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DID THE 1984 ELECTION SIGNAL MAJOR PARTY REALIGNMENT?

by Nelson W. Polsby

Rarely in American history do we see the sort of earthquake that breaks up a dominant political coalition and brings to power a new majority that, in turn, is sustained over a long series of elections. When people talk about party realignment, they usually mean something like what happened in the 1930s, when Franklin Roosevelt forged the New Deal coalition that still more or less dominates American politics.

Starting with Dwight Eisenhower's victory in 1952 and continuing after almost every presidential election since, somebody has proclaimed that the "old" New Deal coalition has disappeared and that a Republican majority is emerging. After the election of 1980, with Ronald Reagan's landslide in the electoral college, these voices were heard again. Although somewhat muted after the midterm election of 1982 when the Democrats recovered smartly, the proclamations are back in full force now, responding to the even bigger landslide that President Reagan won in 1984.

So I propose to review the evidence on party realignment, beginning with a look at voters' expressions of party preference (party identification), at their party registrations, and at actual voting outcomes.

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Over the past 40 years when Americans have been questioned about the party with which they identified, slightly fewer than half have said they were Democrats and one-third, Republicans. Over the years, the numbers have varied with the way the question is asked, the way

the responses of "leaners" (people who claim that they don't identify with a party but say they lean toward one or the other) are distributed, and the degree of "bandwagon" publicity at the moment. But even today, the stability of these relationships is quite remarkable: on the whole, more Americans identify themselves as Democrats than Republicans, and about one-third identify with neither party. Both parties have lost ground to the "neither" category over the years—the Republicans have lost slightly more



Nelson W. Polsby

than the Democrats, and the Democrats have lost their big bulge in numbers associated with Watergate. So today party identifications stand about where they were in 1940, at the end of Franklin Roosevelt's second term.

Out of the hundreds of polls on party identification I have seen, there has been only one reputable tabulation in which the Republicans came out ahead of Democrats in party identification: the CBS-*New York Times* poll published on November 19, 1984. With the leaners distributed, the results showed 47 percent Republicans, 44 percent Democrats, and 8 percent independents. This Republican advantage—no doubt a bandwagon effect of the election—disappeared

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shortly. The very next report under the same auspices, in January 1985, showed the Democrats on top again.

The figures are not much different for party registration. According to a Gallup poll in April 1984, 43 percent of the respondents said they were registered Democrats, 30 percent said they were registered Republicans, and 27 percent said they were independents or declined to say. After the big registration drives of the fall, the results according to the ABC-*Washington Post* poll were 37 percent Democrats, 26 percent Republicans, and 32 percent independents.

(continued on page 2)

Welcome: 12,100 New Phi Beta Kappa Members

With this issue, *The Key Reporter* welcomes an estimated 12,100 new members of Phi Beta Kappa, selected by 234 chapters nationwide. Because enrollment in liberal studies has been generally declining, Phi Beta Kappa has been selecting roughly 500 fewer new members each year.

You will receive *The Key Reporter* free for as long as you keep us informed of your address. We hope you will read and enjoy this publication. Readers who wish to comment on something in this issue or on any aspect of liberal studies are invited to write to the editor at 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

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ELECTION (continued from page 1)

Measures of actual election outcomes include state legislative and gubernatorial seats and congressional seats. Before the 1984 election, 4,624 of the 7,363 state legislators (63 percent) were Democrats. The Republicans gained about 300 seats in the elections, leaving the Democrats with 59 percent after the Republican landslide. As Governor Pete du Pont of Delaware put it, "Of the 6,243 state legislative seats contested in 1984, Republicans lost 58 percent." Republicans now control only 32 of the 98 state legislative chambers.

Before the 1984 elections there were 35 Democratic governors and 15 Republican governors. After the Reagan landslide, there are 34 Democratic governors and 16 Republican governors.

Between Dwight Eisenhower's initial election in 1952 and the election of 1984, 7,392 elections for seats in the House of Representatives were held, and the Democrats won 4,372 (59 percent) of them. In recent years, voting for Congress has been more evenly divided than that, but the formula for turning votes into seats has helped the Democrats. Republicans have been helped in the same way in the Senate, and yet over the same period, there have been 1,540 contests for Senate seats, with 901 Democratic winners (58.5 percent). Even in 1980, when the Republicans took control of the Senate for the first time in 26 years, the votes for Democratic senatorial candidates surpassed those for Republican candidates by more than 3 million. A similar pattern appeared in 1982; when all 33 or so Senate races are ranked by the margin of victory of the winners, 13 Democrats appear at the top of the chart and 9 Republicans and 1 Democrat at the bottom. In 1984 that pattern did not appear, but Democrats registered a net gain of 2 seats.

It is evident, therefore, that consistently over the past 30, 40, or 50 years, the Democratic party has been the majority party in this country by virtually any measure, and by most measures the Democrats are the majority party in the nation today.

But Some Changes Have Occurred

This does not mean, however, that there have been no changes over that period. The classic New Deal coalition consisted of blacks in the North—50 years ago, of course, blacks weren't voting in the South—plus Jews, urban ethnics of all sorts, Catholics, poor people, labor union members and their families, and southerners. In 1976, each of these partially overlapping groups gave majorities to Jimmy Carter, who was elected president by the old New Deal coalition

that had first come into existence in 1932.

But Carter was a southerner, and, except for 1976, southern white voters have pretty much deserted Democratic presidential candidates. This is the big change in the Democratic coalition. The erosion of the so-called Solid South has been going on for a long time; Strom Thurmond ran strongly for president in the South as a third-party candidate in 1948, and George Wallace has since.

In the House of Representatives, for example, after the election of 1960, only 7 Republicans occupied any of the 106 seats allocated to the 11 states of the old Confederacy. Most of these were mountain Republicans, who came from places like eastern Kentucky and Tennessee and western Virginia, where the secession of a century earlier had been unpopular and people had voted Republican ever since. There were a few suburban Republican southern seats: as air conditioning made the South more habitable year round and industry grew, northerners migrated southward and settled in Sun Belt suburbs, some to retire, as in the Tampa–St. Petersburg area of Florida, and some to work as engineers and insurance and banking paper handlers, as in Dallas and Atlanta. A fair number of these people brought their Republican voting habits with them.

In time, conservative Democrats learned that you could vote Republican in federal elections and God would not strike you dead. By 1980, 30 House seats from the old Confederacy were held by Republicans—by people like Trent Lott of Pascagoula, Mississippi, who had been legislative aide to his predecessor, a conservative Democrat, and Newt Gingrich of suburban Atlanta, originally a good old boy college professor from New Jersey, of all places.

In time, conservative [southern] Democrats learned that you could vote Republican in federal elections and God would not strike you dead.

But as Republicans did better, so did liberal Democrats. Although the number of southern Republicans in the House quadrupled in 20 years, the number of conservatives stayed the same. In both 1960 and 1980, one-quarter of the southern Democrats were mainstream Democrats or liberals, and most of the time they voted with the rest of the House Democrats. The Republicans replaced mostly conservative Democrats. So there has been realignment in the South, toward the Republican party, making the South a lot more like the rest of the country.

New Voters

Another indicator to the realignment-watcher is what is happening to new voters. There are two theories of realignment: The first, which practically no serious student of the matter believes, is that wholesale attitude changes take place among voters, who become disenchanted with one party and allow themselves to be driven into the other. Obviously, some of this movement is going on all the time, as the example of Trent Lott indicates. But this is generally thought to be swamped by another effect, the mobilization of new voters. The New Deal got enormous strength from northern black voters who had never voted in the South and hence were new voters, from immigrant women who had been granted the right to vote in 1920 but never exercised it until they had an opportunity to vote for Al Smith eight years later, and from new voters by virtue of age.

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So according to this second theory, new voters are a good population group to examine for signs of party realignment. In 1980, this group seems to have divided about evenly between the parties. For 1984, the numbers for young people, not quite the same as the numbers for all new voters, show a 60-40 split for Reagan very similar to the split in the population at large. People who registered for the first time in 1984 also voted 60 to 40 for Reagan, but voters who first registered between 1980 and 1983 divided evenly in the presidential voting.

These numbers support realignment a little, but not a lot; young voters normally exaggerate rather than merely mirror trends in the general population. Comparable figures among new voters by reason of age in 1964, a Democratic landslide year, show the Democrats getting 88 percent of the presidential vote.

The Presidential Results

If the Democrats are doing so well, why all this talk of realignment? Perhaps the answer is that at the presidential level, they aren't doing so well. Since 1952, Republicans have won six of the nine presidential elections, and more recently, they have won four out of the last five. Suppose we view Republican success at the presidential level not as a matter of party realignment but as a phenomenon of voting defection from a Democratic norm?

This seems to fit the Eisenhower victories of 1952 and 1956 tolerably well. Ike received years of nonpartisan national publicity as a war hero. Moreover, as the new biographical studies reveal, he worked hard to maintain his overwhelming popularity. But Eisenhower's landslides didn't greatly help other Republicans get elected. He carried a narrowly Republican Congress into office on his coattails only once, in 1952, and that majority evaporated after the 1954 election.

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But how do we explain the Republican presidential victories in the elections of 1968, 1972, 1980, and 1984? Evidently it's not so much that Republicans win presidential elections as that Democrats lose them. Richard Nixon was not what anybody would call an overwhelmingly popular candidate in 1968. The big political events of that miserable year had to do with the Democratic party's tearing itself apart on national television, the long-drawn-out and incredibly hostile primary season, the abrupt—and late—withdrawal of President Johnson, two assassinations and the associated riots, the police riot at the Chicago Democratic convention, and so on. Despite all that, Hubert Humphrey almost won the election. When he lost, the Democratic party in its wisdom formed a commission that instituted a series of reforms that have more or less guaranteed party disunity in their presidential nominating process ever since.

The statistics are revealing: From 1952 to 1968, Republicans, always the more ideologically cohesive and smaller of the two major parties, defected from Republican presidential voting at the rate of 10 percent, Democrats, at the rate of 18 percent. From 1972 to 1980, Republican defections remained rock steady at 9 percent, whereas voting defection among Democrats shot up to three times that level. In 1984, the story was almost the same: Reagan persuaded more than 90 percent of the Republicans to vote for him, whereas Walter Mondale lost about a quarter of the Democrats.

These statistics don't seem to reflect ideological change in the population; not many more people say they are conservatives today than was the case 15 years ago. Only a tiny group—4 percent according to the CBS-*New York Times* exit

poll—said they voted for Reagan because he was a conservative. All this fortifies the view that it isn't the Republican party's attractiveness to Democrats but rather the Democrats' inability to get together that seems to be causing the bulk of the defections from party voting visible at the presidential level.

Effects of the 1984 Election on Party Realignment

Observers disagree about the effects of the 1984 election on the prospects for party realignment. According to one school of thought, ideological revolution is brewing and the electorate is moving en masse toward the Republicans. According to a second school, there is ideological movement, or at least a mobilization of nonliberal sentiment on some issues, but it is not yet clear that Republicans will be the sole beneficiaries of the new configuration. According to a third view, stability still outweighs change in the electoral system.

1. *The Ideological Revolution Argument*—A recent *Washington Post* article lined up some survey evidence suggesting that public attitudes are shifting:

- Twice as many poll respondents worried that people are getting too much welfare as worried that people are getting too little, and this majority voted 3 to 1 for the president.
- Sixty-two percent of respondents said the government had done enough or too much to help black people, and these voters were for the president 68 to 20 percent.
- More voters were worried about a Communist takeover in Central America than were worried about American involvement in a war there, and those who were worried about communism supported Reagan 70 to 20 percent.

It seems to me premature to call these numbers evidence of realignment. Americans have not in the past been sympathetic to Communist takeovers or to welfare expenditures. I believe that the numbers more likely indicate that President Reagan's appeal has an ideological component that puts the Democratic party at a popular disadvantage. If that disadvantage persists over time, as a new generation of voters enters the electorate, then realignment could occur. But there is no evidence that it has happened yet except in the South. The Republican party, by defining itself philosophically, may actually be retarding movement into its ranks. If, over time, the Democrats also persist in defining themselves philosophically, they may shove people out of their ranks, thus contributing to what some analysts have taken to calling dealignment rather than realignment.

2. *The Not-Yet-Realignment Argument*—Proponents of the not-yet-realignment school of thought focus on public attitudes that appear to be shifting toward the Republican, or maybe just toward the conservative, part of the spectrum, depending on how the Democrats position themselves. Although Mondale ran a moderate campaign once he was nominated, he did not look like a moderate when he was trying to nail down the nomination, and the poll data strongly suggest this image hurt him considerably.

The Republican party, by defining itself philosophically, may actually be retarding movement into its ranks.

Back in 1982 and 1983, Mondale actually beat President Reagan in most of the public opinion surveys. What happened in the meantime? The economic news improved; we cut our losses and got troops out of Lebanon; the President went to China to get his picture taken at the Great Wall; and we had a splendid little war with Grenada. Meanwhile Mondale had to endure an unbelievably grueling delegate selection process, with Gary Hart mobilizing Yuppies against him and Jesse Jackson preempting his normal base of support among black voters. Mondale had to go hat in hand, in public, to the labor unions, to "special" interests, to the National Organization of Women—indeed, to anyone who would listen to his case. Various glitches in the Jackson campaign may have given Jews an opportunity to reconsider their commitment to Mondale and may also have mobilized white southerners' resistance to the Democrats.

If, over time, the Democrats also persist in defining themselves philosophically, they may shove people out, thus contributing to what some analysts have taken to calling dealignment rather than realignment.

The Democratic nomination process even as now organized—one healthy step backward from the extremes of the McGovern reforms—may still provide a recipe for electing Republicans. Actually nominating the "wrong" Democratic candidate—one who is not the authentic choice of most Democrats—because of peculiarities of the reformed decision-making process is only one problem. The Democrats didn't go down that road this

time. The other problem is putting the winner—even the “right” winner—through a public ordeal in such divisive circumstances that staff burnout, bad publicity, and disaffected voters are inevitable.

At any rate, the evidence of negative ideological drift is beginning to accumulate. Negative ratings began to build up on Mondale during the campaign. Republicans, not Democrats, as traditionally was the case, became the party best able to manage prosperity. What, we may well

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ask, could the American people be telling us when they perceive Ronald Reagan as a strong leader on top of his job? I believe that such a response reflects the harmonious front that Republicans were able to produce in the president's behalf and, even more, the cacaphony of the Democratic nomination process, in which the eventual nominee was buffeted around and made to look weak.

3. *The No-Realignment Position*—Arguments for the third, the no-realignment, school of thought, include these: The 1984 election was not an unusual election. Over the past 50 years we have had 14 presidential elections, 10 of which have been part of what could be called a “landslide sequence.” In the first election in the sequence, a candidate gets elected president. The second time around, he wins a resounding personal triumph. That happened to Roosevelt in 1936; to Eisenhower in 1956; to Johnson, standing in for Kennedy, in 1964; to Nixon in 1972; and to Reagan in 1984. Seen in this light, 1984 does not seem so unusual.

It is also interesting to note that when these landslide sequences happen to Democrats, big things usually happen further down the ticket. That's a little hard to see in 1936, because at the time of the election, the Democrats held 69 of the 96 Senate seats and 322 of the 435 House seats, in part because of the results of the midterm election of 1934, which was the only midterm election in the 20th century in which the president's party picked up seats. Even so, in 1936, the Democrats won 11 more House seats and 6 more Senate seats to go with Roosevelt's advantage of 515 electoral votes and a 25 percent popular vote margin. In 1964, when Johnson beat Barry Goldwater by 23 percent in the popular vote

and by 434 electoral votes, the Democrats gained 2 Senate and 37 House seats. That's what Democratic landslide sequences look like: when the presidential candidate does well, the party does well.

Republican sequences follow a different pattern. Eisenhower's great popular victory in 1956 gave him a net advantage of 384 electoral votes and a 15 percent popular vote margin over Adlai Stevenson. But the Republicans made no net gains in the Senate and had a net loss of 2 seats in the House. In 1972, Nixon won by 503 electoral votes and 23 percent of the popular vote, yet Republicans picked up only 7 seats in the House and Democrats gained 2 Senate seats.

Reagan's 1984 victory was similar—512 electoral votes and an 18 percent margin in the popular vote—yet the Democrats picked up 2 Senate seats and had a net loss of only 14 seats in the House. In 1980, when Reagan's personal margin was only 10 percent, the Republicans gained 12 Senate seats (most of them by very close margins) and 23 House seats. But this was not a realignment, or even much of a mandate, as we discovered at the midterm election when the Democrats bounced back with a net gain of 26 House seats.

International quiescence, sometimes known as peace, and an economic upturn, also known as prosperity, seem to be good for incumbents—incumbent presidents and incumbent members of Congress alike. In 1984, these two conditions helped the president, a Republican, remain in office and they helped the Democrats retain control of the House. And they also seem to have delayed the party realignment that at least some political analysts have awaited since 1952.

Nelson W. Polsby is professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley. His recent books include Consequences of Party Reform, Political Innovation in America, and, with Aaron Wildavsky, Presidential Elections. This article is an abridged version of one of the talks he gave this year as a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar.

U.S. HISTORIAN JOINS BOOK COMMITTEE

Richard N. Current has recently been appointed to the Book Committee to recommend books in U.S. history. Current is the author or coauthor of 20 books, among them *Lincoln the President: Last Full Measure*, which was awarded a Bancroft Prize. He has taught at the universities of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Wisconsin (Madison), and North Carolina (Greensboro). He has also served as Harmsworth Professor at the University of Oxford and as a Fulbright Lecturer at the universities of Munich and Chile (Santiago). He holds degrees from Oberlin College, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and the University of Wisconsin.

The American Scholar

A few words about our editor . . .

In a review of Joseph Epstein's new book, *Plausible Prejudices: Essays on American Writing*, Jonathan Yardley says, “Three cheers—enthusiastic and grateful ones—for Joseph Epstein. He is, for me, a ‘special writer,’ one whose prose style I admire without reservation . . . His essays appear most frequently in *The American Scholar*, *Commentary*, and *The New Criterion*; in the first, of which he is editor, they seem most at home . . .” (*Washington Post*, February 20, 1985)

Indeed, Joe Epstein has been “at home” in the pages of the *Scholar* for almost 10 years. Under the name Aristides, his writing brings sociological observation and literature together in a witty and graceful manner. Epstein's considerable talents, combined with an outstanding editorial board, have made the *Scholar* more widely read than any other quarterly journal in its field.

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EARL W. COUNT, RICHARD N. CURRENT, LEONARD W. DOOB,
ANDREW GYORGY, MADELINE R. ROBINSON,
VICTORIA SCHUCK, ANNA J. SCHWARTZ
RONALD GEBALLE, RUSSELL B. STEVENS

FREDERICK J. CROSSON

Time and Narrative. Paul Ricoeur. Chicago Univ., 1984. \$25.

This first volume of a two-volume study pairs the author's earlier *Rule of Metaphor*, which showed how metaphor creates a new semantic dimension and discloses unsuspected meanings in the world, with an analysis of how the plot of narrative temporalizes and finds meaning in history. Ricoeur draws on Augustine and Aristotle and on theories of historiography and of human action to weave a rich, detailed argument for the centrality of narrative to history (contra the *Annales* school). A truly grand and encompassing work.

Objectivity and Cultural Divergence. Ed. by S. C. Brown. Cambridge Univ., 1984. \$12.95.

A series of papers concerned with (1) the difficulties for cross-cultural study in the social sciences arising from the need to understand alien cultures as they understand themselves and (2) the philosophical problems of objectivity and relativism. Sociobiology, comparative religion, and anthropology exemplify the former; issues of the nature of science and of ethical objectivity, the latter. The writing is clear, the ideas are stimulating, and the topic is important for our self-understanding.

Religion and Politics in the Modern World. Ed. by Peter H. Merkl and Ninian Smart. New York Univ., 1983. \$30.

The relationship between nationalism and religion is as potent today in many parts of the world as it ever was, and this collection of essays reminds us that we cannot discount its significance if we hope to understand our global neighbors. Pakistan, Israel, Poland, and Northern Ireland are some of the instances examined here. The authors also attempt to trace some more general theoretical perspectives on the linkage between religion and nationhood. Informative and thought-provoking.

A Glimpse of Zion's Glory. Philip F. Gura. Wesleyan Univ., 1984. \$29.95.

Perry Miller's *New England Mind* acquainted us with the dominant Puritan orthodoxy of the 17th century and its influence on the revolutionary ethos of the northern colonies. Gura qualifies and enriches our understanding through this discussion of the role of the radical groups spawned by the emphasis on the inner light of the Spirit. Anabaptists, Levellers, Antinomians, and other splinter congregations thrived on the primacy of the individual's religious experience over tradition and ecclesiastical authority, and radicalized the issue of democratic reform of the established religiosity. A careful, enlightening study of the roots of the American experience.

The Thread of Life. Richard Wollheim. Harvard Univ., 1984. \$20.

An unusual work by a philosopher who has previously written on art and on Freud and who here addresses what it means to be a person. He focuses not on the person or the life but on the process: what is it to lead a life of a person? In so doing he criticizes and escapes from the rather desiccated analyses of relational theories of personhood and incorporates the range of concerns with which our personal lives struggle, with our future, with moral values, with knowing ourselves. The fundamental perspective is psychoanalytic and naturalistic and seems to me to leave lacunae, but the manner and substance are thoughtful and original.

Spinoza on Nature. James Collins. Southern Illinois Univ., 1984. \$32.

If in one sense Spinoza reduced everything, including God, to nature, in another he raised everything to the level of nature, the encompassing whole within which all else was to be understood. Collins construes the whole of the Spinoza writing from this perspective, showing how it leads from resolving the Cartesian circle by the Cartesian notion of substance to the assimilation of scriptural criticism and scientific discovery. Not easy reading, but a magisterial interpretation.

ROBERT B. HEILMAN

The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais. Lucien Febvre. Tr. by Beatrice Gottlieb. Harvard, 1982. \$35.

Febvre's 1942 book shows that Rabelais and his contemporaries did not and could not anticipate modern skepticism and unbelief. Febvre's erudition is immense, and his style unceasingly clear and lively—an almost unique joining of scholarship, freshness, and vivacity.

The Wider Sea: A Life of John Ruskin. John Dixon Hunt. Viking, 1982. \$25.

Hunt presents Ruskin almost day by day with "cruel, crawling" pace and prose. But gradually there emerges a fascinating picture of a strange genius—precocious and griggish child, polymath, mineralogist, botanist, weird husband, original art and social critic, driven educator, reformer, utopian, and finally madman.

Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals. Ed. by Leslie A. Marchand. Harvard-Belknap, 1982. \$17.50.

Marchand has skimmed the cream off 12 rich volumes of correspondence and journals by a great letter-writer and diarist—candid about self and others, witty, unaffected, un-

pretentious, shrewd, imaginative, now light-hearted, now intense in feeling.

After Innocence: Visions of the Fall in Modern Literature. Terry Otten. Pittsburgh Univ., 1982. \$19.95.

Using a Blakean view of the Fall as a fortunate escape into experience and knowledge, Otten finds this pattern in fiction by Lewis Carroll, James, Conrad, Hesse, Golding, and Dickey, and in plays by Miller and Albee. The Edenic parallels are not always convincing. The writing, though not elegant, is brisk and lucid.

Milton's Eye. Diane Kelsey McColley. Illinois Univ., 1983. \$17.50.

McColley brilliantly and persuasively reinterprets Eve as an independent and intelligent woman, and undermines romantic readings of Milton's poem as an unintended celebration of profitable disobedience. McColley writes with great learning and amiability, and her style is admirably open and unaffected.

Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle. Zdzislaw Najder. Tr. by Halina Carroll-Najder. Rutgers, 1983. \$30; paper, \$14.95.

Conrad Under Familial Eyes. Ed. by Zdzislaw Najder. Tr. by Halina Carroll-Najder. Cambridge Univ., 1983. \$37.50.

Najder's long biography holds the reader throughout. Using new materials, Najder corrects earlier biographers, identifies Conrad as a manic-depressive, points out his romanticizing tendencies (in fiction and autobiography), evaluates his works, and gives fine portraits of many friends and associates of Conrad.

The materials collected in *Conrad Under Familial Eyes* (many translated for the first time) appeal to the general reader as well as the scholar. They clarify Conrad's Polish background (excerpts from his uncle's memoirs, letters by his parents, legal documents) and shed light on his later life in England (reminders by Polish visitors and essays by Polish critics).

Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller. Judith Thurman. St. Martin's, 1983. Paper, \$9.95.

Thurman's excellent biography, massive but never heavy, traces the interplay of an unusual life and an unusual art. Born into a Danish family of somewhat Buddenbrookian cast, Karen Blixen married a baron, ran a coffee farm in Kenya, and produced her first book at age 49.

Plays. Marguerite Yourcenar. Tr. from the French by Dori Katz. Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1984. \$18.95; paper, \$7.95.

A full-length play on Fascist Italy and three one-acts reinterpreting the Electra and Minotaur stories and an Andersen fairy tale share liveliness, originality, and a persistent sense of the modes of self-interest, often unconscious, that ironically shape both historical and mythical situations.

The Temptation of Saint Anthony. Gustave Flaubert. Tr. by Kitty Mrosovsky. Penguin, 1983. \$4.95.

Flaubert worked for 25 years on this story of a saint's life, which he made a picturesque, and often grotesque, portrayal of many philosophical and religious figures and their ideas. The fluent translation is accompanied by voluminous notes and a long introduction on the sources, context, and criticism of the fiction.

ROBERT P. SONKOWSKY

Oedipus: The Ancient Legend and Its Later Analogues. Lowell Edmunds. Johns Hopkins, 1985. \$26.50.

Antigones: How the Antigone Legend Has Endured in Western Literature, Art, and Thought. George Steiner. Oxford, 1984. \$19.95.

Here are two gifts to the growing number of us who study Classical traditions. Both books inspect members of the same legendary family, perhaps the most famous from antiquity, but the approaches are diametrically and destructively different. Edmunds' approach is that of a Classicist applying folkloristic techniques to the legend. Steiner's is, of course, that of the creative critic, one of the world's most noted.

About four-fifths of the first book is a collection of medieval and modern folk stories, which are analogous to the ancient legend of Oedipus, from Europe, the Near East, Africa, the Carolines, the Antilles, and Puerto Rico. The reader will benefit from reading the ancient versions of the legend, and especially the analogues, before reading the introduction, which is an analysis of the legend itself conceived in the abstract and manifesting itself as a set of motifs dealing with the child of folklore who overcomes all obstacles to achieve greatness as a villain (e.g., Judas) or a hero (e.g., Pope Gregory). Edmunds contrasts this folkloristic description of the narrative with the place of Oedipus in Freud, Propp, and Levi-Strauss, showing how each made use of certain aspects of the legend to support his own thought, as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger had done before him.

Steiner's treatment of the Antigone-Creon tale focuses chiefly on the issues of society and the individual that occur in literature, art, and life. All that Edmunds steers clear of—the literary, philosophical, and mythological—Steiner encompasses, tracing and interpreting successive transformations of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the minds of Hegel, Hölderlin, Kierkegaard, Anouilh, Brecht, Cocteau, and many others. Whereas Edmunds sees the limited number of analogues to the Oedipus tale as calling into question claims for its "worldwide occurrence" and for the universality of the Oedipus complex, Steiner emphasizes the universal vitality of the Antigone tale, suggesting that its power lives even in our own minds, syntax, and behavior. He has watched others and himself interpreting the Sophoclean text and its interpretations, and sets forth his provocative ideas in a prose so rich and supple that the reader feels encouraged to grasp continuities between literature and life and to strive for transcendent realms beyond them.

Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100–400. Ramsay MacMullen. Yale, 1984. \$18.

This is a new and refreshing analysis of the old and important question of why Christianity succeeded in the early Roman Empire and triumphed over other cults. MacMullen steadfastly examines the evidence, which he admits is meager, from historical, rather than theological, perspectives. Both the description of his approach and his prose style show high sensitivity to difficulties and possible prejudices. From the records he posits a mixture of motives for the ordinary religious conversion, showing similarities between Christian and

pagan methods. Before Constantine became a Christian, stories of miracles seem to MacMullen to be most effective in recruiting converts; after that, the yearning for financial security seems central. Even though direct testimony is understandably lacking, he deduces it, for example, from tax breaks for Christians. He also sees a role for intimidation, forceful coercion, and uniquely Christian powers of persuasion derived from a monotheism that reduced other gods to mere demons. His style is generally lively and occasionally indulges in salty colloquialism.

The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's *Iliad*. Seth L. Schein. California Univ., 1984. \$22.

A clear summary of relevant scholarship and criticism on Homer's *Iliad* and an integrated, balanced exposition, in its own right, of the artistry with which the poet handles the essential moral issues of the poem. This very readable account will give any pursuer of Homer, whether in Greek or in translation, a useful framework for understanding the values that define the heroic and social worlds of Achilles, Hector, and those bound with them in life and death, and for appreciating Homer's artistic focus upon the inextricably linked beauty and sorrow of those lives and deaths.

RUSSELL B. STEVENS

Pluto's Republic. Peter Medawar. Oxford, 1982. \$25.

A Slot Machine, A Broken Test Tube: An Autobiography. S. E. Luria. Harper & Row, 1984. \$17.95.

Alexander Fleming: The Man and the Myth. Gwyn Macfarlane. Harvard, 1984. \$20.

Although these three volumes are hardly of a kind—each merits attention for its own sake—there remains, I think, a strong rationale for grouping them. For each in its own way contributes to furthering informed and inquiring readers' understanding of the way scientists go about their business—and few intellectual pursuits are more critically needed today.

Medawar has provided, in his usual lively prose, a variety of essays, some new, some reprinted from earlier sources, on science in relation to other human activities. Anyone who has been brought up on the highly misleading notions of the scientific method, as extolled in the usual classroom and textbook treatments, will do well to read Medawar thoughtfully and thereby come to a clearer understanding of what it is all about.

Luria's work is, as titled, an autobiography. Thus it tells, in the main, how one successful scientist came to do what he did and think as he does. It is necessary and instructive to be reminded that science is done by real people, with all the diversity, strengths, and weaknesses that this fact implies. The story is frankly told and convincing, although his commentary on the political arena is perhaps of little significance to the basic message.

Finally, the biography of Fleming, which, despite the blurbs on the dust cover, is generally sympathetic, makes available in substantial detail an account that for the most part is unknown. The contrast between the popular legend of penicillin's discovery and the full story of this remarkable compound should awaken even the most uninformed

reader to the complexity of scientific research and the risks of depending on mass media alone for information.

Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers. James C. Whorton. Princeton, 1982. \$19.50; paper, \$9.95.

If nothing else, Whorton provides in this volume a welcome antidote to the current national hysteria for things "natural." As a biomedical historian, he examines, with just enough light-hearted running commentary, the century from 1830 onward during which a succession of health reforms were vigorously promoted by their adherents. Not that all the fads—from Graham crackers, through vegetarian diets and body building, to bicycling—were wholly without value. Indeed, many had a certain merit, but it was the unswerving and enthusiastic belief of their promoters that near-total salvation lay in pursuit of this or that special program that lent an atmosphere of absurdity to the whole episode.

The Myth of Population Control: Family, Caste, and Class in an Indian Village. Mahmood Mamdani. Monthly Review, 1972. \$7.50.

One small village in one country during one period can hardly be generalized to the pervasive issue of population pressures and control, and the author makes no such pretense. At the same time, this account makes a compelling case for rethinking some of the concepts and policies that have pervaded accepted dogma in this critical matter for some time. The exposition projects a commendable sense of authenticity.

The Dose Makes the Poison: A Plain-Language Guide to Toxicology. M. Alice Ottoboni. Vincente Books, Berkeley, 1984. \$15.95; paper, \$9.95.

Early on in this relatively slender volume, the author speaks of "news-media toxicology," a phenomenon of which there has been vastly too much in the recent decade or two. Would that all who contribute to the strident accusations and counteraccusations so common in recent years would take to heart the basic message Dr. Ottoboni sets forth—that absolutes are rare, and that few substances are either wholly dangerous or wholly benign. As she calmly and persuasively points out, it all depends—on amount, on timing, on sensitivity, and so on. A thoroughly useful and *timely* book.

Fifth Anniversary Issue, Science 84, vol. 5, no. 9 (Nov. '84) Ed. by Allen L. Hammond. Amer. Assoc. for Advan. of Science, \$2.

Virtually all the space in this anniversary issue of the periodical initiated by the AAAS about 5 years ago is devoted to vignettes under the general title "20 Discoveries That Shaped Our Lives." Few persons, scientists or non-scientists, can fail to be thrilled by this exposition of the near-incredible diversity of the problems and the products of human ingenuity and endeavor.

ANDREW GYORGY

Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917. Stephen F. Cohen. Oxford, 1985. \$17.95.

This brilliantly written book presents a truly "revisionist" recasting of our Western stereotypes and forcefully attacks the old-

fashioned perceptions of the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. This reviewer was particularly impressed by the author's skillful, even respectful, demolition of the so-called Totalitarian Model, which has been the beginning point of all Sovietologists since World War II. Emphatically recommended for the Soviet specialist, but probably of great interest to the general reading public as well.

The Warsaw Pact: Alliance in Transition? Ed. by David Holloway and Jane M. O. Sharp. Cornell, 1984. \$29.95.

Certainly the most up-to-date and comprehensive review of the Warsaw Treaty organization, this book is "must" reading for interested scholars in the field, not to mention the Defense Department, which could particularly benefit from Part II: "Intra-Pact Relations." The essays by Malcolm Mackintosh, Christopher D. Jones, and Stephen Larrabee are especially noteworthy.

The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era. Ed. by Erik P. Hoffmann and Robin F. Laird. Aldine, 1984. \$49.95.

This important tome covers many areas of Soviet life and "polity" that usually remain unexplored by Kremlinologists. More a general reference work than a textbook or case study, this book will be a valuable addition to the bookshelf of the Soviet expert. This reviewer particularly liked the thoughtful essays by Richard Lowenthal, Robin F. Laird, Murray Feshbach, and Blair Ruble.

Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe. Ed. by Sarah Meiklejohn Terry. Yale, 1984. \$27.50.

This superbly edited book is the latest and probably most valuable contribution to the mushrooming literature on East-West relations and conflict areas. Several chapters help to set the stage for a better understanding of current Soviet-satellite economic, political, social, and military relationships. This important book will appeal to both the informed public and specialists in East European politics. This reviewer especially appreciated the chapters by John C. Campbell, Andrzej Korbonski, Paul Marer, and A. Ross Johnson.

The Kremlin and the Prague Spring. Karen Dawisha. California Univ., 1984. \$34.50.

This beautifully documented book artfully combines several analytical chapters with a detailed chronology of the two-phased "rape of Czechoslovakia." Unlike other books on this topic (Valenta and Co.), this book concentrates on the Soviet perspective of the crisis precipitated by the desperate efforts of a satellite to tear itself away from Moscow. The book is warmly recommended to specialists in East European politics and Soviet foreign policy.

The Right Hand of Power: The Memoirs of an American Diplomat. U. Alexis Johnson, with Jef Olivarius McAllister. Prentice-Hall, 1984. \$24.95.

This book will contribute immensely to American readers' knowledge of the short-term (tactical) and long-term (strategic) problems and satisfactions of the U.S. Foreign Service. Each stop of Ambassador Johnson's brilliant career from Czechoslovakia to Thailand is not only explored in detail but put into the proper context of "time and peace." A fascinating life marvelously analyzed—both for professional colleagues and for the general public.

Phi Beta Kappa Associates Invite Membership Inquiries

If you were asked what John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Sylvia Porter, Charles Evans Hughes, Marjorie Hope Nicolson, and Richard Lugar have in common, you would no doubt take account of the fact that the question was asked in *The Key Reporter* and answer correctly: membership in Phi Beta Kappa. Beyond that, however, you might not know that they all were or are members of a special group known as the Phi Beta Kappa Associates.

The Associates are not widely known among the general membership of the Society because they conduct their business unostentatiously. Nevertheless, they have played and continue to play an important role in the life of Phi Beta Kappa. Founded in 1940, the Associates pledged themselves to build an organization whose chief purpose would be to provide a living endowment for the Society, and this they have done.

The Associates' Plan

Their plan from the outset was straightforward: 200 members were to be enrolled, each one committing himself or herself to an annual contribution of \$100 for a period of 10 years. At the end of that period, a "regular" member would become a "life" member, making way for the admission of another regular member. Thus approximately \$20,000 a year would be contributed to Phi Beta Kappa by the regular members. These funds, then the equivalent of the annual income on approximately \$500,000, were to be used as directed by the Trustees of the Phi Beta Kappa Foundation. This plan was put into effect in 1940 and has been the basis of the Associates' operation ever since. Many life members have continued to contribute to Phi Beta Kappa even after their pledges were fully met.

The original proponents of this generous-spirited proposal were Hugh McKin-

non Landon, an Indianapolis banker, and Dave Hennen Morris, former ambassador to Belgium. Twelve others took part in the organizational meeting. The first of what was to become a series of notable annual dinner-meetings took place in December 1940 in New York City, at which time 80 founder members were elected and the group was addressed by Count Carlo Sforza on "The Challenge to Democracy." The *New York Times* of December 20, 1940, observed that "the group plans to point out by precept and example that genuine devotion to public service should accompany high cultural and intellectual ideals." The Associates have never lost sight of this intention.

A Distinguished Group

The membership at the start included leaders in business and the professions—among them Allan Nevins, the distinguished historian; Eugene Meyer, publisher of the *Washington Post*; Owen D. Young, honorary chairman of the General Electric Company; and Roscoe Pound, former dean of the Harvard Law School. Other eminent Americans who joined the Associates at the time of the founding or subsequently include Lincoln Filene, Eli Lilly, Bernard Baruch, Mrs. Dwight Whitney Morrow, Claude Pepper, Samuel R. Pierce, and James R. Schlesinger.

In 1940, Phi Beta Kappa's endowment was \$290,000. With the help of the Associates' regular and substantial contributions, the endowment now stands at approximately \$4 million. In 1942, a national Phi Beta Kappa Lectureship, sponsored by the Associates, was inaugurated to bring noted speakers to Phi Beta Kappa chapters and associations throughout the country. Funds provided by the Associates have also helped support the highly successful Visiting Scholar Program.

Expanding Membership

The original plan for the Associates, which has worked so effectively, has recently been modified to extend the group's reach and increase its contributions. The regular membership limit of 200 has been raised to 300, and the annual contribution has been increased to \$200. To help achieve the new membership goal, seven regional vice presidents have been appointed. They will help identify candidates for membership and assure the organization a geographically representative composition.

Plans are proceeding under the energetic direction of President Stanley A. Frankel, who will be pleased to receive membership inquiries. Letters may be addressed to him care of the United Chapters office in Washington, D.C.

13 VISITING SCHOLARS NAMED FOR 1985-86

Phi Beta Kappa's Visiting Scholar Program, now going into its 29th year, will send 13 Scholars to campuses around the country in 1985-86 to meet students and faculty informally, to take part in classroom discussions, and to give public lectures. In 1984-85, visits were scheduled for 104 Phi Beta Kappa chapters, three-fourths of the requesting institutions.

The Visiting Scholar panel for 1985-86 consists of the following persons:

David Baker, professor of music, Indiana University. Chairman of the jazz department, Baker has appeared as a performer (trombone and cello) with Stan Kenton, Lionel Hampton, the George Russell Sextet, and many other groups. His musical compositions include jazz and orchestral works, sonatas, concerti, string quartets, and trios. His publications include *Techniques for Improvisation* and *The Black Composer Speaks*.

Walter Berns, Olin Distinguished Scholar in Constitutional and Legal Studies, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. A member of the National Council on the Humanities, he is the author of *The First Amendment and the Future of American Democracy*; *For Capital Punishment: Crime and the Morality of the Death Penalty*; and *In Defense of Liberal Democracy*.

Garrett Birkhoff, George Putnam Professor Emeritus of Pure and Applied Mathematics, Harvard University. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, he is the author of *Hydrodynamics* and *Lattice Theory* and is noted for his research in fluid mechanics, nuclear reactor theory, numerical analysis, and modern algebra.

Franklin L. Ford, McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History, Harvard University. Former dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, he is the author of *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV*;

Strasbourg in Transition, 1648-1789; *Europe, 1780-1830*; and the forthcoming *Murder and Politics: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism*.

Roland Mushat Frye, Schelling Professor of English Literature, Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania. Writer on English literature, theology, and art, he is the author of, among other books, *Shakespeare: The Art of the Dramatist*; *Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems*; and *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600*.



David M. Gates, professor of botany and director of the Biological Station, University of Michigan. He has served on the National Science Board and as chairman of the environmental studies board, National Academy of Sciences-National Academy of Engineering. His publications include *Man and His Environment: Climate; Perspectives of Biophysical Ecology*; and *Energy and Ecology*.

Erich S. Gruen, professor of history, University of California, Berkeley. Among his publications in ancient history are *Imperialism in the Roman Republic*, *The Roman Republic*, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, and *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*.

Neil Harris, professor of history, University of Chicago. Former director of the university's National Humanities Institute and current chairman of the Smithsonian Council, he is the author of *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860*; *The History of the*

United States: Source Readings; The Land of Contrasts, 1880-1901; and *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum*.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, professor of law, Georgetown University Law Center. Norton headed the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1977 to 1981 and was a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. She is coauthor of *Sex Discrimination and the Law: Causes and Remedies*.

Edmund D. Pellegrino, director, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, and John Carroll Professor of Medicine and Medical Humanities, Georgetown University Medical Center. He is the author of *Humanism and the Physician* and coauthor of several other books.

Howard R. Pollio, Distinguished Service Professor in Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. First editor in chief of *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, he is the author or coauthor of *The Structural Basis of Word Association*, *Learning*, *The Psychology of Symbolic Activity*, and a number of other books.

Theodore T. Puck, director, Eleanor Roosevelt Institute for Cancer Research, Denver. He is also research professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Genetics at the University of Colorado Medical Center as well as professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Marvin E. Wolfgang, professor of sociology and law, University of Pennsylvania. Wolfgang is director of the university's Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society. His publications include *The Subculture of Violence*, *Crime and Culture*, *Crime and Justice*, *Criminology Index*, and *Evaluating Criminology*.

 **The Key Reporter**

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