

questions: How has the Mexican State been able to achieve the enormous power it now exercises, and, in a part of the world where the overnight coup d'etat is a recognized political ploy, why has it taken 73 years to do it? Salvador Borrego sees two fundamental reasons why the socialization program has enjoyed such remarkable success: the unwavering determination of political leaders, and the corresponding lack of determination on the part of the public. Successive governments have moved along their chosen path step by step with single-minded dedication. If now and then they seem to have paused or even to have taken a step backward, it appears to have been only for tactical reasons. In general they have followed a systematic, coherent course, continually proclaiming their progress to be inevitable and irreversible. While the present crisis may be more than they bargained for, it, too, can be made to serve their purpose if government becomes stronger while the governed become weaker.

Regarding the second question, about why the "revolutionary" change is so sluggish, it can be argued that Mexico is too large and too complex a nation to be effectively transformed at gunpoint. There are 30 times as many Mexicans as Nicaraguans, and the total area of all six Central American countries would fit into a few states in the south of Mexico. Even Chile and Argentina are, respectively, less than one-sixth and one-third the size of Mexico in population. (This is not to say that a *golpe de estado* is impossible, and an amusing little novel by journalist Manuel Sánchez Pontón recounting an imaginary coup and counter-coup is currently topping the local best-seller list.) Violence, however, has not been the way of Mexican politicians, at least over the last half-century.

Salvador Borrego comes down hard on the silent majority of his countrymen. When the revolution took away the right of millions of small farmers to own property, other sectors of society shrugged their shoulders: city real estate was not affected, so they didn't care. As the *ejido*



system moved into collectivism, causing millions to flee the countryside, no move was made to stop the process. When the Catholic Church was denigrated, put under impossible controls, and then openly persecuted, popular reaction came slowly; even when thousands had given their lives in armed struggle a compromise put the government back on top. At each stage of the program to insert Marxist-Leninist teaching into the

educational system there were sporadic protests, but again, whether through lack of unity among the protesters or the action of infiltrators, the settlements always worked to the advantage of the left. While labor has generally submitted to control by the giant semiofficial trade union, captains of industry, through selfishness and shortsightedness, have missed innumerable opportunities to show what the government's claim to be the only friend of the working man really means. Sector by sector, a free society has been pushed to the wall because nowhere has the relentless process of statization met with firm resistance.

Looking ahead, Salvador Borrego sees the foreign debt with its crushing interest payments increasing. He sees further inflation and devaluation bringing on social unrest, which will be met by government measures stronger than anything envisioned today. He concludes with a question that is really a prayer: Will what the Mexican people have suffered and will suffer in the years ahead forge within them what has been lacking and what they must have in order to defend themselves, something that can only be called a national soul? □

## THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

### A Plague on One House

The pox, in keeping with the saying, is actually on both houses—Democratic and Republican alike. Yet, the real loser is one house—the all-encompassing one, that of the duly elected representatives of the American nation, that august body so venerated by high school primers on civics. What's happened in that house of late has turned the issue of public education, so intensely discussed these days, into a grotesque symbol of what's wrong with us in general.

On the surface, what we have here is a case of flawless symmetry in the elective

democratic system: a Republican and a Democrat, each guilty of sin, impropriety, or hanky-panky—you name it, according to your lifestyle denomination. But in those indefinable layers of individual and collective subconsciousness, the Republican is at least one point up: he made it in the old, regular way, with a 17-year-old formally "willing" female congressional page—if we wish to leave all the circumstantial trappings, pressures, and lures unconsidered. But it was strange to see the gentleman (?) from Massachusetts in the reverent, heavily paneled chamber of the U.S. House admitting *urbi et orbi* that he is a homosexual and shrilly demanding compas-

sion. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* was obviously the moral foundation of his nonnegotiable ultimatum, as if what he had done required not absolution but imprimatur. And perhaps he is eschatologically correct: after all, he grounded his factitious righteousness in the reigning zeitgeist. When *Time* magazine puts on its cover one David Bowie—the supreme symbol of plastic, anomic androgyny, a trivial deviate whom *Time* calls “music’s most exquisite artifact,” the high priest of pop AC/DC formulae—some signals are emitted from the squalid legislatures of mass-produced conscience in mid-Manhattan: worship the cheerful designer-fashioned depravity—that is the *pass partout* to fame cum glory to strive for. Congressman Gerry Studds, the Democratic deviate, when describing his deeds, spoke of “consenting adults,” but his “score” was not an adult: he was a 16-year-old boy who admitted to having been awed by the impeccably dressed, worldly “representative of the people” in Washington, D.C.—the mecca of schoolboys who dream about high life in extraordinary places and thus believe that their selection to the Congressional Page Corps is the most superb good luck that can happen to them. The boy was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* saying of his experience: “he [Studds] provided me with one of the more wonderful experiences of my life, if we exclude the instances of sexual experience, which I was somewhat uncomfortable with”—which proves that he was a homosexual not by his genes, or by his conditioning, but by corruption. So, rather than with consent, we are dealing here with a banal and nefarious case of outright seduction, of preying on youthful corruptibility and vulnerability. Congressman Dan Crane, the macho reveler, if compared to Rep. Studds, comes across as a boorish grabber for whom the honor of representing his district and the resulting power is equated with the primitive principle of living it up. Mr. Studds looks like a perverter of values who must now resort to all the mendacity and speciousness of modern

rhetoric.

Yet there’s a whiff of the tragic in this sordid, subhistorical anecdote about human sleaziness. It’s nested in the reaction of many of Mr. Studds’s constituents in coastal Massachusetts. Those fishermen and seamen, rough, hardworking people, when asked by interviewers about their representative’s exploits, asserted almost unequivocally that he had always defended their economic interests well, and that it is not their business to inquire as to what he does in his free time. None of the newsmen had the wit to ask whether they would send *their* sons to D.C. as Mr. Studds’s pages. It

seems that it is someone else’s son who doesn’t really matter very much.

Mr. Studds will find aid and defense in the enlightened, tolerant, liberal press corps. Already voices are saying that he has the right to the privacy of his instincts. None of those ardent defenders bothers, in this case, to mention the archtenet of yesteryear: if you want a private life, don’t run for a public office. They reach the apex of liberal hypocrisy when they invoke Mr. Studds’s right to be immune from the people’s right to know—in the name of which they are perpetually ready to eviscerate anyone whom they ideologically dislike. □

## JOURNALISM

### Tovarich Gannett

As the omniscient insiders in Washington, D.C. keep repeating these days, the Pentagon is against any U.S. intervention in Central America, chiefly because President Reagan has failed to convince the American people that such a venture is necessary. That’s exactly Moscow’s dream. Better yet, there are mighty organizations in America which are doing everything they can—wittingly or unwittingly—to help the Politbureau with its awesome task of befuddling the American collective mind to the point of suicidal stupor. Among these is the powerful chain of provincial tabloids, Gannett. In its recent treatment of the issue, Gannett’s outlets featured photomontages of idealized portraits of Salvadoran guerrillas juxtaposed with the Vietnam War Memorial—a journalistic tidbit which certainly made the Soviet agitprop establishment ecstatic. Not long ago, one John Hanchette, a Gannett comrade from the chain’s news service, provided a piece saturated with delightful disinformation, all of which was dedicated to proving how and why America need not and should not defend itself against the communist encroachment.

His main argument: American pop and rock singers have already begun to perceive the heinousness of our imperialism, and they will bring down any anti-communist efforts, just like they did during the 60’s. Hanchette announced with obvious relish that America’s most valuable contribution to Comintern, the Marxist crooner Pete Seeger, is already in Nicaragua and ready for action. He then revealed an even more weighty menace:

There is another political factor present that wasn’t there during the Vietnam years. A large swath of Latin American culture is burgeoning in the United States through ‘La Nueva Cancion’ (The New Songs) which represent a whole new genre of political protest authored by refugees from Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador and other troubled countries.

A perceptive reader would notice that one Latin American country from which we have quite a lot of refugees (over a million, perhaps, some of whom came in a large batch once called an exodus) is discreetly not mentioned. This tactful silence, of course, implies an untroubled country. In keeping with the correct Soviet propaganda techniques, the absence of those refugees in Gannett’s re-