

The Politics of Land-Use Reform. *Frank J. Popper. Univ. of Wisconsin, \$20/\$7.50.* What's wrong with liberal reformers? That question needs to be answered by "progressives" scrounging around for new ideas in the Age of Reagan. One place they might look is in this provocative book that examines the failures and accomplishments of land-use reform efforts of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Land use sounds unbearably dull, but it's the kind of issue that affects the day-to-day quality of our lives: housing costs, property taxes, recreation opportunities, public services, neighborhood life, jobs and the environment. Fortunately, Popper's clear prose and penetrating analysis make this seemingly esoteric topic accessible and even interesting.

The land-use reform movement grew out of the failure of local communities and zoning boards to control the development boom of the 1960s. Their goal became centralized regulation at higher levels of government, the sort of populist-inspired regulatory agencies that have long been part of the liberal dream. Drawing on regulatory critiques from both the left and the right—from economist Milton Friedman and political scientist Theodore Lowi—Popper examines in detail six state regulatory programs. He finds, for instance, that the broader the mandate given the agency, the more ineffective it turns out to be. Such agencies, Popper finds, too often are so weakened in the real world of politics that they end up favoring the strongest interest groups—in this case, developers.

Popper's recommendations for environmentalists have wide implications for all liberals. He says land-use reformers need to broaden their upper-middle-class constituency and learn to sell their proposals in terms of economic self-interest rather than esthetics. He also says they should look to decentralized, nonregulatory measures to promote their cause and complement the work of higher-level agencies. So he urges them to concentrate on specific, winnable objectives, such as

reforms in tax policy, public-works decisions and local regulations.

—Art Levine

Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number. *Jacobo Timerman. Trans. by Toby Talbot. Knopf, \$10.95.* An autobiographical account of an Argentinian Jewish journalist who is imprisoned without charge and tortured for his writings about politics and race.

Timerman says 20,000 to 30,000 Argentinians have been murdered for political reasons in recent years, and that repression of Jews in that country outdoes anything since Nazi Germany. "The

military," Timerman writes, "has always been unable to outline the reality they care to see materialize, but could quickly describe what it is they hate. They've tapped the vast reservoir of hatred and fantasy into one basic concept: World War III has begun, the enemy is left-wing terrorism, and Argentina, misunderstood abroad, is the initial battleground chosen by the enemy. Like the Nazi Final Solution they seek to exterminate anyone who is considered the enemy."

Timerman was imprisoned and his newspaper, *La Opinion*, confiscated by the government. He was freed only because of international pressure. He thinks

The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There

NAM by Mark Baker

Vietnam—what was it *really* like? To find out, Mark Baker interviewed 70 men and women who served there. NAM is the result—a true oral history of that bloody and muddled conflict. "NAM," writes Mark Baker, "is not the truth about Vietnam. Everyone holds a piece of that puzzle. But these war stories, filled with emotion and stripped of ambition and romance, may bring us closer to the truth than we have come so far."

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highly focused international attention is the only thing that will change Argentina, but that Jews neglect the country because it lacks the gas chambers and concentration camps associated with state-run repression. The military rulers, meanwhile, seem to believe that international pressures over human rights are keeping the world from recognizing Argentina's avant-garde role as the first country to really deal with terrorism. At any rate the word should soon get out; *The New Yorker* plans to serialize *Prisoner*

Without a Name in its entirety.

—Michael Hiestand

The Real Reagan. Frank van der Linden. Morrow, \$10.95. A sympathetic view of the new president.

Real Security: Restoring American Power in a Dangerous Decade. Richard J. Barnet. Simon and Schuster, \$10.95/\$4.95. About a year ago I found myself at a breakfast where Richard Barnet was the speaker. He was stumping for his book *The Lean Years* and delivered a scathing condemnation

of government policies on resource use, local autonomy, and a number of other issues. A woman in the audience, obviously sympathetic, asked, "Now what should we do about these problems?" Barnet straightened his necktie and looked away. "I haven't done much thinking about specifics," he confided.

He still hasn't. Just as *The Lean Years* was little more than a recitation of resource questions and cliches, *Real Security* is a limp and 100-percent insight-free bibliography of the various schools of thought on how we might all get blown to kingdom come. Nearly every idea in the book is attributed to someone else. Finally, towards the end, there is a brief compendium of glissando generalities about how to "restore American power" and obtain "real" security. Barnet offers such down-to-earth solutions as "We need mutually agreed-upon restrictions on what each superpower can do with its military power which would outlaw future Vietnams, Dominican Republics, Chiles, Angolas, Czechoslovakias, Hungarys, and Afghanistans," and "Nothing could restore American prestige and influence faster than a dramatic reduction of our foreign oil dependence and a workable approach to the management of inflation that did not tear the country apart." Does Barnet suggest, even in the most roundabout way, what "a workable approach to the management of inflation that does not tear the country apart" is? If so I missed it. The book has all the pompous pointlessness of a *New York Times* editorial being read aloud by Orson Welles.

—G.E.

Regulating America, Regulating Sweden: A Comparative Study of Occupational Safety and Health Policy. Steven Kelman. MIT, \$19.95.

Ronald Reagan: His Life and Rise to the Presidency. Bill Boyarsky. Random House, \$12.95. Like it or not, we seem to have General Electric to thank for our current president. According to Boyarsky,

We elected him President of the United States – but do we know who he is?

Is he an actor reading his lines or a bred-in-the-bone conservative, the White Knight from California or the Great Communicator? Here a veteran journalist and historian, who has known Ronald Reagan since his days in the Sacramento State House, gives us a factual, dispassionate, unauthorized biography of Ronald Reagan's personal and political life. Drawing on candid interviews with Reagan's friends and enemies, Frank van der Linden has indeed captured the essence of *The Real Reagan*.

"If someone would like to learn a good deal about Reagan, this is a good place to start."—Barry Goldwater, U.S. Senator

"Exciting...accurate and candid."—Thomas B. Evans, Jr., Member of Congress

