

opened the books. Old fears no longer frighten them. They are beginning to know that man's welfare throughout the world is interdependent. They are resolved, as we must be, that there is no more place for imperialism within their own society than in the society of nations.

Maybe any book, written in the hopes and fears of wartime, was bound to be stupid. Yet I once found, in a second-hand shop, a yellowing copy of Carl Becker's *How New Will the Better World Be?* (1944). It's not on the mark either, but at least it recognizes that those who have power aren't likely to give it up, and that the power of good intentions is finite. For Becker, these were probably truisms. Willkie, then as twenty years before, had "religious convictions" instead.

He died in 1944. His exertions four years earlier may have undermined his health. It was probably just as well.

His peak of celebrity had passed, and he would have become a pest—the Eleanor Roosevelt of the GOP, if not the Henry Wallace. Like his isolationist opponents, he believed in America as the last, best hope of mankind. They deduced from this that we dare not mix with Europeans and other wogs. Willkie deduced that we must raise them to our level; indeed, that they wished it.

"If men ask where is his monument," said his eulogist, "let them but look at a world . . . one in a passionate dedication to freedom like that which consumed him." By that standard, he has no monument at all. A better tribute came from a regular at the Old Chesterfield Arms, a London pub where he had stood a round during the blitz. "He was a proper gent—very easy to mix with." That is both true, and kind. □

THE DISCOVERERS

Daniel J. Boorstin/Random House/\$25.00

Antony Flew

Dr. Boorstin, Librarian of Congress, has produced another immense book, continuously instructive yet consistently fascinating. The promise of the dust jacket—for once perhaps written by a thorough reader—is fully fulfilled. *The Discoverers* is indeed "a mystery story played by a vast cast on an ever-changing stage." It really does tell "a tale of discoveries and beginnings," in which Boorstin "sees every discovery as an episode of biography."

The same commentator picks out two further general features of Boorstin's treatment, in addition to that emphasis upon the individual as opposed to the collective. The first is a concern always with "the obstacles that had to be overcome: the illusions held about the continents and the seas before Columbus and Balboa and Magellan; about the past before Petrarch and Winckelmann, Thomsen and Schliemann; about the human body before Paracelsus and Vesalius and Harvey . . ." The second is an eagerness to ask, and to try to answer, questions about why certain developments were so long delayed, or did not occur at all: "Why didn't the

Chinese discover America? Why were people so slow to learn that the earth goes round the sun?"

Boorstin himself never offers any rationale for either his biographical emphases or his concern to ask why developments occurred where they did, not in other places. Maybe it is obvious to everyone that we cannot have an adequate understanding of any achievement without appreciating the obstacles overcome. Yet many people do fail to realize how much we need, in order to be sure that we have correctly identified the crucial factors in—say—the growth of modern science in Western Europe, to be able to examine other cases where some but not all of these supposedly crucial factors were present, yet without producing anything like the particular effect for which we have to account.

The scrupulous historian of modern science has, therefore, no choice but to make the most of the only partly parallel case we have. He has to ask, as Boorstin does, why it did not all happen, and sooner, in China. For in the thirteenth century Marco Polo had found China, in almost every direction, technically more advanced than his native Venice. Boorstin depends for his answers, as we all must, mainly on "the phenomenal Joseph Need-

ham . . . who has achieved one of the great intellectual ambassadorial enterprises of modern times." Boorstin seems not to be aware, however, that for most of his working life Needham was, and perhaps still is, a committed Marxist-Leninist. This increases the significance of various judgments which are, as it were, forced out through clenched teeth.

Thus, in *The Grand Titration*, Needham admits that capitalist pluralism was essential to this historic Great Leap Forward. In *The Discoverers*, Part III of Book I, "Time," deals with "The Missionary Clock." Here the first chapter is "Open Sesame to China," the second "Mother of Machines," and the third "Why It Happened in the West." (These apt and suggestive headings are perfectly representative of the swinging yet scholarly style of the whole work.) Here, following Needham's "non-pareil *Science and Civilization in Ancient China*," Boorstin explains "why the mother of machines proved so infertile there."

In Europe clocks were from the beginning genuinely public, and soon private and unofficial people began to possess their own. "One of the first, most remarkable of Chinese achievements," however, "was a well-organized, centralized government . . . with a vast hierarchy of bureaucrats." Control of the calendar, and hence of the calendar science of astronomy, was a vital matter of state: "This meant, of course, that Chinese astronomy became increasingly bureaucratic and esoteric." But "the technology of the clock was the technology of astrological indicators." So this also had to be "tightly controlled."

In Part XIV, "Opening the Past," Boorstin brings out that critical history too began in Europe, in Classical Greece; nor could it have developed in statist China. It was not enough to have had "the longest continuous past and the most copious written record." The fate of the man who might have become the Chinese Herodotus was decisively discouraging. Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-87? B.C.) dared to defend an unsuccessful general against a false charge of cowardice. He was therefore condemned for "defaming the Emperor," who in the end graciously commuted the mandatory death sentence to castration. Under the T'ang dynasty, in the seventh century, "A History Office was established . . . and thereafter controlled all the accessible past. For millenia Chinese history was written by bureaucrats and for bureaucrats." Although the responsible bureau was not actually called Minitrue, it was directed to produce "Veritable

Records," with, of course, and at the same time, "appropriate concealment."

The third general feature of Boorstin's always exciting treatment is that he "sees every discovery as an episode of biography." This, although the point is never in *The Discoverers* made explicit, is no mere matter of one personally preferred perspective among several others all equally valid. For, in seeing things this way, Boorstin is implicitly adopting what must surely be correct positions on manifestly factual albeit much disputed issues about the role of the individual in history. Are all historical developments determined by collective social forces, or do some particular individuals make significant and substantial differences? Does the occasion, or the movement, always find or produce the leaders who are needed? And so on.

Any Marxist, or indeed any adherent of any similarly ambitious philosophy of history, has to answer the first, two-part question with—respectively—a yes and a no. (For the most elegant of refutations of that two-part answer, see Sidney Hook's *The Hero in History*.) An affirmative response to the second question—such as was so confidently returned by G.V. Plekhanov, the doyen of pre-Leninist Russian Marxism—is perhaps less clearly required. Certainly, whenever that response is given, we have yet one more paradoxical example of atheist providentialism; an obtusely stubborn insistence, in defiance of every evidence to the contrary, that the Universe must in fact be as it might indeed have been were it the creation of a Marxist Deity. (The whole apocalyptic philosophy of history presented in the *Communist Manifesto* is in the same way paradoxically providential. For the promised and allegedly inevitable coming of the secular Kingdom of God on earth is not there, as it is in St. Augustine, solidly guaranteed as the inexorable will of a Being who cannot be frustrated.)

So what is the present particular relevance of all this? It is that, whereas both the Marxist and the para-Marxist have to pretend that every major discovery was bound to be made in (roughly) the place and at (roughly) the time where and when it actually was made, Boorstin, seeing every such discovery as "an episode of biography," is free to recognize that there is no such universal guaranteeing necessity.

Certainly there have been particular discoveries, even major discoveries, about which such a claim can be plausibly made. This applies most obviously to those which have in fact

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given rise to priority disputes. (Boorstin gives due attention both to the growth of the scientific community and to the growth within that community of competition to achieve and to demonstrate priorities.) There are, nevertheless, many other cases where we can find no reason to believe that there was anyone other than the actual first discoverer working on the lines which he thus showed to be fruitful. Take, for example, the cases of Copernicus and of Columbus, cases to both of which—quite rightly—Boorstin gives special attention.

Both men were in fact working on lines opposite to what was suggested by the best evidence available to them: "The more we become at home in the Age of Copernicus, the more we can see that those who would remain unpersuaded by Copernicus were simply being sensible." The theoretical scheme which he proposed, "for all its aesthetic appeal," fitted the then "observed facts no better" than did the established, Ptolemaic alternative. "Nor could he predict the position of the planets with anything like the demonstrated accuracy of the older system."

The case of Columbus is even clearer: He was fortunate in that there were in Western Europe several possible backers to whom he could, and did, make successive applications, until at last he found someone whom he could persuade to finance his expedition. Remember that his darling project was to discover: not the American continent—no one had ever thought there might be an undiscovered continent there—but instead a Western sea route first to Japan ("his Isle Cypango") and then from there on to China. Nor was Columbus peculiar in believing that the earth is spherical: Aristotle himself had argued for this conclusion, which was generally accepted by the educated European contemporaries of Columbus. What was in dispute was whether the range of any ships yet built was sufficient to make the proposed voyage.

When in 1484 Columbus put his plans for "The Enterprise of the Indies" before the most likely supporter, King John II of Portugal, he referred them to an expert committee. Reluctantly, on the advice of these sober and in fact most excellently qualified experts, the King turned Columbus down: "... the committee seems to have been troubled by Columbus' gross underestimate of the sailing distance westward to Asia. And, in the end, their misgivings proved better founded than were Columbus' hopes."

Finally—that readers may have confidence in their reviewer—two rather

petty corrections. First, while 'Ptolemy' was the name of "the indisputable father of modern geography . . . and incidentally that of one of Alexander the Great's closest companions," it is wrong to add that "Another Ptolemy . . . founded the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ruled Egypt for three centuries . . ." King Ptolemy I was the same person as the Son of Larus, one of the Companions.

Second, Boorstin reproaches my ancestors for failing to accept, after Wolfe's 1760 conquests, Franklin's advice "that Canada would be incomparably more valuable in the long run" than "the tiny sugar-rich islands of Guadeloupe." Boorstin forgets that it was the French, not the British, who, under the subsequent Treaty of Paris, ceded Quebec in order to retain Guadeloupe; and Voltaire who con-

gratulated his compatriots on getting the best of the bargain.

But these are petty faults in a splendid book, a book whose only substantial fault is its failure to make the moral explicit. That moral—and it cannot be reiterated too often—is that anyone wanting to achieve or maintain high rates of discovery must become a friend both of economic pluralism and of the open society. □

CAPITALIST PIG

Businessmen are crooks! This expression has been used to describe men who have grown wealthy through their business dealings. The reasoning goes that, "since businessmen are only interested in making a profit," they are greedy money grubbers who exploit the poor and the helpless.

Let's examine this accusation by considering the success of one such capitalist pig, Henry Ford.

Henry Ford's genius and determination made him a very wealthy man. But before he made his first penny, Ford went deeply into debt to finance an extremely risky venture. And in order to make a profit, he first had to provide a product that the buying public wanted and could afford. Ford's wealth, then, should be viewed as a measure of how well he satisfied the needs of others.

Of course, Ford's success enabled him, in turn, to offer high-paying jobs to thousands of people, many of whom were previously

poorly paid or even unemployed.

Furthermore, it wasn't just Ford's own employees who benefited from his "better idea." Countless jobs were created as other companies grew to supply the auto industry. Ford ordered steel from Pittsburgh, rubber from Akron, and the demand for petroleum skyrocketed.

The promise of employment and the chance to get ahead drew people like a magnet from around the globe. Bigger paychecks in the hands of more consumers bought homes, clothing, and groceries on an unprecedented scale. And schools, museums, libraries, symphonies, and athletic teams flourished.

All this happened not so much because Henry Ford (and others like him) loved humanity, but because he wanted to make a profit. In order to do so, the discipline of Capitalism dictated that he first satisfy the needs of others, much as religion has imposed similar rules upon those who hope to "profit" in the hereafter.

TAXES:

Provide schools, roads, national defense, welfare benefits, and other public services

MATERIALS AND SERVICES:

Payments to suppliers who, in turn, pay their employees

CHARITY

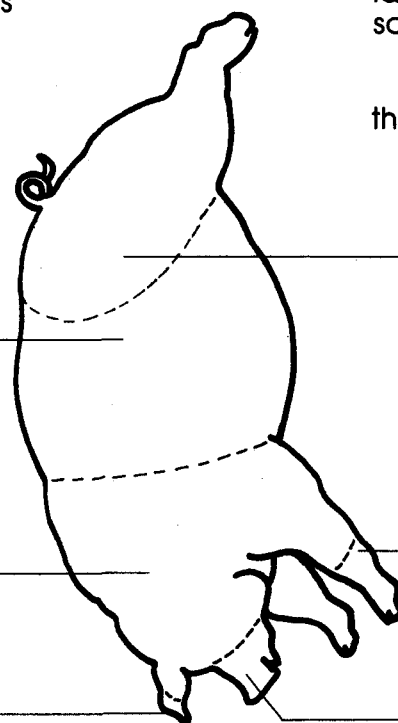
WAGES AND BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES:

Employees, in turn, spend money on goods and services in other sectors of the economy

PROFITS:

- Dividends to shareholders
- Salaries to owners
- Reinvestment in company

DEPRECIATION



CAPITALIST PIG

For further information regarding the availability of a full series of these short, informative essays, contact Mr. G. Scot Hasted, Room D, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI 49242.



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CULTURE AND POLITICS
Ronald Berman/University Press of America/\$10.95

John R. Turner

Culture and Politics, despite its sweeping title, consists solely of an account of the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1972 until 1976

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when author Ronald Berman was its chairman. Yet the treatise to some extent justifies its name, for the debate over the distribution of funds from a federal agency charged with supporting the humanistic disciplines goes to the heart of the relationship between government and the verbal arts.

Mr. Berman, who describes himself

as "a conservative reasonably equipped with morals and ideas," spends only a few pages on the question of whether the public should be taxed to support activities it cannot define. He could have done better to explore the issue more fully. His tepid defense of the practice, which amounts to little more than the excuse that since the bureaucracy is in place anyway it might as well be run sensibly, serves basically to confuse the more principled arguments he makes when he gets around to discussing theoretical aspects of his topic.

The book is composed of two disparate discourses: one an explanation of how the federal government actually works, and the other a philosophic essay on the nature of the humanities and on Berman's attempts to translate that nature into policy at the NEH. The first of these I found to be more interesting and valuable than the second.

the renomination in a bemused and witty tone, but it is obvious that the senator's behavior still rankles him. He sees Pell as a dishonorable man, and with good reason if it is true that the senator did all the things Berman attributes to him. Something about Berman put Pell into a snit, and he used the large prerogatives of his office unfairly to squash a noncompliant bureaucrat.

Pell's actions were regrettable, but they point to a lesson Berman seems only partially to have learned: to wit, in Washington being right will get you nowhere. And that, in turn, indicates the most serious drawback to seeking government support for the humanities. It is the purpose of the humanities to cherish the best that humans have thought and done whereas it is the purpose of government, commonly, to reward politicians, and, at best, to cater to mankind's middling aspirations.

Berman seems to recognize the dangers of a mass culture fueled by government money, and, in fact, to be fundamentally pessimistic about it. At one point he remarks, "I believe actually that . . . in the near future the nation will in a rudimentary way be literate with computers and in a curtailed language of general expressiveness, and pretty much unfamiliar with either the books or the art that are usually thought to be basic to our character and values."

Given Berman's assumptions, it was perhaps inevitable that he would view his tenure at the NEH as something of a rear guard action. His assertion that "the essence of the humanities is not charity: it is style," reveals a mind-set unlikely to fit easily with the coarse wheeling and dealing of American politics.

In the end, however, Berman's frustrations arose less from the crudity of the political system than from the presuppositions of the American people. As he skillfully attests in his final chapter, the general populace has been won by the notion that education and culture promote goodness. And Berman knows that whatever validity the proposition might have in an assessment taking all human endeavor into account, it is worthless as a prescription for the mundane ills of the citizenry.

What bedeviled Berman during his term at the NEH and eventually left him with sour memories was the age-old struggle between aristocratic and popular taste. The problem was not that he couldn't find an audience for high-quality productions. The response to the Unicorn Tapestries showed that he could. No, his main difficulty was

The political tale shakes down mainly to the story of the struggle between the author and Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island. Though Berman tries mightily to paint the senator's opposition as inexplicably irrational, it doesn't take much reading between the lines to see that Pell considered the NEH chairman to be an intellectual snob. What the senator wanted from the agency was not high culture but rather a sprinkling of small grants to ordinary citizens. The most memorable motif of the book is Berman's wry commentary upon Pell's suggestion that money be given to lumberjacks and shoemakers so they could pursue their humanistic interests after a hard day in the forest or shop.

To Berman that would have been piddling the Endowment's funds away to no effect. As he says, "As far as I could see it was preferable to consider the general public as an audience rather than as a collection of potential grantees." Instead he pushed for projects of large public impact, such as the exhibition of the Unicorn Tapestries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the filming of "The Adams Family Chronicle," which proved to be immensely popular when shown on television in January 1976.

These efforts won wide public acclaim, but they did not mollify Senator Pell. When time came for Berman's reappointment, the lawmaker mounted a campaign to block the nomination, and though he lost some skirmishes to Berman's supporters, he was finally victorious, holding off hearings until after the presidential elections when Jimmy Carter's success spelled Berman's downfall.

Berman recounts the struggle over

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