

ed. He struck a bull's-eye, when, in his analytical account, he identified George Shultz, former president of Bechtel and former Treasury Secretary (under Richard Nixon) and Secretary of State (under Ronald Reagan), as the heir to Robert Strange McNamara, as one of the top figures in the new imperial pyramid of power.

George Shultz is truly one of the most nefarious figures in political life in our time. It was Shultz who took personal responsibility for the final destruction of Franklin Roosevelt's Bretton Woods System of fixed exchange rates, first in his infamous diktat to Nixon's Treasury Secretary John Connally, whom he soon replaced; next, at the Azores international monetary conference; and finally, at the 1975 Rambouillet conference, where European nations attempted, unsuccessfully, to reconstitute a stable monetary system to include the integration of the Soviet bloc. Shultz later orchestrated the Plaza Accords of 1985 between the United States and Japan, which, in effect, ended Japan's efforts, over the prior decade, to play the role of sponsor and creditor of a series of great economic development projects. He would later, in effect, "create" the present George W. Bush Administration, through his sponsorship of the "Vulcan" team of top policy aides, who



Victims of the economic hit men and their "jackals" (clockwise from top left): Panamanian chief of state Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, German banker Alfred Herrhausen, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

became key Cabinet officials.

But Shultz in other respects merely personifies the system of economic hit men exposed by the Perkins book. Shultz is not a "Lord of the Rings." He is, ultimately, an underling, who has made the Faustian

deal, and cares nothing about the fact that his policies have directly led to the deaths of millions, and will kill countless more millions in the future if not stopped.

It was the weight of this legacy of genocide-by-debt-trap that prompted John Perkins to break. His decision to write his confession is of monumental importance, at this moment of existen-



tial world crisis, and his book provides a vital flank against the economic hit men of the new imperium.

The appearance of the Perkins book offers this flank against the global financial oligarchy at a moment when their power arrangements of the past 33 years are on the verge of disintegration. Placing the spotlight on the methods of the "I.M.F.-World Bank Washington Consensus," affords a unique opportunity that cannot be passed up. It is in this respect that the Perkins book provides much-needed ammunition to those who are dedicated to bringing a better world into being, and why its timely appearance brought Leibniz's assertion immediately to mind.

—Jeffrey Steinberg

FDR's 'General Welfare'

There are several reasons for recommending this new book by University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein. The first, and most important, is, that it will be the first introduction most Americans will get to a remarkable speech, and conception, by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, called the "Second Bill of Rights." The second is the brilliant way in which Sunstein pulls the legal rug out from under the "don't tax me" zealots of *laissez faire*. The third is the historical review which Sunstein provides of the influence which FDR's "Second Bill" had, especially internationally.

For dealing with all these questions in a readable manner, Professor Sun-

stein deserves our appreciation. What is disappointing is, that he chooses to treat the "Second Bill" as a list of positive law demands, rather than acknowledging that they flow coherently from the *principled* commitment of the U.S. Constitution (in its Preamble and elsewhere) to the idea of the *General Welfare*. Thus, where he could be arguing effectively for the mandate which Congress has to implement this Constitutional commitment, he is instead trying to figure out whether and how the courts could enforce the economic rights which FDR enumerates, ending up with something less than a clarion call for providing these urgently needed rights today.



**The Second Bill of Rights:
FDR's Unfinished Revolution
and Why We Need It
More Than Ever**
by Cass R. Sunstein
New York, Basic Books, 2004
294 pages, hardcover, \$25.00

Nevertheless, the overall thesis is refreshing, and timely. President Franklin Roosevelt did carry out a revolution against the counter-revolution which had been launched against the American System in the decades after President McKinley's death, and precisely that revolution in thinking—back to the Federal government taking responsibility for the welfare of the population—is needed today. As Dr. Sunstein points out, today's free-marketeers have virtually wiped out many of the measures put into effect by FDR, and their elimination has increased the insecurity of our nation. Restoring the FDR approach ought to be at the top of our agenda today—beginning with the essential battle to prevent the destruction of the Social Security system.

The Second Bill of Rights

When FDR gave his State of the Union address on Jan. 11, 1944, he was looking forward to the end of the war, both in terms of international relations, and the situation at home. "It is our duty now to begin to lay the plans and determine the strategy for the winning of a lasting peace and the establishment of an American standard of living higher than ever before known," he said. This meant, he went on, that the guarantee of political rights, such as those enshrined in the Bill of Rights, had to be expanded into the economic sphere. "Necessitous men are not free men," he stated.

Roosevelt continued: "In our day these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident. We have accepted, so to speak, a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all—regardless of station, race, or creed." He then listed the relevant rights:

- "The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
- "The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- "The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return that will give him and his family a decent living;
- "The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competi-



Franklin D. Roosevelt campaigns for President, Wheeling, West Virginia, October 1932.

UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

tion and domination by monopolies at home or abroad;

- "The right of every family to a decent home;
- "The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- "The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
- "The right to a good education."

He then asked the Congress "to explore the means for implementing this economic bill of rights—for it is definitely the responsibility of the Congress to do so."

The General Welfare

Congress never did take action on the economic bill of rights; the closest thing to it was the GI Bill of Rights, which paved the way for home ownership and an education for the millions of GI's returning from the war.

The fundamental reason for this failure, lay with the weakening of the commitment by the nation's political leadership, and culture, to the Constitutional principle of the General Welfare that underlies FDR's Bill of Rights. Once FDR died, leadership of the Democratic Party shifted to the right-wing Harry Truman, a tool of the Synarchist bankers, and no strong standardbearer was ever able to knock the party into shape behind the FDR vision. The closest the Democrats came to achieving this

was with President John Kennedy, whose Presidency was cut short by the Synarchists' assassin's bullets. His most immediate successors, his brother Robert and the Rev. Martin Luther King, met a similar fate.

Beginning with those assassinations, the assault on everything which FDR stood for has escalated, both from the "right" and from the "left." The "right wing," epitomized by those think-tanks who are today salivating over the chance to steal Social Security trust funds for the private markets, openly denounces the idea that the Federal government should provide for the general welfare of the population. Meanwhile, the "left wing" claims to be "pro-people," but has systematically attacked the very concept of industrial and scientific progress, not to mention the government measures required to carry it out.

It should come as no surprise that the abandonment by the United States of the American System ideas of FDR, and the domination of the financial system by the international banking cabal, has led to a collapse of the world system itself. Once again, the question which faced FDR in 1933 looms: Will we have a government that stands for the general welfare, or will we submit to fascism?

To help us face up to this question, books aimed at reviving a public understanding of the FDR legacy, like Sunstein's, do make a valuable contribution.

—Nancy Spannaus