

pointment. To his credit, Goulden doesn't ignore the unpleasant sides of Wurf's character. Unfortunately, he fails to bring anything resembling a critical eye to the activities of Wurf's union. An explanation for this lies in the back of the book, where one learns that AFSCME underwrote Goulden's expenses and promised "to purchase enough copies from the publisher to make the book commercially feasible."

There's nothing necessarily bad about authorized biographies, though readers do deserve to be forewarned. But such books often are characterized by a tendency to indulge in petty criticism for criticism's sake, by overly long treatments of unimportant events that are meaningful to only a few people, and by a general superficiality. All these are evident here. A thorough and openminded assessment of Wurf and the controversial rise of municipal unionism still remains to be done.

—P.K.

Marshall: A Hero for Our Times. Leonard Mosley. Hearst, \$18.50.

Media Unbound: The Impact of Television Journalism on the Public. Stephan Leshner. Houghton Mifflin, \$13.95.

The Murder of Chile. Samuel Chavkin. Everest, \$13.95. From Nixon's 1970 directive to organize a military coup d'etat to Jeane Kirkpatrick's recent praise of General August

Pinochet's policies, Chavkin carefully traces the U.S. government's lack of concern for human rights in Chile. By using narratives, including those of Swedish Ambassador Harold Edlestad and victims of junta torture camps. Chavkin paints a gruesome portrait of the state of Chile under the junta. Chavkin's one excess is his portrayal of Salvatore Allende as a martyred messiah for the poor. But his main point still comes through clearly: that the quick and devastating American intervention killed any chance Allende might have had to make his socialist policies work and that his ouster should be viewed as one of the fiascos of American foreign policy.

—Lyle Crowley

My Harvard, My Yale. Diana DuBois, ed. Random House, \$15.

The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto. Mortimer J. Adler. Macmillan, \$6.95. This short, impassioned plea to improve public schools zeroes in on the two main culprits of their declining quality: poorly trained, incompetent teachers and a gradual whittling away of academic standards. His solution consists largely of an abolition of the tracking system and the institu-

tion of a basic education approach for all students regardless of their abilities. Adler is a bit naive; for example, while the belief in every child's ability is admirable, the failure to give up on a few incorrigible students and remove them from the classroom can ruin the educational experience for everyone else. But Adler's passion is refreshing, and his belief that the decline of our public schools undermines democracy is a warning that can't be sounded often enough.

—P.K.

The Palestinians in Perspective. George Gruen, et al. Institute of Human Relations Press, \$3.50. This anthology of six essays on the historical background and political significance of the Palestinian Nationalist Movement offers some useful background to a complicated subject. Unfortunately, much of it is outdated in the wake of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

—Jacob Weisberg

The Passive Judiciary: Prosecutorial Discretion and the Guilty Plea. Abraham Goldstein. Louisiana State Univ., \$12.95. Goldstein makes a good case for his argument that judges have given prosecutors too much discretion in reducing

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charges, granting defendants immunity, and offering plea bargains. Instead of looking on in tacit approval, judges should review these decisions and overturn those that are contrary to the public interest.

—Dan Weil

Privatizing the Public Sector. *E. S. Savas. Chatham House, \$15.* The author achieved some notoriety recently as the unfortunate official who wrote an HUD draft report that was received at the recent mayors' conference about as warmly as an Ed Koch speech at a 4-H club in upstate New York. The draft called for a slash in federal aid to cities and offered this sophisticated logic: Cities decline. Cities get government aid. Therefore, government aid causes decline.

There's some truth to Savas's claim that certain government services—garbage collection, for example—can be handled more efficiently by private contractors. But Savas never hides his monomaniacal hatred for government and it destroys his credibility.

—Michael Waldman

Straight Talk About American Education. *Theodore M. Black. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$14.95.*

The Superhistorians: Makers of Our Past. *John Barker. Scribner's, \$19.95.*

Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California. *David O. Sears Jack Citrin. Harvard, \$22.50.* Proposition 13 and the other property tax revolts it spawned have been subjected to very little serious scrutiny. But the conclusions are predictable, e.g., rich people supported the tax revolt more strongly than poor people. The authors go so far as to call this phenomenon the "revolt of the haves"—which happens to be the title of Robert Kuttner's far more readable and informative book on the same subject.

—M. W.

This Is Judy Woodruff at the White House. *Judy Woodruff, Kathy Maxa. Addison-Wesley, \$12.95.*

Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman 1949-1953. *Robert J. Donovan. Norton, \$19.95.*

When Governments Collide. *Wallace J. Thies. Univ. of California, \$8.95.* Thies's exhaustive academic study, while a bit arcane for the

general reader, is a good scholarly review of U.S. military and diplomatic strategy in Vietnam between 1964 and 1968. His major conclusions as to why the U.S. failed to force North Vietnam to end the war, however, are hardly surprising. "Could a fragmented and disjointed planning effort produce . . . the desired effect on decision-making in Hanoi?" he asks. The answer, by now at least, should be clear.

—David Schellhase

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