

French Revolution she would wonder whether it is possible to survive in a reign of terror. "I now know beyond doubt," she writes,

that it is impossible. Anybody who breathes the air of terror is doomed, even if nominally he manages to save his life. Everybody is a victim—not only those who die, but also the killers, ideologists, accomplices and sycophants who close their eyes or wash their hands—even if they are secretly consumed with remorse at night. Every section of the population has been through the terrible sickness caused by terror, and none has so far recovered, or become fit again for normal civic life. It is an illness that is passed on to the next generation, so that the sons pay for the sins of their fathers, so that only the grand children begin to get over it—or at least it takes on a different form with them.

Terror, alas, is an invariable concomitant of revolution. It is the substitution of ideo-

logical fanaticism, primitive passion, and naked power for the traditional restraints and usages which the revolutionary ferment has vitiated or destroyed. A kind of moral panic follows. Perhaps this is why Solzhenitsyn like Joseph de Maistre seems to detect a satanic impulse in revolution. Power, as Burckhardt said, is of its nature evil, and at a certain stage of revolution

... everything includes itself in power
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power
Must make perforce a universal prey,
And last eat up himself.⁵

¹Twin brother of the scientist Zhores Medvedev now living in exile in England.

²The Soviet three-judge panel which passed sentences *in absentia*.

³Standard book of indoctrination in the Stalinist epoch.

⁴*The First Circle*

⁵*Troilus and Cressida*, Act. 1, Scene 3.

The Recovery of the Past

C. P. I V E S

Tradition and Reform in Education,
by Stephen J. Tonsor, *LaSalle, Illinois:*
Open Court Publishing Company, 1974.
xi + 250 pp. \$8.95.

KING CROESUS of Lydia, who took a good deal of pride and more of comfort in his riches seems nevertheless to have needed intermittent reassurance about the true nature of happiness. When he heard that the Greek sage Solon was touring in the region

he invited him to the palace at Sardis. Croesus had his chief steward take Solon through the keeps where the ingots were stacked and the gems assorted in their appropriate caskets. Then with the smile of a man who hopes he knows the answer, he asked Solon who Solon thought was the happiest of men. "Tellus of Athens," said Solon, without pause or blink. "But why?" said Croesus, who couldn't remember Tellus in any list of the Richest Fifty. Because, said Solon, among other things, "... He

had sons both beautiful and good, and he lived to see children born to each of them, and these children grew up. . . . His end was surpassingly glorious. . . . He came to the assistance of his countrymen, routed the foe, and died upon the field. . . .”

Writing at the peak of Victorian pride and affluence, William Rathbone Greg—son-in-law of the man who started the London *Economist*, hence brother-in-law of Walter Bagehot, who raised the *Economist* to its journalistic eminence—wondered anxiously

why should not [one who has] a fortune sufficient to supply all reasonable wants pause awhile . . . and try to form a juster estimate of the purpose of life, and the relative value of its aims and prizes? . . . When does he ever say to himself, “I will pause, I will rest, I will enjoy, I will contemplate, I will consecrate my remaining years to my family, to my country, to my soul?” . . .

A few months ago Robert Daley, a freelance sports fancier interviewed the infelicitous Howard Cosell and his one-time TV sportscasting pal and partner Don Meredith in the *New York Times Magazine*. Cosell had some belittling things to say about the Emmy recently awarded to Meredith, and Daley asked Meredith about it. “Emmys—most awards—at best, they’re just a recognition by someone that you tried to do something,” said Meredith. “We’re too goal-oriented in our society. We get hung up on trying to win things. . . .” Cosell was discovered dandling a grandchild and sure “that my life’s a success. This Sunday my wife and I will have been married 30 years. We’ve got two great daughters, a son-in-law of whom I’m very proud, two grandsons with a third grandchild on the way. . . .”

Cosell practiced law for ten years and could well have heard of Solon, the lawgiver, even of Croesus at least in the folk phrase—“as rich as Croesus.” Greg, a publicist and essayist with several inches in the *National Dictionary of Biography* had

doubtless read Herodotus, who tells the Croesus-Solon story—and story it clearly is, inasmuch as Solon seems to have died a year or so before Croesus was born. But the fact that Herodotus drew on what was already traditional wisdom in the fifth century B.C. to edify readers of the longest-lasting history in history about primordial yearnings and ultimate values, in brief, the nature of man and the meaning of life, is not without relevance to Stephen J. Tonsor’s theme in *Tradition & Reform in Education*.

For as professor of history at the University of Michigan, Tonsor knows that much proposed “reform” of what is nevertheless still called “education,” begins with the rejection, pert and total, of Tradition—*trans*, across, *dare*, to give, *tra(ns)dere*, to give across the longest intervals of time those elementals which teach men who they are, and why, where, whence, and at least conjecturally, whither. The immemorial and experiential testimony in which Solon and the TV newscaster concur recedes before the positivist notion that only the now is real and in the now, only the sensed. But standing knee-deep in the wrack of student rioting at his own university, watching college presidents crawl and department heads grovel before campus condottieri whom they have taught to deny the Solons and Gregs and, yes, the Cosells and Merediths, Tonsor raises some old standards and some ancient questions.

They are discussed in three sections of 23 essays in all—brief to briefer in length. The prose is sobersides, unadorned, not much glint, little wit. Tonsor takes his enterprise as a serious one and leaves fancy and fun aside. The tone and tempo of the several statements vary; some read like lay sermons, some like commencement addresses, others like lunch-club or homecoming alumni talks. The matter is usually admonitory but in varying keys, from sweetly reasonable to approximately Savonarolan. Since the book is a congeries rather than a corpus, there are points at which dissonances seem, but only seem, to

appear. For instance, there is frequent stress on the need for diversity in education. But Tonsor, an admirer of Etienne Gilson, is at one with Gilson's overview that "a society, to be a real society, must be a coherent system of men. . . . Its fundamental outlook on the world [must have] some sort of unity. . . ." Tonsor's Section I, called "Images of Society" includes the essay "American History and Political Order" from which this excerpt is thematic of the book as a whole: "Great political orders and cultural eras are born, not in unconsciousness and barbarism, but in the full light of historical understanding. The past is a burden only so long as it is not forced to pay its own way. . . ."

Let us meditate upon one burden put upon us by our failure to make—or let—the past tell us what the Declaration meant when it said, as it certainly did, and does, say, that all men are created equal. In the temporal context of that writing, a quite particularized meaning of the word "equal" was intended and received in a strong and vibrant consensus. Its core was the assurance, respected by most and confessed by almost all, of a metaphysical order in which every man was like every other man in just one (but that one held all-important) aspect: a common finiteness before transcending infinity. As this acceptance waned, and the consensus it had animated, the bright numinous glow of the Declaration's "equal" dimmed to merely worldly and materialist meanings.

Whereupon a sudden pride of oxymoron—"pragmatists" discovered in the *Declaration of Independence* a compulsion for a kind of conceptualist cloning in which every body was identical in every detail with every other body, as one ball bearing is like every ball bearing. The single equality of finiteness in the metaphysical order translated abruptly into a universalized levelling of earthly rank, station, degree, into A's for all in academe, in social place and economic status. A notion of total interchangeability was the ultimate yield, in which men and ball bearings alike are shiftable from

one identical niche to another as the social need is conceived by the societal arbiters (Orwell's equallest of all) to require.

So it is, as reported in the *Sunpaper*, that in the old IBM building in Baltimore City at this very writing, a bank of computers is "digitizing" on "pupil locator maps," one inch for each 500 feet, the 5,000 blocks within the city limits to spot, block by block, every elementary school child residing therein, red numerals for white children, black for black; all this to effect the chiaroscuro blend of school populations mandated from Washington under statutes touted by their partisans as the true get of the Declaration and hence *ex hypothesi* and *ipso facto*, color-blind. The mandating agency is the aforementioned "pragmatists'" Department of Health, Education and Welfare. On the premise of an eighteenth century proclamation of liberty whose true meaning is lost in the neglect of history, HEW pioneers the implacable technology of human manipulation on which the energumens of the coming totalitarian anthills will pounce with glee to deploy.

In the face of such portents, Tonsor is by no means facilely optimistic. But history teaches him to beware of quick despair. He sees about him signs of reviving prudence and reenergizing alarm. The 1960's-type dean of men, bloodied about the head and disoriented, mumbling his simple catchwords about lawnorder-code-word-for-bigotry as the Kids (*aet.* 18-29) bump him down the granite steps of the administration building—the dean is nowadays less resentful of law and even of order than yesteryear. In Part II of his book, titled "The Crisis in Education," Tonsor reports a rising sense even among such men of the federal dollar as trap and entanglement. With Buchanan and Devletoglou—and the master of all, Adam Smith—Tonsor wants to return the financing of education more directly to the individual student who, with his family and friends will thus retrieve some of the area of collegiate policy-making into which the federal government has bought so heavily. He does not stress un-

duly another aspect of this particular reform—that while spurring the committed, and those eager to assist commitment, it might discourage some of the less motivated, who now clog some of the old and all but wholly populate some of the new institutions—with the rising prospect of the kind of jobless and semi-educated bohemianate which helped Hitler in his rise. Tonsor comments tellingly on the new style A. B., flaunted after courses in remedial reading, remedial writing, remedial speech, remedial arithmetic, in sexology, “cocktail theology,” etc., the whole converging ever more perilously upon the statutory offense of fraudulent labelling.

The author hardly bothers to argue with those who say we live in a post-Christian world. If, as is stated with rising plausibility, the true affinity and ever nearer destination of the burgeoning welfare state is a new medievalism, he responds that Christianity survived the Middle Ages and helped the peoples survive them. In his Part III, “Christian Education,” he recalls that the long interval between imperial Rome and modernity was leavened by the consensus of which the authors of the Declaration, as suggested above, were among the vestigial exponents. He feels sure that only such community as to ends and means, on the nature and purpose of the human order, can possibly temper rulers of always rising responsibilities, hence power, to the true needs of the governed; and reassure the governed that, emphatically, No, Caesar is not God, though firmly, Yes, like God, Caesar is to have his full rendering of what is his due. There is a sense, indeed, in which even nonbelievers can take and have taken such teachings as true and nobly stated summaries of, formularies for, and commentaries on essential humanity. Pius XII found right reason in the pagan Cicero and Tonsor suggests that modern educators who slight the values of history and their teaching risk abominations and desolations of which the 1960’s and these 1970’s so far are a mere whisper of an intimation of a hint.

The Politics of Defeat

Will America Surrender? by Slobodan M. Draskovich, *Old Greenwich, Connecticut: The Devin-Adair Company, 1973. xvii + 451 pp. \$9.95.*

IT IS A SAD COMMENTARY upon our vaunted freedom of the press that a book as literate, logical, and amply documented as Draskovich’s has enjoyed so little in the way of reviews and comment. The liberal-dominated big media realized a long time ago that it is not adverse reviews or unfavorable discussion that put the quietus on ideas that do not coincide with their own, but rather the conspiracy of silence.

Draskovich’s topic is the struggle, ideological, political, and military, between world Communism, a dynamic idea whose fanatical devotees are reminiscent of the early Christians, or of Mohammed’s Moslems, and the hodge-podge democratic Western complex, led by a disunited and weakened America, whose solution is to yield at every step until there is nothing more to yield. The question asked by his title can be countered with another question: “Hasn’t America already surrendered?”

Communism’s primary weapon is not military, or even political. Communism feeds on its victims’ greed, like the con artists who play the handkerchief game. Where greed fails, it relies on the incurable optimism, the unrealistic idealism of its opponents, who have proved time and again that they are ready and willing to fall for any “spirit” that comes along (Camp David, Glasboro, Ping Pong, *détente*). In this respect, the author is quite correct when he equates the “conservative” policies of Eisenhower and Nixon with the “liberal” policies of Kennedy and Johnson (he might have brought in F.D.R. and Harry Truman for good measure).

Draskovich holds that the people of the United States are fully aware of the situa-