

spotlight

Economics Educator

The struggle for a free society cannot be waged solely with slogans nor by scholars in their academic journals. While economic analysis provides free-market solutions to today's problems, if these solutions are to win acceptance, America's policymakers outside of the economics profession—business executives, politicians, and professionals—must be exposed to the results of the analysis. Economic concepts need to be translated out of academia's jargon and applied to everyday problems. It was with this in mind that William R. Allen created the International Institute for Economic Research (IIER).

Since the institute's inception in 1975, Allen, its president, and professor of economics at UCLA, has successfully undertaken an "educational venture" to apply "well-established economic theory to public policy" and then to disseminate these studies among America's decision-makers. The IIER fulfills this educational role by distributing public-policy-oriented pamphlets, averaging about 20 pages in length, approximately once a month. Soon the institute will also begin production of a syndicated radio commentary, which will be broadcast on 100 stations. It has a mailing list of over 9,000 names, including 4,000 business executives and professionals, 1,500 members of the media, over 300 academics, all the members of Congress, 800 congressional aides, some members of the executive branch, and many other influential people. Allen believes that on account of "this research and educational effort, there is a fighting chance of influencing some strategically located decisionmakers and spokesmen in both the government and the marketplace."

Institute studies have dealt with such topics as the energy crisis, why government grows, antitrust, advertising by professionals, the multiple tax on corporate income, the effect on corporations of government's attack on private property, and income distribution. To write the pamphlets, Professor Allen has organized an impressive array of scholars, including a former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, Paul W. McCracken; Nobel Laureates Milton Friedman and F. A. Hayek; the dean of the Graduate School of Management of the University of Rochester, William H. Meckling; and the chairman of UCLA's

Economics Department, Harold Demsetz.

The IIER is not attempting to compete with professional economics journals. It is "intended to contribute only marginally, and typically indirectly, to the further development of economic theory per se." Nor are the pamphlets directed toward examining specific legislation before Congress. Allen has instead focused the analysis on general topics, and the pamphlets are often couched in language typically used in introductory college economics courses. He has attempted to create a product for which the reader does not have to labor tediously for hours and that would supply the reader with a general background in the subject.

While the pamphlets have not been aimed at economic specialists, neither have they been written for the mass audi-



William R. Allen

ence; they are specifically for the country's "movers and shakers." Allen explains that the efforts of the IIER are focused on "the more or less immediate decisionmakers and their aides and advisors. So, in a sense, we start at the top of the decisionmaking pyramid and go as far down as we can." Though he has no basic objection to reaching a wider spectrum of people—as demonstrated by his development of a syndicated radio commentary series and his own participation on radio and television shows—it is simply not feasible financially.

There is ample evidence that Allen's efforts are achieving the desired results. Some key people around the country are starting to take notice of the institute's activities. One congressman's aide told Allen "that out of the flood of material we

get constantly, the material of the institute is, by a considerable margin, the most valuable." Two of Senator Tower's aides described the pamphlets as exactly what they needed to provide the senator with background information on issues. Comments such as these are very encouraging in view of the voluminous amount of often worthless material that Congress receives. Congressional staffs just do not have the inclination, ability, or time to read through the reams of technical documents that cross their desks. Yet Allen recognizes that the educational process takes time. "Results here are not to be expected soon. That does not mean that I lack a sense of urgency. I think it's simply recognizing that any type of educational endeavor takes a while."

Professor Allen is well suited to the task of forming and running the institute. He has been chairman of the UCLA Economics Department, a consultant to the Department of Commerce, visiting professor at several universities, a member of the UCLA faculty since 1952, and president of the Western Economic Association. During 1978 he received the Harvey L. Eby Award for his outstanding teaching ability. A specialist in international economics and the history of economic theory, he is the coauthor, editor, or coeditor of five books.

Allen, whose father was a Methodist minister who preached "what they like to call the social gospel," believes that "it's the world that has changed much more than I have. The world has become more and more radicalized. So views which are quite conservative now were barely right of center and indeed may have been left of center twenty years ago." In fact, Allen wrote Adlai Stevenson's seconding speech at the 1960 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. He maintains that the two individuals who have had the greatest influence on his life, other than his parents, are Joseph J. Spengler of Duke, who "was an exhaustive type of scholar," and Armen A. Alchian of UCLA, who is almost "an older brother" and who "finds economics behind every rock." Philosophically, Allen identifies himself with Thomas Hobbes's view that the problem with the state of nature is scarcity, but he finds the solution in Adam Smith's idea of allowing people to follow their own pursuits.

In the short span of three years, Allen has turned the International Institute for Economic Research into a promising educational tool, and its effect is starting to be seen. He accepts the inherent difficulties, however, in trying to educate people, continuing his efforts with the realization that "you cannot turn a person into a renaissance man in a weekend."

—John R. Lott

movies

- A Woman in Her Window • Days of Heaven
- The Revenge of the Pink Panther

• Romy Schneider, the star of **A WOMAN IN HER WINDOW**, portrays a wealthy heiress. intelligent, sensitive, emotionally flaky.

Man No. 1 is her husband, secretary to the Italian ambassador to Greece. He loves her but knows her all too well.

Man No. 2 is a communist sought by the Greek police, and his hope for humanity lies with Stalin. She is madly in love with him.

The time is 1936, and the Greek dictatorship under Metaxis has just taken over. The Spanish civil war is on. Hitler is arming Germany and preparing for the Anschluss.

This film is no ordinary love triangle. It opens at one of the most beautiful sites in the world, the mountains at Delphi, site of the ancient Greek oracle. They walk in the Delphian amphitheater; when *Oedipus* was performed there, one character remarks, it was timed so precisely that just as *Oedipus* blinds himself at the end, the sun sinks into the Aegean and the red sky turns gray. The talk turns to the relation between man and the State, between *Oedipus* and Thebes, between *Antigone* and Creon. After the rich have been dispossessed, can the State really be trusted to protect the working class? Man No. 1 says no, Man No. 2 says yes. She is nonpolitical and knows only whom she loves.

Bit by bit we learn in a series of flashbacks about her, about Greece, about the conflicting ideologies awake over Europe, about fascism and communism and how these wash over her life. The story unfolds psychologically rather than chronologically yet must be pieced together chronologically by the viewer (each flashback is marked with the exact date)—a fact that will keep the viewer confused unless he pays unremitting attention; it also inhibits his emotional involvement in the story.

It has been popular for years in French films to hate fascism and be sympathetic to communism. The script writer who did the best of these films, Z, also did this one. But he may have mellowed through the years, for now neither ism is treated with great sympathy. Perhaps the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* in Paris, long before it appeared in English, and its electrifying effect on French thinking (see "The New Philosophers Rock France," *Reason*, September) had something to do with this. Some of the lines in the script

would never have appeared during France's love affair with the left of a few years back. Sample from Man No. 1: "The bourgeoisie don't need to play politics. They deal in money and goods. They leave politics to neurotics." And from Man No. 2, defending human equality: "Equality doesn't mean eating with your servants. It means that you will never be able to say *mine* any more." The implications of such statements are, of course, tremendous, and if everyone fully understood them there would be no socialist governments left. Since such lines pass without comment in the film, one doesn't know whether their implications are realized even by the author; but at least they are there.

In the end, the message is that all political affiliations, even all attempts to work for a cause, are vain and foolish; only love and friendship count—a trite ending after such an auspicious beginning. Yet the film is worth seeing, on one level for the personal lives (insightfully depicted) of those caught in the clash of international movements, at another level for the international movements in which they are caught. The two never really fuse into a chemical combination but only coexist as a mixture, yet the mixture of such elements as coexist here is more satisfying than many a combination that has been fused out of lesser elements.

—John Hoppers

• What there is of a story is an old-fashioned love triangle, set in 1916, and unremarkable as a story but with promising new talent (Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard, Linda Manz). But one shouldn't see this film for the story, which is a set of pegs on which to hang one of the most beautiful visual canvases in American films. The camera engages in a continuous love affair with the American land: the wind stirring through the wheat fields; the harvest, with large threshing crews and old-fashioned threshing machines; the vast bowl of the prairie meeting the inverted bowl of the sky; the feel of the earth at twilight, with grouse and pheasants stalking through the fields; the summer night settling like an enormous mantle over the endless prairie. In no American film within memory has the sight and feel of the earth been so intimately captured. To spend time there, af-

ter the factories of Chicago, must indeed have been **DAYS OF HEAVEN**, and in no film since *Dersu Uzala* has the camera kept us so riveted to the soil. This is an aspect of the beauty of America that has seldom been shown on the screen and never half so well. And the dependence of the city on the land is never so dramatically brought home as in this film, particularly in the dramatic scene of locusts destroying a year's crop.

The scene is supposedly laid in the Texas Panhandle, and the stark lines of the farmhouse set against the steel-blue sky are reminiscent of the Texas of George Stevens's film *Giant*. But judging by the terrain, most of the picture must have been filmed in the great spaces of Montana and Wyoming and is reminiscent of Howard Hawks's *The Big Sky*. For the majority of Americans who have never traversed this land, other than by a highway, and for the even greater majority of Europeans who have never seen it at all, this film introduces with warmth and passion the beauty of the vast interior of America. It also brings with it nostalgia for a happier time when work was harder but liberty greater.

If writer-director Terrence Malick never makes another picture after this, he will have added to the American legacy a film as fine in its own medium as the fiction of Willa Cather, Ole Rolvaag, and Hamlin Garland—all literary material thus far untapped by films and all of which deserve to be transmuted into pictures as memorably beautiful as this one.

—J.H.

• There is more than a small streak of déjà vu in **THE REVENGE OF THE PINK PANTHER**—not only in the person of Inspector Clouzot (Peter Sellers) and his usual entourage, but in the story line of the bumbling detective blundering into success through a series of happy and increasingly far-fetched coincidences.

Sellers is, as usual, much better than the material he has to work with. It's a long time between good parts like *I'm All Right, Jack* and *Dr. Strangelove*. Dyan Cannon puts her all into the part, as always. Some day she will receive a role worthy of her very considerable talents.

Here and there are moments of wild slapstick à la Chaplin, bursting into genuine humor like fitful lightning flashes over a dull landscape. The funniest scene of all involves not Sellers but Herbert Lom, his detective competitor through this interminable series of films, giving a funeral eulogy on Clouzot full of double entendre. The chase scene in Hong Kong has its moments. Otherwise, it's pretty thin soup.

—J.H.