



Review: [untitled]

Author(s): Joe A. Oppenheimer

Reviewed work(s): *The Economics of Political Violence: The Effect of Political Instability on Economic Growth* by Dipak K. Gupta

Source: *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 1, (Mar., 1992), pp. 268-269

Published by: American Political Science Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1964092>

Accessed: 15/07/2008 15:10

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=apsa>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Peter Gould's *Fire in the Rain* not only tells the story behind the Chernobyl accident (which he has written in an informative, scientifically demystified, and most absorbing style) but also raises a number of keenly perceptive questions about the extent to which the dissemination, manipulation, and suppression of information about the accident and its effects may have been influenced by myriad politico-economic considerations, and, perhaps most significantly, by the degree to which a country is dependent upon atomic power. Gould, who, during the research for this book, covered well over five thousand pages of official reports, eyewitness statements, scientific treatises, and media accounts, convincingly tries to capture this important correlation between a nation's dependency upon atomic power and the degree to which information about the Chernobyl accident and its effects was manipulated or suppressed for no less than 26 West and East European countries (pp. 112-19). At minimum, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl created its own complex information crisis from which all nations can and must learn, and Gould's examination of the range of governmental reactions and responses—especially how and when information was made public in both Eastern and Western Europe—is impressive and instructive.

Grigori Medvedev's *Truth about Chernobyl* also tells the story leading up to the accident and its subsequent cover-up. Medvedev was chief engineer at Chernobyl when it was being constructed during the 1970s and at the time of the 1986 accident was deputy director of the Central Directorate for Power Station Construction in Moscow (a department of the Ministry of Energy), where he was in charge of construction at nuclear power stations. Within days of the accident, Medvedev returned to Chernobyl to investigate the magnitude of the disaster officially.

*The Truth about Chernobyl* is an engrossing and masterfully written account based upon interviews with the directors, engineers and others who worked at the plant, the firefighters and helicopter pilots who valiantly tried to extinguish the fire, eyewitnesses to the explosion, the doctors and nurses who treated radiation victims and risked their lives to save others, and many key people who died from radiation within weeks of the accident. Medvedev's book is, without question, the most authoritative statement on the Chernobyl accident to date. Indeed, in the preface Medvedev notes that he sought to answer a number of crucial questions he believes have been on the minds of many in both the Soviet Union and abroad: By what route did we arrive at Chernobyl? What actually happened, especially on the night of the explosion and over the next few days? What caused the disaster? What were its consequences? What were the lessons of Chernobyl? What does the future hold? (p. x).

Publication in the Soviet Union of *The Truth about Chernobyl* in 1989 was itself somewhat of an eventful test of glasnost, Medvedev's uncensored account quite legitimately taking its place among the growing number of precedents by which we assess the "new thinking" behind Gorbachev's media and information policies. Published in the United States to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the accident, *The Truth about Chernobyl* is skillfully translated by Evelyn Rossiter and contains a genuinely important forward by the late Andrei Sakharov.

What are the lessons and democratic consequences of

Chernobyl? To what degree has the economic and political fallout from the accident increased public opposition to the future of nuclear development in the Soviet Union and abroad? Should nuclear power continue to be developed? If so, who should define and direct the course, tempo, and extent of such development? By asking such questions, both Gould and Medvedev raise a number of crucial socio-scientific issues that certainly predate Chernobyl and once again highlight fundamental concerns that continuously remind us "that humankind is still trying to come to grips with the fantastic, powerful forces which it has brought into being, and is still only learning to use them for the sake of progress" (Mikhail Gorbachev, speech 18 August 1986). In many respects, Gould articulates this delicate relationship among the physical, living, and human worlds as simply and effectively as anyone can: "The problems of atomic energy programs are not scientific problems in any strict sense. They are moral problems, and they arise from the apparent difficulty many have of moving from the demonstrating of the inevitable to the deliberation of the variable" (p. 145).

Among the most important lessons of Chernobyl is the question it raises about how governmental bureaucracies, politicians, and scientists (whatever their political or ideological suasion) manage an atomic or ecological crisis that knows no political or ideological boundary. Both works also raise a number of questions essential to the future of nuclear energy throughout the world: Who should be involved in making decisions regarding the development of atomic power, the location and construction of nuclear power stations, and the disposal of radioactive waste? In sum, who should define the issues and make the decisions that will, without doubt, have an impact upon the delicate balance among the physical, living, and human worlds? And whatever direction the development of nuclear power takes in the future, Andrei Sakharov (himself an advocate of nuclear energy) warns us, we must not leave the answers to these crucial issues solely to technical experts—still less to bureaucrats (p. viii).

In sum, both *Fire in the Rain* and *The Truth about Chernobyl* are excellently written works of gripping detail that are, without question, of essential benefit to anyone interested in the history of nuclear power development in the Soviet Union, the way nuclear crises and information about such crises are managed (or mismanaged), the impact the accident had upon the countries affected by Chernobyl's radioactive fallout, the lessons and democratic consequences of the world's worst nuclear disaster, and the future of atomic energy in both the Soviet Union and abroad.

*Soviet Academy of Management* JOHN MICHAEL CARFORA

**The Economics of Political Violence: The Effect of Political Instability on Economic Growth.** By Dipak K. Gupta. New York: Praeger, 1989. 329p. \$49.95.

Gupta's book is a wide-ranging, high-quality work in the best traditions of the new political economy. The author is clearly well-trained in both political economy (including far more than public choice and economics) and statistics. The book contains an interesting and original model of political rebellion and a careful, methodologically sophisticated study of two aspects of the

political economy of violence in 104 noncommunist countries: the effect of violence or rebellion on their economies and an attempted estimate of the basic behavioral model of individual behavior. Its gravest fault can be easily overcome by a willful reader: the literature review sections are too long. The informed reader will want to skim these chapters (primarily chaps. 2 and 3) quickly and get down to business. And the business is rewarding.

Gupta begins with a general theoretical model of political violence. In doing this he builds on the obvious (and by now generally accepted) insight that the great sociological deprivation theories of political rebellion (e.g., Merton's) did not tell us when individuals will *not* engage in violence. To do this, Gupta uses the best ideas from the rational choice school, along with other psychological and sociological factors. He notes that to get to reasonable levels of participation in a rebellion by rational individuals, one has to get beyond a classical, self-interested model of rationality. His moves in doing this may not be to the liking of all informed public choice types; but it is clearly in keeping with the earlier ideas of Brian Barry and others in their critiques of the Downsian voter.

To get beyond these earlier discussions, Gupta makes a smart move: he introduces the notion of *ideology* as a *preference for benefits* flowing to the groups to which the individual belongs (p. 142). (One might wonder whether the model would not be richer if it were defined in terms of groups with which the individual personally identifies and groups that the individual would like to deprive.) This permits the author to introduce such sociological variables as group consciousness, cohesiveness, and mobilization into his theory. Mobilization, Gupta notes, really requires an organizational component, as well—and some expectation of positive gain. The latter clearly relates to counterrevolutionary sanctions or coercion. All this is nicely integrated in the model put forward in Chapter 5.

Gupta then employs calculus to show the marginal conditions that must be satisfied for participation to be rational. These are used to develop models of likely cycles of violence in systems with specific parameters. Some of these are later estimated with the data. In the arguments that flow from the model, it would appear that the author had an eye toward asking questions regarding the current U.S. experience, namely, considerable continued deprivation for our minorities and yet relative absence of serious political violence. But these questions are not developed in the book as it moves to an aggregate political economy level to investigate the effect of violence on economic growth.

Data from 1948 to 1952 from the *New York Times* are presented for 104 countries, but a far more restricted subset of years is statistically manipulated to do the data analysis. The analysis is quite broad and includes simulations of income redistribution patterns to generate economic growth, the prediction of political violence in countries, the loss of income attributable to instability, and so on. The data analysis is extraordinarily interesting, even when some of the results are only marginally significant, and others not surprising. The program of statistically testing a micro behavior hypothesis with macro system data is problematic, but, at least, the author seems aware of the pitfalls. The limitations of the results are reflected in the relative thinness of the policy conclusions.

These disappointingly thin levels of significance can be looked at in at least one very positive light. Given the strength of development of the approach and the statistics developed, students of political economy, political violence, and political stability have been given food for thought that should serve them in good stead for the development of the next generation of studies on these subjects. And if these students' tastes do not lead them to begin with the material presented in this book, they are likely to be embarrassed by their critics.

University of Maryland,  
College Park

JOE A. OPPENHEIMER

**The Battle for Britain: Thatcher and the New Liberals.**

By Stephen Haseler. London: I. B. Tauris, 1989. 195p. \$24.50.

**Cutback Management in Public Bureaucracies: Popular Theories and Observed Outcomes in Whitehall.**

By Andrew Dunshire and Christopher Hood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 253p. \$65.00.

**Local Government and Thatcherism.** By Hugh Butcher, Ian G. Law, Robert Leach, and Maurice Mullard. New York: Routledge, 1990. 171p. \$48.00.

These three works on Thatcherism and policy will be valuable for scholars of either British policy or comparative conservative movements in the 1980s. Haseler has written a polemic essay from a neo-radical perspective, while Dunshire and Hood and Butcher and his colleagues both provide full sets of arguments and data on the effects of government policy changes. These two are complementary: both adopt official figures and match them to policy goals, but Dunshire and Hood take the Whitehall level while Butcher and his colleagues examine the effect at the local government level. It was, of course, conflicts with local government spending and taxation that partly undermined Mrs. Thatcher's final administration of 1987–90.

Haseler presents a clue to the ability of the radical Right in Britain to co-opt members of the center during the 1980s. He has shifted from the Labour party and Greater London Council to the Radical Society, Social Democratic Party, and Alliance. Yet the essay presents not opposition to, but startling agreement with, the Thatcher government.

The steam engine of this readable essay is the liberalism of the early nineteenth century radicals, Cobden and Bright. The Victorian values of Mrs. Thatcher and those of Haseler overlap in the social agenda and economic prescription, if not in partisan standard. Cobden and Bright stood for free trade and the abolition by mobility of the old, stultifying, feudal class relationships; they lamented that the industrial revolution had made mill-owners and merchants wealthy only to find them sycophantic in face of the feudal aristocracy.

The journalist in Haseler might appreciate William Safire's distinctions between the *libright*, or libertarian strain (Adam Smith) of liberty in social and economic markets and the *tradright*, or traditional strain (Edmund Burke) based on a natural order of governing through the upper social class. The passing of the conservative leadership to a younger "one of us" (self-made man) certainly fits the social change emphasis of the volume, which polemicizes *against* the paternalistic, "allegiant" society (as portrayed by Philip Norton) and *for* a more