

the budget was balanced through energetic collection of taxes and increased charges for public services, domestic prices were curbed by cutting tariffs and credit. As Hewlett reminds us, such a program would have been utterly impossible without dictatorship. By 1967 inflation had been brought under control, and Brazil entered the period of its "miracle." From 1968 to 1973 its overall growth rate was 11.5 per cent, with an awesome 13.2 per cent in industry. The strategy of the regime was rapid build-up with gradual trickle-down—essentially the policy followed by that earlier corporatist Mussolini, although he employed less repression and more welfare.

The book ends with a suggestive if all too brief comparison of Brazil with China as contrasting models for development in the Third World. Brazil combines vast poverty and great inequality with rapid growth and some political freedoms for the upper strata; China offers a concern for social justice along with considerable repression and low growth rates. Hewlett observes that "fifty years down the road, a more prosperous Brazil with an impressive array of individual freedoms for the elite classes and at least some trickle down of the fruits of growth to the middle segments of the population, may present a more attractive image than a stagnant and politically repressive China."

This does not go nearly far enough. Brazil's combination of real economic growth and a certain amount of political freedom provides a reasonable prospect for the gradual lessening of social inequality and a loosening of political rigidity. On the other hand, to call China's rate of development "disappointing" is to indulge in understatement. The classic apology for Maoist excesses was that through repression and bloodshed the Chinese were pushing their way toward dignity and affluence. But evidence shows that the Chinese government has not even resolved the food problem. The truth is that in China, as almost everywhere else, social justice defined as a rough equality of material possessions means, in a backward and repressive society, little more than an equal sharing of poverty and powerlessness on a permanent basis. In at least the early stages of economic development, politically imposed equality is incompatible with the escape into a modern, i.e., highly productive, economy. Enforced equality prolongs pover-

ty. The antidote to poverty is not distribution but production. That is why, after thirty years of Great Leaps, the Chinese leadership is turning to Western market incentives and technology.

Hewlett repeats her major points more than is necessary, tends to underemphasize the importance of noneconomic factors, and leaves a slightly breathless impression with her exclamation points. Nevertheless, readers will find a great deal for reflection in this clearly written book, especially the well-made point that there is not necessarily a satisfactory solution to the afflictions of the Third World, those peoples whose destinies are not manifest but obscure. **WV**

THE AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT
by Leonard Silk and Mark Silk
(Basic Books, 328 pp., \$13.95)

Michael R. Beschloss

The term "the American Establishment" did not gain widespread currency until Richard Rovere's celebrated *New Yorker* essay of 1961, but the ideal of a disinterested public policy elite has long lain in the American mind. Now, Leonard Silk, economics correspondent for the *New York Times*, and his son Mark, a Harvard teaching fellow in history, throw a searchlight upon five of that establishment's best-known institutions—Harvard, the *New York Times*, the Ford Foundation, the Brookings Institution, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

The Silks define the American Establishment as a "third force" counterpoised against business and government, which "seeks to protect and advance social, moral, and aesthetic values that transcend the interests of any single person, economic group, or political constituency or organization; it affects to be a harmonizer, an arbiter, a wise instructor of the nation—and particularly of its political and business ideal."

The authors trace the notion to the early Unitarian church of Massachusetts, which served as counterbalance to Calvinism and Enlightenment Deism, and they draw a parallel between the key attributes of the modern Establishment and those perceived by the Reverend William Paley in the eighteenth-

century Church of England: a hierarchy of professionals, guaranteed financial support, exclusivity, tolerance, and flexibility.

The Establishment institutions of 1980 are found to be increasingly frustrated. At Harvard a new humility is induced by the suspicions of the heartland. "Harvard does not hate America; its Archibald MacLeishes and Samuel Eliot Morisons and Archibald Coxes want nothing more than to be of service to the nation. Yet Harvard's love for America is unrequited. Downstairs does not love upstairs."

The *New York Times* is torn between its business constituency and its maverick editorial page. "In a sense, the vulnerability of a newspaper like the *Times* is precisely that of the American Establishment itself, which also needs to preserve the goodwill and support of business, and which tends to judge the performance of the press, the universities, foundations and research centers, in terms of the impact on business interests."

The Ford Foundation operates with an endowment diminished by one-fourth over a decade. "Buffeted by public opinion, federal legislation, and the economy, Ford could well have turned tail and fled. The wonder is that it did not."

"The Brookings Institution, having withstood Charles Colson's plan to explode a fire bomb within its walls, must now withstand a more threatening national "consensus of economy and efficiency and antigovernmental spirit...blown in by the winds of inflation and high taxation."

The Council on Foreign Relations has become a target. "Has a rising tide of right-wing populism placed the Council, with its internationalist traditions, its dedication to reasoned discussion, and its hospitality to a wide range of views, beyond the Republican party's pale of acceptability?"

The business community, whose principal spokesmen once articulated a creed of social responsibility from such platforms as the Committee for Economic Development, now includes among its leaders a growing population of neo-rugged individualists. The Business Roundtable and the American Enterprise Institute have been formed to influence policy under the watchword of enlightened self-interest. "This new militancy accords awkwardly with the Establishmentarian impulses toward

conciliation and accommodation of some big business leaders."

Perhaps nowhere is the crisis of the Establishment more manifest than in the political arena. Populist hostility toward the Eastern seaboard is not new, yet only in recent years has the movement sprung from the conservative end of the spectrum. Richard Nixon has written of his efforts to build a "new leadership class whose values and aspirations were more truly reflective of the rest of the country." He urged his cabinet to "resist the Washington habit of recruiting their staffs solely from Eastern schools and companies" and "to branch out and get new blood from the South, the West, and the Midwest."

In 1980 these cleavages are evident as never before. George Bush, before campaigning for president, felt compelled to resign from the Council on Foreign Relations, although this did not spare him the wrath of such patriots as William Loeb of the *Manchester Union Leader*: "Mr. Bush is the candidate of the self-appointed elite of this country." Jimmy Carter in 1979 criticized the Establishment as "snobbish, arrogant, distrustful, especially of people like us," yet in 1980 suffers the excori-

ation of Ronald Reagan for his one-time membership in the mysterious Trilateral Commission. A presidential contest in which both main contenders consider such associations a grievous liability raises questions of the future ability of Establishment institutions to influence public policy openly.

The American Establishment is a fine primer on the national élite. It yields a goodly harvest of original anecdotal material. As might be expected, the portraits of Harvard and the *Times* (the latter enhanced by an exceptionally candid interview with Arthur Ochs Sulzberger) are well wrought.

Despite the intention suggested by the title, however, the volume falls short of serving as a central source on the American Establishment. We are never really provided an unambiguous definition of the Establishment for analytical purposes. Do the universities, foundations, and other institutions outside the Eastern network fall within the "third force," or should a "fourth force" be proposed to include them? And what degree of disinterestedness qualifies an institution for the Establishment? The Harvard Business School, for instance, teaches a capital-

ism that is closer to Adam Smith than to what the authors call the "social responsibilities creed," but we infer that it is a member in good standing.

Although the Establishment is demonstrated to be under siege, the reasons remain somewhat opaque. The Silks shrink from one explanation that lies among the most plausible—that the Establishment has been less effective than it might have been in achieving a genuine meritocracy, drawing talent from all segments and areas of the nation. Lack of power corrupts as absolutely as power. Henry Kissinger has pondered how Richard Nixon's attitudes might have been changed had he the opportunity to attend Harvard and to join John Foster Dulles's law firm.

The book is finally weakened by an uncertain point of view. The reluctance to assume a firm stand may have resulted from disagreements between the co-authors, from an instinct to render the volume more universal, or from neither. Yet the outcome is a judgment on the American Establishment that is mainly restricted to one paragraph:

"It would be presumptuous of us to try to hand down verdicts: Harvard, guilty; the Ford Foundation, not guilty;

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The New York Times, the jury is still out, etc. The readers will have to judge, the nation will judge, and the members of the institutions themselves will judge. In general, we think we would render a scotch verdict: we approve of some things the Establishment has done and disapprove of others. While we wish it would behave better—more courageously, with a quicker sense of justice and a stronger will to right social wrongs—we are on the whole glad it exists.”

This respect for the reader’s discrimination is admirable, but the contribution would have been greater had the authors presented a more venturesome conclusion, developed through their years of intimacy with the subject, on an issue whose resolution will do much to influence our national and international direction. [WV]

JACK: THE STRUGGLES OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

by **Herbert S. Parmet**

(Dial Press; xix + 586 pp.; \$14.95)

Bruce Miroff

Jack is a massively detailed account of the rise of John F. Kennedy. Historian Herbert S. Parmet has plumbed the archival riches of the Kennedy Library and conducted numerous interviews with Kennedy intimates in order to establish an authoritative narrative of Kennedy’s prepresidential years. His biography stops with Kennedy’s announcement for the presidency in January, 1960; a second volume on the Kennedy administration is promised.

Unfortunately, the wealth of material that Parmet musters cannot compensate for his deficiencies as a biographer. Parmet has not brought any distinctive insights or narrative gifts to his story. While providing an exhaustive compilation of Jack Kennedy’s doings and sayings, he seldom manages to get inside his subject. The externals of Kennedy’s prepresidential career are extensively aired; his desires, motives, and beliefs are rarely exposed. The result is a sluggish tale, frustrating in its unrealized possibilities.

In a brief prologue Parmet announces several major themes. Jack Kennedy’s biography can be understood, he suggests, as a “lifelong struggle for freedom” against a weak body and an over-

powering father. Through that struggle Kennedy matured into an independent, imposing personality; his personal qualities “were distinctive, more subtle than generally perceived, and not hitherto understood.” This distinctive personality became the key to his remarkable political mystique. “Kennedy, ...rising through the Eisenhower decade, gradually offered an alternative appeal: the desire that masses have demonstrated throughout history, to be led by wise, gifted superiors, congenitally prepared to show the way.”

Only the first of these themes—Kennedy’s life as an ongoing struggle—is actually developed in the course of the narrative. Parmet seemingly intends to portray the success of Kennedy’s struggle, but his evidence remains ambiguous. Kennedy’s courageous battles against disease and injury are amply documented, but the more difficult battle for independence from Joe Kennedy, Sr., is never definitively won. Parmet recounts numerous gestures of resistance against Joe; even Jack’s wartime affair with Inga Arvad, a woman under surveillance by the FBI because of her Nazi connections, is summed up as “another of his little rebellions, exasperating his father and satisfying his own free spirits.” Yet Joe continues to hover in the background, smoothing the way with his vast wealth and influence for his son’s rise. And Jack, despite frequent disagreements with Joe over political strategy and public policy, continues to rely heavily on his father’s “invaluable” assistance.

Parmet’s other themes—that Jack Kennedy had a distinctive and subtle character, and that his wisdom and personal gifts were instinctively grasped by the “masses”—are neither developed nor substantiated in the course of the book. Since Kennedy’s character is not revealed or analyzed in any depth, his purported subtlety remains obscure. Political wisdom and personal gifts are occasionally glimpsed, but the bulk of Parmet’s evidence suggests a conventional mind and a penchant for political expedience.

Indeed, for a biography that begins with a favorable view of its subject, *Jack* is full of unflattering material. Parmet’s research turns up some unsavory moments in the Kennedy rise to prominence. He shows that as a freshman representative Jack Kennedy adopted the same course as his colleague Richard Nixon, attracting public notice

through the grilling of “subversives” before congressional committees. Kennedy’s early and vigorous pursuit of Communists was used as a campaign highlight as late as his 1952 race for the Senate. When Adlai Stevenson came to Massachusetts during that campaign, he drew one of his statements from a memorandum prepared by Kennedy aide Sargent Shriver to praise the young Congressman: “I wonder how many of you know that it was Congressman Kennedy and not Senator Nixon who got the first citation of a Communist for perjury.”

Equally unflattering to Kennedy is Parmet’s research into the writing of *Profiles in Courage*, for which the senator received the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1957. Parmet credits Kennedy with conceiving the book and overseeing its writing. But his examination of Kennedy’s handwritten and dictated material for the book does not support the long-standing insistence by Kennedy intimates that Jack actually wrote *Profiles in Courage*. “At the working level, research, tentative drafts, and organizational planning were left to committee labor...[T]he burdens of time and literary craftsmanship were clearly [Theodore] Sorensen’s, and he gave the book both the drama and flow that made for readability.”

Parmet does succeed in demonstrating Kennedy’s growing political skills in his Senate years. He details Jack’s artful takeover of the Massachusetts Democratic party in 1956, designed to impress Adlai Stevenson with Kennedy’s value as a potential running-mate. He recounts Kennedy’s effective handling of the prickly labor-reform issue in 1958-59 as he positioned himself to make the run for the presidency. Yet, by the end of *Jack* it is still not clear why Kennedy, when he announced for president, could be considered well equipped for the job. Perhaps the second volume of Parmet’s biography can shed light on what this first volume fails to explain: why John Kennedy was an exceptional figure in modern American politics.

Jack is the most extensively researched biography of John Kennedy yet to appear. But Herbert Parmet has leaned too heavily on his research efforts, while failing to bring sufficient psychological and political imagination to his task. All research and no imagination make *Jack* a dull book. [WV]