

in the Communist East. The loss of all sacred vision and our consequent myopic preoccupation with man and his presumed abilities led first to Utopianism, which is still honored, at least formally, in the Communist world, but which in the West has given way to an increasing moral fatigue, based on an awareness of man's limitations, a sense of man's inability to meet his needs on his own.

Molnar speaks of a battle between two schools of historical and cultural analysis: the optimists, who look on the break with the past as a good thing, and think that man can build a hopeful future without sacred sanctions by means of his own science and rationality, and the pessimists, who see the rupture with the past as fatal and irremediable, and think that man faces a "robotized future" such as that envisaged by George Orwell and Aldous Huxley. Two classes of people stand on the sidelines: the "happy hedonists," who are content to satisfy their material and sensual needs, and the strong believers, who look to the final triumph of faith. Although Molnar is definitely a believer, he is not prepared to join the spectators, but wants to do something,

or at least to say something. He may have presented us with such a bleak diagnosis that no therapy will be attempted.

Molnar asserts that humanity cannot create its own sacred order. A myth is unpersuasive if we know that we have made it up ourselves. Yet it is impossible for a community to exist without such an order. He is not categorical in asserting that a rational community is totally impossible without a sacred component, but says that we are now attempting it for the first time in history. Therefore we do not yet know whether success will be possible. There seems to be a certain ambivalence in his position, as he first says that it simply is not possible, and then suggests that it really hasn't been properly tried, no doubt because man really is incapable of attempting to live rationally without the sacred in a consistent way or over a long period. The ultimate result of the attempt to have a rational society without the sacred will be the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Man cannot live without the sacred, and having lost it, he cannot create it for himself. What then may one hope? The soul, a "rectifier

of matter," "may at any time request divine assistance." This, Molnar says, is not a program for civilization but something better than a program, namely, "hope." His concluding sentiment reminds one of the last lines of the Apocalypse: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Twin Powers is difficult to read and probably should be read after *The Pagan Temptation*. And it left me with a sense of frustration, because if Molnar is fundamentally right—and his erudition and arguments are impressive—then it does not help us much to know what he wants to teach us. We will understand some important things, but we will not be able to say, "*Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*." We will rather be in a situation where, "*Tout comprendre, c'est tout souffrir*": "To understand it all is to endure it all."

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REVISIONS

GRAND ILLUSIONS

"America doesn't have a foreign policy," one of our editors is fond of saying. All we have is a variety of tactics employed by competing agencies, branches of government, and political parties. Like the Romans, we have done all right by muddling through—a good deal better than regimes that had a grand strategy. Louis XIV, Napoleon, and Hitler all devised master plans that brought their masters to grief.

David M. Abshire thinks it is time we developed "A Realistic Grand Strategy," which just happens to be the subtitle of his new book, *Preventing World War III* (New York: Harper & Row; 331 pp., \$19.95). Abshire has all the necessary qualifications for a strategist, including service as our NATO ambassador, assistant secretary of state, and president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Most of Abshire's recommendations are eminently sensible and have received praise from Sam Nunn, Henry

Kissinger, and Bill Brock. In this scheme, Washington would get its act together, concert our efforts with NATO, cease to rely single-mindedly on a nuclear deterrence strategy that does our European allies little good, and make sure that, whatever our grand strategy, it will enjoy broad public understanding and support.

All types of from-the-top-down global analysis run the risk of excessive tidiness that sacrifices political reality to the rules of some hypothetical game. Strategists and negotiators who spend too much time with NATO or the UN may begin to forget that they represent their nation's interest, not the cause of global harmony. They also fall prey to the delusion that rich and famous statesmen are necessarily in possession of political wisdom denied to the lesser mortals who only pay the bills.

Abshire is not entirely immune to the disease. When it comes to economic matters, the actual interests of the American people take a back seat to his concern for the global economy, global

interdependence, and the tender feelings of our Japanese "allies." He even goes so far as to remind us to consider the 240,000 American jobs owned by Japanese industry as a rough equivalent to \$9.3 billion of exports. What a relief. The Japanese are not only swamping American markets with their electronic gewgaws ripped off from US patents, they are so heavily invested in stocks, real estate, and manufacturing that we should feel grateful to them.

Set aside the dubious friendship of the Japanese, who will never forgive us for showing up their master-race pretensions. Canadian and British ownership of the US should also make us distinctly uncomfortable, unless of course the nation state is a shopworn and antiquated item in the global marketplace. Unevenly written and crying out for the blue pencil, *Preventing World War III* is, nonetheless, a valuable contribution to a vital national debate. (TF)

Letter From Finland

by Arnold Beichman

No Miracles This Time



Last year, when I was in Helsinki, I made a great discovery: probably the best informed people on Soviet affairs are the Finns, whose Russian-watching goes back almost two centuries, long before the Bolshevik coup of 1917.

I was in Finland talking with veteran analysts, official and unofficial, about the overpowering Soviet military presence that has Norway, Denmark, Finland, and especially Sweden deeply worried. In Finland, where they have learned to take a cultivated relaxed attitude about the Soviet Union, the focus of interest was Gorbachev's reform program. One Finnish diplomat, with years of residence in the USSR, summed it up best: "All that Gorbachev is doing is trying to reform the system within the system. It simply can't be done."

That sentence said it all: the problems of the Soviet people won't be solved by de-Stalinization or some new gimmick, like re-Trotskyization. The country's socioeconomic problems can only be solved by de-Leninization—in other words, an end to the Communist Party's monopoly of everything.

The Finns are so expert about their superpower neighbor because their lessons have been learned the hard way. Finland was a czarist colony for more than a century. Its national hero, Marshal Mannerheim, who fought the Soviets to a standstill in the Winter War (1939-40), was, until Finland achieved its independence in 1917, a czarist general with an irrepressible Finnish nationalism.

Finland has a long land frontier with the USSR. She's fought two bitter and unsuccessful wars against the USSR since 1939, and there was a civil war during and after the Bolshevik Revolution. After these defeats (and pyrrhic Soviet victories), Finnish territorial losses to the Soviet Union were huge,

notably the loss of the Karelian Isthmus. There is, however, no irredentist movement in Finland. Yet as I talked to Finns I was reminded of the motto of the French military after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to the Prussian Army in 1870: *Toujours en penser, jamais en parler*, or "Always think about it; never talk about it."

Finland is a small country with big clout. Although its population is barely five million, it is ninth among the world's wealthiest nations. It has achieved this by pulling itself up by its own bootstraps after the war and in spite of heavy reparations paid to the Soviet Union until 1952. In short, Finland reached the top with no foreign economic assistance and, as older Americans may recall, Finland paid its World War I war debts to the US right on time (with no complaints), while the other European debtors defaulted.

Unlike other noncommunist European countries, Finland benefited little from US largess. This may explain why Finnish public opinion, compared to other democratic countries, is low on the hate-America scale. President Reagan was warmly received when he rested up in Helsinki before going on to Moscow for his fourth meeting with Gorbachev. There were no "Yankee, go home" posters in Helsinki streets and no anti-Reagan demos.

Finland is a constitutional democracy with an efficient market economy. In 1985, it was seventh in per capita GNP, ahead of Japan, although its inflation rate is more than double that of Japan (dinner for two in a good hotel costs \$75 or more). Like its Scandinavian neighbors, Finland cherishes its political freedoms. Officially, it is a bilingual country; Swedish is the second language. English, however, is the real second language. It is spoken by nearly everybody except, perhaps, the reindeer. Given a choice of foreign languages in high school, 95 percent of the students pick English, while only a handful choose Russian.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, Finland is officially neutral. The Russians know, however, that its heart belongs—unreservedly—to the

Western democracies, especially the United States. Neutral as it may be, Finland worries quietly but openly (as do Norway and Sweden) about Soviet intentions in the far north at the Kola peninsula. There, in nuclear bomb-proof solid rock submarine pens are docked six ICBM-armed nuclear submarines. So much for *glasnost*.

There are two Communist parties in Finland, one of them pro-Moscow and the other "Euro-Communist," but they have little importance even though in the March 1988 elections together they won almost 14 percent of the vote. They represent no significant intellectual force in a country where elite intellectual opinion is quite influential. Interestingly, while there have been serious KGB penetrations into the highest diplomatic and military circles in Norway and Sweden, Finland has been singularly free of such embarrassments.

What irritates the Finns as much as anything is the term "Finlandization," popularized some years ago by the historian Walter Laqueur. The epithet purports to describe postwar Finnish-Soviet relations that incrementally led to the loss of Finland's autonomy in foreign affairs, and that illustrate, by analogy, a danger posed to Western Europe by the Soviet Union.

Yet Finland is one country to which the term "Finlandization" does not apply—certainly not today in the aftermath of the fourth Reagan-Gorbachev summit. It is peculiar, say the Finns, that nobody ever talks about "Austrianization," i.e., the neutralization of Austria by the 1955 Austrian State Treaty underwritten by the then-occupying powers, the US, the UK, and the Soviet Union.

What cannot be overlooked, however, is that Finland has a distasteful United Nations voting record as far as the US is concerned. On a number of key resolutions, such as Afghanistan, Finland has abstained, even though the Afghanistan resolution didn't even dare cite the Soviet aggressor by name. Similarly, Finland abstained on a resolution condemning Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. A third Finnish