ped around the country. Nuclear material is most vulnerable to theft during transport. A mind-numbing array of nuclear terrorism scenarios and do-it-yourself bomb plans has circulated in the past decade; the possibilities for disaster presented by the reprocessing plans need not be catalogued.

In 1974 the CIA accused Israel of stealing highly enriched uranium from the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation at Apollo, Pennsylvania. Norman Moss reports in *The Politics of Uranium* that NMEC was fined $1.1 million because it could not account for the missing uranium. For terrorist organizations and hostile countries with far less to lose than Israel, shipments of reprocessed plutonium are tempting bait, a chance to make a bid for the nuclear big time.

If every nuclear materials handler were fined for "Inventory Differences," the industry would quickly go bankrupt: In March, the *Guardian* reported that an internal Nuclear Regulatory Commission study showed 375 questionable inventory statements from seventeen plants over thirty-two months. The newspaper reported that the U.S. Navy's nuclear fuel services plant in Tennessee "has regularly shown a monthly deficit of two pounds of highly-enriched uranium, enough to allow someone to make four nuclear bombs a year."

Reprocessing surely will increase what is already an intolerable risk. The administration's stake in continued social stability should be enough to alert it to the danger, but government-funded breakthroughs and State Department leaks are evidence to the contrary. It appears that our government's lack of prudence may give us yet ghastlier proof of George Orwell's prescience.

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EXCURSUS 3

Alfons Heck on HARD TIMES IN THE FRG

On February 3 of this year Chancellor Helmut Schmidt used the most powerful weapon granted him by the West German constitution: He asked his government—a coalition of his own Social Democratic party (SPD) and the Free Democratic party (FDP)—for a vote of confidence. It was the first time in nearly eight years in office that the chancellor had demanded such a vote. And it highlighted dramatically his concern for the rising unemployment in his country. Schmidt accused the government of dragging its feet in finding an effective remedy. Some foreign observers felt the chancellor was firing a cannon to kill a fly, and some German politicians of the opposition suspected he wanted to assert his undisputed leadership of the country. Maybe so, but Schmidt did not risk a resignation and the fall of his government for mere prestige and egomania. Every poll shows that he remains West Germany's most respected statesman by far, despite the serious decline of his party.

Schmidt knows his Germans. If there is one thing they fear more than inflation, it's unemployment. Adolf Hitler came to power largely because there were more than five million Germans out of work in 1933. Today, the Federal Republic has one of the best unemployment compensation programs in the world, and nobody faces deprivation comparable to the 1930s. But the figure of nearly two million unemployed—just short of 8 per cent of the labor force—contains, as Schmidt put it, "social dynamite."

For one thing, to be unemployed in Germany still carries more of a social stigma than it does almost anywhere else. But more important, such a large number of idle workers signifies the end of an era and the beginning of economic insecurity. "Gone for good is the *Wirtschaftswunder* and ahead of us lie years of painfully high unemployment," said minister of commerce. Count Otto Lamsdorff. There is a general consensus on that, but also a degree of inertia when it comes to settling on ways to combat it. Ironically, West German exports reached their highest levels last year, but unemployment kept rising all the same. A high index of productivity has the side effect of requiring less labor, especially when the demand for goods is slackening. That, in simplified terms, is the German problem. Less efficient countries in the European Community are even harder hit, and so is the American economy, which recently recorded another monthly trade deficit of $5 billion. There is a definite relation between the current world-wide recession and high U.S. interest rates. "Even the Americans should be able to see that," said Hans Otto Poehl, chief of the Deutsche Bank, bitingly.

Unlike President Ronald Reagan, Helmut Schmidt has qualifications as an economist. He was minister of finance before he became chancellor in 1974. It is reported that he is not impressed by David Stockman's uncertain figures. But just like the American president, Schmidt, despite his Socialist party affiliation, is a capitalist. Some of the so-called "employment measures" now being considered by his government would suit Mr. Reagan just fine. For one thing, Schmidt does not intend to use for unemployment benefits any of the additional 7 billion deutschmarks in tax revenues he hopes to raise. Such social services are already sufficiently covered. The money is to be used principally for capital expenditures and investments in manufacturing plants and business. This, Schmidt believes, is what created jobs in the past and will create more jobs in the future. No other measure has such impact.

West Germany has an excellent apprenticeship system that produces highly qualified workers; it is not faced, as is the United States, with millions of people who are virtually unemployable due to lack of skill or motivation. There is hardly a German who would accept welfare as a life-long career. The Germans believe, however, that many of the four million guest workers (the figure includes dependents) will call for exactly that. Most guest workers, in fact, work hard at low-prestige jobs; but many, if not most, Germans have no intention of regarding them as equals. Feelings against them rise with each point in the unemployment rate. But the government knows only too well that without guest workers the German economy would collapse. They are integral to it and are there to stay.

What Chancellor Schmidt successfully conveyed with his startling request for a vote of confidence—which he received by a unanimous vote of all 269 coalition members—was a sense of urgency. "Schmidt is still in Bonn," said many of his countrymen. "He'll stop the slide."

At this point that is little more than wishful thinking, but Germans are more confident of their chances for a quick economic recovery than are many Americans. Still, the measures of the employment program will not have much of an immediate effect, and they are going to be both slow and painful. Although Schmidt and his coalition partner Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who is the foreign minister as well as the leader of the Free Democratic party, have agreed on a very general plan for action, the details still

must be hammered out. That will keep the politicians busy for many months. It appears, though, that beginning July 1, 1983, the value-added tax, now at 13 per cent, will rise to 14 per cent, thus producing some 4 billion deutschmarks per year to finance the program. That rise, however, will have to be approved by a majority of the German states, or *Länder*. There will also be, as with the Reagan administration, a cut in social benefits—an unpopular step for a Socialist party chancellor to take. Thus the cut is likely to be minor, mostly involving a freeze on pension rates. Schmidt's most controversial proposal is to raise gas and fuel prices by July 1 of this year by roughly two cents a litre. Stiff opposition is guaranteed.

Yet there also is no doubt that the program will pass in some form. Germans of all parties recognize the need for action if they are to preserve not only their standard of living but social peace. A feeling of *angst* has already overcome many Germans who had never considered the possibility that some day there might be no work for them. They are willing to make sacrifices for jobs and stability. The gluttonous days of the last years seem somewhat sinful in retrospect. There are also ominous predictions from the extreme radical Right, a small fraction of the German political scene that nevertheless manages to arouse unwarranted fears that foreign workers will take their jobs. "There were no foreigners in our land and plenty of work for all of us Germans in Adolf Hitler's first years, when he faced much grimmer prospects," thundered a right-wing Munich newspaper. Quite true. And the Fuehrer also produced thirty years of employment just cleaning up the debris of the Thousand-Year Reich.

Alfons Heck has written extensively on Germany, past and present.

EXCURSUS 4

Robert J. Myers on THE LIMITS OF TRUTH

"Truth and Its Limits: Public and Private Domains" was the theme of a recent all-day conference sponsored by the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research and the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine. "Are changes in standards of truth-telling a response to competing values, a realization that 'absolute' truth may be only a myth?" the conference asked. "Or are they signs of a pervasive developmental disability, rooted in social disorganization and family pathology? Do different realms of human behavior such as medicine, law, politics, and social relationships have their own standards of truth-telling, and can we tolerate this kind of ethical relativism?"

If the distinguished panelists are to be considered the last word on this issue, relativism carried the day. Final score: Relativism 10, Absolutism 0 (in a field of two moderators, six panelists, and two discussants). These psychotherapists, doctors, and writers considered too much truth a bad thing for both personal and public affairs. As for lying, it was seen as a sort of philosophic salve, soothing the otherwise itchy problems that might overwhelm our public and private relationships and our medical practitioners. Lying not only offers the possibility of enriching dreary, translucent lives but sometimes lubricates the track between capability and achievement.

Our consciences are formed during our first half-dozen years under the influence of family and environment. The moral system of the larger society, however, is not as static. Thus youth, inevitably struck by the "George Washington syndrome" ("I cannot tell a lie"), should not be discouraged about its prospects in the world out there; the superego may yet come 'round.

This view of truth and morals merely grazes a complicated issue. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in *Ethics*: "'Telling the truth'...is not soley a matter of moral character, it is also a matter of correct appreciation of real situations and of serious reflections upon them. The more complex the actual situations of man's life, the more responsible and the more difficult will be the task of 'telling the truth'...[C]ontinual progress in learning to appreciate reality is a necessary ingredient in ethical action." Yet it is our very capacity to lie that leads us to respect the truth, observed Willard Gaylin, president of the Hastings Institute. Said Gaylin (in agreement with Aristotle), man's full political development requires involvement in the political community, for which truth is an important but not the highest virtue.

The pressures to lie in modern society have increased for at least two reasons: (a) Certain customs and taboos (such as not discussing politics, religion, or sex) have been so eroded that social balm needs to be applied more often through evasion and deception; and (b) the world's complexity has strengthened the notion that truth is ambiguous and that privacy, manners, and even secrecy have their positive side.

The afternoon session focused mainly on the public sphere. Perhaps participants anticipated that a different standard of truth would be presented, reinforcing the dualism between private and public standards once articulated by the Italian nationalist Cavour: "If we had done for ourselves what we did for Italy, what scoundrels we would have been!" Rather, the standard for public conduct actually seemed higher than that for the private sphere. For example, Dr. Sisella Bok, author of *Lying*, dwelt on the frightening manner in which public officials can exercise power against their critics by either failing to respond to charges or withholding pertinent information—the silence that distorts truth. One recalls here Hans J. Morgenthau's lament: "For those who have made it their business in life to speak truth to power, there is nothing left but to continue so to speak, less frequently perhaps than they used to and certainly with less confidence that it will in the short run make much of a difference in the affairs of men."

Poll-taker Daniel Yankelovich, a participant, also referred to the arrogance of ruling elites, who effectively "distance" and thereby dehumanize American citizens by placing them in various nonpersonal categories—consumers, youth, women. Such elite codes, he felt, "pointed a dagger" at communal living." This distancing and dehumanizing process is also at work in international relations, particularly in regard to U.S. attitudes toward the Soviets. Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) alluded to this on April 25 when he suggested the creation of a jointly manned communication center. At least we would be talking to each other, understanding that Americans and Russians must share life on this planet. Perhaps we would even come to recognize with Bonhoeffer the relationship between reality and ethical action.

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