

POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.

Robert Conquest. *Oxford University Press, \$19.95* When future histories are written, the twentieth century may come to be known as the era of genocides. We have seen the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turks, the extermination of six million Jews in Europe by the Nazis, and the auto-genocide of perhaps two million Cambodians by their own rulers.

Although the terrible famine in the Soviet Union in 1932-33 has been well known, it has usually been regarded as an inadvertent result of Stalin's forced collectivization. In his powerful, well-documented new work, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, Robert Conquest makes a persuasive case that the famine was no accidental catastrophe, but a deliberate policy of class and national extermination directed by Stalin against the peasantry.

An estimated seven million died of starvation, Conquest calculates: five million in the Ukraine, one million in the North Caucasus, and one million elsewhere. Another 6.5 million died from "dekulakization," the brutal campaign against the kulaks, who were seen by Stalin and the party as an exploitative class of landowners, but whom Conquest portrays as simply the most industrious peasants—petty-bourgeois, but far from rich. The "liquidation of the kulaks as a class," in the words of Stalin's order of 1927, involved executing some, imprisoning others, and deporting still others to remote areas of Siberia.

Those peasants who were left were the target of Stalin's mad conviction that grain was being withheld from the state. He ordered impossibly high quotas of grain from the Ukraine and sent teams of military and party activists to search ruthlessly for caches of grain. One peasant, Conquest writes, "was shot for possession of 25 pounds of wheat gleaned in the fields by his 10-year-old daughter."

People robbed graves, searching for jewelry with which to purchase food in the cities. Some mothers even killed and ate their children.

The famine, he argues, was largely a result of Stalin's fear of the Ukraine's power and nationalism. "Over in Russia," he writes "things were different." An editor of an Odessa newspaper "described two villages on either side of the Russo-Ukrainian border, where all the grain was taken from the Ukrainian, but only a reasonable delivery quota from the Russian villages." The famine also was coupled with a campaign against the artifacts of Ukrainian national culture, including the Church.

Conquest writes with a dry passion, piling fact upon fact, statistic upon statistic, account upon account until whatever resistance the reader may have to an acceptance of the truth is chafed away, leaving only stark belief.

Conquest, a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, is best known for his work on Stalinism, *The Great Terror*. *Harvest of Sorrow* must now stand beside it as a companion volume in documenting one of history's most terrible manifestations of state madness.

—David K. Shieler

Power of Attorney. Mark Stevens. *McGraw-Hill, \$17.95* The practice of blue-chip law, my first-year civil procedure professor told us, is mostly boredom. A respected teacher and judge in the last semester of a 50-year career, he assured us we'd get used to it. After all, non-lawyers would think we were doing something important, and our Ivy League degrees would guarantee good pay.

The only thing to fear, he warned, is lawyers who want to turn the profession into a mere business. "There are worse things than boredom," he declared, bony forefinger held high. "There is perfidy and greed."

Having already heard about Wall Street salaries, most of us were

keeping an open mind on greed. But Mark Stevens reports in *Power of Attorney* that the tweedy old bird was onto something. Crass capitalism, Stevens writes, has invaded the once serene realm of corporate law.

In the good old boring days, prominent firms enjoyed virtual monopoly status in representing flocks of sheep-like companies and banks. In-house counsels were weaklings whose job was to nod yes, yes, while the meters kept running up, up. These captive relationships enabled established legal practices to "all but ignore such boorish concerns as efficiency, productivity, marketing, and competition," Stevens writes.

Today, huge firms gobble up smaller ones and shamelessly raid competitors for top lawyers and clients. Taking cues from Madison Avenue rather than the Old Boy Network, the new breed uses marketing flash to lure customers, and scatters field offices like a fried-chicken chain. Disappearing from the culture of corporate law are loyalty to the firm and aspirations to academic accomplishment or public service. Traditionalists fight a futile rear-guard battle, mourning a loss of quality and dignity.

Stevens, who has written widely about business, provides a useful, if sketchy, outline of this transformation. What the book lacks in depth, it makes up for in bluntness. The author persuaded a wide circle of heavyweight lawyers to accuse each other of complacency, avarice and worse. The pin-striped bitching provides a certain perverse entertainment.

A major target of these attacks,

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and Stevens' prime example of the marauding new mega-firm, is Finley, Kumble, which began with eight lawyers in 1968 and is heading toward 700 today. The New York-based firm unapologetically snatches competitor's long-time clients, promising cheaper, more comprehensive service from offices spread out across the country and the world. When that doesn't work, Finley, Kumble borrows a tactic common in advertising and public relations, but previously taboo among respectable law firms: It buys its competitors' more profitable partners, clients in tow.

Finley, Kumble partners argue that customers don't care about tradition, pipe smoke, or how many law review articles a firm produces. Clients respond to a hard sell and increasingly demand the kind of one-stop shopping that only the largest firms with the most specialties can provide. Keeping the best specialists on hand requires not professional comraderie, but greenbacks—in some cases, millions of them. "Almost everyone has his price," says managing partner Steve Kumble.

Stevens traces the origins of the Finley, Kumble strategy to the wising-up of clients that began about 1970. Corporate legal staffs fought their way through the storm of retainer invoices and hourly bills to discover that they were getting royally ripped off. A legal vice president for a bank tells Stevens that his main goal when he left his old firm was "to make certain my former colleagues didn't charge this client what I used to charge it."

In-house legal staffs grew in size and sophistication, taking over routine work once farmed out to expensive firms. They began comparison shopping when they did go outside, and the Finley, Kumbles were there to pitch the business. Firms that for generations had relied on gentlemanly relations with a handful of compliant clients saw profits dry up.

Power of Attorney unfortunately doesn't explain much of the significance of these trends. Finley, Kumble says it offers more efficient service at a lower price. Some of its competitors argue that the new na-

tional franchises are mostly mirrors and facades. "The whole apparatus is fine-tuned to bring in clients with hardly a thought to serving them once they're lured into the web," a partner of a more traditional firm says. Stevens might have investigated more thoroughly whether the quality of corporate legal work is actually improving or deteriorating as the business changes in style and structure.

For corporate lawyers, current and aspiring, Stevens' book serves as a warning that disdain for the sordid affairs of commerce will soon be a thing of the past. The new breed cares nothing about ivory tower trappings, and Stevens mentions public service only as it's used to line people's private pockets. The "revolving door of government service," for example, remains a "route to legal stardom," he writes. But few pretend any more that those revolving back to the "private sector" do anything other than twist the rules they once helped enforce.

Finley, Kumble has been particularly successful at deploying ex-politician "rainmakers," who peddle their names and connections to prospective clients. It's an old marketing trick, but one now pursued with a zest characteristic of Michael Deaver and other heroes of the Reagan era. Stevens describes how Finley, Kumble grabbed former governor of New York Hugh Carey the year after he left office to help grease the opening of a new market in municipal bond financing. In December, the firm announced it had signed departing Senators Russell Long, premier tax loophole artist, and Paul Laxalt, close friend of the Reagans.

Although he offers little critical commentary, Stevens does contribute to the demystification of lawyerdom. We still accord this profession, and especially its corporate law elite, high social status, deferring to it on many matters of public concern. Some of its members no doubt live up to their reputation. But the new brassiness raises the question of whether the title "officer of the court" fits the people Stevens writes about.

—Paul Barrett

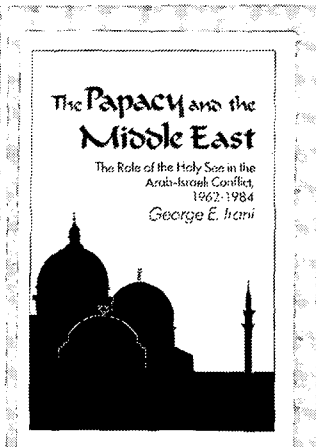
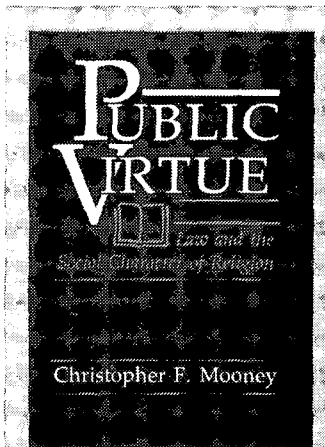
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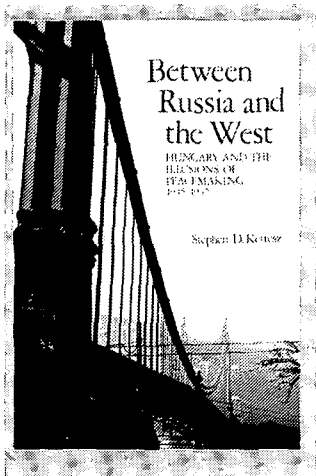
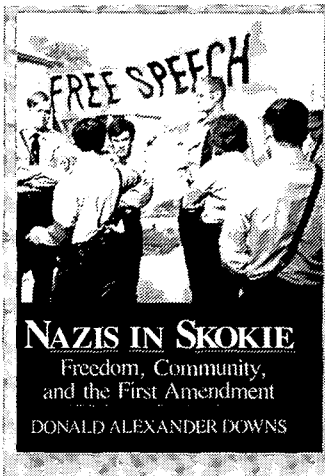
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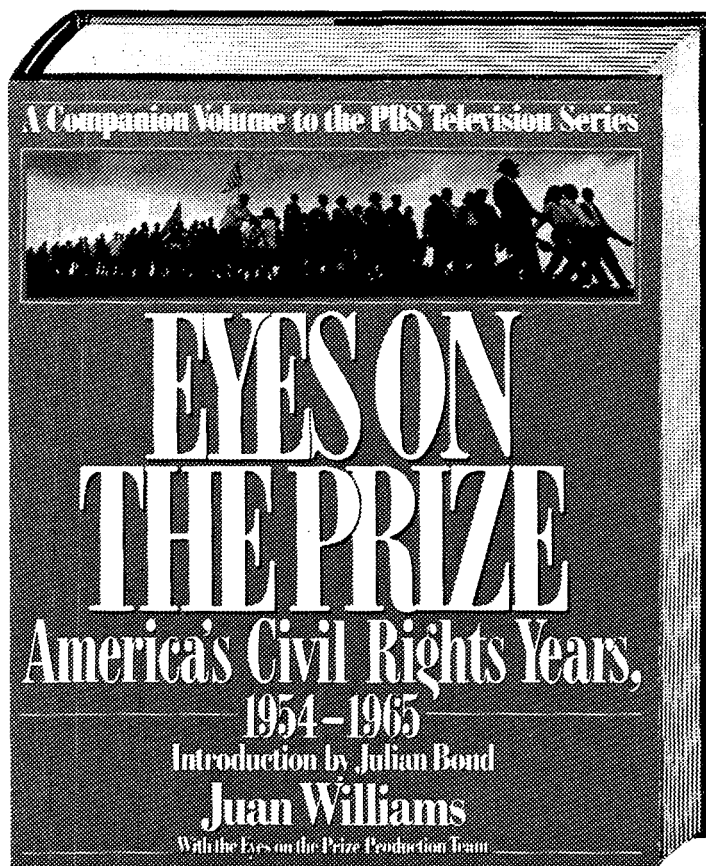
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