

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS



"The Cannes festival, the largest and most prestigious film showcase, has generally favored less commercial, more artistic films often with a leftist political message—the choice of filmmakers rather than moviegoers." This is the voice of the *New York Times*, friends and readers, not that of *Chronicles*. And the *New York Times*—like *il Duce*—*ha sempre ragione*. She is always right. This year, however, was different. The festival was more commercial than ever. Almost 14,500 participants saw more than 600 movies. The city was overrun with American businessmen vying with top dollar for hot films. The advertising was sensational. You couldn't walk into the Carlton Hotel without being overwhelmed by an enormous James Bond ad encircling the entrance.

Not that all the old traditions were gone. West Germany's Barbara Sukowa got the Best Actress award for playing Rosa Luxemburg, the Marxist heroine killed in the Spartacist Revolt of 1919, while Michel Blanc was declared Best Actor for playing a homosexual in a French sex farce. But even they had to share their awards with other performers.

While Rosa Luxemburg had to share her award, movies that concentrated on themes of a spiritual, even of a religious nature, did not. Few films garner more than one award at Cannes, but this year two films went double dipping. The top prize, the Golden Palm, along with the prize for Best Technical Direction, went to Roland Joffe's *The Mission*, starring Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons. With a price tag of \$26 million, it cost big bucks by Cannes standards. More strikingly, it concerned two priests who are ordered to abandon their mission among the Indians of South America and refuse to do so. It is clearly aimed at commercial success, and it takes religion seriously.

Second place, the Special Jury Grand Prize, went to Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice*, a slow-paced

Swedish film, made by a dying Russian director, about the search for spiritual meaning in a crazy world. The award for Best Artistic Contribution also went to Tarkovsky. Third place, the Jury Prize, went to Alain Cavalier's *Thérèse*, about St. Theresa.

This year's Cannes film festival was both more crassly commercial and more explicitly religious than in the past. One of the great fears of the Bourgeois Age was the destruction of standards by the inrush of the Great Vulgar. Suppose now the high tide of democratization were to mean, for art at any rate, the uniting of standards, money, and religion, *res olim dissociabiles*, to use Tacitus' words. The money a few clever Englishmen made off of *Chariots of Fire* does not seem to have attracted the attention of our greedy Hollywood moguls. Maybe this year's fortnight at Cannes will do the trick. (ECK)

Democracy stifles the arts—the saga continues. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, state legislators across the country are diverting tax monies away from the arts, humanities, and social sciences and into the "hard" sciences and engineering and business programs. "There's no doubt about it," says Larry L. Leslie, director of the University of Arizona's Center for the Study of Higher Education. "If it doesn't have to do with engineering or the sciences, it's going to be difficult for people to get new state funds." Nevada has just enacted a new funding formula that takes money away from English, history, and art departments and gives it to science and engineering faculty. The Texas Faculty Association has lodged an official complaint about all the recruitment money flowing into science and engineering faculties and away from the liberal arts. Observers in Maryland and Massachusetts report similar trends in their states.

Before adding to all the professorial handwringing over statehouse philis-

tines, we might ask: Just what benefit do average taxpayers currently receive from college programs in the arts, humanities, and social sciences?

Anyone who has leafed through any publications of the Modern Language Association knows what the *liberal* in "liberal arts" has come to mean. Carolyn Heilbrun devoted her 1984 MLA Presidential Address to a not-so-covert affirmation of literary lesbianism. Things are no better in the dramatic and visual arts, where academic painters and sculptors teach captive students to exhibit their hatred for America in paint and marble. Jacques Barzun argued recently in *Harper's* that America spends way too much money subsidizing artists who lack both talent and message. Some of the worst of our artists-as-public-functionaries now staff the universities.

Like their literary and artistic colleagues, most social scientists nurse an ideological gripe against the society that pays them. Pollster Everett Ladd of the Roper Center recently reported that a survey of social science professors finds them well to the left of most Americans, and well to the left of their colleagues teaching engineering or business. Similarly, at a conference sponsored last year by The Rockford Institute's Center on Religion & Society, University of California sociologist Jay Mechling observed that most undergraduates with a professed commitment to Christianity are "not people going into history or English; they are people who are going to become engineers."

Does this mean that the American professoriat in the arts, humanities, and social sciences has been turned into alienated leftists by doing honest scholarship? Hardly. Many of this century's brightest minds in the literary and creative arts—T.S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Allen Tate, Eugène Ionesco, Ezra Pound, and Jorge Luis Borges, to name but a few—have been political conservatives, even reactionaries. Even among sociologists, the

luminaries—Pitirim Sorokin, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and George Homens—were hardly leftists. But don't look for Eliot or Sorokin in the English or sociology departments of today's American campuses. With some honorable and courageous exceptions, these departments are filled with excellence-haters who would have trouble selling shoes if they ever got off the dole. No wonder they hate capitalism. Faced with the prospect of being educated by such a dismal crew, Eliot might well have opted for computer science and Sorokin for business management.

Global Education is the latest fad among educationists. It might have passed into the general curriculum without fanfare if it were not for the vigilance of Tom Tancredo. Tancredo is the Coloradoan who is Education Secretary William Bennett's Regional Representative in the Rocky Mountains (U.S. Region VIII). A few years ago he outraged all right-thinking men by suggesting that America's Christian majority should have their point of view represented in the public schools. Now he has authorized an assistant, Gregg L. Cunningham, to investigate Global Education, the new name for World History. Cunningham analyzed various publications put out by the Center for Teaching International Relations (CTIR) in Denver. CTIR conducts teacher workshops and summer institutes, publishes curricula, and offers consulting services to public school districts. It even offers graduate degree programs in connection with the University of Denver. About 500 teachers a year, on the average, have completed its programs over the past decade.

Cunningham was looking for trends and significant statements. He never pretended that all the CTIR's publications were the same, that good teachers could not use other, balancing publications and curricula, or that all Global Education institutes are the same.

What he did find, however, was noteworthy. The publications exhibit a one-world bias, tend to emphasize the moral equivalence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and promote cultur-

al and moral relativism. This is most explicit in CTIR's *World Citizen Curriculum*, *Teacher Resource Guide*, which informs us that "to resist the new world order is to miseducate"; asks "Is any one person or culture 'right' or 'wrong?"; and places the KGB and CIA on the same level.

Of course, the students do not get to see the teacher's guide. They are asked, however, in other curricula to "think of the U.S. and USSR as rival street gangs." This comes from CTIR's *Teaching About Conflict, Nuclear Conflict and the Future*, which also explains that "students don't need to understand the global political situation or the details of the arms races." They should, however, "give up blaming" and "find a Russian and get to know her or him." (There is no hint that we might want to learn Russian to do this. And why bother? The Soviet educational system teaches foreign languages.)

The teacher's guide for this curriculum suggests that, to impress on the President the enormity of his actions in the event of nuclear retaliation, we

put the U.S. missile firing code in the chest cavity of an aide. In order to use our nuclear defense, the President must kill the aide with a butcher knife and dig the code out of his chest. (It's too bad David Stockman isn't still a Presidential aide.)

The curriculum guides often aim not at giving students facts with which to make their own decisions, but at changing values. The CTIR's *Teaching About U.S. History* urges projects in which the children criticize their parents' values and imagine alternative life-styles. This includes discussing "issues" and "values" where the kids disagree with their parents; writing essays about Mom and Dad's "faults" and "problems"; passing judgment on the size of their families; and answering questions on the cost of the family home, the number of cars, etc.

There is an entire publication on death education. It not only encourages the students to brood upon their own death, including reading suicide notes, but laments our culture's refusal to "encourage visits" from the "spirits of the dead" as an "open and joyous"



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experience. They are even encouraged to build altars to their ancestors and make "altar offerings" on them. (Cunningham has the cultural insensitivity to describe these activities as "bizarre.")

The Department responded to the blowup which followed the publication of the report by telling its Denver office to release it only to those who requested it. John K. Andrews' Independence Institute got hold of it and sent out copies to its mailing list, with a list of recommendations. The recommendations, which are in themselves good, all accept the beneficial aspects of an improved Global Education program. We have our own suggestions—as opposed to utopian notions that *might* work in a perfect world. On the contrary, our suggestions reflect current educational practice in countries like Germany and Japan, which are killing us in world markets (U.S. businessmen, take note)

and which used to exist in the U.S. just a generation ago.

First and foremost, TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES, kindergarten through 12th grade. No one should be allowed to get past the sixth grade without one foreign language, out of junior high and high school without two more. If we want to encourage breadth, we should make a rule that one language must be modern, one ancient, and one non-Indo-European. The advantages of intensive foreign language training are obvious. Children can learn to make up their own minds about other countries by reading and visiting. They will not be dependent on ridiculous "curricula" which are as full of cultural bias as a newspaper. Naturally, there will have to be a similar rule for the teachers, K-12, of all language arts, social studies, geography, and other humanities and social studies courses. This would be a step towards making teaching one

of the toughest and most challenging professions in our country and attracting people who want a tough and challenging profession.

Not only will these reforms introduce students to real countries with real literatures and cultures instead of abstractions out of a textbook, it will also teach them to think and to write. Translation from or into a foreign tongue is the best way to force the mind to think about what you are really saying.

It will also toll the death knell of bilingual education. As long as Americans know only one language, it may seem unfair to make the Chicano learn more than one. If we are all learning three or more, that excuse will vanish.

This is a reform that has worked in the past. (Check out what the British upper class was studying when it dominated half the world: Greek, Latin, and French.) It will improve the intel-

Readers Survey

About 10 percent of our subscribers filled out and sent in the very unscientific survey we included in the March issue. Several readers and at least one editor of another magazine remarked that we were taking a big risk: this sort of survey was a Pandora's box, and we were going to read a great many things we would rather not hear. The results are in, and we believe we have every reason to gloat. Overall, 89 percent of the readers who responded rated the magazine as excellent or good (63 percent thought it excellent). In general, there was a correlation between length of subscription and approval of the magazine, although in some cases the most enthusiastic endorsements came from new subscribers, who said the first issue came as a revelation. Eighty-five percent said they had read every issue, and 71 percent insisted they read almost everything in each one.

The greatest enthusiasm was manifested for editorials, essays, and longer reviews—all were rated good or excellent by 93 percent. The least interest was generated by

our coverage of the arts (only 81 percent thought it good to excellent) and the inside illustrations (62 percent). On the other hand, the covers were highly rated by 77 percent—appallingly low when you consider the superb series of covers we've been running for nearly a year, but many subscribers did note the improvement. Several, however, were shocked enough by some *Chronicles* art that they wrote in messages: "Disgusting," "frightening," "all those rats chewing out throats in alleyways." You can't please everyone. We have made some effort at diversifying our graphics and at toning down some of the horror; it might be noted, however, that many new subscribers are attracted first of all by the art and have singled out for particular praise the grotesque fantasies of Zbigniew Fitz and several covers of our new art director, Anna Wodecki.

In our coverage of the arts, many readers quite correctly noted a weakness in film reviews. We would like to hear from them if recent reviews by Chris Kopff, Samuel Karnick, and Kate Dalton are more to their taste.

In addition to our arts coverage, many readers were less than perfectly pleased with *Typefaces*, although they did express a desire for more discussion of the press. They also wanted more about religion and less on politics and economics. (I didn't think it was possible to talk less about economics!) Of the sections of the magazine, Correspondence was the lowest rated (only 39 percent said they were very interested), and yet the contributor most often singled out for special praise was the backwoods sociologist from the Research Triangle, John Shelton Reed. To listen to some readers, they practically skip the rest of the magazine and go straight to Professor Reed's musings on the Redneck Way of Knowledge. Still a newcomer when the survey was published, Jane Greer was frequently mentioned as a good reason for reading *Chronicles*.

In reading over the remarks, a number of conflicts between the readers seemed to emerge. While many wanted more religion, a few were irritated by our "obsession" with the subject. Many fairly new subscribers praised *Chronicles* for its freedom from cant and ideology