

at Detroit's very strict Mackenzie High School.

• In Lagos, Nigeria, Justice Commissioner Betu Mamuno unexpectedly discovered twenty Moslems who had been locked away in the Yola calaboose five years ago pending indictment for rioting. Officials had apparently forgotten about them, but life in the Yola prison could not be any worse than life in metropolitan Yola. Mr. Robert Lekachman, a left-wing econo-

mist who could always be relied upon for elegant commentary even in conservative journals such as this one, died. He was 68. Mrs. Pilar Franco, sister of the late Spanish reformer General Francisco Franco, died. She was 94. Mr. Salvador Dali, dauber of the unconscious, died. It was 84. And on January 7, Japan's Emperor Hirohito reached room temperature. He was 87, and demand for Taiwan's white chrysanthemums, the flowers used in the of-

ficial mourning celebrations, was so colossal that Taiwanese growers could only meet 30 percent of their orders.

• There has been another report of a policeman expelling gas in a discourteous manner while on duty. Last month this column reported that three Miami policemen were reprimanded for covering up one officer's flatus into a police radio. Now Los Angeles Police Commander William Booth has suspended patrolman Juan Gomez for

breaking wind in front of two handcuffed prisoners after intoning, "Check this out." Colonel Muammar Qaddafi has notified French television viewers that Shakespeare's works were actually written by an Arab, Sheik Zbere. And there is evidence that the author Alexander Cockburn is at work on a scholarly revision of his mentor, Dr. Marx. There has been an outbreak of head lice in the research rooms of the Library of Congress. —RET

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Correction

Due to an editing error and a case of bad penmanship, Richard Gilder's company was misidentified in the text accompanying our display of Washington Club photographs (taken by Peter Kolk) in our February issue. Mr. Gilder is affiliated with Gilder, Gagnon and Company in New York City. Our apologies.

Keynes and the Congressman

It is a pity that Congressman Stephen Solarz decided to use your invitation to a bit of bipartisan Christmas cheer as a platform for a rather perverted polemic ("Books for Christmas," *TAS*, December 1988). The idea of comparing the freely contracted debt obligations of today's Third World countries to the reparations exacted on Germany after the First World War is, in itself, patently absurd. But his use of Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* to support his ill-founded analogy makes it worse. The congressman should be made aware that Keynes's holy rhetoric is not without its share of critics. Modern British historians Paul Johnson and Corelli Barnett both question the validity of Keynes's judgments. Barnett describes Keynes's influence on the interwar period as "immense, far-reaching and catastrophic" and concludes that Keynes's basic tenet is "sentimental nonsense," particularly when one considers the terms Germany demanded of France (Frankfurt, 1871) and Russia (Brest-Litovsk, 1918). I've always wondered how Keynes's book was taken seriously as an objective account when he admitted to Virginia Woolf, regarding the German spokesman at Versailles, Melchior, "I was rather in love with him," and described his own prime minister as "half-human," one British admiral as "a most surly and ignorant sea-dog," and the Supreme Allied Commander Foch and his spokesman Weygand as, respectively, "narrow and impervious . . . a peasant," and "his attendant sprite." It should have been clear all along that the guilt-ridden conscience of the

Bloomsbury crowd was one step away from treachery (remember Strachey's famous reply to a tribunal's query, "What would you do if you saw a German officer attempting to rape your sister?"—"I should try to interpose my own body"). And Raymond Aron, in his preface to the French edition of Etienne Mantoux's attack on Keynes, *The Carthaginian Peace*, openly declares that we should reject Keynes, and re-read Jacques Bainville. The latter predicted twenty years before the fact that Germany would inevitably be tempted to "fish in the troubled waters" of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Foch, too, had remarked in 1919, "This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years." Which side has been proved correct—the Bloomsbury guilt trip, or the sober French?

—Russell Desmond
New Orleans, Louisiana

Brit Bashes Back

In your issue of November 1988 . . . George Szamuely [in "The Brits Boot Hong Kong"] says: "For the first time in history, a ruling elite will, without even a show of struggle, relinquish its dominance over society in favor of Communists."

The Hong Kong treaty of 1897 has been accepted as valid since its signing. It has never been questioned in international law. But assuming the British were base and foolish enough to unilaterally abrogate the treaty, what then? Has Mr. Szamuely *been* to Hong Kong? Has he any idea of the defensive possibility if China decided to attack?

Let us remember Vietnam. It is true America forced its poor and illiterate to fight its battles there, and it is also true that, heirs to a great tradition, those men fought well though reviled and sneered at by those whose way of life they were defending. But they lost to a tiny far-off country.

Mr. Szamuely wants the British to take on China, does he, and a bloody fool he is.

The Brit bashing in *TAS* (I am a

long-time subscriber) does get tiresome, you know, and at least you could deal in facts, not malice.

—Lt. Col. A. R. Wythe
Walberswick, Southwold
Suffolk, England

Globaloney in Annandale

It may well be, as David Brock suggests, that Minnesota students are under siege by "committed political cadres accomplishing their task through emotional manipulation, indoctrination, and exploitation of school children" ("Selling Globaloney in the Schools," *TAS*, December 1988). But surely the editors of *TAS*, Mr. Brock, and Mrs. Katherine Kerston (the "concerned Minnesota parent, who provided much of the documentation for this article") are not so naive as to expect anything else. The left, if nothing else, is tireless in its pursuit of young minds. It is well organized, well connected, and well financed. Its adherents actually *work* at their cause. And in Minnesota's schools, as Mr. Brock so sullenly points out, their efforts are paying dividends.

But it does no good to whine about it. One expects, or should expect, committed ideologues to pursue their various agendas with whatever force and fervor they can muster. That's politics; and it is honorable, if occasionally dirty, work. . . . If Mrs. Kerston and Mr. Brock wish to stop the leftist indoctrination that they perceive in Minnesota's schools, they'd do much better to emulate the tactics of their opponents than to complain to each other about those bad people in Minnesota. . . .

I grew increasingly uncomfortable as I read Mr. Brock's lengthy diatribe; but it wasn't until I reached the very end that I figured out why. In the second paragraph from the end he writes:

The junior and senior classes at Annandale High School in Annandale, Minnesota, recently spent a day in a discussion of Central America. Among the speakers were Anne Winkler, mentioned above; Mary Turck, a CARC board member; Dick Bancroft, a member of CARC's speakers'

bureau; and Jim Shapiro, a member of CISPEs. At CARC's suggestion, the Annandale students prepared themselves for the event by reading Faith Adams's tendentious state-sponsored Central America "study guide."

Well, yes. Sort of. I'm certain it was a simple oversight by the author, but Mr. Brock's piece didn't mention that Mrs. Kerston was also one of the speakers at that discussion. She was, in fact, one of the two main presenters. It's true that all of those who were mentioned by Mr. Brock did appear at that discussion. And it's true that the students were given Faith Adams's tendentious state-sponsored study guide. But it's also true that there's more to the story than that.

Annandale High School, located in the center of a tiny town in central Minnesota, about one hour northwest of the Twin Cities, is particularly fortunate to have a senior high social studies teacher named Beth Sviggum. She is one of those all-too-rare teachers whose competence, skill, dedication to her profession, and commitment to her students are an actual inspiration to many of us who live here. She was the organizer of the day-long discussion of Central America last February.

After reading Mr. Brock's piece, I contacted Miss Sviggum to ask her a few questions about what actually happened. She told me that her goal in organizing the event was to present to her students a perspective on Central America that was "balanced, fair, and as objective as possible." Most Annandale students—indeed, most adults in this nation—couldn't find Nicaragua on a map, let alone explain what the U.S. interests there might be. Most have, at best, only the dimmest notion of the ideological struggles that divide earnest people in Central America, and here in the U.S. What this young social studies teacher hoped to accomplish through her Central America discussion was simply to give her students some rough idea, some small notion, of the world beyond the Annandale

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EDITORIALS



STUPEFYING IMBECILES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Washington

One of the many unpardonable offenses that one can commit in this enlightened and progressive city is to quote the utterances of one's fellow journalists after a sufficient amount of time has elapsed to expose their flumm-diddle in all its stupefying imbecility. The colleagues do not like to be reminded. Yet with regard to the many portentous pronouncements they have handed down on Ronald Reagan's tenancy in the White House, surely the pundits will not mind being quoted. They have been reiterating their charges against him with unusual regularity for eight years.

In fact, two of the few constants of the Reagan years have been spreading peace and prosperity accompanied by the pundits' judgments that Ronald Reagan was imperiling peace and prosperity. Now, as the most popular President since FDR leaves office, the majority of pundits in print and across the airwaves drone on, sounding pretty much as they did in 1980 when they pronounced Reagan injurious to civilization.

Off to his retirement the oldest President in American history goes, and columnist Pete Hamill once again sounds the shocking litany: "Now we will have to pay for Reagan's party," he moans in the *New York Post*, "learning to live as the world's leading debtor nation. We will have to acknowledge the wan-

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.

ing of our economic power, as the true engine [sic] of the world shifts to Tokyo and the rest of Asia. The mayhem of the drug gangs will get worse. The ghastly army of the homeless will recruit many more troops. And Reagan will live out his days, surrounded by the California rich, basking smugly in public affection. . . . This is some country." Earlier in this column Dr. Hamill relied on another line that has been a stock canard with his kind for eight years: "To the very end, Reagan was only an actor, a man schooled in the craft of counterfeiting eloquence, emotion and toughness." Well, if you can charge a man who so valiantly endured a bullet to the chest with "counterfeiting toughness," you can utter any absurdity. This the Reagan-haters have been doing through the tedious years as they grow ever more honored, more repetitive, and apparently more gaga.

In its 1980 endorsement of Jimmy Carter the *New York Times* wrote: "What concerns us about Ronald Reagan is the depth and texture of his political values. . . . He seems genuinely to believe that the vain pursuit of arms superiority will bring the Russians begging to the bargaining table." *Times* columnist Tom Wicker warned of a Reagan Administration "that threatens a heightened arms race and a retreat from hard-won liberal achievements." Anthony Lewis's contribution to the monotony was that Reagan "seems likely to accelerate the nuclear arms

race. He might strain the relationship with Peking to the point where the Chinese would reconsider their attitude toward the Soviets."

By the fall of 1981 the chorus had gained another somber theme or two. Columnist John B. Oakes explained, again in the *Times*, that Reagan was presiding over a "harshly reactionary revolution" that "substituted a mindless militarism for a foreign policy." Much of Reagan's arms budget "will be dissipated in the self-defeating spiral of an open-ended nuclear-arms race that poses a greater threat to our internal and external security than all the Communist propaganda . . . from Moscow." In 1982, at the threshold of one of America's longest, most comprehensive periods of prosperity, Wicker pronounced the Reagan tax reduction bill "a solid, ringing failure." As to its capacity to produce recovery, "it's self-evident that it hasn't and won't." Two months earlier Lewis was

groaning, "If the economic folly of the Reagan Administration goes on . . . the price will be terrible," and he approvingly repeated Kevin Phillips's prediction that "Reaganism will be followed by authoritarian right-wing populism." Carl Rowan concluded that the Reagan Administration was "destroying" hope "for millions of poor and middle-class Americans."

With the October 1987 stock collapse, the chorus ignored the essential soundness of the economy and sang, "The binge is over"—economist Robert Reich; "The age of Reagan is over now, no matter what happens"—Dr. Lewis; "This debacle marks the last chapter of Reaganomics"—John Kenneth Galbraith. In its summation of the Reagan presidency *Time* magazine now runs the headline "Going Home a Winner," but the subheadline is "Reagan's bread-and-circuses strategy will mar his place in history." And what of the pundits' place in history? □

NBC'S "YESTERDAY" SHOW

As an assiduous viewer of the Republic's three major morning talk shows I should like to tender a public-spirited suggestion to the producers and directors of NBC's "Today" show. The program's name no longer conveys the character of the show or the reason that viewers turn to it. Viewers do not watch it to be informed of events today but to be informed of the way things were yesterday. In the interest of accuracy I suggest that NBC rechristen this swell assemblage of all the sentiments, the prejudices, the bugaboos of the 1970s (occasionally the 1960s too) "Yesterday" with Bryant Gumbel and Jane Pauley.

I do not make this suggestion in pursuit of snickers or rude gestures at NBC's expense. The "Yesterday" show is, I know, a success. Every morning there are a million or so yuppies out there gobbling vitamins, sipping vegetable juices, prayerfully spooning their way through mounds of dis-

gusting bran, and vastly enjoying NBC's stroll down memory lane, where Presidents are always under imminent threat of impeachment and untrustworthy corporations are subverting noble Third World showcases of the socialist political science. A decade ago today's yuppies had only their idealism, their herbal soaps, their earth shoes, a loony prof as a guru, and their bumper stickers. Now they have the Reagan prosperity, their BMWs, and their bumper stickers. They have no new literature, no new wisdom, only their fat paychecks. They are the only malcontents in the history of the West to have learned nothing from their dalliances with totalitarianism and failed Utopia. Those malcontents who in the 1930s returned from abroad extolling the virtues of Stalin, Mussolini, and even Hitler occasionally confessed quite eloquently to their error. Consider Muggeridge, Orwell, or Koestler. Apart from Peter Collier and David

