

To define the first purpose of his book, Shawcross quotes from George Steiner's *Language and Silence*:

"While Jews were being murdered in Treblinka 'the overwhelming plurality of human beings...were sleeping or eating or going to a film or making love or worrying about the dentist....Are there...different species of time in the same world, good times and enveloping folds of inhuman time in which men fall into the slow hands of living damnation?'"

Shawcross asks how "the inhabitants of 'good' time do or do not relate to those incarcerated and often murdered in the 'enveloping folds of inhuman time.'" Our ability to relate, much less respond, to those "inhuman times" has been severely restricted, according to Shawcross, by our ability to accumulate endless "mere facts about the world." Certain crises attain "critical mass," gain the attention of the world, and thereby spur a humanitarian response. Others do not.

Another of Shawcross's goals is "to explore a little the extent to which the memory of the inaptly named *Holocaust* has affected our perception and our imagination when hearing distant cries for help." (Inapt, in Shawcross's view, because of the word's biblical connotation of a sacrifice to God.) That *The Holocaust* is the benchmark by which the world measures disasters appears in the fact that it is, in Communist, capitalist, and socialist propaganda alike, a standard warning of inhumanity. The danger, of course, is that unless a tragic situation is compared to *The Holocaust*, the warning may fall on deaf ears.

Shawcross weaves our collective memory of *The Holocaust* and its effect on our ability to respond to suffering into an insightful treatise on the Western conscience. However, his treatise is most valuable in providing a provocative frame of reference for Shawcross's third goal: "to examine the work of some of those humanitarian organizations that the world has created in an attempt to bind its self-inflicted wounds."

Perhaps nothing in recent history so well illustrates the simultaneous existence of "good time" and "inhuman time" as the fact that the Cambodian people faced forced labor, persecution, the threat of execution and starvation under the Khmer Rouge while much of the world was not only unresponsive but virtually unaware of the repression of Pol Pot's rule. Reports of Khmer Rouge "genocide" were made repeatedly by refugees reaching the Thai border soon after the Khmer Rouge gained power from General Lon Nol in 1975. Like early reports of Nazi plans to liquidate the Jews, many were

not taken seriously until too late; it was not until 1978 that official response to Khmer Rouge atrocities acquired any sense of urgency. As Shawcross writes:

"It happened after and partly because the bitter but surreptitious border dispute between the Khmer Rouge and their former Vietnamese allies broke into public warfare and violent recrimination. Massive abuse of human rights alone had failed to win worldwide attention in the way that open schism and warfare within the Communist bloc did."

Shawcross demonstrated in *Sideshow* that he can uncover the personalities, the historical fears and prejudices, and the strategic and economic concerns that go a long way to explain the intricacies of Southeast Asian politics. This ability makes his careful and thorough chronicle of the humanitarian relief effort in Cambodia an analysis of the way the *politics* of mercy often determines the quality of mercy.

The goal of intergovernmental and private, voluntary organizations is to provide humanitarian, nonpolitical relief to people struggling to survive. Yet all such relief must be delivered in the political atmosphere in which the victims are found. Shawcross explains fully the relation between the strategic, economic, and political goals of the U.S., Thailand, Vietnam, and China, and the bureaucratic and diplomatic procedures that often caused critical delays in the delivery of relief.

The aid shipments actually served to reinforce a political stalemate. Aid sent to the part of Cambodia near the Thai border was a strategic element in the struggle of the defeated Khmer Rouge to regroup before beginning its attempt to regain power in Phnom Penh. For the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin government, the aid helped consolidate its effort to gain legitimacy. The government of Heng Samrin (himself a former Khmer Rouge officer who had earlier fled to Vietnam) was not internationally recognized. The United Nations, concerned with upholding the law of nations, continued to recognize the credentials of the Khmer Rouge, first in 1979 and later in coalition with Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann (a cabinet leader under Sihanouk until the late 1960s). In 1979 the U.N. Security Council considered a resolution condemning the Vietnamese invasion; its passage was blocked only by a Soviet veto.

The politics of relief are not exclusive to governments. While testifying to the commitment of humanitarian agency personnel, Shawcross outlines some of the political factors characteristic of most private foreign relief and development aid programs. A

rather complete picture emerges of the personality conflicts and interagency squabbles that hamper the effective distribution of aid. We see the inherent conflict between the agencies' mandate to meet human needs on a nonpolitical basis, their responsibility to the priorities of donors who provide the funds necessary to sustain a relief program, and their need to work through and with governments. Unfortunately, Shawcross tends to bury some of the more enlightening and intricate details of this history in footnotes and vague references.

When asked to comment on the entire Cambodian effort, Sir Robert Jackson, the personal representative of the U.N. secretary-general during the relief effort, responded:

"I am left with a feeling of sadness and despair. The fundamental objective of preserving the lives of the people has been achieved, but much more could have been achieved if the humanitarian operations had not been subjected continuously to conflicting political pressures. Like the victims of Yalta, the Cambodians are victims of international politics beyond their control...."

It is by uncovering and clarifying the international politics of relief that Shawcross brings us closest to understanding the limits of our ability to translate the dictates of our conscience into the actions of mercy. More than offering us a chance to take a fresh look at our complicity in human atrocity—whether perpetrated by Nazis or by the Khmer Rouge—*The Quality of Mercy* brings to light the inability of humanitarian organizations to deliver apolitical relief when political conditions leave no room for merciful policies. WV

PRESIDENTS, POLITICS AND POLICY

**by Erwin C. Hargrove
and Michael Nelson**

(The Johns Hopkins University Press; 288 pp.; \$25.00)

THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION: THE PRESIDENCY AND THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

by Bert A. Rockman

(Praeger; 253 pp.; \$29.95)

Barbara Kellerman

Hargrove and Nelson make a special point of declaring that their book is not just for scholars and undergraduates but for anyone "interested in understanding the American

presidency." Their intention notwithstanding, what they have produced is primarily an undergraduate text giving an overview of selected aspects of presidential government. They address rather briefly a broad variety of topics, including the presidency and the Constitution, presidential leadership, presidential selection (unaccountably, this chapter follows the one on presidential leadership), and presidents and policy formation and management. Individual presidents are treated in staccato style: The leadership strategies and styles of "three successful presidents"—Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Kennedy—are afforded a total of thirteen pages; ten are devoted to "two flawed presidents"—Johnson and Nixon. Indeed, what may be considered the book's central theme is explored only perfunctorily.

That theme, or hypothesis, is what separates this book from the rest of the pack, and on page 66 Hargrove and Nelson get to their point: There are regular cycles of politics and policy in the American system that occur independently of short-term events and leading political figures. Although the authors credit Samuel Huntington's *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* with the idea that American politics is cyclical, in fact it was Hargrove himself who first presented this theme in his *The Power of the Modern Presidency* (1974). As stated in that earlier book, the century has so far seen three complete cycles. Each cycle consists of three stages, and at the heart of each cycle Hargrove and Nelson propose that there has been a "presidency of achievement ... in which great bursts of creative legislative activity occurred that altered the role of government in society." Each presidency of achievement is followed by a "presidency of consolidation in which reform was not rejected but rationalized, slowed down." This stage is followed by a time of new social discontents that are reflected in a "presidency of preparation [that] lays the political groundwork for the president of achievement who follows."

Unfortunately, the cycles of leadership are examined all too briefly. There is a figure to indicate that between 1909 and 1976 Theodore Roosevelt and John Kennedy were presidents of preparation; Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson presidents of achievement (in Hargrove's earlier book Harry Truman was also in this category); and Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, and Richard Nixon, presidents of consolidation. But the discussion accompanying the figure is frustratingly short; the components of the cycle—including elec-

tions, ideas, and presidential skills—are only touched on; the permutations—for example, how Lyndon Johnson managed to be a president of achievement even though he was flawed—remain only superficially explored; and for the remainder of the book the theme of cycles of politics and policy is dropped altogether.

What we have in *Presidents, Politics, and Policy*, then, is a very competent overview of the presidential office. We also have the restatement of a suggestive hypothesis on patterns of politics. What we do not have is the kind of in-depth investigation of that hypothesis which might have pushed the field of presidential studies to a new frontier.

Bert Rockman's *The Leadership Question* begins to fill the biggest gap in the literature about the presidency by placing the presidential office in the broader context of leadership issues. It serves, therefore, as a much-needed supplement to the rather parochial texts that generally dominate the field.

Rockman begins by describing what he calls the "core dilemma" of leadership in America: the balancing of governability and legitimacy. He proceeds to engage us in a thoughtful discussion of what leadership and change actually mean. Three forms of change are outlined (accelerative, incremental, and innovative), and such non-presidential sources of leadership as bureaucrats, Congress, and the courts are briefly explored. This discussion provides a good background to the three chapters that constitute the heart of Rockman's book: The first considers the constants of presidential leadership, the second presents another model of cycles of presidential leadership, and the third carefully analyzes what makes today's problems of presidential leadership different from what they were earlier in our history.

The section on the constants of presidential leadership is valuable because Rockman explains *why* they are constants. He does more than simply say that presidents have always had to lead without the benefit of a strong central government to back them or a disciplined party to rely on. He goes on to provide information on how this came about and why it is now integral to our political system. History and political culture are the keys here, as is the power of such an unrealized idea as egalitarianism.

Rockman proposes three types of cycles of presidential leadership—as distinguished from Hargrove and Nelson's. He differentiates between epochal cycles, characterized primarily by shifts in presidential-

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congressional relations and electoral realignments; metacycles, which are of narrower range than epochal cycles and determined by shifts in domestic and foreign policy priorities as well as by changes in styles of managing the presidency; and termcycles, including the honeymoon period, declining support over the first term, and growing effectiveness as a result of the incumbent's increased understanding of the presidential office.

The chapter on contemporary influences on presidential leadership surveys such aspects of the modern landscape as the expansion of technology and the resultant growth of individual rationality and its result—a politics “usually vulnerable to the currents of short-term forces.” Most of Rockman's book, then, is concerned with the situation in which all presidents find themselves as they take up their leadership role and how that situation has evolved over time. Only in the penultimate chapter does he focus on the individuals involved. Rockman spends little time on particular presidents; rather, he discusses the styles, traits, and behavior that tend to characterize our presidents, as well as the consequences these may have.

The concluding essay places in the context of a larger leadership question the problems that bedevil those who would exert political leadership in America: Is it possible for the government of an advanced industrial society with a strong democratic tradition to function effectively? By training his lens on the big picture—nationally and to some extent cross-culturally—Rockman enables us to take the long view. His discussion of leadership illuminates the more narrowly defined problems that beset our own political life, and in this he has rendered a service to all who are “interested in understanding the American presidency.” WV

Briefly Noted

THE GLOBAL DEBT CRISIS: AMERICA'S GROWING INVOLVEMENT

by John H. Makin

(Basic Books; 272 pp.; \$18.95)

In the decade beginning in the early 1970s, a small group of banks—along with a few governments and international agencies—loaned almost \$700 billion to developing countries. Today, the failure of these countries to repay the interest on these loans has created the world's worst debt crisis in

the history of eight centuries of international banking.

How did it happen and where do we go from here? These questions are the subject of this timely book by the director of Fiscal Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, who is, as well, professor of economics at the University of Washington. The layman who wants to understand this important subject will find Professor Makin's book probably the best that has appeared so far.

The story he tells is a tangled one. It begins with the judgment of U.S. banks that the United States itself was not a good place to invest money in the 1970s. President Nixon had cut the dollar's link to gold to finance the Vietnam war, the cost of social programs was mounting, and the two were creating massive inflation. Overseas, by contrast, a new economic order seemed to be emerging, with attractive investment opportunities. Moreover, prodigious sums in petrodollars were soon available for recycling, and the powerful economies of scale involved in lending hundreds of millions instead of hundreds of thousands meant much higher commissions for the same amount of work. Adding it all up, it is clear that the temptation to push loans on all-too-willing developing countries was well-nigh irresistible.

In the beginning, of course, these loans made some sense. Nations like Brazil, Korea, and the Philippines quite naturally wanted to spend in excess of their relatively low incomes, and there were good prospects for repayment out of targeted export earnings. But then came the oil crisis, and with it not only petrodollars to be recycled but a reduction in the ability of the world's economic machinery to provide food, steel, and other commodities with existing blends of capital and labor. A U.S. attempt at leading a world revival by old-fashioned pump-priming to stimulate demand for goods was a failure. Some developing countries were now unable to pay the interest on their loans, necessitating further loans and greater indebtedness.

Professor Makin's final chapter is blunt. He sees no hope for “ad hocery” and “muddling through.” He believes the banks should realize that their loans are not worth 100 cents on the dollar and that they have no chance of coming out whole. The International Monetary Fund and other agencies should begin negotiations aimed at parceling out losses. Who will absorb these losses—the banks or governments (read the taxpayer)—is a question that remains to be answered.

—Walter E. Ashley

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NUCLEAR WAR

edited by Christine Cassel, Michael McCally, and Henry Abraham

(Praeger; xix + 551 pp.; \$29.95/\$12.95)

This compendium of information regarding the frightening situation in which we find ourselves toward the end of the twentieth century is timely, necessary, and useful. Originally intended as a reader for medical students in a course on the “Medical Consequences of Nuclear War”—its editing was carried out under the auspices of the Boston-based Physicians for Social Responsibility—the volume will be of value to any concerned citizen and is an excellent resource for college classes and community groups.

The tempo of fearful reaction to the prospect of nuclear war and the possibility of planetary destruction is increasing. While Hersey's *Hiroshima* in the '50s raised moral questions and created some unease (did we need to use the bomb?), more realistic and personal fears have been coming to the fore within the past five years. Publication of the Japanese scientists' *Hiroshima and Nagasaki* in 1983, followed by the more recent *Science* article “Nuclear Winter,” elaborated in the April, 1984, issue of *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, has generated consternation worldwide. Washington and Moscow's slow dance around the prospective killing-ground has augmented these fears and anxieties.

The readings are grouped under such headings as “The Medical Responsibility,” “The Threat of Nuclear War,” and “The Weapons.” A number of chapters are devoted to the effects of nuclear explosions on human beings and the environment, their short and long-term psychological and economic effects, the inability of medicine to cope, and the uselessness of civil defense. There is a fine chapter titled “Ethics,” which contains the Catholic bishops' statement along with a tart philosophical analysis of the uses of patriotism in this context.

The final chapter, on “Common Sense and Nuclear Peace,” if not exactly optimistic, is the most hopeful. Its authors presume that a fundamental change in national attitudes is possible, that common sense does exist among the foreign policy planners of competing and antagonistic nations, and that the rational examination of alternatives will lead to sensible reactions. Nevertheless, it is with an appendix that the book ends—the chilling and bitter scientific article “Nuclear Winter: Global Consequences of Multiple Nuclear Explosions.”

—George A. Silver