

tion people in Washington are asking is—does the United States have a legal or moral commitment to defend Chicago? Legally, the answer is no. Chicago is not a signatory to either the SEATO or NATO treaties. But, morally, America has an immense commitment. Of course, we learned in Vietnam that the U.S. must never again commit ground troops in a ground war. However, there is no reason American air power couldn't be mobilized over the city to drop leaflets explaining the advantages of the American way of life. Before anything is done, though, Mayor Daley would have to resign so that

free elections could be held. The newly elected municipal government would then resign so that a more broadly based coalition could be formed, including all elements. Then free elections could be held.

Should the citizens of Chicago demonstrate a sincere commitment to democratic government, the way would be open for extensive U.S. military aid, for a limited period of time. But the United States would not lose prestige if foreign troops were to occupy Chicago. Most experts now admit that the failure of the Rock Island Line doomed the city months

ago. The only question is how we got involved in the first place. Some people will bring up the "domino" theory, but that is the argument Lyndon Johnson used in Vietnam. It is possible that Illinois and the Midwestern states would pass to foreign control, but that might ultimately be for the best. It would at least be a sobering, highly educational experience.

Perhaps the newsmagazines are right that the United States is suffering a leadership crisis. But as regards foreign affairs this is no longer true. The leadership we are getting there is as excellent as it was 30 years ago. □

## Brudnoy's Film Index

■ **And Now My Love:** The past, truly, is prologue, in this hokey but winning love story of two young people whose coming together is occasioned, more or less, by the story of their ancestors. We race through time from turn-of-the-century coquettishness to contemporary jet-set romance. One drop more of Kismet and the movie would be unbearable; as it is, it envelops the viewer in its web of circumstance. By Claude Lelouch, who brought us *A Man and a Woman* in 1966.

■ **Brannigan:** They've poured John Wayne into his detective threads—one of his three basic outfits, alternating with his cowboy and his leatherneck suits—and plopped him down in darkest London in hot pursuit of a baddie. London survives, Wayne survives, crime survives, and admittedly the scenery and special effects are nice. The acting settles in the stomach like an English breakfast, rendering the viewer incapable of response. Only a necrophiliac could get nourishment from this deadening flop.

■ **Day of the Locust:** The Nathanael West classic about Hollywood's has-beens and would-be-greats lavishly filmed and lovingly acted by Karen Black, Donald Sutherland, Burgess Meredith, and newcomer William Atherton. Each is splendid in his role, and the horrifying conclusion, reflecting West's morbid vision of fame's fleeting power and the mob's hysteria, is a *tour de force*.

■ **Donkey Skin:** A fairy tale about incest that is so saccharine it might rot your teeth. Nevertheless, if the sort of singing that infested *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* some years back is your cup of treacle, this is for you. The young lovers are adorable, the fairy godmother's a hoot, and the colors are enchanting. This one is best seen tripping; with luck it will become a cult classic for hippies who've gone that route with Disney's *Fantasia*.

■ **The French Connection, II:** Gene Hackman is back as Popeye Doyle, the drug-chasing New York cop, here transplanted to France to tidy up the loose

ends from installment #1. Needless to say, it is very messy indeed. There's a neat chase, and the chief villain *may* have survived for a third installment. The added twist this time: Popeye made into a junkie, undergoing one of the most gruesome cold turkey scenes on film. Not a sequel to treasure.

■ **Hearts and Minds:** The Oscar-winning documentary by Bert Schneider and Peter Davis, glorifying the Communist side in Vietnam and maliciously slamming the American. Everything is designed to distort reality so that only America is evil, only American generals are stupid, only America contributes to Vietnam's woes, only America's people are warmongers, only American politicians are dumb. They cheered wildly on Oscar-night when this monumental piece of propaganda won its award; *sic transit gloria Hollywood*.

■ **Love at the Top:** Jean-Louis Trintignant plays a man whose dream is "to have lots of money and sleep with many women." He triumphs, as does this odd but compelling French comedy. The women he sleeps with are lovely, especially Florinda Bolkan (of *A Brief Vacation*), and his crawl to the top is both funny and tragic. Paris never looked so chic, nor opportunism so casual.

■ **The Passenger:** Michelangelo Antonioni's latest, a chilling, truly magnificent peek into the problem of identity, with the usual Antonioni mysteries rolling out one after another. Jack Nicholson and Maria Schneider put more verve into this film than he usually does and than she did in *Last Tango in Paris*: They totally submerge themselves in their roles, and the result is absolutely first-rate acting. The conclusion is instant classic; it will no doubt be held up as a model of cinema genius for many years. Not to be missed.

■ **Rancho De Luxe:** Wall, podner, here's yo' little ole tale of the oooold West—1974—with two greedy, eager, horny young bucks (Jeff Bridges and Sam Waterston) hot to make it big by cattle

rustlin'. Almost, boys, almost. Along the way they romp and frolic with Elizabeth Ashley, Slim Pickens, and a variety of other characters. No great shakes as a movie, but light-hearted fun.

■ **The Reincarnation of Peter Proud:** *Déjà-vu* carried to its ultimate. A slick piece of trash designed to cash in on the dregs of the *Exorcist* mania, with the talented Michael Sarrazin struggling personfully against inane material. A slight bit of sex tease does little to erase the boredom of this predictable, overdrawn bit of occult silliness.

■ **Rosebud:** Leave it to Otto Preminger to take the fascinating possibilities of Arab terrorism as a cinema theme and turn it into sheer tedium. Peter O'Toole looks desperate to escape from his role as mastermind of international intelligence; the abducted chickies look no more inconvenienced than if they had been taken for a weekend of romance, and Richard Attenborough looks ridiculous as an Anglo-Arab messiah.

■ **The Silent Stranger:** A sukiyaki Western set in Japan in the 1880s, written by and produced by and starring one Tony Anthony, about whom you will hear little in coming years, unless a gargantuan lack of talent catches on. Our hero slaughters nearly half the baddies of old Japan (these all converse in high Nipponese grunts and groans), all to rescue a wee Japanese princess (who is about eight years old and somehow speaks perfect English) and find out the mystery of a miniature Japanese scroll. Hint: it isn't one of the Emperor's missing tape transcripts.

■ **The Yakuza:** Nippon once more, this time today's industrialized Japan, with the Oriental Mafia battling Robert Mitchum. Lots of dramatic confrontations, discourses on "honor" and "duty" and other catchy concepts. The location shots are fine; the acting's heavy, and Mitchum is excellent in a fairly ludicrous role. □

EDITORIAL  
(continued from page 4)

Of all the wonders that the pols work, the ones that I especially do not want to know about are those that they work under the rubric of reform. As the eminent James Q. Wilson asserted in the May number of this family magazine, reform "means to improve by alteration, to abolish abuse or malpractice; 'a reform' is a change for the better, an improvement in social, moral, or political conditions." Now how many "reforms" in recent years have comported with that definition? Much of the civil rights legislation of the middle 1960s was admirable reform to be sure, but as the years have worn on the reforms have degenerated into quotas, coercive busing, and a foul policy of "affirmative action" that threatens to return this democracy to the glories of feudalism and an ascriptive society. Then there are the campaign "reforms," at least one of which is so obviously unconstitutional that men as different as James Buckley and Eugene McCarthy joined forces to contest it, and the Department of Justice hesitates to defend it. Yet during its nonsensical gestation on the floor of Congress it was bandied about both by politicians and by journalists as a notable improvement if not an actual panacea.

What is reform? Reform is a tactic resorted to by misologists to preclude debate. It is a preemptive strike against thoughtful analysis. It is a word exuding such connotative bliss that it sanctifies almost any deed no matter how low or hollow. Rarely have men been able to resist let alone debate a policy once it is classified as a reform. In democratic societies it is a kind of sacred seal, which—once accorded to a group or a proposal—makes them admirable and almost un-

assailable. Had the Mafiosi, rather than the League of Women Voters, arranged to have themselves described as a reform movement, I have no doubt that the Brotherhood would now hold an honored place in American life. The Capone era would be eulogized as an auspicious precursor to the New Deal, *The Godfather* would be produced by the American Bicentennial Administration, and many a pol would be sweating after the endorsement of his local Black Hand chapter. The FBI would have sunk even lower in the *New York Times'* esteem.

Political scientists note that reform is generally used against mossbacks; what they generally neglect to note is that it is often used by petty tyrants. How else does one describe the reformers who breathed life into Prohibition, the Mann Act, the Selective Service System, and the income tax? How else to describe the marplots who have turned the American automobile into a vehicle approximating the efficiency, the cost, and, of course, the safety, of a bulldozer? Are not reformers behind the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Civil Aeronautics Board, the Federal Trade Commission, and various minimum wage and rent commissions throughout the land of the free? All of these reformers promised to better the lot of the plain folk and scotch villainy. In most cases all they have accomplished is increased travail for the plain folk while establishing a profitable alliance between the reformer and the reformed.

It is all just another area of political behavior about which I would rather not know. If the pols were serious about improving our condition, there are myriads of improvements they might hammer into policy. And lest the reader think I am

purely negative in my commentary I shall mention one of my favorite reforms by way of ending this scholarly critique and by way of nailing down my point that pols are rascals; for though my reform is eminently practical, useful, and democratic, I guarantee that it will not attract a sniff from Capitol Hill.

Every politician in the land agrees that politicians should be responsible to the people and each politician is forever attempting to one-up his fellow in testifying to his slavish adherence to the people's will, yet I have never heard a politician condemn the curious chronological gulf between the date on which the politician seeks the electorate's approval and the date on which the electorate is presented with the bill for the politician's highjinks. Election day is always about as far removed from income tax day as the calendar will allow. Surely nothing would bring the politician's behavior more closely under the scrutiny of the electorate and therefore make him more responsible to the electorate than to make election day and income tax day one and the same. I therefore propose that federal taxes be paid on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of every November. There you have it, a reform worthy of John Gardner at his best, a reform brilliant in its democratic allure, and a reform that will excite about as much enthusiasm in the mind of the average Congressman as a plan to administer breathalyzer tests on the solons before they wobble into the Capitol.

Beyond a hearty guffaw there is little good the average American can realize from his knowledge of politics as practiced in this Republic. The more we know the more we are degraded. Therefore I believe the people ought not to know; and if laughter is what we are after we can always do graduate work at one of the great universities. □

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## Current Wisdom

**NEOTERICISMS:** The very latest in advanced thought carefully excavated from the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, a magazine of cleverness:

The failed experiment is considered a permanent fixture, so that even the daring speculator talks of reforming the prisons when he should be considering their abolition. If there is any more disastrous survivor of the Enlightenment still gasping at a death-like life, I do not know where to find it.

—*New York Review of Books*  
April 3, 1975

**SEXUAL EMANCIPATION:** Reassuring news from the Latin American underworld, an equal opportunity employer:

Unlike Mafia wives who stay in the kitchen and cook lasagna, women have a prominent place in Latin America's illicit drug traffic, filling every role from courier to godmother of criminal organizations, according to American drug-enforcement officials.

—"*A Woman's Accent*"  
by Mary Daniels  
United Features, May 7, 1975

**THE GORY DETAILS:** Mr. Garry Wills, elevated spirit, describes another poetic moment experienced by one of his literary colleagues:

Tom Wicker was summoned abruptly down into this sewer, as an "observer" at the standoff between rioting prisoners and their guards in upstate New York. He came to look, and stayed to vomit, and vowed to write—and has now written, almost literally in blood....

—*New York Review of Books*  
April 3, 1975

**DEPT. OF ADVANCED THOUGHT:** A Mr. Larry L. King, *New Times*' leading authority on international relations, delivers up a new foreign policy for Arkansas:

We must come to understand that it really doesn't matter whether Park or Kim rule as despots over the whole of Korea. It is not a choice of supporting Freedom over Slavery, no matter what Dr. Kizzinger learned at the knee of John Foster Dulles. These are new times and history makes new waves. Hereafter, when North fights South, let America go fishing—unless the battles pit the domestic Carolinas or Dakotas against each other.

—*New Times*  
May 30, 1975

**CEREBRATIONS:** A brilliantly analytical gust from movie producer Bert Schneider, another genius from Hollywood's rising generation of metaphysicians:

A few critics have charged that "Hearts and Minds" is a propaganda film, one-sided in its attack on American policy in Vietnam. Schneider bridles at these criticisms: "I don't understand what that means. Is Picasso's 'Guernica' Communist propaganda? If I say the sun comes up in the east and sets in the west, and we discover that Karl Marx also said that, am I a tool of the Communists? I used to see that kind of thing when the McCarthy investigations were taking place—guilt by association."

—*New York Times*  
May 4, 1975

**QUALITY OF LIFE DEPT.:** Shana Alexander, resident sage of *Newsweek* magazine, glows, as she rattles off the benefits of life in a Red paradise, benefits about equal to the benefits of life in any American penitentiary:

If we know one thing about the government founded by Ho Chi Minh, it is that its social services are excellent: good health care, day care, and educational programs abound, especially for the poor.

—*Newsweek*  
April 28, 1975

**OLD FAITHFUL:** Applause for American valor from the redoubtable *Nation*, a journal dedicated to the proposition that, in foreign policy, mountains are best made into molehills:

By far the most troublesome aspect of the *Mayaguez* action has been the jubilant, backslapping response it evoked. Congress was virtually unanimous in its approval (there were some conspicuous exceptions, Sen. Gaylord Nelson for one); it took the Senate four hours to voice its commendations, with the conservatives being the most laudatory. As for the public, it has been almost as enthusiastic as Ford and Kissinger, who have been filmed congratulating each other and patting themselves on the back in a manner reminiscent of a team of freshmen wrestlers after their first intercollegiate victory. The reaction suggests that we have learned little from our experience in Indochina; on the contrary, the defeat of United States policy in Vietnam seems to have evoked a jingoistic mood which, as long as it lasts, is likely to encourage future follies.

—*The Nation*  
May 31, 1975

**HE-MAN POLITICS:** The authentic achievements of 30 postgraduates of good

governmentism, as chronicled by *New Times*, the lively journal of silver-spooned urban guerrillas:

Whatever you think of their politics, a look at the record convinces you that the Weather Underground can no longer be dismissed as post-graduate dilettantes. They went underground, about 30 of them, in the winter of 1969-70, most of them with heavy assault and conspiracy charges hanging over them. They didn't go underground to hide out, the way a generation before, the leaders of the Communist party hid when they went underground in the early '50s to escape Smith Act prosecutions. The Weather People went underground to conduct a campaign of sabotage against symbols of American power, but they had more in mind than blowing up buildings. They wanted to build up a permanent underground-based political party and support system—the first of its kind in America. They wanted to disprove the popular assumption that the white radical movements of the '60s all died on January 1, 1970. And they wanted to blow up the myth of FBI invincibility.

They've succeeded. The U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon, New York City Police Headquarters, I.T.T., the State Department. They've claimed credit for these and 20 other bombings over the past five years, many of the claims documented with fingerprinted communiques containing convincing details and postmarks. Most of these bombings have followed immediately upon such events as the killing of George Jackson, the bombing of Hanoi, the coup in Chile. The swiftness of such "symbolic retaliation," as they call it, suggests that the Weather Underground has developed an ability to communicate coast-to-coast among its cells, coordinate complex sabotage schemes against closely guarded targets at a moment's notice and still preserve security.

—*New Times*  
May 30, 1975

**INTELLECTUAL DIGEST:** Intellectual news from Oak Park, Illinois, where the WCTU drinking fountain has been replaced by the Rev. Gerald L. Krick:

While everyone else is celebrating Mother's Day Sunday, the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Oak Park will turn things around and celebrate Non-Mother's Day.

The Rev. Gerald R. Krick said Friday, "The time has come to honor those women who have not had children...."

"For too long childless women have been made to feel that they were inferior and unnatural...."

"Mother's Day is one of the worst times for such women. On this day their