

political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in January

The ABC's of Bureaucracy. Robert B. Jansen. Nelson Hall, \$11.95. Jansen attempts to portray the failings of bureaucracy with wit and irony, but he has neither the wit nor the sense of irony to pull it off. For a guy who says he is "no stranger to the bureaucratic maze," Jansen offers very little that is original. This is mostly a collection of very conventional complaints about bureaucrats and their agencies, except for one startling twist. Jensen finds one of the most praiseworthy bureaucracies is the Bureau of Reclamation, which has been looked upon in other quarters as the builder and promoter of unnecessary and wasteful pork-barrel projects. But maybe that's because he worked there.

The American Presidency. Richard M. Pious. Basic, \$16.

The Angry Decades: The Sixties. Paul Sann. Crown, \$14.95.

Back to the Drawing Board: Planning Livable Cities. Wolf Von Eckardt. New Republic, \$10. Von Eckardt, architecture critic for *The Washington Post*, is at his sensible best poking holes in the grand "high-rise" visions of modern architects like Le Corbusier. Unfortunately, he also tries to be a theorist himself and degenerates into aphorism ("We must reintegrate our disintegrating habitat") and banality ("Housing projects should have attractive gateways"). Von Eckardt is particularly enthusiastic about the "new mood" symbolized by the return of the rich to city living. "The city is merely changing functions," he notes with approval. "Rather than being an industrial center, it is becoming a managerial and cultural center, a place of learning and research. . . ." And what of the poor and middle class who are displaced in this "urban renaissance?" No problem. "It has always been an anomaly peculiar to

American cities that the poorest people should live on the most expensive real estate—downtown, adjacent to the business and cultural district." With the factories gone from the cities, "it is time that the people who need jobs. . . be given the opportunity to follow them."

Cover-Up: The Politics of Pearl Harbor, 1941-46. Bruce R. Bartlett. Arlington House, \$8.95.

The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations. Christopher Lasch. Norton, \$11.95.

Detente or Debacle: Common Sense in U.S.-Soviet Relations. Committee on East-West Accord, eds. Norton, \$10.95.

Dialogues on American Politics. Irving Louis Horowitz, Seymour Martin Lipset. Oxford, \$10/\$2.95.

The Disintegrating West. Mary Kaldor. Hill and Wang, \$10. John Kenneth Galbraith says this book is "most interesting, original, important," and *Kirkus Reviews* says it is "profound." We find it paralyzingly dull.

The duPont Family. John D. Gates. Doubleday, \$11.95.

Economics, Mental Health and the Law. Jeffrey Rubin. Lexington, \$16.50.

Fall In and Cheer. John R. Coyne, Jr. Doubleday, \$8.95. The reminiscences and political philosophy of a one-time speechwriter for Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and Gerald Ford. Coyne is genuinely entertaining and insightful when writing about his adventures in the government; his portrayal of the Ford administration as a "Bring on the Clowns" act reminds us to count our blessings with Carter, and he manages to explain how honorable men could work for Agnew and Nixon. The book is weaker when it falls

into general speculation about the Future of the Republican Party.

First Lady's Lady: With the Fords at the White House. Sheila Rabb Weidenfeld. Putnam's, \$10.95. A bitchy-lively account of life inside the White House by Betty Ford's former press secretary. When the author worked there the man to know at the White House, a man outsiders never heard of, was the Keeper of the Perks, Bill Gully, who was head of the Military Affairs Office under several presidents. Weidenfeld explains:

"As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the President has at his disposal the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. That means military protection for the nation, and military perquisites for the White House. The Navy runs the White House Mess, for example, and the Presidential yacht, Sequoia. The Air Force provides a fleet of Presidential planes, ranging from Jet Stars to large transports, to Air Force One, to jumbo jet commando planes. The Army offers a fleet of chauffeured limousines, and the ability to construct anything anytime to help out. Anything. . . . The Marines offer a fleet of choppers. Thus, everything from mess privileges to the ability to hail a helicopter comes from the Military Affairs Office."

The perks still come from the Military Affairs Office, but it is now overseen by a civilian, Marty Beamon, who like so many of his peers, happens to be from Atlanta.

But if Bill Gully has departed, another of Weidenfeld's characters, Dr. Lukash, personal physician to the President and his family, is still there. Lukash may be the only physician in business who practices medicine once every two or three weeks. Apparently he sits around reading and talking to his friends the rest of the time. Weidenfeld suggests that reporters may

have nailed the wrong man when they got Peter Bourne. What pills were being popped by Richard Nixon and Betty Ford, and who prescribed them?

—Charles Peters

Herbert Hoover: The Public Life. David Burner. Knopf, \$15.95. With the approach of an induced recession (slight, moderate, severe—pick your economist) whose effects and reverberations may coincide neatly with the fiftieth commemoration of the Great Crash, there are no assurances, with this latest biography of Hoover, of lessons learned.

The man in the White House comes from humble, farm origins; he is a self-made, successful businessman; his religious affiliation more than commonly noted, he is celebrated for his humanitarianism; and he is an engineer, with an engineer's stolid faith in organization and technical competence, abhorring the wastefulness of a bloated bureaucracy. When the economy of the nation is threatened, he relies, at first adamantly, on voluntarism, the self-interest that will see the sense in collective restraint. He looks to the business community to set its own house in order and, failing that, to Congress for modest, affordable programs of assistance. But by late 1930, the consensus is that the budget be balanced at almost any cost.

Two years later, claims our author, Hoover has become an advocate of monetary expansion, but Congress, the Democrats in the forefront, remains adamant on the budget, with recommendations that Hoover "cut to the bone" federal expenses, and one congressman advising that the government "cannot go on expending millions of dollars which it has not, whether it be for the unemployed, or for the sick, or for anyone else."

The circumstances of our current economic disarray are unlike those of 1929, all that Hoover feared now being present in the prospect of government domination of the economy. The practitioners of the abysmal science, much less the layman, may not be able to filter any useful analysis from the upside-down parallels found in this book. (As W. W. Kiplinger observed at the time, "The amazing lesson from this depression is that no one knows much about the real causes and effects of *anything*.") But what could be called *The Political Education of an Engineer*, as against the rather dully rendered biographical detail, makes for

IT'S ELECTION YEAR in Zambia, and Kenneth Kaunda is up for re-election. Kaunda's not *quite* a shoo-in. Kaunda does face the requirement that he receives 50 per cent plus one in a Yes/No vote. The voter can register a Yes by making an X next to a picture of an eagle. Last time out the No symbol was a hyena. This year the government wanted to change it to a snake, but the Electoral Commission said that was going too far, so it's going to be a hare. If elected, Mr. Kaunda pledges democracy for Rhodesians.

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