

remains to all effect abolished (it is still to be proven that Gary Gilmore was the start of a new trend and not a lonely exception), murder rates continue to climb — from 12,000 a year in 1968, when the Supreme Court temporarily voided the death penalty, to 20,000 annually at present. A 1974 study by Dr. Arnold Bennett of M. I. T. found that if homicide rates continue to accelerate at their current pace, a child born in the year 2000 in New York City would have a one-in-seventeen chance of being murdered. In Detroit it would be one-in-fourteen; in Washington one-in-sixteen; in Atlanta one-in-eleven.

Believing that it is more than obvious that the pendulum has swung too far, in *Neither Cruel Nor Unusual*, author Frank Carrington argues that the death penalty is both justified and effective, and portrays it as a sorely needed institution to redress the present imbalance in our criminal justice system.

D. Pietrusza

WANNISKI, J.

The Way The World Works: How Economies Fail and Succeed
Basic Books, 319 pp., \$12.95

Since the stunning victory of California's Proposition 13, the U.S. taxpayers' revolt has gathered momentum with ever-increasing velocity. So far its support has derived mainly from a widespread reaction to the sting of payroll taxes and confiscatory real estate levies.

But now a fully reasoned argument in favor of tax-limitation has propitiously appeared. Its author has assembled a work which is forcefully argued, lucidly written, and overwhelming in its impact.

Wanniski bases his theory on the so-called Laffer Curve, an economic formula which rules that a tax rate results in the same amount of revenue at corresponding points — one high and one low — on the Curve's arc, because of the deleterious effect the steeper rate has on productivity and incentive.

It is this hypothesis, as first propounded by University of Southern California Economics Professor, Arthur B. Laffer, that already serves as the basis for a number of Congressional tax reform proposals such as the Kemp-Roth Bill, the Steiger capital-gains reduction amendment, and various measures introduced by Representative Philip Crane.

Opponents of such bills usually charge that they would

increase the budget imbalance and fuel inflation. However, Laffer and Wanniski believe that an administration need not fear a loss of revenues if it cuts taxes to the correct point. The stimulation the economy receives can *more* than offset whatever revenue may be lost.

Following World War II a Republican Congress trimmed personal income tax rates with recovery soon ensuing. The same happened in the 1920's when Warren Harding's "Return to Normalcy" was more than a platitude but a kept pledge to reduce bloated war-time tax structures. Further cuts engineered by Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon turned a sluggish economy around and set off the phenomenal Coolidge Boom.

Silent Cal himself well understood the mechanics of the Laffer Curve and sometimes could wax eloquent on the subject. "The first object of taxation is to secure revenue," he once told the National Republican Club, "When the taxation of large incomes is approached with that in view, the problem is to find a rate which will produce the largest returns. Experience does not show that the higher rate produces a larger revenue. Experience is all the other way. . . .

The most recent example, of course, is the Kennedy Tax Cut of 1963. That broad-based, across-the-board slash (the top rate went from 91 to 70%; the lowest from 20 to 14%) eventually catapulted the Dow Jones Average over the 1,000 mark, reversed the nation's gold flow, cut inflation and unemployment and caused a growth of \$320 in personal GNP over the next two years — as compared with rise of only \$112 in Eisenhower's eight years.

"Most one-term Presidents," says Wanniski, "only have time for one truly disastrous decision, but Hoover squeezed in two. . . . The retroactive feature of the tax boost was Hoover's last gift to Roosevelt. As the March 15, 1933 deadline approached for payment of 1932 tax liabilities, taxpayers throughout the nation had to withdraw funds from the banks. The bank panic of 1933 was the result."

Then as now Republicans — despite their more conservative leanings — were reluctant to initiate or maintain low tax rates. It is in fact because of Eisenhower's opposition to the Reed tax bill of 1953 that the GOP has "steadily lost power as a party," says Wanniski.

The import of "The Way The World Works" cannot be

underestimated. It is shockingly persuasive, a powerful weapon in the counter-attack on confiscatory taxation.

D. Pietrusza

FORDHAM, JIM AND ANDREA

The Assault on the Sexes

Arlington House, 479 pp., \$9.95, 1977

Pre-Christian Europe, with its reverence for the ancestors and its emphasis upon the family, clan, and the continuity of the household from generation to generation, placed women on a high social level as the progenitors of the future generations. Protected by respect for her rights as an individual and her role as a mother, no free woman was submitted to public indignity either as an inferior being or as a "sex object." Only with the arrival of Judaeo-Christianity, and the introduction of oriental concepts of female inferiority, did these latter ideas enter the European scene. While Christianity became to some extent Europeanized — as with the high respect paid to Mary as "the mother of God" — Protestantism, especially, tended to subordinate women, because of its emphasis upon the Old Testament; and Protestant pastors frequently quoted the Old Testament to support the presumed inequality of the sexes. However, in more recent times, the changing conditions of modern western life have given rise to a challenge against these Old Testament influences, and the western world is today faced with a fierce debate over the role of women in society.

Instead of reviving the older European concepts of family unity, male-female reciprocity and female dignity, the contest has tended to be fought in Judaeo-Christian versus Marxist terms, with Marxist antagonism against the family as an "archaic and inequalitarian institution" discreetly hiding itself behind the onslaught against the orientalized concept of "women-as-sex-objects" inferiors, or women as "made-from-the-rib-of-man" inferiors.

Although written in a clearly partisan style, the Fordham's book is nevertheless moderately well researched and surveys feminist literature in a relatively comprehensive fashion. The authors come to the conclusion — detailing their views with substantial documentation — that the "unisex" movement, as they call it, is remarkably well-orchestrated, and has longer