

inability of the Soviet system to cope with failure.

In many areas of *deployed* technology, Mr. Luttwak asserts, the Soviet armed forces are now the equal or even the superior of their Western opponents. It is only now, for example, that the United States has begun the production of an infantry vehicle comparable to the Soviet BMP. He spends less time on Soviet organization, morale, and training, in which areas the Soviets are less well off, although such matters are of course difficult to quantify. Nonetheless, one can only conclude that the Soviet Union has conducted a campaign of armament unprecedented in history, one that has paid substantial dividends, as demonstrated in Africa and now Afghanistan. Although the United States could hardly remain neutral in the event of an attack on China or in southwest Asia, Mr. Luttwak doubts that American forces will recover the capability they once had to physically contain Soviet expansion. In this connection, he strikes the reader as being far more pessimistic than the current administration, which seems to believe that some marginal increases in defense spending will restore the United States to the position of relative military superiority that it had in the early 1960s. As Mr. Luttwak observes, such hopes are chimerical.

Mr. Luttwak has a reputation—well-deserved—for acidic judgments and cutting humor wielded without mercy against inept opponents. To those put off by that reputation, this book will come as a pleasant surprise. His judgments are thoughtful and balanced: His picture of the Soviet threat is a complicated and sophisticated one that takes full account of the many weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the Russian regime.

Mr. Luttwak does not pretend to be a Sovietologist. He is, rather, a student of general history and of military history in particular. There will be those who will regard this book as a presumptuous intrusion into a domain that should be reserved for those who devote a lifetime to the mastery of Russian history, language, and politics. Yet there is a place for the reflections of those whose interest in the Soviet Union is serious but not all-consuming. In an age of arid academic overspecialization, Edward Luttwak's writing serves a particularly useful purpose in helping us understand this country's greatest adversary.

Eliot A. Cohen

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Nowhere Men

The Coercive Utopians: Social Deception by America's Power Players, by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac (*Chicago: Regnery Gateway*).

In 1979 the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs granted \$131,526 of taxpayers' money to the Environmental Action Foundation, whose paperback primer *Ecotage!* offers suggestions of action ranging from sprinkling nails on the highways to mailing dead fish to oil executives. In 1976 the United Church of Christ merited a \$10,000

award from the People's Bicentennial Commission for "evidence likely to lead to the arrest and imprisonment of the chief executive officer of a Fortune 500 company." In July 1981 the Department of Education sent out the second installment of a \$244,000 grant to the Council on Interracial Books for Children for a new third-grade reader because existing textbooks "deny the realities of capitalism and all that goes into it—classes, conflicting class interests, and the ongoing struggle between the few who control wealth and those many who are trying to share wealth."

In 325 fact-filled pages, Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac show how left-wing groups deftly use government and foundation monies to exert an influence far beyond their number. Borrowing a term first used by scientist-journalist Peter Metzger, the Isaacs have entitled their book *The Coercive Utopians*. Philosophically, the activists are utopian because of their implicit belief that "man is perfectible and the evils that exist are the product of a corrupt social system"; practically, this translates into a hatred of the marketplace, a paranoid distrust of technology, and a concomitant romanticization of collectivist regimes. Indeed, the leaders of public interest groups, according to a poll by Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter, give Fidel Castro an approval rating of 34 percent, seven times higher than Ronald Reagan's 5 percent. Since the mass of human beings traditionally prove uncooperative in adapting to utopian planning, sooner or later the utopians are reduced to coercion in the name of perfection.

Environmentalism provides a perfect paradigm of a movement that somewhere crossed the line of reasonable reform into fanaticism. Originally, the environmentalists enjoyed broad popular support, simply because most Americans wanted cleaner air and water. But environmentalists lost all perspective about risk and cost, promoting policies that were often both fiscally insane and scientifically dubious. In 1980, for instance, an independent oilman reported that he had to pay \$1,400 to have 40 acres of a prospective oilfield certified free of Indian arrowheads before he could file an environmental impact statement.

Typically, the environmentalists have been quicker with the regulatory trigger than with the hard evidence. The 1972 decision of William Ruckelshaus, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, to ban DDT was less a scientific than a political response; Mr. Ruckelshaus did not attend the hearings on DDT, nor did he even bother to read the transcript, which contained the hearing examiner's conclusion that "DDT is not a carcinogenic hazard to man" and that "there is a present need for the essential uses of DDT."

Such laws as the Endangered Species Act, "originally passed out of concern for the dwindling numbers of buffalo, whooping cranes, sperm whales, and other increasingly rare creatures," have been stretched to the point of farce. Sometimes the "discovery" of new endangered species stalls federal projects, as was the case with the infamous Furbish louswort on the site of the proposed Dickey-Lincoln Dam in northern Maine. A whole new industry has been created to search for these

endangered species, commanding as much as \$10,000 for a few weeks' search.

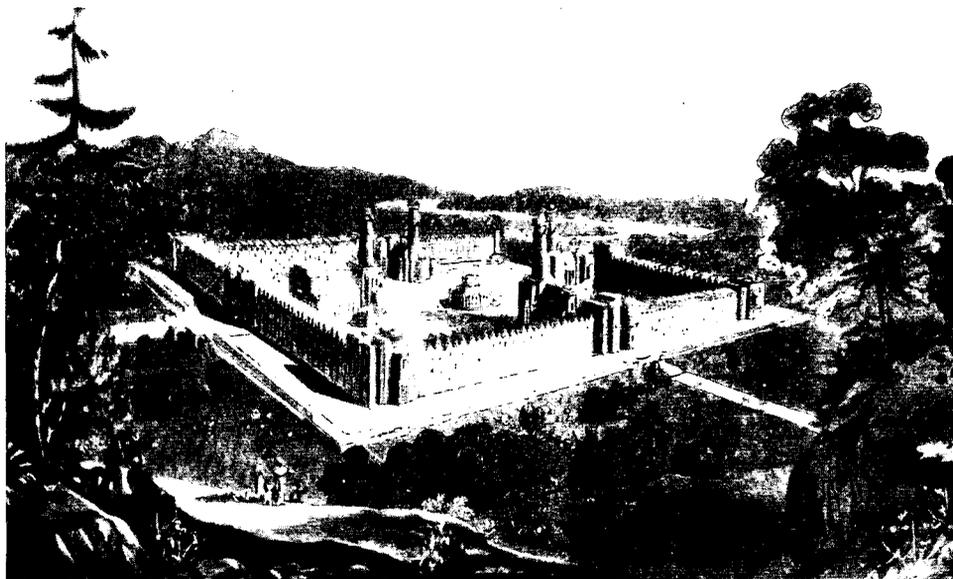
As the Isaacs point out, the success of activist groups like the environmentalists derives from their marked ability to "couch their appeals in terms of values Americans share." Their preferred tactic is not to attack directly but to undermine, by diminishing public faith and confidence in such institutions as the CIA, business, nuclear energy facilities, local governments, and so on. Thus organizations like the Center for National Security Studies—an Institute for Policy Studies spin-off—can work closely with governmental bodies like the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the "reform" of U.S. intelligence agencies. Yet the record of the center indicates an emphasis not so much on reform as on abolition: Center director Morton Halperin has consistently defended CIA defector Philip Agee, and the speakers' bureau for *CounterSpy*, which has published the names and addresses of CIA agents around the world, includes several persons from the center.

Of late, however, the most successful—and dangerous—effort of the utopians has been their radicalization of America's mainline Protestant churches (though the Roman Catholic clergy appears eager to catch up). Once a bulwark against radical fantasy, even the traditionally conservative Protestants, like the Episcopalians, have mobilized their considerable financial, human, and institutional resources in support of everything from Third World terrorism to the nuclear freeze.

Many of these groups were either formed during or radicalized by the Vietnam War, like Clergy and Laity Concerned about the Vietnam War (now just CALC). Together with the Physicians for Social Responsibility, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi, the Riverside Church Disarmament Program, and others, CALC agitates for a freeze out of a conception of America as the world's archvillain. "What seems very clear," the Reverend James Lawson told CALC's 1982 national assembly, "is that the number-one enemy of peace and justice in the world today is the United States."

The common threads that seem to run through these church organizations are a pronounced reluctance to criticize aggression by the Soviets and an enthusiasm for terrorists, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The United Methodist church has been the largest denominational supporter (more than \$5 million in 1981) of the radicalized National Council of Churches. In southern Africa, for example, the United Methodists'



Robert Owen's New Harmony model community, established in Indiana in 1825, collapsed after only two years when its workers stopped working.

World Division gave money to both Bishop Abel Muzorewa's and Robert Mugabe's movements until Bishop Muzorewa, head of the Zimbabwean Methodist church, became head of a biracial government in 1979. After that the Methodists funded only Robert Mugabe's group, which did not accept the election results and engaged in terrorist activity against Bishop Muzorewa's government.

With the recent peace movement the utopians have had their most spectacular gains because, the Isaacs say, "it was far more plausible to argue that the survival of mankind was threatened by nuclear war than to claim the earth was on the verge of extinction from poisons in the air, sea and water." The freeze idea itself had its birth at a summer 1979 meeting of the American Friends Service Committee, which included Richard Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies. Characterized by a doomsday messianism—Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* and ABC-TV's *The Day After* are two good examples—the freeze movement conjures the specter of nuclear annihilation in the push for what amounts to unilateral disarmament.

Though the notion that all peace proponents are agents of the KGB is ludicrous, certainly there has been some Soviet involvement. The World Peace Council and the U.S. Peace Council, which collected signatures for the freeze petition, are giant Communist front groups with large budgets. KGB officers are present at freeze rallies and have been active in inciting the protests against the recent deployment of the Pershing II missiles in Europe. Yet the peace groups never complain; nor did they put up a howl when the Soviets first committed to a mental asylum and then expelled one of their own citizens, Sergei Batovrin, for starting a peace movement there.

Given that few activist groups would ever make it on their own financially, how do they get by? Though their money comes from a variety of sources, foundation and government funds have been their staple. David Jessup

reported to the Methodists' 1980 general conference that most laymen "would react with disbelief, even anger" were they to learn about some of the groups on the receiving end of the collection plate. Even foundations like Ford, which became so heavily anticapitalistic that Henry Ford II resigned from its board in 1976, can stray far from the benefactor's original intent. But both churches and foundations are at least private and voluntary: Far worse is when the government subsidizes these groups with taxpayer dollars.

Access to public funds became easier with the migration of utopians into government during the Carter administration, many into subcabinet and influential White House spots. Equally significant is that about half of all federal judgeships are held by Carter appointees. It is in this branch of government, the furthest removed from the public, where the regulatory battles are settled, often to the utopians' advantage. In 1981, for example, a precedent-setting judge's decision required the government to pay legal fees to opposition lawyers even though the government had won the suit brought against it. In another case, the Legal Services Corporation almost succeeded in divvying up among activist groups some \$18 million the government had allotted to people who could not afford to pay their fuel bills.

The examples cited here but scratch the surface of *The Coercive Utopians*. Page after page and chapter after chapter yield spadefuls of rich information concerning the principles, funding, and activities of the so-called public interest spectrum. There is a section on how Ralph Nader has been able to seize the moral high ground (and power) despite his flagrant use of the double standard.

His campus-based Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), which covers some 175 campuses in 30 states, is typically funded by automatic contributions (sometimes collected in student activities fees) unless the student specifically requests otherwise—the "negative option" that Mr. Nader has attacked when used by book clubs.

Doubtless this book is not going to cause any cheers among the popular press. It is a good bet that if it is not ignored entirely, the book will be criticized for one of its sources, John Rees, publisher of *Information Digest* and the subject of unflattering remarks by everyone from *CounterSpy* ("extremely dangerous") to the FBI ("unscrupulous"). The real question, however, is not Mr. Rees's character but the veracity of his information—a question many would prefer not to ask.

Near the end of the book, the Isaacs quote Dutch journalist Jan Van Houten: "While the right frequently wins elections, the left frequently remains in control of pivotal institutions that shape public opinion." The authors have spent the better part of their careers, in articles for publications ranging from *Commentary* and the *American Spectator* to *Reader's Digest* and the *New Republic*, documenting how the Left has been so successful. In *The Coercive Utopians* they have put it all between two covers, showing that however diverse the expressions, utopian movements all flow from one principle—that although perfection often proves impossible, reality is intolerable.

William McGurn

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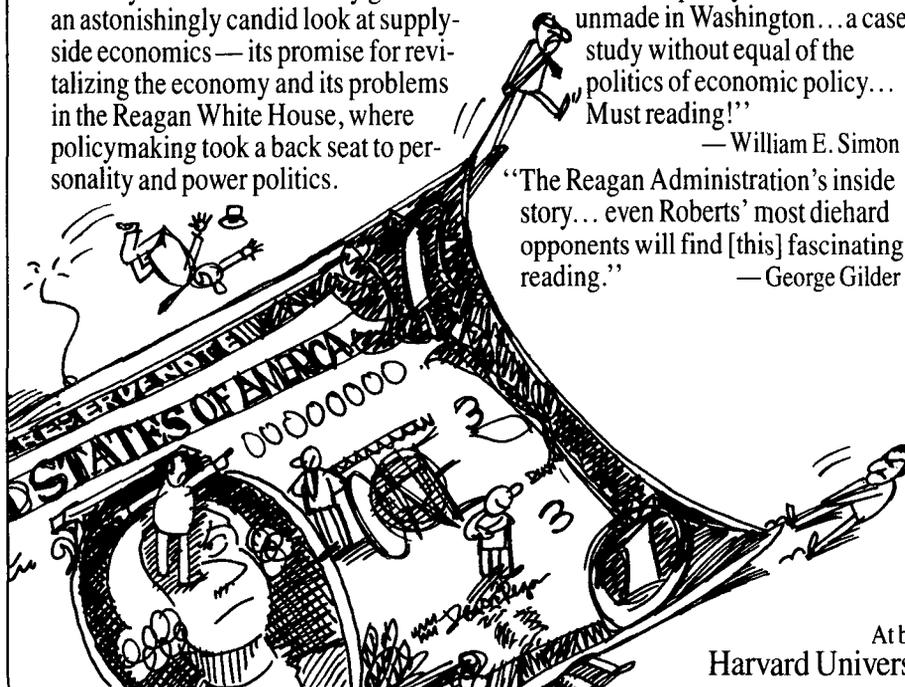
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Movies

The Leftist with a Conscience

Danton, directed by Andrzej Wajda.

The names of Georges Jacques Danton and Maximilien Robespierre are as inextricably bound to each other as they are to the most appalling period of the French Revolution—the Reign of Terror in 1793 and 1794. More than any other individuals, Danton and Robespierre represent the birth of the modern Left; indeed, the very word left comes from the location of their seats in the revolutionary national assembly. And the showdown between them in 1794 has long been the archetype of the bloody struggles that inevitably consume all left-wing revolutions—from Kerensky vs. Lenin, to Trotsky vs. Stalin, to Bishop vs. Coard.

The September massacres of 1792 were the first mass political purge of modern history. The radical Jacobins ruthlessly slaughtered their enemies who favored a con-

stitutional monarchy and, in an atmosphere of intimidation, organized elections that returned to the national assembly a left-wing majority, the Convention. Two main factions dominated the Convention—the Gironde (Left) and the Mountain (extreme Left)—and in 1793, after the guillotining of Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette, the Mountain proceeded to eliminate the Gironde. Its instrument of terror was the Committee of Public Safety, forerunner of the Cheka and the KGB. The Revolutionary Tribunal was created to expedite justice; before long, trial, judgment, and execution were taking place on the same day.

Mounting Madness

Danton, as leader of the Mountain, was the first head of the Committee of Public Safety and one of the founders of the Revolutionary Tribunal. But in the summer of 1793, after the death of his wife, he apparently lost his nerve and tried to retire from politics. He seems to have regretted taking the Revolution as far as he did, and toward the end he said, “Mieux vaut être guillotiné que guillotiner”—better a victim than a butcher be. He died

MASSACRE OF THE FRENCH KING!

VIEW OF
La Guillotine;
OR THE



MODERN
Beheading Machine,
AT PARIS.

By which the unfortunate LOUIS XVI. (late King of France) suffered on the Scaffold, January 21st, 1793.