

endemic." And there is an attempt to grapple with the largest questions, such as the meaning of war: "Not all instances of armed conflict between nations have been considered to be war either under the principles of constitutional law or under international law....Further, a legal state of war may exist without the conduct of hostilities, just as hostilities may be conducted in the absence of a legal state of war."

The strongest parts of the book examine the battles between the executive and judicial branches of government. Students of the presidency have long studied the contest between the president and the Congress for power in foreign affairs—and, indeed, the Thomases address this ongoing struggle in something akin to a (partially outdated) review chapter. They tread ground far less familiar to students of the Executive Office in a chapter entitled "Constitutional and International Law Bases." In this long piece they engage in the valuable exercise of reviewing some of the famous court cases in which the issue was either what constitutes war or what constitutes presidential authority to intervene in a foreign conflict by the use of force. Particular attention is given to *The Prize Cases*; here the Supreme Court had to decide on the constitutionality of President Lincoln's attempt to initiate the Civil War through the proclamation of a naval blockade without a declaration of war by Congress. Lincoln's action was sustained on the grounds that "he was constitutionally empowered to recognize hostile acts of rebels or of a foreign nation as initiating a state of war in the legal sense and that he need not await a congressional declaration." What the Thomases conclude is that "the language of *The Prize Cases* in recognizing the power of the President to make defensive war and in placing that decision, as well as his determination as to the amount of force necessary, within his discretion in reality permits a presidential war-making power with little or no restraint."

The fact that this does not quite square with the last sentence of the book—"All in all, the power of the President to commit forces abroad remains a dark continent of American jurisprudence"—reflects the lack of a strong editorial hand. And it compels us as well to ask why no real attention is given in this volume to what might be called the "impeachment solution." As Democratic Representative Don Edwards argued in a recent *New York Times* editorial, the only way to stop the president from waging an illegal war might be to call him to account by a bill of impeachment.

Yet despite its shortcomings, *The War-*

*Making Powers of the President* offers a number of provocative questions and some timely reminders of events past for those with a special interest in the subject or for those made watchful again in the summer of '83. WV

### THE CHANGING ANATOMY OF BRITAIN

by Anthony Sampson  
(Random House; 476 pp.; \$17.95)

### THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN AN AGE OF ILLUSION

by Anthony Verrier  
(W.W. Norton Co.; 385 pp.; \$18.50)

Larry Tool

For over two centuries Britain has been the very model of a modern industrial nation. The continuing avalanche of books debating or lamenting British decline reflects a concern not only with the relative influence and prosperity of the British people but a broader concern for the fate of the modern project as a whole. In the face of obvious British idiosyncracies there remains a vague but widespread belief that the British future foreshadows that of all modern nations.

The Falklands victory has intensified but not settled the "Whither Britain?" debate. To Mrs. Thatcher and her supporters it symbolizes a welcome resurgence of the national will. In view of her recent triumph at the polls, she can hardly be blamed for believing that this new resolve will soon be translated into economic recovery. She stands foursquare upon the irrepressible human hope that hard work and sacrifice will restore vanished fortune.

To the legions of critics and skeptics, however, the Falklands war only illustrates the bankruptcy of policy based on imperial nostalgia. Sending the fleet south, they contend, was a foolish self-indulgence that squandered lives, weakened NATO, and will drain the treasury for years. They view Thatcher's resolve not as a sign of hope but as an indication that Britain is failing to adjust to her contemporary predicament.

The real issue is the *price* of adjustment. Both the government and its critics seek national solvency and survival. They quarrel about whether it is international prestige or social justice that should be sacrificed to attain it. On the economic front the critics' case remains persuasive: The fleet cannot be launched against Japan, and rumors of Gurkhas will not stampede unions, banks,

and corporations. Yet Thatcher's reelection has left Labour prostrate and the new Alliance still crying in the wilderness. Power has been awarded for resolve, not for economic logic. Even many of the unemployed seem willing to place prestige ahead of self-interest. Clearly each side in this debate has much to learn from the other. Two recent critical books suggest what some of the lessons might be.

Twenty years ago Anthony Sampson published *Anatomy of Britain*, in which he sought the roots of British decline in the obsolete institutions and privileged personnel of Britain's ruling elites. Twice updated, the book has now been completely rewritten. In *The Changing Anatomy of Britain*, Sampson offers a more focused and sure-footed analysis, but one that threatens to overwhelm his original reformist perspectives. The 1962 format remains, but the message is new; twenty years of observation has transformed this anatomist into a psychologist and unwitting ironist. Where, for example, the earlier book damned the monarchy as expensive and irrelevant, the new version extols the diplomatic utility of the queen and portrays Prince Charles as a creative populist. At each stop on his informed and sophisticated tour of the cor-

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ridors of power, Sampson is now alert to the strengths and flexibility of traditional institutions. Like the new Social Democratic party to which he belongs, he is no longer confident that the democratization and modernization of elites will arrest Britain's decline. In domestic affairs, at least, his *Anatomy* points to the need to adapt traditions rather than abolish them.

In foreign affairs, however, Sampson's new book is still haunted by the Falklands crisis and, behind it, by the example of Imperial Spain, another great power that failed to navigate a safe retreat from glory. Because his liberal outlook presumes that patriotism and military effort are throwbacks to a "primitive basis" of society, Sampson cannot believe that the Falklands spirit is transferable to industrial innovation, let alone social progress. Spooked by martial clamor, he ends with a vague appeal to "new kinds of people outside the old classes, who are aware of new opportunities, innovations, and new markets abroad"—a prescription that could just as well refer to Mrs. Thatcher herself.

A cooler and more detailed critique of British foreign relations is offered by An-

thony Verrier in *Through the Looking Glass*, an episodic history of postwar diplomacy. Also an experienced journalist, Verrier is similarly disturbed by the exuberance of the Falklands war. The Argentine invasion of the islands came as a surprise to the British Government, he argues, because of a long history of British self-delusion and make believe. (His title recalls both Lewis Carroll and John Le Carré.) Too many officials were still living in the world of George Smiley and James Bond, where "lesser breeds" do not fight or where a growl from the lion will suffice to scare them off. "The imperial sentiments remain in Mrs. Thatcher's breast," Verrier writes, "but imperial resources have gone."

Verrier's focus is the relation between the permanent administration—the Foreign Office and especially the secret intelligence services—and the succession of elected governments. The intelligence services inherited from Victorian times a preoccupation with the Empire and particularly with the "great game" of containing Russia in Asia. After 1945 they failed to adjust to Britain's diminished role, becoming instead a kind of national "subconscious" charged with the promotion of great power illusions. Over the years a schizoid foreign policy developed, one that paid lip service to British weakness but remained covertly dedicated to making big moves on the big board.

Verrier examines operations in Albania in 1949, Suez in 1956, Kuwait in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, Nigeria in 1967, and Ireland and Rhodesia in the 1970s. In each case he shows the general accuracy and realism of actual intelligence-gathering, the ways in which that work was ignored or misused by elected officials, and the futility of diverting intelligence energies into quixotic operations. Reasoning from conservative premises, Verrier often arrives at liberal conclusions. He comes down particularly hard on Anthony Eden and on the architects of "strategic independence." He makes surprising claims for the role of SIS in the Cuban crisis. Especially welcome is his dispassionate view of the Irish tragedy, where Britain has lost the capacity to rule yet refuses to relinquish the commitment to do so. The intelligence services, he concludes, have through time and error learned the nature of the contemporary world and of Britain's place in it. When will elected governments begin to profit from that knowledge?

If the struggle for the British future is waged on the same thoughtful plane as these recent critiques, Britain may be expected to muddle through with her historic freedoms and her social commitments substan-

tially intact. In any event, scoffing citizens of younger and richer states should remember that ancient communities may have unexpected reserves of ingenuity and morale. We may once again find ourselves turning to our old model for courage and inspiration. WY

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*Carol Lancaster*

Perhaps more than any other continent, Africa has been deeply affected by events and conditions in other parts of the world. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries ten to fifteen million Africans were forcibly transported as slaves to the Western Hemisphere to fill the need for cheap agricultural labor. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Africa was conquered and occupied by European powers. The borders of African countries today were drawn up by Europeans in the last century.

But the impact of the rest of the world on Africa is not limited to the past. To a considerable extent Africa's current economic crisis derives from the recession in the West and the oil price increases of the 1970s. Similarly, prospects for recovery and future growth in Africa will be greatly influenced by economic conditions and political decisions in the West, particularly in the United States. And, as Africans have long recognized, tensions between great powers can spill over into Africa, initiating or exacerbating conflicts in such places as Angola, the Horn of Africa, or Chad.

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