

# In the Magazines

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EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT POLITICAL REALISM. . . . Of course they're no longer professing it in academic circles, says Robert L. Rothstein in "On the Costs of Realism" (*Political Science Quarterly*, September), but "its hold over the mind of the practitioner is still formidable." Rothstein takes the plain brown wrapper off this "important part of our recent intellectual heritage," and the result is a comprehensive and readable . . . well, exposé of the Realist model of world politics—all in the brief scope of sixteen pages. A sample:

"The extent to which Realism has been elitist and antidemocratic was masked—or ignored—for many years, for the policies which dominated American foreign policy rested on a substantial domestic consensus about the proper way to deal with the Soviet and Chinese threats. Not only the mass public but anyone who disagreed with the conventional wisdom could be disregarded, be they reporters, professors, or 'bleeding hearts' in general. What Realism passed on was a kind of romanticism about both policy—for the 'responsibilities of power' meant that we had a stake as policeman or judge in anything happening anywhere—and the policy-maker—who had to make 'hard choices' in spite of domestic stupidity or indifference. The 'professionals' would give Americans a good and prudent foreign policy even if they had to be tricked into it or misinformed or lied to. In effect, Realism has provided the high tone of necessity for a rather low range of behavior. In this sense, the revelation in the *Pentagon Papers* of a persistent disregard for the democratic process and a persistent fascination with fooling the press and obscuring the truth was entirely predictable."

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One "Briefly Noted" reviewer has been reading widely of late in the new literature of old wars, treating *Worldview* readers to studies of the Merovingian military, Vichy France, Lord Nelson and the like. Footnotes to history? Perhaps. But Robert Graves offers evidence—this in the October issue of *Encounter*—that statesmen and soldiers do read (or at least they did in England through World War II) and are influenced by what they read, viz:

"My strategic contribution to the [Second World War] . . . starts some time in the early 'thirties when Colonel T. E. Lawrence in a depressed mood wrote to me from India, where he was living disguised as

Aircraftsman Shaw of the R.A.F. He begged me: 'Spare an obol for Belisarius!'

"Not understanding the reference [Pamphilus had trouble with *obol* too], I wrote back inquiring exactly who Belisarius was. He answered that Belisarius was one of the only three really first-class Roman Generals in history: Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar and, five centuries later, this Thracian genius Belisarius. And that Belisarius was the only General in classical history who had ever successfully invaded Italy from North Africa, but that eventually he was blinded by his ungrateful and jealous master, the Emperor Justinian, and forced to beg for small coins at a street corner in Constantinople. . . .

"Lawrence then suggested my writing a book about Belisarius. . . . In 1938, three years after Lawrence's death, I wrote the book and sent a copy to Winston Churchill. . . . He wrote thanking me, adding that he had learned a great deal from my book.

"When the Second World War was being fought in North Africa, and Rommel had eventually been defeated, General Eisenhower, the Allied Supreme Commander, agreed to Churchill's and Wavell's plan for an allied invasion of Italy. One day I was surprised to read that the expedition had sailed from Africa and landed, like Belisarius's expedition, at Reggio; thence it had crossed the Straits of Messina and, like those 6th-century cataphracts, was steadily advancing up the western coast of Italy.

"It may be recalled that Count Belisarius's small forces were fighting a great mass of Germans—the Visigoths. He had, however, soon discovered a crucial role in German strategy: always to seize the most famous, as opposed to the most tactically important, enemy city. . . . Churchill's strategy was, as usual, classical: to follow Belisarius's disregard for all forces on the flank, make straight for Naples, and thence disconcert the Germans by a sudden raid on Rome: two hundred heavily armed men dropped on Rome airport and followed by our main forces.

"My friend and bibliographer Fred Higginson, of Manhattan, Kansas, was one of the selected raiders and has described to me his comrades' disappointment when the raid was suddenly called off. Apparently, he said, General Badoglio, far preferring the presence of Allied forces in Rome to that of Germans, had been secretly acquainted with the plan but no longer considered it a safe risk for us to take.

Eisenhower's change of mind may, however, have been suggested . . . by [his] second-in-command, Air Vice-Marshal Tedder, who nursed an airman's dislike of Montgomery, Wavell and Churchill—all soldiers. Or, more simply, it may have been the decision forced on Montgomery by his ally, the American general Patton, who shared Tedder's dislikes. . . . In effect, at any rate, the Allied failure to pursue Belisarius's strategy added another three months to the Italian campaign, with immense losses to both American and British forces. My old comrade Air Commodore Gambier-Parry, . . . had now unluckily been captured by the Germans in North Africa and sent as a prisoner-of-war to Italy. There one day he asked the Mother Superior in charge of Amenities at his officers' prison camp: 'Holy mother, could you possibly get me an English novel by Robert Graves, called *Count Belisarius*?' It is most important.'

"Why important, my son?"

"Because, Mother, it informs us authoritatively how this war is going to end."

"And, but for Tedder's (or Patton's) interference, so the book should have done. . . ."



How does Octavio Paz view the United States? Raymond Aron? Indian economist Jagdish Bhagwati? And, while *Daedalus* was asking, how does a British sociologist observe work in our country, a Middle Eastern sociologist see U.S. democracy at work? Where does an Italian international economist situate the U.S. in the economic and political arena? What's the view from Brazil?

Paz, Mexican poet-diplomat-teacher-editor, notes, for example, that "from childhood on, Mexicans learn to regard [the U.S.] as *otherness*. This otherness is at once inseparable from us and yet radically and essentially foreign. In Northern Mexico, the phrase 'the other side' is used to speak of the United States. The 'other side' is a geographical reality; the border; a historical reality; another civilization, another language, and above all, another time (the United States is a modern culture while we are still struggling with our past). It is also a metaphorical otherness, for the United States is the image of everything we are not. . . ."

Middle-Eastern sociologist Omar Grine—to choose one more from the essays in *Daedalus's* fall issue—sees America as having "long been admired for both its potential and its achievement. Many foreigners now, however, like many Americans, are beginning to ask: Is America really different from other nations? One of America's great assets as a nation—certainly the one that was most admired—was its self-confidence. Over the years, however, a crisis has developed. America's self-confidence appears to be undermined; Americans have less confidence in one another. The American government, losing public support, has become less effective in defining and

achieving its objectives. This loss of confidence may be attributed to three causes: the elites are so divided and so confused that they cannot articulate meaningful goals for the society; ethical standards falter and the elites are in danger of losing their moral authority; the elites appear incapable of adapting the national ideologies to change."



Of interest to readers of *Worldview* generally, and of special interest to those who wish to pursue the discussion of African problems begun in this issue of the journal, will be "The Religious Impact of Technology in Africa," an article by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, Ghana, to be found in the July issue of the quarterly *Ecumenical Review*.

The Rt. Rev. Peter Sarpong notes that "the African is highly religious. Traditionally, the dichotomy between the religious and other aspects of life does not exist for him. . . . For him, religion is like his skin, never to be put aside. . . ."

"Religion permeates his life from cradle to grave. Rituals of vital significance are performed for him at the three major turning points of his life. . . . These rituals have an importance not only for the individual concerned, but also for society at large. Funeral ceremonies, for example, are intended as much to ward off the perils into which a man's death is supposed to throw the community as to help him on his way to the world of his ancestors. . . ."

"In the not so distant past, religion was the basis of education. It provided both the incentive to good behavior and the deterrent against aberrant conduct. Religion therefore was the source of morality. It was the most important factor in the formation of the socially acceptable citizen. Other values which the African respected, such as honour, respect for authority, the sacred and old age, kindness and gratitude, hospitality and benevolence, were all founded on godliness.

"Living in an environment of near perpetual hazards and hardships, the African was confronted with many problems which he was unable to explain rationally. He therefore developed a religion based on a philosophy of life which satisfied him as an adequate reply to the paradoxes of his existence. Seen in this light, witchcraft, for example, becomes a set of beliefs which, far from being foolish, make complete sense and are indispensable. . . ."

"The fact is that in the fields of traditional religion and of science and technology we are constantly asking the same questions and in both we are compelled to give similar answers. . . . The universe poses problems for both the traditional African and the scientist or technologist. . . . But their methods of approach differ. Science and technology rely on logical proofs and demonstrations; the traditional African is satisfied with faith and conviction as conclusive evidence. Because science and technology

prove by experimental analysis, they easily impress, and gradually eat their way into the once sacrosanct realm of religion. They have an added advantage: they are new and fashionable! Moreover, traditional standards of morality are not easy to keep. . . . The temptation to throw traditional norms overboard in favour of a more attractive, less demanding way of life is therefore great. . . ."

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"How many times has the American priest, pastor, layman or religious asked himself the following questions? Why am I here in Chile? Should I really be here? Couldn't a Chilean do what I'm doing and do it better? Am I just filling holes? What should be my effective contribution to Chile, to the people, to the social process which we are living, and in what should consist my testimony to the Gospel of

Christ? These are questions which have to be asked and have to be answered in one way or another, since upon their resolution depend the posture and orientation one assumes in relation to 'mission' and 'service.' The way one subjectively justifies his presence here is a personal matter, but it is not something that can be resolved in a vacuum. Without critical dialogue and feedback from Chilean sources such a justification is at best very inadequate and at worst objectively harmful."

The September issue of *Adentro Afuera*, a newsletter published by the Missioners' Committee on International Awareness, contains some of the "feedback" called for from Chileans "who have known and worked with U.S. religious personnel." *Adentro Afuera* may be addressed at Casilla 5497, Correo 3, Santiago.

PAMPHILUS

## Correspondence

[from p. 2]

through on the pledges, explicit and implicit, made to Taiwan over the years. But is it not the better part of morality to recognize the limitations of a situation? Surely neither China nor the U.S. nor the USSR has any "reason of state" for backing Taiwanese independence. If none of the great powers is likely to back Taiwanese independence either in the U.N. or on the high seas, is it not then irresponsible, perhaps immoral, to encourage independence aspirations?

The realities of the situation are not what we may wish; they may be formed by considerations that are wrong both morally and politically; but surely it only exacerbates the wrong to entertain illusions about what can be done. Since it is clear that the U.S. will not jeopardize its new China policy for the sake of Taiwanese independence, Mr. Bueler's energies might be better spent in seeking whatever amelioration is possible of what may be a painful transition as Taiwan is inevitably reunited with the Mainland.

L. Perry Francis

Buffalo, N.Y.

## Pannenberg's Worldview

To the Editors: No doubt some readers will rejoice that there seems to be something going on in theology these days, the death of God notwithstanding. I find it not so difficult to restrain my enthusiasm. Prof. Carl Braaten ("Theology and Our Common World," September *Worldview*) heralds the breakthroughs represented by the work of Munich's Wolfhart Pannenberg in a way which is perfectly understandable to theologians, who, after all, have a very immediate reason for hoping theology has a future but which leaves at least some of us who are not theologians with severe misgivings.

The essential point, if I understand Braaten correctly, is that Pannenberg's efforts are aimed at restoring a kind of universal significance to theological language. That is, theology is not to be viewed as some sort of specialized "faith language" for people who are into the "religion" or "Christianity" thing. Further, we are told that the evidences for Christian claims are in some sense public, not dependent

upon privileged revelation but accessible to any rational being for objective examination. While many theologians might have difficulty with such an approach, I find it perfectly amenable, except why must it be called theology? Surely there is a whole range of scientific disciplines that can, at least in theory, examine the evidences pertinent even to the largest "meaning" questions about human nature, history, even metaphysics. The problem in the university is not that we lack theology's partnership but that we lack the evidences that warrant taking theology seriously as a partner.

. . . . If indeed rational inquiry can lead to the comprehensive conclusions proposed by Pannenberg, let the Pannenbergs and Braatens join those disciplines that have a better track record of rational inquiry than does theology. Braaten presents no persuasive argument for the university to burden itself with the intellectual imperialism and ecclesiastical presumptions that have traditionally accompanied theology.

Craig Doernberg

Cambridge, Mass.