

SPORTS

No going back for Forest Hills

Players are now entertainers, not "ladies and gentlemen."

By Mark Naison
This year's U.S. Open, the last played at the West Side Tennis Club, showed how far tennis has moved beyond the genteel setting in which it was once comfortably nestled.

Sellout crowds, round the clock television coverage, demonstrations against apartheid, and a near riot in the stands when Open officials tried to move an afternoon match involving Guillermo Vilas into the evening program—all these seemed out of place within the confines of a club whose members still sip gin and tonics on the clubhouse veranda and mimic the manners of the British aristocracy.

Next year, the tournament is going to be moved to a city-owned facility in Flushing Meadow park that can seat more people and is more suitable to the rough and tumble atmosphere of big-time sport.

The game has come a long way since the days when tournaments were played on grass and the players were all "amateurs." Tennis still has a special place in the hearts of the rich—the number of chauffeured limousines that pulled up to the stadium was mind-blowing—but it's also been enthusiastically adopted by the American middle class and infused with the spirit of show business.

Players are now entertainers, not "ladies and gentlemen," and they can curse, gesture to the crowd, intimidate linesmen and opponents without much fear of penalty. The audience is also more uninhibited, shouting encouragement to their favorites—"Go Billie Jean," "Get him, Guillermo"—as if they were at a basketball or football game.

But the action on the court is worthy of this excitement. Ever since the Open switched from grass to clay, matches have become much more fun to watch, turning into contests of endurance, dexterity and all round athletic ability as well as shotmaking.

Because the ball is harder to put away on clay than on grass, points last longer and audiences are often treated to breathtaking sequences in which one brilliant shot follows another in rapid succession before a point is finally won. At its best, a clay-court tennis match is a quintessential athletic spectacle in which two fine athletes extend one another to the peak of their physical and mental capacities for three hours or more.

The men's final—between Guillermo Vilas and Jimmy Connors—was just such an event, although there were plenty of other matches in both the men's and women's divisions that excited the capacity crowds.

Women's Championship.

The women's title, as expected, was won by Chris Evert. But many of the other seeded players were beaten, a rarity in women's tennis. Two unseeded players, Australian Wendy Turnbull and 14 year old Californian Tracy Austin, pulled most of the upsets; the former beating Rosey Casals, Martina Navratilova, and Wimbledon Titleist Virginia Wade, and the latter beating Sue Barker.

The success of these two players bodes well for women's tennis. Turnbull is a fine athlete with a number of rough edges in her game, but she seems to have ironed out her weaknesses playing World Team Tennis and should emerge as a major factor on the women's tour. She gave Chris Evert her best match, losing the first set in a tie breaker before

succumbing to Evert's superior steadiness and strategic sense.

Tracy Austin, though celebrated by the media for her pixieish appearance, may be the best athlete to enter the ranks of women's tennis since Margaret Court. Although she weighs only 90 pounds, she is incredibly agile and is able to get every ounce of weight into her shots even when she seems to be off balance. Like Chris Evert, she seems to be in perfect position for every ball that she can reach, but she volleys much better than Evert did at her age and serves a little harder.

Once Austin gets more weight and strength, there may be no stopping her; one hopes that more women with her athletic ability will take up the game so that she doesn't totally dominate the circuit.

A few words should be said about Chris Evert, this year's champion. Because she has won some 110 matches in a row on clay, and because her court demeanor is so impassive, Evert has not captured the imagination of tennis audiences. She deserves better.

Some players run better, some are more flamboyant, but no one has better balance, body control or touch on their shots. Evert hits winners on shots that other players would barely return, but she does it so effortlessly that people don't realize the difficulty of what she's doing.

Against Billie Jean King, whom she beat 6-2, 6-0, she was hitting passing shot after passing shot on balls that landed a foot or two from the baseline. Some fans may call her "mechanical," but people who play the game seriously regard her as a superior athlete and a true court artist.

Men's Championship.

In the men's division there were a few upsets in the early and middle rounds, but the main drama was the finals, where Guillermo Vilas was matched up against Jimmy Connors. With number one seed Bjorn Borg sidelined with an injury, both Vilas and Connors breezed through to the finals without the loss of a set; the former defeating Harold Solomon in his most difficult match, and the latter devastating Manuel Orantes, his conqueror of two years ago.

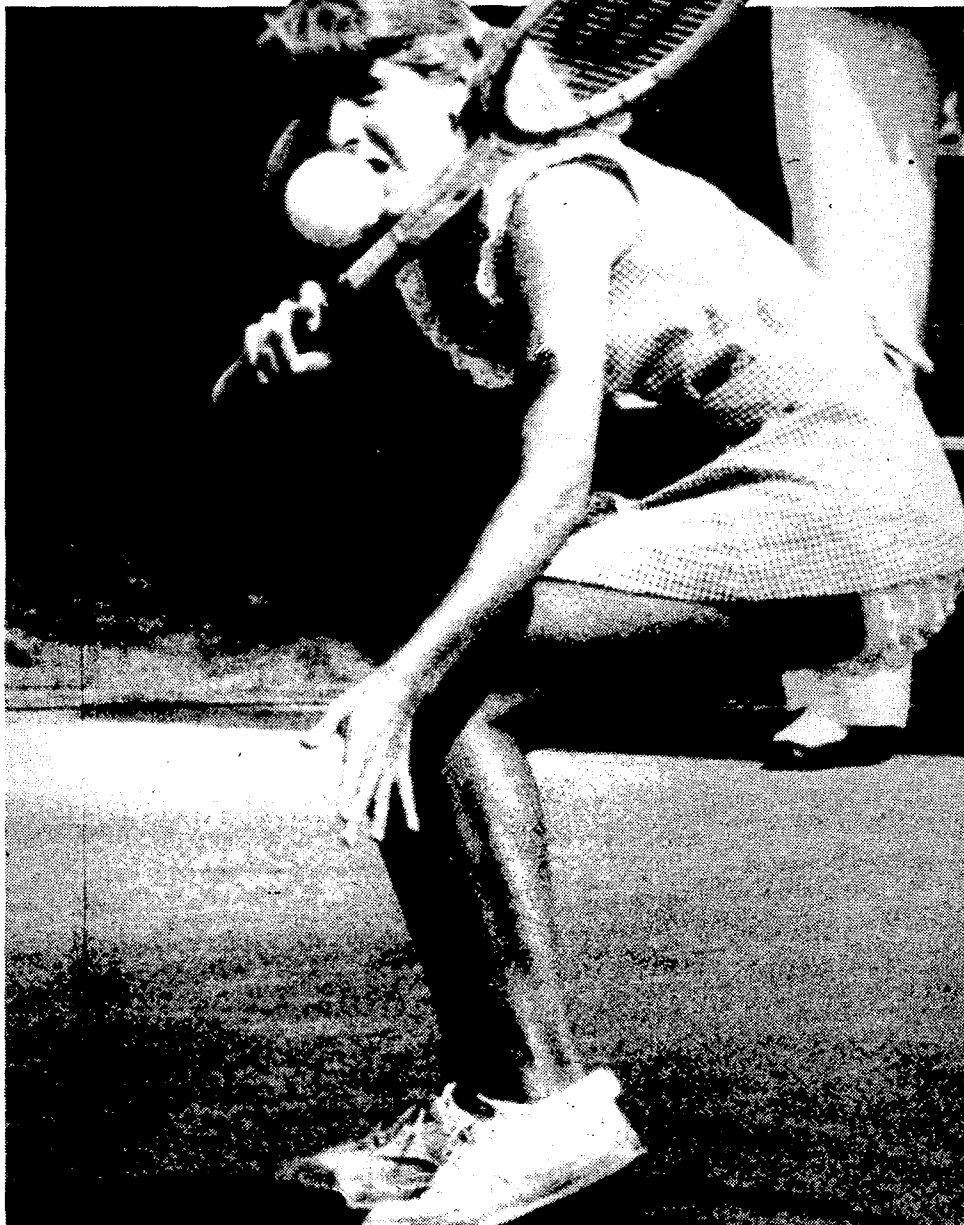
The stage was set for a remarkable match. Vilas had a streak of 39 matches on clay, including six straight tournaments, but he had yet to beat Borg or Connors in head to head competition. Connors had been hampered by back trouble since Wimbledon, but had played brilliantly throughout the Open, intimidating opponents with the power of his shots.

In the first set, it looked as though Connors would wipe the Argentinian off the court. He came out slugging from both the forehand and backhand side and Vilas—visibly nervous—seemed unable to cope with the speed of Connors' shots or the swirling mid-afternoon winds. Vilas mishit numerous balls off Connors' serve and approach shots and Connors appeared arrogant and invincible.

In the second set, however, Vilas began to recapture his timing. He stopped making unforced errors and began to vary his game more, charging net on short balls and interspersing slices with his normal topspin strokes. Connors, in turn, lost a bit of his sharpness and began hitting short forehands into the net. Vilas won the set 6-3.

In the third set, Connors seemed to recover the momentum and jumped out to a four to one lead. He was smashing his ground strokes from corner to corner and charging the net behind brilliant deep approach shots.

But all of a sudden, Vilas began hitting Connors' best shots by him for winners. Pushed off the court by Connors' drives, Vilas came up with a series of



There may be no stopping 14 year old Tracy Austin, who upset Sue Barker and won the attention of everyone.

UPI

topspin passing shots from both the forehand and backhand side that had the crowd gasping in amazement. Connors kept up the pressure, but the harder he hit, the better were Vilas' returns. The Argentinian pulled even at six all and won the set in a tie-breaker.

At this point in the match Connors seemed frustrated and exhausted. Vilas, a powerfully built man in superb physical condition, seemed to have a clear edge in stamina. But to Connors' credit, he refused to give in to fatigue and kept up the strategy that had taken him to the top of the tennis world, charging net on the short balls that Vilas gave him, hoping the Argentinian would lose his timing or his nerve.

But the player once ridiculed for his choking seemed to thrive on the pressure, and picked up his game to even higher levels. Shot after shot whizzed off Vilas' racket from impossible angles to land in corners of the court that Connors left uncovered. He did it on short balls, deep balls, balls hit to the side and down the middle, on drop shots and overheads. Although Connors played well, Vilas won the final set 6-0.

The crowd gave Vilas a standing ovation. Rarely had any of them seen a better tennis match or a more impressive athletic performance.

Mark Naison helps coordinate sports coverage for *In These Times*.

Anti-apartheid demonstration draws comment from Ashe

Some 250 people turned out for the anti-apartheid demonstration called by the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society outside the Forest Hills Tennis Stadium on the day of the U.S. Open finals protesting South African participation.

Although the size of the crowd was smaller than the organizers had hoped for, the demonstration was spirited, well-organized and located in a spot where its chanting could be heard in every part of the stadium. The audience, the news media, and USTA officials were very aware that a demonstration was taking place, and some 10,000 leaflets were handed out describing the Tennis Association's defense of the right of South African teams and players to compete in the Davis Cup and professional tournaments.

One of the highlights of the demonstration came when black tennis star Arthur Ashe came out to address the demonstrators. In the past Ashe had argued that banning South Africa

from international competition would hinder the struggle against apartheid, but on this occasion he shifted his position slightly, arguing that individual South Africans should be allowed to play in the Open, but that South African teams should "perhaps" be barred from the Davis Cup.

Since Ashe is a member of the USTA Executive Board his remarks may reflect a potential change in the Association's position as the pressure on them mounts.

Next year, the Open will be played in a city-owned facility, and the Association may also find it difficult to sell their current position to city officials concerned about the feelings of their black and Puerto Rican constituents.

In any case ACCESS plans to organize further demonstrations in New York and other cities to keep the issue before the public eye, and to broaden the constituency for action against apartheid.

—M.N.

ART & ENTERTAINMENT

BOOKS

Living revolution



TAKING CHARGE

By The Simple Living Collective (American Friends Service Committee)
Bantam, 1977, paper \$1.95

RESOURCE MANUAL FOR A LIVING REVOLUTION

By Virginia Coover, Ellen Deacon, Charles Esser, Christopher Moore
New Society Press, 1977, paper \$5

Here are two new paperback guides to personal and political change. The first is a collective of essays by people who have participated in experiments in what the authors call "simple living." By this they mean "regaining control of the materially connected aspects of our lives" (e.g. the chapter on "Consuming Ourselves"), rejecting the role of "unwitting co-conspirators in the economic oppression of other human beings and the political oppression that usually accompanies it," (e.g. "The Energy Addict's Calorie Counter") and "actively engaging in work designed to bring about a fundamental redistribution of political and economic power in this nation and in the world."

While there is discussion of politics and economics and

some examples of significant efforts at change, the thrust of the book is to persuade the reader that "how you live can make a difference"—which is to say that one is not as powerless as one feels in "the overdeveloped sector of a maldeveloped world."

There are numerous bibliographies included in *Taking Charge*, each directed at stimulating discussion of a particular problem, and there are constant references to a "forthcoming" *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, which has now come forth.

This is the result of long, intense effort—not yet terminated—by four leading members of the Movement for a New Society, centered in Philadelphia. It is larger, more expensive, and much more detailed than *Taking Charge*, and the two work well together.

The *Manual* is predicated on the need for "specific skills that can facilitate the transition to a new society." It is, as its authors put it, "a collection of tools"—everything from ways of structuring a "non-structured" meeting to conflict resolution; from consciousness raising to direct action campaigns. (MNS-trained people are pivotal in such efforts as the Clam-

shell Alliance.)

There are valuable guidelines on "Developing Communities of Support" (i.e. group-living for political activists) and on "Personal Growth" and ways of evaluating it. There is a valuable catch-all chapter called "Practical Skills," in which the reader can find instructions on how to cook for (and clean up from) large groups, or how to write a press release, or how to make signs for a demonstration, or how to keep track of information within a protracted group effort, or what to read before being arrested and going to jail.

There is a list, indexed by states, of groups and individuals to contact for further information and/or support. It is not long, and the farther the distance from Philadelphia, the thinner the coverage. Possibly the existence and use of the *Manual* will change that, for one of the obstacles to change of the kind the Movement for a New Society advocates is the lack of communication between like-thinking individuals and groups in the U.S.

—J.S.

Available from Movement for a New Society, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143.

Epic without a hero

THE BRIDGE ON THE DRINA

By Ivo Andric
Translated from the Serbo-Croat by Lovett Edwards
University of Chicago, 1977, paper, \$4.95

The occasion of a new paperback edition of Ivo Andric's epic Yugoslav novel (first published in 1945) is a chance to comment upon one of the most curious writers of the century, a Nobel Prize winner almost unknown in the U.S.

The Nobel citation for Andric's 1961 award stresses "the epic force with which he has depicted themes and human destinies." Although Andric has written novellas, poems and books of tales, it seems clear that he was chosen for the literature prize largely on the strength of *The Bridge on the Drina*, since none of his other work approaches its ambitious scope.

The novel covers 500 years of Balkan history—from the Ottoman conquest in the 15th century to World War I (which began as a Balkan war when a Serbian bullet pierced the Austrian archduke's chest)—by chronicling the history of a stately bridge over the River Drina between Bosnia and Serbia. Built by the Turks in the 16th century, occupied by the Austrians in the 19th, crossed and recrossed by Serbian nationalists on their missions of liberation, the bridge is a shifting symbol of unity and division among the South Slavic peoples (the Yug of Yugoslavia means "south") who live to either side of it.

Andric himself was born under Hapsburg rule in Bosnia, west of the Drina. He became a Serbian nationalist and was jailed by the Austrians in 1914. Between world wars he served as a diplomat for the short-lived Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and his *Bridge*, written in Nazi-occupied Belgrade in the early 1940s, is a plea for continued Serbian hegemony over the Croats and Muslims. (The South Slavic shell game of religions, cultures and regimes has not yet ended, as is evidenced by recent Serbian rumblings for self-determination.)

Reading *The Bridge on the Drina* is like studying a drop of pond water. Myriad life forms proliferate, degenerate, die out. Exotic characters, pinched like protozoa under the glass of history, offer no more possibilities of tragedy or comedy than a self-dividing amoeba. Many of them seem like puppets by Ghetto, carefully carved into eccentric smiles and scowls, manipulated into tics and limps.

Imagine *War and Peace* beginning with Mikhail Romanov instead of Count Rostov; or *The Grapes of Wrath* beginning with the landing of the Pilgrims. The best novelistic history I know is Garrett Mattingly's *The Armada*, but the scope of that was limited to the generations surrounding the event. Andric steamrolls through five centuries of biological time. The violence of each succeeding empire is distant and inevitable. Personal love is dwarfed into insignificance. Characters emerge

so briefly that they serve merely as representatives of one culture or another; their individuality is flattened under the weight of too many generations.

But here, at any rate, is solid refutation to Norman Mailer's claim to have invented "the novel as history, or history as the novel." Andric beat him to it by 20 years. Whatever its shortcomings as fiction, *The Bridge* is absorbing and accurate as history of an extraordinarily complex group of people. Perhaps the choice of a stone bridge as a unifying device was determined by the instability of the political and cultural entities that exist together in the rugged Balkan peninsula.

When the Nazis broke up the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Andric turned to Tito as unifier of Slavs. Although the Nobel Committee may have sensed in the Serbian nationalism of his great work a potential protest against the new socialist regime, Andric never expressed such feelings. He returned to the writing of histories, tales and novellas. His small people, having awakened to yet another configuration of power, blink and limp their way more often than not into a past where folk tales are blessed by the magical polyglot and mystery of this crossroads country.

Andric died in Belgrade in 1975. His *The Bridge on the Drina* remains a curiosity in world literature: an epic without a single human hero.

—Jeffrey Gillenkirk
Jeffrey Gillenkirk reviews regularly for *In These Times*.

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1st District, Michigan

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