

policies are a success? Can the black wage earner who sees more and more of his take-home pay shrinking because of government taxes feel satisfied? Can black parents say, despite a massive influx of federal aid, that educational standards in our schools have improved appreciably? Can the woman I saw on television recently—whose family had been on welfare for three generations and who feared that her children might be the fourth—can she believe that current government policies will save her children from such a fate? . . .

We ask these questions, because the blacks of America should not be patronized as just one more voting bloc to be wooed and won . . . Therefore, in our national debate over budget and tax proposals, we shall not concede the moral high ground to the proponents of these policies that are responsible in the first place for our economic mess . . . We shall not concede the moral high ground to those who show more concern for federal programs than they do for what

really determines the income and financial health of blacks, the nation's economy . . .

I believe many in Washington, over the years, have been more dedicated to making needy people government-dependent rather than independent. They've created a new kind of bondage . . . Just as the Emancipation Proclamation freed black people 118 years ago, today we need to declare an economic emancipation . . . A strong economy returns the greatest good to the black population. It returns a benefit greater than that provided by specific federal programs . . . We cannot be tied to the old ways of solving our economic and racial problems. But it is time we looked to new answers and new ways of thinking that will accomplish the very ends the New Deal and the Great Society anticipated.

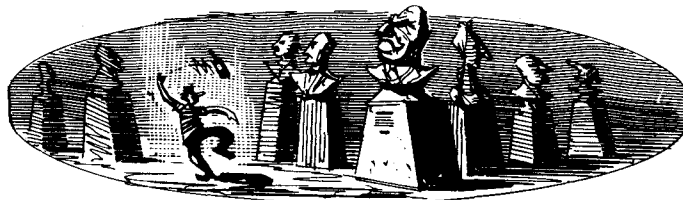
The address to the NAACP served the purpose of showing Reagan's concern for blacks. Yet it also had the

advantage of being an expression of his root conviction that blacks, and everyone else, will be boosted only by a booming economy, never by government aid. In that speech, Reagan held onto his most important asset as a political figure, his integrity. But by invoking the liberal agenda now, he is throwing that away and undermining the ultimate source of his popularity, the public's belief that he is a man who expresses his real views and promotes policies in accord with them.

With his ideology harnessed for the sake of political pragmatism, Reagan is even threatened now with being outflanked by the Democrats on tax cutting. Two Democratic presidential candidates, Walter Mondale

and George McGovern, have endorsed the tax bill crafted by Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey and Congressman Richard Gephardt of Missouri. It would drop the top rate from 50 to 30 percent, and provide a tax cut for 70 percent of Americans. Mimicking supply-side rhetoric that Reagan once voiced, McGovern went so far as to claim that the Bradley-Gephardt measure would produce more revenues at reduced tax rates. Reagan may yet be able to trump that proposal, though not if he and his aides remain mesmerized by the specter of deficits. The economic recovery has given him new flexibility on domestic policy. But he won't be able to capitalize on his opportunity unless he decides, like Robin Yount, to stick with the game he plays best. □

EMINENTOES



THE HIDDEN HOOVER

by Richard Brookhiser

He lived longer than any other President, except John Adams, and he still lives a ghostly existence today in the rhetoric of the Democratic party. When Walter Mondale, stumping through the hills of New Hampshire, or groveling before feminists, needs some Bureau of Weights and Measures-certified unit of failure by which to gauge Ronald Reagan, he reaches even now for the man who left the White House when Mondale was all of four years old. "It isn't what he doesn't know that worries me," he quotes Will Rogers, "it's what he knows for sure that isn't so." This is all the immortality that politics gives: not life in the history books, which everyone enters and nobody reads, but life on the hustings—as a hero, a bogey, a byword. Few politicians achieve it. Most lose their portion in it long before they die biologically; some lose it (Mondale?) while still campaigning.

Herbert Hoover's afterlife has been a long purgatory imposed for having coincided with the Great Depression. Two recent works about Hoover skirt the disaster: George H.

Nash's *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer*,* which takes him as far as 1914; and Gary Dean Best's two-volume *Herbert Hoover: The Post-Presidential Years*,† which picks him up again in 1933. Together, they bracket the period in their subject's

*W.W. Norton & Co., \$25.00.

†Hoover Institution Press, \$75.00 (set).



career which branded him on the public mind. We do not see the Hoover everyone knows. Maybe instead we get the Hoover that actually was.

None of these books is easy going. George Nash has his sights on the definitive biography. He includes everything, and for the years covered in *The Engineer*, everything includes large doses of corporate intrigue, sometimes technical, always complicated (one particularly involved maneuver goes on for 98 pages). But we can always see the *longeurs* coming, while the compact episodes do convey what Chesterton called "the romance of the division of labor."

Mr. Best aimed to survey Hoover's role in American politics. He missed. *The Post-Presidential Years* is marathoner's history, loping painfully from month to month and fact to fact. Reading it for long stretches is about as exciting as watching a cash register.

Hoover first came to public attention in 1914 with his relief work in war-racked Belgium. Yet he had already had a twenty-year career in the mining business, with experience at every level from ore-cart pusher to

chairman of the board. He came out of West Branch, Iowa (pop.: 365), a town with no saloons and one Democrat, who was a drunk. He never shone in school, but he struck teachers and employers alike as industrious and tenacious, and when Bewick, Moreing and Company, one of the largest mining firms in the world, went looking in the American west for a mining engineer to send to the Australian goldfields, Hoover, age 22, was recommended.

Bewick, Moreing was Hoover's ladder to the top. He ran gold mines in western Australia, and coal mines in northern China. He put together the Zinc Corporation in the hope of extracting useful ore from mine waste. On the fourth try and the verge of bankruptcy, the company hit on a successful method, and flourished. He left Bewick, Moreing half a million dollars richer, and set up on his own as an engineer-financier in London. Hoover's companies brought silver out of upper Burma, oil from the Black Sea, copper from a property in the Ural Mountains half the size of Connecticut. Along the way, he produced a scholarly translation of a sixteenth-century Latin mining treatise. He was also said to have

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had a fling with an Australian barmaid, whom he memorialized in verse:

Then you raised your tender glances
darkly, dreamily to mine
And my pulses clashed like cymbals in a
rhapsody divine
And I spent my soul in kisses, crushed
upon your scarlet mouth,
Oh! My red-lipped, sunbrowned sweet-
heart, dark-eyed daughter of the south.

Alas, Nash concludes, the lover is apocryphal and the poem a hoax: "the style is quite unlike anything else that Hoover ever wrote."

It was not all accomplished without trouble. Workers struck his Australian mines, rebels in China besieged him. A partner in London embezzled, ambitious mining projects failed. At the margins of civilization, there was brigandage, disorder, corruption; at the center lurked corporate sharks. Hoover persisted, sustained by a belief in the dignity of his profession, and lured by the prospect of gain: "if a man has not made a fortune by forty," he told a friend, "he is not worth much."

But as forty approached and his fortune got made, he began to yearn for something more—to "get into the big game somewhere." The big game of politics and public service engrossed him for the rest of his life, up to Black Friday, and beyond. He coveted a second shot at Roosevelt in 1936, and tried to stampede the Republican convention of 1940 (his stemwinding oration went unheard when Willkie operatives cut the mike). He supported Taft publicly in the battle for the 1952 nomination, and drafted a letter—never sent—endorsing Goldwater in the California primary. Two Presidents asked for his advice on streamlining the federal government; two Congresses gelded his recommendations, to our cost.

He was raised a Quaker, which seems never to have had much of a formal hold on him, but the real message of midwestern Protestantism—hard work and heavy lifting—stuck with him all his days. Someone once asked his grandmother about the family tree. "Begone with thee," she answered. "What matter if we descended from the highest unless we are something ourselves. Get busy."

Engineering became his paradigm for useful busy-ness. Engineers made the world work, and work efficiently. Their profession was thus superior to law, theology, or war, whose practitioners Hoover judged "parasitic" (also intellectuals: all he found in *The Education of Henry Adams*

was "the puerilities of a parasite"). His youthful devotion to his line of work colored his mature politics. Though he was a lifelong critic of managed economies and the welfare state, he defended capitalism not as a consequence of any theory of natural right, but because it made men get up and go.

Few of the many foreign countries he lived and worked in pleased him.

China was sunk in superstition and graft, England's class system disgusted him (one Englishwoman, on learning what he did for a living—*that* he did anything for a living?—exclaimed, "I thought you were a gentleman!"). Perhaps as a consequence, he had little use for foreign politics. He was willing to help suffering and starving people, but not their embroiled governments.

Once embarked on that path, America would only end by hurting itself. "We cannot become the world's policeman," he warned in 1939, "unless we are prepared to sacrifice millions of American lives—and probably some day see all the world against us."

True enough. But it begs the question whether the world in fact needs policing. Hoover thought not.

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He believed, as the thirties passed and darkened, that Hitler had no intention of attacking Britain and France; or that, if he did, Britain would be able to fend him off. He thought Chamberlain's Foreign Office the only group of skillful diplomats in the world. He abhorred Communism. Yet he was skeptical of committing American troops to NATO or American cash to the Marshall Plan. The offshore islands of Eurasia—Britain, Japan, Taiwan—

seemed to him to mark the limits of our defensible postwar interests. When America ventured beyond, however, he rallied. "I have opposed many of our foreign policies," he said on the outbreak of the Korean War, "but now is not the time to argue. . . . When the United States draws the sword, there is only one course for our people: that is to win." So much for the relative patriotism of yesterday's Right and today's Left. William Sloan Coffin would oppose

troops in Texas if the Sandinistas asked for it.

He was shy from childhood (Nash cites Quaker reticence, an early orphaning, a hard-handed uncle). Later acquaintances testified that he had no small talk. He avoided eye contact, fidgeted with coins in his pocket. So long as there was a consensus that what he knew for sure was so, the introverted engineer could manage politics as well as he fed millions, or ran mines on six

continents. When economic and international upheavals shook that consensus, he was unable to crystallize it anew. The cool professional was no match for the demagogic squire. America turned left, away from him, and in turning right, it has not quite turned back. He looks at us, over his high collars, from pictures fifty and seventy years old and two political generations removed, ambitious, confident, self-contained; intelligent, conscientious, upright. □

EUROPEAN DOCUMENT

THE BOYS OF THE I.R.A.



by Herb Greer

The world, as they say, little noted nor long remembered a remarkable statement made during August in London. The words were uttered by the Foreign Minister of Ireland during an official visit. I would guess that very few Americans—even those professional shamrockers who claim a special interest in that region—could recite even the name of the Irish Foreign Minister, much less remember any of what he said.

For the (American) record, the name is Peter Barry. His statement was an observation that Provisional Sinn Fein and their killer clones, Provisional IRA, are "blatantly Fascist." This very interesting proposition was relegated to the back page of London's *Daily Telegraph*, did not appear in the *Times* at all, and rated only a passing mention in one TV news spot. It seems to have escaped American notice altogether. This is odd, in that the Provisional IRA could neither kill nor propagandize to the extent that it does without generous financial and moral support from Americans. Thus a Minister of Ireland's legitimate government has in effect placed Noraid and its cognates in the role of backers for one of the few fascist organizations in Europe that is actually (and regularly) killing people.

The word "fascist" in this context is not mere abuse. When the recent precursors of today's Republican terrorists drew together in the nineteenth century, they were uncon-

cerned either with democracy or with popular support, standing as they did outside the mainstream of Irish nationalism. Their aim was to sever all ties with the British crown (most Irish nationalists did not want this); their means to this end was the violent action of an elite, which would then rule Ireland. Their attitude to rule was well summed up by James Stephens, founder of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who said as early as 1858: "I believe it essential that the center [he meant himself] of this or any similar organization should be perfectly unshackled; in other words, a provisional dictator." Stephens's co-conspirators fostered the present

style of assassination and random bombing, the mystique of violence later echoed in fascist doctrine, and the murder, torture and mutilation of dissenters still practiced by Republican cabals in Ulster. These traits were given an ideological edge with German-style blood-and-soil rhetoric and a falsified, racist version of Anglo-Irish history which is popular among Irish-Americans today. It trumpets the struggle of a "Celtic" people (which does not exist) against a racially distinct British "Saxon Invader" to restore an Ancient Irish Nation (which never existed). Today the phony history is supplemented with a so-called socialist ideology

matching that of left-wing fascist regimes such as Cuba and Nicaragua. The old-fashioned dictator has given way to a collective group operating on the lines of a Latin American junta, so that these "Republicans" share the delights of both Left and Right extremism.

It is the habit of Noraid and their Irish-American Bund to attach the "fascist" label to Protestant extremist groups in Ulster—though the murderous activity of these fanatics has been primarily reactive in the present troubles, with no doctrinaire aim except the preservation of Ulster as a U.K. province, and sectarian revenge for IRA and INLA killings. The days of the Protestant Ascendancy in the old style are gone forever, with the Unionist Party split into quarreling factions. The leader of one of these, the "Reverend" Ian Paisley, is sometimes portrayed in America as a kind of villainous British super-patriot, though he is intensely disliked by the bulk of the British electorate. His activities, which range from the sinister to the ridiculous, are reported with a certain distaste (sometimes disgust) in British national media. One British Army veteran who had served in Ulster summed up the rankers' attitude to Paisley like this: "If we could have shot the bastard, most of our troubles would have been over." It is worth noting that the principal stimulus for such support as Paisley still enjoys in Ulster remains the existence and criminal acts of the Provisional IRA and the INLA. Amusingly enough, Noraid is actually giving aid and comfort to Paisley, by



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