

More important than the test's effect on Pakistan is the effect on U.S. Congressional opinion. India can simply ignore conservative opinion in America, since India can do nothing right in the eyes of most conservatives. There are others, however, who still have some sentiment for promoting Indian democracy, and India must devote itself to allaying their fears that have been sparked by misperceptions of the recent test. And misperceptions there are, for the American media managers have not done their homework. For a country noted for its investigative reporting, the American media carelessly interpret India's behavior through the prism of American culture-bound policy premises and experience.

One such premise is that "peaceful uses equals military uses." It is at the center of Article I of the NPT. We can grant for the sake of argument that the technology for a peaceful and a military device is the same. So what? Indians argue that what counts is the intent behind the weapon. The question is one of managing incentives, not managing technology. The media further project the idea that the test is the first step toward an Indian weapons program. This assumption is based on the "fact" that all other five nuclear powers treated their tests as steps toward weapons programs. Americans should take more seriously the fact that India is the first country to say that it is not going into a weapons program. This is more than talk and is not, as some suspect, designed to deceive world opinion. Those not persuaded by Indian talk might take a look at Indian actions. India's commitment of resources to nuclear projects shows convincingly that India so far has not invested in weapons programs other than an investment in ballistics research. Unlike the other five nuclear powers, the Indian defense establishment has not been involved at all in the testing program. Nor is it likely, contra some American media coverage, that India will go around helping others to develop nuclear explosives. (What may happen if China tests an ICBM into the Indian Ocean or otherwise poses a nuclear threat to India is another matter. But India has so far shown great caution.) India is likely to seek commercial and political gain by selling power reactor technology to, say, Argentina and Iran, but this does not mean it will sell explosives technology. Explosives technology is something India learned by itself, and other countries will have to learn by themselves.

The Indian argument that its test is peaceful should be taken seriously. A qualification is in order: It is peaceful at present. If Japan tests, the Indians may expect to be blamed. In fact Indians are hardly responsible for Mr. Tanaka's problems with militant Japanese nationalism.

Whatever military significance the Indian test has, it is directed less at Ottawa and Rawalpindi than at Peking. It may be a way to help avoid miscalculations by a China now largely paralyzed by its leadership problems. Chinese misperceptions are one kind of danger. American and Canadian misperceptions are another. Indians face a major job in educating their Canadian and American friends to recognize the logical and policy flaws in the NPT. It becomes more obvious that the legalism of the NPT is not the best way to manage the incentives and compulsions of nations that fear a world order controlled by a concert of superpowers.

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EXCURSUS IV

In Praise of the Automobile

First of all, let us dispense with the silly notion that Americans have some peculiar love relationship with the automobile. Almost everyone in the contemporary world loves automobiles. Those who own them do, as well as those who desire ownership. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Americans have a much more sensible attitude to their cars than the people of most other nations, for the simple reason that Americans have lived with the automobile for a very long time now. Middle-aged couples are more restrained in their passions than young lovers.

The American marriage to the automobile has been a generally happy one. It still is. What has happened, though, is that many Americans seem to feel guilty now about their affection for this mechanical spouse. Very few seem to contemplate divorce in a serious way, but some actually seem to enjoy the guilt. Ownership of a big car may soon be for liberal intellectuals what fornication used to be for Puritans, with roughly the same tension between ideology and pleasure in both instances.

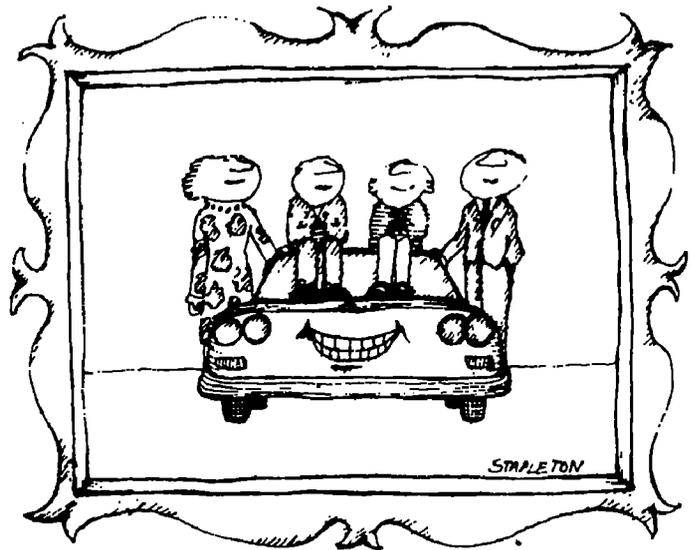
It didn't really begin with Ralph Nader. After all, it was the automobile manufacturers, not their customers, who were the objects of Naderite wrath. It began in earnest in the late 1960's, with the counterculture, the New Left and the ecology movement each contributing to the condemnation of the proud products of Detroit's imagination. As with many other elements of this particular ideological brew, the hatred of the automobile

now appears to have entered the mainstream of the liberal media. It reached a certain climax during the recent gasoline shortage. It was all our own fault, we were told by various media pundits. We had become addicted to our cars, polluting the air, destroying the environment, and it only served us right if we were running out of gas now. All over the country editorial writers and commentators sounded off like old-time preachers gleefully recounting the sorry end of those in bondage to Demon Rum. The energy crisis was but the wages of our own sin, and the Arabs were the Assyrian rod in the hand of Jehovah. Energy "czar" Simon caught these tonalities perfectly. Every time he appeared on television we were all put down in our seats like pupils in a Methodist Sunday School: "This may hurt you a bit, but it's really good for you."

Almost all of this is pernicious nonsense, and it is time to say so. The automobile has made an enormous contribution to what most people consider, and consider rightly, to be the good things in life. It has brought to millions of people an historically unprecedented degree of personal freedom. It has allowed people to live and work in places they wanted to. It has allowed them to discover wonderful sights and experiences that otherwise would have been inaccessible to them. It has freed people from provincial constraints. It has provided mobility accompanied by privacy, with enormous and, I think, largely desirable changes in the character of personal life. It has meant cultural enrichment and it has made possible the maintenance of close human relationships across wide distances.

All these propositions can be concretized: The worker who can raise his family in a place with trees and quiet streets, far removed from the factory where he holds his job. The suburban housewife who can attend a university. Families piling into their car in Chicago to visit the national parks in the West or to visit grandparents in the East. Children being driven to museums, concerts, amusement parks—not to mention better schools. People moving, and still retaining old friendships. People being able to lead unconventional lives away from the hostile scrutiny of their neighbors. And, in America, all these good things have not been the exclusive prerogatives of an upper crust. On the contrary, they have been gifts of the automobile to the great mass of the people.

Are all these things now to become occasions of guilt? It seems to me that anyone who thinks so must have great contempt for the lives of most people. The same goes for those who berate individuals for spending time and lavishing affection on their cars. This is supposed to be a mark



of human deficiency. Says who? Those who spend time and lavish affection on their libraries, their hi-fi equipment, or their sexual experimentation?

But is the place of the automobile in our economy not a waste of labor and resources that could be employed more usefully for other purposes, such as reducing poverty? One can ask the question even if one stipulates that, at any rate, there has certainly been a reduction in the poverty of millions of people directly or indirectly employed by the automobile industry (which, incidentally, includes millions of people in the Third World). Even so, maybe there is something wasteful about the automobile. It hardly compares, however, with the wastefulness of investing labor and resources in universities, book publishing, and literary magazines. But is the automobile not frivolous? No more so than air conditioning, I'd say. But is it not unaesthetic? Well, that's a matter of taste. The streets of our cities are clogged with automobiles, which is both ungainly and inconvenient at times. The streets used to be clogged with horse manure, which, I daresay, was not very aesthetic either.

Is this to deny the costs of the automobile? Of course not! Nothing in history comes for free, and the automobile is no exception. It has provided new occasions for thievery and violence. It has created new hazards to life and limb. It has undoubtedly had adverse effects on the physical environment of our lives. And it may well prove to be too costly for us, as energy resources dwindle in the coming decades.

None of these facts justify the denunciation of the automobile that has been customary of late. If all of Detroit switched tomorrow to producing monorails, the potential for thievery would re-

main roughly the same as it is today (which, incidentally, also holds for the possibility that Detroit would be taken over by the People's Commissariat for Transportation Industries). Criminals, I imagine, can lose themselves more readily in mass transit than in automobile traffic. And so it goes.

The increase in life expectancy has meant that most of us now die of degenerative diseases. The abolition of judicial torture has made for less efficient law enforcement. Democracy is conducive to mediocrity in positions of power (in any well-run despotism many of our politicians would have been strangled as teenagers, if not in the cradle). Are we, therefore, to favor dictatorship, torture and early death? The more plausible course, it seems to me, is to preserve the good things we have attained, while at the same time trying to reduce their costs.

We don't know what the future holds. We may even find that we can no longer afford democracy (almost certainly, by the way, if we are moving toward the no-growth economy that many of our car-haters seem to favor). Many of the things we now cherish, material as well as nonmaterial goods, may become too costly. If so, at least let us not delude ourselves that such deprivation would be some sort of moral achievement. If it turns out that we can no longer afford the automobile, we'll survive. We may even discover acceptable substitutes. But we will have lost something of great value, a portion of freedom, a sense of open spaces, even an affection that was by no means degrading.

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QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Some Americans may be perfectly content with things as they are, but many, probably most, are dissatisfied. Some feel keenly the brunt of prejudice, or work in demeaning and dehumanizing circumstances; some have been bruised by governmental coercion; others see patriotism as a dirty word that stands for racism, invasion of privacy, denial of freedom, and the approval of unhindered exploitation.

The ties that bind us together, however, are moral and ideal; and if we desire to perpetuate the revolutionary commitments which attended

our birth as a nation, the next few years should give us an opportunity to show it. The results may deepen our hopes. It was a seventeenth century theologian who declared that "hope oils the wheels, warms the heart, and gives activity to compassion," and we should value this counsel.

—Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Some Thoughts on the Bicentennial," pamphlet issued by Consulting Committee on the Bicentenary of the United States of the Lutheran Church in America

The morning [at a leading Southern University] was given over to the subject, "The Black Church Today." The afternoon topic was, "Redneck Religion." I was to be the leader of that discussion. . . . I wondered aloud what the response would have been if the morning subject had been "Nigger Religion," and the afternoon had been given over to a discussion of "The Church of the Culturally Deprived and Increasingly Alienated Caucasian Minority." . . . More recently someone I know quite well was doing a Coffee House Performance before a refined, ecclesiastical group of Episcopalians. He opened the gig with a currently popular country song called "Rednecks, White Socks, and Blue Ribbon Beer." It was received with much hand clapping, foot stomping, and cheering. But the house grew silent with hostility when he announced his next song would be, "Niggers, Mudguards, and Red Ripple Wine." Moral: *Let's don't make fun of one another's favorite minorities.*

—Will D. Campbell, "The World of the Redneck," *Katallagete*, Spring

Uganda is another country which seems to be expanding its military capability far beyond what could be justified by defence requirements.

In a recent broadcast from Kampala, a military spokesman told the people that "there will be transport planes in any part of the country at any time." He warned the people against disclosing the number of armaments delivered. "The planes," he said, "will be coming from friendly countries. . . . More ships are carrying more weapons through Mombasa port."

The Soviet military shipments to Uganda have included tanks, armoured personnel carriers, ammunition, rockets and helicopters.

On November 30, President Amin told soldiers at the Mutukula military training wing that by 1975 Uganda would be "one of the best countries in Africa in all military standards. . . ."