects of the world will swim into your vision already half-formed into poetry.

In a well-known poem, Rilke describes an ancient Greek statue of Apollo objectively, impersonally, but the last line abruptly alters into a personal command: *Du musst Dein Leben ändern* ("You must change your life"). In other words, truly observe the statue, and it will compel you to alter your existence. Many of Rilke's followers have preferred reading this message in reverse: If they changed their lives, then their observations might on their own heighten into poetry.

So, here is a simple, appealing answer to how to make art when it has all been made. Rilke, of course, did not originate this doctrine of artistic metamorphosis. Yeats generalized that all writers developed, via their art, into "a new species of man." Yet unlike any writer before him, Rilke was

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Jeffery M. Paine, 40, heads the copywriting department of a San Francisco advertising agency and is a critic and author. Born in Goose Creek, Texas, he received his B.A. from Rice (1967) and his Ph.D. from Princeton (1971). He wrote The Simplification of American Experience: Hollywood Films of the 1930s *(1976) and is at work on a study of Rilke, Forster, Wittgenstein, and Kafka.*

the first to leave a detailed record of exactly how he tutored himself into being a different person, a person who could "see" things that he could subsequently write about. By providing this example, Rilke became—in the minds of many admirers—the very definition of a poet.

Yet something is tricky here: That poetry demands not only a labor at one's desk but also a labor away from it creates, at the very least, a terrible strain. Rilke's capacities as a writer may have enlarged continually, but in America those poets who most wanted to emulate him—among them John Berryman, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath—all met unhappy ends, coming at last to despondency, diminution of ability, increases in alcohol consumed, or death by their own hand, until suicide is now considered an occupational hazard in poetry.

We need to take a closer look at Rilke's life, at exactly how he transformed his experience, to understand why the result—which could have been perilously bleak—in his case proved to be fruitful.

'Early Pain and Bitter Experience'

Anyone who met Rainer Maria Rilke in the latter years of his life may have felt he was shaking hands with European culture in human form. Every sentence Rilke spoke sounded filtered through layers of reflection, prisms of meaning, screens of nuances, till everything gross or mundane was eloquently discarded. Rilke appeared not to come from anywhere so much as to represent the essence of everywhere. In one five-year period he changed his residence 25 times, mainly among the various chateaux and palaces that soft-voiced countesses or sophisticated princesses would place at his disposal. Name almost any European language—English, French, Italian, Swedish, Russian, Danish—and Rilke had done translations from them. From old Count Tolstoy on, almost every major writer and artist on the continent—Auguste Rodin, Paul Valéry, Paul Klee, Thomas Mann, Sergei Diaghilev, Herman Hesse, André Gide, Boris Pasternak—seemed at one point intimately involved with Rilke. Rilke was among the very first to recognize Franz Kafka's writing; to recognize Pablo Picasso as a great painter; to acknowledge Marcel Proust as a great writer.

Where did this rare and ultimate flower of civilization come from?

From conditions close to misery. From, to be more precise, a dismal, negligible background in the declining Austro-Hungarian empire; from a just barely "middle-class" flat in Prague where the air was claustrophobic from a marriage gone bad, from economies and frustrations, from cheap little pretensions.

In that flat, on December 4, 1875, a mismatched couple obtained a new weapon with which to fight and spite each other: A son, baptized René Maria, was born to them. (Only much later, after he began to remake himself, would he change René to Rainer.) The new father, Josef Rilke, was already a failure, a minor railway official whose discontented dreams all pointed backward to when, for a brief spell of glory, he had served in

A photograph of Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937), Rilke's mistress and spiritual counselor. Thirteen years the poet's senior, she had earlier been a close friend of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and later became a student of Sigmund Freud.

the army. So from the father's viewpoint, the son would naturally grow up to be a soldier.

Thirteen years younger than her husband, the new mother, Phia, considered herself a sensitive soul, far superior to her contemptible husband. To say that she was pretentious is to understate matters. She was the kind of person who, before company arrived, would secretly siphon *vin ordinaire* into expensive, resplendently labeled wine bottles. She adored going to the theater, and adored that more glorious theater, the Catholic Church. But theatrically the most delicious were her own self-dramatizations. She apparently had no compunction against raising the baby in girl's clothing, almost as a girl, to substitute for an earlier daughter who had died in infancy.

To be paraded in girlie frocks hardly makes the ideal preparation for military school. At school, young Rilke had neither the stamina nor adaptability to be anything but tormented and tortured by schoolmates who found the little sissy a perfect butt for their often brutal pranks. If a child may be posited with having a nature or character of his own, Josef and Phia Rilke managed to violate their son's at every point. Summing up Rilke's youth, his biographer E. M. Butler cited the analogy of a pearl produced by the stimulus of a disease.

Rilke did suffer an unhappy upbringing; actually, for a future poet it had a lot to recommend it. Alternately fawned over and ignored by his mother, he migrated, not surprisingly, into a rich, solitary world of fantasies. Lacking familial respect, he felt no compulsion to accept the conven-

tional formulas of the good and true and right.

Painful discrepancies and his own suffering made what his mother and father and teachers pretended to believe seem hollow. The staples of childhood—home, acceptance of social norms, and Christianity—Rilke later simply dismissed: "Who can enter a doll's house on which the doors and walls are only painted?"

Now a perceptive and especially brilliant man, if he rigorously shuns family and property and country and organized religion, may well stray into discovering something new. George Bernard Shaw once called the fatal error of poets their seeking comfort in families and fireside. Into this error, if it is one, Rilke scarcely lapsed at all.

By the time he was 19, it was probably inevitable that Rilke would become a poet and, equally inevitable, a bad one. A year later, in 1896, he responded to a poll asking "What made you a writer?" with the answer "Early pain and bitter experience." He must transmute the torment left over from childhood, alchemically, into art or else seemingly it would destroy him. This gave him a reason to write but scarcely anything to write about. For he dared not to touch, not for years yet, that open sore of memories over which the scar tissue was only then forming.

Instead, at 19, he selected any—every—pretty subject, so long as it was sentimental and safely derivative. He dashed off his poems rapidly, facilely, this man who would later devote a decade to a single poem. He gushed whole volumes about loving, as virgins sometimes like to do, this same Rilke who later described love as the most difficult work possible. Which writers did he then imitate? Anyone he happened to read. In many cases, as with the Danish writer Jens Peter Jacobsen or the Russians, "imitation" is a gentle word; *plagiarism* more accurate. But one might precisely say that he seemed to confuse himself with his models.

A Philosopher-Mistress

Halfheartedly, Rilke enrolled as a student at a Prague university, only to find the coursework unendurably dull. To remedy the situation, he would move, in 1896, to Munich, to become again a halfhearted student and to be bored by his studies there. He remained officially enrolled only to satisfy a provision in his uncle's will, which left him a modest stipend. Unofficially, of course, Rilke devoted himself, with wholehearted ferocity, to writing imitative poetry.

That Rilke's earliest poetry was so bad provided the only slim hint that it might one day be good. For though he gave himself heart and soul to imitation, he wasn't very successful at it. He was rather like an inept draftsman who can't pull it off even when using tracing paper. Or, put differently, although he could imitate other writers, he could not learn from them. His latent talent was, for the moment, preserved and protected in a cocoon of literary ignorance. A few years later he would discover the type of artist that could help and instruct him—not writers, but visual

artists whose sculptures and paintings taught him how to write.

That Rilke learned almost nothing from the literature of his time may be counted good fortune, since that literature hummed with home truths and illuminating morals. Rilke never mastered this knack of applying ethical judgments to conduct; if he had, given his extreme introspection, his imagination might have become stunted through self-judgment by moral platitude. Lacking the ethical glue, his varied experiments in conduct—for at 19 he was a derivative in everyday matters as in writing—did not stick. Although he later dressed with fastidious formality, he then padded about in sandals, a kind of proto-hippy.

What Rilke needed to steady him, or at least what he found, was a philosopher-mistress. Moving to Munich and then to Berlin, the 22-year-old Rilke met, and soon became the lover of, Lou Andreas-Salomé. Although a writer herself, Lou Salomé left behind no major work that preserves her memory; rather her reputation as a remarkable woman floats like a rumor or ghost among the famous names—Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Mann—with which hers, as friend or lover, was once linked. In 1897, when she met Rilke, she already had behind her Nietzsche's passionate admiration. Nietzsche had said, "Lou is by far the *smartest* person I ever knew," an assessment perhaps best illustrated by the fact that she had rejected all of his advances.

Before he knew Lou, Rilke had in various flirtations exchanged sugary endearments; it was quite another matter to hear lisping past your lover's lips the tenets of Nietzschean philosophy. Rilke had previously enjoyed frittering time away in congenial editorial offices or coffeehouses; Nietzsche preached solitude away from the herd. Rilke had written great quantities of poetry with great ease; Nietzsche said one should value the most difficult. Guided by a Nietzschean mistress, Rilke tempered his facile enthusiasms and uncontrolled exultations, all that romanticized cloudiness of his early youth. The poet's transformation had begun.

Snubbed by Tolstoy

Yet no erotically charged liaison contains at its libidinal center *Also sprach Zarathustra*, not even this one. To experience, when hardly more than a homely youth, sexual acceptance by an intelligent, amorously expert, mature woman gave him a special confidence in the possibilities of actual life. As though he were a new man, he changed his name—from René to Rainer—and altered his handwriting into an elegant, graceful script reminiscent of Lou's. Many years later he was to write her, "If I belonged to you for some years it was because you represented absolute reality for me for the first time.... The world lost its clouded aspect, the flowing together and dissolving, so typical of my first poor verses... because I was fortunate enough to meet you."

There was the incidental matter that Lou also had a husband. He seemed just that—an incidental matter. Their friends nicknamed him

"Lou-mann." Certainly Lou-mann, or rather Professor Andreas, raised no objection when Rilke accompanied them on their Russian trip in 1899; nor any objection the next year when Lou and Rilke undertook a longer journey to Russia, this time leaving him behind. It was on this second journey that occurred their infamous meeting with Tolstoy at the novelist's estate, Yasnaya Polyana.

In letters written at the time, Rilke stage-lit that meeting in a rosy, melodramatic glow: Tolstoy "immediately recognized" them, greeted them warmly, was "utterly concerned" for them; and turning his back on his family and his meal, Tolstoy whisked them off on an intimate ramble, placing that exclusive hour "in our hands like an unhoped-for gift." This diplomatic description tactfully obscured the fact that Rilke and Lou had burst in uninvited on Tolstoy, who failed to recognize them, who didn't even offer them a cup of coffee, but left them trailing after him as he hobbled off on his cane into the windy day.

Passing through Wedlock

Rilke brooded over this rebuff for 20 years, indeed brooded quite skillfully: Tragedy turned into comedy. Rilke eventually saw his encounter with Tolstoy as a kind of farce, the crude comedy of living divorced from art. For himself Rilke determined that, regardless of the sacrifices, he would never turn into such a blustering, all-too-human figure once he quit his writing desk.

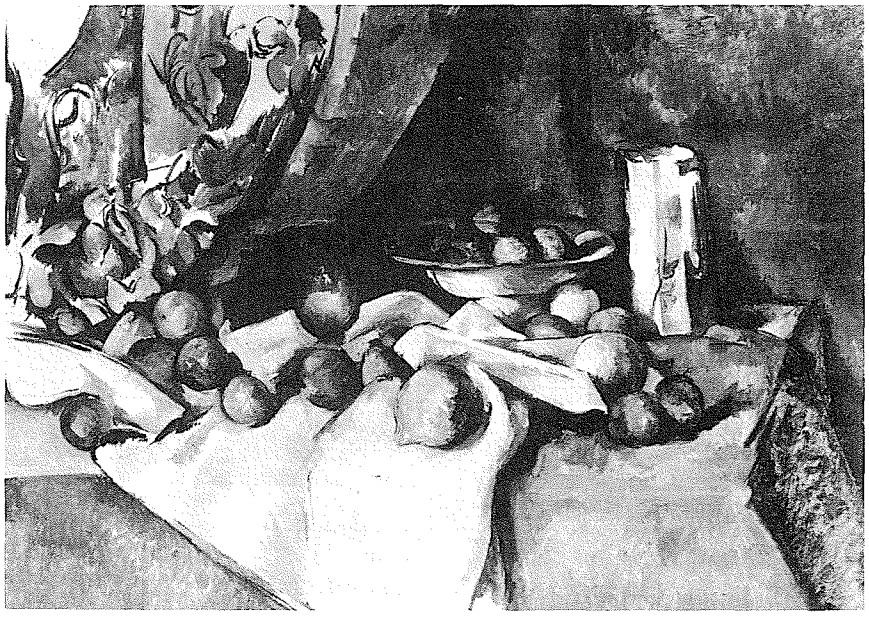
Aside from the mishap with Tolstoy, pre-revolutionary Russia enchanted Rilke. Russia became his symbol of a wholeness and intimacy not yet trivialized into the pragmatic hodgepodge characteristic of Western cities. "Russian people," Rilke wrote in a letter, "seem to live fragments of endlessly long and powerful life spans, and even if they linger in them only a moment, there still lie over these minutes the dimensions of gigantic intentions and unhurried developments . . . " Many critics have pointed out, however, that Rilke's spiritual peasants—glimpsed, as it were, from the speeding train compartment of a six-month visit—seem all too cleanly shaven of the narrow suspiciousness, vice, and idleness that provoked such dismay among Russian writers, including Tolstoy. But Rilke's Russia is one-sided in the way Blake's Golgonooza or Yeats's Byzantium are one-sided. Russia became, in his *The Book of Hours* (1905), more a metaphor for idealized life than a geographical country—and indeed, so idealized that Rilke wrote the book's poetical, mystical generalities not as Rilke but masked in the persona of a Russian monk.

After his Russian journey came the one event in Rilke's life that he never sought to transform into literature. That event was his marriage. In 1901 Rilke married a young sculptress, Clara Westhoff, whom he had met at a return-to-nature artist colony near Bremen. Judged solely by their letters, it would seem Rilke and Clara married in order to write each other passionately about the weather. Searching for a more likely explanation,

others have noted, for example, that Clara was pregnant. (A daughter, Ruth, was born seven months later.) Another theory has Rilke on the rebound from an unrequited passion for painter Paula Modersohn-Becker. (Whereas Rilke mailed Paula Becker the works of his favorite author, he sent Clara Westhoff a sample package of Quaker Oats with the tip that a Do-All pot from a firm in California would make the risk of burning the oatmeal almost negligible.) The more likely truth is that young men, and young women, too, generally marry. Another familiar truth is that the best way to ascertain you don't want to get married is to get married.

Clara possessed a wan resemblance to the great Lou, and Rilke knew how to prepare simple meals. On more fragile foundations than this, others have made apparent successes of their marriage. But a wife, a baby daughter, the financial burden of "a quiet house of my own," and so many new cares and responsibilities all had a way of interrupting his letter writing—which was a nuisance, in fact unacceptable.

Sensing the danger to his writing, Rilke started backing out of wedlock and doing it in a most Rilkean way: He redefined the institution. Marriage meant "two people protecting one another's solitude," which is how some less imaginative folk have defined divorce. Entering marriage, Rilke seemed modest and ineffectual, asking of life only to live it in a cottage with a little wife and daughter. Exiting marriage, he displayed a



Still Life with Apples *(1895–98) by Paul Cézanne. Rilke admired Cézanne's solitary work habits and the "limitless objectivity" of his paintings.*

determination and firmness—though he expressed it rather delicately as solicitude for Clara and Ruth—to let his family starve rather than to let himself in for poetry-killing drudgery.

The rationale by which Rilke backed out of the marriage worked only too well. Despite carrying around an address book that eventually would contain 1,200 names, henceforth solitude would be his modus vivendi; henceforth "people" would represent the false way. "Then if people chance to be present [he wrote to Lou Andreas-Salomé], they offer me the relief of being able to be more or less the person they take me for, without being too particular about my really existing. How often does it not happen that I step out of my room somehow like a chaos, and outside, someone being aware of me, find a poise that is actually his, and the next moment, to my amazement, am expressing well-formed things, while just before everything in my entire consciousness was utterly amorphous. . . . In this sense people will always be the false way for me. . . ." The above reasoning, lacking venom, lacking any hostility, may exhibit one of the rarer grounds for separation. Yet, if he exiled his wife and baby almost blithely, he commited himself equally to exile, harder, more ascetic.

Rodin's Lessons

In separating, Clara provided her husband with something the marriage never had: a direction. She had told Rilke about her former teacher, a sculptor working in a new and important style, and Rilke now made Paris his destination, to write a monograph on this sculptor. Both the city and the man, Paris and Auguste Rodin, were to affect Rilke immensely. Once there, Rilke's character was too exposed, too entirely empathetic, not to identify with all that the underside of Paris coughed up in an endless, terrible stream before his vision: the living wrecks, battered and miserable, the diseased, the paralyzed and the terrorized, so much poverty, the sooty ugliness, all the tics and spasms of human existence out of control.

This horror formed an excellent objective corollary for the quite different horror he had long felt within himself. Paris was a stimulant unequaled before. So much more flooded before Rilke to note, to reckon with—the streets ran toward him "viscid with humanity"—until their morbid and fascinating contents drowned that earlier genteel mysticism of the pseudo-Russian monk. "For the terrible thing," Rilke's fictional persona in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) says of Paris, is "that I did recognize it. I recognize everything here, and that is why it goes right into me: It is at home in me." He would situate the beginnings of this, his only novel, in Paris. And one of its key sentences is "I am learning to see." Before Paris, Rilke's poetry, diaries, and letters sound as though reality were, for him, a fairy-tale-like dream of elusive wispiness. Paris, the "terrible city," cured him of that. Reality acquired a harder edge.

Rilke had originally sought out Rodin as the subject for a monograph, but he soon raised the prolific sculptor to the status of oracle. In his letters,

Two figures from Auguste Rodin's Gates of Hell *sketches, drawn during the early 1880s. Rilke came to Paris in 1902 to write a monograph about the sculptor, whom he hailed as the perfect artist.*

Rilke's salutations alone record his progress through awe, first addressing Rodin as "*Honoré maître*," then advancing to "*Mon cher maître*," next escalating to "*Mon cher grand maître*," and finally exploding to "*Mon grand ami et cher maître.*"

Any relationship between them was destined, perhaps, to be unbalanced: When they met, Rodin was 62 and Rilke 27; Rodin long famous and Rilke almost unknown; Rodin's sculptures lay sprawling all around Rilke while Rilke's German poetry remained incomprehensible and invisible to Rodin. Things, nevertheless, went swimmingly at first, with Rilke employed as an unpaid secretary, handling Rodin's correspondence. But Rilke's combination of idolizing, punctilio, and exquisite sensibility was not exactly unobtrusive, and, on the slightest pretext, Rodin dismissed him. It was humiliating, of course, with its troubling echoes of the Tolstoy fiasco, yet Rilke had already learned the lessons he needed from Rodin.

Not surprisingly, these were quite Rilkean lessons. Rodin told him, "*Il faut avoir une femme.*" Obviously the statement did not nor could not mean—since Rilke was then breaking up his marriage—"It is necessary to have a woman." Rilke rather took its implication to be that daily necessity, represented by wives and housekeeping, should simply take care of itself, should be, in other words, an adjunct to art. (As an adjunct to art, his own

marriage to Clara Westhoff never required the vulgar finality of abrupt divorce; rather he simply transformed it into another artistic adjunct, letters and correspondence, which gradually petered out.) Great men put everything into their art, Rilke concluded, till their lives become "stunted like an organ they no longer need."

Although this conclusion ignored that for Rodin, with his vigor, work overflowed to enrich relationships, it was the conclusion Rilke needed. Up to then, Rilke had remained the young poet stamping his feet, waiting for inspiration to switch on the urge to write. Rodin was the demonstration that toil could, indeed should, take over for inspiration. Rilke determined to shut himself up daily to work, no matter what the external circumstances, and to make the appropriate gestures when work seemed impossible. Without this decision, the *New Poems* (1907–08) and *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* could not have been accomplished.

This decision would increase the loneliness, the ascetic withdrawal, the strain of hyperconsciousness. Still, it somehow suited him for whom words were possible and relationships often unmanageable. When Rilke later lamented to his publisher's wife that his destiny was to have none, that his fate was to have no fate, he was essentially relating a success story.

Rilke learned another, more technical lesson from Rodin's sculptures, from the way they emphasized surface texture (the *modelé*) over composition or pose, a lesson that Rilke translated and generalized into a dictum: Things are more important than ideas. To *see* the thing, rather than representing emotion or an idea, was how Rodin cracked the old aesthetic mold—or so Rilke thought. With this for his inspiration, he began formulating his fundamental task.

Rilke defined this task in relation to a world that was becoming, he believed, in one sense, less visible: The perceived architecture of the everyday was ceasing to correspond to what intimately, personally mattered. The more commonplace or wholesale-manufactured the surface around one becomes, the greater the need is to look deeply, intensely in order for the viewer to have any genuine response. In the *New Poems*, the key to experience seems contained in the act of seeing. For its most famous poem, "The Panther," Rilke appears to have stared at the cage at the Paris zoo until he could empathize with the animal's inner being:

> His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
> has grown so weary that it cannot hold
> anything else. It seems to him there are
> a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world.
>
> As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,
> the movement of his powerful soft strides
> is like a ritual dance around a center
> in which a mighty will stands paralyzed.

Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly—.An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

In the *New Poems* Rilke endeavored to re-see things ("all things without exception"), to experience them so intensely, to master them so thoroughly that internal human complexities would become visible in them.

With the completion of the *New Poems*, Rilke graduated from his apprenticeship. His work habits, his sense of purpose, his approach to subjects, even the image of himself developed in writing the *New Poems*—all point toward *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* and beyond to his masterpiece, the *Duino Elegies* (1923).

Of the two works, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* is the easier in which to discern Rilke's own shape. *The Notebooks* might even pass for a *Bildungsroman*, the fictional education of, in this case, someone not fictional. Parts of *The Notebooks*, though, aren't a *Roman*, or novel, at all but Rilke's rummaging through and reflecting about odd old volumes, arcane legends recorded to corroborate or objectify his elusive insights. The obscure nuns and noblewomen he read about, who had loved in spite of absence and indifference: Their unrequited love suggested an independence of "the other" that gave, in photographic negative, his own distaste for dailiness and commitment in intimate relationships.

The *Duino Elegies* begins where the *Bildung* ends:

We arrange it [our home among objects]. It breaks down.
We rearrange it, then break down ourselves.

The *Elegies* gains its uncanny power because it studies the everyday, the familiar, to rearrange it unfamiliarly. If someone conjured a very modern pencil—one guided by a hand concerned only with ambition, easy comforts, and self-centered triumphs—sketching what a person is, then what the *Elegies* does is to erase that outline and return man to other contexts, to stranger and larger purposes. Religions often taught that mortals had two homes, one earthly, one divine. In the *Duino Elegies*, that "second home," however, becomes only a visionary refocusing, a visual realignment of the first.

Rilke became increasingly anti-Christian; still his poetry resembles that of a person who has forgotten the name of God but is determined to rediscover the relevant experiences, this time without using any kind of bible. Exploration of the joy, love, and suffering that once were directed toward the divinity now took the place of divinity. Wallace Stevens believed modern poetry should provide the pleasures of faith in an age of unbelief. Rilke's attempt was more radical, increasingly denuding his po-

etry of any belief even as he attempted to create experiences that would have once been classified as holy.

The *Elegies* was begun in 1912, at his friend Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis's Castle Duino—begun in a storm of inspiration. It was finished at an isolated chateau in Switzerland in 1922—finished equally in a fury of writing. Having labored so hard and long, or not labored (World War I sickened him beyond writing), he completed the *Elegies* only to discover that he had been given something more, a "bonus." In the release of finishing, Rilke dashed off 59 sonnets within a month almost without effort. Unlike the *Elegies*, the *Sonnets to Orpheus* is full of generalized affirmations, rather like his early poetry, but with a maturer insight and skill gained while laboring over the *Elegies*.

A Solitary Pinnacle

As for Rilke's own life—well, the skeleton in the closet may be indicated by the clothes in the closet. As a young poet Rilke had roamed about, a contemporary wrote, "wearing an old-world frock coat, black cravat, and broad-brimmed hat, clasping a long stemmed iris and smiling, oblivious of the passersby, a forlorn smile into ineffable horizons." Now in his maturity, he dressed camouflaged, as did Eliot and Valéry, in the subfusc pomp of the conservative businessman. As with his prosody, so with his haberdashery: Rilke had put on modernism.

Yet Rilke outfitted himself immaculately, and was mannered impeccably, to cover an existence unconventional in the extreme. He never settled in one place, never settled down with another person. Although, as his fame grew, he was feted and indulged everywhere, his life went bereft of that basic comfort of a middle ground, cosy and reassuring and dulling, in which a job, fixed residence, wife, and regular schedules might have insulated him.

Even with his numerous lovers, the place Rilke liked best to meet these women, the ideal rendezvous, was in a letter. (Letters made an excellent medium for Rilke, because in them an event and interpretation of the event are the same, just as intimacy and distance are one.) Yet this very aloneness, his aloofness, helps accounts for the originality in his perceptions. He had jerkily uprooted himself from regular patterns, so that upon quite ordinary objects his attention, like some x-ray lantern or alien eye, lighted entirely new perspectives.

Rilke knew that such a mode of existence as his led, often as not, straight to psychoanalysis. Incapable of holding a job, incapable of sustaining a love relationship, prone to anxiety and depression, with abundant outcroppings of psychosomatic symptoms—he was a psychiatrist's pin-up. Yet long before he had heard of Freud, Rilke declared that it scarcely mattered whether one were happy. And after his major works were achieved, Rilke was, from a Freudian viewpoint, no more "cured" than at the onset: *Functioning*—to measure it by intimate relationships, pro-

longed work, or healthy habits—was for him as intermittent and haphazard as ever. But then Rilke never wished to be cured. The pleasing simplification, the gratifying control of disruptive and embarrassing characteristics, might help immensely in daily life but might also leave him with a disinfected soul no better for writing. His well-known phrasing of this was that to drive out his devils might drive out his angels, too.

Rilke refused psychotherapy on the grounds that it was appropriate only "if I were truly serious about *not writing any more*." Besides, Rilke was already transformed, transformed the way he had wanted: changed from the awkward boy in Prague, from the novitiate-lover of Lou Salomé, from the wispy sentimentalist who married Clara Westhoff, from the flowery disciple of Rodin, and changed—to alter one of Rilke's metaphors—into the most elaborate, gilded, efficient dictating machine for recording poetry ever invented.

So little, so very little, was left over after and apart from the work, and that little bit, this little biography, paraded about as a kind of caricature of the work. Rilke's maturity, in this regard, resembles that of another solitary pinnacle, Henry James. Both men made the most charming of hosts and guests, so a hundred sources definitely agree, and yet both were finally, slightly grotesque. Henry James performing a daily task, such as asking for directions, would enmesh it in such an inadvertent parody of the Jamesian style that not even Max Beerbohm could have improved on it. Rainer Maria Rilke, complaining to a lady companion of her driving too fast, ennobled his complaint with such charged loftiness that she had difficulty deciphering what he meant at all.

This travesty life, which had become a second-rate paraphrase of his work, caused a perhaps natural sequence of reactions in the poet Paul Valéry, who was at first dismayed at Rilke's monstrous, gorgeous solitude, then subsequently amazed at the prodigies it was producing.

Rilke died of leukemia on December 29, 1926, at age 51, in a sanitorium near Geneva. He had become, in his last years, more humorous, more accepting, more visionary, full of projects and plans, and in the end surprised—as Henry James had been—that a consciousness grown so extremely rich seemed to be facing extinction.

China Reconsidered

American scholars analyzing contemporary events in Communist China prior to its post-Mao "opening" to the West in 1979 had to rely largely on the official press. This did not deter some of them from hailing Mao's Cultural Revolution during the 1960s and pooh-poohing refugees' grim accounts. Indeed, the American Academy of Political Science held a 1972 meeting to consider (among other things) how the Cultural Revolution could serve as a model for the West in tackling *its* social problems. Sympathy, observed Sinologist Harry Harding in 1980, "is no substitute for tough-minded analysis." Here, Arnold Isaacs assesses the first wave of post-Mao books by journalists and scholars who have investigated China firsthand.

by Arnold R. Isaacs

The 1980s in China have seen not only profound political changes but also unprecedented access for foreign journalists, writers, and scholars. One result is a lengthening shelf of books that reflects, for the first time since the Communists came to power in 1949, sustained systematic observation instead of the travelers' brief glimpses and gleanings from official publications on which earlier China-watchers had to depend.

The new literature consists of more than just the impressions of American and other foreign writers, however. It also provides Westerners with rich insights into how recent Chinese events were seen through Chinese eyes.

This is the product, chiefly, of the political liberalization that has taken place since Mao Zedong's death in 1976. The regime under Deng Xiaoping remains totalitarian—controls are still imposed on speech and press—but Mao's successors in Beijing have allowed writers, artists, and ordinary citizens more latitude than was ever granted, or even contemplated, during the Mao era.

If there is a prevailing theme in these books of the 1980s, it is disillusionment with revolution and with Maoism. This is in sharp contrast to the previous decade, when many Western visitors wrote about China with uncritical admiration—those on the Left imagining Mao's regime to possess a revolutionary purity no longer found in the arthritic Soviet state, and later, after Richard Nixon's "opening" to China, those Americans on the Right intoxicated by the thought of a huge new partner for Washington in an anti-Soviet alliance.

The euphoric reporting of the 1970s was itself a startling shift away from

the menacing images of the late 1950s and early 1960s, in the wake of the Korean War, when China was commonly pictured by U.S. journalists and politicians alike as a rogue aggressor state in the grip of an expansionist ideology.*

China is no longer seen in the West as an international threat. But the dominant message in the books of the 1980s is overwhelmingly critical of China's internal conditions and official institutions. Almost without exception, the authors portray both a political regime under which the most intimate aspects of life are subject to heavy-handed Party control and a huge, bumbling bureaucracy shot through with petty corruption and favor-seeking. In contrast to the glowing reports of many Western visitors during the Mao era (1949–76), the new China hands describe the victims of Mao's Cultural Revolution, persistent rural poverty, and startling economic inequalities.

The Next Wave

The evidence for this revised view of China is frequently powerful. But it is important to note that it may already be partly out of date. Of the books published so far in this decade, none reflects the impact of Deng Xiaoping's economic reform program, with its emphasis on free-market incentives and openness to Western trade and technology. Deng's efforts have begun to show fruit only during the last two years or so.

The bleak conditions depicted in the current crop of books are those of the early 1980s, during a kind of national convalescence, when Maoism was officially discredited but before the new leadership's policies had taken shape. If Deng's program has the stimulating effects that current news reports suggest, and if Deng's policies survive, the next wave of China authors may be more optimistic (perhaps too optimistic) and hopeful than those reviewed here.

Concentric Spheres

American journalists were among the first beneficiaries of China's more open policies, deploying to Beijing in 1979 after the normalization of Sino-American relations. Many were fluent in Chinese, some had advanced degrees in Chinese studies, and most had reported on Chinese affairs from British-ruled Hong Kong.

The assignment was rewarding but not easy. Reporters found China "secretive and many-layered, like one of those intricate series of concentric spheres that Chinese craftsmen carve from solid blocks of ivory," writes Richard Bernstein, *Time*'s man in Beijing during 1980–82.

Bernstein distilled his China experience in *From the Center of the Earth*, the most stylish of the books turned out by that first group of reporters.

Reporting on the city of Chongqing, for example, where "the houses lean, pitch, and roll in all directions as if bobbing on the surface of the sea," Bernstein manages to evoke the flavor of China's urban life:

> Chungking's [Chongqing's] sound is not at all the sound of a city in the West that comes from the hum of machines and

*Such fluctuating American perceptions of China are not unique to the Communist era. The alternating cycle of positive and negative stereotypes dates from early in the 19th century. A 1958 study of this phenomenon is *Scratches on Our Minds: American Views of China and India* by Harold R. Isaacs, reissued by Sharpe (1980).

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Opening to the West: American products were advertised in Hang-zhou during the 1979 world badminton finals; the goods were available only to tourists.

engines and the whoosh of tires on pavement. It is an entirely human sound, created only by the friction of feet and by voices, the vague, unfocused sound that fills a stadium or amphitheater as the crowd waits for some spectacle to begin. It is the sound of idleness, the sound of waiting. It is the muffled cacophony of overpopulation, of masses of people who throng the city's streets and alleys, its bright spots and its dark crevices, but who, besides escaping the airless heat of their tiny homes, really have nothing to do.

Reaching similarly stark conclusions, though very different in style, is *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* by Fox Butterfield, who opened the *New York Times*'s Beijing bureau in 1979. Butterfield's strength lies in his solid documentation of the wide range of failures, notably in the Chinese economy, that Mao bequeathed to his successors. Under Mao, millions of Chinese had died of hunger; millions more barely survived.

In one rural province, Butterfield discovered, rural incomes were less equally distributed than in capitalist Taiwan, Egypt, or South Africa. In another poor region, he learned that more than three decades after "liberation," peasants still had to go out on the roads to beg for food during the lean season before the harvest, just as they had done for centuries during the feudal past. They were given written permission to beg by the local Party authorities, Butterfield discovered, so they would not be arrested.*

Sharing the outlook of their colleagues were Jay and Linda Mathews, who reported for the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, respectively, and co-authored *One Billion*. The Mathews' experiences as parents in China provided some lighter moments—as when their guide on one trip commented favorably on the good

*Rural poverty and oppression are the subjects of two controversial studies, *Broken Earth* (1983) and *Journey to the Forbidden China* (1985) by Steven W. Mosher, an academic whose work is often journalistic in character. See "The Mosher Affair" by Peter Van Ness, *WQ*, New Year's 1984.

behavior of some other American children in the party. "Our kids aren't like that," Jay Mathews confessed. "They're noisy and loud, sometimes a little rude." "Maybe," said their guide, "they want to grow up to be foreign correspondents."

Two of the most useful books by non-American journalists were written by David Bonavia, a reporter for the London *Times* and the Hong Kong weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review*. Bonavia's experience in China dates back to the early 1970s, and he also served in Moscow.

Bonavia's *The Chinese*, published in 1980, provides a snapshot of China just as its leaders were embarking on the long, hesitant journey away from Maoism. That journey is also the theme of *Verdict in Peking*, his account of the trial of Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, and the other members of the ultra-Maoist Gang of Four.

The trial in Beijing was "a kind of apology to the people of China," he writes, "and an explanation to the rest of the world, for the country's extraordinary behavior" during the harsh final decade of Mao's rule.

A Growing Web

Post-Mao China has been scrutinized by scholars, of course, as well as by journalists. A good roundup is *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s*, edited by the Brookings Institution's Harry Harding. With six fellow authors, Harding traveled to China, Japan, India, Singapore, and Italy for meetings with nearly 100 Asian and European specialists on China.

Out of those discussions came essays on the historical, political, economic, and strategic context of present-day Chinese foreign policy. In the final essay, Harding concludes that although China's future foreign policy may fluctuate, nothing is likely to "cause any fundamental unraveling of the growing web of commercial, diplomatic, educational, and cultural activities that binds China to the rest of the world."

Some of the same ground is covered in *The China Factor*, written under the auspices of the American Assembly (an affiliate of Columbia University) and the Council on Foreign Relations. The contributors include Richard H. Solomon, the editor, and Michel Oksenberg, Robert A. Scalapino, Lucian W. Pye, and William G. Hyland. Destroying the new ties between Washington and Beijing, Solomon writes, "would reimpose on both China and the United States great costs which could not serve the interests of either country."

Confessions

A more personal report comes from historian Vera Schwarcz, who in 1979–80 was a member of the first officially sponsored exchange group of American scholars in China. Schwarcz's research topic was the May Fourth Movement—China's great student-led protest in 1919 that heralded the next three decades of revolutionary upheaval. But during her 16 months in China she found herself immersed in the ferment of contemporary Chinese political life.

Her encounters with intellectuals emerging from years of persecution are recorded in diary form in *Long Road Home: A China Journal*. One scientist told her of the made-up "confessions" he and others were required to write during the 1950s, to prove their devotion to Mao's new order. "We tried to hear and to reproduce the unified voice the Party deemed acceptable," he told Schwarcz ruefully. "Thus, we forgot our own."

Other visiting scholars have looked critically at some of China's revolutionary myths. Two examples are Margery Wolf's *Revolution Postponed:*

Women in Contemporary China and Richard Madsen's *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village*.

Wolf's interviews with nearly 300 women in various Chinese provinces led her to conclude that despite the revolutionary promises of 1949, China remains a profoundly patriarchal society in which "a woman's life is still determined by her relationship to a man, be he father or husband, not by her own efforts or failures."

Madsen, studying a Guangdong province farming community, found that the twists and turns of official orthodoxy over the last 35 years weakened traditional Confucian beliefs but failed to generate any new ideas in their place. Today's prevailing rural values, Madsen observes, seem to encompass nothing more than selfish pragmatism.

The most telling accounts of China's recent experience come from the Chinese survivors.

"I love Chairman Mao" were almost the first words Liang Heng learned to speak. But after Mao's erratic policies destroyed his family—Liang's mother was purged in the 1957 anti-rightist campaign, and his father, a journalist, was persecuted in the Cultural Revolution—Liang suffered years of inner turmoil matching the chaos that Mao brought down on China. In *Son of the Revolution*, written with his American wife, Judith Shapiro, Liang has produced an extraordinary memoir.

Spirit of Protest

He was successively a roving Red Guard, a member of a semidelinquent street gang of homeless youths, a peasant, a factory worker, and finally (after Mao's death permitted Liang and millions of others to overcome the stigma of "rightist" family backgrounds) a literature student at the Hunan Teachers Institute. There he met Shapiro, who had come to teach English; after they fell in love, it took no less than the permission of Deng Xiaoping himself for the couple to marry and leave for the United States.

Liang's disillusionment (by the time Mao died, he writes, "the very word 'Revolution' had become tedious and meaningless") was shared by millions of Chinese who came of age during Mao's final decade. The voices of some are in *Mao's Harvest*, a striking collection of stories, poems, and essays published in 1979–81.

The book's editors, Helen F. Siu and Zelda Stern, culled their selections not from the openly dissident Democracy Movement publications but from officially sponsored literary magazines that sprang up in considerable numbers during the cultural thaw of those years. (Almost none of these magazines survive today.) A spirit of protest animates most of these pieces, but the authors demand not so much a change in the system as the right to self-expression. One essayist observes:

> If you say we are here for revolution, the idea is too abstract and farfetched. I don't want to write for the purpose of making a contribution to the people or for Deng's Four Modernizations but for myself, for my own personal needs. I am not content to let society treat me as if I were nothing.

The same attitude flavors *Chrysanthemums*, a collection of stories by Feng Jicai, one of China's best known writers and painters. During the topsy-turvy Cultural Revolution, Feng burned many of his own manuscripts (sometimes as soon as he had finished writing them, according to his translator, Susan Wilf Chen) in order to avoid persecution by Maoist zealots. Nearly all the stories Chen chose for this collection recall the lunatic passions and "stifling, fear-ridden atmosphere" of that time. The episodes often sound unbelievable, but as one of Feng's

characters remarks, "If my story seems to smack of caricature, that is because life itself was freakish in those days."

William Hinton, the author of *Shenfan*, is American, not Chinese, but to the extent that he draws on extensive oral history interviews, his book also represents, at least in part, Chinese experiences as seen through Chinese eyes.

This book continues Hinton's chronicle of a village in north central China called Long Bow, where Hinton lived as an early admirer of the Communist revolution during the first four years of Communist rule (1949–53). When Hinton's focus is on subjects outside Long Bow, his work is little more than propaganda. But when he turns to village personalities and events, his account brims with the earthy details of how rural Chinese live, farm, and conduct their affairs.

Hinton was on hand when local party cadres in 1971 carried out a grim "rectification campaign," seeking to uncover errors or counter-revolutionary plots among village officials. All told, he provides perhaps the most detailed account available of how Mao-style politics actually worked at the grass-roots level.

China's leaders, past and present, do not lend themselves to easy analysis. But biographers persist.

Perhaps the best effort is Dick Wilson's *Zhou Enlai*, a portrait of Mao's urbane Number Two, who died in 1976. Zhou, Wilson shows, truly earned his reputation as China's "indispensable man." As Prime Minister for 26 years, he was simultaneously the country's chief administrator, diplomat, conciliator of intraparty disputes, and—not least important—mender of Mao's broken crockery. Wilson, a British author of numerous books on China, does not really solve the many riddles of Zhou's character or of his long, enigmatic partnership with Mao, but he does a workmanlike job of presenting the available facts of Zhou's life.

Some parts of this study need to be

Mao Zedong

Deng Xiaoping

read with caution, however, especially Wilson's anecdotes drawn from Chinese publications appearing after Zhou's and Mao's deaths. At that time, Beijing propagandists were deliberately brightening Zhou's image, partly to discredit further his enemies, the deposed Gang of Four, and partly as a means of subtly diminishing Mao's own godlike image.

Deng Xiaoping by the Taiwan-based scholar Ching Hua Lee is said by its publishers to be the first full-scale biography of China's present leader.

Although written in plodding style and burdened by details that may exhaust the nonspecialist, this useful study traces Deng's life and his 60 years in the Chinese Communist movement. The story covers the years of the Long March, the wars against the Japanese and Chiang Kai Shek's Nationalist regime, the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, and the succession of purges and factional struggles that Deng weathered before coming to power after Mao's death.

A Different Story

Deng, who will be the last Chinese leader to have served with the revolution's founding fathers, is shown to have displayed the same qualities as a young man that he is known for today: intelligence, pragmatism, competence, and a bristling stubbornness in the defense of his own ideas.

In sharp contrast is *The Messiah and the Mandarins*, a breezy biography of Mao by the British journalist Dennis Bloodworth. While no original scholarship is attempted or achieved here, the general reader will find it a coherent profile of the Great Helmsman.

Bloodworth's success lies in showing the grandiosity of Mao's revolutionary passion: He dreamt of transforming not just China's political and economic system but the people themselves, whom he imagined could be freed of greed and selfishness and reborn as a new generation of noble postrevolutionary heroes and heroines. Bloodworth writes:

> He was forever pushing them upwards, only to see them roll back again, but the significance of this did not appear to trouble him—that the terrible futility of the ordeal of Sisyphus lay not in the stone, but in the law of gravity; and that the terrible futility of his own ordeal might lie in the nature of man.

A different story is that of Ding Ling, a literary rebel who became the Chinese Communist movement's best known woman writer. Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker has written *Ding Ling's Fiction* as an extended critical essay rather than as straight biography; it is, in essence, a bitter commentary on the artist's fate in 20th-century revolutionary politics.

Ding Ling, born in 1904, began writing fiction during the 1920s, at first mainly about young women trying to liberate themselves in a male-dominated society. (The ideas expressed in her stories were so new that she used the English words "modern girl" because no equivalent phrase had yet been coined in Chinese.) Ding joined Mao's guerrillas in the 1930s, and from then on, Feuerwerker shows, was constantly torn between her artistic vision and the demands of Maoist orthodoxy.

Contradictions

Purged from the Party as a "rightist" in 1957, she spent the next 22 years in prison or banished to remote provinces, while her books were banned and her name erased from official literary histories. Though she was reinstated during the post-Mao cultural thaw, her life still embodies the terrible contradiction between China's "liberation" and the victimization of

so many of its people.

No one can understand China's current (peaceful) revolution under Deng without looking at the past. Among recent histories, one of the most rewarding is *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* by Jonathan D. Spence, a British-born Yale scholar.

Spence gracefully illuminates the upheavals of the last 100 years by focusing not on China's generals and political leaders but on its thinkers and writers—men and women who not only shared the passions and dangers of their time but also described them with artistry and understanding.

Three people give continuity to Spence's narrative. The first is Kang Youwei, a leader in the doomed effort to reform the decaying Qing dynasty at the end of the 19th century. "When objects get old, they break. When institutions get old, they are corrupted," Kang wrote in 1895—the same thought that inspired Mao's Cultural Revolution seven decades later.

Spence's second subject is the writer and literary modernizer Lu Xun, who led Chinese literature away from its fossilized classical traditions and became the mentor and model for an entire generation of writers who came of age after World War I. And the third is Ding Ling, whose life and work, as Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker's study shows, encompassed the long travail of China's revolution.

No Pluralism

Through these lives, interwoven with glimpses of many others, Spence gives the reader a vivid sense of how China's turbulent revolution *felt* to some of its most sensitive and sharp-eyed participants. Of all of them, it was Lu Xun who most unforgettably expressed the human cost of the struggle. "Revolution is a bitter thing," he once declared, "mixed with filth and blood, not so lovely or perfect as the poets think."

In *Chinese Democracy*, Columbia's Andrew J. Nathan places the brief 1978–79 Democracy Movement and its aftermath in the context of earlier reform movements—including Kang Youwei's—and of Chinese political tradition.

Nathan shows that, during the last 100 years, the impulse toward pluralism and individual freedom surfaced whenever political conditions permitted reformers to voice their ideas. But so far, Nathan concludes, China's "obsession with political order and national strength has made it impossible for most other Chinese, even non-Marxists, to share [such] reformers' vision of change."

Old Passions

Other chronicles adopt a more narrow focus, examining specific events of the 20th century. *The Long March* by *New York Times* alumnus Harrison E. Salisbury, no China hand, chronicles the legendary 6,000-mile retreat of Mao's guerrillas from a wilderness area of Jiangxi province in southern China to Shaanxi in the far north, whence Mao would return to conquer all of China 14 years later.

The Long March was one episode in a saga extending well back into the last century. This drama is traced by Robert Scalapino in his new history, *Modern China and Its Revolutionary Progress: 1850–1920*, covering the 70-year span from the great convulsion of the Taiping Rebellion to the eve of the founding of the Communist Party.

Another historian, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, examines a fateful moment in U.S.–Chinese relations—Washington's refusal to recognize the newly victorious Communist regime in 1949, preceding nearly a quarter century of conflict and total estrangement—in *Patterns in the Dust*. And a different look at the past is offered by my father,

Harold R. Isaacs, in *Re-encounters in China*.

As a young journalist in Shanghai during the early 1930s, Isaacs knew many writers and revolutionaries of that period, including Ding Ling and Son Qing-ling, widow of Sun Yat-sen (later the ceremonial vice-chairman of the Peoples Republic).

In 1980, Isaacs was finally allowed to revisit the scenes of his radical youth. His memoir of that journey shows both author and his old acquaintances as if on film in double-exposure—amid the passions of the 1930s, and amid the terrible ambiguities of the revolution's legacy nearly half a century later.

If one theme emerges from all these books, it is that through all the turbulence of recent Chinese history the big issues have remained remarkably constant. "Science and Democracy," Beijing's dissidents wrote on Democracy Wall in 1979. The same words, exactly, were the slogan of the students' May Fourth Movement 60 years earlier. China's long struggle has been with domestic tyranny, economic backwardness, human degradation, and the threat of foreign encroachment. That struggle is not over.

CHINA BOOKLIST

American Assembly (Columbia University) and Council on Foreign Relations, **The China Factor: Sino-American Relations and the Global Scene** (Prentice-Hall, 1981); Richard Bernstein, **From the Center of the Earth: The Search for the Truth about China** (Little, Brown, 1982); Dennis Bloodworth, **The Messiah and the Mandarins: Mao Tsetung and the Ironies of Power** (Atheneum, 1982); David Bonavia, **The Chinese** (Harper, 1980), **Verdict in Peking: The Trail of the Gang of Four** (Putnam's, 1984); Fox Butterfield, **China: Alive in the Bitter Sea** (Times Books, 1982); Feng Jicai, **Chrysanthemums and Other Stories**, translated by Susan Wilf Chen (Harcourt, 1985); Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker, **Ding Ling's Fiction: Ideology and Narrative in Modern Chinese Literature** (Harvard, 1982).

Harry Harding, ed., **China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s** (Yale, 1984); William Hinton, **Shenfan** (Random, 1983); Harold R. Isaacs, **Scratches on Our Minds: American Views of China and India** (Sharpe, 1980), **Re-encounters in China: Notes of a Journey in a Time Capsule** (Sharpe, 1985); Ching Hua Lee, **Deng Xiaoping: The Marxist Road to the Forbidden City** (Kingston, 1985); Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, **Son of the Revolution** (Knopf, 1983); Richard Madsen, **Morality and Power in a Chinese Village** (Univ. of Calif., 1985); Jay and Linda Mathews, **One Billion** (Random, 1983); Steven W. Mosher, **Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese** (Free Press, 1983), **Journey to the Forbidden China** (Free Press, 1985).

Andrew J. Nathan, **Chinese Democracy** (Knopf, 1985); Harrison E. Salisbury, **The Long March: The Untold Story** (Harper, 1985); Robert A. Scalapino, **Modern China and Its Revolutionary Process: 1850–1920** (Univ. of Calif., 1985); Vera Schwarcz, **Long Road Home: A China Journal** (Yale, 1984); Helen F. Siu and Zelda Stern, eds., **Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation** (Oxford, 1983); Jonathan D. Spence, **The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1890–1985** (Viking, 1981); Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, **Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949–50** (Columbia, 1983); Dick Wilson, **Zhou Enlai: A Biography** (Viking, 1984); Margery Wolf, **Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China** (Stanford, 1985).

EDITOR'S NOTE: *For earlier works on China, see* WQ*'s Background Books essay on Mao's China (Autumn 1980).*

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.*

The American Indian

The authors of the articles on "The American Indian" (*WQ*, New Year's 1986) provided a perceptive synthesis of one of the most complex issues of American life.

However, I would have been pleased by the inclusion of several developments that are already affecting Indian affairs and will continue to do so in the future:

The impact being made on Indians by the gradual withdrawal of federal funds and services. Its ramifications include fundamental changes, involving new hardships and perils, for Indian populations. Example: Gramm-Rudman-Hollings implies increasing tribal responsibility for the economic well-being, health, education, and housing of tribal members. We may see increasing involvement in the dominant economic system—Indian entrepreneurship, joint venture undertakings, the proliferation of tribal profit-making.

The new status of tribal governments, somewhat on a level with that of state governments. Does it give the United States the beginning of a third—Indian tribal—government within our body politic?

The increasing association between American Indians and indigenous populations in the rest of the world. The contacts and growing organizations, some with UN recognition, extending from the Circumpolar Arctic to many Third World countries, merit attention as a development with a potential in future international affairs.

Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.
Greenwich, Connecticut

Author, Author!

If you are going to do articles on "The American Indian," why not get some Indians to write them? We have been producing scholars, historians, lawyers, and doctors for the better part of a quarter of a century. The federal government has spent nearly $10 million a year sending Indians to college and graduate school. And we have Indians of high quality all over the country.

Why then import the authors you have chosen who have only the slightest contact with or knowledge of Indians? Why do articles of such simplicity—even lacking any fundamental points of information that might give some conceptual framework or substantial content?

The underlying theme here is that an article on Indians is not really authoritative unless it is written by a white person. Apparently you subscribe to the belief that almost any white person is more knowledgeable than the best of the Indian scholars.

Vine Deloria, Jr.
Professor of Political Science
University of Arizona

Nuclear Exorcism?

William Lanouette's demonological approach to current problems of the nuclear industry ("Atomic Energy, 1945–1985," *WQ*, Winter 1985) makes interesting reading. But the problems he cites may have a simpler origin.

Let's question four of the article's candidate demons:

- Selection of light water reactors as the standard? Elaborate judgments preceded that decision. One should not fall into the snare of comparing today's complicated light water reactor (LWR) with the relatively simple competing designs of the 1950s. Its acceptance by the overwhelming majority of the world's nuclear utilities tells us that the LWR, like the internal combustion engine, has a lot going for it.
- Failure of the federal government to take early and strong control of the nuclear industry? Plants built before the onset of massive regulation are faring well, with safety records as flawless as those of their far more heavily regulated younger siblings.
- Contradictions in the way utilities are obligated to raise capital in the open markets, but secure it with uncertain revenues and spend it under less-than-market constrictions? This is the same system that worked for the first 50 or 60 American nuclear

power plants.

- Too-rapid upscaling of reactor size? This development is not limited to the United States; reactors of 850 megawatts and higher are increasingly common in Europe and Asia. Their performance has not deteriorated greatly from that of earlier, smaller reactors.

When conditions here are suitable for large-scale generation of more electricity, nuclear power will return to the United States. The obstacles will be surmounted.

Paul Turner, Vice-president
Atomic Industrial Forum, Inc.
Bethesda, Maryland

Flunking France

I very much enjoyed reading "How the French Got a New Start" by John Ardagh (*WQ*, New Year's 1986). It nonetheless suggests three questions.

First, has enough been made of the change in 1982 in the Mitterrand regime from textbook socialism to conservative macroeconomic policy? A 1977 book by Jean-Noël Jeanneney insists that Edouard Herriot failed in 1924 because he waffled on the Socialist program, whereas he should have bulled his way through with such measures as nationalization of industry. Mitterrand seems to have bought the advice. It failed again for the same reason as in 1924: strikes on the part of the middle class that exported its capital.

Secondly, the France of the *grandes écoles* was expected to shine in the age of high tech: Thus far it has not. Witness such failures as Machines Bull, the economic fiasco of the Concorde, and the St. Gobain plant in Tennessee.

Third, not unrelated, where today is *gloire*? De Gaulle spoke often of it. The France that wanted its own foreign policy, missiles for all azimuths, independence from NATO, has not paid off. A France large enough to destabilize the world economy, but too small to exert leadership shows signs of settling down to the followership of West Germany and Japan.

Or is it true that the more it changes, the more it is the same?

Charles P. Kindleberger
Professor Emeritus of Economics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Open annual competitions have brought more than 600 Fellows to the Center since 1970. All Fellows carry out advanced research, write books, and join in seminars and dialogues with other scholars, public officials, members of Congress, journalists, business and labor leaders. The Center is housed in the original Smithsonian "castle" on the Mall in the nation's capital. Financing comes from both private sources and an annual congressional appropriation. The Center—and *The Wilson Quarterly*—seek diversity of scholarly enterprise and points of view.

A Social Disease That Afflicts Us All

This issue of Wilson Quarterly examines one of our nation's most severe, yet underpublicized, problems: illiteracy. Though an informed citizenry is a cornerstone of our democracy, more than 26 million American adults lack a basic means to learn. They are functionally illiterate. The intangible cost cannot be measured. The economic cost is an estimated $100 billion a year, according to the U.S. Department of Education. We all pay the price.

Gulf+Western is helping to combat the problem both directly and indirectly through:

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A growing number of business and public organizations are joining the campaign to overcome illiteracy. They need your help. Illiteracy is too much a waste of human minds.

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