

political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in October.

Almost Everyone's Guide to Economics. John Kenneth Galbraith. Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95.

American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964. William Manchester. Little, Brown, \$15. For us haters, Douglas MacArthur made a hell of a target. He was insufferably vain—his wife called him "Sir"—he was imperious, patriotic, the darling of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the lunatic Right. But in William Manchester's gracefully written and wonderfully marbled account, the reader glimpses at not just America's most brilliant wartime general but a genuinely interesting man. A soldier who hated war, a victor who refused to conquer Japan, MacArthur was an educated man who knew much about the history of war and civilization, and too little about himself.

—Ken Auletta

America's Dilemma: Jobs vs. Prices. Alfred L. Malabre. Dodd, Mead, \$9.95.

Anticipatory Democracy: People in the Politics of the Future. Clement Bezold, ed. Random House, \$10/\$4.95.

Bakke, DeFunis, and Minority Admissions: The Quest for Equal Opportunity. Allan P. Sindler. Longman, \$12.50.

Bearings: A Foreign Correspondent's Life Behind the Lines. Edward Behr. Viking, \$12.50. Books born of moseying about—Behr has been a correspondent variously for Reuters, Time-Life, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Newsweek*, and others—are rarely great. Their value lies in their flash insights, more common to journalists than to scholars, which add soupcons to history's brew.

Like a good journalist, Behr delights in anecdotes. Some, lamentably, are suspect. His account of the Army lecturer who, concerned with the high incidence of VD in Vietnam, demonstrated on his middle finger the use of a condom only to find later that many GIs had followed his instruction literally, is a recycled chestnut from World War II.

Behr's anecdotes are best when they illuminate the news business itself. For instance. . . .

About the abysmal wages the wire services used to pay: a correspondent/

trainee in Reuters' New York bureau collapsed on the street and was taken to Bellevue Hospital. An intern phoned the bureau and explained that their man was suffering from malnutrition. "Damn," said the bureau chief, "I thought he had friends here."

About correspondents' talent for getting to the point: While Belgian civilians in a state of shock were waiting to be airlifted out of the turbulent Congo, a British TV reporter dashed about the airport periodically stopping to bellow, "Anyone here been raped and speaks English?"

Since after the U.S. Senate, newspapermen are the world's most incestuously self-idolatrous clan, *Bearings* deserves praise for the perspective it keeps. Its archetypal foreign correspondent is not so much Gregory Peck in a trenchcoat as Woody Allen in a swivet.

—Leonard Reed

Britain—A Future That Works. Bernard D. Nossiter. Houghton Mifflin, \$9.95. If British society ever disintegrates, Americans won't be able to complain that the news media didn't warn us. In this book, *Washington Post* reporter Bernard Nossiter attacks much of the popular media mythology about Great Britain, refuting myths by citing facts.

Taxes are higher in France, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway than in Britain. Far from crippling the economy with excessive wage demands, the British unions have agreed to a "Social Contract" that limits pay increases in return for dubious promises of controls upon inflation and maintenance of social services. The British economy has been growing, not stagnating, since World War II; other industrial nations have simply been growing faster. The North Sea oil will provide a long-awaited spur to the British economy. If there are any severe problems afflicting Britain, Nossiter declares, they are racial and religious, rather than economic—warfare between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and racial discrimination against Asians, West Indians, and Africans within England.

If Nossiter had merely refuted the standard gloomy predictions about Great Britain, he would have performed a

genuine service. However, he also makes the shakier claim that by investing less energy in their work than people in most industrial societies—and by spending more time on leisure pursuits, family, social relationships, and cultural activities—the British are a model for the rest of the world. A decade after the Beatles and Carnaby Street revolutionized popular culture and almost two decades after the “angry young men” produced a distinguished theater and literature, Nossiter predicts that Britain’s new exports will be its art and its lifestyles.

All this resembles the celebrations of the American counterculture of the 1960s, and it deserves no more credence than Charles Reich deserved. As unemployment continues to rise in Britain and living standards decline further, the most recent export has been punk rock, with its overtones of sadism and violence. In Great Britain, as in this country or anywhere else, when the economy stagnates, social meanness ensues. To recognize this truth, one need not be a conservative ideologue, on either side of the Atlantic. George Orwell, Beatrice and Sydney Webb, Keir Hardie, and other prophets of the British welfare state all agreed that economic growth was essential for their dreams of a more equitable society.

—Harry Lesser

The Buchwald Stops Here. Art Buchwald. Putnam, \$9.95.

Children of the Revolution: A Yankee Teacher in the Cuban Schools. Jonathan Kozol. Delacorte, \$9.95.

Choices and Echoes in Presidential Elections: Rational Man and Electoral Democracy. Benjamin I. Page. University of Chicago, \$17.50.

Conflict in Urban Transportation: The People Against the Planners. Henry Malcolm Steiner. Lexington, \$13.50.

Congress and the Budget. Joel Havemann. Indiana University, \$12.95. This clear, well-researched book reports that after a slightly bumpy start the congressional budget committees have begun to ease into the arena of influence, if not power, and it reluctantly concludes that the able, photogenic Alice Rivlin and her Congressional Budget Office have been far less to the point.

The Constitution Between Friends: Congress, the President, and the Law. Louis Fisher. St. Martin’s, \$12.95/\$5.95.

A Crisis for the American Press. John Hohenberg. Columbia, \$14.95.

Deadly Magic. Edward Van Der Rhoer. Scribner’s, \$9.95. An interesting book about the breaking of the Japanese code during World War II by a man who worked on the project. One of his anecdotes is a bureaucratic gem. In January, 1941, Joseph Grew, our ambassador to Tokyo, reported, “There is a lot of talk around town to the effect that the Japanese, in case of a break with the United States, are planning to go all out in a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor.” Grew’s information was forwarded to Admiral Kimmel in Hawaii with an evaluation by Naval Intelligence stating that “based on known data regarding the present disposition and deployment of Japanese naval and army forces no move against Pearl Harbor appears imminent or planned for the foreseeable future.”

You can be certain that on the morning of December 8, ONI’s file copy was pulled and the words “known,” “present,” and “foreseeable” were underlined.

Democracy and the Amendments to the Constitution. Alan P. Grimes. Lexington, \$17.95.

Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers. Michael Schudson. Basic, \$12.95.

The Eisenhowers: Reluctant Dynasty. Steve Neal. Doubleday, \$10.95. The author doesn’t excel either as a writer or an analyst, but still his book is important. Its combined portrait of Milton, the New Deal administrator, and Dwight, the Republican general, does much to explain the consensus that governed America from the late thirties until the mid-sixties.

France and the United States: From the Beginnings to the Present Day. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle. University of Chicago, \$18.

Good News, Bad News. Edwin Diamond. MIT, \$12.50. This book belongs in the “might have been” category of the season, primarily because Diamond and the MIT Study Group have been so good in the past. Diamond’s articles in *New York* magazine over the years usually have been models of good reporting and keen, thoughtful insight. *Good News, Bad News* has a little of both, but not nearly enough to fill 17 chapters and over 200 pages. What we’re left with instead is mostly bad