

overthrow Ho Chi Minh." Yeah, and then what? What puppet regime would we have installed to replace him? How long would we have had to occupy the country? What would we have done about the millions of heavily armed North Vietnamese roaming the countryside? The hawks never bother to pose such questions. No doubt because they have no answers.

—Michael Massing

**The Resurgent Liberal (and other unfashionable prophecies).** Robert Reich. *Times Books*, \$19.95. Reich's hit parade of our economic follies are all on view in this lively collection of Reagan-era essays. It's a spectacle of myopia. Diapered MBAs and trembling CEOs shuffle zillions of dollars in paper while new products languish. The Pentagon devours the few engineers and scientists we turn out, dooming our shrinking R&D efforts to commercial irrelevance. The government, meanwhile, fights yesterday's "us versus them" battles, imposing quotas to stem a tide of imports that include American companies' offshore production. Who's "us" anyway, Reich asks, when there's more American workmanship in today's Tennessee-built Nissan than in today's offshore Buick?

Reich's most compelling (and frequently repeated) theme stresses skilled labor as our only likely source of sustainable advantage in a global low-wage marketplace. But realizing this potential requires a brave new workplace—one where managers issue fewer commands and share more information and where broader incentives (like employee ownership) give all in the enterprise a shared stake in success. Above all, however, the skills of skilled labor depend on education and training, an area we continue to leave unreformed despite the usual sound and fury.

Several of Reich's pieces shed light on the symbolic costs that come with seemingly positive policy changes. He notes, for example, that tax reform's scrapping of progressive tax rates and the earlier move to a voluntary army both eroded the democratic values of shared sacrifice.

One quarrel: Like many writers infatuated with a thought, Reich has an irritating habit of recycling pet

phrases. We're told several times, for example, that yesterday's "muckrakers" are today's "investigative journalists." So read these essays, but not in one sitting.

—Matthew Miller

**All By Myself: The Unmaking of a Presidential Campaign.** Chris Black, Tom Oliphant. *Globe Pequot Press*, \$19.95. In case you're still wondering, it was all Michael Dukakis's fault.

*Boston Globe* reporters Chris Black and Tom Oliphant have concocted a campaign melodrama about the very best efforts of John Sasso, Susan Estrich, Tubby Harrison, Jack Corrigan, Tom Kiley, Nick Mitopoulos et al to guide the Massachusetts Governor into the White House in spite of himself. The basic ingredients of *All By Myself* are the Dukakis team's memoranda and sideline whispers. The field and fund-raising operations weathered the sudden departure of John Sasso, and the lock-'em-up-early delegate strategy, outlined by a primaries prodigy aptly named Tad Devine, worked to perfection.

But Estrich and Kiley labored in vain to get the Democratic nominee-apparent to develop a catchy theme. "Competence" was not only dull, they argued, but it also invited opponents to exploit the tiniest flaws in the governor's decades-long record of policy decisions. In May 1988, the Dukakis high command anticipated the Bush attacks on prison furloughs and the Pledge of Allegiance. But their suggested alternatives to "competence" came back from Dukakis with "a curt, almost always unexplained rejection: I'm not going to do that, guys. That's not me."

The best chapter of the book exhumes the fall advertising campaign. The spin doctors called in David F. D'Alessandro, a "proactive" executive from John Hancock Insurance, for which he created the glossily gritty "Real Life, Real Answers" series of commercials. D'Alessandro strode into Dukakis headquarters and found 1,200 scripts for unproduced television spots strewn across desktops and planters. Taking control from the linear thinkers, he concocted a series that would feature two fictional Bush packagers, a cynical pair of white guys who manipulate their candidate

but fail to fool the American people. Too many aides feared too many viewers wouldn't get it, so only one installment aired.

Amid the disarray, the candidate asks his advisers if he should be known as Mike or Michael. A rare consensus quickly emerges: Michael will make him seem bigger.

The other high point of the book, its account of the Biden Videotape Crisis, details a similar frenzy of image consciousness. This section will thrill campaign volunteers who have dreamt about having an impact on political history. Black and Oliphant trace the death of one candidacy and the decapitation of another to the pivotal behavior of a Dukakis *intern*. Second thoughts about making a tape juxtaposing Joseph Biden's speech with its Neil Kinnock progenitor led the intern to tell Dukakis press secretary Patricia O'Brien that Sasso had commissioned the deed. At the time, it was widely speculated—even in Dukakis headquarters—that it was someone in the Gephardt campaign who had given such a tape to *The New York Times*. But once alerted, O'Brien pressured Sasso. So did a *Time* story and phone inquiries from *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*. By the time Sasso confessed to Dukakis, the candidate was on record as saying he would "probably" fire anyone in his employ who engaged in dirty politics. Sasso stayed, then left to spare Dukakis the trauma of having to fire him.

But like Dukakis, *All By Myself* also falters in its analysis of the campaign and election. The Dukakis advisors appear prescient, unanimous, and unerring in their recommendations to the obstinate candidate. This may have been true in August 1988, when every Democrat in America longed for the presidential nominee to quit dithering with his state duties so that he could counter the Republican assault. Yet the "perfect staff" effect is also a fiction of the campaign melodrama genre, wherein every phone call brings a message on which the contest will turn. And many interpretive and explanatory passages smack of reporter-source coziness, especially the description of John Sasso as he returns to the campaign helm after 11 months on Elba.

The authors ask us to make sense of the rise and fall of Team Dukakis through the prism of a "Scenes From a Marriage" theory: Michael brought the executive skills, John supplied the passion and savvy; during crises, John adapted but Michael denied; left alone, Michael reeled, and John came back too late to save him. Given this approach, it is somewhat odd that the book provides less personal detail about Sasso and the admittedly high-profile Dukakis than about Willie Horton.

What is worse, *All By Myself* doesn't give outside and impersonal forces due consideration. Dukakis certainly deserves blame. But the authors underappreciate his brusque "That's not me" dismissals of staff suggestions. Like any veteran campaigner, he should have had final authority as to what he could pull off as a performer; advice that asked him to violate his sense of his public self cannot be regarded as sound, even if it seems abstractly appropriate in narrative hindsight. Since the debates revealed that he couldn't stretch his persona even when he had agreed to do so, it strikes me as unreasonable to argue that he should have changed when and as his staff saw fit.

The evidence of Sasso and Company's foresight impresses. Yet surely a campaign that generated 1,200 ad scripts also produced a surfeit of other memoranda. The options Dukakis rejected that would not have worked should have been analyzed here, too. As the chapter on advertising demonstrates, such options make the report both livelier to read and truer to life.

Black and Oliphant show us little more than the figure of Michael Dukakis standing between the staff and victory in late September. For the sake of argument, let us suppose the staff did have the power to breathe vitality and wit into the candidate during his public performances. Must we also assume that the Bush team would have failed to adjust its strategy and tactics? Would the Republicans have ignored their previous experience and sat on their resource advantages, including the powers of incumbency?

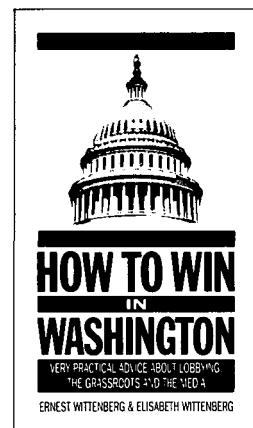
Who are they trying to kid? Do they wish to torture that intern with guilt?

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