

aise. Here, he fails to consider that, even if such changes may on occasion stymie political activity, the result may actually be beneficial: Surely, the possibility that the very inconsistency and occasional nonviability of proportional representation is a better reflection of human nature in all its complexity and perversity should not be rejected out of hand. There have been instances where the presence of small parties reinvigorates politics by forcing real issues onto the political radar—as today in Britain, with the advent of both the United Kingdom Independence Party and the British National Party. As for instability, would politics really be made easier if there were thousands of individual, revolving agendas, instead of six or seven party ones? (When dealing with large numbers of people, some simplification and debasement of messages and ideologies is sadly necessary.)

Nor does Sutherland favor direct democracy, in the form of referenda and citizens' initiatives. Such schemes, he feels, can only work within very close-knit communities, where there is a sense of *homonoia* or "same-mindedness," while referendum questions and answers can easily be manipulated by politicians. Yet, while Sutherland is rightly wary of such devices, surely they could have an important role to play in limiting party machinations.

Sutherland is fonder of judicial activism, which he regards as "a pluralistic defence against the elective dictatorship at the heart of our political system." Yet such is the state of British culture and education that such activism is at least as likely to have evil effects as the party variety. Today, judges are scarcely more likely to be motivated by common sense than are politicians.

Sutherland salts his text throughout with barbed remarks and amusing anecdotes, such as the story about Lloyd George, who got lost while on a motor-ing holiday and had to ask a passer-by where he was. Upon being told by the wag that he was "in a car," Lloyd George is supposed to have remarked that this was the perfect answer to a parliamentary question because "it was true, it was brief and it told him nothing he did not already know." Many government ministers since the Welsh Wizard seem to have drunk deeply from that particular fountain.

All in all, *The Party's Over* is an audacious and ingenious book, one that provides a splendid overview of British con-

stitutional history. Yet the political party is not going to disappear any time soon. While it is true, as Sutherland points out, that political parties were only recognized in U.K. law as recently as 2000, the fact is irrelevant. Parties are now part of the British political and cultural scenery, and even those who really wish to challenge the *status quo* feel constrained to express themselves using the form and idiom of the political party. That is why there are still good-hearted people—even legislators—to be found within the British Conservative Party (as within the GOP, for that matter), despite the decades of disappointments under salesmen masquerading as statesmen. And even if all Sutherland's arguments were miraculously to become widely accepted, there is the force of inertia to reckon with: The major political parties themselves are not going to vote for their own abolition. (Even Sutherland admits that his hopes are probably "more wishful than thinking.")

The major parties will gradually mutate into something more satisfactory and viable, or they will eventually be replaced by new parties; either way, the political party *qua* political party is almost certainly here to stay. Recent rhetoric and policy proposals from the Conservatives hint that Michael Howard may be realizing the depths of public disillusionment with politicians. Thus, his party is quietly adopting vote-winning policies on crime and political correctness and advocating immigration restriction, while couching their policies in populist rhetoric about "timetables for action" and the like. It remains to be seen, however, whether these proposals will be lived up to—presuming, of course, that the Tories get back into office at all. Perhaps on this score, as on so much else, the Conservative Party will be outmaneuvered by Tony Blair, whose tactical shrewdness unfortunately makes up for his philosophical shallowness. Meanwhile, notions of casting ballots and of political life being organized around geographical constituencies are also likely to be around for some time to come, in the absence of any clear alternatives.

Sutherland's idea of allowing the Crown to resume some degree of input into legislation is likewise a pleasing but unrealistic one. Our emasculated monarchy is never likely to be able again to take a role in policymaking, despite the Prince of Wales' occasional (and welcome) ir-

ruptions into the headlines. The present incumbent of the throne seems perfectly content to read out whatever meaningless (and poorly written) political message she is told to read out by the government. The House of Windsor has lost the habit of ruling, as many Britons have lost the habit of deference toward, and are starting to lose even respect for, the monarchy. The audience for the Queen's traditional Christmas Day broadcast in 2004 was the lowest ever, while the egregiously politically correct content of that broadcast is unlikely to encourage royalist, patriotic-minded Britons to watch again in 2005. And, of course, even the most independent-minded and best-intentioned future rulers, being heavily dependent on fallible advisors, would be almost as vulnerable to political, social, and cultural pressures as any harried government minister.

The problems of our present politics are very deep and have many causes. Our institutions have been badly corrupted, and public faith in them is greatly corroded. These problems could never be resolved by simply swapping one imperfect system for another but only by combining technical improvements with a gradual cultural renaissance aimed at making people better educated, more honest, more open-minded, and more respectful of their civilization and traditions than they are today. Without such gradual uplift, all tinkering with the machinery of state is likely to prove more or less bootless. Nevertheless, Keith Sutherland has done us all a signal service through this impeccable analysis of an incontrovertible conundrum.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, published in London.

Moscow in Malibu

by James O. Tate

Red Star Over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance With the Left

by Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh
San Francisco: Encounter Books;
309 pp., \$25.95



This new consideration of a well-worn subject is altogether justified for two salient reasons. The first is that

Red Star Over Hollywood contains new material and judgment fortified by new research and information; the second, that the topic has been distorted not only by failures of interpretation but by continuing exploitation, even today. The Radoshes are quite clear on this second point: Hollywood continues to broadcast much mythology about the communists in Lala Land, the HUAC hearings, and all the rest of it. Though the emphasis here is on the 30's, 40's, and early 50's, the subsequent justification, victimology, and mendacity are remarkable in themselves, as contemporary bad movies have something to say about the nature of movies as well as about political-historical amnesia and manipulation.

The Way We Were (1973) rather misses the point of its own story, but don't try telling that to Barbra Streisand. *The Front* (1976) is not a Woody Allen movie but a movie starring Woody Allen, the comedy of which fails to mesh with its mawkish revisionism. *Marathon Man* (1976) mixes political mythology with melodrama in such an annoying way as to suggest a new interpretation of the torture scene. In this film, the CIA protects Nazis, and the protagonist's father was a victim of the blacklist. *The House on Carroll Street* (1987) has so much retro charm as a Hitchcock pastiche that you might not notice the political suggestion: Anticommunism equals pro-Fascism. *Fellow Traveller* (1989) wallows in the tragedy of the blacklist, as does *Guilty by Suspicion* (1991). *The Majestic* (2001) is the same old fantasy, and an odd Jim Carrey vehicle. *One of the Hollywood Ten* (2002), about Herbert Biberman and the making of *Salt of the Earth*, contains gross distortions of fact and nuance. And so it goes, as if we knew nothing about the history of the Communist Party in America and in Hollywood. Maybe nothing is what we are supposed to know—or not to know.

To remind us of the way we actually were, to repair some of the damage broadcast by Hollywood and institutionalized by the Academy, and to take advantage of the Venona files and other new information, Ronald and Allis Radosh have recreated the grounded meaning of Hollywood's infatuation with left-wing politics. One of their strongest points is to insist on the specific meaning of Stalinism; another is to emphasize Moscow's control of the American Communist Party.

Hollywood was targeted by the Comintern from early on and penetrated by

agents answering directly to Moscow—including Otto Katz, who, in one of his identities, was involved with Lillian Hellman. Later on, when Katz was tortured and murdered during the Slansky episode in the Czechoslovakia of 1952, his old Stalinist friends in Hollywood knew he was innocent but kept mum—party discipline, you know.

But the penetration of Hollywood by international agents was matched by the conversion of film-industry types to communism, often in connection with a visit to the Soviet Union. Joseph Losey, Jay Leyda, Budd Schulberg, and Maurice Rapf are famous examples. John Howard Lawson and Lester Cole were Stalinists who became part of the "Hollywood Ten" only after years of service to the party in Hollywood. As the faithful danced to the tune that was called, however, a rather disconcerting hitch known as the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed. The political and intellectual contortions that followed this reversal of policy, which revealed the power of the party as well as its profound corruption, was a blow from which the alliance of liberals and communists never recovered. There would still be time, however, to contribute to a "war effort" that included making nice with Uncle Joe Stalin.

The Radoshes' account of a seldom-seen film, *Mission to Moscow* (1943), explains a lot of context that has been forgotten. Based on Amb. Joseph Davies' memoir of the same name (1941), the film is unadulterated Stalinist propaganda—basically a justification of the notorious purges of 1936-8. In an exquisite moment, the Radoshes point out that Jack Warner himself, in testifying to the HUAC, actually employed Stalinist logic, dismissing the criticisms of John Dewey as "Trotskyite." Davies had insisted that the film deny that the Soviet Union had invaded Finland in 1939, and so it did. Such extremity was denounced even by such leftists as James Agee, Edmund Wilson, and Dwight Macdonald. The crop that the Hollywood left was to reap was the one they had sown.

Another vital point registered by the Radoshes has to do with an article published in a French communist journal in April 1945 and signed by Jacques Duclos. Written in Moscow and approved by Stalin, it rejected cooperation with the West. The former head of the Communist Party in America, Earl Browder himself, later called the piece "the first public declaration of the Cold War." Similar-

ly, in their account of the clash between the communists and HUAC, the authors make a new and authentic point in publishing a letter from John Garfield to Dore Schary dated October 13, 1950, in which that "victim" declared he was against communist policy and wanted to appear in anticommunist films. They suggest a revision of the received image of Garfield as a victim of the blacklist to that of a victim of the Communist Party.

Supplying useful perspectives on much disputed history, Ronald and Allis Radosh have given us an indispensable book that tells us what we need to know about such people as Elia Kazan and Victor Navasky. The resulting clarity allows us to begin to understand the power and ambiguity of film and the attraction it exerts over the public—and over those who would deceive the public.

Contributing editor James O. Tate teaches English at Dowling College on Long Island.

A Master of His Time

by Fr. Michael P. Orsi

The Americanization of
Benjamin Franklin
by Gordon S. Wood
New York: Penguin Press;
320 pp., \$25.95

Gordon S. Wood's *Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* is a welcome testimony to the renewed interest in America's Founding Fathers. Although most Americans have a clear idea as to the importance of Washington's military role and Jefferson's contribution in writing the Declaration of Independence, few appreciate the pivotal part Franklin played in legitimizing the Revolution among foreign powers. Indeed—as Wood points out so clearly—without Franklin, funding from France would have been impossible, and the Revolution would have failed. According to Wood, it was Franklin's personal charm and his friendship with Charles Vergennes, who became virtually first minister under Louis XVI, that moved the French to lend the Americans the money they needed to fight the British. Furthermore, the personality and writings of Franklin, as