

## RESEARCH REPORTS

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

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### **"American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled."**

Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. 322 pp. \$24.95.  
Authors: Howard R. Bowen and Jack H. Schuster

American colleges and universities are caught between a rock and a hard place. Not only must they contend with a shrinking demographic pool of students, but according to Bowen and Schuster, professors of economics and public policy, respectively, at Claremont Graduate School, "fewer and fewer highly talented young students are opting for academic careers."

The authors note that while the number of Americans with Ph.D.s has steadily risen (to 750,000 in 1985), so too has the percentage of those employed in professions other than teaching (43 percent in 1985). And among the best and the brightest, the rejection of academe in favor of law and business is becoming more pronounced. A survey of "highest achievers" (the top five percent of graduating seniors at elite research universities) showed a drop in Ph.D. candidates in this group from 44 percent in 1966 to 21 percent in 1976. Furthermore,

while 35 percent of Rhodes Scholars chose teaching careers in 1964, only 18 percent did so in 1977.

The authors attribute the ivory tower's lost luster to several factors. Despite the rapid rise in students' tuition, faculty salaries have declined in real terms by 15 percent since 1970. The quality of academic life has also suffered, as hard-pressed institutions have cut back on building maintenance, clerical staff, and research facilities. Tenured posts are harder to come by; competition has increased and institutions have become more willing to hire less expensive—and usually less qualified—part-time instructors (up from 22 percent of all faculty in 1970 to 32 percent in 1982).

To attract talent to academe, the authors make a number of (predictable) suggestions. These include raising salaries, improving working conditions, and offering more job security through tenure.

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### **"The American Millstone: An Examination of the Nation's Permanent Underclass."**

Contemporary Books, 180 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60601. 307 pp. \$8.95.

In 1985, amid revived debate over U.S. antipoverty programs, the *Chicago Tribune* deployed a biracial team of 24 reporters to focus on the predicament of North Lawndale, a nearly all-black neighborhood on Chicago's West Side.

The *Tribune* produced an unsentimental, comprehensive 31-part profile of North Lawndale and its dominant, demoralized "underclass," now published as a book. The journalists combined sharp-edged interviews and vivid local "human interest" stories with city, state, and na-

tional data. They also included the views of a host of specialists, including Greg J. Duncan, of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, and William Julius Wilson, a noted sociologist at the University of Chicago and author of *The Declining Significance of Race* (1978).

North Lawndale, the *Tribune* staffers discovered, was a bleak "laboratory" for their research. Within this crime-ridden "land of broken glass" there were 99 liquor stores and 48 state lottery agencies, several major public housing projects, and

storefront churches that had names like "Instant Deliverance."

Every kind of economic or demographic statistic suggests that the neighborhood is deep in trouble: Half of North Lawndale's 61,654 residents are on welfare; three of every five potential workers are unemployed; 41 percent of all families are headed by single women; seven out of 10 births are illegitimate; the homicide rate is six times the national average.

Despite numerous federal programs, North Lawndale's prospects, the authors note, have become grimmer over the last 20 years. Busing, racial unrest, and rising crime rates spurred most middle-class whites and blacks to move their families—and their businesses—out of the neighborhood. Ironically, the *Tribune* points out, the easing of Chicago's racial segregation has hurt rather than helped the ghetto: It has enabled blue-collar black families to

move out of places like North Lawndale and into better neighborhoods.

Left behind are the violent, the shiftless, the drug-addicted, the welfare-dependent. Most (but not all) seem immune to outside efforts at social uplift. Local schoolteachers, policemen, parole officers, welfare officials, and the editors of the *Tribune* are not optimistic.

The newspaper urges more early childhood education, a carrot-and-stick approach in welfare administration, job training, and strong leadership, hitherto lacking, from area churchmen and public officials, presumably including Chicago's Mayor Harold Washington. "What's needed," says the *Tribune*, "are politicians who will be forthright in acknowledging the problem in all of its painful dimensions; who will admit that not every member of the underclass can be reached, but [that] for many the chain can be broken."

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### **"Crisis in the Budget Process: Exercising Political Choice."**

American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

88 pp. \$4.95.

Authors: Trent Lott, Norman Ornstein, Leon Panetta, Rudolph Penner, Allen Schick, David Stockman

Pointing to massive annual federal budget deficits—\$212 billion in 1985—many social commentators have charged that the federal budget process does not work. But the six specialists on government spending who contributed to this report agreed that the *process* is fine: Congress, they say, lacks only the political courage to make ends meet.

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974, explains University of Maryland professor Allen Schick, was designed to help Congress impose discipline on the budget-making process. Rather than accepting or rejecting White House spending bills, one by one, Congress, under this measure, would design its own master budget—according to which it would raise and spend federal monies. The law also established the House and Senate Budget Committees, and the Congressional Budget Office,

which has a 218-member staff today.

The specialists do suggest some minor revisions in the budget process. Congressmen Leon Panetta (D.-Calif.) and Trent Lott (D.-Miss.) argue that the budget should be drawn up every two years—not annually. But all agreed with Panetta that "political will... is the bottom line."

David Stockman, former director of the Office of Management and Budget, traces the origins of today's cumulative \$1.67 trillion federal deficit back to the early 1970s, when "favorable fiscal trends" allowed Congress to expand federal programs without raising taxes.

One "trend," he says, was the "collapse of national interest and defense spending" as the United States withdrew from Vietnam. Pulling out of Indochina, he estimates, saved Washington some \$200 billion (in 1985 dollars) every year. Galloping

inflation rates also helped the government save or collect money. Through tax "bracket creep," the Internal Revenue Service collected an increasingly higher percentage of Americans' incomes; inflation also decreased the "real" interest on U.S. Treasury bills, with which Washington finances the debt.

In sum, says Stockman, "the budgeting game of the 1970s delivered a \$300 billion jackpot (5.5 percent of the gross national product [GNP]) of new domestic benefits to domestic constituencies without explicitly

raising taxes." Members of Congress happily went about authorizing high defense expenditures, or new subsidies for nutrition and student aid, without considering the long-term consequences. Between 1962 and 1980, for example, the annual cost of Social Security alone increased from 2.6 to 4.5 percent of total GNP.

"Current fiscal disorder," Stockman concludes, "results from powerful, long-term, macroeconomic policy and political trends that have thoroughly overwhelmed the budget process."

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### "World's Fairs: How They Are Faring."

Editorial Research Reports, 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 17 pp. \$5.50.  
Author: Robert K. Landers

"World's Fairs [have] had their day, and [will] be seen no more."

So wrote *Century* magazine in 1885. One hundred years and dozens of expositions later, today's pundits are no more optimistic about the future of world's fairs.

The skeptics have their reasons. Recent fairs, says Landers, a *Congressional Quarterly* editor, have drained private and public coffers. In May 1984, Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards exclaimed, "Laissez les bon temps rouler" (Let the good times roll), as he kicked off his state's world exposition. Due to poor attendance, the fair left the state with a \$120 million debt. Two years earlier, Knoxville's Energy Expo '82 had been no more successful. The fair drove the city's largest bank, United American, into insolvency.

Why have world's fairs gone broke? The expositions, critics hold, fail to attract huge crowds because they no longer serve as "timekeepers of progress." World's fairs, observes New Orleans business leader Harry Greenberger, used to be on "the leading edge of the newest technology." Indeed, Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition in 1876 gave visitors their first look at the typewriter, sewing machine, and telephone. "Now," Greenberger says, "we

see [new technologies] on television."

Still, some previous world's fairs have returned something of value to the cities that sponsored them. Many fairs have helped rebuild decaying downtowns. Seattle held its Century 21 Exposition in 1962. Today, the city uses the exposition's U.S. pavilion as a sports arena; the auditorium functions as an opera house. Spokane's Expo '74 transformed the city's waterfront—long a wasteland of railroad yards and deserted factories—into today's Riverfront Park.

This year's world's fair, Expo '86, now under way in Vancouver, British Columbia, seems to be faring better than most. Fair organizers expect some 16 million visitors by the time the fair ends on October 13. Still, Expo '86 will not pay for itself. The federal government in Ottawa is picking up part of the \$1 billion cost—including \$100 million for Canada's pavilion alone.

Whatever the costs, world's fairs are more than likely to continue, say their aficionados. "There's nothing like rubbing shoulders and talking, and seeing what others are doing, and showing off," observes Alfred Heller, editor of *World's Fair* magazine. "I just can't imagine the world not having them."