

periences: For the English, World War II was endured on their own territory—midnight bomb attacks, the destruction of historic cities, the expectation at one point of a German invasion at any time. One elderly resident of Canterbury once recalled for me helping to gather up directional signs on the Dover road in the summer of 1940, to make life difficult for Hitler's legions once they had landed. "As we bloody well assumed they would. An experience like that," he added, "puts its mark on you for the rest of your life." That was in 1968. Further, while the postwar period for the United States began with unconditional surrender and continued with the baby boom, the rush to the suburbs, and a meteoric rise in living standards, for the British it commenced with national bankruptcy and went on to rationing, international retreat, and finally, when a measure of recovery was finally achieved, to a pale and inadequate copy of our own consumer revolution. Small wonder we see the world so differently.

But the third point, and perhaps the most important, is that the English do not treat foreigners much differently from how they treat each other. They are suspicious of all strangers and prefer not to deal with them altogether. This is part of what George Orwell once called the ferocious privateness of their lives, and Theroux rediscovered it on his jaunts. Some of it is probably due to the weather, which forces them to spend much of their time indoors. Hence their love, as he writes, of "squashy sofas and warm rooms and the prospect of tea." But demography plays a role as well. As Ivor Richard points out, the population density of the British Isles is 228 persons per square kilometer, compared to 98 for France and 24 for the United States. But for England alone, it is 356 per square kilometer, and for Southeast England, where fully a third of the population lives, it is 619. Such density, needless to say, does not conduce to random chumminess; indeed, if under such circumstances the English tried to act like Americans, they would drive each other mad. So what constitutes a sometimes acute social irritation for the tourist or occasional visitor is in fact a virtual national necessity.

Paradoxically, each of these books tends to defeat its apparent purpose before the American reader. Richard sets out to justify his country, to explain its quirks and gloss easily over its faults, to make us feel a bit sorry, as it were, that we too cannot be British. In this he does not succeed, because if there are many things about his coun-

try we do not know, the things that we do are widely and informatively reported in this country, and they are not particularly flattering. But if Theroux's account is supposed to make us dislike these people, he too fails. His characters are not, after all, Oxbridge academics or guttersnipe journalists, but ordinary folk who are not out to impress anyone or to put everyone down, simply decent if not very glamo-

rous people. They are not, however, for the most part what we see of Britain abroad, or even on the islands themselves when we happen to visit. Obsessed as we Americans seem to be with the pomp and paraphernalia of monarchy or the slightly ratty elegance of Britain's ancient university foundations, we miss much of the point about this country—difficult, enigmatic, maddeningly close and yet impossibly far away. □

PARIS

John Russell/Harry N. Abrams/\$50.00

Franz M. Oppenheimer

"Car la Seine est une amante, et Paris est dans son lit."
—La Seine

John Russell, the art critic of the *New York Times*, has written a love letter to Paris, a love letter that has a life-long lover's knowledge of the heart and an awe-inspiring scholar's erudition. This is no coffee-table book designed to be given away and not read, although the illustrations alone would make *Paris* worth treasuring. Above all, there is the text, which defies summary and description, for how does one compress a universe?

In a short romantic passage at the beginning of the book, Russell reveals the passion behind the erudition: "You can live half your life in Paris; you can love Paris, marry a Parisian, raise Parisian children. But none of that will make you a Parisian. This is irksome, if you are by nature a joiner rather than a looker-on, but it gives Parisian life a tautness, an inner coherence, and a ferocious continuity. Paris in this sense is a secret society." This is the emotion of Yeats about Maud Gonne, not that of Major MacBride about his wife.

Many other men have loved Paris like a woman even though, unlike Russell, they did not see themselves as outsiders. French writers in particular have shared Russell's fascination with every physical aspect of Paris. In *Remembrance of Things Past* Proust refers to 68 Parisian streets by name. The Proustian knows not only in what street Swann, the Guermantes, the Verdurins, and Odette lived, he also knows through what street Swann went to his dentist: the Rue Duphot.

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In *Sentimental Education* Flaubert seems to have positive sentiments for none of his characters but only for Paris. The few agreeable passages of that book read like passages of Russell's. Let me quote just one from *Sentimental Education*: "His eyes, leaving the stone Pont de Notre-Dame and the three suspension bridges, invariably strayed in the direction of the Quai aux Ormes [now the Quai de l'Hôtel-de-Ville], towards a clump of old trees which looked like the lime-trees in the port of Montereau. Facing him, the Tour Saint-Jacques, the Hôtel-de-Ville, Saint-Gervais, Saint-Louis, and Saint-Paul rose among a maze of roofs, and the genie on the July Column shone in the east like a great golden star, while in the other direction the dome of the Tuileries stood out against the sky in a solid blue mass." Writing about the Seine, Russell echoes Flaubert's feelings when looking across, up, and down the river from the Ile de la Cité: "Between the Pont d'Austerlitz in the east and the Pont d'Iéna in the west it was difficult until quite lately to stand on either bank and point to anything ignoble."

There are innumerable similar passages in French novels, perhaps none more explicit than Michel Déon's in *Les gens de la nuit*:

At daybreak . . . I opened a window and found myself in an unknown land: the boulevard Saint-Germain lined with trash cans, plane trees with diffident leaves, chairs piled upon one another in front of the cafes, the deserted street. Was this my city, this trembling scene with its furtive shadows? Did I have the right to look at a woman who is waking up at that uncertain hour? Anyone of sensibility must feel shy at the moment he discovers such a well-hidden secret. At daybreak there is in Paris such an uncertainty between the sordid and

the glorious that one had to have been her lover for a long time not to be disappointed. I decided to become her lover.

Anyone other than an erudite lover of Paris will find it difficult to follow reference upon reference to names that may not trigger pictures out of his memory at once. This difficulty makes *Paris* a book that demands effort and discipline from its readers. Indeed, having believed that I knew Paris well, I began to feel ignorant almost to the point of illiteracy when I reached its first descriptive and historical chapter, "The Louvre." The first sentence reads: "The Louvre is the largest of Parisian monuments, and the most inscrutable." We are then plunged into the equivalent of a college course on the history of the Louvre, its surroundings, its architecture, and the monarchs, architects, artists, and politicians who made that history. To anyone less learned than John Russell I recommend he read that chapter, as well as most others, with the green *Michelin Tourist Guide of Paris* at hand. Only by referring to maps of Paris, and drawings in that *Guide*, could I follow sentences like "The part built under Napoleon extends from the Pavillon de Marsan to the Pavillon de Rohan." The Michelin shows additions made by Napoleon I, as well as those made by Catherine de Medici, Henry IV, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, and Napoleon III, by different colors in a diagrammatic perspective drawing of the Louvre. But even in the Michelin I failed to locate the Pavillon de Rohan.

Perhaps other teaching aids and reference works are needed. Even among the educated, few will know the architects Sebastiano Serlio, the brothers Le Breton, and Pierre Lescot, who are mentioned as having been or not having been employed by François I.

The chapters on the different neighborhoods, the Grands Boulevards, Haussmann, the Paris of the First Empire, the Palais Royal, and the Comédie-Française present the same difficulties. Note that the chapters do not correspond to any symmetrical scheme of organization. Some deal with an *arrondissement*, some with a building, some with a historical period, and one with the impact of a city planner, Haussmann. Here again we see the spirit of the heart and not that of geometry at work.

These difficulties should discourage nobody from reading the book. No guide could be a substitute. Even when we miss the significance of a name, person, building, historical event, painting, composition, novel, or play, we are left amused, enriched, and

creatively bewildered by every page. For instance, Russell writes about "The Marais":

It was in the Marais that the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day was organized, that Louis XVI and his family were imprisoned, and that Madame de Sévigné went regularly to listen to Bourdaloue, the finest preacher of his day. It was there that the child Mozart played, that François Couperin and his sons lived and worked, and that Marc-Antoine Charpentier was *maître de chapelle* at the Eglise Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis. Nowhere is the great classical age of French music more vividly present to us.

As to life in the Marais of just yesterday, now "in full ebullition," and of "the kind of complexity that cannot be described, let alone disentangled, in a page or two," another passage must serve for many:

In these small and overpopulated enclaves we saw the last of the truly cosmopolitan Paris—not the cosmopolis of the rich, but the older and more authentic society in which respect for the habits and personality of others was absolute. Those who have kept clear of poverty often believe it to be a great leveler, but you were more likely to find a standardized human being in the Hotel Plaza Athénée than in the Gorky-esque bistros of the Marais. Within it were concentrated elements from the life of the Baltic states, Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean seaboard of Africa, the Sahara, Turkey, Lebanon. . . . This was, in fact, the true Musée de l'Homme . . .

The chapter on the Marais comprises 24 pages. It contains descriptions of museums, detailed discussion of the history, architecture, and contents of great houses, and even a sympathetic appraisal of the Centre Pompidou.

Russell shows his critic's nature not only when taking on controversial matters like the Centre Pompidou. Every quarter and many streets are given marks, and among the many qualities of *Paris* is that of raising questions. Why, for instance, does Russell believe that the whole Ile de la Cité "is now *triste* beyond redemption"? I know no place on the globe that lifts my spirit higher. There is the glory of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, with which, however, Russell has his problems. "The view from the west door [across La Place du Parvis Notre-Dame] is one of the ugliest in Paris," he says, and having traced the pillages, losses of treasures, and changes the Cathedral has undergone during the last eight hundred years, he "can sympathize with the medievalists who feel little but dejection as they prowl from one restoration to the next." Still, he must confess that none of these misfortunes touches the essence: that "one cannot but feel that the Parvis de Notre-Dame is still, in some real sense, the center of France" and that "Notre-Dame re-

mains tremendously moving. Nothing can take away the fact that it is essentially a family church, with all France for its family . . . the bourdon [bell] of Notre-Dame is *the* voice of France."

Here I have more sympathy with Russell's feelings than with his scholarly views about the ravages of change. I cannot help being convinced that lighting a candle in Notre-Dame is more pleasing to the Lord than doing so anywhere else.

On a more earthly level, what could be less *triste* than the flower stalls and garden shops on the Place Louis-Lépine and the Quai de la Corse, just off the Parvis de Notre-Dame? And where on earth can one see dusk fall more poetically than from the second-floor corner table of the Auberge du Vert Gallant overlooking a corner of the Palais de Justice, the Seine, and the trees and houses on its left bank? All this on the Ile de la Cité.

Similarly, why should the Rue Saint-Jacques, which runs from the Seine past the Panthéon, the Sorbonne, the Luxembourg Gardens to the Val-de-Grace, be called a "forbidding street"? True, we learn from Russell that much that was noble has been torn down, but also that there are still jewels to be looked for. Indeed, I have decided to carry some xeroxed pages from *Paris* in my pocket the next time I walk up the Rue Saint-Jacques in order to find the seventeenth-century farmhouse at No. 262, and other places I knew nothing about.

I recommend to all who plan to visit Paris and to explore some specific part of it to do likewise: to xerox a page here and a few more pages there and to carry them along. The entire tome is too large and heavy to fit easily into transatlantic luggage, to say nothing of carrying it on long walks. Yet only with the right pages from Russell will we be able to unlock the many doors to which he has given us the keys.

The book's general lessons, however, are best learned in advance by reading the entire book: Thus it is useful for the visitor to be warned in advance that the distances along the Seine are greater than they seem; that in the 5th *arrondissement* "there are cafés in which you can sit all day over the philosophy of Malebranche, and cafés in which you would be unwise to sit at all," that "the choice of an hotel is as private a matter as the choice of a wife," and that the Francophile's article of faith about every Parisian restaurant being a good one is an illusion.

As we have seen, Russell can give bad marks, and marks with which one can quarrel, but when it comes to the

grisly history of Paris, he limits himself almost entirely to euphemistic brush strokes. He defends himself in advance by stressing that his book "is not a political history" and that he does "not propose to take the reader day by day through all the tumultuous commotions that Paris has undergone." True, such a "day by day" account would be a different book, but even in the book we have, should one not ask whether this grisly side is mentioned adequately, when we are merely told in the context of "the long-running civil war between Parisian and Parisian" that "the first and most evident characteristic of the Parisian commotion is its vivacity," and that in 1830 the students of the Ecole Polytechnique, in standing up to the Garde Royale, "fulfilled the immemorial role of young people in Paris, which is to get themselves beaten up or killed for an idea"? Yeats had harsher words for Maud Gonne.

It is puzzling that one so aware of

the impact of the past on the present as John Russell pays so relatively little attention to the horrors of the past: the gore and terror of the revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848 and of the Commune, the role of Parisian politicians, clergy, and writers in the origins of virulent racial and political anti-Semitism during the Dreyfus case and the Occupation (he does mention in passing the herding of Jews into the Velodrome d'Hiver before their deportation in 1942), and the lynching trials of alleged collaborators after World War II.

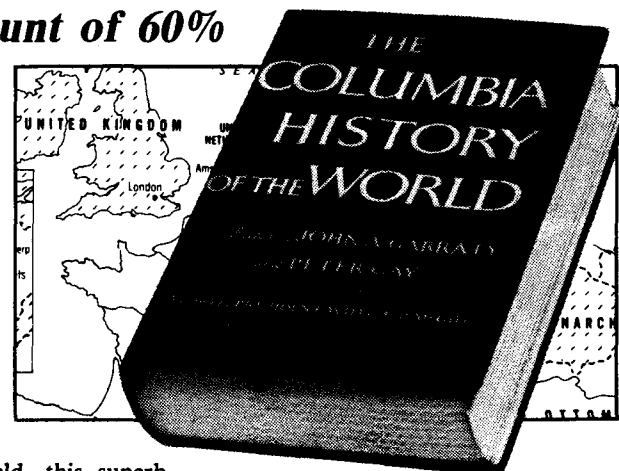
Non-political horrors, however, are not brushed aside. Before the middle of the nineteenth century "the houses in which most people lived were dirty, damp, dark, and smelled bad. . . . Paris in the nineteenth century was primarily a city in which more than half of the inhabitants lived very badly." One might add that even in this century, indeed, until the miraculous thirty years from 1950 to 1980, a sen-

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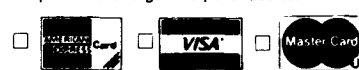
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sitive soul, like Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge*, could be so overwhelmed by the suffering of the poor and sick that the splendors of Paris almost passed him by. Still the same was true of most capitals, except that France with its century of bloody revolutions managed to pass basic social legislation only some sixty years after Disraeli and Bismarck had done so without revolutions.

Perhaps this past lends some credence to the conventional slander, spread not only by foreigners but by Parisians themselves, that Parisians are more rude, selfish and inhospitable than other mortals—"abrupt, edgy, rapacious, egoistic, and smug." Russell has some trouble dealing with this nonsense; it "is both true and not true," he informs us. But eventually he comes out on the right side: "Nowhere is friendship more enduring, or hospitality more subtly resourceful, than in Paris." For more than forty years I have had the greatest difficulty in understanding malevolent generalizations about Parisians to which even Russell almost seems to have succumbed. Again and again I have experienced just the opposite, as for instance, when at the rush hour during a subway strike, and when no taxis could be found, a bell boy at a restaurant drove me in his own car some twenty-five minutes to the suburb of Neuilly and refused payment with the explanation that he was not a taxi driver, or when a complete stranger whom I asked for directions to a restaurant insisted on walking me there four blocks in pouring rain.

Nor is it true, as Russell does maintain, that the private world of Parisians is impenetrable, that, as he says at the outset, "Paris . . . is a secret society." He concedes that "Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were made welcome," but seems to find it more significant that Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald probably never got to be at home "in a Parisian house of any distinction." If true, it is likely that Hemingway and Fitzgerald never made an effort. Speaking English and hanging out with other expatriates was easier.

Russell surely has made the effort, and I would be more than astonished if I were to learn that he was not at home in many a Parisian house of distinction. Rather Russell *wants* to see Parisians in the romantic glow of mystery. How else could he write about the Parisian woman: "She is not open to the foreign visitor. It is difficult for us even to look at her, as we can look at the women of Rome or Milan."

Let us be thankful for his romanticism. Hemingway called Paris a moveable feast. John Russell's book about it is a feast of civilization. □

THE SUPPLY-SIDE REVOLUTION: AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT OF POLICYMAKING IN WASHINGTON

Paul Craig Roberts/Harvard University Press/\$18.50

Thomas Hazlett

Ronald Reagan rode to Washington on a mandate, and with a mission, but soon fell victim to a quiet mutiny (so quiet, in fact, that the commander never knew he had walked the plank). Reagan's mandate was his bruising KO over bantamweight Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential prize fight; his mission was to cut federal spending, slash taxes, and level overzealous regulatory bureaucrats. Reagan had his program in place, and his congressional votes in line. But—just at the moment of triumph—he was betrayed by a cabal of his closest allies. Jim Baker and the Senate Republicans undermined the President with ruthless pressure and sneaky press leaks, endorsing higher taxes in response to powerhungry David Stockman's constant wailing about the deficit, which in turn was a factor only because of flub-ups at the Fed by Paul Volcker. The "supply-side revolution" was vanquished, and the dastardly deed was definitely an inside job.

Buy it?

If you do, you'll be pleased to find that this is just what Paul Craig Roberts, President Reagan's once and never-again assistant treasury secretary for economic policy, has to sell. In his *Supply-Side Revolution*, Roberts assiduously documents the book's subclaim: "An Insider's Account of Policymaking in Washington." Roberts, I suspect, is a relatively reliable source for a supply-side yarn; he appears to be about the only old-time supply-sider still with us who hasn't become wealthy or famous (or President) from peddling the stuff. Instead, Roberts has been toiling to make the rest of us wealthy—or so he believes. But let us not overstate the virtues of altruism.

To his credit, Roberts does a skillful job outlining the momentum that existed in Congress for tax cuts . . . under Carter. By June 1977 Senate Finance Committee Chairman

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Russell Long, says Roberts, "did not think it had cost the government any money when the top bracket was cut from 90 percent to 70 percent in the 1960s. Nor was the 70 percent rate a revenue raiser. 'It would be my guess if you would reduce your top rate to 50 percent, you actually would make money.'" Soon, both Democratic-controlled houses, frightened over the stagflation mess and angling for a way to cut in front of a growing tax-revolt movement, were voting to cut capital gains taxes and personal income taxes as well. In October 1978, the House and Senate voted by wide margins (268-135 and 65-20) for the Nunn Amendment ("son of Kemp-Roth"), a plan to cut taxes and limit federal spending. (It would, said Senator Muskie, "tie the hands of future Congresses"—which, oddly, was Muskie's argument *against* the measure.) Although the Carter Administration succeeded in gutting the Nunn Amendment on a conference committee butcher block, tax cuts were blowing in the wind. The Democratic leadership rallied desperately to hold off the persistent Marjorie Holt, whose bill to combine Kemp-Roth tax cuts with commensurate spending reductions had been beaten back in the summer of 1978 by a shaky 206-201 margin. And then came the stunning 1979 report from the Joint Economic Committee of Congress. Roberts describes it:

Led by Senator Bentsen, the new chairman, and Representative Clarence Brown, JEC produced its first unanimous report in twenty years. It was a breath of fresh air. Stagflation, said the report, is the result of policies that have stimulated demand while retarding supply. The Democratic majority, including such liberals as Kennedy and McGovern, signed the report, thereby endorsing the supply-side approach that the Republican minority had been working toward for two years.

Unfortunately, Roberts's account of Reaganomics under Reagan is less compelling. What with the tax cut fever pushing Nunn, Long, and even the JEC on to new heights (and cuts), according to Roberts, Reagan's supply-side agenda would have flown

if not for "the struggle between President Reagan and his aides." Although the 3-year, 25 percent across-the-board personal income tax reductions did make it into law, the cuts were delayed, the policy was never adequately explained, and the Fed botched the recovery. "During 1981-82 the supply-side approach to economic policy fell victim in part to the failure of monetary policy, in part to the ego struggle that senior aides carried on against the President and in part to a campaign conducted against supply-side economics by elements of the media," claims Roberts.

Specifically, in the dark, recessionary days that followed Reagan's 1981 tax cut victory we were hit by "Volcker's regime of six months of zero money growth—a policy far below Federal Reserve targets and one unexpected by the Administration." As the Fed created recession, Stockman conspired with White House insiders to "make himself economic policy czar," and to focus national attention on the deficit, which, he alleged, would stymie recovery if unchecked. Thus "the Reagan strategy of balancing the budget through economic growth was being replaced with the Stockman strategy of balancing the budget with higher taxes." David Stockman's motive? "Watching Stockman push so hard for tax increases created the impression that Stockman wanted supply-side economics to be perceived as having failed."

C'mon.

While Roberts has done serious supply-siders a favor in breaking ranks with Jude Wanniski ("Wanniski . . . sensationalized" supply-side economics) and Arthur Laffer ("none of the supply-siders within the Administration were Lafferites promising that the tax-rate reductions would pay for themselves in higher revenues"), he fails to deal with the global economic issues surrounding tax rate reductions. Nothing could be easier than to play armchair Fed chairman; if economists know anything about macroeconomics it is that reining in a 13.3 percent inflation rate in two years will be neither perfect nor painless. Zero money growth for six months may have been an overreaction—but that is the proper side on which to err for credibility when the world (i.e., Wall Street) suspects another underreaction. Roberts could be a bit more understanding of the man who, at a minimum, has given Roberts's former employer his one decisive policy victory: the gagging of inflation.

It must frustrate Roberts terribly to have a zero-cost solution to high taxes,