

ican policy toward an alliance with Mao. Their effort failed, largely because Roosevelt preferred to cling to Chiang and Hurley opposed the Communists.

The Yalta conference of February 1945 represented the consolidation of Roosevelt's strategy of protecting China from Soviet desires and compelling the Communists to join a Chiang-dominated coalition. The President offered Stalin concessions in Manchuria, and the Soviet leader affirmed that he preferred to see Chiang dominant in China. Presumably, without aid from Stalin, Mao would be more likely to enter the American-conceived coalition under Chiang.

HOW MUCH DID ROOSEVELT's death and Truman's succession change American policy toward China? Schaller himself seems unsure at times, perhaps because of FDR's penchant for ambiguity. The evidence suggests, as Schaller briefly acknowledges, that there was, at best, a "slim possibility" for a revision of American policy under Roosevelt. If so, it died with him.

President Truman depended upon advisers who mistrusted the Soviets and the Chinese Communists more deeply. After V-J Day, through the deployment of American soldiers and the ferrying of Nationalist troops, the U.S. government tried to buttress Chiang's forces and weaken the Communists. As one American marine complained from China in November 1945, "... we are here to protect General Chiang's interests against possible Communist uprisings. Everything we do here points directly or indirectly toward keeping the Chinese Communists subdued."

In late 1945, the American military presence in China produced occasional clashes with Communist forces. Most notably, near Suchow, the Communists scrapped with an American intelligence party led by a then obscure captain. Stopped for questioning by the Communists, he called them "bandits." When warned by a Kuomintang associate not to provoke them, he reportedly declared, "I want to find out how they intend to treat Americans. I don't mind if they kill me. If they do they will be finished, for America will punish them with atomic bombs." And probably because the Communists believed the captain was linked to an American-supported program of Nationalist terrorism, they executed him. His name—John Birch.

Confronted by the growing Com-

munist strength in China, the Truman administration tried to block the Communists and push them into a Chiang-dominated alliance, while shoring up Chiang and forcing him to reform. Just as he had thwarted Roosevelt's efforts, Chiang frustrated Truman and General George C. Marshall, the President's special representative, who failed in his mission to China. Through the early postwar years, the administration's own anti-Communism, reinforced by the China lobby and the fear of a domestic backlash, blocked any thought of abandoning Chiang for Mao. In November 1948, nearly a year before Chiang fled to Taiwan, General Marshall, then the secretary of state, told the Truman cabinet, "There is nothing we can do to save China."

When Chiang's government collapsed, many Republicans and some Democrats accused Truman of "selling China down the river." Among them was a young Democratic congressman, John F. Kennedy, who complained in 1949, "What our young men had saved [by fighting in World War II], our diplomats and our President frittered away." Roosevelt's generation was not alone in failing to understand the social revolutions of Asia. □

CONFESSIONS OF A CONSERVATIVE, by Garry Wills. Doubleday, 231 pp., \$10.00.

Confusions of a conservative

DAVID GORDON

WHOTHER ELSE BUT GARRY Wills would include in the same book a penetrating analysis of Saint Augustine's view of justice and a tasteless defamation of Albert Jay Nock? Lack of discrimination and confusion of thought are the only constants in this meandering attempt to elaborate an allegedly conservative political philosophy that will justify the

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author's idiosyncrasies. Wills suggests that the purpose of the state is not to enforce justice but to postpone conflict "in the name of common good things held." His ideal, what he terms the "convenient" state, "exists to hold people together in peace, not to enunciate 'raw justice.'" The state, he contends, cannot be founded on reason, since any

Wills assumes public schools and public safety but never says why the public should foot the bill.

attempt to do so represents a kind of masked theocracy. How did we get from justice to reason? And what is "theocratic" about, say, the society based on reason discussed in Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia*?

Wills's failure to consider questions like these means in itself only that his theory is insufficiently elaborated, but he soon falls into outright contradiction. He favors preferential hiring of blacks on the ground that "conservatives are bound to the concept of 'historic guilt' for racial wrongs." Even granting that reverse discrimination is a case of implementing justice, what happened to his belief that the state is not founded to preserve justice? On the next page, Wills repents his midsixties opposition to civil disobedience: Apparently violence by some blacks is compatible with "holding the people together in peace." Another chapter defends elitist "do-gooders," whom others condemn as busybodies: Without such "prophetic" figures, how could radical reform measures get started? The convenient state goes out the window as soon as the status quo does not suit Wills's pet causes.

Even when Wills is right he finds it impossible to avoid muddle. In the course of an argument that American elections do not settle major issues, he states that "our nation is never more united than at the close of an election," forgetting his own discussion of the election of 1860 in the previous chapter. Vastly exaggerating the practical importance of Condorcet's paradox of voting (which shows that voting does not always result in a clear social preference), he mars his interesting discussion

of the limits of democracy by offering a melange of poorly digested welfare economics. He manages to quote Kenneth Arrow without once mentioning the Impossibility Theorem, a much stronger version of Condorcet's paradox.

Wills uses the idea of the convenient state (when the prophets are on furlough) to support a "conservative" position like that of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in *The Vital Center*. What are to be conserved are the social gains of the welfare state. Everyone must undergo twelve years of public education and contribute to social security; and federally mandated safety requirements are a step in the right direction. Characteristically, Wills offers no argument for public provision of these services. The need to serve certain interests is simply posited. This may seem an odd version of conservatism, but what can one expect from someone who avows himself a Chestertonian distributist but thinks that the widespread holding of property is nowadays both unnecessary and impossible. This is as sensible as being an admirer of Shakespeare, except for the plays.

In his long memoir of his years at *National Review*, Wills's reporting of the opinions of others leaves a great deal to be desired. If "Alfred Kohler of the China lobby" instead of Alfred Kohlberg is dismissed as a slip, what is one to think of his imputing belief in unfettered capitalism to Russell Kirk? In *A Program for Conservatives*, Kirk—whom by the way Wills delicately terms a "sap"—explained in detail his preference for the moderate welfare state of Wilhelm Roepke over the "Manchesterism" of Ludwig von Mises. Murray Rothbard, an outspoken critic of the single-tax movement, appears here as a "latter-day [Henry] Georgist." Leo Strauss did not believe that "history is one long conversation in univocal terms," and the claim that Eric Voegelin supports "theocratic politics" is at least debatable, and requires some evidence. When I called Wills's observation to his attention, Voegelin stated that it was nonsense.

The *pièce de résistance*, however, is surely the following, about Nock's old magazine, *The Freeman*: "I find it hard to see what impressed so many people in the twenties. Nock was only exaggerating a little when he said in his *Memoirs*, 'We produced what was quite generally acknowledged to be the best paper published in our language.'" If not formally contradictory, the two statements are at least glaringly inconcinnous, to use one of Wills's favorite words. □

MUSIC

The essential jazz record library

NAT HENTOFF

ALTHOUGH CHARLIE PARKER was the explosive trailblazer of modern jazz, greatly advancing the harmonic sophistication and rhythmic complexity of the improvisers who followed him, he was not the only explorer. Dizzy Gillespie set new directions on trumpet, creating a virtuosic but penetratingly emotional style laced with sardonic wit and a playfulness that served as a reminder that the music, while serious, need not be solemn. (*Dizzy Gillespie: The Development of an American Artist, 1940-46*, Smithsonian Collection, P2 13455; available from the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50366; *Oscar Peterson & Dizzy Gillespie*, Pablo 2310-740.)

Also in at the beginning of the post-swing era revolution was Thelonius Monk, a pianist-composer with roots in the Harlem "stride piano" tradition but with an utterly singular harmonic imagination (to him, so-called dissonance was as natural as swinging), a bent for angular and somehow mysterious melodies, and a slashing rhythmic incisiveness (*Brilliance*, Milestone 47023; *Monk/Trane* Milestone M-47011).

Miles Davis, on the scene early and a sometime sideman of Charlie Parker, took a while to develop a voice that was truly an extension of his own particular strengths and interests. His playing grew spare, making dramatic use of space. Often implying, rather than specifically stating the beat, Davis showed other players diverse routes to greater

rhythmic freedom, and was particularly influential in his gradual jettisoning of chords and use of modal patterns instead (*Kind of Blue*, Columbia PC-8163). For Davis at his most evocatively, hauntingly lyrical, there is *Sketches of Spain* (Columbia PC-8271).

Many of Davis's sidemen later went on to renown, but his most remarkable alumnus was tenor saxophonist John Coltrane. No one in jazz before had used such density of textures, multinode improvisations that critic Ira Gitler called "sheets of sound." Coltrane played with enormous energy and urgency, and when leading his own groups he had so much to say that one number could last an hour or more. He learned to play several notes or tones simultaneously, and used drummers who built multiple layers of intersecting rhythms; he also, as a soloist, sustained a higher emotional tension for longer than anyone would have thought possible before (*Giant Steps*, Atlantic S-1311; *Live at the Village Vanguard*, Atlantic S-10; *Ascension*, Impulse S-95).

Also forceful, but on a broader and a more narrative-like structural scale, was bassist-composer-leader Charles Mingus. His work was characterized by bold, arching melodies, pungent harmonies, and what he considered a natural approach to time: The rhythm would accelerate and decelerate in a piece according to the needs of the mood and the story-line. "Like conversation," he said. His subjects ranged from volcanic evocations of Holiness prayer meetings he had attended as a child, to a portrait of Lester Young, to savage satirical thrusts at racism, and unabashedly intimate but tensile sketches of former lovers and present companions. Mingus produced a more diversified and durable body of work than did anyone in jazz history but Duke Ellington (*Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*, Barnaby/Candid 5012; *Tia Juana Moods*, RCA APL 1-0939; *Mingus Ah Um*, Columbia CS-8171; *Cumbia & Jazz Fusion*, Atlantic 8801).

By contrast with the fierce flights of Coltrane and the passionate lyricism of Mingus, the Modern Jazz Quartet was considered too formal and bloodless by some. Yet this unit, the most accomplished chamber jazz group in the post-

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