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COMPLIMENTARY

An Interview with Nadine Gordimer

Fiction and Consequences

Biodun Jeyifo

The occasion was a UNESCO-sponsored conference in February in Harare, Zimbabwe on the subject of African literature(s) in the 1990s and beyond. Logically, current processes of change and transformation in South Africa figured as a special issue at the conference. That

INSIDE:

In an effort to break away from the horserace mentality that characterizes most political reporting in this country today, the Bookpress has asked four nationally prominent thinkers to put the upcoming election in a wider context. Walter LaFeber offers a historical perspective, Alfred E. Kahn provides an economic analysis, Zillah Eisenstein deals with our cultural expectations, and Theodore Lowi analyzes our troubled domestic political institutions — as well as announcing the formation of a new national third party, to be known as the Independence Party.

See pages 2 and 3

country was represented by two writers, poet and novelist Mongane Wally Serote, and Nobel laureate for 1991, Nadine Gordimer. Both, incidentally, are members of the African National Congress (ANC).

I had gone to the conference anxious to make contacts with writers and critics from South Africa who are active in the country. I had also gone with a special objective — a long, exhaustive interview with Nadine Gordimer. One of the almost certain cultural and intellectual effects of the supersession of apartheid in South Africa will be the reconfiguration of African literature, as an institution of society at large and as a vital part of the curriculum in the schools and universities. For one thing, it will become more "natural" for writers, critics, and teachers to the north to think of white South African writers as "African" authors. Conversely, white and black South African writers and critics will rediscover each other — and in so doing, aid the rest of the continent to reconceptualize "race" as a determinant of inclusion and exclusion in the canon of African literature. Undoubtedly, Nadine Gordimer will figure prominently in

this reconfiguration of African literature. This has little to do with the Nobel prize, important and welcome as this may be. It is more on account of the range and quality of her works, especially the essays and the fiction that explore whiteness and the constructions of whiteness as these are played out simultaneously within an enclave in Africa's own "deep South," and as a projection, a movement into the rest of the continent. Perhaps no other writer has explored this double articulation of the race question in white South African writing with the depth, sensitivity, and critical self-awareness of Nadine Gordimer.

In the end it was not possible to have the long, wide-ranging interview I had anticipated. Perhaps the occasion for that will come. In the meantime, the dialogue transcribed here focuses less on Gordimer's work than on the immediacies and contingencies of South Africa at the present moment in the light of "unscripted" transitional politics and the efforts of the community of writers and critics to respond to them.

B.J. Your novel *July's People* has the
see Gordimer, page 13



photograph: © Dörte Nielsen

Nadine Gordimer

Urban Affinities

Heather C. White

THE MALE CROSS-DRESSER SUPPORT GROUP
by Tama Janowitz
Crown, \$20, 313 pp.

Tama Janowitz's new novel will not suffer for lack of hype. Its jacket, resplendent in eye-catching limegreen, day-glo pink, and safety orange, makes it look like a hip, '90s kind of feel-good manual. (Who's to say male cross-dressers don't need a support group, just like anyone else?) A full schedule of Janowitz's appearances around the country is planned, to allow her own much-discussed look to work its magic on prospective readers. Just in case anyone has lost interest in that look, advance copies of the book include a magazine article about Janowitz's makeover last year and her subsequent decision to accept her old look as part of who she is. The book's jacket features a full-color glamour-girl photo of

Janowitz's new, albeit short-lived, self. Finally, in a media-savvy move worthy of Madonna herself, Janowitz has made a video for the book in which a cast of famous people act out the book's plot, to be shown on MTV. One can only imagine the confusion this will engender in thousands of unsuspecting video viewers, and the jump in book sales as they figure out what is going on, and a new generation is brought back to books as another kind of pop culture.

The only danger in all this is that a certain kind of reader may be put off by the hoopla, which would mean that many fewer people to read what is, underneath the glitz packaging, a very fine novel. *The Male Cross-Dresser Support Group* is the story of twenty-five-year-old Pamela Trowel and her attempts to survive New York. Pamela lives in Manhattan, is underpaid, and underloved. Her rich boss humiliates and exploits her regularly, insane and impotent men find her

irresistible, and, as she says flatly early on, her apartment hates her. Pamela inhabits the forgotten side of the city; she is young, white, and employed, so is not one of its "truly disadvantaged." But she makes barely enough money to survive, let alone participate in the lifestyles of the rich and irresponsible, so she is not a yuppie either. She seems to be constantly surrounded by garbage, as though the city, in abandoning her, has appointed her the caretaker of all its castaways. Janowitz describes filth in loving detail, and some of her best passages are those that describe the quotidian horrors Pamela encounters: the sink fur that will not die, the gelatinous ooze that threatens to swallow her bathroom, the abundant waste that litters any sidewalk she happens to be on. Pamela buys all of the recommended cleaning products and brings to bear every lethal chemical in the modern household

see *Urban*, page 16

Cargill's Buffalo Shuffle

Secular Cathedrals

Bill Brown

**MEASURE OF EMPTINESS:
GRAIN ELEVATORS IN THE
AMERICAN LANDSCAPE**
by Frank Gohlke,
epilogue by John C. Hudson
Johns Hopkins, cloth, \$59.95,
paper, \$29.95, 110 pp.

**CARGILL: TRADING THE
WORLD'S GRAIN**
by Wayne G. Broehl, Jr.,
University Press of New England
\$19.95, 1014 pp.

As everybody in Buffalo knows, grain elevators are *interesting*, especially to look at. They make great subjects for photographs.

More than that, grain elevators were invented by two Buffalo men, grain merchant Joseph Dart and engineer Robert Dunbar, 150 years ago, and, in little over a decade, made the port of Buffalo the biggest grain port in the world — a distinction it retained as late as the 1940s. This was because of the relative ease

with which Dart and Dunbar's "marine tower" could unload steamers from the Great Lakes and assist in the loading of canal boats bound for Albany and the Hudson River.

And so, even though the grain transhipment business pulled out of Buffalo 30 years ago, it was to Buffalo that the Federal Parks Service (in the form of the Historic American Engineering Record) came in 1990 when it wanted to research and document grain elevators for the Library of Congress. Rest assured, HAER took a lot of photographs.

It is thus with some surprise that any Buffalo inhabitant will look at the photographs and articles in Frank Gohlke's *Measure of Emptiness: Grain Elevators in the American Landscape*, and find not a single photograph or reference to a Buffalo grain elevator. Despite the inclusiveness of the book's subtitle, the grain elevators photographed are located in Minneapolis and various places in Texas, Kansas, see *Secular*, page 12

The End of

The Global Context

Walter LaFeber

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the supposed end of the Cold War was a cause for considerable rejoicing in the West. Among other reasons for the celebration was the realization that the world had avoided the nuclear holocaust that had haunted it for nearly a half-century. Only one cheer has proved to be appropriate, however. Pictures of victims in Bosnia, Somalia, and even the Commonwealth of Independent States itself (notably Georgia), are

reminders of a central historical lesson of the post-1945 years and, indeed, of the entire 20th century.

That lesson is that while few Russians and Americans died in direct superpower confrontations, 21 million people did die in wars after 1945. At least 4 million died in Vietnam alone, including more than 57,000 Americans. Another million (at least) died in the Korean conflict, including 33,643 US battle deaths (and 20,000 related American deaths.) Nearly 200,000 are estimated to have been killed in the

Central American wars between 1978 and 1990. Many of those victims had their lives ended by US-supported or Soviet-supplied armies and death squads.

Conclusions can be drawn. One is that the present century, supposedly the most sophisticated, knowledgeable, interdependent, and technologically advanced in history, has also been among the most violent. From modern technology have been born the triplets of efficiency, leisure time, and violent death. Historian Charles Tilly has estimated

that, in the 18th century, 50 people per million population died in wars. In the 19th century, the figure was 60 per million population. In the 20th century, it has been 460 persons per million population. The nature of the killing has been transformed as well. As Randall Jarrell's poetry and Kurt Vonnegut's novels emphasized decades ago, and as the Scuds and Tomahawk missiles again demonstrated in the war against Iraq, the means of death have come from ever greater distances and been ever

see Global, page 11



photograph: Hilary Schwab
Walter LaFeber



photograph: Gladys B. Clark

Alfred E. Kahn

The first thing to understand is that to characterize the economic task we face today — or tomorrow — as converting from a cold war to a peacetime economy grossly exaggerates the dimensions of that particular problem, and correspondingly minimizes the dimensions of what really needs to be done. The reasons why that is so are themselves instructive.

Near the end of World War II, we were devoting about 40 percent of our total gross national production to military purposes.

Chronic Consumption

Converting to a peacetime economy at that time was indeed a formidable undertaking — or at least seemed to be, in prospect.

At its peak in the middle 1980s, in contrast, our spending on national defense reached 6.2 percent of GNP; if we include total budget expenditures for "international affairs," the percentage rises to 6.6 — still only one-sixth of the end-of-World War II level.

I don't suggest for a moment that our current military spending at an annual \$275 to \$300 billion rate is peanuts; but in an almost \$6 trillion economy, cutting it by half or even more hardly poses a major problem of conversion.

Of course, those savings could be used to do a lot of good elsewhere. But compared with Federal deficits in the \$300 billion range — which we clearly have to get down — and considering the huge shortfalls in other government expenditures — which we surely have to make good — even the opportunity and the "peace dividend" that it promises over a period of maybe five years begin to look pitifully small.

Comparison with the

conversion problem at the end of World War II is illuminating in another way as well. In the middle 1940s, there was a great deal of anxiety and outright pessimism about our ability to provide employment opportunities for all the combat forces and defense workers that the outbreak of peace would release onto the job market; and Henry Wallace was regarded as a woolly-headed visionary for suggesting a program for an expanding economy that would produce 60 million jobs. (Our civilian employment today, in a lamentably weak economy, exceeds 117 million.) These fears were quite understandable, in light of the stubborn refusal of unemployment — which hit a horrendous 25 percent officially in 1933 — to drop below 14 percent until the upsurge of military spending from 1940 onward turned the prolonged depression into a boom. Yet we cut our national defense outlays from \$82 billion at their 1945 peak to \$42 billion in 1946 and 11.6 billion in 1947 — from 38.6 percent of GNP to 5 percent in two years — while the unemployment rate rose only from 1.9 to

3.9 percent — and all this without any governmental conversion program, other than unemployment insurance, worthy of the name.

Of course one can read the lesson of that experience in a different way: A 35 percent-of-GNP curtailment in military expenditures can cause hardly a ripple in a dynamic economy that awaits only a reduction in the military drain to satisfy long-suppressed civilian demands, but a curtailment only one-tenth as large, proportionately, could give rise to real suffering in an economy that is only limping along, as ours has been for the last three-plus years. Our present unemployment in the 7.6 to 7.8 percent range (though markedly below the 11 percent peak monthly rate during the 1981-82 recession) — which translates into something like 11 percent if we take into account involuntary part-time employment and discouraged workers who have simply dropped out of the job market — is the consequence of our having grown at a less than 1.5 percent annual rate in the five quarters before the present recession officially began and at an average just below zero in the eight quarters

since then.

But this is only another way of saying that the economic "problem" of a "transition to peace" is nothing more than a mild intensification of the problem of stagnation from which we suffer anyhow (to which, to be sure, the leveling-off and mild drop in military spending in the late 80s and early 90s made a small contribution); and that we will not take advantage of the modest opportunity it presents us to do some of the things that badly need doing unless we get over that stagnation. Like the unemployment of some workers that would follow conclusion of a North American Free Trade Agreement, the problems are no different in either kind or degree from the problems of any healthy, growing economy — to absorb resources displaced from less productive into more productive employments; and the solution is not to continue to spend foolishly on the military — or deny ourselves the benefits of freer trade with Mexico — but to convert our stagnant economy into a healthy, growing one. The bright side of the picture is that the way to make those

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Publisher: Jack Goldman
Editorial Staff: Jack Goldman, Joel Ray

Production & Design: Amy Kwasnica,
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Distribution: Olli Baker, Bill Gandino,
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the Cold War



Zillah Eisenstein

It is almost impossible to sort out real political issues from their misrepresentations and rhetorical abuse in the present presidential election. Candidates from both parties speak of a "new world order," "economic issues" vs. "family values," "domestic vs. foreign policy," the forgotten "middle class," as though these political phrases accurately describe the issues—and they do not. The effectiveness of this political rhetoric is that it partially rings true and does so through the vague imagery it creates. Anyone can read whatever they like into the sound-bite rhetoric. Obscured in

All in the Family

this process is that this language bespeaks faulty distinctions and divisions which are not entirely true. The new world order is new and also very old. Domestic and foreign policy are no longer separate spheres. The economy and family are interrelated realms. The middle class was forgotten in the past decade, but the fact that this middle class is also a "working class" has been wiped off the map.

This duplicitous cacophony sets the context for the swirling contradictory messages about women and their proper identities in the present election. On the one hand we are told that this is the "year of the woman"; more women (16) are running for the Senate than ever before and one is "even" African-American. Two of the four candidates' wives are lawyers; one practices, the other does not. Barbara Bush presents herself in a homey self-denigrating fashion and gains record-high popularity. She uses her paper-thin persona to bring in whatever pluralist vote exists out there for the Republicans. She has become the party's umbrella. But more on that later.

Hillary Clinton is the other election icon at the moment. As her

husband Bill says, you would think Bush is running against her. And in some sense he is. Ms. Clinton has been dangled out there by the Republicans as a radical feminist, arch-critic of marriage and family, and defender of children's rights to sue parents. Everyone, including Hillary, seems to ignore the fact that if she were a radical feminist she might run for President herself. Instead, she has chosen to be a political "wife." We need to remember that her early outspoken role in the campaign unfolded amidst the charges of her husband's infidelity. She was drawn into the Gennifer Flowers affair to speak for her husband's faithfulness. She tried to silence the rumors as only a wife can do. One should not mistake this early active role in the campaign as a co-presidency.

Women's lives do not lend themselves to easy homogeneous description, although election rhetoric attempts to do just this. The rhetoric trumpets worn-out models that do not work for most women and/or their families today. This does not stop the right wing of the Republican party from privileging the model of the traditional patriarchal family—husband in the labor

force with a wife at home. Never mind the reality that this version of the family applies to less than 16 percent of US families today.

The economy and its demand for dual wage-earning families undercuts the hollowness of traditional family rhetoric further. So do the vast number of single-parent households, especially those headed by women. And we have not even yet mentioned the issue of poverty for these families. When the Republicans speak of "family values" it is this multiple reality of family that they try to cover over, looking back to what they perceive as a better time: a stronger and more dynamic economy which allowed the "traditional" white middle-class family structure to dominate. Family and economy are completely intertwined here, but they are treated as separate.

"Family values" has become a political code word for anti-abortion, anti-feminist, anti-affirmative action, anti-homosexual, anti-social welfare, anti-drugs. The imagery elicits the vision of a traditional white-male-headed heterosexual family which is supposedly orderly, drug-free, abuse-free, and AIDS-free.

The language of "family val-

ues" constructs the perfect postmodern moment in its elusiveness and vagueness of borders. As Barbara Bush says, family is whatever you say it is, even though she thinks her kind is the best kind to have. The plural vision she alludes to is a false pluralism because the Quayles, Pat Buchanan, Phyllis Schlafly, and President and Barbara Bush make clear that the kind of family they live in is the model for the all-American family. Bush sums this up when he says he wants America to be like the Waltons, and not the Simpsons—he does not even mention the Huxtables.

It is interesting to note that the Republicans' theme has not been families, but family "values." This sleight-of-hand allows them to ignore the structural realities of families by focusing on imagery. The discussion of values in Bush's rhetoric emphasizes individual choice and responsibility for self rather than the constraints which impinge on people's choices. But don't get me wrong here—I am not saying that people, especially women, would choose the patriarchal family if they were free from economic constraints. Of course

see Family, page 9



photograph: Cornell University

Theodore J. Lowi

It's the end of the Cold War. The Wall is down. Hopes are up. Why do we feel so bad?

It's as though the raising of the Iron Curtain enabled us for the first time to see not our adversary but ourselves, not blinded by the requirements and restrictions of national security. Our democratic institutions have never been more severely tested, not only by our own domestic problems but by the need to serve as a beacon for the newly emerging countries whose people yearn for the advantage of individualism and the benefits of economic and political participation. Americans have a particular obligation to ask whether our political institutions are equipped to confront the new international challenges as well as our persisting internal problems.

Beyond Political Paralysis

Yet, despite the elaborate analytic processes of the CIA, State Department, and special international relations advisors we have been living passively through a genuine world revolution.

The collapse of the Soviet satellite system, followed quickly by the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, has unleashed a process of world revolutionary development that far exceeds the dreams of the original architects of the Soviet system itself.

But with the end of armed confrontation between East and West in Europe, the popular cry for "self-determination" has returned after an absence of half a century. Having forgotten that the Soviet Union performed a very useful service by keeping more than 25 major nationalities within Russia and Central Europe from making war against each other for 45 to 75 years, we are not ready for the dangers their re-emergence produces. The present situation bears a strong resemblance to the epoch that ended in 1914—quite an ominous model for a New World Order. What was then called Balkanization meant nationhood and self-determination, but it also meant war. It was in Sarajevo in August 1914 that Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, inaugurating World War I.

A further consequence of the Soviet collapse is the globalization of the market, or, one could say, the globalization of capitalism: multinational and foreign-owned corpo-

rations; convertible currencies and instantaneous flows of capital 24 hours a day; easy movement of companies from high-cost to low-cost labor markets without regard to country loyalties.

The interaction among these revolutionary changes is what confronts the public policy agenda in every country including the United States. What will first require our attention is the interaction between nationhood and global markets. Nationhood is culturally specific, attached to land and blood, arising out of the sense of a common past and shared destiny. In contrast to the particularism of nationhood, the market is universalistic. It has no past or future except by contract. It needs neither culture nor knowledge—only information, for purposes of instant communication. It requires no loyalty, except to the bottom line, and no responsibility, except the fiduciary kind. Nationhood and market globalization are contradictory forces that, left unattended, may undermine one another.

This provides at least an intimation of the emerging world order and its meaning for American political institutions. The old World Order was shaped by external bipolarity—West versus East, maintained by Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). The new bipolarity is internal, wherein each country must struggle to deal with the tension between the cultural imperatives of nationhood and the economic

universalism of the market.

Despite its great power, the United States is not immune to these opposing tendencies. Although our economy has long been built on market principles, it is in a constant state of friction with those aspects of American nationhood that we call family and community, neighborhood and ethnic group, tradition and religion. Efforts reaching back at least to the New Deal—mainly by the Democratic party—can be understood as government programs designed to defend individuals, families, and communities from the harshest aspects of the market. These policies have been regularly attacked by the Republicans as interfering with the economy, and there is of course a great deal of truth in that. But Republicans and many conservative Democrats have been interfering with the economy in their own way for an even longer time, with such policies as tariffs, government subsidies, banking laws, food and drug regulations, divorce laws, laws on prostitution and other morality, medical licensure, child labor laws, and universal compulsory education, to name but a few. Both sides, both parties, obviously favor intervention in the economy in different ways but for the same general purpose: to defend communities, neighborhoods, character, and social values against individual and corporate greed that is the underlying motive of the market economy.

That brings us to the mutual and

shared inability of the two major parties to cope with the collapse of another system—their own. During the current epoch of some 40 years, there has been a political consensus between the parties. In the 1930s a new welfare and regulatory state was constructed, basically in defense of human values against the brutally efficient but imperfect economic system. This "new American state" constructed by the Democrats was eventually accepted by the Republicans, who during the 1950s and '60s ran virtually as Democrats who could do the same job better and cheaper. Mainstream Republicans accepted the new state for practical reasons—the only way to get elected was to play along as frugal New Dealers. But the right wing in both parties accepted the new state for reasons of principle. The Burkean right (e.g., Russell Kirk and George Will), the Christian right, and the white supremacist right had always seen serious problems with capitalism because of its permanent assault on traditional community values. Naturally they did not express themselves as anti-capitalist: no one likes to appear to be a traitor. But Wall Street, absentee ownership, wage labor, women laborers, and contract itself were the enemy of traditional community values. In 1933, for example, the profoundly reactionary congressman, John Rankin of Mississippi, sounded like

see Beyond, page 8

Off Campus

At The Bookery

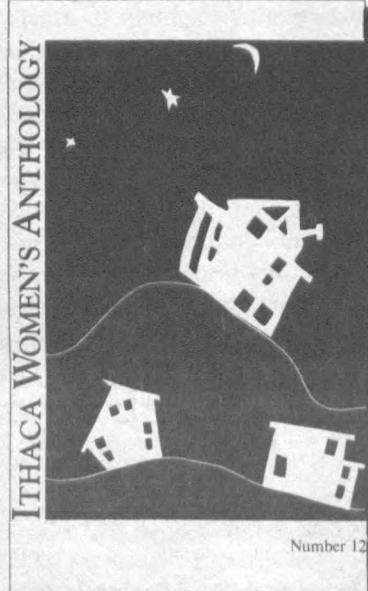
The "Off Campus at the Bookery" lecture series continued last month with **Paul West** who read from and signed copies of his just published novel, *Love's Mansion*.

October 4



William Goldsmith, will speak on "Politics, Poverty and the City" and will sign copies of his recent book *Separate Societies: Poverty and Inequality in U.S. Cities*. Goldsmith teaches City and Regional Planning at Cornell.

October 18



Ithaca Women's Anthology a reading by local writers whose work appears in the 1992 Anthology, a women's literary journal published once a year. This year's theme is "Transformation."

November 15



Dr. Peter W. Nathanielsz will read from his upcoming book *Life Before Birth and A Time To Be Born*. Nathanielsz is Director of the Laboratory for Pregnancy and Newborn research at Cornell University

December 6



Alison Lurie will give a talk on "Good and Bad Children's Books. Her newest book is *Don't Tell the Grown-ups: Subversive Children's Literature* (1990). Her novels include *Foreign Affairs* and *The Truth about Lorin Jones*.

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Francis Adams

**STORM SIGNAL:
STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT ALTER-
NATIVES IN THE CARIBBEAN**,
by Kathy McAfee
South End Press, \$15.00, 259 pp.

"Structural adjustment" is often considered an all-purpose remedy for the problems of developing nations. Poverty, debt, and dependency will be lessened, it is argued, once these nations adopt a few relatively simple policy reforms.

The usual prescription is that developing nations should first liberalize their trade and investment policies. Access to foreign markets will stimulate local export production while foreign investment will bring an infusion of much-needed capital and technology. Expansion of the export sector will then stimulate other sectors of the economy, increasing productive capacity and laying the foundation for rapid growth and development.

In *Storm Signals*, Kathy McAfee rejects the notion that structural adjustment is in the best interest of developing societies. Focusing on the Caribbean, where such reforms have been adopted almost universally, McAfee finds them to be "wreaking havoc" on the economies of the region. She goes on to propose her own "self-reliant" and "economically sound" development model.

Caribbean nations have certainly led the movement toward neo-liberalism in the developing world. During the 1980s many of these nations slashed their import tariffs and eliminated restrictions on foreign direct investment. In fact, numerous incentives were put into place to attract foreign corporations, including generous tax concessions, the establishment of industrial free zones, and the creation of debt-equity programs.

McAfee, a senior member of the Policy Research and Advocacy Unit of Oxfam America, is convinced that these reforms are counterproductive. As she puts it, "[t]he evidence is strong that structural adjustment has not succeeded, and cannot succeed, in promoting economic development in the Caribbean or in the majority of poor countries." In fact, almost everywhere it has been attempted, she argues, these reforms have engendered "increased poverty and unemployment, declining export incomes, higher debts and political unrest."

McAfee questions the degree to which Caribbean nations benefit from free trade. Opening the domestic market to an influx of foreign products, she contends, has often crippled local agricultural and industrial production. For her, these policies "reduce the ability of local enterprises, which often cannot compete with large foreign corporations, to provide jobs and to supply local products to meet local needs." Here McAfee's argument is persuasive. Small-scale artisans obviously lack the capital, economies of scale, advanced technology, or marketing skills to compete with the transnationals.

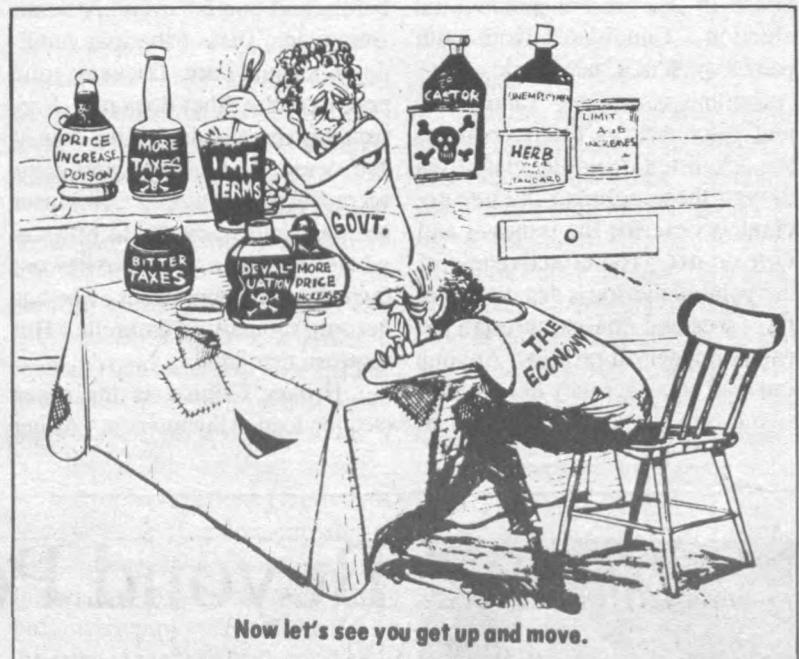
McAfee also demonstrates the

extent to which world market prices undervalue Caribbean exports. Researchers have often referred to a "structural bias" in world trade or a long-term tendency for the value of primary products to decline relative to the value of manufactured goods. Because trade relations take place in a world market largely dominated by the industrialized states, third world exports are often undervalued relative to their manufactured imports.

McAfee also refutes the notion that foreign investment is in the interest of Caribbean nations. Through detailed case studies of Dominica, Jamaica, and Grenada she highlights the often destructive social and economic consequences of such investment, which reinforces inequalities in the region. Such investment tends to create small, capital-intensive export enclaves which are largely cut off from other sectors of the economy, absorbing

demonstrates the degree to which liberalization undermines Caribbean development, her conception of dependence is somewhat limited. Rather than simply reflecting a system of "unequal exchange" between rich and poor nations, most scholars writing in this field (such as Theontonio Dos Santos, Osvaldo Sunkel, Arghiri Emmanuel, and Celso Furtado) have stressed the lack of "policy-making autonomy" in the dependent nation. Nations are considered dependent when they are no longer able to exert control over their national economies.

Dependence is often attributed to the absence of a viable capital-goods sector. Developing such sectors necessitates articulating these economies with the global market in order to complete the cycle of capitalist reproduction. As such, dependent nations are unable to carry out autonomous, self-sustained social and economic development.

from *Jamaica Daily News*

courtesy EPICA

local capital and pulling scarce resources toward primary rather than industrial production. As a result, Caribbean nations have been decapitalized over time as domestically generated surpluses are exported abroad rather than reinvested in the local economy. Human and material resources of these nations are used to meet foreign rather than local needs.

For McAfee, the actual effect of structural adjustment is to deepen Caribbean dependency. As she puts it,

In reality, rather than establishing a sound basis for economic growth, structural adjustment is reducing ...those nations' capacity to sustain their own populations and their chances of catching up with the world's industrialized economies.

Thus broader participation in world markets has often prevented Caribbean nations from developing their own productive capabilities. They are left economically dependent on the manufactured goods, capital, and technology of the advanced states. Trade and investment liberalization simply assures the industrialized nations access to cheap labor and primary commodities, ready markets for their manufactured goods, and opportunities for capital investment.

Although McAfee effectively

McAfee is also highly critical of the austerity measures that typically accompany structural adjustment programs. "Caribbean governments," she points out, "are cutting their expenditures on health, education, agricultural extension, and other badly needed public services," and she demonstrates how such cuts in public spending, reduction in social welfare programs, lifting of price controls, and wage reductions "[shift] the burden of adjustment onto those least able to bear it."

McAfee concludes that structural adjustment has "reinforced the region's impoverishing economic and social structures, deepened its dependency and established the conditions for further economic and social deterioration." This has directly contributed to "declining living standards and decaying social services, decreasing food self-sufficiency, and degradation of the environment."

While McAfee's critique of structural adjustment is well-developed and persuasive, she does not make a particularly original contribution to the field. Similar arguments, for example, can be found in the writings of Cheryl Payer (in *The Debt Trap, Lent and see Reggae*, page 6)

Conscientious Objection

The Other Israelis

Will Fudeman

WALKING THE RED LINE: ISRAELIS IN SEARCH OF JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

edited by Deena Hurwitz

New Society Publishers,
paper, \$19.95, 224 pp.

The Israeli peace movement rarely receives much attention in the United States. We read about mass rallies in times of crisis, but how many Americans are aware of the weekly vigils of Women in Black, or the continuing activities of the members of Yesh Gvul, the reserve soldiers of the Israeli army who refuse to serve in the occupied territories?

Deena Hurwitz first traveled to the Middle East in 1981, a trip that "changed [her] life." She has led study delegations to Israel, the occupied territories, and various Arab countries almost every year since, and spent 1989-90 living in east Jerusalem, helping to establish Middle East Witness. Hurwitz has gathered an impressive array of writings of 19 Israeli peace activists in *Walking the Red Line*. The "red line" refers to a "personal, moral, or psychological limit beyond which one is unwilling to transgress; or

conversely, by which one is impelled to action, perhaps consciously, to incur risk." In the essays, poetry, and interviews with Israelis from diverse backgrounds (women and men coming from native kibbutz families, the US, France, Germany, South Africa, and Argentina; religious Zionists, secular anti-Zionists; a Palestinian cleric from Nazareth and a Druze journalist and novelist), we encounter a persistent passion for justice.

Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom, co-founder of Clergy for Peace, an Israeli/Palestinian interfaith initiative, describes his personal development from a young man emigrating (making 'aliyah') to Israel as a way to celebrate his religious and cultural identity to a man who recognizes that "it is rather in bad taste for immigrants to refer to the original inhabitants of the land as 'strangers'." Rabbi Milgrom completed three years of active duty in the Israeli army, as well as 16 years of reserve duty. His developing conscientious objection began with a refusal to serve in the war in Lebanon and ended with his refusal to carry a weapon, and his release from

the army. Milgrom writes:

The close call suffered by the Jewish people during the Holocaust, far from sensitizing them to the abuse of power in the service of inhumane ideology, has made them obsessed



Yesh Gvul symbol

only with their own vulnerability. 'Never Again' means 'Never Again to us' - all threats to Jewish existence must be eliminated, at any cost. This includes, if necessary, even an entire nation of innocent bystanders.... The release of the Palestinian people is essential to the resurrection of Judaism, the very goal that Zionism set out to accomplish.

Deena Hurwitz, in her introduction, provides perspective on the difference between the mainstream Israeli peace camp (which is Zionist and pro-US) and the progressive peace movement, which includes Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist elements. Where members of the mainstream peace camp ceased dialogue with Palestinians during the Gulf War, the progressives put forth a critique of the motivations of the mainstream peace movement, while continuing dialogue and support of Palestinian rights.

"By exposing the range of debate in Israel, these essays chip away at the argument that criticism of Israel, or even debating the premises of Zionism, is inherently anti-Semitic." In fact, a primary motivation for these activists who seek to confront and change Israeli policies is the affirmation of Jewish moral values.

Yehzekel Landau, a leader of the religious peace group Oz ve Shalom, counters the right-wing religious settler movement by trying "to communicate how Jewish traditions should guide public policy in a reborn Jewish commonwealth, one

that can fulfill the promise of equal civil rights to non-Jewish citizens, though its prevailing ethos and symbolism are Jewish." Landau advocates sacrifices "necessary to reach a just compromise with the Palestinian people." He grounds his argument in God's charge to the Jewish people in Exodus to be a "kingdom of priests," which means "in our understanding, to use temporal or state power...as a means toward priestly, spiritual, redemptive ends. And what is the essential ministerial role of the priest? It is to mediate forgiveness through sacrifice. It is this forgiveness that is the source of real peace, the inner peace of the soul."

In contrast with Secretary of State Baker's high-profile efforts to bring Israeli leaders and Palestinians to the negotiating table (which could lull us Americans into trusting the experts to work out Middle East peace), Hurwitz's book introduces us to the thinking and actions of Israeli citizens who struggle to create a cultural context in which peace between neighbors can grow from the grass roots.

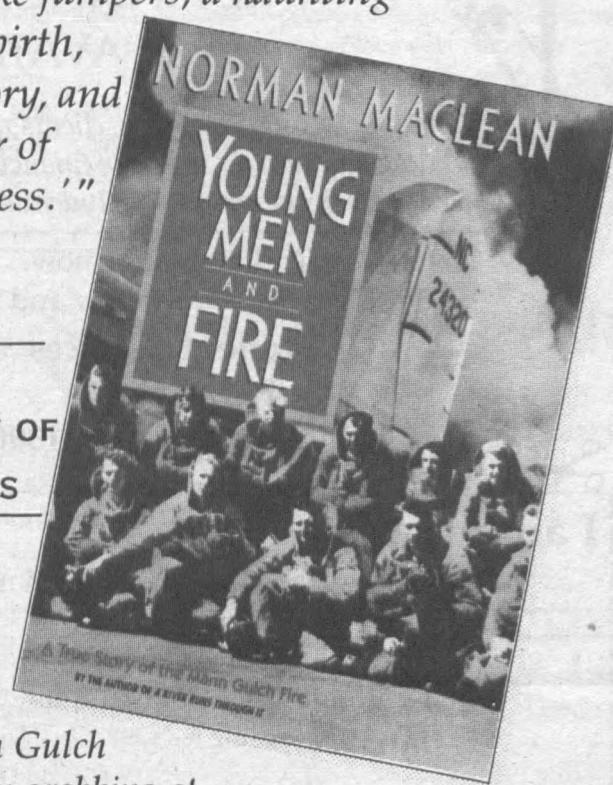


Will Fudeman is a writer who lives in Ithaca, NY.

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Reggae

continued from page 4

Lost, and The World Bank: A Critical Analysis) and in such works as Susan George's *A Fate Worse Than Debt* and Jill Torrie's edited volume *Banking on Poverty: The Global Impact of the IMF and the World Bank*.

Storm Signals is also weak historically. Though McAfee effectively demonstrates the negative effects of structural adjustment, the reader gains little sense of the forces that brought Caribbean nations to this point. Global recessions of the mid-1970s and early 1980s, coupled with deteriorating terms of trade, led to negative economic growth and chronic balance-of-payments crises, while attempts to offset foreign exchange shortages through massive external borrowing engendered debilitating debt burdens.

The combination of higher debt payments and reduced export earnings led to chronic liquidity problems and shortages of foreign exchange throughout the Caribbean. New commercial lending also dried up as the banks lost confidence in the ability of these nations to repay their past loans. At the same time, bilateral and multilateral organizations were either unwilling or unable to step in and make up the deficiency.

In order to continue purchasing vital imports, many Caribbean nations turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. IMF support was contingent, of course, on the adoption of structural adjustment reforms. Moreover,

other sources of credit, including the World Bank, the Paris Club, many bilateral programs, and most commercial banks, began making further loans dependent on acceptance of an IMF agreement.

While these developments are chronicled elsewhere (see for example Arthur MacEwan's *Debt and Disorder*, Chakravarthi Raghavan's *ReColonization*, or the edited collection by Barbara Stallings, *Debt and Democracy in Latin America*), a brief historical overview in one of the early chapters of *Storm Signals* would have provided a little more context for understanding the current crisis.

McAfee's analysis is least convincing when she turns to the mechanisms through which Caribbean underdevelopment is generated and preserved. Her argument is based almost exclusively on the notion of rich countries exploiting poor countries. This, she argues, is a function of the current "global economic hierarchy" or "international pecking order," which results in an "outflow of human and natural resources from impoverished populations and indebted nations." The debt crisis is thus portrayed as a "powerful siphon draining the economic lifeblood of Caribbean and other nations of the South." This theme is continually reiterated throughout *Storm Signals*.

At the root of many of these problems is the continuation of systems, albeit in modified form, which perpetuate the withdrawal of resources from the South and which concentrate power over global economic structures in institutions and corpo-

the BOOKPRESS

rations based in the North.

For McAfee, structural adjustment programs have a common purpose:

to transfer more funds from impoverished debtor nations into the coffers of the Northern governments, commercial banks and multilateral lending agencies to which they are officially indebted.

Caribbean governments are thus portrayed as the helpless victims of these transnational processes. These governments, McAfee contends, have lost all power "to determine their own priorities."

While the prevailing international economic order indisputably contributes to Caribbean poverty and underdevelopment, McAfee's analysis tends to ignore the class divisions within these nations. She occasionally refers to "governing and economic elites" or "commercial and land-holding elites," but the role played by them in preserving the existing order is not systematically incorporated into her analysis.

The political and economic elite of Caribbean nations benefit from structural adjustment reforms at the expense of other social groups. Large landowners gain access to wider markets for their agricultural products through publicly funded export incentives. Small farmers and peasants, on the other hand, are often displaced as production of cash crops for export replaces the production of staples to meet local needs. The best lands often become concentrated in the hands of a small economic elite who dominate the rural export sectors.

Multinational corporations often collaborate with local capital in establishing joint ventures, trade associations, and other financial connections which benefit large-scale local enterprises, while smaller firms or handicrafts, unable to compete with the transnationals, go under. It is poor and working-class people who are most adversely affected by the price increases, wage cuts, and loss of publicly funded services which accompany structural adjustment.

Clearly, a domestic elite, with interests that transcend those of their own country, has emerged and gained state power in these nations. The present structure of international capital tends to promote a mutuality of interests between foreign investors and the larger local entrepreneurs. McAfee's failure to fully recognize the extent to which domestic class actors favor liberalization, because they benefit from these policies, constitutes a fundamental weakness in her analysis.

Given these analytical shortcomings, McAfee's "alternative" model for Caribbean development is not entirely convincing. Relying on what she calls "interactive research" (based on workshops with people from various sectors of Caribbean society), McAfee concludes that greater "self-reliance" is the key to equitable growth and development.

According to this view, local firms should produce a larger percentage of consumer goods and the inputs needed for agricultural and

industrial production. Workers' cooperatives should develop practical technologies and marketing systems for foods and other goods processed from local crops and raw materials. Linkages between agro-processing and other economic sectors would then be expected to reduce import costs and expand employment opportunities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as farmers' and workers' unions, women's associations, and community cooperatives are also a central component of McAfee's model. Because grassroots or popular organizations are composed of and accountable to the poor, she argues, they are most orientated toward social change. These organizations are thus more effective in "reaching, mobilizing and representing the poor and marginalized." "[T]heir variety and flexibility enable them to respond to rapidly changing conditions in ways that more formal and established institutions cannot." NGOs are credited with finding innovative solutions to the pressing problems of poverty and, in the process, creating new structures and methods for achieving social justice and sustainable development.

McAfee places considerable emphasis on popular "empowerment," by which the impoverished and marginalized are active participants in the formulation and implementation of all development programs. These programs can only be successful if they draw upon the knowledge and skills of poor and working-class people and earn their "wholehearted and active support."

see Reggae, page 16



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Fire and Ice

Norman Krumholz

SEPARATE SOCIETIES: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN U.S. CITIES

by William W. Goldsmith and Edward J. Blakely
Temple University Press,
\$19.95 192 pp.

Separate Societies: Poverty and Inequality in U.S. Cities arrives at a propitious time. For the first time in over twenty-five years, the issue of urban poverty—and our national failure to deal with it—is front page news. There is no mystery about the catalyst. With the Los Angeles riots as backdrop, politicians, economists, religious leaders, and other Americans are groping for an adequate response. In the policy debate which is now underway, this highly readable, exhaustively researched book should be influential.

Separate Societies is a study of how political and economic factors have affected the lives of poor people in US cities since the end of World War II. In clear language and supporting graphics, it examines trends and public policies that have helped turn the hopeful and optimistic War on Poverty of the 1960s into today's smash-and-grab war on welfare. The book joins a number of excellent studies of urban poverty written in the 1980s, including Thomas Boston's *Race, Class and Conservatism*, Michael Katz's *Undeserving Poor*, and William Julius Wilson's *Truly Disadvantaged*.

Separate Societies argues that American society is in danger of social, economic, and geographic separation that may prove to be permanent. Using the water-into-ice analogy, the book argues that "American society is like water just above the freezing point, dangerously close to dissociating into

separate parts." Yet, despite this almost despairing point of view, the argument of the authors is essentially optimistic, asserting that politics and economics can be reshaped positively to respond both to worldwide economic restructuring and to the needs of the urban poor.

The book begins with a brief analysis of three usually competing and sometimes overlapping theories of poverty: as pathology, as accident, or as a feature of economic and political structures. The authors reject standard definitions of poverty, and argue that poverty is perpetuated through racial isolation, educational and social disadvantage, institutional hostility, and international economic policies.

In the second chapter, the authors document the appalling conditions of poor and minority people in central cities, and examine these conditions in relation to continued racism and inequalities in national distributions of income and wealth. Chapter three examines the interaction with the restructuring of the global economy and shows how the availability of cheap overseas labor has deepened the dilemma of the poorest Americans. The fourth chapter extends the argument to analyze how changing industrial patterns in the US, including the suburbanization of manufacturing and service jobs,

have harmed most American cities and workers.

The final chapter is the book's most riveting. It contains a history of federal and local efforts in

resource development.

Programs recommended for federal support include: a national employment program to rebuild urban infrastructure; educational enrichment, including expanding early education and using the community school as a means of delivering social services; a family-support program using a broadened Earned Income Tax Credit or family assistance plan; and a National Health Plan. Emphasis is wisely placed on the need for universal rather than means-tested services. This recognizes that over the past 20 years, Social Security benefits were regularly adjusted for inflation, while the purchasing power of welfare and food stamp benefits for single mothers declined by an average of 27 percent.

Where will the political support come from? The authors consider—and reject as unlikely—support from large corporations, a revived Democratic party, or a suburban-city coalition. While large corporations need an educated work force and wish to shift the growing costs of health and social expenditures to the government, they still resist the higher taxes this implies. The authors also believe success is unlikely through a revived Democratic party because it

has failed to capture the Presidency since 1976, its liberal wing is weak and suburbanization has drained its strength. Similarly, the authors reject the probability that the suburbs might agree to an effective coalition with the central cities if only to protect their own suburban isolation.

Hope for betterment, the authors believe, must start with the central cities and their empowered neighborhoods. They point out that several cities with successful city hall/neighborhood coalitions have adopted "bottom-up" policies and developed programs focused on the essential needs of poor residents and neighborhoods. Using the example of Chicago under Harold Washington and other "progressive cities," they suggest what might happen when those in power in city hall push for local, state, and national economic agendas that fit real needs. The authors believe that a number of progressive-minded cities working together and working with grass-roots, neighborhood-based reform movements could force needed change at the national level.

Regardless of what one thinks of the authors' conclusions, their documentation of the bleak existence of the urban poor, their analysis of causes, and their proposed solutions provide a provocative optimism that is a refreshing challenge in this period of pessimism and despair. The book deserves a place on the shelf of any student, teacher, or policymaker dealing with the problems of urban poverty.



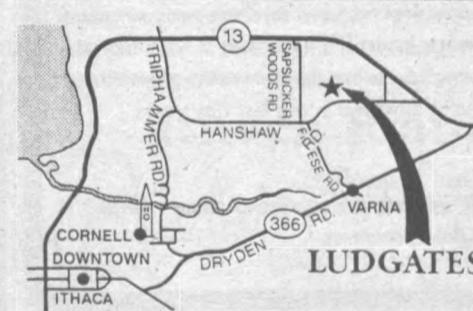
illustration: Fernando Llosa

fighting poverty and a set of proposals for federal action. Perhaps most useful, it also contains an analysis of potential sources of political support for the proposals it recommends. It is in this discussion on the sources and probability of political support that the book proves to be superior in comprehensiveness and strategy to many other recent books that have gone over similar ground. The authors believe that any successful plan to undo the problems of severe urban poverty and racial discrimination must begin with efforts to reshape the city into a vehicle for local and national human and

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Beyond

continued from page 3

a Communist when he raved about the national economy:

I am for taxing profits...[to] redistribute the wealth of the nation, and lift the burden of taxation from those least able to bear it. I am told that Andrew W. Mellon himself has an income of \$30 million a year. If I had my way we would put a wound stripe on his purse big enough to be seen from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia.

Russell Kirk, as recently as 1988, put it this way: "Libertarianism [Adam Smith liberalism], properly understood, is as alien to real American conservatives as is Communism." And no genuine pro-market capitalist could feel comfortable with the title (or the text) of George Will's book, *Statecraft as Soulcraft*. Beginning in the late 1970s, the entire American right wing was willing to make common cause with the Republicans, whose intention was not to terminate any of the New Deal programs, but to delegate social legislation to the state governments where conservatives have always been able to protect their own traditions.

The New Deal consensus worked well for over 30 years, with Democrats and Republicans alternately in control of the White House. The entire New Deal program remained in place through the 1960s (even now, no important New Deal program except the Civil Aeronautics Board has ever been terminated), proving we could have high levels of government services, safety nets for the rich and the poor, a redistributive income tax, and at the same time, sustained economic growth.

What killed the New Deal epoch was the Cold War. Successive Soviet and American leaders spent their nations into the economic equivalent of Armageddon. The Soviet Union ended in oblivion. The United States was lucky, spending itself only into insolvency. But we are paying for it now, and somehow all the economists are looking for an answer in all the wrong places as to why we have a runaway debt that prevents us from sustaining the highly beneficial New Deal system. Rather than denounce the Cold War and the idiots who led us to insolvency, and rather than accept the debt as a permanent

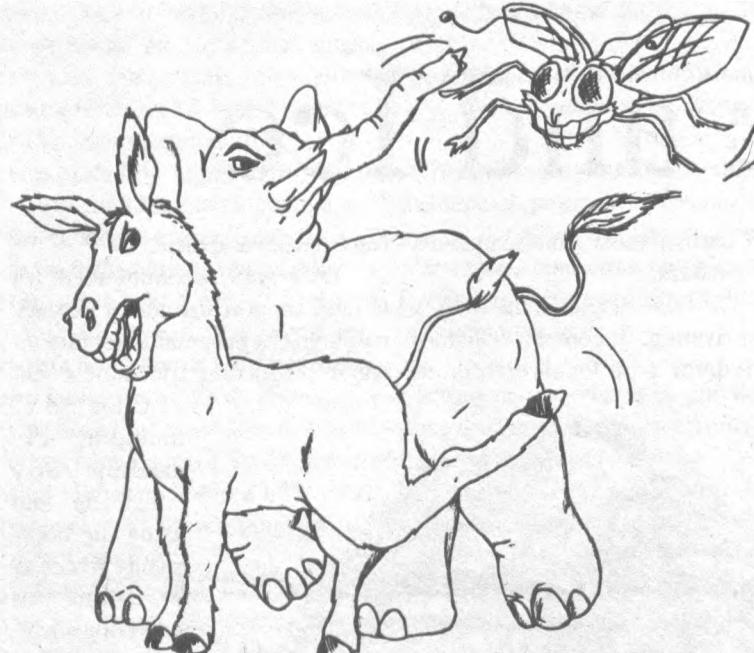


illustration: Stephanie Clair

monument to the Cold War, we have begun the new era renouncing the liberalism upon which the Welfare State was built.

The Republicans scream against government (it's the problem, not the solution) even though their five-year prosperity under Reagan was produced by government deficits larger than even Keynes would have approved. The Republican right wing claims to endorse the great free market, even though virtually every policy and constitutional change they seek would be a restriction upon it. Meanwhile, the Democrats are so traumatized by their lack of understanding of the causes and nature of the debt that they have abandoned their heritage, refusing even to evoke the L-word. The Republican era began in the 1980s when Democrats began running as Republicans.

Internal bipolarity is so difficult because it is so contradictory. But making the best of both sides of a contradiction has always been the signifying mark of the politics of democracy. The skill and the strength of politicians is to take big, moral issues and to trivialize them — that is, to bring issues down from Grand Alternatives to relevant choices that can be dealt with practically and incrementally.

The American political system succeeded supremely in the politics of democracy, until about 20 years ago. Since that time — and we falsely blame this on Watergate, OPEC, what have you — the American political system has displayed a decreasing capacity to deal with post-Cold War problems in an appropriate discourse with a relevant set of policy alternatives. Presidential

campaigns have not been empty of "the issues." In fact, recent presidential campaigns are far more filled with issues than were campaigns of the past. Every candidate tries to corner the market on economists-for-hire to help build a very large briefing book, so that the candidate can have a ready-made position on every conceivable issue. You might even think we could get a domestic policy that prepares American workers and communities for the global economy with instruction in relevant skills and in true multicultural understanding. You would also think we could get a foreign policy that discouraged large American corporations from exporting jobs to countries where workers are exploited at slave wages and costs of production are further reduced by exploiting the environment with wanton utilization and dumping. But the present situation calls up the moment in "Murder on the Orient Express" when Hercule Poirot discovered he was being set up because "there are too many clues." Too many issues can be a cover-up for the absence of priorities. Strategic obfuscation. The American political system suffers more from the absence of priorities than from gridlock.

Is it any wonder, then, that nearly half of the American electorate is today without party loyalty? That over 60 percent of Americans feel antipathy toward the President and the executive branch, as do 72 percent toward the US Senate, and nearly 70 percent toward the House of Representatives? Is it any wonder that 60 percent of the American

see *Beyond*, page 14

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Party Crashers

Barbara Mink

Theodore Lowi's effort to help found a third political party in the US is a result, in part, of an Op-Ed piece Lowi published in the *New York Times* last April. In it he appealed to Ross Perot to form a new party, and though Perot declined, some of his regional organizers were intrigued. Their interest was the impetus for an organizational meeting which took place last month in Chicago; but Lowi says the rationale for believing that a third party might take root now lies in two broader phenomena: the number of alienated citizens in this country, and Ross Perot's candidacy.

"There are more alienated people today than there have been since the Progressives were a political force to be reckoned with. As for Perot, he galvanized a huge segment of the American electorate, and it's the middle." Lowi says the "radicalization of the middle" should be thought of in its mathematic sense, where radical is defined as the search for roots or fundamentals, rather than "crazies on the right or the left." He says what differentiates the party from other "third" parties, like the Libertarian or Right to Life, is that it is not based on a single issue.

"Both the Democratic and Republican parties have staked out positions on every conceivable issue; so the Independence Party will focus instead on priorities." One basic priority is to do three things simultaneously: raise taxes, cut expenditures, especially defense, and cap entitlements. "The key here is to do all these things at the same time," maintains Lowi, "so no one feels like they're getting it in the butt. Both Clinton and Bush have danced around one approach or another, but they won't commit to seeing it through."

Lowi says it's never convenient to start a new party, in part because of our rigid electoral system. "It's either too late or too early: too late, like this year, or too early, when by February or March no one is interested in politics." Unlike the parliamentary system, where elections can be called almost at will, the fixed election dates in this country can hamper the spontaneous growth of alternative movements.

Right now the Independence Party is operating on the doctrine that theory is more powerful than practice. Lowi wrote the statement of principles for the group, and used them to approach Lowell Weicker, governor of Connecticut, to be the party's chief spokesman. "We asked Weicker to be involved because he is the highest ranked independent officeholder in the country, and because he's so damned smart." Weicker will officially announce the formation of the Independence Party at a news conference in Washington in mid-October.

The organizing committee was made up of 35 self-selected people, slightly more than half, alienated Republicans, the rest former Democrats. There were many more men than women, and overwhelmingly more whites than blacks; but Lowi says those proportions are bound to change.

"The only way you can last is to run candidates, and that's what we're going to do in 1994. We'll be focusing mainly on Congress, as the true bridge between local and national representation, with an eye on other offices, like the Presidency, later. The main focus for the 1992 election will be to stir voters to realize that the present campaign is the last one in which they will be faced with no choice."

Lowi's interest in third-party politics goes back more than ten years. He has written steadily on the subject in many venues, and in 1983 signed on as an advisor to then-presidential candidate John Anderson. The effort to start a third party fizzled when Anderson resigned to become head of Independents for Mondale. This time around, Lowi says, the party structure stands with or without a charismatic leader. "It ain't likely it will succeed," he admits. "As gamblers say, it's an 8-5 chance against anything happening. But it's more possible today than at any time in the last fifty years."

+

Barbara Mink teaches at Cornell University and represents Ithaca's 5th Ward on the Tompkins County Board of Representatives.

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Family

continued from page 3

most people do wish to be surrounded by love, to have interesting and well-paying jobs, to be free of the life that nurtures addictions. Family values rhetoric simply sidesteps these considerations.

The rhetoric of family values and "women's place" allows Republicans to stake out old territory within the so-called new world order. The new order is no longer defined by an anti-communism focused on Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union. The new anti-communism targets feminists, homosexuals, and people of color as the new egalitarians who want too much government. As Gary Wills says, the new enemy for born-again Republicans is inside our borders. The enemy is pro-state (more taxes, more civil rights legislation, more social services) and anti-family.

Family values are center-stage in this election because this is the way the right wing of the Republican party has chosen to define the battle against liberal democratic politics. The battle reflects a certain truth: family structures are at the core of society and are changing the way we live. The traditional family is in as much trouble today as the savings and loan industry. Many of those living in marginalized families would love a government bailout too.

The internationalization of the economy and the multicultural nature of the US work force have created new problems for family life that used to be defined by the model of white men with good jobs. In the current economy there are not enough good jobs for white men, not to mention single parents, whatever their gender or race. The traditional family structures don't fit well with an international economy that requires women's entry into the labor force and consigns them to low-paying jobs. As the economy constricts, fewer people than ever inhabit the structure of the traditional family.

Family values rhetoric is also an attempt to repackage the

Republican anti-abortion stance in less strident language. Family values are already coded and in place as anti-abortion. Pro-choice activists still hope to make abortion a decisive electoral issue and there is a good chance that there will be a mobilized pro-abortion vote in November. This was made more likely with the Supreme Court's spring 1989 Webster decision which severely curtailed women's access to abortion.

The Clarence Thomas - Anita Hill hearings which publicized the issue of sexual harassment and uncovered the callous and uneducated stance of white male senators also complicate politics as usual. Fam-

ily values rhetoric might just end up with a gender gap that counts electorally this time around in a way it didn't in 1984 and 1988.

Barbara Bush's role is to ensure that this gender gap does not materialize. For more than a decade when she was asked her thoughts about abortion and whether they differed from the President's, she refused to answer the question, commenting that she was not going to let the press make it seem like she and George were in conflict over the issue. But when her husband started to trail badly in the polls and the Republican party platform took a rigid anti-abortion stance—unpopular even with a majority of Re-

chosen her family as her first priority, although she works full-time campaigning for her husband.

Unlike the Republicans, the Democratic candidates did not choose to have their wives address the convention. In part this is because they did not have to make up for an anti-abortion party plank. But Ann Richards opened the Democratic convention by saying "I am pro-choice and I vote." This was to remind us that the next President will choose the next Supreme Court justice, who will likely decide the abortion issue. Women candidates running for Senate were highlighted, reminding us all of the

today only approximately half of the public votes. About 1/4 of the voting public actually voted for Reagan. About 1/3 voted for Bush. And that is just the way the Republicans, and even some Democrats, like it.

For those who say we cannot make a difference, it's important to remember perestroika, and the revolutions of 1989. Our issues are not all that different. The struggle over women's "appropriate place" in the family, economy, and society remains a part of the "new world order." Post-revolutionary Eastern European societies are deeply conflicted over women's lives — abortion rights, family leave policy, day care supports, and so forth. The women of Poland face new restrictive abortion legislation initiated by the Catholic Church. Gorbachev argued, without asking women, that perestroika would "allow" them to return to their domestic duties in the home. Vaclav Havel of the former Czechoslovakia thinks feminism is "da-da" and envisions a male public living in "truth." The women of the former East Germany have lost most of their family supports which allowed them to continue working in the labor force.

The revolutions of 1989 reminded the world of the importance of democracy. Perhaps the election of 1992 will make clear that women's lives — their jobs, their right to reproductive freedom, their families, their sexual freedom — must be at the core of these democratic imaginings. For family is structurally as integral to society's well-being as the economy, and reproductive rights are fundamental to democratic life.



Illustration: Milly Acharya

"Well, you said you'd do anything to get elected."

ily, economy, the right to abortion, and the problem of sexual harassment intersect as issues in most women's lives.

Those issues are key in several current political races. Carol Moseley Braun in Illinois is running for Senate partly as a protest against Hill's treatment. Lynn Yeakel in Pennsylvania hopes to beat Arlen Specter who led the assault against Hill. Add together the stress of women's everyday lives, abortion rights, day-care, family leave, sexual harassment on the job, and we

publicans—George needed her to speak. So at the Republican convention Barbara told us that the abortion issue does not belong in the party platform. The morning after, she recanted, revising her statement to read that she is not pro- or anti-choice. Barbara Bush remains the dutiful wife.

Marilyn Quayle offers herself as the appropriate choice for women who do not want to be, as she claims, "liberated from their essential nature as women." Educated and professional, she claims to have

Thomas-Hill hearings.

So where are we? Men and women who are pro-choice can make a difference in 1992, but this does not mean that either party is out there charting a new course in terms of family issues and women's lives. But if people who do not usually vote, and if people who usually vote along party lines vote pro-choice, anti-sexual harassment, and pro-family leave, electoral politics may be radicalized and taken in a new direction. Voting itself is more radical than it once was. After all,

Zillah Eisenstein is professor and chair of the Department of Politics at Ithaca College. Her most recent book was *The Female Body and the Law* in 1993 the University of California Press will publish her *Rethinking Democracy: Sex, Race and Rights*.

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Chronic

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transitions is to start doing the things we should have been doing anyhow, for their own sake.

The current condition of the American economy

It is very difficult to present a fair picture of our present economic condition — especially in an election season. It would have to begin by pointing out that we still enjoy something like the highest living standards — on average — and highest average labor productivity in the world, and that most of the complaints about our competitive decline are grossly exaggerated. The only way in which it makes some sense to refer to us as having become a second-class economic power is in the gap between our international political aspirations (or presumption) and the resources we choose to devote to support them.

The fact remains that

- the 2.5 to 3.0 percent annual growth in output per worker-hour of the '50s and '60s that we came to regard as an immutable basis for ever-expanding living standards averaged something much closer to 1 percent during the last decade;
- our income is more unequally distributed than it was ten or fifteen years ago, and poverty and homelessness have gotten worse;
- the stagnation of our economy overall during the last three-plus years and our present stubbornly persistent recession are the price we are now paying for the fact that the long recovery of the 1980s was so heavily debt-financed — and, especially Troublesomely, financed by foreigners;
- the sharp decline in our annual balance of payment deficit —

the BOOKPRESS

• the best characterization of the trends in our real living standards over the last 15 to 20 years was the title of a recent survey of the evidence in the London *Economist*, "Running to Stand Still";

which is the measure of the extent to which we go into debt each year to the rest of the world, on balance — from its \$160 billion peak in 1987 has been made possible only by the stagnation in our own incomes

has traveled abroad recently will attest. And why is the dollar now so undervalued? Why do dollars, when converted into pounds or marks, buy a lot less coffee or hamburgers abroad than they will here and why do foreign tourists drool over how cheap it is to travel and shop here? The reason is that the United States has come to look like a relatively unattractive place in which to invest, partly because of its stagnation, partly because of the low interest rates that the Federal Reserve has pressed upon us in hope of stimulating a recovery.

The significant point is that whether through recession, stagnation, or a gross undervaluation of the dollar, we have had to be restrained in our national tendency to live beyond our means; and we have failed to expand those means as rapidly as the demands we have been placing on them. That unhappy conjuncture produced chronic tendencies to inflation, restrained only by periodic and progressively severe recessions, in the 1970s and early '80s; rapidly increasing international indebtedness since then; and stagnation of employment and living standards so far in the '90s.

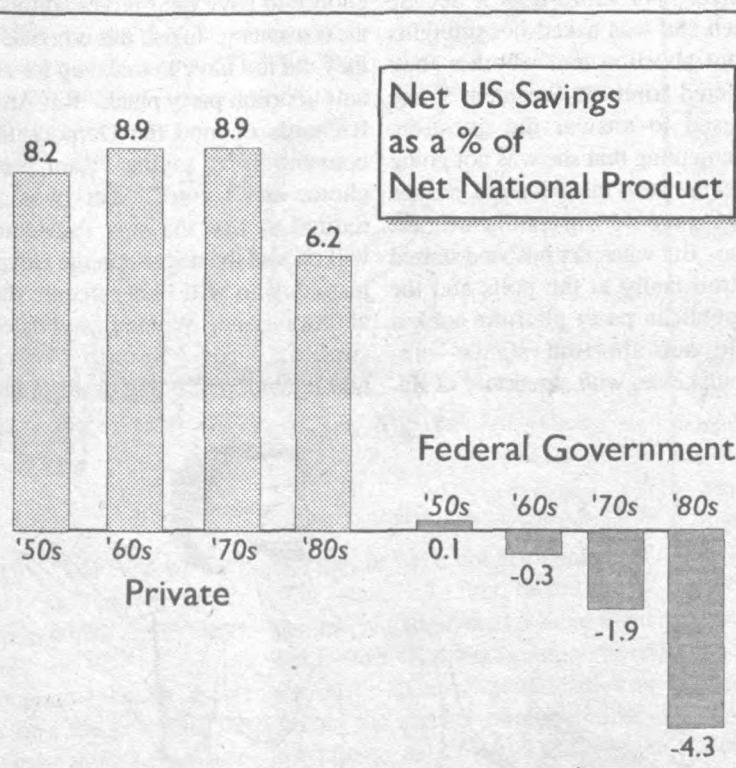
Fundamental causes

We are far from understanding fully what it is that makes an economy progress satisfactorily or stagnate. The one thing we are certain of is that increasing output and income per capita are in the long

run closely associated with the process of saving and investment — that is, of devoting something less than all our income and output, (whether of an individual, family, or country) to current consumption and devoting the difference to increasing the capital stock — of productive plant and equipment, physical infrastructure, technology, and the skills and educational level of the labor force. Our national savings and investment rate is the lowest among the world's major industrialized countries; and it has been declining.

There are two ways of looking at this phenomenon; both are profoundly discouraging. Our net national savings (which is, in real terms, the same thing as our net national investment — the portion of our output that consists not of goods we consume but of capital goods, broadly defined) averaged approximately 8.2 percent of our net national income during the 30 years between 1950 and 1980 and only 3.4 percent in the decade of the '80s. By far the greater portion of that drop was accounted for by the mammoth increase in the federal government's deficits — which may be interpreted either as negative savings or as a claim on more than 50 percent of our shrunken private savings, leaving correspondingly less to finance private consumption and investment. That, in a nutshell, is why we had such heavy recourse during the '80s to financing from abroad, converting us from the world's biggest international creditor to its biggest debtor.

see Chronic, page 15



(which cuts our imports) and the progressively severe undervaluation of the dollar. Both of these are cures by impoverishment: the first, by cutting the growth in our incomes and throwing people out of work; the second, by offering our products to foreigners at lower and lower costs to them and making their goods and services more and more prohibitively expensive to us, as anyone who

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Global

continued from page 2

more impersonal. Those characteristics of modern warfare have made killing more acceptable.

The Reagan and Bush administrations learned the lesson. Understanding that the Vietnam War was the first covered (indeed blanketed) by television, and that the results were politically and militarily disastrous, the Pentagon carefully imposed tight censorship over US actions in Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), and the Middle East (1990-91). The results, both politically and militarily from the administrations' view, were greatly improved, although in all three instances evidence later appeared to raise fundamental questions about the motives and costs of the operations. These questions, however, did not disturb Americans, or even many in the media. In the 1960s, such censorship was impossible, as President Lyndon Johnson's staff admitted, because loud protests would further erode the administration's already low credibility. In the 1980s and early 1990s, no such protests appeared. We believed what we were first told. Americans' reaction to war has thus changed, as the means for carrying out the violence have become less personal, amid a century that has been the bloodiest, by a factor of seven, of at least the last three centuries.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the number and locales of Americans killed in battle since 1945

is that US foreign and military policy in the Cold War focused on (as the French termed it) the Third World of the less industrialized nations. The United States was preoccupied with Soviet Communism when the moment arrived for the making of the defense budget or when a president (usually beleaguered) asked for support. But one mourner's comment at André Malraux's funeral was relevant: Malraux, as a 20th century man of images, "never asked if an idea was right or not, but whether it made an effect." US leaders, as their appeals focused on the dangers coming out of Moscow or Beijing, and as nearly half their military budgets was spent for defense in Western Europe, obtained the desired effect, even as the most active and deadly commitments occurred in Korea (1950), Guatemala (1954), Lebanon (1958 and 1982-83), Cuba (1961), Vietnam (1950-75), Cambodia and Laos (especially 1969-73), Angola (1974-89), El Salvador and Nicaragua (after 1979), and the Persian Gulf (notably after 1987).

Viewed in this context, some of the most important US foreign policies have continued from 1945 into the 1990s, regardless of the Cold War's end. Historically, the United States defined the Soviets as the greatest military danger, but it consistently committed its forces to areas of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, sometimes to fight Soviet surrogates, often out of serious misjudgment about the nature of the actual threat. It was not, contrary to the saying, that familiarity bred contempt (or fear) of

Vietnamese or Central Americans. Rather contempt was bred by ignorance of their cultures and the causes of their upheavals.

Another chapter of the Cold War also continues into the 1990s: the increased blurring between foreign and domestic policies. It is neater, especially for politicians and university departments, if the nation's

Hong Kong and Mexico. The irrelevance of the separation between domestic and foreign affairs is not new in the 1980s and 1990s, only more dramatic and costly. As early as the 1950s, US multinational corporations accelerated their overseas expansion to take advantage of the then-new European Economic Community and, soon after, the in-

the point.

The origins of this problem actually go back far beyond the 1950s. The necessity to think about the constant relationship between domestic politics and global economics was perhaps best phrased by Henry Adams in his autobiography of 1907: "Washington [where Adams lived as a highly acute observer] was always amusing, but in 1900 as in 1800, its chief interest lay in its distance from New York," where the powerful financial centers lay. "The movement of New York has become planetary — beyond control — while the task of Washington, in 1900 as in 1800, was to control it. The success of Washington in the past century," Adams concluded, "promised ill for its success in the next." How Americans might pay for the kinds of medical care, education, retirement benefits, environment, aid to the poor and disabled, and even the roads and landfills they want, will be more and more determined by the relationship, in Adams' terms, between New York and Washington — or, in simpler terms, between an internationalized economy and a parochialized politics.

The end of the 75-year confrontation with the Soviet Union was cause for celebration, especially in such horrors of that conflict as the killing fields along the Berlin Wall and the gray societies of Eastern Europe. But history, unlike baseball, does not stop neatly and start again cleanly. (No doubt that is a major reason why baseball is the National Pastime and history is not.)



illustration: Fernando Llosa

agenda can be divided between internal and external problems, but it is also increasingly irrelevant — especially, say, for the 3000 Smith Corona workers who lost their jobs during the past decade. They lived and worked in central New York, but their futures were decided in

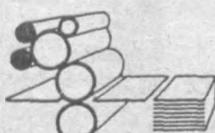
viting labor rates of the Far East and Latin America. Thereafter, discussing domestic problems without understanding the shifting international economic context (the context that, for example, was determining how those domestic problems would be paid for) was beside

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Secular

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and Oklahoma, not in Buffalo and Oswego, "where the first large terminal elevators in the American grain trade appeared," and where "nearly all" of the "more than twenty million bushels...being sent east via the Great Lakes vessels" in the 1850s were destined.

Gohlke's pictures are of so-called country elevators, which John C. Hudson, in the book's epilogue, defines as "located along railroad sidetracks in towns...receiv[ing] most of their grain from local farmers." (Terminal elevators are erroneously defined by Hudson as elevators that "receive their grain via rail or truck from the country elevators, and they sell the product to manufacturers or store the grain for shipment to distant domestic and foreign markets." Even to this day, Buffalo's Standard terminal elevator receives its grain via lake from the country elevators.)

I don't mean to imply that Gohlke's pictures aren't expertly composed and executed, or that the 44 black-and-white plates aren't skillfully arranged and printed. It's just that, by and large, the country elevator is generally uninteresting from the standpoints of architectural design and engineering.

Hudson, for his part, seems to realize this; he writes that "the country elevators that began to appear after the mid-1870s were really little more than scaled-down versions of the early terminal elevators," and that "contractors used the same blueprints over and over, thereby stamping the same jagged silhouette of elevators against the horizon of every town." Furthermore, Hudson provides a justification for Gohlke to vary the rigid "stamp" of the country elevator when he writes that the grain elevator's function "over the course of American agricultural history...has changed scarcely at all, but its appearance has repeatedly been transformed as agriculture has grown in productivity and transportation technology has evolved in response."

But Gohlke, in the main, didn't take the hint. Though he writes in his preface that "the sounds that come from inside the elevators — whining, thrumming, generic machine noise — reverberate in the deep alleys between rows of bins," he doesn't seem to realize how lucky he is to come upon a working grain elevator, because he apparently hasn't taken any pictures "from in-

side the elevators." If Gohlke were to take his camera inside one of these elevators, he wouldn't find "generic" grain-handling machinery, but the very site of the "growth in transportation technology" spoken about by Hudson. For example, motor-powered pumps have replaced, or at least supplemented, the old motor-powered belt-and-bucket conveyors, especially at the country elevators serviced by trucks.

But, to be fair, the blame isn't all the photographer's. He has at least managed to capture the range of building materials used in the construction of grain bins. He shows us wood-binned, tile-binned, steel-binned, and reinforced concrete-binned elevators, each of which has distinct features. But in the texts accompanying most of these photographs, neither Gohlke nor Hudson is there to explain *what* the pictures show, to explain that wood-binned elevators were invented in the 1840s and were the dominant building type in the 19th century; that concrete-binned elevators were invented in the 1900s and have been the dominant type of this century, with the tile and steel-binned elevators developed in the 1890s and 1900s as transitional types.

It is in this context that a trip to Buffalo would have been of help. Unlike the other cities, which only have one or two of the four types of elevators, Buffalo has all four, and nearly all of them are on the waterfront. Gohlke claims that "the essential grain elevator view is obtained through the windshield of a car or a truck while traveling on a highway in Kansas or Oklahoma or the Texas Panhandle." But if he were driving through Buffalo, Gohlke would have to slow down, pull over, and get out of his car.

If the photographer were to have any doubts about this, he should ask Cargill, the huge international grain-trading company that is the subject of Wayne G. Broehl, Jr.'s new book. In the late 1920s Cargill slowed down, pulled over, and got out of its car in Buffalo. In 1927 the company leased the city's Superior elevator for three years, and eventually bought it in 1939; in 1932 Cargill leased space in the Saskatchewan elevator, eventually buying it in 1962; in 1936 it leased the Great Eastern elevator; and finally, in 1939, the company bought the Electric elevator and extended it in 1940.

Cargill: Trading the World's Grain is, in the author's own words,

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"a full-scale...business history" of Cargill, the largest grain-trading company in the world, and the largest privately held company in the US. The production, marketing, and manufacturing of grain is the biggest business in the world, so Cargill must be counted among the very top multinational corporations in the world.

"A particularly important feature of my Cargill study," Broehl writes, "is the availability of a rich set of business and personal corre-

facts, someone would be able to use them."

How well these remarks apply to Broehl's own book; it is an oversized, up-to-date, wisely hopeful, fact-filled disappointment. Frequently Broehl can't see the forest for the trees, or, shall we say, the bushel for the grains. His book is divided into six sections, which move from 1865-89 ("Cargill's Roots") to 1890-1915 ("Genesis of the Modern Corporation") in a lean 200 pages, then from 1916-30 ("Free to Grow")

and the Electric elevators to their respective fates. In the case of the historic Electric elevator, built in the 1890s, that fate was demolition.

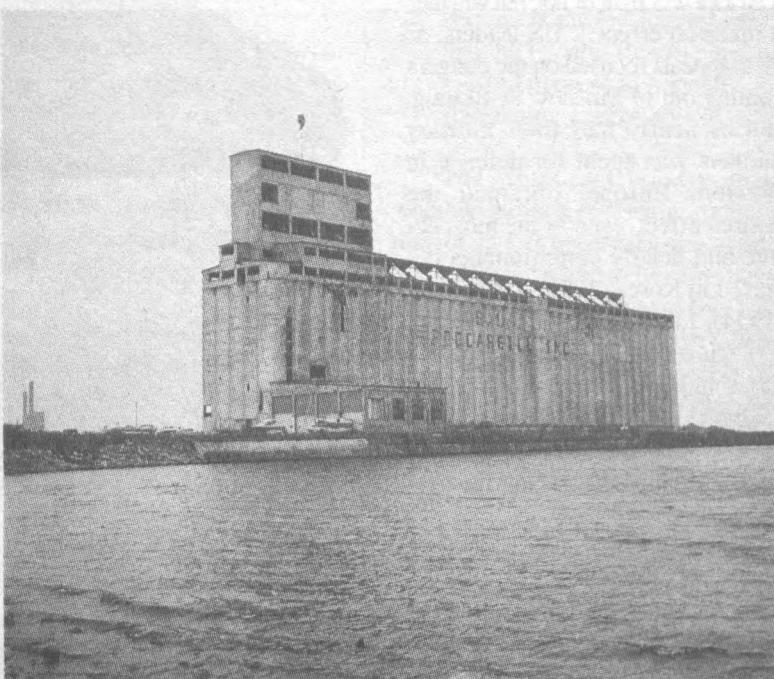
But none of these facts is even mentioned by Broehl. He simply says that the Great Eastern elevator "had been razed," without saying why. The absence of such facts is explained by the promise that they "will be addressed in books to follow this study." What's frustrating about the 1962-63 period of Cargill's history (at least as Broehl has presented it) is how well the author has prepared us for it. Though one of the subsections in the 1916-30 part is entitled "The Enigma of Buffalo," there's no enigma concerning Cargill's attitudes towards the city. Broehl reports that in 1922, John MacMillan, Sr. said that, "As you know, we have kept out of Buffalo during all these past years...I am anxious to have our own facilities at Buffalo so that we can move grain freely through that port at all times."

But just two years later, John Sr. would hear from John MacMillan, Jr. that, "I am not at all certain that it would be good business for us to commit ourselves heavily in Buffalo...I am just as certain as can be that property there will have relatively little value once the St. Lawrence is opened to large lake vessels." By 1929, John Jr. was saying — on the basis of the Interstate Commerce Commission's rate reductions on railroad trade from Oswego to New York and Boston — that, "it seems to all of us here it will definitely mark the end of Buffalo as an important transfer point."

There's a story here that Broehl is missing. On the one hand, Cargill itself did a lot to undermine Buffalo's status as an "important transfer point." In 1932, in an effort to capitalize on the new improvements to the Welland Canal, the company built a 13.5-million-bushel transhipping terminal elevator in Albany, so that grain could be shipped there from Oswego, rather than from Buffalo. Broehl reports that "Certainly John Jr. sensed trouble when he read a Buffalo paper's story on this: 'The Cargill Grain Company by going to Albany has aroused intense opposition.'" But the Company won out, and the Albany terminal assisted in the bypassing of Buffalo.

There's another story here because Cargill apparently had the same ideas about the US that it did about Buffalo. In 1938 John Jr.

see Secular, page 15



Photograph: Irving Mink

Cargill Grain Elevator, Buffalo, New York

spondence between and among the family members over many years.... The total set of documentation available to me has been superb. As a felicitous companion to this, the Company has made available to me *all* of its records for this period." (The 1,000-page book includes footnotes, glossary, illustrations, and index.)

But all that raw information may not have been so "felicitous" for an academic such as Broehl (he is a professor of the science of administration at Dartmouth College). There comes a very awkward moment some 600 pages into the book when, in the midst of a very dense, detailed discussion of the Temporary National Economic Committee of 1938, Broehl calls upon the historian William E. Leuchtenberg to give the following damaging testimony: "The TNEC's shelf of studies brought knowledge of business operations up to date, but the total yield of the investigation proved disappointing...unwilling either to tackle the more difficult problems or to make recommendations which might disturb vested interests, the committee expressed the wistful hope that if it assembled enough

to the 1930s ("Ideas and Innovations") in over 400 pages, and then from World War II ("War Once More") to 1962 ("Assessing the John MacMillan, Jr., Years") in a full 250. Finally, in an astonishingly inadequate *three* pages, Broehl covers 1963 to 1991 — key years, in anyone's estimation.

Quite simply, Broehl seems to have devoted space to whatever subject or period was well-documented, rather than to whatever subject or period was important to anyone other than Cargill employees. Much needs to be cut from the book, or summarized more quickly, and yet much needs to be focused on in greater depth. Take, for example, the author's handling of the crucial 1962-63 period, at which time Chase Manhattan Bank, one of Cargill's creditors, evaluated the organization's overall performance. "The analysts urged Cargill to make a careful study, elevator by elevator," Broehl writes, "to determine which locations were bleeding the Company most. The Company's own elevators should be shut down first." The company took the analyst's advice, and by 1964 had simply abandoned the Superior, the Pool,

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Gordimer

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the following quotation from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* as its epigram: "The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms."

"As CODESA* gets underway and we can begin now to envisage a post-apartheid South Africa, would you say that the "morbid symptoms" have been averted?"

N.G. Well, you know, at the time that I wrote *July's People* [1981], the situation in the novel, an all-out war between blacks and whites, seemed very much in the program. The morbid symptoms now...well, there's the rise of the extreme right-wing white groups, the neo-Nazi's, this is one of the morbid symptoms.

Then there is the revival of tribalism for political means, cynical political means; this is another morbid symptom. So it gives me quite a cold feeling to see that Gramsci was right. B.J. Over the years you've engaged the subject of whites in Africa in general, and in South Africa specifically. You have examined what this meant in the light of a perspective informed by a historical vision.

You've always questioned the grounds of the racial construction of whiteness, in terms of privilege, in terms of modes of thought and feeling, and in terms of an ideology of domination. My question is: apart from extreme right-wing, neo-Nazi white groups, do you see a preparedness on the part of most whites to accept that a post-apartheid South Africa would involve substantial, even massive relinquishing of these privileges in institutional, economic, juridical and cultural terms, terms which have so far defined and constructed "whiteness"? How much of a hope is there for this?

N.G. A few years ago, I would have said to you, no hope. But it's interesting to see how pragmatic people are. Look at de Klerk. De Klerk, under Botha, belonged to the right wing of the National Party! The very last thing de Klerk did before he became president, one of the last bills he presented as Minister of Education in the mid-'80s, was an absolutely despicable bill which required that university authorities, including the faculty, were virtually to spy on what the students were doing. It went so far as to disallow students and their organizations from putting up posters and notices because, you see, students were supporting protests against detention without trial, all sorts of things really, but detention without trial was the main thing. Every poster had to be approved, the bill even went so far as to include photocopying reproduction, this had to be approved. And if a student took part directly in protests, and this is one of the worst aspects of this bill, because at that time there were protests — and boycotts against certain businesses and corporations, for instance boy-

cotts of chocolate factories — students who took part in extramural protests were harshly disciplined. This was de Klerk's bill, the last thing he did before becoming president. So you can see, he's moved from that right-wing, conservative position.

B.J. What accounts for that change? N.G. Well, survival, pragmatism. He is also a very intelligent man. B.J. This leads to my next question, one which touches on the bitter lessons of our postcolonial experience in the rest of Africa. Essentially, some of us worry that CODESA might lead to a South African version of the classic neocolonial solution to the demands for an end to dispossession and disenfranchisement. In this case, it would mean white privilege, consolidated white privilege, making an alliance with black opportunism to...

N.G. You mean minority rights guaranteed?

B.J. Yes, but only as a mechanism for containing the necessity for decisive redistribution of power and resources, so that a black elite could be fostered which would have the trappings of power, the symbolism, but would leave the present racialized structures of privilege substantially untouched.

N.G. Honestly, B.J., I don't think this can happen in South Africa. At the present stage of negotiations, ANC is saying everybody has got to have a right to have a voice. The problem is that in CODESA you can't rule anything out of the discussion, you can't say in advance that this thing or that thing can't be expressed. What is important now is for the PAC [Pan African Congress of South Africa] to come into CODESA. You know there was this pact between ANC and PAC which broke down; they have to come back into CODESA. If you have something like a patriotic front in CODESA which includes PAC, then people like Inkatha [Zulu-based political organization which has allegedly been manipulated by the South African government] haven't got a chance, and de Klerk will be defeated in his attempts to write minority group rights into the constitution.

What does it mean to have 26 seats reserved for white people? I remember coming here to Zimbabwe, right after independence, and it was awful because it was perpetrating the old race thing, it separated, marked off black from white. If you have a bill of rights, a right of individual guarantee, what do you want minority rights for? As you seem to suspect, the whole thing is a cover-up, it's a power thing, it's not about the freedom to practice your religion, or rights of assembly, your customs and language, it's simply a power thing, in order to keep a white veto. It's unacceptable, and I don't see it going any further than the very first stage of the present negotiations.

B.J. Looking at the Congress of South African Writers [COSAW], how does it relate to these funda-

mental shifts and realignments of race and class in South Africa? How would you describe it, non-racial or multi-racial? In fact, is there any

different philosophical conception from that deployed by apartheid; it might mean that you make the most positive, non-coercive, non-domi-

back door, and nobody lets you in. Now they just walked in through the front door. It was not an easy time if you were white, but still, this was a kind of minority problem, and one shouldn't go into it too much.

Now, you talk about COSAW. COSAW, from the very beginning, has been absolutely non-racial, open to anybody, quite apart from whatever political alliance people might have had. Whites, until very recently, for all sorts of reasons, have been unbelievably slow in coming to join COSAW. There was a kind of inhibition, I suppose left over from the '70s when they were rejected by black separatism. But you know, once the United Democratic Front [UDF] came into existence in 1983, they changed, because the Democratic Front was open to everybody, it had an amazing collection of people, people like myself found a political home, a platform for political expression that they hadn't had for a long time. We had had ANC and others, but they were all banned, so UDF provided a forum for everybody. So, by the time COSAW was formed, which is now about four and a half years ago, even whites who had been in UDF—it was amazing—whites who would stand up for African writers who were imprisoned, whites who were strongly against censorship, distanced themselves from COSAW. Psychologically, whites are so used to saying "right, we'll do this, and we'll do that," and very often the right thing. But they are not used to being made by blacks to do things.

When a black says our policy is going to be this thing or the other and they have to be followed, whites are not used to that, and I think that has psychologically been the cause of their distance from COSAW. And they also were very frightened by ANC, when it was still banned. In

the preamble to its constitution, you know where the ANC pledges itself to base the future culture of South Africa on the workers and the people, this, for them, had a nasty, communist smell, and COSAW was thought to be a front organization for the ANC. But now some of that is changing and a lot of young white writers have come in. Of course again, you've got to face the facts that you have to be careful. In the paid personnel of COSAW we've got a mixture of blacks, Indians, and whites, and sometimes there's some kind of rivalry as to why an Indian got a post, or a white, because it should be Africanized, you know. But it's all dealt with very openly, very openly indeed. It's very difficult to make decisions on merit when a whole majority of the people have been disadvantaged in every way.

B.J. In some of your essays and novels, you have made farsighted and knowledgeable criticisms of the pitfalls of black nationalism. N.G. Black *separatism* you mean... B.J. Yes, black *separatist* nationalism... N.G. Well, you know, I am one of the few whites who understood in the '70s... I don't give myself any great credit for this, because I think it was so very obvious, but I understood that what had happened to blacks was so terrible, and the whole period during the '50s and '60s of white liberalism produced nothing. So then, inspired by events in '60s America, inspired by Fanon, by Cleaver, this black separation developed in South Africa. Of course it was devastating if you were white and you were working together and you really were committed. But it was necessary. And Wally Serote had turned round and said in his famous poem that I've quoted a lot: "White people are white people, they must learn to listen; black people are black people, they must learn to talk." So this was really the difference, black people beginning to talk and not to knock passionately on the

B.J. What of the debates on literature and cultural production in a post-apartheid South Africa that were generated around Albie Sachs' document?** How have these debates gone?

N.G. That was so healthy. I mean quite a lot of us, Njabulo Ndebele,

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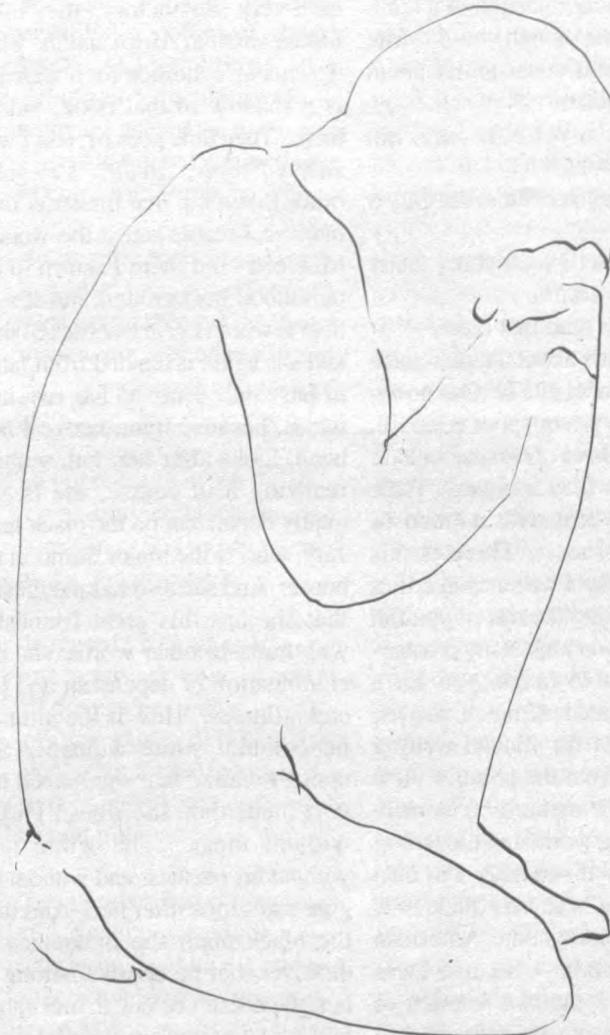


Illustration: Joanna Sheldon

distinction to be made between "non-racial" and "multi-racial"?

N.G. Oh yes, a very important one. We don't use this term "multi-racial" anymore because it has basically come to stand for minority group rights, you know, a code word for ethnic rights, many different nations. If we are *all* to have the same rights, "multi" would imply a congress of many different nations, while "non-racial" implies a unitary South Africa.

B.J. And apartheid has always used "multi-racial" as a conception to entrench and rationalize its racist policies, its attempt to naturalize the separation of the races.

N.G. Yes, exactly...and enlightened people here have always said: *they*, the apologists of apartheid, talk of *nations*; we talk of a South African *nation*, a unitary South Africa. There's a very big difference. But it's very hard sometimes for people overseas to understand this difference because they think that "multi-racial" means that everybody mixes, but it doesn't mean that here, it means the opposite, it means everybody is separate.

B.J. But "multi-racial" does imply that, philosophically, you don't obliterate difference, which "non-racial" seems to do. Rather, "multi-racial," in a different political and historical context, might have a

nating uses of difference.

N.G. Yes, I know that's possible, but it's too subtle to get into politics, it doesn't work in politics, and it has been hijacked by the government.

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Gordimer

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myself, Mbulelo Mzamane, we've been saying these things for a long time in our own work. But you see when Albie, who lost his arm, who's proved himself ten times over, he's committed his life to the struggle, he can say things that even I can't say and that was why that was so important. Of course it was misunderstood; Albie is a man full of humor, he says things tongue-in-cheek. I personally think that the "culture as a weapon" was an important thing. But it also produced, especially in young, beginning writers, a kind of fear of saying what they felt about their childhood, about being in love, because this was not "relevant." The word "relevant" was actually used as a whip. So what Albie said was very valuable and it opened up a whole can of worms, it freed people.

B.J. But it did also seem to imply that in a post-apartheid South Africa, struggles would no longer affect artistic creations. This may be a premature view, don't you think? I'm speaking now from our own experiences in post-independence Africa.

N.G. Of course it does, but it's not quite true, because there will be new situations arising. And even more pointed, if you've waited for so long for the policies of the people you believe in, or that you are a part of—like the ANC—to come into power, there's always the danger of thinking, well, you mustn't rock the boat so early, their position is not really very secure, they are just beginning to sit in these seats, where's our loyalty, and what is this great thing about artistic integrity here, and what about the whole fate of the people there...

B.J. What I'm saying is that it's kind of like Mao's "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a thousand thoughts contend," which doesn't therefore mean that the struggle has ended...I gather that some people took Albie Sachs to be saying that the struggle is now behind us...

N.G. Well, people read things into issues that they want to, they oversimplify. But in frankness, Albie also said things that were not quite true. For instance, it wasn't true that the writers who were *real* writers, the better writers, were ignoring the human condition; and the way that Albie said, "don't revolutionaries ever make love," I mean this was not true because in all the books of the better writers committed to the

struggle against apartheid, there was the ordinary human element, so that was an exaggeration. They were only writers of very poor quality who were afraid to have any kind of human richness in their works.

B.J. This point brings me to the question of your rejection of a feminist label, even though you do write powerfully and consistently about female characters.

N.G. But my books are not "women's books."

B.J. No? Maureen Smales in *July's People*?

N.G. Okay, let's look at my latest novel, *My Son's Story*.

B.J. I haven't read that one...

N.G. Well, it's about a father and a son. Let's look at *The Conservationist* which is a novel of mine I'm fond of, or *A Guest of Honour*, or look at *The Old World of Strangers*. These works don't deal with women or "women's issues." There is this desire of feminist writers and critics to claim me, and the rest of you fall for it! But if you look at my protagonists, the whole range, you get a more complicated picture. I've even been attacked for indeed writing consciously from the point of view of men, and being hard on women, and portraying women in the wrong way.

And then suddenly I'm also being attacked because Hillela in *A Sport of Nature*—some American says she's a bimbo—because I was trying to show that we're often so cerebral, but there are some people for whom there's a kind of truth for them of the body, and the influence of sensuality. But, you know, all writers face this sort of thing.

B.J. I do want to pursue, though, the relationship between Maureen (in *July's People*) and July or Mowake (his true African name) because I think there is a powerful infusion of gender into the racial conflicts of the novel. What did you intend by that intense...

N.G. Well, I don't know how you see it, but I see it in my own work and that of other writers... we are in a sense like dogs worrying away the same old bone, digging it up, and it has a different taste every time. Most of us have things that we are capable of dealing with only in one way at one stage. A couple of years go by and you approach it from a completely different angle, and nobody notices it, but it's the same thing again. In *A Guest of Honor*, which is not set in South Africa, it's set in an unnamed country to the north, there's a woman character, she's not the most important character, because the chief character is a former white

colonial servant, Bray, but she is his lover. She, to me, was very much the colonial white female product. And there I show her as being handed...she starts off in Kenya, she marries very young, she's handed from father to husband, and that isn't very satisfactory...they move further south in Africa and the whole dependent condition for her identity is a shadow in that book, but it's there. Then time goes by, and I write *July's People*. In *July's People* I think I develop that question to its ultimate, because here is this woman, Maureen (and there I return to my childhood background, but it's the man to whom I give that background) and she again is handed from father to husband. But she has two husbands, because Bam, her real husband, looks after her, but, without realizing it of course, she is also totally dependent on the black man, July, who is the major domo in the house. And she also has the illusion that she has this great friendship with him. In other words, she is a combination of dependent and liberal attitudes. This is the ultimate neocolonial white woman. She doesn't realize that she indeed has two men, that she doesn't exist without them. The white man without his business and without his gun, can't look after her. And then the black man, she is amazed to discover that he doesn't belong to her, she doesn't belong to him either, but he's got his own people and there is that scene when he actually tells her that fact.

B.J. Which is quite an extraordinary scene, because at the level of language, of words...

N.G. I think it works...

B.J. It works! I am saying that it's almost magical, the way it works...

N.G. It's really a horrible scene, but you know...

B.J. How so?

N.G. Well, when two people have a bond — and even he has a certain bond with her — when all the things we have against each other work against the bond, it's very painful...

B.J. This is the moment when he speaks in his own language?

N.G. Yes, she can't understand, but she knows that what's being said is an absolute rejection of her...not horrible, but painful.

B.J. Final question: Some of us sort of expected a bigger white South African presence at this conference. I mean certainly a presence including more writers than yourself, of course your distinguished self. I thought in fact Breytenbach was going to come. He'd been in Lagos

in 1988 at a conference which brought together Anglophone and Francophone writers and we had long sessions. And so one expected to have met him here again. The reason I raise this point is that it seemed to some of us that at this historic moment white South African writers and critics who've been consistently opposed to apartheid, and have had a vision of genuine dialogue with other African writers and critics to the north, would have found their way to a conference like this one. So can one read this absence as a sort of reflection on the state of things in South Africa?

N.G. No, not really, because, apart from me, there were two other white

South African writers who were invited — John Coetzee, who's a wonderful writer but who's a very

shy man who never wants to go

anywhere, and Andre Brink who goes everywhere but couldn't come.

The other person who didn't come

from home was Njabulo Ndebele,

but he just couldn't come because

he's making a move from Lesotho to

the University of the Western Cape.

But it has no significance the way

you see it.

B.J. Well, you see, I can understand

why a writer like Coetzee, for all

kinds of complex reasons, a writer

who's rather like our own Ayi Kwei

Armah, very shy and somewhat wary

of conferences, would not feel ex-

actly comfortable or be of a temper

to dialogue with writers to the north...

N.G. I'll tell you one reason why.

You see, he keeps totally out of any

support for or alliance with organi-

zations and parties of liberation. The

sad thing is that at home, because of

this, he's not read among black

people, they don't read him, they

don't care for the quality of his

writing, yet there's a tremendous

amount of protest in his writing.

B.J. Yes, yes, a complicated but

very, very powerful protest...

N.G. Yes, but you see, because you

can't draw him into things, he's set

aside as just a "white" writer...it's

unjust but it's in the nature of these

complications at home at the present

time.

B.J. Well, last question: Your vi-

sion in your works often takes in the

whole of Africa. Have you been in

other parts of Africa, in West Africa

in particular?

N.G. Yes, in the '70s. I Ghana,

have been in Cote D'Ivoire, Angola,

and in Senegal and Madagascar. I've

never been in Nigeria because there

hasn't been the opportunity...

B.J. Well, on behalf of the Associa-

tion of Nigerian Authors (ANA) of

which I am a member, let me ex-
press the hope that the opportunity
will soon arise...

N.G. Yes, let's hope so.

*Congress for a Democratic South Africa: the forum for the present negotiations for a new constitution for South Africa, involving the white minority government of President de Klerk, the ANC, the South African Communist Party, the Indian Congress, and others.

**Published in the *Weekly Mail* of Johannesburg in February 1990, Albie Sachs' "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" was originally written in 1989 as an "internal document" of the ANC abroad. The essay argues against the perceived prescriptiveness and reductionism of the "culture is a weapon of struggle" doctrine of the ANC and sections of South African progressive writers, critics, and teachers. It generated extensive controversy in South Africa [See *Spring is Revolutionary*, Ingrid de Kak and Karen Press, Bantu Books, Capetown, 1990].



Biodun Jeyifo is a professor of English at Cornell University.

Beyond

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people feel antipathy toward both the major parties? Is it any wonder that 70 percent of Americans feel that current incumbents will never reform the political process? That 60 percent of Americans approve the proposition that there ought to be a new, third political party?

How much time do we have before we reach the irreversible point where Americans switch from saying "government is the problem, not the solution," to saying "politics is the problem"? The current crop of politicians are going to have to get down to business or get out of town. America is no longer a young nation that can depend on providence for salvation. Only a sound analysis of this Godforsaken world can do that.



Theodore Lowi is John L. Senior Professor of American Institutions at Cornell University, and the author of *Poliscide: Big Government, Big Science, Lilliputian Politics and other books*.

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Chronic

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There is nothing wrong with going into debt. We don't assess the health of either a household or a business by looking only at the liability side of its balance sheet. What is crucial is how productively it uses the resources it borrows. How have we used the total resources available to us, supplemented as they were during the '80s by the excess of imports over exports financed by foreign borrowing?

In the 1950s we devoted 58 percent of our real gross national income or product to consumption; that ratio rose steadily in each of the ensuing decades and reached 64.6 percent in the 1980s. The share of our production that went into increasing our privately owned physical assets — gross private domestic investment — in contrast, was essentially flat: 16.3 percent of GNP in the 1950s, rising to 17.2 percent in the '70s, then dropping to 16.9 percent in the '80s. The critical *net* business fixed investment in plant and equipment dropped from an average of about 3.7 percent of GNP in the first 30 years to 2.9 percent during the last decade. And, as we will see, *government* investment outlays declined even more. In short, we used the resources made available to us by foreign lenders and investors not to increase the rate at which we accumulated real assets but, on balance, for consumption.

What offset this dramatic increase in the share of our resources that we consumed? Believe it or not, it was government purchases of goods and services — from 25.1 percent of our gross product or income in the '50s to 19.8 percent in the '80s.

How can this have been, when — as we've been told over and over — total government expenditures have grown *more* rapidly than our national income over the last several decades? The answer is that actual government purchases and provision of real goods and services have declined, in relative terms, as the figures show. What have ballooned have been mere transfers of money from government to private

recipients — interest on our skyrocketing national debt and the so-called entitlements programs — social security retirement and Medicare, farm parity price supports, civil service and military retirement, veterans' benefits, as well as the social safety net programs like Medicaid and welfare. The entitlements have increased from something like 10 percent to 50 percent of the total federal budget over the last 30 to 35 years; and — mark this — only about one fifth of them are under programs specifically targeted at low-income beneficiaries. The share of GNP that we devote to government *investment* expenditures on infrastructure and the rest, in contrast, has declined by something like one half.

So our problem has been a chronic and growing tendency to overspend on consumption, financed by cutting personal savings and by the exploding government entitlements, and a corresponding neglect of investment in physical capital, people, and technology.

The solutions

The clue to healthy economic growth, to resuming our lamentably delayed progress in combating poverty, combating homelessness, taking care of the 35 million people without medical insurance and the far larger number who lack catastrophic medical coverage (which means, almost as an afterthought, absorbing workers displaced by what we should hope will be sharp cuts in defense expenditures) is to reverse those unhealthy trends. This means, in the most general terms, increasing savings and the productive investment they make possible, in three major kinds of ways:

1. Reducing our huge collective dissavings via the federal budget and the subsidies to consumption that it provides, protecting only the needs-tested programs. Specifically, this will require:
 - cutting the bloated entitlements programs — for example, by making the entire non-contributed portion of social security subject to income tax

and sharply increasing the beneficiaries' contributions to their heavily subsidized Medicare benefits on the basis of ability to pay;

- drastically reducing the scores of billion of dollars of annual tax breaks for housing — the unlimited deductibility of mortgage interest for two houses — and unlimited non-taxability of employee fringe benefits;

• shifting the basis of our taxation from income and employment (remember that the Reagan income tax cuts were offset by sharply increased, and far more regressive, social security taxes) to consumption — as always, taking pains to offset its regressivity with negative income taxes and expanded employment tax credits;

- increased taxes on energy, not just to raise revenue — every 10 percent per gallon tax on gasoline raises 10 billion dollars — but for independent reasons of energy and environmental policy;

- cutting other non-productive government expenditures — such as on the military, manned spaced exploration, and the construction and maintenance of underused veterans hospitals.

2. At least as important as reducing federal government dissaving is the need to reverse the long historical decline in productive government expenditures on infrastructure, technology, and education. Since our resources are limited, we have to find ways of increasing the efficiency of those expenditures at least as much as their total — easier said than done, I recognize. But, for example, since, I understand, we already spend more on education per capita than any other country in the world, we obviously have to learn to spend it better rather than simply more.

3. Correspondingly, we need to use taxation to encourage private

investment. By this I do not mean a generalized cut in the capital gains tax, which would confer enormous windfalls on people who merely hold, buy, and sell securities and real estate — the connection of which to increased productivity is extremely remote and the payoff rates very low. If there is one thing we do not need, it is more speculation. Nor do we need tax credits for home purchases: the connection between investment in housing and productivity is likewise very remote. The contrast between Japanese workers saving some 20 percent of their disposable incomes and spending some 5 percent on housing and Americans doing just the reverse is sobering. I refer, rather, to tax credits for real private investment, R&D, apprenticeship and worker training programs, and expanded employment tax credits.

There is one aspect of this that makes me uncomfortable, as I look it over: its almost exclusive concern with changing government policies carries the implication that those policies bear the principal responsibility for an economy's performance and have the capacity radically to improve it. They do not; and what they can actually do to change that course for the better is limited. The fact remains that, whatever the limitations on the capacity of sensible government policies to do good, there is little question that bad policies can cause a great deal of harm; and we have had a surfeit of those.

The foregoing list of reforms is not very different from the one that was prepared for Ross Perot, not long after he said he could take care of the federal deficit without breaking into a sweat. Is it any wonder that he pulled out of the race after looking at that plan and *before* releasing it to the public?

♦

Alfred E. Kahn is the Robert Julius Thorne Professor of Political Economy, Emeritus, at Cornell University. He was chairman of the New York Public Service Commission from 1974 to 1978; chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board in 1977-78; and Advisor to the President on Inflation during the last two years of the Carter Administration.

Classifieds

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Secular

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wrote that "We would be advised to liquidate entirely our business in the US. There seems very little real understanding in Washington of the nature of the problem, let alone with the disposition to work out a solution along rational lines." Eventually, Cargill became a multinational, originally founded in Conover, Iowa, but now acting in its own best, international interests.

To give him credit, Broehl doesn't miss it all; he's aware that some people — including US Senators, Supreme Court Justices, and the like — believe that because the grain trade is "affected with the public interest," and is "of a public character," it should be carefully regulated, in the public's interest, by the federal government, while other people — including the owners of Cargill — believe that government regulation is "socialism," and that

"we don't want socialism, collectivism or cooperativism as a scheme under which we live." But what Broehl tries to do with this difficult problem is to have it both ways — and he fails, as when he flatly juxtaposes the two viewpoints, with a parenthesis and exclamation point doing all the work: "John Sr. had seen this coming...when he wrote John Jr.: 'The only thing that is preventing an entire collapse of our business is our Federal Reserve System' (some governmental controls were acceptable to John Sr.)"

There is something ironic in John Jr.'s statement, but it is also clear that *some* sort of recommendation should be made as to what degree of governmental controls are necessary. Certainly John Jr. himself made many such recommendations. But Broehl doesn't, and there's frankly something troubling about a business historian who "remembers this panic (of 1907) as one of the classic ones, along with 1873, 1893 and 1929," but doesn't feel it incum-

bent upon himself to comment upon the "classic" boom-and-bust cycle itself, or how it might be regulated or softened. Perhaps such recommendations are simply unimportant when, in the midst of the current economic recession, "the Company had record earnings of \$372.4 million on sales of \$44.1 billion, with year-end net worth standing at almost \$3.7 billion."

Though he doesn't tackle difficult problems or make troublesome recommendations, Broehl does "elevate" his language on occasion. "The elevators, standing like spires in those scattered, often-isolated towns and villages, gave a permanence and an identifying physical sign, almost as if someone had moved out through the plains to put a 'mark' as a signpost along the way." It is on this lofty plane that a real conversation can take place, not only between Broehl and his readers, but between a business historian such as Broehl and a photographer such as Gohlke. In one of the highlights

Global

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The problems that have emerged in the post-Cold War era are rooted in the Cold War and earlier. This past May, Mikhail Gorbachev observed in a speech at Fulton, Missouri that the world's peoples were threatened with the exchange of the Cold War's end for a return to the conditions of 1914. As the poorer, often highly nationalistic regions grow more volatile, military responses can become more tempting, especially since no other great power can any longer check the West's military. New York will continue to "become planetary" in an economic sense. The central question is whether Washington's politics will become more parochial and, in both senses of the word, bankrupt.

♦

Bill Brown received his PhD in American Literature from SUNY Buffalo, and is a professor at Rhode Island School of Design.

Walter LaFeber is Marie Underhill Noll Professor of American History at Cornell University.

Urban

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arsenal, but to no avail; detritus is simply her lot.

On the bright side, it is this trashy magnetism that brings her Abdul, a little boy of indeterminate age who, like a stray cat, shows up on her doorstep and will not go away until he is taken inside. Pamela does take him in, thereby instigating the strange and wonderful partnership that ensues. Abdul has no past and Pamela has no future, but together they make a life. Time passes, the two become half friends, half family, and both their lives become increasingly marginal. Pamela loses her job and Abdul continues not to attend school or have friends; they need, and have, only one another. Janowitz builds a funny and moving relationship between the two outcasts, based on shared loneliness and fondness. The reason that New York will eat Pamela is that at heart, she cares what happens to other people. This is not only not a survival skill in Pamela's New York, it is a deadly liability, and gets Pamela into more and more serious trouble. Abdul, however, needs someone to care about and someone to care about him. The moment Pamela offers him a slice of pizza, as she does the first time she sees him, he is hers for life. There is nothing maudlin about the friendship, however, and a great deal of its interest is based on Abdul's indeterminate attitude toward Pamela. We assume he loves her, but it's hard to tell from what he says to her.

Janowitz's story is in many ways the story of a generation without a real childhood. Abdul makes only one reference to his, when he speculates that his real mother was probably a crack addict. Pamela speaks

of hers mostly in terms of the emotional upheavals her parents were undergoing. Her emotional life, like Abdul's, is overdetermined from

her child," is a consummately '90s idea, the very kind of idea Janowitz's novel mocks so devastatingly. Her real gift as a satirical writer is her

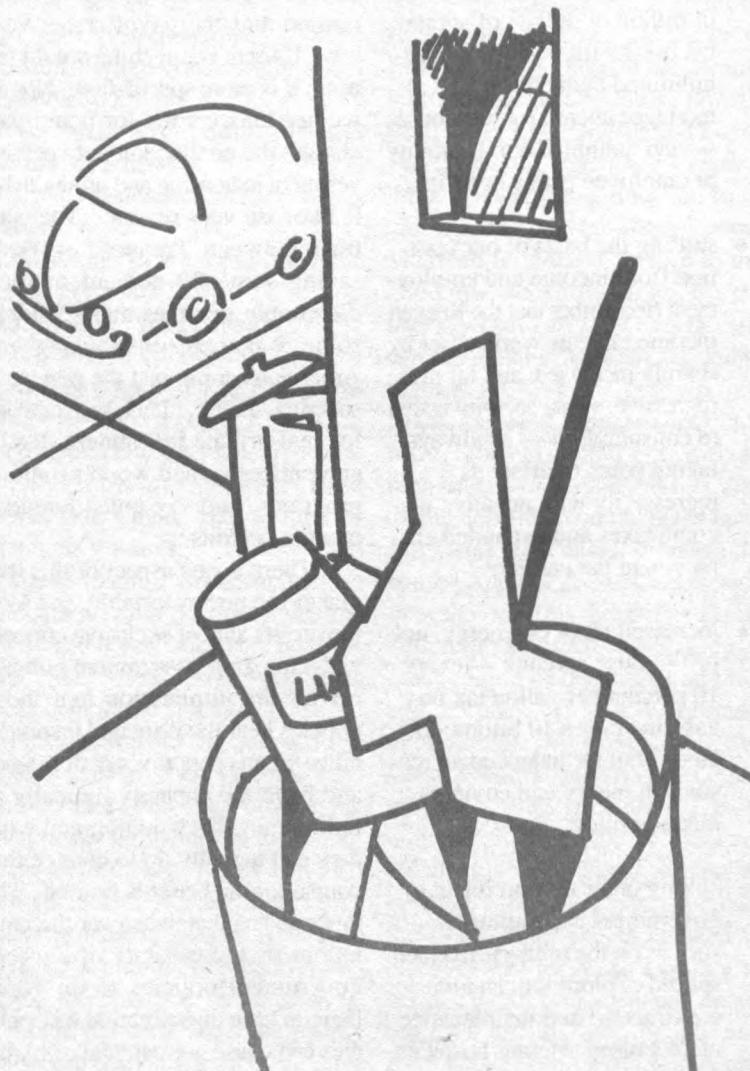


illustration: Joanna Sheldon

the start, and her story is as much about finding her own life as it is about making one for Abdul. Of course, the whole notion of reacquainting oneself with one's childhood, of searching for the "in-

ability to sort out the truth of her generation's predicament from its media-friendly image; to find, in short, the real Pamela among all the would-be's who write and buy the self-help manuals.

For McAfee, NGOs represent an effective vehicle for popular empowerment: "NGO's can help impoverished communities to define their own needs, to develop more effective mechanisms for providing services and to make demands upon the state and the private sector."

Self-reliance and the empowerment of the poor is thus considered vital to the "creation of real democracy," in which people have a "significant degree of control over decisions that affect their lives, particularly decisions about the allocation of resources."

While McAfee's call for self-reliance is appealing, she provides little reason to believe that such a

model could actually be put into place. Given the small size and limited resources of the Caribbean, few of these nations are in a position to significantly reduce their ties to the external world.

Moreover, the integration of all nations into a single global economy has become an effective reality. The exponential growth of international trade, the spectacular diversification of transnational corporations, and the expansion of international information and financial systems constitutes a fundamental restructuring of the world economy. Thus the growth and development of any national economy is a function of its transnational

The result is Pamela's incessant and wandering internal dialogue which chronicles her attempts to reconcile the bizarre and threatening forces that meet her at every turn with the enlightened, sensitized, self-scrutinizing consciousness she knows she ought to possess. She is so taken up by this process that she is left weirdly unflappable. When she is whisked away to an isolated location by a crazy cab driver, she wonders what form of abuse he will make her undergo and how she will feel about it. Then she immobilizes him and escapes, and comes home to tell Abdul about it — all without any elevation in pulse rate.

In Pamela's town that sort of thing happens far too often for her to be surprised, much less indignant, when it finally happens to her. Furthermore, there are certain protocols for such situations, which anyone who watches TV knows about, so what's the worry? It's all part of growing up in modern New York. Janowitz is at her best in imagining her heroine's endless meditation on the nature of identity in the 1990s. At one point Pamela reflects:

It was hard to be so paranoid and judgmental, but there was nothing I could do about it, unless I changed my personality completely—and then who would I be? I would be a completely different person, a stranger to myself, and apart from Abdul and my mother, I was the only person I could trust and be comfortable with. If I were a stranger, it would take years to get to know myself. And right now, I just didn't have the time.

Later, when, in typical Pamela fashion, she has found and picked up a severed head from the side of the

road, she comments:

I am nothing if not a product of the twentieth century and well aware that in Freudian terms all of this means something. To find a head in the road might be a quirk of fate, but to find a head in the road and then to stumble upon the scene of one's father and stepmother's demise—obviously some larger psychosis or neurosis is involved. But hey, so what? I mean, who the hell actually cares? Life is short and psychoanalysis is long. In the meantime, as my mother always told me, the main point of existence was to have fun and grow as a human being.

Janowitz is an extremely skillful comic writer, blending outrage and platitude into a very dark, very funny commentary on modern manners and morals. Few contemporary urban pretensions go unmarked and unridiculed in this book. In her irony, however, she does not sacrifice empathy; she is not a cynic. We care about what happens to Pamela and Abdul, and because we do, we care about what their predicament says about the city in which they live, and the times in which we live. At the heart of the book's wit and flash is some serious and insightful thinking about city life and its effect on those who live there. Janowitz's novel is intelligent as it is entertaining. Anyone who does not like the hyper-publicity surrounding Janowitz should simply ignore it and read the book; few will be disappointed.

Heather C. White is a writer who lives in Ithaca, NY.

Reggae

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"Empowerment" thus reflects the

capacity by groups and individuals, particularly the poor and disenfranchised, to survive; to understand their relation to the natural, cultural, economic and political forces that affect them; to organize, plan, implement, and evaluate activities to protect their interests and improve their situation at the local level; and to enhance their ability to affect change on the regional, national, and international level.

linkages. Self-reliance hardly comes across as a viable alternative.

McAfee also fails to effectively address the underlying structural inequalities in these societies. While

such notions as "grassroots empowerment" and "genuine democracy" sound appealing, their achievement requires fundamental changes in the structure of local power and class relations. Here, McAfee provides little insight and few guidelines for action.

Despite its weaknesses, *Storm Signals* does present an effective critique of structural adjustment reforms in the Caribbean. McAfee demonstrates how these reforms exacerbate existing inequalities and

reinforce the very conditions which generate poverty in the first place. In this respect, the book is a timely and useful contribution to existing scholarship on the region.

Clearly the sacrifices associated with structural adjustment have fallen disproportionately on poor and working-class people in the Caribbean. But creating the type of society which McAfee envisions will require going beyond her call for self-reliance and community initiative to directly challenge the underlying power and class relations that preserve and protect the existing order.

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