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Cover Photograph by Alfred Wolff

YANKGCHOW, CHINA, APRIL 1983
A visitor to China might conclude that the
Chinese are as curious about him as he is
intrigued by the Chinese

For more of Alfred Wolff’s photographs of the
Orient see Gallery pages in this issue.
It is now over twenty years since Americans were challenged to become better citizens by John F. Kennedy's call to "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Although those words spurred some to join the Peace Corps or fight to overcome racial injustice, the vast majority of Americans were never really moved to examine their responsibilities as citizens or for that matter to become actively involved in politics or governmental affairs.

Since the Kennedy years the state of American citizenship has degenerated. The Vietnam war created deep divisions at home as large numbers of citizens became alienated from government and in some cases ashamed of their country. The post-war era did little to revitalize citizen support for government as the Watergate scandal left Americans with a tainted view of the presidency and political ethics. Politicians were stereotyped as "crooks" and "liars," while government appeared oblivious to the wishes of the average citizen. The resignation of President Nixon and the Administrations of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter may have cleared the air of conflict with the public's view of leadership and national pride were severely affected. President Ford's pardon of Mr. Nixon angered those who felt that justice had not been served, while Jimmy Carter's inability to solve the Iranian hostage crisis left Americans with a feeling of powerlessness and inferiority.

As the United States entered the 1980s many Americans felt that the conservative Reagan Administration would foster a recommitment to the traditional values of citizenship. In fact, Mr. Reagan's call for greater volunteer work rather than reliance on government programs has encouraged a number of Americans to begin solving local problems such as crime, medical care and nutrition, although some of this volunteering came as a result of Reagan's budget cuts, rather than from a renewal of citizenship. Recent data also points to a stronger sense of patriotism among Americans and a willingness to express those feelings openly. There is even more support now for a form of mandatory national service for all eighteen year olds. Finally, voter registration drives throughout the country have raised the level of potential electoral participation as more Americans seem to recognize the importance of casting their ballot.

Yet before we define the 1980s as the decade of citizenship renewal, it is important to look at some negative indicators. A 1983 Gallup Poll which asked citizens to rank various occupations in terms of "honesty" and "ethical standards" put state political officeholders in twenty-first place, ahead of only insurance salesmen, labor leaders, advertising executives and car salesmen. National politicians fared no better: Senators ranked sixteenth and Congressmen ranked nineteenth. Another more important poll showed that Americans still have little confidence in their governing institutions. In the ten years since Watergate, Congress has actually dropped fourteen percentage points on a "confidence scale." Compared to other institutions like organized religion, the military, and public schools, the Congress received one of the lowest confidence scores: Even in the area of paying taxes, which most Americans still view as their primary responsibility as citizens, there are ominous signs. The Internal Revenue Service claims that upwards of $90 billion in tax revenue never reaches the United States Treasury due in large part to evasion.

But perhaps the most serious sign of a continued decline in citizenship in the United States is the woeful lack of interest in politics and knowledge of the political process by American youth. A Gallup Poll a few years ago showed that sixty-one percent of sixteen to eighteen-year olds were "not very" or "not at all" interested in politics. Moreover, teenagers did not cite a political/governmental career among the top thirty careers they wished to pursue once out of high school. And when asked to identify their United States congressman, only twenty-seven percent of the teenagers answered correctly.

It is fashionable today to blame such responses on the failure of education, television and of course the politicians themselves. But the poor record of American citizenship is not something new or the result of periodic scandals. Our attitudes toward citizenship seem to be handed down from generation to generation. Even worse, we don't seem to be that interested in changing these attitudes. We have become accustomed to low voter turnout, and we fail to realize that citizens of many other democracies feel an obligation to participate. We complacently accept the cliche that bad government is the fault of the politicians rather than the result of our negligence. We have lost hope in trying to make government work for us, primarily because we refuse to take the time to understand how it works.

Rebuilding a sense of citizenship in this country will not be easy, since strengthening the ties between people and their government requires a long process of civic education. More than just classroom education, civic education seeks to develop a greater commitment to participate in government affairs through reforms that allow for wider participation in political decision-making.

To be effective, civic education must be targeted at the new generation of American citizens who need to be reminded of both their rights and their responsibilities in our democracy. Being a good citizen is really not that difficult. It is in many ways a matter of training; not blind brainwashing as is found in Communist countries, but frequent reminders at home, at school, over television and on the job that participating in government affairs is a vital part of life. For too long Americans have abdicated their citizenship responsibilities and relied on the "other guy" to take care of governmental affairs. We continue to call ourselves a democracy, but in reality we may be participants in a democratic facade - a society where the citizens have little interest in preserving their own way of life.

Michael J. Kryzanek
Martha’s Vineyard is known for secluded beaches, quaint towns and summer vacations. Despite its name, few connect it with wine, unless, of course, you are lucky enough to be familiar with Heitz Cellars’ sought-after Martha’s Vineyard California Cabernet. In fact, there is a vineyard on the Vineyard as well as nine others here in New England: three each in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and one in New Hampshire. It should come as no surprise that grapes for wine are grown in these parts, since upstate New York was the first major wine-making area in the U.S. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is soon planning to designate southeastern New England as an official wine-growing region.

Most New England wineries use both traditional European grapes (vitis vinifera) such as chardonnay, reisling and cabernet sauvignon, and what are known here as French hybrids. These are grape varieties developed about one hundred years ago in France (where they are still used but called “American” hybrids) as a way to combat the vine-destroying root louse, phylloxera. These newer breeds of ‘vines combine the elegance of the traditional vinifera with the heartiness of the American roots and at the same time eliminate the undesirable strong, grapey or “foxy” quality inherent in native American grapes.

These new hybrids were originally given names like Seibel 5279 or Seyve-Villard 5276, perhaps a botanist’s dream, but certainly not designed to lure the average consumer. So the names were changed to the more marketable Seyval Blanc or Vidal Blanc.

The New England wineries are all small operations. Commonwealth Winery in Plymouth, Mass., for example, produced 12,000 cases last year. In comparison, Chateau Lafitte Rothschild produces 25,000 cases a year, and many of the California wine makers produce as many as 500,000.

Commonwealth owns no vineyards itself, relying instead on grapes purchased from vineyards in New Hampshire, New York and Massachusetts. David Tower, who owns Commonwealth, oversees the grape growing at many of these vineyards.

Commonwealth’s production is split 50-50 between the vinifera and hybrids. Of the latter, Tower says, “I’m not trying to make a $30-a-bottle wine - these are perfectly delightful varieties for the mid-priced ($5-$7 a bottle) range.” However, Commonwealth’s best wines are the vinifera, the Chardonnay and Reisling. Tower’s “1983 bottling” Quail Hill Vineyard American Chardonnay won a gold medal at the First American Wine Competition held at the Culinary Institute of America in New York. Of the nineteen Chardonnays which won medals, sixteen were California; Tower’s was the only one from the East. This year there is not enough Quail Hill Vineyard Chardonnay to be bottled separately, so it will be combined with Chardonnay from a Massachusetts vineyard, Stone Gate, and labeled with both names: Stone Gate-Quail Hill Vineyard American Chardonnay.

Even though Commonwealth’s wines are made from grapes grown and harvested in a single year, their labels cannot legally include a vintage year. A wine label which carries a vintage year is generally an indication of quality; thus a wine labelled “1982 Bordeaux” will probably be superior to one simply labeled “Bordeaux.” However, a U.S. wine labelling law requires that eighty-five percent of the grapes in a vintage-dated wine come from the state in which the wine was made. Since a large portion of Commonwealth’s grapes are grown in New York, its labels can bear the notation “bottled in 1983” but not simply “1983.”

A visit to the Sakonnet vineyards in Little Compton, Rhode Island, provides a wonderful lesson in grape growing and wine making. Jim and Lolly Mitchell have forty-five acres of neatly pruned vines of all varieties. Since the different varieties mature at slightly different times, you can see the vines and grapes in various stages of development. With their own acreage and another fifteen acres which they manage, the Mitchells need not rely on out-of-state grapes; hence their wines carry a vintage date and some say “estate bottled,” signifying that they come exclusively from Sakonnet’s own grapes. From an initial output of 4,000 cases in 1975, their first year, Sakonnet’s production has grown to 10,000 cases last year. Half the vineyards are currently planted with vinifera and half with hybrids. Like Commonwealth, Sakonnet uses the hybrids to make both varietal and generic wines. These are distinguished by the fact that varietals carry the names of the grapes from which they are produced, such as Vidal Blanc, while the generics, which are made from a combination of several grapes have imaginative names like “Spinnaker” and “America’s Cup White.”

Chicama Vineyards, on the Vineyard, grows only vinifera - merlot, cabernet sauvignon, and gewurztraminer - on its thirty-five acres. In addition, the owners, George and Cathy Mathiesen, buy carefully selected grapes from California to produce a Zinfandel, Chenin Blanc and Ruby Cabernet. In size, Chicama is what Californians call a “boutique” operation, producing about 6,000 cases a year. The Mathiesens have started making the region’s first sparkling wine, called Sea Mist, using both the traditional champagne method, and the traditional grapes of Champagne, the chardonnay and pinot noir.

The public is encouraged to visit these wineries for a tour and tasting. Since they are all small operations, an advance phone call to check on visiting hours is advisable.
Day care was a dirty word; a term once associated with government giveaways, disadvantaged families and mothers who did not wish to remain at home with their children. Circumstances, however, have changed. Day care has become a way of life for parents who are involved daily in the work force outside of the home. As a result, many family life styles have been altered.

According to the Federal Education Annual Report *The Condition of Education*, the percentage of children in preschool programs has doubled since 1968, indicating the increased involvement of mothers of preschool children who are working outside of the home. The majority of these mothers are single parents. Indications are that many more mothers in the work force would seek child care if it were less expensive. Following housing, food and taxes, day care is considered the fourth largest expense for parents.

Ten years ago the dilemma of mothers working outside the home centered around the question "Should I send my child to day care?" They were criticized for choosing to work and send their child to a day care center by those attempting to protect the sanctity of the family unit. As a result, many mothers experienced guilt about leaving their children but felt there were few alternatives, as grandparents and other family members became less available for babysitting.

What was once a fear of abandoning the traditional role of motherhood is now a matter of economic survival. Mothers outside of the home are now asking, "Where shall I send my child to day care?" "How do I choose the best center?" "Should I consider a center near my home or near my work?" For families, day care has now become a way of life.

Recent Census Bureau information indicates that half of the mothers with outside employment arrange for day care, which means that they must find a place where they feel comfortable leaving their children for the duration of the day. Parents seeking licensed child care in Massachusetts have two options – group day care and family day care.

In a group day care setting, children are together in numbers corresponding to the center’s license. The children attending may be from 2 to 6 years of age. The teacher (or care giver) to child ratio is one to ten children. Infant centers are available for babies from 3 to 15 months and toddler care centers accept children from 15 months to 2.5 years of age. The infant center ratio is one adult for every three children, while the toddler center is one for every four.

The purpose of a well-run child care center is to provide a service to parents by offering children opportunities to socialize, feel good about themselves and develop a sense of achievement while being with other children and adults. Both youngasters and parents learn skills related to health and hygiene. During the course of the day, care givers provide experiences for cognitive, emotional and physical development, according to the needs and experiential background of the children.

Family day care is an option for parents who wish to leave their children in a home-like setting. The licensed family care providers may take up to six children in their homes, but not more than two can be under 2 years of age. The physical setting is smaller than that of group day care so the children can receive more individual attention. The goal of the family day care providers is to maintain as much consistency as possible between their environment and the child’s home with regard to care and discipline. A family day care setting thus becomes a type of surrogate family for the child.
The Office for Children of the Commonwealth oversees licensing for all group and family day care centers as well as all nursery schools. The OFC supervisors issue and renew licenses and make yearly visits to all centers to check for regulation violations. The state-supported OFC, once considered for elimination by the King Administration, anticipates an expanded budget in 1984.

Governor Dukakis appears to be seeking equitable solutions to the budget dilemma. The Governor's Working Committee on Day Care -- a statewide advising group -- includes child care providers, parents and advocates who will serve as a liaison between the administration and the day care community. Their function will be to review policies and advise the Governor on various day care issues and unresolved day care problems.

Another bright spot has been the two-year federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Massachusetts Office for Children. The project will emphasize the group day care needs and will focus on day care policy and local OFC Councils for Children, computerized information about group day care and helping the community to solicit employer-supported day care.

Governor Dukakis appears to be oversee the development of a comprehensive child care policy for the community, the private sector and legislators. The results are expected to be reflected in the budget for Fiscal Year 1986.
support now consists of reduced rates for space, while other support comes from grants and parents' fund raising efforts. Television coverage was recently given to the opening of the Commonwealth Children's Center in the McCormack Building for children of state employees. Finally, the Commonwealth's commitment to day care was apparent during the 1983 legislative session when a bill that protects day care was apparent during the 1983 legislative session when a bill that protects the needs for state employees was passed.

Help From The Private Sector

Recent state and national proposals for public education have indicated a need for involvement by the private sector, specifically industry. However, child care has not been totally ignored by those hospitals, businesses, colleges, and universities which have been forerunners in supporting child care options in an effort to cultivate more effective employees and students. Those businesses that have become successfully involved have experienced a more reliable and stable work force with less tardiness and absenteeism. Employees, moreover, feel a greater satisfaction and security knowing that their company respects their need for quality child care.

Industry has several options in providing child care for employees. Some have chosen to incorporate on-site facilities, enabling parents to spend lunch and break time with their children. Many parents enjoy the advantage of spending the time traveling to and from work in the company of their children. The Stride-Rite Children's Center in Boston's South End has been recognized as a national model for on-site child care. Employees of the Stride-Rite Company who enroll their children in the center pay fees calculated at ten percent of their gross weekly wages.

The Eastern Uniform Company in Norwell has become the first South Shore business to open an on-site day care center. The center serves not only the children of the Eastern Uniform Company employees, but also children of parents employed by companies in the nearby Assinippi Industrial Park.

Other companies contract to pay independent centers in return for guaranteed slots for the children of their employees. The John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company donated $100,000 to the Parent Information and Referral Service of the Child Care Resource Center and several child care facilities in the Boston area.

Still other companies, such as Polaroid and Zayre, have elected the voucher system for their employees. Polaroid pays a subsidy for employee child care costs in licensed facilities for families earning less than $20,000. Zayre provides up to twenty dollars per child per week for children in regularly-scheduled care.

The Gillette Company and the National Bank of Boston have contracted with the Child Care Resource Center for parent information and referral. The CCRC maintains special telephone lines for those employees and provides occasional on-site parent workshops.

We cannot expect the private sector to solve the day care problems that the rest of the community has ignored.

Other companies have acknowledged child care needs by organizing parenting seminars for families who must juggle child-rearing and employment simultaneously. These cooperative efforts educate employers to the problems and concerns experienced by their working parents. Employers are beginning to recognize that child care is as important to some parents as health insurance and other benefits.

Tax advantages have encouraged many companies to support child care. The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 offered tax incentives to employers who provide child care services to their employees. Through the Dependent Care Assistance Program of the Recovery Act, employees with children under 15 years of age can deduct child care expenses providing their employer has a formal day care plan. Employer-sponsored child care, then, is mutually beneficial from the standpoint of taxes to the business and the employee.

Colleges and universities have been instrumental in sponsoring on-site facilities for their students and staff. Support for these programs varies. Some are extensively subsidized, while others merely occupy space and operate independently.

The Early Childhood Learning Center at Bridgewater State College opened in 1972 with support from the Student Government Association. The College donates the space and utilities and the SGA continues to subsidize the center. A college or university-based day care center offers children the benefit of campus educational resources, materials and personnel. According to Diane Sherman, director of the ECLC and a Bridgewater graduate, "Our children have opportunities to work with student teachers and work study students. The physical education department works with children through their methods classes. They also have a chance to see children's theater productions here in the campus auditorium."

Also locally, the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Brockton operates the Tyke Site, a non-profit preschool program. Like Bridgewater State College, the hospital provides space, utilities and maintenance, but unlike the College, does not subsidize the program. More than one-half of the twenty-five licensed slots currently serve employees. Jeanne White, also a Bridgewater graduate and Tyke Site director, points out the advantage of her program: "Many of the families come from great distances. The travel time they have together is important, especially if there is more than one child in the family." In addition, Mrs. White adds, "Many of the children have local doctors and the parents can make appointments for them at lunch time."

Tyke Site has fifty children on the waiting list. One parent has been on the list since she was three months pregnant. Director White sees a great need for more infant-toddler centers to meet the needs of mothers who must return to their jobs soon after their babies are born.

We cannot expect the private sector to solve the day care problems that the rest of the community has ignored. However, private sector support is gaining credibility with a modest beginning in the investment of the citizens of the future.

Involving the Public Schools

Use of the schools as day care centers can be an important service to working parents. Proponents of day care have been looking toward the public schools that have been closed because of declining enrollment as a source of sites for child care centers. Many towns have contracted out such schools privately in an effort to maintain use of the empty buildings. Still other day care supporters feel the need for more public school involvement. Federal money is available in the form of public facilities, easing the need for local tax support.

If day care programs were to be operated by the school system, high quality staffing could be insured, providing sound educational experiences for the children. A secure and satisfactory preschool program in the public schools is apt to attract parents who will keep their children in the public school system at a later time. Gordon Mitchell, Superintendent of Schools in East Bridgewater, feels that public school systems should become involved in preschool education. Although East Bridgewater does not have the resources for such a program, Superintendent
Mitchell believes “preschoolers profit from being a part of an organized program. Children whose developmental deficiencies have been diagnosed in first grade may have been helped earlier if they had been in a structured preschool program in the public school system."

Use of the public schools for day care may be sound public relations to show members of the community that school personnel are concerned about the care of all the children. The amount of financial support given by the system may have to be determined by taxpayers. Day care in the public schools may be an opportunity for businesses and schools to work together to provide solid community relationships.

A bill currently before Congress is designed to provide seed money to encourage the use of public schools for environments after school every day. This particular need for child care for children who are concerned about finding parents come home to unsupervised parents and employers. Employers have experienced the "three o'clock syndrome," in which their employees receive telephone calls from children who are concerned about finding something to eat, fighting with siblings or strangers at the door.

Parents are concerned because, despite stringent house rules, some children become vulnerable to peer pressure when friends say, “Let’s play at your house. Your mom will never know.” Children have great difficulty resisting temptation when they are called "chicken", and they fear a lack of acceptance by their friends.

Various community groups have addressed this issue by providing after-school child care in supervised settings. Many school systems offer such care and provide bus transportation to a central location. In addition, YMCA, YWCA and other youth-oriented groups in many communities are open to youngsters for after school and school vacation programs. Day care centers have begun extended day sessions in an attempt to meet the needs of working parents. All of these programs provide recreational and hobby-oriented experiences and are not intended to operate as an extension of the school day.

The after school program at the North Easton Family Day Care Center, for example, provides sports, outdoor activities, cooking, arts and crafts, group games, creative writing and opportunities to select their own activities. According to Director Rappaport “The children can create their own program. We have structure, but allow for flexibility by providing numerous activities from which they can choose.”

Often, the difficulty parents encounter is convincing their children of the need to be in a supervised activity program during after school hours. Perhaps the dangers of being alone and the need for adult supervision are subjects that teachers need to explore in the classroom setting.

Day Care Leaves Its Mark

The need for child care is not restricted to any socioeconomic, racial or ethnic group. Quality care is needed for many young children. Last year in Southeastern Massachusetts alone approximately fifty new day care centers were licensed. These centers are being operated by highly-qualified teachers. Because of the current surplus of public school teachers, the majority of Early Childhood Education majors who graduated from Bridgewater State College are working in preschool settings. The main problem these new preschool teachers are facing is raising wages. Many are working for the federal minimum wage with few or no fringe benefits. One recent BSC graduate was offered a teaching position at a franchised day care center in the region for $3.45 per hour. The only consolation for the low salary is that these young teachers are having the opportunity to work in the field they have prepared for during their college years.

Various early childhood teacher organizations are attempting to seek legislation that sets wage scales in an attempt to upgrade the salaries of day care providers. In the Boston area, day care workers have formed a union, The Massachusetts Association of Day Care Agencies, to seek greater recognition for the members of the profession.

There are still unresolved issues about the effects of day care on young children. Day care can never replace the attention young children receive from their parents; this is not the intention. For some youngsters, day care provides a more stable environment than their own. Children benefit in some way from all the experiences they receive in social and language development, two important components of day care. Jerome Kagan of Harvard University, author of The Effects of Infant Day Care on Psychological Development, reports that no intellectual or social differences were apparent between those children cared for by mothers and those attending day care.

Nevertheless, there can be noticeable differences in the behavior of kindergarten children depending on whether or not they have attended day care. On the positive side, Margaret Meyers, a kindergarten teacher at Halifax Elementary School, notes that “children share better when they come from day care than when they come to kindergarten straight from the home. They also have less difficulty adjusting to working in large group situations.” On the negative side, Mrs. Meyers feels that when children have been in a cognitively oriented day care center, some have "had it" with tracing, coloring and other small motor activities by the time they arrive in kindergarten. She finds kindergarten a difficult adjustment for children who have been in day care for several years. She comments, “They are tired of the regimentation. They like kindergarten because it is different, but they really don’t want to do the work.” Mrs. Meyers suggests that working parents be “day care shoppers,” if possible, and advises that they “consider changing day care settings so children do not get bored.”

Child care advocates are taking steps statewide and nationally to promote quality day care, but we are a long way from having an acceptable policy. Day care is here to stay and the need is steadily increasing. The Urban Institute predicts that by 1990 there will be 23.3 million preschool children with mothers working outside the home. These children will need care. Although many steps have been taken to help working families, several questions still need to be answered in greater depth: What form should government support take? How can the private sector participate most effectively? Should the public schools be involved in day care? Should uniform sliding fee scales be implemented on a nationwide basis? It seems that these questions will be answered only when we have a highly-organized state and national child care policy.

Dr. Margery A. Kranjik is Professor of Education and Coordinator of the Early Childhood Program at Bridgewater State College. She is the author of numerous articles on child development and parent education and formerly wrote for the Boston Globe. Dr. Kranjik is the author of the book Starting School and has a second book accepted for publication next spring. A resident of Hyde Park, Dr. Kranjik is active in the local Y.M.C.A. where she has served as Chair of the Board of Directors and the Reach-Out Fund Raising Campaign.

Photograph by Robert Ward
Child Care in Sweden: Another Approach

Day care is a far more accepted way of life in Sweden than it is in the United States. Although not every parent returns to work after the birth of a child, most do, at least part time. Swedish national child care policy helps make this possible.

When a child is born in Sweden, either parent may stay home from work for nine months and receive ninety percent of his or her pay. After that, either parent may stay at home for the next three months with a guaranteed weekly income of forty Swedish Krona (or about five dollars). This can be extended for a second year if the parent wishes. The parent returns to the job or a similar job at the rate of pay he or she would have received if no work had been lost. Such parents may choose to work fifty, seventy-five or one hundred percent of the normal work week. The choice is theirs and they cannot be denied their position because they want shorter hours.

Any parent working seventy-five or one hundred percent of a work week is entitled to day care in a day care center. This care is more easily available in some areas than in others. The child’s name is placed on a list as soon as he or she is born and the centers are filled from the list.

Many day mothers are also available for those who work fewer hours or to anyone else who chooses one. These women have approximately one hundred hours of special training to care for children in their own homes. If three families living in one area have children, they can share a day mother, who would rotate among them, spending a week at each home. Those whose home she is not visiting would take their children to the home where she is located.

The state and federal governments pay most of this child care cost, while parents pay a portion according to their income. Everybody has to pay something, but people who earn very little pay less than those whose income is greater. The first child in a family is the most expensive, with costs diminishing for each additional child. No child under six months of age is accepted in day care.

In addition, all parents with children under sixteen receive a quarterly check from the government for each child. They receive eight hundred and twenty-five Krona (about one hundred dollars) for each of the first two children, and the rate of payment increases for each additional child. The payments diminish after age sixteen and stop when the child reaches eighteen.

Day care centers are built by the government of the local city or town and its suburbs or spaces in apartment or other buildings are rented. Construction is financed through tax revenues. Standards for physical layout of the structure as well as the training of personnel are set by the Minister of Education. The teachers are college trained.

The day care center in Strömsnäsbruk, a village in south central Sweden, is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. every week day all year round. Each of its large, airy rooms is equipped for a special purpose, one for painting, one for large muscle development, one for small muscle development and still another for stories and resting. One side of the building is designed for children ages one to four years, and accepts twelve children.

The center has an administrative office and a kitchen, and the other half of the building, with an equal number of rooms, is for children ages five to seven and accommodates fifteen children. There are two outside play areas, one for each group with many kinds of climbing equipment, swings and slides as well as picnic tables for outside activities. Most of the children attend from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Working parents are permitted up to sixty days a year as “sick leave” for each child, an amount which has increased considerably in recent years. The time can be taken by either parent, or some days by each. If a parent misses more than one week of work because of a child’s illness, a doctor’s note is required at his or her place of employment. The parent is paid ninety percent of his or her regular salary for these sick days.

Stromsnasbruk has a population of about five thousand people. Although there is no police department and only a “call” fire department, this town has a fully-equipped, professionally staffed day care center.

It is clear that Sweden has devoted far more of its national energies and resources to meet the needs of working parents than the United States has.
IS THERE A CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA?

A Personal and Sociological Appraisal

by Abraham Thomas

American news media as well as American textbooks, both college and secondary schools, present India as a unique society because it practices the caste system, which is then described in terms of its presumed traditional characteristics. Americans thus learn to picture the Indian society as extremely static and assume that the caste system still continues in its traditional form. The fact is that even in traditional times, the caste system never existed as it was theoretically supposed to operate. In modern India, the caste system exists, but not as westerners generally conceive of it.

Having lived in the United States for more than two decades (and being a naturalized U.S. citizen), I have observed close parallels between the caste system in India and racial relations in the United States, in both the traditional period and the modern era. Once divested of its exotic names and descriptions, the caste system is nothing more or less than any system of social inequality involving changing patterns of domination, exploitation and rebellion, the likes of which are found the world over.

I was born and brought up in a farm family in Kerala State (Southwestern part of India) where my father owned rice fields and cultivated them with the help of what may be called bonded labor. When my grandfather partitioned his land among his three sons, including my father, he also divided the thirty or so families who worked for him in the fields throughout the year among his sons. My father was responsible for providing work for these families year round and for looking after their needs. They in turn were obligated to work for us exclusively and to be loyal to the family. They lived on my father's property and were dependent on him for work and for protection. They addressed my father as well as other members of the family by the term "Thampuran" meaning "lord" and the men took off their turbans in the presence of adult members of the family. They never entered the house except when asked, for performing specific tasks. They remained in the courtyard and father would talk to them from the veranda of the house. When they were given food, they had to eat outside the house.

In a society where much respect was shown to older people, and all older people within one's own community or caste were called by respectful titles, it was normal for us youngsters to call older workers from the lower castes simply by their first names and even to use terms that boys would normally use in addressing each other.

All this was true about thirty or forty years back. Now, however, only in rare cases (some of the older generation) will the children of those workers call the present generation of upper castes by any special titles. By government law, all landowners, including my family, were obliged to let long-term tenants keep one-tenth of an acre, where they could live. Many of the workers' children are not working in the fields, but have been educated in the schools and colleges in nearby towns and have come back to the area as government officials, teachers and politicians. Nobody would dream of treating them the way their parents were treated three decades ago. When they have occasion to come to your house or office, they have to be treated with dignity and equality. (Neither my father nor my three brothers in India are engaged in direct farming anymore).

My family belongs to the ancient Syrian Christian Community of Kerala (the Malabar Coast), one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. We trace our origin to Brahmins, the highest caste, who were believed to have been converted to Christianity by St. Thomas the Apostle in A.D. 52 and to the Syrian immigrants who came to the Malabar Coast in A.D. 345 under the leadership of a merchant prince named Thomas of Cana. (Thus, my name, Thomas, is not really Welsh, but very much Indian or Syrian). Because of these associations, the Syrian Christians were given a high status in the caste system, even though, strictly speaking, the caste system applies only to Hindus, the majority community of India. The workers that I referred to were from the Pulaya and Ezhava communities, both classified as very low caste. The relationships between the upper caste Hindu landlords and their lower caste workers were even more hierarchical.
Today workers are members of agricultural labor unions owing allegiance to different political parties of the State. They work for anyone they like, under contract rather than the traditional exchange of goods and services. Many younger members of the traditional upper caste farming families have received professional education and have gone to cities, some of their former workers have found enough money (often using low-interest loans from the government) to buy small plots of land and work for themselves.

This brief description of my personal experiences, I hope, gives you some idea of the fluidity of the caste system as it exists now. We shall discuss other changes later. Before we do that, however, I would like to put the caste system into a sociological context. I will describe briefly how the system was supposed to have functioned in the ancient past and how flexibility existed within the system.

Every society has inequalities -- inequalities of wealth, status, power and other privileges. The particular ways in which these inequalities manifest themselves vary, and the names used, both formal and informal, to denote these inequalities will be different in each society. However, the basic fact of inequality of privileges enjoyed and deprivations endured is universal. The system of inequality present in modern western society is known as class. Most people in the United States would approve of the class system because they believe that it corresponds to the different levels of ability that people are endowed with at birth and the different levels of effort they put forth. The class system is also seen as justified because it is believed that there is plenty of opportunity for people from the lower classes to move up if they work hard.

Systems of inequality found in other societies, especially nonwestern societies, are seen by most Americans as being radically different not only in name but also in principle from the American system. However, although the caste system is seen by most Americans as completely alien to their system, it is in fact not that different from past or present systems of inequality that exist in the U.S. The packaging -- the names used for the different groups and the justification given for the system -- may vary, but the content, the effects for the people, is the same.

CASTE IN THE PAST

First, a brief description of the caste system as it was supposed to have been practiced in India. The vast majority of Indians are Hindus. In the caste system, sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures, there were four major divisions called Varnas. ("Varna" means color and it is argued that caste divisions may have had something to do with color of skin). They were: 1) Brahmins, the priestly class; 2) Kshatriyas, the warriors; 3) Vaishyas, the merchants; and 4) Shudras, those who engage in different trades and service occupations such as launderers, barbers, etc. However, the most menial jobs, such as cleaning toilets and moving carcasses, were relegated to the so-called "untouchables" were considered to be beyond the pale of the caste system. As the name implies, touching them or even coming near them would pollute the ritual purity of the upper castes and if it occurred they had to go through the process of ritual washing and offering prayers. So, in effect, there were five castes. The untouchables were given the name "Harijans" by Mahatma Gandhi (himself a "Vaishya") meaning "children of God." For Gandhi, the most despised of the land were the ones closest to God.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
Minister for Law in the first Indian Cabinet, architect of India's Constitution and leader of the Untouchables.

It should be noted that the "Varna" was not a homogeneous group. Each had up to a thousand sub-divisions called "Jatis" which formed a hierarchy within each caste. Not all Jatis were to be found in all parts of India. Within a small village, for example, there may have been present representatives of only fifty or sixty Jatis. Some of the well-known names of Indians are really Jati names and show the traditional occupation of their families. So, the names Nehru, Gandhi, Desai, Patel, Menon -- denote not only their Varna and Jati but to some extent their traditional occupation. Patel and Menon both referred to village chiefs, and Namboodiri was a priest. Of course, not all Jati names referred to an occupation.

The traditional Indian caste system required strict endogamy, i.e., marrying within one's own group -- primarily the same Jati or closely related Jatis. Occupations were generally connected with one's Jati; hence both were inherited. Thus a "Kayastha" was a scribe, a "Vaidya" was a doctor, an "Asari" a carpenter, and a "Musari" a pot maker. One's status and ritual standing within the village was determined by the position of one's Jati within the caste hierarchy. Brahmins enjoyed the most prestige and the Harijans the least.

However, in spite of the fact that the descriptions of how the caste system was supposed to operate, taken primarily from the early Hindu scriptures, seem very strict and inflexible, close scrutiny shows that there must have been a great deal of flexibility built into the system. For example, there were provisions for the ruler to upgrade a man's caste standing as a reward for outstanding services in time of war. Individuals of proven religious, especially ascetic achievements, were held in high honor irrespective of their caste. Seemingly strict rules such as prohibition against inter-dining was interpreted in such a way that, in practice, people of different castes could eat together without breaking the rule. Thus, although it was against caste law for people of different castes to eat sitting in the same row, sitting in different rows was acceptable. In practice it was also true that a rich Vaishya had often more power than a poor Brahmin in a given village.

The fact that certain rules exist does not necessarily mean that they will be followed. For example, even though the Roman Catholic Church strictly prohibits the use of artificial means of birth control by its members, it is obvious that not every Roman Catholic follows the rule. Only empirical studies based on description of actual behavior can reveal the degree of conformity to rules.

The period between the seventh and seventeenth century A.D., especially in northern India, was marked by the establishment of Moslem religion and Moslem rule. The proselytizing programs of the Moslems, it is argued by several scholars, created a defensive reaction among the Hindus, who clung to their traditional religion including aspects of the caste system even more than before. Hence, the caste system may have been most strictly observed during this period.

The seventeenth century marked the beginning of significant western influences. The British, who ruled much of India by 1857, abolished some of the extreme forms of the caste system. (On the other hand, British policies had the effect of strengthening many caste divisions.) Hindu social reformers such as Vivekananda,
Tagore, and Gandhi helped in the acceleration of this process from within the Hindu community. Western Christian missionary work was seen as a threat to the survival of the Hindu religion and hence pressures for reform from within increased.

CASTE IN MODERN INDIA

With Indian independence in 1947 and the establishment of a democratic republic, the largest in the world, in 1950, any discrimination based on caste was abolished by law. India is also perhaps unique in the fact that not just "affirmative action" but what I would term "affirmative discrimination" (usually known in the U.S. as "reverse discrimination") became the official policy of the government. Members of backward and scheduled castes were given preference for government jobs, admission to educational institutions and in many other areas. A certain number of seats was also reserved for members of these castes in the elected bodies at the state and federal levels.

In India also, the same type of controversy that is heard often in the United States regarding affirmative action policies was aroused by programs to promote the welfare of the backward and scheduled castes. Opponents argue that showing preference to members of the lower castes in the long run will work to their disadvantage, that such preference is unjust and that it creates negative feelings among the upper castes. Leaders of the lower castes however argue that these programs are necessary to counter balance effects of century-old policies of discrimination. They also claim that in spite of much talk, little progress toward equality has been made, since institutionalized discrimination still continues in most areas.

Obviously much can be said on both sides of the argument. There is no doubt that tremendous progress has been made in removing legal discrimination. There is no argument in India about "affirmative action," that is, programs to assure equal access to jobs, only about "affirmative discrimination," namely, showing preference to low-caste members. Even here, most members of the upper castes argue that after thirty-five years it is time to stop the policy of showing preference on the basis of low-caste membership, but rather to base such policies on economic class membership, irrespective of caste. It is argued that there are many poor people among the upper castes who deserve special treatment and that the rich among the lower castes do not deserve such preferential treatment.

Every time I return to Kerala after the interval of a few years, I am amazed at the changes that have come about in the social relationships between different castes. Gone are the days when upper castes were addressed with respectful titles, although there may be some exceptions among the old people. In the villages, the members of the lower castes usually make up the majority and they elect members of their group to village councils and other elected bodies. The greatest transformation is among the young people, many of whom receive full scholarships to schools and colleges and find government jobs. Very few of the younger people follow the traditional occupations of their parents and Jati. A few have been elected to political offices.

Although these educated members of the lower castes expect to be and generally are treated as equals by the upper castes, this does not, mean that in intimate social relationships, such as friendship and marriage, caste does not play an important part. Most marriages still take place among members of the same varna or caste (the Jati or sub-caste distinctions are more easily ignored now). However, inter-caste marriages have become much more common. Organizations exist to promote such marriages, and it is the semi-official policy of the government to encourage them. Prominent examples of inter-caste marriages have occurred during the past three or four decades so that they are no longer considered unusual.

CASTE AND POLITICS

As mentioned earlier, India is in theory a secular state, and religion and caste are not expected to play any part in politics. The major political parties of India, like the Congress Party of which Indira Gandhi is the leader, publicly oppose paying any attention to caste and religious affiliations in picking their candidates for elections. However, members of the lower castes have discovered that caste and religious consciousness and allegiances can still be easily exploited for political advantages. All political parties unofficially recognize this and play caste politics, and most of the caste and religious organizations which have developed since Independence have taken a distinctively political orientation. Either by
forming their own political parties or by being a major influence in the already existing political parties, they succeed in electing candidates from their own communities to the state and federal legislatures. The influence they wield is then translated into policies and programs which will benefit their castes or communities. Caste organizations, especially those of the lower castes, hold statewide conventions to rally support among their members and to make their demands known to the political parties.

Being low caste has even become a source of pride, as members of the many lower castes have changed their traditional names. So “pulayas” one of the lowest castes who did menial work call themselves “Cheramar,” and claim that their ancestors were the rulers of Kerala in ancient times.

Similarly, in Kerala State the Ezhava Community has discarded the old term “Chovam” and has built up a cultural and educational organization known as SNDP. This Ezhava organization sponsors its own political party and runs several colleges, hospitals, numerous schools and other institutions. This is not to say that all Ezhava members support only one political party. As a matter of fact, a high percentage of them are said to support the two Communist parties in the State. However, even the Communist party is expected to give caste representation in their leadership positions.

The flexing of political muscle and assertion of power in local villages have given rise to conflict in many areas. Members of the upper castes, who have been used to receiving respectful treatment from the lower castes, often consider their present behavior to be arrogant and aggressive. Most of the landowners and the middle class are still upper caste, whereas most of the workers are from the lower castes. Even upper caste workers often identify with the more well-to-do members of their own caste rather than with lower caste workers. Upper caste landlords, with the help of workers belonging to their caste, may try “to teach” the lower caste workers a lesson by physically intimidating them. But more often than not, especially in many of the rural areas, the lower caste people are able “to teach” some of their current or erstwhile masters a lesson also. In many parts of North India mutual punishments, which often result in atrocities such as large scale killings, take place between the upper castes and the lower castes. In many areas where the upper castes are all too powerful, the lower castes have no choice but to endure their ancient portion of suffering and exploitation. However, this too will be a passing phase, as the lower castes get more organized and powerful, and will eventually challenge the authority of the upper castes, as they have done successfully in many parts of India.

When I was in India last year doing research on the social mobility of lower castes, I interviewed several lower caste members who now occupy positions of authority. One, a member of the elite Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who headed a major department in the state government, obviously has many members of the upper castes who work under him. I also interviewed a retired university professor, as well as officials who headed the Harijan Welfare Board (a government department to look after the interests of the lower castes) all belonging to backward classes. Needless to say, they all have high social status. In the federal as well as state governments, members of lower castes occupy high positions; in fact, they have sometimes headed state governments. For well-educated, politically active, lower caste members there are a great many avenues of social mobility. However, in the rural areas, while radical changes have already taken place in social relations, much change has yet to take place economically and socially.

COMPARISONS WITH THE U.S.

Do any of the situations described above sound familiar? I would submit that the traditional race relations between blacks and whites in the U.S. are strikingly similar to the traditional Indian caste system. By the same token, modern changes in caste relations clearly parallel changes now taking place in the relations between blacks and whites.

Not long ago, for example, older black men could be addressed as “boys” not only by white adults, but also by white youngsters. Only two decades have passed since the blacks began to press the demand that they be addressed by the name of their choice, namely “Black,” rather than the names given by the whites, namely “Negro” or worse. “Black is beautiful” is still a new concept for many, and claims of a glorious and proud black heritage are still not widely accepted by the whites.

Inter-caste marriages are perhaps more common in India than inter-racial marriages in the U.S. But, black politics, especially in 1984 with Jesse Jackson’s candidacy for the presidency, is not in the background anymore. Blacks have made slow but steady progress in this area by using the ballot box, an experience clearly paralleled by the lower castes in India. However, the multi-party system of Indian parliamentary democracy gives greater scope to caste politics. As mentioned earlier, controversies regarding Affirmative Action and reverse discrimination abound in both societies.

While whites point to the progress blacks have already made, most blacks see the distance they have yet to travel. The situation seems to be somewhat similar in India. In both countries legislation has achieved a great deal, but without quantum changes in attitudes progress will be slow and perhaps violent. Although the blacks have “captured new turf” in many northern cities, and the lower castes dominate many of the rural areas in India, state and national political structures in both countries are overwhelmingly controlled by the dominant group -- the whites in the U.S.A. and the upper castes in India.

CONCLUSION

Does caste exist in India? Sure it does. But just as racial discrimination in the U.S.A. is not the same as it was two hundred or one hundred or even twenty years ago, the same is true with caste in India. It exists, but in ways radically different from those of the past. In both societies the same social dynamics are at work. What is more important to note and understand are the similarities in this process in the two societies, rather than the differences, which are comparatively speaking superficial. In both India and the U.S., questions of caste and race are intertwined with questions of economic justice and equal opportunity in the broadest sense. Thus, rather than looking at the caste system as unique, it would be more profitable to look at it from a comparative perspective, as one of the numerous systems of inequality to be found the world over.

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The Timely Humor of Stephen Leacock

On this fortieth anniversary of his death, Stephen Leacock, one of the finest humorists of this century, and "the best known Canadian of any kind, except perhaps Mary Pickford," according to Douglas Brown, deserves reassessment. Born in 1869 in Swansmore, Hampshire, England, and resettled with his family on a farm ("damnedest place I ever saw") near Lake Simcoe, Ontario, at age six ("I decided to go with them," he was to say later), he survived the rigors of frontier life in a family of twelve children, all reared by a mother of breeding, hardihood, and humaneness, and deserted by a profligate, Micawber-like but insensitive father. Through his mother's influence, Leacock remained throughout his life a committed and vociferous socialist, castigating liberals with acid wit and pungent satire, and extolling the virtues of the Empire. He carried his convictions into the classroom, particularly during his thirty-five year association with McGill University in Montreal, first as lecturer, then as professor, and finally as Chairman of the Department of Economics and Political Science. One of his students remarked, "His lectures were crowded. Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Malthus would come to life. He, before Winston Churchill, saved the British Empire every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at three o'clock in Room 20."

As to the Ph.D. degree itself, Leacock wrote, "The meaning of this degree is that the recipient of instruction is examined for the last time in his life, and is pronounced completely full. After this, no new ideas can be imparted to him." He took pride in it nonetheless, and when on a trip to Europe, having signed the register as Doctor Leacock, he was summoned by the Captain to "Have a look at the second stewardess's knee," he was "off like a shot." "But it was no use. Another fellow got there ahead of me. He was a Doctor of Divinity."

Leacock's best known and most widely used text, Elements of Political Science (1906), earned him more money than any of his books of humor. It was revised and reissued in 1921, again proving successful. He published widely and influentially in his professional disciplines, chiefly political science, but it was his humor that built his reputation.

Privately printed, Leacock's first humorous book, Literary Lapses (1910), proved so successful that John Lane of the prestigious Bodley Head, Ltd. of England purchased publication rights, thus establishing a long association with Leacock. A curious potpourri of sketches, Literary Lapses reflects many of the comic themes and devices which were to characterize Leacock's writing from that point on. "My Financial Career" establishes a standard type in Leacock's fictions, the little man bewildered by a world he can neither understand nor cope with (Charlie Chaplin later sought Leacock unsuccessfully to write a scenario for him) treated with a subtle blend of the ludicrous and the pathetic. Here a meek, shy, suspicious soul, persuaded to bank his life savings of fifty-six dollars, does so cautiously and furtively, "In fifties," he says secretively, "In fifties," and pungent satire, and extolling the virtues

where his contributions to the newspaper and literary journal led him to publish commercially. Eight years later, when he was thirty, he proposed marriage to Beatrice Hamilton, a girl he had met in Orillia, Ontario, where he spent the summers. They were married in August of 1900, and their near-perfect marriage ended in her tragic death by cancer twenty-five years later. She bore him one son, Stephen, ill from infancy with a rare disease which impeded growth, but brought to healthy and reasonably normal adulthood by the help of the best doctors and his father's tender care. Deeply sensitive to human frailty and human need, both inside and outside his circle of family and friends, he was profoundly affected, perhaps even embittered, by these events.

Just before marriage, Leacock so fell under the influence of Thorstein Veblen's recently published The Theory of the Leisure Class that he determined to study under Veblen at the University of Chicago where he received a Ph.D. in Political Economy in 1903. Despite this inexplicable connection, Leacock remained throughout his life a committed and vociferous conservative, consistently opposing socialism, castigating liberals with acid wit and pungent satire, and extolling the virtues
Literary Lapses anticipates other persistent themes as well: attitudes toward finances, public and private; spoofs of antiquities, aristocracy, the nouveau rich, supernaturalism, contemporary literature, poetry in general which he regarded as on the lowest literary scale; mild satire on the clergy, law, medicine, education, business, clubs and clubmen and women, phonies, and food faddists; appreciation of barbers for being as in Ring Lardner's sketches, small town communication centers. All through this first book, Leacock distinguishes sharply between rural and urban life, things as they are and as they should be, life as it was and as it is now, and what we have come to accept as permanent in our culture and what we may reasonably - or even unreasonably -- anticipate in the future.

Leacock's interest in travel emerges here also. As he came to travel more and more widely, for business or pleasure, he broadened his perspectives while never losing sight of his origins and his fundamental loyalties. He was thus constantly learning, so it's not surprising that the topic of education itself should occur in some form in every book of humor he wrote. In "A Manual of Education," for instance, all major disciplines are dismissed summarily with truncated versions. Thus, "Botany is the art of plants. Plants are divided into trees, flowers, and vegetables. The true botanist knows a tree as soon as he sees it. He learns to distinguish it from a vegetable by merely putting his ear to it." Though he was trained in them himself, he even satirizes the classics. He delights in deflecting the pretensions of those who quote vaingloriously and egotistically from the classics and who claim these works "made them what they are." In "Homer and Humbug" (Behind the Beyond, 1916), he insists that "some of these men would have seen them what they are." Later, in "Oxford As I See It" (My Discovery of England, 1922), he attributes to the tutorial system, where students gather in their tutor's digs discussing ideas amidst his befogging tobacco smoke, the development of genuine scholarship, since "men who have been systematically smoked at for four years turn into ripe scholars."

At the heart of Leacock's most amusing humor lie some of his deepest prejudices. For example, he believed that women in higher education should stay segregated at Bryn Mawr or Wellesley. "A girl in such a place as McGill, with men all about her, sits for four years as silent as a frog full of shot." Or, "I spent three years in the graduate school of Chicago, where coeducational girls were as thick as autumn leaves -- and some thicker." Another prejudice, this one perhaps not unfounded, involves the contrast between English and American attitudes toward education. At Oxford, students work at their own pace, while in American universities professors are concerned with a student's "deportment," his "organizing ability and his hope of promotion to a soap factory." To the American professor, "a student of genius merely means . . . a student who gives no trouble, who passes all his 'tests,' and is present at all his recitations." Such a student, "if he can be trained to be a hustler and an advertiser, will undoutedly 'make good.'"

First he played with his toothbrush. He got a whole lot of water and brushed his teeth with it. This was huge. Then he played with his collars. He had no end of fun with them, taking them all out one by one and swearing at them, and then putting them back and swearing at the whole lot together.

The next toy was his pants. He had immense fun there, putting them on and taking them off again, and then trying to guess which side was which by merely looking at them.

After that he took his book and read some adventures called "Genesis" till breakfast.

After he kisses his mother and father, and sees his father smoking a cigar and his mother wearing her brooch proudly, he quietly determines "that next Christmas he will hang on to his money and take chances on what the angels bring."

Leacock's second book, Nonsense Novels (1912), is a series of parodies of popular types of fiction: among them the social novel, the detective story, the chivalric romance, the futuroistic novel, the yarn of the sea, the tale of life on the old heavily mortgaged farm. "Gertrude the Governess," orphaned long before she was born, has for her education but the meagre resources of her aunt's library and music room: a piano; French, Italian, Russian, and Roumanian grammars; a theodolite; and a book on mining engineering. The day she finds she must seek gainful employment, her eye lights upon an advertisement for a governess with "a knowledge of French, Italian, Russian, Roumanian, Music, and Mining Engineering." Struck by the correlation, it takes Gertrude but half-an-hour to realize that she is admirably equipped for the task of educating "two golden-haired children" destined to inherit an immense fortune obtained from mining operations. All ends happily: one who has loved her long, a nobleman no less, becomes her husband against his father's, the Earl's, and mother's, the Countess's, objections:

Gertrude and Ronald were wed. Their happiness was complete. Need we say more? Yes, only this. The Earl was killed in the hunting-field a few days after. The Countess was struck by lightning. The two children fell down as well. Thus the happiness of Gertrude and Ronald was complete.

"Guido the Gimlet of Ghent" seeks the hand of Isolde; but for her love others have suffered:

Otto the Otter had cast himself into the sea. Conrad the Cocoanut had hurled himself from the highest battlement of the castle head first into mud. Hugo the Helpless had hanged himself by the waistband to a hickory tree and had refused all efforts to dissolve him. For her sake Siegfried the Susceptible had swallowed sulphuric acid.
In Leacock’s parody of the sentimental tale, John Enderby, about to lose the Old Homestead, titled “the crock of buttermilk that stood beside him and drained a draught of the maddening liquid, till his brain glowed like the coals of the tamarack fire before him,” and when his distraught wife urged him to read “the Good Book” instead, he “took from her hand the well-worn copy of Euclid’s Elements” and read “the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal, and whosoever shall produce the sides, lo, the same also shall be equal each unto each.” Even Scottish national pride is punctured in “Hannah of the Highlands.”

It was here in the glen that Bonnie Prince Charlie had lain and hidden after the defeat of Culloden. Almost in the same spot the great boulder still stands behind which the Bruce had lain hidden after Bannockburn; while behind a number of lesser stones the Covenanters had concealed themselves during the height of the Stuart persecution.

Parody depends heavily on the reader’s familiarity with the original, but Leacock’s parodies afford pleasure even to the uninitiated.

It was in Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912), and Arcadian Adventures With the Idle Rich (1914), that Leacock realized most fully that transposition into humor of the tensions in his life and art: desire for wealth, yet contempt for those amply endowed with it and insensitive to its proper use; affection for individuals, but suspicion of their clumping together institutionally; divided loyalties between the satisfactions of domestic life and the demands of a public career; ambivalence toward professions and their practitioners, including his own. Never a novelist, he was nonetheless able in these books to sustain consistency of character, setting, situation, mood, and theme to produce remarkable overall integrity.

In Sunshine Sketches, the town called Mariposa provides the major linking device. Mariposa was a thinly fictionalized version of Orilla, a town which Leacock knew well. In his preface, Leacock disclaimed “writing about a real place and real people,” claiming that Mariposa may be found “all the way from Lake Superior to the sea, with the same maple trees and the same churches and hotels.” Similarly, he disavows actuality of character, though the citizenry of Orilla so disagreed that Leacock barely escaped libel actions. The barber of the town said repeatedly to indignant customers. “How in hell was I to know he would put these things in a book.”

In the course of composing Sunshine Sketches, Leacock revealed not only his ambivalence about Orilla’s inhabitants, a microcosm of Leacock’s whole world, but he also exposed many of his own predilections -- even prejudices -- about the manners and mores of his time. Moreover, by reading aloud sections of the book to friends and family, he discovered that rich potential for public speaking which he exploited fully in the years to come. Of his so-called “Empire” lectures, which took him all over the British Empire in 1907, he said, “When I state that these lectures were followed almost immediately by the Union of South Africa, the Banana Riots in Trinidad,” and the Turko-Italian War, I think you can form some idea of their importance.”

As to Orilla itself, Leacock built himself a summer home, “Old Brewery Bay,” on the shores of Lake Couchining near the town. There he relaxed from the rigors of college teaching and lecture tours.

Mariposa, the fictional town in Sunshine Sketches, slopes down from Lake Wissanott, out of which flows the Ossawippi River. The frame for the story is Josiah Smith’s hostelry which, at the beginning of the book, he is obligated to endow, because of a threatened closing, with French chef, “rat’s cooler,” and twenty-five cent gourmet meals, thus creating so strong a grass roots movements that he keeps his license without having to add the “girl room,” whatever that was.

The humor of the book takes many different forms: plays on words, incongruity of various kinds, hyperbole, malapropisms, barely credible eccentricities, harmless deceptions, silly ambitions punctuated by deflationary rhetoric, paradoxical figures, irony, sudden shifts in tone and diction, outright puns, and situations that show the ineffectual puny creature man pitted against a jungle of frustrating circumstance, from which he is rescued by inexplicable quirks of fate. However, the fundamental comic effect is achieved by Leacock’s firm conviction that the finest humor arises from “an attempt to see things as they really are and not as convention has led us to think they are,” as well as by his view that “the very essence of good humor is that it must be without harm and without malice” even though “there is in all of us a certain vein of the old original demonical humor or joy in the misfortune of another which sticks to us like our original sin.”

The frame story in Sunshine Sketches recounts Smith’s surprising election as M.P. from Missinaba County. His opponent, Bagshaw the Liberal, demonstrates an acerbic rhetoric that is still characteristic of Canadian politics today. Promising gentility and restraint, he refers to Smith as a skunk, a common saloon-keeper, a horse thief, a “notable perjurer,” and “the Blackest-hearted liar in Missinaba County.”

Set like jewels within the frame are nine stories which demonstrate the full range of Leacock’s comic ability. Jefferson Thorpe, barber and speculator, makes a fortune in silver only to lose it all by investing in bananas. He maintains his composure in failure as he had preserved his modesty in success, by planning to contribute most of his money to the indigent and the idiots of Missinaba County. Even his daughter Myra, back at her job as telephone operator instead of on the New York stage, says “that if there’s one thing she hates, it’s the stage, and she can’t see how actresses put up with it.” The Mariposa Belle, an imposing side-wheeler, but easily mistaken for the Lusitania in a certain light, sinks, as she always does, in six feet of water, the deepest part of Lake Wissanott, during the “Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias.” Mr. Pupkin, a lowly bank teller “with a face like a horse,” wins the hand of Zena Pepperleigh, the Judge’s daughter, when, in an attempt at suicide, he fires instead at an intruder in the bank, wounding him slightly and being wounded slightly in return. His assailant turns out to be the bank guard who had mistaken Pupkin for the thief, whereas in reality there was no thief, no robbery, but only two heroes. Dean Drone, the financially inept vicar, is spared resignation by a fortuitous fire (altruistically set by Josiah Smith for the $100,000 insurance). The sun continues to shine in Mariposa, the better to illumine the follies of her inhabitants. If Robertson Davies is correct, “the people of Mariposa were a self-important, gullible reflection of mankind, at least from Leacock’s angle of vision.”

After Sunshine Sketches Leacock compiled Behind the Beyond (1913), the
first of the annual miscellanies. Here the
disparities persist, the familiar human types
abound, and the scathing commentaries
upon almost everything appear. Two of
the best pieces, both of which depend on
the myth of the common man's vicissitudes
and triumphs, are "With the Photographer"
and "The Dentist and the Gas." In the former,
a photographer so annoys his subject with
fussiness over best angle, correct smile, and
flattering retouching, that the victim finally
revolts:

What I wanted is no longer done. Go on,
then, with your brutal work. Take your
negative . . . dip it in sulfide, bromide,
oxide, cowhide--anything you like; remove
the eyes, correct the mouth, adjust the face,
restore the lips, reanimate the
necktie, and reconstruct the
waistcoat. Coat it with an inch of gloss,
shade it, emboss it, gild it . . . then . . . keep
it for yourself and your friends.

In the latter, an overcharged and irritated
patient sends a bill to his dentist for $400
($50 for mental agony, $100 for gross lies in
regard to the nothingness of gas, $50 for
putting him under gas, $100, for "Brilliant
ideas, occurred to me under gas and lost").
Donald Cameron calls Behind the Beyond
one of Leacock's best and "most
characteristic" books.

Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich,
Leacock's fifth book, is the flip side of
Sunshine Sketches, more satiric and
exclusively urban. The Mausoleum Club,
around which much of the action centers, is
modeled on the posh Mount Royal Club of
Montreal. Plutoria, supposedly a city in the
United States, is really Montreal. The book
castigates charlatanism, exposes secularized
religious institutions tainted by big
money, pillories corrupt politics, and
thrashe go-getting in the guise of
education. It demonstrates Leacock's
deplored view that material means and
business methods may be used to solve
many human problems, but cannot be used
with impunity to hold society together or to
cement lasting spiritual bonds.

The mood of the book is struck in the
opening pages where infant scions of
financial empires are wheeled about the city:
"... a little toddling princess in a rabbit suit
who owns fifty distilleries in her own right";
"... a little hooded head that controls from
its cradle an entire New Jersey
 corporation"; "a million dollars of preferred
stock laughs merrily in recognition of a
majority control going past in a go-cart
drawn by an imported nurse." From birth
to death, these Plutorians control lives they
know nothing, care nothing, about. They
infringe themselves with visiting nobility,
they patronize ecclesiastics and academics
alike, thus vitiating the potential of the
institutions they represent; their wives find
their jewels and fur wraps "deastralized" by
two "old criminals" who have "worked this
same thing in four cities already, and both of
them have done time, and lots of it." Even
the fight for "clean government" is really
staging for the entrepreneurs to "clean up"
financially. The businesslike merging of St.
Asaph's and St. Osaph's churches, the only
truly topical note in the book, satirizes
harshly an unholy alliance Leacock
particularly deprecated.

Those chapters dealing with Mr.
Tomlinson, the "Wizard of Finance,"
illuminate Leacock's method and purpose,
and the relation of his art to his life. The
Wizard farmer whose gold strike has
plunmented him into a fortune, tries
diligently to fail. Completely out of his
natural environment in a fancy expensive
hotel, he endures stoically the torments of
wealth and prestige: pitting his wife her
agony as inept society matron; seeing his
son Fred, a good, hardworking farm boy,
become infected with the malaise of
indolence and the curse of decadence;
having his tacit ignorance interpreted by a
host of manipulators as creative
shrewdness; and being besieged on all sides
by self-serving businessmen, politicians,
lawyers, clergymen, and academicians.
Among these is President Boomer of
Plutoria College, who wants money to
restructure the campus and revamp the
faculty ("to dismiss everybody but himself
and Dr. Boyster"), and who has already
changed Plutoria College into a modern
university where anyone can study
anything. When Tomlinson's dream of
financial failure is realized, he returns home
with a happy wife and a reconstituted son.

The other story best illustrating
Leacock's blend of satire and sentiment is
that of the strange marriage of Mr. Peter
Spillikins, a wealthy twenty-four year old, to
a widow with four sons, the eldest but four
years younger than Peter, who weds him for
his money, then falls deeply in love with him.
Peter is philanthropic, cares not one whit for
his money intrinsically, and is not a schemer
or manipulator. He thus earns a happy
home, a dutiful wife, and four sons who love
him, and, better yet, play his favorite game
of billiards with him whenever he wants
them to.

Clark Bissell considers Arcadian
Adventures Leacock's finest book because it
so skillfully pulls together those two
divergent strains of his humor, the utterly
ridiculous and the bitingly satiric. For
Edmund Wilson, those polarities were
outward manifestations of an inward and
spiritual tension, a kind of tug-of-war
between "slapdash buffetoneries" and
"Canadian Violence." Robertson Davies,
however, moderating Wilson's extremism
somewhat, claims that Leacock's inherent
violence "springs from a tension in the
mind" typical of all serious humorists.
"Leacock is violent," he says, "as Chaplin is
violent; under the clowning works a
vigorously turbulent spirit, whose mellowest
productions leave always on the palate a
hint of basic brimstone." Leacock's own
favorite story involves a man who tells a
physician of his insomnia, nervousness,
unalloized discomfort, and general
despension. The doctor says, "What you
need is a lift of the spirit which will take you
away from yourself and amuse you. Go see
the clown Grimaldi. I saw him last night.
You'll come away cured," whereupon the
man replies "I am Grimaldi."

Stephen Leacock, a man of gusto, pride,
and insecurity, constructed from his fears
and his hopes, his triumphs and his defeats,
his meanness and his magnanimity, his loves
and his hatreds, a quality of humor that
defies precise classification but commands
affectionate recognition. Repeatedly, we see
ourselves mirrored in his work because his
insatiable curiosity and his courageous and
perceptive articulation fix us in the amber of
his sketches. Gelett Burgess, another
humorist of considerable stature, put it well
when he wrote, "Though I say it as
shouldn't, it takes a fine scientific mind to
write good nonsense, and Stephen Leacock
has placed himself in the class of Edward
Lear, Dodgson, Barrie, Oliver Herford and
the author of Felix the Cat." One could
hardly hope to be in better company.
KOM OMBO, EGYPT, NOVEMBER 1975 - At the temple of Kom Ombo ancient Egyptians worshipped the falcon god Horus and the crocodile god Sobek.

Alfred Wolff, Associate Professor of History, received his A.B. from the College of William and Mary and M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. He takes pictures for classroom use while traveling. He has been in the Orient several times, most recently while on sabbatical leave in the spring of 1983.

THIMPHU, BHUTAN, JUNE 1979 - Buddhism is the state religion of Bhutan. About a thousand lamas live in this monastery in Thimphu.

KWEILIN, CHINA, MARCH 1983 - The Communist revolution has wrought great changes in China, but many aspects of traditional Chinese society can still be seen.
General Education Today
by
Jerry G. Gaff
San Francisco

Jerry G. Gaff's General Education Today is a notable contribution to the recent literature on general education reform, for it addresses the issue of the changing clientele population in American post-secondary education and offers practical suggestions for general education revision. A former director of curriculum development at the Association of American Colleges, Gaff supports his ideas with data from two national research projects. While he does not offer a particular blueprint for general education reform, his comprehensive approach to the subject and his numerous illustrations make this book very useful for anyone engaged in the revision process. Indeed, this sensible and well-organized study might be read with profit by every teacher and administrator in higher education.

Gaff defines the general education curriculum as a social contract in which the multiple interests of an institution agree upon the meaning of a "proper education." As New Fist, the prehistoric curriculum specialist in The Sabertooth Curriculum, would agree, changing times require a periodic re-examination of the meaning of a "proper education." Like New Fist, Gaff places the present reform movement in historical perspective.

The last sustained national effort on behalf of general education was in the late 1940s and early 1950s. During this period the Harvard "Redbook," General Education in a Free Society, 1945, had a tremendous influence, especially on private higher education. In the post-Sputnik years of the late 1950s, however, general education began to receive less emphasis when federal funds made research and specialization more attractive than teaching basic courses. The upheavals of the 1960s dealt further blows to the concept of general education. Traditional liberal arts such as history and literature did not seem "relevant" to the contemporary scene and, according to Gaff, the student rebellions were aimed in part at "irrelevant courses taught by poorly prepared teaching assistants or low-status instructors." What had become traditional general education was further challenged in the 1970s by the expansion of career training and changes in student population.

"The ideal of generally educated" students did not die, however, and by the late 1970s there were signs of a revival. This reform continues and must take into account several new conditions. As higher education becomes more public and differentiated, a single model of general education, such as the Harvard plan of 1945, will not suffice. Also, the perspective of Western Civilization, so dominant in past curriculums, must give way, according to Gaff, to a global outlook. Finally, the changing curricular patterns must reflect the greater diversity of students in higher education today.

... teaching general education courses needs to be perceived by both faculty and administration as a highly valued contribution to the institution's overall educational goal.

Advocating what he calls an institutional approach, Gaff envisions each campus shaping its own revision through extensive internal dialogue rather than relying on the recommendations of prestigious individuals or commissions. It is a herculean task to achieve a consensus on the goals of general education and still create a curriculum representative of the various purposes, concepts, and interests found in any institution of higher education; the new programs will have to be more eclectic than the old.

Gaff's book is well organized. Part I deals mainly with the intense controversy concerning the need for general education reform. In this section Gaff presents evidence which leaves no doubt that the image of general education has been tarnished. Among other factors contributing to this decline are faculty specialization, departmental territoriality, the valuing of research and publication over teaching, the enrollment of more career-oriented students, and budget cuts. Fortunately, however, the debates now taking place on campuses across the country clearly represent a major rethinking of the purpose of general education and how to achieve it.

Part II describes the various educational philosophies, content, and teaching methods of the emerging general education programs, and the necessity for evaluation and administrative support. Especially worthwhile is the discussion of important principles that should guide the process of curriculum reform. The entire institution, declares Gaff, should be concerned with the fashioning of a coherent and achievable general education program. An attempt must be made to close the gap between the theory and practice of general education, for far too often there has been little connection between a philosophic statement of purpose and the curriculum seeking to carry it out.

Another guiding principle in the current reform movement is the emphasis placed on a generalist approach to learning and knowledge. This is not an easy thing to achieve when most faculty are specialists in a particular field.

According to Gaff, teaching general education courses needs to be perceived by both faculty and administration as a highly valued contribution to the institution's overall educational goal. This attitude is hard to achieve in the larger institutions where general education courses are often relegated to part-time or junior faculty. Service in the general education program is often viewed as a kind of pedagogical purgatory which must be served before one "moves up" to more prestigious courses.

After exploring the philosophies which undergird the new programs, Gaff discusses the emerging curricular patterns. The most common tendency is to increase the amount of general education while limiting the range of courses from which students can choose. Frequently, colleges adopt a combination of a core curriculum and a distribution pattern. In some cases the requirements are spread over four years, making general education an integral part of
a student's entire undergraduate program. There is also a definite move toward tightening academic standards and regulations. Values and skills are receiving greater emphasis; some programs call for "writing across the curriculum." Some institutions are working for greater integration of the undergraduate curriculum by requiring such things as an interdisciplinary baccalaureate essay.

Gaff makes the point that curriculum reforms and revised general education programs are only as good as the quality of instruction they provide. He chides the "strong acceptance of amateurism in college teaching." To combat amateurism, Gaff suggests that the findings of educational research be examined and the best of what we know about the teaching and learning process be applied to post-secondary education. In light of the research Gaff holds that general education courses should deal not only with the content of the discipline but with the method of the discipline -- not just the conclusions but how those conclusions are reached. Restructuring the course content in order to reveal the method of the discipline is necessary in order to engage the student in active, meaningful learning. To the lecture format, Gaff presents many alternatives which are designed to engage the student actively in the learning process.

The new general education programs incorporating revised philosophies, redesigned course distributions and updated methodological strategies require good administration, solid financial support, and thorough evaluation. Gaff makes a strong case for a representative general education committee and/or a special director to coordinate this part of the undergraduate curriculum since an academic dean and standing curriculum committee are principally engaged in monitoring existing programs. Successful new programs entail new expenses. Reimbursement for planning sessions, limitation of class sizes and the employment of evaluation systems designed to assess the effectiveness of the new program all cost money. Therefore, an institution committed to successful change will need to shift financial priorities and devote more of its budget to general education.

Gaff closes on a cautiously optimistic note. Although reform is far from universal, more and more colleges are returning to the goal of a broad education for all students. However, each institution with its own unique setting and circumstances should develop its own program, bearing in mind that a "curriculum is a social contract and

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**Tale from Culleoka, Tennessee for my father**

Once, when I was a boy, old man Paul Jordan took me and his pet coon fishing. The sun was just past being overhead; a dusty hot day since before sunrise. That's why we decided to stop at the spring for a cold gourd full of water before we hit the river beyond the woods.

In the cool shade I took turns with Mr. Paul rinsing our mouths and drinking from the chained gourd while Zip grappled for crawfish.

His hands went way back under that hill and his face didn't change as he dragged something squirming from the spring.

But he must have suspicioned something because instead of popping it straight in his mouth he turned to look as he held up high a wriggling black snake! Well, it was like you could see the skin beneath the fur turning bone white, as though he had pulled from under that rock all the nightmare in the world. And his eyes! Poor fellow, like those I saw in the face of a young boy who fell on a broken bottle and cut his throat. He flung that snake in the water and tore out toward the house, not knowing it wasn't a moccasin, not knowing piddling differences.

Just knowing snake. We found him in his box under Mr. Paul's bed after he'd climbed the front porch columns to the second floor and gone through an open window. We lifted the fancy quilt and there he was, two bright eyes among the dust boogies and dull shadows, staring at us, staring like he just caught sight of the drop edge of never.

by Jacquelyn Crews

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Born in Diana, Tennessee, Jackie Crews is a technical writer for McCormack and Dodge, a software company based in Natick. She has published in Tendril, Plowshares and was recently featured poet in Salem State College's literary magazine, Sounding East. Her Master's Degree in Fine Arts is from the Warren Wilson program in North Carolina. She has recently completed a manuscript entitled "The Spring at Diana, Tennessee."
curricular reform is a corporate activity.”
This development, however, need not be
carried out in a vacuum and, as General
Education Today demonstrates, the
institution can profit greatly from the
experiences of many colleges across the
country. As a college community, and more
specifically the Bridgewater community,
continues the task of general education
revisions, Solomon-like wisdom will be
required. Perhaps these wise words of Gaff
should be kept in mind: “Reform proposals
represent, quite simply, the best a college
can do, if not the best to which individuals
can aspire.”

Diana Draheim
Professor, Department of Elementary
and Early Childhood Education
Benjamin A. Spence
Professor, Department of History

Algeny
by
Jeremy Rifkin
Viking Press - 1983

The term “algeny” (a blend of the words
“alchemy” and “genetics”) is used by the
author to denote the application of modern
biological technology to perfecting the
performance of living systems. In Algeny
Mr. Rifkin attempts to persuade the reader
that genetic engineering is a radical new
form of human endeavor which should be
abandoned because its implementation will
certainly lead to a reduction in both the
quality of the human experience and the
quality of the cosmos itself. Genetic
engineering is purported to be “as serious a
threat to the existence of life on this planet
as the bomb itself.” “From a world teeming
with life, a world spontaneous, unpredic-
table, dynamic, rhapsodizing, we
descend to a world stocked with living
gadgets and devices, a world running
smoothly, effortlessly, quietly, without
feeling. In the end it is companionship we
give up, the companionship with other life
that is at once both indescribable and
essential, and without which existence
becomes a meaningless exercise.”

Although the book is based to a
considerable extent upon philosophical,
historical, sociological, and biological
arguments, Rifkin’s style is an enjoyable
mixture of excited urgency, sardonic
metaphor, and brimstone preaching.

Rifkin begins by considering major
technological advances from fire through
computers and genetic engineering as
successive steps in the process of subduing
nature. He argues that the human
perception of nature simply reflects the
degree to which natural phenomena have
been conquered. Rifkin surveys the present
and predicted capabilities of biotechnology,
and concludes that the impending
association of biology and computers is
revolutionary enough to
warrant a major shift in our view of
humanity’s relationship to nature.

For the most part, Rifkin’s account of
the present biological knowledge is correct. We
now have a firm grasp of the basic molecular
principles whereby DNA, the hereditary
material, controls the structure and
function of living systems, replicates, and is
passed on to the next generation. Individual
cells (the fundamental building
blocks of life) from
unrelated organisms have been
fused to form a
single hybrid cell.
Functional DNA
has been transfer-
red between spe-
cies, and cells have
also been modified
by the incorpora-
tion of synthetic
DNA into their
own DNA.

However, in predicting the near
future, Rifkin has fallen prey to
accounts in the
popular media
provided by news-
paper reporters,
business execu-
tives and excited
researchers who
can now foresee
heretofore un-
thinkable experi-
timents. Many of his
predictions are
certainly open to
debate, and the
projected time
frame is wildly
compressed. For example, Rifkin believes
that within a generation parents may be able
to select from among a broad array of traits
to be incorporated into their children. Yet,
Paul Berg, an eminent molecular biologist,
in a recent summary of the prospects for
genetic engineering in humans emphasized
the massive technological obstacles to
simply engineering away those inherited
defects which are already well understood
at the molecular level, let alone other more
remote possibilities. Nevertheless, Rifkin’s
errors in substance and time frame do not
negate the existence of an explosion in the
understanding of mechanisms of biological
control.

Rifkin goes on to explain his reservations
to embracing a technology which will
probably lead to radical redesign of many
species, and quite conceivably to the origin
of altogether new species. He believes that
the subduing of life itself, with consequent
adoption of eugenics, is going one step too
far in the human march toward conquering
nature in quest of security and immortality.
Rifkin argues that we should forego the
temptations of this new technology and

“Kevin” Photographed by Robert Daniel, Professor of Education
Rifkin believes that each culture generates a view of the cosmos which both reflects and justifies the activities of that culture. For example, Darwin’s theory of evolution (more properly, the Darwin-Wallace theory) is seen as the cosmic view which necessarily appeared in the Industrial Age; hence, as we shift into the Age of Biotechnology we must be rejecting Darwin’s tenets and substituting alternatives. Rifkin expounds at length upon Darwin’s ties to the laissez-faire socio-economic conditions of the Industrial Revolution, his consequent exposure to a dog-eat-dog society, and his familiarity with the ideas of Malthus and Adam Smith. Overlooked are the biological observations which led both Darwin and Alfred Wallace to postulate the same mechanism of evolution. Rifkin implies that biologists are truly in the midst of overthrowing Darwin’s ideas, when in fact we have merely expanded the original theory, filled in gaps with new information, and made minor modifications. The author’s attack on the original theory is based upon a misunderstanding of this basic continuity in evolutionary theory as well as upon superseded ideas, misconstrued statements, and misinformation. One illustration is Rifkin’s belief that the ancestry of the horse was deduced from a simple comparison of various skeletons on the basis of size. He is obviously unaware of the considerable body of evidence derived from potassium-argon dating, faunal associations, and the ages of geologic strata where fossils have been found. This attack on Darwin’s theory of evolution is expanded to encompass the Oparin-Haldane theory of spontaneous origin of life on earth. Here again, the arguments are most unpersuasive.

Rifkin proposes that a “temporal theory of evolution” is presently replacing Darwin’s theory. The temporal theory proclaims that selection by the environment is based upon the individual’s ability to adapt to a changing environment, and it is specifically proposed that this ability has its basis in biological clocks. (Biological clocks are inherited mechanisms which enable organisms to detect and appropriately respond to cyclical fluctuations to their environment. Many plants, for example, flower in response to a specific regime of day-lengths which are detected and measured by their clocks). In actuality, Rifkin’s “temporal theory” is merely a modification of the Darwin-Wallace theory. It was Wallace who suggested that the environment selects in favor of those individuals who inherit traits that are best suited to that environment. Thus, the new “temporal theory” of evolution is new in a semantic sense only.

In spite of Rifkin’s inability to overthrow the Darwin-Wallace theory and demonstrate the joint introduction of a new Age and a new concept of the cosmos, his concerns about the ultimate uses of genetic engineering should receive attention, albeit in forums other than Algeny.

F. Hardy Moore
Associate Professor of Biology

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The New Class War
Reagan’s Attack on the Welfare State and Its Consequences
by
Frances Fox Piven
and
Richard A. Cloward
NEW YORK: Pantheon, 1982

In a time when the poor can detect no silver lining on any cloud, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward have come forward to paint that lining in their latest book, The New Class War. Their previous book, Regulating the Poor, was a description of the past, while this book is a prediction of the future. Regulating the Poor challenged the prevailing liberal assumption that social welfare systems in advanced industrial societies develop slowly but surely, like coral reefs, according to predictable patterns of demography and political economy. Rather, asserted Piven and Cloward, the growth and decline of welfare systems is cyclical; they grow to quell civil disorder by buying people off cheaply as in the 1930s and 1960s, and contract as the turmoil subsides, when they are used to enforce work norms, as in the 1950s and 1980s.

While this analysis squared with the experience of the poor and their advocates, it made the prospects of achieving a social welfare system that adequately met people’s needs seem dim. Paradoxically, people on both the left and the right of the political spectrum were critical of social welfare programs, and some (rightists), seeking to dismantle the programs, borrowed (selectively) from leftist criticisms of those programs. Thus, liberals and leftists found themselves in the uncomfortable position of defending demeaning and inadequate programs against the assaults of the right. Those leftists who viewed welfare programs as band-aids for capitalism’s terminal illness or, at best, “contradictions” in capitalism, were particularly hard put to come up with an adequate theoretical analysis to counter the New Right.

Piven and Cloward now offer both a theoretical and a tactical resolution to that dilemma in The New Class War. Written in November 1981, after the major depredations of the October 1981 Omnibus Reconciliation Act, it is intended as a kind of manifesto on “subsistence rights,” to clarify the thinking of welfare advocates and to give them hope in the struggle for an adequate social welfare system. The book attempts much, outlining the history of subsistence rights from late medieval England to the present-day United States in only one hundred and fifty pages. Compared to the wealth of detail in Regulating the Poor, this is a sketchy book, but the authors’ purpose was to publish it quickly as a tool to mobilize activists. Although some of its discussions of the Reagan program are already dated, it succeeds remarkably well in clarifying the nature and history of people’s struggles for “subsistence rights,” the present status of that struggle, and the tasks that activists should perform to carry on the struggle. The authors provide the arguments which allow us to criticize the failures of the welfare state while also seeing it as a positive, and limited, result of previous class struggle.

The authors argue that, despite the current round of cutbacks, the basic structure of the welfare state is here to stay because democracy, which in the beginning promised only civil rights, has expanded since the 1930s to include the concept that the state protects the economic rights of all citizens, not just of property owning citizens. The Right resists that concept under the ideology of laissez-faire and the “invisible hand” of the marketplace, but in actuality, since the beginnings of mercantilism, the state has supported business interests rather than working
people. That fact has become increasingly clear and this clarification of the role of the state has raised the consciousness of working people to strengthen their demands for state support of their right to a livelihood, whether that livelihood includes jobs, housing, medical care, services, or some form of income maintenance.

The authors argue that, while social welfare programs have been used to discipline workers, they are also hard-won victories which limit the power of capital over workers’ lives. Social Security, unemployment insurance, welfare, social services, housing, food, and medical benefits do, indeed, protect the poor from the worst economic calamities and serve as a check on capitalist exploitation. It is this entrenchment of “subsistence rights” which the Right is attempting to weaken with the current cuts. If workers have no economic cushion to fall back on, they are more likely to put up with low wages and onerous working conditions. And they are less likely to strike, since food stamps and AFDC are no longer available to striking workers.

In their eagerness to prove their points, the authors distort some facts. They say, for example, that real wages did not fall during the 1970s, when in fact they did fall. While the wage picture differed for different sectors of the labor force (some people got richer, some poorer, and some stayed the same), yet the overall wage trend during the 1970s was down. (Statistical Abstracts, 1983-84) The authors argue that the “Phillips curve,” which claims that high unemployment results in low wages, was proven invalid in the 1970s, when unemployment rose to its highest levels since the 1930s, but wages did not fall. This argument is important to their thesis, as they claim that wages did not fall because of the great expansion of social welfare benefits in the late 1960s and 1970s. The “industrial reserve army of unemployed” has traditionally deflated wages and workplace demands because workers who know that many unemployed people are waiting for their jobs are less likely to press for better wages and working conditions. Employers, for their part, point to the large supply of available workers as they resist their workers’ demands. However, if workers can get food stamps and welfare when they strike, or unemployment compensation if they are laid off, their hand is strengthened in bargaining with employers. When no cushion of benefits is available, they must take any job at any wage with any working conditions. Or so the authors argue.

While the authors are certainly correct in saying that the programs that provide a national minimum-income floor are being cut back as one part of a larger strategy to increase business profits, it is not true that the expansion of welfare benefits strengthened labor’s hand enough to keep real wages from falling. The cushion was not as supportive as the authors claim -- a very thin cushion indeed for such a large army of unemployed.

But the problem may contain the seeds of the solution. The Reagan Administration has made such large scale and Draconian assaults on so many groups that it will face opposition from large numbers of people. No longer are the Reaganites simply attacking the most politically unpopular, and therefore most vulnerable, program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) -- which is, incidentally, the cheapest of all the federally-matched welfare programs. They have declared war on the entire working class, even segments of the working class such as PATCO that supported Reagan in the election. Surveys show that workers nowadays are less likely to blame themselves when forces beyond their control cause them to lose their jobs than they were in the past. And now, more than at any time in the past, workers recognize the role of the state in determining their economic well being. Piven and Cloward predict that many groups will recognize their common oppressions and form coalitions to resist. They point to groups that have already begun the fight: environmentalists; religious, student, civil rights, and civil liberties groups; organized labor; the aged; women.

But will all of those groups recognize their common interests and fight together? While it is true that many diverse groups are struggling against the New Right assault, it does seem that Piven and Cloward underestimate the difficulties this poses. There are sharp divisions between groups based on such things as class and ethnic antagonisms. Upper class environmentalists may not feel much in common with General Relief recipients. Whites resist minority demands for equality because they feel their jobs are threatened. Antagonism toward welfare recipients runs particularly deep in this country, especially toward people benefiting from means-tested programs such as AFDC and General Relief. (The “universal” programs, so much more common in Europe, escape the stigma because most people benefit from Social Security at some point in their lives.) When talking about “welfare cheats,” most people don’t have in mind those who commit ninety-three percent of the welfare fraud in Massachusetts -- the vendors who sell medical, dental, pharmaceutical, and other services to the state.

Yet on the other hand, there have been some encouraging alliances. Public service workers, municipalities, social agencies, and religious leaders formed an alliance with AFDC recipients to prevent the workfare program that would have displaced union workers in public service jobs. Many unions and other groups joined the Greyhound workers to walk their picket line. Workers at the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission joined with their disabled clients to resist massive purging of the rolls by the Reagan Administration, and won some victories. Only time will tell whether these small rivers will join to open the flood gates of economic democracy.

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Exactly thirty years ago millions of Americans were fascinated by a day-time TV drama featuring the Republican Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy. The Army-McCarthy hearings, called by one writer, “the greatest political show on earth,” were televised by ABC from April 22 to June 17, 1954. For many it was the first opportunity to see the Senator whose name epitomized militant anti-Communism and who since 1950 had attracted more attention than the President of the United States. Few viewers could know, however, that TV’s opportunity to see the Senator whose name was part of the political lexicon, was one of the most powerful men in America. While many reviled him as a crude demagogue, others saw his campaign to cleanse Communism from American life as a heroic crusade to save the Nation. Millions rallied to his banner and accepted his view that America’s failures after World War II stemmed from spies in high places. For a time McCarthy was the G.O.P.’s most popular speaker. His allegations won praise from such large newspapers as the New York Daily News and the Chicago Tribune and from powerful newspaper chains like Scripps-Howard and Hearst. His efforts were lauded by such popular radio commentators as Fulton Lewis Jr., Walter Winchell, and Paul Harvey; and among his friends and supporters were Joseph P. Kennedy, J. Edgar Hoover, and Richard M. Nixon.

McCarthy’s grip on the nation and its obsession with subversion were the result of a Red Scare, a noxious by-product of the Cold War. Thoughout United States history, in times of unusual stress, Americans have been susceptible to conspiracy theories to explain their anxieties. Such a time was the late 1940s and the early 1950s when many Americans were confused and frustrated by setbacks abroad. After all, most Americans believed that the United States had almost single-handedly defeated Germany and Japan, had sole possession of the atom bomb, and at war’s end in 1945, was the most powerful nation in the world. But in no time the security was gone and America faced a deadly Soviet peril. Surely something had gone wrong and for some the answer was a gigantic and diabolically cunning conspiracy.

The Red Scare started slowly after the war but, as the Soviets tightened their grip on eastern Europe, fear of Communist expansion became mixed with fear of internal subversion -- especially when evidence of spying came to light. In 1945 federal agents discovered classified government documents in the office of a left-wing journal, Amerasia. In 1945, Canadian officials uncovered an extensive Soviet spy ring. Uneasy over such disclosures, President Harry Truman, just nine days after outlining the Truman Doctrine which crystalized the Cold War, initiated a federal loyalty program whereby every federal employee, whether janitor or atomic scientist, would be investigated. While well intended, it was a questionable move which fueled anxiety and led to abuse.

Despite the Administration’s security system, which should have satisfied the most ardent inquisitor, talk of subversion and Communism mounted. By its activities, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), contributed to public apprehension. Established in 1938, it quickly became an instrument to attack the
loss of the world's largest nation to Communism. Secretary of State Dean Acheson defended American policy, arguing persuasively that the events in China were beyond the control of the United States, and put the blame squarely on Chiang Kai-Shek, whose regime was corrupt and incompetent.

Although the government's defense of its policy toward China was irresistible, many Americans, not generally informed, were shocked and bewildered. The Chiang they knew was the Generalissimo seen frequently on the cover of Time Magazine, one of the war's Big Four (along with Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill), dependable and pro-American. Besides, how could the most powerful nation in the world lose China? Sensible observers noted that America never had China to lose, but deceived by the illusion of omnipotence, Americans wanted to know where the government had gone wrong.

A month later came the second shock when the government announced that the Soviet Union possessed the atom bomb. Americans, who had been assured that the Soviets were years away from developing a nuclear weapon, began to ask whether spies had turned over secrets to Stalin.

By the end of 1949, talk of spies and traitors was commonplace. President Truman's Attorney General warned that Communists "are everywhere -- in factories, offices, butcher stores, on street corners, in private businesses." HUAC, which had just published a booklet entitled Spotlight on Spies, warned in its annual report: "We feel more than ever impressed with the insidiousness and vastness of the ramifications of the Communist movement."

The beginning of a new decade brought no end to the hysteria. In January 1950, after the first trial ended in a hung jury, Alger Hiss was found guilty. If Hiss, a man of flawless reputation, was a spy, how many other bright New Dealers were Communists? Congressman Richard Nixon charged that the Hiss case was only "a small part of the whole shocking story of Communist espionage in the United States."

More was to come. In early February Scotland Yard arrested Klaus Fuchs, a British scientist who had worked on the atom bomb, for giving American secrets to the Soviets. The Chicago Tribune screamed "REDS GET OUR BOMB PLANS." It was all too much for one conservative senator who waited, "How much more are we going to take? Fuchs and Acheson and Hiss and hydrogen bombs threatening outside and New Dealism eating away the vitals of the nation. In the name of Heaven, is this the best America can do?"

The time was ripe for a demagogue and six days after Fuchs' arrest, with the Red Scare well under way, Joseph McCarthy, then a relatively obscure Senator, told an audience in Wheeling, West Virginia: "I have here in my hand a list of 205 -- a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department." A few days later, he charged that there were "fifty-seven card-carrying members of the Communist Party in the State Department." McCarthy had no lists; it was an enormous fraud, but he was on the front pages of newspapers, where he wanted to be and where he intended to stay.

McCarthy's allegations prompted an investigation by a Senate committee which, after almost five months, reported that the Wisconsin Senator's charges were "A fraud and a hoax perpetuated on the Senate of the United States and the American people." Nevertheless, even as McCarthy was exposed, his public support grew because he had tapped deep-seated fears in the land and many believed that McCarthy had actually discovered spies.

Throughout 1950 McCarthy gained momentum. Thousands of letters poured into his office and he quickly became the Republican Party's most sought-after speaker. Against all logic and on the strength of bold lies, McCarthy became a symbol of anti-Communism. A political charlatan had kindled a fire in America's heartland by offering simple answers to complex questions: China was lost because of spies; the Soviet Union had the bomb because of spies; America's failures stemmed from a conspiracy in Washington.

Others, to be sure, had raised the specter of treason, but other Red-baiters lacked McCarthy's phenomenal impudence and mendacity. As one veteran Washington reporter wrote, "McCarthy was surely the champion liar. He lied with wild abandon; he lied without evident fear; he lied in his teeth and in the teeth of truth." Crude and reckless, McCarthy did not hesitate to smear his opponents and, when crossed, he got even, which made him a dangerous foe. Many followers conceded that the Senator played a little rough, but argued that excesses were excusable in a life and death struggle. Nor could other witch hunters match McCarthy's skill in manipulating the press. He pioneered the technique of holding one press conference to announce that a shocking revelation would come at another press conference later in the day. Afternoo newspapers would blaze such headlines as "McCarthy TO NAME TOP SPY SOON." Headlines usually featured McCarthy's charges, while denials less sensational and more complex were buried at the end of the story.

Even as skilful a demagogue as McCarthy, however, could not have thrived for so long without the events of 1950. First there was the arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for spying, confirming what many already accepted. In June the Korean War turned the Cold War decidedly hot and the accumulating frustrations were made to order for McCarthy. In this hysterical atmosphere, anti-Communism demagoguery became commonplace with both Republicans and Democrats raising the subversion bogey.

But none could match McCarthy for recklessness. He was the master of guilt by association and he moved quickly from one preposterous charge to another while making little effort to support his accusations. In his attacks, often bitter, frequently sarcastic, McCarthy denounced the Truman Administration for "selling out" to Communism. Secretary of State Acheson, whom McCarthy referred to as the "Red Dean," was a traitor to his country; he lumped Acheson and Truman together as the "Pied Pipers of the Politburo." No one was safe after McCarthy accused General George Marshall, hitherto one of the most respected men in American life, of being part of the Communist conspiracy. Many Republicans who knew better saw McCarthy as the route back to the White House and, out of calculation or fear or both, indulged their colleague.

With the election of Republican Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, most assumed that
McCarthy would cooperate with the New Administration. But to Ike’s dismay the Senator, now Chairman of the Government Operations Committee, stepped up his campaign to ferret out Communists. Eisenhower personally loathed McCarthy, but hesitated to grapple with him, explaining, “I will not get in the gutter with that guy.”

McCarthy began his campaign with an investigation into subversion in the Voice of America, the government agency for overseas broadcasts. His chief counsel, Roy Cohn, and committee staff assistant G. David Schine, made a highly publicized tour of American information offices in Europe, searching for subversive books and terrorizing employees.

By early 1954, McCarthy was at the height of his power. A Gallup Poll of January 1954, reported that fifty percent of those interviewed expressed a favorable opinion of him. But when, in his increasingly reckless course, he turned his guns on the United States Army, the Eisenhower Administration broke with McCarthy. At issue was whether the Army was protecting and even promoting Communists. The Army fought back, charging that Roy Cohn had sought preferential treatment for his sidekick G. David Schine, who had been drafted in 1953.

The clash became the subject of a Senate investigation which was televised from April 22 to June 17. Like the later Watergate hearings, it was compelling drama, attracting millions of viewers, who quickly realized that McCarthy was a crude and cruel bully. As one columnist observed, “No one who saw that flower of evil will ever forget it.”

The dramatic highlight, which assured McCarthy’s denouement, occurred when the Army counsel, Joseph Welch, outraged by McCarthy’s attack on a young colleague, cried out, “Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness... And he added, “Have you no sense of decency, Sir, at long last?” The gallery applauded and McCarthy’s bullying days were over. In December 1954, the Senate censured itself against his insults and voted to “condemn” McCarthy. Thereafter McCarthy was a voice in the wilderness, snubbed by all, save the hard-core Red baiters. His death from alcoholism, in 1957, “merely ratified his political demise,” as one writer put it.

Before McCarthy’s self-destruction, he disrupted two Administrations, besmirched American political life, lowered morale throughout the federal government, and contributed to a rigid foreign policy that stifled debate and inhibited the American government for years to come. McCarthy encouraged censorship, blacklists, and loyalty oaths and, while he never uncovered a single Communist, many hundreds suffered because of his obsession with subversion.

McCarthy operated in troubled times, but his brief success serves to remind us that the fabric of civil liberties is fragile and that “Great Simplifiers” are dangerous. People like McCarthy get their chance when fear and ignorance become tangled, when people do not understand life or history’s complexities. While some liberals of the ’50s thought they saw an emerging dictator and recalled the last days of Germany’s Weimar Republic, McCarthy was no Hitler – he had no program, his ambitions were limited. But this is no reason for complacency. Even the most optimistic student of American history must consider the possibility that in another national crisis, a real Fuehrer could emerge to tantalize us with simple solutions to complex problems.

**RESEARCH NOTE**

**PCBs In The Acushnet River Estuary**

by Jacek Sulanowski
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Much media attention has recently been devoted to potentially toxic substances disseminated throughout various components of the environment. In almost every case these substances had been manufactured and distributed under the assumption that they did not pose a threat to man. Indeed when tested by methods current at the time of their initial introduction the substances were considered benign. It was only later when technologically advanced and more sensitive methods of analyses were developed that the presence of these substances was considered to be of real concern. Unfortunately, in the interval between introduction and detection, the accumulation of these substances had frequently reached staggering proportions.

Under these circumstances, the problem can no longer be solved by the simple expedient of cessation of production. Methods must be devised to deal with the already accumulated substances. Frequently, because of the urgency, these methods constitute only stop-gap measures which do little more than transfer the pollutants from one environmental component to another while awaiting the development of technology which will permanently neutralize the pollutants.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are but one example of such substances. Originally made commercially available in 1929, they share with many other halogenated hydrocarbons the characteristic of excellent resistance to degradation. From the time of introduction through 1975, approximately 600 million kilograms (kg) of PCBs were produced in the United States alone. These compounds were found to be extremely useful in a wide variety of industrial applications. Their stability at high temperatures and voltages made them ideal lubricating and insulating oils respectively. Also related to their stability was their use to extend the life of certain pesticides. Other applications included their incorporation in the manufacture of rubber and plastics as corrosion and flame retardants. Paradoxically this stability, which caused the PCBs to be so attractive in industrial and agricultural applications, is also the source of their environmental liability. Nearly the entire amount produced since their introduction can be accounted for. More than half of the total is still in service and only approximately four percent has been degraded or incinerated. Of the remainder it is estimated that 130 million kg are located in landfills or equipment dumps and 68 million kg have been released into the environment.

**Figure 1**

General Structure of polychlorinated biphenyls

![PCB Structure Diagram](image-url)
Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) comprise a large number of organic compounds where several chlorine atoms occupy different positions on the ten carbon atoms of the biphenyl rings, giving rise to related chemicals known as isomers. About one hundred such PCB isomers, each with its unique physical and chemical properties, have been manufactured by Monsanto Chemicals, U.S.A. Although the solubility of isomers generally decreases with increasing numbers of chlorine atoms on the biphenyl ring, each member of PCBs often exhibits unexpected properties leading to detrimental effects on the environment.

Sufficient data now exist which indicates that PCB mixtures have an adverse effect on biological systems. These effects range from disruption of community structure in certain marine systems to reproductive dysfunction in subhuman primates and include carcinogenicity in laboratory organisms. The observed effects of PCB mixtures on humans have to date been limited to relatively minor impairments such as abnormal skin eruptions (chloracne). Carcinogenic effects of PCBs on human populations cannot at the present time be unequivocally determined due in part to the lack of a sufficiently long latency period. However, the lack of clear-cut causal relationships should not be construed as indicating that PCBs do not pose a serious potential health risk.

Following the detection of PCB mixtures in environmental samples during the 1960s, Monsanto voluntarily limited its range of PCB products and restricted sales to manufacturers of closed electrical components. Finally, in 1977, Monsanto ceased United States production of PCBs entirely. The cessation of production did not significantly ameliorate the problem since PCBs had already accumulated in the environment as a result of direct discharge and leaching. Since more than one-half of the total PCBs produced are still in service, there remains a great potential for major additions to the environment if effective techniques for neutralizing these substances are not adopted.

Certain geographic areas have been contaminated to a greater degree than others. Coastal areas seem to be especially prominent in this regard due to the siting of both heavy and light industries near waterways. The Hudson River in New York state, whose sediments bear an estimated PCB load of 300,000 kg, is perhaps the best studied example. In the New England region the Acushnet River Estuary bears the dubious distinction of being similarly burdened.

The Acushnet, a small river located on the western shore of Buzzards Bay, separates the communities of New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts. The estuary of this river forms a natural harbor approximately four kilometers (km) long which was responsible for the importance of New Bedford as a commercial port during the nineteenth century. Former textile mills line the banks on the New Bedford side of the estuary. Two of these vacated mills have been occupied by electronic component manufacturers since World War II. PCB mixtures were used by both companies in the manufacture of capacitors and leakage of these substances into the Acushnet River occurred during the manufacturing process. As a result, the Acushnet has received direct discharge of PCB mixtures for nearly four decades.

PCBs were discovered in the Acushnet River in 1974 during analyses of samples for another group of hydrocarbons. Investigators at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) found that certain substances, later identified as PCBs, interfered with analytical procedures. Subsequent sampling programs carried out by investigators from WHOI, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state agencies suggested that the extent of PCB pollution in the estuary was of critical proportions. This information had several consequences. In 1977 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) issued a warning against the consumption of fish and shellfish taken from the Acushnet Estuary. In the same year the two capacitor manufacturers stopped using PCB mixtures. Finally, in 1979, the MDPH expanded its earlier warning by issuing orders which closed the estuary and adjoining portions of Buzzards Bay to fishing (Figure 2). This action was taken because PCB concentrations in fish which inhabited these waters exceeded the federal maximum of five parts per million (ppm) for edible tissue.
During this time a group of W.H.O.I. scientists had been involved in a nationwide coastal pollution monitoring program named “Mussel Watch” which used the common blue mussel as a sentinel organism. One of this group, Dr. John Farrington, became very concerned about the elevated levels contained in mussels from the Acushnet River Estuary and brought the resources of his laboratory to bear on the problem. As a result, state of the art analyses soon augmented the more routine analytical procedures utilized by the other agencies involved in the problem. This was an important development in that the more sophisticated analytical procedures brought out complexities of the problem which were not detected by standard methods.

The concentration of PCBs in the inner reaches of the Acushnet River Estuary (Area I in Figure 1) is due in part to the presence of a hurricane barrier which was constructed in the mid-1960s. The restricted movement of water and suspended sedimentary particles through the harbor entrance has resulted in the formation of a sink for pollutant compounds which are discharged into the harbor. Consequently, PCB concentrations in the harbor area have reached levels as high as 190,000 ppm near one of the manufacturing plants. Estimates of total PCB load in the harbor, based on several cores and approximately twenty grab samples, indicate that more than 100,000 kg of these pollutants are found within the upper one-half meter of sediment. From the perspective of the health of the Buzzards Bay ecosystem, the formation of this sink might be considered a boon in that the larger fishery has been protected from a potentially major PCB impact for nearly twenty years.

However, the inner harbor sediments cannot be considered a permanent sink for pollutants. A recent study of the distribution of trace metals, another group of pollutants which have accumulated in the harbor over the past eighty years, suggests that the harbor is a “leaky sink” and that some trace metals have been transported on suspended particles of sediment into the western portion of Buzzards Bay. Since PCBs also tend to be associated with solid surfaces, they may be transported in a similar fashion resulting in a chronic but relatively low-level discharge into Buzzards Bay. Analyses of easily resuspended particles in the inner harbor verify this suggestion.

Regardless of the precision involved, scientific research alone may only delineate a problem. The results of the research must be transmitted and explained to those public officials who are responsible for the legal and policy aspects of environmental management. Frequently, this transfer of information from generator to eventual user is not as direct as might be supposed. This seems to be especially true when the generator is an independent academic laboratory desiring collaboration with agencies which may have proprietary interests in the matter. This particular problem was brought closer to resolution as a result of the formation, in 1979, of the Ad Hoc Committee by State Representative Roger Goyette of New Bedford. Periodic meetings of this committee increased the general awareness of the PCB problem within the various agencies of the Commonwealth and on the national level.

**Sufficient data now exists which indicates that PCB mixtures have an adverse effect on biological systems.**

It soon became obvious that attention to this problem was required since estimates of the costs of dredging operations approached 130 million dollars. Such a sum could not easily be assimilated by either local or state resources during these current fiscally straitened times. In 1982 the Acushnet River Estuary was added to the list of U.S. EPA hazardous waste sites making it thereby eligible for “Superfund” assistance. At the present time additional data on various aspects of the problem are being generated in order to better define the problem and to design an appropriate solution.

One of the solutions being considered is a dredging of the harbor sediments to a depth of one-half meter. Of the various management alternatives, dredging appears to be the most technically and economically feasible method to alleviate the problem in the near future. However, even under ideal conditions, dredging operations can only account for a capture of approximately ninety percent of the sediments. The remainder escapes as a result of the resuspension of particles disturbed during dredging. These particles will settle at velocities dependent on their diameter resulting in a prolonged suspension of fine-grained particles. In a suspended state these particles are subject to transport out of the harbor and into Buzzards Bay.

The specific cause for concern relates to the high surface area-to-volume ratio of fine particles relative to coarser ones. Higher concentrations of PCBs should therefore be associated with the fine particulate fraction of the sediment. A hypothesized consequence of this relationship should be a considerable net transport of PCBs into Buzzards Bay during dredging operations. We are currently attempting to define the PCB-to-particle size relationship at Bridgewater State College using funds provided for this purpose by the Pappas Foundation of West Falmouth, Massachusetts.

Particle size analyses of the twelve stations sampled indicate that nearly one-third of the sediment is finer than medium silt. Assuming an average water depth of five meters and absolutely calm conditions, these particles would stay in suspension for a minimum of seven hours. An even more alarming consequence is that under the same conditions nearly one-sixth of the sediment which escapes capture would remain suspended in the water column for over four days. During this time it would be subject to, at minimum, transport by eight tidal cycles.

Though the above are preliminary order of magnitude calculations, they do suggest that even just the removal of affected sediments is not as simple a procedure as might be expected. When other factors such as disposal of the captured sediment are considered, it becomes obvious that quick solutions to the problem are not forthcoming and that alternatives should be based on well considered research.

Considering the foregoing, the no-action alternative might seem attractive. However, in the long term this alternative has serious consequences. The hurricane barrier which has provided a measure of protection to the Buzzards Bay ecosystem has never been tested by a major storm. It is possible to envision a scenario in which a hurricane overtops the barrier and transports the polluted sediments into Buzzards Bay.

Under these circumstances a problem which was once localized and potentially soluble becomes unmanageable as a result of inaction.

**SELECTED REFERENCES**


It has become clear to me that there are many people who do not know what to do about computers. I would like to help shed some light on the issue by employing a writer's device called the "strained simile," which is like an overdone comparison, only more fun to say. My premise is that computers are like cars. The aptness of the comparison is evident in the fact that countless people have adopted an attitude toward computers that turn-of-the-century Americans must have had toward the automobile. "Gee whiz, I don't know what that is, Harriet but I bet I need one." But do you?

I find it comforting to know that there once was only one computer, just as there was a first car. Each clanked, buzzed and rattled and made liberal use of what now would seem quaint technologies. Now, of course, the variety of computers is well beyond catalog level. Smaller computers range in size, sophistication and storage capacity from hand-held and briefcase sized to desk-top "micros." Like small cars, they usually cost less and can do less. But as with cars, size does not tell the whole story. You can buy a small Volkswagen, or a small Ferrari. This explains the oft-heard exclamation from new shoppers for computers, "That little thing costs HOW MUCH?"

Larger computers are the full-sized sedans and light trucks of the industry. They can do more, store more, and usually cost more. And the largest computers, called "main-frames" are the heavy-duty eighteen wheelers and earth movers.

As to the question of whether you need a computer, let us begin with the assumption that if you need a thirty-eight ton earth mover, you already know it. Your own situation probably presents a closer call. To avoid running the risk of jumping in big (when you should have looked on laughing) or missing out on the many bennies of computing, here are some of the instructive lessons of the automotive past.

My uncle bought a Packard which he is reported to have polished daily, even cleaning the engine with a gas-soaked rag on the rare occasions when he used the car. He took occasional trips to the store (when the weather permitted) and made ceremonial "arrivals" at family events. While I cannot categorically state that uncle George should not have bought his Packard, it most assuredly was not used in the way its engineers intended. It lived a life more akin to "artness" than "carness."

I am not surprised, therefore, to know computer owners who, while using their new acquisitions minimally, maintain an appreciation of their mysterious capacities not unlike that of stone-age peoples for the Oldsmobile Starfire. Home computers make excellent objects of worship. With a little practice, they can also be used to store recipes (almost as handily as on the now outdated three-by-five card), play games (with the attendant advantage of developing in the owner spectacular wrist and finger dexterity), and write letters to friends (think of the advantages at Christmas of fooling friends into thinking they have received genuinely personalized holiday greetings).

Another, less romantic category of computer owners, use their machines more in the way most people use Volkswagons. They drive them 120,000 miles fully expecting the car to do, without complaint, exactly what it was designed for. Rabbits are meant to go from here to there.

In fact, this article is being written on the computer equivalent of a Chevy Chevette. Only four cylinders, an AM radio and no carpeting. While it can play games, they are mean-spirited things, with featureless little letter "qs" being pursued by wholly unmenacing letter "os." To limit oneself to such prosaic equipment (and uses) when others are wallowing in the seas of limitless RAM, ROM and bubble memory requires tremendous self control, or a severely limited budget.

If none of this has helped you, I have available one alternative response. My grandmother's aunt Hedda, upon seeing her first automobile, expressed immediate disapproval and remained firmly opposed for forty-five years. You will find that such a position on the home computer will save not only money, but the countless brain cells that might otherwise be devoted to the storage of unappealing words like "baud," "configuration" and "modem." One warning, though. To adopt such a position in the face of the predicted onslaught of the "computer age" is sure to be as futile as early opposition to the automobile. Then again, Hedda survived.

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