

LETTERS

Salary envy

In September's "Tilting at Windmills" Peters was shocked to discover that some of the U.S. employees of the IMF and the World Bank "make between \$70,000 and \$149,000" a year. Since he has frequently complained of the inadequate remuneration which characterizes his own (some would say deservedly) low-paid employment, his indignation is at least understandable. However, he fails to note that most of the people who arouse his splenetic envy are doctorate-level economists for whom that salary range would be considered low to average in the private business sector of any major country.

IMF and the World Bank are international organizations dealing with the economies of the caliber required by the esoteric and rigorous demands of the work they do. Peters' perspective might be vastly improved if he were to peruse the employment sections of some British, French, or German newspapers and consider the salaries and perks offered there for people of similar qualifications. Should international organizations offer U.S. citizens less than they have to pay to attract qualified foreign employees?

PAUL N. NASH
Arlington, Virginia

For editors' comments see "Tilting at Windmills" p.8.

Marielistas defended

As a regular reader of your magazine, I was distressed to read Charles Peters's ["Tilting at Windmills"] item on the Mariel Cuban case in your September issue. It was particularly surprising in view of the fact that Peters is usually one to ask for deeper understandings of issues which should not be framed in black and white (as he does so carefully in the very next item on NOW's abortion workshops).

Peters recklessly refers to the "2,500 Marielistas who have been committing mayhem in this country" and suggests that had we been "prudent enough to hold our tongue" on the Radio Marti broadcast we would have "rid ourselves of the murderous lunatics from Mariel."

While there is no question that among the Mariel refugees were numerous Cuban criminals, there were innocent people as well who had come to this country at the invitation of President Carter. Many innocent men were sent to the federal penitentiary in Atlanta not long after landing in Key West because they were told that the American government would congratulate even petty crimes against a communist regime. They admitted their crimes and languished in jail for years waiting for the disposition of their cases. Some of the cases are hardly the work of "murderous lunatics": One man was accused of stealing a loaf of bread. Another was guilty of stealing a kiss from a grocery cashier.

Still, the Justice Department since 1980 hasn't wanted to bother with processing the Cubans. U.S. District Judge Marvin Shoob then ordered review boards set up to evaluate the Cuban cases in the hope that the criminals might be separated from the innocent. Many refugees were released. Sponsors were found to help integrate the Cubans into the American community. And, the records of the Mariel parolees have been quite good. Only a handful of the hundreds released were ever reported to have gotten into trouble.

M. S. PARADIES
Santa Monica, California

One solution for poverty

In response to the Charles Murray/Ken Auletta dialogue, "Saving the Underclass" [September], I believe an answer acceptable to liberals and conservatives lies with a policy never mentioned by either: simple economic control.

Murray seems to be saying that the inner-city poor have been lulled into complacent dependency by social programs that do little more than assuage liberal con-

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sciences and maintain a status quo of poverty. He wants to motivate people by torpedoing the ship of public largesse and forcing passengers to sink or swim.

Unfortunately, his plan offers no more reward down the road for those who manage to tread water than a job sweeping floors. The Horatio Alger story, while it has applied in rare cases to America's entrenched urban poor, remains closed off to those people as a rule because of the underlying assumption by our society as a whole that they are not allowed to achieve past a certain point.

Why not take Murray's idea a step further? Declare inner-city areas to be enterprise zones as the conservatives argue, but place them under the jurisdiction of neighborhood economic development corporations, with a controlling vote on their boards held by directors meeting a strict residency requirement, say, 10 years in the community.

Next, give each development corporation eminent domain powers and the authority to raise capital in the financial markets, albeit with built-in checks against abuse. Finally, provide a one-time initial capitalization—a combination of local, state and federal funding—and *then* let the community as a whole sink or swim.

As a sweetener, Washington could dispense the same tax incentives to corporations and developers willing to do joint venture business with these economic development entities. Only this time, development would be on the community's terms, with guarantees of key employment and training as part of the package. It could also lead to requirements by inner-city residents that would lead to innovative affordable housing designs or industrial plant processes that benefit workers and employers.

Such a program would give a neighborhood's best and brightest a reason to stay on and not flee the area as quickly as it takes ink to dry on a business degree. It would likely also draw a stampede of corporations and academics in a consulting capacity to what they see as a huge untapped market for their services. Third World countries like to remind us that as they undergo political upheaval they will remember their friends when the smoke clears. Why should Brazil get a better deal than Roxbury? It certainly hasn't shown any greater fiscal responsibility.

NIELS ERCH
San Francisco, California

Kirkpatrick revealed

As a student who was forced to muddle through the contrived intricacies of political science courses in the late sixties, I greatly enjoyed Steven Waldman's article, "Put the Politics Back into Political Science," in your September issue.

However, I was surprised that no mention was made of Evron Kirkpatrick's long tenure as director of the American Political Science Association. Surely, in such

a long critique of the APSA's role in creating elaborate windmills of unrealistic jargon, which richly deserve to be tilted at, the importance of Jeane Kirkpatrick's spouse (mentor to the only widely-acclaimed "intellectual" yet to serve in Ronald Reagan's cabinet) deserves acknowledgement?

HAL DORAN
Toronto, Ontario

After reading *The Washington Monthly* for 15 years, I've come to appreciate its reliability and consistency. You can usually count on it for both enterprising journalism and anti-intellectualism. The September issue disappointed on the former but came through on the latter in Steven Waldman's diatribe against political science ["Put the Politics Back into Political Science"].

The Waldman essay was typical of the *Monthly's* formula for putting down the social sciences: a sprinkling of ad hominem arguments, a few derisive code words ("scientific" and "modeling") and voila, you've made the case against the pointy-headed academics again. George Wallace did the same sort of thing years ago with less grace but equal conviction.

Waldman reveals more about himself and the unfortunate journalistic prejudice against theory and evidence than he does about the shortcomings of political science. Of course there is some useless and even shoddy research that finds its way into the political science literature. One can say the same about journalism.

ARNOLD H. ISMACH
Dean, School of Journalism
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

Tax terrorism

Your article on the IRS backlog ["Refund? What Refund?" Paul M. Barrett, September] was interesting, but you didn't address the question of computer break-ins. Is it possible that tax protesters have planted some worms or bombs in IRS computers?

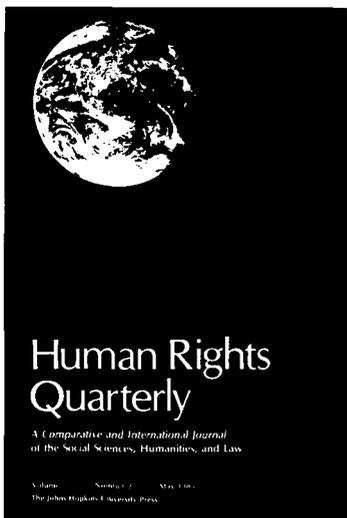
TOM LEWIS
Albany, New York

Better socialist than hungry

Re: Joseph Nocera's "Making Capitalism Moral" [September]: with some so-called neoliberals, there is the danger of missing the truly insidious intent in the midst of seemingly reasonable discourse. Nocera gets through his article almost without a revealing flaw. But on page 44 we see the truth revealed at last: "Yes, the unemployed [of Europe] don't starve, but that doesn't mean they don't go to their graves feeling just as empty as any unemployed person in America."

Good grief—better starved than fed? Death from intellectual malnutrition? Terminal ennui? Apparently, the disease of "Eurosocijalism" is so awful, the

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thought of a full belly so frightful, that we should allow the impoverished or unemployed to starve, rather than force them to endure the horror of, egad, foodstamps? This is the mentality of destroying villages to save them. Apparently the neoliberal flirtation with the more conventional right-wing philosophies has now extended to a belief that the poor and the rich have an equal right to starve to death under a bridge.

Although I read your magazine with interest (and, in fact, find many areas of agreement), neoliberalism seems often to believe that, in a bank robbery, the bank is at fault for being there—no bank, no bank robber. Disestablishing the role of government (no government, no problematic government programs) is equally specious. Getting into bed with the Reaganites and other true believers such as Charles Murray, who can accept that the answer to everything is that their mistakes will splatter no more people against the pavement, simply ensures more suffering. Instead of forsaking decades of positive social progress, we should become intent on reducing the splatters on the pavement in a constructive fashion.

FRED FACHET
Warrenville, Illinois

Turncoats at dinner

May I point out a significant omission in your piece, "Reporters: The New Washington Elite," [Charlotte Hays and Jonathan Rowe, July/August]? The authors should have consulted the guest list at state dinners sponsored by Ronald Reagan; they would have found the names of a few journalists whom Reagan admires for ideological reasons. Interestingly, many of those who have accepted Reagan's invitations—Morton Kondracke and Charles Krauthammer, for example—are former doctrinaire liberals who are now cozying up to the neoconservatives. What their becoming involved in such social occasions does to their objectivity in reporting needs no comment.

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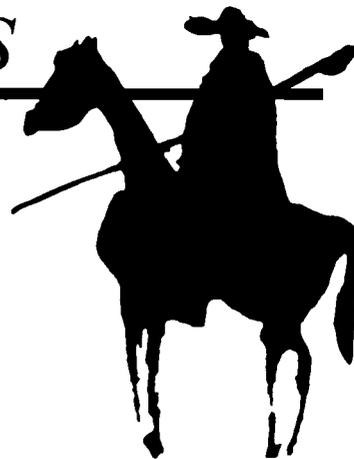
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TILTING AT WINDMILLS



You may have missed a revealing sentence that was buried in a long newspaper story about the administration's tax revision plan:

"Reagan's first reaction upon seeing the [tax reform] plan was, sources said, to question why doctors couldn't keep their tax deduction for country club dues, since they use club contacts to obtain patients? . . .

"Why," asks Elizabeth Dole, "are truckers hauling peanuts 'roasted and salted in the shell' required to file rates with the Interstate Commerce Commission, while those carrying peanuts 'shelled, salted, not roasted or otherwise' are exempt?"

"Why," the secretary of transportation continues, "are raisins coated with honey, cinnamon, or sugar of

no interest to the ICC while rates for chocolate-coated raisins must be recorded in Washington?" And why, she asks, "is a rate required for Jiffy Pop popcorn while Orville Redenbacher is exempt?"

She is right, these are absurd regulations, the kind that should be eliminated. But, as Kitry Krause points out in her article in this issue, economic deregulation must be accompanied by increased vigilance on safety matters. There is enough evidence already in on trucking deregulation to show that opening up the trucking business to numerous new carriers heightens the risk of accidents. This doesn't mean there shouldn't be more competition. What it means is that we need more safety regulation. . . .

We're all for

entrepreneurship, but physicians are becoming involved in a dangerous form of it. Increasingly, they are acquiring financial interests in diagnostic clinics, walk-in surgery centers, dialysis units, CAT scanners, and other costly medical equipment. They are tempted to steer their patients to use these facilities. Even the most conscientious doctor is under pressure from his partners in these ventures to produce business. Similarly, physicians who own hospitals are under pressure to keep the beds filled. Often those pressures mean the wrong—or unnecessary—treatment. Their relationship with drug companies poses another ethical problem for doctors. From the free samples to paid participation in "symposia" at various exotic locations, these companies