

thoughtlessly absorbed large doses of the mental meat tenderizer of American academia—cliché leftism. What seems to have been forgotten by Dr. Conant and the worse things that have come after him is the fact that civilized institutions—be they artistic, economic, academic, or governmental—require a certain number of civilized maintenance men. These maintenance men used to be supplied by selective, traditionally structured universities that emphasized a rich appreciation and understanding of western civilization.

Those days are gone, however, and now the machines are beginning to break down. Peter Witonski has done some serious thinking on the deeper causes of the breakdown and reached some interesting conclusions. His latest book is a useful guide to anyone seriously concerned about the state of American education at all levels and how it might be salvaged. Since Witonski is also a literate fellow with an ample measure of wit, it also reads well, despite a few traces of hastiness in preparation.

Besides providing much helpful information on current student opinion, the role of the federal government in determining educational policy, and the impact of New Left violence, Witonski also states an interesting case concerning underlying causes. While aggravated by Dewey and his more rabid successors, he says, the root problem of American edu-

cation goes all the way back to the beginnings of the Republic and the ingrained Yankee notion that mass "practical" education is the desirable goal of our educational system. This was the logical precursor of the current devaluation in academic standards and climate in which, "while grades are rising at colleges and universities across the

land, scholastic aptitude scores are falling."

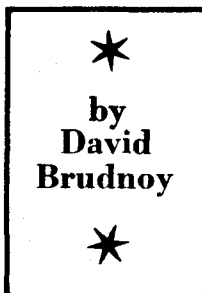
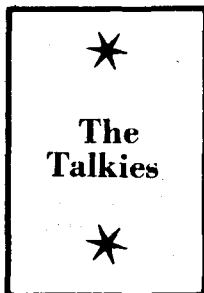
One almost bemoans the passing of that extinct class, the slightly neurotic, rather despotic but wholly dedicated spinster teacher and/or austere teaching nun who at least succeeded in pounding the basic elements of mathematics and reading into their balky charges, along with a modicum of civility, clarity of thought and expression, and hygiene. Left to their own devices today, the same class of adolescents have somehow managed to spawn twin epidemics of illiteracy and venereal disease in the most overschooled, overmedicated society in the world.

What does Witonski suggest by way of improvement? Raise standards; eliminate second-rate universities, faculties, and students; set up a dual secondary school system that separates wheat from chaff, along European lines; and see to it that noncollege material is channeled into practical trade and technical training centers.

Until we follow such a course, too many unqualified college instructors will be teaching (or, rather, attempting to teach) too many unqualified college students with abysmal results to themselves and the institutions they supposedly serve.

Good luck, Peter, but don't hold your breath.

**Aram Bakshian, Jr.**



### *Make 'em Laugh; Make 'em Cry*

You go to the movies in a funk, some film matches your temperament that day; you emerge proclaiming it a "majestic cinema treatment of a universal theme." Or the sun's tickling every fiber, the one you love loves you truly, truly dear, and shows it; all's well, and some sing-a-ding-a-ling flick seems like the happiness masterwork of the decade. The temper we carry into the theatre, as much as the film itself, conditions the opinions we take from the experience to—in my case—the typewriter.

Sometimes, not infrequently, one finds two sets of conflicting reactions, thought patterns, approaches, operating during a film viewing. On a light level, for instance: in the spring I went off to *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*: perfectly charming to look at, lovely kids, Nature natural, greener than green, and on in that vein; but the inane screenplay, the acting, the asinine cavorting about and

silly resonances of current events to give, ough, "relevance" to Saint Francis. All right, I say to myself: now hold on, separate your aesthete's eye from your critical glare, get it in perspective, let that witless cartoon-strip of a live-action movie have it. Which I did.

But it isn't always that simple. The conflicting approaches, bi-level emotions, reasoned film reviewer's backlog of experience fighting with the eternal little boy movie-lover's wonderment that the thing up there can move and can move me—all this conjoins not to produce, as one would hope, a well-made critique the next day, but to leave me with two sets of notes, as though two different heads saw the same film, the same night, the same two hours of, say, *Scarecrow*. This film calls, perhaps, for the thoroughly ruthless critic (John Simon, maybe) to eviscerate its cheap-jack emotionalism, to expose its manip-

ulativeness, and to give no quarter even to the merits of the film, which are several, if overwhelmed by the faults. Mr. Simon, I should guess, would be savage. I would too, were *Scarecrow's* only memory for me an awareness of its tricks played on me.

*Scarecrow* tells of two losers. Max, played by the estimable Gene Hackman, is just out of jail for fighting, a pattern he's developed of busting up people and places 'til he gets busted again and again himself. Max is heading East, first to Denver to see his sister, then to Pittsburgh to set up a car wash with a small reserve of money. At the picture's start, he crosses paths in some isolated area with one Lionel (whom Max rechristens "Lion"), acted by Al Pacino, like Hackman an actor of diverse talents, some most likely still untapped. They're an unlikely pair, the boffo-socko and the tender innocent. Max at first tries to avoid hooking in with Lion, but at last their inability to hitch a ride brings them together, Max sweeping

The Alternative Educational News Service is a bi-weekly publication which offers feature stories, book reviews, research and background material for student publications. For a free subscription send the name and address of your campus publication to: The Alternative Educational News Service, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

# Encounter

A Transatlantic Monthly Review of

•CURRENT AFFAIRS•

•LITERATURE•

•THE ARTS•

## SOME RECENT ARTICLES

HENRY FAIRLIE  
Letter from Washington

B. H. HAGGIN  
Toscanini & His Critics

RICHARD LOWENTHAL  
What Prospects for Socialism?

ALEXANDER WALKER  
Blood & Cinema

KARL POPPER  
Indeterminism is not enough

JOHN WEIGHTMAN  
Samuel Beckett

BARBARA WOOTTON  
Journey to China

MILOVAN DJILAS  
Political Torture

GOLO MANN  
Who Owns Heine?

ALVIN TOFFLER  
The Future of Law & Order

JOSEPH FRANK  
Dostoevsky's Realism

JOHN MANDER  
Willy Brandt's Germany

(The issues containing these articles are available for \$1.25 each including postage by surface mail)



## SOME PRESS OPINIONS

★ "There is no other journal in the English-speaking world which combines political and cultural material of such consistently high quality."  
—*The Observer* (London).

★ "Probably the best monthly magazine of politics and the arts in the world today."—*Sunday Telegraph* (London).

★ "Provocative, timely, unpredictable and thoughtful the London-based magazine is a lively combination of articles on all subjects, book reviews, theatre and film critiques, short stories and new poetry."—*Time*

## SPECIAL OFFER TO NEW READERS

ENCOUNTER, 59 ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON W.C. 2, ENGLAND

Please send me ENCOUNTER for the next eight months for the special introductory rate of \$8.00 air-speeded — saving 25%. I enclose my check for \$8.00.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(please write very clearly)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ALTERNATIVE 11/73

Lion up in his plan to conquer the world with car washes.

Before the trek to Detroit, where Lion wants to see his child, born after he had abandoned his girl to run off to sea for five years, they follow train tracks to Denver, there to contact sister Coley (Dorothy Tristan) and her partner, a sex-starved woman (Ann Wedgeworth) who gives Max what he needs. Despite the obvious advantages of settling in Denver—both men are happy, both women are happy, why not Denver?—it's not to be. A fierce fight one evening in a roadhouse lands the men in jail; Max, who's guilty of initiating the fight with a bunch of toughs, blames the innocent Lion for it and refuses to speak to him for their month on a prison farm. Lion, naive beyond words, allows himself to be aided by a prison sharpie (Richard Lynch), whose aim is eventually revealed: sex. Lion refuses, horrified, and is beaten by his friend-turned-tormentor; Max then beats the bully and we're off again.

Scene four takes them to Detroit. Lion calls his ex-wife (or ex-girlfriend), who berates him for deserting her, then lies to him, telling him that their child was stillborn. Lion tells Max only that the kid is fine, is a boy, and that he thinks he won't mess up the lives of those he's deserted by visiting them. He acts care-free, goes off to play with some kids at a park fountain, and freaks out. At the end, Lion has either died or remained catatonic; Max leaves, alone, for Pittsburgh. Close.

Just about every tear-jerking gambit but piteous oldsters in retirement homes is paraded out to evoke sympathy. The two guys are obviously such nice, pathetic fellows; the girls are such toughies with hearts of gold; the despair eating Lion, who believes himself not only a deserter, which he is, but also the precipitating cause of his child's death, is so touching. The piled up woes are so arranged as to show us the weight of hopelessness impinging on guys born losers. Lion's personal aphorism—"people can't stay mad at you if you make them laugh"—and his pet theory (whence derives the film's name) that scarecrows don't scare crows but instead amuse them, thereby securing the crow's beneficence on the farmer who sets up the scarecrow, mark him as the beloved simpleton, the sweet boy-man whose final collapse into anguish tears us, the audience, apart. As if programmed on a machine, the set-up's perfect: we don't like these chaps at first; they are crude; we come to favor them as they come to favor each other; we feel for their feelings; we cry with their sadness.

Were it only that, we would mark it off as a fabulously successful entry in the hearts-and-flowers, bottom of the barrel sweepstakes. But it is more. It is also cinematography by Vilmos Zsigmond (who did the splendid work in *Deliverance* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*). It is also visions of contemporary America ringing true, the grit and grime of a culture increasingly lacking style, grace, warmth, but possessed everywhere of that particular ease, that forwardness, that optimism we call "Amer-

ican." It is mythic: the lonesome buddies myth, the On the Open Road myth, the myth of the Yankee struggle for success out of adversity. OK, they don't make it, but they work at making it. They put their wounded selves into the struggle and fail the test: one fades out, the other

goes courageously on, on, we guess, to more failure, however dogged his zeal.

*Scarecrow* straddles that line between sentiment and sentimentality; it lapses into mawkishness, then rises fitfully to genuine humor laced with spunk. It cannot be both awful and splendid,

though parts are one or the other. I reach back now to recollect my mood when I saw it, to try to see what I put into *Scarecrow*, to determine (and I fail at the effort just now) why I am now dangling between giving a slap or a buss to this extraordinarily moving, yet unconscionably artificial film. □

## Book Review

# An Introduction to Christian Economics

by Gary North  
Craig \$9.95

What we have here is a collection of Mr. North's essays on economics, only a few of which are explicitly Christian, and none at a level one would call "introductory." Mistitled or not, the essays are very good indeed.

Economics, as a science, is "value-free." It is not supposed to make moral judgments about what is right, fair, or just. Christianity, of course, does deal with moral values. So how can there be such a thing as "Christian economics"? How can you fuse Christian belief with a value-free science?

To a Christian, that question is inverted. How can there be a valid economics except in a God-ordered world? As North explains it, economics works because it is based on the right "givens," on premises borrowed from Christianity. For instance, the all-important economic fact of scarcity is an exact counterpart of God's curse upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-19). Whether scarcity is expressed in biblical or scientific terms, the Christian economist knows that it imposes a limit on human action that men cannot overcome. Neither men alone nor their governments can turn stones into bread.

North brings the best of both sides to these essays, although the book is heavily weighted towards, and most useful for, the economics. North has studied the great works of von Mises, Rothbard, Hayek, Rushdoony, Roepke, and Hazlitt. From these wellsprings he has drunk deeply of erudition and, like most young writers, he tends to use rather more of it than is called for. But this degree of scholarship, while limiting his readership, is the more rewarding to those who have the background and intelligence to stay with him in his skilled discussions.

I do not mean to imply that North's prose resembles that gray-green sludge that Distinguished Professors of Economics pass off as writing. Not at all. North writes well, with occasional wit. He also has the knack of picking just the right quote to tack down a point. In a couple of the essays, he quotes Isaiah on the moral and financial ravages of inflation: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves" (Isaiah 1:21-23).

That debasement of the currency is

accompanied by moral decline has been observed in every inflation, not least by Peletiah Webster at the time of the racking "Continental" inflation that prolonged and nearly ruined the American Revolution: "We have suffered more from this cause [paper money inflation] than from any other cause or calamity. It has killed more men, pervaded and corrupted the choicest interests of our country more, and done more injustice than even the arms and artifices of our enemies."

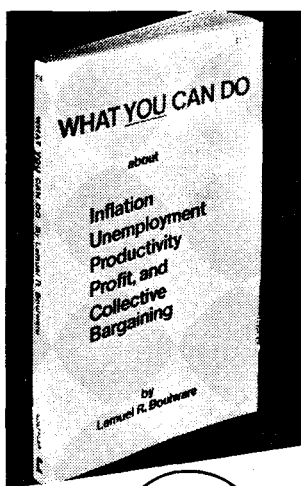
North is at his best on the subject of inflation. He starts with the pure definition, "any increase in the money supply," and summons up flawless arguments against it. Inflation is an invisible, unpredictable tax on capital. It usurps and centralizes power in the state. It distorts the market's pricing mechanisms and thus makes efficient allocation of resources impossible (one by-product: pollution). It redistributes capital from efficient (by preinflation standards) producers to less efficient

producers. It acts unevenly, enriching those individuals or businesses nearest to, and favored by, the state at the expense of those furthest and least favored. It encourages unscrupulous debtors to discharge their debts with depreciated paper worth a fraction of the sum owed. It encourages manufacturers to hide price increases in the form of poor and shoddy merchandise. The Christian would add: inflation is *theft*. It is wrong. You cannot achieve good ends with thieving. Institutional theft leads to social disaster.

You cannot turn stones into bread. You cannot create wealth by printing paper bills and designating them money. It ought to be obvious. Yet both the Keynesians and the Chicago school of economists share the notion that inflation *stimulates* the production of new wealth. Indeed, a gush of new paper money does appear to stimulate productivity at first. But the new paper is in fact stealing existing wealth, for those who do the inflating and those nearest

## NEWEST CHALLENGE TO CURRENT CONSENSUS

Lively new guide for corrective thought-leaders



**\$1.35**

Assigns rewarding new course to be pursued personally and through others.

Charts only path to better living. Freshly debunks something-for-*nothing* promised through government, unions, business or magic. Re-enthrones the economics, morals and politics of something-for-*something*.

Sheds new light on cause and only possible cure of inflation and unemployment. Offers new view of profit. Chapter on political sophistication worth the whole book.

Discloses little known extent of union power and its abuses. Puts blame where it surprisingly belongs. Shows what you can do to correct the situation.

Send check or money order direct  
to the publisher

**LOEFFLER & CO., INC.**

P.O. Box 9622, San Diego, Calif. 92109

10 for \$12.  
Postpaid